

Chapter 9

The interviews with professional astrologers

This chapter reports on the findings from the interviews with the professional astrologers. This chapter therefore takes a step beyond the material discussed in chapter 8, the 'notes in a bottle' from the surveyed astrologers, and allows for a more thorough consideration of the views of these professional, consulting, lecturing, writing and teaching astrologers. Although there were common questions within all the interviews this chapter is organised on the natural emerging themes that developed within the interviews.

Methodology

The survey, discussed in the last two chapters, was completed by November 2008. While I continued to analysis the quantitative and qualitative data, between the periods of October 2008 to April 2010 I also conducted 22 interviews with professional astrologers from diverse astrological communities.

The interviews were undertaken in the form described by Thomas as 'converging-questions' as well as 'response-guided' interviews.⁸⁷⁰ Thus the interviews were designed to ask broad questions about the themes of fate and free will and allowed the interviewee to control the flow of the conversation. Since the interviewees knew me as a fellow astrologer, this approach resulted in a relaxed exchange and allowed the astrologer to drift into personal anecdotes about their experiences of fate and/or their attitude to it. This method is what David Silverman describes as an emotional style of interview where the interviewees reveal an 'authentic insight into [their] experiences.'⁸⁷¹ Each interviewee therefore became a unique conversation focused on the astrologer's views on fate, how they personally incorporated their views on fate into their life style, and how this thinking influenced their professional work in consultations with clients.

⁸⁷⁰ Thomas, *Blending Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods in Theses and Dissertations*: p.64.

⁸⁷¹ Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*: pp.87-94.

Most of the interviews were conducted in person either at astrological conferences in the UK, USA, Netherlands, and Australia; where it was not practical to meet in person the interviews were conducted using Skype. The interviews varied in length from 60 to 90 minutes and were all recorded. Each interview was then transcribed in full and, like the 902 notes from the surveyed astrologers, these transcripts were coded in Nvivo in the manner suggested by Pat Bazeley and Lyn Richards, by taking a 'broad-brush' approach and allowing the emergence of particular themes.⁸⁷² The transcription and analysis also applied feedback into the forthcoming interviews.

Ethical considerations

At the time of arranging the interviews each interviewee was informed of the nature of the research project and that their interview, with their permission was going to be recorded and transcribed to allow for extensive quotations to be used in this thesis. In this regard they were informed that they could at any time either withdraw or request anonymity. Of the 22 interviews, one interviewee chose to withdraw their interview. The remaining 21 interviewees signed release forms – a copy is given in the Appendix 2 – consenting to the use of their names. All the interviewees were offered the opportunity to review the transcription of their interview; one took up that opportunity.

The interviewees

The selection of interviewees was motivated by the desire to represent a diversity of thought within the astrological communities. A full alphabetical list of the astrologers interviewed with their brief biographies is provided in Appendix 2.

The interviewees were selected with the criteria that they were astrologers who were regarded as being of influence within the astrological community through writing and teaching, and all were highly regarded by the global community in their style of astrology. The interviewees consisted of 6 males and 15 females. They were located in the USA, UK,

⁸⁷² Pat Bazeley and Lyn Richards, *The Nvivo Qualitative Project Book* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), pp.54-55.

Netherlands, South Africa, Bali, and Australia. All of the astrologers have been involved in astrology for 25 or more years and all but one (Gillian Helfgott, who is now retired) run professional astrological consulting and teaching practices. Most of the interviewed astrologers hold undergraduate degrees with many having also acquired Masters degrees, and three astrologers held PhDs. These tertiary qualifications were in classics, medieval studies, ancient languages, romantic languages, music, psychology, English literature, drama, economics, archaeology, history, philosophy and cultural studies. All of the astrologers were published authors. Their areas of specialisation within astrology covered the following areas:

- Esoteric astrology, a spiritual form of astrology based on the evolution of the soul.⁸⁷³
- Horary astrology, the astrology of answering a particular query.⁸⁷⁴
- Financial and/or business astrology, the astrology which uses planetary cycles or company horoscopes to understand the forthcoming business cycles.⁸⁷⁵
- Psychological astrology, which uses the horoscope to reveal the psychological complexes of the mind.⁸⁷⁶
- Humanistic astrology, a person-centred approach to astrology which sees the individual as an 'independent organic whole consisting of an intricate pattern of interrelated and interacting forces.'⁸⁷⁷ Using this astrological approach the horoscope is considered a reflection of a perfect concept of self as a seed.
- Medieval astrology, which uses the astrological techniques of the medieval period.⁸⁷⁸
- Hellenistic astrology, which uses the astrological techniques of the Hellenistic period.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷³ Alan Oken, *Soul-Centered Astrology* (New York ; London: Bantam, 1990), p.5.

⁸⁷⁴ Dunn, *Horary Astrology Re-Examined*: p.xi.

⁸⁷⁵ McWhirter, *Astrology and Stock Market Forecasting*: pp.3-4.

⁸⁷⁶ Greene, *The Horoscope in Manifestation, Psychology and Prediction*: p.1.

⁸⁷⁷ Meyer, *A Handbook for the Humanistic Astrologer*: p.13.

⁸⁷⁸ Ben Dykes' Introduction to Guido Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, trans. Benjamin N. Dykes (Golden Valley, Minnesota: The Cazimi Press, 2007), p.xxxiii.

⁸⁷⁹ For an example see Joseph Crane, *Astrological Roots: The Hellenistic Legacy* (Bournemouth, UK: Wessex Astrologer, 2007).

- Metrological astrology, which uses astrology to endeavour to predict the weather for a future time and place.⁸⁸⁰
- Cosmobiology, which uses a geometrically-based astrology of 'planetary constellations' or clusters to seek great clarity of prediction.⁸⁸¹

In this way the interviews embraced the diversity of opinion on fate and free will within the early twenty-first century English-speaking communities of astrologers.

Fate as the order of the world

In the *Timaeus* Plato had postulated that the cosmos was governed by the World Soul whose essence was reason.⁸⁸² In the third century Diogenes wrote of the Stoic cosmos as alive and rational and in the fourth century Calcidius argued 'So the World-Soul is fate as a substance.'⁸⁸³ The classical view of cosmos was a rationally formed and sympathetic entity. According to Plato this sympathetic nature was maintained by the cosmos being permeated with divine reason; Aristotle considered it was bound by divine love; while the Stoics considered that the need for the co-creation of the divine bound all things in a sympathetic web through the workings of fate.⁸⁸⁴ Regardless of the nature of the binding force of the cosmos, in the third century Plotinus argued that the entire cosmos was enchained in a sympathetic web.⁸⁸⁵

Astrologers have not abandoned these classical arguments. Self-evident in the 'notes in a bottle' reviewed in chapter 8 is the theme of living in an enchained purposeful cosmos, and such a view was also articulated in the interviews with the professional astrologers.

⁸⁸⁰ C.C Zain, *Weather Predicting* (Los Angeles, CA: The Church of Light, [1949] 1975), p.14.

⁸⁸¹ Ebertin, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*: p.11.

⁸⁸² Plato, *Timaeus*: 30a-c.

⁸⁸³ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II: Book II - 139; den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: Paragraph 152.

⁸⁸⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*: 48a ; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: 1072b 1073-1074; Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.277; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, , trans. R.D. Hicks, vol. I, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, [1925] 2005), II.140.

⁸⁸⁵ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.7.

The American Hellenistic astrologer Demetra George, when interviewed in August 2009, captured this fundamental theme in present-day astrology. She replied to my question on the nature of fate and astrology as follows:

Well, one of the things that I consider is that astrology can only work in a model where there is soul, intelligence and conscious in the cosmos. If our world view is that we live in a random, chaotic, dead world, then there is no way that astrology can make any sense whatsoever.

George's 'dead world' is, for her, a world which is not sympathetically linked in a chain of being. The classics scholar and self-professed Stoic astrologer also from the USA, Ben Dykes, embraced this theme of a living cosmos and talked of fate as order, an order which was immanent within the universe. He mused on this when considering the origins of fate as follows:

Um.. I guess.. err.. where does fate itself come from? .. My guess, it's from the way that the cosmic reason operates. .. In reality, where did we come up with the idea... um.. I am sure it was people reflecting on cosmic processes.

