

Fate and Freewill in the Quantum Age or can systems thinking save us from climate change disaster?

Fate and freewill – the debate is as old as astrology, certainly as old as prediction. In the past the debate has focused on our individual sense of freedom of movement. This is the aspect considered by Bernadette Brady in her book “Astrology: A Place in Chaos”. But I want to ask, in an age where we are contemplating the self extinction of humanity on account of our abuse of the planet’s life support systems, how free are any of us individually to bequeath to our children a world that is rich in fresh air, pure waters and abundant and diverse life forms?

Last October the Scottish Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs held a conference in Edinburgh. They had reviewed the state of the Scottish Environment. In many ways it was not bad at all. Individual rivers were cleaner and certain plant and bird species were recovering from danger. Of course that was before the Seafield sewerage spill. But all these achievements would come to nothing if climate change is not stopped. Climate change is a global event. We simply cannot sort this problem out at an individual level alone. We have to collaborate at a global level. For the kind of high speed mass movement change and evolution human society now needs, hierarchy is unhelpful. It simply takes too long to tell everyone what to do. We need a quicker way of turning new knowledge about our situation into action. **This is even acknowledged by government as these slides from the National School of Government show.**

What I want to do tonight is explore the history of this situation related to astrological symbolism. By looking at systems thinking I believe that Brady is on the right track. By looking only at the individual side, I believe her thinking is still caught up in the old world individualist and consumerist models that have got us into this fix.

What I want to do is explore models of collective intelligence and response. To do that, I shall refer to events such as Hurricane Katrina and the Asian Tsunami. I shall refer to the work of the consultant Margaret Wheatley on the application of quantum science and systems thinking to human organisation. I shall also refer to Ken Loach’s film “Land and Freedom” and the work of the pioneering Scottish educationalist A.S. Neill at Summerhill and the Isle of Eigg community land buy-out.

In order to set the scene I shall explore the nature of freedom at an individual level, referring to the work of Alice Miller, the American psychotherapist and explain why Neill’s work in education is such a vital antidote to the problem of attachment behaviour that she describes.

But to really understand how we got into this fix, we have to dig much further back into history and pre history. This will take us to the cycle of Sedna, the recently discovered transplutonian object. The last cycle of Sedna, 10,500 years ago I associate with the loss of the Golden Age of Saturn and the first human steps to breaking up the world. The cycle of Sedna takes us from before the end of the last

ice age right up to the decision of the [IAU] International Astronomical Union to create a new class of dwarf planet; a decision rich in awesome astrological symbolism and epitomising bad behaviour at the level of collective decision making. Perhaps this marks a real turning point in human awareness? Or maybe not. I personally find the combination of Pluto, lord of the underworld, the image of the repressed passions of the people with Ceres, goddess of grief and famine and Eris the goddess of anger rather alarming. Charon Pluto's twin, ferryman over the Styx to the land of Hades, is also in the running for dwarf planet status. And then there's Sedna, the odd man out, Inuit goddess of the seas and fishermen. Are we fated to experience the worst features of this cluster of deities or are we free to avert global disaster? Though no-one thinks just now that the world will end in 2050, we could know by then, that there is nothing more we can do to prevent global calamity unfolding. The race is on to enter the Aquarian Age, the age of systemic intelligence and collective and holistic values. Will the astrological community lead from ahead or from behind? Let's see...

Freedom means you're free to do just whatever pleases you, if, of course, that is to say, what you please is what you may.

The verse neatly sums up the quandary of freedom. We can do what we like as long as we can. That is, while we have the personal capacity to do so and don't upset other people. Our sense of freedom is also coloured by what it is we want to be free to do. I am pretty free to live a rich inner life as long as my basic physical and emotional needs are met. Once I want to be free to do things in the world I will increasingly encounter other factors, people, animals, plants and the like, that are all expressing their own life force. My capacity to do what I want, will be enhanced if I am able to work with the life that is around me; my capacity for engagement and relationship if you like – a factor that our Scottish politicians are grappling with right now.

So let's just run through a few things that freedom is or is not? Is freedom indulgence? Well probably it is, as long as we don't hurt others. We tend to think of the others only as people. Climate change brings home to us that, in a web of interdependent life forms, others includes all life. We are free to respect and support the multiplicity of life forms, not to hurt them. We are free to live as Jain priests, carefully sweeping the path before us, so as not to injure a fly. We are not free to pursue a parasite life, sucking out the goodness of the earth and not replenishing it. Our individualism and consumerism acts like a drug. We are not meant to question our behaviour. Tony Blair, challenged on his long haul holiday flights, tells us that there is no point not supporting the economy. But what is the economy, if not the means to the pollution of air, sea and land? Our capacity to discriminate between the various strands of economy, to identify our real needs from artificially generated dependencies, or to restore the word "economy" to its original meaning, is damaged by this kind of leadership behaviour. Why do we fall for it? Why is our thinking and behaviour so at odds with our survival needs for fresh air, pure water and life supporting earth systems?

