AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Dena DeCastro for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies presented on June 2, 2007. Title: Mystical Discernment in Christianity: Ancient Ways of Knowing Within Christian Practice.

Throughout the history of Christianity, there have been practices of mystical discernment such as prophecy, reading of signs and omens, and the interpretation of dreams. While the current culturally predominant sect of conservative Christianity is at odds with divinatory practices linked to an esoteric way of knowing, there is historical evidence that the Christian Church of the past often celebrated the old ways within the new. I will explore the possibility that there was a more friendly exchange between the old ways of knowing and Christianity. More broadly, I will provide evidence, through scriptural exegesis and a review of theological literature, for the welcome of these practices of mystical discernment. My purpose is to show that Christianity was not in an oppositional relationship to the use of mystical ways of knowing then, and there might again today be a place of acceptance within Christianity of these ways of understanding messages from the divine.

Mystical Discernment in Christianity:
Ancient Ways of Knowing Within Christian Practice

by

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A Thesis
submitted to
The Faculty of Marylhurst University

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Completed June 2, 2007
Commencement June 18, 2007

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Thesis of Dena DeCastro presented on June 2, 2007.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to this project by way of inspiration in the beginning stages, guidance in the formative stages, and support throughout. To Dr. Sheila O'Connell-Roussell, I owe great gratitude for her encouragement at the right moments, combined with the proper redirection when I found myself struggling. Her scriptural knowledge and compassionate guidance were essential to this work. I would also like to thank Dr. Debrah Bokowski for the perfect balance of discipline and optimism, seriousness and humor. As a teacher myself, I hope to take away the essence of what I gleaned just by watching her; she was the perfect guide through this process. My warmest appreciation to Madaline Allen, for cheering me on at the beginning, and telling me that I *could* when I most needed to hear it. For the initial insights which led me to this topic, and for leading me to Marylhurst in the first place, I thank Mirae Grant. Years of discussion between us helped to develop my own theology, which informs this paper. For further discussions which helped to hone the particular ideas presented here, I thank my friend and fellow astrologer Ed Welsh; the coffee meetings kept me inspired and on-track. For bringing me out of the depths of frustration many times with humor, hopeful offerings, and lots of dark chocolate, I thank my partner, Brad Thomsen, for choosing to be at my side during this process. Finally, I'd like to thank my mother, Cindy, for inspiring in me my initial love of astrology, and for bringing me back to it before the end of her life. The journey began with her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Since its inception, Christianity has been the bearer of mystical wisdom, and mystical ways of discernment. Mystical wisdom is an inner way of knowing, and has been accepted and practiced throughout the history of the religion. The current culturally predominant sect of conservative Christianity, however, is at odds with divinatory practices linked to an esoteric way of knowing. Nonetheless, this wisdom is found within the customs and rituals of Christianity, and is even physically evident in the stonework of the Christian Church's primary standing monuments: the gothic Cathedrals of Europe. The presence of ancient sacred symbols reveals how the ancient ways were preserved in stone, and embraced by the Christianity of the time. A common scholarly explanation of the presence of esoteric symbols within ostensibly Christian venues is that the Church of the time was simply co-opting these symbols in order to appease a pagan populous. My argument will be that this previous explanation is somewhat facile, and potentially inaccurate. I will explore the possibility that there was a more friendly exchange between the old ways of knowing and the Christianity of the medieval era. More broadly, I will assert that the Christian Church of the past often celebrated the old ways within the new, and that the scriptures show evidence for the welcome of the Seer, the Wise Man (Magi) and the Wise Woman. Additionally, tools for spiritual discernment were used within the boundaries of Christian theology and practices. My purpose is to show that Christianity was not in an oppositional relationship to the use of mystical ways of knowing then, and there might again today be a place of acceptance within Christianity of these gifts of discernment.

This topic is important in its potential for creating a more tolerant environment amongst conservative Christians, other Christians, and those who might reject Christianity out of hand because of the perceived intolerance toward these ancient modes of knowledge. For example, I know many individuals who currently call

themselves "pagans," almost as a reaction against what the predominant conservative branch of Christianity has come to represent in the culture. This creates animosity between those who are otherwise spiritual, but reject Christianity, and those who are practitioners of the Christian faith. Furthermore, I hope to clarify that there are different factions of Christianity that hold varying beliefs on this topic: all Christians can not be grouped into one category. I have found that some Christians even have a resistance to identifying themselves as such, because they don't want to be identified with the currently more extreme views presented by the conservative branch. In exploring the existence of the mystical throughout Christianity's history, I hope to bring into the discourse the notion that there has always been an integration of these old ways and the new ways of spiritual practice. I further hope to open a dialogue between conservative Christians and other factions of Christianity, as a means toward healing some of the negativity that currently surrounds this relationship.

This topic came to my attention due to my own lifelong interest in divination and astrology, juxtaposed with an upbringing in conservative Christianity. When I was a child, both parents were very liberal, and interested in divination and esoteric practices such as tarot, astrology and yoga. However, my mother converted to Christian fundamentalism when I was very young, so I was raised for the majority of my formative years in that belief structure. But, it seems the seeds of interest in esotericism had been sown and taken root: I became a practicing astrologer about ten years ago. During my years in this profession, I have found that I had to be careful, in certain circles, of mentioning the topic of astrology. I received censure and disapproval regarding my profession from those of a more conservative Christian background. When I worked in an office environment to support myself through school, I remember several of my co-workers questioning me about astrology, and equating it with witchcraft. I even had someone accuse me of practicing "devil worship." These types of accusations created in

me a desire for understanding their source, and laid the foundation for my work on this topic.

While I have always had an interest in esoteric practices, divination, and the mystical aspects of spirituality, I had never seen these things as being at odds with the teachings of Jesus. Having some scriptural knowledge, and having been exposed to many aspects of Christianity throughout my childhood, I felt a schism, of sorts, within myself. I could not resolve why these ways of knowing should be seen as evil, as abhorrent in any way. But I lacked a deeper knowledge of the history of Christianity. Consequently, I did not fully comprehend how extensively rooted was the dissonance in the relationship between Christianity and divination. This historical relationship is one that will be explored in depth in the following chapter. Additionally, the scriptural sources for concern regarding divination, and cautions regarding even mystical revelation, will be addressed and analyzed.

A primary means to explore my topic will be a limited exegesis of a scriptural passage. The purpose of this brief exegesis is to demonstrate the acceptance of these modes of revelation from a biblical perspective, and to thereby establish grounds for the acceptance of similar practices of discernment today. My purpose is to scrutinize the view that mystical wisdom (which many today call esoteric practice) are in opposition to Christian teachings. Therefore, I have selected a passage, written by the Apostle Paul, which expresses an acceptance of such mystical ways of knowing, including prophecy, speaking in tongues, visions, and direct mystical revelations. As Paul is known as one of the most influential theologians of the early Christian church, his views on this topic are of primary importance as to how they relate to the formation of accepted Christian practice. Astrological symbolism in the Bible will also be explored, as it supports an integration of this ancient science into the Christian perspective of early Christianity. This observation of "astral prophecy," as evidenced in New Testament writings, lays the foundation for a later consideration of the medieval

theological view of astrology in particular. At the forefront of the consideration of the relationship between astrology and Christianity is the question of whether it is a form of fortune-telling (which the Bible clearly denounces), or whether it is viewed as a means to discern using the heavens as another language of God.

A review of the medieval theological writings concerning the notion of Christianity as the bearer of esoteric and mystical wisdom will also be a component of my research. This will include the mysticism of theologians of the medieval era, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, and Hildegard of Bingen. These mystics and saints provide examples of various paths to union with the divine, all engaging in the practice of mystical revelation. Mystical revelation, a means for receiving information from God in the form of visions, dreams, and auditory perceptions, is much akin to modern practices of discernment. The acknowledgement of these paths of mysticism, accepted within Christianity, creates avenues for understanding of the current versions of these practices. Furthermore, the role of the mystic as a conduit between the Christian community and the divine will be described in this section, as well as in the discussion of the spiritual leaders and saints of the early Celtic Christian church.

Another impetus for my quest into this topic came from my interest in the gothic cathedrals of Europe. In researching Chartres Cathedral for a previous paper, I discovered a puzzling anomaly: the presence of astrological symbols carved into the stonework of Chartres. These included planetary symbols, and representations of the zodiac. In light of what I had experienced in terms of the conservative Christian feedback regarding my astrology practice, I was intrigued to find these symbols present at a Christian sacred site. A portion of my research is an endeavor toward understanding the origin of these symbols as they came to present themselves at Chartres. The Druidic influences present at the site serve as a potential explanation of the presence of these symbols. However, a more careful examination yields other

possibilities for the interpretation of these symbols as something less to do with the "occult," and more to do with the representation of a great cosmogony arranged by the Creator.

In the final sections of the literature review, I bring forward the modern representations of these old ways of mystical discernment as present in the Christian practice of spiritual direction. Spiritual direction will be defined; following, then, is a discussion of how mystical practices, such as the Enneagram, have been included to the benefit of this mode of Christian pastoral care. This creates a bridge to the presentation of a model for integration between Christian spiritual direction and astrological knowledge. I will assert that the practice of astrology may be useful to spiritual direction in a very similar manner that the Enneagram functions, as an aid and guide for spiritual discernment. My intention in presenting this theory is to establish that astrology in particular, as one path to knowing and understanding the self in relation to the cosmos, is not so different from other mystical practices which have been embraced by Christianity throughout its history, and today.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, there have been accepted practices of mystical discernment within the bounds of Christian practice. Examples of the use and acceptance by the Church of the gift of prophecy, discernment of spirits, visions of angels, revelation through dreams, and direct revelation through the practice of mysticism can be found in scripture and in the histories of the saints and Christian mystics. In this chapter, several of these examples will be presented in chronological order. The first example will be in the form of a detailed scriptural analysis, or exegesis, of a key passage from the New Testament: a letter from the apostle Paul to the Corinthians. This passage details how certain gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy and speaking in tongues, can be used for the "common good" of the Christian Community. Following, there will be a discussion of the role of prophecy, and its connection to divination. This will lead into a presentation of the Biblical references to "Star Guides," or discernment using the heavens. Within this discussion will be a presentation of research done regarding the Book of Revelation as a book of "Astral Prophecy," and a consideration of the assertion that an accurate interpretation of the book relies heavily upon the understanding that John of Patmos used astrological imagery as a prophetic tool. This will conclude the portion devoted to direct scriptural sources.

The role of the mystic, in the early and medieval church, will then be considered. Mystical practices, both by proclaimed mystics and those who are recognized as Saints, will be viewed as to how they enriched Christianity and affected its practice. This will entail an introduction to the early Celtic Church, and move on toward a more thorough discussion of the medieval mystics. In connection with the medieval Church, there will follow an exploration of the existence of esoteric symbols within Chartres Cathedral.

This section will address the questions which arise from the observation of ostensibly pagan symbols within a Christian venue.

Finally, the current relationship between Christianity and mystical practices of discernment will be examined. Christianity has used certain practices within the context of spiritual direction, while marginalizing and rejecting other quite similar practices. My intent is not to merely point out the inconsistencies between which practices are embraced versus which are rejected, but to present some grounds for reunification between the old ways of knowing and discernment and the new way of Christian practice.

Biblical Exegesis: I Corinthians 12:4-12

In the following scripture, Paul writes to a newly-converted Christian community. He writes with concern regarding the right use of certain "gifts of the spirit," as a preventative against their aberrant use. The following analysis of the text is presented as a formal exegesis in order to ensure a proper and systematic interpretation. The interpretation includes the following aspects: historical context, examination of the words used in the text, the form and tradition, the structure, the contributing source(s), the redaction criticism, and the theology imparted. In An Introduction to the New Testament, author Raymond Brown states that the authenticity of I Corinthians as a Pauline letter is well-supported by biblical criticism (12). Paul has been the most influential figure, next to Jesus, in the history of Christianity (Brown 422). Therefore, this epistle's great influence upon the subsequent formation of early church doctrine is firmly established. Of the twenty-seven works in the New Testament, over half are attributed to Paul (Brown 410). For that reason, this scripture is a credible source from which to gain insight into the place of gifts of discernment, prophecy, and divine revelation within early Christian practice. The passage is taken from the New Revised Standard Version:

> ***4*** Now there are varieties of gifts, but of the same Spirit, ***5*** and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ***6*** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ***7*** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ***8*** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ***9*** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ***10*** to another the working of miracles to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ***11*** All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (I Corinthians 12:4-12)

Historical Analysis

Paul is one of the figures most responsible for the spread of the new religion of Christianity and for the guidance of the formation of its doctrines: "Under Paul's leadership, the small religious movement rapidly spread to the other parts of the empire--Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, and Rome itself-- and began to constitute itself as a world church" (Tarnas 89). During his life, he wrote many letters to the nascent Christian Communities, and guided them in their formation. This letter was written from Paul to the Christian Community at Corinth in the last part of his three-year stay at Ephesus, from 54-56 CE.

Corinth was a seaport city, located on the Isthmus between Greece and Peloponnesus, and was a Roman colony with a culturally diverse population. This Christian Community had been converted by Paul in 50-52 CE. But at the time of the writing of the epistle, the Corinthians had been experiencing some problems in regard to the administration of the Church and their understanding of Christian behavior in the context of a newly formed community (Brown 511). He had spent a year and a half at Corinth, which indicates that he attached some great importance to establishing a Christian foundation there; he had spent relatively shorter periods (months rather than years) in the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica (Ellis 38). Indeed, the town had a reputation for licentiousness, and still adhered to many pagan rites and practices (Brown 513). Paul would have been witness to some of these practices in previous visits

during their Isthmian athletic games, as the pagan rites were a central part of the festival (Broneer 169). Paul would have therefore been very aware of the tendency in the Corinthians toward the old pagan ways, and of the vulnerability of these newly sown seeds of Christianity. This passage of I Corinthians addressed the problems at hand in a newly formed community, one that was in transition from a pagan worldview toward the living of Christian ideals.