I asked Dykes if this imposed immanent order was, for him, like the operating system on a computer in that it was something that was in the background but laid down all the rules on how the system worked. He laughed and replied:

I never heard it said like that ... but yes it is the immanent way in which the universe operates even if there are levels of reality in which there are some Platonic forms that sort of guide the being.

Liz Greene, a UK Jungian psychologist whose astrological work was discussed in chapter 6, acknowledged determinism but, as with the other astrologers interviewed, saw fate itself as something more organic than determinism. When I interviewed her in January 2010, she spoke of her view of fate as a mixture of many influences on an individual, reflecting Ptolemy's notion of comminglings:

What happens is you get a sort of alchemical mix, there is the individual's temperament, there are psychological inheritances, family complexes, physiological inheritance, environment, choices the parents make at any given time, choices the individual makes...

And then to this mix of determinism she added another level of order, that of emergentism, and patterns:

.... I think there are patterns that operate on levels that are not explainable. Jung calls them archetypes, they are also the form of myths. But they are in the fabric of life, they are the stuff of life, they are alive, they are here, they are everywhere. We are not ... it is not that we go and grab a handful of the pattern, we are part of the pattern. Every person is part of it. So those patterns do not have a logical cause. And they are becoming 'creativity' through some kind of process of livingness that is intelligent but which I don't think is sort of up there someone looking down. It is actually in the stuff of living of the world. It is in the stuff of everything.

Greene's view of the forces imposed on an individual embrace both material determinism and cultural and/or psychological determinism but to this she added a further Jungian concept of an archetype, an influence which imposed pressure on the actions or thoughts of an individual.⁸⁸⁶ This was expressed in pattern, story and mythology and, in her view, and echoing Schopenhauer's idea of being born into the World of Will, the individual was born into a 'part of the pattern' and the nature of pattern at that moment was their fate.

Another classical scholar from the USA was the medieval astrologer Robert Hand whom I interviewed in August 2009. His position was similar to Greene's as he saw the actual physical reality of living in an ordered universe as the source of fate. However, he differed from her in that he spoke of this order as our perceptions: 'Well that is our experience of it. I am not sure that there is any objective reality to fate. I am also not sure that there isn't. But I think what we experience is a lack of freedom and that lack of freedom we call fate.' Hand's thinking was reflecting the Humean notion of beliefs coming from empirical sources.

The UK astrologer who lectures in psychological astrology, Darby Costello shared a similar view to Hand wondering if fate really existed or if it was just our way of seeing the world. In her interview in November 2009, she talked of this by saying:

So fate is perhaps a way of seeing, a way of ordering the world. And that is why the question can never quite be answered about fate and free will. Because it is a way of ordering the world and we perceive that and so as astrologers we use that human instinct to order the world and see it in some sort of fate... in a larger or lesser degree.

⁸⁸⁶ Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* Vol. 5: p.313.

Another point of view was put forward by the American esoteric astrologer Alan Oken. I interviewed Oken in March 2010 via Skype since he lived in Bali and when I asked for his opinion on the source or nature of fate, he talked of the role of determinism:

...indeed we are fated biologically in terms of our time clocks ... our 'fate' is biologically predetermined. So there is a measure of fate that is already built in that is a whole mechanism that is being used.

Oken then continued to build on his idea to include a spiritual dimension. He spoke of the Platonic and Stoic notion of fate being an instrument of the divine:

... and that divinity, I believe, has a destiny whose dynamic transcends all of the individual parts, meaning your fate and my fate. So there is an overriding movement of fate which is really the life force and the life destiny of that divine entity.... So I do not know of any time when fate does not exist. Fate, to me, always exists, [and we have to] accept that there is a dynamic of an expansion of awareness which allows freedom of choice to transcend a previous fate as you move into another fate.

For Oken fate is, as the Middle Platonist Calcidius had proclaimed, the substance of the World Soul, the living divine force that reached through the entire cosmos but this force, for Oken, did not overrule free choice, but rather could be used to move between levels of fate, moving ever closer to the divine.

Capturing some of Oken's esoteric philosophy were the comments of Australian astrologer Gillian Helfgott, whom I interviewed in July 2009. Her astrological field was cosmobiology and she believed in love as the energy of the divine mind, which she called the 'infinite mind', the vehicle which could help one live with the planetary fates. She commented:

I believe so powerfully in love, if you have love there, then you do not have the fear of the energies of the planets which are all part of the infinite mind and can then have a better way of working through you. I believe that the universe has a completeness of creation. We are the Becoming working to get back to the Being, so we are seeking our oneness with the Being which is there but we do not understand it.

Helfgott's philosophy embraced the Aristotelian concept of a cosmos fuelled by love, but did not follow his naturalism. Instead she moves into a Neo-Platonist position of Becoming and Being and like Plotinus, she too was seeking the One.

Instead of love, tolerance was the theme of fate for British humanistic astrologer Roy Gillett whom I interviewed in November 2009. I asked him about the source of fate and his reply, like George, involved a sympathetic cosmos:

... the universe is based on tolerance. The planets tolerate each other. There are cycles in the heavens and when anything happens something else happens. ... I think you do have a certain amount of control over your destiny. If you are conscious of the cycles you are free up to a point within the range of possibilities. [We are] parcels of water sucked into and pulled one way and another. And the extent to which we can work with this is like a ship sailing through the ocean.... You cannot master fate, but you can work with fate. You can turn what can be a very difficult situation into a much better one.

Gillett saw the notion of fate as containing the influence of material determinism, like Greene and Hand. However, for Gillett the 'great chain of being' and the sympathetic cosmos represented a pressure on the individual which was based in the balance and counter balance of the 'tolerance' of the planets. Into this view of fate Gillett held a natural compatibilist view that the individual who had knowledge of these influences could use their free will to work with these energies for a better outcome.

Among these varying opinions on the source of fate, however, all of these astrologers held two common themes, that of a sympathetic cosmos, as well as the ability to use freedom of choice. Dykes from his Stoic philosophy talked of a force that guided the being; Greene with her Jungian perspective saw humanity enmeshed in pattern but talked of the 'choices the individual makes'; Hand and Costello, appearing to take a Humean attitude, pondered fate as an expression of natural beliefs; Oken, arguing from a Platonic esoteric position, considered that we had 'freedom of choice' to transcend levels of fate; Helfgott, also esoteric, held a Plotinus view and considered that we were able to 'seek our oneness'; while Gillett saw the theme of tolerance as the balancing force of the cosmos and used the metaphor of sailing a boat to describe fate and its relationship to free will.

Fate and the soul

With any mention of fate the interviewees tended to shift the subject to that of soul. Indeed the soul and its relationship to fate was central to the free will dilemma in the classical period. As argued in chapter 2, Plato considered that the soul was formed by the divine and a spark of the divine soul was placed into each individual. The soul held both the attributes of reason and what Plato termed as 'what was up to us'. With these features, the soul's responsibility was to seek a union with the World Soul.⁸⁸⁷ Aristotle with his orientation on naturalism pondered on the mortality of the human soul and considered it was the life force the 'essence of the whole living body' and that it was the tool by which humanity reached for perfection.⁸⁸⁸ Later in the thirteen century, Aquinas, also discussed in chapter 2, followed Aristotle and aligned soul with the body, but also acknowledged its immortal features. He considered that the soul functioned in both the temporal world of matter as well as the divine realm of spirit.⁸⁸⁹

In August 2009 I interviewed British psychological astrologer Clare Martin who, like Margaret Hone discussed in chapter 6, had been the president of the Faculty of Astrological Studies, UK, from 2000–2009. I asked her about her views on fate and she moved the conversation to talk about the soul and its relationship to fate:

Well I think we are multi-levelled, yes. I do not feel that our bodies can transcend our charts as I think that the charts are maps of time and space. We are embodied in time and space. It is our bodies which are here. In our bodies we are born and die and we are subject to time. But I do not think that that is all that we are so I would subscribe to the sort of ancient view that we have a soul that comes and goes and that it is timeless and that is not subject to time.