Of course freedom has always gone with responsibility; responsibility for ourselves and our self knowledge for instance. Our capacity to live and act responsibly

relies in part on our ability not to be compelled by unconscious drives and needs. The birth chart has many models and methods of testing appropriate human development; development that is conscious, social and responsive to the present. Let's take a look.

For starters there are the elements. The four elements are original tests of wholeness in development. Our human society gives great emphasis to the air element with the volumes of data we are presented with. Young people are trained in data sort and analysis and tested and assessed for proficiency. Airy therapies based on the observable links between thoughts and actions, such as Cognitive therapy and NLP, are now relatively well accepted. We are air heads to the nth degree.

Over emphasis on air distorts our relations with the other elements. In terms of earth, we manage quantifiable volumes of substance, hauling, processing and marketing the stuff. We also understand our own physiology much better now, but it has been uphill work for this understanding to be valued in the way we raise our children. It is now clearer that children need outdoor space, fresh air, pure water and abundant life forms to play in for their proper physical development. Without the capacity to explore outdoors and without appropriate social contact, children fail to thrive and develop. Studies of Rumanian orphans show that the electrical activity in the brain reduces in situations of deprivation. Children deprived in this way may never fully recover. Yet this situation fails to sound the alarm with regard to the treatment of our own children, who are also deprived, physically, socially and emotionally, albeit to a lesser extent. We are content to criminalise young people as "asbos", ignoring our social and collective responsibility to provide for their appropriate development through play in nature.

Air also distorts our relationship with fire. The fiery sense of vision and opportunity is all too often turned to enterprise and the question put "What is my vision for my business?" The fiery vision is spiritual first of all. It is entirely non physical in essence, but uplifting, inspirational arousing exuberance and enthusiasm. When the vision of fire is applied to making money I wonder if this is in some sense a compensation for something we lack. Recent studies have estimated that an unhappy person needs an extra £50,000 a year to compensate them for their unhappiness.

Crucially we lack water. The round the world sailor Robin Knox Johnston recently sailed into Bilbao saying he would not take part in the round the world yacht race again. His reasons? The sea is too polluted, too full of mega freight tankers. The whales and Dolphins have gone. Three times he and his yacht were nearly run down by tankers. The ships masters did not even check to see if he was ok. This is a symptom of a loss of good water in the material world and in the realm of feeling and values that our astrological water correlates with. Without this water how will we cool down the planet? The water element seeks meaning and value. Water asks "Why?" and requires to be satisfied at the level of good feeling and right relationship, not on the basis of data and argument alone. It is the missing element of our age.

How else does astrology image right development? I would argue that it does so through the sequence of the houses. I suspect that the chakras, conventionally associated with the planets, can also be associated with the houses, starting with the root chakra in the 6th house at puberty, the point of sexual awakening. This is also the point of apprenticeship into adult skills through routine daily practice, supervised by a master from outwith the family group.

But this is to cut in, in the middle. The first house is the house of birth, the arrival of the person as a physical entity. This is a crucial process in development. Baby and mother pass through a life and death crisis. They are alone in this. Nevertheless, both depend upon being welcomed home, cared for with rejoicing, once the baby is born. This lone journey and welcome home is a metaphor for the developmental transition through each house to the next.

However, I would argue that, while we delight in the child's first steps (second house) or the child's first words (3rd house) we struggle to really support the child or adult through further phases of development. This is because we want to hold on to things as they were. Our tenacity and retention blinds us to the developmental needs of those around us. Our further support is not unconditional. Movement through the phases of development is distorted by rules, assumptions and conventions that are hard to recognise and therefore challenge. We want to provide a loving home (4th house), but not one where children are safe or noisy or can make a mess. We want children to be happy, but this means depriving them of the chance to play (5th house) because at this age (7 – 14) we want to teach them adult skills in a context divorced from practical relevance. We ignore the fact that social play in the outdoors has always been the child's natural route to knowledge, skill and friendship. We inhibit development out of fear (Saturn). Where did we all go wrong?

Let's try looking at the planets. What can they tell us about true human development? Pretty much all counselling astrologers tend to agree that the Moon is the foundation of our emotional security. Moon in Cancer or Taurus, at home or exalted, is generally viewed as a happy placement, a good thing, giving the native a good start in terms of emotional security and self awareness. Moreover, as Alice Miller makes clear in "The Inner Drama of the Gifted Child", emotional self knowledge is vital for the expression of our natural energy and drive. We have to know our emotions before we can engage our motivation. The words come from the same root. Without this emotional intelligence we are always caught in a subtle double bind. A sub conscious, emotionally driven bio-feedback mechanism is always telling us we might be at risk. It doesn't feel safe, we cannot reveal our true selves, we fear we will not be accepted. Further development is always going to be inhibited if these emotional foundations are not right.

