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STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

To Fall in Love with the World

Individualism and Self-Transcendence in American Life

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.

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THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence the Studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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The opinions expressed in *Studies* are those of the the individual authors thereof. Parenthesis designates year of entry as Seminar member.

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John M. Staudenmaier, S.J.

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

26/3: May 1994

For your information . . .

Every spirituality is influenced by the culture and the institutions of the society within which it exists. American Jesuit spirituality, then, experiences the influences of the culture and institutions not only of the Society of Jesus itself but also of the United States. As part of this twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality and of *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*, we are making an effort to publish several issues of *STUDIES* dealing more explicitly than usual with Jesuit spirituality in the context of particular characteristics and institutions of American culture. The January 1994 issue, which dealt with American Jesuit identity and the examen of conscience, is an example of such a treatment. So is the present issue on individualism and self-transcendence in American life. Later this year we shall publish an issue on American Jesuits' beliefs about the power of institutions.

A work that portrays such interactions in the last century is the fine new book "*Come, Blackrobe*": *DeSmet and the Indian Tragedy* by John J. Killoren, S.J. (University of Oklahoma Press). Father Killoren spent many years working with Native Americans and many years doing research preparatory to writing this book. It will well repay your reading.

Another such work is *Sacred Encounters: Father DeSmet and the Indians of the Rocky Mountain West* by Jacqueline Peterson with Laura Peers (University of Oklahoma Press and the DeSmet Project of Washington State University). A magnificently produced book, it accompanies the international traveling exhibit of the same name. Many of the most beautiful photographs illustrating the book are the work of Thomas M. Rochford, S.J. The exhibit was organized by Washington State University in collaboration with the Cheney Cowles Museum of Spokane and in cooperation with the Jesuit Missouri Province Archives and the Coeur d'Alene, Salish, and Kootenai Tribes of Native Americans. The exhibition sites are Bozeman (Montana), Vancouver (British Columbia), Kansas City (Missouri), Los Angeles (California), and Indianapolis (Indiana).

The first sentences of the introduction to *Sacred Encounters* set its tone.

In the beginning, we were very different people. We came from totally separate worlds, each of which was very old. But we were also alike. We were human beings, occupying a portion of this earth that each of us considered to be the very center. We also shared a belief in a mysterious power beyond ourselves that made all life possible. We called it Amótkan or God; Sumeš or Sacrament. It was everything.

The rest of the book beautifully develops the implications of those statements in text and picture.

"*Come, Blackrobe*" fully depicts what happened when (DeSmet in most ways a shining exception) the American culture of nineteenth-century "manifest destiny" could not begin to comprehend the indigenous cultures it encountered and all but destroyed them. Only now, as *Sacred Encounters* says at the end of its introduction, "the grafting of Christianity onto the root stock of traditional native religion is a tentative indication

that, after five hundred years, the descendants of European colonizers and the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas may finally have something to say to one another."

See the exhibit; read the books. You will be much moved by them, as each in its own way illustrates how a spirituality is influenced by the culture and the institutions of the society within which it exists.

With this present issue of STUDIES, we bid farewell to four members of the Seminar who have completed their tenure of membership. They are John Baldovin, Michael Cook, Brian Daley, and Gerard Stockhausen. STUDIES has already published a bibliographical essay on Christian liturgy by Father Baldovin and one on Jesus' parables and the faith that does justice by Father Cook; essays by Fathers Daley and Stockhausen, on the three degrees of humility and on Jesuits and leisure respectively, will appear in these pages in the course of the coming year. To all four departing members go the thanks of the Jesuits of the United States and of the other readers of STUDIES, religious, lay, and clerical, here and all over the world. As to the new members of the Seminar, you will learn about them in the September issue.

John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor

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TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD

INDIVIDUALISM AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

IN AMERICAN LIFE

Introduction

Not long ago I read an article describing the practice of “brawling” in the United States during the eighteenth century, primarily in southeastern rural areas. I didn’t want to know what the author told me. It was, he said, common practice for the winner in one-on-one male combat to symbolize victory by biting off the nose or ear, or gouging out the eye, of his opponent. With my twentieth-century sensibilities, I found it hard to imagine that fellow human beings indulged in such savage behavior. The article reminded me that the biblical maxim “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was intended as a limit to vengeance—*no more than* one eye if your enemy only took one eye from you or your people.¹

I have been happier about it since. Stories like this help me remember that my own culture does not hold a corner on the market for bad behavior.

¹ See Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, and Deuteronomy 19:21. The *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990) observes, “The idea was to restrict indiscriminate vendetta by applying a rough principle of equity, . . .” (p. 104).

See Deuteronomy 25:11–12 for another hint of—to our cultural tastes—excessive crudity while fighting: “When two men are fighting together, if the wife of one intervenes to protect her husband from the other’s blows by putting out her hand and seizing the other by the private parts, you shall cut her hand off and show no pity.” On Appalachian brawling see Elliott J. Gorn, “Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry,” *American Historical Review* 90 (February 1985).

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The intractable nature of various human barbarities, appalling to the outsider but ordinary to the local citizen, suggests that we Christians, no matter our level of culture, do best to tread very lightly when claiming that our culture-driven behavior offers the model for faith life. In recent years I have grown in the conviction that I do not best understand myself as a believer who tries to love and engage his culture. The wiser question asks, Since it is a given that I am shaped by my culture, what do I need to help me to become a believer? I never possess faith as some fully formed object that I then bring to my culture. In faith I live a lifelong conversion of the culture I carry within me.

I am, in short, a late-twentieth-century capitalist;² along with most of the readers of this essay, I carry the inclinations, the burdens, the nobilities, and the violences of capitalist culture deeply etched in the core of my being. My situation is no worse, surely, than that of citizens of other cultures. But no better either. Culture lies too deeply embedded in human beings to ever become completely baptized, and the life of faith in every era takes the form of a holy tension between primordial cultural tendencies and God's endlessly affectionate challenge to learn to live faithfully.

In this essay I will concentrate on one contemporary trait—the penchant for therapeutic individualism that has become so pervasive in this century. By “therapeutic individualism” I mean three related things: (1) a sense of one's self as the primary or, more extremely, the only valid arbiter of belief and commitment; (2) a correlative mistrust of both the benefits and demands of one's received traditions or of interdependence with family, friends, or fellow citizens; and (3) a strong focus on acquiring self-knowledge and behavior modification in order to correct one's dysfunctional characteristics.

It has become increasingly difficult for Americans to speak of commitment to others without appearing falsely pious or seeming to reject their inner value and personal worth. Many types of therapy—from psychotherapy and clinical psychology, to Twelve Step self-help groups, to the shelves of pop psychology fix-me books—encourage clients to perceive what troubles them as matter for personal adjustment, healing, or learning. The alternative concept—that what troubles “me” troubles “us,” and that “we” need to engage in the

² By “capitalist” I mean the worldview that became dominant in northern Europe during the rise of industrial capitalism: a commitment to rational tactics (especially in science, technology, and business) seen as a liberation from traditional culture and religious dogma; it tended to define nonrational modes of consciousness (for example, contemplation and mysticism) as magic. Thus, for example, David Landes has this to say: “Rationality may be defined as the adaptation of means to ends. It is the antithesis of superstition and magic” (*The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], 21).

gritty political work of societal change—is rarely treated as an equally valid response.³

It won't do, however, to solve the problem by trashing our twentieth-century tendencies either toward individualism or toward therapy. These deeply rooted habits of culture operate as a significant part of our identity, blessing and burdening us at the same time. How, then, can we learn to live these therapeutic tendencies more gracefully? To put the question more completely, how can we respond to the call of faith and live committed to something larger than our individual selves without an impossibly violent rejection of our culture?

In Part 1, I will describe some historical origins of individualism in the United States.⁴ I will pay particular attention to (1) the influence of some of our commonplace communication technologies (telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and the like) to ask how they influence the way we talk and listen to one another; (2) the ideological revolution of enlightenment rationalism and its influence on human interaction and self-understanding; and (3) the surprising transformation of the ideal capitalist individual from an aggressive self-starter to a passive conformist.

