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## **Some philosophical roots of determinism in astrology**

This presentation considers the nature of the determinism associated with astrology by some of its critics and its protagonists, and then suggests that the determinism actually taught and practiced in contemporary western astrology has links to the philosophy of Plato rather than to the universal causal determinism as suggested by its critics. In this paper I will examine the work of two astrological authors, exploring their views on determinism within astrology. The first is Alan Leo (1860 - 1917), an English astrologer and founder of the Astrological Lodge of the Theosophical Society, UK. Leo is considered to be one of the driving forces behind the revival of astrology in the west. The other is Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985), French born astrologer, philosopher and composer who spent most of his life in the USA. Rudhyar is the author of over 40 astrological works and is the founder of what is known as transpersonal astrology. Finally I will give some preliminary results of survey work I have been conducting within the European community of astrologers to show how the philosophy and nature of the determinism presented by both Leo and Rudhyar is reflected in their practice of astrology.

### **Determinism**

To the modern western mind determinism is generally defined as causal and universal. In the words of William James (1842 – 1910)

It professes that those parts of the universe already laid down absolutely appoint and decree what the other parts shall be. The future has no ambiguous possibilities hidden in its work: the part we call the present is compatible with only one totality. Any other future complement than the one fixed from eternity is impossible<sup>1</sup>.

This definition of determinism is Laplacian (if all the laws of the universe are known and all the knowledge of the universe is known then all future events can also be known – the universe is complicated but ultimately understandable like a machine). It is supported by the causal philosophy of classical science and has its origin with the Stoics, the first Greek philosophical school to develop universal causal determinism.

There was, however, a philosophical impasse in the causal determinism of the Stoics. When their ideas on determinism were placed into human life as fate (a word I will use here to describe determinism applied to the life of a human being) such a description of fate resulted in fatalism– which meant that their philosophy precluded moral responsibility and free will. This was contrary to the common-sense perception of life and thus it came into conflict with Athenian homicide law of the fourth century B.C. This law made a distinction between intentional and unintentional homicide. The

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<sup>1</sup> William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Dover, 1956), pg .150.

places where the two kinds of homicide were tried were different and the penalties for unintentional homicide were less severe than those for intentional homicide<sup>2</sup>.

This pressure placed on the different arguments on determinism by the practice of law is the place, even today, where philosophy has to meet the everyday business of the state and we shall return to it later in the paper.

To resolve this impasse the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus (280-207 BC) suggested that all things happen in accordance with antecedent causes. That is to say, things *do not* happen in a causal chain in accordance with first and perfect causes but rather in accordance with auxiliary and proximate causes. First and perfect causes were driven by *orthos logos* which is god but also the wise man who is able to choose towards “moral goodness” consequently this restored free will to the human agent<sup>3</sup>. The Stoic example used to explain this was that of a cylinder which is pushed to roll down a hill. The auxiliary cause is the push to the cylinder to begin its movement; however, the exact nature of its rolling will depend on the nature and shape of the cylinder.

The Stoic concept of universal causal determinism placed in a person’s life as fate was strongly challenged by Cicero and was at odds with all other schools of Greek philosophy. Nevertheless, it is this Stoic thinking on determinism which led to the development of classical science and is still today that body’s and society’s accepted view of determinism. Consequently when a subject like astrology, which contains determinism, receives criticism it tends to involve arguments based on the debates against Stoic determinism.

### **The critics view of astrological determinism**

One such critic from the classical era was Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 – 43 B.C.E.). In his work *De Divinatione* he challenges the validity of divination and includes astrology in his criticism.

Cicero defines determinism on the model suggested by the Stoics when he states:

Now by Fate I mean ... an orderly succession of causes, wherein cause is linked to cause and each cause of itself produces an effect.<sup>4</sup>

Determinism is actually the price paid for an ordered universe, hence the nature of one’s philosophical position on determinism will impact on one’s thinking on the nature of the origin of order. Cicero restates his Stoic ideas on determinism when he discusses his thinking on the origin of order:

Things which are to be do not suddenly spring into existence, but the evolution of time is like the unwinding of a cable: it creates nothing new and only unfolds each event in its order<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas M. MacDowell, *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (London: Manchester University Press, 1963), pp.45, 117.

