

The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column

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Introduction

The group of studies to which the content analysis of the Los Angeles Times astrology column belongs, sets as its aim the investigation of the nature and motivations of some large-scale social phenomena involving irrational elements in a peculiar way—fused with what may be dubbed pseudo-rationality. 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. They function as though rationality of the self-maintaining body politic had grown malignant and therewith threatened to destroy the organism. This malignancy, however, can be demonstrated only after the autopsy. Often enough the consequence of apparently rational considerations leads to ultimately fatal events—the most recent example being Hitler’s shrewd and temporarily highly successful policy of national expansion which by its own logic inexorably led to his doom and world catastrophe. In fact, 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.”

It is the pattern of interacting rational and irrational forces in modern mass movements upon which our studies hope to throw some light. The danger is by no means, as some theories such as Brickner’s *Is Germany Incurable?* would like to have it, a specific German illness, the collective paranoia of one particular nation, but 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. Their investigation points to a definite basis in certain subjective dispositions though they certainly cannot

be explained altogether psychologically. Psychotic character structure may sometimes though by no means always, be involved. In view of the presupposition of psychological "susceptibility" it may be assumed that they do not manifest themselves only in the sphere of politics that is at least on the surface realistic, but can be studied in other social areas as well, or even better, although the reality factor is rarely absent even from fads which somehow pride themselves on their own irrationality. Such an approach might be less hampered by rationalizations which in the field of politics are hard to discount. It also might violate fewer taboos and deep-rooted canons of behavior. Above all, 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. The danger of *ex post facto* theories might thus be partially avoided.

It is in this spirit that we take up the study of astrology, not because we overrate its importance as a social phenomenon *per se*, nefarious though it is in various respects. Accordingly, the specific nature of our study is not a direct psychoanalysis of the occult, of the type initiated by Freud's famous essay "The Uncanny"¹ and followed up by numerous scientific ventures, now collected by Dr. Devereux in *Psychoanalysis and the Occult*. We do not want to examine occult experiences or individual superstitious beliefs of any kind as expressions of the unconscious. In fact, the occult as such plays only a marginal role in systems such as organized astrology. Its sphere has little enough in common with that of the spiritualist who sees or hears ghosts or with telepathy. In analogy with the sociological differentiation of primary or secondary groups,² we may define our area of interest as one of "secondary superstition." By this we mean that the individual's own primary experience of the occult, whatever its psychological meaning and roots or its validity, rarely, if ever, enter the social phenomenon to which our studies are devoted. Here, the occult appears rather institutionalized, objectified and, to a large extent, socialized. Just as in secondary communities, people no longer "live together" and know each other directly, but are related to each other through intermediary objectified social processes (e.g., exchange of commodities), so people responding to the stimuli we are here investigating seem in a way "alien" to the experience on which they claim their decisions are based. They participate in them largely through the mediation of magazines and newspapers, the personal advice of professional astrologers being too expensive, and frequently accept such information as reliable sources of advice rather than pretend to have any personal basis for their

1. Sigmund Freud, *Collected Papers*, trans. by Joan Riviere (London, 1949), IV, pp. 368-407.

2. Charles H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York, 1909), chapter III. Cf. also Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1921), pp. 50, 56-57, 282-287.

belief. 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. In the newspaper column to which this monograph is mainly devoted the mechanics of the astrological system are never divulged and the readers are presented only with the alleged results of astrological reasoning in which the reader does not actively participate.

This alienation from experience, a certain abstractness enveloping the whole realm of the commercialized occult may well be concomitant with a substratum of disbelief and skepticism, the suspicion of phoniness so deeply associated with modern big time irrationality. This, of course, has historical reasons. 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*.

It may be objected that organized fortune telling has for time immemorial had the character of "secondary superstition." It has been separated for thousands of years from whatever could be called primary experience through a division of labor that admitted only priests into the esoteric mystery and therefore always carried within itself the element of phoniness expressed in the old Latin adage that an augur laughs when he sees another. 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. 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 supranatural 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." In addition, it should be stressed that in former periods, superstition was an attempt, however awkward, to cope with problems for which no better or more rational means were available at least so far as the masses were concerned. The sharp division between alchemy and chemistry, between astrology and astronomy is a comparatively late achievement.

Today, however, the incompatibility of the progress of natural sciences, such as astro-physics, with a belief in astrology is blatant. Those who combine both are forced to an intellectual retrogression which formerly was hardly required. In a world in which, through popular scientific literature and particularly science fiction, every schoolboy knows of the billions of galaxies, the cosmic insignificance of the earth and the mechanical laws governing the movements of stellar systems, the geocentric and anthropocentric view concomitant with astrology is utterly anachronistic. We thus may assume that only very strong instinctual demands make it possible for people still—or anew—to accept astrology. Under present conditions, the astrological system *can* function only as “secondary superstition,” largely exempt from the individual’s own critical control and offered authoritatively.

It is necessary to stress this character of “secondary superstition” since it provides the key for one of the strangest elements in the material we are investigating. This is just its pseudo-rationality, the very same traits that play such a conspicuous role in totalitarian social movements, its calculative though spurious adaptation to realistic needs. Again, this may have been germaine to fortune telling since time immemorial. 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 selfinterest, 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.

Our interest in secondary superstition naturally entails a lesser concentration on the psychological explanations of individual occult leanings than in the total personality set-up of those who are susceptible to these rather ubiquitous stimuli. In order to approach the problem, psychiatric as well as socio-psychological categories will have to be utilized. 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). Very often it seems as though astrology were only an authoritarian cloak while the matter itself is strongly reminiscent of a mental health column written for the trade in limited self-awareness and paternal support.

The column attempts to satisfy the longings of people who are thoroughly convinced that others (or some unknown agency) ought to know more about themselves and what they should do than they can decide for themselves. It is this "mundane" aspect of astrology which particularly invites social and psychological interpretation. In fact, many of the messages are of a directly social or psychological nature. However, they rarely if ever adequately express social or psychological reality, but manipulate the readers' ideas of such matters in a definite direction. Therefore, they must not be taken at face value, but subjected to some deeper probing.

This study is in the nature of content analysis. About three months of the daily column "Astrological Forecasts" by Carroll Righter in the Los Angeles Times, November 1952-February 1953, are interpreted. As a corollary, some observations on a number of astrological magazines are presented. We want to give a picture of the specific stimuli operating on followers of astrology whom we hypothetically regard as representative of the whole group of those who go for 'secondary occultism' and of the presumptive effect of these stimuli. We assume that such publications mold some ways of their readers' thinking; yet they pretend to adjust themselves to the readers' needs, wants, wishes and demands in order to "sell." We regard this content analysis as an inroad to the study of the mentality of larger groups of a similar frame of mind.

There are various reasons for choosing this material. Limitations of research facilities prevented real field work and forced us to concentrate on printed material rather than on primary reactions. Such material seemed to be most copious in astrology and was easily accessible. Also astrology probably has the largest following among the various occultist schools in the population. It is certainly not one of the extreme occultist trades, but puts up a facade of pseudo-rationality which makes it easier to embrace than, for example, spiritualism. No wraiths appear, and the forecasts pretend to be derived from astronomic facts. Thus astrology might not bring out so clearly psychotic mechanisms as those fashions indulged in by the real lunatic fringe of superstition. This may hamper our study as far as understanding of the deeper unconscious layers of neo-occultism is concerned. This potential disadvantage, however, is compensated by the fact astrology has caught on in such large sections of the population that the findings, in as much as they partly are confined to the ego level and to social determinants, may be generalized with greater confidence. Moreover, it is just "pseudo-rationality," the twilight zone between reason and unconscious urges, in which we are specifically interested from the viewpoint of social psychology.

For the time being our study has to limit itself to the qualitative. It represents an attempt to understand what astrological publications mean in terms of reader reactions, on an overt level as well as on a deeper one. While this analysis is guided by psychoanalytic concepts, it should be pointed out from the very beginning that our approach as far as it largely

involves social attitudes and actions must largely consider conscious or semiconscious phases. It would be inappropriate to think exclusively in terms of the unconscious where the stimuli themselves are consciously calculated and institutionalized to such an extent that their power of directly reaching the unconscious should not be regarded as absolute and where overt issues of self-interest continuously enter the picture. Frequently, surface aims are fused with vicarious gratifications of the unconscious.

In fact, the concept of the unconscious cannot be posited dogmatically in any study concerning the border area of psychological determinants and social attitudes. 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." Frequently one encounters a kind of "mimicking" of the unconscious in the maintenance of certain taboos which, however, are not fully endorsed. No light has so far been thrown on this somewhat obscure psychological zone, and our study should among other things contribute to its understanding. It goes without saying that the ultimate basis of this zone has to be sought in the truly unconscious, but it might be a dangerous fallacy to regard the psychological twilight of numerous mass reactions as straightforward manifestations of the instincts.

So far as effectiveness upon actual reader mentality is concerned, our results must by necessity be regarded as tentative. They provide us with formulations, the validity of which can and should only be established by reader research. We may expect that the authors of our material know what they are doing and to whom they are talking, though they themselves may start from hunches or stereotyped assumptions concerning their readers which facts would not bear out. Moreover, there is little doubt that in any modern mass communications the idea is artificially fostered that one has to cater to the tastes of some group as a means to mold the communication material in a way fitting the mentality of those responsible for the production or their designs. Shifting responsibility from the manipulators to the manipulated is a widespread ideological pattern. We must therefore be cautious not to treat our material dogmatically as a mirrored reflection of the reader's mind.

Conversely, we do not try to make inferences through our analysis about the mentality of those responsible for the publications to be examined, particularly the authors. We do not think that such a study would lead us very far. Even in the sphere of art, the idea of projection has been largely overrated. Although the authors' motivations certainly enter the artifact, they are by no means so all-determining as is often assumed. As soon as an artist has set himself his problem, it obtains some kind of impact of its own, and, in most cases, he has to follow the objective requirements of his product much more than his own urges of expression when he translates his

primary conception into artistic reality. To be sure, these objective requirements do not play a decisive role in mass media which stress consumer effect far beyond any artistic or intellectual problem. However, the total set-up here tends to limit the chances of projection utterly. Those who produce the material follow innumerable requirements, rules of thumb, set patterns and mechanisms of controls which by necessity reduce to a minimum the range of any kind of self-expression.

Certainly the author's motivations are but one source while the set patterns to which they have to stick seem far more important. While it would be very hard to trace back a production like the Los Angeles Times Column to any single source in particular, it is integrated in such a way that the material speaks a kind of language of its own which can be read and understood even if we do not know much about the processes which led to the formulation of the language and infused it with meaning. It ought to be stressed that understanding of such a language cannot confine itself to its single morphemes, but always has to remain conscious of the total pattern in which these morphemes are more or less mechanically interwoven. Some particular devices cropping up in our material such as for example frequent reference to the family background of a person born on a certain day may appear completely trivial and harmless if seen in isolation. In the functional unity of the whole, however, they may obtain a significance far beyond the harmless and comforting idea which is indicated at first sight.

Basic Situation of the Column

The column "Astrological Forecasts" by Carroll Righter appears in the Los Angeles Times, a conservative newspaper leaning far to the right wing of the Republican Party. Mr. Righter is well-known in movie circles and supposed to be the private astrological counsellor to one of the most famous film "stars." When he took up his work, he obtained considerable publicity also in television. However, his column does not indicate any particular tinge of Hollywood sensationalism or Southern California faddism. The whole outlook of the column is "moderate." 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. Astrological niceties and astrological lingo except for the popular twelve signs of the zodiac are absent. The more sinister aspects of astrology such as emphasis on catastrophes and threatening doom hardly make themselves felt. 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. Hardly ever does the practical advice tendered to the reader transgress the limits of what one finds in any column dealing with human relations and

popular psychology. 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. This authoritarian element, incidentally, is also present in the popular psychological columns of which the column is reminiscent in so many respects: their authority is wielded by the expert rather than by the "magus" while the latter also feels compelled to speak as an expert.

Yet, the implicit irrationality of the column's claim to be inspired by the stars cannot be dismissed in as much as it sets the stage for its effect and fulfils a highly significant function in dealing with the anxieties and difficulties of those at whom the column is directed. Astrology, although it sometimes pretends to be chummy with theology, is basically different from religion. 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 supranaturalism. This "depersonalized" merciless aspect of the supposedly transcendent source has much to do with the latent threat spelled by astrology. 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. Naïve 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 an 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. This phase of astrology's own ambivalence is exploited by the "rational" side of the column. The aid and comfort given by the merciless stars is tantamount to the idea that only he who behaves rationally, i.e., achieves complete control over his inner and

outer life, has any chance of doing justice to the irrational contradictory requirements of the existent by adjustment. Thus, 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.

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. However, this strength and power ultimately derived from the father image has become completely depersonalized in astrology. Communion with the stars is an almost unrecognizable and therefore tolerable substitute of the forbidden relation with an omnipotent father figure. People are allowed to enjoy communion with absolute strength in as much as it is considered no longer human. It seems likely that the fantasies about world destruction and ultimate doom appearing in more extremist astrological publications than the Los Angeles Times column are connected with this ultimately sexual content in as much as they are the last vestige of the individual expression of guilt feelings grown as unrecognizable as their libidinal source. Apart from this zone, the stars mean sex without threat. They are depicted as omnipotent, but they are very far away—even farther than the narcissistic leader figures described in Freud's "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego."

The Column and the Astrological Magazines

At this point, it may be pertinent to characterize briefly the difference between the column and astrological magazines such as *Forecast*, *Astrology Guide*, *American Astrology*, *World Astrology*, *True Astrology*, *Everyday Astrology* and other publications of the "pulp" type. While no systematic study of this material could so far be undertaken, it has been perused to a sufficient degree to allow a comparison with the Los Angeles Times column which contributes toward an understanding of the latter's proper setting. There are numerous shades in the magazine material ranging from very harmless, though utterly primitive, publications such as *World Astrology*, to wilder ones such as *True Astrology* or *Everyday Astrology* to paranoid ones such as *American Astrology*. No degree of secondary occultism has been forgotten. Our observations, however, seem valid for all these magazines on the basis of a cursory comparison.

It goes without saying that such magazines directed at a nucleus of astrological followers rather than at the public at large contain more "technical" astrological material and try to impress the readers both with "esoteric" knowledge and with "scientific" elaborateness. Terms such as 'house,' 'square,' 'opposition,' etc., occur all the time. Astrology is not taken

for granted, but attempts with some violence to defend its "status." Thus, the issue from which our examples are chosen, contains a polemic against some doctor of science who criticized astrology as a superstition and compared it with fortune-telling from the entrails of animals or from the flight of birds.³ The magazines seem to be particularly sensitive about any such comparison. The doctor's charges are denied through the somewhat tautological assertion that astrology never busies itself with entrails or birds. It pretends to a higher level of scientificness than the supposedly more primitive forms of esoteric wisdom without, however, entering into the argument itself: the lack of a transparent interconnection between astronomical observations and inferences pertaining to the fate of individuals or nations.

The only substantial difference more sophisticated astrologists can point out between themselves and the tribe of crystal-gazers is their aversion to unqualified prophecies—an attitude presumably due to caution. 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. 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. Moreover, the idea that the freedom of the individual amounts to nothing more than making the best of what a given constellation of stars permits implies the very same idea of adjustment the affinity to which has been pointed out previously as one of the traits of astrology. 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

3. It should be noted that the oafish attitude taken by the magazines against what it regards inferior remnants of outdated superstition does not prevent it from at least a kind of official solidarity with competing rackets of a pseudoscientific tinge of our own time. Good fellowship among all those occupied with esoteric knowledge is promoted. One serious reference is made to "our numerological friends."

concretistic advice of adjustment in everyday life. Thus the philosophy expressed by the speculations of the magazines provides us actually with some background for the understanding of the down-to-earth statements of the Los Angeles Times column.

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." In accordance with this kind of gratification, the whole atmosphere is much more grandiloquent and boastful of the wisdom of the initiated and bombastic predictions go to much greater extremes than the Times column. As was to be expected, there are frequent sinister hints such as those of the beginning of the new era heralding a major world catastrophe and implying a war between the United States and Russia in 1953 without, however, committing itself definitely on this score.

Nevertheless, the caution prevailing in the Los Angeles Times column is also shown to a certain extent even in such scurrilous publications. Thus it is stated in one article with amazing frankness that there is no uniformity about the basic interpretation of heavenly signs among astrologists, probably an attempt to ward off any attacks based on the inconsistencies between various astrological forecasts. As a matter of fact, there are flagrant contradictions to be found among various articles in a single issue. The publisher and editor in one case wrote a lead article tuned to the impending doom idea and the prediction of a terrible battle in which the American "majority"—a notion which might have a racist slant while sounding democratic—is going to win. This, however, is followed immediately by another article which heralds the new year as one of bliss promising that it will relieve innumerable people of worries and pressures. Obviously an attempt is being made to cater to various layers of demands in the readers, to those more deep-lying ones where the spectacle of the twilight of the gods is hoped for as well as to the level where one wants to be reassured about a raise in one's salary.

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. Some of the imagery reminds one of that used by fascist

anti-semitic agitators of the pseudo-religious brand. Thus reference is made to the apocalyptic battle of Armageddon which played a large role in the speeches of a Los Angeles "radio priest" who created quite a stir during the thirties. However, it is possible that such biblical imagery is used independently of the vernacular of political agitators and draws its strength from the tradition of revivalism. 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.

Altogether, however, the American cultural climate seems to demand at least a veneer of common sense and realism. This leads to the truly unexpected features of the magazines which happen to be just the opposite of the eccentricities just referred to. There seems to be more implied than merely American common sense and realism. In the magazines, one finds entirely different zones, carefully kept apart from each other. On the one hand, there are general astrological speculations involving conjunctions, oppositions, houses, etc. They are being applied to mankind as a whole, or at least to the American nation as such. On the other hand, there are detailed predictions from what will happen on each day to any person born under a specific sign of the zodiac. The main difference between the Los Angeles Times column and the astrological magazines is that the column carries only the latter predictions and the horoscopes of children born on a particular day and omits the "speculative" and world-historical material contained in the magazines. However, if one compares predictions in the column and in the magazines, there is, apart from individual difference of style and preferences of the writers', a striking similarity.⁴

Winter Issue (1953) of "Forecast"
Daily Advice for Virgo, p. 59.

MON. Feb. 16—Don't attempt to tell someone what you think of them or to criticize unfavorably. Be wise and know that silence is the best part of valor today. Put your energies into some needed work or a job that has been awaiting your attention.

TUE. Feb. 17—There seems to be considerable tension around you; see that you do not add fuel to the fire. Relax; read a good book or do something that will occupy your mind and hands in a constructive manner. Retire early.

WED. Feb. 18—All constructive effort, whether of a personal or business nature, should bring good results and benefit to you. Make dates, appointments or interviews.

THU. Feb. 19—Get started early with your personal plans; travel, write, seek aid or instruction, see lawyers, advisors or instructors, doctors, nurses, agents, or repairmen, friends or teachers.

4. The uniformity of the material, though it has certainly its psychological aspects or those of psychological calculation, is probably explained primarily by the fact that the magazines are published by a very few centralized agencies.