In Part 2 I will turn to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, in particular to the Second Week. I want to point out how the Exercises lead to a highly individualized level of self knowledge that opens out to love for the world as an *essential* part of personal conversion. Thus—and this is my major point—this sixteenth-century text responds to late-twentieth-century capitalism with remarkable directness. If my hypothesis is correct, however, this ought not surprise us. In Part 1, I will argue that the revolution we call industrial capitalism based its impressive technological achievements on a significant cultural imbalance, an imbalance centered in capitalism's rejection of nonrational modes of consciousness. It was, if I am reading things rightly, only a matter of time

³ Recently, the burgeoning therapeutic "industry" has attracted some critical attention—in particular, the expansion of twelve-step treatment programs beyond the realm of chemical addiction and the recent explosion of co-dependency literature—for blurring the distinction between personal dysfunction and oppressive societal structures and for fostering "a readership that expects prescriptions—10 or 12 or 15-step programs for recovery" in place of encouraging "people to join together to challenge and restructure power arrangements in the larger society." For these quotations see Marianne Walters, "The Codependent Cinderella Who Loves Too Much . . . Fights Back," *Networker* (July/August 1990): 55.

⁴ I am limiting my consideration here to the United States, not because similar patterns might not be found in Europe and even in more recently Westernizing cultures, but because I have not done the research to speak of these developments with even modest authority. I will only refer to Europe, then, to help contextualize the United States experience.

I prefer to avoid using the terms "America" and "American" for the United States, for that usage ignores claims to the same name urged by the rest of the two continents. Occasionally, however, I find alternative expressions so clumsy that I am driven, with apologies, to employ the less-than-accurate terms.

before the West would need to retrieve some key elements of its precapitalist traditions to temper the imbalance.

One final prenote: I will make what may seem unusual criticisms of our mainstream culture and technologies. To highlight the magnitude of the cultural changes that have occurred in the past two centuries, I will sometimes ask the reader to imagine a noncapitalist alternative. I do not mean by this even to hint that I dislike or reject my own late-twentieth-century culture. Those who know me well could testify that I embody the capitalist tendencies I discuss here and that I immerse myself in the technologies I criticize. However, it is not our responsibility to concentrate on the challenge to faith faced by cultures other than our own. We are called to read the signs of our own times as aptly as we can, so that we can help one another to live our own cultural life more faithfully. To do that, we must risk being a little critical.

Individualism in the United States

It seems to us that it is individualism, and not equality, as Tocqueville thought, that has marched inexorably through our history. We are concerned that this individualism may have grown cancerous—that it may be destroying those social integuments that Toqueville saw as moderating its more destructive potentialities, that it may be threatening the survival of freedom itself.⁵

I have used Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* four times as the core text for a seminar on individualism; the book evokes powerful feelings. In its study of middle-class attitudes, students and teacher recognized how much we expect our lives to remain private property. Most agreed with the authors that traditions honoring self-sacrifice for the common good no longer balance traditions of individualism. We recognized the tendency to define ourselves as active, creative adults *only* in the private arena of our personal interests, and to define ourselves as passive conformists in the public domain. Church, nation, city, even extended family lay much less claim on us than they did on the average citizen of 150 years ago. Compared to them, we do not define ourselves as members in the sense that we readily give these larger communities the right to interrupt our lives and plans, nor do we open our affectivity to them so that we habitually long for the good of "our church" or "our nation" or "our town." Often, it is only when we see civic troubles impinging on our personal lives that we are aroused to action as part of a special-interest group. Our larger hopes seem to get stuck in a seductive powerlessness wherein we define ourselves as passive and ineffectual in the public domain.

⁵ Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), viii.

The atrophy of civic, church, and other forms of communal commitment as traditional American counterweights for individualism has long and tangled roots in the past two centuries. What follows offers a sketch of some parts of that story.

Individualism and Network Technologies

Let us begin by considering the influence of what might be called “private network” technologies on United States individualism. A set of nineteenth- and twentieth-century technologies—telephone and transportation systems involving the automobile, rail, bus, and airplane—has coalesced in an infrastructure that has the unintended consequence of fostering disembodied primary relationships. These technologies permit me to maintain important friendships across very long distances, even cross-country marriages where spouses live in separate cities and commute on weekends. Consequently, I am much less dependent for my affective life on the people who live within walking distance of where I sleep at night.

An increasing number of people tend to have significant adult relationships arranged in “support networks” rather than village-style communities. Some of the people to whom I relate do not know each other and many do not live in close proximity with one another. The more this pattern holds, the less older forms of mutuality based on physical contiguity (at best nuanced communal support, at worst gossip-driven oppression) define my interactions. When contrasted with the village style of physically contiguous community, these far-flung networks demand much more explicit decisions from us to interact with one another. Even in marriages, a couple must learn to take very explicit means to find time for talk. The pace of two working adults, with their separate networks of commitments, can erode intimacy by inadvertency if the two do not work at finding times to be together. These patterns mean that I tend to imagine myself as an autonomous entity who must work at, and who has some power to control, connecting with others. Unlike citizens of village-style cultures, my life feels individualistic.⁶

The electronic media, with their revolutionary ability to move information at the speed of light over very long distances, enhance the experience of separateness. Broadcast technologies (telegraphic news services, radio, television) exert immense power because their highly crafted messages reach and shape most public discourse for audiences in the many millions. When thinking of the

⁶ On social-network patterns in the United States, see Claude Fischer, *To Dwell among Friends: Personal Networks in Town and City* (University of Chicago, 1982), and Barry Wellman and S. D. Berkowitz, eds., *Social Structures: A Network Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

high price of advertising spots and politicians fighting to control the “spin” of the news, I am reminded of the medieval maxim “If you let me write the song the army sings as it marches, I will have the army.”⁷

Speed-of-light media are a mixed blessing. Electronic media provide almost immediate contact with a vastly larger world than the earlier village life could and have promoted an extraordinary flowering of human consciousness. To cite only one example, global information systems make it possible for Christians to understand Jesus’ love for the entire world at a completely new level of the imagination. Still, electronic media have more troublesome propensities as well, most notably their contribution to the public passivity of contemporary individualism.

Compare electronic and village styles of telling the news. In a nonelectronic world, news rarely traveled faster than a horse could trot. “The news” described a minuscule universe, my village and a surrounding countryside perhaps thirty miles across. Information from beyond those boundaries arrived, not as “the news,” but as “the olds” and its form differed accordingly. Newspapers published “correspondences” from distant places, leisurely essays for readers who needed subtle details to understand the unfolding of events. Still, in my own town, I received “the news” as an active interlocutor. I could supply a host of nuances that the printed account only suggested; and if I did not like the way my editor told the story, I could walk over to his establishment or meet him at church and tell him what I thought.

Beginning about 1870, national telegraphic wire services began to change all that. In 1876, for example, if I lived in Chicago I would probably have read in the morning paper about the “Molly Maguire” trials hundreds of miles away in the eastern Pennsylvania coal region. I would learn that “the Mollies” were anarchistic Irish miners conspiring to violently destroy the lives and property of coal-mine owners. The morning after it happened, I would have read that twenty-four were convicted and ten hung. I would not have learned, however, that most later historians interpret the trial as a frame-up and that the key witness was a Pinkerton detective in the employ of the owners.⁸ The wire-

⁷ For more detail here, see my “Moving at the Speed of Light: The Influence of Communications Technologies on Modern American Culture,” in *Proceedings: Conference on Religious Telecommunications* (The University of Dayton, September 1988).

⁸ The Molly trial was probably the first “national media” event in U.S. labor history. Joseph Rayback describes the immediate and long-term effects of the trial as follows: “The evidence against them, supplied by James McParlan, a Pinkerton [detective], and corroborated by men who were granted immunity for their own crimes, was tortuous and contradictory, but the net effect was damning. All twenty-four were convicted; ten were executed. The trial temporarily destroyed the last vestiges of labor unionism in the anthracite area. More important, it gave the public the impression that miners in general were inclined to riot, sabotage, arson, pillage, assault, robbery, and murder; and that miners were by nature

service news crafters did not choose to include that perspective, and I, drinking my morning coffee, lived too far away to know more than the wire service told me.

