



**FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA
INSTITUTO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD**

TESINA de LICENCIATURA en TEOLOGÍA

**IGNATIAN NARRATIVITY:
SELFHOOD, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCE**

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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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Introduction: Imagination and Articulation

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

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 hatred in place of narratives of empathy and compassion. That we have disposed of master narratives does not mean, however, that we can rid ourselves of our innate narrativity, of our capacity for and need of the inspiring art and organizing structure of story. The philosopher Charles Taylor makes a strong argument concerning our need of narrative for both identity formation and moral orientation; 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 need of stories and their telling, that makes us human.

We find ourselves, as did Ignatius of Loyola, 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 image and guide, both the horizon and the help that makes hope possible. As 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 and the unity of the Body. The centrality of discernment and election in the Exercises is precisely this – a moment where we seek to know the will of God, choosing to conform our life, our narrative, to that of the crucified Body of Christ, and to live our lives apostolically in love and service. The Exercises are not merely an opportunity to passively contemplate the biblical narratives of salvation history; if those narratives are to have any effect on our lives Ignatius understood that we must participate in their revealing truth if we are to partake in their redemptive character. We are to become evidence that these narratives are salvific. The Exercises are not merely a story to be heard but an act of love to be performed.

This project is divided into four parts. 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 narrativity suggested in the first part. Part III serves as a bridge between the foundational argument about narrativity and some characteristics of what might be considered an Ignatian narrative theology. And Part IV presents three essential components of such a theology – an Ignatian perspective on selfhood, knowledge, and experience of God (i.e. anthropology, epistemology, and mystagogy). 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 lens of narrativity – a narrative hermeneutic – might help clarify our understanding of what's happening and what's at stake in Ignatian spiritual praxis in general and the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* in particular.

The creative tension behind much of Ignatian spirituality is, I will argue, one of narrativity – imagination and articulation, contemplation and conversation, personal identity and moral orientation. This insight is not revolutionary (it might very well be just another version of Nadal's well trod 'contemplatives in action') but I think it is both an efficient and accurate description of a theologically distinctive way of coming to know God. For this reason, and in this way, my narrative preoccupation gives over to an epistemological one – the Ignatian *way of knowing* is to engage fully our personal narrativity in the contemplation and articulation of salvation history, in imagination and in experience. I hope this project to

be an extended meditation on the Ignatian understanding of the structures and dynamics of selfhood, knowledge, and experience and how in each of these, the particularity of our personal narrativity becomes a privileged place of encounter with God.

I have found the writing of this thesis to be an experience of great humility before what I know to be the profound goodness and long history of the Ignatian spiritual tradition. I have felt invited, on many occasions, to a posture of reverence before the object of my study, a task that has felt more often than expected like contemplation. I have tried to honor this experience by making use of whatever capacity for *imagination* I have in my attempt at *articulation* of what I have been privileged to study. I am humbled 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 itself. If any insight is lacking it is only because my poor articulation has inevitably failed to match the great abundance of grace given to Ignatius by God. I am, however, deeply consoled and encouraged by the gift 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 recommend *narrativity* as an 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 this distinctive spiritual and theological charism and it can help in our efforts to share this charism in our contemporary context. I hope to demonstrate how a narrative hermeneutic is uniquely suited to the creative praxis of Ignatian spirituality (a praxis that is participative, dynamic, and, above all, personal) and that the narrative imagination has played a crucial role in the long religious, artistic, and theological tradition of Christianity. In this sense, *narrativity* meets the two criteria set out for Jesuit theology stated in our *Constitutions* - that our theological perspective be (1) helpful to the people of the age and (2) solid in its foundation within the tradition and teaching of the Church.³

³ *Constitutions* [*Const.*], 351; 358 and 446.

Method: After a brief definition of terms (Part I - Definition of Terms - 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 content and praxis (Part II - Ignatian Narrativity and the *Spiritual Exercises* - a reading of the *Exercises* exploring various aspects of their narrativity). From this foundation I will then articulate the basic components of an Ignatian narrative theology (Part III - Toward an Ignatian Narrative Theology - Ignatian theology understood as a process of ‘authentic christocentric imaginative construing’) before concluding with a summary of an Ignatian view on selfhood, knowledge, and experience (Part IV - Becoming Love: Selfhood, knowledge, and experience - a kind of broad Ignatian epistemology and an argument for the epistemic value of the narrative imagination).

Purpose: 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 Charles Taylor will call a *theorized framework*). My exploration of narrativity sets the foundation for an argument toward a broader Ignatian narrative theology and a distinctive Ignatian perspective on selfhood (anthropology), knowledge (epistemology), and experience (mystagogy). All of this is my humble attempt to explore how the narrativity of Ignatian spirituality can help people come to a fuller sense of their own identity and a surer sense of their orientation in life – that is, to experience the love of God. As Flannery O’Connor says, “the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story is only to help you experience that meaning more fully,”⁴ so too the purpose of this thesis (my statement about the meaning of Ignatian spirituality) is to help people experience that meaning more fully.

1.1. Narratives, Narration, and Narrativity

The late twentieth century saw a proliferation of narrative theories in a variety of scholarly fields. As 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

⁴ O’CONNOR, F., *Mystery and Manners* Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York (1957), 96.

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 obviously not a conscious priority of Ignatius of Loyola nor 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 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 – which compels the director to allow the Creator to work (*obrar*) directly with the creature and vice versa.⁹ 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* their narration, leaving the creative work of narration to God and the individual retreatant.

⁵ *The Oxford English Dictionary [OED]*, 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. – Citations from the *Spiritual Exercises* [*Sp.Exs.*] will be taken from: Ignacio de Loyola, *Ejercicios Espirituales* (Ed. Cándido de Dalmases, S.J.) Sal Terrae, Santander, 1985.

⁸ C.f. GARCIA DE CASTRO, J., “Qué hacemos cuando hacemos Ejercicios? La actividad del ejercitante a través de sus verbos.” *Manresa* 74 (2002), 11-40.

⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 15,6.

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 their narration as well as the inter-personal narrative interaction of Creator and creature. By *narrativity* I mean to include both the creative faculty of our *imagination* and the temporal-spatial dynamics of personal *experience*.

It is this *narrativity* of Ignatian spiritual praxis and worldview 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 applied creativity, both facts and their formation in an ordered (or disordered, as the case may be) narrative. As we will see in Parts III and IV of this project, it is in the narrative ordering or imaginative ‘sense-making’ of our experience where we discover God. It is within the space and time of narrative experience (i.e. the experience of character, conflict, and conversion) that we come to know, in the most meaningful sense, the truth of the love of God.

1.1.1. Why Narrativity? A Broad Narrative Hermeneutic

So, why narrativity in relation to Ignatian spirituality in particular? Partly because of a 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

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

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, these two parts of the 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 to be addressed in the third and fourth parts of this paper: (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 will find it necessary to read the *Autobiography* or the *Letters* in order to fully understand the 'rules for discernment', etc.).¹¹ I 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

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.

essential hermeneutic lens for understanding the distinctive Ignatian spiritual-theological insight. I can't (and hope not to!) take 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.