In the article "Paul and the Pagan Cults at Isthmia," author Oscar Broneer asserts that Paul was ". . . in position to draw authoritatively from both pagan and Jewish sources and to combine what he had absorbed in his own presentation of the new faith that he had come to propagate" (187). In order that the message take hold more readily, it is likely that Paul used his knowledge of the current beliefs of the population -- and its tendency toward the old ways of paganism -- in order to frame his message in language that created a bridge from the old ways of believing toward an embracing of a new life and community in Christ.

Paul wrote I Corinthians in response to a set of questions he received from the Christian community at Corinth while he resided at Ephesus (Crossan and Reed 111). Ephesus, similar to Corinth, was a thriving port city on the eastern coast of the Aegean, and lay within about two weeks' sail from Corinth (Crossan and Reed 330). He had been residing there for about two years at the time that he received the questions from the Corinthians (McKenzie 241). According to Crossan and Reed, his letters in response (I and II Corinthians) were written after he had been released from a short stay in prison at Ephesus (331). Paul famously referred to his fighting "beasts" at Ephesus within the letter to the Corinthians (McKenzie 241). This is perhaps linked to an incident described in Acts 19:1-20; Luke tells the story of a riot led against Paul at Ephesus by "the silversmiths devoted to 'Artemis/Diana of the Ephesians,' which led to his departure" (Brown 434). This imprisonment may have been due to the hostile pagan response to his Christian message. However, Brown states more equivocally that "those

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Text

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attempts in these chapters to define further what it means to be 'spiritual' (pneumatikos) by discussing 'spiritual gifts'" (Ackerman 350). Paul would have seen, in his own religious heritage, the gifts of mysticism already present in the Jewish religion. The sharing of these gifts with the Gentiles would have also been a potential aim of his ministry. He brought these beliefs in the gifts of the spirit from his Jewish heritage, and described how they might be accessed through a belief in Christ. In the entry regarding the use of the word "spirit," McKenzie writes specifically about this passage: "The distinctive effect of the spirit is the 'gifts' such as prophecy and tongues (I Co 12 and 14); these and similar manifestations are a witness to the risen Christ and the security of the Christian hope" (844). These spiritual gifts, for the early Christians, are actually the physical manifestation of the "risen Christ."

Paul states that these gifts are given "for the common good." The "common good" would seem to be for the good of the community, rather than for any kind of personal agenda. Paul is entreating the Corinthians to use these gifts in a mature and wise manner, not for self-glorification. As Peter F. Ellis states in his analysis of this passage in Seven Pauline Letters: "Paul's second principle deals with the origin and purpose of the gifts. . . The letter as a whole deals with the common good or upbuilding of the community, and the theme of building runs through the letter" (94). It is in engendering a focus upon the common good that Paul guides those who possess the charisms away from any sense of self-importance. He also stresses that the gifts are given to many, not to a select few. As Crossan and Reed state: "That section in I Corinthians 13 and its wider ambience in I Corinthians 12-14 makes it clear that 'to love' means 'to share' and that all other Spirit gifts or Spirit functions are worthless unless received, used, and shared with all for the common good" (347). Paul strongly emphasizes the potential of the charisms to serve Christ's followers, and steers those who administer the gifts away from self-aggrandizing behavior.

The ability to share these gifts was of great importance to Paul; it is evident from scriptural evidence that he saw that these charisms could be used for the "bulding up" of the Christian faith. Some gifts, such as prophecy, might have been considered by Paul to be more viable than other gifts that had more of a potential for misuse. For example, Paul states in I Corinthians 14:3-4 that prophecy was more valuable than speaking in tongues (glossolalia), because the prophet spoke to people for the purpose of the upbuilding of the Church and the community, while those who spoke in tongues built up themselves. Brown cites I Corinthians 14:5 to assert Paul's view of prophecy as an important charism in the upbuilding of the Church: "Compared to tongues, there are more excellent gifts, e.g., prophecy that build up the Church (I Corinthians 14:5)" (531). But as Crossan and Reed point out, despite the potential for misuse of the gifts of the spirit, "Paul never says to stop it. Interpretation, yes, order, yes, peace yes, but 'do not forbid speaking in tongues' (I Corinthians 14:39)" (348). However, Paul continually reminds his new community of Christians that all of these gifts are useless without a focus upon love in the administration of the charisms: "Most radically Paul urges seeking after love (*agapē*), which is more important than any charism (I Corinthians 13:1-13), whether speaking angelic tongues or prophecy or miracles" (Brown 531).

Form and Tradition

The body of I Corinthians is structured as a formal epistle, but would more precisely be considered a letter. Referring to the work of A. Deissman, Brown notes the distinction that Deissman made between an "epistle" and a "letter": "'Epistle' for him was an artistic literary exercise, generally presenting a moral lesson to a general audience, and intended for publication . . . 'Letter' was a nonliterary means of communicating information between a writer and a real correspondent separated by distance from one another" (410). Paul was writing to the Christians at Corinth about a specific set of issues; it was not meant for a general audience, but for this specific

community. McKenzie's definition of the epistle corroborates the distinction between epistle and letter: "The letter is a communication from person to person (or a definite group of persons) in response to a defined concrete situation" (243). This definition would also establish I Corinthians as a letter. Paul was writing to the "definite group of persons" in response to a specific situation: the list of questions he'd received from them regarding problems in the administration of the Christian faith. Because Paul was a traveling apostle, his letters were his primary means of communication with his new converts, allowing him to minister to these new communities in his absence (Brown 6).

Structure

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is structured as follows:

A. Opening Formula: 1:1-3

B. Thanksgiving: 1:4-9

C. Body: 1:10-16:18

D. Concluding Formula: 16:19-24

Within that structure, Brown terms the section which includes 12:4-12 as: "Part III: Problems of charisms and the response of love" (Brown 512). The Pauline letters were meant to be read aloud, like speeches, and used rhetoric to persuade their audience (Brown 411). The function of the authentic Pauline letter was to address a community in a persuasive voice; because of Paul's evangelical nature, his letters carried this persuasive tone as well. While the letters followed the formal epistle format, they were crafted to his purpose, depending upon Paul's greatest concern at that time (Brown 6). Paul was writing within the Hellenistic tradition, but had adapted his letters and moderated them to serve Christian purposes, thereby creating a "sub-genre" (Doty 21). This sub-genre was the format for the authors who would write the New Testament letters not attributed to Paul, but are still considered to be "Pauline" -- in his style. Doty elaborates on this structure of the Pauline letter in general as follows:

> Opening (sender, addressee, greeting)
> Thanksgiving or Blessing (often with intercession and/or eschatological climax)
> Body (introductory formulae) often having an eschatological conclusion and/or an indication of future plans)
> Paraenesis
> Closing (formulaic benedictions and greetings; sometimes mention of the writing process). (Doty 27)

Source

One pertinent source to consider in the study of I Corinthians 12:4-12 is its Old Testament subtext, Deuteronomy 18:9-22:

> ***9*** When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you must not learn to imitate the abhorrent practices of those nations. ***10*** No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, ***11*** or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead. ***12*** For whoever does these things is abhorrent to the Lord; it is because of such abhorrent practices that the Lord your God is driving them out before you. ***13*** You must remain completely loyal to the Lord your God. ***14*** Although these nations that you are about to dispossess do give heed to soothsayers and diviners, as for you, the Lord God does not permit you to do so. (New Revised Standard Version)

This passage deals with the problems of consulting divination, and while the Deuteronomic passages are not stated as subtext explicitly, its warnings are implicit in the passage from I Corinthians. In "Deuteronomy, an Exposition of the Spirit of the Law" author John Walton lists Deuteronomy 18:9-22 as directed toward the prophets, as they have been appointed with the responsibility of passing along God's messages. Deuteronomy is a book interpreting Mosaic Law, and its main concern is the authority of God is it relates to man. Walton points out the function of Deuteronomy to serve as a particular kind of warning: "Deuteronomy may be seen to warn of areas where the covenant could be jeopardized through a break in the chain of authority and instruction" (217). Therefore, the warning of verse 9-15 may have been toward the prophet who was liable to go astray when wrong authority was used -- such as in divination.

Divination was historically condemned at the time of Paul; in the Old Testament, it was associated with the corrupt ways of foreign cultures, particularly Mesopotamia. McKenzie writes: "Divination was strictly prohibited in Hebrew Law under penalty of death (Lv 19:31; 20:6; Dt 18:10-11). It is a sin as grievous as idolatry (1 S 15:23). . . Divination is enumerated among the sins for which Yahweh destroyed the kingdom of Israel (2 K 17:17)" (201). Paul would have been aware of the need to distinguish these "gifts of the spirit" from the old ways of divination, and to clarify their right use within a Christian Community. In particular, the words of I Corinthians 12:4-11 state repeatedly that these gifts of discernment are attributed to God, not the powers of fate or of an

oracle. But the gifts of the spirit, as Paul defines them, illustrate a mystical union with spirit, rather than any attempt to control or define the future.

As evidenced in Acts 16:16-18, Paul reacted harshly to those who were classified as divinators or fortune-tellers. As the Apostle Luke recounts the story, they were followed by a slave girl, a "fortune-teller"; she proclaimed them to all as "Slaves of the Most High God" and followed them for many days. Ultimately, Paul ordered the spirit of divination to come out of her: "But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour" (Acts 16:18). Paul's reaction in this passage illustrates his views regarding divinators. However, I Corinthians 12:4-11 sets the charisms in a different category, as they are to be welcomed, not feared or cast away like the spirit of divination in the fortune-teller.

Redaction Criticism

Paul's teachings laid the foundation for normative early Christianity practice, and his vast influence is illustrated in the later Deutero Pauline canon. This canon includes all books that are said to be "pseudo-Pauline." These were letters ". . . not written *by* him but were attributed *to* him by later writers" (Crossan and Reed 106). The ideas in I Corinthians 12 show up, for example, in later Pauline Epistle of Ephesians. Nearly thirty years after Paul wrote to the Corinthian community from the Ionian city of Ephesus, and nearly twenty years after his death, the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians (90 CE) used Paul's teachings as the foundation for his composition: ". . . Ephesians can be seen as a development of Paul's own view of the body of Christ in the light of a larger view of the church toward the end of the century" (Brown 441). There is a link between the I Corinthians passage theme of unity amongst the Christian community, and a passage found in Ephesians 4:4-6. At concern in both Ephesians and I Corinthians is the idea of unification, of bringing together both Jews and Gentiles into

the one body of Christ. Brown asserts that the writer of Ephesians takes this concept and even makes it more poetic:

> While Paul stresses the theme of 'one' (body, bread, spirit, mind: I Cor 10:17; Phil 1:27; Rom 12:5), he never reached the grandeur of the description he motivated in Eph 4:4-6: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. To imitate the master is one form of appreciation; to be inspired by him to go farther is an even greater contribution to his heritage. (Brown 454)

It's clear that the writer of Ephesians valued Paul's teachings. The context of Ephesians leads scholars to assert that 1 Corinthians was his source. "The context of I Corinthians 12-14 is identical to that of Ephesians. The discussion of charismatic gifts is opened with a reference to the Gentile past of the Corinthians (I Cor 12:2)" (McRay 433). The purpose of the Corinthians text discussion of these many different kinds of gifts, however, is discussing the unification, not only of Jews and Gentiles, but of old ways and new. There is the cautionary subtext in both I Corinthians and Ephesians 4 to attribute the gifts to their true source: "even with many different kinds of gifts, there is but one giver" (McRay 43).

Theology

In understanding this passage, it is important to remember that Paul himself had what would be defined as mystical experiences. He spoke in tongues (I Corinthians 14:18), and it was reported to Luke that he had premonitions given to him by God, and saw visions of Jesus (Acts 9:4). Receiving this vision of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus was the pivotal experience of his life. He had been an opponent to the Christian religion, but was instantly converted by this experience (Tarnas 89). As Crossan and Reed state, "no matter how one explains or interprets ecstatic mysticism, it is absolutely fundamental for any understanding of Paul" (280). Evelyn Underhill spends a significant portion of her book, The Mystic Way, in describing Paul's life journey as that of an early mystic: "It is no new thing to claim St. Paul as a mystic; or at least as an exponent, amongst other things, of what are called 'mystical' ideas" (158).

Consequently, an awareness of Paul's mystical approach to Christianity is fundamental for an understanding of I Corinthians 12. He himself had direct experience of these charisms: the gifts to discern, to speak in tongues, and to prophecy. Within this passage, he displays his awareness of the potential beauty and value of these gifts, and how to use them, as he did in his own life. At the same time, by implication he establishes the need to remember the source of these gifts: they are not of man, but of Spirit. Within the text, he emphasizes that the gifts should unite the community, not divide it, for all these gifts come from the same Spirit. In this way, he delivers a message of unity to a community that has become fractured.

This message is also quite applicable in terms of present day communities, as the Corinthians may have many similarities to present day Christians. As Brown states in his analysis of this epistle: "Paradoxically, the range of their problems (rival 'theologians,' factions, problematic sexual practices, marital obligations, liturgy, church roles) makes the correspondence exceptionally instructive for troubled Christians and churches of our times" (Brown 511). The potential for healing comes through realizing a common ground in Christian practice, and in this passage Paul illustrates the need for a focus upon the one Spirit, from whom all diverse gifts flow.