If standardized news systems make it hard for me to learn more about events than they tell me, their economic structure makes it almost impossible for me to construct and communicate an alternative version to the public. A recent exception demonstrates the rule. During the Reagan and Bush administrations, while the *New York Times* and other mainstream media accepted the administration interpretation of Central America (that is, struggling democracies in Salvador and Guatemala versus dangerous dictatorship in Nicaragua), a broad grass-roots network managed to convey an alternative version of events and significantly influenced national policy as a result. One has only to note, however, the monumental efforts involved over nearly a decade of commitment by individuals—specifically, dedicated groups such as “Witness for Peace”—and churches to see how unusual this example is. Whether I favor the mainstream ideology or oppose it is not the point. Whatever my ideology vis-à-vis the electronic media at any given time, I ordinarily experience myself as passive, isolated, and powerless. Even when I shout at the television set because of a particularly odious advertisement or newscaster remark, it wears me out to try to imagine that I might change things. Media passivity creates its own form of individualism, one rooted in passivity. Because “I” cannot generate a public version of events and “you” can’t either, the *communal* act where our several perspectives interpret the meaning of events eludes our grasp.⁹

To be sure, electronic media are not uniquely responsible for the transformation of consciousness from active participation in public discourse to docile acquiescence. Earlier societal trends in the United States suggest that the shift toward audience passivity predates the emergence of electronic communications systems. Thus, a few decades before the first organized wire services, we find a similar domestication of theater goers. In the 1820s through the 1840s, people from every economic class attended the same theaters and music halls. In what most of us would see as semibarbarous behavior, many routinely came armed with rotten fruit to pelt villains or inadequate performers. Shouting and stamping one’s boots on the wooden floor signaled outrage at a dull musical passage and a call for something livelier. Audience participation, in short,

criminal in character and were to be condemned and disciplined by the more respectable element in society. The impression became the foundation for the antilabor attitude held by a large portion of the nation to the present day” (*A History of American Labor* [New York: MacMillan, Free Press, 1966], 133).

⁹ Base communities are notable here because they explicitly aim at countering media passivity by providing a forum for individuals to come together and talk with one another about public events.

sometimes approached the chaotic.¹⁰ About the end of the Civil War, however, the pattern began to change. Thus, the noted conductor Theodore Thomas began to discipline his audiences, sometimes turning to stare them into silence before continuing the performance; he typified a new order in which audiences began to sort by economic class into separate public places, burlesque halls and saloons for the working class, theaters, orchestra and opera halls for those aspiring to a higher status. These latter soon learned the new etiquette of passivity at public performances.

Thus, while electronic media helped along the process of individualizing to a very considerable degree, they reflected a much larger societal change. The heart of the transformation is best understood as part of that profound transformation of Western consciousness (between roughly 1700 and 1890) called variously the "Industrial Revolution," "Industrial Capitalism," or "Enlightenment Rationalism." Whatever name we give it, its connection with individualism merits attention.

Capitalism and Individualism

How did the coming of capitalism foster individualism, and how did the creative and aggressive individualism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries turn into this century's passive public conformism? The key to this paradox can be found in the capitalist commitment to rationality, precision, and clarity and, much more important, its correlative attack on the nonrational, the imprecise, and the uncertain. It helps to understand the scope of this change in Western consciousness by considering it in terms of two primordial human symbols—light and dark. Capitalism breaks from prior Western thinking by defining both light and dark as absolutes. Light is always good and dark is always bad. Activities that require light (for example, reading, building, strategic planning, and execution of plans—in short, scientific and technological activities of all sorts) are honored, while those that have traditionally flourished in the dark (for example, sleeping, dreaming, contemplation, storytelling, nonelectronic

¹⁰ Lawrence W. Levine offers the following description of a not very untypical angry audience reaction when a visiting Italian opera troupe cut the final scene of an 1837 performance of Rossini's *Semiramide* without prior announcement. The *New Orleans Picayune* described the outcome of management's attempt to stop the wild uproar by darkening the hall and driving the audience out. "Twas the signal for the demolition of everything they could lay their hands on. . . . The drapery around the boxes was torn, the cushions in the pit ripped open, the seats broken, and chairs were flying in all directions." The next night, the chastened company performed "the last note that ever Rossini composed." See *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 91.

See also John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), especially Chapter 7, "The Disciplining of Spectatorship."

partying, and interpersonal intimacy) tend to be denigrated. It is not a compliment, in what has come to be called the "real world," to say, "You are an excellent sleeper," or, "You are a dreamer."

Clearly, however, the West shares with other cultures a deep love of light. For several thousand years, however, Western love of clarity and fear of chaos operated in the context of a balancing recognition that too much clarity is dangerous and that the uncertain dark is sometimes the necessary seedbed of life and of vision itself. Job and Oedipus painfully learn that some questions cannot or should not be answered. The Book of Job ends without an answer, its questions about the meaning of suffering finally silenced. Oedipus finds his answer; but, seeing what his history reveals, he puts out his eyes. Likewise, the Western tradition of the holy dark, the frightening places in which visions are born and human purpose renewed, stretches from Abraham's vocational dream-visions and Jacob's nighttime wrestling with the unnamed stranger to the "cloud of unknowing" and the "dark nights" of the medieval mystics and Shakespeare's tender "sleep that knits the ravell'd sleeve of care."

The intuition that uncertainty must balance clarity and the ambiguous temper the purposeful suffered periodic collapse when various communities broke out in vicious fanaticisms such as Ferdinand and Isabella's ethnic cleansing of Jews and Muslims from Spain and the more violent excesses of the Inquisition. In such instances love of clear-boundary definitions drifted toward a savage lust for order.

Even during the worst of such excesses, however, the clarifying urge was held in check by a technological style that held precision measurement in only modest regard. However much one might long for the bright light of clean boundaries, the diurnal rhythm of day and night governed life. In a world of inadequate artificial light, night put an end to working time. Night prayers mixed fear of the dark ("Preserve us from violence and crises; keep our imaginations and passions in check") with affection for dimly lit times of storytelling and rest ("Into your hands, O Lord, we commend our spirits"). Even during the daylight, the urge toward accuracy was limited by imprecise machines and instruments. To take one example from many, public clocks long showed only one hand, telling the hour but not the minute. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, improved clock escapements and temperature compensation enabled clock makers to improve their best accuracy from an already remarkable ten seconds per day to 1800's one fifth of a second.¹¹

Two revolutions, the British industrial and the French political, created an unusually powerful hiatus in European culture near the end of the eighteenth century. During the two decades spanning the turn of the nineteenth century,

¹¹ Tore Frängsmyr, J. L. Heilbron, and Robin E. Rider, eds., *The Quantifying Spirit in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 7.

the French revolutionary republic dismantled civic and religious structures, only to be itself replaced by Napoleon's empire. Meanwhile, French industrialists had begun inviting British factory masters and skilled artisans to cross the channel and install the new industrial system. It proved a powerful mix: the traditions of the Ancien Régime died a violent death during the years of the Revolution, and later attempts at restoration, particularly in Church matters, were carried out under the powerful influence of industrial capitalism. Where factory masters tried to enforce precisely defined work rules, the Church gradually turned to similarly detailed codes of law and doctrine. Boisterous politics, whether on the shop floor or in the Vatican, became increasingly suspect.

The historian Patricia Byrne has identified a striking instance of the pattern among the Sisters of St. Joseph in France. Eighteenth-century France was host to many tiny congregations of Sisters of St. Joseph, typically five to twelve members. Communities in larger towns and cities differed dramatically from those in rural areas. Town houses conducted their financial affairs, chose their places and types of work, and governed their community lives with remarkable autonomy. The mostly illiterate women in the country houses, on the other hand, ordinarily operated with little autonomy under the tutelage of a town-house sister. Both sorts of community were called by exactly the same name, "Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph," and both were considered independent organizations. Examples of similar nominal ambiguity could be multiplied. To call these tiny groups by the same name required a tolerance for conceptual and behavioral ambiguity that did not survive the Revolution intact. However, as the Sisters of St. Joseph were restored after their decimation during the Revolution, the pattern of amorphous cooperation between independent communities gave way to centralized government. Thus, by 1830 the Congregation of Lyon ran over two hundred separate houses from its central seat of governance. Communal life began to be regulated by detailed codes very like the factory work rules then revolutionizing manufacturing. Gradually, while instrument makers revolutionized the world of precision measurement and quantitative analysis, religious and cultural leaders began to read the holy dark out of the Western canon. Mysticism went the way of playful ambiguity and sensuality, and Shakespeare's praise of sleep gradually became less acceptable than the late-eighteenth-century poet Hanna More's attack on sloth: "Thou silent murderer, Sloth, no more my mind imprisoned keep; / nor let me waste another hour with thee, thou felon sleep."¹²

¹² The citation of More's poem "Early Rising" (1831) appears in E. P. Thompson's "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* (1967), 87f. It is noteworthy that Bartlett's *Concordance* (London: Macmillan, St. Martin's, 1894/1979) contains only six citations for "sloth," eleven for "lazy," but requires four complete columns of citations for "sleep," most of them positive.

