



# STUDIES

IN  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

“As Different As Night and Day”

*Ignatius's Presupposition and Our Way of Conversing  
across Cultures*

CARL F. STARKLOFF, S.J.

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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 that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that it publishes.

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*Carl F. Starkloff, S.J.*

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## For your information . . .

You never know!

Just about the last place that I would have expected STUDIES to show up was in a contemporary best-seller. And yet there it is. In *Son of the Circus*, the latest novel by John Irving (author also of such works as *The World according to Garp* and *The Cider House Rules*), a customs inspector in Bombay, India, while looking through the baggage of a new arrival, finds among other items "many pamphlets of something called STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS." Wondrous to behold, he also finds a "thin book called *Sadhana: A Way to God* by Anthony de Mello, . . . the *Autobiography of St. Ignatius*, and a copy of the *Spiritual Exercises*—there were many other books, too. Altogether there were more books than there were Hawaiian shirts and clerical collars combined." It will edify our readers to know that the new arrival in question is a Jesuit scholastic!

The further portrait of the young Jesuit scholastic is surely more realistic than that of the dying Jesuit general in the excerpt from an Alexander Dumas novel of the nineteenth century that makes up the Source selection in this issue of STUDIES. But what could you expect when, according to one anti-Jesuit writer of a century ago, all Jesuits were "thoroughbred bloodhounds, elegant and supple (!)"?

In contrast, quite realistic, thoroughly documented, and very well presented is the world of "Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits," to quote the subtitle of *The Reckoned Expense*, a collection of fifteen essays from authors of international reputation, prepared to celebrate the first centenary of Campion Hall at Oxford. The book has been edited by Thomas McCoog, S.J., of the Maryland Province, who is both the archivist of the British Province and a member of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome. This volume represents the first modern study of Edmund Campion; it takes up especially the theme of the passage from a Catholic to an Anglican England. Apropos of the subject of this issue of STUDIES, the "presupposition" of St. Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* was not exactly the context within which Catholics and Anglicans dealt with each other during the decades when that passage was taking place. Publishing *The Reckoned Expense* is an eminently worthy way to celebrate the hundred-year anniversary of a most important work of the Society.

Another event well worth attention is the publication of *An Ignatian Concordance*. Just as in a biblical concordance, so also in this volume, every word in the writings of St. Ignatius is listed alphabetically in its original language with the notation of where it is to be found in his works. In addition, the several words preceding and following each entry are printed along with that entry so that every word is immediately seen in its context. The works included in *An Ignatian Concordance* are the "Spiritual Exercises," the "Constitutions," the



“Autobiography,” the “Spiritual Diary,” “Directories of the Exercises,” the “Deliberation of the First Fathers,” the “Deliberation on Poverty,” and three papal documents important in the establishment of the Society.

This publication, the result of several years of effort by an international working group, is a cooperative venture of the Institute of Jesuit Sources in the United States and of *Mensajero* and *Sal Terræ* in Spain. The introduction and the instructions for use of the concordance are printed in both English and Spanish.

This volume, containing more than 1,400 pages and measuring six by nine inches, costs \$59.95 plus postage and shipping charges. We are able to keep this special net price much below the cost of comparable concordances of relatively limited circulation (for example, of English and American authors, which range from \$75 to \$200 or more) because of the generous help in money and personnel of the Society in Spain. You will find ordering information on the back cover of this issue of STUDIES.

And finally, news of the imminent publication of another important book, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms*. This, as you will remember, is one of the results of the work of the Thirty-fourth General Congregation. In fact, by the time this issue of STUDIES reaches its readers, the *Constitutions and Norms* will either already be in your hands or ready to come from the printer. The official Latin edition printed the two documents separately. This English translation, in contrast, places the related parts of the Constitutions and Norms on facing pages, so that their interrelationship can easily be seen and readily understood. I think that the book will respond to the desire of the Thirty-fourth General Congregation that the members of the Society see how the Norms express our wish to live the Constitutions today and how the Constitutions validate the Norms as rooted in the founding inspiration and corporate heritage of the Society of Jesus.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*



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CALVIN: *Doesn't it seem like everybody just shouts at each other nowadays?*

*I think it's because conflict is drama, drama is entertaining, and entertainment is marketable. Finding consensus and common ground is dull! Nobody wants to watch a civilized discussion that acknowledges ambiguity and complexity. We want to see fireworks!*

*We want the sense of solidarity and identity that comes from having our interests narrowed and exploited by like-minded zealots! Talk show hosts, political candidates, news programs, special interest groups . . .*

*They all become successful by reducing debates to the level of shouted rage. Nothing gets solved, but we're all entertained.*

[Pause]

HOBBS: *Hmm, you may be right.*

[Longer pause]

CALVIN: *What a boring day this turned out to be!*

—Bill Watterson, *Calvin and Hobbes*

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*How can you have a good fight if you define your terms?*

—St. Louis University Historian Thomas P. Neill

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*Barbarism likewise threatens when men cease to talk together according to reasonable laws. There are laws of argument, the observance of which is imperative if discourse is to be civilized. . . . Civility dies with the death of dialogue.*

—John Courtney Murray, S.J., *We Hold These Truths*



# “AS DIFFERENT AS NIGHT AND DAY”

## *Ignatius's Presupposition and Our Way of Conversing across Cultures*

### A Journey

I am sure that my readers can recall examples of their own to illustrate the theme I propose to discuss. Personally, I am happy to pay a tribute to Calvin, of the comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*, and to my former professor-mentor Thomas P. Neill, late professor of history at St. Louis University, whose wry remark some thirty-five years ago presaged the little barbarian and his feline alter ego. As a matter of fact, Neill, at the time simply having some fun with a very righteous student who was demanding “clear and distinct ideas” in a class discussion, was himself a superb model of John Courtney Murray’s “civil discourse.” In memory of such worthy authorities as these, I wish to discuss a process and a spirituality of civilized discourse that has graced the Society of Jesus from its earliest years. I am referring to that very brief and laconic instruction called “Presupposition,” given at the outset of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The context or discourse that I am concerned with here is found only on the margins of Murray’s world of conversation, in those milieus where people of very different cultures attempt to talk with one another.

In order to dramatize why this instruction has taken on such fresh meaning for me since the early 1970s, I ask my readers to retrace a journey with me. The journey began about thirty years ago when I was a scholastic just beginning regency. My assignment was to teach and work among North American Indian people on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. This

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mission, as it turned out, set a basic direction from which I have never really departed in all the ensuing years. Of course, I had virtually no background for the work, though during philosophical studies I had also devoted some attention to "natural religion" because of a personal interest in the field, and done some historical investigation of American policies towards its native peoples. I am sure that some native people were at times inclined to regret my presence among them in view of the ignorance it manifested.

No doubt the most mysterious aspect of native culture for us missionaries, especially at that time, was the traditional or "primal" religion and spirituality of these people. Anthropologists had been studying this phenomenon for over a century; explorers and adventurers had been commenting on it even longer than that. But with a few exceptions, Christian missionaries, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, had generally sought ways to extirpate all "pagan practices," by way of confrontation and "power encounters." (I think at once of the missionary zeal of St. Boniface, who hewed down the sacred tree of my eighth-century tribal ancestors in Frisia!) Some of our Jesuit missionaries chose to practice a form of benign neglect towards aboriginal spirituality, hoping that the practices might simply wither away. Earlier, many of the French Jesuits, as we are told in the *Jesuit Relations*, even went so far as to learn native languages and engage aboriginal spiritual leaders in debates. Sadly, in subsequent centuries our practice pretty much lost even these elementary forms of civil discourse, until Vatican Council II launched a new openness.

I have chosen just one of these experiences to illustrate my purpose here. Among the rituals of the United States Plains tribes is the "Peyote Way," a practice centering on a substance brought from Mexico and introduced among North American tribes beginning in the late nineteenth century. Eventually the Peyote Way acquired the name of the Native American Church.<sup>1</sup> My first knowledge of this way came only from vague conversations with other missionaries and from standing outside the mission residence on chill autumn nights and hearing the rapid beat of the water drum coming from a mile down the road. I would occasionally write about it in letters home, so as to impress family and friends with the exotic character of this adventure of mine.

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<sup>1</sup> For details, see the bibliography in Carl F. Starkloff, S.J., "Religious Renewal in Native North America: A Contemporary Challenge to the Churches," *Missiology* 13 (January 1985): 81-101. It is worth pointing out that this later usage differs considerably from the ancient ritual practices of Mexican Indians, such as are described so vividly in Barbara G. Meyerhoff's *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).



My own busy time of regency diverted my attention from the peyote religion almost completely until later, when I was serving as a chaplain at Haskell American Indian College in Lawrence, Kansas. Once again I overheard students talking about it; but because they had experienced the reactions of previous missionaries, they were never willing to share information on the topic. By this time my theological studies (undertaken during the period of Vatican Council II) had included some opportunities to probe more deeply into the theological mysteries of religious experience. Thus, after winning a measure of agreement from my Jesuit fellow chaplains at the school, I made bold one Sunday evening to suggest to some hundred or so students a discussion on peyote. Not surprisingly, the response from this otherwise friendly group of young people was a mixture of uneasiness, quiet and nervous laughter, and then stony silence. Nonetheless, further conversations with a Jesuit classmate (like myself a grizzled but wiser veteran of two or three years of mission work) were opening my mind more deeply to the immensity of the problem of religious and cultural conflict.