Martin appears to accept the fate, and questions whether we have any free will at all. In one respect she is a monist astrologer but to this she added an almost Cartesian-style disempowered soul, independent and outside of time.

⁸⁸⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*: 30b-c , 41e-42a and 48a.

⁸⁸⁸ Aristotle, *On the Soul*: II.415b 9 -12. and III 432a 1-2

⁸⁸⁹ Quinn, "St. Thomas Aquinas's concept of the Human Soul and the Influence of Platonism," p.182.

In contrast was the thinking of another British 'humanistic/psychological' astrologer Melanie Reinhart whom I interviewed in August 2009. She also spoke of soul in the context of fate so I asked her what she meant by soul:

My definition of the soul is a pretty simple one, what I feel and see about it is that what I call soul is the locus of somebody's experience. And so the person who is within and core to that locus is the focus of the awareness we call "I". So the soul is the field of the experience.

Thus Reinhart saw soul in an Aristotelian manner located within the physical world. Indeed her opinion with its strong naturalist theme was also reminiscent of Hume's thinking, discussed in chapter 3. Hume considered that our beliefs were the results of our experiences of the natural world.⁸⁹⁰ Reinhart's naturalism therefore follows the Aristotelian–Hume orientation where 'soul', or inner sense of being, is linked with personal identity.

Liz Greene also addressed the issue of the soul's nature and relationship to fate and framed it in a Humean empiricism:

...the idea of soul seems to be something that humans do construct in particular ways when they encounter these patterns which are experienced as fate. Because they are overwhelming, you can't do anything about them. It is the place where we are suddenly reduced to the recognition that we are simply part of life, that we don't have autonomous control over it. So the idea of soul as a divine spark that has come down between reincarnations and will fly up home again once the body decays could be our view of human hope.

Greene was suggesting that the soul was produced by our perceptions, our sense of awe and wonder when we recognised our life as a part of a pattern and that through the creation of the idea of soul we maintained the hope of our own uniqueness.

Whether the soul was real or whether it was a psychological construct to help one find meaning in life, some astrologers felt that the soul was something that needed to be made or shaped by the trials of life. Brian Clark, a 'humanistic/mythological' Australian

⁸⁹⁰ Hume, *A treatise of human nature*: IV.p.131.

astrologer, was one such astrologer. When I interviewed him in April 2010, and asked him about free will, he shifted the conversation into poetry and the nature of the soul:

I came across John Keats the other day. I was reading his *Ode to Psyche* and then the notes that he wrote about soul. About the veil, earth, the world being the veil of soul and so on. He wrote those three days before he wrote this *Ode to Psyche* and he talked a lot about as if it was this kind of world of pain, 'the test and tasks of life that made soul', so what I .. to cut a long story short ... free will I think is to recognise that... I guess the soul is made. I like Keats' idea of 'soul making'. So it is as if... I see soul as what makes ... infuses our lives... it infuses and gives meaning ... so I see soul as the sort of meaning of life, if you will.

Clark saw the soul as something that learned or was shaped by life and one's free will was to recognise and accept this struggle. Free will was for Clark one's attitude and this attitude helped to 'make the soul'. Greene also talked of this idea of soul-making by sharing one of her dreams she had while recovering from surgery:

When I was coming out of hospital I had a couple of very strange experiences, one of which was a bizarre dream. I was doped up on the pain killer drugs and I dreamt about souls. I was seeing ... these... it was the most bizarre combination of Platonic and Complexity, it had everything in it. There were these individual souls and they were geometric. They were like cubes or hexagons and there were the Platonic shapes and they were all connected by these very delicate-kind of cords. But they were moving around so they weren't in any kind of order. And all of them were in the process of transformation and some of them had writing on them and it was either Hebrew letters or hieroglyphs or alchemical symbols. They all had this symbolic writing on them, some of them were base metal or just sort of clay and they were turning... they were transforming through all metals like an alchemical... some were silver or bronze becoming copper and they were souls. And it was clear that they were souls being formed by life, by life experience, and eventually they might become gold or silver. But they did not start like that.

Greene, coming from her Jungian perspective, then commented on her dream of souls:

What it said to me was that the potential for a soul, that the sort of base stuff that could be a soul, is there maybe in all things, maybe even in rocks. But it does not automatically become this kind of... we are not automatically incarnating with it, such as pure gold people, a pure gold piece of god in us. We are just part of life. We work at it and we transform it and we struggle and we become more conscious and it may or may not transform.

Greene's dream and Clark's reference to John Keats' idea of 'soul-making' raises some questions. For many astrologers, this soul making could be considered a Platonist view of soul, the soul born into mortal flesh and then struggling in order to improve its nature. Plato wrote of the soul's responsibility to improve itself: 'So all things that contain soul change, the cause of their change lying within themselves and as they change they move according to the ordinance and law of destiny....'⁸⁹¹ Thus soul in this context was the vehicle, divine or a human construct, with which the individual engaged with the sympathetic cosmos and the struggle of this engagement was deemed to be one's fate.

Clark sees the work of soul-making in a monist manner seeing it as a journey of 'participation' in one's mortal life, while Greene contemplates whether the raw material of soul is exclusive to humanity or whether it belongs to the entire material world. She wonders if the soul is real or just a version of human hope. In this regard Greene's version of soul, which may be shared by other monist astrologers, is more attuned to Spinoza's view of *conatus*, defined by Smith, cited in chapter 3, as 'the presence of an urge, however poorly understood, to live rationally or intelligently. We desire not just to live but to enjoy the fullness or plenitude of life.'⁸⁹² Hence soul-making in this regard is a Spinozian journey of self-understanding.

In contrast to this monist view of soul the South African humanistic astrologer and white Swazi Sangoma Rod Suskin adopts a Platonic dualist soul and links the notion of free will to the spiritual life of the soul. When I interviewed him in September 2009, he replied to my question on free will by saying:

... for me the notion of freedom is always to choose higher consciousness or the greater good or those kind of things .. in asking themselves questions about their soul's growth, working in their spiritual life to see what can they do which is selfless, that grows them spiritually, they will minimise the impact of the lesson of letting go. So I do stress that [with clients].

⁸⁹¹ Plato, *Laws* 904 b-e

⁸⁹² Smith, "What Kind of Democrat Was Spinoza?," p.15.

For Suskin, there was the concept of the soul's growth, or how the soul was made was through spiritual practices rather than as with Greene, the painful process of self-understanding.

Other astrologers, however, saw the soul in a Cartesian manner in that it did not require the body for its existence. Such a soul was not engaged in a union with the physical world which produced 'soul-making' but was already perfectly formed and possessing reason and free will. Alan Oken talked of this in his book *Soul-Centered Astrology*: 'The more we are attached to the personality, the more we are materially oriented, in and of the Earth. As the Soul becomes an ever-increasing Presence in our lives, we begin to become more Light-oriented.'⁸⁹³ 'Light-oriented' is the nature of existence of the soul when it is no longer tied to a body, as Oken writes: 'It is to Light that we also return...'⁸⁹⁴ When interviewing Oken I asked him about his view on the soul. He linked it to free will by saying:

Free will is relative to the expansion of consciousness that the individual achieves to help to transcend his or her biology ... So here is where the soul comes in.

As we move into that place of free will we move into the realm of the soul... [this is the place where] what I like to call "free creative radicals" are available to us, so that we have what appears to be some greater choice but that greater choice is still within the parameters of some larger energetic unit which has movement and life being and destiny of its own. Except that its destiny is larger than that of the individual who has not achieved that awareness.

Although these astrologers had diverse opinions about the nature of soul, they all considered that the soul was the holder of a unique feature of the individual, beyond 'personality' which Oken saw as a minor expression of the soul in its material guise. Thus another question naturally emerged: 'If the soul was unique and a holder of the will, or free will, what was its relationship to the natal horoscope?'

⁸⁹³ Oken, *Soul-Centered Astrology*: p.20.

⁸⁹⁴ Oken, *Soul-Centered Astrology*: p.19.

Fate, soul and the horoscope

One of the questions that can be asked of an astrologer is whether the soul is contained within the horoscope and if not then what are the attributes of the soul and what are the attributes of the horoscope?