<sup>3</sup> A.A Long, "The Stoic Concept of Evil," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 18, no. 73 (1968): pg.334.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Divinatione*, trans. W.A. Falconer, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge Massachusetts, London England: Harvard University Press, 1923 Reprinted 2001), I. iv.127.

Cicero then applies this determinism to astrology and suggests that many people would have shared the same date of birth as Homer but that there was only one Homer<sup>6</sup>. Similarly he suggests that the differing lives of identical twins show the determinism of astrology as unsustainable<sup>7</sup>. This same argument is used four hundred years later by St Augustine (354 – 430) who declares that the observation of the lives of exact time-twins was sufficient to show the fallacy of astrology<sup>8</sup>.

The problem with this argument is that both Cicero and St Augustine are really arguing against genethliology, defined by Thorndike as the superstition that the time and place of birth and nothing else determines with mathematical certainty and mechanical rigidity the entirety of one's life<sup>9</sup>.

Assuming this rigidly causal view of fate, Cicero then points out the fault in genethliology, which is that if one's fate cannot be changed then it is of no use knowing about a future event<sup>10</sup>. Similarly St Augustine reconfirms his opinion that genethliology is the type of determinism, and thus view of fate, used by astrology when he suggests that Christians should leave the subject of astronomy alone "because it is related to the most pernicious error of those who utter a fatuous fatalism"<sup>11</sup>

Both Cicero and, later, St. Augustine ignore the argument of Chrysippus concerning the different *types* of causes, primary or auxiliary - which does create a place for free will and thus moral responsibility within the Stoic model of determinism. Instead they both focus their criticism on genethliology which, according to Thorndike<sup>12</sup>, was very much alive in the general populace at the time of St Augustine but was, however, not that apparent in the views of the *astrologers* of the day.

Fifteen centuries later the issue of the lack of moral responsibility implied by genethliology still formed the central theme of 20<sup>th</sup> century criticism against astrology. Richard Dawkins<sup>13</sup> assumes that astrology "pigeonholes people" into hard-edged and deterministic zodiac signs and thus, since such a view reduces personal responsibility, he assumes that followers of astrology are "stupid people" who should be pitied not exploited. Dean, Kelly and Mather<sup>14</sup> agree with Dawkins and also consider people who use astrology to have a psychological weakness. Genethliology was also assumed to be

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<sup>5</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I. lvi. 127.

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, II. xlvii. 99.

<sup>7</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, II. xlv. 93.

<sup>8</sup> St Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 2-3. In St Augustine, *St. Augustine Confessions* trans. Pine-Coffin R.S. (London Penguin, 1961), pg. 140.

<sup>9</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science Part 1* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1923), pg. 517.

<sup>10</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, II. viii.21.

<sup>11</sup> St Augustine, *De principiis*, I, 7. In, Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science Part 1*, pg. 521.

<sup>12</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science Part 1*, pg. 517.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Dawkins, "The Real Romance in the Stars," *The Independent on Sunday*, 31 December, 1995 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Dean, Ivan Kelly, and Arthur Mather, "Astrology" in *The Encyclopaedia of the Paranormal*, ed. Gordon Stein (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996b), pp. 47-99.

the substance of astrology by Sutcliffe<sup>15</sup>, a reporter for the UK newspaper the *Independent*, who in an article on 9 January 2002 considered a person who uses astrology to have a disease – “a kind of scabies of the intellect”. However, of these voices of judgement against astrology or the people who use it, it is Theodor Adorno<sup>16</sup> (1903 – 69), one of the most important philosophers and social critics in Germany after World War II, who presents a case in detail. In the 1950s he wrote on his views on astrology, and once again the assumption is that its determinism is genethliological.