FRI. Feb. 20—Don't attempt to do the impossible; finish the routine work or job, and wait for a better time to start new or important projects. Enjoy some special friendship or a show in the evening.

SAT. Feb. 21—The day can be slightly difficult unless you are willing to cooperate and adapt to present conditions. Don't be too critical; display a sense of humor.

SUN. Feb. 22—Whatever it is that you want to do today, if it helps another in any way, do it. Work or pleasure shared will be pleasant and beneficial in many respects.

MON. Feb. 23—You must exercise caution with all associates, and keep out of disputes or arguments which could lower you in the estimation of some important people.

TUE. Feb. 24—This is a good time to take stock of your assets and see where you can make some advantageous changes or investments. See officials, make agreements or appointments, phone, visit or write.

WED. Feb. 25—if you expect progress in anything today, you must put forth some extra effort and work. See that all jobs, tasks of a home nature and belated correspondence is brought up to date.

THU. Feb. 26—Early hours of the day give the best chance for attending to any important matters or the starting of anything new. Be a little cautious in dealing with legal matters, foreign correspondence and financial affairs later.

FRI. Feb. 27—Don't be too disturbed by news or commotions around you. Confine your efforts to the worthwhile activities in connection with your home or place of business. Keep calm, relaxed and ready to cooperate with all people.

SAT. Feb. 28—Take it easy, and don't let your temper or impulses rule your better judgment. It pays to ignore the things or statements you don't like, and take a constructive viewpoint of things.

Carroll Righter's "Astrological Forecast"
Column for Saturday, January 31, 1953.

ARIES: Make your appearance more charming early. Then, contact co-workers and make plans for a more efficient and harmonious arrangement of future routine chores.

TAURUS: Attend to essential home duties early; then venture forth and make yourself more charming by means of beauty treatments, haircuts, dieting. In P.M. have fun; be happy.

GEMINI: Contact all and complete business and correspondence early. Later, pitch in and make home, family and property conditions more satisfactory through cooperative measures.

CANCER: Find out early just where you stand financially and then go out and attend to necessary red tape. Confer with associates who understand your urges; seek their help.

LEO: Decide early what you want, and then study your income and expenses; then, devise new imaginative ways to increase your revenue to take care of new expenses; seek abundance.

VIRGO: Consult a confidante early and plan for attainment of mutual desires;

make sure you know your specific part in the arrangement. See all who can help your advance.

LIBRA: A good friend points the way to your desires; in appreciation, do as suggested; quietly channeling your efforts without fanfare, for, in this case, secrecy is best.

SCORPIO: Find out early exactly what an important person expects from you; then contact a good friend who can help you; be readily cooperative and success will follow.

SAGITTARIUS: Early in the A.M. a prophetic hunch requires that you contact a powerful person who is able to make your inspiration a success. Be exact all through the day.

CAPRICORN: Make a working plan early for increasing joint revenue. Then, get in touch with new acquaintances who can use their expert knowledge to make the project a success.

AQUARIUS: Placate your opponent and huddle with a partner early in the A.M. Then, make a specific outline of an effective working arrangement and all concerned are delighted.

PISCES: Complete all your duties at breakfast time and leave the rest of the day free to have fun with all associates. Take no chances; discuss all points of interest.

The striking feature which the personal predictions in the two kinds of publications have in common is their "practicability" and the almost complete absence of any reference to the major and mostly solemn speculations about the fate of mankind at large. It is as though the sphere of the individual were completely severed from that of the "world" or the cosmos. The slogan "business as usual" is accepted as a kind of metaphysical maxim.

In view of the obvious absurdity of tendering petty advice to people who at the same time are fed with glowing images of all-embracing conflicts, this dichotomy calls for an interpretation. 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.

In this respect, some similarity to the function of the dream suggests itself. 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. Only in isolated cases, such as sleep walking, does it gain control of the motoric apparatus. Thus it may be said that dreams not only protect sleep, but also the waking state in as much as the "nightly psychosis of the normal" prevents the individual from psychotic behavior in his reality coping. 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 channelizing and to a certain extent neutralizing some of the individual's more threatening id impulses. Yet the analogy has to be qualified in various directions. To the individual, astrological belief is not a spontaneous expression of his mental life, not "his own" as much of the dream content is but is, as it were, ready-made, carefully prepared and predigested irrationality. In so far, the term "dream factory" applied to the movies applies also to astrology. 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.

It is a moot point whether people who fall for astrology show, as it was taken for granted by Simmel, a psychotic predisposition, whether "psychotic characters" are especially easy to be caught by it. It may apply to the psychotic element in the normal as well and not require any special psychological susceptibility such as so-called ego weakness. In fact quite a few astrology addicts seem to enjoy a rather strong ego in terms of reality functioning. The lack of manifestly delusional content, as well as the collective backing of astrology makes it comparatively easy for the "normal" to embrace the apocryphal creed. It should also be noted that

quite a few disciples of astrology accept it with a kind of mental reservation, a certain playfulness which tolerantly acknowledges its basic irrationality and their own aberration. 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.

The ready-made "alienated" character of astrology, however, should not lead us to the oversimplification that it is something entirely ego-alien. As a psychological device adopted by the individual, astrology is in some respects reminiscent of the symptoms of the phobic neurotic which channelize, focus and absorb his free-floating anxiety seemingly in terms of objects of reality. However, in phobias, no matter how rigidly structured, this channelization is by necessity impermanent and fluctuating. A phobia uses existent objects for the individual's own psychological needs. The realistic object of commercial astrology is specifically conceived and constructed in order to satisfy those psychological needs that astrologists assume to exist in their audience. In both cases, 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.

The Underlying Psychology

In contrast to the magazines, an astrological columnist like Carroll Righter faces a more vaguely defined, but presumably larger number of people with divergent interests and worries who are attracted by the column and often seek some advice. The latter has to be of such a nature that it gives *per se* some vicarious aid and comfort to the readers who can hardly be expected to be really helped by the columnist. He knows neither the persons he addresses nor the specific nature of the wishes and complaints of any of them.⁵ Yet his position of authority forces him to talk as if he knew and as if the constellations of the stars provided him with satisfactory, sufficient and unequivocal answers. He can neither afford to disappoint his readers by not committing himself at all nor to compromise his magical authority on which his sales value rests by blatantly false statements. He has to face the squaring of the circle. What he says must sound as though he had concrete knowledge of what problems beset each of his prospective followers born under some sign at a specific time. Yet he must always remain non-committal enough so that he cannot be easily discredited.

5. In some respect he is in a position similar to that of the political demagogue who has to make some promises to everybody and has to figure out what is likely to worry most the majority of his audience.

While being compelled to take some chances, he tries to reduce the danger of failure to a minimum. This explains the usage of some rather rigid stereotypes of style. E.g., he frequently employs expressions such as "Follow up that intuition of yours," or "Display that keen mind of yours." The word "that" seems to imply that the columnist, on the basis of astrological inspiration, knows exactly what the individual addressee who happens to read the column is like or was like at some particular time. Yet the 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.⁶

But such nice little tricks alone do not dispense with the columnist's fundamental difficulty. He generally has to rely on his knowledge of the most frequently recurring problems prescribed by the set-up of modern life and of characterological patterns he had frequent occasion to observe. He figures out a number of typical situations in which a large percentage of his followers might at any time find themselves. He must especially concentrate on apparently ferreting out those problems, which the reader cannot solve by his own power and force him to look for outside help, and must not even shrink from questions which are difficult to solve rationally at all so that an irrational source of advice is sought, for it is presumably precisely from such situations that people turn to the column. This leads quite logically to the fact that the astrologist's advice reflects a number of more or less insoluble situations of the present phase, impasses which threaten each individual and stimulate each individual's hopes for some effective interference from above. Even within the framework of ubiquitous problems, however, a certain latitude of expression has to be maintained so that even truly unrealistic predictions and advice can still be reconciled to the reader's life situation and are not too easily discarded. In this respect the astrologist relies on a habit equally well-known to serious psychiatrists and to popular psychologists. People who have any affinity at all to occultism are usually prepared to react to the information they are craving in such a way as to make it fit their own system at almost any cost. Thus, he even might expose himself on a factual level unpunished so long as he figures out adequately those particular needs and wishes of his readers which are so strong that they are not likely to be shattered by confrontation with reality, provided only such confrontation is really on a purely intellectual level and does not subject the readers to dire consequences in their practical life. In fact, great care is taken by the columnist to avoid this

6. "By pseudo-individualization we mean endowing cultural mass production with a halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself." T.W. Adorno, "On Popular Music," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, IX, 1941, p. 25.

while lavishing gratifications in the realm of the imaginary.

In order to fulfill such exacting tasks, the columnist really has to be what is called in American slang, a homespun philosopher. It is perhaps this requirement which makes for the striking similarity between the column and its psychological counterparts. In this popular psychology, though shaped as it is primarily in terms of mass appeal, the knowledge of the phenomena as such, is often pertinent and the descriptions adequate. But their dynamic interpretation is either completely absent or faked: most of the time vulgar, pre-Freudian ego-psychology cloaked in what Theodor Reik has called the social workers' lingo of psychoanalese.⁷ This attitude of popular psychological writings is not merely due to a lack of erudition. Since the columnist, even if he were equipped with a complete knowledge of Freud, cannot hope to change psychodynamically any of those to whom he speaks, he has to keep within the external zones of the personality. What really distinguishes "world-wise" institutions such as the column from real psychology is not so much observations and possibly not even the columnist's underlying interpretations, but the direction in which he moves and manipulates his reader's psychology. He continuously strengthens defenses rather than shatters them. He plays on the unconscious rather than attempting its elucidation beyond the most superficial phraseology.

He caters above all to *narcissism* as one of the strongest and most easily approached defences. Often his references to his readers' outstanding qualities and chances seem so silly that it is hard to imagine that anyone will swallow them, but the columnist is well aware of the fact that vanity is nourished by so powerful instinctual sources that he who plays up to it gets away with almost anything.

Complementary to the narcissistic gratifications aimed at by the column is a more or less veiled suggestion of *anxiety*. The idea that the reader is somehow threatened must be maintained because only if some mild terror is exercised, he will seek help—analogous to advertising of drugs against body odor. Threat and relief are somehow intertwined in a way that can be spotted in various kinds of mental disorders. The kind of popular psychology on which the column relies takes it frequently for granted that most persons feel threatened, either in reality or at least psychologically, and that the column reaches them only if it establishes an intelligence with the reader in the zone of threat. Yet the threat must always be mild in order not to really shock the reader who would give up looking into a column which caused direct discomfort. Thus one of the most widely spread realistic threats, that of being fired, appears only in a diluted form, e.g., as conflicts with higher-ups, being "dressed down," and similar unpleasantnesses. The term "firing" is not used a single time.

7. Theodor Reik, *Listening with the Third Ear* (New York, 1949), pp. 458-463. Reik applies the term to the jargon of semi-professionals. This jargon has, in the meantime, become socialized.

A favorite threat, however, is that of traffic accidents. Here again one finds how various facets of the approach are blended: the danger of traffic accidents is ever-present in the congested Los Angeles area. But it is singled out as if some specific prophetic knowledge were behind it, a claim that cannot easily be refuted due to the ubiquity of the threat itself. At the same time, a threat like that of a traffic accident does not hurt the readers' narcissism on account of the complete externalization of the threat. It has hardly any humiliating implications, public opinion does not brand the traffic sinner as a criminal. Finally, reference to this threat displays one of the most prominent features of the column: supposedly irrational and magical forebodings are translated into the advice of being sensible. The stars are invoked in order to reinforce the harmless, beneficial but trivial admonition: "Drive carefully!"

Only very rarely examples turn up of more sinister threats such as that one has to be particularly careful in everything on one particular day unless one would incur serious risks.

Ridding life of sinister acquaintance makes more assets obtainable.

(November 19, 1952, Scorpio)

In such moments the authoritarian whip cracks down, but it does so merely as a reminder in order to keep the readers at bay, and is never carried so far as to seriously distract from the gratifications they otherwise get from the column or to make them feel uncomfortable for more than the present moment. To get rid of an acquaintance seems, after all, not too great a sacrifice or too heavy a task.

The gains the reader obtains in this particular area consist, apart from the potentiality of deep underlying gratifications to destructive urges provided by the threat itself, in the promise of help and mitigation, granted by a superhuman agency. While the subject has to follow closely what this agency indicates, he does not really have to act on his own behalf as an autonomous human being, but can content himself with relying on fate. He has to avoid things rather than to do them. He is somewhat relieved of his responsibility.

This indicates the most important construct of the column—that of readers who are or feel themselves to be basically *dependent*, who find themselves incessantly in situations which they cannot cope with by their own powers and who are beset psychologically by what has come to be known as ego weakness, but is often expressive of weakness in reality. The columnist figures quite reasonably that only the persons thus characterized are likely to rely on him unquestioningly and therefore calculates his every word in order to fit with the specific needs of the dependent—including those narcissistic defenses which help them to compensate for their feelings of weakness. This again is in harmony with that kind of popular psychology whose favorite term is "inferiority complex." The columnist is quite

familiar with certain forms of reaction likely to be encountered among the readers, but carefully refrains from elucidating them and thus changing them, but utilizes them in order to fixate the reader to the "message" and thus to the column as an institution. By systematic pursuit of this procedure he tends to spread the pattern of dependence and to transform more and more people into dependent ones with whom he establishes what might properly be called a situation of secondary transference.

The problem of the relation of certain neurotic traits to reality which is here implied involves grave methodological problems which can only be mentioned. Some revisionists such as Fromm and particularly Horney have oversimplified the matter by reducing neurotic traits such as the one here under consideration, dependence, to social realities such as "our modern competitive society." Since characterological patterns are likely to be established much earlier than a child makes the specific experience of a highly differentiated social system, the etiology postulated by these writers seems to be doubtful and indicative of a relapse into pre-Freudian, rationalistic psychology. At the same time, however, it is equally dubious to sever psychodynamics altogether from its "social stage." Suffice it to say here that neurotic syndromes and irrational susceptibilities of every kind are present within a large number of people at any time, but that some of them are worked upon specifically during certain periods and that modern mass media tend particularly to fortify reaction formations and defenses concomitant with actual social dependence. The link between the compulsive elements of the column and the underlying idea of the subject's dependence may very well be that compulsive systems are employed as defenses against "realistic" dependence without ever involving any behavior that might change the basic situation of dependence.

It should be noted that the threat-help pattern of the column is closely related to devices more generally spread through contemporary mass culture. Hertha Herzog has pointed out in her study "On Borrowed Experience"⁸ that the women daytime serials or soap operas generally follow the formula "getting into trouble and out again," a device which incidentally seems also to be valid for jazz which constantly employs and resolves some kind of "jam." This formula is equally applicable to the astrological column. While there are continuous hints of conflict and unpleasantness, it implies that whoever is aware of these situations will somehow be taken care of.

There is a soothing overtone to the whole column: it seems to reassure the reader incessantly that "everything will be fine," overcoming his apprehensions by establishing some magical confidence in the good turn of events.

8. *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 1941, I.

...just keep your aims high, your goals clearly before you; then all's well.

(November 21, Pisces)

Remainder of day splendid in practically all ways. (December 6, Leo)

...unless you realize that in the afternoon all tension will dissolve into happy feeling. (December 31, Aries)

Within this general pattern of the happy ending, however, there is a specific difference of function between the column and other mass communications. Soap operas, television shows and above all movies are characterized by heroes, persons who positively or negatively solve their own problems. They stand vicariously for the spectator. By identifying himself with the hero, he believes to participate in the very power that is denied him in as much as he conceives himself as weak and dependent. While the column also works with identifications, they are organized differently. There are no heroic figures in the column, and only general hints of charismatic persons such as the mysterious creative and powerful people from outside who occasionally crop up and tender the reader invaluable aid. By and large, people are taken for what they are. True, their social status is, as will be demonstrated later, vicariously raised by the column, but their problems are not hidden behind an imagery of ruggedness or irresistibility—in this respect, the column seems more realistic than the supposedly artistic mass media.

For the column, the hero is replaced by either the heavenly signs or, more likely, by the omniscient columnist himself. Since the course of events is referred to as to something pre-established, people will not have the feeling, still present in hero worship, that by identification with the hero, they may have to be heroic themselves. Their problems will be solved either automatically or with the help of others, particularly of those mysterious friends whose image recurs throughout the column, provided one only proves confident in the stars. Impersonal power thus replaces the personalized one of the heroes and is transferred to his more powerful superiors. It is as if the column would try to make up by its identification with the reader's actual psychological and reality situation of dependence for the unrealistic element of the dogmatic reference to the stars. The column indulges in a symbolic expression and psychological fortification of the pressure that is being continuously exercised upon people. They are simply to have confidence in that which is anyway. Fate, while being exalted as a metaphysical power, actually denotes the interdependence of anonymous social forces through which the people addressed by the column will somehow "muddle through." The semi-irrationality of "everything will be fine" is based on the fact that modern American society in spite of all its conflicts and difficulties succeeds in reproducing the life of those whom it embraces. There is some dim awareness that the concept of the forgotten man is outdated. The column feeds on this awareness by teaching the

readers not to be afraid of being weak. They are reassured that all their problems will solve themselves even if they feel that they themselves are unable to solve them. They are made to understand—and in a way rightly so—that the very same powers by which they are threatened, the anonymous totality of the social process, are also those which will somehow take care of them. Thus they are trained to identify themselves with the existent *in abstracto* rather than with heroic persons, to concede their own impotence and thus being allowed as a compensation to go on living without too much worrying. This promise, of course, is contingent upon their being "good boys" (or girls) who behave according to given standards, but who also allow themselves, for therapeutic reasons, as it were, that range of pleasure which they need in order not to collapse under the requirements of reality, or under the impact of their own urges.

It goes without saying that this is a remedy ultimately as problematic as the remedy offered by the movies though it may not be so obviously spurious. Life actually does not automatically take care of people. But it does to a certain extent and where it doesn't, insecurity and threats make people susceptible to unfounded promises. They do not only play a role in the individual's psychological household, but also fulfill the function of a conservative ideology, generally justifying the *status quo*. An order of existence which expresses the promise to take care of everyone, must be substantially good. Thus the column promotes social conformity in a deeper and more comprehensive sense than merely by inducing conformist behavior from case to case. It creates an atmosphere of social contentment.

This explains an outstanding peculiarity of the individual advice tendered by the column. It implies that all problems due to objective circumstances such as, above all, economic difficulties, can be solved in terms of private individual behavior or by psychological insight, particularly into oneself, but also into others.

This is indicative of a function popular psychology is nowadays assuming to an ever-increasing extent. While psychology, when really carried through, is a medium of insight into oneself, criticism of oneself and concomitantly insight and criticism of others, it can also play the role of a social drug. In particular, objective difficulties which doubtlessly always have their subjective aspects and are partly rooted in the subjects, are presented as though they were completely due to the individual.⁹ This alleviates any critical attitude, even that towards oneself, since the individual is provided with the narcissistic gratification that he is really all-important while at the same time being kept under control. While the world is not so bad, he is given to understand that somehow problems arise within his behavior and action alone. Finding the right approach to himself is regarded as a

9. Observations of a closely related nature were presented in the paper "Psychiatric Theory and Institutional Context," read by Dr. Alfred H. Stanton at the 109th Annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, Los Angeles, May 7, 1953.

sufficient condition for relieving all difficulties, thus partly making up for the feeling of weakness from which the whole approach starts. The pat formula "everything depends on man" is not only a half truth, but really serves to cloak everything that materializes over the heads of people.