Star Guides in the Bible

Throughout the Bible, there are many assertions that the "heavens," as well as the earth, are God's creation (Gen 1:1, Psa 102:25, Isa 45:12). McKenzie states, in his Biblical definition of "Star," that: "The OT [Old Testament] is emphatic in asserting that Yahweh created the stars, and that He created them for light and reckoning of time (Gen 1:16; Psa 8:4; 136:9; Je 31:35)" (McKenzie 846). The heavenly luminaries hold a purpose beyond light-giving and the separation of day and night: there is scriptural support for the notion that God communicates with man through signs given in the heavens. Scripture is filled with references to the stars and the firmament as a means by

which God proclaims his purpose and plan for humanity: "The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples behold his glory" (Psa 97:6). In the Bible, it is as if the stars and the heavens are a language of God. He speaks using the heavens as a medium: "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice" (Psa 18:13) and "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psa 19:1). But in these transmissions between God and his people by way of the heavens, there is always the mention of God as creator of the stars: he has power over them, and they do not wield power of their own accord.

The distinction is made in scripture between star-worship, and divining God's plan for human kind through observances of the heavens. It is made clear that the stars are not to be worshipped like idols, but are to be observed and revered as God's creation: "And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven" (Deu 4:19). The caution may be due to the fact that Israel was influenced by astral cults of Mesopotamia, and so in order to distinguish themselves from the pagan cults and from sorcery, the emphasis was always placed back upon God's role in creating the stars (McKenzie 846). In Isaiah, there is a warning against putting too much power or stock in astral divination: "You are wearied with your many consultations; let those who study the heavens stand up and save you, those who gaze at the stars, and at each new moon predict what shall befall you" (Isa 47:13). According to scripture, the heavens should not be discerned independent of a relationship with God. In God, the wisdom to interpret these gifts is available.

But the importance of the heavens as signifiers of Divine will, and as modes of prophecy, should not be underestimated. In the New Testament, the pivotal event of Christ's birth is proclaimed by the appearance of a star, which alerts the magi. The magi, more commonly known as "the three wise men," are identified in the book of

Matthew, according to McKenzie, as "possessors of occult knowledge, which is here identified by implication as astrology" (534). Brown asserts that the use of a star is significant in that it is a way of revelation for those who are not of the Hebrew faith: "The magi are Gentiles guided by a star (a revelation in nature to those who do not have the Scriptures)" (176). The scripture itself states that the magi were guided to seek Christ's birthplace by the appearance of a star, and came, "asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage" (Mat 2:2). There is no judgment cast against the magi as being "occult practitioners." Instead, they are welcomed into the house and they present the Christ child with their gifts (Mat 2:11). This is only the first example in the New Testament of the important and accepted role of astral divination. A more thorough use of astral symbolism can be found in the Book of Revelation.

Bruce Malina asserts in his exegetical work On the Genre and Message of Revelation: Star Visions and Sky Journeys that the book of Revelation, the book most commonly known for its eschatological visions, can be seen and understood more deeply when viewed as a work of "astral prophecy." The author questions the accuracy of a reading of Revelation without consideration of the astrological component, and delves into an interpretation of the book, which is intricately woven through with celestial references. In response to the traditional scholarship which has categorized Revelation as apocalyptic, Malina asserts that this categorization is limited and prevents a true reading of the text. He warns against a potential misreading through a stagnant perception using an old means of interpretation, and goes on to make a solid case for the proper understanding of the book as viewed through an astrological and astronomical lens (12).

When looking at Revelation within an astrological framework, John of Patmos, author of the text, is not only a prophet, but specifically an "astral prophet." He uses the heavens as his means of discerning the messages given him, and astrological

symbolism as his way of conveying that message. Malina defines the genre and the prophet's role in this way: "So we may say that as a genre or type of writing, astral prophecy, like that in the book of Revelation, is a type of astronomic writing with a narrative framework which sets forth information derived from the prophet's interaction with celestial entities" (Malina 26). There had always been sky scholars and watchers of the skies. The Old Testament yields many examples of God's statements of His intent to give signs through the heavens: "I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke" (Joel 2:30). But also, we hear his prophets describe ways that astrology and astronomy had been used in order to interpret the potential impact of the events in the heavens upon the world of men: "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezek 1:1). According to Malina, the special role of the astral prophet was to interpret these celestial events and visions as divinely given: the prophet was given this information in order that man could receive divine guidance from the stars. The ability to discern using the heavens, in this context, does not take power from God and put it in the hands of a fortune-teller; on the contrary, the astral prophet is in the service of God. His service is given through providing a channel by which the gift of divine revelation can be conveyed.

Malina notes that this way of prophecy was not a worship of the stars, nor was it viewed as idolatrous: "Reverencing the statues of gods was forbidden since, as elite Israelites believed, statues are really dead entities. But reverencing the living celestial personages and God's sky servants seemed to have been proper behavior" (15). The "sky servants" he refers to are those who go between God and man, but who are ultimately obedient to God. To the astral prophets, and those receiving their guidance, these beings are not seen as "gods" (in which case the relationship *would* be idolatrous), but are viewed as messengers, guides, and beings who act on humanity's behalf. This definition is similar to the traditional definition of angels, and indeed Malina makes that

[redacted]

experience of the divine can be called a mystical one, which is of unification with God. McKenzie, in his entry on Prophecy states:

> Thus the prophetic experience is such a mystical immediate experience of the reality and presence of God. The prophets disclose the nature and character of the God so experienced, and they state the implications of the divine nature and character for human thought and action. (697)

The prophet delivers his message, received in a mystical state of union with God, regarding the potential future based upon a collusion of the will of God, and the actions and free-will of the people.

One might ask if, in fact, prophecy is a form of divination if one considers divination to involve foretelling the future. In The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Anne Marie Kitz asserts in her article "Prophecy as Divination" that prophecy is indeed divination, but carefully goes on to explain the way in which prophecy functions as such. Kitz classifies prophecy as a form of divination that involves the divine manipulation of animate objects -- the animate object being the prophet. Kitz also links prophecy and oneiromancy (the interpretation of dreams), in that both require a change in consciousness: "In these encounters, God guides the body and/or the senses -- sight and hearing in particular -- to deliver information" (31). The prophet acts as an agent through which divine revelation can be received, but the prophet does not intercede with interpretation; he/she simply delivers the message.

An important clarification in considering prophecy as divination is illustrated in the difference in emphasis between the Hebrew Bible and earlier Mesopotamian texts. The Mesopotamians tended to emphasize the divinator's skill to interpret signs given by the divine, putting more importance upon the divinator than the source of the message. However, the Biblical emphasis is upon "divinely inspired interpretation of heavenly generated signs" (Kitz 24). The difference is subtle, but important, as it is in keeping with the Judeo-Christian need to attribute power to its proper source: the power does not belong to the prophet, but to God. The Hebrew Bible, according to Kitz, "may not necessarily dismiss the efficacy of divination per se, but rather any human attempt,

unaided by Yahweh alone, to interpret the implications of divine activity" (24). So, if prophecy is a form of divination, and is accepted within the context of the scriptures, then what distinguishes it from other forms of divination that are condemned?

McKenzie states that there is a difference between *foretelling* the future and *predicting* the future: "The word most frequently used to describe the prophetic utterance is 'foretell'. . .It is a common misconception of OT [Old Testament] prophecy that it means prediction" (698). This seemingly slight difference in the possible connotations of the word "prophecy" is important, in that it does distinctly separate prophetic revelation from the work of the fortune-teller. The distinction lies again within the notion of the prophet as messenger, the seer and revealer of divinely inspired signs. Heschel elaborates on this clarification of the prophet's role: "The prominent theme is exhortation, not mere prediction. While it is true that foretelling is an important ingredient and may serve as a sign of the prophet's authority (Deut. 18:22; Isa. 41:22, 43:9), his essential task is to declare the word of God to the here and now; to disclose the future in order to illumine what is involved in the present" (15). The prophet delivers this message, but is not the source of the prediction. Furthermore, the prophet does not hold the power to predict merely for some kind of self-glorification, or for the gratification of the human desire to know the future.

On the contrary, the prophet often foretells events which are unpleasant and frightening, and delivers this vision of a future reality in order to inspire awe and reverence toward God, as well as to convey the realities of our present day situation. The tenor of the message of the prophet tends to be that of a warning, and often a confrontation with the problems of the society in which that prophet lives. The prophet is unique in this service. The gift of prophecy is unlike the gift of the mystic, for example, whose role is to exemplify union with God, and to communicate the nature of that experience of unification. The prophet must stand apart as observer and

messenger; he or she delivers messages, but should merge neither with God nor with humanity.

When distinguishing the role of the mystic from that of the prophet, Heschel describes the prophet as one who is engaged with an observation and commentary upon the earthly plane, as opposed to the mystic who is focused upon unification with God: "The mystic is absorbed in contemplation of the infinite; the prophet's eye scans the definite and finite, the insolence and hypocrisy of man. . .This is why it is not enough for a prophet to be inspired by God; he also must be informed about the world" (465). The role of the prophet in the context of the Christian church becomes that of social commentator, one who can potentially awaken the listener to the need for awareness not only of the future, but of the future that is being created in the present.

The Saints of the Early Celtic Church: Prophetic Gifts of Discernment

As the Christian Church grew and took hold in other areas of the globe, there remained within the Christian community the role of the prophet, and the seer. The early Celtic Church holds many examples of the presence of these gifts as delivered by the Celtic Saints. In their time, they were not deemed "saints," but were the spiritual leaders of their monastic communities. It is important to acknowledge that perhaps the acceptance of these saints and their prophetic gifts were possible because of the different worldview present in the Celtic Church, one that often challenged that of the Roman Catholic Church. While the Celtic Church was considered part of the Christian tradition, there were differences between their practices and those of the Church of Rome. Firstly, there was a difference in the structure of authority: "Instead of being ruled by bishops, the Scotch-Irish [Celtic] church was under the leadership of the heads of monastic communities" (Gonzalez 236). In Mystics, Visionaries & Prophets, Shawn Madigan, C.S.J. discusses the ways in which Celtic Christianity was at odds with the Roman Catholic Church, not only in the structure and hierarchy, but also in their

continued observances of pagan rites and festivals (44-45). It was these ways that St. Patrick, the British priest, sought to change upon his arrival to Ireland: "Patrick was not very sympathetic to the Irish culture that he discovered upon his arrival. He preferred the ways of his own Romanized Britain. . . At the time of his coming, there were still several Celtic gods and goddesses worshiped by the Irish" (Madigan 42). The source of the tension between the two branches of Christianity was ultimately rooted in the fact that the Celtic Church was strongly influenced by, and intertwined with, the pagan practices of the Celts.

In Edward Sellner's book, Wisdom of the Celtic Saints, he describes the early Celtic church as "Influenced greatly by the values of the Celtic pagan culture that preceded the arrival of Christianity on its shores" (17). This pagan influence led to conflict with Rome upon how the religion should be administered. Even though the Irish were responsible for keeping many of the early Church studies in the antiquities safe during the waves of barbarian invasions, and reintroducing them to the Roman Church (Gonzalez 235), there was perpetual tension between the Celtic way and the Roman Catholic way. Ultimately, the Celtic Church was subordinated to the Roman ecclesial system in the 12th century. However, its influence upon future religious figures was evident; Sellner lists Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Joan of Arc, George Herbert, Evelyn Underhill, and Thomas Merton, all of whom are strongly affiliated with the mystical tradition. Celtic Christianity, in spite of its struggles with the Roman Catholic Church, infiltrated other forms of Christian practice and is considered foundational to many branches (Sellner 21).

Amidst this tension, the Celtic Christians worshipped in their own way, which emphasized community (Madigan 45), and looked to the leaders of these communities: the Saints and mystics. Sellner encapsulates the lives of several of the early leaders of the Celtic Church, gleaned from various sources in his research of both written and oral traditions. In the hagiography of these saints, a common theme seems to be that many

of them had the ability to prophesy, and to hear the voice of God and his angels directly. One example of this is the story of St. Ita, second only to St. Brigit in popularity among the Celtic Saints. At a very young age, she felt called to the service of God, and wished to refuse marriage and devote herself as a nun. Her father was very displeased by this, and refused permission. According to Sellner as he presents her hagiography, she was "filled with the spirit of prophecy," and said to all: "'Leave my father alone for a while. Though he now forbids me to be consecrated to Christ, he will come to persuade me and eventually will order me to do so. . .'" (Sellner 151). And so it happened as she said; her father was visited by an angel, according to the story, and was convinced that he should release her to serve wherever she wished.

During her time of service, she was said to have known two cases of nuns in her care that had committed the sins of fornication and adultery. She called them before her, and they repented and confessed (Sellner 153-154). Through these gifts of prophecy, she was not only able to foretell the future, as in the incident with her father, but she was able to know what was happening to those in her charge who were not present. These latter abilities seem very akin to what we would nowadays term "psychic"-- and in the context of her community and her time, she was revered because of these gifts in particular: ". . . All of Ita's community and many others who knew her prophetic power respected her, whether she was absent or present" (Sellner 154). This devoted early Christian woman possessed prophetic, even psychic, abilities, and was not cast out of her community, but instead was later named a saint of the Church. In the example of St. Ita, we are given a model of Christianity in which the prophetic gifts of discernment are not only welcomed, but sought after as vital guidance and for her people.

These saints and monastic leaders were also called, in Celtic terms, "Anam Cara," or "Soul Friends." This meant that they served as spiritual guides to their community, providing a nurturing hand to their individual soul work. John O'Donohue

defines the term in Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom: "*Anam* is the Gaelic word for soul; *cara* is the word for friend. So *anam cara* means soul friend. The *anam cara* was a person to whom you could reveal the hidden intimacies of your life" (xviii). Sellner speaks specifically of the role of the Celtic Christian Saints as "soul friends" (Sellner 26). They were educators, guides, and mentors to their tribes and spiritual communities. And they were the forerunners of the spiritual director, as later defined in Medieval Christianity.