Adorno argued that the astrologer or their client needed to shed all moral responsibility and yield totally to the dictates of the stars<sup>17</sup>. He considered that such an acceptance of unbridled absolute power in one’s life had to be a form of a compulsive neurosis to follow orders<sup>18</sup>. Adorno<sup>19</sup> considered astrological determinism to be (and I use his words) an “authoritarian whip” which cracked down on the user, and caused the user to be “dependent”, able only to fear it, or brace for its blow.

Yet, the fundamental question which Thorndike suggested was valid in St Augustine’s day remains unaddressed by astrology’s critics even up to present time; this question is: within 20<sup>th</sup> century astrology does the determinism it contains result in a genethliological approach, or does the literature and/or practice suggest other definitions of determinism?

If we look briefly at two astrologers who were of major importance as published and respected astrological authors, and whose work would have been readily available in the 1950s at the time of Adorno’s critique on astrology, we do not see evidence of genethliology in their writing.

Alan Leo, the English astrologer from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in his work, *Astrology for All*, writes:

Matter is fated while the spirit is free. ... Matter is fated to assume shape and form, yet the life within that form is destined to control it sooner or later.<sup>20</sup>

In Leo’s writing we can see a reflection of the Stoic’s example of the cylinder being pushed down the hill. The matter is the push on the cylinder but the spirit is the *nature* of the cylinder which influences the way it moves. Leo is suggesting that *all* is not determined at the moment of birth but rather the life or spirit of the person will sooner or later influence the fated matter.

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Sutcliffe, "Did They See It Coming?," *Independent*, 9 January 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Theodor Adorno, W, "The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column," in *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Adorno, "The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column," pg. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Adorno, "The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column," pg. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Adorno, "The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column," pg. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Alan Leo, *Astrology for All* (1998) (1910 [Accessed 1 August 2007]). Paragraph 320.

He expands this concept in the same work when he writes:

Character is that inherent quality of the soul which it brings with it as an asset, and is the 'root of merit' through which it is either susceptible and conformable to its environment, or rises above and dominates, alters or changes it.

In this sense Character becomes Destiny<sup>21</sup>.

Leo is linking the will of the individual to the idea of character and one's soul. He is suggesting that this part of a person struggles with the body's desires which are ruled by fate and if the will or character is not strong enough it will be consumed by matter. The outcome of such a struggle is not predetermined in Leo's astrology but rather rests on the "character" of the soul.

This struggle between one's bodily desires and the soul's desire for a virtuous path is found in Plato's *Phaedrus* where he uses the example of a charioteer to explain the soul's difficult and unpredictable struggle with fate. To Plato the soul is immortal and consists of three parts, which are portrayed in *Phaedrus* as a charioteer and his two horses:

To begin with, our driver is in charge of a pair of horses;... one of his horses is beautiful and good and from stock of the same sort, while the other is the opposite and has the opposite sort of bloodline. This means that chariot-driving in our case is inevitably a painfully difficult business<sup>22</sup>.

The struggle of the Will (the charioteer) to resist the disobedient, unruly, and lusty desires of the non-noble horse is almost overwhelming for the charioteer. The non-noble horse seeks to drag the whole threesome in the direction of satisfying its lust for a beautiful youth. The outcome of this struggle rests totally on the will power of the charioteer who is responsible for maintaining the virtue of the soul. The consequence of losing this struggle is the damaging of the soul, with serious outcomes regarding its ability to rise via its future lives to eventually enter the Field of the Blest.

We can also see this in Plato's *Clitophon* where he writes:

Someone who does not know how to use his soul is better off putting his soul to rest and not living at all rather than leading a life in which his actions are based on nothing but personal whim<sup>23</sup>.

Leo's astrology reflects Plato's views as he also talks of the need for a strong willed soul to deal with life, suggesting a lost life if the soul is weak. He writes:

The weak-willed are constantly being affected by all desires and forces outside of themselves, and these forces being too strong for their inherent will to overcome, they eventually succumb to what is called fate, responding blindly to the major portion of the planetary influences<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Leo, *Astrology for All*. Paragraph 299-301.

<sup>22</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 246b.

<sup>23</sup> Plato. *Clitophon* 408b.