This is clearly not all bad news. Capitalism's exaltation of rationality, alertness, precision, and strategy has fostered a level of individual initiative unlike any seen in previous history. As competition supplanted an earlier more communal ideal, many people experienced themselves as individuals with the power to make and execute plans for their own purposes. All of us, I suspect, cherish the individualism inherent in the capitalist definition of the creative self. But what to make of capitalism's correlative hatred of the unruly, the unclear, and the unpredictable? Paradoxically, while the enlightenment virtues encourage aggressive individual initiative and creativity, it seems that the enlightenment's hatred of uncertainty and ambiguity erodes the communal mentality and leads eventually to passive conformity. Healthy community requires the capacity to thrive in the "darkness" of the unpredictability that attends every interactive human process.

Mutuality takes different forms. Some are strategic, as when a group of people debate, confront, form alliances, and work out compromises that construct the elements of some common good. Some are celebrative, as when lovers, friends, or a worshiping community create symbolic rituals to express some transcendent meaning that they share. On whatever level one considers it, however, mutuality necessarily includes the give-and-take of people with multiple styles and diverse definitions of the common agenda. Given different perspectives and biases, we cannot know in advance how the interaction will turn out. Consequently, we may find ourselves fighting, weeping, or laughing, shocked into a time of silence or irritated into boredom before we emerge with some negotiated settlement. Strategy and intimacy come to moments of clarity only by passing through the darkness of unpredictable human passion.

During the post-Civil War "Gilded Age" (c. 1865-1900), however, the United States experienced two seemingly contradictory trends. They evolved from the developments we have noted above, and together they created a new climate, at once more daring and more anxious. Americans thrilled again and again when they heard news of protean technological triumphs that promised to transform the burdens of what had been primarily a frontier life. Often, however, urban violence seemed to threaten all they held dear. Two decades of bloody confrontations between workers and management police were covered in lurid (and generally antiworker) detail in the national press. Still more unsettling, millions of immigrants from the hitherto unfamiliar countries of eastern and southern Europe flooded the nation with what for many seemed to be hoards of disturbingly un-American strangers.¹³

¹³ For an excellent overview of scholarship on urban violence, see Paul Boyer's "The Ragged Edge of Anarchy": The Emotional Context of Urban Social Control in the Gilded Age," in his *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978). On immigration patterns see John Higham, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York: Atheneum, 1975) for a broad

Awe-inspiring contemporary technologies stood out in stark contrast with these frightening signs of social disorder. New inventions—railroads, telegraph, telephone, structural steel, electric light and power—showcased experts who solved problems by designing elegantly standardized systems which required conformity from their users. Standardization was gradually replacing an earlier and less efficient technological style that required more hands-on negotiation among all concerned.

Examples abound. The historian J. L. Larson contrasts old and new railroad designs as they appeared in the grain-shipping facilities of St. Louis and Chicago in 1860. The older St. Louis design demanded bagging the grain, loading it onto train cars, off-loading it at the outer edge of the city (where, in typical antebellum fashion, the tracks ended), teamstering it across the city, and loading it again onto river boats. The Chicago design permitted bulk loading onto grain cars, because the company-owned track ran all the way through the city to the docks, where it was off-loaded onto grain boats. Larson concludes his description with the following provocative sentence: "If the Chicago system was a model of integration, speed, and efficiency, the St. Louis market preserved the integrity of each man's transaction and employed a host of small entrepreneurs at every turn—real virtues in ante-bellum America." The St. Louis setup required negotiation as a part of the shipping process, while the more centralized Chicago design achieved greater efficiency and permitted railroad management to ship grain without needing to negotiate with that "host of small entrepreneurs at every turn." About the same time expanding U.S. factories were transforming the relationship between owner and worker from the sometimes respectful and sometimes tumultuous interaction of the earlier American small shop to heavy-handed enforcement of work rules coupled with the de-skilling of workers through increasingly automated machines.¹⁴

The older types of negotiation—skilled workers with owners or local businesses with national rail lines—were often unpredictable and truculent; they demanded political skill to achieve technical results. The new standardized systems seemed to promise the ability to control an unruly social order much as it controlled technical complexities. It is not surprising that those who feared

overview of legal and social resistance to immigration from 1870 through the draconian 1924 immigration act, which marked the definitive end of the earlier open-door policy. On the origin and later history of the popular image of the "melting pot," see Philip Gleason, "The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?" *American Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1964): 20-46.

¹⁴ J. L. Larson, "A Systems Approach to the History of Technology: An American Railroad Example," a paper read at the annual meeting of the Society for the History of Technology (1982), p. 17. The most helpful single source on changing labor/management relations in nineteenth-century America remains Herbert Gutman's *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Vintage, 1966), especially the title chapter.

“un-American” social chaos would look to the same scientific and technological expertise for answers. Thus in 1898 the sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross urged “the right persons” [social scientists] to undertake “the study of moral influences . . . for *the scientific control of the individual*.”¹⁵ In the first decades of the twentieth century, technocrats like F. W. Taylor proposed “scientific management” as the solution for the nation’s problems through the application of “exact science” in factories, schools, and local governments, to what had previously been understood as problems requiring interactive negotiation.¹⁶

Pressure toward conformity pervades the early decades of the century. The 1914 Ford labor reforms countered the previous year’s intolerable 370 percent worker turnover on the company’s nearly complete assembly line. Ford doubled daily wages to five dollars and cut the workday from nine to eight hours, while establishing a complex plan that used factory spies, home-visiting inspectors, and an English-language school to produce Americanized workers for the company.¹⁷ Ford’s mix of enforcement and paternalistic betterment programs proved to be an early version of postwar control tactics seen in the Red Scare of 1919 and 1920, the adoption of tear gas in 1923, industrial psychology, and welfare-capitalism plans throughout the twenties.¹⁸

Attempts to inculcate conformity among the mass of ordinary citizens took perhaps their most sophisticated form in the full-service advertising agency that came of age immediately before, during, and after World War I. Apart from patent-medicine-style huckstering, most nineteenth-century advertisements

¹⁵ Ross urged concealing such scientific secrets, for “to betray the secrets of social ascendancy is to forearm the individual in his struggle with society.” Quotes from A. Michael McMahon, “An American Courtship: Psychologists and Advertising Theory in the Progressive Era,” *American Studies* 13 (1972): 6.

¹⁶ On scientific management and its later spinoff, industrial psychology, see Edwin T. Layton Jr., *The Revolt of the Engineers: Social Responsibility and the American Engineering Profession* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve Press, 1971), and Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890–1920* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964). For the biography of another of the major technocratic spokesmen of the period, see Ronald R. Kline, *Steinmetz: Engineer and Socialist* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992).

¹⁷ See Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908–1921* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981), *passim*.

¹⁸ David Brody’s *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20th Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) provides a thoughtful analysis of welfare capitalism and the pre- and post-war labor/management context. For an interpretation focusing more on radical worker movements in the period, see James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980). On the introduction of tear gas into civilian police forces, see Daniel P. Jones, “From Military to Civilian Technology: The Introduction of Tear Gas for Civil Riot Control,” *Technology and Culture* 19, no. 2 (April 1978): 151–68.

assumed a basic equality between advertiser and buyer: sales were thought to result from rational dialogue about the product's qualities, price, or availability. World War I saw a new style emerge that focused on product benefits. Since advertisers perceived their targets as inept and irrational rather than decisive and adult, advertisements were increasingly designed to domesticate citizens into "consumers" who needed help to make the most elementary decisions and whose decisions were understood to be limited to the private domain. In Michael Schudson's reading, "The satisfactions portrayed [in advertisements] are invariably private, even if they are familial or social; they do not invoke public or collective values."¹⁹

To be sure, the advertising agencies only exploited (and enhanced) preexisting confusions caused by turn-of-the-century turmoil. The foregoing sketches, brief as they are, understate the changing speed and scale of daily life wrought by the new media and transport systems. Together with the burgeoning growth of cities (made possible by structural steel and elevators for skyscrapers, as well as by electric trolleys), the new systems created an artificial landscape that defined the individual as a tiny figure against imposing, sometimes violent, and always dynamically changing forces. It is no surprise that the turn of the century was marked by hunger for inner meaning to counter the confusing pace of modernity.

