



**FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA
INSTITUTO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD**

TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

**IMAGINATION AND ARTICULATION:
IGNATIAN NARRATIVITY AND THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*
OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA**

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Visto Bueno del Director

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Fdo

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Writing Short Stories

*When you can state the theme of a story,
when you can separate it from the story itself,
then you can be sure the story is not a very good one.
**The meaning of a story has to be embodied in it,
has to be made concrete in it.***

*A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way,
and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is.
You tell a story because a statement would be inadequate.*

*When anybody asks what a story is about,
the only proper thing is to tell him to read the story.
The meaning of fiction is not abstract meaning but experienced meaning,
**and the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story
is only to help you experience that meaning more fully.***

— Flannery O'Connor,
from *Mystery and Manners*

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Imagination and Articulation

“We come to life in the middle of stories that are not ours.”

- Paul Elie

Introduction: Empowering authentic religious narrativity in the world today is of utmost importance. We are now living in what some would consider to be a ‘storyless’ moment. As Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of the *Image Journal*, notes: “According to postmodern intellectuals, the West is no longer undergirded by the Judeo-Christian story that had guided it--and its theorists argue that the modern ‘master narratives’ of Marx and Freud--the secular replacements for the Judeo-Christian story--have also lost their capacity to give meaning to our lives.”¹ The absence of substantial or unifying master-narratives makes possible the proliferation of divisive, fundamentalist, and, at times, dreadfully violent micro-narratives - narratives of exclusion and/or hatred in place of narratives of empathy and/or compassion. That we have disposed of master narratives does not mean we can rid ourselves of our innate narrativity - our capacity for and need of the inspiring art and organizing structure of story. Charles Taylor’s makes a strong argument concerning our need of narrative identity formation and moral orientation and he suggests that to dispose of narrative frameworks is to dispose of what constitutes our personhood; to lose narrativity is to lose human agency; it is precisely our capacity for narrative, our stories and their telling, that makes us human.

We find ourselves, as did Ignatius, in a cultural moment where the Church, concerned for the dignity of the human person, would do well to affirm this narrative capability and to offer, yet again, her liberating narrative of Christ as a model - Christ who is both the image and guide, both the horizon and the help that makes hope possible. Again, Gregory Wolfe explains:

“We are charged with the responsibility of renewing the story, and finding our own connections to it. When the Church’s versions of the master narrative become too narrow and triumphalistic, we are called upon to expand the story so that it is more inclusive and humble. When secularism and relativism threaten to empty the faith of content and contour, we must evoke the moral and spiritual boundaries that can guide us through troubled times.”²

¹ WOLFE, 82

² WOLFE, 84

A deeply held conviction of mine guiding this project is that the *Exercises* of Ignatius not only help the individual person to experience their own salvific narrative encounter with God, but that the *Exercises* (being exercises) also strengthen their capacity for receiving and telling the saving story of God's love in the Church and in the world. Ignatius was not merely concerned with the salvation of individual souls but with the conversion of the Church, the unity of the Body. The centrality of discernment, decision, and election in the Exercises is precisely this, a moment where we seek to know the will of God, choose to conform our life, our narrative, to that of the crucified Body of Christ, and to live our lives as an apostolic evangelizing mission in love and service. The *Exercises* are not merely an opportunity to passively contemplate the biblical or historical narratives of salvation history. If those narratives are to have any effect in our lives Ignatius understood that we have to participate in their truth to partake in their redemptive character. We are to become the narrative. The *Exercises* are not merely a story to be heard but an act of love to be performed.

This paper is divided into two basic parts (with a third part still in development - *Part III - For Further Research* - that I hope to complete as a part of the requirements of an anticipated Licentiate in Spiritual Theology). Part I is an attempt to define terms - to lay the basic foundation for what an 'Ignatian narrativity' might imply. Part II is a general reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* in light of the 'Ignatian narrativity' suggested in the first part. Ultimately, I do not expect to author a unified-theory of Ignatian spiritual theology, if ever a thing could be authored. What I do hope, is that the additional lens of narrativity - a narrative hermeneutic - might help to clarify our understanding of what's happening and what's at stake in the Ignatian spiritual praxis in general and the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* in particular. My title "Imagination and Articulation" reveals something of my conclusion; namely, that the creative tension behind much of Ignatian spirituality is one of imagination and articulation, contemplation and conversation, identity and orientation. This insight is not revolutionary (it might very well be just another version of Nadal's well trod 'contemplatives in action') but I do think it is both an efficient and an accurate description of a theologically distinctive Ignatian way to know God.

I have found the writing of this paper to be an experience of great humility before what I know to be the profound goodness and long history of the Ignatian spiritual and apostolic project. I have felt invited, on many occasions, to a posture of reverence before the sacred object of my study, a task that has felt more often than expected like true

contemplation. I have attempted to honor this experience by making use of whatever capacity for *imagination* I have in my personal attempt at *articulation* of what I have been privileged to study over the course of the past year. I am humbled most immediately by the many scholars and practitioners of the Ignatian tradition who go before me. If any insight that follows here is worthy of the subject material, it is only because the source and content of the Ignatian *imagination* is nothing less than grace incarnate. If any insight is lacking it is only because my poor *articulation* has inevitably failed to match the great abundance of grace already given by God. I am, however, deeply consoled and encouraged by the mystery of the Incarnation, for I trust that in the end there will be no punishment for being *all too human*, and I'm profoundly grateful for the opportunity to do so, by the grace of God, however I am able.

Part I -- Defining Terms

Proposal: In this project I will suggest *narrativity* as an apt hermeneutic lens for understanding Ignatian spirituality. While *narrativity* is surely not the only possible lens, it is an additional interpretive filter that can give greater 'depth of field' to our appreciation of the distinctive Ignatian spiritual/theological charism and help in our efforts to share this charism in our contemporary context. I hope to demonstrate that a narrative hermeneutic is particularly suited to our time and to the creative praxis of Ignatian spirituality today (a praxis that is participative, dynamic, and, above all, personal) and moreover, a crucial part of the long religious, artistic, and theological history of Christianity. In this sense, *narrativity* meets the two criteria set out for Jesuit theology in the *Constitutions* - that our theological perspective be (1) helpful to the people of the age³ and (2) solid in its foundation within the tradition and teaching of the Church.⁴

Method: After a brief definition of terms (Part I - Definition of Terms - Essentially an attempt to explain what I mean by 'Ignatian Narrativity' - a dialogue between Ignatian spirituality and Charles Taylor's treatment of narrative identity and moral values.) I will analyze the *Spiritual Exercises* in order to highlight the narrative elements of the text, its

³ *Constitutions*, 351

⁴ *Const.* 358, 446. While there is a temptation to identify 'narrative theology' with the 'helpful' and scholastic theology with the solid, I hold that, well done, both traditions can be applied apostolically as Ignatius desired. It is still necessary to justify the 'solidity' of the narrative side of things by observing that narrative is most certainly at the heart of Christian experience and thought - c.f. The recent turn in biblical theology, Logos/Word, salvation history, positive theology, etc. If Jesus' use of parabolic pedagogy isn't an endorsement of *narrativity* I don't know what is.

content and praxis (Part II - Ignatian Narrativity and the *Spiritual Exercises* - a close reading of the *Exercises* exploring the various levels of their narrativity).

Purpose: Ultimately I hope to present the *Exercises* as an apt tool for the preservation of human personhood and moral orientation toward the good in our contemporary secular context, what Taylor might call a theorized framework. More immediately, this ‘exploration of Ignatian narrativity’ is intended to set the foundation for the further development of an argument for an ‘Ignatian narrative theology - Ignatian spirituality and narrative epistemology’ in the coming year. All of this is offered as my humble attempt to help explore how the narrativity of Ignatian spirituality can help people to come to know God in the world today.

1.1. Narratives, Narration, and Narrativity

The late twentieth century saw a proliferation of narrative theories in a variety of scholarly fields. While narrative has proven to be a fruitful means of furthering academic understanding and explanation in philosophy, theology, legal and social sciences (to name only a few), it now becomes necessary to first define what we mean to say when we speak of narrative, narration, and narrativity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines narrate and narration thus: “*to narrate* - to relate, recount, in post-classical Latin also to plead in a court of law, to recite the verdict of a jury, related to knowing, skilled...” & “*narration* - a narrative, story, tale, (rhetoric) that part of speech which sets out the facts of a case, in post-classical Latin also a statement of claim in pleading...”⁵ For the purposes of this paper I will add to these common definitions a third term, *narrativity*, in order to describe the general narrative quality or narrative characteristic of the Ignatian spiritual praxis; any variation on this definition should be made clear by the context in which I use the term.

Narrative theory was clearly not a conscious priority of Ignatius of Loyola or his 16th century contemporaries. Ignatius himself used the term ‘*narrar*’ sparingly, and, perhaps, in its most limited sense - to relate or to recount.⁶ However, while Ignatius’ sole ‘narrative admonition’ is that the spiritual director ‘narrate briefly and faithfully’⁷ the points of each meditation to the person making the retreat, the *Spiritual Exercises* are fundamentally a

⁵ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, Volume X *Moul-Ovum* (Eds. Simpson J.A. And Weiner E.S.C.) Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989 pgs. 219-220

⁶ In the *Concordancia Ignaciana*, ‘*narrar*’ has only three entries - and it’s italian equivalent ‘*narrare*’ a few more - all but one in reference to the simple act of ‘recounting’ or ‘relating’ the details of the *Autobiography*. In this sense, Ignatius and DaCamara use ‘*narrar*’ as we might use ‘to tell’ or ‘to dictate’. *Concordancia*, 827

⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 2,1

systematic invitation to a sustained process of narration on the part of the exercitant herself: to imagine, compose, contemplate, etc.⁸ - to prayerfully review the content of each meditation in a colloquy (with Christ or Our Lady or one of the persons of the Trinity) and then to narrate it all back to the spiritual director. The praxis of the *Exercises* consists in a dynamic engagement with the narratives of the Gospels (i.e. the mysteries of the life of Christ), the imaginative Ignatian contemplations (e.g. The Call, The Two Standards, etc.), as well as with the personal narrative of the lived experience of the one making the retreat. Considering this, we must conclude that the ‘narrative caution’ of the second annotation is best understood as an application of the fifteenth - the annotation which compels the director to allow the Creator to work (*obrar*) directly with the creature and vice versa.⁹ Therefore, Ignatius’ apparent ‘narrative limitation’ is actually a ‘narrative liberation’. That is, the person giving the Exercises shouldn’t *narrate* what happens within the prayer of the one making them but rather *encourage* narration, leaving the creative work of narration to God and the individual retreatant.

It is in this broad and inclusive sense that I will use the word *narrativity* in this paper. By speaking of Ignatian narrativity I mean to say that the characteristic way of proceeding in Ignatian spirituality is one of personal narratives and personal narration, essentially, a spirituality of sacred story and storytelling. The strict OED definition of *narration* as a mere story or tale - a mere setting out the facts of a case - is insufficient for what I would like to say about the *Exercises* in this project. Even in and of themselves, all stories are more than facts, more than a series of events; truly personal narratives involve complex characters and conflict, creative authors and participative audiences.¹⁰ For this reason, I prefer the term *narrativity* - to include both narratives and narration as well as the inter-personal narrative interaction of Creator and creature. It is the *narrativity* of Ignatian spiritual praxis that interests me. More than compiling a cold list of *eventualities* or facts (be they theological, anthropological, biological, etc.) speaking of Ignatian *narrativity* allows for an analysis of what transformative *occasions* of encounter with the divine will of God might entail - an occasion of encounter which includes both stories and storytellers, both fixed frames and

⁸ C.f. GARCIA DE CASTRO, J. What do we do when we do the exercises? [verb analysis]

⁹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 15,6

¹⁰ For a treatment of the distinction between chronicles, annals, and narratives see VELLEMAN, D.J., “Narrative Explanation”, *Philosophical Review*, 112 (1).

applied creativity, both facts and their formation in an ordered (or disordered, as the case may be) narrative.

1.1.1. Why Narrativity? A Broad Narrative Hermeneutic

So, why narrativity in relation to Ignatian spirituality in particular? Partly because of this perceived narrativity intrinsic to Ignatian spiritual praxis (briefly discussed above) and partly due to the contemporary relevance of narrative in both academic inquiry and cultural life. Speaking of Ignatian narrativity is one way, a particularly relevant way, of orienting and understanding the Ignatian tradition in and from our contemporary context. And so, before offering a narrative reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the second part of this project, I will first review Charles Taylor's case for a narrative understanding of identity formation and moral decision making (i.e. a contemporary example of narrative hermeneutics) after which I will briefly sketch what I see to be basic indicators of *narrativity* in the fundamental Ignatian texts of the *Autobiography* and the *Constitutions* (i.e. the intrinsic narrativity of Ignatian spiritual praxis). In this way I will put Ignatian spirituality in dialogue with the broader academic conversation about narrative, a dialogue that, I hope, will be mutually beneficial.

The entirety of this first part is intended to provide a definition of terms and a basic description of the territory - i.e. putting Ignatian spirituality on the narrativity map. The second part of my paper will consist of a more precise examination of the particular narrativity of the *Spiritual Exercises*. **In other words, the two parts of this project address two basic questions: (1) What are we talking about when we talk about narrativity in general and Ignatian narrativity in particular? And (2) how is this narrativity encouraged and experienced in the *Spiritual Exercises*? My exploration of both questions will also include an overarching pastoral concern for meaning and purpose, a concern that suggests a third area of inquiry: (3) What value does narrativity in general and Ignatian narrativity in particular have for our personal well-being in relation to God? What difference does it make? When we speak of Ignatian spirituality today, what's at stake? What's on offer? What good is there in this Ignatian storytelling business?**

1.1.2. An Initial Hypothesis - Narrative Identity and Moral Agency

Anecdotally one can say that attempts at Ignatian theology are made in large part by the application of a narrative hermeneutic key to the (presumed) theology of the *Exercises*. That is to say, the process of doing Ignatian theology can't proceed, or at least doesn't get very far, without Ignatian stories (e.g. An Ignatian theologian might find it necessary to read

the *Autobiography* or the *Letters* in order to fully understand the ‘rules for discernment’, etc.).¹¹ In this project I am trying to take this anecdotally perceived narrative approach to Ignatian theology one step further (without stepping too far) by making explicit the suggestion that *narrativity* is an essential hermeneutic lens for understanding the distinctive Ignatian spiritual-theological insight. I can’t (and hope not to!) take this this claim too far - I cannot claim that Ignatius himself was consciously intending a ‘narrative theology’. I will, however, suggest that, considering our cultural and intellectual vantage point, the narrative lens can deepen our understanding of the uniquely Ignatian theological perspective.

I believe the lens of narrativity can help modern readers toward a right-understanding of Ignatian texts and Jesuit sources and avoid a mis-reading or misinterpretation of our fundamental charism. One could argue that there was such mis-interpretation of Jesuit sources during the restoration of the Society when Ignatian narrativity, and its concurrent apostolic creativity, was replaced by something closer to monastic or scholastic rule and order.¹² The mid-twentieth century call for ‘renewal’ or ‘ressourcement’ (in the Society of Jesus as in the wider Church) is itself evidence of this perceived misinterpretation or at the very least an appreciation of how the ‘old way of proceeding’ was no longer relevant to the contemporary age. What we’ve returned to is largely understood to be something closer to Ignatius’ intent and, remarkably, also something more adaptable, something more contemporary. My suspicion is that a return to narrativity might have something to do with the success of this ‘ressourcement’ - a systematic returning to the sources, to the foundational narratives as a way of recuperating and participating in the charism of our founder Ignatius. Narrativity allows for the innovative application of fixed forms in new contexts by new creative agents (authors, narrators, etc.). Narrativity encourages the development of analogical imagination and empathy. The structured continuity and creative innovation of narrativity allows for transformative relationships between subjects (characters) and objects (facts) which avoid rigid fundamentalism and/or the absolute relativity of subjectivism.

¹¹ Also, as we will see below in Part II, in the Ignatian pedagogy of the rules for discernment we find a kind of narrativity in the description of ‘pensamientos’ as characters interacting, like a woman, like a military general, etc. and a narrativity in the strategy of recognizing, interrogating, and evaluating the motions of the spirit within a narrative/analogical environment. Ignatius takes advantage of our fundamental narrativity (which he observes and describes -- phenomenologically), our capacity for narrative imagination, creation, and What C. Taylor might call our narrative ‘moral territory’. The way to understand is by narrativizing - a narrative epistemology.

¹² A betrayal, I will argue, of the narrative structure of the *Constitutions* -- a distinctive form in a genre marked by rules. The restored Society, marked by a temptation to appropriate other forms of religious life, excerpted ‘rules’ from the *Exercises* in a way that, arguably, limited their application in new contexts.