<sup>24</sup> Leo, *Astrology for All*. Paragraph 234.

Here Leo is clearly defining fate as coming from or being represented by the “planetary influences” and it is the journey of life for the individual to overcome these fated forces through the use of their own will power.

Alan Leo’s astrology is spiritually driven, with the theme that the horoscope provides the fate or material component of the life while the soul is captured in the difficult mortal framework of the body. For Leo the correct use of the chart was to understand this mortal framework in order that one may rise above its influence and become a more purified, wise or evolved soul. Such an evolution would either help the individual reincarnate into a better life or help the world become a better place. Here, in Leo’s astrology, the free will engages with the mortal clay of fate and the outcome, seen as the person’s life, depends on the strength of the soul in this struggle.

A generation later and in another continent, the US astrologer and philosopher Dane Rudhyar expressed similar themes. Rudhyar produced his astrological works from 1936 to the early 1980s and his books are still in print and readily available. Indeed, in the pilot studies of a survey I am currently conducting with astrologers, nearly 15% of the 115 astrologers surveyed listed him as a major influence on their astrology, with over 65% listing other astrological authors who have themselves been strongly influenced by Rudhyar.

Rudhyar’s theme is similar to Leo’s but he blends the theosophical position with Jungian psychology, and from this he takes a strong stance on the balance between free will and determinism. In his work *The Lunation Cycle* (1967) he states:

Events cannot be foretold accurately, but the conditions needed by an individual if he is to grow to his full stature as an individual can be pre-diagnosed. The astrologer can discover from the progressions the main turning points in the life of a person<sup>25</sup>.

Here Rudhyar is suggesting that part of the life is under the control of a person’s fate – that of the timing of events – such events occur in order for the individual to learn and reach their full potential; but the actual nature of the events is not under the influence of fate. Rudhyar sought to create what he defined as transpersonal astrology, in which he taught that the chart was just a beginning of a journey, a seed from which the individual soul could emerge. In his work *The Astrology of Transformation* (1980) he states:

The birth potential remains what it is; this the permanent factor in us, the seed form, the "fundamental tone" of our individual being and destiny; but nearly everything that surrounds us will tend to change its vibration, even with the very best intention, even through parental love and all kinds of love<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle* (Santa Fe, New Mexico Aurora Press, 1967), pg. 104.

<sup>26</sup> Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation* (1980 [Accessed 3 March 2007]); available from [http://rudhyar.com/aoft/aoft\\_c8\\_s1\\_p1.shtml](http://rudhyar.com/aoft/aoft_c8_s1_p1.shtml).

Later in the same work he continues:

If we consider a birth-chart the symbolic seed of an individual personality, we can readily see that the growth of the germinating seed into a large tree depends, on the one hand, on the inner rhythm of the natural process of unfoldment of seed-potentialities into the actualized form of the tree, and on the other hand, upon weather conditions, sunshine and rain, and what insects, large animals, and human beings might do to the growing tree<sup>27</sup>.

Rudhyar's astrology, like Leo's, considers the determinism contained as fate in the birth chart as the starting point of one's life, similar to the biological determinism of one's genetic structure; for both these astrologers the chart is the soil and environment into which the soul is planted. For both Leo and Rudhyar it is the combination of the will of the soul with the fate of its material environment which produces the final outcome of the lived life.

Rudhyar's Platonist roots are revealed in his thinking on the purpose of astrology: he considers astrology to be a tool or map to help guide one's I-center (soul) towards a galactic (divine) level. He writes:

The birth-chart is only the starting point of this process, which even physical death may not end if the individual has succeeded in raising his or her I-center to the transindividual (or symbolically, the "galactic") level<sup>28</sup>.

This reflects Plato's thinking –in *Laws*<sup>29</sup> he suggests that the aim of life is to improve our soul and “to make it better than it was before”. The association of the body and soul is a union of learning to help the soul evolve, the real purpose of life being ultimately to join with the divine. Plato has Socrates stress this to his listeners when he writes: “The union of body and soul, you see, can never be superior to their separation (and I mean that quite seriously)”<sup>30</sup>.