For philosophers of the classical, late antiquity, and medieval periods, the attributes of the divine soul were reason and the will and, as argued in chapter 2, these lay beyond the domain of earthly fate. Plotinus considered that the union of the immortal soul with the material realm was the result of the soul traveling through the cosmic circuits of the planets with each planet in turn clothing it with both its nature and its future fate.⁸⁹⁵ The horoscope therefore could be seen as the cloth of fate that was wrapped around the immortal soul. It was Spinoza who argued against these classical notions and considered that the notion of a free will was an illusion and the will itself was subject to determinism like everything else in the world.⁸⁹⁶ David Hume and Alfred Schopenhauer also supported similar views, that the will was not able to be free.⁸⁹⁷ These arguments therefore dismiss the existence of the soul or at very least remove from its attributes the notion of the will.

However, as previously discussed in the astrological literature review chapters, there is a divide amongst astrologers between the acceptance or rejection of Aquinas' notion of the soul being separate to the horoscope. This divide has been used to produce in this thesis the distinction between the dualist or monist astrologers. The widely held astrological view in the first half of the century was represented by the astrology of Alan Leo, who considered that character and soul were not attributes of the horoscope. The horoscope was the holder of the material fate and the soul was the holder of the will and reason and these could not be 'read' from the horoscope. This is a dualist argument. However, by the middle of the twentieth century this view gave way, largely due to the work of Hone and later Greene, to the notion that the soul, reason, character and material fate, were all contained within the horoscope, thereby increasing the importance of the horoscope.

⁸⁹⁵ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.10.

⁸⁹⁶ Spinoza, *The Ethics*: Part 2. Prop. 35. Note.

⁸⁹⁷ Hume, *A treatise of human nature*: IV. p.131; Schopenhauer, "Character," p.40.

In 2008 Demetra George published an astrological book titled *Astrology and the Authentic Self*, in which she acknowledged this split amongst astrologers. Offering advice to the consulting astrologer George wrote: 'If we [the astrologer] consider the possibility that an individual can take conscious action to alter the indications of the chart... we [the astrologer] give guidance as to the strength of the human will to overcome obstacles.'⁸⁹⁸ Thus George was saying that if the astrologer considered that the human will (soul, intellect, or reason) was free and existed outside the chart, it can be used to alter the expression of the horoscope. If, on the other hand, the astrologer considered that the 'character' was fixed within the horoscope, then, George suggested, the astrologer should advise the client to take a Stoic/Spinoza-like approach and find inner harmony while accepting '... the objective conditions of our lives.'⁸⁹⁹ She wrote of her own opinion on this question, saying, 'A planet's condition does not predispose a person to act in good or bad ways – moral behaviour remains in the sphere of the free will; what it indicates is the presentation of fortunate or difficult life events and the likely outcome of those situations.'⁹⁰⁰ George thus took up her first position of locating the will outside the planetary influences. For her, it is free and this freedom was necessary for insuring moral responsibility.

Greene disagrees. In her interview, she voiced Spinozian-like concepts indicating that ignorance made one passive and thus one was 'thrown about like a football' by determinism.⁹⁰¹ Coming from a monist psychological perspective she talked of the horoscope (chart) and its relationship to fate by stating:

I do not think that charts are equal in terms of,.. I mean, that is nonsense to think that people are equal in terms of their charts. Not every moment is the same as every other moment and that is all a chart is, a moment. The life form is not always the same it has extremes; there are times when it is flowing and times when it is at war with itself and times it wants to kill itself and times when it ... it is different all the time and if you are born under a time, at a time when life is going through a sort of nauseous bit, you are going to have a rougher time – it is not about fairness.

⁸⁹⁸ George, *Astrology and the Authentic Self*: p.286.

⁸⁹⁹ George, *Astrology and the Authentic Self*: p.287.

⁹⁰⁰ George, *Astrology and the Authentic Self*: pp.35-36.

⁹⁰¹ See Spinoza, *The Ethics*: Part 2. Prop. 35. Note; Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding*: Paragraph 60. Points 1-8; Dilman, *Free will: an historical and philosophical introduction*: p.128.

Fairness does not come into it. But even then you can still tamper. The more openings you can make, the less compulsive the flow of the water. There are people that are just deeply unconscious, they have no idea and they do not want to know. So they are thrown about like a football by their complexes and by anything that happens to them. And they invariably follow the least conscious version of their pattern. And other people are in there struggling with it, and maybe having a really rough time but they are trying to work with it and they get a lot better results out of it.

Greene's astrological arguments are reflective of Schopenhauer's concept of the world as a chaotic place. Schopenhauer had seen 'fate' as being born into a pessimistic world — the World as Will.⁹⁰² For Greene, however, the individual was born into an emergent cosmos which did not have a pessimistic agenda. To quote Greene, 'The life form is not always the same it has extremes; there are times when it is flowing and times when it is at war with itself...' For Greene this is fate.

Another feature of the horoscope was, according to Cicero cited in chapter 1, that it produced an inevitable future. Robert Hand addressed this when he pointed out that '...the chart is not strictly determinative. It is only if you think that the chart makes a person become that person and nothing else and their life is totally fated and determined that astrology is hard to defend.' British financial astrologer Christeen Skinner, whom I interviewed in November 2009, came from a different perspective when she described how the horoscope contained fate but that it was not inevitable. She used an analogy from music:

.... can I come back to music on this. Yamaha managed to come up with an electronic piano that played itself. It was terrible, this thing was playing a perfect A, perfect B flat but actually it is the imperfections that makes a piece of music into something that touches your soul — so, yes, one of the beauties of astrology which is like art or music or anything else is that it is very slightly flawed or that it requires a little poetry, it requires ... it has an organic part to it.

For Skinner the horoscope was not inevitable but an organic, living, concept flawed, to be read or played like music. The non-inevitable horoscope was also the style of thinking

⁹⁰² Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea* p.23.

embraced by Dutch psychological astrologer Karen Hamaker-Zondag, whom I interviewed in Amsterdam in September, 2008. Speaking in English, she talked of how she spoke of fate to her students:

What I tell my students is that from the moment that I am born my progressions and transits are fixed, so I can actually see what is happening when I am ninety years old. And I know that things will happen in accordance with the core meaning of those planets but I cannot see what exactly. So ... there is a kind of pattern that wants to unfold and it has its own timing and it does unfold. So, yes, that you can consider as fate.

Hamakar-Zondag also saw these emergent patterns of fate running across families over generations: 'The energy which is constellated is not only of living people ...it goes back until three or four generations.'

Hamakar-Zondag's comments raise the issue of fate and time, discussed in previous chapters. Astrologers may differ on the hypothesis that the horoscope contains the will and or soul or not, resulting in very different astrological views and approaches to astrology. However, with regards to the horoscope's relationship to time, astrologers are in agreement of the link between fate and time. Robert Hand pointed this out when talking of *kairos* time he said:

In astrology the only manifestation we have of that [inevitability] is that once you are born, the time and date of all transits, progressions and directions are totally determined because they are functions of the motions of the planets. This is actually the notion that most people seem to think of when they think of fate, as something that makes it happen. You have no choice.

Fate, time and the horoscope

American medieval and Hellenistic astrologer Dorian Greenbaum, whom I interviewed in October 2008, mused on the relationship between fate and time, 'Well we believe in cycles as astrologers. I mean cycles come and they go, we can see where they are and we can predict them, so is that fated? I guess it is in a way but it's the rhythm of the universe....' This 'rhythm of the universe' to which Greenbaum referred, is for the astrologer an expression of *kairos* time, as discussed earlier, where time is perceived not only as that of

chronos linear and clock time but as subjective time, a time which has the quality of a moment, *kairos*.

Indeed the survey I conducted, discussed in chapter 7, revealed an acceptance of *kairos* time as a defining feature of astrology, along with the fact that this acceptance grew as the individual studied or worked in astrology. 56.8% of astrologers new to the subject accepted that the time of an event was fated but the actual expression of the event was not, while this acceptance grew to 77.4% for astrologers of twenty or more years of experience. I asked all the astrologers being interviewed their opinions on time and fate.

