

Chapter 2

Theories of Fate and Cosmic order

This chapter presents a classical literature review in order to establish a background for the investigation of the beliefs held by contemporary astrologers. This review presents the established perception of these classical authors rather than seeking to be representative of the scholarly debates concerning issues of translation. The chapter considers fate as portrayed in the word of Homer, together with the classical theories of fate of Plato (c.424–348 B.C.E.), Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), and the Stoics and their influence on other classical and Late Antiquity authors all of which exerted an influence on debates concerning the nature of astrology.¹⁵⁶ The chapter will introduce their varying theories of fate and the nature of their links to the idea of a divine ordered cosmos. Additionally this chapter considers the influence of the work of Saint Augustine (354–430) and Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) as an extension of these theories of fate beyond the classical period.

Introduction

When considering the classical notions of fate, Michael Frede argues that the notion of the human will, as well as the freedom of this will, did not come into classical philosophy as a concept until the work of the Stoic Epictetus (55–135 C.E.) who phrased it, according to Frede, as the concept of 'what is up to us'.¹⁵⁷ Earlier Aristotle had in *Nicomachean Ethics* discussed the notion of choice based upon desire. According to Terence Irwin's translation he wrote, 'Hence also decision will be deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us;

¹⁵⁶ Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*: pp.2-3.

¹⁵⁷ Frede, *A Free Will - Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*: p.45; See Epictetus, *Discourses Books 1 and 2*, trans. P.E.Matheson (New York: Dover Publications Inc, trans. 2004), Book I.1.

for when we have judged as a result of deliberation, our desire to do it expresses our wish.'¹⁵⁸

However, Frede argues that for Epictetus 'up to us' had a different focus as he used the expression with concern to the mind's internal reactions to external events — events over which he considered one had no control.¹⁵⁹ Susanne Bobzien also comments that Chrysippus (279 – 206 B.C.E.) the third head of the Stoa, does not use a word for freedom, but instead talks of a notion described as 'not externally hindered, not necessitated.'¹⁶⁰

The actual term of free will, according to Frede, was not used until the third quarter of the second century when the Christian apologist Tatian, in his *Oratio and Graecos*, referred to, 'eleutheria tēs prohaireseōs' which Frede translates as, 'the freedom of the will.'¹⁶¹ Consequently in considering the classical works on fate in this thesis the term 'what is up to us' will be used with the caveat that the writings of Homer, Plato and Aristotle and the early Stoics all use the notion of 'what is up to us' to imply different concepts around attitude, choice and action.

Fate

Debates concerning fate have a long history. Leo Oppenheim suggests that the Mesopotamians possessed a concept of fate.¹⁶² Contrary to Oppenheim, Francesca Rochberg-Halton points out that, although the Assyrians worked with the movement of the heavens as relevant to life on earth, they did not appear to have, or at least it is not known that they had, a clear doctrine on fate.¹⁶³ However, both Rochberg and Daren Lehoux suggest that the idea of fate in the Assyrian period was often presented as a type of law, or

¹⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1985), III.1113a. 10-12

¹⁵⁹ Frede, *A Free Will - Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*: p.45.

¹⁶⁰ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.330.

¹⁶¹ Frede, *A Free Will - Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*: p.102.

¹⁶² Leo A. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp.201-208.

¹⁶³ Francesca Rochberg-Halton, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: the Lunar Eclipse Tablets of Enuma Anu Enlil* (Horn: Archiv fur Orientforschung, 22; Ferdinand Berger & Sohne, 1988), p.15.

a legal decree.¹⁶⁴ An example of such a notion of fate is found in Simo Parpola's translation of an Assyrian text from c.650 B.C.E. which reads, 'As [regards the su]bstitute king about whom [the king, my lord, wrote to me]: Let him sit for a 100 days; (only) [after] he has completed the 100 days, [he should go to his fate].'¹⁶⁵ It would seem that the planetary omens have produced a fate for the king; however, fate can be fulfilled by the use of a substitute king who will be king for 100 days after which he will meet his fate, which implied that he will be killed. This text encompasses a notion of choice as the king will meet his fate but he, or another, could choose *who* will play the role of 'king'.

Within Greek literature there were different notions of fate. For the Greeks, fate or the Fates were the personification of the *Moirae*. Mircea Eliade argued that the *Moirae* were goddesses of both destiny and birth.¹⁶⁶ Dietrich notes this when he writes: 'Normally the explanation offered is that *Moirai* or the *Moirae* appear to bring luck or bear gifts to the new born infant.'¹⁶⁷ Richard Onians also talked of the idea of *moira* as weaving or spinning concept which was a 'binding process on the part of the powers determining man's fate.'¹⁶⁸ Additional to the idea of *moira* was the concept of *ananke* which is necessity and J.O. Urmson points out it had a variety of meanings as both Plato and Aristotle used it not only as the logical and necessary result of earlier actions — Plato, *Timaeus*, 40d and Aristotle *An. Pr.* 24b 18 — but also to denote both the necessity of the compulsion of a force and the necessity of the consequences of how the world was constructed.¹⁶⁹

There was also the later word *heimarmene*, defined in the second century C.E. text by Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fato*, as 'a law because it has laid down the consequences which

¹⁶⁴ Daryn Lehoux, "Tomorrow's News Today: Astrology, Fate, and the Way Out," *Representations* Summer (2006): p.111; Francesca Rochberg, "Fate and Divination in Mesopotamia," *Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft* no. 19 (1982): p.363.

¹⁶⁵ Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal Part 1* (Germany: Butzon and Kevelaer 1970), Letter 292.

¹⁶⁶ M. Eliade, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions* (Paris 1949), p.163.

¹⁶⁷ B. C. Dietrich, "The Spinning of Fate in Homer," *Phoenix* 16, no. 2 (1962): p.94.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate* (London: Cambridge University Press, [1951] 1954), p.349.

¹⁶⁹ J.O Urmson, *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p.20.

follow upon occurrences, as in the legislation of a state.¹⁷⁰ This is a similar concept to that of the Assyrian period cited by Rochberg and Lehoux earlier. R. Sklenář, however, defines *heimarmene* as 'the Stoic notion of ... the all-pervading network of causation.'¹⁷¹ J. B. McMinin agrees and writes, '*Heimarmene* is like a fine thread running through the whole of existence; it is the logos of the cosmos, the mind of God.'¹⁷² Kocku von Stuckrad considers *heimarmene* as a feature of the doctrine of correspondences, the belief in the interlinked nature of all things and he writes that:

It [the doctrine of correspondences] is visible in the Stoic concept of sympathy and *heimarmene* as well as in the Platonists' description of the world as a living creature with every part connected to one another or to its transcendent idea.¹⁷³

Hence according to von Stuckrad the notion of *heimarmene* was more a divine law than the logical or mechanical-like law of matter contained in the idea of *ananke*. Ilsetraut Hadot notes, however, that the divine law contained in the notion of *heimarmene* was the divine law which ruled over the lives of all men measuring out justice.¹⁷⁴

There was also the notion of *tyche*, which McMinin points out is different from *heimarmene* in that humanity wished 'to free himself from the bondage of *Ananke* and the caprice of *Tyche*.'¹⁷⁵ This comment by McMinin seems to suggest that *tyche* contains a certain fickleness which F. J. K. Soontjens comments is the notion of 'chance'. This is not, however, solely our contemporary notion of chance as it could also contain the idea of teleology.¹⁷⁶ Dorothea Frede also emphasises that *tyche* is the concept of a thing which

¹⁷⁰ Ps-Plutarch, *De Fato*, vol. VII, *Moralia* (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1959), 570B.

¹⁷¹ R. Sklenář, "Seneca, Oedipus 980-94: How Stoic a Chorus?," *The Classical Journal* 103, no. 2 (2007): p.193.

¹⁷² J. B. McMinin, "Fusion of the Gods: A Religio-Astrological Study of the Interpenetration of the East and the West in Asia Minor," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15, no. 4 (1956): p.203.

¹⁷³ Kocku von Stuckrad, "Jewish and Christian Astrology in Late Antiquity: A New Approach," *Numen* 47, no. 1 (2000): p.9.

¹⁷⁴ Ilsetraut Hadot, *Studies on the Neoplatonist Hierocles*, trans. Michael Chase (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), p.104.

¹⁷⁵ McMinin, "Fusion of the Gods: A Religio-Astrological Study of the Interpenetration of the East and the West in Asia Minor," p.204.

¹⁷⁶ F. J. K. Soontjens, "Evolution: Teleology or Chance?," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science / Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie* 22, no. 1 (1991): p.133.

happens by accident.¹⁷⁷ Additionally Walter Agard writes of *tyche* that it was used to imply 'in many instances nothing more than ordinary uncertainty, opportunity, or good and bad luck.'¹⁷⁸

Homer used the concepts of *ananke* and *moira* in his work. Written down in the eighth century B.C.E.¹⁷⁹, Homer's work provided images of an inevitable force. He wrote of the *Moirae* in the *Iliad* when Priam's wife, grieving for the death of her son Hector, tried to stop Priam taking revenge for their son's death by reminding her husband that the *Moirae* had spun Hector's fate at his birth. Samuel Butler's translation reads, 'Let us then weep Hector from afar here in our own house, for when I gave him birth the threads of overruling fate were spun for him that dogs should eat his flesh far from his parents...' ¹⁸⁰ Earlier in the *Iliad* Homer's description of the forthcoming fight between Pisander and Menelaus also portrayed a view of *moira*. Homer considered it ruthless, for he wrote, in the words of Butler's translation 'Pisander then made straight at Menelaus — his evil destiny luring him on to his doom, for he was to fall in fight with you, O Menelaus.'¹⁸¹

In addition to a fate which is spun, Homer also used the concept of necessity or *ananke*. Onians comments that:

In Homer, one is struck by the fact that his heroes with all their magnificent vitality and activity feel themselves at every turn not free agents but passive instruments or victims of other powers.¹⁸²

Kalliopi Nikolopoulou also talks of this other style of fate in Homer's *Iliad*. He refers to it as:

The fear of mortality, the quintessential fear of the standing being, turns Achilles into an animal. The animal is not bound by oaths or treaties — the symbolic reminders of human limitedness and of human subjugation to *Ananke*. Because it operates on instinct, and because instinct is governed completely by necessity, the

¹⁷⁷ Dorothea Frede, "Accidental Causes in Aristotle," *Synthese* 92, no. 1 (1992): p.39.

¹⁷⁸ Walter R. Agard, "Fate and Freedom in Greek Tragedy," *The Classical Journal* 29, no. 2 (1933): p.119.

¹⁷⁹ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. M.Cary, et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

¹⁸⁰ Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Samuel Butler (Digireads.com Publishing, [1898] 2009), 24.210-216 .

¹⁸¹ Homer, *Iliad*: 13.603-605.