The column contains all the elements of reality and somehow catches the actual state of affairs but nevertheless constructs a distorted picture. On the one hand, the objective forces beyond the range of individual psychology and individual behavior are exempt from critique by being endowed with metaphysical dignity. On the other hand, one has nothing to fear from them if one only follows objective configurations through a process of adaptation. Thus the danger seems to lie exclusively within the power of the powerless individual whose superego is continuously appealed to.

Urge to tell off official would alienate helpful partner, so keep calm despite irritation: later material benefits will follow making more cooperative deal at home. (November 10, Aries)

Sulking over disappointing act of influential executive merely puts you deeper in disfavor... (November 10, Scorpio)

Get away from that concern that seems to have no solution... (November 10, Sagittarius)

Your own A.M. fretfulness and lack of vision alone makes the morning unsatisfactory. (November 11, Libra)

The constant appeal of the column to find fault with oneself rather than with given conditions, a subtle but highly objectionable modification of an element of modern depth-psychology, is only one aspect of the ideal of social *conformity*, promoted throughout the column and expressed by the implicit, but ubiquitous rule that one has to adjust oneself continuously to commands of the stars at a given time. While the problems of the individual spotted by the column denote, no matter how diluted and weak, areas in which everything is not well and in which the official optimism promulgated by the column meets some difficulties, the description of these problems and particularly the subsequent advice fulfill the function of re-establishing the established order, of enforcing conformity and keeping securely within the existent. Our asserting that the irrationality of the fate that dictates everything and of the stars that offer advice is really but a screen for society which both threatens the individual and grants it its livelihood is borne out by the messages derived from the irrational source. They are indeed nothing but messages from the social *status quo* in the way it is conceived by the column. *The over-all rule of the column is to enforce the requirements society makes on each individual so that it might "function."* The more irrational the requirements, the more they call for irrational justifications. Problems arising out of social conditions and antagonisms are reconciled by the column with social conventionality, and in this aim, threat and help converge. The column consists of an incessant battery of appeals to be

"reasonable." If the "unreasonable," i.e., instinctual urges, are admitted at all, it is only for the sake of reasonableness, namely in order to make the individual function better according to the rules of conformity.

It has been noted in the discussion of the astrological magazines that their basic irrationality never leads to any renunciations of the normal, rational way of everyday behavior. This attitude, which, in the magazines, is complementary to sometimes wild fantasies, is the exclusive medium of the column. It strikes an unquestioning common sense attitude, stresses accepted values and takes it for granted that this is a "competitive world"—whatever this may mean today—and that the only thing that really counts is success. Anything approaching the irresponsible is shunned, no connotation of the crank is tolerated. Here again the column is in harmony with cultural industry as a whole. The customary reference to "dream factory," nowadays employed by the representatives of the movie industry themselves, contains only a half truth—it pertains only to the overt "dream content." The message of the dream, however, the "latent dream idea" as promoted by motion pictures and television reverses that of actual dreams. It is an appeal to agencies of psychological control rather than an attempt to unfetter the unconscious. The idea of the successful, conforming, well-adjusted "average" citizen lurks even behind the fanciest technicolor fairy tale. Astrology is no exception to that rule. It does not teach its followers anything to which they are not accustomed by their daily experience; it only reinforces what they have been taught anyway consciously and unconsciously. The stars seem to be in complete agreement with the established ways of life and with the habits and institutions circumscribed by our age. The adage "be yourself" assumes an ironical meaning. The socially manipulated stimuli constantly aim at reproducing that frame of mind which is spontaneously engendered by the *status quo* itself. This attitude which would appear, if viewed merely rationalistically, as a "waste of effort," is actually in line with psychological findings. Freud has stated repeatedly and emphatically that the effectiveness of psychological defenses is always of a precarious nature. If the satisfaction of instinctual urges is denied or postponed, they are rarely kept under reliable control, but are most of the time ready to break through if they find a chance. This readiness to break through is enhanced by the problematic nature of the rationality that recommends postponement of immediate wish-fulfillment for the sake of later permanent and complete gratifications. One is taught to give up immediate pleasures for the sake of a future which only too often fails to compensate for the pleasures one has renounced. Thus rationality does not always seem as rational as it claims to be. Hence the interest of hammering over and over again into people's heads ideas to which they are already conditioned but in which they can never fully believe. Hence also their readiness to embrace irrational panaceas in a world in which they have lost faith in the effectiveness of their own reason

and in the rationality of the total set-up.

Image of the Addressee

Perusal of the column over a longer period of time permits one to figure out the columnist's image of his reader, the basis of the techniques he employs. The over-all rule is that this picture must mainly be flattering, offer gratifications even before actual advice is tendered, but must be at the same time of such a nature that the addressee can still identify himself and his petty worries with the picture of himself he is constantly offered.

No American data were available as to the sex distribution of astrology fans, but it seems reasonable to assume that their majority are women or at least that women are equally represented among them. The columnist is very likely well aware of this. Strangely enough, however, the implicit picture of the addressee, though rarely quite articulate, is predominantly male. The reader is presented as a professional person who has authority and has to make decisions; he is presented as a practical person, technically minded and able to fix things. Most characteristic of all, whenever the erotic sphere is touched upon, the addressee has to see an "attractive companion." As a popular psychologist, the columnist seems to be better aware than many supposedly serious writers of the inferior status of women in modern society in spite of their supposed emancipation, their participation in professional life and the glamor heaped upon some of them. He seems to feel that women will usually feel flattered if they are treated as men as long as the specific sphere of their femininity and its conventional attributes are not involved which does not happen in the column; it is suggested to each housewife that she might be a V.I.P. Possibly the columnist draws even on some psychoanalytic knowledge of penis envy¹⁰ when talking to an audience of women as though he were addressing men.

As additional factor may be contributing to the male characterization of the addressee. Since the column is continuously tendering advice, wants people to act and takes the over-all attitude of the "practical," it appears necessary to speak as though one would address those who really act, the decision makers—men. The more women are actually dependent, on a deeper level, the more important it may be to them that they are treated as though they were the ones on whom everything depended though actually the treatment they are given by the column to which they are tied really enhances their own dependence.

The standard image is that of a young person or one in his early thirties, vigorous in his professional pursuits, given to hearty pleasures which must

10. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XIV (London, 1948), "Einige psychische Folgen des anatomischen Geschlechtsunterschieds," pp. 24f.; *Werke*, X (London, 1940), "Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 134f.

somehow be held in check and prone to romance—rather a subtle gratification to presumably frustrated readers who are likely to identify themselves with the addressee if born under the astrological sign mentioned and transfer the imaginary addressee's qualities upon themselves.

The addressee belongs to some church though no reference is made to which denomination and no specific dogma is ever expressed or mentioned. But it is taken for granted that he attends some service on Sunday as a "regular" person and a solemn semi-religious tone is usually reserved for holidays.

The image of religion is entirely conventionalized. Religious activities are restricted to leisure time and the reader is encouraged to attend some "good sermon," as though he were to select a show.

Fine for inexpensive entertaining, sports, recreation, romance. Attend worship, then keep living religion. (December 14, 1952, Cancer)

Routine tasks seem dreary. Forget them. Go to church where you can find better religious ideas that are able to support your many burdens.

(December 28, 1952, Capricorn)

The addressee is sometimes presented as a car owner. Whereas this seems realistic enough in view of the tremendous number of car owners in greater Los Angeles, even here some cuddling might be involved in as much as one might expect to find among the devoted readers of the column quite a few persons who do not own cars but like the idea that they are treated as though they did.

It should also be noted that no reference of the addressee's educational level is made. Whenever his personal qualities are summoned, they are either completely severed from what he might have learned, stressing merely "gifts" such as charm, "magnetism," etc., or they pertain vaguely to his family background. But it does not make any difference whether the addressee went through college, through high school or only to grammar school. This might be indicative of the fact that the columnist's real image of the addressee differs significantly from the one he promotes. While he evinces the idea that the addressee is a superior person he is very careful not to draw a picture of this superiority which would be definite enough to alienate the reader by making him aware that he does not fit the picture at all.

By far the most important feature of the addressee is his socio-economic status. The image presented in this area may be called, with some exaggeration, that of the *vice-president*. The people spoken to are pictured as holding a superior place in life which forces them, as mentioned before, to make decisions all the time. Much depends on them, on their reasonableness, their ability to make up their minds. It is carefully avoided to represent them in so many words as impotent or unimportant small men. One may think of the well-known technique of magazines such as *Fortune*

which are written to give the impression that each of their presumably very numerous readers were a big shot in some major corporation. The vicarious gratification thus provided, the strong appeal exercised by the transference of the American ideal of the successful businessman upon the none-too-successful is obvious. Yet—and this is why the column addresses vice-presidents rather than presidents—the reality situation is never lost sight of. Whereas the illusion of importance and autonomy is superficially kept intact, the fact is not forgotten that these much desired assets are really not being fully enjoyed by the addressee. He is therefore presented as someone who although fairly high himself in the business hierarchy has essentially to depend on others who are even higher. Since this may be the situation even of some real vice-presidents, the feeling of humiliation is somewhat attenuated at the same time. Advice can be proffered that befits the underling without revealing that he really is an underling although on a deeper level he may very well be made to understand that he has only little to say. The addressee's ego ideal and his realistic experience of his actual place in life are somehow fused. At the same time, the hierarchical way of thinking often to be met among compulsive¹¹ lower middle-class people is met halfway.

Treating the addressee as an important link in the hierarchy is indicative of one of the basic psychological constructs of the addressee suggested by the set-up of the column. While he is figured out probably quite realistically as a basically weak and dependent person both with regard to his actual function in the social set-up and to his psychological characteristics, he is not likely to admit his weakness and dependence. This defense is taken into account as much as the dependency needs themselves. Hence, the reactive picture of themselves developed by dependent people is strengthened. Here belongs, above all, hyperactivity. Continuous advice is given to take some action, to behave like a successful go-getter. What is thus emphasized is not so much the addressee's real ego power as his intellectual identification with some socialized ego ideal. He is led to interpret his actions as though he were strong and as though his activity would amount to something. The phoniness of this concept is indicated by the spuriousness of most of the activities encouraged by the column. "Pseudo-activity,"¹² a very widespread behavioral pattern in our society, is represented rather clearly by the column and the psychological calculations on which it is based.

It would be one-sided, however, to reduce the psychological image of the addressee entirely to categories such as dependence and ego weakness and the infantile fixation specifically involved—orality.¹³ The columnist is by no

11. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, VII (London, 1941), "Zwangshandlungen und Religionsübungen," pp. 129ff.; *Werke*, IV, "Ueber libidinöse Typen," p. 511.

12. Erich Fromm, "Zum Gefühl der Ohnmacht," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, VI, 1937, and T. W. Adorno, "On Popular Music," *op. cit.*

13. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XV (London, 1940), "Angst und Triebleben," pp. 105f.

means committed to these categories which, particularly as far as ego weakness is concerned, would be inadequate even for a popular psychologist. The underlying ideas of the psychology of the 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. While he creates the addressee in the image of the big shot with some worries, he reckons with an average lower middle class reader. Throughout psychoanalytic literature down to its current popularization, the affinity between the lower middle class mentality and certain infantile fixations has been recognized. Even the popular psychologist today had heard that the petty bourgeois is likely to be an anal character.¹⁴ While the column neglects quite a few of the implications of anality such as sadism and stinginess (they are incompatible with the synthetic ego ideal it promotes), the more general pattern of anality, and one of the most widespread of retrogressive personalities, is underscored the more heavily: compusiveness.

It is intrinsic to the astrological pattern itself: one believes he has to obey some highly systematized orders without, however, any manifest interconnection between the system and himself. 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. In as much as the stars as viewed in astrology form an intricate system of do's and don'ts, this system seems to be the projection of a compulsive system itself.

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. Numerous recommendations of the column which make a major affair of the painstakingly strict fulfillment of requirements and tasks which are actually meaningless and have very little influence on reality are plainly encouraging compulsive behavior. There are innumerable passages like the following ones:

In P.M. more charm in environment brings desired peace...

(November 11, 1952, Sagittarius)

14. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XV, "Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," p. 108; *Werke*, VII, "Charakter und Analerotik," pp. 203f.

Your own day to take those beauty treatments, get haircuts, do whatever increases your personal charm and sense of well-being.

(November 13, 1952, Libra)

In P.M. arrange cleaning, laundry, clothing, furnishing, diet problems.

(November 21, 1952, Virgo)

This is one of the major demonstrations of the fact that the psychological insight on the part of the columnist is not utilized in order to really develop psychological insight on the part of the reader but rather in the opposite direction, in order to maintain his defenses and to fixate him to irrational patterns, thus making him more obedient to the columnist, the self-styled spokesman of social norms. The underlying idea of compulsive behavior (if he fulfills this or that unpleasant duty, it will liberate him from guilt feelings and earn him some sort of compensation) is directly reflected by the logic of the column. It should be stressed, however, that just as in the case of dependence, even here a realistic element is not altogether absent. Just as the exploitation of the addressee's susceptibility to psychological dependence exploits his truly dependent status in society, the compulsive traits worked out by the column are frequently those which are expected of those persons who are likely to believe in the column's revelations. To overrate the importance of fulfilling mechanical chores, may be a symptom of compulsive neurosis, but the little fellow who has no space for "creative" or spontaneous activities and who is expected to function as a cog in a bureaucratic machinery, must do his chores strictly and conscientiously, nothing less, but also nothing more. In fact, if he were to try to do more, he might be suspected as an "apple polisher" or as having big ideas in his head, as mal-adjusted to his job and might be fired. Realistic considerations of this kind are thoroughly blended by the column with psychological lore.

Nevertheless, the "realism" in the addressee served so punctiliously by the advice of the column, is never entirely realistic. The overemphasis on realism in the actual content of the column is also calculated to make the addressee forget the irrationality of the whole system about which one should not think too much, whereas the almost complete absence of any hint at the sources of advice tendered therein mirrors the severe repression that always works upon the instincts of the compulsive. Nowhere is the relationship between realism and its counterpart so hard to distinguish as in the area of compulsion.

The Bi-Phasic Approach

It has been mentioned before that the column aims at promoting conventional, conformist and contented attitudes and that any insight 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. But the column is much too well aware of the seriousness of reality problems as well as of psychological ones as to rely entirely on the effectiveness of its own ideology. It has to face people who find out from life experience continuously that everything does not run so smooth as the column seems to imply it does and that not everything takes care of itself. They are incessantly beset by irreconcilable and contradictory requirements or their own psychological economy as well as of social reality: the column constructs its addressee as being "frustrated." It does not suffice to the column to simply deny the existence of these requirements and to comfort the frustrated; somehow the column has to take up these contradictions themselves if it really want to tie the readers to its own authority. It fulfills this task which by necessity cannot be solved by the mere promulgation of a "positive" ideology, nor by any other content that could be easily refuted by everyday facts, rather ingeniously by its formal set-up, thus fortifying an otherwise precarious balance of contradictory requirements, in the reader.

The basic formal device employed here—and probably the most effective trick of the column, as a whole—is derived from its principal medium, i.e., the *time* element. Astrology pretends basically that the stars determine what will happen or, if the approach is brought more "up-to-date," what is advisable or inadvisable at any given day or hour. Thus frequently a certain general mood is maintained for a whole day, supposedly due to the basic constellations of this day, affecting every reader, no matter under which sign he may have been born. Here is the "Astrological Forecast" for Sunday, November 20, 1952:

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A.M. bring many problems into open to test your self-control, ideas to be lived in daily tasks; P.M. your mind solves them, finds new avenues in which growth, expansion excellent.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You have a good chance A.M. to think deeply into unusual ways to push ahead. P.M. dynamic official brings you chance to add to your revenue; show appreciation by trying suggestions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21): A.M. finds you able to solve quietly present riddles in your way of life; discuss with understanding individual. P.M. splendid for forging ahead to new goals awaiting you all ways.

CANCER (June 22 to July 21): Early A.M. feeling of wellbeing starts interesting day right; attend worship as your chosen outlet for expanding happiness; P.M. keep companions jolly by entertaining.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21): Seek those early who lift your spirits, bring you solace; forget the humdrum in enjoying others; P.M. get together with friends, partners, for amusements, romance, sports.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22): Listen carefully to what both friends, attachments suggest in lines improving conditions at home, with family; P.M. organize calendar to use good coming week wisely.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Calm hurt feelings of family, others important to your life, A.M., let them talk grievances out of their systems; P.M. enjoy neighbors, relatives, close associates; be charming.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have chance to coordinate higher ideals in everyday living by careful A.M. study; P.M. much activity at home brings into open improved plans for financial security.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Doing job with routines thoroughly, avoiding costly commitments A.M. brings peace, contentment; P.M. use all that mental energy generated to improve all your affairs.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20): Refusal to allow upset comrade to disturb your equanimity great assistance A.M. to all about; P.M. quietly look to present practical interests; plan to improve coming week.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19): Side-step those routine tasks that make you want to explode A.M., contact, enjoy good friends instead; P.M. use all that vitality to arrange new plan for attaining goals.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to March 20): Morning fine for seeking out good friends, loved ones, making plans to have good time later; P.M. making secret arrangements to bring your talents to one able to aid is best.

This establishes, first of all, the supremacy of time, but does not yet take care of conflicting requirements. However, this all important task, too, is shifted upon time. It has to fulfill the role of the ultimate decision maker.

The problem how to dispense with contradictory requirements of life is solved by the simple device of distributing these requirements over different periods mostly of the same day. The fact that one cannot countenance two contradictory desires at the same time, that, as it is loosely called, one cannot have one's cake and eat it too, induces the advice that irreconcilable activities simply should be undertaken at various times indicated by celestial configurations. This again feeds on realistic elements: the order of everyday life takes care of a number of antinomies of existence, such as that of work and leisure or of public functions and private existence. Such antinomies are taken up by the column, hypostatized and treated as though they were simple dichotomies of the natural order of things rather than sociologically conditioned patterns. Everything can be solved, so runs the implicit argument, if one only chooses the right time, and if one fails, this is merely due to a lack of understanding of some supposedly cosmic rhythm. This indeed achieves a kind of equilibrium and satisfaction that cannot be achieved if the contradictions were faced as such, i.e., as simultaneous and equally potent demands by various psychological or outside agencies. They are all replaced by the more abstract but less offensive and affect-laden time concept. Thus, A.M. comprising the bulk of the work day, is frequently treated as representative of reality and the ego principle: people are advised to be particularly reasonable during the morning.

Tax problems, money dealings with others easily attended to in morning...