I asked Robert Hand if we ever had a choice to avoid the fated time, no matter what it held but he only laughed and replied: 'You will not miss a transit. You may not notice it but you will not miss it.' Clare Martin wrote of this as follows: 'In our natural state we live under the sometimes tyrannical dominion of the planets. But what we do with our birth chart, and how we choose to live it, is up to us.'⁹⁰³ Here Martin accepted the limitations the horoscope imposed on the timing of the events of life but stated that the will was nonetheless free. I asked Martin to expand on her understanding about fate and time and she replied:

I mean you cannot trade that in, that is what you are given. Now in the birth chart is the period of history we are born in because of the cycles of the great planets. We are all subject to that. We are all part of a period history and we are all born into a certain culture and that is our fate. Also it is our fate to ... I mean you can look at a baby's chart and see that when that baby is going to be 75 years old you can see that Pluto is going to be crossing over the ascendant. And we know exactly how that chart is going to be triggered for the rest of that person's life. We can talk about the exact date. That is also our fate.

Thus for the astrologer, the timing of a future event was fixed, inevitable and apparently non-negotiable, as Martin stated: 'This is also our fate'. I explored this notion with the financial astrologer Christeen Skinner. She was talking of a possible time when the planet Saturn was going to move into a place in its orbit which linked to the geometry of her own

⁹⁰³ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche, An Introduction to Psychological Astrology. Volume 1, The Planets and the Zodiac Signs* (London: Centre for psychological Astrology Press, 2005), p.2.

horoscopes. I asked her: 'Do you believe that in this period of time you are going to encounter 'Saturn'?' Skinner replied:

Yes, I am going to encounter something. I cannot say for sure what that thing will be, but I know what the music is that needs to be played at that time. I have a choice. I can decide that I do not want to play in that concert in which case I suspect that the cosmos will come and force me into the one next door which will be twenty times more painful. Or, if I am going to take part in it, do I want to prepare for it?

Skinner was implying that although the timing was fixed, based on her horoscope, she stated 'I have a choice'. She could willingly engage in the potential of the forthcoming event which she referred to as 'I know what the music is that needs to be played at that time' or she could use her free will to ignore it, with the caveat that ignoring it could make it 'twenty times more painful'. In contrast if she chose to 'take part in it' then she could 'prepare for it'. I asked Skinner how she would prepare for a forthcoming predicted 'encounter with Saturn'. She continued with her musical metaphor:

I know what time the performance is going to be [the time of the transit]. I do not know how the audience is going to be, or if anybody is going to show up, but I know when that performance is. So therefore, like for example I am getting old and Saturn is supposed to be [associated with] the bones, so that it would not be a bad idea to check that I am having enough calcium and things before this happens. So I am doing things that are essentially only like weather forecasting in that I am taking the umbrella out with me beforehand. But I am trying to take a healthy, well what I hope is a healthy approach to it.

Cycles by definition repeat time as in the 24 hours of a day but, as previously discussed, it was the philosophy of Stoicism which developed the notion that great cycles were linked to inevitable events. This was the Stoic concept of closed time, where the great cycle of the conflagration produced inevitability.⁹⁰⁴ Nietzsche had also bolted time and events together

⁹⁰⁴ Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.312.

to produce an inevitability which he defined as the eternal recurrence.⁹⁰⁵ Dane Rudhyar, however, reviewed in chapter 4, focused on the cyclic nature of astrology with its association with planetary cycles and separated these from closed time by coining the term 'spiral time'. Rudhyar suggested that these cycles, whether astrological or not, were emergent, with each new cycle being influenced by the last.⁹⁰⁶ In this way Rudhyar voiced the difference between the astrological use of planetary cycles and closed time of the Stoic philosophy.

Robert Hand reflected Rudhyar's view of cycles when he commented on his own experience of the cycles of Saturn — a Saturn return which happen every 29.5 years for every individual. He spoke of his own Saturn return as follows:

...they are nevertheless, only a pre-figuration, they are not going to be repeated. Nothing is ever repeated. For example both [my] Saturn returns, interestingly enough coincided with the same style of personal problems but the second one worked out fine. More recently I have had Saturn squaring those same points and its manifestations have been entirely health. And there is no reason based on where Saturn is transiting why it should have made that difference.

In referring to his life events and inherent in his conversation is the concept that one Saturn cycle would not produce the same exact events as the first.

All the astrologers interviewed saw time embedded with quality and this *kairos* time was deemed to contain their fate. For these astrologers, and for the majority surveyed, this was the result of living enmeshed in a sympathetic cosmos.

However, regardless of whether one accepted the astrologer's concept of a sympathetic cosmos, Elliott Jacques talks of the need to maintain different views of time. He argues that humans need to exist in a five-dimensional world view. Three of these dimensions are spatial and two are temporal, represented by *chronos* and *kairos* time. He suggests that all five dimensions are required in order to deal with 'the physical matrix and social matrix in

⁹⁰⁵ Cybulska, "Nietzsche: Love, Guilt and Redemption," p.9; Wolfson, "Structure, Innovation, and Diremptive Temporality: The Use of Models to Study Continuity and Discontinuity in Kabbalistic Tradition," p.159.

⁹⁰⁶ Rudhyar, *Astrological Signs the Pulse of Life*: p.12; Rayner, Rayner, and Newell, *Dane Rudhyar, an interview*: pp.94-95.

which we are embedded.'⁹⁰⁷ There is a case to be made that astrologers are using the instrument of the horoscope to enable them to focus, or gain some understanding, of their view of *kairos* time. The horoscope provides a 'clock' for the reading of *kairos* time. Given Jacques argument, and given the central nature of this concept to both the surveyed and interviewed astrologers, it would appear that astrologers were individuals who innately recognised *kairos* time and map it using the horoscope.

Fate and reason

Plato spoke of reason as the divine gift which enabled the individual to 'subdue that turbulent, irrational mass [of their material being] by means of reason.'⁹⁰⁸ Aristotle defined divine thought as 'thinking is a thinking of thinking.'⁹⁰⁹ Victor Caston argued that Aristotle anticipated Descartes' *cogito* with his view of human consciousness which he saw as an extension of divine thought.⁹¹⁰ Descartes' definition of conscious was not simply awareness of one's self but the notion of 'thinking something and reflecting on one's own thought'.⁹¹¹ Caston added that one such view of consciousness 'is a form of intentionality; and it is this alone ... which permits an informative explanation of consciousness.'⁹¹²

Many astrologers, both in the 'notes in a bottle' discussed in chapter 8, as well as in the interviews, reflected that the notion of 'reason' or consciousness was the instrument with which they avoided, negotiated or transcended fate. Alan Oken as an esoteric astrologer linked consciousness directly to free will and in his interview said, 'Free will is relative, it is very relative. Free will is relative to the expansion of consciousness that the individual achieves to help to transcend his or her biology and the psychological dynamics enthused in that biology,' indicating that for him consciousness was the ability to resist the physical desires or worries of a worldly life.

⁹⁰⁷ Jacques, *The Form of Time*: p.160.

⁹⁰⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*: 42d.

⁹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. 12.9,1174b 34

⁹¹⁰ Victor Caston, "Aristotle on Consciousness," *Mind* 111, no. 444 (2002): p.758 and p.779.

⁹¹¹ Descartes, "Conversation with Burman," AT.5.149.

⁹¹² Caston, "Aristotle on Consciousness," p.776.

Sue Ward, a horary astrologer, whom I interviewed in April 2010, understood consciousness to be used differently. I asked her whether we could change the fate that was indicated within the horoscope and she replied:

We are all to a greater or lesser degree the subjects of heavenly forces, influences, to a greater or lesser degree. We can reduce that if we believe that the stars incline, we can reduce that inclination or compulsion by sorting ourselves out. ...which I think explains my attitude far more than any other. It is that if you can gain control of yourself..., if you can gain control of yourself, purify yourself as they would have said, then you can become the mistress of your own fate. You can, as [William] Lilly said, "Rise above the stars" and that is what he means when he says that.