In the summer of 1969, ten years after my first vague experiences of the Peyote Way, when I was doing summer youth work on the Wind River Reservation, I had a conversation with a young Arapaho university student who asked, "Why has the Church always condemned the Peyote Way [and all forms of native religion]?" My response was to alter my life quite deeply. I simply said, "I don't really know. Why don't I come back next summer and try to understand this?" Thus did I begin, in an unarticulated and unreflective manner, to carry into practice the Ignatian presupposition.

Over the next five summers, I strove to talk with tribal spiritual leaders about their spiritual traditions, generally provoking the response that one might expect under the circumstances. One sympathetic elder did plan for me to participate in a peyote meeting (or service), but had to abort the plan when he was unable to convince the other leaders that admitting me would be helpful to anyone. I had thus to content myself with reading historical and anthropological materials, as well as with attending the annual Sun Dances of the Arapahos and Shoshones and some other minor ceremonies. But even these limited experiences, illuminated by my reading, were familiarizing me with the spiritual and social history of a people across the centuries, and especially with a phenomenon that has been included among the "religions of the oppressed."<sup>2</sup> I learned gradually to appreciate Paulo Freire's powerful phrase "cultural invasion," a term he uses to designate the

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<sup>2</sup> Readers who may want to understand this approach further can consult Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed*, trans. Lisa Sergio (New York: Knopf, 1963).



humiliation of a conquered culture at the hands of a conqueror.<sup>3</sup> I learned to appreciate how and why the violated cultures developed religious practices that anthropologists came to call “revitalization movements.”<sup>4</sup> Thus far, however, my knowledge was superficial and largely academic; I had become a “case study” of the very point I am making. That is, I began to appreciate the importance of the presupposition, not simply within the Exercises but for other forms of interpersonal and intercultural dialogue. No matter how much I sat and talked with native leaders, as long as we just talked, the problem remained. As my good Arapaho friend and admonitor, the late Ernest Sun Rhodes, once reminded me with a wry smile, “The Indian and the white man are as different as night and day.” That is, I could strive with all goodwill to “save the propositions” of those who followed the Peyote Way, but I could not come close to understanding them, let alone “savor” such beliefs “internally,” as Ignatius counsels us to do when dealing with spiritual truths in the Exercises.

The breakthrough came with my return to full-time reservation work between 1975 and 1981. Gradually, native people came to accept me to a greater degree and even to assist me to experience aspects of their spirituality. Among these experiences was my first peyote meeting, on one crisp autumn night in 1977 when an elder friend invited me to share in a gathering being “put up” to assist his grandson. Such meetings take place between sunset and sunrise, beginning with the call of an eagle-bone whistle and a formal procession into a large tepee that can comfortably accommodate some thirty persons. First there are some opening words of welcome, a purification of participants with cedar incense, and a prayer by the “Road Man” or leader. Then a ceremony gets underway consisting of constant singing to the beat of the water-filled drum, public prayers for personal needs, “doctoring” of the sick by medicine persons, confession of sins and problems, admonition of the young people present, ceremonial smoking, and, of course, the ingesting of peyote in the form either of ground powder or, in its cruder state, of dried cactus “buttons.” Peyote, which can also be taken as a kind of tea, is a mild hallucinogen (not a narcotic!), containing a small amount of mescaline. Participants all take a certain quantity of it, supplementing it by further potions according to personal choice as the rite progresses. After ingesting the drug, participants sometimes experience symptoms such as nausea, so they are allowed to leave the tepee when necessary. Eventually, the drug mildly affects other senses and feelings, depending on individual temperaments.

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<sup>3</sup> See Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Seabury, 1978), 152.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see the bibliography in Starkloff, “Religious Renewal.”



Total immersion in this ceremony carries the participant far beyond the "propositional" stage of dialogue and so alters the senses as to permit new understandings. I retain one very vivid memory of the ceremony, the quiet instructive voice of John C'Hair (*sic*), who became one of my most powerful instructors until his death in 1983. From him I learned that the ceremony was not a form of "idol worship," but rather the taking of a "medicine" given by the one Creator, to heal the body as well as the spirit; that the peyote movement is a source of strength for native people against outside rejection; that it helps strengthen traditional values, especially family life; and that it helps to reinforce sobriety. John's kindly attention to me that entire night remains a very significant memory!

So I was indeed a novice once again, though this time I had even less power to set my own terms and boundaries than was the case during my novitiate. I simply had to be deeply *attentive* to an experience that was exercising a powerful authority over me. However, I was to become even less than a novice; I was to act like a child, in that I violated one of the basic rubrics. Although I should have left the tepee to relieve myself when I experienced mild nausea, I decided to "tough it out" and lie down for a short period instead of sitting up attentively, as I should have done. I realized later that the ceremonial leaders regarded this behavior much as I would the annoying scampering about of a two-year-old when I was presiding at the Eucharist. Even so, no one said anything to me at the time about what I had done, although I thought I caught one reference in the Arapaho language to "what the white man had done" during the morning prayers. It was only over the coming months that I, in a very "Indian" way, picked up reports that I had committed a rubrical faux pas. It was nearly two years later, at the start of my second meeting, that the grandfather of the sponsoring family, a deeply spiritual man named Frank Tyler, spoke very gently and privately to me, using the third person, about how "a fella always sits up straight and pays attention" at meetings. Without indicating that I saw this as addressed to me, I nodded in agreement with this "proposition," that this was indeed the only way to behave!

In subsequent years, although I have shared in other native rites, I have not returned to a peyote meeting, though I would be willing to do so if invited. Nonetheless, the experience deepened my understanding and helped me to relate more empathetically to the ongoing dialogue between native and nonnative leaders about religion, as well as to the disagreements even among Indian people about which native ceremonies are authentic for the Arapahos. What I have come to understand especially is that this rite is one of many ritual experiences, either aboriginal or of recent origin, in which a marginalized people experiences belonging and community and seeks deeper spiritual identity by means of secret rites.



I am aware that theologians and missionaries worry about problems of “syncretism” among people who combine tribal and Christian experiences. I am aware as well that some colleagues within the nonnative community and even within the native community disagree with me about involvement in and support of such rituals. Once I asked one of my own Arapaho spiritual mentors, now deceased, what he felt about my participating in a peyote meeting. This loyal Catholic, who was also deeply involved in traditional tribal religious leadership, replied that he personally did not take part in this ritual because he could not accept it as a true Arapaho tradition. Even so—and here his reply was typical of so many forms of advice given in the native community—he admitted that perhaps I might be making a good choice to share in the ceremonies, if for no other reason than to be sure that I understood them.

But the point of this lengthy personal testimony is that I *have* indeed, thanks be to God, retrieved an invaluable teaching given to me at the outset of my novitiate—one that Ignatius “presupposes” is proper to every good Christian; unfortunately, I appreciated it very poorly at the time. This instruction has enabled me to discourse with many native persons in a more meaningful way. To some extent the exchange of information and explanation has enabled me to do this; but even more, the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches of native ritual have done this for me. I know that I—and I make bold to speak for all “mainstream” Christians here—have so much to learn about furthering the quest for the more mysterious aspects of truth that defy “clear and distinct ideas.” But all of that must come only at the opportune time, in the course of conversations among equals, accompanied by some very acerbic denunciations, as I have found. Eventually we may all be able to “seek all suitable means” to bring one another to a “correct interpretation” of human and Christian truth.

## The Significance of “Retrieving” the Presupposition

“Retrieval” is the act by which we reach into personal or collective history to bring forward into the present a foundational principle that has been lost or neglected, one that might serve in the present to strengthen and creatively challenge us as a community. Retrieval thus differs essentially from “restoration” in that it represents the upholding of a perennial value, whereas restoration simply resurrects a period piece notable more for its evocation of nostalgia than for its relevance. A renewed attention to the presupposition, as I see it, can symbolize and effect an authentic retrieval of an enduring value contained in the Spiritual Exercises. For many years I have been impressed by the provocative and encouraging power of this small initial instruction, which someone (probably Ignatius himself) named a “presupposi-



tion," and have often asked myself why spiritual writers have not devoted more commentary to this arresting statement. It has always seemed to offer a model of communication and conversation for all parties in any sort of exchange, not simply in the context of retreats. Experience over the past quarter century has convinced me that the presupposition is a process for intercultural "conversation," for discoursing together.