The lens of narrativity can help modern readers toward a right-understanding of Ignatian texts and Jesuit sources and avoid a misreading 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. The 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.

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. It seems to me that this narrative dynamic of

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.

human experience had something to do with Ignatius' own conversion and his subsequent insight into the structures and dynamics of human interiority that allowed him to author such a convincing and longstanding method of 'coming to know' God – the broad tradition we know now as Ignatian spirituality. 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 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 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

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.

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. Ignatius’ existential crisis was certainly 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

¹⁵ TAYLOR, 28.

¹⁶ *Autobiography* [Au.], 7.

¹⁷ TAYLOR, 19-20.

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 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 (prototypical¹⁸) 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 it’s 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

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. *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* [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.

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

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)orientation²¹

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:²²

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*.²³ 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.²⁴

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

²¹ Ibid, 41-42.

²² Ibid, 45.

²³ Ibid, 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.

²⁴ 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*.

like Christ.²⁵ Charles Taylor's term for this divinizing narrativity might 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."²⁶ 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 prose²⁷ but rather a speech act articulating (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."²⁸ 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 senses²⁹ (this idea will be developed in the third and fourth

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ TAYLOR, 92.

²⁷ "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." Ibid, 92.

²⁸ Ibid, 91.

²⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 248; See also Endean's treatment of Rahner's theology of direct experience in relation to Ignatian mysticism.

parts of this project – on narrative epistemology). In this light, the *Exercises* can be understood as a way of ‘choosing Christ’ by participating in Christ’s divine narrativity. But I will 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 and 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 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.*”³⁰ 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, according to 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.”³¹ This ‘seeking-quest’ image, which Taylor adds to his diagnosis of our contemporary predicament, resonates with Ignatius’ own self-identification as *the pilgrim* in the *Autobiography*.

Here again, whereas 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

³⁰ ELIE, P., *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage*, Farrar Straus, New York, 2003.

³¹ TAYLOR, 17.

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*).

It seems that Ignatius does indeed experience something of an existential ‘identity’ crisis in the way Taylor would define it and 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 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 and 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 (dictated) explicitly with this purpose in mind and therefore it implicitly affirms narrativity as a means of identity formation and moral guidance.³²

The *Autobiography* was the last of the texts produced by Ignatius but its narrativity was more than an afterthought, more than a mere memorial of a life gone by. I 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 narrative traditionally considered. However, 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

³² 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* - all cited in the Bibliography.

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’ and both texts do so narratively.

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

“We find the sense of life through articulating it.”³³ The *Exercises* are rightly understood as the Ignatian masterpiece. 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 throughout the composition of both the *Constitutions* and the *Exercises*. The conversion experience Ignatius 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, literally speaking, his life’s work. Ignatius didn’t just happen to write his story; his happening became the story; his *exercise* 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*.

³³ TAYLOR, 18

Part II – The Narrativity of the *Spiritual Exercises*

Introduction: Narrative Analysis. In Part I above I outline a robust definition of what I mean by narrativity and make 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 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.³⁴ The fundamental question in Part II of this project becomes: How do the *Exercises*³⁵ 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 (in Parts III and IV), 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'³⁶ – a performative

³⁴ TAYLOR, 19-20.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ García 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

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.?

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. 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 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 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

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.

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 – getting free from our disordered attachments and becoming capable of the indifference necessary for praise, reverence, and service, 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 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. 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 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’. As Rogelio García Mateo explains:

“[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.”³⁷

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* can be understood as a script, a written attempt to create and give order to this dramatic 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 process³⁸ – its writing and revision was woven into Ignatius’ own ongoing

³⁷ “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.

³⁸ “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

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 and guidance and his ongoing spiritual and theological encounter with Christ.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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

hechos insinúan que no sólo la realidad de su vida, **sino incluso la misma narración tienen un valor peculiar y grande.**” RAMBLA, 7 – emphasis, in bold, mine.

³⁹ “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.” *Au.*, 37.

⁴⁰ “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.

destiny, with God”⁴¹; 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 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 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 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 should 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 Montserrat⁴²; 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.⁴³

⁴¹ “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 destino, con Dios.” GARCÍA MATEO, 268.

⁴² MELLONI, (2000), 6-13.

⁴³ 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.

Structurally speaking, 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* 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.”⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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 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 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 God⁴⁶ and to love and to serve⁴⁷ in all circumstances guided by the Divine will. The text itself arises from within 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

⁴⁴ MELLONI, (2000), 9-10.

⁴⁵ *Sp.Exs.*, 4,7.

⁴⁶ *Sp.Exs.*, 1,4.

⁴⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 233.

others to have similar experiences.⁴⁸ This process was informed 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.⁴⁹ The hour of prayer, meditations and their repetitions, the days and weeks of the *Exercises*, the times/occasions for making a sound election⁵⁰, etc. There is also a notable concern for space⁵¹ (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.⁵² 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 (imagination and experience) 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.

⁴⁸ MELLONI, 48.

⁴⁹ 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).

⁵⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 175ff.

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² BARTHES, 48-52.

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*⁵³]. 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.⁵⁴ These four ‘histories’ are to be ‘brought’ (“Traer la historia”⁵⁵) into the consciousness or *imagination* of the exercitant and the exercitant ought to become an active participant in the narrative process of their *articulation*.⁵⁶ 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 Loyola⁵⁷ 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

⁵³ *Sp.Exs.*, 2.

⁵⁴ IGLESIAS, 69-70.

⁵⁵ *Sp.Exs.*, 191.

⁵⁶ “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.

⁵⁷ *Au.*, 5-10.

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.

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. 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 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*⁵⁸), seasoning them with the fruit of their own history and the content of their own imaginarium, personalizes this thematic narrative experience of their history.⁵⁹ As Charles Taylor suggests – 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

⁵⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, 2,4 - This notion of internal knowledge will be examined in depth in Part IV.

⁵⁹ 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.

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.⁶⁰ 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 – toward 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 earth’ (*haz de la tierra*) image will return repeatedly over the course of the Exercises - in the meditation on the *Incarnation*⁶¹, in the *Contemplation to Attain Love*⁶², in the description of consolation given in the *Rules for thinking in the Church*⁶³, and in the *Rules for Discernment*⁶⁴ – 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. Some have referred to this indifference *spatially*, as a kind of ‘*affective distance*’⁶⁵ between the subject and the

⁶⁰ 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).

⁶¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 106.

⁶² *Sp.Exs.*, 236,1.

⁶³ *Sp.Exs.*, 316,2.

⁶⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 325,7.

⁶⁵ This idea is developed in Part 4.1.2 - the indifference of reverence.

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 *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* 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*

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.

⁶⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 23,6.

⁶⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, [46] [169] [177] [179] [189].

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 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 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

⁶⁹ BOYLE, 148.

⁷⁰ DEI, 1662-1668 - *sujeto*.

⁷¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 32.