For Sue Ward the horoscope allowed the individual to gain a greater knowledge of themselves and through this knowledge they gained a greater understanding of the 'inclinations or compulsion' that drive them from within. In this way she suggested that 'you can gain control of yourself' and thus become the 'mistress of your own fate'. I asked if one could break the bonds of fate in this way and she replied:

Yes that is the potential, in that I think it is highly unlikely that you're not going to know that it is happening, particularly if you have a horrible Saturn in your nativity, but what you can do is re-adjust. This is the principle, this is the theory, that you re-adjust so that you do not allow it, you are able to resist, so that your life is based on choice.

Ward was suggesting that one could be free of fate by awareness but that one's fate, her statement regarding 'the horrible Saturn in your nativity', may itself make it more difficult, reminiscent of Liz Greene's comments that not all horoscopes are equal in their fate, as well as Alan Leo's comments cited in chapter 4 with regard to the poet Percy Shelley, that some people were more fated than others.⁹¹³

Melanie Reinhart also spoke of the need for awareness. She told a story of two twins with very similar charts both having events happen in their life at the same time yet one being far worse than the other. I asked Reinhart the question: 'What makes the event different for each twin? Does free will come in here?' Reinhart replied:

⁹¹³ Leo, *The Progressed Horoscope*: p.8.

I think that if one is plodding along relatively unconsciously in any area of life then the experience of choice is often either not possible or in fact it is an illusion or... yes, basically one of those two. So the more conscious someone is the more choice they have,... the more the possibility of free choice does arise.

Although not her intention, Reinhart was answering Cicero's challenge regarding twins who lived different lives, cited in chapter 1. Reinhart's comment implies that the astrologer believes that the twins will have the same *symbolic* life.

The astrologers therefore rejected Hume's notion that reason was not relevant for awareness and accepted the Platonic relationship between fate and reason. Some astrologers such as Alan Oken considered that fate could be transcended and thus reflected the Platonic idea of consciousness, while others, such as Greene, accepted that consciousness could be used to increase knowledge of oneself in order to reduce the internal pain of one's mind, reflecting the Stoic/Schopenhauer/Spinozian arguments. Others like Reinhart and Ward appeared to follow Rudhyar's suggestions of altering the present in order to co-create the future via the concepts of emergentism, as discussed in chapter 3. However, for all these astrologers the idea of self-knowledge in order to facilitate a natural compatibilism was a central theme of their astrology, as well as what they sought for their clients.

Fate and the astrologer's clients

The motivation of these interviewed astrologers was to help their clients gain insight into their life through enabling the client to become conscious of their own life patterns. For these astrologers the patterns contained within the fated planetary cycles were indicated by the horoscope.

When I asked the Australian astrologer Brian Clark how he understood fate, he moved the conversation to his work with clients and commented:

Well fate is a ... fate is a word I use sometimes. Well actually I would say I use it quite a bit with a client. Like as an astrologer you sort of feel that you have this ... I'd say not so much right but you have this ... yeah it is like a right to be able to speak about fate. That is why people come. I figure that people come because they

want to know about this because the answers they are not receiving from anywhere else.

He then talked of the way one could participate with fate through gaining an understanding or becoming aware of it. He continued:

I guess it is like an acceptance of trying not to change what cannot be changed. I mean we cannot change others. We cannot make people love us, we can't ..we can't ... but what we can do is start to accept the way that it is.

Sometimes we can change a situation, and then you want to empower somebody or help them —... help them to see that they can change that and then they can participate, that is change. But ... but when we have situations that really can't be changed —... try to ... not extract a blame... to help them to understand the responsibility. To accept that. To participate with that.

Then while they fear that they will be sad or very disappointed....is, is,... is what they find is actually that they feel more empowered. That is the kind of limit of where they can go, if that makes sense. So there are many situation of where you can see that you can help a client to be more accepting of a situation that they can't change.

Clark's comments appear to be reflecting the Spinozian idea of inner freedom through acceptance of one's situation, or it could be seen as a Stoic resolve. However, unlike Spinoza or as with Stoicism, Clark considered that there are times when the client could change a situation. Melanie Reinhart also described this method for enabling an individual to gain meaning from their experiences, as way of linking the client to what she considered was the fate of their life. She spoke of this by saying:

Someone will come in with their life falling apart and I will very often just track with them how this unfolded or when it started. So either with my printout or from my computer I will show them on the graph, and I just give them the timing of the whole thing. Then I can say next port of call is here and then there is that and that etc etc. I would alert them to the fact that there is a process going on in their lives that they are in the middle of and feeling bad but there is an order to it that they may not have felt.

Roy Gillett put this even more simply, using the example of working with a couple who were thinking of a divorce:

... if they both come to see you , you can say “Well now look now you have a choice. Saturn is going to square your Jupiter and oppose your Mars, you are going to feel very brutal and difficult with each other. But do you love each other? Are you willing to go through a very painful experience together, and support each other through it. Because if you do you are probably setting this relationship up to be a wonderful relationship for the rest of your life. Or do you think you can do better elsewhere? I can tell you that with this transit for the next six months, if you do try and do better elsewhere you are going to go from the frying pan into the fire. .. but it is entirely up to you.” Now this is freedom, this is not enslavement to astrology.

As these astrologers endeavoured to help their clients with becoming more conscious of their patterns or enabling them to participate more fully in their life, so they also sought to follow their own advice.

Living with fate

Hone, discussed in chapter 6, had argued in 1951 that the role of the horoscope was to allow astrologers to have an objective view of the self and thus provide an instrument of both information as well as detachment. I asked the astrologers how they handled the fated information revealed by their own horoscope.

Carolyn Egan, an astrologer from the USA who specialises in weather predicting talked of her own experience in living with her horoscope. When I interviewed her in March 2010, and asked her if a person could change their fate, she replied:

When I started to study astrology I saw how many influences I had from my 3rd house. I am Gemini also and my 8th house is ruled by Mercury and there has been lung cancer in my family and so I gave up smoking because of what I saw in my chart. And I am still here and we have early deaths in my family ...

In this way Egan believed she had potentially changed her fate but used the warning in her chart to indicate possible problems with the lungs. In astrology Gemini is said to be related to the lungs and its ruling planet is Mercury and the 8th house in astrology said to be

associated with death.⁹¹⁴ Thus to Egan's eye this was a warning of potential health issues to do with her lungs. Egan's approach was reminiscent of Sepharial's view discussed in chapter 4; Egan read what Sepharial had called the 'sign of the times'.⁹¹⁵ Egan was not concerned with other possible expressions of these planetary fates but rather used the chart like a set of signals that could be read and taken into account, in this case to give up behaviour which would have increased her potential death by lung cancer. Egan was expressing Cartesian dualist views similar to both Sepharial and the financial astrologer McWhirter as discussed in chapter 4.

The South African astrologer Rod Suskin talked of his own use of his horoscope by saying that 'For me for myself I will always look back', meaning that he would look back at past events in his life and link them to a predicted event in his horoscope in order to learn of a possible future event. However he added, 'but I do have to confess that I spend as little time looking at my own chart as humanly possible because I am good at freaking myself out with it.' Such a view was also expressed in some of the 'messages in a bottle' discussed in the previous chapter. Some of these implied a certain apprehension about the future, suggesting the astrologer may not, in practice, hold a natural compatibilist orientation as they felt unable to influence their fate and thus were wary of its portents.

In October 2009 I asked Dutch business astrologer Faye Cossar what she did if she saw a difficult event in the future for herself. She replied:

I try and use it. I will try and negotiate and co-create and think what can I do with that. I might not necessarily then think "shit I must do that". But I would be aware of that. Like with the Neptune transit, I was aware I do not want it to go into addiction, so I think it might be a good time to get into a photography course.

Cossar is suggesting the compatibilist view that she can give fate another outlet in her life. For her, the planet Neptune is associated with matters to do with addiction as well as matters to do with illusion, hence Cossar's reference to photography. To her eye the future held an encounter with 'Neptune'; this was fated and could not be avoided. However,

⁹¹⁴ Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*: p.21, p.39, p.53 and p.94.

⁹¹⁵ Sepharial, *Directional Astrology* p.42.

instead of waiting for the encounter, she strove to instigate that 'meeting' with her fate and thus hoped to be able to choose the expression of the 'meeting'.