One of the ironies of this century pits this cultural formation toward passive conformity, fruit of the many social and technical changes sketched just above, against a longing for self-fulfillment and individualized identity. The very advertisements that encourage mistrust of personal judgment and trust of commodity experts routinely celebrate the consumer's right to choose. The psychotherapeutic movement and the use of trained psychologists in advertising agencies do not appear simultaneously on the U.S. scene by mere coincidence. In both instances therapeutic expertise promises the individual a renewal of personal satisfaction and a healing of interior anxiety. Whether the promise proved genuine or spurious, the larger cultural trend revealed a population with increasingly strong tendencies toward self-doubt and dependence on expert help in order to find meaning in life, a population which seemed to find it harder and harder to believe that individuals have the *capacity*, let alone the *responsibility*, to make a creative and blessed difference in the world.²⁰

¹⁹ Michael Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 221.

The best study of these developments remains Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); on consumers as irrational see pages 10, 68f., and passim. See also Daniel Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

²⁰ For an analysis of advertising as part of a larger social movement from a nineteenth-century Protestant ethic of productivity toward the twentieth-century therapeutic ethos,

If this sketch of our cultural evolution is accurate, citizens of the late-twentieth-century United States face a powerful challenge. How can we respect the individualism that runs so deep in our affective veins without being rendered passive and disconnected from one another? Can we articulate a spirituality that engages our longing for explicit self-awareness and helps us with our sometimes narcissistic fulfillment dreams while sending us out into the larger world?

The Spiritual Exercises: The Dynamic of the Second Week

To sum up the argument in advance, the foregoing interpretation argues that late-twentieth-century Americans are culturally formed both as individualists and as therapeutically inclined. Our style of individualism, moreover, defines us by a private/public split—responsible adults in the private world and passive conformists in the public order. Our therapeutic heritage enhances this passivity by teaching us to trust expert helpers, to mistrust our interior experience, and to define those things that trouble us as individual problems for personal adjustment rather than common problems requiring the political processes of debate, compromise, and interactive creativity. The dynamic of the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises, on the other hand, inculcates a form of personal intimacy with Jesus that opens out to intimacy with the larger world, an intimacy of affective engagement that leads to action in the world. The spiritual discipline on which this intimacy depends is rooted in learning how to trust our interior experience as the key to finding personal meaning *and* to guiding our engagement in the public order. I will argue, in short, that the sixteenth-century Exercises respond remarkably well to late-twentieth-century-needs. All this suggests that we late-twentieth-century capitalists may have to retrieve earlier Western traditions of affective discipline and learn how they might balance our finely honed rationalist methodologies, and that the Exercises represent one such discipline, one particularly apt for Jesuits.²¹

see T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 1-38.

²¹ In what follows I will call attention to details in the text as I learned to interpret them while directing thirty-day retreats over the past two decades. I am, of course, reporting on the experience of late-twentieth-century Americans (director and retreatants); my primary interest is to point out how aptly the Second Week addresses the cultural challenge of therapeutic individualism.

As a result of its suppression, beginning in 1773, the Society of Jesus was particularly hard hit by the radical changes we have observed in the wake of the British industrial and French political revolutions. It is not unlikely that the Society was influenced by the ideology of industrial capitalism as it struggled to restore ordinary religious life in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Thus, it may well be that the Society's radical reinterpretation of the Spiritual Exercises, from its original form as one-on-one spiritual direction to a program of group presentations providing points for meditation, represents another manifestation of nineteenth-century preference for conceptual clarity over unpredictable affectivity. It has become evident in the past two decades, both in actual practice and through textual study of the tradition, that the text of the *Exercises* treats formal conceptual content as secondary and affective experience as primary. To cite three examples among the many possible, the second annotation [2] counsels the director to leave as much room as possible for the retreatant's own experience of the matter at hand, "[f]or it is not *much knowledge* that fills and satisfies the soul, but the *intimate understanding* and *relish* of the truth." The fourth direction for the First Week insists that the pace of the retreatant be governed by his or her affective experience: "I will remain quietly meditating upon the point in which *I have found what I desire*, without any eagerness to go on *till I have been satisfied*" [76]. Most important, Ignatius expects that the daily process of deciding what direction the retreatant ought to take the following day depends on how the retreatant has been moved (that is, by consolation or desolation), and the only warning sign occurs when the retreatant "is *not affected* by any spiritual experiences, such as consolations or desolations, and that he is *not troubled* by different spirits" [6].²²

Thus, my first long retreat in 1957—during which the novice master presented five talks each day and moved all thirty-five of us along at the same pace regardless of our separate affective experiences—represents a remarkable departure from the original model of regular, one-on-one direction based on the exercitant's inner movements.

This historical background from the turn of the nineteenth century suggests that the history of the Exercises in the Society participates in those cultural developments we have already observed wherein the enlightenment mistrust of the dark gradually evolved into a world of precisely measured,

²² For other noteworthy instances of the pattern of directing by attention to emotions, see [7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 62, 78]; and, of course, see also the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits [313–36], which are themselves worth a complete article.

Here and elsewhere all references to the text of the *Exercises* will use the paragraph numbering found in the translation I am following: Louis J. Puhl, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951). I use bracketed numbers to cite these paragraph references (for example, [2]), a system used in many earlier translations. All emphases found in quotations from the *Exercises* in this essay are my own.

predesigned systems matched with a world of human beings whose primary role was to conform to system requirements. Predesigned system and individual conformity, this immensely powerful cultural transformation gathered momentum through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Perhaps its most vivid single expression appears as the theme of the official guidebook of the 1933–34 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago: “SCIENCE FINDS, INDUSTRY APPLIES, MAN CONFORMS.”²³

Keeping this in mind, let me summarize what follows. I will concentrate on the Second Week of the Exercises and, indeed, only on one dimension of the Second Week. The Second Week is primarily about falling in love with Jesus: “Here it will be to ask for an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more and follow Him more closely” [104]. In this essay, however, I am most concerned with understanding the process by which the Exercises lead the exercitant, through the mediation of personally falling in love with Jesus, to a new level of self-transcendence, falling in love with the world by following Jesus. Paradoxically, this transformation from private to public love of Jesus is rooted in a self-knowledge very like that sought by therapeutic individualists today. This interplay between self-understanding and public citizenry, which my directing of the Exercises leads me to believe operates at the heart of the Second Week, motivates this essay. It may well be that the sixteenth-century Exercises offer a very apt remedy for one of the most vexing hangovers left behind by two centuries of industrial capitalism.

Preparation for the Second Week: The First Week and the Kingdom

The prayer of the Second Week, sensual and contemplative, presumes a basic level of emotional health in the exercitant, health that typically flows from the graces of the First Week. If the First Week has gone well, I will have found my way to the failed, violent, and abandoned places of my own self and waited there long enough for God to meet and embrace me.²⁴ Even to begin so perilous an inner journey, I need to be loved at the outset and to have sufficient emotional health to sustain my sense of being beloved as I enter the places where love feels impossible. Absent a durable sense of self-worth, First Week dynamics easily drift toward masochism. Assuming this, however, the joy and liberation I taste when God meets me in places I have thought to be unbearable can serve as bedrock for my life from then on. It matters little whether First Week joy is experienced in a burst of emotion or more quietly. But it is essential that there

²³ *Official Book of the Fair* (Chicago: A Century of Progress Inc., 1932), 11.

²⁴ In order to save the reader from the clumsy pronoun structures that gender sensitivity requires, I will refer to my hypothetical exercitant in the first person.

should be no major aspect of my past life or personality that has not become a place of grace where the affection of God will always meet me. It is this graced conviction that the First Week inculcates and the Second Week presumes.

The meditation on the Kingdom of Christ builds on the grace of the First Week. My experience of conversion and joy specifies Jesus' call when he says, "It is my will to conquer the whole world and all my enemies." Conquest here cannot mean gathering good guys to defeat bad guys, since the call goes out "to all . . . and to each one in particular" [95]. "Conquering the world" refers instead to what has just happened to me; I have been conquered after the fashion of John Donne's "Batter My Heart, Three Personed God"; and, being won over by God's grace, I have begun to live in a personal world made whole. The call of Christ begins to turn my attention from the inner world of my personal needs to the larger world of "all and each in particular."