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* (i.e. using/applying) the three potencies/powers (memory, understanding, and will) and a meditation *about* (i.e. 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. The agential powers of the exercitant (memory, understanding, will.⁷²) 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 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.

An excellent example of the dynamic of narrativity, 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 choose⁷³ 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

⁷² *Sp.Exs.*, 50.

⁷³ *Sp.Exs.*, 23 - *desear y elegir*.

agent capable of meaningful action, a kind of participation in divine authorship. That is to say, contemplation and imagination are incomplete without the volitional response of articulation and action.

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.”⁷⁴ 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?*’⁷⁵ 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 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’.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 54.

⁷⁵ *Sp.Exs.*, 53.

⁷⁶ IVENS, 54 - emphasis mine, in bold.

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.⁷⁷

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 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* – we might even say ‘gushing’.⁷⁸ What Ignatius suggests in the 5th and final point of the second exercise⁷⁹ is something 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

⁷⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 54.

⁷⁸ Noted in ARZUBIALDE, 203 n.26.

⁷⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 60.

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’⁸⁰ 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 (**How** all the creatures have allowed me to live, **how** the Angels have borne with me and protected me, **how** the Saints have interceded and prayers for me, and the heavens, sun, moon, stars and elements, fruits, birds, fishes, and animals...and **how** 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*⁸¹ 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 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

⁸⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 61.

⁸¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 230-237.

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.⁸²; dramatization - “As that of a knight coming before the king...as a great sinner in chains...”⁸³; 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*.

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’⁸⁴) 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 a 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

⁸² *Sp.Exs.*, 65.

⁸³ *Sp.Exs.*, 74.

⁸⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 32.

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'."⁸⁵ 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.

I will treat discernment more extensively in Part IV concerning Ignatian epistemology.⁸⁶ It is interesting (narratively speaking) to note that the pedagogy Ignatius uses when presenting the rules for discernment 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 narratives. 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

⁸⁵ ENDEAN, 120.

⁸⁶ I intentionally place the conversation about discernment in the category of epistemology because, essentially, I think we need to understand discernment more as knowing and less as decision-making.

⁸⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 325-327.

⁸⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, 185.

⁸⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 186.

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 – 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.⁹⁰ 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 rather to ‘know as Christ knows’.⁹¹ 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.

⁹⁰ 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*.

⁹¹ cf. *Sp.Exs.*, 248 - another example of Ignatius inviting us to ask for the grace to see as Christ sees, etc.

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. (See⁹², hear (in order to know)⁹³...and notice what they do⁹⁴) 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 above⁹⁵) 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 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

⁹² *Sp.Exs.*, 106.

⁹³ *Sp.Exs.*, 107.

⁹⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 108.

⁹⁵ *Sp.Exs.*, 60.

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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷

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*⁹⁸; second, the process of seeking and finding and

⁹⁶ *Sp.Exs.*, 23.

⁹⁷ On this note, see Philip Endean’s 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.

⁹⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, 139.

responding to God's here-and-now word, i.e. *election*.”⁹⁹ 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 such conflicts. The contemplation of the *Binarios/Types of Persons* is a kind of narrative/parabolic auto-reconciliation which reveals the Ignatian vision of the human person, body and soul, head and heart, a person in search of wholeness and holiness.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in narrative theory 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

⁹⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 74.

¹⁰⁰ This idea is developed fully in the Part III on Ignatian anthropology and the Part IV on Ignatian mystagogy.

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 the virtue of ongoing discernment and election – 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.¹⁰¹ 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 – *To be or not to be... 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 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

¹⁰¹ “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.

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 itself 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 attachments¹⁰², to seek and to do the will of God,¹⁰³ is to become a liberated moral agent capable of love and service.¹⁰⁴ 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 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

¹⁰² *Sp.Exs.*, 21.

¹⁰³ *Sp.Exs.*, 1,4.

¹⁰⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 233.

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 grace¹⁰⁵ ...en todo amar y servir¹⁰⁶); 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.¹⁰⁷ 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 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."¹⁰⁸ 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 articulation, (2) by the praxis of sympathetic resonance, and (3) by the revelation of symbolic mediation.

¹⁰⁵ *Const.*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ *Sp.Exs.*, 233.

¹⁰⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 231,1.

¹⁰⁸ BOYLE, 148.

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.¹⁰⁹ 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.”¹¹⁰ 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 identifies this action-with as Christian love of neighbor.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ “There is no greater disaster in the spiritual life than to be immersed in unreality, for life is maintained and nourished in us by our vital relation with realities outside and above us. When our life feeds on unreality, it must starve. It must therefore die. There is no greater misery than to mistake this fruitless death for the true, fruitful and sacrificial “death” by which we enter into life.

The death by which we enter into life is not an escape from reality but a complete gift of ourselves which involves a total commitment to reality. It begins by renouncing the illusory reality which created things acquire when they are seen only in their relation to our own selfish interests.” MERTON, T. *Thoughts in Solitude*. Burns & Oates, Great Britain, (1958), 19.

¹¹⁰ TAYLOR, 91-92.

¹¹¹ ENDEAN, 220.

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 share the fruit of his experience and his means of coming to it with others.¹¹² 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.¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴ 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

¹¹² *Au.*, 37 - Barcelona.

¹¹³ Cf. IGLESIAS, and the pneumatological significance of Ignatius' conversion to the church.

¹¹⁴ Cf. GARCÍA DOMÍNGUEZ - *La Entrevista en Los Ejercicios Espirituales*.

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.”¹¹⁵

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.”¹¹⁶

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

¹¹⁵ BARTHES, 53.

¹¹⁶ BARTHES, 54-55.

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, 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 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*.¹¹⁷ Ignatius presents three modes of prayer that loosely mirrors his sense of the three agential powers – Memory/Considerar¹¹⁸, Understanding/Contemplan¹¹⁹, and Volition/Compás. Arzubialde¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ The musical metaphor opens up interesting possibilities in our understanding of Ignatian narrativity when we think of narrative communication in terms of *resonance*.

At the heart of this ‘methodology of prayer’ Ignatius includes a note¹²² 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

¹¹⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 238-258.

¹¹⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, 241.

¹¹⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 249.

¹²⁰ ARZUBIALDE, 608-610.

¹²¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 258.

¹²² *Sp.Exs.*, 248.

consider what Ignatius is suggesting. 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 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 *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.”¹²³ 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.¹²⁴ 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

¹²³ Cited from the web: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sympathetic_resonance

¹²⁴ NUSSBAUM, *Love’s Knowledge*, 162.

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.

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 chord¹²⁵, 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."¹²⁶ 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

¹²⁵ *Au.*, 28.

¹²⁶ *Diario Espiritual [Sp.Dir.]*, 222; also cited alongside a helpful explication of *locuela* in the DEI, 1142.

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

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach notes that there is an absence of Marian ‘narrative’ in the Exercises in favor of a Marian ‘performance’ - that is to say, her stories (or 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.¹²⁷ 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. 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 in order 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 – the bold humility of Mary – a willing subject before her creator and Lord making possible the impossible and the invisible visible.