(Saturday, November 15, 1952, Taurus)

Looking straight at present obligations, duties, restrictions early shows right way to solve them simply and effectively. (November 16, 1952, Sagittarius)

Keep smiling plodding at chosen tasks despite early A.M. feeling nothing works right. Plan different clever methods quietly. (December 2, 1952, Leo)

A.M. brings big chance to iron out any concerns regarding officials, executives, career, credits. (December 15, 1952, Taurus)

A.M. finds many little duties that you'd best do early, freeing remainder of the day for much joy... (January 1, 1953, Virgo)

Early desire for fun can put a big dent in bankroll, so be economical. (January 2, 1953, Aries)

A.M. finds your own desires conflicting with those of family member. Don't argue, cooperate to prevent lasting resentment. (January 2, 1953, Taurus)

Conversely, P.M., which generally includes at least a certain amount of leisure time, is handled as though it were the representative of the instinctual urges of the pleasure principle:¹⁵ people are often admonished to seek pleasure, particularly the "simple pleasures of life," to wit, the gratifications offered by other mass media during the afternoon or evening.

Afternoon finds pleasures all about: enjoy thoroughly; relax in P.M.

(November 16, 1952, Virgo)

P.M. get out from present preoccupations; entertain; enjoy sports, romance.

(November 17, Leo)

A.M. finds need for secret huddle with member of family to eliminate present worry; later excellent influences prevail for you to enjoy amusements, romance, recreation. (November 19, 1952, Virgo)

In P.M. enjoy sports, romance, entertainment, recreation.

(November 21, 1952, Libra)

P.M. enjoy pleasures, recreation, love.

(November 23, 1952, Leo)

By dichotomies of this kind a pseudo-solution of difficulties is achieved: either-or relationships are transformed into first-next relationships. Pleasure thus becomes the award of work, work the atonement for pleasure.

While this formal scheme of the column is derived from its medium, and mirrors the time schedule to which most people are subject it is again very shrewdly keyed to psychological dispositions frequently encountered in stymied personalities. Here again the semi-popular concept of ego weakness first comes to mind. Erich Fromm has pointed out in his study "*Zum Gefühl der Ohnmacht*" (The Feeling of Impotence), from which we quote in a free translation: "Faith in time lacks the sense of sudden change. It substitutes expectations that 'in due time' everything will come out all right. Conflicts, which one feels unable to resolve oneself, are expected to be resolved by time without one's having to take the risk of deciding. Faith in time is found especially frequently with respect to one's own achievements.

15. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XII (London, 1940), "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 369f.; *Werke*, XIII (London, 1940), "Jenseits des Lustprinzips," pp. 3ff.

People not only console themselves over their unperformed performances, but also over not preparing for the performance by persuading themselves that they have so much time left and that there is no reason to hurry. An example of this mechanism is the case of a greatly gifted author who wanted to write a book which, in his opinion, would rank among the most important of world literature. All he did was to pursue a series of thoughts about it, to indulge in fantasies about the epoch-making effect his book would produce and to tell his friends that it was almost finished. Actually, although, he had 'worked' on the book for seven years, he had not yet written a single line. As these people get older, they must cling even more stubbornly to the illusion that time will take care of things. Many, when they reach a certain age—usually the early forties—either sober up and abandon the illusion and make efforts to utilize their own powers or have a neurotic break-down because life without the consoling illusion of time as a benefactor becomes intolerable."¹⁶ It may be added to Fromm's remark that the tendency he describes seems to be derived from an infantile attitude, possibly related to the child's fantasies of what will happen when he is "grown up." What is at certain times realistic in children who know that they will grow and who have neither full disposal of their potential faculties nor the autonomy of making their own decisions, becomes neurotic when it is carried over into adult life. 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.

Beyond such observations, the dichotomous interpretation of time can probably be understood in depth-psychological terms. A valid interpretation of this approach is probably obtained by the concept of the bi-phasic symptoms frequent in compulsive neurosis. Fenichel describes the mechanism as follows: "In reaction formation, an attitude is taken that contradicts the original one; in undoing, one more step is taken. Something positive is done which, actually or magically, is the opposite of something which, again actually or in imagination, was done before. This mechanism can be most clearly observed in certain compulsive symptoms that are made up of two actions, the second of which is a direct reversion of the first. For example, a patient must first turn on the gas jet and then turn it off again. All symptoms that represent expiations belong in this category, for it is the

16. Erich Fromm, "Zum Gefühl der Ohnmacht," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, VI, 1937, pp. 103-104.

nature of expiation to annul antecedent acts. The idea of expiation itself is nothing but an expression of belief in the possibility of a magical undoing."¹⁷ This mechanism is related to compulsiveness: "Whereas some compulsive symptoms are distorted modes of perceiving instinctual demands and others express the anti-instinctual threats of the superego, still other symptoms obviously show the struggle between the two. Most of the symptoms of obsessive doubt can be covered by the formula: 'May I be naughty, or must I be good?' Sometimes a symptom consists of two phases, one representing an objectionable impulse, the other the defense against it. Freud's 'rat-man,' for instance, felt compelled to remove a stone from the road because it might hurt somebody, and then felt compelled to put it back again."¹⁸ What results if expiation and undoing are obsessively institutionalized is called: "...a bi-phasic behavior. The patient behaves alternately as though he were a naughty child and a strict punitive disciplinarian. For obsessive reasons a patient was not able to brush his teeth. After not brushing his teeth for a while, he would slap and scold himself. Another patient always carried a notebook, in which he would make check marks according to his conduct to indicate praise or blame."¹⁹ Defenses and behavior patterns of this kind while actually neurotic are systematized and presented as normal and wholesome throughout the set-up of the column. As a matter of fact, this principle of organization permeates it to such an extent that most of the specific devices now to be analyzed can and will be presented within the framework of the bi-phasic approach.

Work and Pleasure

When children learn English in Germany, they are often taught as one of the first poems they are made acquainted with:

Work while you work, play while you play.
This is the way to be cheerful and gay.

The idea is that by strictly keeping work and pleasure apart, both ranges of activity will benefit: no instinctual aberrations will interfere with seriousness of rational behavior, no signs of seriousness and responsibility will cast their shadow over the fun. Obviously this advice is somehow derived from social organization which affects the individual in as much as his life falls into two sections, one where he functions as a producer and one where he functions as a consumer. It is as though the basic dichotomy of the economic life process of society were projected upon the individual. Psychologically, the compulsive connotations based on a puritan outlook can hardly be overlooked: not only with regard to the bi-phasic pattern of life as a whole

17. Otto Fenichel, *Psychoanalytic Theory of Neuroses* (New York, 1945), p. 153f.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

but also to notions such as cleanliness: neither of the two spheres must be contaminated by the other. While the advice may offer advantages in terms of economic rationalization, its intrinsic merits are of a dubious nature. 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.

The columnist does not bother about such problems, but sticks to the well-established "work while you work, play while you play" advice. It thus falls in line with many phases of contemporary mass culture where maxims of the earlier development of middle class society are repeated in a congealed form although their technological and sociological basis does not exist anymore.

The columnist is very well aware of the drudgery of most subordinate functions in a hierarchical and bureaucratic set-up and of the resistance bred in those who have to do some work which is often completely alien to their subjective urges, which can be done as well by anyone else and which may have been reduced to so small mechanical functions that it cannot possibly be regarded as meaningful. They are continuously admonished to attend to this kind of work under the flimsy pretext that this is the way to comply with the order of the day.

However, in this ideology there are some subtle significant changes in comparison with the old "work while you work" attitude. What people are supposed to do during A.M. is no longer supposed to be an autonomous activity molded after the model of the independent entrepreneur. Rather they are encouraged to fulfill little and insignificant set tasks in a machinery. Thus, the admonition to work and not to allow oneself to be distracted by any instinctual interference has frequently the form that one should attend to one's "*chores*."

Dismal early A.M. forgotten by plunging into routine chores.

(November 21, 1952, Leo)

Keep plugging at chores...

(December 19, 1952, Sagittarius)

Stick to attending chores...

(December 27, 1952, Sagittarius)

Most of the time chores are to be done right away according to such advice, occasionally—and this characteristic of the column's mosaic technique that

brings the same basic categories into various configurations—to be postponed for more suitable times.

It's unnecessary that you fuss so much with routine chores this morning.

(November 10, 1952, Taurus)

The term "chores" seems to conjure up unquestioningly accepting minor tasks as a superior law, guided not by insight into their intrinsic necessity but only by fear of punishment. The column strives to overcome resistance against meaningless routine work by playing upon the compulsive libidinization that increases so often in reverse proportion to the importance of the chores.

This psychological tendency is exploited even more where the idea of minor responsibilities is carried over to private existence. Activities such as washing one's car or fixing some household contraption, inferior though they may be, are still somewhat closer to the subject's own range of interest than the business routine, for those activities pertain to what belongs to him and is regarded as part of his "ego" realm whereas he often feels that what he does in business ultimately serves only others. This observation is fused with the columnist's knowledge of the tremendous and doubtlessly irrational role of "gadgeteering" in the psychological household of many people today. Labor-saving devices, primarily necessitated by objective conditions such as the scarcity of domestic help, are invested with a halo of their own. This may be indicative of a fixation to a phase of adolescent activities in which people try to adapt themselves to modern technology by making it, as it were, their own cause. It may be mentioned in this connection that the real psychodynamics of gadgeteering are still largely unexplored and that their study would be utterly timely in order to gain insight into the emotional ties between the objective set-up of contemporary conditions and the individuals who live under these conditions. It seems that the kind of retrogression highly characteristic of persons who do not any longer feel to be the self-determining subjects of their fate, is concomitant with a fetishistic attitude towards the very same conditions which tend to be dehumanizing them. The more they are gradually being transformed into things, the more they invest things with a human aura. At the same time, the libidinization of gadgets is indirectly narcissistic in as much as it feeds on the ego's control of nature—gadgets provide the subject with some memories of early feelings of omnipotence. Since this type of cathexis shifts from ends to means which are treated as though they were things themselves, a close affinity to concretism can be observed. This is given away in the column by occasional rather eccentric statements such as "buy interesting gadgets."

Make more happiness there (your home) by more interesting gadgets...

(December 3, 1952, Aquarius)

As to *pleasure*, it is, according to the bi-phasic approach, mainly reserved for P.M. and for holidays as though there were an *a priori* understanding between celestial revelations and the present calendar system. For the sake of variation and in order not to make the bi-phasic monotony too obvious, there are exceptions to the rule.

It would be erroneous, however, to assume that the bi-phasic division of work and pleasure puts both work and pleasure on an equal footing. Since the approach itself, the "division" of life into various functions which are supposed to be more productive if kept apart, is chosen under the auspices of psychological rationalization, the priority of the rational over indulgence, to put it crudely of the ego over the id, is strictly maintained. *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.* There is a double reason for the conspicuous emphasis on this principle. On the one hand, the prevailing idea of conformity to what one is expected to do as well as the pretense to help people to master their everyday conflicts which often arise out of their resistance to routine work requires a strengthening of traditional working morals—possibly because in the present era, the more technology advances, tedious work seems to become superfluous and is therefore increasingly resented as long as it still goes on. The column has to take care of a specific social irrationality that gradually shows up today. On the other hand, the columnist knows of the guilt feelings frequently induced by pleasure. They are assuaged by making the reader understand that some pleasure is permissible in so far as it is a "release," that he would, as popular psychology has learned by now, become a neurotic person unless he allowed himself some gratifications, and above all that there are many pleasures which fulfill immediately and directly some economically gainful purpose. Since this concept of pleasure for duty's sake is contradictory in itself, again some bizarreness shows up that sheds light over the whole area covered by the column.

There is above all the monotonously frequent advice to "be happy." (Cf., for example, November 27, 1952, Scorpio; November 28, 1952, Sagittarius; December 15, 1952, Sagittarius; December 16, Leo; December 23, Sagittarius.) Obviously it is directed at encouraging the reader to overcome what, in popular psychology, has come to be known as "inhibitions." However, this encouragement becomes paradoxical in as much as instinctual needs contrary to the rule of rational interests appear to be commandeered by rational interests. Even that which is spontaneous and involuntary is being made part of arbitrariness and control. It is like a parody of the Freudian dictum that what is id should become ego. The former appears switched on, ordered, as it were, by conscience. One is forced to have fun in order to be well adjusted or at least appear so to others because only well-adjusted people are accepted as normal and are

likely to be successful. One should here remember that psychological experiments have shown a high correlation between subjective sympathy with a face that has a happy look and, conversely, antipathy toward people who look unhappy. This aspect of universal externalization comes close to what has been called "fun morality" by Wolfenstein and Leites: "You've got to have fun" (whether you like it or not).²⁰ Instinctual requirements are freed from threatening aspects by being themselves treated as duties to be performed—the psychoanalytic concept of *Genussfähigkeit* (capacity for pleasure) already carries this fatal connotation within itself. At the same time, however, censorship is extended. Sexuality itself is being desexualized, as it were, by becoming "fun," a sort of hygiene. It loses not only its more threatening and ego-alien impact, but also its intensity, its "flavor." This tendency, clearly shown by the column, was pointed out in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, where he describes orgies deteriorated into social functions; while the adage most frequently uttered by the inhabitants of his negative utopia reads "everybody is happy nowadays."

The semi-tolerant integration of pleasure into a rigid pattern of life is achieved by the ever-recurring promise that pleasure trips, sprees, parties and similar events will lead to practical advantages. One will make new acquaintances, build up "connections" that prove helpful for the career if one walks out with business associates. Relations may become smoother and as implied indirectly one's position may become firmer and better remunerated. Sometimes there are even hints that if one takes out one's romantic interest one might benefit from the sound business intuitions of the woman he loves.

...enjoying congenial amusement with serious comrade clears path for successful association. (November 19, 1952, Cancer)

...entertain recent new influential acquaintances. (November 24, 1952, Virgo)

...woman comrade introduces, praises you to influential friend able to push you ahead. (November 26, 1952, Cancer)

Much conversation with an official or associate, especially at a social function or sporting event, reveals your talents so that real support is quickly given. (January 3, 1953, Gemini)

It's your day to have fun; so contact very active associates, take them to amusement places, and discuss practical goals in these surroundings for excellent results. (January 9, 1952, Cancer)

In all these respects the image of the influential decision maker is more or less subtly substituted by the reality of the salesman.

It may be suspected that the columnist and his readers know in the depth of their hearts that the pleasures ordained are no longer pleasures at all, but really the duties as which they are rationalized, the rationalization containing more truth than the supposedly unconscious wish. In other

20. Wolfenstein and Leites, *Movies* (Glencoe, 1950), p. 21.

words, more and more leisure time activity officially serving the purpose of fun or relaxation has actually been seized by rational self-interest and is attended not because anybody really likes it but because it is required in order to make one's way or maintain one's status. In one instance, a slip of the column gives this away: the addressee is advised to "accept all invitations" (cf. November 17, 1952, Libra; also January 27, 1953, Pisces), obviously without caring whether he likes it or not. The consummation of this trend is the obligatory participation in official "leisure time activities" in totalitarian countries.

The pleasures themselves are divided by the column into two classes, the simple ones and the unusual ones. It goes without saying that sympathy is with the simple, but sometimes the unusual ones are also encouraged, either merely for the sake of variation and "color" or possibly as a cautious means of admitting unorthodox or at least more expensive desires among the readers. What the unusual pleasures are is never hinted at: it is left up to the addressee whether to think of foreign restaurants or sex variations.

Enjoy unusual amusements and outlets. (November 10, 1952, Cancer)

(November 10, 1952, Cancer)

The simple pleasures are again integrated within the prevailing pattern in as much as they are mainly characterized by inexpensiveness. The reader is constantly reminded that while it is all right to have some fun and to restore his balance, this should never be allowed to interfere with the well-planned budget. But the columnist's favorite pleasures are not only simple, but also "proven" (January 29, 1953, Aries and Gemini) and defined as radio and television (January 25, 1953, Scorpio). Gratification seems tolerable if it bears the stamp of social confirmation, if it is channelized through mass media, in other words, if it has become subject to a preconceived censorship before it even enters into the subject's experience. Thus, even in the realm where one is supposed to "let oneself go," adjustment is promoted. Pleasure itself, if admitted, has to be predigested and somehow castrated. While the column seems broadminded enough to allow the addressee some "outlets," they have to be essentially of a spurious nature in order to obtain the blessing of the columnist. Even where the reader is authorized to get away from the routine of his life, it has to be assured that his outbreak will lead him finally into some repetition of the self-same routine he wants to get away from.

Adjustment and Individuality

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. However, the bi-phasic compulsion seems to expand over many other areas analogous to bureaucratic set-ups that have, as was pointed out by Max Weber, an inherent tendency to expand. This pertains particularly to the problem of adjustment to which the handling of pleasure by the column leads. While

the relation between the individual and his environment is in continuous interaction with the conflict between pleasure and duty, the antagonism between the individual and the universal cannot be altogether reduced to instinctual dynamics but pertains also to the objective sociological dimension. The bi-phasic is applied to this dimension as well as to psychology in a typical pattern of advice. At times, the readers are encouraged to be strong, rugged individuals, at other times, to adjust themselves, not to be stubborn, but rather to comply with requirements from outside. The classical liberal ideas of unlimited undividual activity, freedom and ruggedness are incompatible with the present developmental phase in which the individual is more and more required to obey strict organizational demands made by society. The same person can hardly be expected to be thoroughly adjusted and strongly individualistic at the same time. Yet, the individualistic ideology is maintained the more strongly, the less adequate it becomes to actual conditions. The conflicts thus induced must be taken care of by the column. It takes the individual apart as it were, into adaptive and autonomous components, thus implicitly endorsing the actual impossibility of the much praised "integration."

However, in order to get the right perspective, the underlying contradiction should not be oversimplified. In fact, the two requirements not only contradict each other, but are continuously intertwined. Thus, even today success is contingent upon individual qualities which, though utterly different from the old ones, are by no means unequivocally defined by the often stressed ego weakness²¹ only but require at the same time considerable strength, namely the capacity of sacrificing oneself, as it were, for the sake of maintaining oneself. Adjustment calls for individuality. Conversely, individual qualities themselves are *a priori* measured today in terms of potential success. Thus it is taken for granted that an "original idea" is something that will "sell" and prove itself on the market.

In fact the psychological situation is rather paradoxical. He who wants to adjust himself to a competitive pattern of society or to its more hierarchical successor has to pursue his own particularistic individual interests rather ruthlessly in order to find recognition—he has, so to speak, to adjust through non-adjustment, through unwavering emphasis on his limited self-interests and their concomitant psychological limitations. Conversely the development of spontaneous individuality implies by necessity some degree of adjustment. Henri Bergson has pointed out in his *Laughter*, that the psychological calcifications which make an individual comical in an esthetic sense indicate some failure in his maturity and are bound up with his incapacity to cope with changing social situations, going as far as stating that, in a way, the concept of "character" denoting a rigidified personality pattern impervious to life experience is comical *per se*. Thus, the emphasis

21. Cf. Herrmann Nunberg, "Ichstärke und Ichschwäche," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, XXIV, 1939.

on individuality *in abstracto*, its severance from contacts with the outside world results in a way in its maladjustment. It induces compulsive behavior which we are tempted usually to attribute only to the opposite, to the pressure of an alienated and conventionalized²² reality. It is therefore dangerous, though easily understandable, in a social set-up in which a fetish is made of the concept of adjustment to isolate the concepts of individuality and adjustment and to play up undialectically one against the other. It is this complex structure which provides the column with the opportunity to somehow find a common denominator for the contradictory requirements of being a personality and being, as it is called euphemistically, "co-operative." The fact that one of the contradictory requirements often fulfills the other unwittingly is skillfully exploited.