The Method: Sensual Contemplation

In the Second Week, prayer becomes more contemplative and sensual. The directions for the week encourage me to experience the mysteries of the life of Jesus with my body in several ways. Ignatius's emphasis on the diurnal rhythm of two meditations (or contemplations) followed by three repetitions often becomes more prominent as emphasis shifts from personal conversion to the mysteries of the life of Jesus. The contemplation of each day's mysteries from the life of Jesus begins, like matins, in the middle of the night. When I meet with my director, we speak first about how yesterday's contemplations ended, then about how today's are going, and finally about what tomorrow's will be. It may well be that twentieth-century retreatants find Ignatius's recommendation for prayer in the middle of the night to be more provocative than sixteenth-century retreatants. Be that as it may, it seems that Ignatius understood the power of moving from sleep directly into contemplation and the importance of the diurnal rhythm of night and day.²⁵

The instructions for contemplation, particularly the day's final contemplation, the Application of the Senses, place strong emphasis on sensuality. These would be less striking, perhaps, if I were invited to "see" and "listen" alone. But the invitation—to "smell the infinite fragrance, and taste the infinite

²⁵ Contemporary electric and electronic systems almost perfectly embody the eighteenth century's call to conquer sleep with alertness. We have such high-quality artificial light and such extraordinary precision systems of communication (radio, television, clock, telephone) that we can continue almost any of our projects during the hours when an earlier culture would have retired to some small, enclosed place where, when all was well, they would practice the softer virtues of the night. (To be sure, they would also beg God to be preserved from emergencies during the night, since their inferior artificial light made it nearly impossible to cope with crises effectively.)

sweetness of the divinity . . . to apply the sense of touch, for example, by embracing and kissing the place where the persons stand or are seated" [124f.]— is unmistakable. I am to move out beyond my intellectual frames of reference, trusting my body and imagination.²⁶

Throughout the Second Week I ask for the grace of "*intimate knowledge* of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love him more and follow him more closely" [104]. The wording here echoes the second annotation, which counsels brevity for the director: "[F]or it is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but the *intimate understanding* and relish of the truth" [2]. For late-twentieth-century rationalists, the term "intimate" needs more emphasis than "knowledge." Excessive intellectualizing about Jesus would define me as a spectator; the text of the Second Week counters such tendencies on every level, as it invites me to sensual connection with the mysteries of Jesus' life. On this point it is noteworthy that Ignatius even takes manifest textual liberties with Scripture when encouraging the retreatant to sensually imagine the mysteries of the life of Jesus. To cite two examples, Ignatius's Mary and Joseph, en route to Bethlehem, are accompanied by a maid [111]. As scriptural justification for Jesus' appearance to Mary after the resurrection, Ignatius argues, "For Scripture supposes that we have understanding, as it is written, 'Are you also without understanding?'" [299]. In both cases, Ignatius's personal affective experience takes priority over explicit content.²⁷

The Days before the Two Standards

The first days of the Second Week prepare for the thematic tension of the Two Standards between the standard of Satan and the standard of Christ. Each day's mysteries reveal Jesus' coming into the world as tender, accessible, and domestic, but also as terrifying and violent. The first day's contemplation of the Incarnation juxtaposes global human violence ("all nations in great blindness, going down to death and descending into hell" [106]) with the personal encounter between Mary and the angel. If I contemplate these events and do not limit my attention to speculative analysis, I open myself to the terrifying

²⁶ In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. William Morris (New York, 1975), the first definition of "sensual" ("pertaining to or affecting any of the senses or sense organ") is positive. The second ("pertaining to or given to the gratification of the physical appetites, especially sexual appetites . . . carnal rather than spiritual or intellectual; worldly") reflects capitalism's ideological attack on the nonrational. Obviously I am using "sensual" in the positive interpretation here.

²⁷ Space limitations prevent a complete survey of affectively oriented directions, but we should at least note in passing that the focus for the three repetitions of each day's mysteries is set by paying attention to how I have been affectively moved during earlier prayer; (see [118–26]).

power of ordinary violence, which I see in the daily news on the local, national, and international level. What happens in me when I turn from such violence to the simplicity of the scene in Nazareth? The second mystery makes the contrast even more vividly. At the end of the nativity's warm domesticities—cave, crib, and birth—we read Ignatius's bleak reminder: They are "laboring that our Lord might be born in extreme poverty, and that after many labors, after hunger, thirst, heat, and cold, after insults and outrages, He might die on the cross, and all this for me" [116].

The second day presents the mysteries of the presentation in the temple and the flight into exile. Both experiences share the loving bond between Mary and Joseph with their baby, but the prophecy of Anna in the first points to the flight into exile, to the terror of a refugee family fleeing soldiers in the middle of the night. The third day invites the retreatant to taste Jesus' ordinary life (Jesus advancing in wisdom and age and grace, and learning to be a carpenter [271]), but contrasts it with his parents' fear for their lost child and with a shocking invasion of domestic privacy by Jesus' public commitment [272]. It is easy to overlook the fact that Jesus grew up in a country more like Bosnia, to take a grisly current example, than middle-class America. The Roman army under Varus viciously suppressed armed insurrectionists with approximately two thousand crucifixions somewhere between Jesus' second and sixth year. Torture and mutilation flourished during Jesus' childhood as tools of intimidation.²⁸

If, then, I am *not* moved by the tender intimacies of the early life of Jesus *and also* not moved by the violence that permeates his world, something is the matter. Being capable of grief, fear, and anger alongside tenderness and delight will prove important for the meditations of the Two Standards. The absence of either kind of affect should warn the director that I am not ready to move to the day of the Two Standards.²⁹

²⁸ See "Chronological Table," *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), 466. The chronology gives Jesus' birth date as probably 7 B.C. and the date of Varus's suppression of the rebels as 4 B.C.

²⁹ It is wise for the director to recall here the sixth annotation: "When the one who is giving the Exercises perceives that the exercitant is not affected by any spiritual experiences, such as consolations or desolations, and that he is not troubled by different spirits, he ought to ply him with questions . . ." [6]. Here, instead of the personal conflict between grace and sin, the retreatant encounters powerfully evocative humanity, personal and public by turns, in the early life of Jesus. Ignatius's note that diverse affective inner responses signal healthy prayer holds true in both cases. In fact, missing either experience is usually a sign that some dimension of the First Week experience remains unfinished. As a director I would ordinarily suggest more time in the early years of Jesus' life, waiting to see what the retreatant's lack of affect indicates.

The Two Standards

The day of the Two Standards³⁰ interrupts the life of Jesus at the point where he leaves his private life and before he begins his calling as a public citizen. The meditation begins by noting that Christ and Lucifer both want *all* beneath their standards [137]. In the third prelude I ask for knowledge and help “to guard *myself* [against Lucifer] . . . and the grace to imitate Him [Jesus]” [136]. If I approach these introductory notes with my capacity for intimacy opened by the three prior days, I cannot miss the fact that the knowledge I ask for is participatory and personal rather than abstract and general. There are *two* standards, not three. No place is provided for spectators. Ignatius enhances the participatory tone with an emotional portrayal of Jesus and Lucifer. The chief of the enemy is “seated on a great throne of fire and smoke, his appearance *inspiring horror and terror*,” while Jesus is seen “standing in a lowly place in a great plain about the region of Jerusalem, his *appearance beautiful and attractive*” [140, 144].

The contrast between the standards, with their deliberately evocative descriptions of Satan and Christ, together with the petition for help to guard myself, suggests that the meditation is meant as a recapitulation of what I have learned about myself during the First Week. It is as if Jesus were taking me to a vantage point from which I can see my life as a whole, where I begin to recognize the patterns of grace and sinfulness in my life. Satan’s “riches, honors and pride” mean *for me* the specific riches, honors, and pride that tempt me; there is no point in guarding myself against something that doesn’t tempt me. Likewise, the poverty, insults, and humility to which Jesus calls refer to the graces I have begun to see as specific to my own life. From the perspective of this late-twentieth-century essay, then, the Two Standards consolidate the self-knowledge of the First Week, knowledge that we could appropriately call both therapeutic and individualistic.

At this juncture, however, the meditation changes focus; it mirrors the change in Jesus’ life from private to public citizen by asking me to turn my attention away from my personal needs and toward Christ’s call to follow him out into the world. Ignatius reintroduces the triple colloquy from the First Week and has me ask, not for the knowledge and help “to guard *myself*” seen just above, but “to be received under His standard.”

³⁰ The alert reader will note that I omit consideration of the “Introduction to the Consideration of Different States of Life” [135] and, indeed, that I will not discuss the election in this essay. This is partly due to space limitations here and partly due to my intention, which is to call attention to subtleties within the Second Week that precede the election and have, in my reading at least, been frequently overlooked by commentators.

A colloquy should be addressed to our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son and Lord the grace to be received under His standard, first in the highest spiritual poverty, and should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, and deign to choose and accept me, even in actual poverty; secondly, in bearing insults and wrongs, thereby to imitate Him better, provided only I can suffer these without sin on the part of another, and without offense of the Divine Majesty." [147]

Medieval battle standards served two functions—morale and logistics. In the turmoil of hand-to-hand combat, where soldiers repeatedly got turned around, the waving standard not only assured soldiers that their leadership remained intact but also kept showing them which way was forward. The enemy concentrated on trying to cut the standard down, so that “under the standard” meant to fight where the battle raged at its worst and the most was at stake.