My suspicion is that our fundamental human proclivity for narrative, a proclivity that allows for our understanding of and participation in the divine work of creative generosity, might be at the heart of Ignatius' spiritual wisdom. I once heard someone say that to do what Ignatius did, we have to do it differently; my suspicion is that the wisdom of this quip is key to a narrative approach -- we all tell stories, we all orient ourselves narratively, even if we each do so differently or for different reasons. I will turn now to a contemporary theory of narrative identity and moral understanding that I hope will help illustrate a narrative bridge between what 'Ignatius did' and what we are called to do today.

1.2. Narrative Identity and Moral Values (Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*)

Considering a wide variety of narrative theories¹³, I chose Charles Taylor as a conversation partner in this project for three basic reasons: (1) his clarity, (2) his concern for identity and morality, and (3) his explicit attempt to speak meaningfully to the contemporary secular context about the critical importance of personhood, moral decision making and the good. Defining narrativity is not Taylor's main concern in *Sources of the Self*, and this makes his articulation of what I will call his 'narrative social anthropology' clear and necessarily concise, in turn, making it a manageable foil within the limitations of my project. His concern for identity and morality coincides with what I see to be the primary concerns of Ignatian spirituality - *identity*, understood as the formation of the subject as a moral agent (i.e. the Ignatian concern for 'helping souls'), and *morality*, understood as orientation in moral space (i.e. the Ignatian concern for discernment and pilgrimage). Finally, Taylor's explicit effort to dialogue with contemporary culture (his search for the foundations of the self in the secular age) fits very well with the perpetual Jesuit desire to apply the wisdom and grace of the Ignatian tradition to the contemporary context, the apostolic desire to help a person from where they are.

As defined above, I am using the term *narrativity* in order to indicate a particularly 'Ignatian style' of apostolic religious life, theological and spiritual praxis. We can speak of Ignatian narratives or the process of narrativizing, but it is the combination of these narrative

¹³ To name a few: Nussbaum and literary analysis and narrative morality, Ricoeur and narrative identity and religious symbolic mediation, Fricker and narrative epistemology and testimony, Meyers and narrative ethics and victim stories, etc. An Ignatian scholar might benefit more or less from one or another of these 'foundational' theories. i.e. A literary analysis of the *Autobiography* might benefit more from Nussbaum's literary treatment of morality (*Love's Knowledge*). A more developed theological analysis might benefit from Ricoeur's philosophy of narrative identity and symbolic communication, etc. The current section of this paper justifies the use of Charles Taylor for the purposes of this project. -- See also Bibliography - Narrative Ethics.

elements (character, author, audience, story, etc.) that I find intriguing as a lens for reading Ignatian spirituality. The remainder of this first part will, with Charles Taylor's help, seek to give further nuance to this notion of narrativity. I will offer what I consider to be a robust definition of narrativity and its value in four steps - essentially a critical summary of the first part of Taylor's text *Sources of the Self* (1989): (1) Our predicament. (2) The stakes. (3) The terms and territory. And, finally, (4) the spiritual value of personal narrativity.

1.2.1 Definition: Charles Taylor's Narrative Social Anthropology

Charles Taylor, in *Sources of the Self*, explores the modern landscape and its particular challenges to the 'self' as an agent in moral space. His basic diagnosis is that without the horizon of traditional religious or social-philosophical 'common ground' the individual is left without a reliable 'framework' for self-understanding or moral decision making. The self is lost, if not annihilated entirely.

1.2.1.a. Our Predicament

Taylor differentiates our predicament from that of previous periods in history by noting that ours is particularly concerned with the loss of identity; whereas a person in previous social-historical contexts (at least Western-Judeo-Christian contexts) might have been more concerned with the loss of salvation, we are plagued by a kind of existential meaninglessness or lack of purpose. In making this distinction, Taylor frequently uses Martin Luther as a counter-example for what he sees as the modern individual's existential predicament; where Luther faced a crisis of condemnation the modern self experiences something more like a crisis of identity.¹⁴ Taylor explains that Luther's existential crisis was not fundamentally a personal crisis of identity, but rather something more social or institutional: "For someone in Luther's age, the issue of the basic moral frame orienting one's action could *only* be put in universal terms. Nothing else made sense. This is linked, of course, with the crisis for Luther turning around the acute sense of condemnation and irremediable exile, rather than around a modern sense of meaninglessness, or lack of purpose, or emptiness."¹⁵ What then, I wonder, would Taylor say of St. Ignatius?

It would seem that for Ignatius, a 'man of Luther's age', this modern sense of 'meaninglessness, or lack of purpose, or emptiness' is precisely where the crisis turns.

¹⁴ "The existential predicament in which one fears condemnation is quite different from the one where one fears, above all, meaninglessness. The dominance of the latter perhaps defines our age." TAYLOR, C., *Sources of the Self*, 18

¹⁵ TAYLOR, 28

Obviously, Ignatius' existential crisis was experienced in universal terms of salvation and condemnation that might not be shared by our secular contemporaries, but his memory of the crisis that led to his conversion does seem to include a sense of loss of meaning and personal identity that Taylor might recognize as particularly modern. Ignatius describes his conversion moment in Loyola as one of literal salvation -- "Todavía nuestro Señor le socorría [Still, Our Lord *rescued/saved* him]..." -- but immediately follows this description with one of personal 'identification' with the saints -- "Santo Domingo hizo esto; pues yo lo tengo de hacer. San Francisco hizo esto; pues yo lo tengo de hacer. [St. Dominic did this; then I must do it. St. Francis did this; then I must do it.]"¹⁶ That the existential reality of personal identity and moral decision making is somehow related to our salvation, perhaps even more so than our institutional identity, is a truly Ignatian novelty, perhaps the surest case for his sainthood, and one of his greatest gifts to the Church on the verge of the modern age. Moreover, this connection between identity and decision making is precisely where Taylor chooses to focus his analysis of the sources of the self in the secular age.

Ignatius' experience seems to demonstrate Taylor's fundamental claim about the connection between identity and moral orientation; in this way, Ignatius becomes a bridge between the pre-modern and the modern self. In his crisis of conversion Ignatius momentarily loses his horizon (the structured life of court) and gradually discovers one in Christ; in Taylor's terms, Ignatius discovers an identity and a moral orientation by adopting a new existential *framework* (a technical term for Taylor, defined as - "a crucial set of qualitative distinctions") - and, as Taylor explains, to think/feel/judge within a framework is to function with some sense that some action/mode of life/mode of feeling is 'incomparably higher' than others available to us, incomparable in that it commands our awe, respect, admiration, 'reverence'; higher in its fullness, depth, purity, humility; a 'standard' by which all other ways of life are judged.¹⁷ That Taylor's language here resonates with the fundamental Ignatian posture before the 'standard' of Christ - a posture of reverence toward that which is incomparably higher than other modes of life, higher even in its humility - is revealing. Ignatius' discovery of these 'standards' and the importance of choosing to identify oneself with the 'standard of Christ' above all others, is precisely the kind of salvation by identification that Taylor wants us to reclaim. According to Taylor, the predicament of the

¹⁶ *Autobiography*, 7

¹⁷ Taylor, 19-20

modern self is one wherein salvation and condemnation are experienced in terms of identity, meaning, or purpose - our perdition is experienced as a loss of horizon or a loss of our means of navigating within the horizons that remain.

Ignatius presumably shared Luther's fear of condemnation and loss of salvation, but (as I'll develop below) differed from him in his remedy. The remedy which Ignatius discovered and then shared in his *Spiritual Exercises* is particularly modern (prototypically¹⁸ so) in its concern for the existential identity and personal agency of the individual before God. While Ignatius may not have shared the psychological understanding (or the vocabulary) of our modern disease of 'ego-loss' he certainly seems to have experienced its symptoms (briefly defined by Taylor as: emptiness, flatness, futility, lack of purpose, or loss of self esteem¹⁹). Ignatius can be seen as a 'proto-modern' subject whose experience marks the arrival of the modern 'self' and its potential for identity crisis. Moreover, Ignatius offers a remedy for this crisis based on the development of human agency - the formation of the human subject²⁰ in her capacity for making decisions in relative freedom. In this way, we can say that our predicament is his, that our condemnation is experienced as meaninglessness (loss of identity) and our salvation has something to do with a search for identity and moral orientation (personal agency).

1.2.1.b. The Stakes

In this context and with this particular cultural-existential predicament, what is at stake? What do we lose if we lose our horizons, our frameworks (strong qualitative discriminations), our narrativity (our capacity to understand, describe, and navigate these horizons)? Taylor makes a strong claim that to lose such things is to lose our human personhood because, for Taylor, these frameworks partially constitute human agency:

"I want to defend the strong thesis that doing without frameworks is utterly impossible for us; otherwise put, that the horizons within which we live our lives and which make sense of them have to include these strong qualitative discriminations. Moreover, this is not meant just as a contingently true psychological fact about human beings, which could perhaps turn out one day not to hold for some exceptional individual or new type, some superman of disengaged objectification. Rather the claim is that *living within such strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human*

¹⁸ Much of what I'm trying to say here is captured in this play on words: I'm making a case for Ignatius as a *proto-type* for the modern self...and the *Exercises* as a *proto-typical* 'remedy' for the modern predicament.

¹⁹ TAYLOR, 19

²⁰ cf. DEI, 942-947 - '*hombre*', 1662-1668 - '*sujeto*', as well as the concern for '*el hombre*' etc. in the *First Principle and Foundation, Sp.Exs.*, 23

agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood."²¹

Essentially, what Taylor hopes to communicate to his (and our) contemporary secular context is that to live without horizons and, more pointedly, without frameworks with which to orient ourselves in relation to those horizons, is nothing less than to cease to be human. Taylor makes a case for frameworks (theorized or otherwise) and, in Part II of this paper, I will present the *Exercises* as one such 'theorized framework' uniquely suited, according to Taylor's argument, to the protection and preservation of our human agency (identity) and to help in our moral orientation (discernment) toward the good. If Taylor is correct, the stakes of this presentation are very high. If no convincing framework is offered, if there is no reliable map, no trustworthy guides, the secular self will continue to be lost, human agency ruined, and we will have essentially ceased to be persons.

1.2.1.c. The Terms and Territory

Concerned then with the preservation of human agency and personhood in the secular age, Taylor begins his examination of the fundamental philosophical question of identity - *Who am I?* Taylor approaches the problem by way of a spatial metaphor. *Identity* is understood as "orientation in moral space" and, in Taylor's understanding of the modern self, to know "who you are" is to know "where you stand" in regard to values. Taylor, having connected identity (who I am) and moral orientation (where I stand) within his sense of the 'frameworks' which constitute our human agency, proposes narrativity as our means of answering these questions of identity and moral orientation. Taylor's map of 'moral space' and our means of orienting ourselves within it essentially takes the following form:

Two types of spatial (dis)orientation²²

1. What is the lay of the land?
2. Where am I (on the map)?

Two analogous types of moral (dis)orientation:

1. What is qualitatively higher?
2. Where do I stand in relation to it?

The second question involves two further questions:²³

²¹ TAYLOR, 27

²² TAYLOR, 41-42

²³ TAYLOR, 45

1. A relative question: How far am I from the good? (the answer admits of degrees).
2. An absolute question: Am I moving in the right direction toward it? (Yes/no answers only).

The second absolute question concerns the direction of our lives, it concerns our becoming, and so is answered with a *narrative*.²⁴ A narrative structures my present in relation to my past and future toward the good. In Taylor's scheme, if and when we are lost, it is our narrativity, our capacity for narrativizing, (theologically/spiritually our participation in the divine narrativity of Christ-Logos), that saves us. Our identity is defined by where we stand in relation to God and to know *who we are* and *how we are* requires a narrative sense of orientation.²⁵

1.2.1.d. The Value

The spiritual importance/value of narrativity, then, is that it both constitutes and orients our human personhood. It is our narrativity that helps us to navigate the complex existential frameworks (qualitative distinctions in moral space) that make our lives fundamentally human. Theologically, I would say that we become more human by way of our narrativity and, by the grace of the incarnation, what makes us more human makes us more like Christ.²⁶ Charles Taylor's term for this divinizing narrativity might well be 'linguistic articulacy' as he shares the Socratic appreciation of "...the sense of logos, of linguistic articulacy, as part of the telos of human beings. We aren't full human beings until we can say what moves us, what our lives are built around. ... Articulation can bring us closer to the good as a moral source, can give it power."²⁷ I understand *narrativity* to include what Taylor refers to as his 'unusual broad and encompassing sense' of the terms 'language' and 'articulation' - both terms implying more than mere prose²⁸ but rather a speech act articulating

²⁴ TAYLOR, 47 - I owe much of my understanding of Taylor's narrative theory to my participation in Diana T. Meyers' graduate seminar on narrative ethics at Loyola University Chicago. This schematic/summary is an abbreviation of the work of that seminar and Professor Meyer's always articulate and insightful class notes.

²⁵ This relative-absolute tension can be seen as a way of articulating the subjective-objective dynamics of the *Exercises* -- a subject in relation to the transcendent object - God. Ignatian equivalent of this narrative orientation - *Principle and Foundation*.

²⁶ This is what theologian Michael Himes' calls the 'incarnational principle' - because we understand Christ to be both perfectly human and perfectly divine, it follows that to become more perfectly human is to become more divine - i.e. whatever humanizes, divinizes.

²⁷ TAYLOR, 92

²⁸ "Clear for centuries in the Western church, the principal media in which the mass of believers came to understand their faith were, alongside narrative, those of ritual and visual presentation in church frescos and illuminated windows." TAYLOR, 92

(i.e. narrating) our story of the good, a narrative of grace, our salvation history. As Taylor explains: “A sense of the good finds expression not only in linguistic descriptions but also in other speech acts -- as with the example above of prayer.”²⁹ -- It is our participation in the divine narrativity of Logos that makes possible our salvation in Christ.

Here is where Taylor and I will temporarily part ways as I make use of his narrative foundation to discuss the narrativity of Ignatian spirituality. But this will not be a permanent or devastating departure; ultimately, I hope to affirm Taylor’s argument by suggesting that Ignatius’ *Exercises* are an invaluable tool for accomplishing the kind of narrative agency Taylor recommends if we are to preserve our ‘undamaged human personhood.’ In the end, I hope to present Ignatian spirituality as a narrative remedy to the existential and moral predicament of the secular soul. So the fundamental question in Part II of this project will become: How do the *Exercises* demonstrate Ignatian narrativity and how might their narrative praxis serve the modern subject in his/her search for meaning, his/her discovery of identity and orientation in moral space? Beyond the merely existential concern for the secular subject lies a theological claim that this narrative remedy might also have transcendent implications - namely, that to discover our identity as moral agents and to participate in the narrativity of moral discernment is one way to come *to know Christ* - in the sense of familiarity with Christ, but Ignatius also suggests that we pray for the grace *to know as Christ knows* - to imitate Christ in the use of our senses³⁰ (this idea becomes the basic thesis of my upcoming narrative epistemology project). In this light, the *Exercises* can be understood as a way of ‘choosing Christ’ by participating in Christ’s divine narrativity. But I would like to make one more diversion before we get to the *Exercises* -- establishing the existence of Ignatian narrativity in the foundational texts of the *Autobiography* and the *Constitutions*.

1.3. Ignatian Narrativity -- Pilgrimage & Formation

Having nuanced what I mean by *narrativity* in general above, I will briefly address what we might consider, more precisely, Ignatian narrativity - the narrative characteristic of Ignatian theological thought and spiritual praxis found in the *Autobiography* and the *Constitutions*. This brief sketch of the initial traces of evidence for a general Ignatian

²⁹ TAYLOR, 91

³⁰ *Spiritual Exercises*, 248; See also Endean’s treatment of Rahner’s theology of direct experience in relation to Ignatian mysticism.

narrativity will then set the foundation for an analysis of the particular narrativity of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the second part of this paper.

1.3.1. Quest and Identity

“*A pilgrimage is a journey undertaken in the light of a story.*”³¹ In his presentation of our narrative social anthropological predicament, Charles Taylor repeatedly uses Ignatius’ 16th century contemporary Martin Luther as a counterexample to make his point about personal identity. As I have explained above, following Taylor, the modern crisis is one in which the loss of horizon, the loss of frameworks, constitutes a loss of identity, whereas the ‘crisis of Luther’ was not one of identity but of condemnation, not a loss of self per se, but of salvation. Within this argument Taylor notes the difficulty many moderns experience in adopting frameworks: “...frameworks today are problematic. ... [people always experience] something tentative in their adhesion, and they may see themselves, as, in a sense, seeking. They are on a ‘quest’, in Alasdair MacIntyre’s apt phrase.”³² This ‘seeking-quest’ image, which Taylor adds to his diagnosis of our contemporary predicament, resonates with Ignatius’ own self-identification as *pilgrim* in the *Autobiography*.