Dorian Greenbaum, also expressed a natural compatibilist view when she talked of how she planned undertaking her PhD studies while it was auspicious, according to her horoscope, for her to engage in a period of hard work. She described it in this way:

When I started by PhD, Saturn was just about to go into my 10th house. So I took the energy of Saturn on the Midheaven to say "Okay I am going to go and work on getting this degree. I am going to work very hard .. and.. um.. I did... (*laughs*).

Greenbaum was timing her decision to engage in a PhD on the understanding that in astrology the planet Saturn is associated with hard work and respectability and the 10th house is associated with public standing or career.⁹¹⁶

Alan Oken, as an esoteric astrologer, took the same compatibilist approach to his fate. Using the language of astrology, he described a fated difficult time ahead of him which could have been violence or even death and, given this, he made a series of decisions to change his living situation:

I knew that that aspect was on its way for yearsssssss before it happened. (*Oken stressed the years drawing it out*) I said OK let's get some place safe. Let's gets some place safe so that that can happen in a comfort zone.

Oken had 'seen' his fated meeting established in the future movement of planets and the geometry of his own horoscope. He accepted this fated encounter and decides to relocate to a 'safe' place.

So I move to very safe place because I know that that aspect will be brutal, at the very least life challenging, and maybe even be life threatening and, because I have nothing else to support Mars in my chart, "Let's get some place where there is a lot of nurturing, let's get some place where I can be nurtured. Now let's get to a place where the dynamics of the way I nurture will be tested and it will be okay for me to be tested there." So I did that. I moved to Lisbon, Portugal.

⁹¹⁶ Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*: p.30, p.95.

Oken accepted that he cannot avoid his fate but like Cossar he sought to choose the expression of this 'meeting'. The events for Oken, as for Cossar, were not inevitable; what was inevitable were the timing and the quality. Oken knew the timing and he believed that, in his own words, 'it will be brutal'. He continued with his personal story:

Now I took a very cushy apartment in Lisbon and I have a lot of very close friends in Lisbon and the thought was that "OK, this will be a safe place for Pluto opposing Mars". So what happens, right... I fall down, my foot is badly injured, I am starting to age very rapidly, I need all of those friends to bring food and groceries and to help me to get to my teaching classes, because I am hobbling. The evaluators for the entire time I lived in this beautiful apartment on the sixth floor of a seven story building kept breaking down. I sometimes would be isolated in that apartment for days at a time because my foot was really bad. I could not walk, my maid robbed me while I was in London on a teaching trip, I got ripped off financially, and I also came into a whole bunch of money. So I got financially regenerated as well as robbed, as well as ripped off, as well as aging ... my whole level of compassion grew for people who are ill, for people who are suffering, for people who have less than a good group of friends to take care of them.

I asked Oken if this was, in his opinion, how he had used his free will, choosing to move to Portugal, but he quickly replied, 'The free will was my attitude, not so much in moving to Portugal.'

In February 2010 I interviewed Australian medieval and esoteric astrologer and software developer Stephanie Johnson. She described her experience of living an astrological life and seeing future times and possible events in her own horoscope:

I tried to juggle things so that [transiting] Saturn on my Moon would not be my son getting incredibly ill and.....some things you can grow through and some things you can kind of juggle and there are other things that are just thrown at us and we need to deal with them. So the value of hindsight is wonderful and the value of foresight can be wonderful but it is not necessarily going to change things.... astrology is a very powerful tool and it is basically helping us to live the best life we can. ... sometimes when you keep those sorts of things in mind you can kind of learn your lessons the easy way, but sometimes things are out of your control.

Johnson was concerned about the forthcoming time in her life described by astrology as the joining of the planet Saturn with that of her natal Moon. Traditionally this is considered a

combination of hardship or worry involving children or loved ones.⁹¹⁷ Johnson revealed her compatibilist credentials when she spoke of trying to 'juggle things', but accepted that at times 'things are out of your control'.

British humanistic and homeopathic astrologer Sue Tompkins, whom I interviewed in November 2009, also spoke of what it was like to live as an astrologer:

A few years ago, I have this group of south London friends and we tend to do things on people's birthdays. One of the group was about to have a 60th birthday and she wanted us all to go to Morocco. And this is a discussion in April for something which is happening in the following November. I looked at the transits in November and I thought, "Oh God, I don't want to go away in November". It was massive Saturn, you know, which is not horrendous but — ... but on the other hand I could not not because it was — ... anyway, so masses of Saturn transits and we went to Morocco and I had a great holiday! But basically the whole place was full of Saturn because it was a city which was a walled city. Everywhere there are donkeys, beast of burden. We went up the Atlas mountains, there was impoverishment, it was uncharacteristically cold, so we were all wearing all! You know, it was just Saturn all the way through. But hey! We had a great holiday. So one still meets the symbolism, we have all done this, one meets the symbolism of whatever the given planet is. BUT I could not have predicted that.

Tompkins was commenting that, for her she still 'met' the planet Saturn but instead of her expectation of depression or difficulties she 'met' the planet's symbolism as a walled city, beasts of burden, impoverishment and the cold.⁹¹⁸ Here Tompkins did not try and 'juggle things' as Oken and Johnson but instead took her chances with the holiday at what she considered was a difficult time, only to find, from her perception, the symbolism fulfilled in a benign manner.

Barbara Dunn, whose work was discussed in chapter 5, talked of living her life with horary astrology. I interviewed her in April 2010 and she mused on how she would try and select the fate for a situation by waiting for a good astrological time before asking a question:

I can remember years ago when I was working for .. I was trying to get a job on *Cosmopolitan* and I remember thinking that I would do a horary today, and I

⁹¹⁷ Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*: p.151, p.188.

⁹¹⁸ Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*: pp.30-31.

thought "No I won't, bad day". And this went on for about three or four weeks until I got a good day. So I asked the question, I mean you can never be sure because of the minute but you can have a rough idea. I asked the question "Will I get the job?" – Yes, it looks good. I get the job. And I wonder. I still have the chart and I still look at it and I sort of wonder how that works. I am not quite sure about that either.

With her mental knowledge of the position of the planets, Dunn would pose the question in her mind, asking if this was a good time to ask this question. If she mentally calculated that it was not, then she would not 'ask the question'. However, after some weeks she considered that the planets were now in auspicious places for such a question to be asked. Thus for her getting the job at *Cosmopolitan* justified the process of waiting. However, she wondered if she created the fate or not. Dunn's next example reflected the dilemma of Calcidius, the fourth century philosopher discussed in chapter 2, who posed that because we are fate-creators by our own actions we are totally responsible for that fate:

And another awful instance with a friend of mine about ten years ago. She had a lump in her breast and she said to me, we were in the car. "I've got this lump, but it won't be anything", and I thought to myself, "No it won't be anything but I will do a horary", I thought in my head. And the horary was dreadful, but I had thought that it would be good. I had made a mistake, I thought it was going to be a good horary, a good chart for her. I did not tell her —... I did the chart and it was awful and she did have cancer. I mean she survived it but I was not sure what was going on then either. I was trying to help because I thought that if I get a good horary and if I am casting fate I am going to help her.

Dunn worried about the moral responsibility of being a fate-caster. Calcidius warned of this problem but his solution was to go to an astrologer for help in understanding the consequences of one's potential actions.⁹¹⁹ Dunn's problem was her need for another unemotionally involved fate-caster; if her friend had died Dunn would have been left with the worry of being the causal agent. Her worries were due to the modern notions of horary astrology, which needs to uniquely provide the power of self-agency to the individual to avoid the consequences of the inevitability of the horary rules of reading the horoscopes, but the consequences of this power are the moral responsibility of a 'fate-caster'. However, Dunn was not sure of seeing herself as holding the power of what Plato called the 'Prime

⁹¹⁹ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 157.