By asking for the grace to be received under the standard, I am asking for much more than the grace to avoid personal temptation. I ask, rather, to find my way to the places in the world where the battle for the liberation of all people runs hottest. Still, I cannot be received under the standard of Christ if I cannot find where it is. When I seek to be received where the battle is most intense, I intend to place myself very specifically in my world; and to do that I must learn to interpret the public order of events, “to read,” in the words of Matthew’s Gospel, “the signs of the times” (Matt. 16:3). Because assessment of public affairs can remain abstract spectatorship, the Exercises teach me a habit of reading the world by paying attention to how events move me affectively.

The dynamic works like this. The personal intimacy that liberated me in the First Week makes me capable of love for Jesus, of a deepening love that gives me the courage to follow Jesus out into the world. In the First Week I follow Jesus to the broken and violated places of my own life in order to be liberated. In the Second Week I begin to follow Jesus where he calls me into the broken and violated places of the larger world. To follow Jesus, then, is to so engage the world and hope for its healing that I am always capable of joy in its beauty and grief over its violence. This sorrow, together with the opposition I will experience when taking stands in the world, will provide me with the “poverty, insults and humiliations” for which I ask in these prayers.

The Three Classes

To conclude the day and provide a bridge back to the public life of Jesus, Ignatius proposes the meditation on Three Classes of Men. I am to consider a situation where ordinary living in the world has created an attachment (to a modest fortune in Ignatius’s example). Each class wants to rid itself of “the burden arising from the attachment” because “[t]hey all wish to save their souls and find peace in God our Lord” [150].

After presenting the first two classes, who evade the issue of personal attachment by procrastination and self-deception, Ignatius introduces the third class. It would not be surprising if I entered this consideration expecting that I should simply get rid of the small fortune. No such thing, however. The third class “want to rid themselves of the attachment, but they wish to do so in such a way that they *desire neither* to retain *nor* to relinquish the sum acquired. They *seek only to will and not will* as God our Lord inspires them and, as *seems better* . . . [155]. The text twice repeats a striking integration of active initiative (“desire,” “seek”) with serene balance (“neither . . . nor,” “only . . . as seems better”). The passion that drives me to follow Jesus into the wide world, where ordinary life tugs and pulls at my affections, must be balanced by self-awareness, so that I avoid the fanaticism that often attends passionate involvement in the world. For this reason, what we might today call “therapeutic self-knowledge” must go hand in hand with engagement in the world’s affairs.

The Note That Follows the Triple Colloquy

The relationship between the note with which Ignatius concludes the Three Classes meditation and the related direction among the notes for the remaining days of the Second Week caught my attention nearly twenty years ago, when for five summers in a row I had the opportunity to direct thirty-day retreats as part of a team.

The note following the triple colloquy of the Three Classes reads thus:

It should be noted that when we feel an attachment opposed to actual poverty or a repugnance to it, when we are not indifferent to poverty or riches, it will be very helpful to overcome the inordinate attachment, even though corrupt nature rebel against it, to beg our Lord in the colloquies to choose us to serve Him in actual poverty. We should insist that we desire it, beg for it, plead for it, provided, of course, that it be for the service and praise of the Divine Goodness. [157]

The first note for the remaining days of the Second Week reads thus:

They will conclude [the five contemplations each remaining day of the Second Week] with the three colloquies of the meditation on Three Classes of Men, *or according to the note which follows this meditation*. [159]

These two texts provide a glimpse into what Ignatius expected to happen during the rest of the Exercises; they also offer a key for understanding how the Second Week teaches an apostolic spirituality that simultaneously fosters personal self-knowledge and public citizenry.³¹

³¹ The point is easily missed, as in David L. Fleming’s *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading* (St. Louis, Mo.: Institute of Jesuit

In the note following the Three Classes, Ignatius indicates that I should pray the triple colloquy only until I experience repugnance about following Jesus. When this happens and “corrupt nature rebel[s],” I should take the more explicit step of begging for the actual poverty that has stirred up my repugnance.³² Where the triple colloquy qualifies the general desire for actual poverty with “should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, and deign to choose and accept me,” the note instructs me to “beg for it, plead for it.”

Several assumptions operate here. First, Ignatius assumes that, when I feel corrupt nature rebelling, I am rebelling about a particular something that I have encountered while contemplating the public life of Jesus in the Second Week (or his passion and death in the Third).³³ No one follows Jesus day in and day out without experiencing resistance. Second, the resistance I experience will be supplied partly by the condition of the world and partly by my personal compulsions. What triggers my repugnance will differ from what triggers yours; our styles of resistance differ according to our personalities. Thus the self-knowledge that I began to achieve during the First Week, which became more integrated for me as I prayed the Two Standards, is meant to deepen every subsequent day as I reenter the contemplations of Jesus’ public life.

I learn here, as the days of the Second and Third Weeks unfold and my capacity for sensual contemplation matures, to expect that I will experience resistance, my personal and increasingly familiar compulsions, as an *ordinary* part of the following of Jesus. These moments of ordinary compulsions are not only moments of ongoing conversion—these they certainly are—but also a pragmatic tool for finding *precisely where* to place myself in the world. Just as I and my director use my inner movements of consolation and desolation to determine where to go in prayer, so when I contemplate the world I pay attention to where world events stir up consolation or desolation in me. I turn toward what moves me, simultaneously coming closer to the public event *and* to my affective response. My emotional response helps me past the evasion of

Sources, 1978), 97, where the author omits from his version of the text Ignatius’s direction to conclude prayer with the Triple Colloquy and the note that follows.

³² What Ignatius means by “actual” as opposed to “spiritual” poverty is a question of such density that it merits a paper all its own. For the purposes of this essay, I will limit myself to suggesting that *actual poverty* means the experience of actually suffering from the violence of the situations in which my following of Jesus lands me, whereas *spiritual poverty* means the habit of discernment that I must have (that blend of self-knowledge and affection for the world that is the central point of this essay) if I am ever going to find my way to the places where Jesus desires to lead me, without slipping into therapeutic complacency on the one hand or fanatic self-punishment on the other.

³³ For Ignatius’s expectation that the triple colloquy of the three classes or the note that follows will continue in the Third Week as well, see [199], where these specific directions are offered as an option.

abstract spectatorship by turning me toward the events, and the use of the note that follows protects me from fanaticism by alerting me to my own style of distorted responses to the event that moved me.

The principle operative here claims that affective knowledge (that is, knowledge based on what moves me to consolation or desolation) is more accurate than speculative knowledge, because any abstract strategy for interpretation or praxis can be rationalized as if disconnected from my actual motivations. If I learn to pay attention to what moves me before I know where my emotional response will lead, my affective responses to the events of my life have much to teach me. For Ignatius, both consolation and desolation are good news, because both tell me that “something” is touching me and that it is worth my while to become intimate with that something.³⁴

The theological vision encapsulated in the direction to keep using the triple colloquy *or* the note that follows suggests that followers of Jesus ought to get out into the world and in over their heads on a pretty regular basis. We will, as the disciples who followed Jesus to Jerusalem did, begin to behave badly, because the realities of the world trigger our worst inner demons. I expect that Peter could have managed to cover his cowardice and avoid the triple denial if he had not lost his head and followed Jesus too close to the terrifying power of the police. When I come too close to the hard places of the world where Jesus longs for me to go, I should expect—this is the precise point of the note that follows the triple colloquy—that I will experience my particular style of bad behavior over and over again during my life.

This is a delightful state of affairs, it seems to me, for my bad news can thus be good news as long as I manage to let Jesus lead me out beyond personal-survival needs into love for the wide world. The more I get to the right places (that is, “under the standard”) and the more I get in over my head, the more I see my bad behavior and need to beg for help. The more I have to beg, the more humble I become and the more I experience myself as kin to all the rest of the citizens of the planet. I am less and less inclined, as a result, either to focus exclusively on my own therapeutic needs or to imagine that I work “for others” without needing mercy and affection myself.