Out of this we generate a risk averse society. If anything in our human world threatens our security it must be someone else's fault, not ours and someone else must pay. I am reminded of Arthur Grimble's true tales of life in the Pacific islands nearly 100 years ago; for instance of two teenagers happily hunting octopus for tea with no weapons, nets or technology, only their knowledge, strength, skill and trust. Would we really be condemning young men as anti social in our society, if

they had the chance to use their daring and companionship for socially appreciated purposes? Or I think of the story of the man, hunting shark by swimming in the water with only a knife. How can we ever claim to engage the Mars in our charts, while Saturnian fears, generated by lunar bonding disorder, prevent us from getting outside our doors?

Alice Miller makes it clear that infant bonding disorder is rife in our society. The cause is conditional loving, the lack of a bond with a significant carer based on respect for the infant's unique otherness. The idea that the baby must be a "good baby", eat well, sleep at night, not make a noise or a mess and so on. Our tendency to treat a baby, not as a wonderful adult in potential, but as an inferior product is at fault. The Inuit do differently. They regard the infant as a little grandparent, the reincarnation in some sense, of a past generation, and due the veneration and care that elders should receive. Ah yes, but how do we treat our elders in our society?

The infant bond, established in the first year of life, secures the sense that we "belong". It is this sense of belonging that requires to be re established at each transition point through the houses. Each house in the chart represents a developmental stage, separating us from our past and enabling us to break through into a wider world of both greater freedom and greater responsibility. In the first five houses this responsibility is to our own fullest development; a matter that the child cannot entirely determine by themselves, because they need the support and resource of family and society. I feel that too often astrologers and psychologists focus on the role of the family. I argue that society has a vital role. Too often astrologers fail to question the role of society in offering appropriate conditions for development. Without the commitment from the society to the child in meeting their true needs, we cannot expect the child to make a successful transition to the 10th and 11th houses. That is, to want to offer something of value back to the world, to value their society (10th house) and rejoice in its achievements (11th).

The converse of successful bonding and belonging is not simply loneliness and alienation, although these will be found. It is also attachment behaviour in all its forms. Remember that £50 k pa that you need if you're unhappy? And our attachment is subtle. It's not just stuff that we crave. We also want approval. It is a substitute for love. This is a crucial point to understand when we look at what went wrong when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. Approval – yes we want to get it right, not by the application of our own wit and ethics, but as recognised by our masters. Why?

Alice Miller makes this clear. A child who has not found a secure sense of belonging in infancy will always be desperate to please those who have power over him or her. Parents first; then school and after that god. Sadly this does not always guarantee "good" behaviour, but it does guarantee that the child will use every opportunity to demand attention for good or ill. The "clever" child soon learns that they can please mummy and daddy by doing "well" at school. That is they learn to succeed at the preferred skills that schools and society values – analysis and data sort for instance. They do not necessarily learn to be true to

themselves, to think, to be resourceful or to value the skills innate in them. Cleverness offers the chance of a good fit between socially endorsed skills and the person themselves. For the unbonded infant, a natural aptitude at the three R's allows such an individual to be driven to the top. They are caught on a hamster wheel of attainment, approval and admiration –more of Alice Miller's love substitutes.

There really is no substitute for reading "The Drama of the Gifted Child". The experience of this little book is powerful. Primarily she writes about the individual. But this is so important for our age, precisely because our whole society is driven by attachment disorder. Until we re-orientate our values towards the watery element; until our feeling life comes alive for us, our motivations will remain corrupted by unmet emotional needs.

And then there's god. Alice Miller is damning about the fundamentalist religions, such as some branches of Christianity in the USA. For her this is yet another dangerous thread along a path of seeking to meet unmet bonding needs, by seeking god's approval. God is the ultimate top man for those driven to seek approval, but not quite conventionally clever enough to achieve a Professorship or Presidential status. The dividing line that conservative religions of all colours mark out; the line that says we, us, good inside and you, them, bad outside is the foundation stone of warfare and hatred, no matter how much love it preaches. To quote Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh "Throughout human history, believers have waged war against one another. Gnostics and mystics have not. People are only too prepared to kill on behalf of a theology or a faith. They are less disposed to do so, on behalf of knowledge. Those prepared to kill for faith will therefore have a vested interest in stifling the voice of knowledge." The distinction between the handed down voice of truth and the ever living, ever unfolding work of knowledge creation is fundamental to the paradigm shift we have arrived at. The difficult work of facing up to the implications of Alice Miller's work in our lives comes with a hidden bonus, the conscious choice of mysticism. Mysticism being the lived awareness of unity, offers the ultimate path of belonging, along with the constant shift into disequilibrium. Knowledge is vital and our knowledge is partial. We must ever create it anew together, while knowing that it is never perfect or complete.

And so how did this go so wrong? Aha!

