

environments with those with a greater propensity—as a result, their belief systems are modified; (4) group rituals (inducing altered states of consciousness) increase the incidence of anomalous experience, inspiring belief in ideologies associated with the ritual; and (5) beliefs, resulting from anomalous experience, support spiritual healing rituals.

Although TWMHP does not entail social scientific research, "ghost chasers" could evaluate these hypotheses. Hauntings are amenable to social scientific investigation and discussion of these ideas could refine these hypotheses.

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Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon by Roy Willis and Patrick Curry. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004. 170 pp. \$25.95 (paper). ISBN 1-85973-687-4.

In *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon*, Roy Willis and Patrick Curry take a postmodern, dialogical, linguistic perspective, confronting science and modernity to promote astrology as a divinatory technique. They unapologetically argue for astrology as a conversation with a universe that is permeated with intelligence, in contrast to the dualist perspective of a scientific observer who is somehow outside of the inanimate universe being studied.

Willis and Curry form an interesting partnership. Willis is a social anthropologist at the University of Edinburgh who came to the study of astrology from exposure to the work of the Gauquelins and the scientific

controversy with the organized skeptics. This led him to consult an astrologer and experience it firsthand, rather than simply studying it abstractly. Curry was a practicing astrologer before pursuing academic training in psychology, anthropology, and, finally, a Ph.D. in the history of science. He became concerned about the "absurdities of astrology . . . [and] its intellectual poverty" (p. 12). However, it was not until he read Max Weber's ideas on enchantment disenchantment and concrete magic that he found a scholarly framework for understanding astrology. This resulted in collaboration with Willis on this book. Although the authors' perspectives overlap and inform each other, they divided the writing, with Willis providing the bookends of the first three and last two chapters and Curry writing chapters four through nine.

Chapter one reviews astrology from a pre-historical, anthropological perspective, noting that humans recorded the cycles of the moon over 30,000 years ago and proposing that astrology should still be perceived as divination, rather than dismissing such a perspective as pre-modern and unscientific. Chapter two introduces the idea of ancient consciousness evolving in a dialog with nature and the universe, reviewing a variety of ancient myths to show this common perspective. Chapter three traces myth through history and builds on the obscure work of Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay on Myth and the Frame of Time*, in which they claim that mythology was a coded means of tracking the motions of the planets that was known only to the priesthood in these cultures. While this is an interesting thesis, it is never tied back to the rest of the book, so the transition from Willis' writing in this chapter to Curry's writing in chapter four is more disjointed than it need be.

Chapter four shifts perspectives to recount this history of Western astrology from Mesopotamia, Greece, Egypt and Rome. Through conflicts with the church and with emerging scientific ideas, astrology was left bereft of any status in the culture and was left to be defined by what it was *not*: not religion, not science, not truth; relegated to the marginal place it still occupies today. Chapter five then argues for what astrology is: a divinatory system. However, divination is not simply predicting the future, rather it asks the dialogical and ethical question "What should I do?" in a particular circumstance. Curry traces the roots of a divinatory astrology and shows how the Greeks created an abstract, rational structure for astrology, setting the direction for most Western astrology, where the birth moment of the native replaces the horary moment (the moment a question is asked) as the heart of astrology. Chapter six reviews various types of astrology: divinatory, neo-Platonic and Hermetic, Aristotelian and Ptolemaic, scientific and psychological. In all of these systems, other than the original divinatory type, astrology evolved to conform to other disciplinary frameworks. The discussion of scientific astrology points out that such tests try to eliminate the astrologer—and, hence, eliminate all symbolic, metaphoric or dialogical parts of astrology—to disenchant the universe. This leads to chapter seven, focusing on Weber's critique of science as disenchantment. However, this is not simply a postmodern treatise against science, but rather one against most

abstract "systems," including much of modern astrology, in which astrologers have a desire to create an all-encompassing system in which astrology relates to all areas of human thought.