What is it, then, that we are retrieving—this tiny nugget in the Ignatian gold mine? I give it here in George Ganss's translation:

22. That both the giver and the maker of the Spiritual Exercises may be of greater help and benefit to each other, it should be presupposed that every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbor's statement than to condemn it. Further, if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means it. If that meaning is wrong, one should correct the person with love; and if this is not enough, one should search out every appropriate means through which, by understanding the statement in a good way, it may be saved.<sup>5</sup>

The instruction, as I shall discuss below, is a product of Renaissance literary and theological language; the terminology and, no doubt, the mentality need contemporary interpretation. I offer first a brief paraphrase:

1. Authentic discourse demands sincere openness in all parties involved—perhaps that Pauline readiness to "believe all things" (1 Cor. 13:6)—that never descends to mere credulity.
2. One must be prepared to offer considered and probing questions to one with whom one disagrees.
3. Challenges in a discussion are to be based on the desire to find the truth in the very position that is challenged.

Let me expand on the dynamic that I see in the presupposition, which calls for a foundational attitude that might be described as follows:

1. It is un-Christian to foreclose the possibility of discovering authentic and practical truth. This approach favors not only charity and justice but every kind of inquiry as well; prudence and enlightened self-interest also urge us to remain open to the possibility of discovering truth.

2. The second sentence of the paragraph is a powerful principle of communication, demanding that we risk entering into the mind and heart of our conversation partner: "Further, if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means it." I believe that here Ignatius's words imply but do not state explicitly an idea that seems to have been clear to

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<sup>5</sup> *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, trans. George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 31.



him from other examples in his life; namely, I as listener should not only try to make certain that the *other* has neither erred in intention nor misstated the point; I must likewise examine *myself* on my ability to comprehend the point.

3. Finally, all of us, but especially those of a more “liberal” bent, will find equally demanding the requirement that with charity and prudence as well as courage we venture to challenge the other to see more clearly into the truth being sought, employing a “dialectic” that might “save the truth” in the other’s position. Interpretations of this process have been surprisingly rare over the centuries, but research does bring further understanding, as I shall attempt to describe now.

### The Archeology of the Presupposition

I use the word “archeology” here because I am about to drag my readers, at least for a few pages, through the dust, not of old tombs, but of old tomes. They are tomes, however, that indicate deeper understanding of the instruction. Like an archeologist about to begin his excavations, I ask the reader to indulge my tedious brushing away of dust from those old fragments and shards. If we do apply the brush of the imagination to this investigation, we can grasp the meaning of Ignatius’s magnanimous vision that soon became obscured by the dust of the Counter-Reformation.

Although recent commentators have not made extensive use of the presupposition, its significance did not go unnoticed in earlier literature, although it is absent from the 1548 edition of the *Exercises* reproduced photographically in 1910.<sup>6</sup> Four versions of the presupposition are given in the *Monumenta Ignatiana*: the Spanish autograph, the Vulgate, the “First Version,” and the version of Father Roothan.<sup>7</sup> While all versions agree in

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<sup>6</sup> *St. Ignatii de Loyola Exercitiorum Spiritualium Editio Princeps*, ed. P. Lethielus (Paris, 1910). But it should be noted that already in 1555, a year before the death of Ignatius, his young confidant and interpreter, Pedro Ribadeneira, wrote in a marginal gloss to the work of Luis González that Ignatius himself always kept this rule of the presupposition. It was “as it were, proverbial of him to excuse the faults of others.” See *Narrationes scriptæ ante annum 1557*, ed. Dionisio Fernández Zapico, S.J., and Cándido de Dalmases, S.J., vol. 1 of *Fontes narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societate Iesu*, from *Monumenta Ignatiana*, series 4, new ed., vol. 66 of *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Rome, 1943), 581. (This is a different set of documents from the one indicated in the following note.) Bear in mind also that “excusing faults” is not really the point of my article. I include the reference as demonstrating the magnanimity of Ignatius of Loyola.

<sup>7</sup> *Exercitia Spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et Eorum Directoria*, from *Monumenta Ignatiana ex Autographis vel Antiquioribus Exemplis*, 2nd series, vol. 19 of *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Madrid, 1919), 251f. This source is cited in this essay as *MI*.



using either the Spanish *presuponer*, or the Latin *supponendum est*, or *præsupponendum*, the actual title does not appear. While this is not the place to enter into intricate textual comparisons, we may note that the texts do not differ substantially from one another. However, it is worth noting that one commentary illustrates what I observed earlier about the second part of the text. W. H. Longridge's interpretation places special emphasis on the possibility of error only in the one making the statement. Perhaps, he writes, "the other has simply expressed himself badly, so that the tongue rather than the mind has erred."<sup>8</sup> In other words, there is no possibility indicated here that the one listening might be misunderstanding or misinterpreting. Was that Ignatius's meaning? George Ganss sheds some light on this when he places the basic responsibility for careful listening on the exercitant: "To profit from the Exercises . . . an exercitant who is suspicious or hostile and searching for heresy or Illuminism would lack the desirable openness. Ignatius is here asking for fairness. If something is unclear, let the exercitant ask about it."<sup>9</sup> Ignatius's words, however, seem to call both director and exercitant to an open-minded attitude.

The Monumenta Ignatiana commentary offers some interpretation of the importance of the text. First of all, it points out that Ignatius himself called it "Prosupuesto."<sup>10</sup> The commentator states further that Ignatius's words in the Spanish version speak of making the effort to save the proposition itself; an unknown corrector, however, omitted the Latin pronoun *eam* (referring to the proposition itself) and substituted the passive *salvetur*, referring to the other person. This would indicate that the concern of the instruction is the salvation of the neighbor personally. But the Monumenta commentator (Father Roothan) believes that Ignatius himself simply wished to salvage the truth of the *proposition*, thus suggesting a more benign understanding of the dynamic here, one that refuses to impute possible damnation to the person uttering a proposition.<sup>11</sup>

In his discussion Roothan goes on to comment that Ignatius's own experience of "less fair judgments" influenced him as he wrote this instruction. Often he was pursued by "suspicions of the serpents of heresy" and was in danger of incurring the unhappy epithet "innovator" whenever he gave the Exercises. The commentator goes on to paraphrase Ignatius: If you

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<sup>8</sup> W. H. Longridge, M.A., *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola*, 2nd ed. (London: Robert Scott, 1922), 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 148, note 16.

<sup>10</sup> *MI* 169.

<sup>11</sup> Ganss notes that "the Spanish text is ambiguous, and can be translated either way" (*Spiritual Exercises*, 148, note 16).



find someone uttering something “new” or offensive, “do not, I beg you, rush to condemn the point.” Rather, “question the one who is explaining it; you will see to it that each and every point be rightly understood and explained.”<sup>12</sup>

The *Directory* of 1599 says of the presupposition, perhaps significantly, that in the context of a directed retreat, it will be better not to address it explicitly at the beginning of the Exercises; instead, if any difficulty should arise, it might be discussed in order to give more confidence to the exercitant. This very subtle usage symbolizes the spirit of the text itself, which is to discern where the truth lies rather than to provoke unnecessary argument.

Certainly too, the same restraint in communication is thematic in other writings of St. Ignatius. The fifteenth annotation instructs the director to respect the exercitant’s personal discourse with the Creator, as well as to avoid seeking to know the hidden sins of the exercitant. Moreover, Ignatius’s instructions to Jesuits in sensitive positions also counsel prudence in speech and readiness to listen carefully. Thus, when sending Broët and Salmerón to Ireland, he advised them to discipline themselves to listen long and speak briefly.<sup>13</sup> And to the fathers attending the Council of Trent, he said: “Be slow to speak, and only after having first listened quietly, so that you may understand the meaning, leanings, and wishes of those who speak. Thus you will better know when to speak and when to be silent.”<sup>14</sup>

A rare modern article on the *præsuppositio* appears in a 1935 edition of *Manresa*, whose author identified himself only by the initials “E. D.”<sup>15</sup> This commentary offers several valuable suggestions as to Ignatius’s thinking about the presupposition, its history, and its contemporary application, going well beyond the context of a retreat. The author calls the presupposition “a precious piece of instruction or advice” (327). E. D. cites an earlier commentary of 1885, which had noted, “How many sins would be avoided if everyone acted according to this document!” (327). The point here is that the author saw the presupposition as expressing an attitude that has value well beyond the retreat context. E. D. follows the testimony of the *Monumenta*, that Ignatius’s personal history after his conversion figured profoundly in his thinking here, since he had repeatedly endured harassment

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<sup>12</sup> *MI* 170.

<sup>13</sup> See Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J., *Counsels for Jesuits: Selected Letters and Instructions of St. Ignatius Loyola* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 1–3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> E. D., “El Presupuesto,” *Manresa: Revista Trimestral de Ejercicios* no. 44 (April 1935), 327–42. E. D. was F. J. Morell, S.J., according to John W. Padberg, S.J., to whom I am indebted for this reference.



over the early methods of giving the Exercises. His critics seem to have assumed that Ignatius, who was "an unlettered man," must therefore have been one of the *illuminati*, who claimed sources coming directly from God without the mediation of the Church. Thus, early in his apostolic life Ignatius came to understand how disposed the human will is to condemn rather than to defend, and how prone the human tongue is to speak evil of others.<sup>16</sup>

The true value of the presupposition is its potential for creating a dynamic of trust and collaboration between persons, whether in retreats or in any other form of discourse. The antithesis to such trust, according to E. D., is the sin of rash judgment and the intrusion into the "holy of holies" of the person's inner life.<sup>17</sup> In other words, according to the anonymous author, the basic value of the presupposition lies in what the phenomenological method calls "intentionality," not only in the knower but in the person known. This can never be presumed, but must be described only after careful inquiry. Both charity and justice demand no less. Charity is the virtue that prefers to "indulge" the intentions of others rather than to treat them with severity, and justice always refuses to usurp jurisdiction over the inner life of another (334). This is why one must always ask how the other understands the proposition.