Ignatius’s injunction to complete the Second Week and the Third Week with the triple colloquy’s longing to be received with Jesus *in the world* and his pragmatic expectation that we will routinely encounter personal bad behavior constitute the core spirituality that is “taught” during the thirty days. If I can let myself be loved where I had learned to reject my own humanity (grace of the First Week) and if I respond to God’s affection by contemplating Jesus until

³⁴ As we have often observed, of course, absent the presupposed base in healthy affection, all this goes out the window and the entire process degenerates into either narcissistic perfectionism or masochistic self-punishment.

I fall in love with him, I will long to follow where he goes. I will learn to engage the world without evasion, on the one hand, or fanaticism on the other. The self-knowledge that emerges from the First Week and comes to focus during the Two Standards and the Three Classes is meant to continue to grow all through my life. In short, just as self-knowledge-cum-affection is meant to open me out to love for the world, so the self-transcendence inherent in following Jesus is simultaneously a process of self-improvement. For Jesuits, Ignatius understood personal improvement and love of the world as inseparable. Perhaps his most notable articulation of the premise comes from a famous passage in the "General Examen": "The end of this Society is to devote itself with God's grace *not only* to the salvation and perfection of the members' own souls, *but also with that same grace* to labor strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their fellowmen."³⁵

Conclusion

Where does all this leave us? We late-twentieth-century capitalists need, it seems, an inner discipline that honors our urgent hunger for self-understanding and respects the anxieties that burden us while instilling the confidence and courage that it takes to love the world. To state the matter in terms of the foregoing cultural analysis, I need a spirituality that helps me to trust—in the face of much of my electronically mediated experience—that I am connected with the larger world, an active participant and not an isolated outsider. For that to be possible, I need a spirituality that helps me to trust that I am beloved and worth being connected. Despite my culture's love of the clear and predictable and its hatred of the uncertain and ambiguous, such a spirituality requires that I become comfortable with the uncomfortable: with the passion and uncertainty that are evoked whenever human beings come close to their own or the world's human condition. I think that the method of the Second Week offers such a wisdom. Let me summarize by reflecting on how the Second Week teaches a method of prayer and a vision of Church.

Prayer, from the perspective of the Second Week, moves back and forth from self-needs to world-needs, from self-as-beloved to world-as-beloved. I pray as an individual, needing mercy and affection just to keep on getting up in the morning; I contemplate the world, its beauty and burdens, with the sensual

³⁵ St. Ignatius of Loyola, "The General Examen and its Declarations," in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. with an introduction and a commentary by George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis, Mo.: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), chap. 1, [3] (pp. 77f). The emphasis is my own.

intimacy taught during the Second Week's contemplations. When I receive mercy and affection—from God explicitly or from those God sends into my life as my allies—my capacity to love the human condition deepens and so does the courage I need to pay attention to the wide world.

When I risk active engagement, the world is always too much for me. If it isn't, I may have created a nest and insulated it. Thus, reading the paper or watching television or looking out the window or going to work are meant to be contemplative moments in the following of Jesus. To let my bad behavior lead me again to receive mercy and affection from those whom God sends into my life as allies—that too is part of prayer. In a lifelong process, the most important sign of deepening conversion is *not* that my exterior behavior gets better: hard times can make exterior behavior seem worse. My conversion deepens as I become more capable of being moved by the world that God loves and as I become more accessible to mercy and affection.

We can see this back-and-forth rhythm in the first followers of Jesus as they return to the upper room before the resurrection. The Church is born here. These men and women, who embarrassed themselves during the final journey to Jerusalem by bickering, lying, and giving way to panic, come back to the upper room transformed by their share in Jesus' terrible dying. I doubt that anyone was tempted to score points by claiming to be better at enduring horror than the others. Competition loosens its grip among them because they have seen too much of the world's violence and of their own as well. Almost without noticing, they fell in love with Jesus and even with each other. Everyone is welcome in the upper room. They all can come and tell what happened to them after they left the place of execution. Did some go and get drunk? Or wander aimlessly? Or weep? Or hide from the police? Or pay for a prostitute? What difference does it make? They have all seen too much and they all need mercy and affection.

Thus, it seems to me, does the Church operate in the world. We are the people who are called by God to follow Jesus into the world and then to comfort and nurture one another when the world gets too much for us. We are the people who are sent by God to applaud and be delighted when one of us manages to do some small good thing for the healing of that world. And in the process we minister to one another's conversion.

This model of the Church at large fits the Society of Jesus too. Many Jesuits have observed that the challenge we were given by "Our Mission Today" was matched by the challenge found in "Union of Minds and Hearts."³⁶ It is

³⁶ *Documents of the Thirty-First and Thirty-Second General Congregation of the Society of Jesus: An English Translation of the Official Latin Texts of the General Congregations and of the Accompanying Papal Documents*, ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), 411–38 and 467–85.

impossible for us to work for the world's healing—which requires disciplined attention to very complex societal structures, the patience to articulate alternatives that have a realistic chance of doing some good, and the courage to risk dangerous and unpopular stands while doing so—unless we cherish one another. All of us, I suspect, felt a wave of affection and care for our brothers in El Salvador when we heard that six of them were murdered. We live in their debt, because they stirred our hearts and reminded us that our tradition has always taught us to love the world after the manner of the Second Week: disciplined yet passionate, tender and simple, affectionate and brave. May they bless us always.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

As Fr. Joseph Tetlow, S.J., has pointed out in his recent monograph on the examen ("The Most Postmodern Prayer: American Jesuit Identity and the Examen of Conscience, 1920-1990," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 26/1 [January 1994]), this spiritual exercise has come through some hard times. While a number of authors over the years have tried to revive and enhance the exercise, no approach has proven satisfactory in bringing it back to the important place it was meant to have according to the mind of St. Ignatius.

While doing graduate studies in Christian ethics, I was fortunate to be exposed to a Biblical-theology course entitled God's Universal Covenant. (One might consult Professor Walter Vogel's book *God's Universal Covenant* [Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1986] for an excellent overview of covenant themes.) It struck me at the time that there were similarities between the examen and some aspects of the covenant formulary.

By way of a brief review, this formulary encompasses promise, consummation, infidelity, and renewal, culminating in the promise of a new covenant. We, of course, enter the scene post-resurrection and post-baptism as sharers in the new covenant established by Christ.

Concretely, the covenant formula always begins with an account of the history of God's saving actions on behalf of his people. These historical benefits are retold in any "covenant lawsuit" that Yahweh might bring against Israel.

Thus the first point of the examen, in which we recall with thanksgiving the many gifts God is continually bestowing on us, is similar to the opening phase of the covenant formula. The intent of the first point is to evoke a sense of gratitude

for the loving kindness of God in our regard. It also heightens our sense of sin as ingratitude, as failure to respond, to such a loving God.

In fact, every covenant has its stipulations that must be followed if human beings are to fulfil their side of the covenant. The Ten Commandments should really be seen in this covenant context and not as rules and regulations on their own.

Thus those who might be put off by the examen-of-conscience approach might be helped not only by adding a "review of consciousness" dimension to the exercise (see George Aschenbrenner's influential article "Consciousness Examen," *Review for Religious* 3 [1971-72]: 14-21) but also by recalling the various covenant contexts of our lives.

This is particularly true when we place this exercise in a new covenant context. This new covenant is rooted in the gift of the Holy Spirit "poured forth in our hearts" (Rom. 5:5), the first gift to those who believe—as the fourth canon of the Mass expresses it.

This being the case, in addition to basic commandments, we have promptings of the Holy Spirit to be responsive to and answerable for. Therefore, the review-of-consciousness/discernment model of examen is entirely appropriate but, I believe, better grounded in a comprehensive covenant context.

So, having reviewed God's covenant benefits and examined our response to God's action in our lives, no doubt—like Israel—we will declare our guilt and admit our sins, often those of omission.

Like Israel, we too are emboldened to ask for pardon from our creator and Lord and to pray for a restoration and renewal of the covenant. These last two phases of

the examen are akin to the Jewish prayer for restoration or "Todah."

In fact, as Steve Coffey points out in "The Exercises and the Examen: Some Relationships" (*Review for Religious* 42 [1983]: 96),

This attitude reaches its culmination in the Contemplation to attain Divine Love. Indeed, the fifth point reveals the examen as a daily repetition of the Suscipe: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me; to thee, O Lord, I return it. All is thine, dispose of it according to thy will. Give me thy

love and thy grace, for this is enough for me." [234]

What better covenant prayer could we make?

In this letter I have tried to indicate very briefly some connections between the covenant formulary and the Ignatian examen. I leave it to others trained in Scripture and spirituality to explore and flesh out these connections. Perhaps it could provide a further impetus for the renewal of this important spiritual exercise.

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