Having emphasised the preferred state of the soul to be separate from the body, Plato then considered that there was a relationship between individual souls and the stars, with the soul's journey over many lifetimes focused on the ultimate reunion with its star-companion. In the *Timaeus* he writes:

... he [God] divided the mixture into a number of souls equal to the number of the stars and assigned each soul to a star.

... And if a person lived a good life throughout the due course of his time, he would at the end return to his dwelling place in his companion star, to live a life of happiness that agreed with his character. But if he failed in this, he would be born a second time, now as a woman<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation*.

<sup>28</sup> Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation*.

<sup>29</sup> Plato, *Laws*, 727.

<sup>30</sup> Plato, *Laws*, 828d.

<sup>31</sup> Plato, *Timaeus* 41e – 42d.

Rudhyar appears to draw from Plato's work and also considers that souls are engaged with the trials of life in order to learn and eventually to return to the star. He writes in *The Astrology of Transformation*:

A one-to-one relationship can be established between the human individual and the "star" that symbolizes his or her trans-individual selfhood, or a particular aspect of the "galactic" consciousness operative in this higher collectivity may focus itself upon the mind of the individual on the transpersonal way<sup>32</sup>.

Rudhyar stresses however that such a star has no causal influence on the individual but instead it acts as a sign or symbol, a guiding light. In this way Rudhyar is revisiting the arguments of the neo-Platonists – such as Plotinus (205 – 270) who drew a distinction between the idea of a heavenly body being used as a sign or a cause<sup>33</sup>.

### **Astrology as a cultural carrier of Platonism**

The assimilation of Plato's philosophy into 20<sup>th</sup> century astrology has enabled it to become a tool for one's personal spiritual journey. This assimilation is made possible by understanding that one of Plato's central tenets is that the soul, which is immortal, needs to feed itself and grow through gaining wisdom. In the *Epinomis* Plato makes it clear that there is only *one* pathway to wisdom and that is to study the movement of the heavenly bodies. Only then, once one is "truly initiated and has achieved perfect unity and a share of the true wisdom, he will continue for the rest of his days as an observer of the fairest things [the movement of the sky] that sight can see."<sup>34</sup>

Plato continues ennobling the study of the heavens by saying: "To one who studies these subjects in this way, there will be revealed a single natural bond that links them all"<sup>35</sup>." Plato informs us that such a person who sees and understands this bond between their soul and the heavens is promised eternal bliss by joining in the destiny of unity and rejoining their star-companion.

Plato also suggested in the *Republic* that there is an element of determinism which is linked to the time of a person's birth:

For the birth of a divine creature, there is a cycle comprehended by a perfect number. For a human being, it is the first number in which are found root and square increases, comprehending three lengths and four terms, .. The whole geometrical number controls better and worse births<sup>36</sup>.

Plato expands this thought, suggesting that it is the responsibility of those that have wisdom to use this knowledge to help produce people of good nature and states that: "when your rulers, through

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<sup>32</sup> Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation*.

<sup>33</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science Part 1*, pg. 306.

<sup>34</sup> Plato, *Epinomis* 986d.

<sup>35</sup> Plato, *Epinomis* 992.

<sup>36</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 546b-c.

ignorance of these births, join brides and grooms at the wrong time, the children will be neither good natured nor fortunate.”<sup>37</sup>

Plato’s work provided and continues to provide a strong environment for astrology: his constant theme of the development of the soul via the gaining of wisdom; the statement that this wisdom is only gained via studying the heavens; and that the purpose of this study was to attune oneself to the heavenly movement. Added to this, in the *Republic* he suggests that there are good and bad times of birth and that such influence of number associated with the time of birth of a child will provide the child’s fate. All of this creates a foundation and even a spiritual justification for the practice of astrology.