Here again, where Taylor sees in Luther a person from a fundamentally different age than our own, his near contemporary, St. Ignatius, appears to fit many of Taylor’s existential criteria for modernity. Taylor focuses narrowly on the ‘crisis of Luther’ but we ought not only analyze the content of a person’s crisis, but also their reaction to it. That is to say, it is not only the disease that interests us but also the remedy. Would Taylor look to Ignatius he might see in him an example of someone seeking, someone on a *quest* (the pilgrimage of the *Autobiography*); he might find a person committed to helping others in the formation of their personal and institutional narrative *identity* (Jesuit formation and the *Constitutions*); and he might find a spiritual teacher hoping to share a pedagogy, a narrative way of appropriating a Christian identity, a theorized framework or map, to help others in their own quest (*Exercises*).

As I argued above, it seems that Ignatius does indeed experience something of an existential ‘identity’ crisis in the way Taylor would define it and an imaginative narrativity seems to play a role in his discovering his vocation and his subsequent development of a spiritual pedagogy for teaching discernment, moral/vocational decision making. While

³¹ Paul Elie, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage*, Farrar Straus, New York, 2003.

³² TAYLOR, 17

Luther's response to his crisis turns outward, to theological questions about the faith and ecclesiological questions about the Church, Ignatius' reflection turns inward, to wonder about what was happening within him; instead of theological questions, a deeply personal quest, a search for meaning, a search for a framework that could help to make sense of the loss of self which came with his injury in Pamplona. In Ignatius we see not only a theological crisis but a personal conversion. The fruit of this conversion is what we find in the foundational Ignatian texts. If the crisis was unresolved or unresolvable there would be no 'Ignatian tradition' to speak of, but rather just a few scarce historical references to a failed basque courtier-soldier named Iñigo.

The textual sources of the Ignatian tradition are the fruit of Ignatius' own ongoing process of 'narrativizing' and the prayers of Ignatius that eventually became the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, were for him a kind of 'narrative method' for making sense of his experience over time. As a man of the 16th century he may not have had the vocabulary of 'meaning' as Taylor notes, but that his response is an introspective search for a new vocational framework (the life of court vs. vowed religious life) would seem to answer Taylor's doubts. That Ignatius proposes an 'existential remedy' proves his concern for the consequences of an 'existential crisis' and its subsequent 'search for meaning'. What Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre might call a quest, Ignatius of Loyola would call a pilgrimage.

1.3.2. *Autobiography & Constitutions*

Obviously the *Autobiography* is, in the narrow sense, an 'Ignatian narrative' and by its nature carries an explicit narrative character. It's worth noting, however, that the 'Ignatian narrativity' of the autobiography extends well beyond its superficial status as an Ignatian narrative. Here I'm referring to issues of textuality and authorship. The *Autobiography* is not only a narrative in itself but a purposive document that seeks to encourage and assist others in the authorship and interpretation of their own story. To this end, the *Autobiography* suggests a narrative approach to identity formation in that it uses parable as a means of communicating moral or spiritual wisdom. We recall that that text itself was the result of a petition by someone (a representative of a religious community) looking for guidance in his own self-understanding and formation. The text was narrated explicitly with this purpose in mind

and therefore it implicitly affirms narrativity as a means of identity formation and moral guidance.³³

But the *Autobiography* was the last of the texts produced by Ignatius (although in collaboration) and I'd like to suggest that narrativity was more than an afterthought...more than a mere memorial of a life gone by, I'd like to suggest that narrativity was, in fact, an instigating presence from the beginning...a crucial part of the Ignatian conversion and maturation process over the entire course of his life -- a consistent narrativity that we can trace by its appearance in various Ignatian texts. Working backward then, from the *Autobiography* to the *Constitutions*...we see an earlier textual expression of an implicit narrativity.

Narrativity and the Constitutions: The *Constitutions* are not, upon first glance, a traditionally considered a narrative. One need not look too deeply to notice their narrative character, especially in comparison with other 'constitutional' documents and institutional texts. The *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus take as their organizing principle the life of a Jesuit over time...genetically, organically, or, we might say, narratively. Where other orders contemporary to the nascent Society of Jesus organized themselves around a set of 'rules' or a systematic collection of instructive decrees, Ignatius (with the able assistance of Polanco) organizes his *Constitutions* biographically - they begin with "all those who desire..." and proceed through the stages of formation from candidate to death. In this sense we can say that they are a narration of the theoretical or ideal Jesuit life...and by this narration they 'constitute' what it is to be a Jesuit, what is to be the Society of Jesus.

The text itself - with its prodigious use of footnotes and parenthetical annotation - is kind of a choose your own adventure novel whereby the particular story is derived from a sequential reading and series of choices, an implicit application of discernment. "This is our way of proceeding, or this, or this, depending...in this case or that...etc." The *Constitutions* serve as a narrative template for the individual Jesuit seeking to 'conform' himself to the way of Ignatius and the Society of Jesus; they provide the skeletal structure and, as I will develop in Part II, the *Exercises* add the dynamism of flesh, spiritual muscle which animates and incarnates the Society in the individual Jesuit - the *Constitutions* outline a 'what' and the *Exercises* a 'how' ...both do so narratively.

³³ For more on this narrativity see the excellent and exhaustive work of Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, Roland Barthes, and, more recently, John McManamon, SJ's treatment of the *Autograph*.

How does my story become the story of Christ? How do I become a companion of Jesus? How might I end my life more capable of recounting the pilgrimage as did Ignatius. How do we help people tell their stories? How can I make of my life an offering, the telling of my story a teaching, a testament?

Conclusion: The Exercises as a prototypical expression (praxis) of Ignatian Narrativity

“We find the sense of life through articulating it.”³⁴ The *Exercises* are rightly understood as the Ignatian masterpiece...and that they were the work of Ignatius from the beginning. The *Constitutions* and the *Autobiography* were consequences of the ongoing incarnation of the *Exercises*. While only the *Autobiography* is properly considered a story, the only true ‘Ignatian narrative’, it is important to note that a fundamental *narrativity* is present from the beginning. The conversion experience he reports in the *Autobiography* was substantially formed by narrativity - not only the textual inspiration of his reading the *Life of Christ* and the *Lives of the Saints*, but also in his own practicing *narrativity* by way of imagined fantasies, etc. That the *Exercises* include these imaginative contemplations - meditations that arise quite clearly out of Ignatius’ own mystical/spiritual experiences, and that these are regularly and rightly considered to be the prototypical Ignatian contemplations - seems to suggest that the *Exercises* were, among other things, his masterpiece and, quite literally speaking, his life’s work. Ignatius didn’t just happen to write his story; his happening became the story; his *exercises* of narrativity became his biographical narrative. What we can identify as the explicit Ignatian narrative of the *Autobiography* and the implicit Ignatian narrative of the *Constitutions*, we must now trace to the intrinsic Ignatian narrativity of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Part II. - The Narrativity of the *Spiritual Exercises*

Introduction: In Part I above I outlined a robust definition of what I mean by narrativity and made a very brief sketch of what we might consider to be the traces of a distinctive Ignatian narrativity in the *Autobiography* and the *Constitutions*. To speak of Ignatian narrativity is to make a claim that Ignatian spirituality can be understood, practiced, and interpreted by its narrative qualities - not merely that Ignatian spirituality includes stories (narratives) and storytellers (narrators), but that it recommends a narrative way of being (narrativity) and relating to God. As Charles Taylor might say, the practice of Ignatian spirituality involves thinking feeling judging within a framework (a crucial set of qualitative

³⁴ TAYLOR, 18

distinctions) with the sense that some action, mode of life, mode of feeling, is incomparably higher than others available to us. We come to know who we are and how we are in relation to this higher good by way of the application of our memory, understanding and will, by the appropriation of stories, by way of narrative.³⁵ The fundamental question in Part II of this project becomes: How do the *Exercises*³⁶ demonstrate Ignatian narrativity and how might their narrative praxis serve the modern subject in his/her search for meaning, formation of identity, and orientation in moral space? And eventually (for further research), what can narrative analysis teach us about Ignatian spiritual theology?

In the general introduction above I suggested that the Exercises are not merely a story to be heard but an act of love to be performed. The text of the *Exercises* is intended as a kind of script for various players engaged in a performative speech-act (in linguistic/semiotic terms). In this sense, they recognize and promote narrativity (the forming, telling, and interpreting of stories - biblical, personal, vocational, etc.) as a crucial function in human agency, moral decision making, and identity formation. Those concerned with the cultural-linguistic context of Ignatius' *Exercises* (writers like Rogelio García Mateo, Roland Barthes, etc.) invite us to interpret the *Exercises* as a 'dramatic speech-act'³⁷ - a performative text that we can only come to fully understand by experience and by praxis. The rest of this project will be an attempt to answer and give reason to this invitation -- to interpret the *Exercises*, piece by piece and as a whole, in terms of their narrativity. How does reading the *Exercises* in light of narrativity help us to understand them better or differently? What implications does narrativity have for their application and practice? How might this narrativity explain/defend their particular usefulness in our time, a time (as Taylor and Wolfe note) that finds individual narrative agents 'unmoored' in moral space, without a map, without a sense of how to navigate, etc.?

³⁵ TAYLOR, 19-20

³⁶ I will attempt to follow the typographical norm of italicizing the title *Exercises* when I refer to the text and not italicizing when I refer to the experience or praxis of the Exercises.

³⁷ Garcia Mateo on Barthes: "Esta ha sido, a todas luces, el error común que se ha cometido a la hora de juzgar y de interpretar los Ejercicios: no haber tomado en serio sus estructuras formales, haber los reducido literariamente a 'un cuaderno de apuntes' o a 'notas sueltas'. Aquí Roland Barthes es la gran excepción. Pero su interpretación, con todo lo que tiene de certera, cae en el extremo opuesto, olvidar el contenido, y sobre todo pasa por alto el carácter performativo: que los Ejercicios están escritos no para ser leídos, sino para ser realizados. Por tanto, tal y como sucede con textos de este tipo (dramas, libretos, partituras), sólo se les podrá entender plenamente ejecutándolos. Este no parece ser el caso de Barthes." GARCIA MATEO, 267. I appreciate García Mateo's perspective here and am using the term narrativity in order to include both 'extremes' - the narrative and the narration fully realized, enacted, executed.

In the end, my concern is simple, personal, and pastoral. I think we are helped most toward a transformative relationship with Christ by listening to stories (our own, others, God's) and by learning to tell them; as I hope to demonstrate, this 'listening' and 'telling' are recognizable in the Ignatian acts of imagination and articulation, contemplation and conversation. I think a narrative approach to the human person is evangelical, therapeutic, redeeming. Jesuits are particularly called to the ministry of the word, to the ministry of reconciliation, and to apostolic mission and its necessary tasks of communication and translation, the tasks of evangelization. As agents of the Word of God we are called to listen first to that Word revealed in the lives of those we encounter and then to speak the truth of God's merciful love to all the ends of the earth. The Exercises ought to prepare us for this narrative work, like any exercise, by developing the narrative potential placed in us by the Creator in whose image we were wonderfully made.

Method: Narrative Analysis - a proposed way of proceeding. I will examine the *Exercises* from three points of reference - (1) the **text**, (2) the **content**, and (3) the **method**; in each of these three parts I will suggest correlations to narrative elements of plot, character/conflict, and authorship/agency respectively. Analysing the redaction of the **text** itself as well as its foundational principles will introduce its intrinsic narrativity of setting and story, plot and place, the where and the when of narrative space and time. Considering the **content** of the *Exercises* (principally the use of colloquies in meditations and the election) will explore the narrativity of characters, their conflicts and choices, the who and what of the players and the plot. Finally, discussing the **method** of the Exercises (modes of prayer, the role of conversation and imagination in the interview and contemplations, etc.) will explore the narrativity of authorship, agency and articulation, the how and the why; the moral of the story, the narrativity of moral agency and mission.

The hoped for fruit of this exploration will be a first attempt to (1) suggest that the *Exercises* are a tool for narrative identity formation and orientation in moral space (taking a tip from Charles Taylor) and (2) to propose a further claim about the particular characteristics of a narrative epistemology of Ignatian spirituality, an epistemology that claims we might come to know God's will by way of narrative appropriation of God's divine character and that by getting free from our disordered attachments we may become capable of the indifference necessary for the praise reverence and service of God; we become capable of love. The *Exercises* then can be understood as a narrative method of creative/agential

divinization whereby we conform our lives to the true life of Christ, a life lived necessarily in the Spirit and in the Body of the Church.

2.1. Text - Script (Time and Space)

“*Once upon a time, in a land far far away...*” So begins the typical bedtime fairy tale story. The rubric reveals a need - every narrative requires both space and time. Even our narrative fantasies can’t escape this need; they may seek to distance themselves from us - *once upon a time, in a land far far away* - but they still take place in a temporal-spatial reality, albeit one of make-believe. The spatial metaphor of moral decision making and identity formation suggested by Charles Taylor which I presented in the first part of this project is but one way of articulating this fundamental narrative dynamic of our experience of personhood - a narrative consists in a subject moving through space and time in a sequenced, orderly, or purposeful way. As I mentioned above, some consider the Exercises an example of the dramatic literary form, a text that informs and directs a ‘speech-act’, and perhaps no single paragraph inspires my current study more than this one from Rogelio García Mateo:

“[The] Exercises contain a rich theatrical semiotics, which is still yet to be studied. Therefore, Ignatius can be placed in the pedagogical line of sacred theater. Theatre (the Greek *theáomai* = to consider, to look) is closely related to the visual organ, with imagination and fantasy, to the extent that the external scene itself is nothing more than an aid to give form to or construct the internal scene. With the method of the application of the senses Ignacio takes up, on the other hand, a way of meditation with a long standing tradition. Both elements constitute one of the foundations which gives textual form to his personal religious experience.”³⁸

This dramatic, or theatrical, hermeneutic communicates well the dynamics of imagination and application at play in the contemplation and action of Ignatian spiritual praxis. This lens also makes clear the dramatic character of lived spiritual experience - an experience of transformation that requires a narrative setting - a place and time. The text of the *Exercises* might be understood as a script, as a written attempt to create and give order to this dramatic

³⁸ “Según lo expuesto, los Ejercicios contienen una rica semiótica teatral, que está todavía por estudiarse. Con la Cual Ignacio se pone en la línea pedagógica del teatro sacro. Teatro (del griego *theáomai* = contemplar, mirar) está relacionado estrechamente con el órgano visual, con la imaginación y la fantasía, hasta el punto que la escena externa propiamente no es más que una ayuda para construir la escena interna. Con el método de la aplicación de los sentidos Ignacio recogía, por otra parte, un modo de meditación de larga tradición. Ambos elementos constituyen una de las bases para dar forma textual a su experiencia religiosa personal.” GARCÍA MATEO, 275

time and space. It is easy to imagine them as such - the text implicates a *performance*, a *director*, various *actors* and a fundamental *conflict* in need of *resolution* (reconciliation/election).

Beyond this simple dramatic analogy however lies a more complicated question: What evidence is there of this interpretive claim? How, precisely, do the *Spiritual Exercises* represent a narrative structuring of space and time? I think in two (or three) basic ways: First, the biographical redaction of the *Exercises* (a creative process that took place over years of time along the way of Ignatius' own pilgrimage) suggests that the narrativity of Ignatius' own life played a substantial role in the formation of the text. And secondly, Ignatius' sensitivity to temporal and spatial orientation is manifest in his insistence that the *Exercises* involve an examination of various 'histories' (narrative time - *Annotation 2*) and that they have as a horizon a truly 'global stage' (narrative space - *Principle and Foundation*).