E. D. points out that this sensitive dealing with another is not to be equated with moral indifference or credulity (339). Here we see how the practice of mutual correction is expressed in the third part of the admonition. It is a correction that is always done with love, as manifesting compassion and great sensitivity in the act of correction: "A most beautiful teaching, but difficult to raise up to practice" (338). Ignatius, says the author, was an example of this value, which "he raised up to practice with rare perfection in his life as well as in his theory" (338).

It is worth noting that this author, writing in 1935, still possesses unflinching certitude about what he can call "manifest errors"—such as those of the Modernists—thus placing limits on the possibility of reassessing

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<sup>16</sup> Walter Ong has suggested an important insight into the problem that Ignatius faced. The basically adversarial nature of oral disputations would have had a negative effect on any effort to have new views accepted with a collaborative rather than an "agonistic" attitude. It seems not to have been a common-sense teaching that one should bend over backwards to "save" another's proposition. As for the Church, its deep attachment to this method at the time of the Renaissance led it to approach discussion more as contest than as dialogue. This point makes a stronger argument for the countercultural value of Ignatius's instruction. On this point, see Walter J. Ong, *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 126.

<sup>17</sup> E. D., "Presupuesto," 332.



historical positions, as the Church has in fact done with many Modernist positions. All the more reason, then, for the principle of retrieving what the presupposition seems to stand for: the importance of the person and of the truth. Thus, we are called to make a “second effort” to question apparent adversaries once again in order to discover deeper meanings in their positions. However, E. D.’s ease in detecting error here is understandable and does not detract from his deep concern for respect and charity. Perhaps his problem is analogous to the failures of our North American predecessors, who, lovers of liberty and tolerance though they were, could not bring themselves to grant these same boons to aboriginal and other minority cultures not well understood by the American mainstream.

The value of the presupposition, seen as extending into the realm of apostolic endeavor, can be summed up by one who made dramatic use of it. Pedro Arrupe wrote that the characteristic Ignatian features of the presupposition in any exchange of ideas are

- ▶ A broad understanding, which seeks to evaluate the statement itself and the spirit in which it is intended
- ▶ A complete objectivity, which knows how to consider the positive values and put aside one-sided exaggerations or purely emotional reactions
- ▶ Utter respect for the legitimate freedom of others, without seeking to lead all by the same road, but allowing the Spirit to guide each one according to his will<sup>18</sup>

In other words, Arrupe was describing civilized discourse, and this observation brings us back to John Courtney Murray.

## The Presupposition in the North American Context

For North American readers, at least, Murray’s phrase regarding the laws of dialogue, cited at the beginning of this essay, can bear some situating within his context of the mainstream American academic world.<sup>19</sup> I do this here as a recollection of my own pilgrimage, which has been an alternation between academic and pastoral contexts, and between intellectual and pastoral social apostolates. That the two must constantly “interface” might convincingly be demonstrated by referring to an early work by the American sociologist Robert Bellah, who brought a serious charge against the

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<sup>18</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *A Planet to Heal* (Rome: International Centre for Jesuit Education, 1977), 138.

<sup>19</sup> *We Hold These Truths: Reflections on the American Proposition* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), 14.



mainstream American ideology of "manifest destiny." This slogan became programmatic in the optimistic nineteenth century, but it had its roots two centuries earlier among the first European immigrants. The fundamental image at that time was the powerful one of "covenant"—a pact between our Puritan ancestors and God to extend the Reign of God on earth. For Bellah, the sin that broke this covenant was the failure of its makers to include the aboriginal peoples as conversation partners in this march of progress.<sup>20</sup>

And yet, ironically, American intellectual history abounds with testimony to respectful dialogue among those who differ. Among North American thinkers who preceded Murray, the presupposition, if it could have been publicized, would have resonated with statements defending the right to personal freedom and respectful argumentation. In my own experience, I have often sought to place Ignatius's argument, if not his metaphysics, alongside that of William James, whose pragmatic viewpoint was deeply concerned with the practical consequences of ideas.<sup>21</sup> James's persistent question was "In what respect would the world be different if this alternative or that were true?" (24). In this light, we must see theories and positions as instruments for pursuing the practical consequences of truth, rather than secure and tranquilizing answers to enigmas (26). On this point, he wrote as follows:

Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses and to count the humblest and most personal experiences. She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. She will take a God who lives in the very dirt of private fact—if that should seem a likely place to find him. (38)

The spirituality of the Ignatian Exercises, and of Ignatius generally, repeatedly applies this pragmatic norm in spiritual direction and discernment. Even more specific is the presupposition: it defends the value of any position until this statement clearly reveals itself as a disvalue. It thus calls for understanding, collaboration, trusting mutual correction, and personal dialogue as working values. James would find in the process of the presupposition—the desire to "rejoice in the truth" rather than to condemn error, the spirit of careful inquiry, the courage to engage—a powerful antidote for "a certain blindness in human beings" that afflicts them in their approach to those who differ from themselves (251). Therefore, we must take care not "to be forward in pronouncing on the meaninglessness of forms of existence

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<sup>20</sup> See Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury, 1975). This argument runs throughout the book.

<sup>21</sup> See William James, *Pragmatism and Other Essays* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 26. The essays of interest here are James's essay on pragmatism (1908) and "A Certain Blindness in Human Beings" (1896).



other than our own,” and must “tolerate, respect and indulge those whom we see harmlessly interested and happy in their own ways, however unintelligible these may be to us” (269). While Ignatius had a different understanding of how one arrives at the truth, he supported this principle of respecting the truth of the other. But, not unlike James, he further undertook to engage others in dialogue and argument. The aspect of Ignatius that has assumed so vivid a place in my own mind is his desire not simply to tolerate but to *save* the truth in every position that he encountered.

This expansive understanding of human interaction found a ready disciple in Murray as he sought for civilized discourse in both Church and civil society. Murray’s contribution in this case consists in his measured passion against that “barbarism” which prohibits persons from living and talking together, that is, from holding authentic “conversation.”<sup>22</sup> His search for public consensus was based on premises that are analogous to the presupposition: the call for reasonable discourse to seek out the truth in any proposition. This in turn makes religious freedom not merely an act of tolerance but a stage in the quest to discover the genuine values in religious positions. As Murray pointed out with regard to the then well-known dictum in Roman Catholicism that error has no rights, “True enough, but persons do!”<sup>23</sup>

### On Finding Civilized Discourse Where We Don’t Expect It— among So-Called Barbarians

The celebrated Cree artist Norval Morrisseau has created a powerful depiction of the general impression that Europeans give to aboriginal peoples. In that painting we behold two natives—an adult and a child—engaged in an exchange with a white man. Using the artistic imagery of several northern Algonquin tribes, Morrisseau always depicts verbal exchange by means of wavy lines coming from the speaker’s mouth and entering the mind or heart of the listener. But in this encounter the lines simply swirl around the European without ever getting inside, while the small child simply stares in wonder.

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<sup>22</sup> Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> John Courtney Murray, S.J., and Walter Burghardt, S.J., *The Problem of Religious Freedom* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1965), 10. The profound impact of this dictum on the Second Vatican Council is famous, and it can be rediscovered in the recent documentation from General Congregation 34. See “Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue,” in *Documents of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995), 67–81.



I do not wish to do further needless "bashing" here by creating a naive "good guy/bad guy" image, but there is no question that the painting depicts a constantly recurring theme in colonial history. Even one of the learning exercises in a beginner's language text, *Ojibway Language Course Outline*, contains a familiar statement among various generalizing comments: "Kaween zhaugunaushuk bizindizeewuk"—"White people do not listen."<sup>24</sup> Tragically, missionaries are included in this perception. Consequently, any missionary who offers Jesus Christ and the Church to another culture must study, learn, and acquire insight into that culture, its values, gifts, and needs.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the presupposition, in the spirit of the *Directory of the Exercises*, becomes a kind of vade mecum throughout all personal interchange.