¹⁸² Onians, *The Origins of European Thought About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate*: p.303.

animal creature does not recognize necessity as alien to it, and thus remains unconscious of negation, limits, and ultimately, death.¹⁸³

Here Nikolopoulou reminds us that *ananke* is the concept of necessity and portrays necessity's influence on the human mind as the pressure of instinctual behaviour.¹⁸⁴

Simone Weil (1909–1943) focused on this concept of necessity and argued that Homer's necessity had a ruthless universality; Homer used the inevitability of the outcomes of the story of war and death to create a theme of the human will being consumed by a 'force'.¹⁸⁵ This necessity portrayed in Homer's *Iliad* was administered by Zeus but in this regard Zeus did not actually control the laws of necessity. Homer wrote of the death of Hector as follows:

... when they reached the Spring for the fourth time, the Father held out his golden scales, and putting sentence of death in either pan, on one side for Achilles, on the other for horse-taming Hector, he raised the balance by the middle of the beam. The beam came down on Hector's side, spelling his doom. He was a dead man.¹⁸⁶

In this way Weil argued that Homer's idea of necessity was guided by 'geometrical rigor', a force which constantly redressed itself with no regard for humanity as it sought perfection or balance.¹⁸⁷ In the *Iliad* Zeus may hold the scales of death but he is not the cause of these scales. Indeed with non-personal necessity in mind one can understand the lament of Helen of Troy when Euripides had her announce, 'Naught is might exceedeth dread necessity.'¹⁸⁸

In contrast, the play *Oedipus Rex* by the Greek tragedian Sophocles (c.496–406 B.C.E.) is not a play principally about ruthless necessity; it instead seems to embrace the *Moirae*, cited earlier, the personified fates and goddesses who spin one's destiny.¹⁸⁹ Destiny can

¹⁸³ Kalliopi Nikolopoulou, "Feet, Fate, and Finitude: On Standing and Inertia in the *Iliad*," *College Literature* 34, no. 2 (2007): p.180.

¹⁸⁴ Nikolopoulou, "Feet, Fate, and Finitude: On Standing and Inertia in the *Iliad*," p.177.

¹⁸⁵ Simone Weil, "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force," *Chicago Review* 18, no. 2 (1965): p.6.

¹⁸⁶ Homer, *Iliad*, trans. E.V.Rieu (London: The Penguin Classics, 1964), 22.230-240.

¹⁸⁷ Weil, "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force," p.15.

¹⁸⁸ Euripides, "Helen,"

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0100%3Acard%3D1>. 5 Feb 2011.(Helen, 514).

¹⁸⁹ Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess* (London: Penguin Arkana, 1993), p.360.

have different definitions. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) defined destiny as that which is our predisposition, basing destiny in our character.¹⁹⁰ Later in the contemporary period Karl Popper, in discussing the determinism of science, also used the term destiny but he used it to indicate a predetermined event.¹⁹¹ However, returning to Homer, Agard claims destiny is, 'a decree of "God" as experienced by an individual man.'¹⁹² In Sophocles' play, therefore, it is the destiny of Oedipus to kill his father and marry his mother as the god Apollo had decreed it; nevertheless Sophocles did not view destiny as denying moral responsibility, for in the play he allows Oedipus to take personal responsibility for his crimes. As Lham Dilman argues, Oedipus ensured the fulfilment of his destiny through his own ignorance and blindness of the consequences of his actions.¹⁹³ Unlike the characters swept up in the battle within Homer's *Iliad*, Oedipus, having unknowingly fulfilled his destiny, sought the truth through self-knowledge, though the use of his reason. This is the difference between Homer's necessity (*ananke*) and the role of the Fates (*Moirai*) posited by Sophocles, Homer's heroes fail to use their reason whereas Sophocles' character, Oedipus, does. E.R. Dodds argues that the gods did not predict that Oedipus would pursue the truth, only that he would commit the crimes.¹⁹⁴ One can argue that Sophocles' play, therefore, offers an opinion that the divine gift of human reason is the progenitor of moral responsibility.

Plato and the divine cosmos

The exploration of notions of a spun fate and its link to a divine and ordered cosmos was a theme in the works of Plato. It is in the *Timaeus* that Plato writes of the cosmos being the act of creation of an intelligent and ordering force:

... he [the demiurge] put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe. He wanted to produce a piece of work that would be as excellent and supreme as its nature would allow. This, then, in keeping with our

¹⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960 [1793]), Book I, pt1.

¹⁹¹ Karl Popper, "Indeterminism in Quantum Physics and Classical Physics," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* Vol. 1, no. No. 2 (1950): p.122.

¹⁹² Agard, "Fate and Freedom in Greek Tragedy," p.119.

¹⁹³ Sophocles and E.H. Plumptre, *Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King)* (Digireads.com, 2005), p.76; Lham Dilman, *Free will: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.32.

¹⁹⁴ E. R. Dodds, "On Misunderstanding the 'Oedipus Rex'," *Greece & Rome* 13, no. 1 (1966): p.43.

likely account, is how we must say divine providence brought our world into being as a truly living thing, endowed with soul and intelligence.¹⁹⁵

Plato viewed the divine force as being both transcendent as well as immanent, external and separate in its ability to design the order of the cosmos but also within 'the minutest constituents of the universe.'¹⁹⁶ It was 'unmoved', while at the same time providing motion for all other parts of the universe.¹⁹⁷ This provider of prime motion, Plato viewed as a divine intelligent cosmos which had power over all things. Fredrich Solmsen notes that the actual eternal order of the heavens, 'suggested to Plato the existence of a divine Soul — or Mind — which inspired and directed these movements. The stars themselves were felt to be divine beings, alive, and animated by their own souls.'¹⁹⁸

In the *Timaeus* Plato considered the creation of the human soul and its eventual separation from the divine soul. He wrote that the Demiurge, upon making each human soul:

... mounted each soul in a carriage, as it were, and showed it the nature of the universe. He described to them the laws that had been foreordained: they would all be assigned one and the same initial birth, so that none would be less well treated by him than any other. Then he would sow each of the souls into that instrument of time suitable to it, where they were to acquire the nature of being the most god-fearing of living things...¹⁹⁹

Broadie notes that Plato considered the human soul to be immortal with its aim to eventually returning to its own star-companion.²⁰⁰ The soul could achieve this return to the divine by mastering the emotions of the body by the use of reason, Plato wrote of the individual soul:

¹⁹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, ed., Plato Complete Works (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 30b-c.

¹⁹⁶ Plato, *Laws*, trans. Trevor J. Saunders, Plato, Complete Works (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 903b.

¹⁹⁷ Plato, *Laws*: 894e-895b.

¹⁹⁸ Fredrich Solmsen, "Epicurus and Cosmological Heresies," *The American Journal of Philology* Vol. 72, no. No 1 (1951): p.5.

¹⁹⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*: 41e-42a.

²⁰⁰ Sarah Broadie, "Soul and Body in Plato and Descartes," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 101(2001): p.296; Plato, *Timaeus*: 41d-e.

He would have no rest from these toilsome transformations until he had dragged that massive accretion of fire-water-air-earth into conformity with the revolution of the Same and uniform within him, and so subdued that turbulent, irrational mass by means of reason. This would return him to his original condition of excellence.²⁰¹

Thus in contrast to Homer's necessity of the *Iliad*, Plato considered that reason, required for moral responsibility, could overcome necessity.²⁰² He wrote:

Reason overruled Necessity by persuading her to guide the greatest part of the things that become towards what is best, and the result of this subjugation of Necessity to wise persuasion was the initial formation of this universe.²⁰³

For Plato reason in humanity was a gift from the divine and, Cornford argues, with this gift of divine reason man's purpose was to become like the divine 'by reproducing in his own nature the beauty and harmony revealed in the cosmos.'²⁰⁴ Additionally Soontiëns notes that for Plato this harmony in nature was an expression of a teleological force embedded in each soul giving it a desire to return to the divine source.²⁰⁵

In the *Timaeus*, Plato argued that in order to help the soul with its journey back to the divine, this gift of reason, given to each soul, could be strengthened by reflecting on the divine heavens. Indeed he argued that the very purpose of sight was in order to watch the heavens:

Let us rather declare that the cause and purpose of this supreme good is this: the god invented sight and gave it to us so that we might observe the orbits of intelligence in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding. For there is a kinship between them, even though our revolutions are disturbed, whereas the universal orbits are undisturbed. So once we have come to know them, and to share in the ability to make correct calculations according to nature, we should stabilize the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstraying revolutions of the god.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Plato, *Timaeus*: 42d.

²⁰² Francis M Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1935, 1997), p.35.

²⁰³ Plato, *Timaeus*: 48a.

²⁰⁴ Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*: p.34.

²⁰⁵ Soontiëns, "Evolution: Teleology or Chance?," p.133.

²⁰⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*: 47b-c.

Plato returned to this theme later in the *Timaeus* by writing:

We should redirect the revolutions in our head that were thrown off course at our birth, by coming to learn the harmonies and revolutions of the universe and so bring into conformity with its objects our faculty of understanding, as it was in its original condition. And when this conformity is complete, we shall have achieved our goal: that most excellent life offered to humankind by the gods, both now and forevermore.²⁰⁷

For Plato one could become more attuned to the divine by learning the harmony of the rotation of the heavens and using this knowledge to redirect 'in our head' what was thrown off course at the time of our birth. Thus the harmony of the heavenly spheres could produce harmony in one's soul.

Plato's dualist theory of fate

Plato's philosophy of body and soul are often seen as the beginnings of the mind-body problem. As Gunther Stent comments, 'Ever since Plato put forward the dualist doctrine that mind and body are fundamentally different, philosophers have argued about whether they are. This argument came to be known as the "mind-body problem."'²⁰⁸ W.D. Hart commented that, within the discipline of the philosophy of the mind, 'Plato and Descartes are probably the two acknowledged philosophical masters who were most explicitly dualists.'²⁰⁹ Cornford pointed out that Plato's doctrine of Being and Becoming,

lays down the Platonic classification of existence into two orders. The higher is the realm of unchanging and eternal being possessed by the Platonic Forms.... The lower realm contains "that which is always becoming" passing into existence, changing and perishing but never has real being.²¹⁰

The nature of the higher realm is made of a substance which is not subject to the same natural laws as that of the lower realm, even though the latter was created from the former.

²⁰⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*: 90d.

²⁰⁸ Gunther S. Stent, "Epistemic Dualism of Mind and Body," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 142, no. 4 (1998): p.578.

²⁰⁹ Hart, "Dualism," p.265; also see Broadie, "Soul and Body in Plato and Descartes."

²¹⁰ Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*: p.24.