2.1.1. - Redaction and Structure - Scripts and Stages [Au. 5-10]

The text of the *Spiritual Exercises* was composed by Ignatius over the course of many years. Because of this, we can say that the redaction of the text itself was part of a bio-narrative process³⁹ - its writing and revision was woven into Ignatius' own ongoing process of 'memorializing' his life experience (a narrative he eventually shares, in part, near the end of his life with DaCamara in his dictation of what would become the *Autobiography* - a text that Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle convincingly demonstrates had its own narrative peculiarities as an epideictic text - a rhetorical style explicitly concerned with the identity formation and moral orientation of its interlocutors). While living and interpreting his own vocation, forming his own personal narrative, Ignatius was simultaneously writing and revising the *Exercises*. Certain moments were key in this development (Manresa, Paris, Venice, Rome) but the intervening daily occurrences of Ignatius' life also must have had an effect on his composition and revision of the text. His desire to write and share the Exercises grew out of his own need to share his experience, his own desire for spiritual conversation

³⁹ "La narración, pues, qué hace Ignacio de su vida no es simplemente la transmisión neutra de algo vivido, sino su propia vida interpretada desde la madurez de sus últimos años y convertida en guía para otros. Esto lo sugiere tanto la trascendencia que atribuye Ignacio a la comunicación de su experiencia personal, como el modo excepcional de narrar que tenía. Efectivamente, las circunstancias que envuelven la decisión de empezar el relato, y el tono de suma gravedad con que Ignacio afirma haberse atendido escrupulosamente a la verdad de los hechos insinúan que no sólo la realidad de su vida, **sino incluso la misma narración tienen un valor peculiar y grande.**" RAMBLA, 7

and guidance and his ongoing spiritual and theological encounter with Christ.⁴⁰ The relationship was mutual and the praxis of the Exercises (his writing them, giving them to others, teaching them, etc.) also influenced the direction and decisions of his life.

While analysis of the redaction of the text of the *Exercises* reveals clear bio-narrative connections with the *Autobiography*, and though they have a Christo-narrative structure which includes the contemplation of biblical-narratives, imaginative-narratives, etc. they aren't exactly a narrative in and of themselves; they aren't a coherent telling of a particular story. The *Exercises* remain, however, a good example of what I mean by narrativity in that they are *performative*; they involve the active interpretation of narrative; to make the Exercises is an act of narrativizing various sacred histories. The *Exercises* are not a strict narrative per se, but as a text that guides a person in their own act of narrativizing they are rightly understood as something closer to drama.⁴¹ In his analysis of the *Exercises*, García Mateo identifies the nature of drama and its capacity to “reveal the innate human quality to act and perform, above all in their conflictual nature with themselves, with others, with destiny, with God”⁴²; this ‘dramatic’ nature makes the Exercises a fitting example of Taylor’s narrativity -- i.e. a narrative orientation - reading, interpreting, and performing - in moral space. The *Exercises* are not merely a speech-act directed from one subject to another (as in prayer) but rather a guide - an act that orients the subject in relation to another in moral space.

The redaction of the *Exercises* took place over nearly twenty years of life and the text was informed and revised biographically. The *Exercises* were not merely an inspired text which dropped from the heavens but rather the result of an ongoing conversion, inspired by and intended to communicate something of Ignatius’ own mystical experience and developed as an attempt to communicate this experience to others. This communication was necessarily formed and mediated by the ongoing lived experience of Ignatius in Manresa, Jerusalem, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris, and Rome, and the many roads and waysides between them. The

⁴⁰ “Estando todavía aún en Barcelona poco más de veinte días, según su costumbre buscaba todas las personas espirituales, aunque estuviesen en ermitas de la cibdad [sic], para tratar con ellas. Mas, ni en Barcelona ni en Manresa, por todo el tiempo que allí estuvo, pudo hallar personas que tanto le ayudasen como él deseaba; solamente en Manresa aquella mujer, de que arriba está dicho, que le dijera que rogaba a Dios le apareciese Jesucristo: está sola le parecía que entraba más en las cosas espirituales.” *Autobiography*, 37

⁴¹ “Por su naturaleza performativa los Ejercicios no podrán entrar adecuadamente ni en el ámbito de la lírica, ni de la narrativa, ni de la épica, sino precisamente en aquel género que también por naturaleza es acción, a saber, en el drama.” GARCÍA MATEO, 267

⁴² “Como ningún otro género literario, el dramático revela la cualidad innata del hombre por actuar y realizar, sobre todo en lo referente a su naturaleza conflictiva consigo mismo, con los demás, con el destiny, con Dios.” GARCÍA MATEO, 268

authorship and redaction of the *Exercises* begins with the mystical illumination by the banks of the river Cardoner in Manresa; they develop their Christological focus in the period from Manresa through Paris; and after the La Storta experience they take an ecclesial and pneumatological turn. From the outset we might qualify this sequence by noting that the *Exercises* of Ignatius found source material and structure in earlier spiritual exercises that he would have encountered in the monastery of Montserrat⁴³; Ignatius' 'authorship', then, might be better understood as a reformulation of the spiritual exercises he was given, a reformulation made in light of his own mystical experience and ongoing spiritual and theological formation. Evidence of this claim would be that the 'typically Ignatian' meditations - *Principle and Foundation*, the *Call of the King*, the *Two Standards*, the *Three Kinds of Persons* - are those that seem to follow more or less directly from Ignatius' biography. In any case, Ignatius' process of turning from personal conversion to outward communication, is what José María Lera refers to as Ignatius' 'conversion to the church' - a process by which the mystical content of the *Exercises* finds its translation into the lives of those who make them.⁴⁴

In terms of structure, it is interesting to note that Ignatius organizes the *Exercises* thematically in units of time. There are obvious practical considerations at play here - a retreat is made in a certain moment over a certain period of time, and, of course, there is strong evidence that the *Exercises*, as I've just stated, were influenced in their form by previous texts of exercises that Ignatius encountered in the monastery of Montserrat. Those monastic exercises took their structure from the 'hours' of the divine office, adding "three meditation-points for each canonical hour of the week."⁴⁵ It is intriguing, however, that we now speak of 'weeks' as thematic markers or descriptive adjectives - e.g. "*That sounds like a third week experience,*" or "*He's a person of the first week.*" Ignatius is not merely creating a schedule; he makes it clear that these 'thematic weeks' may not correspond directly to the calendar.⁴⁶ This is to say that the *Exercises* are no mere chronology, but rather a narrative - an ordered sequence of events with developing themes. In the dramatic metaphor we call these 'thematic periods of time "*Acts*"', implying not only the passage of periods of time, but the

⁴³ MELLONI, 6-13

⁴⁴ See Arzubialde's summary of the genesis and redaction of the *Exercises*, ARZUBIALDE, 31-62. Also see José María Lera Monreal's recent book *La Pneumatología de Los Ejercicios Espirituales* (2016) for an profound development of Arzubialde's basic intuition.

⁴⁵ MELLONI, 9-10

⁴⁶ *Spiritual Exercises*, 4,7

decisions and choices of dramatic *actors* within them. The four weeks of the *Exercises*, like acts in a play, have a narrative coherence and logic guided by questions of meaning and purpose - what Charles Taylor might call an orientation in moral space over a period time. Therefore, in both the narrative and moral sense, we can say that the *Exercises* are profoundly *consequential*.

The Exercises, then, are not merely a journaling exercise, but rather they intend to give form ('modo y orden') to the prayer experience of the exercitant - and it is precisely this intentionality that makes the narrativity of the Exercises explicit - they intend to help order, to make sense of, to orient and to guide our experience in space and time. Where chronologies or chronicles merely record data, narratives are formative; narratives imply purpose and are driven by creative desires - this is precisely what Ignatius suggests the *Spiritual Exercises* are for - to seek and find the will of God⁴⁷ and to love and to serve⁴⁸ in all circumstances guided by the Divine will. The text itself arises alongside the *Autobiography* and is formed in part by Ignatius' own narrativizing of his lived experience - what begins as a mystical 'illustration' seeks a vocabulary and expression. Unlike the *Autobiography*, however, the principal concern of the *Exercises* is not to share Ignatius' own story, but rather the crafting of stories, parables, metaphors, from his own experience and his theological formation in a way that would help others to have similar experiences.⁴⁹ This process was informed, no doubt, by a series of trial and error - giving the Exercises to various people and making adjustments to the text along the way - as well as by Ignatius' ongoing theological formation and studies. Their structure gives thematic significance to the development of subjects over time. It is this concern for narrative space and time to which we now turn.

2.1.2. - Narrative Time - Narrativity and History [Sp.Exs. 2]

In ways too many to number the *Exercises* are concerned with time.⁵⁰ The hour of prayer, meditations and their repetitions, the days and weeks of the *Exercises*, the times/occasions for making a sound election⁵¹, etc. There is also a notable concern for space⁵²

⁴⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 1,4

⁴⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, 233

⁴⁹ MELLONI, 48

⁵⁰ The *Concordancia Ignaciana* lists over two full pages of references to the word 'hour', half of these appearing in the *Exercises* (628-630) and even more to the word 'time' (1256-1262)

⁵¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 175ff.

⁵² Places and postures for prayer, appropriate places to make the Exercises - 'apartamento' - the importance of 'retreating' from the spaces and interactions of our daily life in order to 'draw closer' to God, *Annotation* 20, etc.

(I will address the spatial concern in the following section). Roland Barthes makes an interesting point about how this concern for time and space has the effect of making possible a new language (semiophony) - where God speaks.⁵³ My claim follows his - where Barthes suggests that this preoccupation for ordering space and time makes possible a new language, I suggest that it makes possible an experience of narrativity. The ordering of events and decisions in time is one way of understanding our history, an understanding that can help orient us in a world full of opportunities yet to be fulfilled and decisions yet to be made. This concern for history and orientation, are both expressions of the narrative dynamics which begin the *Exercises*. I cannot claim that Ignatius was conscious of narrative theory (the traces of 'space and time' I note may very well be an incidental consequence of human linguistic/existential constraints), but his intuition affirms narrativity as a privileged place of encounter with God. Ignatius is certainly concerned that the *Exercises* proceed narratively because, as we will see, his own conversion depended deeply on texts, on lived histories, and on imagined futures.

In Part I of this paper I noted that Ignatius seems to put a narrative limitation on the Exercises in this second annotation [*narrar fielmente*⁵⁴]. I suggested that this narrative limitation placed on the director of the Exercises is intended to be a narrative liberation for the exercitant. After receiving the basic 'points' of each exercise the exercitant bears the responsibility of narrating the details of each contemplation on their own, without undue distraction on the part of the director. We can deepen this observation about the 'narrative liberation' of the second annotation further by adding that while Ignatius doesn't use the word 'narrate' more than once, he does emphasize the term 'history' (the word appears four times in the four lines of this annotation). Considering the importance of *history* in the Exercises gives depth to our consideration of their narrativity, particularly in their concern for narrative time.

Ignacio Iglesias identifies various 'historical narratives' at play in the *Exercises*. The 'history' of the *Exercises* is at once the history of Jesus, the history of each human being, the history of the exercitant, and the history of what happens over the course of the lived experience of the Exercises themselves in the actual moment of the retreat.⁵⁵ These four

⁵³ BARTHES, 48-52

⁵⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*,

⁵⁵ IGLESIAS, 69-70

‘histories’ are to be ‘brought’ (“Traer la historia”⁵⁶) into the consciousness or *imagination* of the exercitant and the exercitant ought to become an active participant in the narrative process of their *articulation*.⁵⁷ This narrative participation mirrors precisely Ignatius’ own experience of conversion. Ignatius made sense of his own conversion and mystical encounters with the divine by way of an ongoing appropriation and creative application of various histories, various ‘historical narratives’. In the paragraphs of the *Autobiography* where Ignatius describes his initial conversion experience in Loyola⁵⁸ we see him reading and interpreting his own life in light of various histories - *The Life of Christ* and *The Lives of the Saints*, his personal history, and his immediate experience of ‘lived history’ in the conclusive and confirming moment of a ‘visitation’ by Our Lady with the child Jesus. These are precisely the narratives at play in the *Exercises* - Jesus, the Saints (idealized/universalized humanity), an individual’s personal history, and the ‘history’ of present lived experience). What Ignatius suggests in the second annotation is precisely what he experienced during his convalescence in Loyola - unable to move through space, he moved, by way of narrative, through time instead. The foundational experience of Ignatius’ conversion and the foundational methodological principle of the *Exercises* is that we discover God in history, in story, in the reflection on our lived experiences and our imagined futures.

From the beginning, then, we can conclude that the structure of the *Exercises* and the ‘method and order’ they intend to give the exercitant is both based upon and intended to facilitate a thematic narrative experience. The redaction of the *Exercises* represents an ongoing bio-narrative integration of Ignatius’ conversion, mystical insights, theological formation, etc. which gives thematic form to the lived experience of the Exercises. In an obvious way the four weeks of the *Exercises* are Christological, following the narrative of Jesus, but also, because of their redaction over time, they follow and are informed by the biographical narrative of Ignatius’ life of conversion. The ‘Ignatian parables’ (which I will explore below in light of ‘character and motivation’) and their coincidence with key moments of the *Autobiography* - fantasies, conversion, and discernment - make it clear that the *Exercises* arise from Ignatius’ own narrative encounter, over time, with the narrative of Christ

⁵⁶ *Spiritual Exercises*, 2.191

⁵⁷ “Significa obviamente hacerlo presente en el mundo interior del ejercitante, en su conciencia, trayéndola como desde fuera de ella, o despertando la adormecida en Ella misma. Lo importante es que el ejercitante no se quede fuera de esa historia como un espectador, sino que el propio esfuerzo de evocarla, movilizandole todas sus capacidades es cognitivas, le introduzca vivencialmente en ella.” IGLESIAS, 71

⁵⁸ *Autobiography*, 5-10

in the scriptures, stories of the lives of the Saints, and other spiritual exercises of his time. The invitation in the *Exercises*, that the exercitant narrate these various histories and to ‘internalize them’ (*sentir y gustar de las cosas internamente*⁵⁹), seasoning them with the fruit of their own history and the content of their own imaginarium, personalizes this thematic narrative experience of their history.⁶⁰ As Charles Taylor helps us to understand - looking to our history helps us to know where we are, where we stand in relation to values. In this way, our narrativity helps orient us in time and space.

2.1.3. - Narrative Space (Foundations and Frameworks) [Sp.Exs. 23]

All the world's a stage... The narrativity of our experience requires not only time but also space, not only a history but also a stage. In a practical way Ignatius acknowledges the importance of space in *Annotation 20*, where he suggests that a person making the Exercises will be best served by a literal change of scenery. This ‘retreat’ from the world was certainly not an innovation of Ignatius’ - Christian spirituality from the desert fathers on forward has valued a time and space ‘apart’ as a privileged place of encounter with the divine.⁶¹ Ignatius gives three reasons for this change of space in making a ‘retreat’ and each of them is primarily concerned with the ordering of our commitments, the unification of the self, and intimacy with God. In the spatial metaphor of Charles Taylor, we can say that, for Ignatius, the retreat is an opportunity to step away from the busyness of daily life to take the long view, to look around, get the lay of the land, reinforce our fundamental sense of identity and orient ourselves again toward the good. *Annotation* recognizes the importance of space, of where we stand; we could say that this annotation is an invitation to recognize that our space is sacred - a place of encounter with God.

In the *Principle and Foundation* Ignatius sets out a map of the territory, placing the human person in their moral context. The spatial metaphor here is explicit - the person is given a purpose (praise reverence and service of God, SpExs 23,2) and a place in which to fulfill that purpose (all other things on the face of the earth, SpExs 23,3). This ‘face of the

⁵⁹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 2,4

⁶⁰ On Rahner and narrativity: "In the Ignatian Exercises, therefore, Rahner saw a process of discovery essential to Christian discipleship. To summarize it in anticipation: the self can be led to focus on its 'transcendence', and the basic features of consciousness which are normally just the tacit accompaniments and enabling conditions of particular mental acts can become 'thematic'. The Exercises foster such moments. The effect can be to transform our reflective self-understanding, and the patterns of significance and value that shape our perceptions -- a transformation with practical consequences." ENDEAN, 103

⁶¹ Perhaps one of my favorite books on the subject of early Christian monasticism and the spiritual value of ‘places apart’ or ‘extra-ordinary’ space and time is the absolutely wonderful text *On the Solace of Fierce Landscapes* by Belden Lane (Oxford, London, 1998).

earth' (*haz de la tierra*) image will return repeatedly over the course of the Exercises - in the meditation on the *Incarnation*⁶², in the *Contemplation to Attain Love*⁶³, in the description of consolation given in the *Rules for thinking in the Church*⁶⁴, and in the *Rules for Discernment*⁶⁵ - and this repetition highlights Ignatius' consistent concern for right-orientation. In each instance Ignatius literally gives the exercitant a sense of 'global orientation'. This expression - the face of the earth - is Ignatius' way of communicating universality, a global perspective, a hyperbolic sense of absolute moral space in which we are free (or desire to be so!) to choose - *of all possible things* - that which most leads us closer to God.