Mainstream North American theology and missiology until recently have not attended to conversation with persons and cultures that express themselves in differing idioms. In fact, even John Courtney Murray, in his courageous and at the time ecclesiastically unpopular struggle to establish the rights of conscience, ignored this dimension, save for several references to the rights of black people. I am sure that Murray would endorse such an extension of his argument to reach to our conversations with peoples we have so often considered to be "barbarians." It remains for Murray's successors to establish a basis for what William Johnson Everett calls "publicity"—the capacity to express oneself and to participate in a society according to one's own free choice—on behalf of North America's aboriginal minorities.<sup>26</sup>

Even so, we are deeply indebted to Murray for alerting us to the barbarism that lurks below the surface in all of us, the tendency to dismiss as savages all those who do not respond in our categories. If we are to rehallow the original covenant of freedom for this continent, we must extend our principles of dialogue to include people who have no means of

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<sup>24</sup> Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Language Course Outline for Beginners* (Ottawa: Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1978), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Here we reflect on the words of General Congregation 34: "In the exercise of our mission, we bring a simple criterion from our Ignatian tradition: in our personal lives of faith, we learn that we are in *consolation* when we are fully in touch with what God is doing in our hearts, and we are in *desolation* when our lives are in conflict with his action. So, too, our ministry of evangelizing culture will be a ministry of consolation when it is guided by ways that bring to light the character of God's activity in those cultures and that strengthen our sense of the divine mystery. But our efforts will be misguided, and even destructive, when our activity runs contrary to the grain of his presence in the cultures which the Church addresses, or when we claim to exercise sole proprietorial rights over the affairs of God" ("Our Mission and Culture," in *Documents of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation*, 53f.).

<sup>26</sup> William Johnson Everett, *God's Federal Republic: Reconstruction Our Governing Symbol* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 95.



entry into the conversation save through dramatic acts of resistance or revolution. Again, we must move beyond Murray's "barbarian" argument; although his barbarian is a person of any culture who refuses to engage in civilized discourse, the argument presupposes a literary context for all discourse. According to one suggested etymology of the word, a barbarian is one who babbles incoherently, a stereotype that has all too often made its way into our judgments on the esthetic, ethical, and religious practices of others. I have come to appreciate this problem by reflecting on my stumbling efforts to engage in another form of discourse. When suggesting that we extend our principles of dialogue, I do not have in mind abandoning rational discourse and opting for chaotic sentimentality; I mean simply the ability to look and listen and feel for other forms of communication, especially in symbol and myth, song and dance, and even, as painful as they may be to endure, the outbursts of frustration and anger of aboriginal people.<sup>27</sup>

### Practicing the Presupposition across Cultures

Once I realized that I would have to seek to "save the truth" in the propositions of aboriginal persons (and we have indeed engaged in many discussions around propositions!), I was to learn the corollary to this truth—that I would have to become a witness to and, where allowed, a "participant observer" in their symbolic discourse. Conversation is not simply a debate (even though native elders do enjoy a good intellectual tussle); it is even more a "being there." If one can do this with a command of the native language, all the better. Having established only a halting facility in two native languages, I admire colleagues, both Jesuits and others, who have become somewhat fluent in local languages. In my own case, it was precisely as a bungling learner of the local language who required guidance as he composed liturgical prayer in the native language that I was able to be a participating observer. Well can I remember the peals of laughter that accompanied my attempt to find the correct word for "sin" to put into the Arapaho Eucharistic liturgy!

In matters like this, the "children of this world" have often put the "children of the light" to shame. The efforts of such scholarly anthropologists as Lucien Levy-Bruhl, Claude Levi-Strauss, Emile Durkheim, Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, and many others, however much these may have produced their own kind of projections, at least admonish us regarding the kind of intellectual rigor that we may need if we wish to carry on intercul-

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<sup>27</sup> Frank Clooney's essay in the May 1996 edition of *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS* is an excellent example of such an ability.



tural conversation. One modern Christian thinker who appropriated this concern was the late Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye, who persistently warned readers against the naive evolutionism that denigrates myth and symbol, branding them inferior forms of discourse.<sup>28</sup> Frye wrote that no mere "bilingual dictionary" can ever close the gap between two different cultures, especially if one is a modern technological one and the other is rooted within a tribal context. Modern mainstream North Americans cannot expect to translate his or her own concepts easily into the language of, say, a Polynesian or an Iroquois, nor could aboriginals easily translate theirs into ours. Only "patient and sympathetic study" can help to discover what is happening in the other's mind in such cases. Still, Frye continues, one must seek to discern "communicable inner structures," and thus to "disentangle one's own mental processes from the swaddling clothes of their native syntax" (72).

My efforts to understand the ceremonial and mythical side of native cultures and to relate to this in pastoral practice furnish one illustration of this. A serious problem that still exists within aboriginal societies goes by various names—sorcery, witchcraft, bad medicine, bear walking, and the like.<sup>29</sup> Clergy and church ministers may often be called upon to assist persons who have been "cursed" and are suffering deep anxiety. Beyond doubt, such a condition is an evil, but the underlying problem is very complex. In many societies where forms of law and order familiar to us had not evolved, the use of spiritual means of self-protection was considered necessary and legitimate, and the total culture had its ways of dealing with various "medicine power" tensions. These ways offend the Christian sensibility, but they were pragmatically effective. Today, these structures are mostly destroyed, but in many places the practice of bad medicine still persists. In my experience and that of other church workers, we could not simply read these situations (in Frye's terminology) through *our* "syntax," but had to engage local persons in order to find the best pastoral approaches to the problem.

Let me take another example from my own encounter with aboriginal spirituality. My task as a theologian or pastor includes more than merely describing a peyote ceremony. I must open myself up to be instructed by the living, believing, and acting practitioner of the rite. Thus, when one elder explains to me that peyote is not a divinity but a "medicine" or power-filled

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<sup>28</sup> Robert D. Denham, ed., *Northrop Frye on Culture and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 23, 38.

<sup>29</sup> This is the term used by Ojibways and other Algonquin peoples to describe how the sorcerer assumes the form of a bear and appears to the person he or she desires to curse.



reality, I am being exposed to a challenging proposition, as we have seen above. I might easily interpret "medicine" in its merely antisocial sense rather than as a very complex reality. I can deepen my appreciation of this point only by observing ceremonies approved in the community and by actually participating in them myself. Moreover, when I enter into such "participant observation," I also learn about the hopes and fears of those involved, especially about the devastation and oppression that followed the collapse of Plains Indian culture in the nineteenth century and led to the ill-fated Ghost Dance movement. Combining personal testimonies and historical study, I learn that the peyote movement and its institutionalized form, the Native American Church, can best be called a "revitalization religion" by which a people seeks to recover a lost culture. I then come to know myself as challenged by the testimonies shared in the ritual.

A question put to me by a young Navajo just after we had both shared in the Arapaho peyote ceremony goes farther than any theory toward placing intercultural work in perspective: "Do you have anything like this in your church?" Not only did I not at that point see any value in a "propositional" response, but I was not even sure that I could invite him to "come and see." I wondered what kind of symbolic statement my presence there made to him, but most likely I will never know.

What I do know is that acting in accordance with the presupposition often creates a transformation in the questioner even before he or she formulates a challenge. Between the years 1981 and 1994, one of my "students" was Ojibway Deacon Dominic Eshkakogan, a man of about my own age. It was my task to instruct him in theology, and he was constantly open to this instruction, never hesitating to ask me what I meant by statements that he did not at first grasp. But Dominic's questions nearly always included examples of how he understood my teachings within his own culture. Thus, for example, during a course in "theological anthropology" Dominic commented on the hereditary character of "original sin" in the light of healing one's family history. As I in turn questioned him about what this meant, I sensed myself drawn into the wounds in my own family history, and was able to share with him my own sense of the need for redemption and forgiveness. Some years later, in 1994, as Dominic, ravaged by diabetes, lay near death, I was able to be at his bedside and to share in the "teachings" he was giving to his visitors from this ultimate podium, and to perceive that Dominic was truly healed of the conflict that had so often caused tension between his Christianity and his aboriginal spirituality. The healing had come from intense engagement in both "propositional" and symbolic dialogue. When he died several days later, so his wife Gladys told me, his final gesture was to reach to the sky as if welcoming death. His funeral was



a synthesis of the Eucharist and the symbols of his people, presided over by his fellow Ojibway, Father Milton McWatch.

## **Inculturating the Principle of Inculturation**

It has been my purpose here to suggest how we might "inculturate" the Ignatian presupposition—that great principle itself of inculturation—within North American culture, both within the mainstream and among those marginalized in our society. For a reason unknown by me, I find this very terse instruction deeply moving. Perhaps I see it as a "medicine" for the ills that have plagued my own life in mission. In any case, I constantly experience it (in spite of its unassuming position outside the annotations) as a dramatically practical expression of the spiritual freedom that all people passing through the Exercises desire. It would be difficult, if not impossible, then, to restrict such an instruction to the confines of retreats or one-on-one spiritual direction. Rather, all Christians, certainly all Jesuits and others who espouse an Ignatian spirituality, must fervently pray for the freedom to be open to other views and positions and to other worldviews and cultural forms. Any of us who realize how easily we become annoyed by the apparent recalcitrance of others, and how easily we descend to shouting matches or to subtle forms of manipulation, will realize the significance of the presupposition. In struggling to observe it, we will have to take more seriously the examen of consciousness and to peer into the various fears, biases, and self-deceptions that obscure our vision and hearing. Pedro Arrupe, speaking at the Jerusalem Interdisciplinary Seminar on Inculturation, had this to say:

The Church—that is, ourselves—all of us, must exhibit a model, or many models, not just of peaceful co-existence, but, as has been said, of peaceful pro-existence, where each one has something to contribute to the well-being of the other, and where differences make for mutual enrichment.<sup>30</sup>

In this same rich volume, Marcello Azevedo, the Brazilian Jesuit theologian, sought to teach participants how they could prudently and firmly disengage from cultural impediments: "to extricate the original Christian message from the overwhelming and over-detailed set of meanings, symbols, and names that accumulated over the centuries and that the church

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<sup>30</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., in Ary Roest Crolius, S.J., *Inculturation: Working Papers on Living Faith and Cultures* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, Centre for Cultures and Religion, 1982), xi-xii.



tried and still tries to retain sometimes, in a quite absolute manner.”<sup>31</sup> This implies a complex process: the Church must pick its way through the jungle of ideologies and worldviews in order to develop a critical consciousness about itself and its mission if it is to be a “transparent milieu for the constant action of God in humanity” (49).