Kolvenbach concludes his argument by citing the traditional claim that Mary dictated the Exercises to Ignatius – a pious affirmation 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.¹²⁸ Typical of 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)

¹²⁷ KOLVENBACH, *Decir... Al ‘Indecible’*, 139.

¹²⁸ KOLVENBACH, 139 ff.

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 her intercession, we are made participant in the creative project of God. She is the first example of ‘fully human agency’ - an agency which profoundly senses (discernment) and freely chooses (election) the will of God; she enacts the redemption made possible by the incarnation and the unfolding of the Paschal mystery. The ‘Yes’ of Mary is offered up as our yes to Christ and through Christ to the salvation of the Father.¹²⁹

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 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 role of Mary in the central meditation on the *Incarnation* – the annunciation takes the third place in the triptych of salvation¹³⁰ – 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.¹³¹

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

¹²⁹ cf. KOLVENBACH, 143.

¹³⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 106.

¹³¹ DEI, 1197 - “María”.

within the measure of the visible.”¹³² 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 ultimately on the grace of God.”¹³³ 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.”¹³⁴ It is a role that saved Ignatius - a profound ‘Yes’ to God’s will in total 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.**"¹³⁵

¹³² RAHNER, H., 217.

¹³³ Ibid. 223.

¹³⁴ Cited in the epigraph of Javier Melloni’s *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*.

¹³⁵ BOYLE, 182 - emphasis, in bold, mine.

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 eased him. His spiritual journey, although not by straight lines, was from the ascetic to the charismatic to the habitual."¹³⁶

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*;

¹³⁶ BOYLE, 182-3.

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."¹³⁷

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 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

¹³⁷ ENDEAN, 133-4.

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, 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 here 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. I have intended to examine the *Spiritual Exercises* in light of this tension, something 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 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.

It is from this point that I will make the epistemic turn in the final parts of this project. The implicit questions mentioned above (i.e. the existential questions which drive our narratives - where am I going and why?) reveal an epistemological concern in the spirituality of Ignatius, a distinctively narrative epistemology. 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.

What follows (in Parts III and IV) will be a turn from the particularity of narrativity to the more general conversation about Ignatian theology. What are the consequences of this narrative characteristic in Ignatian praxis? What value would such an Ignatian narrativity have for the work of theology, for our understanding of the human experience of God, etc.? All of this is my first attempt at exploring how the narrativity established here help us toward a new understanding of Ignatian selfhood (anthropology), knowledge (epistemology), and experience of God (mystagogy).

Part III – Toward an Ignatian Narrative Theology

Introduction: Narrative Epistemology - An Ignatian 'way to know' God

If the *Spiritual Exercises* are an occasion for coming to know the will of God, then 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 occur? What is happening when a person 'makes' the *Exercises*? If, as Charles Taylor suggests, narrative frameworks help us to construct identity and orient ourselves in moral space, how exactly 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 response to these questions so far has been that the *Exercises* accomplish all of this by Plot (the scene, the territory), by Character (the players, conflicts), and by Authorship (the creative agency...) – that is, by creating space for purposive agents to understand, appropriate, experience and imagine creative ways of living a Christian life. Charles Taylor's suggestion - that we know who we are by a narrative

orientation toward the good – helps 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 narrativity of the *Exercises* has various implications for what we might call the narrative epistemology of Ignatian spiritual theology. What follows from the foundational theory of Ignatian narrativity (identity formation and moral orientation) presented in the first half of this project will be an argument for a kind of Ignatian epistemology, a distinctively Ignatian ‘way of knowing’ God. As we have already seen, 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*¹³⁸ (to relate = to tell and/or to associate or connect) with God. The act of narration is used by Ignatius as a pedagogical tool in various instances and the fact that narration is closely related to knowing (e.g. *traer a la memoria*) in the Ignatian tradition suggests a potential ‘narrative epistemology’ which I will explore in what remains of this current study.

This part of my project (Part III) will intend to bridge the conversation about Ignatian narrativity with Ignatian theology. This argument will be developed in three basic movements: (1) I begin by introducing a sketch of the history of Jesuit theological style and by identifying some of its defining and/or distinctive characteristics. This sketch concludes by making a case for the importance of praxis and method in defining Ignatian theology. (2) After this brief survey I will develop a parallel sketch of the role of narrative imagination in the Christian tradition. This section intends to explain how the imagination makes possible the kind of subjective/existential epistemological ‘sense-making’ which Ignatian theology is after. And finally, (3) I revisit some of the examples of Ignatian narrativity presented in Part II in order to demonstrate how the praxis of narrativity in the Ignatian spiritual tradition epitomizes the fundamental theological and epistemological demands of Ignatian insight. All of this intends to prepare the way for the final part of this project where the narrative and theological foundation will become the basis for a deeper understanding of Ignatian selfhood, knowledge, and experience (Part IV). In brief, what this third part of my project intends to establish is that Ignatian theology seeks an ‘authentic Christocentrism’ whereby the subject becomes capable of knowing God and knowing as God knows – that is, creatively in their use of narrative imagination. It is precisely this Christocentric authenticity and imaginative

¹³⁸ OED definition - narrate = to relate (cited in Part I above).

sense-making which becomes the foundation for the Ignatian anthropology, epistemology, and mystagogy presented in the fourth and final section of this project.

3.1 Authentic Christocentrism

Ignatius himself didn't say much *about* theology. While having received years of formal theological training, Ignatius did not regularly participate in systematic theological speculation or publish any strictly '*theological*' texts. Ignatius was not a '*theologian*' in this narrow sense. And yet, to assert that Ignatius was not a "professional theologian"¹³⁹ does not necessarily mean that he wasn't '*theological*' – that he wasn't *doing* theology, or that he has no '*theological*' insight to offer. His particular mode of speaking to people about their experience of God, may in fact be a helpful and corrective addition to what we understand theology to be. Even Thomas Aquinas believed there to be more than one way of doing theology¹⁴⁰ but too often we collapse our understanding of what we mean by theological thinking into a rather narrow interpretation of the scholastic/Thomistic style.

What would Ignatius say? First, he would remind us that theology has a properly ordered 'end', which is to help souls.¹⁴¹ He suggested that, of the modes/methods of theology known to him, both 'positive theology' (patristics, bible – a narrative-philological style) and 'scholastic theology' (Thomistic, systematic-speculative style) were appropriate.¹⁴² He was clear that all possible modes should be included in the formation of Jesuits and in their college curriculums¹⁴³, accepting that at some points in history and in some cultures one style or approach might be more or less fruitful than another; that is, one way might be more or less helpful to the souls Jesuits were hoping to help. Ignatius noted that 'scholastic' theology

¹³⁹ DULLES, A., "Saint Ignatius and the Jesuit Theological Tradition", *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* v.XIV n.2 (March, 1982), 1.

