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Skylights:

This collection consists of eleven excellent essays, thoroughly and carefully researched, on the roles of astrology in modern culture, together with provocative foundational works that explore Islamic influences concerning unusual celestial phenomena as compatible to jihadist expectation of imminent apocalypse (M.A.Rashed) and in the rediscovery of astrology by twelfth-century Catholic Europe (Mitchell) as well as Late Greek Gnosticism and theurgist engagement with the divine through the heavenly bodies understood as encompassed by encosmic gods (Akyndinos Kaniamos). Implicit in both contemporary astrology and in the Abrahamic undercurrent of Neoplatonic, Islamic and Christian theologies is the exaltation of transcendence over materiality and an alleged positive role of the planets and luminaries on the lower ontological level. The Platonic bias of astrology is further supported in Garry Phillipson's understanding of panpsychism as interpreted through Irving Hallowell and Graham Harvey's 'new animism' – a form of personalism which itself is a derivative of idealistic or transcendental Platonism.

A contrasting understanding to panpsychic sentience considered as already belonging ubiquitously to the material is that there is a natural impulse inherent in matter to become conscious or to produce consciousness. Perhaps the essay that is the most grounded of the collection to physical and historical realities is Kim Farnell's investigation into the origins of the horoscope column. Karine Dilanian also draws on the parallels between Kepler's methodological study of political cosmology and the Russian *cosmist* Alexander Chizhevsky's historiometric research concerning solar cycle correlations and sunspot activity that apply science rather than history for the study of social evolution and the psychological phenomena of mental life. Related to this is Laura Andrikopoulos' discussion on Charles Carter and Margaret Hone's more scientific (rather than psychist) development of Psychological Astrology that examines the use of the natal chart to illuminate the "ego's unfolding journey through the zodiac and houses." In her essay, Jayne Logan ties the modern psychological and humanistic interpretation of the birth horoscope to the soul as an animating power underpinned by the Theosophical notions of karma and reincarnation. The astrologer herself/himself becomes a co-facilitator in the individual's dealing with fate and self-transformation toward illumination.

Focusing on the ancient Greek concept of the daimon, Alina Pelteacu's description of this liminal figure mediating between gods and humans as a personal guide is reminiscent of Aké Hultkrantz's elucidation of the pagan understanding of soul duality, namely, a life-soul animating the individual's body and a free-soul that ultimately is the individual's guardian spirit. Developing from Plato's idea and emancipating from the medieval demonization of the daimon, Jung connects the entity with the "higher part of the human soul" – an equivalent of the unconscious, and Hillman locates the soul-companion or daimon as the individual's soul-image, the *puer eternus*, in contrast to the *senex* component of the ego that develops through time. Nevertheless, Liz Greene re-interprets these concepts by adapting them to the horoscope as a map of the individual's psychological development over time, Pelteacu

concludes that the daimon's inclusion into modern psychological astrology represents "a renewed incorporation of Platonic cosmology in astrology."

In contrast to Chizhevky's rejection of history as a science, the German art historian Aby Warburg established a library that employed the history of astrological sources of images for investigating the production and transmission of human knowledge. As Jenn Zahrt explains, Warburg accepted astrology to be the constant around which its images changed over time and did not acknowledge that astrology itself could develop and change. She considers that in contrast to Warburg's demonic understanding of astral magic, the view of the majority of contemporary practicing astrologers is that astrology is "an experimental, empirical science, engaging questions of scientific validity." This assertion, however, appears to counter the idea of astrology as largely a Platonic creation. Nevertheless, Crystal Eves' ethnographic research indicates that astrology's understanding of the sky as providing information about life on earth itself constitutes a language that concerns the nature of time as measured by planetary motions as both cyclically spiraling (as proposed by Dane Rudhyar) and seasonally chronic with episodes characterized by a beginning, middle and end (as in *Kairos*, the Greek concept of qualitative time). The notion of 'linguistic relativity' that was first articulated in the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis is supported by Eves' findings and correlates with the idea that astrological knowledge constitutes a particular language that leads to specific conceptualisations of time that differ from the ways time is conceived by standard English-speaking peoples. In all, astrological language, its applications and its various interpretations as either empirical science or historical definition are amply examined in the present collection of splendid *Skylights* essays. These are exemplary of the continuing calibre of the Sophia Centre's students.