So it is for Ignatian spirituality’s inculturation in our North American context. Carrying the presupposition into practice demands the kind of self-divesting attitude that will free us to live a truly incarnate existence not simply as missionaries “going out” to foreign cultures, but as ministers relating across the increasingly complex network of cultures that exists in such North American cities as New York, Toronto, Montreal, Chicago, or Los Angeles. No minister of the Gospel can render an authentic service without transcending his or her biases in order to appreciate ways of entering into the ideas, cultures, and lives of those being “served.” This kind of entry may be modest enough, entailing an easing of restrictive boundaries in a given city parish, or it may be the heroism demanded of so many serving in Third World countries and identifying with the oppressed.<sup>32</sup> The challenge applies not only to clear-cut cultural lines, of course, but to other tensions between the Church and marginalized persons. It will call for spiritual and intellectual integrity in responding to the concerns of women, the protestations of gay persons, the needs and rights of the disabled. Perhaps most difficult of all, it must be applied to conflicts of ideology on the right and the left, that we might find in it the spiritual resources to refrain from both heresy hunting and dogmatic political correctness.

One way or another, the growth of social and cultural awareness that is gained by persons taking such risks in divesting themselves will further call for more generous sharing of resources, be they material, intellectual, or spiritual. Since the communication advocated by the presupposition is mutual, it renders theological education a practical reality. Just as no spiritual-direction relationship can remain one of cool detachment after the presupposition has been applied, neither can education be predominantly oriented toward the academic once it has entered into the fuller meaning of cultures. More than one “paradigm shift,” or radical alteration of a cultural

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<sup>31</sup> Marcello Azevedo, S.J., “Inculturation and the Challenges of Modernity,” in Crollius, *Inculturation*, 9f.

<sup>32</sup> Those who are working to incorporate groups of immigrants into the parish life of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Toronto afford an example of cross-cultural ministry within a city parish. See John Duggan, S.J., “Religious Experience and the Multicultural Community” (unpublished Doctor of Ministry thesis, Toronto School of Theology, 1987).



configuration, must be inevitable if cross-cultural communication proceeds along the lines of the presupposition.

To end where I began, we see that in the fullest sense of the term, the presupposition entails a sharing of power, on all the levels of that word. For example, to stay within Ignatius's context, spiritual directors cannot deliver a monologue to their directees or conduct themselves in a perempory manner once they have risked such a relationship of mutuality. Nor can the directee remain in a state of passive, submissive aloofness, retaining the power to be detached from challenges. By way of analogy, we can only speculate how different might now be the relationships between missionaries and native peoples in so many places had the presupposition been carried into practice.

When my young Arapaho friend asked me twenty years ago why the Church had been so hard on native religion and I promised to investigate the matter, I was on the brink of a profound surrender. I would have to surrender the power, at least in my own mind, to make someone else like myself. I would, in the course of time, have to surrender even more power, including the power to remain independent; I would have to become the childlike learner and even at times, in response to well-meant inquiries, the object of sharp reproach and recriminations. Even now, when I look at the possible direction of future dialogues, I do not always like what I see. But we continue to pray for the spirit of inquiry.

The title of this article was chosen in memory of an incident dating back to the autumn of 1975, during a period of drastic change in mission policy. The "bottom line" of this change, largely forced on us by circumstances rather than by any discernment on our part, resulted in our surrendering most of our power over educational theory and practice into the control of tribal leaders. The implications were becoming dramatically evident as we (the non-Indians) found ourselves listening hour after hour to native persons "telling their stories" to us, in many cases for the first time. It was to offer a helping hand to me in this process that that truly wise man, Ernest Sun Rhodes, spoke to me those words I have already quoted, "The Indian and the white man are as different as night and day."

But Ernest had a way of heightening his rhetoric for dramatic effect. He always insisted with equal vigor that we are all children of the one Creator. The problem was that hitherto the native people had been required by cultural and historical forces to remain the "children," and the missionaries had become the "parents." Now the roles are often reversed. But the purpose of such a role change is surely that we may all reach full spiritual adulthood before God. To enrich our "civilized discourse," then, we must be ready to "interpret favorably," to inquire more deeply, and finally to risk calling and being called to better self-understanding.



Martin E. Palmer, S.J.

**On Giving the Spiritual Exercises  
The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories  
and the Official Directory of 1599**

Granted that the basic manual for giving the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius was always the book of the Exercises itself, Ignatius, his associates, and their successors all realized that on many points fuller explanation was needed. This need they met with the Directories translated by Fr. Palmer in this book.

It gives us all the supplementary guidelines for giving the Exercises which derive from St. Ignatius and other 16th-century Jesuits. Much of the material survived only in manuscript form until the last century, and appears here in English for the first time. The documents range from a simple page of notes by St. Peter Canisius to a full-scale handbook by Ignatius's Secretary and long-time collaborator, Juan de Polanco. The book concludes with a fresh translation of the comprehensive *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises* published for the use of Jesuits in 1599, which served for over three centuries as the official guidebook to giving the Exercises.

For those involved with today's rapid growth in individually directed Ignatian retreats, these texts offer unparalleled insight into the original practice of the Exercises under St. Ignatius and his associates. Spiritual directors, retreat directors, and students of the Spiritual Exercises as well as of religious thought in general will not want to be without this book.

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## SOURCES

### Imagination Runs Riot

*The sources of the reputation of the Jesuit as archconspirator are many. The first of them is Protestant polemics at the time of the Reformation. The Society of Jesus was not founded to oppose the Reformation, but it quickly discovered itself cast in that role by Protestants and Catholics alike and by some of its own members. Often enough the sources of opposition to the Jesuits were theological. Far more popular and far more widespread, however, were the depictions of Jesuits in some of the fiction of the nineteenth century, in English-speaking lands to be sure, but even more so where the Romance languages prevailed. The present excerpt will give a good idea of such portrayals wherein imagination runs riot. It comes from a novel by one of the most popular authors of the day, Alexandre Dumas (1802–70).*

*Dumas's most famous novel is, of course, The Three Musketeers. Most people do not know that he wrote a sequel called The Vicomte de Bragelonne (part of which was also issued separately as The Man in the Iron Mask). The three musketeers, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, appear again and so does D'Artagnan. They are pretty much the same kind of characters as in the earlier novel except for Aramis who, at the end of The Three Musketeers had entered the priesthood. Ten years later, in the sequel, he is the bishop of Vannes in Brittany and is now about to reach the giddy heights of power, becoming the general of the Society of Jesus. The then current general himself, who is never named, is on his deathbed. He is going to hand over power to one of seven competitors who tells him a secret so valuable that it will enable the Society to control the kings and princes and prelates of this world. Such, of course, is supposedly the way in which the Society operated in its dedication not only to serving the Church but also to acquiring for itself European political dominance. In this part of the novel Father General is disguised as a Franciscan and is thus referred to in the original text. For the sake of clarity, in the excerpt here he is simply called "the General." The scene takes place in the seventeenth century in a country inn, the Hôtel de Beau-Paon, near Fontainebleau, where the General is dying and to which he has summoned a German baron, a Spanish cardinal, a Bremen merchant, a Venetian senator, a Scottish laird, a counselor from Austria and the bishop of Vannes, Aramis himself. The present excerpt is abridged from the selection in Great Spy Stories, edited, fittingly, by Allen Dulles, former head of the CIA, and published in 1969 by Castle.*

[It was late at night.] While the inn-keeper stood respectfully near the door, the General collected himself for a moment. He then passed across his sallow face a hand which seemed dried up by fever, and rubbed his nervous and agitated fingers across his beard. His large eyes, hollowed by sickness and iniquity, seemed to pursue in the vague distance a mournful and fixed idea. . . .

[It will be imagined that, at the sign of the cross which they had exchanged, the landlord and the invalid monk [the Father General] had recognized each other as two affiliated members of the well-known Society of Jesus.]

"What physicians have you at Fontainebleau?" . . .



“. . . Three, holy father,” . . . [the third] a secular member [of the Society], named Grisart.”

“What priests . . . belonging to what orders?”