In *Phaedo*, Plato stated his dualist credentials by arguing that the soul or intellect must be immaterial because it can conceive of the invisible or the divine and so '...the soul resembles the divine, and the body resembles the mortal.'²¹¹ Plato considered that humanity lived in the material realm but also possessed a tripartite soul, made up of appetite, reason and spirit.²¹² George Boys-Stones discusses the union of these three parts as a complex blend between desire, immortal reason, and the need of the spirit part of the soul to strive for purity.²¹³ However, he points out that for Plato the soul's essence is pure reason and he, Plato, never denies the 'primacy of reason.'²¹⁴ Reason and spirit represented the immortal features of the soul and together they were the instruments for defeating desire or necessity. A central theme to Plato's cosmology was that the link between reason/spirit and the World Soul, the ideal form of soul, was so strong that the body was simply a physical and temporary vehicle which '...confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom...' and '... because as long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we desire...'.'²¹⁵

D. J. Allan points out that for Plato the soul was, '... the active principle which alone can initiate change.'²¹⁶ The soul therefore was accountable for such changes and hence was the holder of the individual's moral responsibility. Gould, also adds that Plato saw 'character' as a part of soul, he states that, 'Plato sets forth in fairly straightforward language the proposition that character formation is exempt from whatever causal nexus governs other things.'²¹⁷ The central theme of Plato's view of life and the struggle the soul has with necessity was the concept of morality. The very purpose of the union of body and the immortal soul was to allow for the refinement of the immortal character, contained in the soul, to enable it to prepare itself for its eventual reunion with the World Soul.²¹⁸ This

²¹¹ Plato, *Phaedo*: see 78b - 84c. Quote - 80a.

²¹² Mary Margaret Mackenzie, "Plato's Moral Theory," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 11, no. 2 (1985): p.89.

²¹³ George Boys-Stones, "Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the Soul," *Phronesis* 49, no. 1 (2004): pp. 6-7.

²¹⁴ Boys-Stones, "Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the Soul," p.4.

²¹⁵ Plato, *Phaedo*: 66a-b.

²¹⁶ D. J. Allan, "The Inaugural Address: Causality Ancient and Modern," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 39 (1965): p.8.

²¹⁷ Josiah B. Gould, "The Stoic Conception of Fate," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. No. 1 (1974): p.19.

²¹⁸ Plato, *Timaieus*: 42c.

refinement happened in two ways, firstly through the soul's use of divine reason to resist the physical desires of its current mortal body; and secondly, in its spirit state after death, where it was able to use its developed wisdom to choose the nature of its next incarnation.²¹⁹ It is in the Myth of Er that Plato described the choice given to each soul concerning its next life. The souls of the newly dead were addressed by a speaker:

Here is the message of Lachesis, the maiden daughter of Necessity: 'Ephemeral souls, this is the beginning of another cycle that will end in death. Your daemon or guardian spirit will not be assigned to you by lot; you will choose him. The one who has the first lot will be the first to choose a life to which he will then be bound by necessity. Virtue knows no master; each will possess it to a greater or less degree, depending on whether he values or disdains it. The responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; god has none.'²²⁰

Hence the divine part of the tripartite soul was morally responsible for its own well-being over the course of many life times. Dilman describes this as moral determinism for the causal agent of this form of fate was not solely the universal law of matter — necessity or *ananke*— but also a future influenced by personal moral integrity in the present.²²¹

Dilman's moral determinism suggests that Plato did not see the future as fixed, but rather in the hands of the individual's choices made both while in a mortal body as well as in the spiritual realm and influenced by the spindle of necessity.²²² Onians argues that in this regard 'the Platonic conception elaborated in the Republic is but little removed from the Homeric.'²²³

Plato wrote in *Phaedrus*, '...any who have led their lives with justice will change to a better fate, and any who have led theirs with injustice, to a worse one.'²²⁴ The moral consequences in this model were that the major factors which influenced the soul, in its

²¹⁹ Plato, *Republic*: 618c.

²²⁰ Plato, *Republic*: 617e.

²²¹ Dilman, *Free will: an historical and philosophical introduction*: p.35.

²²² Plato, *Republic*: 620e.

²²³ Onians, *The Origins of European Thought About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate*: p.352.

²²⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*: 249a.

spiritual form, were its immortal character and its history.²²⁵ Here the soul is portrayed as an autonomous free agent, able to choose its next life. However, R. F. Stalley challenges this idea of Plato's notion of choice. He points out that Plato offered his notion of 'what is up to us' only if we conformed to what the divine reason required:

This means that freedom is not an all-or-nothing matter. The more we willingly allow our lives to be governed by reason the more free we are. On this view freedom both in the state and in the individual rests, not on the possibility of unconstrained choice or the ability to 'do otherwise', but rather on the capacity to recognise truth.²²⁶

As cited in this chapter Michael Frede suggests that this concept, as argued by Stalley, did not appear in the literature prior to the work of Epictetus, and according to Bobzien, Epictetus' notion of freedom was then adopted by the middle Platonists of the third centuries C.E.²²⁷ However, Plato's allocation of choice to the unborn soul was in fact a step towards what Robert Kane, in discussing modern arguments on determinism, argues is libertarianism, since it locates a style of free will outside space and time. Kane states that deep free will, a style of free will that is free of any type of coercion, needs to invoke '...noumenal selves outside of space and time.'²²⁸

Plato summed up his position on necessity and moral responsibility when he wrote, '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.'²²⁹ The purpose of the divine cosmos, the gift of reason to humanity, and the freedom of the immortal soul to use this reason were eventually for the benefit of the World Soul. Plato wrote, 'You forget that creation is not for your benefit: *you* exist for the sake of the universe.'²³⁰

²²⁵ Plato, *Republic*: 617e-620e.

²²⁶ R. F. Stalley, "Plato's Doctrine of Freedom," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 98(1998): p.157.

²²⁷ Susanne Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem," *Phronesis* 43, no. 2 (1998): p.163, p.174.

²²⁸ Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.39.

²²⁹ Plato, *Laws*: 904 b-c.

²³⁰ Plato, *Laws*: 903c.

Plato's opinion of 'astrologers' was that they would reincarnate as birds as they were 'innocent but simpleminded men, men who studied the heavenly bodies but in their naiveté believed that the most reliable proofs concerning them could be based upon visual observation.'²³¹ However, as cited earlier, he also wrote in an earlier section of the *Timaeus*, 'we should stabilize the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstraying revolutions of the god.'²³² Plato's writings opened up the intellectual space to create a link between the divine heavens and the lives of men.

Plato's theory of fate can be cautiously summarised as follows:

- i. It was dualist as he located 'what is up to us' to divine reason — outside the world of matter. Reason was also allocated power over necessity, the laws of physical matter.
- ii. Moral responsibility was maintained by reincarnation where individuals were held responsible, via their immortal character, for the condition of their immortal soul and thus for the quality of their future lives.
- iii. It contained the causality of necessity – Plato's view of the laws of matter.
- iv. It contained *telos* as the immortal soul was teleologically drawn to reunite with the World Soul.
- v. However, it had a limited definition of 'what was up to us'. The individual soul could choose its own future. However, this choice was restricted due to what would now be considered in modern philosophical discourse as coercion, as one's choice was between righteousness or the threat of future lives of hardship.

Plotinus, astrology and Plato's theory of fate

The Greek philosopher Plotinus (204/5–270) although predominantly working with Platonist themes, according to E.R. Dodds, also adopted Stoic and Peripatetic ideas into his work.²³³ In terms of the mind–body problem he, like Plato, used the dualist solution to the free will dilemma. Plotinus' dualism is apparent in his discussion on matter; as John Rist

²³¹ Plato, *Timaeus*: 91e.

²³² Plato, *Timaeus*: 47b-c.

²³³ E. R. Dodds, "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960): p.2.

points out Plotinus, like Plato, considered that there were two worlds, 'the world of particulars and the world of Forms.'²³⁴ For Plotinus, the world of particulars was sited in matter and the world of Forms although in matter was not subject to the laws that influenced matter.²³⁵ Although it should be noted that Kevin Corrigan argues matter and form is not a simple dyad, for Plotinus matter could exist in a 'hierarchical continuum' which contained matter of different attributes.²³⁶ Plotinus also developed a concept of soul and, following Plato's thoughts, used it to be the receptacle of reason which was separate or insulated from the laws of matter. He wrote:

Soul we must bring into the world of things as a separate principle (a separate source of motion).... Cause, bodiless and therefore supreme over itself, free, beyond the reach of cosmic Cause: though, brought into body, it will not be unrestrictedly sovereign; it will hold rank in series.²³⁷

The 'rank in series' is a reference to Plotinus' concept of a hierarchical view of reality. John Dillon states that the top of this order was Plotinus' principle of 'the One' while the bottom of this hierarchy was occupied by the soul when attached to a mortal body.²³⁸ Plotinus, like Plato, considered that the soul could be influenced but not compelled by necessity: 'Are we then, to conclude that particular things are determined by necessities rooted in Nature and by the sequence of causes, ... No: the Reason-Principle is the sovereign, making all...'.²³⁹ Dillon argues, however, that Plotinus struggled with the location of this divine Reason-Principle, the mind of the One empowered to produce independent movement, within the different levels of the human soul as he, Plotinus, was also aware of the powerful Stoic arguments that there was 'no effect without a cause.'²⁴⁰ Nonetheless Plotinus does maintain both individual moral responsibility and the self as a independent agent in the face of celestial fate:

If there is a Necessity, bringing about human wickedness either by force of the celestial movement or by a rigorous sequence set up by the First Cause, is not the

²³⁴ John M. Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," *Phronesis* 6, no. 2 (1961): p.155. II.4.5

²³⁵ Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," p.155. II.4.5

²³⁶ Kevin Corrigan, "Is There More than One Generation of Matter in the "Enneads"?", *Phronesis* 31, no. 2 (1986): p.181.

²³⁷ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (New York, USA: Larson Publications, 1992), III.1.8.

²³⁸ John Dillon, "Plotinus at Work on Platonism," *Greece & Rome* 39, no. 2 (1992): p.192.

²³⁹ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: III.2.11.