The encouragement of direct adjustment to outside forces often takes the form of glorifying, to use once again the terminology of popular psychology, the extrovert at the expense of the introvert.²² It often seems that the column really does not expect an integrator of social norms with the personality but rather wants the addressees to obey requirements from outside to the extent to which it has to be done while at the same time being led to ruthlessly falling back on a kind of anarchic ruggedness as soon as they can get away with it—the configuration of rigid obedience and lack of true introjection of norms being itself a symptom of something wrong underneath. People are continuously reminded that they should not brood, but should seize their opportunity when it is time to act, that they should be "pleasant" to others, avoid quarreling and be "sensible."

...be very considerate at home where tension mounts if you display nervousness... (November 19, 1952, Taurus)

...control desire to let fly with choice sarcastic comments.

(November 21, 1952, Capricorn)

Replace mulling over troubles by new interests. (December 9, 1952, Pisces)

Temptation to bawl out co-workers should be sternly repressed.

(December 9, 1952, Cancer)

Be considerate of others. Work all questions out in cooperative fashion.

(December 13, 1952, Scorpio)

A.M. brings many problems into open to test your self-control...

(November 30, 1952, Aries)

You really are explosive during morning without any apparent reason. It's just the planets testing your self-control. Keep calm. (December 31, 1952, Cancer)

...be more social... (November 12, 1952, Virgo)

Get out of yourself; make every new association possible...

(November 13, 1952, Aquarius)

22. This dichotomy goes back to the characterological typology developed by C.G. Jung (*Psychologische Typen* [Zürich, 1921], pp. 473ff.). It should be emphasized that just a psychologist who claimed to give metaphysical depth to supposedly shallow psychoanalytic concepts, is particularly prone to be taken up by commercial popularization.

Much pleasure is yours by keeping around happy, cheerful personalities.

(December 14, 1952, Cancer)

Much happiness is easily yours now if you accept invitations...

(January 12, 1953, Leo)

Attach yourself to all about you who are vital, dynamic and able to advance you quickly... (January 13, 1953, Virgo)

...get out in the world; meet all those who can show you more modern ways... (January 20, 1953, Scorpio)

You are eager to get those plans into execution. Fine. Lose no time; contact all friends able to help; expand into new outlets in all directions.

(January 3, 1953, Sagittarius)

...contact all possible and forcefully state your own desired aims in a charming manner. Discuss the future with practical friends. Act!

(January 9, 1953, Pisces)

Action!

(January 18, 1953, Scorpio)

Most of these devices express an awareness of some difficulties on the part of the addressee. Thus precisely the kind of compulsive and isolated elderly women who must provide a good part of the astrological audience are often afraid of any new contact, if not of any contacts at all. The column somehow comes to their aid. "Psychotic characters," in spite of their overrealistic defenses and success in isolating their delusions, are still continuously threatened by the loss of any relationship to reality and it is one of the aims of the column, inasmuch as it tries to "help," to maintain this relationship on a superficial level. Similar experiences stand behind other advices on the same dimension. "Being pleasant" refers to the petty quarrels particularly characteristic of crankish women from the lower middle classes, "not brooding" to the psychological habit of "ruminating" to be found in obsessive-compulsive persons. While the column strengthens their neurotic attitudes in certain directions, it tries to channelize them or to isolate them from their everyday functioning, to remove overt symptoms which might hinder the reader's efficiency.

One specific advice promoting "extroverted" adjustment is the attack on the "inflated ego." Reckoning with the narcissistic²³ sensitivities of the addressee, the columnist is careful not to blame him for such a deformity, but rather refers to threatening higher-ups and officials in such terms. However, it may safely be assumed that the underlying idea is to warn the addressee himself against having such unrealistic ideas about his own person.

You feel dynamic, determined to put your plans in effect at all costs. However, do so cleverly without alienating others with big ego who resent other's success.

(December 14, 1952, Scorpio)

An executive or a government official with an inflated ego is likely to put a monkey wrench in your plans... (January 29, 1953, Leo)

23. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XI (London, 1940), "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 426ff.

So far as the higher-ups are concerned, the device attempts by reference to the "inflated ego" to mitigate the unpleasant impact of hierarchical relationships. It is the higher-up, not the little man, who somehow appears unbalanced. His show of strength is presented as a symptom of inherent weakness in order to make it easier for the inferior to obey by suggesting that he is actually the stronger. The trivial psychological insight that pretentiousness is frequently a mere reaction formation to the popular inferiority complex is utilized in order to make it easier for the addressee to cope with his own social dependence. The idolized extrovert does not overassert himself, but rather accepts what the world thinks of him as the ultimate yardstick for his evaluation. Defamation of the "inflated ego" is all-pervasive in popular psychological literature, including the works of the late Miss Horney such as *The Neurotic Personality of our Time* or *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*.²⁴ Feeding upon reminiscences of the old psychiatric concept of delusions of grandeur, this stereotype comes pretty close to the idea expressed in nicknames such as "*Café Größenwahn*": that the introvert, the retiring person is unjustifiedly haughty and that his withdrawal from the triviality and brutality of everyday life is actually indicative of weakness only and of a distorted picture of reality. The grain of truth contained in such notions is abused for conformist purposes. The world is right; the outsider wrong. Thus, as well as by the closely related pattern of anti-intellectualism, general leveling is promoted. According to this ideology nobody really should believe in himself and his intrinsic qualities, but should prove his mettle by functioning within a given set-up as well as the others do.

According to the bi-phasic technique, however, at other times the readers are encouraged to be "individual." But here something analogous to the treatment of pleasure can be observed, somehow leading to the suspicion that individuality itself is regarded as a kind of luxury which some people sometimes can afford and which has to be exalted as "a cultural good," but which should never seriously interfere with the smooth running of the social machinery.

Looking more closely at the individual qualities advocated by the column, we will discover that it practically never refers to the mature, experienced character defined by power of resistance against external pressure, never to a specific and strongly developed ego. Rather the supposedly positive aspects of individuality are isolated traits severed from the ego development—in fact, just the opposite of the ego, namely irrational gifts with a dash of the magical. The difficulty of stressing individuality in persons whose ego is assumed to be weak is overcome by substituting individuality with rudimentary archaic qualities which may be regarded as the "possession" of the individual independent of his ego formation. Just in

24. Cf. Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1940); *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York, 1950).

as much as such qualities have little to do with the ego and his rationality, they are treated as though they were "unique" and individualized in an absolute sense. When the column appeals to the addressee's individuality, it mentions almost invariably blessings such as "charm," "personal magnetism,"

...keep steadfast in impressing higher-up with your innate abilities.

(November 10, 1952, Aquarius)

...improving your outlets and personal charm, unusually effective...

(November 12, 1952, Taurus)

...keep cheerful, exuding magnetism. (November 14, 1952, Aquarius)

Your own personal charm enhanced by supplies available.

(November 13, 1952, Libra)

...improve personal charm... (November 17, 1952, Sagittarius)

...every ounce of your magnetic charm is more evident...

(November 18, 1952, Leo)

...bring out your magnetic charm... (November 19, 1952, Aries)

Exude magnetism. (November 21, 1952, Libra)

Exude charm. (November 17, 1952, Aries)

or even their "own intuition":

...flash inspiration of brilliance shows method for improving joint undertaking. (November 10, 1952, Sagittarius)

Use that fine mind in A.M. to bring into expression more workable plans in all departments of your affairs. (November 16, 1952, Virgo)

Then your intuitions give you correct answers during afternoon.

(November 16, 1952, Scorpio)

Get that clever mind of yours busy early mapping big day to advance by threshing out... (November 20, 1952, Scorpio)

the emphasis on irrational intuitiveness set against rational thinking being extremely popular in a rationalized world.²⁵ It seems that the individualistic categories here involved are treated as what has come to be known in economics as "natural monopolies." Thus they are characteristically called "assets," subject to the measuring rod of success, of practicality, just as pleasure has been treated as a subfunction of work. If the individual lives up to the expectations of the column, he develops, stresses and shows off these qualities which he shares with no one else because their "rarity" gives them a sales value. Being different, thus, is integrated into the pattern of universal sameness as an object of barter. Individuality itself is submerged in the process of transformation of ends

25. It may be mentioned in passing that the historical origins of the concept of intuition coincide with the extreme great rationalistic systems of seventeenth century philosophy. Thus to Spinoza, intuition is the highest type of knowledge, though the term is used by him in a sense somewhat different from the current one. In Leibniz, the concept of the unconscious is introduced by ways of mathematical reflections on subliminal knowledge under the title of "petites perceptions." The history of intuitionism is the night side of accidental rationalism.

into means. The reader is incessantly encouraged to impress others with his individuality by making use of those "assets" which seem to be so highly coveted that everybody is prepared to attribute them to himself if he is given a chance to do so.

Even this is not a wild and unrealistic construction on the part of the column; but reflects something that has been observed long ago. Aldous Huxley has described in one of his early novels a person who can switch his charm on and off at will. This seems to be by no means a unique experience. When people learn, in a competitive world, that certain manifestations, originally quite involuntary and irrational, such as a smile or a particular tone of voice, impress people in a favorable way, they actually learn to convert such expressive qualities into an "asset" and to display "that famous grin" at every befitting occasion.

While the advice to be practical coincides with the idea of being realistic and in many respects actually amounts to realism, the underlying irrational mechanisms of compulsion manifest themselves in certain traits of the fostered sense of the practical which are irrational themselves and give a picture of what might be called a lack of sense of proportion, sometimes indicative of serious psychological deformities. These deformities usually follow the all-pervasive pattern of substituting ends for means. What it dubbed practical, sometimes assumes the weight of an "*überwertige Idee*" (an idea that plays in a person's stream of consciousness a disproportionate role determined by psychological factors). Viewed from reality, actions and attitudes are heavily emphasized of which effect and importance is actually of an extremely limited scope.

Thus advice, innocuous but trite, of taking care of one's appearance plays a surprisingly large role in the column.

Also improve personal appearance... (November 12, 1952, Virgo)

Rather, get your personal appearance, health in better shape. (December 12, 1952, Aquarius)

More charm to self, improvement to car, etc. possible by taking approved methods for "face-lifting" treatments. (November 13, 1952, Gemini)

Your own day to take those beauty treatments, get haircuts, do whatever increases your personal charm and sense of wellbeing... (November 13, 1952, Libra)

...get personal appearance improved to bring out your magnetic charm. (November 19, 1952, Aries)

...YOUR personal appearance must be impeccable... (November 22, 1952, Taurus)

Incessant stress suggests the exaltation of cleanliness and health to the level of ideals, a well-known trait of the anal syndrome. The psychotic symptom of paying extreme attention to the patient's own body which somehow seems to be alienated from "himself" is also pertinent. Cranks fall as easily

for astrology as for health food movements, natural healing and similar panaceas. The sociological value of cleanliness is tied up with the cultural heritage of puritanism, a fusion of the ideal of sexual purity with that of a neat body—*mens sana in corpore sano*. At the back of this is the repression of the sense of smelling.

All these irrational propensities are championed by the column's pseudo-rational pattern of externalization. What matters is what one looks like and not what one is; the means-for-ends idea has done away with the last vestige of anything existing for its own sake.

Closely related is the frequent advice to "arrange property matters or discuss finances with the family." They are above all indicators of the anal cathexis to tangible, fixed property, as it is represented to the addressee, mainly in the sphere of his private life since probably only a minority of the addressees own any business. But apart from these well-known psychological features some specific sociological considerations also enter the picture. The possibility of acquiring money and property, or even the chance of making a start for it, is much more limited for most people today than it was rightly or wrongly supposed to be during the heyday of classical liberalism. Yet the Horatio Alger myth is continuously upheld as one of the most important stimuli that induce people's efforts. Here again, the column looks for a way out. If one cannot gain property as of old, it is suggestively implied that by clever disposition of what one has, by planning and scheduling in a manner appealing anyway to compulsive persons, the same success may be achieved that is now denied to expansive business enterprise. Making charts, time tables, schedules, and similar formalistic ventures serve as substitutes for the actual money making. This is why the idea of budgeting, making plans and similar symptoms of unrealistic realism are favored by the column. It is as though the imaginary vice-president, since he is no vice-president after all, should at least playfully fulfill the latter's function, a device which by the way is also sometimes supplied in business education where office boys have to act symbolically as executives for one day.

You have imagination, vision which you can reduce to exact expression—find out how others invest, increase income; then apply to your own responsibilities; pay bills. (November 13, 1952, Pisces)

Look to new methods to add to present income, lop off unnecessary expenses; getting in huddle with serious workers brings new aspect to your present obligations. (November 18, 1952, Scorpio)

...devise new avenues for making money... (November 19, 1952, Scorpio)

...arrange improved methods for securing more income, happiness by cooperative measures. (November 20, 1952, Gemini)

Work all angles that bring you added money, possessions, good things of life.

(November 22, 1952, Capricorn)

Yet the old concept of unbridled acquisitiveness is so deeply embedded in a business culture that it cannot be discarded or entirely repressed by spurious pseudo-activity though the columnist is well aware that it is no longer adequate to present day economy. Here the columnist finds a rather ingenious way out, falling back to astrology's otherwise concealed basis of superstition. There are quite a few hints of substantial material gains, but they are rarely if ever attributed to the reader's own work or to business profits, but almost always to highly improbable and irrational providential acts of fate.

Unexpected help from hidden source makes all property conditions easier to solve... (November 23, 1952, Aries)

Persons, messages, calls from distance bring element of good fortune toward securing determined wish... (November 26, 1952, Aries)

Noon finds unexpected support secretly given you. (December 6, 1952, Virgo)

Unexpected benefits are probable but whatever you force through yourself will boomerang. (January 20, 1953, Aries)

Through taking recourse to the simple technique of the fortune teller and discarding the column's usual reserve, the reader is assured that at some particular time pecuniary affluence will be heaped upon him if he is born under a particular sign of the day, or by using mysterious "friends" as the agents who bestow fabulous benefactions upon him. He is neither expected to believe that he could earn it nor to accept that he can never have it. Thus he is spoken to and given unreasonable promises like a child. Obviously the columnist figures out that the reader's wishes in this direction are so strong that he can get away with even such unreasonable promises on account of the momentary gratifications they provide though the reader knows in the depth of his heart that the promise will never be fulfilled. At this point the column profits from the same mentality which draws people to gambling, horse betting and similar devices for making easy money. Propensity for irrational material gain seems to be contingent upon the shrinking chances of making big money as a pioneer or on a rational basis of calculation.

Sometimes the wild promises made by the column take the form of referring to the addressee's "fondest" hopes or "deepest" desires.

Discuss your fondest hopes with relatives. (January 27, Taurus)

Such references are "blanks" which can and probably will be filled in by each adept of the column according to his specific emotional requirements. Just because his "fondest hopes" are concerned, he is temporarily prepared to accept the most improbable promises. What appears to be simply a linguistic mannerism of the column reveals itself in its over-all context as a very clever device to catch the addressee. It may also be that the rather abstract form "your fondest hopes" is one of the ways in which real, uncensored instinctual urges of the addressees are sanctioned by the

columnist without the possibility of his being put on the spot and having to take the responsibility for anything he might have said.

While nursing hopes for considerable gains outside of the limitation of normal business processes, "a stroke of luck," the column is not satisfied with entirely irrational promises. Sometimes the addressee is, though utterly cautiously and indirectly, encouraged not simply to rely on his luck, but, to borrow the phrase of Lessing's *Riccaut de la Marlinière*, to "*corriger la fortune*." The form in which this idea crops up is the use of expressions such as "behind scenes activities" reference to which is often made in a positive sense.

Behind-scenes huddle with personal expert with finances shows way to *increase* your assets. (November 17, 1952, Sagittarius)

A.M. finds need for secret huddle with member of family to eliminate present worry. (November 19, 1952, Virgo)

...plan future secretly. (November 21, 1952, Capricorn)

...make quiet arrangements... (November 21, 1952, Aquarius)

This is your day to manipulate matters cleverly behind the scenes to improve your happiness... (January 3, 1953, Leo)

Much behind-the-scenes discussion can show intelligent ways to increase your revenue. (January 9, 1953, Aquarius)

Behind-scenes activity to devise a better system for performing irksome chores will bring more contentment at home as well. (January 13, 1953, Aquarius)

Apart from the constant advice "to strike a bargain," to "improve property" and "make schedules," the columnist fosters the idea that the addressee can get ahead in the business hierarchy only by finagling himself, by use of personal connections and sly diplomacy rather than by strict working activities. This has some rather evil implications. Within the pattern of modern mass delusions, the idea of conspiracies is always present—an idea doubtlessly of a projective nature. Encouraging "behind-the-scenes" activities is an inconspicuous form of conjuring up such tendencies usually projected upon outgroups. Those who persistently blame others for indulging in conspiracies have a strong tendency to engage in plots themselves and this is taken up and reproduced in the column. In view of the somewhat risky character of this admonition, the bi-phasic approach here proves especially valuable to the column. The advice to finagle is countered—undone in the psychoanalytic sense—by interspersed reminders to be law-abiding and always to keep within the realm of the permissible, an advice that chimes in with the column's outward attitude of over-all conventionality and conformity.

Strict adherence to the spirit as well as the letter of the law greatly please harrassed higher-up... (November 14, 1952, Capricorn)

But morality too appears externalized: one has to account for one's actions to others, to wit, the higher-up, rather than to oneself. At the same time,

the idea of accounting is not so much presented as a normal duty in business as it is pictured as a threat. The addressee is advised to behave in such a way that, when and if accounting comes, he will be spared by the thunderstorm with the undertone that by keeping his books either pedantically or cleverly things will blow over.

Use utmost care in handling funds involving others...

(November 10, 1952, Gemini)

...see that every item of worldly affairs is exactly right so no criticism comes to you. (November 17, 1952, Pisces)

Credit interests require more than usual care to prevent unintentional error that causes higher-up to look askance at your abilities; P.M. systematize joint concerns. (November 18, 1952, Pisces)

...be sure you account exactly bank, tax, property obligations.

(November 22, 1952, Aries)

...arrange joint funds exactly. (December 6, 1952, Taurus)

Your disinclination toward making present associations more lucrative necessitates careful approach to authority who would flare up unless exact picture is given. (January 3, 1953, Pisces)

Take no chances with credit and career! When others demand accounting from you for present obligations, be grateful and give meticulous explanations.

(January 8, 1953, Capricorn)

An authority will demand an accounting if you take any chances.

(January 14, 1953, Capricorn)

The A.M. requires exactness in all matters connected with those in authority.

(January 15, 1953, Aries)

Your financial problems show need for more systematizing and wisdom in handling. (January 21, 1953, Pisces)

While the column implicitly seems to agree to the very widespread, though unofficial ideology that everything is permitted as long as one is not caught, the periodical reminder to readers to remain within the limits of the law is also indicative of the fact that the columnist presupposes very strong inclinations for law-breaking and anarchy in his readers which are the reverse of that social integration and rigid conformity overtly upheld. Everpresent destructive urges are ready to smash the very same control mechanism by which they are engendered.