¹⁴⁰ "At the outset of the *Summa theologiae* [*Summa theologiae*, 1. 1. 6.], Thomas Aquinas writes of a 'twofold manner of judging', generating 'a twofold wisdom'. One style of judgment centres on a person's 'inclination': the matter in question attracts the virtuous person to make correct judgments. The holy person operates *patiens divina*—out of receptivity to divine reality. The other style is a matter of 'knowledge'; correct judgments come from an awareness of ethical principles. And Thomas specifies that his project is of the second kind."

THEOBALD, C., "An Ignatian Way of Doing Theology: Theology Discerning 'The True Life'" *The Way*, 43/4 October 2004, 146.

¹⁴¹ *Const.* 351.

¹⁴² *Sp.Exs.* 363 - Rules for thinking with the Church.

¹⁴³ *Const.* 351.

was helpful in his context of the Reformation, but he was sure to encourage discernment and adaptation if and when appropriate.

Considering this call to adaptability, our question then becomes, how have Jesuits navigated this *everything* of all theological possibilities? What has found priority and why? And, ultimately, what kind of theology ‘makes sense’ for the souls of today? “In recent times, theology has become much richer, and much more diverse. But this very diversity raises a question: what, in all this wide-ranging intellectual activity, is in fact specifically theology? What holds it all together? What gives it coherence?”¹⁴⁴ Cristophe Theobald suggests that the distinctively ‘Ignatian way’ of doing theology makes a call to “abandon the sense of sharp separation between so-called ‘academic theology’ and its expression in spiritual literature so sadly characteristic of Christian thought throughout the second millennium.”¹⁴⁵ I have, and will continue to suggest that it is the narrativity of imagination that makes this unity of spirituality and theology possible. But first, to understand how Ignatian theology developed its distinctive way, we must look to its history.

3.1.1 Ignatian Theology: A Brief History

Avery Dulles paints the Jesuit theological tradition in three broad strokes,¹⁴⁶ identifying three different milestones in Jesuit theological history: The Councils of Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II. That Jesuit theology can be understood in relation to three ecumenical councils says a lot: namely, that Jesuit theology seeks to serve the Church in her most universal expression by answering contemporary questions and by offering counsel to the Church’s hierarchy in times of self-evaluation and reform. At the Council of Trent the nascent Society was an advocate, as mentioned already, of both scholasticism and positive theology as effective and valuable theological modes. The Society of Jesus was known from this early stage for their advocacy of the importance of Papal power for the sake of unity in the universal church. Dulles notes that this characteristic is also evident in the Society’s theology around Vatican I – defining Jesuit theology in this moment by its concern for defending Neo-Thomism and Papal-power.

¹⁴⁴ THEOBALD, C., 146-60.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ DULLES, A., “Jesuits and Theology”, *Theological Studies* 52 (1991) 524-538.

The third historical movement involved a notable thematic shift around the time of Vatican II. In this period Dulles describes the Society as leaning back on *positive theology* (Patristics/Scripture - often neglected in a strictly speculative scholastic approach to metaphysical categories, ethical principles, etc.) as well as *discernment* as the distinctive Ignatian trait that holds in tension tradition-hierarchy, and development-reform. This may be rightly understood as a ‘Spiritual’ theology in that it trusts that the Spirit might demand new ‘ways’ of theologizing in a new context while always evaluated under the standard of the *First Principle and Foundation* – to help us ‘praise reverence and serve God’. Ignatius himself was concerned with a particular kind of knowledge of God – one that would give rise to love. His contemplation to attain divine love can be understood as a kind of *theotic* theological method (conversion by contact - mutual self-communication). So between the goal (*First Principle*) and the glory of achieving that goal (*Contemplation to Attain Love*) what is the *way*? Here a narrative theological option begins to present itself: What Ignatius proposes as a way between his First Principle and his Contemplation to Attain Divine Love is a series of stories, imagined by the subject (exercitant) in the presence of the object (God), a co-creation of a loving narrative, a gospel written in the life of each individual. What Ignatius proposes with his Exercises is nothing short of a narrative appropriation of the authentic Christian life – a life lived in the companionship of Christ.

3.1.2. Ignatian Theology: Characteristics and Praxis

Defining an Ignatian theology depends, of course, on what we mean by theology.¹⁴⁷ Avery Dulles defines theology as a creative ‘imaginative’ endeavor (something more than, in his words, mere ‘metaphysical photography’) whereby experience and proclamation are held in a dialogically mutual formative tension. He suggests four categories/models to explain what we might mean by an Ignatian theology - Christocentrism, Anthropocentrism, Ecclesiocentrism, Theocentrism - and he concludes by identifying six characteristics: (1) mysticism of grace, (2) Christocentrism, (3) ecclesial loyalty, (4) esteem for the human, (5) respect for freedom, and (6) adaptability to changing situations.

Dulles’ treatment begs the question: How many ‘centrisms’ can a single theology contain? Models can be helpful tools for approximating an understanding of a complex

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

reality¹⁴⁸, but I find them less helpful in this instance precisely because the distinctive characteristic of an Ignatian theology might very well be its allergy to *objective* categorization and its preference for *subjective* participation. Ignatian theology seeks a ‘synthetic’ unity¹⁴⁹ and yet Dulles’ own exposition insists on separating Ignatian theology into four categories. Ignatius own writing reveals a distinctive trinitarian vision of God – three particular persons united in a missionary relationship of self-communicating love.¹⁵⁰ The trinitarian absence in Dulles’ presentation is striking and ultimately his categories fail to convince. He recognizes the need for synthetic unity but misses the opportunity to discover/advocate for that unity in praxis.

My argument up to this point has intended to provide a treatment of narrativity as the synthetic dynamic in Ignatian theology and Jesuit spiritual praxis. If Ignatius was not a theologian and Jesuits are not looking to be more ‘Ignatian’ but rather to live as companions of Jesus, what then does it mean to do Ignatian theology? We ought to ask how would (did) Jesus theologize. Answers to this question seem to agree with what Dulles extracts from the history of Jesuit theology: experience and imitation, an imaginative-dialogical method where the medium and the message become impossible to separate. I would only add that Jesus as theologian is decidedly narrative and analogical – speaking in parable, teaching in example – “*The kingdom of God is like...*” It is the narrativity of Ignatian pedagogy and epistemology that makes for a distinctive Ignatian theology.

Ignatius invites us into a ‘way of proceeding’ and his theological insight has proven to be a great gift to the Church. At the heart of this way is an explicit desire to allow the individual person direct contact with Jesus, their Creator and Lord. Jesuits don’t really want to do Ignatian things, but rather to do ‘Jesus things’ as Ignatius helped them and inspired them to do. Dulles’ Christo-Anthro-Ecclesio-Theo-centric model misses the mark for its intrinsic emphasis on the object being studied and not the subject doing the study; Dulles misses the essentially interpersonal (i.e. relational/existential) dynamic of the Ignatian understanding of God. Perhaps the unifying synthetic element in each of Dulles’ categories is

¹⁴⁸ Dulles’ use of models is a remarkable example of catechesis around complex theological themes like Divine Revelation (Models of Revelation) and Ecclesiology (Models of Church). Dulles was fond of the use of ‘models’ in his teaching and theology and to great positive effect in the post-Vat-II Church -- but here the effect is, in my opinion, counterproductive.