This freedom to make use of all things on the face of the Earth is tempered by a call to indifference. The famous Ignatian indifference of the *Principle and Foundation* can be rightly understood as a posture of 'reverence' before all created things - a reverence which awaits the call from God - to see all things in God and God in all things. Karl Rahner referred to this indifference *spatially*, as a kind of '*affective distance*' between the subject and the object which is necessary if we are to choose well. While Ignatius recommends indifference, it is clear that his map is not one of neutral territory but rather one that is morally charged. Ignatius' *First Principle and Foundation* is the moral space in which Charles Taylor suggests we orient ourselves toward or away from the good.⁶⁶ Ignatius defines the territory (the whole face of the earth) and identifies an end (the praise reverence and service of God). The remainder of the *Exercises* become a kind of map or guide for how to make our way toward the good. We are to use the map in order to orient ourselves ever more toward the good, toward the praise reverence and service of God, the end for which we were made.

In this sense there is an explicit beginning middle and end (key characteristics of the narrative form) to the *Principle and Foundation*. Our creation (beginning), our indifference (middle- an ideal *equilibrium*), and our purpose (end). The indifference of the *First Principle and Foundation* does not suggest cold material objectivity (where everything is merely material and thereby neutral) but rather moral significance (where everything is present and full of potential - where we need a strong sense of personal agency and moral discernment to receive and respond to the gift in each present moment). The beginning middle and end of the

⁶² *Spiritual Exercises*, 106

⁶³ *Spiritual Exercises*, 236,1

⁶⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 316,2

⁶⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 325,7

⁶⁶ "But we are only selves insofar as we move in a certain space of questions, as we seek and find an orientation to the good." TAYLOR, 34

Principle and Foundation is not mere chronology, but rather narrative in character (morals/values may be considered a key marker of narrative forms - not the mere recording of a chronicle but a sequenced and purposive series of events structured to give some sense of conflict and resolution or moral formation).

The *First Principle and Foundation* then represents moral space where the ‘end’ of the road is not a particular place or object but rather the ‘end’ of moral perfection - the completion of our purpose in a series of choices made over time. Here we encounter one of the instances of the infamous ‘Ignatian-magis’ - “solamente deseando y eligiendo lo que más nos conduce para el fin que somos criados.”⁶⁷ How we make choices and what moves/drives us (*nos conduce*) through this narrative space and time is where I will turn to in the next section - given the stage, what players occupy it, with what intentions and motives, and how their choices lead them toward or away from this moral end. This ‘first principle and foundation’ is more than a starting point, but rather a frame of reference that returns throughout the *Exercises*⁶⁸ as a guide. More than a static map, then, the *First Principle and Foundation* serves as a compass to carry with us along the way - reminding us always to search for the ‘higher good’ of praise reverence and service in every instance, in every place and time. What do we desire and what do we choose...and how do these motives and elections ‘orient us’ or ‘drive us’ through moral space and time toward the end for which we were created? The *Exercises* are not concerned merely for space and time - not only for the stage, but rather for persons who move upon it. The end of the *Exercises* is not a destination but a destiny.

2.2. Content - Character (Players and Conflict)

All the world’s a stage ... and all the men and women merely players. If, as I suggest in the first section above, narratives require space and time, they also require characters and conflict. Here the distinction between a narrative and a chronicle becomes even more relevant. Narratives are driven by characters with desires and conflicts; that is to say, narratives are *purposive*. Chronologies or chronicles are a mere recording of events in chronological sequence (e.g. a captain’s log, an almanac, etc.). As Charles Taylor indicates a person constructing a narrative identity is moving through ‘moral space’ (not neutral space), toward or away from the good. While chronologies represent a passive recording of history in

⁶⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 23,6

⁶⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, [46] [169] [177] [179] [189]

space and time, narratives represent an active/authorial ordering of that history. Chronicles might include action and movement, but they seek to record more than to order or to explain those actions and movements. Narratives (and their authors) are moved by meaning, intentionality, and desire - motives, (e)motions, etc. Narratives ask questions of how and why and we don't get to how and why without interested persons, persons with hopes and fears, needs and wants, persons with desires.

The desire driven character of narrative would have been very familiar to Ignatius. Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle explains the connection between character, narrative and desire in her analysis of the *Autobiography*: "In medieval narrative and culture the individual subject, such as the hero or the protagonist, was more central and predominant than in modern versions. The subject was fundamentally decentered, however. He was represented as a void who was not the master of the discourse or of the will of the other characters, including God. The subjects in medieval narrative were related to other characters and objects intensely through desire. Desire was virtually the only principle of the description of character. The narrative always, and often only, disclosed what the character desired -- intended, wanted, loved -- not what he thought. That affective, rather than intellectual, description is implied in Loyola's epithet 'the pilgrim.'"⁶⁹ The affective concerns of the *Exercises* - that the subject come to interior knowledge of the various movements of spirit within them and that they grow in their capacity to discern the source and motivation of their desires - makes narrativity a fitting mode of prayer and contemplation. Developing on my previous examination of narrative space and time we can now explore how the *Exercises* help subjects navigate within the space and time in which they live and the desires that move them.

In this second section I will turn from the foundations and presuppositions of the *Exercises* to a treatment of their content. Focusing principally on the points of the First and Second Weeks, themes to be considered include the formation of the subject, the application of senses, and the centrality of discernment and election. My basic claim at this point is that the narrativity of the *Exercises* is evident in the way in which they invite *characters* to move and make decisions in the narrative historical contexts we explored above in the first section.

2.2.1. - Players and Motives - Examen, Colloquies, and First Week Exercises

Even before the Exercises begin they are concerned for the formation of the subject. In the dramatic metaphor we might consider this preparation of the subject as a kind of

⁶⁹ BOYLE, 148

casting call. Much can be said about the preparation and election of the subject⁷⁰ before making a retreat but I will leave that conversation for another time in order to keep my focus within the scope of the *Exercises* themselves. But even from the first paragraphs of the *Exercises* the concern for the formation of the subject is clear and I turn now to these initial exercises.

Potencias y pensamientos - The preamble of the *Examen* recognizes three thoughts present within every human subject - tres pensamientos.⁷¹ Ignatius is inviting a reflection on what contemporary psychologists and philosophers might call our affectivity or agency - that is, the structure of our consciousness that appears to be divided between a series of conflicting wills and the governing rule of conscience or intentionality (Freud might recognize his own theory of Id-Ego-Superego here). The *Examen* then proceeds from this basic awareness of our fundamental affectivity to reflect upon how we act upon those fundamental 'thoughts'. With the *Examen*, Ignatius invites the exercitant to engage their subjectivity, their own self-consciousness, to become aware of who and how they are in relation to God. He is inviting them, in no uncertain terms, to *come to their senses*. Having been presented with the territory - the absolute horizon of '*all things on the face of the earth*' - the exercitant is immediately invited to look inward, to come to awareness of their own personhood/agency before all created things and before God.

The first exercise following the *Examen* is a meditation *with* (that is to say, using/applying) the three potencies/powers (memory, understanding, and will) and a meditation *about* (that is to say, considering) the three categories of sin - that is to say, Ignatius is attentive simultaneously to both the *content* of the meditation and the *act* of meditation; he is concerned for the formation of the subject and their own self-consciousness. (Incidentally, the composition of place⁷² - a characteristic of Ignatian contemplation which is to be repeated throughout the Exercises - affirms what I have said above about the importance of narrative space and time.) The agential powers of the exercitant (memory, understanding, will.⁷³) are brought to bear (an *act*, in the robust philosophical sense) on the *content* of the exercise itself - moving from the ideal to the particular - from the universal 'sin of Adam' to the personal 'sin of individuals'. This first exercise is both an exercise of agency and an

⁷⁰ DEI, 1662-1668 - *sujeto*.

⁷¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 32

⁷² *Spiritual Exercises*, 47

⁷³ *Spiritual Exercises*, 50

examination of it (a good example of Ignatian pedagogical efficiency!). The exercitant is not only asked to consider the history of sin, but to reclaim their own agency in the process - *Do I remember what happened?* (memory) *Do I understand what happened?* (understanding) *Do I affirm/desire/want/agree with what happened?* (will) - Ignatius is not merely reviewing the experience of sin, but deepening our sense of what that experience reveals about us as persons (human subjects with affectivity and agency - '*potencias y pensamientos*') and about our relationship with God. We are invited to *remember* our history, to *know* at every level of our being what is happening in that history, and to *want* for the good to be revealed by it.

Regarding the dynamic of narrativity we can say that the invitation in this first exercise is not just an invitation to a recounting of the facts, but rather a reordering of our desire such that we not only remember and understand, but also want and choose⁷⁴ that which will bring us closer to our 'desired end' - toward the love of God. This volitional consideration requires that the person exercise their narrative role as an active participant in the drama of life - an agent capable of meaningful action, a kind of participation in divine authorship.

Character and Colloquies - At the end of this first exercise Ignatius introduces the first of the *colloquies* which complete each meditation or contemplation of the *Exercises*. "A colloquy, properly so called, means speaking *as one friend speaks with another*, or a servant with a master, at times asking for some favor, at other times accusing oneself of something badly done, or sharing personal concerns and asking for advice about them. And then I will say an Our Father."⁷⁵ This first colloquy is distinguished from the rest by the three questions addressed directly to the exercitant herself: After asking Christ crucified "how it came about that *the Creator made himself a human being* and from eternal life came to temporal death, and thus *to die for my sins*. ... Then, turning to myself, I will ask, '*What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?*'"⁷⁶ In this colloquy there is more than a mere conversation, but rather another self-examen-ation and another invitation to personal agency by way of a narrative recounting of our history, present circumstances, and future desires. The questions of this colloquy are an invitation to personal narrativity - an invitation to narrate my history, my present, and my desired future - insofar as each question

⁷⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 23 - desear y elegir

⁷⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 54

⁷⁶ *Spiritual Exercises*, 53

in the colloquy is necessarily answered with a narrative: *What have I done? What am I doing? What ought I to do?* This narrative element of the colloquy helps move a person through moral space and time, as Michael Ivens explains:

“The mode of prayer changes and in the colloquy the exercitant enters on what will be later understood as ‘imaginative contemplation’ ... It is noticeable that whenever Ignatius gives a content to the colloquy, he presumes the grace asked for in the petition and leads the exercitant a step further. Here, at least in the third question, **the focus shifts from past to future**, and from ‘shame and confusion’ to the desire to serve. Note also that these questions represent the typical movement of Ignatian response **from the affective to the effective**, from the response of the heart to, eventually, the response of ‘doing’.”⁷⁷

The colloquy, then, can be understood as a kind of Ignatian *narrative orientation* (defined above, with Charles Taylor’s help) - a narrative that structures and orders our past, present, and future. It also shifts from the affective (what I feel) shame and confusion to the effective (what I do) desire to serve. This shift from reaction to action is precisely where the person making the exercise reclaims agency in this colloquy; and this personal agency - individual freedom that may have been disordered in the past, taking me further away from the good - can now be reordered, moving me, narratively - by way of conversation and a re-telling of my sacred history - closer to who and with whom I want to be. By responding to these questions and engaging the implicit narrativity of this colloquy the subject moves closer to Christ.

In this single paragraph, Ignatius invites the subject to a narrative engagement (from past to future - space and time) with their personal agency (from reaction to action - narrative intentionality and motivation). The capacity for this meta-conversation about the prayer experience is perhaps the defining characteristic of a worthy subject of the Ignatian *Exercises* - a person capable of ‘coming to their senses’ enough to be aware of their orientation in narrative moral space. It is important to remember that the exercitant is not alone in this conversation, that they are in dialogue with Christ and that they are accompanied by the director of the *Exercises* in this process - speaking as one friend to another.⁷⁸

To be continued... The second exercise of the *First Week* is an application of the awareness practiced in the first exercise, but now directed specifically at the individual - a

⁷⁷ IVENS, 54 - emphasis mine, in bold.

⁷⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, 54

consideration of the dynamics of sin (disordered affections and acts) not only out there in the world or in history in general, but within us, in our personal history. This second exercise deepens the experience of the first, and makes everything preceding it more *personal* in the broadest sense. Most remarkable perhaps is the second exercise's conclusion, another narrative re-telling of personal history. Karl Rahner described this conclusion as the 'most overflowing' text of the *Exercises* - one might say 'gushing'.⁷⁹ What Ignatius suggests in the 5th and final point of the second exercise⁸⁰ is something more of a spontaneous reaction - "*An admiring exclamation with growing affection*" - than a point of prayer or contemplation. Since you can't really direct a person to have a particular affective reaction, this raises an interesting question: What, exactly, is the exercitant being asked to do at this point? Ignatius gives us a hint: They are to narrate what I would call their *history of grace*, a personal history of sin and salvation which prepares them then to have the so-called 'colloquy of mercy'⁸¹ which conclude this exercise.

Here in the midst of a meditation on the nature of sin Ignatius encourages the exercitant with an invitation to narrate their personal version of salvation history. This "*How they have...?*" litany (**H**ow all the creatures have allowed me to live, **h**ow the Angels have borne with me and protected me, **h**ow the Saints have interceded and prayers for me, and the heavens, sun, moon, stars and elements, fruits, birds, fishes, and animals...and **h**ow the earth has not yet swallowed me up!), a litany of open-ended suggestions (How? How? How?), invites the exercitant to tell their personal story of mercy. It's a foretelling of the *Contemplation to Attain Divine Love*⁸² that anticipates the solution to the puzzle this final contemplation implies - that we're after a gift already given. The *effect* - wonder and awe - is the result of the individual's *affective* narrative capability (their awareness that things have happened - for their good or for their ill - and that they have the capacity to recall the story) - their memory, understanding, and will oriented toward the appropriation of their own salvation history. The previous four points of the exercise are all, in a sense, passive verbs - *remember, ponder, review, consider*; this fifth and final point of the exercise is an exclamation followed by a series of open-ended narrative 'how's'. *Tell me how it happened...* Ignatius first prepares the subject to use their intellectual and affectual capabilities, then sets

⁷⁹ noted in ARZUBIALDE, 203 n.26

⁸⁰ *Spiritual Exercises*, 60

⁸¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 61

⁸² *Spiritual Exercises*, 230-237

them free to narrate their version of salvation history. The effect is expected to be pure consolation - *admiring exclamation with growing affection*.

Repetitions - From here forward the *Exercises* carry on with their narrative momentum and the exercitant is now well along the road of the way of 'Ignatian imaginative contemplation'. In terms of 'character' it is interesting to note that this second exercise of the First Week is followed by two repetitions of the first two exercises, each with the *Triple Colloquy* - a repeated series of three conversations with Our Lady, God the Son, and God the Father respectively. Dramatically speaking it seems that Ignatius is literally (and narratively) filling the stage with new characters, new interlocutors for the exercitant to engage - a kind of casting call and dress rehearsal for the conversations that will carry on throughout the rest of the Exercises. What is made very clear at this early point in the *Exercises* is that the exercitant is a person capable of recounting history, a moral agent with a sense of responsibility, and that they are (or ought to be) in conversation with the divine persons of the Trinity and Our Lady.

In the succeeding exercises on hell and the additional recommendations of the first week the narrative methodology is repeated over and over (e.g. 'with the eyes of the imagination' ...hear, smell, taste, feel.⁸³; dramatization - "As that of a knight coming before the king...as a great sinner in chains..."⁸⁴; etc.) At this point, it is sufficient to note that the narrativity of the *Exercises* (in *Examen*, colloquies, meditations, etc.) is deeply personal. It concerns the formation of the personal subject and hopes to give the subject a sense of their role in salvation history, their responsibility in a lived relationship. As I discussed in the first part of this project, narrative is in many ways what makes us who we are as persons, what constitutes our identity and capacity for orientation toward the good. The first steps of the *Exercises* are explicitly oriented toward engaging this narrativity, toward engaging our capacity for self-awareness and orientation in time and space toward (or away from) God. We are invited to 'take the stage' and to tell the story of how this came to be...how we came to be where we are and in doing so to awaken the desire of where we want to be more and more. By telling this '*how it happened*' narrative and doing so with literally everything we're capable of (memory, understanding, and will) we begin to become narrative agents, creative players in the process of the *Exercises*.