Christianity and Esoteric Wisdom in the Medieval Era

Christian Mystics of the Medieval Era

During the medieval period, Christian Mysticism developed as a prominent religious path, sweeping through Europe in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as "an extraordinary wave of mystical fervor. . ." (Tarnas 197). The phenomenon of mysticism took hold during this era, and some of the most prominent theological figures of the medieval period were indeed mystics. In The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, Matthew Fox begins his discussion of mysticism by laying out the etymological meaning of the word: "The word *mysticism* comes from the Greek *mystikos,* which seems to have two basic meanings: to 'shut one's senses' and to 'enter the mysteries'" (38). This definition encapsulates the two most prominent aspects of mysticism: its association with asceticism (a "shutting" of one's senses), and its link to the "mysteries' -- those things not commonly revealed to humanity. The role of the mystic was to move deeply into those mysteries, and to discern with their heart what God was saying. However, in order to achieve a level of communion with God, mystics often required times of solitude and withdrawal from the senses of the world in order to achieve the state in which they could receive their visions.

Mysticism as a spiritual path established itself as a vehicle by which individuals served as way-showers and leaders within Christian communities. Medieval mystics,

such as St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, and Hildegard of Bingen, were also known as "spiritual directors"-- a term very similar in meaning and function to the Celtic "Soul Friend," or Anam Cara. Like those leaders of the Celtic Christian monastic communities, these and other mystics served to guide fellow seekers on a path toward God, and union with Christ. Although the path of the mystic often involved asceticism and withdrawal, the mystics still moved out into the world and shared their experience of the divine with others. Madigan asserts the theme of inclusiveness in the mystic's expression: "An authentic Christian mystic relates to others with a gracious hospitality that testifies to the presence of Christ everywhere and in all people" (4). Ultimately, the mystics were a vital force in the shaping of the medieval Church, both in the Church's reactions against mysticism and in the lessons and gifts that the mystics were able to bring to the laity.

Mystics have often operated outside the auspices of structured religion, in territory that the priests and congregation members fear to tread. "Intensely devotional, Christ-centered, and aimed at achieving a direct inner union with the divine, this religious outpouring took place largely without regard to the established structures of the church" (Tarnas 197). Because the mystics of the medieval period often operated on the edges of Christian practice, they continually walked a fine line between acceptance and rejection by the church. Matthew Fox writes that these mystics of the medieval era are even still obscure to popular knowledge, because of the Church's "ambivalence" toward mysticism: "The Christian West has indeed been ambivalent toward its mystics. Few of us know the greatest of the mystics of our own western heritage" (42). A main reason for the historic uneasiness around mystical practices was in response to the mystic's notion that anyone could access God directly, and therefore did not need the authority of the Church to intervene in the relationship between God and the individual.

The mystic's emphasis was upon direct experience, rather than a textual and scriptural understanding of God. In "The Changing Shape of Medieval Mysticism," Bernard McGinn cites Eckhart: ". . .Meister Eckhart repeatedly insisted that God could

be found, directly and decisively, anywhere and by anyone" (199). McGinn also cites Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the most prominent teachers of the medieval era, as emphasizing the need for personal experience of God in balance with biblical knowledge: "At the beginning of his exegesis of the Song of Songs, Bernard proclaimed: 'Today we are reading in the book of experience.' The proper balance between the book of the Bible and the book of experience was to be a major issue in later Christian mysticism" (196). The common theme of the mystics' message was always to connect with the divine through direct and real encounter. While they did not dissuade any from reading the scriptures, they exemplified a new way of seeing the text. This way was sometimes outside the traditional scholarly approach proscribed by the Church, as practiced by some of its most notable mystics.

The medieval mystics became the inspiration and foundation for much later work in the area of mysticism. A prominent voice regarding the mystics of the medieval era is Evelyn Underhill (1875 – 1941). An Anglican theologian, writer, and spiritual director, she also considered herself a mystic. She did not believe that mysticism and the church should be opposed to each other. In her major work, Mysticism, she states that "…the antithesis between the religions of 'authority' and of 'spirit,' the 'Church' and the 'mystic,' is false. Each requires the other" (ix). This was a foundational notion for Underhill, that the mystics throughout the ages should be welcomed into the fold of the Protestant Christian tradition. Underhill's intent also was to bring to light the idea that mysticism is not merely a psychological aberration, since the time she was writing about medieval mystics was during the rise of the psychoanalytical schools of approach in the early 20th century. She points to philosophers and theologians who had worked to show that mysticism was, and is, a valid form of Christian practice, as it "gives the self a genuine knowledge of transcendental Reality -- with its accompanying demonstration of the soberness and sanity of the greatest contemplative saints" (4). A common theme in

Underhill's work, in fact, was the defense of the place of mysticism within Christian practice by establishing the validity of the mystics' experiences.

Theologians of the medieval age wrote about this new wave of mysticism, and addressed how the path might be accepted within the fold of normative Christian practice. Although, as Elizabeth Petroff writes in her article "The Mystics," "All traditions seem to agree that mysticism is a special gift, not fully under the control of the recipient" (Petroff Par. 4). Viewed in the positive, mystics were the pioneers, those who were willing to plumb the depths of their experience to find new ways of encountering God. "Mystics may be found in every religious tradition, sometimes as central participants but often on the periphery of accepted practice, for they map out new experiences of the divine" (Petroff, Par. 3). Underhill says that "The spiritual adventures of the mystic are not those of ordinary men. . .He can press forward to countries which unmystical piety must mark as unexplored, pushing out from harbour to 'the vast and stormy sea of the divine'" (125). The Medieval Church viewed the mystics sometimes with reverence. They could become the leaders of their monastic communities: "Mystics were the teachers of the age [high Middle Ages, 1100-1450], inspired leaders who synthesized Christian tradition and proposed new models for the Christian community" (Petroff Par. 7). But proposing new models was not such easy work, and as the leading edge between humankind and contact with the divine, those who walked the path of the mystic experienced a mixture of ostracism and acceptance.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 - 1179 C.E.) is considered one of the greatest women mystics of the Middle Ages. According to Patrick Reid in Readings in Western Religious Thought, she was an "active and forceful abbess of her own convent," and also "produced accounts of her visions, prophecies, liturgical songs, a morality play" and several other exegetical and scientific works (210). While she was learned and accomplished scholastically, her mystical approach took her beyond the "scholarly" way of understanding scripture. Her visions allowed her to interpret scripture with new

insight, and the spiritual meaning was revealed to her beyond what she had learned from books (Reid 211). This type of insight was achieved through her visions and revelations, which came to her in a state of mystical awareness.

Her achievements during her time were beyond the scope of what had been possible for women to achieve up to that point within the patriarchal framework of the Medieval Christian Church. Although women mystics were more in number, they seemed to have some unique problems not present for their male counterparts. Often, they appeared to have to apologize for the "weakness" of their sex, and make disclaimers about their lowly womanhood before presenting a revelation received from a divine source. Even though she was one of the most highly regarded of women mystics, Hildegard of Bingen seemed to both play within the rules of the patriarchic Church, and to subtly push for the inclusion of a positive view of the feminine in her writings. She begins a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux with the usual disclaimer: "I, wretched creature, more than wretched, being a woman . . ." (Zunn-Brunn 19). Then, she goes on to speak of a revelation she was given in a vision. While she makes these formal disclaimers, perhaps they are only meant to assuage the male clergy, so that she could ultimately get her work out. "At a period when misogynous descriptions prevailed (inherited from Theophrastus and St. Jerome), in Hildegard's work we notice an attempt to break free of traditional patterns" (Zunn-Brunn 14).

Hildegard even wrote scientific and medical works, which were received through a combination of study, observation, and mystical discernment. Her two main scientific works are *Physica,* dealing with nature, botany, and zoology, and *Causae et Curae,* a treatise on diseases, illnesses, and their cures (Zunn-Brunn 9). Her education came in good stead in supporting her medical and scientific works: "Her scientific knowledge derives, on the one hand, from a personal observation of surrounding nature-- animals and plants-- as well as from a study of the illnesses of those who came to her to be healed and, on the other hand, from a rich tradition based on a global explanation of the

universe inherited from Greek antiquity" (Zunn-Brunn 8). But even today's medical experts acknowledge the mystical source of her revelations, while still valuing her great contributions to modern medicine. Dr. Marcia Ramos-e-Silva, in an article for the Journal of Dermatology, cites Hildegard as a great influence upon this field of medicine: "The mystic Abbess of Bingen wrote two major books of medical writings, *Causae et Curae (Holistic Healing),* after receiving 'divine revelations' about the origin and treatment of many diseases, and *Physica* or *Liber Subtilitatum Diversarum Naturatum Creaturarm*, an encyclopedic work, marred here and there with magic formulas, but rich in medical lore" (Ramos-e-Silva 318). Although the doctor implies that Hildegard's use of "magic formulas" detracts from her work, she acknowledges the value and accuracy of her writings: "Hildegard is probably the first woman to write about skin diseases, and also about their therapies" and "in her books there are recipes for the use of various plants that are now proven to be anti-inflammatory and antibiotic agents" (319). Even today, her work is seen as foundational and accurate within a scientific context. Hildegard, it seems, also promoted what would today be called a "holistic" approach to health: "In Hildegard's medicine, it is most important to take the responsibility for your own health. Enjoy a natural life and make proper use of your five senses" (Ramos-e-Silva 319). The importance of Hildegard's medical works can not be underestimated, as she could be considered the first published woman physician (Ramos-e-Silva 320).

Although Hildegard was educated to some extent, she received much of her information, including her theology, through visions: "She was taught theology through her visions rather than from a disciplined study, for women were not allowed to study theology in universities" (Madigan 94). In Hildegard, a powerful combination of intelligence, education, and mystical gifts allowed her to become one of the few women of the time to be allowed to disseminate knowledge, regardless of her gender: "Her prophetic voice, her preaching activities, and her teachings were eventually verified by church leaders in spite of the prohibitions against women teaching men" (Madigan 94).

An exemplar of the highest potentials of the often difficult mystic path, Hildegard was to be a way-shower for others to follow.

Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582), a mystic of the later medieval era, is the first woman to be declared a Doctor of the Church; she received this honor posthumously from Pope Paul VI on September 27, 1970 (Egan Future 118). Her life and work is another example, akin to Hildegard, of a woman mystic who was successful and influential both during her time and to the present day. She entered the Carmelite order at age 20, and after being part of the Carmelite order for about twenty years she had a powerful mystical experience at age 40. This set into motion an internal conversion in Teresa (Egan Anthology 437). There followed many other mystical experiences throughout her life; these led St. Teresa to enact reform within the Carmelite order. These experiences, in which she ". . . saw the Lord and heard him speak," led to her establishment of a new Carmelite order that would follow the original Carmelite rule (Rohrbach 9084). This original rule included a stricter observance of ascetic practices, including fasting and seclusion; Teresa's new order were termed the "discalced" Carmelites due to their wearing of sandals ("discalced" means "shoeless"). She founded many convents, at the behest of a Carmelite general in 1567, and found her life's work in the administration of these convents (Rohrbach 9084).

Throughout this time, she wrote several works of spiritual reflection; Interior Mansions in particular is sourced in her mystical experiences received through prayer and contemplation. In Mystical Theology, author Mark McIntosh describes the experience that Teresa intends to communicate through writing: "For Teresa, this 'interior mansion' becomes the imaginal realm in which the divine speech can still be heard, but now the language of that speech is constituted by the inner movements of the soul" (69). Teresa was not naturally inclined to writing; she lacked formal education, and felt inadequate to the task (Egan Future 119). However, she wrote of her prayer life and mystical experiences because her spiritual directors and confessors demanded it of her,

presumably because they felt it would be of value to them and to others. Egan describes her gifted way of written expression:

> Teresa makes the experience of God intelligible through an extraordinarily subtle and psychologically acute description of her own mystical life and through the spiritual authority with which she communicates it. Moreover, one finds in her works a paradigm of the life of faith, hope and love that all Christians live in a much less dramatic way. To read her works is to be initiated in one's own deepest experience of God. (Future 119)

Because of her mystical abilities, and her gifted way of communicating her revelations, she is considered "one of history's great authorities on mysticism" (Rohrbach 9084).

An equally influential mystic of the period was St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), who became associated with Teresa of Ávila due to their common interest in religious reform efforts within the Carmelite Order. Unlike Teresa, John was very widely educated, having a solid training in the humanities from the Jesuit College in Medina, Spain. But at the time of his first meeting with her, shortly after his ordination at Medina, he had been longing for a life of deeper solitude and contemplation (Kavanaugh 987). Teresa told John of her plan to establish monasteries for Carmelite men, and that she needed brothers for the order. The reformed Carmelite order appealed to John's desire for a life more focused upon reflection and prayer. In her introduction to John of the Cross: Selections from "The Dark Night" and Other Writings, Emilie Griffin describes a particular way of prayer attributed to the reformed Carmelites: "The Discalced Carmelites also emphasized a way of prayer called 'recollection.' Recollection begins with turning from the exterior life of mindless chatter and feverish activity, away from noisy and distracting people and places, toward the calm and peace of the inner life" (Griffin x). This practice of "recollection," sounding very akin to the modern definition of meditation, allowed for greater access to mystical experiences.

Throughout the rest of his life with the Discalced Carmelite order, St. John became a gifted mystic, prolific writer, and spiritual director. By many accounts, although they had a difference in age of 27 years, St. John and St. Teresa were fast friends; later, he even became her spiritual director: "While sending John off to instruct

Carmelite friars in the new ways, Teresa also contrived to retain him as spiritual director to herself and her sisters, for John was able to shepherd Teresa through many intense mystical experiences" (Griffin xi). Although St. John was well-educated and scholarly, his theology was grounded in the more experiential aspects of mysticism. In his commentary on stanzas in The Spiritual Canticle, St. John writes to a prioress of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in 1584: "Even though Your Reverence lacks training in scholastic theology, by which the divine truths are understood, you are not wanting in mystical theology, which is known through love and by which one not only knows but at the same time experiences" (Griffin 20). St. John had a gift of poetic expression, and this enabled him to convey his mystical experiences, both joyous and painful, in a way that speaks to readers today.