²⁴⁰ Dillon, "Plotinus at Work on Platonism," p.201.

evil a thing rooted in Nature?' ... No: men are no doubt involuntary sinners in the sense that they do not actually desire to sin; but this does not alter the fact that wrongdoers, of their own choice, are, themselves, the agents; it is because they themselves act that the sin is their own; if they were not agents they could not sin.²⁴¹

Howard Patch argued that Plotinus constantly drew parallels between the action of the soul and the movement of the celestial spheres.²⁴² An example of this link between soul and stars is when Plotinus draws on Plato's *Timaeus*, and describes the birth of a soul:

These statements bind us to the stars, from which we get our souls, and subject us to necessity when we come down here; from them we get our moral characters, our characteristic actions, and our emotions, coming from a disposition which is liable to emotion.²⁴³

Thus for Plotinus the human temperament and possibly even character was shaped by the cosmic circuits the soul encountered at its birth into the earthly plane. Plotinus stressed, however, that the planets should not be seen as causes but instead as signs. He talked of how both in the heavens and in the world '...All teems with symbol; the wise man is the man who in any one thing can read another, a process familiar to all of us in not a few examples of everyday experience.'²⁴⁴ Tim Hegedus writes of Plotinus' idea of signs, 'that the stars do not cause earthly events but rather are to be regarded as divinely appointed signs of what will take place in the future.'²⁴⁵ Plotinus talked not of causes but instead of how 'all things must be enchained; and the sympathy and correspondence obtaining in any one closely knit organism must exist, first, and most intensely, in the All.'²⁴⁶ He thus argued for a sympathetic cosmos not linked by Stoic causes but by signs.

With the heavens portrayed as signs, all enchained by the notion of sympathy, Plotinus concluded that the nature of a person was composed, firstly, of the unique nature of the individual soul before birth; secondly, of the classical concept of 'chance' or *tyche*,

²⁴¹ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: III.2.10.

²⁴² Howard Rollin Patch, "Fate in Boethius and the Neoplatonists," *Speculum* 4, no. 1 (1929): p.68.

²⁴³ A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus: Enneads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), II.3.9.

²⁴⁴ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.7.

²⁴⁵ Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*: p.34.

²⁴⁶ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.7.

represented by the quality of the time as described by the cosmic circuits for the moment of birth; and, finally, the symbolic implications of those cosmic circuits themselves — the horoscope of the person.²⁴⁷ Th Sinnig points out that, for Plotinus, this mixing occurred as the soul descended through the heavenly spheres and 'adopted knowledge about a multitude of things, and developed interest in the habits and needs of the body' which acted like a garment on the soul.²⁴⁸ However, Plotinus considered it was this very garment of the planetary spheres cloaking the soul with the needs of the body that hid the authentic self, the true image of the soul:

When you know that you have become this perfect work, when you are self-gathered in the purity of your being, nothing now remaining that can shatter that inner unity, nothing from without clinging to the authentic man, when you find yourself wholly true to your essential nature.²⁴⁹

Like Plato, Plotinus saw each human soul as containing a spark of the divine reason but unlike Plato, as Paul Kalligas argues, Plotinus considered that this divine spark could look for inner unity both within the self and outside the self, both in this life as well as in an afterlife.²⁵⁰ In this way Plotinus' view of 'what is up to us' was similar to Plato's; it was the freedom to find the divine. However, for Plotinus the divine could be found in the physical world as well as within the spiritual realms. For Plotinus, as for Plato, any lack of this 'God-seeking' activity was, according to Dillion, 'an index of our ignorance and imperfection.'²⁵¹ Plotinus warned of the consequences of not seeking this unity stating that '...or else he is bereft of this higher soul and lives under destiny (*heimarmene*), and then the stars do not only show him signs but he also becomes himself a part, and follows along with the whole, [of *heimarmene*] of which he is a part.'²⁵² That is, failure to seek the divine leads to increasing subjection to fate.

²⁴⁷ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.10.

²⁴⁸ Th G. Sinnig, "Plotinus on the Human Person and Its Cosmic Identity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 56, no. 3 (2002): p.293.I.6.3

²⁴⁹ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: I.6.9.

²⁵⁰ Paul Kalligas, "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus: A Re-Examination," *Phronesis* 42, no. 2 (1997): p.218.

²⁵¹ Dillion, "Plotinus at Work on Platonism," pp.201-202.citing VI.8.39

²⁵² Armstrong, *Plotinus: Enneads*: II.3.9.

Dodds suggests, however, that this limited notion of 'what is up to us' — free to choose the divine — was more acceptable to a person than a life subject to the rigors of necessity or fate, and he wrote of Plotinus' views:

Such a doctrine could have little appeal to a world that craved above all for 'salvation', that is, for the escape of the individual from the paralysing power of *Heimarmene*. But the individual for Plotinus is more than the helpless product of a cosmic overflow: he is a creature possessed of will, and it is open to him to realize his true self — not by the assertion of an illusory independence, but by a voluntary self-identification with his source....²⁵³

In this regard Plotinus' theory of fate, although similar to Plato's, is distinguished from it with regard to the actual purpose of fate. For Plotinus, there was a greater emphasis on the development of personal spirituality or inner unity of the self to be obtained in the physical life, within the world of matter.

In summary Plotinus' theory of fate can be tentatively summarised as follows:

- i. Like Plato his theory of fate was dualistic in nature as it contained an emphasis on the soul, reincarnation, and autonomy allocated to the soul in spiritual form.
- ii. He placed on the soul the onus of moral responsibility to re-unite with the divine.
- iii. He differed from Plato in arguing that the perfection of self could be obtained in this life through seeking inner unity: 'never cease chiselling your statue [character], until there shall shine out on your form the godlike splendour of virtue...'.²⁵⁴

Dillon argues that 'This is essentially a Stoic attitude, but with a Platonist belief in an immortal rational soul superimposed.'²⁵⁵

Calcidius and the idea of human agency

It was Calcidius, the fourth century Christian who, according to J. den Boeft, placed Platonist concepts of fate into Christian philosophy.²⁵⁶ Edward Grant notes that Calcidius' translation and commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, up to 53c, was the only extensive Platonic

²⁵³ Dodds, "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus," p.3.

²⁵⁴ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: I.6.9

²⁵⁵ Dillon, "Plotinus at Work on Platonism," p.201.

²⁵⁶ J. den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1970), p.134.

text known to the Latin West for nearly eight hundred years.²⁵⁷ While den Boeft points out that Calcidius' treatise 'On Fate' was derived from his commentary on the *Timaeus* and was written to challenge the doctrine of fate within the Stoa, with its prime focus on human freedom.²⁵⁸ A.A. Long points out that Calcidius also drew on Pseudo-Plutarch's *De Fato* on issues to do with providence and free will.²⁵⁹

Within the non-Christian Platonist theories of fate, the instrument of reincarnation provided a mechanism for free will and hence moral responsibility, as the soul could be held personally responsible for its own future lives and thus its own eventual ability to connect with the divine. However, with the removal of reincarnation the fate of one's life was no longer the result of one's personal choices made before birth. Thus Christian philosophers were required to revisit the question of moral responsibility. Frederick Tennant points out that all souls were now born with the same inherited sin.²⁶⁰ In this way the soul lost some of the autonomy that it had held under Plato's views. Furthermore the doctrine of providence, God's foreknowledge, challenged the notion that there existed freedom of any sort.

Calcidius attempted to present a solution to this problem. He cited Plato on virtue: '...virtue is independent and not subject to any necessity...' He also cited Moses and the story of the eating of the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden, saying that humans, according to God, had the '...ability to abstain or not.'²⁶¹ In this way Calcidius associated freedom with the development of virtue in the earthly life. Having so defined freedom, Calcidius then explored God's providence, he wrote that, '...the things within human power...' can be divided into different stages, of all the things that were possible some were necessary and others were contingent.²⁶² Pascal Massie points out that the necessary

²⁵⁷ Edward Grant, *Science and Religion, 400 B.C. to A.D. 1550* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), p.93–94.

²⁵⁸ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: pp. 4 and 7.

²⁵⁹ A. A. Long, "Review: Calcidius," *The Classical Review* 25, no. 1 (1975): p.53.

²⁶⁰ Frederick Robert Tennant, "Recent Reconstruction of the Doctrine of Sin: II. Original Sin," *The Journal of Religion* 5, no. 2 (1925): p.158; Also see Geoffrey Rees, "The Anxiety of Inheritance: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Literal Truth of Original Sin," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 1 (2003): p.76.

²⁶¹ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 154.

²⁶² den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 155.

is that which is expected to happen — one can say that all things that are born will die — whereas the contingents are the things that may or may not happen.²⁶³ Massie then defines these contingents as what we would now consider random events, that which is either expected or unexpected.²⁶⁴ In this regard the contingents of Calcidius have commonality with the Greek concept of *tyche*, chance. Calcidius then took the step of stating that God knows the necessary but *not* the contingent. God knows things by their nature and the nature of contingencies is that they are not formed, so God chooses not to know them as it would be against their nature to be known: 'God does not know the nature of what is contingent in such a way as that which is certain and bound by necessity.'²⁶⁵ This appears to be in contrast to Pseudo-Plutarch *De Fato*, which takes an ambiguous position by stating that fate 'embraces the particular cases potentially in its general provisions; so also the law of nature, while dealing with universals primarily, deals secondarily with particulars. The latter too are all fated after a fashion, since they are co-fated with the former.'²⁶⁶

Having altered the universal nature of God's knowledge, Calcidius now placed free will in humanity's hands. Humanity was subject to necessity and the causal chains of fate but humanity could also be the originator of a new causal chain, or alter an existing causal chain. By the very laws of fate such action would have consequences and impose moral responsibility on the instigator. Calcidius wrote:

Now the preceding merit [fate] which can take one of two directions is caused by a motion of our mind and a judgment and an agreement and desire or avoidance, things put within our power, because these things as well as their contraries are for us to choose. So in this ordinance of things and according to a most ancient law some things are said to result from a preceding decision and are in our power; what comes after them, however, is the result, bound by necessity.²⁶⁷

Bobzien refers to this concept in the Middle Platonist writings as 'hypothetical fate' and states, 'Plato's formerly "pre-natal" choice of a life is presented as including the choice of

²⁶³ Pascal Massie, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, an essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), pp.26-27.

²⁶⁴ Massie, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, an essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus*: pp.2-6.

²⁶⁵ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 162.

²⁶⁶ Ps-Plutarch, *De Fato*, VII: 569F-570A.

²⁶⁷ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 151.

individual *actions* in one's life, and it has become dependent on the soul whether or not to *act*.²⁶⁸ Bobzien points out the significance of this distinction:

... the importance of the introduction of individual choices lies in the fact that it is in their choices that people manifest themselves qua rational or moral beings: my choices, since determined by nothing but myself, reflect who I am. This is why I am morally responsible for what I choose. It is in order to ensure this, that choices have been exempted from the predetermination by fate.²⁶⁹

Bobzien highlights that this concept of the individual's action that actually produces fate is a new theme within the middle Platonist literature. This is the concept of humanity's ability to freely choose and she suggests that this effectively changed the philosophical landscape ending the debates on the 'causal universal determinism' within antiquity.²⁷⁰ The ideas contained in Calcidius' writings conform to what Kane defines as a form of libertarianism, a belief that the causal chain can be altered or begin with the action of the individual who thus becomes 'the prime mover unmoved.'²⁷¹ Chisholm also defined this libertarian principle as immanent causation, a cause initiating with the self – self agency.²⁷²

With this new notion of freedom Calcidius suggested that humanity would need guidance in order not to inadvertently create a chain of negative fate. Calcidius' solution was to suggest astrology as the instrument of this guidance. He wrote, '...the astrologer will correctly and rationally try to catch the right moment to undertake an act according to the favourable position of stars and constellations, so that if this will happen [an action taken], that will be the result [the resultant causal chain].'²⁷³ The unique feature of this Middle Platonist theory of fate represented in the work of Calcidius is the introduction of a libertarian principle within the world of matter – free will in the face of necessity.