The original dividing line in the human world is the dividing line that created farming and land ownership. I submit that before this point humanity lived a hunter gatherer life, dependant upon the cycles of the natural world and adapting and moving with it. What's more I submit that in some sense we need to return to this kind of adaptability to natural rhythms and systems. **Slide 1 old and new paradigm in education/values**

Systems thinking, of which Chaos theory is a part, is about looking at the life of whole systems. It is the very antithesis of analysis. In thinking, it represents a shift from left brain analysis to right brain synthesis. In approved skills it shifts from the breaking down of things into parts to the holistic and visual mind set that we need

to appreciate the operation of living systems. We are looking therefore for the higher order thinking skills, of the kind frequently found in people identified as having learning difficulties, in conventional schooling. In terms of responsive behaviour we move from command and control, to the spontaneity and rapid knowledge sharing seen in the movement of shoals of fish.

Land ownership created the first notion of land as a commodity that we could manage and control. It required a settled life and allowed people to accumulate goods beyond what would be possible in a nomadic society. It set aside a zone for monoculture in which good was inside and bad – all parasites, invaders and thieves lay outside. Because of this it generated the need for warfare between human societies. Bows and arrows, primarily designed for hunting prey for food, gave way to swords, daggers and shields, for hand to hand human combat. The shift to farming, which permitted the accumulation of wealth, the development of a settled city life and the shift towards social hierarchy and control marked the end of the Golden Age. To quote from the Greek Mythology link – a truly wonderful web resource for the Greek myths:

The Golden Age is the reign of [Cronos](#)/Saturn, implying "the manner of life" under his rule. This is the age of Right, Trust, Simplicity, Innocence, Peace, and Everlasting Spring. The gods have intercourse with men, and the Earth yields, without being forced. There is no navigation, no mining, no laws, no judges, no war. The Golden Age appears as a lost paradise which has been associated with the irretrievable reverie of Childhood: it is a state of innocence, purity, freedom, and simplicity, ruled by Justice and obviously permeated by the significance and beauty of the natural world. The spiritual power of this age is revealed by the circumstance that the world is enchanted or 'bewitched', as must be a world in which men have intercourse with gods. In this age, the mind prevails over the physical, as may be deduced by the growing 'materiality' of the succeeding ages.

This is an illiterate age that enjoys the peace of mind that may derive from a submitted intellect.

Death has not been discovered yet, for the man of the Golden Age, ignoring significant divisions or classifications, has no knowledge of the difference between Life and Death.

In such a world, [Time](#) cannot know any sections: there is no 'past', 'present', or 'future', but rather an everlasting present in a timeless world:

Why did the Golden Age come to an end? but 'love of gain' is often mentioned as the cause ending the golden past

'Money, money makes the man,'

Ovid associates the shift of age with the dethronement of [Cronos](#). This is no more than the association of a shift in collective culture with a shift in the collective myth. A factor in our own time with the arrival of dwarf planets and transneptunians.

The change of rule had been predicted, being written in the book of Fate. Consequently, the Golden Age should *necessarily* come to an end, and *necessity*

must also apply if the Golden Age is just a phase in a cycle. Necessity ([Ananke](#)) is the mother of the [Moerae](#) [Pla.Rep.617c.]—the three sisters deciding on human fate.

With this shift Saturn moves from being the lord of timelessness and unbounded space to being, as we know him, the lord of time and space, the setter of boundaries. Boundaries and land ownership accompany the arrival of agriculture. The unbounded world then symbolically moves out to the Lordship of Neptune/Poseidon.

In the Greek myths Poseidon is not a loved or cosy god. In the myth of Perseus he is counter posed against Pallas Athene the goddess of agriculture and “civilisation” so called, that is the world of farmers, city states and slaves that were the cornerstone of classical Greek life. The Greeks had a number of reasons to be wary of Poseidon. We now know that a massive volcanic eruption in the Greek islands was probably responsible for destroying the Mycenaean civilisation on Crete, not directly, but on account of the massive Tsunami that followed it, bigger even than the recent Asian Tsunami in our own times.

Before that, the Greeks had global warming. The last ice age began to thaw some 10,000 years ago and I suspect that their myths probably date back several thousand years in oral tradition. 1,000 years ago the modern land area of the UK was joined to the continent. There were phases when the ice melted quickly. The land was rapidly overtaken by the rising seas at a rate that would have been obvious to a nomadic society. Their sacred sites, feast areas, hunting and burial grounds would be retreating by miles every year. Their dead would disappear under the sea. The sea not just as mother food source but as predator arrived.

Aha! At this point let us think, not just of Poseidon but of Sedna. Sedna is a transplutonian solar system body with an orbit of about 10,500 years. She is an Inuit sea goddess, originally an Inuit beauty who was wooed and won by a fulmar disguised as a man. The bird man doesn't feed her and she cries into the howling wind until her father returns to rescue her. The fulmar pursues Sedna and her father in their boat until the father, fearing for his life, throws her overboard. She clings to the side of the boat until he cuts off all her fingers which are then transformed into sea creatures, fish, seals, walrus, whales and so on. From this she becomes the Inuit food source in the sea. Though Sedna dies as a mortal she becomes a feared sea goddess. She sets out strict rules for fishing. If these are broken the shaman must visit her and comb her hair in order to find out what the tribe must do to put things right.