Unlike Teresa's journey, John's path was fraught with difficulty due to his mystical gifts. His popularity amongst the laity caused him political problems with the clergy (Griffin xi). He suffered an incarceration due to power struggles within the Carmelite order, and spent nine months in a cell 6 feet wide and 10 feet long.; during this time he composed some of his greatest poems (Kavanaugh 989). Out of this experience arose The Dark Night of the Soul, perhaps his most renowned work. Egan describes the content and effect of the work:

> . . . *The Dark Night* is written as an allegory in which the lover sings of her good fortune in having departed "one dark night" to be united with her beloved. It then speaks of the wonderful results of this union of love. In this work, John delineates how one reaches "the high state of perfection" attained only in the dark night of naked faith. (Egan Anthology 451)

His written work, based upon experience obtained through his willingness to suffer uncertainties and persecution upon his own path, possessed an authentic quality that made his an inestimable contribution to the Christian tradition.

Sadly, he died without knowing the profound influence he would have on the future church, again due to political struggles within the reform effort of the Carmelites (Kavanaugh 987). But like St. Teresa, St. John was also proclaimed a Doctor of the

Church in 1926 by Pope Pius XI. The theme of a descent into the dark has been influential upon theologians to the current day: "John had a decisive influence on the Christian mystical tradition. In fact, his writings have become almost the norm for interpreting the mystical ascent to God" (Egan Anthology 450). St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Ávila, and Hildegard of Bingen each contributed to the mystical tradition through their unique voices, and their willingness to enact change in the world of the Church based upon their faith in the truth of their direct experience of God.

Divination as Viewed by Medieval Theology

One of the most influential and significant theologians of the Medieval Era was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Aquinas was of the Dominican order, which emphasized theological education (Reid 242). Aquinas studied extensively both philosophy and theology. His mastery of these subjects is evident in Aquinas' masterwork, and major contribution to Western theology, the Summa Theologica. The Summa is organized in the form of sequentially numbered questions, followed by "objections" which are a form of argument, then focusing upon the heart of the section, Aquinas' arguments against the objections.

In the Summa, Aquinas deals at length with the question of whether divination is a sin according to Church doctrine. Aquinas' "Question 95" is regarding "Superstition of Divinations." He quotes Deuteronomy to begin the discussion: "Neither let there be found among you… any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune tellers" (Deut 18:10-11 qtd. in Aquinas 1599). He goes on to state that certain kinds of divination *are* a sin, but qualifies which kind. Article 2 of Question 95 explores the idea of whether divination is a species of superstition. Aquinas makes the claim that superstition is

anything that denotes "undue divine worship" (1600). He then connects his idea of superstition with idolatrous practices, and the involvement of demons:

> Wherefore superstition includes not only idolatrous sacrifices offered to demons, but also recourse to the help of the demons for the purpose of doing or knowing something. But all divination results from the demons' operation, either because the demons are expressly invoked that the future may be made known, or because the demons thrust themselves into the futile searchings of the future, in order to *entangle men's minds with vain conceits* [italics mine]. (1600)

This latter concept of "entangling men's minds" is indeed at the core of much of the Christian resistance to divinatory practices. The underlying fear of the Church seems to be that the people will become entranced with their own power to foretell the future, falling further under the sway of demonic influences. Unlike the revelations of the mystics and prophets, divination was officially banned by the Church, likely because of the Deuteronomic passage referenced above by Aquinas. However, some forms of divination and spiritual discernment were accepted if they could be justified as falling within the realm of divine revelation.

Oneiromancy as Revelation in the Medieval Period

Oneiromancy, the revelation and interpretation of dreams, was accepted by the Church of the medieval era, with some caveats. In "Dreams and Divination in Early Medieval Canonical and Narrative Sources: The Question of Clerical Control" author Isabel Moreira discusses the place of dreams as revelation and divinatory practice. She found that not only the dreams of the religious elites, nor only the dreams of mystics, were recorded and interpreted. Instead, there was evidence that the dreams of the laity were considered important sources of revelation. This suggests that dreams "held a noteworthy place in Christian religious culture and that the religious elite believed these dreams to be worthy of religious interpretation" (Moreira 622). While the concept of oneiromancy had been accepted in the early days of the Church as a common means by which the mystics and prophets received messages, during the medieval period it was

also acceptable for the people to have dreams which were considered and interpreted by their clergy.

While there is evidence that dreams of the laity were interpreted and recorded, there was some worry by the Church around the issue of sexuality in dreams, and the potential of a person being influenced, in the dream state, by evil entities (Moreira 627). Furthermore, oneiromancy at times had been associated with soothsayers. However, during this era, Moreira finds that there is no conclusive evidence of oneiromancy being explicitly banned: "It is, in fact, impossible to demonstrate that dream interpretation was regarded as a prohibited divinatory practice from late antique sermons and hagiography" (Moreira 628). The laity brought their dreams, then, to clergy members for interpretation and guidance, and this shows a willingness by the clergy of that time to see oneiromancy as a way of knowing within Christian practice.

Furthermore, findings of other researchers show that dreams were even used as a source of divine guidance in the founding and building of Christian Holy sites. In the article "The Role of Medieval Dream Images in Authenticating Ecclesiastical Construction," author Carolyn M. Carty describes the medieval Church's use of the dreams of the laity and clergy members in guidance toward the foundation of monasteries and new churches (Carty 46). While the author acknowledges the tension that existed between the Church and any form of divination, she illustrates the connection between oneiromancy and the Church: "While the medieval Church was ever wary of the enticements of magic and divination . . . the dream nevertheless had its roots in biblical contexts, an important factor for the legitimacy of certain dream phenomenon" (Carty 45). The grounding of dream interpretation within the traditions of prophecy and scripture is previously documented; this link is what brings legitimacy to oneiromancy in the medieval context. Despite the pre-Christian, pagan origin of dream interpretation, the medieval Christians included this way of knowing within the bounds of their practice: "Medieval dream theorists, adopting the theories of their pagan

counterparts, adapted these theories to Christian purposes, thereby sanctioning and validating the dream experience and placing it within the framework of religious experience" (Carty 45). However, other forms of divination, such as astrology, were more hotly contended and required careful defense by members of the clergy in order to justify its use.

Astrology as Divination in the Medieval Era

During the medieval era, the question of astrology in particular as a form of divination was a delicate one. Although astrology did have its roots in pre-Christian and pagan practice, however, this most obvious potential reason for Christian condemnation might not have been the most important source of the contention surrounding its practice. Christianity was well established as the dominant religion at this time, and might not have found it necessary to so avidly stamp out pagan ways. In the article, "The Western Church and Astrology During the Early Middle Ages," M.L.W. Laistner posits many of the potential reasons for the medieval Church's official objection to astrology. He divides astrology first into its two most prominent categories of practice: popular and scientific. Popular astrology was more concerned with the fortune-telling properties of the practice, while the scientific form was more akin to what we would call astronomy, an observation of the heavens and their earthly effects. Laistner states that the popular form was objectionable because of its associations with pagan superstitions, while the scientific form was objectionable because: ". . . it sought to substitute for God and the operation of Divine Grace and Providence a fatalistic scheme of the Universe in which the life and fortunes of every man were rigidly predetermined from the moment of birth or even of conception" (Laistner 254). Laistner further distinguishes the source of the Church's inherent problems with astrology as having little to do with its pagan associations: "In contrast to this scarcity of official condemnations of astrology there is abundant evidence to show how the Western

Church struggled unceasingly to suppress rustic superstitions, fortune-telling, spells, and similar pagan abominations" (265). The question of the doctrine of free will appears to be a more pressing issue in the Church's ultimate acceptance of astrology than its pagan roots.

Other writers also argue that the consideration of astrology's pagan origins might not ultimately have had as much weight as its potential interference with man's free will as given by God. Author Richard Tarnas writes in The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View, that because paganism was no longer an "immediate threat" to Christianity, astrology found its way back into consideration of medieval theologians. In this consideration, the theological arguments centered mainly around the discussion of fate and free will. Aquinas was one of the most prominent of them to take on the issue: "The traditional Christian objection to astrology-- its implicit negation of free will and grace-- was met by Aquinas in his Summa Theologica" (Tarnas 193). Firstly, it is important to understand the roots of the doctrine of free will as established by St. Augustine. Much of the church doctrine on free will originated with Augustine. According to Tarnas, Augustine asserted that: ". . .evil was a consequence of man's misuse of his free will. Evil lay in the act of turning itself-- of turning away from God-- not in what was turned to" (Tarnas 145). So, the act was not in and of itself what constituted "evil"; the evil lied in turning away from God toward anything else. Consulting astrology as a means of determining one's fate was construed by Augustine and others as this act of "turning away" from God's gift of free will.

Aquinas takes on this argument with care, delineating the practice of astrology into the two different types. On the one hand, he states that the practice of astrology to forecast events could be viewed as a science of observing past events in order to gain a foreknowledge of the future, and also to predict such things that "happen of necessity" such as an eclipse. He distinguishes this scientific approach from the type of astrology

used to predict a definitive future, which might take away from man's free will. But, he acknowledges that there are different viewpoints on the matter, and ultimately does not take a definitive stand against the matter of "Divination by the Stars." He makes clear, in his argument, that the movements of the stars are neither a signifier of an event, nor are they the cause of an event. Likely, he argues, the movements of the stars and the events upon earth stem from a higher cause: Divine Providence. And by reading the stars, we may be able to gauge some natural occurrences. Aquinas does unequivocally state that the problem comes when one seeks to foreknow future *human actions* by observances of the stars, because this approach does not take into account man's free will.

Aquinas' arguments regarding the uses and potential abuses of astrology were influential upon future generations of theologians and clergy members. In Laura Ackerman Smoller's book, History, Prophecy, and the Stars: The Christian Astrology of Pierre D'Ailly, 1350-1420, the author presents the arguments of a medieval cardinal and theologian for the use of astrology in a manner that fits within the bounds of Christian practice. While d'Ailly was a church officer, he always saw astrology as a useful tool by which to discern the fate of the world: "D'Ailly saw astrology not as a magical art by which he could manipulate the future course of the world but rather as a rational science by which he could discern the broad patterns of earthly events" (Smoller 7). He used astrology himself, and like Aquinas, he addressed in a series of writings the question of whether divination by the stars was a sin. He refers back to Aquinas' arguments in the Summa to support many of his assertions.

The doctrine of free will is also a vital consideration in understanding d'Ailly's approach to the defense of astrology. Smoller continues to put into context the Church's objections to astrology during the medieval period, as it stems from the doctrine of free will:

> Church fathers attacked astrology for two basic reasons. First, its practice bore traces of pagan superstition and star worship. Second, it

> denied the fundamental Christian principle of man's freedom of will. Quite simply, if the stars controlled all human actions, men were not responsible for their good or evil deeds, and the economy of salvation was meaningless. (Smoller 25-26)

D'Ailly contended with the argument that the practice of astrology went against the Church doctrine of free will by using Aquinas' tact that the stars could rule the physical body, but that men had a choice in how they responded to the physical by the choices they made with their spirit. While Aquinas acknowledges the possibility that heavenly bodies do influence humans, he states that man will always be able to counter this influence with his own free will (1604). Tarnas further clarifies Aquinas' general premise, that "the planets influenced man, specifically his corporeal nature, but that through the use of his God-given reason and free will man could control his passions and achieve freedom from astrological determinism" (193). D'Ailly uses this argument, following its logic to establish that astrology did not interfere with man's exercise of free will: ". . .[d'Ailly] granted the stars a direct influence on the body and an indirect influence on the soul via the senses. Through the exercise of free will, a man might choose to follow or not to follow the impulse of the body" (Smoller 37). In other words, a person could choose to overcome the stars' influence, but this would require that the person be enlightened enough to rise above bodily drives.

Despite their view that astrology could be potentially useful, both d'Ailly and Aquinas express discomfort with astrology's associations with magic, or the "dark arts." Aquinas sees astrological divination as a potential slippery slope in that predicting the future might somehow leave one open to the influence of dark entities, and expresses fear that demonic influence might still "thrust itself" into the situation "in order that man's mind may become entangled in vanity and falsehood" (1603). But he continues to separate the two different ways of practicing astrology: one is that of using it "in order to foreknow casual or fortuitous future events, or to know with certitude future human actions," and the other is using the stars to "foreknow those future things that are caused by heavenly bodies, for instance, drought or rain and so forth. . ." (1604). He deems the

first means as being vulnerable to demonic influence, and therefore potentially sinful. However, he deems the second means as: "neither an unlawful nor a superstitious divination" (1604). However, Aquinas ends this passage by referring back to the former fear: that any attempt to foretell the future may cause the astrologer and the querent to be "duped" by demon interference. He goes on to quote Augustine as saying that: "'A good Christian should beware of astrologers, and of all impious diviners, *especially those who tell the truth*, lest his soul become the dupe of the demons and by making a compact of partnership with them enmesh itself in their fellowship'" (1604). While Aquinas acknowledges the veracity of astrology, he cautions that one should be aware of this possible "enmeshment" with demonic influences.

Aquinas' comments convey a sense of conflict around the idea of using the celestial bodies for guidance. He acknowledges its value for predicting natural events. But evident throughout his writing is the caution to Christians against being seduced off of the path by the power of forecasting the future. A most important distinction lies between revelation that is divine, which he sanctions, and divination which comes from the divinator, which he deems to be an act against God. The distinction is key because it highlights an idea which is foundational to the Church's objection to divination. Aquinas says it is not considered divination "if anyone knows other contingent future things, through divine revelation: for then he does not divine, but rather *receives* [italics mine] something divine" (1600). In the act of "receiving" the divine, the one who gives the message becomes passive to the will of God, and is not asserting themselves in the act of divination. As with the role of the prophet, Aquinas establishes that the Church will not tolerate one who uses this power to foretell the future in any way that would take away from the ultimate power of God.