The theory of fate put forward by Calcidius contained the following assumptions:

²⁶⁸ Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem," p.161.

²⁶⁹ Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem," p.162.

²⁷⁰ Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem," p.163, p.174.

²⁷¹ Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*: p.47.

²⁷² Roderick M Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self," in *Free Will* ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.31.

²⁷³ den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*: paragraph 157.

- i. The source of fate was the workings of the divine cosmos.
- ii. The autonomy of the mortal self, was emphasised in order to maintain the notion of moral responsibility; one created the events of the future in one's mortal life by one's own actions.
- iii. Fate which emanated from the World Soul influenced but did not compel an individual — God's providence was not universal.
- iv. With the individual actually creating fate guidance was not solely through the gift of divine reason, as per Plato, or the personal work of inner perfection, as per Plotinus, but was linked with an element of knowledge. By understanding the cosmic circuits one could choose the favourable times to act.
- v. Calcidius' theory of fate, therefore, saw freedom based more in the knowledge of the world — the cosmic circuits — rather than solely in the pursuit of purification of the soul. This knowledge of how to work with fate was thus independent of one's moral character or a reflection of the health of one's soul.

Aristotle: issues of causality and *telos*

From his writings it appears that Aristotle approached the heavens with a utilitarian eye. William Craig argues when considering Aristotle's cosmology that 'the status of God in all this is not clear.'²⁷⁴ His argument is that Aristotle was not seeking an ultimate intelligence in the universe but rather an ultimate cause for the 'vast stellar systems.'²⁷⁵ Alan Bowen and Christian Wildberg suggest that Aristotle's goal in *De caelo*, written after Plato wrote the *Timaeus*, was to 'formulate a critical response to the "unscientific" character of his teacher's natural philosophy.'²⁷⁶ It is in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that he discussed the celestial model of the solar system with the earth residing in the middle of a series of interconnected spheres:

Since, then, the spheres by which the planets themselves are moved are eight and twenty-five, and of these only those by which the lowest-situated planet is moved

²⁷⁴ William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2001 [1980]), p.37.

²⁷⁵ Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*: p.42.

²⁷⁶ Alan C Bowen and Christian Wildberg, "Introduction," in *New perspectives on Aristotle's De caelo*, ed. Alan C. Bowen and Christian Wildberg (Amsterdam: Brill, 2009), p.1.

need not be counteracted, the spheres which counteract those of the first two planets will be six in number, and the spheres which counteract those of the next four planets will be sixteen, and the number of all the spheres — those which move the planets and those which counteract these — will be fifty-five. And if one were not to add to the moon and to the sun the movements we mentioned, all the spheres will be forty-nine in number.²⁷⁷

Into this analytical approach and in agreement with Plato, Aristotle added a 'divine unmoved' as his primary source of motion and considered that this 'produces motion by being loved and it moves the other moving things.'²⁷⁸ Additionally in *De caelo*, Aristotle confirmed that not only is the prime mover responsive to love but that each of the planets moving in its own sphere is also the seat of a divine essence: 'We think of the stars as mere bodies, and as units with a serial order indeed but entirely inanimate; but we should rather conceive them as enjoying life and action.'²⁷⁹ Friedrich Solmsen commented on Aristotle's approach to the movement of the spheres:

In his system eternal movement is forever tied to one and the same Cosmos. Movement, Cosmos, and Time are coeternal, and the never-broken movement that he himself has in mind is the rotation which is performed by the heavenly sphere and inspired by the perfection of the Unmoved Mover.²⁸⁰

In *Meteorology* Aristotle linked this movement of the heavens, these living stars, to the cause of all things on earth: 'this world necessarily has a certain continuity with the upper motions; consequently all its power is derived from them. (For the originating principle of all motion must be deemed the first cause.)'²⁸¹ Hence the living stars, through the eternal movement initiated by the love of the unmoved mover, were responsible for all movement on the earth. This movement lead to changes and these changes were sympathetically reflected in the qualities of hot cold wet and dry in all things. Aristotle spoke of these

²⁷⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. R.P.Hardie nad R.K. Gaye, The Complete Works of Aristotle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1074a 10-13.

²⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: 1072b 3-4.

²⁷⁹ Aristotle, *On the Heavens*: II.16-22.

²⁸⁰ Friedrich Solmsen, "Aristotle and Presocratic Cosmogony," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63(1958): p.278.

²⁸¹ Aristotle, *Meteorology*: 339a 19-24.

changes as, 'An individual man, for example, being one and the same, becomes now pale and now dark, now hot and now cold, now bad and now good.'²⁸²

Additionally the causal motion of Aristotle's heavens was, according to Mariska Leunissen, teleological. She writes:

The teleological explanations are the only fully-fledged physical explanations that Aristotle offers in this treatise. By this I mean that the teleological explanations are the only explanations in *De caelo* that address the nature and causes of the various features and motions of the heavens and that build upon some evidence from observation.²⁸³

The Aristotelian theory of causation consisted of four components: the material cause (the substance contained in the object), the formal cause (how this substance has been arranged), the efficient or moving cause (its movement) and the final cause which was teleological (that for which it was designed).²⁸⁴ These causes explained more than simply the movement of the heavens. Andrea Falcon writes: 'Although Aristotle's theory of causality is developed in the context of his science of nature, its application goes well beyond the boundaries of natural science... the four causes are used to explain human action as well as artistic production.'²⁸⁵ Menno Hulswit argues that Aristotle's causal theory was not totally dispelled until the work of Isaac Newton (1642–1727) although, Hulswit points out, there were many different causal theories between those of Aristotle and Newton.²⁸⁶ The importance of this point is that theories of fate from the classical period do have shifting opinions on the causal model. Necessity or *ananke*, therefore, may not be the same concept from one classical author to another. Allen notes that Plato's and

²⁸² Aristotle, *Categories*: 4a 17-20.

²⁸³ Mariska E.M.P.J Leunissen, "Why the Stars have no Feet, Explanation and Teleology in Aristotle's Cosmology," in *New perspectives on Aristotle's De caelo*, ed. Alan C Bowen and Christian Wildberg (Amsterdam: Brill, 2009), p.216.

²⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Physics*: 1013b 1-15.

²⁸⁵ Andrea Falcon, "Aristotle on Causality," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Spring 2011 (2011), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/aristotle-causality/>. 15 June 2011.

²⁸⁶ Menno Hulswit, "From Cause to Causation. A Peircean Perspective," (2002), <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/see/SEED/Vol4-3/Hulswit.htm>. 23 April 2011; For different theories of causation see David Sapire, "General Causation," *Synthese* 86, no. 3 (1991).

Aristotle's causal models contained both teleological and efficient causes while the Stoics' ideas on causation, to be discussed later, are quite different.²⁸⁷

Any theory of fate following on from Aristotle needs to embrace both his view of the natural world and his causal theory. He tended to take a monist position for as Gunther Stent argues, Aristotle 'advocated the anti-dualist doctrine of *monism* according to which mental phenomena are nothing other than bodily functions.'²⁸⁸ For Aristotle the soul was the life force and was thus linked with mortality.²⁸⁹ Lozen argues a similar point by stating, 'The relation between soul and body, on Aristotle's view, is also an instance of the more general relation between form and matter: thus an ensouled, living body is a particular kind of in-formed matter.'²⁹⁰ However, intellect, for Aristotle, was less clearly defined as he considered that intellect was contained in matter but not made of matter and could therefore be immortal.²⁹¹

Aristotle's thinking on fate is also reflected in his famous future contingency puzzle on the possibility of a sea battle.²⁹² Aristotle argued that every event in the future must be either true or false. If it is true that there will be a sea battle tomorrow then there will be a sea-battle tomorrow and there cannot fail to be a sea-battle tomorrow. The result, according to this puzzle, is that nothing is possible except what actually happens. Richard Gaskin argues that this was Aristotle's approach to ways of challenging the power of necessitarianism — the laws of necessity.²⁹³ This suggestion is also supported by David Bostock, who argues that Aristotle's causal theory, with its inclusion of teleology, implies that he did not fully accept necessitarianism was sufficient to account for the development of living things.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁷ Allan, "The Inaugural Address: Causality Ancient and Modern," p.3.

²⁸⁸ Stent, "Epistemic Dualism of Mind and Body," p.578.

²⁸⁹ Aristotle, *On the Soul*: II. 415b 1-25.

²⁹⁰ Hendrik Lorenz, "Ancient Theories of Soul," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2009), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ancient-soul/>. 9 January 2010.

²⁹¹ Aristotle, *On the Soul*: III. 4-6.

²⁹² Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*: 9.18a-22.

²⁹³ Richard Gaskin, "Alexander's Sea Battle: A Discussion of Alexander of Aphrodisias "De Fato" 10," *Phronesis* 38, no. 1 (1993): p.75.

²⁹⁴ David Bostock, *Space, Time, Matter, and Form, Essays on Aristotle's Physics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.59-60.

M. De Pinedo points out that such a need to challenge universal necessity also suggests a monist philosophy.²⁹⁵

Furthermore where Plato's dualism used the instrument of teleology to understand the soul's need to return to the divine, Aristotle's idea of *telos* was different, as Ernst Mayr argues:

The word *telos* has been used in the philosophical literature with two very different meanings. When Aristotle uses it, it refers to a process that has a very definite goal, a goal ordinarily anticipated when the process is initiated. The *telos* of the fertilized egg is the adult into which it develops. For the deistic teleologist,[Plato] cosmic teleology also had a definite goal, i.e., the world in its final perfection as conceived by its creator and effected by His laws.²⁹⁶

Also, accepting Aristotle's monist position, Dorothea Frede argues that the question of whether Aristotle was a hard incompatibilist or a compatibilist varies depending on the text being studied. Frede cites *Posterior Analytics* and parts of *Metaphysics* and suggests these imply that Aristotle was a hard incompatibilist. However she states that in his work on ethics, '...Aristotle seems to presuppose quite a large class of events which are not determined but which are 'open either way'; it is called the contingent...'.²⁹⁷ Furthermore in *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle developed the idea of voluntary and involuntary action.²⁹⁸ Derk Pereboom in discussing Aristotle's views in *Nicomachean Ethics* argues that such an analysis of a person's actions suggests a compatibilist account of free will — the argument that free will can exist alongside determinism.²⁹⁹ However, as already argued, given that Aristotle's necessity has a different causal model to modern determinism, such contemporary terms can lead to confusion in understanding classical concepts around necessity.