Sedna was discovered in 2003, the year of the Asian Tsunami, but first I want to show you Sedna in the chart of the IAU in 2006 which I think is when she, along with Eris arrived publicly on the astronomical map.

Now the era just prior to Sedna's last cycle, 11,000 years ago is being associated both with climate change and with the extinction of large Ice Age animals. Studies in the Americas suggest that human beings arrive there at about this time. They are unsure whether climate change or human kind caused the giant sloths, short eared bears, mammoths and sabre toothed cats to disappear. The return of

Sedna to this phase in her cycle is coincident with present day climate change and mass extinctions.

CHART - IAU

There are a few points I would like to draw your attention to here. First of all this conference was exceptionally contentious and characterised by really fierce arguments. This is perhaps almost cause and effect for the naming of Eris, the Greek goddess of discord and her role in the conference. Note the grand trine in fire between Pluto, Eris and Mercury – the very picture of power, passion and argument in a context normally reserved for “scientific” objective and dispassionate discussion.

The conference decided on a new class of dwarf planets of which Pluto, Ceres and Eric would be the first. Notice Ceres conjunct Neptune and opposing Saturn and in Square to Sedna.

Ceres is the goddess of corn – agriculture, nourishment. In our age we are heavily dependant on intensive farming methods. Indeed the Economist argued last December that we simply don't have enough agricultural land in the world to feed everyone on organic agriculture. Ceres is conjunct Neptune and opposed Saturn. Perhaps an indicator of the erosion of land boundaries and agricultural land in particular by the encroaching seas. The Opposition is in square to Sedna – an Inuit goddess of the fruit of the seas and a goddess who angrily punishes those who break the rules of fishing. We already have predictions that we are cleaning out the seas and must take steps to protect fish stocks globally.

Ceres is associated with grief. When Pluto steals and rapes her daughter Persephone she withholds summer and humanity starves for her grief. It seems to me then that this configuration is a harbinger of grief associated with starvation caused by the loss of agricultural land – not just to flood but to drought and the loss of sea stocks, signified by the square of Sedna to Ceres, Neptune and Saturn.

Notice also the placements of the nodes in this chart. I have simply chosen the time of the press announcements for the close of the conference and it shows the nodes across the 2nd and 8th houses. Successful expression of the meaning of the chart depends first and foremost on the establishment of appropriate collective values. You could spend quite a time in the area of the chart. Look at the role of Virgo in seeking balance and justice between the elements, the role of Mars as the arbiter of justice and right relationship with the soil, the focus of Vesta and the Moon in Virgo meaning our need to focus on appropriate nurturing at every level in the world – not just agriculture but ethical investment and the Alice Miller bonding issues with right relationship in daily practice emphasised by the Juno on the cusp of 8th.

The n node in 2nd to my mind points to the importance of water to us all – emotionally, for agriculture and in the oceans. Notice how Pluto is in square to the nodal axis. Getting this balance right will not be easy – the presence of Pluto shows that the powers that be and the passions of the people are at stake.

The establishment of appropriate collective values and effective decision making in time in my view the determining issues of the age. It potentially tips the balance between whether humanity is fated to destroy itself or is free to unwind 10,000 years of establishing hierarchical thinking attachment behaviour and top down control. It is why I feel I have to share this with you today. It is no good me thinking my thoughts alone. They must be shared, shaped and fired in the kiln of shared sense making. We have left the age where education was about the promulgation of established certainties. We approach an age of moment by moment group sense making. Not group think I hasten to add, but group learning, altogether new, in the moment and generating appropriate action on a wide scale and for the widest benefit.

OK so let's look at the Tsunami...!

The Tsunami was awful – a human and environmental catastrophe on an awesome scale. Yet to my mind it is also a symbol of hope. Hope on account not of the way government responded, which initially was reticent, but hope on account of the popular response to the disaster which was popular, generous and world wide. It was this that humiliated governments into more effective action. Are there any signs in this chart that this would be the case?

I have taken a very approximate chart here based on the start of the underwater earth quake that triggered the Tsunami. I have chosen Banda Aceh as the location for no better reason than that I have coordinates for it and it was very badly affected and very much in the news at the time.

Venus rules the chart and is located in the 3rd with mercury. This is news item, it is on everybody's lips, the news is regularly updated on teletext. Venus and Mercury are sextile Neptune in 5th – people were playing by the sea – the news images show them swimming or on the beach as the big wave comes in.