In the discussion of astrology by Aquinas and d'Ailly, both Christian theologians and clergy members, we see a great effort to find a place for the practice of this art. It can be used, as Aquinas points out, as kind of cosmic weather guide. He makes an

interesting paralleling between the astrologer and the physician: ". . . even as astrologers by considering the stars can foreknow and foretell things concerning rains and droughts, and physicians, concerning health and death" (1600). Whereas the physician can read signs of the body to "foretell" health and death, the astrologer can read the signs of the heavens to "foretell" such things as the weather. Aquinas uses a positive analogous relationship to describe the role of the astrologer, despite all of his warnings and cautions against its potential misuse. We can assume, then, that astrology must have been a highly valuable tool in order for luminaries such as Aquinas to go such lengths in order to present extensive guidelines for its use.

Chartres Cathedral: Druid Roots and Pagan Symbols

History of Chartres Cathedral

Chartres Cathedral was built first in the 12th century, destroyed by fire, and then rebuilt in the 13th century. The cathedral is not the first Christian monument to inhabit the place. It is the penultimate of several earlier Christian structures, and sits atop a Druidic sacred site. There is a legend that the Druids had a prophetic vision that a virgin would give birth to a child, and carved an image of the virgin and child from a pear tree (Markale 246). At the place where Chartres now stands, there was once a mound and a dolmen; the Druids placed this statue at a power point within the dolmen and called her "The Virgin Under the Earth" (Westwood 20). The Cathedral, "erected above a grotto associated with the legend of the Druidic shrine of a Virgo paritura," (Johnson 439) is itself a mixture of pagan and Christian associations: its Druidic roots feed the myth and symbolism embodied in the structure above.

In Landscape and Memory, Simon Schama discusses the presence of pagan symbolism within Christian venues, and how the pagan origins of those symbols were adopted by the cathedral builders of the time. He specifically addresses the pagan symbols present in Chartres. In reference to the gargoyles and other sculpture, Schama

states: "Green Men like the Trier mask grin and grimace from so many bosses, vault ribs, and piers in European churches that they somehow manage to become invisible to the casual gaze. So we fail to register the grotesque incongruousness of fertility fetishes, vomiting greenstuff from their stretched mouths into the house of Christ" (218). The juxtaposition described in this passage is striking-- fertility fetishes in a Christian sacred site. But in looking at the cathedral with the casual gaze, indeed one might not even notice the existence of these blatantly pagan symbols. The symbols have been both misunderstood, and ignored, by modern historians. These symbols of Green Men, of the acorn (a druidic symbol), and of the Virgin herself, can be seen as outgrowings from the pagan roots that lie beneath Chartres. The symbols present at Chartres are multivalent, possessing qualities of their former pagan associations, while incorporating the ideals of the Church at the time of its building.

Astrological Symbolism in Chartres

The mystery school at the cathedral was established in 1000 AD by the Bishop Fulbert and continued until about 1200 AD (Colbert 441). It was a place of wisdom and learning, and greatly influential upon the culture of the time. Founded on the concept of the seven liberal arts, the school provided a balance between theological and philosophical studies: "Secular studies in general were pursued to confirm the harmony between faith and reason, between Biblical revelation and Platonic cosmology" (Colbert 441). There is an inherent disjunction, however, between the Christian ideals of the Cathedral itself, and the origin of these seven liberal arts. The seven liberal arts are associated with the oracles of the seven planets, and as we have already seen from the arguments of Aquinas and d'Ailly, references to astrology within Christianity were not orthodox, and generally needed defense. In describing the personification of these seven liberal arts as female statues in the Royal Porch of the cathedral, René Querido asserts in The Golden Age of Chartres:

> If we try to read literally the story told in the right doorway of the Royal Porch, we immediately encounter a problem, for the seven liberal arts are not usually associated with the images from the Gospel. A solution lies in our understanding that in addition to the accepted stories of the Old and New Testaments, the lives of the saints, and other events important to Christianity, the iconography of Chartres at times conveys a deeper, more esoteric message. (73)

The "problem" Querido refers to is the juxtaposition of pagan-associated imagery and Christian iconography. The juxtaposition is embedded in stone; the pillars' presence can not be connected to Christian tenets. The School at Chartres linked itself to esoteric ways of knowing such as astrology.

In The Secret Zodiac: The Hidden Art in Mediaeval Astrology, author Fred Gettings asserts that, despite the title of his book, the symbols were not deliberately being hidden, but that their deeper significance had not been acknowledged. Consequently, the symbols have often been dismissed as "decorative." "In such attitudes we may note the failure to grasp that the art of the ancients was fundamentally different from modern art, in which there is all too evidently a place for 'mere decoration'. . ." (Gettings 20-21). Schama goes on to demonstrate that the acorn symbolism present in many Cathedrals is a reference to "the Druid symbolism over which the church was said to have been built" (218). The acorns are carved into the stone as part of a design, and like the other stone carvings, can easily recede into the background unless a person knew what they were looking for. They could be construed as merely decorative; however, they are not hidden. Both Schama's and Gettings' work establishes the idea that the pagan symbols were not intentionally hidden; they are actually unconcealed, available for all to see.

But during the medieval period, astrology as divination was not explicitly condoned by the Christian Church; the defense of astrology was done with care and precision. It is surprising, then, to see the symbols blatantly displayed in a cathedral. Gettings offers one possible explanation: that the symbols were not placed by the hands of theologians, but were placed by those under the influence of esoteric traditions:

> . . .even while the arguments about the validity or morality of astrology echoed through the new universities and flowed into the bloodstream of the newly awakening Europe, astrological and constellational symbolism was already being used in a sophisticated way in the fabric of the cathedrals. . .The exoteric academic realm which interested itself in such matters seemed to have little or no contact with the artistic life around them, and as the scholars said one thing, the artists (no doubt working under the instruction of esoteric schools) did another. (Gettings 78)

Gettings asserts here the notion that the artists who decorated the cathedrals, those responsible for the existence of the symbols, were informed by esoteric schools. Meanwhile, the theologians and academics of the period who argued for and against astrology's validity and acceptance were not the ones actually placing the symbols.

Another potential explanation for the existence of the astrological symbols at Chartres is the idea that, perhaps, all Cathedrals were created to be a replica of the cosmos, with an all-inclusive view of God's creation. The zodiac may not have had pagan associations at all, but may have been representative of the contained universe, and the divine order of time. Mircea Eliade writes in Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism:

> We have seen that it was not only temples that were thought to be situated at the 'Centre of the World', but that every holy place, every place that bore witness to an incursion of the sacred into profane space, was also regarded as a 'centre.' These spaces could also be constructed; but their construction was, in its way, a cosmogony-- a creation of the world . . . (Eliade 52)

In the creation of the world at Chartres, we see references to the Sun, Moon, and Stars. This would be logical, considering that all of these are God's creation, and also mark order and time. This imagery of the "centre" is also embodied in the symbol of the labyrinth. Gettings links the idea of the "center" as created by the presence of the labyrinth at Chartres:

> Is it possible that the ancient church zodiacs, and the so-called 'labyrinths,' found at one time in many of the mediaeval ecclesiastical structures, are related in some symbolic way? Is it possible that the zodiac was seen as an image of the dance of the stars in adoration of the solar God, while the labyrinth symbolized a dance of man in the house of God, beneath the stars? . . . What is important to both formal patterns is the 'invisible centre,' one of which was marked by symbolic figures relating

> to a great earth-mystery, the other of which is still marked by the sun. (Gettings 65)

Gettings and Eliade both refer to the concept of the center as being embodied within the building of the cathedral. This center, symbolized by a circle in both cases, may also symbolize the bounded world of humanity, bounded by the created cosmos of God. Creation is at the Center, and it is God's creation. This notion of a reality in which the created world exists at the center is in keeping with Christian theology through all ages, and hence the potentially pagan notions of the zodiac and star or planet worship are not the likely sources of the presence of these symbols within Chartres.

Perhaps the presence of these pagan symbols within a Christian structure is a physical manifestation of the idea that there has always been a place within Christian practice for the ancient and mystical ways of knowing. Between the time of Chartres and today, however, much has changed. In the present day climate amongst Christian communities, there are divergent opinions upon the inclusion of mystical practices. Some of these ancient practices, because of their potential associations with the occult, have created debate within the Christian Church of today.

Mystical Discernment in Christianity Today

Spiritual Direction

As we have seen throughout the discussion of the role of the prophets, medieval mystics, and the early Celtic Christian Saints, there was a common and valuable role which these individuals provided: that of the guide, or the spiritual leader, within their community. They were guides toward growth and development within the Christian faith, and engendered spiritual growth in their fellow practitioners through the tradition of the "soul friend" and the "spiritual director." In the present day, the tradition of the spiritual director is a modern application of a mystical way of discernment within Christian practice. According to Elizabeth Leibert, S.N.J.M., the relationship between the director and the directed is considered to be a sacred one, assisting the individual

with methods based upon the Church's ideals of pastoral ministry. In Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction, Leibert writes:

> Christian spiritual direction, then, is an interpersonal helping relationship, rooted in the church's ministry of pastoral care. In this relationship, one Christian assists another to discover and live out in the context of the Christian Community his or her deepest values and life goals in response to God's initiative and the biblical mandate. (8-9)

The sessions between director and directed involve a process of "noticing, hearing, and responding" to the presence of God in the life of the individual (Leibert 8).

In his article, "Spiritual Direction in the Roman Catholic Tradition," Rev. Gene Barrette explores and defines spiritual direction specifically as it has existed in the Roman Catholic tradition. Barrette defines spiritual direction as: ". . . an *experiential process* focused upon one's lived relationship with God. Spiritual direction is grounded in the *experience of the divine*" (291). The use of such words as "lived relationship with God" and "experience of the divine" hearken back to the experience of the mystics. In fact, Barrett cites some of the mystical writers that have already been discussed as potential sources of inspiration for spiritual directors, because they are helpful in understanding spiritual experiences (294). Barrette defines the role of the spiritual director as a spiritual companion who offers guidance to an individual (297). The manner in which the Director guides the individual is through the process of discernment, a long tradition within spiritual direction: "As early as the desert fathers and mothers, discernment has been recognized as one of the major tasks of spiritual direction. Discernment does not only involve discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit, but also the presence of the 'enemy' blocking the spirit's work" (Barrette 297). Through helping the client discern their relationship with the divine, the spiritual director guides the client through a process of listening, reflecting, and helping the client toward a self-understanding that fosters an understanding of one's relationship to God.

The Use of the Enneagram in Spiritual Direction

One of the identifiable goals of spiritual direction is to assist individuals on their spiritual path, and this goal is often met through a process of self-awareness. The Enneagram, a tool for self-understanding, has been accepted by spiritual directors in the Christian tradition as useful in their work. This is a system wherein there are nine "personality types," each one providing specific insight into an individual's prominent traits, modes of interacting with others, and possible areas of blockage or weakness. In Understanding the Enneagram: The Practical Guide to Personality Types, authors Riso and Hudson refer to the types as being modified by the "level of development" of the person: "Each type description begins with a profile of the type's main traits. These profiles are, in effect, the 'core traits' -- the complex cluster of related traits that is the essence of each type -- in the healthy, average, and unhealthy levels of development" (66). The Enneagram types provide a description of these "core traits" in their positive and negative manifestations. The system works as a guide for the individual to recognize their strengths and abilities, while at the same time directing attention toward those areas of the personality which could lead to unproductive or dysfunctional behaviors. In a spiritual direction session, a director may use the Enneagram to provide an awareness of the traits and behavioral tendencies of the client.

The roots of the Enneagram system are pre-Christian; the geometric shape itself goes back to the time of Pythagoras, and the philosophies and applications for its use draws from mystical Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, Buddhism, and ancient Greek philosophy (Riso and Hudson 33). The earliest applications of the Enneagram in the western traditions are attributed to George Ilych Gurdjieff (Pacwa 14). Gurdjieff's work used the symbol of the Enneagram in meditation and sacred dance (Riso and Hudson 32). The founder of the Enneagram system as it is applied today, Oscar Ichazo, synthesized it from a number of ancient wisdom traditions, and expanded upon the ideas of Gurdjieff (Riso and Hudson 31-2). The main difference between Ichazo and Gurdjieff was that Gurdjieff did not use the Enneagram to do any kind of personality

typology. Ichazo established the Enneagram as primarily a system of understanding one's character. He developed this system not only from Gurdjieff's work with the symbol, but also from the western mystical and philosophical traditions of the "nine Divine Forms":

> In developing his Enneagram theories, he drew upon a recurrent theme in Western mystical and philosophical tradition -- the idea of nine Divine Forms. This idea was discussed by Plato as the Divine Forms or Platonic Solids -- qualities of existence that are essential, that cannot be broken down into constituent parts . . . These ideas found their way from Greece and Asia Minor southward through Syria and eventually to Egypt. There, it was embraced by early Christian mystics known as the Desert Fathers who focused on studying the *loss* of the Divine Forms in ego consciousness. (Riso and Hudson 34)

Ichazo adapted these nine forms, which then became the nine Enneagram personality types.