¹⁴⁹ DULLES, A., (1982), 3.

¹⁵⁰ cf. Spiritual Diary of St. Ignatius in *Ignacio de Loyola, Obras* (Iparraguirre, I. / Dalmases, C. / Ruiz Jurado, M., eds.) BAC, Madrid 1991.

the theologian herself and the ‘I Am’ truth of God revealed in the creative tension between the God of self-communicating love and the theological subject working to receive that love in the *theotic (theosis)* mutuality of the *Contemplatio*. In the conclusion of Dulles’ survey he identifies six attributes of an ‘Ignatian theology’ wherein he uses the phrase ‘**authentic christocentrism**’¹⁵¹ (as well as ‘mysticism’ and a type of ‘creative fidelity’ call to obedience in the Church -- a stretched attempt to reconcile the historical tension between Thomism and Positive theology). In the few words Ignatius offers on the subject, Aquinas is defended for being particularly useful to his time, however, progressive creativity is emphasized in so far as theology was not to remain a speculative exercise but rather a spiritual aid in bringing the person not only (or merely) to abstract knowledge of God, but rather to a soul-saving relationship with God. That is, Ignatius was concerned with a particular type of knowledge - experiential knowledge that would give rise to the love of God.¹⁵²

Theobald’s contribution develops what we could mean by such an ‘**authentic christocentrism**’ in a way that makes the case for a distinctive ‘style’ of Ignatian theologizing. Theobald explicitly addresses not only theological content, but also method – a significant and underdeveloped consideration in Dulles’ presentation of the question.¹⁵³ Aquinas himself identifies two ways of doing theology: one by knowledge of ethical principles (his way) and the other by ‘inclination, attraction, or receptivity’ to divine reality (a spiritual way); while Aquinas acknowledges both ways later Thomists expressed a clear preference for the systematic knowledge of ethical/metaphysical principles to the exclusion of ‘spiritual’ theologies and theologians.

Theobald’s approach allows him to describe the ‘synthetic’ dynamic of Ignatian theology (“Inner-coherence of theology and relationships between the different activities that theology involves”¹⁵⁴) that Dulles mentions but doesn’t really discover. Theobald explains this ‘inner-coherence’ by noting the unity, for Ignatius, between doctrine and ‘true life’ (a specific way of relating to God and human beings. “Doctrine” (propositions) opens up to a

¹⁵¹ DULLES, A., (1991), 538.

¹⁵² I’m borrowing this “give rise to love” language from David Lonsdale and his book *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, Orbis, New York 2000.

¹⁵³ To be fair to Dulles: He briefly introduces Lonergan/Rahner...but does not allow for their ‘methodological’ considerations to substantially affect his argument...which, is more concerned with presenting a survey of Ignatian/Jesuit thought than an explicit argument for one...a call to find this distinctive theological thread that, Theobald and this current paper, attempt to define.

¹⁵⁴ THEOBALD, C., 148.

“style” (method) of transformation and/or conversion.¹⁵⁵ Ignatius identifies doctrine with ‘formation of a true life’ that occurs when Jesus or his apostles come into contact with people.¹⁵⁶ This contact demands discernment and inventiveness in place of strict doctrinal fundamentalism. Reading and re-creation of the reader mediated by the spirit.¹⁵⁷

The Ignatian way, for Theobald (and here he echoes Dulles’ notion that theology is more than mere ‘metaphysical photography’), is not a description or representation of life, but rather an invitation to actually experience that life. Experiences occur in history and in infinite variety, therefore, theology, Theobald explains, must remain supple. Theology demands a “fluid relationship between Christian experience and its regulation in ideas.” Theobald refers to a “feedback effect” where theological self-understanding consists of a mutuality whereby the structuring of Christian life is a theological effect.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the pre-eminent Ignatian example of this ‘feedback effect’ would be the ‘mutual self-communication’ described by Ignatius in the *Contemplation to Attain Divine Love*.

Theobald’s description meets Ignatius’ fundamental theological criteria – that theology serve the end of helping souls in their particular histo-cultural context. He describes the value of ‘authentic life’ in face of a contemporary tension between individualism and ‘conformism’, the coherence between words and deeds, creativity, the universal call to holiness, etc.¹⁵⁹ whereby the Spirit ‘counsels’ (consoles) each person directly (individually, personally), where God is revealed in mutuality by a kind of ‘textual appropriation’.¹⁶⁰ This ‘textual’ or ‘narrative’ appropriation allows the reader (whether in literal reading, theological, spiritual, etc. or in imaginative scriptural contemplation, as in the Exercises) into the author’s ‘generative’ experience.¹⁶¹ Just as Jesuits appropriate the ‘experience of Ignatius’ in reading his autobiography, any Christian appropriates the ‘experience’ of Christ by personal, theological, or liturgical reading of scripture.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ *Sp.Exs.*, 146.

¹⁵⁷ THEOBALD, C., 151.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 153-154.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 156.

¹⁶⁰ It should be noted that the theological relevance of this approach in the twentieth century is evidenced by the importance and influence of various Jesuit theologians - Rahner, etc. cf. Sesboué

¹⁶¹ THEOBALD, C., 157.

¹⁶² Incidentally, this ‘textual appropriation’ model of Theobald also serves to answer some of Dulles’ concerns about the risk of 20th century Jesuit theology (or theological pluralism in general) breaking away from faithfulness to the Church’s teaching/tradition: The theological/liturgical community becomes a helpful safeguard against the potential ‘disobedience’ or ‘ecclesial/traditional’ rupture Dulles fears; if we remain apostles, empowered by the Spirit, using the tools of discernment Ignatius suggests, we need not fear, for where

3.1.3. Imaginative Construing (Theology) & Authentic Life (Praxis)

The narrative appropriation of experience becomes, for Ignatius and for those who practice his way, a privileged place of encounter with Christ, an opportunity to order our life by the authenticity of the figure of Jesus. Theobald articulates (without naming it as such) a subtle trinitarian structure to this appropriation: “Spirit consoles (counsels) ... a wisdom spread in God’s providence, to Christian life’s specific form.”¹⁶³ As I have argued in the first half of this project, the distinctive Ignatian praxis is narrative in ministries of the word and the spiritual exercise of discernment and contemplation within the imaginative narrative context of the scriptures.