Carefully double check all your accounts, statements and joint obligations. That temptation to forsake duty for pleasure is not good.

(January 21, 1953, Gemini)

Use utmost care in handling funds involving others; postpone expensive pleasures until more propitious time; your security improves by finishing present obligations. (November 10, 1952, Gemini)

One final irrational aspect of the idea of "being practical" emerging in the column may be mentioned. It is the idea that "your family background" will indicate to the addressee the right way.

Your inherited background gives answers for right attitude to assume toward higher-ups who question your ability, viewpoint. (November 23, 1952, Capricorn)
Inherited, family principles are to your advantage in A.M.

(December 7, 1952, Cancer)

Your family background provides answer to your deepest needs at moment.
(December 14, 1952, Libra)

Your background provides correct answer to A.M. preoccupations, glumness.
(December 21, 1952, Capricorn)

The solid principles of your background conflict with your desire for risky, adventurous pleasures; stick to your proven outlets. (January 11, 1953, Scorpio)

In the A.M. your family background points the way to your advance in all directions. (January 18, 1953, Aries)

Peace of mind today is attained through attention to practical problems and proven principles from your family background. (January 25, 1953, Virgo)

This idea again is close to others being dealt with in this study, such as the treatment of personal qualities as natural monopolies or the bi-phasic idea of being modern and being conservative, the family background, of course, belonging to the conservative side.

But above all, this device is another attempt to cope with the threatening disappearance of free competitive activity. The notion of those who "belong" plays an increasing role sociologically linked to "closed societies" and particularly observable in totalitarian countries. Conjuring up the "family background" may possibly be an appeal to those who, being native, white, gentile Americans and whose families have lived in the States a long time may fancy themselves as the "right people" and expect certain privileges. The "family background" is supposed to function as reassuring narcissistically and also realistically in as far as people with such a background might be admitted more easily to influential positions. Behind the family background lurks the idea of *numerus clausus*. But the range of the device is by no means limited to the happy few, but the majority is treated as a privileged group in order to counteract feelings of atomization and personal insecurity as part of the technique of modern mass manipulation pointed out by Karl Mannheim in his book *Man and Society*.

In the column of December 21, those born under the sign of Capricorn are reassured that their background provides "correct answer to pre-occupations, glumness". On the surface this means that they can draw on their traditions in order to solve their problems—certainly not a very convincing promise. The real psychological message is rather "Think about the marvelous family you come from and you will feel elated and superior to those on whom you depend and who might have annoyed you." It may be mentioned that a highly prejudiced subject studied in the *Authoritarian Personality*²⁶ remarked: "All my friends are from marvelous families."

26. Cf. T.W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, Nevitt R. Sanford (New York, 1950).

Imaginativeness is often referred to. Here, however, something shows up that is indicative of subtle psychological changes reflecting rather drastic social ones. The old idea that money can only be made through originality and new ideas and that success on the market depends not only on meeting demands by offers, but in either creating new demands or in offering something better and cheaper than what is at the moment available, is still maintained. But the column must acknowledge that the opportunity for the implementation of innovations and original ideas are extremely limited today for most persons. Thus, again cleverly relying on compulsive patterns, the emphasis on imaginativeness is presented mostly in terms of business administration and business organization. While, of course, the opportunity for really essential changes on this level are also severely restricted, they still seem to be more in line with the over-all organization of professional life within which people find themselves caught than the idea of an inventiveness which presupposes a much more individualistic set-up. Thus, the addressees are encouraged to make changes within the given organizational framework, by necessity more or less routine provisions, which we may assume fall within the very narrow range of their influence or their knowledge and which have presumably little influence upon the real course of events. The concept of originality seems to have shrunk to the ideal of each person's becoming an efficiency expert in his own circumscribed realm.

...you can replace by adopting unthought, untried new plan. Be open-minded.
 (November 10, 1952, Scorpio)

You have imagination, vision which you can reduce to exact expression—find out how others invest, increase income; then apply to your own responsibilities; pay bills.
 (November 13, 1952, Pisces)

...your creative ideas are fine, attend to investments, too.
 (November 15, 1952, Gemini)

Creative expressions unusually appealing so use your sense of neat touch, the artistic, to attain more success.
 (November 22, 1952, Libra)

Modifications such as that of the concept of originality, indicate that the worldly wisdom that steers the column is by no means limited to popular psychology, but includes also economics as might be expected of an approach dedicated to the very sphere where psychological and rational motivations are fused. Some of the "spread out" contradictory advice testifies to economic problems of old standing. Here belongs above all, the alternative advice to be "modern" and to be "conservative" related to, but not identical with the dimension of being "imaginative" and being "sensible." Again both terms are introduced mostly with reference to business methods, techniques and improvements. Again individuality is involved. Only he who thinks by himself and offers something new is supposed to make good. On the other hand, it is traditionally accepted that

those who have dared to make innovations but had only limited financial resources run the risk of being wiped out by financially stronger interests even if they think of some real novelty: the image of the starving inventor is well-known. Under present conditions the slogan "be modern" is apt to deteriorate into a mere sham. Real technological advancement is left to technological experts frequently far removed from the business set-up whereas he who wants to make headway in a large scale business organization has generally to be "consevative" not so much perhaps, nowadays, for fear of bankruptcy, but for fear that as an employee one would appear as a crank, transgressing the place in the hierarchy if he continuously made or advocated innovations. While the column attempts to solve this impasse by simply demanding that the reader sometimes be "conservative," sometimes "modern," the real difficulty is dodged. Both advices which have their full meaning in the sphere of production only are transferred to the sphere of consumption which still gives the individual at least the illusion of a certain freedom of choice between what is advertised as excitingly modern and as cozily and quaintly old-fashioned. Even more often the term conservative is used in the loose meaning of pursuing a "conservative" financial policy, i.e., carefully avoiding unnecessary spending: frequently high-sounding statements of the column amount in practice to the recommendation of thriftiness. When the column advises the reader to be modern it seems almost imperative that he should buy modern equipment particularly for his home—an advice affiliated with gadgeteering. When he is advised to be conservative, it means that he should keep his expenditures under control. The relegation of the change between the modern and the conservative to the sphere of consumption, however, points itself to a somewhat self-contradictory situation. While the present huge offer of goods calls for modern minded people prepared to buy any novelty, the buyer's mentality thus built up destroys reserves, threatens those to whom buying becomes a compulsion and is often presented as though it would potentially endanger the whole economic structure by undermining buying capacity itself. In order to make it right, as a real conformist, to everyone, the column has to promote sales and sales resistance, an ungrateful task to be mastered only by again spreading the advice over different periods of time.

Your own ideas need revitalizing to keep up with present worldly conditions; fine for studying modern systems; a progressive associate helps greatly if asked.

(November 16, 1952, Capricorn)

Your associates all seem to be at sixes and sevens, nothing seems to make sense. Stick to tried, proven principles, then all goes along very smoothly.

(December 4, 1952, Aries)

Nothing seems easy to do, you can't find right articles of goods, foods, or other supplies. Be very conservative. Then you avoid mistakes that others, unaware it is a difficult day, are making.

(December 4, 1952, Leo)

Adopting more up-to-date attitude brings you protection.

(December 9, 1952, Scorpio)

. . . use much care in all property matters, joint ventures; your hunches are poor.

(January 6, 1953, Pisces)

The term "modern," as used by this column, is frequently the equivalent of "scientific":

Forget past, worn-out systems, interests; look to modern trends in educational and scientific fields vital to your needs. (January 5, 1953, Capricorn)

Getting down to brass tacks in an up-to-date scientific manner improving your outlets and personal charm unusually effective. (November 12, 1952, Taurus)

This is your day to get out from your conservative, conventional outlets; see how rest of world lives, take to yourself modern methods that improve your efficiency. (November 12, 1952, Capricorn)

Some of our long-standing views need to be brought up-to-date for present workability. (November 16, 1952, Aries)

Adopting more modern spiritual, educational, scientific principles gives more happiness, success in creative interests. (November 23, 1952, Gemini)

This involves the idea that one *saves* money by introducing innovations rather than running any risk. At the same time the admonition to be "scientific" airs a peculiar concern of the column. 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. While the column avoids controversies on the merits of astrology, but for good psychological reasons takes its authority for granted, it indirectly follows this urge by its studious bows to science in general.²⁷

Viewed psychoanalytically, the interpretation of astrological ambition to present an apocryphal cult as scientific in order to assuage a bad conscience

27. A study on science fiction would be worthwhile. This wide-spread fad may owe its tremendous popularity to its ingenious solution of the conflict between irrationality and common sense. The science fiction reader need no longer feel ashamed of being a superstitious and gullible person. The fantasies of his own making, no matter how irrational they are, and how much projective content of either individual or collective nature may be implied, appear no longer as irreconcilable to reality. Thus, the term "another world" which once had a metaphysical meaning, is here brought down to the level of astronomy and obtains an empirical ring. Ghosts and horrible threats often reviving repulsive freakish entities of olden times, are treated as natural and scientific objects coming out of space from another star and preferably from another galaxy although to the best of today's biological knowledge, the "law of convergence" would probably lead even on distant stars to developments much more similar to those on earth than it appears in the secularizations of demonology enjoyed by the science fiction reader. Man's own reification and mechanization is projected back upon reality in the very widespread robot literature. Incidentally, science fiction consummates a long tradition of American literature dealing with the irrational while at the same time denying its irrationality. Edgar Allan Poe is in various respects the inventor of science fiction, no less than of the detective story.

probably does not go deep enough. The ideal of security, the conquest of anxiety, seems to be involved. There exists a compulsive fear of committing an error and, as a correlate, a high gratification in being "absolutely right" even if irreproachability may be obtained only by complete triviality and meaninglessness—a philosophy reminiscent of the pedantry of the anal character. The more dubious the statements craved for, the stronger the need for this type of protection. On top of early fixations, this attitude is reinforced in the Oedipal phase²⁸ by the fear of the father who discourages sexual curiosity and teaches the child that it is too stupid to understand and should confine itself to what is conventionally done and known rather than embark on any exploratory ventures—an attitude reflected by the column in as much as it always refers to fixed unalterable necessities and never goes beyond what is made to appear as "positive." The reader of the column is always supposed to act according to prescriptions. The feeling that nothing can happen after withdrawal from sexual longing, related to castration fear,²⁹ replaces the enjoyment originally longed for: security itself may become a sexual substitute. Yet the irrationality of this displacement is never lost sight of entirely. This is mirrored rather exactly in viewing astrology as a science which promises absolute and unchallengeable security (mainly because it cannot be put to the test) while the ultimate source of the security—the threat—is hidden and utterly unrecognizable. The hints of impending danger may be the last of heavily censored traces of castration fear. Certainly among the truly unconscious messages of the column, one of the most effective should read "safety first," a slogan which itself is to be regarded, apart from its rational merits, as a psychological hieroglyph.

Ruggedness and Dependence

Closely related to the contradiction between adjustment and individuality is that between dependence and ruggedness. Viewed psychologically, the actual weakness of the individual in the social set-up is concomitant with serious narcissistic losses which have somehow to be made up vicariously by the column. For the purpose, it draws again on some phenomena of reality. The psychological feeling of dependence seems to be on the increase. But giving up one's individuality requires the same effort and investment of libido formerly needed in order to develop individuality—in a way, the same "ruggedness." Thus the column's task is twofold—in as much as the situation makes for subordination, it has to reassure its readers that they are nevertheless rugged individuals; in as much as the situation calls for real ruggedness, it has to assuage their own feeling of impotence. As to

28. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XI, "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 211ff.; 341ff.

29. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XI, "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 383f.; *Werke*, XIV, "Hemmung, Symptom und Angst," pp. 136f.; *Werke*, XV, "Neue Folgen der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," pp. 93f.

"aggressiveness," it obviously goes with the ideal of being practical; as to subordination, this seems to be related to conscience and generally to a timid and withdrawn personality structure. A common denominator is sought for both types.

It can easily be seen that the dimension here considered does by no means coincide with those previously stated. No mechanical parallelism between the three main dichotomies analyzed by our study would be adequate. Since the total approach of the column is, as may have crystallized by now, a definite pattern, a structural unit, everything is somehow connected with everything else, and the analytic isolation of various factors has always something of the arbitrary. Yet the isolating operations we have carried through are invited by the nature of the material. The column's model of ruggedness has very little in common with those irrational qualities of the individual it stresses otherwise; and the sense of obedience it promotes is equally distant from the salesman traits of the happy extrovert. The antagonism here under discussion expresses itself frequently in the habit of sometimes advising people to be definite, sometimes to think carefully before they act. The warning not to hesitate³⁰ is probably derived from the pressure of time under which most people have to work together with the impact of the widespread, culturally conditioned taboo of "armchair thinking." Yet today it is dangerous to practically anyone to act upon his own responsibility. People who make supposedly wrong decisions are rarely in a position to follow up these decisions independently, to make them good or to take subsequent actions by which the previous ones may be justified, but are generally called on the carpet if the decision does not agree with the policy set by higher agencies. This structural change typically involved in the bureaucratization of modern society, is met by the column's advice not to act hastily and irrevocably, particularly not to be led by impulse into actions, but rather to think carefully and particularly to discuss problems with others before acting.

...discuss thoroughly with those familiar with true facts, operating principles.
(November 25, 1952, Cancer)

You see both sides of every question confronting you, are able to convince all colleagues of your stand.
(November 25, 1952, Capricorn)

You feel dynamic, determined to put your plans in effect at all costs. However do so cleverly without alienating others with big ego who resent other's success.
(December 14, 1952, Scorpio)

Be careful that in haste to do chore and get to church or off on trip you do not damage articles of clothing. In P.M. confer with associate about new big venture.
(January 4, 1953, Libra)

Your determination to spend much on investments and pleasures is all right, but not now; await a better moment for this step—watch these suggestions.
(January 7, 1953, Gemini)

30. Cf. T. W. Adorno, "How To Look at Television," *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, III, no. 3, pp. 213ff.

Concomitantly the general tendency of the column to prepare the addressees to act as members of "teams" comes to the fore. It is as though it had been accepted as a major ideological tenet that everything can be settled by majority decisions taken at some "meeting," a caricature of democracy. At the same time, the continuous encouragement to talk things over with others appeals to the conviction of many people mentioned previously, that others know more about them and their own difficulties than they know themselves—an all-pervasive sense of self-alienation. It is in this connection that the concept of "understanding" crops up in the column. Sociologically the stress on understanding, being understood as well as understanding others, probably reflects social atomization, the reverse and concomitant of collectivization as studied by David Riesman in his *Lonely Crowd*. The column calculates, probably correctly, that whoever is subject to cold, dehumanized, rigid and alienated social relationships feels insufficiently understood. Objective estrangement is made up suggestively, synthetically, as it were, by ubiquitous "human interest." Thus continuous advice is given to seek other persons who understand one and to try to understand others.

Make sure you are most understanding with members of family who are distraught. (November 22, 1952, Scorpio)

Be most careful with all in authority. Be understanding that they have problems. (December 18, 1952, Aries)

Bombastic associate, enemy unable to find personal peace of mind tries to take you also deep into doldrums. Be understanding but don't fall for this dreary line. (December 30, 1952, Capricorn)

Your personal resentments keep desired—and desirable—favors from you; so smile, see other fellow's view, be kind to officials, then, P.M. bring much happiness. (January 23, 1953, Capricorn)

The latter advice is sometimes administered under the viewpoint that one is able to overcome one's own difficulties by identifying oneself with someone even worse off. Thus even humaneness is treated as a means rather than an end. It is as though finally the sphere of the internal itself were to be incorporated into the range of externalization by manipulating the active and passive phases of understanding. Inwardness is integrated into the machinery.

While this can be partly explained by the tendency to transform objective problems into subjective and psychological ones, it also means that one should be prepared to give in to the supposedly higher wisdom of those whom one has to obey anyway. Psychological self-reflection is transformed into a tool furthering adjustment. Meekness towards the more powerful seems to do less damage to so-called self-esteem if cloaked as the outcome of higher insight either into oneself or into those whom one obeys.

Not infrequently the bi-phasic admonition appears actually in behavioral terms. Sometimes the addressee as a successful business man has to be

"dynamic," sometimes he has to "give in." It seems, however, that the advice to be strong and rugged is meted out rather reluctantly. While the veneer of the addressee's independence is guarded, he is advised most of the time to be strong only with people weaker or at least on an equal footing with him, particularly with his family, but also occasionally with the "friends" whose function throughout the column is somewhat ambivalent. On the whole the column takes the idea of "ruggedness" less seriously than its counterpart.

The idea of "giving in" is usually cloaked in such a way that all potentially unpleasant demands to be expected from the outside are presented as though they were well meaning advice from other people. Here again, adjustment necessitated by stronger conditions is mitigated as an achievement of insight. The soft-pedalling is most of the time brought about by the device of personalization. The requirements of reality are constantly reduced to the human figures who might want or order something. These persons rather than the requirements themselves are continuously characterized. Generally they are well-meaning, experienced, friendly, but at the same time, powerful and somehow authority figures; sometimes, however, provision is made for negative experiences with them.

These negative characteristics are generally stated in a way calling for pity with the strong rather than for their rejection. If it is envisaged that the addressee is being hurt by someone, he is made to understand that he is not to hit back but rather to assume an attitude indicative of his own inner superiority and to yield. The psychiatrically well-known pattern of "identification with the aggressor"³¹ seems to be one of the column's basic positive ideas on human relationships. Perhaps it can be seen nowhere more clearly than here how the column, and the popular psychology to which it is related, strengthens defenses rather than dissolves them.

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.

Categories of Human Relationships

We conclude our analysis of the typical ideas and techniques of the column by mentioning a few of the most important categories of human relations as conceived by the column.

Family and Neighbors

The column's attitude towards the *family* is largely one of conventional, official optimism which does not admit that anything might be wrong with the addressee's closest in-group. To be sure, there are tensions but it is assumed that basically everything is love and harmony. One might say that the true problems of the family are brought out only negatively, namely by

31. Cf. Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York, 1946), pp. 117ff.

an almost complete neglect of the internalized, affective aspects of family life—here everything is extroverted, too, and the family is viewed either as a resource of help and comfort

...support comes from member of family to lighten present burdens.

(November 10, 1952, Leo)

or as a source of complaints and demands which one has to satisfy to a certain extent in order to have a tolerable life. Thus, certainly unconsciously, a picture of coldness is obtained due to the lack of anything like empathy with the others. The family is relegated to leisure time; in the bi-phasic organization of the column it is mentioned almost exclusively with reference to P.M., in the same sphere in which the addressee is advised to fix his home or to go out.