### **The Determinism of Plato**

Plato’s philosophy accepts the existence of determinism and thus of fate. Within that fate he places the immortal soul. The soul’s journey is to deal with the material fate in which it finds itself and the outcome of this struggle is dependant on the strength of character of the soul. The purpose of this union is to allow the soul to be educated by struggling with the desires given to it by fate. The fate given to a soul is selected by the divine checker-player who places the soul into the mortal world at a time and place best suited to its learning needs<sup>38</sup>. Or, in the myth of Er, it is the soul itself that chooses its own fate and thus the wiser the soul the better its judgement in choosing the fate that will best suit its evolution. Whether it is the divine checker-player or the soul itself that chooses the fate of one’s future life, Plato’s version of determinism is what would today be considered a compatibilist position.

### **A modern approach to determinism.**

The philosophical problem of free will and determinism is the problem of understanding how, if at all, the truth of determinism might be compatible with the truth of our belief that we have free will. This problem was taken to a new level of debate by the philosopher David Hume (1711-1776). Hume argued that if the world was indeterminate, then all events were random and thus one’s actions must also be truly random; consequently one’s actions are not determined by character, personal desires, preferences or one’s values. But if one’s actions are not determined by character, then a person cannot be held responsible for the random events they perform<sup>39</sup>. Free will therefore requires determinism. Hume shifted the debate from one of arguing for the existence of either determinism or indeterminism to the question of whether determinism was compatible (free will exists with determinism) or incompatible (free will cannot exist in determinism), although these terms were not introduced until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century by William James (1842 – 1910).

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<sup>37</sup> Plato, *Republic* 546c-d.

<sup>38</sup> Plato, *Laws* 903d.

<sup>39</sup> Ted Honderich, "Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, and the Smart Aleck," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 56, no. 4 (1996): pp. 855-6.

James extended Hume's thinking by defining levels of determinism. His scale ranged from the softest of soft determinism to the hard determinism of causal determinism<sup>40</sup>. These were then defined as compatibility and incompatibility. The compatibilist considers that we are *not* the creators of the events that happen around us (we do not have origination) but we can, however, choose how we react to these events. Compatibilists therefore support the existence of determinism in human life and see it as necessary for the existence of free will.

Earlier, Hume had drawn on legal arguments to support his view of what James would define as a deterministic and compatibilist world. Hume pointed out that crimes committed spontaneously are punished less severely than crimes that are premeditated<sup>41</sup>. This is an ethical solution which embraces an approach to life lived in a deterministic compatibilist world. In such a world one's actions *can* be the result of an external cause and thus at these times we are potentially "overwhelmed" by the determinism within the world. However, any action undertaken consciously is considered to be chosen by the free will (Plato would have said chosen by the soul) and thus punishment for a crime committed with the free will engaged is more severe. So it can be seen that the law acts as if we actually *do* live in a compatibilist deterministic world.

Against this view is the incompatibilist argument which takes the position that determinism is harder and its presence precludes free will. Incompatibilists consider that the deterministic position is an unequivocal statement that free will can only exist when humans do have origination over the events around them and since we do NOT personally create all the events around us then we do not have free will. Since incompatibilists consider that we *do* have free will they therefore conclude that we live in an indeterministic universe.

### **What the Astrologer's think - early survey results**

Since September of 2007 I have been piloting and compiling a survey of contemporary astrologers with regard to their beliefs around determinism (fate) and how that belief influences their practice of astrology. The survey consists of a combination of multiple choice questions and a series of statements on the purpose of astrology and on the origin of determinism. For these statements the astrologer is asked to select a position varying between strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree or agree, agree and strongly agree.

These results are then tabulated, firstly into a strongly agree table, and secondly into a strongly disagree table. If the astrologer did not strongly agree or disagree with any statement then their answers are not shown in the tables. Sometimes an astrologer would strongly agree or disagree with more than one statement and would therefore be counted in a table twice. I do intend to do a fuller analysis of the levels of agreement and disagreement but these are some early and, necessarily at this stage incomplete, results from the pilot studies.

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<sup>40</sup> see William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism," in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays* (New York: Longman, 1909).

<sup>41</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977; reprint, 2nd), pg.66.