⁸³ *Spiritual Exercises*, 65

⁸⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 74

2.2.2. Conflicts and Choices -- Discernment - Election - Incarnation

Narratives are driven by conflicts between and within persons (cf. above on the 'three thoughts within me'⁸⁵) and the choices made by them in hopes of resolving or reconciling these conflicts. It is no surprise then that the *Exercises* focus on the centrality of discernment and decision in an life-changing election. If the first steps of the *Exercises* introduce us to the characters at play and their capacities (thoughts, memories and volitional desires), they also quickly introduce us to the presence of conflict and the need of reconciliation. The central dynamic of the *Exercises*, some would argue, is that of election. The *Exercises* don't only present a series of stories in which decisions are made and conflicts are resolved, but the *Exercises* are unique as a text in that they presume the person making them has an important (even life-changing) decision to make; they implicate their reader in a choice and they are intended to help the exercitant to choose well. In this sense the *Exercises* and their component contemplations and colloquies represent a process of 'co-narration' - a consequential participation in the creative decision making process. "Their point is not so much that the exercitant may learn what the New Law entails, but rather that 'from the life of Christ, I can read the imperative which applies individually to me, and arrive at a corresponding choice regarding my way of following him'."⁸⁶ The imaginative and biblical parables of the *Exercises* are intended to help awaken in a person their own decision-making discipleship - their own capacity to participate in the creative authorship of Christ.

Much could be said about the rules of discernment. It is interesting (narratively speaking) that the pedagogy of Ignatius when presenting these rules is a parabolic-narrative pedagogy. To help the exercitant recognize the various movements of spirit, he personifies them - literally character-izes them. *The good spirit behaves like a... the evil spirit will behave like a...*⁸⁷ *What advice would you give to a friend?*⁸⁸ *Imagine yourself on the deathbed...what version of the story would you have liked to tell?*⁸⁹ Narrativizing discernment as a characteristic method of decision making should not surprise us - Taylor essentially tells us the same - that we know who we are by narrative (distinguishing between various voices/versions of our history) and that we orient ourselves toward the good by way of

⁸⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 32

⁸⁶ ENDEAN, 120

⁸⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 325-327

⁸⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, 185

⁸⁹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 186

narratives. What is remarkable is that Ignatius's insight is psychologically very shrewd - he is rightfully lauded for his capacity to recognize the dynamics of divided will and consciousness that often make decisions difficult i.e. our varied layers of affectivity, our desires about our desires. Ignatius understands that the characters of the play (the various moving - consoling or desolating - spirits) behave differently depending on where the protagonist finds themselves in time and space (there are different rules for differing First Week or Second Week themes). The rules for discernment are a systematic means of navigating this complicated interior territory, rules that recognize how we may find ourselves (and quite often do) living an internal drama between conflicting desires, between goods, and yet desiring always the greater good, always in search of the will of God.

Contemplation of Incarnation -- It is interesting that as Ignatius seeks to help the exercitant in their own discernment, preparing for their own moment of election/choice, he invites the exercitant to imagine God - the three persons of the Trinity - essentially moving through a communal discernment process. Between the central meditations on the *Call of the King* and the *Two Standards*, Ignatius places the contemplation on the *Incarnation* followed by a few days of contemplation on the *Nativity* story and 'hidden life' of Jesus. That is to say, immediately before making an election - a process of careful discernment and life commitment - Ignatius asks the exercitant to contemplate the discernment and 'life-commitment' of God.

The meditation on the *Incarnation* is dramatically narrative in its details - with the three persons of the Trinity looking over the curvature of the earth, seeing all of the rich diversity of humanity in wounded in conflict and violence, etc. If there were to be musical accompaniment I'd recommend the traditional English Christmas hymn, *O Holy Night - Long lay the world, in sin and error pining, 'til He appeared, and the soul felt its worth* - for it captures well the setting, the desire, and the outcome of the *Incarnation*. By way of a nativity story, with character and conversation, a mysterious dogma of the Church is dramatized and made comprehensible. Ignatius invites us to listen in on the dialogue between the three persons of the Trinity as they reconcile their own division of 'three voices' and choose to give of themselves in love for the sake of the world just as in the *Examen*, the rules for discernment, and the pending election he asks us to listen in on the 'three voices' within us and make a mission driven choice for the sake of Christ's kingdom.

In discernment and election, then, we can say that we are, quite literally, doing what God does - we are becoming more like God in our response to conflicts and our choice to love and serve. The grace prayed for in the preamble of this contemplation is for the *internal knowledge* of our Lord so that we may love and follow him more closely - not only to 'know Christ' but, I would argue, to 'know as Christ knows'.⁹⁰ In a world of conflict and violence and division, and with an interior life that is also often divided in conflict, we are invited - through conversation and dialogue, compassion and empathy, generosity and reconciliation - to see as God sees and to choose as God chooses in order to love as God loves. The narrative dynamic of this contemplation moves the exercitant through the three agential powers of the self (memory, understanding, and will) from past to future, from perception to action, from intellect to affect and from affect to effect. Like the Trinity, we *see* what is happening in history, we *discuss* it and *make judgments* about it, and then we *respond*. See. Judge. Act. (See⁹¹, hear (in order to know)⁹²...and notice what they do⁹³) The meditation on the *Incarnation* is a clear example of how narration leads to action - a fitting illustration of what it means to say that Divine Love becomes Word Incarnate. This meditation is (like the 'admirative exclamation with growing affection' and praise of creation at the end of the second meditation on sin discussed above⁹⁴) another foretelling of the *Contemplation to Attain Divine Love* and a direct experience of how love reveals itself more in deeds than in words. Moreover, as with the examination of the three agential powers of the First Week, the Second Week of the Exercises begins with a narrative enactment of personal agency in salvation history. The meditation on the *Incarnation* becomes also a *contemplation of incarnation* and demonstrates, yet again, how the stories we tell can determine, in part, who we become.

2.2.3. Character Development/Formation

Up to now we have seen how the initial steps of the *Exercises* are a kind of call to personal awareness in time and space - *What is it like to be you? What thoughts and desires move you?* As we move deeper into the content of the *Exercises* the question becomes not merely one of experience but of personal formation and vocation - *Where are you going and*

⁹⁰ cf. *Spiritual Exercises*, 248 - another example of Ignatius inviting us to ask for the grace to see as Christ sees, etc.

⁹¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 106

⁹² *Spiritual Exercises*, 107

⁹³ *Spiritual Exercises*, 108

⁹⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 60

why? What kind of a person are you called to be? The systematic exercise of our narrativity helps us in answering this question, existentially if not explicitly; as Charles Taylor has it: Who you are depends upon where you stand in relation to moral values and you know where you stand by way of a narrative of personal history and moral orientation. It should be obvious at this point that Ignatius is not merely a champion of pure subjectivity, awakening the freedom of the exercitant to do whatever they please. He is rather deeply concerned for their capacity to use their freedom for the good, their capacity to get free from their disordered attachments in order to be better prepared to love. He is not only after our memory understanding and will, he is after the divine will of God for us. Ignatius is not merely a psychologist interested in our function as characters, but a kind of morally concerned personal therapist (for lack of an alternative metaphor) interested in the positive formation of our character - in the dramatic or literary arts we speak of *character development*, in the moral-religious realm we speak of *character formation*.

Ignatian freedom and agency is clearly an agency of moral responsibility - our ability to respond to the call of God, the call of love and service which is our end.⁹⁵ Ignatius hopes to guide the exercitant toward the true life of Christ and her liberation is one in which she can choose freely to conform her will to God's word in the here and now moments of her daily life. If the central concern of the *Exercises* is for decision and choice it is clearly intended to be an *ordered* decision, a choice that orients us toward God. The initial concern for the setting of time and space, our capabilities and desires as characters who live and move within that space, and the conflicts and choices that form us - all of these exercises are ordered by a concern for who we are becoming. One final word on this Ignatian 'becoming' would be to specify that it is a becoming inspired by and dependent upon grace - while much of what I have to say in this project proposes the *Exercises* as a tool in helping persons in their identity formation and moral orientation it must be said that the principal formation and orientation of the subject of the *Exercises* is done by none other than God. We participate in this formation, and this participation is a constitutive part in the formation of free moral agents capable of love, but it is always by the grace of the incarnation and the gift of the spirit that this formation continues.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 23

⁹⁶ On this note, see Philip Endean's excellent treatment of Karl Rahner's theology - particularly "The Immediate Experience of God" and "The Mystical and the Gracious", Chapters 2 and 3 of *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, Oxford, London, 2001.

Getting to the heart of the matter -- To understand the sense of ‘character formation’ in the *Exercises* we can look to the paradigmatic Ignatian contemplations of *The Call of the King* and the *Two Standards* as well as to the *Three Kinds of Humility* and the *Three Kinds of Persons (Binarios)*. Michael Ivens says this about the second week of the *Exercises*: “Through this material, the exercitant is drawn into a double process: first, ongoing growth into *the true life taught by Christ*⁹⁷; second, the process of seeking and finding and responding to God’s here-and-now word, i.e. *election*.”⁹⁸ Where I have made a distinction between space and time, Ivens makes a distinction between occasions or ‘moments’ in the *Exercises* and ‘processes’ and he suggests that the formation of the exercitant happens in the tension between the two. The *Second Week* election is where the *here and now* (space and time) meets the creative *process* (becoming) in the exercise of personal agency.

Second Week Contemplations: *Call of the King and Two-Standards* - When we consider the function of parables in the *Exercises* we can speak of two ways in which they play a role in the formation of the exercitant: parables have a linguistic/symbolic value (as an example of performative language - it does what it says, the medium is the message, symbolic mediation) and a psychodynamic value (parables make possible empathetic identification - stories engage personal desire and affectivity). From the contemplation on the *Two-Standards* to that of the *Three-Types of Persons* we see a shift from an external battle (two standards) toward an internal battle (binarios). Here the English translation (and the *Latin Vulgate*...which exchanges binaries for *classes of persons*) loses something important; the Ignatian anthropology of these contemplations is not as taken by divisions between kinds of persons, but rather with the divisions *within* each person - the binaries reveal the familiar Ignatian sensibility to the problems and possibilities of living with a conflicted will, a circumstance which makes discernment the Ignatian virtue *par excellence*. The narrative movement during the second week of the *Exercises* is from an external battle in the *Two-Standards* to an internal one in the *Binaries* (incidentally, a dynamic which mirrors the beginning of the first week - the first exercise with its ‘external gaze’ at the three sins followed by the second exercise and an ‘internal examination’ of the exercitant’s personal participation in sin). In each case the narrative intends to make clear the dynamics of external/internal conflicts and in so doing to help the exercitant in their own reconciliation of

⁹⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 139

⁹⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, 74

such conflicts. The contemplation of the *Binarios/Types of Persons* then can be understood as a kind of narrative/parabolic auto-reconciliation. We see revealed an Ignatian vision of the human person, body and soul, head and heart, a person in search of reconciliation - wholeness and holiness. Similarly in narrative theory (though beyond the scope of this project) we find a philosophy of 'self-reconciliation' and identity formation which occurs as we narrate a process of conflicting desires. Essentially, our narratives highlight the importance of what we care about and partially constitute our sense of something like a coherent personal identity.

The contemplation on the *Three Kinds of Humility* unites the *moment* of here and now dispositions with the *process* of becoming, of development in personal agency and Christian discipleship. The character development sought for in the *Spiritual Exercises* is, we could say, the virtue of ongoing discernment and choice - the virtue of self-giving love; a virtue which is practiced habitually by a person who has fully appropriated what Michael Ivens calls the 'paradoxical wisdom' of the third kind of humility, the agapic logic of Christ crucified.⁹⁹ Hamlet famously asks, To be or not to be? Ignatius had his own dark nights of a similar suicidal temptation. By the grace of God he continued to ask further qualifying questions - *Or who? And how?* The here and now moment meets the process of formation in choice - and this choice is critical to the true (and eternal) life of Christ. We make choices in any given moment and re-orient ourselves in moral space and time. But these choices represent not only a re-orientation but also a reformation of who we are, a conversion. In choosing we become. This leads us to the third and final section of my analysis concerning the method/praxis, the how and why, of becoming free to love.

2.3. Method - Action and Authorship (Moral Agency and Mission)

Happily ever after... Up to this point I have explored some aspects of Ignatian narrativity by way of analysis of the narrative setting (space and time) and the narrative

⁹⁹ "To appreciate the general doctrine in this text [Three Kinds of Humility], as well as to see its special relevance at this point of the Exercises, we must return to the distinction, and connection, between a 'moment' in the Exercises and the 'process' of maturation in Christ. In the Exercises the kinds of humility are considered at this point in order to enable the exercitant to check his or her here-and-now dispositions, especially in relation to the impending election. If the here-and-now context is ignored, and if the third and even the second kinds of humility are understood to describe only habitual dispositions, the exercise acquires an air of unreality; for it is a fact of experience that at moments we can be influenced by qualities of motivation or intention which are not operative in our lives all the time. On the other hand, the purpose of the Exercises is not just to help the exercitant reach an occasional peak in order to make an election, nor would there be any solidity about an election if the motivation required both for making and living it were a purely transitory experience. The Exercises are a major step in the life-process of maturing in Christ; and this maturation consists in coming increasingly to experience and respond to life habitually on the basis of the paradoxical wisdom of the third kind of humility." IVENS, 123

players (character and conflict) in the *Spiritual Exercises*; now I will turn to their narrative *ends*. The wordplay I'm making here on the multiple meaning of 'ends' is absolutely intended. Because narratives are purposive by nature, the *end* of a narrative is not merely the conclusion of a chronology, but rather the reconciliation of a problem, the transformation of a character, or the appropriation of moral wisdom by the reader. In narrative, as in the *Exercises*, we are not interested in a cold examination of data points collected over a set period of time, but rather we are looking for a moral outcome, a fulfillment of purpose, a realization of the 'end' defined from the very beginning in the principle and foundation. We are hoping to become something more than we were, or more of what we should have been all along. The questions here - after the *when* and *where* (time and space), the *who* and *what* (characters and conflict) of the two previous sections - become questions of *how* and *why* (election and self-gift). *How* do we become capable of attaining divine love by way of these spiritual exercises? And *why* would we choose to do so? I could have just as easily put these questions at the beginning - Ignatius speaks of ends and means from the first words of the *Exercises* - but I hope the analysis we've made so far will help illustrate how a narrative method inspires a particular purpose - intentional co-operation in God's authorship of salvation history.

Regarding narrativity, in this final section I will examine the method and praxis of the *Exercises* in terms of *authorship* and *action*. Here I'm not referring to the authorship of Ignatius - this authorship was examined in the first section above with the presentation of the redaction of the text. Rather, I'd like to suggest that authorship is one of the *ends* of the *Exercises* - that those making the *Exercises* become co-authors, or better yet - purposive moral agents by way of their efforts to 'seek and to find' the divine will of God and their decision to put this will into *action* by a life of loving service. It is this 'authorship of moral agency' that makes the narrative connection to the Ignatian missionary ends more clear. The end of the Exercises is to free oneself from disordered attachments¹⁰⁰, to seek and to do the will of God,¹⁰¹ is to become a liberated moral agent capable of love and service.¹⁰² The Exercises prepare the subject for this end by schooling them in the mutually necessary narrative arts of imagination (contemplation) and articulation (action). The ideal of Ignatian

¹⁰⁰ *Spiritual Exercises*, 21

¹⁰¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 1,4

¹⁰² *Spiritual Exercises*, 233

moral agency becomes a posture of reverence before God, an agency enacted by the intentionality of indifference before all created things. The ideal Ignatian agent formed by the discipline of the Exercises becomes a profoundly attentive subject ever ready to do the will of their lord.

In his linguistic analysis of the *Exercises*, Roland Barthes suggests a multiplicity of four ‘texts’ within them - literal, semantic, allegorical, and anagogic - texts which arise from a reciprocity of influence between four subjects who give and receive them - Ignatius, the director, the exercitant, and God. It is this participative ‘co-authorship’ (this is my term, not Barthes’ - his would be something closer to *dialectic*) that I find to be a key ‘end’ of the *Exercises*; it is one way of understanding what we mean to say when we say that someone ‘makes the Exercises’. This aspect of Ignatian narrativity, its participative character, is critical to the formation of the moral agency of the subject; that we participate in the narrative of salvation history is essential to the Ignatian understanding of obedience and mission (by this same grace¹⁰³...en todo amar y servir¹⁰⁴); it is how we ‘become capable of attaining divine love’ - by accepting the grace of God given and to offer, in a response of loving mutuality, all that we have and all that we are.¹⁰⁵ We become co-operatives in the saving work of God by our passive (though intentional) reverence before the authorship of God and by our active (though inspired) election of or assent to that authorship in surrender to divine will.

Ignatius himself likely would have understood the act of authorship as an act of imitation of the divine authorship of God. As Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle observes in her indispensable analysis of the *Autobiography*: "Medieval authors and scribes habitually falsified literature and documents. Their culture differed from modern psychological notions of the empirical, individual creator whose work is self-expressive. Their method was not originality but imitation, as invented from the commonplaces of an anonymous tradition."¹⁰⁶ Ignatian imitation can be understood as a way to know as God knows, to see as God sees and to act as God acts. In this sense our narrativity participates in the narrativity of God, our capacity for discernment and creativity is necessarily participative in the divine creativity of God. This final section will explore how the narrativity of the *Exercises* might facilitate this co-operative authorship in three possible ways: (1) by the creative tension of imagination and

¹⁰³ *Constitutions*, 3

¹⁰⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 233

¹⁰⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 231,1

¹⁰⁶ BOYLE, 148

articulation, (2) by the praxis of sympathetic resonance, and (3) by the revelation of symbolic mediation.