In certain situations, the addressee is advised to give in to the family. Typical is the assumption that he might be inclined to spend beyond his means—possibly for pleasures such as alcohol and gambling. Since the wife is the one who, in the last analysis, has to manage with the budget, the addressee is being taught to talk over financial matters with her although she is rarely referred to as such but mainly in the more abstract term "the family," perhaps in order not to make him feel henpecked. In this pattern, the family functions as the agent of social control of the addressee's instinctual urges. Following the same line, the caution of the wife, in talking over business matters, is sometimes supposed to prevent the husband from rebelling in his professional life and thus to endanger his job. Such bits of common sense are never stated in so many words, but in rather abstract terms allowing for various interpretations. Thus, the talking over of finances with the family might also serve the opposite purpose, namely of controlling the purse strings against the wife's inclination towards heavy spending. Here the wife, as "consumer" is regarded as more irrational than the husband as "provider." Such apparent inconsistencies express fairly well the complexities of actual life situations. Anyway, the prevailing idea is that the family still is the only "team" knitted together by so strong common interests that one can rely on each other with little reservations and somehow make joint plans in order to cope successfully with a threatening and potentially hostile world. The family is constructed as a kind of protective organization built exclusively on the principle of give and take rather than as a spontaneous form of living together. This may well reflect certain structural changes in the modern family.³²

Therefore, the addressee has to "calculate" very carefully his relationships with his family. He has to pay for the help and solidarity he expects. There is the ever-present threat of nagging and it is this point where the column tends to emphasize the "giving in," by a cautious soft-pedalled

32. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today," in: *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, ed. Anshen (New York, 1949).

behavior and continuous consideration of what might invite the family's wrath. In this respect the family often appears as a kind of threatening archaic clan whose verdicts prevail over the dependent subject. Behind the idea of nagging there is the correct expectation that the division between the spheres of production and consumption, of work and leisure, never runs smoothly. The fact that life itself tends to become increasingly a mere appendix to the business that should serve life needs involves an absurdity with which even the supposedly well-adjusted cannot possibly get away without conflict. The wife's nagging is, without her being aware of it, a protest against a situation often aggravated because the man who has to "control himself" during the working hours and to repress his aggressions is prone to let them loose against those who are close to him, but have less power than himself. The worldly wisdom of the column is quite aware of all this as well as the fact that in such conflicts women are usually more naive than men and that the appeal to the latter's "reason" might help soften inevitable clashes.

Tense situation at home, unless you dissolve easily with a smile, effects relations with everyone else as well; forget hurt feelings; work to increase savings.

(November 14, 1952, Cancer)

...be very considerate at home where tension mounts if you display nervousness...

(November 19, 1952, Taurus)

Use happy feeling early generated to charm loved ones into contentment.

(November 19, 1952, Leo)

Settle any arguments at home early; then make domicile more attractive for all there; later, discussing family finances, property matters brings better understanding.

(November 20, 1952, Libra)

Unsatisfactory family, property matter brings you big chance to show your ability to handle personal relations diplomatically, conscientiously. In P.M. plan budget.

(November 21, 1952, Cancer)

Make sure you are most understanding with members of family who are most distraught.

(November 22, 1952, Scorpio)

Their inevitability, the social reasons of which have been pointed out, is blamed upon the abstract time element, as though at some particular afternoon or evening trouble were brewing at home and that the addressee has to exercise particular self-control if he is to avoid a major quarrel. This, of course, reflects also the irrationality of the motives frequently leading to family flare-ups that occur in the wake of entirely insignificant events.

Apart from this appeasement policy, the addressee is encouraged to "take the family out" or to have a "wonderful time" with them by inviting friends; an advice often tendered on holidays when the addressee is likely to do something of the sort anyway. This advice reminds one of the vicarious attempts at institutionalizing pleasure and human closeness, somehow after the fashion of Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day. Since it is felt, rightly or wrongly, that the warmth and closeness of the family is on

the decline but since the family is retained for both realistic and ideological reasons, the emotional element of warmth and togetherness is rationalistically promoted just as a further means of smoothing out things and keeping the partners together while the actual basis for their common *joie de vivre* seems to have gone. The strange situation in which people have to be pushed in order to do what is supposedly natural—the idea that one has to send flowers to one's wife not because one feels an urge to do so, but because one is afraid of the scene she makes if one forgets the flowers is mirrored by the empty and meaningless nature of the family activities which the columnist sets in motion. He seems to accept thoroughly the idea of "having a wonderful time" by going together to the movies or to a night club.

It might be asked how the column's family policy can be reconciled with our basic assumption that the real addressee is a middle-aged or elderly woman. To this it might be answered that the column, after it has set out to build up the image of a male addressee, has somehow to stick to its guns and to follow up this idea with a fair amount of consistency. No fully satisfactory explanation, however, seems available.

In connection with the family, the role of *neighbors* in the column should be mentioned. They certainly may be expected to be more important in the life of lower middle class people than in that of the fictitious successful businessman. It should not be forgotten however, that the column appears in an extremely large city in which social figures, such as the "neighbor" characteristic of primary communities where everyone knows everyone else, are certainly atypical. While the notion of the neighbor may be a simple carry-over from the olden days of the fortune teller who thinks in such terms, it fulfills at the same time the timely function of conjuring up a picture of village-like traditionalism, non-commercial mutual interests and possibly even biblical memories of the neighbor who is like yourself, which all helps to reconcile socially and often psychologically isolated persons with their lot. At the same time, it cannot be ruled out entirely that, as a heritage of the pioneering period in the semi-rural parts of Greater Los Angeles, the neighbor still somehow survives and that there is a positive tradition of neighborly contact and readiness to help each other in the Western United States.

Friends, Experts, Higher-ups

By far more important than the neighbors, in fact one of the most frequently mentioned topics of the column are the "friends." Their continuous invocation is most conspicuous and calls for tentative explanation even if one assumes that the term "friend" has come to be vastly diluted and is often used as a mere synonym for acquaintance.

More than anything else, the role of the friend in the column may be a carry-over of the crystal-gazer. Astrology's basic assumption of "friendly" and "hostile" conjunctions seems to conjure up human messengers of those

powers. But this leaves open why so much is made of the friends while little or nothing is made of the foes. It might be remembered here that one of the most important facets of supersititon, direct threat, terrorizing people by some unknown danger and thus inducing them to obey blindly occurs in the material selected very rarely. One has the feeling that the friend-foe dichotomy, which by itself would fit very well into the bi-phasic approach and into a paranoid way of thinking has been subjected to some special censorship and that only the friends have been allowed to survive.

The most important function of the friends in the column may be similar to an image often to be found in fortune telling by cards where someone unexpected turns up and exercises the greatest influence. The friends come from outside, perhaps on account of the columnist's underlying construct that the addressee is unconsciously antagonistic to the family that is generally treated, on an overt level, in stubbornly optimistic terms. They suddenly appear and heap benefits upon the addressee, either by giving him sound advice leading to an increase of his income

Vital friend gladly shows you how to enlarge joint venture with limited partner so that better results are produced to mutual advantage; show appreciation by trying suggestions. (November 12, 1952, Pisces)

Contact optimistic friends who can aid your advance...

(November 22, 1952, Aries)

or by forthright donations

...a good friend bestows unique benefit. (November 10, 1952, Virgo)

Making definite, concrete plan with partners, in public work, brings influential friends, support, so success easily obtained. (November 20, 1952, Cancer)

or by appointments to influential jobs.

Purposeful friend, eager to see you succeed, brings opportunity for you to attain cherished goal... (November 17, 1952, Capricorn)

Faithful friends look on you with much favor, seeking to find the answer to your present perplexities, which come from expanding your consciousness to higher ambitions now. (November 18, 1952, Aquarius)

...later enjoying congenial amusement with serious comrade clears path for successful association. (November 19, 1952, Cancer)

...get together with attractive friends who are anxious to aid your advance forward. (November 19, 1952, Pisces)

The general assumption is an extreme expression of dependency needs: the addressee is invariably advised to follow his friends and is made to understand that they are stronger than he, know better than he, but will take care of him.

Recent, highly active friend believes in you, shows your partner how to utilize your talents to greater degree, more constructive and effective use.

(November 26, 1952, Gemini)

Careful, precise friends and potent partners combine to make your life more successful. Let them confer favors without interfering with their sensible course of action.

(December 8, 1952, Scorpio)

A generous companion, eager for your advancement, asks good friends to study new ways to forward your scientific, educational and spiritual aims.

(January 3, 1953, Aquarius)

Others have the power to make your life a success or failure according to the way you handle and impress them with your financial, practical abilities.

(January 7, 1953, Aquarius)

At the same time, 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.

Viewed from this angle, reference to the friends again comes close to the "identification with the aggressor." In fact it may be said that frequently the friends are but rather thin cloaks for the "higher-ups," just as the family is a "screen" for the wife. The rationality of business relations is transfigured into love relationships in which the same ones one has to fear are those who mean one's best and whom therefore one has to love—an obvious transference from the Oedipal situation. Sociologically, it feeds on the awareness that everyone is replaceable in the economic process. The addressee is expected to feel that he is allowed to fulfill his social function as a kind of irrational benefaction given to the undeserving son by an everloving father. The directive given to the underling by his superior is interpreted as though it were given merely in order to help the underling in his failures and weaknesses—an infantile personalization of objectified relationships.

... consult with influential friend about your progress.

(November 22, 1952, Cancer)

... influential friend gives good pointer for securing wish, goal.

(December 1, 1952, Cancer)

Powerful friend really goes out of way to give you big shove forward, by explaining how he became successful, which can also apply to your choicest hopes. Be attentive.

(December 8, 1952, Cancer)

Powerful person unites in confidential arrangement to aid your advance forward toward practical ambitions.

(December 26, 1952, Gemini)

Prominent friends, realizing your most out-giving talents, abilities present interesting arrangement for bringing them to attention of all able to bring you success. Cooperate.

(December 26, 1952, Cancer)

Much conversation with an official or associate, especially at a social function or sporting event, reveals your talents so that real support is quickly given.

(January 3, 1953, Gemini)

Executive, or responsible higher-up, if contacted by you will show right way to increase and expand present outlets. (January 3, 1953, Capricorn)

An influential associate, in mood to forward your basic needs, shows how you can utilize each hour of the day to best advantage. (January 5, 1953, Cancer)

A prominent person, more practical than you, willingly gives you good counsel, so listen attentively and follow this improved plan of action.

(January 10, 1953, Aries)

A powerful man readily gives you a bright new course of action if you evidence interest. Show your gratitude by following it carefully. (January 10, 1953, Taurus)

Here again, 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. But all this does not exhaust the implications of the column's idea of the friend. The very vagueness of the term allows for its psychological utilization in various directions. One of them is the personalization of society at large. The column is incessantly concerned with the addressee's compliance with social norms. Their impact can be mitigated again if they do not appear on an objective but personal level somewhat reminiscent of the role of the *raisonneur* in the older comedy. Thus disinterested friends convey to the addressee what has to be done and what is best for him. They are *like* him, possibly involving the imagery of himself as well as of siblings on an unconscious level. It seems quite possible that this function of the friend in the implicit ideology of the column is related to significant changes in the pattern of authoritarianism which no longer invests real father figures with authority but replaces them by collectivities. The image of the friend invokes a collective authority consisting of all those who are like himself, but who know better since they are not beset by the same worries. 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.

The friends do not enforce anything, but they reveal to the addressee, as it were, that he, in his very isolation, is nevertheless one of them, that he is not isolated at all and that the irrational benefactions they offer him are those offered by the social process itself. This picture of the messenger of society is of course easily fused with that of the higher-up who, in as much as he appeals to duty, is almost invariably a representative of superego demands.

...influential man shows right way to adopt in daily living.

(November 23, 1952, Aries)

As to the friends as *projections of the addressee himself*, it stands out that in most cases, they represent his supposedly well-understood selfinterest in a chemically pure form. It is as though his dialogue with himself when it comes to conflicts would be projected in such a way that he

himself is permitted to speak like a child while his "adult" part, his ego, "speaks" to him reassuringly rather than threateningly as a friend in as much as it represents rationality against the momentary urges for pleasure. Yet at the same time, the friends also function in a way for the sake of his id by supposedly fulfilling desires which we may assume he would not dare fulfill himself. It is as though they were telling him, the child: "If you do what we tell you, if you only will be good, we will give you anything you want to have."

Two characteristics of the "friends" may be mentioned in this connection. First, they are often though not always introduced in the plural, which may perhaps be interpreted as sign of their representing either siblings or society at large. Lack of individualization, the notion that everybody can replace everybody else, is also conspicuous. Secondly, the image of the friend is sometimes substituted by that of the stranger or "interesting foreigner," particularly when irrational promises and unexpected gains are concerned. While, on a more overt level, this may reflect the boredom of normal everyday life and resentment of the closed circle of people whom the addressee knows, the figure of the stranger, strongly affect-laden, may play a magical role and may help somehow to overcome suspicion of irrational promises by making their source as irrational as the promises themselves are. Incidentally, only the positive aspect of the stranger is emphasized while the negative one, like all hostility, is entirely repressed by the column. In depth-psychological reasoning one might assume that the kind of person talked to by the column is very in-groupish and does not permit himself any "exogamic" wishes. The mysterious stranger takes care of such repressed urges. It is remarkable, however, that no traces of xenophobia, quite common in astrological magazines, appear in the column. This may best be explained by its "moderation." Only the family background device suggests leanings of this kind. Finally the friend as a stranger may be symbolic of the very fact that an estranged society speaks, as it were, to the addressee.

All these implications lead towards the expectation of some ambivalence toward the friends. It is given vent by the column rather subtly. There is a continuous distinction between "old" and "new" friends and the positive accent is surprisingly enough regularly on the new ones.

You really want to tell off, force issue with one able to take away your present prestige; instead discuss with unusual associate best way to placate.

(November 10, 1952, Capricorn)

Good friend, in distress, looks to you for answer to present obligations; making new acquaintances takes you out of doldrums, brings surprise outlet for your talents. (November 10, 1952, Pisces)

... make new acquaintances tonight. (November 18, 1952, Sagittarius)

...make new acquaintances; listen to understand their methods of attaining success. (November 19, 1952, Taurus)

Early get out in the world, make new friends of those different in background . . .

(November 19, 1952, Sagittarius)

...contact recent acquaintances for best use. (November 20, 1952, Taurus)

Your creative expressions please recent acquaintances who give you opportunity for added avenues, unknown before... (November 20, 1952, Virgo)

They to whom one is not yet accustomed, have something of the stranger and foreigner with whom they are sometimes directly identified. At least they are exciting and somehow promise pleasure; in a set-up of standardization and threatening sameness, the idea of the unusual *per se*, is positively cathected: But above all, they fit within the *present*. Conversely, the old friends are at least occasionally presented as a burden, as people who are demanding and who somehow draw unwarranted claims from a relationship that actually belongs to the past.

Forget working angles with close companions; get out in the world...

(November 13, 1952, Capricorn)

Old desires, old acquaintances seem for the moment pretty unsatisfactory...

(November 14, 1952, Sagittarius)

Ridding life of sinister acquaintance makes more assets obtainable...

(November 19, 1952, Scorpio)

Harassed friends try to pull you down to their level; ambitions seem long way off... (November 21, 1952, Sagittarius)

They might be tolerable as "pals" in good days, but the addressee should never take them too seriously, should not allow himself to be involved too deeply with them and is sometimes warned of them outright. Here we might get a glimpse into a strong appeal of the column as well as of the atmosphere of which it is expressive: the rejection of the past. Anything that is no longer "there," that is no longer a fact is treated as absolutely non-existent, in the words of Mephistopheles, "as good as if it had never been there," and to be concerned with the past means only to be distracted from the tasks of the day. In spite of conventional morality and decency, the idea of loyalty is basically rejected by the column: what does not prove useful right here and now is to be abandoned. By applying this method to the "old friends," the hostile phase of the relationship to the friends is rationalized and channelized in a way suitable to the column's over-all pattern of streamlined adjustment. Good are the friends who help you or at least band with you in order to reach some positive goal; the others are really relics of the past, exploit situations which are no longer valid, are therefore moralistically punished and left alone. Such traits reveal something of the cold undercurrent of the slick ideology promoted by the column.³³

Sometimes the column refers the addressee to the advice of the "expert." The "expert" is a kind of inbetween the higher-up (or society-at-large) and the closeness of the friend. While he is evaluated on the grounds of his

33. Attention should be drawn to the analogy with the well-known antisemitic division into "good" and "bad" Jews. Cf. *The Authoritarian Personality*, pp. 622ff.

objective merits as the man with the know-how, he is at the same time represented as being above vested interests, solely motivated by his objective knowledge of the matter itself and thus his advice is sugarcoated. The idea of the expert itself has gradually obtained a quasi-magical connotation, of which the column is well aware. Through universal division of labor and extreme specialization he is not solely someone who has gathered special knowledge of some matter but this also involves that it is knowledge which other people, the non-expert, cannot master and in which he nevertheless has to trust implicitly since expertness is supposed to be based exclusively on rational processes. Thus the expert has gradually grown into the magus of the rationalized world whose authority has to be accepted unquestioningly without violating the taboo set upon blind authority. Since the column has continuously to reckon with the conflict between irrational authoritarian wants and needs and a rationalistic cultural veneer the figure of the expert serves it very well.

Unnecessary to try to carry all burdens alone; consult with experts, more experienced than self... (November 12, 1952, Gemini)

Behind-scenes huddle with personal expert with finances shows way to increase your assets. (November 17, 1952, Sagittarius)

Get off with expert who is able to advise best methods to handle tense family problems requiring new approach... (November 20, 1952, Aquarius)

...be economical in expenditures, cooperative with tax-experts. (November 22, 1952, Libra)

The key figures in all personal relations as viewed by the column are the *higher-ups*, the bosses, both in their capacity in business life and in their psychological role of father substitutes; it is a safe guess that a very high percentage of all references to humans contained in the column, even if veiled by some of the categories so far discussed, actually refers to the higher-ups. Thus, during a sample period from November 10 to November 22, the categories of human beings mentioned by the column can be broken down as follows:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned</i>
Strangers	1
Neighbor	2
Expert	5
Family	35
Friend	
Higher-Up	53
	overlapping { 48

Of course, they are treated more ambivalently and bi-phatically than the "friends." On the one hand, they are a continuous threat mainly because they want some "accounting;" one has obligations towards them often beyond one's capacity, and has to obey them. But they are also blamed on a personal level for being pompous, pretentious and what not. Both threats, however, are mitigated, the objective one by reference either to the moral

right or to the better insight of the higher-ups, their whims and irrationalities by the implication that they too have their worries, their inner problems which call for understanding or that they are simply ridiculous in as much as they are pompous or inflated personalities. Thus conflicts appear as though they need not be taken too seriously.

...harassed higher-up who needs your perseverance to complete tough assignment... (November 14, 1952, Capricorn)

Annoyance over drudgeries eased by aiding worried associate with harder problems... (November 16, 1952, Gemini)

Often the friend's power is invoked as mitigating intermediary, softening up the higher-ups or taking the strain out of the relation.

...pains-taking friend cooperates with associates to bring your wish. (November 11, 1952, Scorpio)

...good friend willingly gives pointers best way you can secure personal ambitions. (November 17, 1952, Aquarius)

The attitude toward the higher-ups recommended to the addressee is practically without exception that of giving in and respecting the hierarchical order. One of the favorite suggestions is to placate the higher-ups, the way a child would act towards his parents when they are "cross." The emphasis is less on the fulfillment of duties *per se* as it is on a shrewd and flexible psychological attitude. The higher-ups must be "treated" skillfully, if one wants to keep in their good graces. In a genuinely hierarchical fashion, the relationship is depicted as that of the court favorite who wants to ingratiate himself with the princeling rather than to do his work satisfactorily.