“There are Jesuits, Augustines, and Cordeliers. . . . Shall I send for a confessor belonging to the order of Jesuits?”

“Yes, immediately.”

Left to himself, the General drew from his pocket a bundle of papers, some of which he read over with the most careful attention. The violence of his disorder, however, overcame his courage; his eyes rolled in their sockets, a cold sweat poured down his face, and he nearly fainted, and lay with his head thrown backwards and his arms hanging down on both sides of his chair. For more than five minutes he remained without any movement, when the landlord returned, bringing with him the physician. . . . The noise that they made in the room, the current of air which the opening of the door occasioned, restored the General to his senses. He hurriedly seized hold of the papers which were lying about, and with his long and bony hand concealed them under the cushions of the chair. The landlord went out of the room, leaving patient and physician together.

“The landlord,” [said] the doctor, “told me that I had the honor of attending an affiliated brother.”

“Yes,” replied the General, “it is so. Tell me the truth then; I feel very ill, and I think I am about to die.”

The physician took the monk’s hand and felt his pulse. “Oh, oh,” he said, “a dangerous fever.” . . .

“Look at my gray hair and my forehead, full of anxious thought. . . . Look at the lines in my face, through which I

reckon up the trials I have undergone; I am a Jesuit of the eleventh year, Monsieur Grisart.” The physician started for, in fact, a Jesuit of the eleventh year was one of those men who had been initiated in all the secrets of the order, one of those for whom science has no more secrets, the Society no further barriers to present—temporal obedience, no more trammels.

“In that case,” said Grisart, saluting him with respect, “I am in the presence of a master?”

“Yes; act, therefore, accordingly.”

“And you wish to know?”

“My real state.” . . .

“Very well. Considering all the symptoms of your case, I must tell you that your condition is almost desperate.”

The General smiled in a strange manner.

“What you have just told me is, perhaps, sufficient for what is due to an affiliated member, even of the eleventh year; but for what is due to me, Monsieur Grisart, it is too little, and I have a right to demand more. Come, then, let us be more candid still, and as frank as if you were making your own confession to heaven. Besides, I have already sent for a confessor.”

“Oh! I have hopes, however,” murmured the doctor.

“Answer me,” said the sick man, displaying with a dignified gesture a golden ring, the stone of which had, until that moment been turned inside, and which bore engraved thereon the distinguishing mark of the Society of Jesus.

Grisart uttered a loud exclamation. “The General!” he cried.



"Silence," said the General; "you now understand that the whole truth is all-important."

"Monseigneur, Monseigneur," murmured Grisart, "send for the confessor, for in two hours at the next seizure you will be attacked by delirium and will pass away in its course."

"Very well," said the patient, for a moment contracting his eyebrows, "I have still two hours to live then!"

"Yes; particularly if you take the potion I will send you presently." . . .

"I would take it were it poison, for those two hours are necessary not only for myself but also for the glory of the order."

"What a loss, what a catastrophe for us all!" murmured the physician.

"It is the loss of one man—nothing more," replied the General, "for heaven will enable the poor monk who is about to leave you to find a worthy successor. Adieu, Monsieur Grisart; already even, through the goodness of heaven, I have met with you. A physician who had not been one of our holy order would have left me in ignorance of my condition, and, confident that existence would be prolonged a few days further, I should not have taken the necessary precautions. You are a learned man, Monsieur Grisart, and that confers an honor upon us all; it would have been repugnant to my feelings to have found one of our order of little standing in his profession. Adieu, Monsieur Grisart; send me the cordial immediately." . . .

A few moments after the doctor's departure, the confessor arrived. He had hardly crossed the threshold of the door when the General fixed a penetrating look upon him, and, shaking his head, murmured, "A weak mind, I see; may

heaven forgive me if I die without the help of this living piece of human infirmity." The confessor, on his side, regarded the dying man with astonishment, almost with terror. He had never beheld eyes so burningly bright at the very moment when they were about to close, nor look so terrible at the moment they were about to be quenched in death. The General made a rapid and imperious movement of his hand. "Sit down, there, my father," he said, "and listen to me." The Jesuit confessor, a good priest, a recently initiated member of the order, who had merely seen the beginning of its mysteries, yielded to the superiority assumed by the penitent.

"There are several persons staying in this hotel," continued the General.

"But," inquired the Jesuit, "I thought I had been summoned to listen to a confession. Is your remark, then, a confession?"

"Why do you ask?"

"In order to know whether I am to keep your words secret."

"My remarks are part of my confession; I confide them to you in your character of confessor."

"Very well," said the priest, seating himself on the chair which the General had with great difficulty just left, to lie down on the bed. . . .

"The first to whom I wish to speak," said the dying man, "is a German from Vienna whose name is the Baron de Wostpur. Be kind enough to go to him, and tell him that the person he expected has arrived." The confessor, astounded, looked at his penitent; the confession seemed a singular one.

"Obey," said the General in a tone of command impossible to resist. The good Jesuit, completely subdued, rose



and left the room. As soon as he had gone, the General again took up the papers which the crisis of the fever had already, once before, obliged him to put aside.

"The Baron de Wostpur? Good!" he said. "Ambitious, a fool, and straitened in means."

He folded up the papers, which he thrust under his pillow. . . . The confessor returned followed by the Baron de Wostpur; . . . at the appearance of the General, at his melancholy look, and seeing the plainness of the room, he stopped and inquired, "Who summoned me?"

"I," said the General, who turned toward the confessor, saying, "My good father, leave us for a moment together; when this gentleman leaves, you will return here." . . .

The baron approached the bed, and wished to speak, but the hand of the General imposed silence upon him.

"Every moment is precious," said the General, hurriedly. "You have come here for the competition, have you not?"

"Yes, my father."

"You hope to be elected general of the order?"

"I hope so."

"You know on what conditions only you can possibly attain this high position, which makes one man the master of monarchs, the equal of popes?"

"Who are you," inquired the baron, "to subject me to these interrogatories?"

"I am he whom you expected."

"The elector-general?"

"I am the elected."

"You are—"

The General did not give him time to reply; he extended his shrunken hand, on which glittered the ring of the General of the order. The baron drew back in surprise; and then immediately afterwards, bowing with the profoundest respect, he exclaimed, "Is it possible that you are here, Monseigneur; you, in this wretched room; you, upon this miserable bed; you, in search of and selecting the future general, that is, your own successor?"

"Do not distress yourself about that, monsieur, but fulfill immediately the principal condition of furnishing the order with a secret of importance, of such importance that one of the greatest courts of Europe will, by your instrumentality, forever be subjected to the order. Well! do you possess the secret which you promised, in your request, addressed to the grand council?"

"Monseigneur—"

"Let us proceed, however, in due order," said the General. "You are the Baron de Wostpur."

"Yes, Monseigneur. . . ."

"Now speak."

"I have a body of troops, composed of fifty thousand men; all the officers are gained over. I am encamped on the Danube. In four days I can overthrow the Emperor, who is, as you are aware, opposed to the progress of our order, and can replace him by whichever of the princes of his family the order may determine upon." The General listened unmoved.

"Is that all?" he said.

"A revolution throughout Europe is included in my plan," said the baron.



"Very well, Monsieur de Wostpur, you will receive a reply; return to your room, and leave Fontainebleau within a quarter of an hour." The baron withdrew backwards as obsequiously as if he were taking leave of the emperor he was ready to betray.

"There is no secret there," murmured the General; "it is a plot. Besides," he added, after a moment's reflection, "the future of Europe is no longer in the hands of the House of Austria."

And with a pencil he held in his hand, he struck the Baron de Wostpur's name from the list. . . .

Raising his head, he perceived the confessor, who was awaiting his order as respectfully as a schoolboy.

"[Doctor Grisart] is waiting with the potion he promised."

[The next man to be summoned is the Spanish cardinal, who reveals the whole of the still secret policy of Louis XIV to claim the crown of Spain for his grandson when the then reigning king of Spain dies. He then is sent away to await the General's decision.]

"Call Grisart, and desire the Venetian Marini to come," said the sick man.

While the confessor obeyed, the General, instead of striking out the cardinal's name, as he had done to the baron's, made a cross at the side of it. Then, exhausted by the effort, he fell back on his bed, murmuring the name of Dr. Grisart.