Aristotle's importance in this thesis lies not in his contribution to any possible Aristotelian theory of fate but rather his influence on the classical and medieval world view of the

²⁹⁵ M. De Pinedo, "Anomalous Monism: Oscillating between Dogmas," *Synthese* 148, no. 1 (2006): p.93.

²⁹⁶ Ernst Mayr, "The Idea of Teleology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, no. 1 (1992): p.123.

²⁹⁷ Frede, "Accidental Causes in Aristotle," p.39.

²⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book III.

²⁹⁹ Derk Pereboom, *Free will* (Indianapolis, IN ; Cambridge: Hackett Pub. Co, 1997), p.1.

heavens and their link, through motion defined by the four causes, and qualities to life on earth. It is Aristotle's cosmology which became a force within astrology through the work of the first century C.E. Greek astronomer and astrologer Claudius Ptolemy, discussed in chapter 5, as well the work Aquinas (1225–1274), discussed later in this chapter.

Some of Aristotle's contributions to any future theories of fate were:

- i. He stressed the sympathetic, causal link between the movement of the divine heavens and life on earth.
- ii. His development of a causal model which contained the notion of *telos*, different to Plato in that *telos* was not the pull to return to the divine but the inherited nature of something to move towards its completed form.
- iii. He rejected necessitarianism.

The Stoics: a monist theory of fate

A problem in investigating Stoic thought, as Bobzien points out, is the lack of primary sources with what is known coming from works cited by other scholars of that period.³⁰⁰ One such secondary source was Diogenes Laertius, the third century Greek biographer, who wrote of Zeno of Citium (*d.* 263 B.C.E.), the founder of the Stoa, that he considered a feature of Stoicism was the unity of the divine cosmos. Diogenes quotes Zeno as saying, 'The substance of God is the whole world and the heaven.'³⁰¹ Diogenes also referred to the work of Chrysippus (279 – 206 B.C.E.) the third head of the Stoa when he wrote: 'as Chrysippus says in the first book of his *De finibus*; for our individual natures are part of the nature of the whole universe.'³⁰² Cicero, voicing Stoic thought, also commented on this unity of the whole cosmos when he wrote:

Who is not compelled to accept what I say by (consideration of) the tremendous sympathy, agreement, and interconnected relationships of the cosmos... These things, and the mutual harmony of the parts of the cosmos, certainly could not

³⁰⁰ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: pp.8-10.

³⁰¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R.D. Hicks, vol. II, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, [1925] 2005), 7.148.

³⁰² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II: 7.88.

happen as they do unless they were bound together by one divine and continuously connected *pneuma*.³⁰³

The Stoics, like Plato, considered that the cosmos was a living creature. Diogenes wrote of the Stoic cosmos as, '... the entire cosmos too, being an animal and alive and rational...' ³⁰⁴ This living creature was linked to all of its parts, not by direct causes but by sympathy with all parts, both in the heavens and on the earth. Diogenes continued this thought, 'for this is necessitated by the sympathy and common tension of heavenly things in relation to earthly things.' ³⁰⁵ This binding force which linked all things in the cosmos was divine in nature, as Aetius (c.100 C.E.) commented, 'The Stoic made god out to be intelligent, ... and encompasses all seminal principles according to which everything comes about according to fate.' ³⁰⁶

However, this Stoic concept was a different notion to Plato's idea of the divine. For Plato the divine was both transcendent and immanent, unmoving and thus the prime causal agent in the chain of causation. In this schema the divine could never be subject to change — it was unmoved. However, the Stoic view, as pointed out by Gerard Randall, was that the divine was *only* immanent and must *be moving*, as it comprised the actual matter of the world, and the divine needed to be changed, and created, by the world. ³⁰⁷ Sophie Botros uses the term God for the Stoic concept of the divine. She argues that the Stoic view was that God's very identity was an expression of the Great Chain of Causes, but not, however, the unmoving origin of it. ³⁰⁸ God's very immanence was one with the world, it was the world itself with no existence outside the world while also being moved and changed by the world. Brad Inwood and Lloyd Gerson argue that in the Stoic cosmology the human being, possessed of consciousness, had a moral responsibility to help the creation of the

³⁰³ Requoted from: Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*, trans. Brad Inwood (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2008), p.62. Cicero text 2.19.

³⁰⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II: Book II - 139.

³⁰⁵ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II: Book II - 140.

³⁰⁶ Aetius cited in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 2007), p.274.

³⁰⁷ Gerald H. Randall, "Immanence, Stoic and Christian," *The Harvard Theological Review* Vol. 14, no. No. 1 (1921): p.4.

³⁰⁸ Botros, "Freedom, Causality, Fatalism and Early Stoic Philosophy," p.291. also see; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II: 7.135-136; Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.4.1.6-14.

whole. On this basis, they argue, the Stoics considered that the individual was empowered by reason and accountable for one's own actions; since humans were also a part of the world of matter and thus part of the immanent God they were also partly responsible for the creation of God.³⁰⁹

The first century Greek Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, wrote of the human involvement with the world of matter in his *Discourses*:

The gods then, as was but right, put in our hands the one blessing that is best of all and master of all, that and nothing else, the power to deal rightly with our impressions... [we are] Prisoners on the earth and in an earthly body and among earthly companions, how was it possible that we should not be hindered from the attainment of these powers by these external fetters?³¹⁰

Such a style of philosophy, according to Mark Balaguer, is a form of monism as the world is only made of one substance.³¹¹ Epictetus continued, however, with his potentially monist argument and defined the notion of free will, which Matheson notes is Epictetus' earliest comment on the subject.³¹² Epictetus quotes Zeus as saying:

But as things are — never forget this — this body is not yours, it is but a clever mixture of clay. But since I could not make it free, I gave you a portion in our divinity, this faculty of impulse to act and not to act, of will to get and will to avoid...³¹³

Frede, as already cited in this chapter, also notes that Epictetus was the first known writer to express such a concept of free will — the freedom to think or feel otherwise.³¹⁴

Thus any Stoic theory of fate needs to contain the human subjection to the world of matter and its laws while also embracing a freedom to, as Epictetus said, 'deal rightly with our impressions'. Bobzien stresses, however, that any Stoic views on fate, necessity and its impact on humans vary depending on the different texts citing Chrysippus' work, and the

³⁰⁹ Inwood and Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*: p.xiv.

³¹⁰ Epictetus, *Discourses Books 1 and 2*: 1. p.4.

³¹¹ Mark Balaguer, *Free Will as an Open Scientific Problem* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), p.70.

³¹² Footnote comment in Epictetus, *Discourses Books 1 and 2*: p.4.

³¹³ Epictetus, *Discourses Books 1 and 2*: 1. p.4.

³¹⁴ Frede, *A Free Will - Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*: p.46.

interpretations brought by those authors to the understanding of Stoic thinking.³¹⁵ It is for this reason that Pereboom suggests that the Stoics can be seen to be both adopting hard incompatibilism as well as that of compatibilism.³¹⁶ However R.W. Sharples notes, as already argued, that, given these different set of universal laws, it is right 'to doubt whether the Stoic conception of causation can be fully captured in the terms of modern post-Humean formulations of determinism.'³¹⁷ Furthermore Botros notes that exploring Stoic views on necessity and its influence on human life is not a straightforward matter of considering the role of the divine and the nature of the individual but rather requires one to step into an alien physics with a seemingly different set of universal laws.³¹⁸ With this different cosmological view in mind Bobzien comments that it is easy for any scholar to fall into misunderstanding with Stoic literature due to the complexity of Stoic ideas on the nature of being, both universal and individual, as well as the Stoic concepts of time and causation.³¹⁹

With respect to these difficulties, however, a few points can be made. In contrast to the dualist position of the Platonists, the Stoics, with their belief in a solely immanent cosmos, considered the soul and body to be constituted of the same essence. As Long and Sedley state, '... the soul or self is not fragmented into a plurality of psychic entities, as in the Platonic model.'³²⁰ The Stoic model accepted the concept of a World Soul but did not accept the dualist post-death libertarian style of philosophy put forward by Plato. Instead, according to Botros, the Stoics placed the human soul and the human will within the physical world and appeared to accept the universality of necessity, seeing the two concepts as non-conflicting separate issues.³²¹ Thus the human will was located *within* the Stoic view of fate. This was achieved by developing the concept of self-agency within one's mental state — to 'deal rightly with our impressions' — rather than the argument promoted by Calcidius of self-agency in external action. Sharples argues that mental self-

³¹⁵ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.234.

³¹⁶ Pereboom, *Free will*: p.5.

³¹⁷ R. W. Sharples, "Soft Determinism and Freedom in Early Stoicism," *Phronesis* 31, no. 3 (1986): p.266.

³¹⁸ Botros, "Freedom, Causality, Fatalism and Early Stoic Philosophy," p.274.

³¹⁹ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.14.

³²⁰ Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.321.

³²¹ Botros, "Freedom, Causality, Fatalism and Early Stoic Philosophy," p.276.

agency as an argument for Stoic 'compatibilism' can be challenged but, as he himself states, it is an argument that is far from settled academically.³²²

The Stoic doctrine also viewed the transmigration of souls in a different manner to that of Plato. A.A. Long states that, 'The Stoics ... insist[ed] that the soul is corporeal.'³²³ With the soul being corporeal the union of individual body and soul was reborn but only as a result of the rebirth of the entire world through the conflagration. One was naturally reborn — body and soul — at the appointed time of one's birth in the history of the planet.³²⁴ Reincarnation was thus linked to the periodic cosmic conflagration, a concept which, as Long and Sedley argue, produced the idea of Stoic time being closed or circular, implying that the past was embedded in the future and the future embedded in the past.³²⁵

This notion of Stoic circular time was similar to what O'Brien notes of the work of Empedocles (490 – 430 B.C.E) who argued for a cosmic cycle of elements shifting back and forth between Strife and Unity.³²⁶ However, S. Trépanier points out that Empedocles' cosmic cycle contained the element of chance and thus change, unlike the Stoic version, which did not contain these features.³²⁷ Stoic circular time found a modern expression in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) who argued for the 'Eternal Return of the Same'.³²⁸ Eva Cybulska points out, that Nietzsche eternal return was the same concept as closed or cyclical time.³²⁹ Expanding on closed time Elliot Wolfson defines Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence as, 'the production of something new ... comes about through

³²² Sharples, "Soft Determinism and Freedom in Early Stoicism," p.269.

³²³ A. A. Long, "Soul and Body in Stoicism," *Phronesis* 27, no. 1 (1982): p.36.