This articulation of the Ignatian way is well suited to our contemporary context. It leans away from ‘doctrinal’ theology and toward a ‘positive theology’ that is more narrative and less systematic, but the narrative turn is not without its systematic foundation; it simply avoids (in Dulles’ words) reducing theology to metaphysical photography and understands it as something participative and dynamic. “The theologian, using the themes and symbols provided by Scripture and tradition, attempts an **imaginative construing** that gives meaning and direction to the Christian life.”¹⁶⁴ Here Dulles, defining the act of theology in general, seems perfectly in line with Theobald’s understanding of the role of an Ignatian theologian, acknowledging that theology is “a creative task” and that “types of theology rest not so much on agreed sets of theses as on commonalities of experience, outlook, and concern.”¹⁶⁵

It is precisely the combination of ordered structure and creative dynamism which makes narrativity a meaningful expression of what is at stake in the work of theology. We can reduce the number of models or theological categories (from Dulles’ ten to two): (1) Metaphysical photography: scholastic or systematic, (re)presentation, proclamation, dogmatic, knowledge or ethical principles, content driven. (2) True/authentic life: positive theology, participation/appropriation, interpretation (imagination/narration), philology, analogic, familiarity (personal), theosis, conversion, method, mutuality in

there is Spirit, there is Freedom (2 Cor 3:17-18) and God’s creative labor can continue in the world, in our lives, and, of course, in the Church.

¹⁶³ THEOBALD, C., 157.

¹⁶⁴ DULLES, A., (1982), 1.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

self-communication (*Contemplatio*). If there is a uniquely Ignatian way of proceeding and it must be rightly understood as a *way*. This Ignatian way includes discernment and participation in the ‘authentic life’ of Jesus by the appropriation of texts and the generative experience of the author. From this point begins the case for a narrative Ignatian-theology, a theology that acts – not merely Christocentric but rather Christo-praxic – teaching and healing, serving and saving, helping and humanizing.

Dulles is right to highlight the importance of definitions: What is theology? Is the act of theology merely metaphysical photography (describing or capturing images of the ‘object of God’) or is it a creative enterprise, direct experience of the authentic ‘true life’ of Christ? Theobald reconciles the division between the two models I suggest above when he claims that theological self-understanding is both Christian experience and its regulation in ideas; there is a mutuality between experience and reflection, a ‘feedback effect’ between dogmatic theology and positive theology.¹⁶⁶ From this point we can draw a few preliminary conclusions about Ignatian theology: (1) The insufficiency of models/categories because of the absence of the subject (creative participation/method). (2) The importance of the ‘theotic’ style described by Theobald: participation, conversion, interpretation, etc. (3) and that the end of Ignatian theology is, more than mere systematic (conceptual/intellectual) knowledge, but rather what Theobald calls the ‘authentic life’ - the goal of the *Principle and Foundation* achieved in the direct experience of the *Contemplation to Attain Divine Love*.

What might we mean by an “authentic Christocentrism”? My suspicion is that this *authentic Christocentrism* can be understood as a kind of narrative theology: How would Jesus have done theology? Narratively (teaching about God in analogies and parables, etc.). Moreover, an authentic Christocentrism is not after the definition of objects, but rather after the conversion of subjects. How do we participate in this theology? By the narrative appropriation of this authentic life in Christ.¹⁶⁷ We are called to conversion, spiritually and theologically, to a conversion richly understood as authentic life in Christ.

¹⁶⁶ In all of this...are fundamental epistemological questions: If God is a morally perfect being worthy of worship, perhaps then God is unknowable as a ‘third-party’ object. Perhaps God hides in inwardness and subjectivity and perhaps the most appropriate form of ‘God-talk’ (theology) is actually the act of talking to/with God -- that is, conversation -- spiritual conversation in God’s presence, theology done in the eucharistic context of worship; perhaps this is what Ignatius was calling us to when he reminds us that we are made to praise, reverence and serve -- more than simply distinguish define and defend.

¹⁶⁷ E.g. by Ignatian contemplation, discernment, liturgy, eucharist, apostolic mission, the mutuality of self-gift, self-communication, donation, offering, etc.

If this ‘authentic life’ is what we’re after in Ignatian theology and Christian life, then what kind of spiritual/theological praxis can deliver such authenticity? Counterintuitively, perhaps, the Christian tradition has held that the image and the imagination are privileged places of encounter with God – places both of knowledge of God and of ‘authentic experience’. It is, I will now argue, the imagination properly understood that guides Christian knowing. Theological knowledge is not limited to the literal or analytical ‘words’ of systematic theology or dogmatic definitions, but rather flows from the living and dynamic Word of God; theological knowledge is discovered also in the image of God and the expression of that image made known over time in the unfolding of creation and the history of salvation. Narrativity in this sense can be understood as the image in action and in this way we begin to see how the imagination joins reason as an epistemic faculty of sense-making.

3.2. Narrative Imagination and Sense-Making

It would be difficult to overestimate the danger of losing or neglecting our capacity for imagination in moments of personal or cultural crisis. It is the imagination that makes hope possible. It is the imagination that allows for *sense-making*. It is the imagination that orients our lives by way of images of all sorts - images of our lived reality necessary for our basic survival, images of the yet-unseen reality necessary for our creativity, images of inspiration necessary for our making possible the impossible. Above all, it is fair to say, though seldom appreciated, that the imagination lies at the heart of our knowledge of and our capacity for a relationship with God. The things of God, being profoundly consequential, are complicated and full of risk, and perhaps for this reason we all too often hold the imagination at a distance – suspicious of its ways, untrusting of its power. But to live without imagination, to live without sense, without hope and creativity, is an even greater danger, and for that reason we ought to intend a meaningful understanding of what the imagination is and how it functions in Christian spiritual life.

Image and imagination (narrativity as image-action) - St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), often considered the definitive voice on theological matters, includes the imagination among our human faculties in his definition of the soul; he understands the soul as the organ of our cognitive and affective faculties - intellect, reason, memory, imagination.

¹⁶⁸ William F. Lynch (1908- 1987), writing three quarters of a millennium later, and more about psychology than theology (i.e. concerned more about our sanity than our souls), considered our cognitive and affective faculties to be a function of the imagination: “Here imagination means nothing esoteric. It is the sum total of all the forces and faculties in man that are brought to bear upon our concrete world to form proper images of it.”¹⁶⁹ The imagination, for Lynch (as for Aquinas), is understood as a collection of faculties (or one among them) that plays an important task in the formation of sense-making images of the world around. Lynch restricts his definition to “proper images” of the “concrete world”, I presume, because he is writing a text about the psychological imagination as a means of healing mental illness; it would not be too much of a stretch, however, to add to his ‘formation of images in the concrete world’ the ‘revelation of’ or ‘reception of’ images in the spiritual realm. I would argue that the imagination can be understood as a *communicative* faculty - both in forming and interpreting revelatory, or sense-making, images - and that even Lynch’s psychological definition, concerned with the sanity of our mind, opens up possibilities in our heart as well, i.e. hope for the salvation of our souls. In any case, Lynch nuances his definition by identifying two tasks of the imagination:

“The first task of such an imagination, if it is to be healing, is to find a way through fantasy and lies into fact and existence.