Mover', the beginning of a causal chain.⁹²⁰ I asked her if this was where she located free will in her astrology, by being able to choose to ask the question or not, and although she practiced it in this manner, she replied in a way which showed her doubt and confusion regarding this point:

I don't really think so, I don't think so because even .. I sort of think that even if you think you have got free will and you are tuning it into asking questions or taking actions or whatever people do in their day to day life, I think it is already .. I think you are just doing what you are predetermined for you.⁹²¹

Dunn's comments show that the horary astrologer can either step into a position of natural hard incompatibilism or assume Calcidius' concept of giving humanity a level of godliness, and thus adopt a natural libertarian position.

In contrast to Dunn's story was that of Brian Clark. When I asked him about how he dealt with forthcoming predicted difficult events which he saw in his own horoscope, he firstly used astrological terms to describe what was happening in his horoscope – his planetary fate; he then talked of his experience of this:

The last time I had a major Pluto transits, I found my neighbour — (I have moved since then), I rushed over to her house and found her— ... she had been on the floor of her bathroom all night. I knew that something was wrong, I just knew it.

I helped her up and blah blah blah... (*Brian waves his hands in the air*) and she eventually died. But to cut a long story short, this [his current] neighbour I am having the problem with — his birthday is the same day as mine and he just turned 30 and I have just turned 60 so we are like —... and I laugh because I can see ... The astrological images allow a kind of ... I don't know it is like "Hah hah haaaa", you know? It got me!

(Clark is referring to the fact that with a shared birthday the neighbour's natal sun is the same zodiacal position as his thus he knows that the neighbour is also 'meeting' the planet Pluto via his natal sun.)

But what it does is that, well, he is a very nasty person but what it does is lessen my —...if, if ... if I sit with it I feel very rage-full and I am going to go over and smash

⁹²⁰ Plato, *Laws*: 894e-895b.

⁹²¹ Interview with Barbara Dunn on 27 April, 2010.

this person, but really when I reflect on it, because of what I know about it, it lessens that —... There is... there is something bigger going on, and I have to find the answer to that so when I see these things and I use the astrological images, whatever they are, I am trying, as much as possible, be alert to them, to the potentialities and possibilities of them and to be more reflective and be understanding, to try to not, in any way, circumvent life but to live it, and to live it with the knowledge of what is going on around me.

Clark's story is of a person who lives in a sympathetic cosmos. He defines this as participating in life and, for him, this participation gives him a different perspective on life's situations. He finds himself placed in a situation where he is enraged by his neighbour. However, by using the information in his horoscope he is able to detach from that rage and resist his desire to 'smash this person'. Instead there is another deeper story at stake, fated and a little mysterious. Anthony Giddens writing on self-identity argues that, 'Fateful moments are times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands, as it were, at a crossroads in his existence; or where a person learns of information with fateful consequences.'⁹²² From his perspective Clark was standing at such a fateful moment, and there was another level of meaning to the situation with his neighbour which he did not understand but was sure that 'there is something bigger going on', hence he 'sits with it', he 'reflects on it because of what I know about it'.

Clark's story of his own struggle with his emotions and his resistance to the normal flow of events has resonance with Spinoza's philosophy. Clark accepted his fate but by using an instrument of detachment, for him this was his horoscope which also provided an inner personal and unbiased authority, he found he could 'lessen' the heat of his anger. He engaged his reason by pondering the deeper significance of the events. For Clark this was participating in his life, rather than just blindly living it.

James Davidson in his light-hearted critique of astrology in 2004 wrote: 'Getting into astrology is like being drawn through the door of your own private cathedral or seduced by

⁹²² Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity. Self and society in the late modern age*: p.113.

a fugue constructed out of the letters of your name.'⁹²³ Davidson's comments are written to suggest that astrology is a self-indulgent subject but in his criticism he echoes a truth, for a cathedral, or even a fugue, is a place where one comes closer to a version of the divine. For an astrologer, the horoscope is one's link to a sympathetic cosmos, for they use it for their own life decisions; they also introduced their clients to their 'own private cathedrals'. Such an introduction, as shown by these interviews as well as the interviews in chapter 8, provided a level of detachment which allowed for the individual to be reflective of their life. In Clark's example, which was not unique, he reached for the Spinozian concept of *sub specie aeternitatis*, where his reason could function without reference to time.⁹²⁴ He pondered the death of an elderly neighbour many years before, while also talking of present difficulties, both for him linked in a timeless moment. Clark was aware that, by stepping into this detached place of reason, his rage reduced and he was able to respond differently rather than being a pawn of the flow of events. This for Clark was the expression of his free will in a compatibilist manner as he does not deny the workings of fate in his life.

These replies revealed individuals who were living in a sympathetic cosmos, some seeing it as a set of additional instructions to be taken into account, others such as the horary astrologer Dunn, concerned with the moral responsibility of being a fate-caster.

Summary of the Interviews

The aim of this chapter was to present the views of a group of professional astrologers. The interviews were focused on the astrologers' views on fate and although the interviews were not structured, there were common themes which spontaneously emerged. While there were diverse personal philosophies, all the astrologers embraced the notion of a sympathetic cosmos where their horoscope revealed the nature of their personal relationship with this cosmos. Fate, separate to determinism, organised the order of their world, either divine or as part of the natural laws of the cosmos. Some of the astrologers

⁹²³ James Davidson, "I told you so," *The London Review* 2004, pp.13-14.

⁹²⁴ Spinoza, *The Ethics*: Part 4. Prop. 62 also expanded in Part 62.Prop.44. Corollary 62.

talked of fate when they talked of soul, the holder of the will and reason. Soul, for them, is the notion of consciousness, similar to awareness. It was this awareness, in varying ways that was the vital tool for living with fate. Some of the astrologers adopted a Platonic dualist argument, believing that they could develop their awareness in order to transcend their material fate, thus reflecting Leo's astrology or possibly Rudhyar's astrology; others adopted a Cartesian attitude where their horoscope was used as a set of signals to be read.

Those astrologers who supported a monist argument accepted that awareness could be used to give greater understanding of their material fate. These astrologers expressed the concept as 'soul-making' and followed a naturalistic philosophy which could embrace Hume's pragmatic approach, or adopt Schopenhauer's dualism of mind and 'Will'. Such astrologers saw their astrology as giving information about the on-going internal dynamic between mind and Will or unconscious/mental complexes.

Fate and time were also examined, as the survey had revealed this link to be a fundamental astrological premise for the majority of astrologers. Amongst the interviewed astrologers no support was found for Cicero's assumption that the horoscope produced an inevitable horoscope, although the horary astrologers drew close to this acceptance. However, the horary astrologers sought a natural libertarianism by adopting Calcidius' thinking of attributing self-agency — they believed their freedom was contained in their choice to ask a question or not. All the other interviewed astrologers adopted a compatibilist approach using a *kairos*-like view of time, where a fatalistic acceptance of timing, no matter what action they took, meant they 'met' a certain planetary symbolism at a set date in their future. Thus fatalism existed in the astrologers' attitude to timing, but it was limited in that only the time was set, not the event. This was shaped but not defined by the symbol or the emergent pattern. All the astrologers in different ways sought to negotiate with fate. In this way the astrologers held a natural compatibilist attitude.

Additionally the interviews showed that the nature of each astrologer's thinking about soul, horoscope, fate, and awareness became the philosophy they employed when working with their clients. Apart from the horary astrologers, client work was not based in the quest for inevitability but instead was motivated to provide the client with awareness of what the

astrologer believed was their client's personal relationship with a sympathetic cosmos. The chapter also focused on the astrologers' personal stories of living with fate. Some of the astrologers used their horoscope to objectively read its signals taking a Cartesian attitude to the world of matter, while others engaged in a Spinozian-like philosophy of using their horoscope as a form of detachment to enable them to accept that they were a part of nature and step back and reflect, thereby enabling the use of their free will.

Finally, it became clear that, whether the astrologer was an esoteric astrologer with Platonist-like theories of fate, such as Alan Oken, or a pragmatic humanistic astrologer like Sue Tompkins, or a mythologically-inspired emergent astrologer like Brian Clark, or the Jungian Spinozian astrologer Liz Greene, all of these astrologers had the same approach to living with fate. They lived in a sympathetic cosmos and considered that they could participate and/or negotiate with fate in some manner. This was the underlying theme of their theory of fate onto which they placed their other personal beliefs.

The next chapter draws the thesis to a conclusion.