**The Strong Agreement Results**

The table in *figure 1* is created by the combination of what astrologers strongly agreed was the purpose of astrology *linked* with their strong agreement as to the source of determinism. These two beliefs actually unite to form the astrologer’s personal philosophy of astrology even if they have not articulated it for themselves. For example, if an astrologer strongly believed that God’s Will defined what happened in their life, and their chart helped them understand and thus follow God’s Will, then the table registered a count in the top left hand cell. As can be seen from this table (*figure 1*) only one astrologer from the 115 surveyed held this philosophical position.

*Total number of People*

115

***Strong Agreement report***

The purpose of Astrology	The source of determinism							
	God's Will	A divine nature	The Soul's need for evolution	One's karma	Science laws of physics	Jungian - family's past	Living in patterns	A human construct
To work with God's or gods' plan	0.9% 1	7.8% 9	9.6% 11	5.2% 6	3.5% 4	4.3% 5	7.0% 8	2.6% 3
For the soul to Transcend the chart	0.0% 0	1.7% 2	1.7% 2	0.9% 1	1.7% 2	0.9% 1	0.9% 1	0.0% 0
To reach one's potential as contained in the chart	1.7% 2	13.0% 15	20.0% 23	11.3% 13	10.4% 12	13.0% 15	14.8% 17	3.5% 4
To predict like Science	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.9% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.9% 1	0.9% 1	0.0% 0
To help find harmony	0.0% 0	8.7% 10	8.7% 10	4.3% 5	6.1% 7	7.8% 9	12.2% 14	1.7% 2
To be used to dictate one's actions	0.0% 0	1.7% 2	1.7% 2	0.9% 1	0.9% 1	0.9% 1	0.9% 1	0.0% 0

*Figure 1 – Table combining the strongly agree position of the purpose of astrology with the considered source of determinism.*

**The most common strongly agreed position**

Of the 115 astrologers surveyed, 20% (23 of 115) considered that the source of determinism (fate) in their lives and thus in their charts was linked to their soul’s need for evolution. This evolution is dependant on existence in a physical body with all its needs and problems. The use of the chart is to provide a map and thus an aid to help the astrologer understand what their soul needs in order for it to reach its full potential, or achieve the full evolutionary benefits from the current life. This is the astrology of Rudhyar and Leo and thus is reflective of the philosophy of Plato.

The next most supported position was:

14.8% (17/115) of astrologers saw that the source of determinism (fate) was the natural patterns of the universe, and the chart provided a map which could be used as an aid to reaching one’s full potential as a citizen of the universe.

Indeed, the chart acting as an aid to reaching one’s full potential, from various philosophical positions, was the considered purpose of astrology for over 75% of astrologers questioned (66/115 when the astrologers who strongly agreed to more than one source of determinism were only counted once. )

The survey also included the position presented by Dawkins, Dean, Kelly and Mather, Sutcliff and Adorno, which is that the purpose of astrology is to *dictate* one’s actions and thus allow one to remove from one’s life any form of moral responsibility. Only 2% of astrologers took this position (3/115 when the astrologers who strongly agreed to more than one source of determinism were only counted once).

**Strong Disagreement Results**

To the same questions the astrologers could also select “strongly disagree”. Fewer astrologers selected this option for any question (*see figure 2*).

*Total number of People*  
**115**

***Strong Disagreement report***

<b>The purpose of Astrology</b>	<b>The source of determinism</b>							
	<i>God's Will</i>	<i>A divine nature</i>	<i>The Soul's need for evolution</i>	<i>One's karma</i>	<i>Science laws of physics</i>	<i>Jungian - family's past</i>	<i>Living in patterns</i>	<i>A human construct</i>
To work with God's or gods' plan	7.8% 9	0.9% 1	2.6% 3	3.5% 4	1.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	6.1% 7
For the soul to Transcend the chart	5.2% 6	0.0% 0	2.6% 3	3.5% 4	1.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	5.2% 6
To reach one's potential as contained in the chart	0.9% 1	0.0% 0	0.9% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.9% 1
To predict like Science	7.8% 9	0.0% 0	3.5% 4	1.7% 2	4.3% 5	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	10.4% 12
To help find harmony	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0
To be used to dictate one's actions	13.9% 16	0.9% 1	3.5% 4	2.6% 3	3.5% 4	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	9.6% 11