...keep steadfast in impressing higher-up with your innate abilities. (November 10, 1952, Aquarius)

...increase prestige by aiding officials, executives to make their jobs more successful. (November 13, 1952, Aquarius)

At times the ungrumbling attitude towards superiors takes the paradoxical aspect of bribery. The weaker is supposed to invite the stronger, to take him out and to indulge in similar ventures in order to, as it is put euphemistically, achieve a satisfactory human relationship.³⁴

...invite powerful persons into your home. (December 13, 1952, Leo)

...bring into open your appreciation of higher-ups. (December 24, 1952, Taurus)

Attend a distinguished party or gathering; entertain influential individuals if time permits. (January 13, 1953, Capricorn)

34. It may be mentioned in passing that the language of the column on the whole is euphemistic and that all negative aspects of life are expressed by neutral or even pleasant terms which one has to analyze pretty carefully in order to get at the reality basis. Most of the examples so far offered are at the same time examples of euphemism. The superstitious element in this device, the fear of summoning some demon by mentioning his name is well known and probably utilized. On an overt level, the fear of offending anybody plays a large role. Neither does the column want to offend the addressee by designating his weakness with its right name nor does the addressee want to offend the higher-up even in his thoughts.

Invite influential higher-ups to party and impress with your abilities.

(January 18, 1953, Libra)

It is as though the notion of neo-feudalism which lurks in the back of the columnist's mind, would carry with itself the association of the serfs paying tribute to the master—an idea equally retrogressive socially and psychologically. Of course, the rationalization is always the egalitarian one that the higher-up and the addressee are socially on an equal footing and that the latter can invite his boss without any hesitation. The hint that such service will be appreciated is rarely absent.

This idea is in accordance with the other pole of the bi-phasic approach to the higher-up. If the friends are often mere cloaks of the superiors, the higher-ups are frequently presented as friends somewhat reminiscent of a stern and demanding father who would use the intervals of his tyranny in order to assure his kids that he is their best friend and oppresses them only for their own sake. This goes together with a glorification of the image of the higher-up whose position of success is supposed to be the result of his innate qualities, as though those who have the office had also the brain (*Wem Gott ein Amt gibt, dem gibt er auch den Verstand:* on whom God bestows an office, he also bestows intelligence). Thus hierarchical relationships are mirrored by the column in an apologetic and fetishistic manner.

Friends, partners, opponents will listen with reason to any intelligent plan you submit, for they are open-minded, willing to replace hardheaded attitude with joint arrangement. (December 2, 1952, Aries)

Executive, official very exact about every detail irks your lofty aims but shows right way for you to attain worldly honor, popularity, credit... (December 3, 1952, Leo)

Meticulous executive, high-up shows how routines can be expanded wisely. (December 8, 1952, Sagittarius)

A "dressing down" by executive, official or government is fine for it shows you how you are now faring financially. (January 10, 1953, Aquarius)

Often simple prestige terms such as "important personality" are employed in order to add a halo to the higher-ups' more favorable position.

...influential executive. (November 10, 1952, Scorpio)

...influential executive. (November 26, 1952, Aries)

...prominent persons... (December 22, 1952, Libra)

...prominent person... (December 24, 1952, Capricorn)

...driving, important person... (January 22, 1952, Gemini)

The more generalized attitude to be derived from the dependent, shrewdly meek attitude towards the higher-ups is one of general reconciliation, particularly of placating opponents, of "playing up" to them. The columnist figures that to a degree everybody fails to live up to his duties and lays himself open to some kind of scolding either by an insatiable superior or by a nagging wife. Whenever the reader runs into such difficulties, he should, according to the column not allow things to

come to a head, but rather to seek a way out of it by taking a conciliatory attitude, talking in a friendly manner and winning over opponents who might finally be his best friends. The idea of *talking* plays an important role in this respect. This is a final corroboration of the weight of orality within the psychological concept of the column. The addressee is encouraged to speak, speaking itself being a hybrid between a passive giving-in attitude and the aggressive impulses to "speak up against somebody." This advice is the more promising since the oppressed really want to speak in the depth of their heart but have to repress this wish. An attempt is being made to put this urge into the service of realism and conformity.

The net result of the practice furthered by the column is that conflicts should either be altogether avoided or settled by clever meekness—in fact, by a behavior reminiscent of that of the woman who wants to get the better of the man on whom she depends. By contrast, there are no concrete references to autonomous and independent behavior.

Conclusion

In view of the limited and highly specific nature of the material scrutinized, no "generalization" in the strict sense seems to be possible. However, the material suggests certain perspectives of a somewhat broader nature. While largely having been drawn as inferences from the specific interpretations attempted, they should also provide a background for the whole study and particularly make it understandable why it was carried through.

Though we are not primarily interested in astrology *per se*, as was pointed out before, it may be well to remember that the astrological fad, and analogous ones, is widespread enough and exercises sufficient influence as to warrant an investigation of its own. Though an increase of the astrological fashion cannot be "proved" for obvious reasons, since no comparative figures from the past are available, it seems quite likely. Thus, in German newspapers, the signs of the zodiac under which a person was born have come to be frequently mentioned in lonely-hearts advertisements. If one attributes such an increase to the mounting exploitation of superstitious leanings alone, a higher distribution of astrological material, this seems hardly to suffice as an explanation since this increase of material would scarcely work unless there were some definite susceptibility for it among the people. 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.

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. However, in terms of the specificity of contemporary astrology, the concept of dependence as such seems to be somewhat too abstract as to lead us very far. Throughout history in organized society, the majority of people were somehow dependent and in some phases probably more so than today. This, however, has to be somewhat qualified. No matter whether the individual is "freer" today in many respects than he used formerly to be, the socialization of life, the "seizure" of the individual by innumerable channels of organization has certainly increased. Suffice it to state as an illustration that the traditional dichotomy between work and leisure tends to become more and more reduced and that socially controlled "leisure activities" take over more and more of the individual's spare time. 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. The intermediary processes between social control and the individual tend to vanish and the individual has once again to obey the direct verdict of the groups at the helm of society. 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. One may say that the adepts of astrology frequently play

and overplay their dependence; a hypothesis which would fit well with the observation that so many followers of astrology do not seem quite to believe but rather take an indulgent, semi-ironical attitude towards their own conviction. In other words, astrology cannot be simply interpreted as an expression of dependence but must be also considered as an *ideology for dependence*, as an attempt to strengthen and somehow justify painful conditions which seem to be more tolerable if an affirmative attitude is taken towards them. 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.

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 reason that it is too difficult indeed to distinguish such systems from the equally inexorable and equally opaque one under which they actually have to live out their lives. This is pretty well reflected by astrology as well as by the two brands of totalitarian states which also claim to have a key for everything, know all the answers, reduce the complex to simple and mechanical *d'etre* 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. Thus people even of supposedly "normal" mind are prepared to accept systems of delusions for the simple reason that it is too difficult to distinguish such systems from the equally inexorable and equally opaque one under which they actually have to live out their lives. This is pretty well reflected by astrology as well as by the two brands of totalitarian states which also claim to have a key for everything, know all the answers, reduce the complex to simple and mechanical inferences, doing away with anything that is strange and unknown and at the same time fail to explain anything.

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. The sense of an underlying crisis has never disappeared since the first World War and most people realize, at

least dimly, that the continuity of the social process and somehow of their own capacity of reproducing their life, is no longer due to supposedly "normal" economic processes but to factors such as universal rearmament, which by themselves breed destruction while they are apparently the only means of self-perpetuation. This sense of threat is real enough and some of its expressions such as the A and H bombs are about to outrun the wildest neurotic fears and destructive fantasies. 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. The sense of doom may today obtain a peculiarly sinister coloring by the fact that the present form of social existence seems to go down whereas no new and higher form of social organization appears on the horizon. The "wave of the future" seems to consummate the very fears that are produced by the conditions of the present. Astrology takes care of this mood by translating it into a pseudo-rational form, thus somehow localizing free-floating anxieties in some definite symbolism, but it also gives some vague and diffused comfort by making the senseless appear as though it had some hidden and grandiose sense while at the same time corroborating that this sense can neither be sought in the realm of the human nor can properly be grasped by humans. The combination of the realistic and the irrational in astrology may ultimately be accounted for by the fact it represents a threat and a remedy in one, just as certain psychotics may start a fire and at the same time prepare for its extinction.

In spite of this comfort, 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. One could not grasp the specificity of astrology and of the whole frame of mind it stands for if one would simply call it a reversion to older states of metaphysics: what it is characteristic of is the transfiguration of a world of things into quasi-metaphysical powers. Auguste Comte's postulate that positivism should become a kind of religion is fulfilled ironically—science is hypostatized as an ultimate, absolute truth. The astrologist, as was pointed out in our brief survey of magazines, is very anxious to present it as a science. It may be mentioned in passing that 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 from 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.

Yet astrology is not merely an enlarged duplicate of an opaque and reified world. While people have come to be conditioned in such a way as to be unable to think or conceive of anything that is not like the existent, they want at the same time desperately to get away from the existent. 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. More than in any other respect, astrology resembles in this dimension other mass media such as the movies: its message appears as something metaphysically meaningful, something where the spontaneity of life is being restored while actually reflecting the very same reified conditions which seem to be dispensed with through an appeal to the "absolute." The comparison of astrology with religious mysticism, dubious in more than one respect, is invalid particularly in as much as 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.

This strange structure of astrology is significant, however, because it can itself be reduced to an all important mundane structure: the division of labor which is basic to the whole life process of society. One may well concede that the isolated elements of astrology are rational. On the one hand, there are stars and their laws as explored by the science of astronomy, and the astrologists seem to take care to keep their statements, as far as they are concerned with celestial events, strictly in line with those movements which actually take place according to astronomy. On the other hand, there is the empirical life of man, particularly with regard to typical social situations and psychological conflicts, and our analysis has shown

that the astrologists display quite a keen and sensible insight into life; that they speak out of experience, without any traces of delusion. The "mystery" of astrology, in other words, the element of irrationality and, incidentally, the sole element that accounts for its mass appeal, is the way these two "unrelated" realms are related to each other. There is nothing irrational about astrology except its decisive contention that these two spheres of rational knowledge are interconnected, whereas not the slightest evidence of such an interconnection can be offered. This mystery, however, is not merely "superstition." It is the negative expression of the organization of work, and, more specifically of the organization of science. There is but one world and its division into disconnected spheres is not due to being as such, but to the organization of human knowledge of being. It is in a way "arbitrary," though unavoidable in terms of historical development, to keep, say, the science of astronomy and the science of psychology completely apart. This arbitrariness leaves its scars in knowledge itself; there is a break between the two sciences, continuity ends for all practical purposes and the systematic attempts at a unification of the sciences remain extraneous and formalistic. The awareness of the gap is reflected by astrology. On the one hand, it is an attempt, once again in short-cut fashion, to bridge the gap and to relate, with a stroke, what is unrelated and what, one ultimately feels, must somehow be linked together. On the other hand, the very fact that the two realms *are* unrelated, that there is a void between them, a kind of no-man's-land, affords an ideal opportunity to settle there and to come forward with unsubstantiated claims. It is in fact this very unrelatedness, the irrationality in the relations between astronomy and psychology, for which there is no common denominator, no "rationale," which affords astrology with the semblance of justification in its pretense to be mysterious, irrational knowledge itself. The opaqueness of astrology is nothing but the opaqueness prevailing between various scientific areas which could not be meaningfully brought together. Thus one might say that irrationality is in itself the outgrowth of the principle of rationalization which was evolved for the sake of higher efficiency, the division of labor. What Spengler called the modern caveman, dwells in the cavity, as it were, between organized sciences which do not cover the universality of existence.

Of course, the basic deception, the arbitrary connection of the disconnected, could easily be grasped in terms of present scientific knowledge. But it is significant of the situation that this knowledge is actually "esoteric" in as much as few people seem to be capable of drawing such consequences, whereas self-styled esoteric knowledge such as astrology has come to be extremely popular. It was pointed out before that astrology, just like racism and other intellectual sects, presupposes a state of semi-erudition. When evaluating astrology as a symptom of the decline of erudition, however, one has to be cautious not to indulge in superficial

statements of official cultural pessimism. It would be irresponsible to allege such a decline in general and quantitative terms, not only because no valid comparison with former periods seems to be possible, but also because in many respects erudition is likely to be more widespread today than it used to be, i.e., layers of the population which formerly had no access to culture and knowledge are now brought into contact with the arts and sciences through the modern means of mass communications. The state of mind that can properly be called semi-erudite seems to be indicative of a structural change rather than of the distribution of cultural facilities. What is really happening is that, concomitantly with the ever-increasing belief in "facts," information has a tendency to replace intellectual penetration and reflection. The element of "synthesis" in the classical philosophical sense seems to be more and more lacking; 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. The rigid dichotomy maintained in very influential philosophical schools today between logical formalism and a kind of empiricism that regards every theory only as the expression of expectations to be fulfilled by data later to be found is symptomatic of this intellectual situation. It is, in a way, mirrored by astrology too, and it may well be said that astrology presents the bill for the neglect of interpretative thinking for the sake of fact gathering. There are, on the one hand, the "facts" both of stellar movements and well-known psychological reactions, but there is no real synthesis even attempted, no relationship that makes sense is established—and probably cannot be established between two spheres so widely divergent. Instead an entirely extraneous subsumption of human events under astronomical laws is attempted, externalization, as will be remembered, being an essential facet of astrology in all respects. The element of semi-erudition shows itself in the failure of the mind to recognize the fallacy not of the material thus interconnected, but of the spuriousness of the link. Lack of "understanding," disorientation in a complex and at the same time fatal social set-up and also, possibly, confusion created through misunderstandings of the recent developments of natural sciences (particularly of the replacement of the concept of matter by that of energy which seems to invite wild constructs) contribute to the readiness to relate the unrelated—a pattern of thinking which, by the way, is well-known to psychiatry. Under this viewpoint, astrology may well be defined as an organized system of "ideas of reference." While the naive persons who take more or less for granted what happens hardly ask the questions astrology pretends to answer and while really educated and intellectually fully developed persons would look through the fallacy of astrology, it is an ideal stimulus for those who have started to reflect, who are dissatisfied with the veneer of mere existence and who are looking for a "key," but who are at the same time incapable of the sustained intellectual effort required by

theoretical insight and also lack the critical training without which it would be utterly futile to attempt to understand what is happening. 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. Thus astrology is an expression of the impasse reached by the division of intellectual labor not only in objective terms, according to its intrinsic structure, but also subjectively, being directed at those whose mind has been conditioned and warped by that division of labor. The astrological fad can mainly be explained as the commercial exploitation of this frame of mind, both, presupposing and corroborating retrogressive tendencies. In as far as it is part and parcel of the all-comprising pattern of cultural industry; in fact, the specific ideology promoted by a publication such as the Los Angeles Times Column is pretty much the same as that emerging from the movies and television although the type of people at which it aims is probably somewhat different—there is some “division of labor” also among the various mass media, mainly with regard to the various kinds of customers which each medium attempts to ensnare. Primarily, astrological publications “sell” due to the objective and subjective characteristics so far outlined. In view of this commercial success, astrology is taken up by more powerful economic agencies which take it away from the crystal-gazer atmosphere, as it were (just as the big studios took away the movies from the amusement park booths), purge it of its manifestly crazy traits, make it “respectable” and thus utilize it commercially on a large scale. This, of course, is only possible in as much as the inherent ideology of astrology harmonizes with what the interests vested in this area want to promote. It is of little importance whether, as it seems likely, conformity and obedience is *a priori* inherent in astrology or whether the ideology spotted by our analysis of the Los Angeles Times Column is due to astrology’s integration into a larger ideological framework.

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. Apart from the features brought out in our analysis, some more traits of the high scorer cropping up in the column may be mentioned. Here goes the over-all externalization promoted by astrology, the idea that everything negative is due only to external, mostly physical circumstances, but that otherwise “everything is fine,” the continuous stress on conventional wholesomeness. All this is indicative of rigid psychological defenses against instinctual urges. The psychological syndrome, however, expressed by astrology and propagandized by its advice is only the means to an end, the promotion of a social ideology. 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.

It should not be overlooked that within the total set-up of the ideology of mass culture astrology represents a "specialty." The nucleus of its doctrine as well as of its adherents shows many characteristics of a sect. 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. The paradoxical idea of a one-party state—while the idea of "party," being derived from "part" is itself indicative of a plurality—is the consummation of a trend feebly presaged by the opinionated, inaccessible attitude of the astrological adept who defends his creed by hook or crook without ever entering into a real argument, who has auxiliary hypotheses in order to defend himself even where his statements are blatantly erroneous and who ultimately cannot be spoken to, can probably not be reached at all and lives on a kind of narcissistic island.

It is this aspect which ultimately justifies the psychiatric emphasis given to our study, the interest psychiatry has to take in astrology and the psychiatric nature of many of our interpretations. Again, great care has to be taken not to oversimplify the relationship between astrology and psychosis. Some of the complexities of this relationship have been stated in the text itself. It should be emphasized that there is neither justification for primitively calling adepts of astrology psychotics, while, as has been shown, it also serves the function of a defense against psychosis, nor to postulate that astrology as such is indicative of people becoming crazier and crazier, or that paranoia as such is on the increase. However, the hypothesis may be ventured that various historical situations and social settings favor various psychological syndromes and "bring out" and accentuate distinct types of possibilities ever-present in human beings. Thus nineteenth century liberalism with the idea of the small independent entrepreneur who accumulates wealth by saving has probably elicited character formations of the anal type more than, say, the eighteenth century, where the ego ideal was more largely determined by the feudal characterological imagery which would be called in Freudian terms "genital"³⁵—although closer scrutiny

35. Sigmund Freud, *Werke*, XV, "Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," p. 105.

would probably show that this aristocratic ego ideal hardly had so much basis in fact as romantic desires would have it be the case. Anyway, it seems that in eras of decline of social systems, with the insecurity and anxiety widespread in such eras, paranoid tendencies in people are evinced and often channelized by institutions wishing to distract such tendencies from their objective reasons. Thus organized flagellantism and apocalyptic fantasies among the masses were characteristic of the first phase of the decay of the feudal system, and witch-hunting of the period of Counter Reformation when an attempt was being made to artificially reconstruct a social order that by that time had become obsolete. Similarly, today's world, which offers such a strong reality basis for everybody's sense of being persecuted, calls for paranoic characters. 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. The movement "moral rearment" would never have gained its momentum by its general humanitarian aims alone, but its exhibitionist rite of public confession and its hostile attitude against sex, so strongly reminiscent of the strengthening of defenses throughout other mass media, seems to act as a real stimulus. One may well compare the function of these confessions to the forced confessions of the supposed traitors in Russia and the satellite states behind the iron curtain, which far from disillusioning Communist followers in the free world often seem to cast a kind of magic spell and to be swallowed hook, line and sinker. Astrology has to be regarded as a little model of much greater social feeding on paranoid dispositions. In so far it is a symptom of retrogression of society as a whole which allows some insight into the illness itself. It denotes a recurrence of the unconscious, steered for purposes of social control which is finally irrational itself.

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.