2.3.1. Contemplation and Conversation - Imagination and Articulation

Ignatian prayer or contemplation is widely recognized for its use of the imagination and rightly popular for the same reason - people who may have grown tired of rote prayers or rigid structures often report feeling a sense of creative liberation when encouraged to use their own imagination in prayer. What is not always so clear, however, is what is meant by the Ignatian use of imagination. What is also under-mentioned (if ever at all) is the importance of what we might call Ignatian ‘articulation’. It is not enough to imagine a future; it must be enacted. The Word of God longs for incarnation and the contemplation of the imagination longs for language. The end of imaginative Ignatian contemplation is never pure fantasy; the end of imaginative Ignatian contemplation is greater clarity about our history, greater sensitivity to our present, and greater generosity in our future. The end of Ignatian imaginative contemplation is not escape from reality but rather a deeper commitment to it. We may have a very good sense of right or wrong but if we never articulate or are never articulated by that sense it does nothing to move us toward the good. Charles Taylor reminds of the importance of language and articulation: “A sense of the good finds expression not only in linguistic descriptions but also in other speech acts - as with the example above of prayer. ... Articulation can bring us closer to the good as a moral source, can give it power.”¹⁰⁷ This speech-act is of utmost importance; it is not only contemplating or knowing or imagining the good, but also doing the good that matters. “We become aware, says Rahner, of the fullness of God’s love only when it leads us towards specific courses of action, towards something willed by God in another sense ... this object of God’s inclination is, properly speaking, a person rather than a thing, and this identities this action-with as Christian love of neighbor.”¹⁰⁸

Ignatius’ own life demonstrates this truth. His initial experiences of divine encounter gave way to a desire for articulation, prayer, and conversation that would draw him ever closer to the source, closer to God, and ever further into His service. Ignatius’ mystical experience by the river Cardoner left him longing for spiritual conversation and inspired to

¹⁰⁷ TAYLOR, 91-92

¹⁰⁸ ENDEAN, 220

share the fruit of his experience and his means of coming to it with others.¹⁰⁹ His conversion which began in Loyola (or even earlier in Pamplona or Nájera) inspired by heroic narratives and extended periods of imaginative fantasy, continued to unfold over many years of pilgrimage, theological and ecclesial formation.¹¹⁰ Ignatius benefited from a series of spiritual conversation partners and he composes the *Exercises* precisely for those seeking to accompany others; the *Exercises* are a guide inspired by his interlocutors - women and men, religious and secular, young and old - whom he encountered along the way and they are intended for those who would like to be spiritual conversation partners for others. In light of this, we might even say that Ignatius' text is less concerned for what happens in the moment of contemplation (he trusts that conversation to the Creator and creature - *Annotation 15*) than it is for what happens in the moment of the interview.¹¹¹ The entirety of the *Exercises*, though giving hints to the exercitant and director about how to proceed and what signs to look for, is actually dedicated not to the content of contemplation but rather to the art of conversation about that content - the *Exercises* are as concerned with the *articulation* of the content and the consequences of prayer as they are with the use of *imagination* within that prayer.

Roland Barthes makes the distinction between imagination and articulation clearly and his explanation underscores its narrative implications. Barthes is convinced (as a linguist) that the *Exercises* are concerned with the creation of language. They are not, as with other mystical texts, merely an attempt to give description to the indescribable, but rather they seek to make use of language and articulation as a way of experiencing, understanding, and doing the will of God:

“Articulation appears to all [mystics] as the condition, warranty, and fate of language: to outstrip language, articulation must be exhausted, extenuated, after having been recognized. We know that this is not Ignatius's goal: the theophany he is methodically seeking is in fact a semiophany, what he is striving to obtain is more the sign of God than knowledge of Him or His presence; language is his definitive horizon and articulation an operation he can never abandon in favor of indistinct -- ineffable -- states.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *Autobiography*, 37 - Barcelona

¹¹⁰ cf. IGLESIAS, and the pneumatological significance of Ignatius' conversion to the church.

¹¹¹ GARCÍA DOMÍNGUEZ - *La Entrevista en Los Ejercicios Espirituales*

¹¹² BARTHES, 53

Ignatius seeks not to banish language, but rather (as the ‘God in all things’ wisdom of Cardoner would suggest) he intends to discover God precisely in a kind of revelatory semiotic language, in the ‘signs’ of God’s will. These signs are not static markers or indicators, but rather a part of a dynamic narrative; as Barthes observes, the Ignatian *vision* is a *view* and as Michael Ivens recognized, the tension between moment (images) and process (articulation) is paramount. In Barthes’ words:

“The Ignatian image is separated only insofar as it is articulated: what constitutes it is its being caught up simultaneously in a difference and a contiguity (of the narrative type); thus it is contrasted with the "vision" (which Ignatius had experienced and on which he reports in his *Journal*), indistinct, elementary, and above all erratic ("felt or saw very luminously the Divine Being or Essence itself in the form of a sphere a little larger than the sun"). The Ignatian image is not a *vision*, it is a *view*, in the sense this word has in graphic art (View of Naples, View from the Pont-au-Change, etc.); again, this "view" must be captured in a narrative sequence, somewhat after the fashion of Carpaccio's St. Ursula, or the successive illustrations in a novel.”¹¹³

The Ignatian vision is a view; the Ignatian image is dynamic; Ignatian imagination is narrative. It sets the scene, it puts the characters in motion, it questions their motives and desires in order to understand and to discern well an appropriate response, a response to be articulated in further action. The goal of Ignatian contemplation, and the posture of static reverence it requires at first, is actually a kind of conversation - not a static vision of being but rather a beatific view becoming, a perspective that gives orientation to further action.

There are several levels on which this contemplation and conversation of imagination and articulation takes place. First, within the exercitant: during the Exercises they are instructed to pray and to discern what happens during their prayer - to *view* themselves with a kind of meta-awareness of their own contemplation. Second, between the exercitant and the director - another level of articulation happens when the exercitant shares the fruit of their prayer with the director in the conversation of the daily interview - the imagination at play in the prayer is challenged to find articulation in the conversation with the director who shares his or her particular *perspective* or view. And finally, in the philosophical, linguistic or semiotic sense which Barthes suggests we ‘read’ Ignatius - that our very understanding of what Ignatius is after in how we come to know God, his spiritual epistemology of narrativity,

¹¹³ BARTHES, 54-55

the Ignatian *way of knowing* God involves both epistemic exercises of contemplation and conversation, imagination and articulation. The Ignatian speech-act empowers the subject in a kind of theotic conversion - by contemplation of the mystery of Christ, the subject becomes capable of articulating Christ in their life. At each of these levels we can say that the Exercises are an *act* in the robust philosophical sense - the action of purposive agents - and that, by their creative narrativity, by their contemplation and conversation, by their imagination and articulation, these *actors* ‘make the Exercises’.

2.3.2. Sympathetic Resonance - *Modes of Prayer* [Sp.Exs. 248]

I have already implicitly said quite a bit about methodology in the *Exercises*, about their way of proceeding and the various invitations offered by Ignatius to help the formation of the subject. One more place where Ignatius speaks directly to the question of method in the spiritual life is in the *Three Ways to Pray*.¹¹⁴ Ignatius presents three modes of prayer that loosely mirror his sense of the three agential powers - Memory/Considerar¹¹⁵, Understanding/Contemplar¹¹⁶, and Volition/Compás. Arzubialde¹¹⁷ suggests that this third way of prayer (por compás) may be understood in terms of a song/chant; ‘to pray by compass’ in this sense refers to a metronome, marking a persistent rhythm with the breath.¹¹⁸ The musical metaphor opens up interesting possibilities in our understanding of Ignatian narrativity when we think of narrative communication in terms of *resonance*.

Directly in the heart of this ‘methodology of prayer’ Ignatius includes a note¹¹⁹ where he suggests that those who would like to “imitate in the use of their senses” Christ our Lord or Our Lady in prayer should “entrust themselves” to them in the preparatory prayer. What seems straightforward at first (be like Mary or be like Christ) becomes remarkable when we consider what Ignatius is suggesting. I would suggest that this is not only or merely an invitation to simple ‘imitation of Christ’ or ‘imitation of our Lady’ but rather a profound (even mystical) surrender to the Divine agency, a prayer for theotic transformation into persons capable of seeing as God sees, hearing as God hears, and acting as God acts. A close Jesuit friend of mine, an experienced spiritual director and lover of music, explains this surrender of the senses to God by referring to the acoustic phenomenon known as

¹¹⁴ *Spiritual Exercises*, 238-258

¹¹⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, 241

¹¹⁶ *Spiritual Exercises*, 249

¹¹⁷ ARZUBIALDE, 608-610

¹¹⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, 258

¹¹⁹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 248

sympathetic resonance: “Sympathetic resonance or sympathetic vibration is a harmonic phenomenon wherein a formerly passive string or vibratory body responds to external vibrations to which it has a harmonic likeness. The classic example is demonstrated with two similar tuning-forks of which one is mounted on a wooden box. If the other one is struck and then placed on the box, then muted, the un-struck mounted fork will be heard.”¹²⁰

Colloquially we often speak of two people trying to ‘get on the same wavelength’ - this would be the spiritual equivalent whereby we intend to put ourselves on God’s wavelength, to be literally ‘moved’ (harmonically/acoustically speaking) by God. The spiritual metaphor here is apt: harmonic (acoustic relationship), a formerly passive subject (creature - human person) responds to external vibrations (a call) to which it has a harmonic likeness (creator - Christ).

Obviously the laws of physics determine the outcome of experiments in sympathetic resonance and metaphors can only take us so far toward meaningful/experiential understanding of spiritual phenomena, but it is interesting to note how something similar happens in our contemplation on and sharing of narratives. Not only at the physical/acoustic level of speaking and listening, but at the psycho-dynamic level of communication (verbal or otherwise), the sharing of stories produces something like *resonance* in us and something literally *sympathetic*, namely, compassion and empathy. Martha Nussbaum says the following about the moral quality of our attention given to characters in narrative fiction: We are “participators by fond attention” in the lives and dilemmas of [the author’s] participants, we engage with them in a loving scrutiny of appearances. We actively care for their particularity [a kind of scriptural empathy], and we strain to be people on whom none of their subtleties are lost, in intellect and feeling. ... Stories call forth our “active sense of life”, i.e. our moral faculty.¹²¹ Perhaps this is what Ignatius is after when he asks us to pray for ‘interior knowledge’ of the players in given contemplation, or when he suggests that we might ‘entrust ourselves’ to Our Lady or to Christ as a way of ‘imitating the use of their senses’. Perhaps the *exercise* of the Exercises is precisely this - our straining effort to be persons on whom none of the subtleties, in intellect and affect, of God’s creation are lost, to be ‘participators by fond attention’ in the lives and dilemmas of all, to be moved by them in a kind of sympathetic resonance that calls us to live and love as agents of God’s word and mercy in the world.

¹²⁰ Cited from the web: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sympathetic_resonance

¹²¹ NUSSBAUM, *Love’s Knowledge*, 162

Locuela - Without too much further diversion, I will only add a brief word about the mystical gift of ‘locuela’ that Ignatius records in his *Spiritual Diary*. I do so only to establish that there is some evidence for the claim that Ignatius may have had an acoustic sense of divine revelation. In addition to reporting the Cardoner experience as an experience of the Trinity as three keys in a musical chord¹²², Ignatius records the acoustic experience of ‘locuela’ alongside his experience of the gift of tears in his *Spiritual Diary*. Little is known about this mystical gift, but it is presumed to be musical; Ignatius’ experiences of it are deeply eucharistic, acoustic, experiences of symbolic mediation. “Muchas veces el Señor nuestro mueve y fuerza a nuestra ánima; es a saber, hablando dentro de ella sin ruido alguno de voces, alzando toda a su divino amor.”¹²³ This experience of God moving us without any sound of voices, in silence...may seem to negate the presence of narrativity, but at points Ignatius castigates himself for enjoying the music too much and missing the lyrics. Other problems that we don’t have time or space for here include the question of expression; Ignatius struggles at times to find ‘expression’ for the ‘movements’ inspired by ‘locuela’ - making difficult a claim about its role in facilitating theotic divine imitation. However, it is clear that locuela brings with it a sense of consoling confirmation in Ignatius’ discernment process - perhaps this locuela is an harmonic ‘Amen’, a non-verbal affirmation of one spiritual body finding itself in sympathetic resonance with its inspirational source; in this case the music of resonance becomes the language and the expression becomes nothing less than the transformation of the subject by grace. In any case, the central experience of locuela seems to affirm intuitions about the *resonant* quality of Ignatius’ direct experience of God.

2.3.3. Mediation of Symbols - The ‘Problem’ of Maria

How do you solve a problem like Maria? How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand? Mary presents various ‘problematic’ questions for a student of the *Exercises*. Why does she appear where we might expect the Holy Spirit? Where are the Marian narratives in the meditations? What do we make of the non-scriptural post-resurrection visitation of the fourth week? How are we to understand the role of Maria as mediator and model for the exercitant and the church? (Ecclesiology and Pneumatology) Regarding this current project, what can we say about the importance of Mary in the narrativity of the Exercises? In brief, her capacity to be a ‘bearer of the word of God’ and a ‘doer of God’s will’ makes her the quintessential

¹²² *Autobiography*, 28

¹²³ *Diario Espiritual*, 222; also cited alongside a helpful explication of *locuela* in the DEI, 1142

Ignatian role model for ecclesial and spiritual presence of God in the world and in each of our individual lives.

The 'Problem' of Maria: Peter-Hans Kolvenbach notes an absence of Marian 'narrative' in the Exercises in favor of a 'performance'...that is to say, her stories (stories about her) are less important (or at least, less emphasized by Ignatius) than her performance in someone else's story (her role in the narrative of Christ).¹²⁴ Mary is present in the *Exercises* principally as an agent of salvation, as a mediator, as a bearer of Christ. This lack of Marian narrative is problematic if it removes Mary's agency, her role as co-narrator in the story of salvation. It is critical, however, in revealing the importance of how we ought to understand the theological-spiritual value of narrativizing. We don't write our own stories to become demi-gods, but rather we seek to align our story with the 'divine-narrative' to allow ourselves to become a character in the story God is writing in history, we seek to play a part in salvation history. This is the narrative humility we're after - a willing subject before her creator and Lord.

Kolvenbach concludes his argument by noting the traditional claim that Mary dictated the exercises to Ignatius - an affirmation of the interpretation of Mary as mediator. While this pious tradition presents a host of other problems, critically speaking, it does affirm the basic intuition about the importance of Mary in the spiritual life and teaching of Ignatius, even understanding her in some sense as co-author.¹²⁵ In this interpretation, typical of the subversive Christian narrative praxis, the 'problem' of Maria becomes a triumph. Her narrative silence gives way to a revelatory performance; she is not merely relegated to the quaint Nativity story, but the performance of her mediating role (truly, uniquely, and particularly present in the historical moment of the nativity) continues throughout the narrative interplay of the Exercises and, by extension throughout the personal process of narrativizing our own relationship with God in Christ. She continues to 'play this role' and invites us into our own role as 'mediators' of Christ's salvific mission in this world and, by Mary's intercession, we are made participant in the creative project of God. She is the first example of 'fully human agency' which senses (discernment) and chooses (election) the will of God; she enacts the redemption made possible by the incarnation and the unfolding of the

¹²⁴ KOLVENBACH, *Decir... Al 'Indecible'*, 139

¹²⁵ KOLVENBACH, 139 ff.