Chapter eight, "Science and Astrology," discusses astrology as scientific heresy, from the 1975 *Humanist* attack, through Richard Dawkins' ongoing assaults on astrology as evidence for irrational thinking in society. There is a critique of scientific research on astrology, focusing mainly on Phillipson's (2000) summary of efforts in this area. However, as I have previously pointed out, the perspective in Phillipson is somewhat monolithic (Urban-Lurain, 2004). Hence, this chapter is a postmodern deconstruction of a "scientific" astrology straw man that readers of this journal may find somewhat unsatisfying.

Chapter nine reintroduces astrology as divination in the modern world, no small task. Not only does the mainstream "scientific" worldview reject this, but most astrologers, who are products of their culture, resist such a move. The goal for astrology is to contribute to the re-enchantment of the world, but this is a dilemma for astrology, since re-enchantment will be rejected by the mainstream culture, further marginalizing astrology (and astrologers). Curry proposes that recent postmodern thinkers (e.g., Weber, James, Lévy-Bruhl and others) may show the way out of this conundrum and encourage "intellectual practitioners . . . to shake off their own scientific, secularist and anthropocentric prejudices" (p. 119). Fortunately, he does acknowledge that this task will "encounter serious resistance" (p. 119). However, the challenge to change is not only for scientists, but for astrologers too. He claims "that any pretences on their part to systematic or objective (let alone scientific) truth, as distinct from divinatory (but not therefore merely 'subjective') truth, only legitimizes the authority of those who would like to see them jailed for fraud" (p. 122).

Willis returns in chapters ten and eleven. Here he uses Husserl's phenomenology as a theoretical framework to understand divination as part of *Homo sapiens'* innate intersubjectivity. Mind is not a *tabula rasa* to be "filled" but rather is socially constructed; intersubjectivity evolved, in part, through a dialog with the universe. Willis draws on Peek's anthropological work to present divination as a shift in cognition from logical (left brain) to holistic (right brain), a shift in which the diviner and client consciousnesses merge in a transcendent state and new knowledge emerges.

Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon is a pioneering work that brings a postmodern perspective to this ancient subject. Willis and Curry raise some interesting and difficult challenges for those of us who propose to study anomalies using the scientific method. Do such phenomena define and defy the limits of the scientific method? Unfortunately, as with much postmodern writing, this book sometimes suffers from what Phillips (1995) identifies as a tendency "towards relativism, or towards treating the justification of our knowledge as being entirely a matter of sociopolitical processes or consensus, or toward the jettisoning of any substantial rational justification or warrant at all" (p. 11). Wilber (2000), hardly a friend of the scientific

worldview, also points out the circular self-contradictions of one of the tenets of postmodernism, that there is no preferred perspective, which is a foundation of the line of reasoning used to deconstruct scientism. However, the claim that there is no preferred perspective is itself a preferred perspective, a contradiction usually ignored by postmodern writers. Readers of this journal are likely to be sympathetic to the objections Willis and Curry raise to scientism, but they may find this work a bit too eager to throw out the baby with the bathwater. However, with that caveat, I highly recommend this thought-provoking work for anyone trying to find a new approach to conceiving of anomalous phenomena.

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FURTHER BOOKS OF NOTE

The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It by Marcia Angell. Random House, 2004. 336 pp. \$24.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-375-50846-5.

Science, Money and Politics: Political Triumph and Ethical Erosion by Daniel S. Greenberg. University of Chicago Press, 2001. 528 pp. \$35 (cloth); \$20 (paper). ISBN 0-226-30634-8; ISBN 0-226-30634-8.

Science in the Private Interest: Has the Lure of Profits Corrupted Biomedical Research? by Sheldon Krimsky. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. 264 pp. \$27.95 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7425-1479-X; ISBN 0-7425-4371-4.

The first of these books has made quite a splash recently, fully deserved since the contents live up to the provocative title. Angell, a former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, pulls no punches. The other two books are equally deserving of public attention. For decades, Greenberg has been the foremost journalist specializing in the relationship of science to politics, publishing the newsletter *Science & Government Report*; his earlier groundbreaking book was *The Politics of Pure Science* (1967). Sheldon Krimsky is a professor of political science at Temple University who has studied such matters as the consequences of conflicts of interest; his book provides a wealth of data.