³²⁴ Sklenář, "Seneca, Oedipus 980-94: How Stoic a Chorus?," p.186; Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.311.

³²⁵ Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.312.

³²⁶ Denis O'Brien, "Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle," *The Classical Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1967): p.35.

³²⁷ S. Trépanier, "'We' and Empedocles' Cosmic Lottery: 'P. Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665-1666', ensemble A," *Mnemosyne* 56, no. 4 (2003): p.399.

³²⁸ F.W. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Wilder Publications, 2008), p.6.

³²⁹ Eva Cybulska, "Nietzsche: Love, Guilt and Redemption," *Philosophy Now*, no. 86 (2011): p.9.

the mechanism of repeating that proceeds from the formlessness of time's form; indeed, the absolutely new is nothing but repetition, albeit the repetition of what is yet-to-come.³³⁰

Bobzien argues that any form of a Stoic theory of fate thus needs to include the concept that time was closed and moved, along with a moving God, in ever repeating cosmic cycles, thus producing cycles of repeating patterns.³³¹ Additionally, Botros argues that it needs to include the idea of the immanent world where nature, life, God and the organic and inorganic world all combined in one sympathetic connected relationship.³³² The focus of the person who adopted such a theory of fate would therefore be inward and accepting of the outer world events, striving for a level of inner peace.³³³

A Stoic theory of fate can thus be considered to contain the following features:

- i. It is monist in that there is no 'other place' where freedom could reside — any expression of freedom needed to happen in the domain of all-encompassing fate.
- ii. Fate was the consequence of the workings of a divine cosmos, immanent in nature and created by the actions of all things within the cosmos.
- iii. Freedom was to be found in mental self-agency, in that one was free to find inner happiness and harmony in one's life.
- iv. Moral responsibility was inherent to the system in that one was morally responsible for contributing to the creation of the divine and one's inner harmony contributed to the holist health of the whole.
- v. Guidance was to be found in the process of inner reflection, in the quest for inner harmony. This view was later embedded in the dualism of Plotinus.
- vi. The future was understood by the past, time was closed. All things repeated in cosmic cycles.

³³⁰ Elliot Wolfson, "Structure, Innovation, and Diremptive Temporality: The Use of Models to Study Continuity and Discontinuity in Kabbalistic Tradition," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 6, no. 18 (2007): p.159.

³³¹ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.49; Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1: p.307.

³³² Botros, "Freedom, Causality, Fatalism and Early Stoic Philosophy," pp.279 - 280.

³³³ Inwood and Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*: p.xiv.

Claudius Ptolemy, discussed in chapter 5, who transmitted Aristotelian thought to present-day astrology, also transmitted Stoicism.³³⁴ When one discusses the Stoics, one needs to engage with the concept of fatalism.

Fatalism – a discussion

Fatalism is different to fate. Fate has its accompanying beliefs and, as already shown, is a pressure that has intent and purpose and is held in a theory of fate. It may have both antecedent causes, as in Calcidius' argument in that we can create our own fate, or it may contain teleological elements. In contrast, fatalism is inevitable teleology, and thus a 'pulling' concept defined by Massie as a belief that '...what will be will be no matter what causal path brings it about.'³³⁵ ; Evander Bradley McGilvary characterises this as the inevitability of an event placed in our future in which 'our wills have no part in determining the outcome.'³³⁶ By this definition fatalism, not linked to any antecedent causal agent, is the belief that a certain event will occur in the future regardless of the pathway an individual takes to reach that point in time.³³⁷ Additionally Robert Solomon points out that fatalism, not containing any antecedent causes differs from notions of modern determinism which hold that the future is already embedded in the past and is a logical extension of a causal chain.³³⁸ Fatalism is the enticing or pulling force portrayed in Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*, cited in this chapter, where Oedipus cannot avoid his 'destiny'. Sarah Broadie notes that fatalism can lead to futilism and points out that this is the classical 'Lazy or Idle Argument', the doctrine that, if an event will happen in the future regardless of one's actions, then there is no point in taking any action.³³⁹ However, Bobzien argues that fatalism does not necessarily lead to futilism, by pointing out that lack

³³⁴ James Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Woodbridge, UK The Boydell Press, 1987), p.68.

³³⁵ Massie, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, an essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus*: p.52.

³³⁶ Evander Bradley McGilvary, "Freedom and Necessity in Human Affairs," *International Journal of Ethics* 45, no. 4 (1935): p.382.

³³⁷ Mark H. Bernstein, "Fatalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.65; Steven M Cahn, *Fate, Time and Logic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p.8; Dennett, *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*: p.104.

³³⁸ Solomon, "On Fate and Fatalism," p.443.

³³⁹ Broadie, "From Necessity to Fate: A Fallacy?," pp.21-22.

of action or resignation is a choice, just as action is a choice, so futility is a mental state which leads to its own set of actions.³⁴⁰

The Stoic views of the universal nature of fate could imply another form of fatalism. A. J. Kleywegt notes, however, that the futilism of this was countered by Chrysippus, who argued that the chain of causation did in fact require human action.³⁴¹ With this action, argued by Chrysippus as being the ability to control our impulses.

A sympathetic cosmos

A common theme to all of these different classical theories of fate was the notion of a *sumpatheia*, a sympathetic cosmos.³⁴² This is defined by Botros when discussing Stoic cosmology as one where nature, life, God/gods or divine, and the organic and inorganic world all combined in one sympathetic connected relationship. Bobzien defines this concept as the idea that 'in some sense everything in the universe emits some physical influence on everything else.'³⁴³

In commenting on the Stoic sympathetic cosmos A.A Long writes that stones resemble men, for both offer resistance to other objects and 'men and stones are alike in having shape and identity which persists over time.'³⁴⁴ Bobzien also notes that all things were part of the divine which was being formed by the movement and thoughts of everything.³⁴⁵ The Stoic sympathetic cosmos was, according to Cicero, driven by the 'one divine and continuously connected *pneuma*.'³⁴⁶ Plato's sympathetic cosmos was divinely ordered, benefic and biased towards good.³⁴⁷ Aristotle's sympathetic cosmos was based in the units of quality, those of hot, cold, wet and dry, all commingled by the movement of the celestial

³⁴⁰ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.192.

³⁴¹ A.J Kleywegt, "Fate, Free Will, and the Text of Cicero," *Mnemosyne* 26, no. 4 (1973): p.342.

³⁴² B. Inwood, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), p.277.

³⁴³ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.169.

³⁴⁴ Long, "Soul and Body in Stoicism," pp.36-37.

³⁴⁵ Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*: p.41, p169.

³⁴⁶ Requoted from: Inwood and Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*: p.62. Cicero text 2.19.

³⁴⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*: 30b-c.

spheres.³⁴⁸ As Lehoux writes, 'Rivers, plants, and animals co-wax and co-wane with the moon' and the qualities of the stars and planets moved or influenced the similar qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry on earth.³⁴⁹ Rather than a sympathetic cosmos driven by the clear qualities of Aristotle or the singularity of the Stoics, Plotinus argued for a world that '...teems with symbol...' and filled with a symbolic language.³⁵⁰ In this way Plotinus' sympathetic cosmos was full of the ambiguity of symbols which thus had a multitude of ways for eventual expression in life on earth.

Saint Augustine: providence and theological fatalism

For Augustine the sympathetic cosmos was the potentially fatalist concept of God's providence. In his early life Augustine encountered astrology. Hegedus notes that he was involved in some manner with astrology from his late teens to his early thirties.³⁵¹ According to Hegedus, an early Christian motif was that 'humans were created upright in stature so as to contemplate the sky and fix their thoughts on heavenly things.'³⁵² Charles Ferrari remarks that even after Augustine gave up astrology and broke from the Manichees, he was still oriented toward fixing his thoughts on heavenly things 'not only in the religious sense but also in the physical sense.'³⁵³ Nevertheless despite this heavenly orientation, Nicholas Campion cites Augustine as a major figure in the attempt to 'de-spiritualise the universe.'³⁵⁴ This endeavour of de-spiritualising the universe was the result of Augustine's twin objectives: the glorification of God, and the removal of any potential challenge to God's omnipotent power.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Meteorology*: 339a 19-24.

³⁴⁹ Lehoux, "Tomorrow's News Today: Astrology, Fate, and the Way Out," p.108.

³⁵⁰ Plotinus, *The Enneads*: II.3.7; Sinnige, "Plotinus on the Human Person and Its Cosmic Identity," p.295.

³⁵¹ Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*: p.46-47.

³⁵² Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*: p. 69.footnote 42.

³⁵³ Leo Charles Ferrari, "Astronomy and Augustine's Break with the Manichees," *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 19, no. 3-4 (1973): p.268.

³⁵⁴ Nicholas Campion, *The Dawn of Astrology. A Cultural History of Western Astrology, The Ancient and Classical Worlds* (London, UK: Continuum Books, 2008), p.283.

³⁵⁵ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Classics, [1972] 2003), V.9.

With this as his apparent motivation Augustine wrote a polemic against astrology. In *City of God* he dismissed astrologers and their heavenly fate, claiming that fate and destiny were the work of God:

“Fate”; a name given by some people not to the position of the stars but to a chain of causes dependent on God’s will. There are those who use the name ‘destiny’ to refer not to the conjunction of stars at the moment of conception, or birth, or beginning, but to the connected series of causes which is responsible for anything that happens. ...For in fact they ascribe this orderly series, this chain of causes, to the will and power of the supreme God, who is believed, most rightly and truly, to know all things before they happen and who leaves nothing unordered.³⁵⁶

Augustine thus removed fate from the heavens and placed it in God’s hands. His logic was simple: ‘It is beyond anything incredible that He should have willed the kingdoms of men, their dominations and their servitudes, to be outside the range of the laws of His providence.’³⁵⁷ Placing humanity within God’s providence and removing the soul-cleansing mechanism of reincarnation, there was now no longer room for personal involvement with the creation of one’s fate, nor the ability to use the planets as intermediaries. Augustine placed human life under the power of providence and argued that providence was not necessity:

Are men’s wills under the sway of necessity? There is no need, then, to dread that ‘necessity’, through fear of which the Stoics took such pains to distinguish between the causes of things, withdrawing some of them from the sway of necessity, subjecting others to it, and classing our wills among the causes they wished to emancipate from necessity, for fear, I suppose, that they would not be free if subject to it....If, on the other hand, we define ‘necessity’ in the sense implied when we say that it is necessary a thing should be thus, or should happen thus, I see no reason to fear that this would rob us of free will.³⁵⁸

With this argument Augustine dismissed Stoic necessity and took a dualist position that the human will was free. However, this freedom was questionable, as Augustine also believed in God’s foreknowledge and, as Gerald Bonner points out, God already knew which souls would reach the kingdom of heaven; these souls were predestined for salvation while all

³⁵⁶ Augustine, *City of God*: V.8.