Although the Enneagram is regularly practiced within spiritual direction, there are some within the conservative faction of Christianity that have objections to its occult roots. In his article, "Tell Me Who I Am, O Enneagram," author Mitchell Pacwa, S.J, argues against the use of the Enneagram in Christian spiritual direction. He presents the history of the Enneagram's development in the west, and asserts that the occult origins of the Enneagram should be a source of concern for Christians:

> Rarely are teachers or participants aware of its occultic origins, something that should be s source of real concern for the Christian church. Echoes of false, Gnostic theology are heard in Enneagram teachings, though its occult roots are masked. The lack of scientific research into the enneagram system is an additional cause for concern. (Pacwa 14)

Pacwa's argument against the use of the Enneagram because it is not "scientific" isn't a logical one, because the process of spiritual direction itself has never been based upon science. However, the author does present solid research regarding these occult origins. He pinpoints Gurdjieff as the man "credited with bringing the enneagram figure to the west," then goes on to lay out the ways in which Gurdjieff was "fascinated" with the occult: "Astrology, mental telepathy, spiritism and table turning, fortune telling, and demon possession all held his interest as a youth" (Pacwa 14). Pacwa's problem with Gurdjieff's occult interest lies primarily with Gurdjieff's "pantheistic" tendencies:

> Gurdjieff also taught that everyone has an essence and a personality. The essence is "the materiel of which the universe is made. Essence is divine -- the particle of god in our subconscious called Conscience". . . Note that Gurdjieff's doctrine of "essence" places him squarely among the pantheists (who believe that everything is God). Enneagram teachers who recommend that students return to this essence rarely understand what Gurdjieff meant, but his words make it clear that he did not have a Christian sense of God. (Pacwa 15-16)

Pacwa equates occultism with pantheism, a belief that God is in everything. For Pacwa, he perceives as the threat of the Enneagram that it somehow takes power away from the "Christian sense of God." But the author, coming from a conservative Christian perspective, has a very specific definition of the Christian God, a static definition which does not allow room for evolution and movement in the relationship between the individual and God.

It is this evolving relationship between the self and the divine which is at the core of spiritual direction, however. Author Richard Rohr, writing specifically about the integration of the Enneagram into Christian spiritual direction, makes the argument for the use of the Enneagram in Enneagram II: Advancing Spiritual Discernment:

> The Enneagram may also be used as what I would call a "tool for discernment." We aren't taught much about discernment these days, and I think that's why some people on the religious right are so threatened by the Enneagram . . . And yet, throughout the centuries, discernment has always been crucial and central in spiritual direction. (5)

The current utilization of the Enneagram focuses upon the way in which the knowledge of one's ego drives, and the negative aspects thereof, can derail one from their true spiritual potential. The crux of the issue for the early mystics and philosophers who embraced the knowledge of the Divine Forms was the struggle between the ego/personality and the potential for union with the divine (Riso and Hudson 34). For this reason, it seems logical that the Enneagram has been welcomed into spiritual direction. The Enneagram uses the core premise of self-knowledge as a means to find the places where our ego and personality distort our essence. But some of today's conservative Christians may find fault even with this well-intentioned quest for self-knowledge because of its occult associations.

However, Pacwa's argument against the use of the Enneagram is a circular one: he does not provide any concrete evidence of instances where the use of the Enneagram within spiritual direction has led any individual into danger, nor even to embrace another faith besides Christianity. Rather, he bases his statements upon the scriptural objections to divination, as he has interpreted them: "The frequent use of such occult practices as divination and spiritism in Gurdjieff and Ichazo immediately throws up a red flag. In Deuteronomy 18:9-15 and many other Scripture passages, God our Lord forbids such pursuits" (Pacwa 18). His argument, based upon scripture, implies that the Enneagram itself is a form of divination, which it is not. The fact that its originators, Gurdjieff and Ichazo, were known to have an interest in the occult does not necessarily make the Enneagram a form of divination. The enneagram is not used to divine the future, but as a means toward self-understanding. And nowhere in the scriptures is self-awareness categorized as a "sinful" or "forbidden" pursuit.

Ultimately, spiritual directors will likely continue to use the Enneagram despite its detractors. Pacwa, writing in a popular Christian publication, speaks for and to a large faction of Christians today. But there seems at the heart of his protests a basic misunderstanding of how and why the Enneagram is used in spiritual direction. Any tool of discernment that might seem connected to divination presents a theological challenge for the Christian, because of the potential that the tool itself might become a false idol. But as the apostle Paul and St. Thomas Aquinas both attempted to establish, there are gifts of discernment that are given to us by God; it is only their improper use that is deemed sinful, not the gift of discernment itself.

Conclusion

There are many ways that Christians have practiced ways of knowing, and of discerning the meaning of their relationship to God. Throughout the history of Christianity, followers of this path have perceived that God has given them certain gifts

as a means for guidance, and a means to a more deeply lived relationship with the divine. The apostle Paul termed them "charisms," gifts of the spirit; the prophets, the mystics, the magi, the dreamers, and the anam cara all held these gifts to be precious contact between themselves and the Creator. Each of these practices has had varying degrees of acceptance within Christianity, and each of these paths had their own difficulties and challenges. The prophets bore the burden of delivering messages that were at times unpopular or unpleasant. The mystic struggled with their direct experience of God amidst the Church's more structured theological approach. But the common purpose of all these gifts of discernment was for the good of the people, for giving a guiding hand from God to humanity. The mystics, prophets, and anam cara undertook this often difficult role, with care to prevent the improper use, lest they become merely fortune-tellers.

Spiritual direction serves as a current way in which these mystical gifts of discernment are still offered within the context of Christianity. Along with the inclusion of the Enneagram, there might be other means of discernment which can bring about useful insights for the seeker's spiritual growth. Modern Astrology, when used as a personality typology and means toward self-awareness, could be potentially powerful when used under the guidance of a spiritual director. Because of its associations with divination and fortune-telling, however, Astrology has historically been, and currently is, eschewed by the Christian Church. However, as Aquinas and d'Ailly argued, Astrology may be seen as divinely given; they deemed it a valuable enough tool to consider its defense. And as scripture tells us, God created the heavens, and communicates with us through its signs. There might yet, then, be a place for this art of the magi within the practice of spiritual direction. The necessary caveat is that, as with other gifts of discernment, its intent must be to serve the community of Christians, rather than the practitioner.

In the following chapter, a potential model for the practice of Astrology within the context of spiritual direction will be provided. The current tenor of fear and a certain level of misunderstanding by prominent factions of Christianity around the notion of mystical practices will be discussed. This is necessary in order to better understand what resistances there might be to this new model, one which integrates the Christian practice of spiritual direction and the mystical practice of Astrology. In order to address and allay probable resistances to such integration, a careful distinction will be made between astrology as fortune-telling and prediction as opposed to its use as a tool for self-awareness and understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

Christianity's historically documented acceptance of mystical practices of discernment leads us to a consideration of how these ancient ways of knowing can be useful to us today. Apprehension regarding associations with occultism must be considered in approaching this topic. This uneasiness mainly stems from scriptural sources. In the writings of St. Paul and St. Thomas Aquinas, these concerns were addressed in their discussions of divination, prophecy, and gifts of discernment. Throughout the history of Christianity, we have seen the acceptance of these ways of

The presence of this apprehension today presents obstacles to the integration of certain mystical practices of discernment within a Christian model. However, such tools for discernment could be very beneficial to the Christian modality of spiritual direction. The Christian practice of spiritual direction, as defined in the previous chapter by Leibert and Barrett, is focused upon the guidance of an individual along their spiritual path. This guidance is primarily achieved through pastoral ministry techniques. The process can be greatly aided by tools of discernment, such as the Enneagram. The grounds for the use of such tools have been a cause for contention in some circles. Jesuit Father Mitchell Pacwa, a voice aligned with the conservative branch of Catholicism, argues that the "occultist" associations of the Enneagram taint the practice of spiritual direction. Yet, Franciscan Father Richard Rohr asserts that the Enneagram is a useful tool for the ancient honored practice of discernment.

However, despite its occult associations, the Enneagram has been predominantly accepted as a valuable addition to this practice. Within spiritual direction, it is a means toward self-understanding and awareness in the client, while also providing the spiritual director with an efficient means of understanding some of the fundamentals of the client's personality. The modern practice of astrology is a similar modality to the Enneagram, and could also be well-used in aiding in the process of spiritual direction through discernment. Thus far, astrology has not been used in conjunction with spiritual direction. This is likely for the same reasons that there has been resistance to the Enneagram: astrology has previous occult associations and pagan roots. The likely more relevant source is that it has the potential to become a tool of mere fortune-telling. A model in which astrology could function as a tool for discernment within Christian spiritual direction has yet to be provided. This model would need to address the two main topics of concern surrounding astrology: free will vs. determinism, and the problem of divination.

Establishing a spiritual direction model for astrologers, and an astrology model for spiritual directors, could benefit both fields. While the practice of astrology is not likely to be formally accepted within the bounds of normative Christian practice, there might be a middle ground where the two could overlap, each giving heightened perspective and relevance to the other.

Astrology and Its Problems

Both Aquinas and d'Ailly recommend the use of astrology as a means of discerning the Creator's intentions for humanity, much in the same manner that a Prophet uses his vision to foresee the likely destiny of mankind. But as both men argued, astrology is potentially dangerous when used primarily as a fortune-telling device. Aquinas' key objection to astrology was that, when used as divination, it inherently went against the doctrine of free will. Astrologers were looked upon with suspicion, from Aquinas back to Augustine, for their propensity to derail the free will choice of any man or woman with their predictions. As a professional astrologer, I have discovered some of the pitfalls of "predictive astrology," aside from any religious implications. Through experience with clients, I have developed the philosophy that to attempt to foretell the future for them, and to take away their own sense of free will, is to do a disservice to the client. Moreover, the foretelling of future occurrences is not even something that is consistently possible. Therefore, from my perspective, it is dangerous to try.

I've found that astrology is only marginally accurate in predicting external physical events; it is much more accurate in determining the general themes that the client may be experiencing in the upcoming timeframe. Consequently, I am always sure to make clear to my clients that they do indeed have free will: their choices and the actions they take will be the ultimate determiners of their future. This method of discernment is not of specific events, but of the "astrological weather": an astrologer can

say which way the wind is blowing, but can not tell whether the client will actually put up their sails and take hold of it. This is akin to the weather metaphor used by Aquinas. He stated that one could use astrology as a sort of "weather prediction" system, as it applies to individuals and also to the collective of humanity, as well as to events on the earth which affect humanity. Astrology, used in this "weather prediction" manner, simply provides a means to know the surrounding conditions which may support or detract from those choices.

While astrology has been popularly viewed as a method of fortune-telling, in modern practice, it is used in a much different capacity that incorporates some knowledge of psychology and archetypes. Beyond the use of astrology as a means to know the future surrounding conditions for a client, it is used as a way for the client to access a deeper awareness of their soul's nature. The birth chart, much like the Enneagram, is a system which makes visible the blueprint of the psyche of the client. This means to self-awareness has been used between Astrologers and clients to provide a template for guiding the client through difficult life passages, crises, and in order to facilitate spiritual growth. Astrology is primarily a personality typology system, beyond its ability to indicate the presence of current themes in an individual's life.

Astrology seems a natural candidate, based upon its similarities to the Enneagram, for use within spiritual direction. But in order to be successfully integrated, the practice of astrology must stay in keeping with Christian theology by removing any tendencies toward divinatory practice. A successful model for astrology's use within the Christian spiritual direction is dependent upon keeping the client's free will intact; therefore, it could only harmoniously be integrated into this practice if the sole focus of this model were astrology's capacity as a personality-typology system, and its ability to help discern the soul's path. In the following model, I hope to adequately address these concerns, and offer a new modality for use within spiritual direction.

A Model: Astrology in Spiritual Direction

Astrology can illumine the art of spiritual direction; there is insight and important information to be shared between the two fields, allowing for an even greater potential for spiritual discernment. The natal chart (also called a "birth chart") is a map of the sky at the moment of an individual's birth, looking out into space from the perspective of the earth. The chart is comprised of three basic components: planets, signs, and houses (see appendices). There are ten planetary bodies used in western astrology, placed in any combination of twelve astrological signs, then in any combination of twelve houses. This set of combinations makes for a highly individual chart. Beyond these combinations, the unique layout of each person's birth chart is like their thumbprint. The spiritual director would have, in the natal chart, a flexible and varied tool. However, the complex nature of a birth chart, in contrast to the more streamlined typology system of the Enneagram, would require the director to have formal training in the basics of astrological chart interpretation. I will address potentials for training in the following section.

There are three main ways that knowledge of the birth chart may contribute to the process of spiritual direction. The first is through insight into the prominence of certain archetypes in the psyche of the client. The second is through an awareness of the client's current planetary cycles (see Appendix 1). And finally, the client's observance of seeing their patterns and personality traits read through a map of the stars brings to the client a sense of connection to the cosmos -- and ultimately toward the awareness of a meaningful and purposeful universe. This notion, that there seems to be a divine plan, and a purpose underlying creation, is one that astrologers and Christians do share. The integration of natal chart reading into spiritual direction brings forward this

commonality, toward the shared goal helping the client to see their connection to something beyond oneself.

The first way in which astrology can be used, through an awareness of the client's prominent archetypes, would be a logical starting point for applying this modality. As presented in the previous chapter, the use of the Enneagram in spiritual direction sessions offers a means by which the director and the client may understand the client's path, and their obstacles, toward union with God. In a similar manner, astrology may also serve as a tool for discernment: of the clients' basic personality traits, and their obstacles to growth. These traits and obstacles can be viewed through the lens of archetypes, as presented through the planets and their mythical associations.

For example, if someone has a prominent Saturn placement in their birthchart, aspected by many other planets, they may find the themes of the Saturn myth very present in their personal experience. The spiritual director could use this knowledge of the Saturn myth, and its positive and negative associations, to guide the client towards a better self-understanding in the light of this archetype. Some associations with Saturn are the archetype of the father, the laws of time and fate, discipline, work, and structure. If the spiritual director approaches a session with the knowledge that these themes are at the fore, and that the client's essential needs and core issues are likely to be focused in "Saturnian" territory, then they are able to use it as a template to frame questions, and to guide them towards a realization of the highest potential of this ideal. With Saturn themes present in one's natal chart, for example, the individual may find their sense of satisfaction and purpose in meaningful work, and benefit from a disciplined approach in their spiritual practice. If the client is playing out the shadow side of the Saturnian material, they may be preoccupied with orderliness, may be overly career-oriented, or may have depressive tendencies (tending to take on "the weight of the world"). The spiritual director can use this knowledge of the shadow side of Saturn

material to help guide the client toward creating more balance and peace in their life, through a better understanding of their shadow tendencies.