*Figure 2 – Table combining the strongly disagree position of the purpose of astrology with the considered source of determinism.*

Here the matter of using astrology to dictate one’s actions or to simply predict with the rigor of science was strongly disagreed to by 61.7% of astrologers (71/115), suggesting that there is not support within the practitioners of astrology for the genethliological position as described by Thorndike – which, to restate, was the belief that the time and place of birth and *nothing else* determines with *mathematical certainty* and *mechanical rigidity* the entirety of one’s life.

The survey also indicated that there were more than just Stoic variations of determinism within the astrological community. There was support also for an emergent rather than unfolding form of determinism. If the future is emergent then it is not yet formed, it is simply a potential which is sensitive to feedback which actively co-creates the next event. This is unlike unfolding, which is geometrical and predetermined. We know the final shape of unfolding a newspaper, however the contents and layout of the newspaper is not even pre-known by the editor; it is emergent in that it is dependant on news stories, advertising pressures, ink supplies and the intuitive feelings of the layout editors.

To explore what I will call “emergent” determinism, in the survey astrologers were asked a series of questions which concerned their use of patterns. They were asked if they expect to see astrological patterns within their family, within the generations of their family and even in their pet’s charts. The belief in similar horoscopes within a family implies that the pattern within the charts defines a level of determinism concerning, firstly, producing and secondly, maintaining this pattern. Simply put, if a family has a pattern of sun signs all in one element, such as fire (Aries, Leo and Sagittarius), then the forthcoming birth of a new member of the family will already be influenced by determinism – as the family pattern applying pressure for the child to be born with a family matching sun sign.

A total of 65% of astrologers (75 of the 115 surveyed) agreed with the importance of pattern in determining the nature of the birth charts.

This is a different style of determinism to the Stoic model and the Platonist soul- driven causal model. It is defined within process philosophy, spearheaded by Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). In process philosophy, the classical principle – functioning follows being – is reversed to: being follows functioning. The process is thus given priority over the product<sup>42</sup>. Something is becoming rather than being and in this way Whitehead considered that a good life was one led within a pattern<sup>43</sup>.

The dividing point amongst process philosophers is the issue of a purpose in nature – does the emergence happen blindly or is it following a path, a pattern? The naturalistic process philosopher sees nature’s way of moving forward as an inner push to something different – a chance-driven randomness. In contrast there is a teleological side of the debate that considers nature to be pulling us forward to a positive destination “pre-established by some value-gearred directive force<sup>44</sup>”. This teleological side of the debate is the form of determinism that 65% of the survey astrologers agreed to when they considered that family charts are echoed within their family, and/or the generations of their family and/or even the family pets.

Thus the early survey results are showing that a view of determinism sourced in process rather than product is within the practice of 20<sup>th</sup> century astrology; and continuing the qualitative research in this area and exploring its philosophical roots is part of my ongoing research work.

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<sup>42</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-philosophy/> Accessed 11 August, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> A. H Johnson, ""Truth, Beauty and Goodness" In the Philosophy of A. N. Whitehead," *Philosophy of Science* 11, no. 1 (1944): pg. 9.

<sup>44</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-philosophy/> Accessed 11 August, 2007.

**In summary**

A strong argument can be made that astrology, in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, is a vernacular cultural expression of Platonism. Additionally, it can be seen that astrology not only contains a compatibilist deterministic view but it also harbours an element of determinism which is currently being defined within process philosophy. However, notwithstanding the different versions of determinism, it is becoming apparent that the majority of astrologers view the determinism of their charts as a resource, rather than a hindrance. This resource is seen to provide a guide for attaining greater awareness of their own personal potential. Lastly, the early survey results suggest that an astrologer who actually practices the astrology suggested by the critics, that of genethliology, is an exceedingly rare creature which probably exists more in the critic's imagination than in real life.

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