³⁵⁷ Augustine, *City of God*: V.11.

³⁵⁸ Augustine, *City of God*: V.10.

other souls were condemned to eternal damnation, regardless of their actions, good or evil, within their lifetime.³⁵⁹ This was theological fatalism, as nothing one could do would influence the predestined fact of whether one was saved or damned. Indeed Bonner argues that Augustine combined necessity and fatalism to produce his version of the Divine Will or providence.³⁶⁰

For Augustine, the moral responsibility placed on each individual was maintained by coercion. As Alan Hill states, lack of morally correct behaviour would result in damnation and such damnation was pre-ordained by God's judgment.³⁶¹ One had to maintain good works in the hope that these actions were known by God and that as a result of these good works, one had already been selected for salvation. There were different solutions to maintaining free will in the face of Augustine's divine providence.³⁶² However, with regards to astrology, solutions to theological fatalism do not appear to be central to understanding the role of the heavens in influencing or portraying life on earth.

Augustine did not have a theory of fate in the sense meant by Bobzien. He had instead a set of theological doctrines. Katherine Rogers argues that, if one took the post-lapsarian definition of freedom — in which fallen man's only freedom was to choose against God — then Augustine actually held compatibilist credentials.³⁶³ However, in the face of God's providence and this definition of free will, Susan Haack and Richard Purtill independently argue that Augustine promoted fatalism.³⁶⁴

In considering Augustine's influence on astrology, Mark Graubard comments on Augustine's challenge to the divine heavens: 'Since the days of Democritus and Plato the

³⁵⁹ Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity - St Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), p.23.

³⁶⁰ Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity - St Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom*: pp.17-18.

³⁶¹ See Alan G. Hill, "Three 'Visions' of Judgement: Southey, Byron, and Newman," *The Review of English Studies* 41, no. 163 (1990).

³⁶² For a detailed examination of these arguments see: Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³⁶³ Katherin A. Rogers, "Augustine's Compatibilism," *Religious Studies* 40, no. 4 (2004): p.415.

³⁶⁴ Susan Haack, "On a Theological Argument for Fatalism," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 24, no. 95 (1974): p.156; Richard L. Purtill, "Foreknowledge and Fatalism," *Religious Studies* 10, no. 3 (1974): p.324.

writers of ancient Greece knew that the heavenly bodies were regarded as gods or as divine beings ever since oldest antiquity.³⁶⁵ Campion concurs and points out that, after Augustine the stars no longer offered salvation.³⁶⁶

Augustine's contribution to any theory of fate can be considered in the following way:

- i. He established the universality of providence.
- ii. He added the concept of divine grace which he perceived to allow for the idea of free will, which was that one was free to choose God or to face damnation.
- iii. He dismissed the link between individual fate and the once divine stars.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

In the thirteenth century, Aquinas adopted Aristotle's natural philosophy and inserted it into Christianity.³⁶⁷ Patrick Quinn notes that Aquinas accepted Aristotle's argument that our way of learning was based in the natural world. Quinn continues that 'Aquinas regards Aristotle's account of cognition as being so acceptable in the natural human circumstances of life compared with the account that Plato gives.'³⁶⁸ Furthermore, Campion comments that the impact of the introduction of Aristotle's natural law into medieval Europe through the work of Aquinas and others was of the same magnitude as 'the combined effect of Galileo's discoveries and Newton's theories in the seventeenth century...'.³⁶⁹ This reintroduction of the significance of the natural world also included an acceptance of the heavens. Patrick Curry observes that Aquinas' acceptance of the influence of the natural world on the lives of humans, '...legitimized the basis of astrology by granting the efficacy of Aristotle's descending spheres of celestial influence, but simultaneously delimited it by

³⁶⁵ Mark Graubard, "Astrology's Demise and Its Bearing on the Decline and Death of Beliefs," *Osiris* 13(1958): p.255.

³⁶⁶ Campion, *The Dawn of Astrology. A Cultural History of Western Astrology, The Ancient and Classical Worlds*: p.283.

³⁶⁷ F. Earle Fox, "Biblical Theology and Pelagianism," *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 41, no. No. 3 (1961): p.172.

³⁶⁸ Patrick Quinn, "St. Thomas Aquinas's concept of the Human Soul and the Influence of Platonism," In *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul: Reflections of Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions*, ed Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth and John M. Dillon. (New York: Brill, 2009). 18 January 2011.

³⁶⁹ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume II* (London, UK: Continuum Books, 2009), p.43.

stressing the freedom of the will.³⁷⁰ Aquinas' 'delimiting' of astrology was through installing dualism as the path forward for its legitimate use.

Indeed Aquinas addressed the significance of Aristotelian natural law and the place of the heavens within this law by stating:

Of course, acts of choice and movements of the will are controlled immediately by God. And human intellectual knowledge is ordered by God through the mediation of the angels. Whereas matters pertinent to bodily things, whether they are internal or external, when they come through the use of man, are governed by God by means of the angels and celestial bodies.³⁷¹

Aquinas also maintained the notion of free will by stating, '... whatever change might take place in our body as a result of the influence of a celestial body, it would not suffice to cause our choices...'.³⁷² Aquinas accepted that the body could influence the mind in terms of health, age or desires but, as Quinn points out, the Thomist soul was complex and able to function within both 'a temporal world of sensory experience, on the one hand, and the immaterial, eternal and intelligible realm of divine spiritual existence, on the other'.³⁷³ Thus Aquinas accepted the natural laws which also embraced the practice of astrology but to all these laws he applied a dualist argument in order to safeguard freedom of the will which resided in the human soul. In this way Aquinas established the astrological dualist approach to the horoscope, referred to in this thesis as 'Aquinas' solution'. Thus the horoscope became an incomplete view of a person, a partial image which represented only the body of the individual and not their soul.

Aquinas also used similar concepts to Plotinus as he linked wisdom and reason to a person's ability to resist the necessity of the planetary movements:

... the impression of the stars produces its results in most people who do not resist the tendency that comes from their body, but it is not always effective, for, in one

³⁷⁰ Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England*: pp.10-11.

³⁷¹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles. Book 3: Providence, Part II*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 3.91.92.

³⁷² Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles. Book 3: Providence, Part II*: 3.85.89.

³⁷³ Quinn, "St. Thomas Aquinas's concept of the Human Soul and the Influence of Platonism," p.182.

case or another a man may resist, perhaps, the natural inclination by means of reason.³⁷⁴

Aquinas expanded this by saying that the planets would have an effect, in some way, in the material world but the exact nature of the effect was not inevitable. He concluded that if '...everything occurs by necessity, there is nothing fortuitous or by chance.'³⁷⁵ In this case 'chance' for Aquinas is similar to Calcidius' contingency, an event which 'escapes predictions' and is considered accidental and as such, according to Massie, is 'epistemologically irrelevant.'³⁷⁶ As Massie points out, the classical view of chance is thus an event whose antecedent causes are not obvious: in contemporary arguments the occurrence of unexpected events is now governed by the mathematics of probabilities.³⁷⁷

Aquinas' role in the question of free will and astrology was one of restoring the heavens to humanity while at the same time defining the limits of the horoscope. By promoting the link between the body and the heavens Aquinas' teachings allowed for the new Arabic ideas of medical astrology to be taught in Western Europe. As Roger French explains, medicine thereafter became a rational Aristotelian science based on the practice of astrology.³⁷⁸ Within this Aristotelian framework Aquinas' views on fate were, as previously argued, dualist, but his dualism allowed, by association, for the idea that an acceptance of any astrological premise did not automatically ensure fatalism. However, Aquinas' major contribution to astrology was not his version of dualism but that he instilled the argument of dualism into the astrology practiced in the Christian world.

Aquinas' contributions to theories of fate were:

- i. The restoration of the importance of natural law to learning.

³⁷⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Book 3: Providence, Part II: 3.85.25.

³⁷⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Book 3: Providence, Part II: 3.86.11.

³⁷⁶ Massie, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, an essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus*: p.1.

³⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion on Chance, Fortuna and their relationship to fate see, Massie, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, an essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus*: pp.1-37; Pierre-Simon Laplace, *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities* (New York Cosmio, 1812, 2007), p.3.

³⁷⁸ Roger French, "Foretelling the Future: Arabic Astrology and the English Medicine in the Late Twelfth Century," *Isis* Vol. 87, no. 3 (1996): p.457.

- ii. The restoration of the Aristotelian concept of a relationship between the celestial spheres and life on earth.
- iii. The embedding of the dualist argument into astrology.
- iv. An emphasis on reason as the tool with which to rise above the necessity indicated by the planetary movements.
- v. The acceptance of a place for astrology within medicine.

Chapter summary

This chapter has considered the classical theories of fate of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics and their influences on other classical and Late Antiquity authors in order that the findings of the fieldwork can be compared and contrasted with classical thinking on fate.

The work of Homer and Sophocles was discussed to establish the early Greek notions of fate and necessity and the questions emerging around moral responsibility. The chapter then discussed Plato's solution to these questions through presenting a dualist theory of fate. He constructed a benefic sympathetic divine cosmos and considered that all individuals had a personal relationship to this cosmos through the idea of soul. The soul was responsible because its receipt of the divine gift of reason which enabled the soul to, over many life times, learn how to escape from the necessity of the material world. The chapter then presented variations on Plato's theory of fate. Plotinus's divine cosmos full of symbols which coated the soul with planetary additions which the soul had to learn to remove to find its true authentic self. Calcidius theory of fate was also discussed which showed the emergence within Middle Platonism of a new philosophical position on free will — the ability to choose what depends on us which is reflected in Calcidius theory as an emphasis on self-agency, the ability of an individual to participate in fate by also creating chains of fate. Aristotle's naturalism was introduced with his ensouled divine cosmos all moved via his theory of causation which formalised the notion of non-divine *telos*. The chapter also explored the Stoic monist theory of fate as introduced through the works of Zeno and Chrysippus of the old Stoa and Epictetus of the first century and presented the immanent sympathetic cosmos where all things influenced all other things via movement. The chapter also highlighted how these classical theories of fate required a sympathetic cosmos, a 'physics' which gave purpose to the existence of fate, and how the nature of these 'physics' varied from one school of thought to the next.

The chapter then considered the influences of these classical views on the work of Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine rejected Aristotle's notion of a link between the divine celestial spheres and life on earth and installed the concept of universal providence where all things were linked by God's providence and thus produced theological fatalism. In contrast, Aquinas accepted Aristotle's views and proposed that the planets influenced the body but the soul was insulated from the necessity of the planetary movements. Due to his influence, Aquinas instilled dualism into the practice of astrology.

The next chapter considers the post-seventeenth century replacement of fate and a sympathetic cosmos with the idea of universal determinism and the consequences of this determinism on the notion of free will and the meaning of life.