Pluto is in the 3rd in Sag – the news goes world wide – an awful lot of people have died, the death toll is huge. Chiron in 4th perhaps denotes homes, families' even communities swept away – opposed by Saturn in cancer. People's livelihoods fishing have also been destroyed. This opposition sits square the nodes – this time in 1st and 7th the me and you axis. Perhaps this signifies the many missing people and the families who went to Asia in search of their loved ones. Ceres in Scorpio in 1st is trine Uranus in Pisces in 5th, although these planets are close enough to the cusp to be connected with 2nd and 6th houses. Uranus brings the sea, suddenly, sweeping away food stocks. Sedna is trine Chiron in the 8th and Eris is trine Pluto – not a promising chart in that sense.

I think for me, the positive signs are in the role of the media and communication. Notice Pallas in the Ascendant, the journalists are early on the scene and trine Juno in air signs – maybe urging right relationship and fair share with Pallas in Libra. This reinforces the Venus and Mercury in 3rd and encourages a sudden rush of mass learning unimpeded by government. Moon in Gemini in 9th opposed Pluto in 3rd also engages people's feelings in making sense of the big picture here; the moon being "the people" in traditional astrology and here information being disseminated – Gemini – from abroad – 9th.

So lets compare with Katrina.

Notice that once again we have a grand trine in fire, just like the IAU chart with Mercury, Pluto and Eris all involved! Notice also that Mercury, which is only just chart ruler, is confined in 12th. The Pluto trine with Pluto retrograde maybe reinforces the desire to keep the lid on things and withhold the news, but the fiery element and Eris there maybe also suggests suppressed fury. I recall also that the plight of the prisoners was quite a feature. They were trapped out of doors and under surveillance by armed police.

The sun opposes Uranus and squares Juno. The image of a sudden shock and a struggle to establish fair and just relationships. The nodes are across the 2nd and 8th again. This time the emphasis is on 2nd house – maybe the focus was on protecting property and possessions with Venus and Jupiter conjunct?

This is an event that Margaret Wheatley discusses in her book “Leadership and the new Science”. She says...

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Even before Katrina hit, key decision-makers at all levels of government displayed a curious blindness. Years of simulations and analyses had created clear descriptions of the damage that would result from a category 3 or 4 hurricane. The destruction of New Orleans was one of the top three potential catastrophes listed by FEMA for many years. How is it possible that officials were blindsided and failed to prepare adequately for this eventuality? And why were they so slow to respond, even as the National Weather Service mapped Katrina's approach with unerring accuracy? It was as if government officials at all levels could not comprehend the reality of what was about to happen. Either they discounted the information, failed to interpret it correctly, or duped themselves into believing “it can't happen here”. This is a familiar yet troubling example of paradigm blindness, where people are unable to see information that threatens and disconfirms their worldview. No matter how much data is in front of them, their lens filters it out or distorts it to mean something else. And in some cases, people literally do not see the information, even if it's right in front of them (see Kuhn 1969).

In the days after Hurricane Katrina, this blindness was coupled with bureaucratic conditioning and cumbersome chains of command. Missteps, misperceptions and inaction cascaded through organisation, creating only more chaos. An already devastating set of circumstances turned even more tragic because of the failure of leaders to perceive accurately what was going on and to risk taking actions that went beyond the bonds of bureaucracy.

However, all along the Gulf Coast, people self-organised with neighbours and strangers to help and rescue people....

“Each one is a mobile, independent unit working in cooperation for a common goal” (Sky,83). They acted freely, but from a clearly shared intent.

In Hurricane Katrina, the chain of command and the observance of protocol created even more disasters:

So did the timing of these events determine what the response would be? Were they fated by their choice of time and place? Was another response possible?

It seems to me clear that, given a clear picture of the situation, the Tsumani response is not simply possible but likely.

Elsewhere Wheatley describes what she calls the three keys to self organising systems. The first is identity, the sense making capacity of an organisation. She says that all living systems have an identity, and operate in order to ensure that that identity survives. Our knowledge has value in so far as it helps us to maintain ourselves. This is a comfort for astrologers everywhere, since psychological astrologers have always viewed our main value to the world as our power to describe the uniqueness of another individual from their chart.

The second key is information – particularly the information that affects our context and shifts our view of our world and our place in it.

The third key is relationships – lots of them – unfettered access to every member of the system. Relationships are the means whereby information passes on and made meaningful. They bring the data to life by encouraging us to work out what it means for us individually and collectively. The crucial differences between the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, to my mind are the differences in control over information flow and meaning making. After the Tsunami information was spread as rapidly as possible, after Katrina it moved like treacle and with a strong sense that this was being caused by leaders in the highest quarters.

Freedom of information then, coupled with a strong sense of identity and the capacity to form multiple relationships that foster ever increasing meaning making are vital. Is this something that can be taught?

Let's have a look at A S Neill.

