



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

Thinking through Fate

Bernadette Brady

Fate, a different ontology, a sympathetic cosmology

- Fate exists in a different ontology to that created by the sciences in the last few hundred years.
- An ontology that places synchronicities, serendipities, superstitions, divination, lucky and unlucky, jinks, omens, curses, prayer and blessings, into a rational format also supports the existence of fate.
- Such an ontology belongs in what Lévy-Bruhl defined as a **mystical mind**. Such a mind was indifferent to questions of how but on 'what' - what is the meaning of the event, rather than 'how' does this event happen?

Bernadette Brady, *Cosmos, Chaosmos and Astrology* (London: Sophia Centre Press, 2014), 17-18.

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *The Notebooks on Primitive Mentality* trans. Peter Rivi re (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), 37-38.

- *The Notebooks on Primitive Mentality* 50.

Fate belongs to the organic world



Functioning within a sympathetic cosmology, the other central feature of fate is that it is personal. Fate varies from one person to another, as one person's fate can be viewed as more difficult than another.

Determinism however is universal and constant across the laws of nature. All people are affected by gravity regardless of their moral values.

This personal nature of fate separates it from determinism.

Determinism is devoid of moral content or purpose and acts on all organic and non-organic objects. Fate, however, is the opposite.

Fate is like story

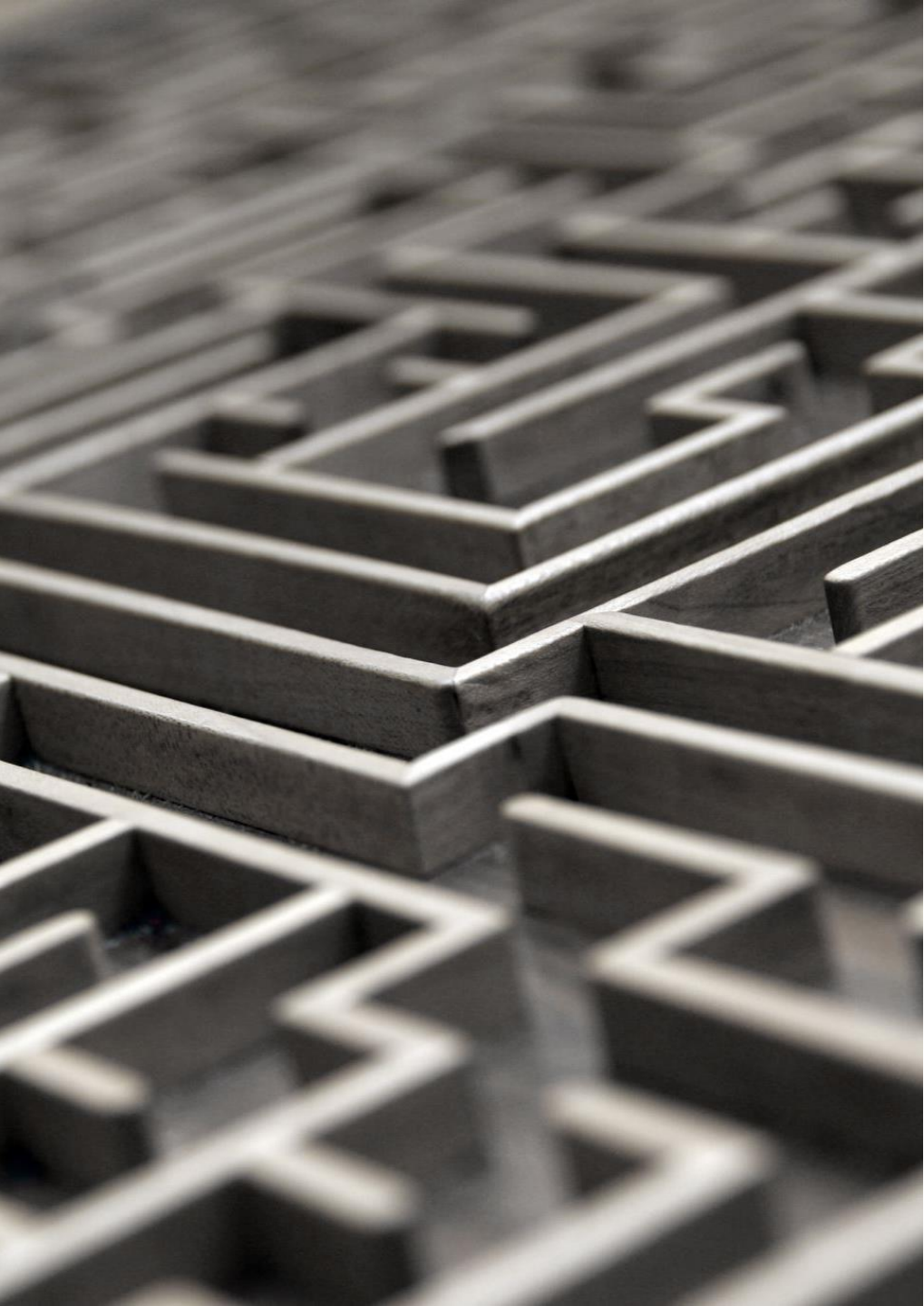


The perception of fate is as a pattern. Fate is sensed when seeking to understand a string of apparently disconnected events across time that ‘conspire’ to a certain purpose.

This is like finding oneself in a story **but only glimpsing part of the plot line at times of serendipity or personal reflection.**

Stories are like fate, they are also teleological and driven by a purpose defined by their ending.

When fate is experienced, it has a sense of already being written, it has the purpose of the movement of a story through time.



Fate and moral responsibility

Throughout its history, both within astrological literature and philosophical discourses, fate has yielded to issues of moral responsibility.

People will accept their fate, unless this means it will produce an unwelcomed event. People will then seek to alter their fate – ritual, prayer, actions in any way... .

Within philosophy David Cockburn argued for the existence of free will by stating that determinism needed to find the gaps in moral responsibility. However, the thesis of determinism is void of moral themes, **instead it is fate that finds the gaps in a person's moral fabric, as this is one of fate's characteristics.**

Fate and Participation



Today, astrologers generally hold either a Platonistic approach to their lives and seek to first discover their fate, and then seek to rise above it and hope that their soul will return unimpeded to the stars.

Other astrologers echo the Stoic view of accepting and seeking to live in harmony with their fate.

However, whatever the individual astrologer's approach to fate is, the vast majority also seek to participate with fate, to be an active agent in their story.

Participation, in this sense, was not to be an onlooker but an active part of the process. For the astrologers, it was to learn to create a dialogue with the heavens. This is the same idea as described by Lévy-Bruhl discussed earlier in the module.

Fate and Astrology

My research with the astrologers showed that their astrological fate provided them with a notion of past and future, based in planetary cycles which produced a personal life-narrative, a life story.

This was a part of the unique view of self and its relationship to the cosmos. Thus, for many astrologers, these planetary events have become internalised, forming what Anthony Giddens referred to as the ongoing story about self.

Astrology does not impose fate on the individual. Instead, the individual finds in astrology a home for their own private views that life is lived in patterns. based on planetary cycles, which produced a personal life narrative