Paschal mystery. The ‘Yes’ of Mary is offered up as our yes to Christ and through Christ to the salvation of the Father.¹²⁶

Our Lady - Kolvenbach is sure to note that we can’t underestimate the importance of the ‘Our’ in ‘Our Lady - She is ours because we belong to her and she to us by way of our yes to God. Mary, then, appears in the Exercises not only where we would expect to find the Spirit (i.e. in the Triple Colloquy, etc.) but also as the beloved disciple, as the church. Iglesias picks up this intuition of Kolvenbach and deepens our appreciation of Mary’s important role in helping us to understand the pneumatology of the exercises, how we become *mission* by playing our role in this salvific story. We see this clearly when we examine the essential role of Mary in the central meditation on the *Incarnation* - the annunciation takes the third place in the tryptich of salvation¹²⁷ - the first being a *vision* the world in need, the second being God’s *desire* for redemption and reconciliation, and the third, the *means* of that redemption made possible in the willful assent of Mary to the divine narrative of salvation. Mary, not merely as a silent object, but rather a reverent and active participant in the narrativity of salvation history is our model of what it means to participate in this narration as a mediator of salvific incarnation.¹²⁸

We know from the biography of Ignatius that Mary appeared again and again as a consoling presence over the course of his life. It is this role of ‘Christ consoler’ that Mary mediates in the Fourth Week meditations, a role of that has broad pneumatological and ecclesiological implications. Hugo Rahner explains: “‘Church’ embraces all visible things, from scripture to reason; ‘Spirit’ is the immediate interior contact of the soul with the power ‘from above’. Mysticism and reason, Spirit and Church belong together, but always in such a way that the Spirit, however abundantly it may pour forth, will allow itself to be confined within the measure of the visible.”¹²⁹ After an excellent treatment of Nadal’s extensive commentary on this Ignatian mystical pragmatism, he continues, “Consequently, this Spirit-Church dialectic in the theology of Ignatius leads directly to the indissoluble unity of tension between grace and free cooperation, between trust in God and personal endeavor. Trust in God, but never in such a way as to forget that you must do everything that lies within your power. And work, but never in such a way as to forget that everything depends

¹²⁶ cf. KOLCVENBACH, 143

¹²⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 106

¹²⁸ DEI, 1197 - “María”

¹²⁹ RAHNER, H., 217

ultimately on the grace of God.”¹³⁰ Mary’s is a role that allows for the Spirit’s continued presence in our life and in the Church. As Vladimir Lossky writes, “Tradition has a pneumatological character: it is the life of the Church in the Holy Spirit.”¹³¹ It is a role that saved Ignatius - a ‘Yes’ to God’s will in surrender - and a model that he hopes will help save others.

We can see the fruit and consequence of such a sacred and saving role-model in the life of Ignatius. In the *Autobiography* we see Ignatius the author looking back on himself as subject. And his privileged position of authorship, a role earned over years of habitual practice of the wisdom of the *Exercises*, affords him a quality of divine mercy that he did not have in the early days of his pilgrimage. Analysis of his authorial voice in the *Autobiography* is perhaps the best evidence of the theotic potential of narrativity in the spiritual life. In a beautifully wrought passage from her incredibly insightful reading of the *Autobiography*, M. Boyle shows us Ignatius the author reviewing the story of his life in compassion:

"The intriguing man is the self who walks off the pages of the text in 1537 -- the Loyola who by 1553 is able to review his experience critically, but with humor rather than the hatred he conceived against himself as just plain filthy. Here Loyola presents himself as if dusty from the road of pilgrimage. The blame is lacking the savage indignation of a Juvenal; classically, it is more like the detached benignancy of a Horace. Although Loyola is a spectacle of vainglory, the reader is not his adversary but his intimate. **The rhetoric does not provide a raw confrontation with that vice but rather invites a shared recognition of the human condition. The purpose of the text is not only reform but also relief: tears of consolation.**"¹³²

The effect of this narrative capacity for mercy, the capacity to imitate Christ and Our Lady in the use of their senses, is profound consolation. The cause of this narrative capacity was years of practice, years of entrusting himself again and again to God asking for the grace of divine perspective - the Ignatian ideal fully alive - the image of God articulated. Boyle continues:

"The change must have come with 'facility,' habit formed by practice, as mentioned in the conclusion. Loyola was 'ever growing in devotion, that is, in facility (*facilità*) for finding God. And every time or hour he wished to find God, he found him.' Ease

¹³⁰ RAHNER, H. 223.

¹³¹ cited in the epigraph of Javier Melloni’s *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*.

¹³² BOYLE, 182 - emphasis, in bold, mine.

eased him. His spiritual journey, although not by straight lines, was from the ascetic to the charismatic to the habitual."¹³³

Above I have said, in various ways, that the *Exercises* are not so much a text to be read but an act of love to be performed. Here again we sense the importance of this praxis of Ignatian spirituality. The 'role-model' we find in Mary is precisely that - a model for us to follow in our own 'playing' with God. That dour and melancholic Ignatius can look upon his own life with a sense of gentle humor and mercy is evidence of the consoling grace of God - defined and recognizable in his own text as an increase in faith, hope, and love. It is this increase of Faith hope and love that we're after and it is made possible by our narrative participation in the great story of God's sensitive and saving love of all creation.

Conclusions: Bearers of the Word of God and Doers of God's Will

The *Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola are a masterful guide and a classic example of how narrativity functions in the formation of personal identity and moral orientation, how narrativity participates in the revelation of God's will for us, how we, by way of careful attention to our stories, become bearers of the Word of God and doers of God's will, how we become moral agents capable of *imagining* the goodness of God' and somehow *articulating* that goodness in our lives. An example of this 'narrativity at play' in identity formation and moral orientation is made clear in Philip Endean's brief and insightful commentary on the famous parable of the Prodigal Son:

"The prodigal son comes to himself in a pigsty, and the pigsty triggers what happens. But the primary object of the young man's thought is not the actual pigsty -- which is presumably the same as it always was -- but his own situation. He comes to *himself*; the nature of his own identity becomes the focus of his awareness; he begins to recognize -- even if only by remembering that the food is better at home -- that he is made for something different. It is to such an experience that Rahner's theory is pointing. Particular situations trigger moments of self-awareness in us -- moments when we recognize our own identity as temples of grace."¹³⁴

Endean uses this story as a prototypical example of Karl Rahner's Ignatian theological intuition. It is at once itself a story and at the same time a story about the importance of story. It is a narrative account of what transcendent and transformative human spiritual experience

¹³³ BOYLE, 182-3

¹³⁴ ENDEAN, 133-4

looks like. The problem of our salvation has a narrative solution - we 'come to ourselves' by way of stories and by stories draw nearer to God. We remember ourselves, understand ourselves, and fulfill ourselves by way of narrativity. We answer the most important questions of our lives by way of a narrative and in so doing we make of ourselves a temple of the Spirit. We become, like Mary, capable of bearing God's word in our history and of doing God's will in our life. We become, like the young man in the pigsty, capable of remembering and recognizing our fundamental dignity, capable of 'coming to ourselves' as we 'come to Christ' in image and in act.

It needs to be said that to make a case for narrativity (and its important role in spirituality) is not to fall into the particularly postmodern perspective that we are 'authors' of our own 'reality'. The case I am making for our constitutive narrativity is that the narrative functions of the human intellect and affect are critical parts of our personal agency, and that this agency is one way of understanding how we participate in the authentic freedom of love. We continue being creatures, God continues being 'creator' and 'Lord', but in the salvation story we are created as loved and free participants. We can, and often do, choose to author a counter story (e.g. eschatology of mercy vs. eschatology of sin). That there is objectivity does not deny subjectivity (i.e. subjectivity doesn't collapse into subjectivism...and neither should objectivity collapse into fundamentalism). Our subjectivity (and its narrative dynamic) is part of the way in which we engage with the objective reality before us. To say that narratives have consequences (perdition or salvation) is one way of articulating this relationship. The merciful God has in mind our salvation. Our task, narratively, is to get on the same page, to tell (with our lives) the same story; like the characters in the parable of the Prodigal Son we seek to understand and to enact a kind of filial obedience to the will of God, to be faithful to God's word, to imagine possibilities and to articulate these possibilities in our actions. To affirm our narrativity is fundamentally to affirm a relationship of responsibility (our ability to respond) with the God who calls, the God who is revealed in the eternal self-communication of radical self-giving love.

As I mentioned in the general introduction above, the title of my paper reveals the heart of what I hope has been its insight - that Ignatian narrativity involves our living in and learning from the creative tension of imagination and articulation. It is this tension, I think, that saves us from the extremes of subjectivism or fundamentalism mentioned in the paragraph above and seen with nauseating regularity in our daily newsfeeds. It is this

imaginative-articulate tension that holds us and animates us in the apostolic work of evangelization and reconciliation. In this project I have intended to examine the *Spiritual Exercises* in light of this, what I find to be a fundamentally narrative piece of wisdom. The basic hermeneutic metaphor was a simple one - plot, character, and authorship - but the consequences are substantial - who we are becoming and how. Below the simple dramatic or narrative metaphor, however, is the fundamental existential tension of our personal identity in formation. We are human *beings* in our human *becoming*. It is this narrative sense of our own becoming, more than any fixed certainty in our own being, that structures our consciousness and makes possible our 'coming to know' the saving grace of God's love. We know who we are by stories. We make our way by stories. We participate in the great gift of receiving and sharing God's grace by imagining and articulating the truth of our stories.

We are living an answer to a series of questions, questions that find their response in the narrative of our ongoing participation in lived history. Dramatic or fictional stories are driven by questions. Some would say by 'conflict', but what they mean by conflict is simply a situation (a subject in space) in search of resolution (a subject in time). Therefore, more than conflict, I would say that our stories are driven by questions - by our desire to know, to see what happens when, to reconcile what is now in pieces, to follow decisions to their consequences, to imagine possibilities and to be surprised by creativity. We live with and through these questions and our stories are our attempts to respond. I think Ignatius discovered that perhaps the best way to help souls come to know God would be to make explicit the questions and to simply listen to their response, to simply accompany the person along the way, to savor their presence as another particular expression of the great work of the universal God, and to hear in their telling the beauty of their particular note in the chord of God's creative music. To watch a person becoming who they are and to receive the sharing of their story in this way is to witness the revelation of Divine Love incarnate. As Flannery O'Connor says in the passage I used above as an epigraph, the meaning of a person's life "has to be embodied in it, has to be made concrete in it." The eternal image of God longs for incarnation and the creative imagination of God longs for loving articulation.

I believe St. Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* for the same reason that Flannery O'Connor wrote creatively, not only as a practicing artist, but also critically as a teacher and guide about the art of writing. They both understood that the goodness of a thing, its meaning and purpose, is not something abstract but rather something to be experienced. As O'Connor

says so well, “the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story is only to help you experience that meaning more fully.” What we have in the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola is similarly, a love letter of the experience of God, an inspired text that doesn’t intend merely to make abstract statements about the meaning of things, but hopes rather to help us in experiencing their meaning more fully. As I come to the conclusion of this current project, I have to say that, in all humility, mine is the same hope. I hope what I have written here is not only a fair description of the narrativity of the *Exercises*, but some help for those who seek to experience their grace more fully. If I succeeded in this effort, this desire to share the goodness and grace of the Ignatian spiritual tradition in even the slightest way, that would be enough for me.

Part III -- For Further Study -- To Be Continued...

Narrative epistemology and the Ignatian ‘way to know’ God:

If the *Spiritual Exercises* are an occasion for coming to know the will of God...theology might want to ask how? How can we make that claim? What is the (internal) logic of the *Exercises* that allows this encounter to happen? What is happening when a person ‘makes the *Exercises*’? We can ask similar questions from the other direction. If Taylor suggests that narrative frameworks help us to construct identity and orient ourselves in moral space how do they do that? What is the praxis or applied logic of narrativity that helps answer these fundamental questions of identity and moral orientation? My initial response to these questions has been that the *Exercises* do this by Plot (the scene, the territory), Character (the players, conflicts), Authorship (the creative agency...) - that is, by creating space for purposive agents to understand, appropriate, experience and imagine creative possibilities. Exploring Ignatian narrativity has opened up various levels of inquiry.

What Charles Taylor suggests, that we know who we are by a narrative orientation toward the good, I think can help us to see more clearly what is happening and what is at stake in the *Exercises* and the broader spiritual and theological insights of Ignatius of Loyola. The narrative insight is not an Ignatian invention, but his careful way of describing and teaching this narrative method are distinctively agile. I will very briefly sketch here a few suggestions that come from my exploration of the narrativity of the *Exercises*, suggestions that I hope to continue to explore in future work concerning narrative epistemology and Ignatian spiritual theology - that will be an exploration of what we can say about a distinctively narrative Ignatian ‘way of knowing’ God. The process of conversation in Ignatian accompaniment or spiritual direction, the fundamental practical modality of the *Exercises*, is a process of narration - in every sense, an experience of *relation*¹³⁵ (to relate in both senses - to tell and to associate or connect) with God. We have seen narration used by Ignatius as a pedagogical tool in various instances (Constitutions - Letters, etc.). That narration is related to knowing suggests a potential ‘narrative epistemology’ which I will explore briefly in the conclusion as a proposal for further study - *Ignatian Spirituality and Narrative Epistemology*.

¹³⁵ OED definition - narrate = to relate (above)

3.1. Ignatian Narrativity - Imagination and Articulation

Much of what I imagine saying here is already being drawn out in this current paper and briefly, if poorly, summarized in the conclusions above. Ignatian narrativity is fundamentally the function of interaction between our capacity for contemplation and action, our ability to both imagine (in memory, understanding, and desire) the truth of things and to articulate a response in loving speech and action.

3.2. Ignatian Agency - The Indifference of Reverence

To speak of the narrativity of Ignatian spirituality is one way of articulating what we might mean by a distinctive Ignatian sense of personal agency. This Ignatian agency is characterized by its Christological character, whereby it finds fulfillment in surrender. This ‘indifference’ of intentional poverty, and indifference of reverence before the will of God, is a kind of liberating agency taught by the Ignatian rules for discernment, discipleship and election. This is perhaps, in my humble opinion, one of the most urgent needs and difficult tasks of any meaningful spiritual-theological work of evangelization of our age - convincing a world taken by confused notions of the value of liberty and the meaning of love. Ignatian agency refuses to let us off easily as it affirms absolutely both our freedom and our responsibility and calls us to a profoundly creative fidelity of self-gift. It is the paradoxical freedom of what has been called ‘passionate indifference’ - something I suspect Ignatius himself might have called the posture of reverence.

3.3. Ignatian Mystagogy/Soteriology/Pneumatology/Ecclesiology - Becoming Love

Obviously, I’m opening too many doors at once here. But the insight, I think, is sound - that a distinctive Ignatian contribution to theology in any of these areas will be rooted in and oriented toward the transformative/salvific/theotic relationship with Divine Love. Ignatian epistemology must include aspects of all of the above. How do we come to know God? While each of these areas is impossibly complex, the Ignatian offering is one of unity. That what we mean by personal theotic-mystical transformation (mystagogy), what we mean by salvation and conversion (soteriology), what we mean by the affirmation of the presence of the Spirit among us (pneumatology), and how we understand and experience this Spirit communally (ecclesiology) must all be inter-woven if they are to be properly understood. These questions help to answer one of the great mysteries of the Exercises - where is the ‘Spirit’ in these so-called ‘Spiritual’ exercises?

In each of these areas I have at least two or three doctoral dissertations awaiting me. For now I will leave these questions outstanding. But, in keeping for my fundamental pastoral concern, I will conclude by sharing what I find to be a series of ‘outstanding’ Ignatian questions that inspire the epistemological concerns behind my current and proximate course of studies.

Four ‘Outstanding’ Ignatian Questions: (1) What is it like to be you? (2) Where are you going and why? (3) What is something worth living/dying for? And (4) How can you be a better lover? These are the existential questions behind the narrative epistemology (a narrative way of knowing - a coming to know God by the narration of sacred stories) of the *Exercises*...answering these questions is the Ignatian way to know God. Asking these questions and listening patiently, lovingly to their response, is the best way to be a ‘spiritual guide/director/companion’. Answering these questions is a part of our salvation; asking them is a sacred act...a holy conversation.

1st Week - What is it like to be you? (an epistemology of empathy - empathetic knowledge ... as opposed to knowing *how* or knowing *that*) Invites analogic description - answered in images and story. Expresses empathy and compassion (what is it like invites honesty about pain and suffering), interest and curiosity.

2nd Week - Where are you going and why? (an epistemology of moral orientation) Suggests dynamism, orientation - discernment. Who do I follow? What is my goal or purpose? What motivates my decisions and my following?

3rd Week - What is something worth living/dying for? (an epistemology of vocation/compassion) A vocational concern...and the ultimate question of dying...opens the final turn toward self-gift - what would I die for? Give my life for?

4th Week - How can you be a better lover? The existential question in daily life. I want more than anything to be a better lover - what decisions help me to do that? How can I become more like God? If I began these questions looking at what it’s like to be me (1st Week honesty about sin and distance from God) I finish by reconciling myself with my divine source...what does it look like to love as God loves?

In the coming year I hope, as I said above in the conclusion to this first part of my project, to say something about these questions in order to help us experience their meaning more fully. For now, however, this particular chapter of our story must come to its end.

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