Neill was born in 1883, the son of a dominie in Forfar. In spite of, or perhaps because of, his unhappy time at school, he resolved to be a teacher and moved to Germany. There he came under the influence of the analytic movement and he set up Summerhill in 1921. In his wonderful book about the place he says that Summerhill was based on "Self-government for the pupils and staff, freedom to go to lessons or stay away, freedom to play for days or weeks or years if necessary, freedom from any indoctrination whether religious or moral or political freedom from character moulding." He describes his children as "problem children sent in despair by parents and schools – thieves, destroyers, bullies of both sexes. I 'cured' them by analysis I thought, but discovered that the ones who refused to come to my analysis sessions were cured also, and had to conclude that freedom, not analysis, was the active agent." Although he describes his school as free in so many ways, self government was mandatory. The school still operates on the decision making of a weekly meeting, run by the pupils and in which the staff have no more say or voting power than the children. Neill says "Education should produce children who are at once individuals and community persons, and self-

government without doubt does this. In an ordinary school, obedience is a virtue, so much so that few in later life can challenge anything.” In the context of my theme, this is a vital point. The Katrina experience was one where maybe not enough people in authority were prepared to take the initiative, act without orders or question what was going on. Neill is making a community – an important point in itself – a community where people have ample opportunities to try out making the rules, working out how to enforce them, changing the rules and breaking them. In a world where everyone has an equal voice, no one is afraid to speak up. What’s more action and learning are immediate. The system will provide feedback on the school’s decisions right away. Neill created a school where everyone was bound to learn, often the hard way, what it takes to make a society that is free **and** that works for everyone.

Neills’ chart is just as remarkable as one would expect. I have not made a guess as to the birth time, but the Aries chart is still quite dramatic. A bowl chart, strung between the two nodes, the south node in Taurus implies the need to create something of substance as a stepping off point for the work of depth in the north node and with sympathy for the feminine. The nodes are squared by Mars and Jupiter in Leo implying someone who squared up to his fate, confrontative as Librans can sometimes be. Notice Pluto conjunct Chiron suggesting the deep healing of teaching (Chiron) against oppression (Pluto). Ceres is in Gemini – nourishing through books, ideas and the mind, trine the Sun in Libra. This placement also images his real empathy and insight into his charges even while he probably enjoyed putting his point of view across. Neptune is close to the Moon in Taurus which adds a further message of practical compassion to the Moon’s loyal and sensual nature. The moon is also sextile Juno and therefore probably determined that the emotional exchange should be fair.

The next chart sets Neill’s chart beside the founding of Summerhill. Again I have a date but not a time for this, so the point of the chart is just the synastry. Neill’s natal Mercury, Pallas opposition is met by Chiron opposed Saturn and Pallas for the school. I rather suspect that Pallas represented the conventional curriculum as well as the muses, which appear to have played a large part in school life, particularly art and drama. I’ve not shown his progressed chart but the Progressed sun conjunct progressed mercury are opposed to the natal Pluto Chiron. **Here is the transit chart on its own.** Notice the Sun Mercury conjunction aspecting the nodes, Mars Jupiter and Chiron Pluto in the natal chart.

I’d like to just quickly show you another couple of charts if we have time

The first is for the launch of Ken Loach’s film “Land and Freedom” in 1996 and the second is for the Isle of Eigg community land buy out in 1997. Both of these events are concerned with creating a space where people will feel and be free. The film concerns a British volunteer in the Spanish civil war who fought for the anarchist forces. It explores the role of the communists and fascists in the conflict, but the central scene is set in a town hall where the anarchists gather after having won a victory. They have to decide how to govern themselves and also how to respond to the gathering military threat outside. All their differences emerge and the consensual decision making approach appears worse than problematic in terms

of responding to the military emergency. It is a very Aquarian issue. We are all unique individuals and we seek the space to be true to ourselves. Perhaps that is in essence the freedom that we seek. It is also what sets us apart. In an emergency situation, having strict protocols in place and operating on command suppresses our individuality but enables the whole organism to respond rapidly to predicted crisis situations. Our difficulty becomes clear when we try to run a society along these lines when there is not a crisis or when the situation is not predictable. At that point, as Margaret Wheatley says, we have to trust that people are generally thoughtful, generous, creative and ethical, we all want to help. In war time these qualities tend to come out for Christmas if at all.

In the chart notice the nodes. The land that they are aiming for, their homeland, I suggest is in the 4th house with the north node. They are disconnected from it with Chiron there. They have to fight for it and so here we have the south node in Aries conjunct Eris (who does seem to be evident in situations of conflict and argument). The film is ruled by the moon, another indicator of the emotional homeland, and the moon is conjunct Uranus in 7th in Aquarius – radical and focusing on a breakaway splinter group of idealists. Perhaps the presence of Pisces at the MC along with Mars, Sun and Saturn points to the lack of focus and idealism in terms of how they will make their cause manifest in the world, that ultimately is perhaps their downfall?

In the case of the **Isle of Eigg** Mercury is the chart ruler and is strong in Gemini at the MC. Notice that Mercury is opposed to Pluto, perhaps pointing to the intense power struggle the islanders had and the strong passions evoked in the course of it. The buy out was a first for Scotland but more have followed and the process is now officially supported. Mercury is also trine Uranus and Pallas in Aquarius in 5th. There is a breakout spirit at work here that says that we want to be free to be ourselves.