When he returned to his senses, he had drunk about half of the potion, of which the remainder was left in the glass, and he found himself supported by the physician, while the Venetian and the confessor were standing close to the door. The Venetian submitted to the same formalities as his two predecessors,

hesitated as they had done at the sight of the two strangers; but, his confidence restored by the order of the General, he revealed that the Pope, terrified at the power of the order, was weaving a plot for the general expulsion of the Jesuits, and was tampering with the different courts of Europe in order to obtain their assistance. He described the pontiff's auxiliaries, his means of action, and indicated the particular locality in the Archipelago where, by a sudden surprise, two cardinals, adepts of the eleventh year and consequently high in authority, were to be transported, together with thirty-two of the principal affiliated members at Rome. The General thanked Signor Marini. It was by no means a slight service he had rendered the Society by denouncing this pontifical project. The Venetian thereupon received directions to set off in a quarter of an hour, and left as radiant as if he had already possessed the ring, the sign of the supreme authority of the Society. As, however, he was departing, the General murmured to himself: "All these men are either spies or a sort of police; not one of them is a General. They have all discovered a plot, but not one of them is a secret. It is not by means of ruin, or war, or force that the Society of Jesus is to be governed, but by that mysterious influence moral superiority alone confers. No, the man is not yet found, and to complete the misfortune, heaven strikes me down, and I am dying. Oh! must the Society indeed fall with me for want of a column to support it? Must death, which is waiting for me, swallow up with me the future of the order, that future which ten years more of my own life would have rendered eternal? For that future, with the reign of the new king, is opening radiant and full of splendor." These words, which had been



half-reflected, half-pronounced aloud, were listened to by the Jesuit confessor with a terror similar to that with which one listens to the wanderings of a person attacked by fever, while Grisart, with a mind of a higher order, devoured them as the revelations of an unknown world in which his looks were plunged without ability to comprehend. Suddenly, the General recovered himself.

"Let us finish this," he said; "death is approaching." . . .

"Call the Scotchman!" exclaimed the General; "call the Bremen merchant. Call, call quickly. I am dying. I am suffocated."

The confessor darted forward to seek assistance, as if there had been inhuman strength that could hold back the hand of death, which was weighing down the sick man; but, at the threshold of the door, he found Aramis, who, with his finger on his lips, like the statue of Harpocrates, the god of silence, by a look motioned him back to the end of the apartment. The physician and the confessor, after having consulted each other by looks, made a movement as if to push Aramis aside, who however with two signs of the cross, each made in a different manner, transfixed them both in their places.

"A chief!" they both murmured.

Aramis slowly advanced into the room where the dying man was struggling against the first attack of the agony which had seized him. As for the General, whether owing to the effect of the elixir or whether the appearance of Aramis had restored his strength, he made a movement. His eyes glaring, his mouth half open, and his hair damp with sweat, he sat up on the bed. Aramis felt that the air of the room was stifling; . . . he opened the window and,

fixing upon the dying man a look full of intelligence and respect said to him:

"Monseigneur, pray forgive my coming in this manner, before you summoned me; but your state alarms me, and I thought you might possibly die before you had seen me, for I am but the sixth upon your list."

The dying man started and looked at the list.

"You are, therefore, he who is formerly called Aramis, and since, the Chevalier d'Herblay? You are the bishop of Vannes?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I know you, I have seen you."

"At the last jubilee, we were with the Holy Father together."

"Yes, yes, I remember; and you place yourself on the list of candidates!"

"Monseigneur, I have heard it said that the order required that [it] become possessed of a great state secret, and knowing that from modesty you had in anticipation resigned your functions in favor of the person who should be the depositary of such a secret, I wrote to you to say that I was ready to compete, possessing alone a secret I believe to be important."

"Speak," said the General; "I am ready to listen to you and to judge of the importance of the secret."

"The secret of the value of that which I have the honor to confide to you cannot be communicated by word of mouth." . . .

"How do you propose, then, to convey your secret?" inquired the dying general.

With one hand Aramis signed to the physician and the confessor to withdraw, and with the other he handed to



the General a paper enclosed in a double envelope.

"Is writing not more dangerous still than language?"

"No, my lord," said Aramis, "for you will find within this envelope characters which you and I alone can understand." The General looked at Aramis with an astonishment which momentarily increased.

"It is the cipher," continued the latter, "which you used in 1655, and which your secretary, Ivan Injan, who is dead, could alone decipher, if he were restored to life."

"You knew this cipher then?"

"It was I who taught him," said Aramis, bowing with a gracefulness full of respect and advancing towards the door as if to leave the room; but a gesture of the General, accompanied by a cry for him to remain, restrained him.

"*Ecce homo!*" he exclaimed; then reading the paper a second time, he called out, "Approach, approach quickly!"

Aramis returned to the side of the General, with the same calm countenance and the same respectful manner, unchanged. The General, extending his arm, burnt by the flame of the candle the paper which Aramis had handed him. Then, taking hold of Aramis's hand, he drew him toward him and inquired: "In what manner and by whose means could you possibly become acquainted with such a secret?"

"Through Madame de Chevreuse, the intimate friend and confidante of the Queen."

"And Madame de Chevreuse—"

"Is dead."

"Did any others know it?"

"A man and a woman only, and they are of the lower classes."

"Who are they?"

"Persons who had brought him up."

"What has become of them?"

"Dead also. The secret burns like vitriol."

"But you survive?"

"No one is aware that I know it."

"And for what length of time have you possessed this secret?"

"For the last fifteen years."

"And you have kept it?"

"I wished to live."

"And you give it to the order without ambition, without an acknowledgment?"

"I give it to the order with ambition and with the hope of return," said Aramis; "for if you live, my lord, you will make of me, now that you know me, what I can and ought to be."

"And as I am dying," exclaimed the General, "I constitute you my successor . . . thus." And drawing off the ring, he slipped it on Aramis's finger. Then, turning toward the two spectators of this scene, he said: "Be witnesses of this, and testify, if need be, that, sick in body but sound in mind, I have freely and voluntarily bestowed this ring, the token of supreme authority, upon Monsieur d'Herblay, bishop of Vannes, whom I nominate my successor and before whom I, a humble sinner, about to appear before heaven, prostrate myself as an example for all to follow." And the General bowed lowly and submissively, whilst the physician and the Jesuit fell on their knees. Aramis, even while he became paler than the dying man him-



self, bent his looks successively on all the actors of this scene. Profoundly gratified ambition flowed with lifeblood toward his heart.

"We must lose no time," said the General; "what I had still to do on earth was urgent. I shall never succeed in carrying it out."

"I will do it," said Aramis.

"It is well," said the General, and then turning toward the Jesuit and the doctor, he added, "Leave us alone," a direction they instantly obeyed.

"With this sign," he said, "you are the man needed to shake the world from one end to the other; with this sign you will overthrow; with this you will edify; *in hoc signo vinces!*"

"Close the door," continued the General after a pause. Aramis shut and bolted the door, and returned to the side of the General.

"The Pope is conspiring against the order," said the General; "the Pope must die."

"He shall die," said Aramis, quietly.

"Seven hundred thousand livres are owing to a Bremen merchant of the name of Bonstett, who came here to get the guarantee of my signature."

"He shall be paid," said Aramis.

"Six knights of Malta, whose names are written here, have discovered, by the indiscretion of one of the affiliated of the eleventh year, the three mysteries; it must be ascertained what these men have done with the secret, to get it back again, and bury it."

"It shall be done."

"Three dangerous affiliated members must be sent away into Tibet, there to perish; they stand condemned. Here are their names."

"I will see that the sentence is carried out."

"Lastly, there is a lady at Anvers, grand niece of Ravailac [the assassin of King Henry IV of France]; she holds certain papers in her hands that compromise the order. There has been payable to the family during the last fifty-one years a pension of fifty thousand livres. The pension is a heavy one, and the order is not wealthy. Redeem the papers for a sum of paper paid down, or, in case of refusal, stop the pension—but run no risk."

"I will quickly decide what is best to be done," said Aramis.

"A vessel chartered from Lima entered the port of Lisbon last week; ostensibly it is laden with chocolate, in reality with gold. Every ingot is concealed by a coating of chocolate. The vessel belongs to the order; it is worth seventeen millions of livres; you will see that it is claimed; here are the bills of lading."

"To what port shall I direct it to be taken?"

"To Bayonne."

"Before three weeks are over it shall be there, wind and weather permitting. Is that all?" The General made a sign in the affirmative, for he could no longer speak; the blood rushed to his throat and his head, and gushed from his mouth, his nostrils, and his eyes. The dying man had barely time to press Aramis's hand, when he fell in convulsions from his bed upon the floor. Aramis placed his hand upon the General's heart, but it had ceased to beat. As he stooped down, Aramis observed that a fragment of the paper he had given the General had escaped being burnt. He picked it up, and burnt it to the last atom. Then, summoning the confessor



and the physician he said to the former: "Your penitent is in heaven; he needs nothing more than prayers and the burial bestowed upon the pious dead. Go and prepare what is necessary for a simple interment, such as a poor monk only would require. Go."

The Jesuit left the room. Then, turning toward the physician, and observing his pale and anxious face, he said, in a low tone of voice: "Monsieur Grisart, empty and clean this glass; there is too much left in it of what the grand council desired you to put in."

Grisart, amazed, overcome, completely astounded, almost fell backwards

in his extreme terror. Aramis shrugged his shoulders in sign of pity, took the glass, and poured out the contents among the ashes of the hearth. He then left the room, carrying the papers of the dead man with him.

*[The secret that Aramis confided to the General was that the king of France, Louis XIV, had a twin brother, who was kept locked up in the Bastille; he was the "Man in the Iron Mask." And, irony of ironies, or treachery upon treachery, "the Jesuit grand council" had itself arranged that the death of the already dying general be hastened by poison.]*



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