The second, and even more helpful, means in which astrology can be used to enhance spiritual direction is through the director's awareness of the client's astrological cycles of time. For example, there are certain planetary cycles that occur at the same age for everyone, and during these cycles, the same themes seem to present themselves. Two pivotal planetary cycles are the Saturn Return at age 29 and the Uranus Opposition at age 41. Both of these often coincide with what seem to be stressful times of a person's life. The Saturn Return happens when one is about to leave the twenties and enter the thirties; this is a time in which many feel pressured to "grow-up," take on more responsibility in relationship or career, and step into one's social role more fully. This can manifest in a variety of ways, such as getting married, having a first child, or committing to a career path. But the themes of responsibility, commitment, and maturation are consistent; these are all words related to the Saturn Archetype. If the spiritual director has an awareness of the Saturnian event, and the associated themes, they will be more able to guide a 29 - 30 year old client toward a positive way of dealing with the sometimes difficult and momentous choices that avail themselves during this cycle.

The Uranus Opposition, occurring at age 41, is tied to the "mid-life crisis" period. As individuals enter their forties, often the reality of aging and mortality settle in. The Uranian themes of breaking free from restrictions and responsibilities, and an urge to liberate oneself and make sweeping changes, can come as a response to this awareness of one's encroaching age, and entrenchment in life's responsibilities. This can manifest, obviously, in both very positive and quite destructive ways. The spiritual director could use this information to skillfully guide the client toward the positive manifestation of Uranian impulses, and be conscious enough to steer them away from the more destructive ones.

A deeper understanding of the myths of both Saturn and Uranus, and their relationship with each other, are helpful to the spiritual director in contextualizing these life events. In myth, Uranus rebels against Saturn, the father. Through astrology, it is made clear, noting that the Uranus opposition follows the Saturn return by about a decade. The two are connected. Whatever commitments and responsibilities that the client has taken on during the Saturn return, they often come to a point of restlessness regarding these responsibilities at the time of the Uranus opposition. The spiritual director can help the client by reframing this restlessness as a positive opportunity for reevaluation, and recommitment, if appropriate. Alternately, there may be changes that need to be made in order for the client to move forward in life with integrity and a clearer sense of their purpose. In either case, an awareness of astrological cycles can aid the spiritual director in creating a larger context of understanding for the client that may be useful in terms of decision making, and comforting during a time of distress.

This comfort avails itself through the client's development of an awareness of their connection to the cosmos. The birth chart and its correspondences to the individual's life patterns, cycles, and personality traits can offer to the client a sense of belonging to something larger, something beyond oneself. This sense of belonging, of connection, can be reassuring for the client and may help them maintain perspective during trying life circumstances. For example, if the client had come to spiritual direction amidst troubles in their marriage, the previous two methods may be applied in guiding the client to working through these troubles. The knowledge of one's planetary cycles can shed light upon the effect of timing on the events of one's life; the spiritual director can reassure the client by being able to let them know of the temporary nature of the cycle. The insight that "This, too, shall pass" may be efficiently gained from knowledge of the astrological cycles involved, and passed on to the client to give them a broader life perspective, and a sense of faith and optimism, during times of crisis.

Astrological Training for Spiritual Directors

In spiritual direction, a client visits with their director in an ongoing fashion, as frequently or infrequently as the client chooses. However, it is customary for a client to meet with their director regularly, as a means of staying on track in their spiritual growth. The regular meetings encourage a sense of accountability and commitment of the client to the process. In an initial spiritual direction session, the director spends some amount of time in familiarizing him/herself with the background of the client. This first session usually also involves some form of self assessment by the client, guided by questions from the director. These questions are oriented toward discovering what the client hopes to achieve through participating in spiritual direction, and helping the client to set their own goals for this process. A spiritual director, trained in the art of reading a natal chart, could come to their first meeting with a client with a more precise set of questions, and a better understanding of the basic personality traits of the client.

In order for this model to be consistent and applicable, however, training should be provided for those spiritual directors desiring to integrate astrology into their practice. The spiritual director would not need to be a professional astrologer, but would need education in the areas related to planetary archetypes and cycles in order to utilize the aforementioned methods of integration. The training could be broken down into beginning to intermediate and advanced levels of chart interpretation. At the beginning level, the interpretation of each planet and its archetype would be discussed, along with the basic meanings of the planets, signs and houses. Additionally, in order to connect the astrological model to the Christian model, there could be scriptures associated with each planet, sign, and house. For example, the planet Venus, associated in astrology with love, and the Beloved, could have a corresponding scriptural reference: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (I John 4:7). This way of connecting astrological archetypes to scripture might create a needed bridge between the two models.

Secondly, in order to better understand the planetary archetypes and their accompanying myths, a minimal background in Depth Psychology would be helpful. This could be administered in the form of an introduction to the work of C.G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, James Hillman, and others as a means to understanding how these archetypes manifest in the lives of individuals. The work of Jung and Campbell connects the mythological gods and goddesses, for which the planets are named, with aspects of our psyche. This connection makes explicit the use of astrology as a tool for self-understanding and discernment: the planets are the embodiments of psychological drives which lie within each of us. The Depth Psychology approach describes a world soul, or as Jung termed it, a collective unconscious, through which the microcosm and the macrocosm are connected. Through an astrological model of the planets in our birth chart, we see this connection between the microcosm and macrocosm made visible. Both Depth Psychology and modern astrology aim to describe the function of these archetypes within the psyche. Therefore, it would be useful for the spiritual director to have background knowledge in this subject.

The final course of education would be technical instruction as to how to identify the timing of planetary cycles, and the corresponding themes of these cycles. There are many transits which do not require astrological calculation in order to know when they are happening; these are the most easily identifiable life-cycle transit, such as the Saturn Return and the Uranus Opposition mentioned previously. There are others transits that could be added into the repertoire of the spiritual director, so they may have a template to indicate what part of the cycle their client falls into, simply by knowing the age of the client.

Conclusion

When considering the integration of astrology into Christian spiritual direction, not only the format of the training must be considered, but attention must be given to the

initial resistance that is bound to be present when introducing this modality. As discussed in Chapter Two, the history of divinatory practices and Christianity shows the undisputed rejection of any form of divination which purports to foretell the future, and thus rob humanity of free will. However, astrology, when used in the ways outlined in this chapter, has no divinatory properties whatsoever. If used to understand archetypal patterns, to become aware of the client's current life cycle, or to gain an understanding of one's place within the cosmos, astrology serves as another form of mystical discernment. This form of discernment is in line with the gifts of the Anam Cara who read the souls of their parishioners in the early Celtic Church, and has little to do with the superstitions of the early Mesopotamian star cults that Deuteronomy references. This form of mystical discernment is another gift, another tool, for the soul to find footing along its path, and to reconcile with the Creator of the Heavens.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the discussion of the relationship between divination, modes of mystical discernment, and Christianity, we have discovered the ways in which some of these practices have been embraced by the religion, while others have remained outside of normative practice. Prophecy, and other similar "charisms" (the gifts of the Spirit, as termed by the Apostle Paul), were viewed as God given means to ascertain God's plan for humanity. Biblical references to the omens of the heavens, as illustrated in Malina's work on Book of Revelation and other sources, indicates that there was an acceptance of these omens as part of God's language. The mystics were able to access this language of God through the practices of asceticism, prayer, and contemplation. Throughout the history of the Christian Church, the mystics received visions, dreams, and auditory messages from intermediaries to God, or God Himself. These intermediaries, discerning God's language, were able to guide their communities through offering comfort in the presence of God. They were the channels for the physical manifestation of spirit, through the interpretation of these omens, signs, and visions.

For those ways of mystical discernment that have traditionally been rejected by Christianity, we have found that this is primarily due to their associations with divination and fortune-telling. As we discovered throughout the texts of Christian theologians throughout the ages, the core problem with divination is related to the doctrine of free will. Any divinatory practice which presumes to predict the future is problematic, and can not be accepted, within the bounds of Christianity. Astrology has been, throughout its history, sometimes used as a means of fortune-telling. Additionally, both astrology and the Enneagram have historical associations with occult practices. Because of these two issues, that of free will, and that of occult associations, astrology as a means of discernment has been largely eschewed by Christianity.

However, we might consider the art of mystical discernment as a way of understanding God's language. One who uses one of these ways of reading the language, whether they be a prophet, mystic, or spiritual director, is simply amplifying the voice of God so that those who seek to hear, may hear. Viewed in that way, the Enneagram becomes simply a tool for interpretation of one's relationship to God. Viewed in that way, the art of the astrologer, when used as a way of seeking one's spiritual purpose and life path, can not be viewed as evil. As long as astrology is used in the proper manner, not as fortune-telling, it might successfully be integrated into the practice of Christian spiritual direction.

I have offered a model for this integration of astrological knowledge into spiritual direction. Like the Enneagram, astrology is a tool which can add a considerable dimension to this practice. There are many potential benefits of this integration. For example, there are those clients who might already understand the language of astrology, and having previous knowledge of their birth chart might therefore be able to utilize the astrological framework in their sessions. This awareness would bring additional potential for growth and self-knowledge. There are also the grounds for more understanding between astrologers and Christians; astrological training for spiritual directors would dispel the mystique and the misconceptions surrounding astrology, and hopefully allay some of the perceptions as to its "evil" nature. As Carl Jung said regarding astrology, "We are born at a given moment in a given place, and like vintage years of wine, we have the qualities of the year and of the season in which we are born. Astrology does not lay claim to anything else." In its most valuable form, astrology is a means to self-understanding, and indeed does not lay claim to anything else.

Another implication of this study is the possibility that practicing astrologers might also benefit from spiritual direction training and knowledge of pastoral care techniques. In my own astrology practice, I believe I have informally walked the path of the spiritual director, but can not lay claim to the type of training that one must undergo

to do such work. In an astrology session, the client will sometimes share very personal information regarding their past, their childhood, or current life crises. I have often referred clients to spiritual direction, or professional counseling as necessary, as I am neither licensed nor equipped to address some of the more serious issues that can arise in a reading. Many astrologers could benefit from a knowledge of the deep listening techniques as presented in spiritual direction, as well as a basic knowledge of how to advise someone in crisis, and when to direct them on to psychological counseling.

Other considerations for further research in this area would be the observation of data resulting from the practical application of the theory put forward in the previous chapter. It would be of great usefulness and import to both the fields of astrology, and of spiritual direction, to see how the merging of the two works in practice. Tracking client progress through questionnaires, journaling, and feedback for the director, would be useful in determining the most beneficial means of applying astrological knowledge to a spiritual direction session. I have suggested the use of planetary cycles to create a framework for sessions. However, to track client progress over the course of time, and to see if their life circumstances do actually present the themes of the planetary transits, would be valuable to obtain through a spiritual direction session. Similar research has been done in the field of astrology, but data from the results of the merging of the two fields has not yet been obtained.

Throughout the research presented in Chapter Two, and in my presentation of the model for integration of astrology and spiritual direction in Chapter Three, it has been my intention to seek understanding of the source of the rejection of certain practices of spiritual discernment, and the acceptance of others. Through the study of the history of mystical discernment in Christianity, we are reminded of the power of witnessing the manifestation of messages from Spirit. These ancient ways of knowing have been the vessel for the voice of God throughout Christianity, and might experience a renewal in the broader culturally predominant sect of Christianity, if an awareness of the true

historical acceptance of these ways is understood. The benefit of this research is in its potential to replace divisiveness and fear with unification and understanding.

Unification, and overcoming fear of what we do not understand, is a prerequisite of love: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love cast out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because He first loved us" (I John 4:18-19, NRSV). And love, according to scripture, is the path to union with God: "So we have known and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (I John 4:16). The path of the mystic, of the prophet, of the anam cara, of the spiritual director, and even of the astrologer, can lead to union with God. But the prerequisite is love, and for that love to exist there must be the awareness and tolerance of each of these paths to the other.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The Planets and Their Cycles

The planets in astrology represent archetypal forces within the individual. Everyone has each of these planets in the birth chart, but where they fall -- in which sign and a house -- describes the way in which these archetypes are displayed. However, even without knowing the sign and house location of a planet, certain cycles of the outer planets (Saturn through Pluto) occur at predictable ages. These cycles coincide with life events related to the archetypal territory of the planet in question.

Planet	Archetypal Territory	Main Cycles	Frequency/Age*
Sun	The Hero: Ego Development	Solar Return	Once a Year on the Birth Date
Moon	The Parent: Nurturing, Caretaking, Emotional Bonding	Lunar Return	Once a Month
Mercury	The Communicator: Teaching, Speaking, Writing and Listening	Mercury Return	Just Short of Once a Year
Venus	The Romantic/The Muse: Partnership and Creativity	Venus Return	Just Short of Once a Year
Mars	The Protector: Adventure, Warriorship, Physical Energy	Mars Return	Once Every Two Years
Jupiter	The Beneficent Ruler: Law, Religion, Philosophy	Jupiter Return	Once Every Twelve Years
Saturn	The Father: Maturity, Responsibility, Discipline, Career	Saturn Return	1st: Age 29 1/2 2nd: Age 59
Uranus	The Rebel/Revolutionary: Individuation and Reform	Uranus Opposition, Uranus Return	Opposition: Age 41 Return: 81-2
Neptune	The Great Mystery: Spiritual Connection, Mysticism, Call to Service	Neptune Square	Varies per Generation: Currently age 39 - 41
Pluto	The Shadow: Fears, Sexuality, Death, Rebirth and Transformation	Pluto Square	Varies per Generation: Currently Age 35 - 38

**Note*: The frequency and ages of cycles are approximate. For example, the Saturn Return happens at *about* age 29 1/2, but can vary a few months on either side.

APPENDIX 2

The Astrological Houses

Envision an astrology chart as a pie, divided into twelve pieces. Each piece represents different areas of your life, as well as different parts of your psyche. Depending on the