The Moon is also strong being angular in the first and opposing Ceres in Pisces in 7th. I find it interesting that Sedna is trine the Moon in this chart and the mixture of watery and earthy nourishing imagery suggests to me a strong picture of the mix of land and sea in nourishing this community.

OK

So I've brought you on this Cook's tour of history, philosophy, astronomy and a few charts. Where are we now on fate and freewill.

Well first of all I can only offer you a personal view, since I am wary of imposed orthodoxies.

My personal view says we are all here with a one off life time chance of being completely true to ourselves – We move in this direction every time we take a step towards the satisfaction of our hearts – Bernadette Brady suggests that every step we take towards ourselves, every option we open up for ourselves, takes us further out of the rut and rewards us with future options. I content that alongside our personal choices, we depend a great deal on other people in our lives and the culture and values of our society in supporting or hindering our progress. Do we

really want people to grow? Do we want to learn the Alice Miller lesson about early infant bonding? Are we prepared to take A.S. Neill's lessons in freedom and community responsibility to heart and shift our schooling accordingly?

Alastair McIntosh in his book "Soil and Soul" weaves the heart sense marvellously with the head sense and castigates our society's confusion of addiction with wealth as a betrayal of our true and emotional needs. He says:

"Here we see the core dynamic of consumerism – the notion that it is necessary "to have" in order "to be". And that dynamic is, like all violence, like all sublimated expressions of domination or war, an erotic dysfunction. Love is displaced from things that are living on to a mere branded product. Eros is hijacked and perverted; it is a rape rather than love-making. The erotic, as Audre Lorde brilliantly points out, is about much more than sexuality alone. It is "the personification of love in all its aspects ... the passions of love, in its deepest meanings." It is the bridge connecting our inner, psychological and spiritual nature with the outer, social and political expressions of life in this world. Eros, says Lorde, is nothing other than the full extension of feeling: it is how we feel with our hearts what it's like truly to be alive, and start living...the opposite of the erotic is pornography...which ...emphasis sensation without feeling." While we are subject to attachment behaviour we continue to be consumers and in this sense our relationship with the world continues to be pornographic and exploitative and not arising from relationship.

The lesson of Alice Miller is therefore a lesson in the recovery of love from the substitutes we have been taught to aspire to. The lesson of AS Neill is that we long to be free and freedom, undertaken in his community based manner, can be a healing and socialising factor.

From Land and Freedom and the Isle of Eigg we learn that we need a space where we can do this without undue interference from the powers that be. Indeed, it is arguably about a reversal of our relationship with the land, from the ownership of an exploitable community to a space rich in myth and experience to which we may belong heart and soul and to which we may devote ourselves to fostering the enrichment of the natural and human gifts of the place.

These things do not happen spontaneously. In all these themes there seems to me to be an Aquarian flavour – the desire to be uniquely ourselves, in communities that foster freedom. To make it happen we need something else Aquarian, we need some guiding principles. There are a lot to choose from. **I'll offer you the 6 freedoms of AI**, these are pretty good as far as I am concerned and offer us a starting point for the work ahead.

If we are entering the Age of Aquarius here for real, then it's good to know something about where we are going.

Try this pattern of paradigm shift.

Margaret Wheatley concludes that her model of new age leadership in reality is probably the model of international terrorism. She says this not on account on what terrorists try to do but on account of the way that they do it. She says:

“Although these groups appear leaderless, they in fact are well-led by their passion, rage, and conviction. They share an ideal or purpose that gives them a group identity and which compels them to act. They are geographically separate, but “all of one mind” (Arquilla, 9). They act free of constraints, encouraged to do “what they think is best” to further the cause. This combination of shared meaning with freedom to determine one’s actions is how systems grow to be more effective and well-ordered. The science predicts why terrorist networks become more effective over time. If individuals are free to invent their own ways to demonstrate support of their cause, they will invest ever more destructive actions, competing with one another for the most spectacular attack.

People who are deeply connected to a cause don’t need directives, rewards or leaders to tell them what to do. Inflamed, passionate, and working with like minded others, they create increasingly extreme means to support their cause.”

The question is what cause? We have to work that out together – we need more feedback from within and outwith our own systems, we need a wider view, we need values and principles to guide us but we also need the courage and confidence to challenge the established

[Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary - Cite This Source](#)

Heresy

from a Greek word signifying (1) a choice, (2) the opinion chosen, and (3) the sect holding the opinion. In the Acts of the Apostles (5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5) it denotes a **sect**, without reference to its character. Elsewhere, however, in the New Testament it has a different meaning attached to it. Paul ranks "heresies" with crimes and seditions (Gal. 5:20). This word also denotes divisions or schisms in the church (1 Cor. 11:19). In Titus 3:10 a "heretical person" is one who follows his own self-willed "questions," and who is to be avoided. Heresies thus came to signify self-chosen doctrines not emanating from God (2 Pet. 2:1).

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