The second task of such an imagination is to create perspectives for the facts it has found. It will refuse to leave facts as scattered absolutes, to preoccupy and frighten human beings. Like hope itself, it will always suppose that there is a fact and a possibility that is not yet in. The imagination will always be the enemy of the absolutizing instinct and the ally of hope.”¹⁷⁰

The first task Lynch identifies is clearly within the bounds of his understanding of ‘proper images’ and of the ‘concrete world’. But the second task stretches beyond the mere functionality of ‘fact finding’ into the realm of ‘sense-making’. This is what I consider to be the heart of what we might call a *narrative epistemology* – i.e. narrativity understood as an imaginative sense-making epistemic faculty. This second task of imagination is a narrative task – it puts the pieces of fragmented images into meaningful relationships with one another.

¹⁶⁸ Aquinas, T. *STh* I-II q. 23, art. 4c; q. 79, art 8, resp.

¹⁶⁹ LYNCH, W.F., *Images of Hope: Imagination as healer of the hopeless*. University of Notre Dame Press, London (1965), 243.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 243.

It puts images, quite literally, into perspective, allowing them a place in our relationships of space and time. This imaginative perspective is epistemological insofar as we put a series of images in relationship with one another in order that they might ‘tell’ us something of the truth of experience. Somewhat like the individual frames of a film, or the sequence of images in a comic-strip, we orient our understanding of things by allowing the *data* of images to participate in the *dynamism* of action (*image-in-action* = *imagination*) thereby attaining the epistemic *depth* of perspective.

Significantly this is not a process we can do by ourselves - ours is a shared narrativity. Here Lynch follows Piaget in his suggestion that imaginative sense-making of scattered images is a ‘socializing’ process whereby we place our varied perspectives into relationship with those of others.¹⁷¹ It is precisely this *sense of perspective*, this depth of relationality, that makes hope possible. It is, on the contrary, the absolutizing nature of meaningless images or unrelated images - as Lynch says, images that are just ‘scattered around’ - that makes for hopelessness. Religiously speaking, it is the absolutizing function of static or solitary images that makes idolatry possible - i.e. idols are simply images that do not foster or participate in relationships; they pretend to be the thing they represent and therefore make impossible the true magic of metaphor; they do not move us, transform us, or put us into deeper relationship with the things they represent; they simply confuse and clutter our lives with yet another thing. In any case, it is the metaphoric action of authentic images made possible by our imagination that saves them from idolatry. It the narrativizing of images - putting scattered images into ordered relationships of depth and perspective - that saves us from meaninglessness.

Perhaps the most troubling ‘absolute image’ for us is that of death. It’s curious, then, and theologically significant, that we often narrativize death in order to transcend our paralyzing fear of it. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, for example, St. Ignatius is sure to maintain a narrative flow in the Third Week as we contemplate the passion of Christ. One act turns over into another; the definitive moment of Christ’s death is surrounded by the narrative action of all those gathered around the cross; we are never to stop and contemplate only a certain part of the story, but rather we are encouraged to allow the story to flow. In this way, the absoluteness of death is conquered as we participate in the kenotic narrative flow of God’s death and resurrection. In this way (and not only in the Third Week, but in the application of

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 247-249.

the senses throughout the *Exercises*) we participate in “the co-realization of a story whose content is the kenosis of God in the world and of the world in God.”¹⁷² Our fear of death is, literally speaking, very much about our fear of becoming one more meaningless bit of dust to be scattered about (not unlike the ‘scattered absolutes’ of Lynch’s definition of mental illness), but our hope lies in our participation, dust though we may be, in the ongoing story of God’s creation, the ongoing narrative of our participation in the creativity of divine imagination. Our hope is that our *isolation* will give itself over to meaningful and ordered *relations*.

3.2.1. Image and Imagination in the Christian Tradition

In Our Image and Likeness - From the beginning, quite literally, the Judeo-Christian tradition has understood God to be taken with the creation of, by, and in images. In the first words of the Judeo-Christian scriptures our very relationship with God is defined by a relationship of image and likeness.¹⁷³ A god so image-concerned and our relationship with such a god, rightly understood and practiced, demands a careful treatment of the powers and practices of the imagination. It should be no surprise to us, then, that in the very first set of ‘rules of engagement’ with this God¹⁷⁴ a treatment of the proper use of images features quite prominently. It would appear that, from the outset, judeo-christian spiritual and theological masters, writers and storytellers, have appreciated the powers and the problems of idols and ideas.¹⁷⁵

‘Verbo Divino’ - the word incarnate - the word imagined. The relationship of image and ideas finds expression in the words we use to make sense of things, God included. This image-occupied God of ours soon presents himself as the Word, seen *and* heard. In John’s

¹⁷² “En efecto, los sentidos junto con las imágenes y las ideas han de morir con Cristo y descender a los infiernos, para resucitar para el Padre de un modo inefablemente sensible-suprasensible. ‘Entonces oí sin escuchar sonido alguno, vi sin percibir ninguna luz, olí donde no había olor, gusté lo que no podía ser gustado, toqué lo que no podía ser palpado’, dice la esposa del Cantar de los Cantares en Eckhart. Esto no son paradojas que se destruyen a sí mismas, es **la co-realización de una historia cuyo contenido es la kénosis de Dios en el mundo y del mundo en Dios.**” BALTHASAR, H. Urs von., *Gloria. Una estética teológica* (6 vols.), Encuentro, Madrid 1985-1989 [orig.: Herrlichkeit (3 vols.), Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1961-1969], vol. I, 375. - emphasis, in bold, mine.

¹⁷³ Gn 1, 26 - “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’”

¹⁷⁴ Ex 34 - The Ten Commandments.

¹⁷⁵ While we have generally kept our fear of idols...at some point we seem to have lost the fear of ideas...you might say that scholastic theology even turned to idolize the idea of God...and with the idolization of ideas, perhaps lost something of our imagination.

famous remix of the first lines of Genesis¹⁷⁶ we see this powerful divine image-idea taking on a radically new shape. The theological ‘image of God’ is no mere idol and no mere idea, but rather a word made flesh - not an abstract or static image-idea but rather an active verb. The unheard become heard. The invisible made visible. The eternal God-becoming.¹⁷⁷ With this theological turn we see a novel incarnational and sacramental theo-epistemology developing within the spiritual praxis of the Christian tradition; we are made both in the divine imagination and memory - “Do this in memory of me.” The invisible God is made visible in Christ; the invisible Christ is made visible in sacramental communion.

Poets and Prophets - Mystics and Misfits: A Tradition of Visionaries - In the long history of the Christian spiritual tradition we find a community of teachers and writers, artists and practitioners doing what they can to understand this ‘image-of-God’ religious experience. In their efforts we can trace the development of what might be called a mysta-prophetic religious or spiritual pedagogy. This novel understanding of the divine comes with a certain ‘chicken or egg’ dilemma – Which came first, the image or the god? If in the first millennium the general movement was from the invisible God to the visible image of God¹⁷⁸, the second millennium turns around in hopes of moving back from the visible image to the invisible God.¹⁷⁹ We might say that this spiritual tradition of religious interpretation and praxis is one made up of *visionaries*, of prophets and mystics. But it must be said that, properly understood, neither prophets nor mystics are in the business of inventing fantasies. They are more concerned with the right-reception of and right-interpretation of that which has been experienced and that which is yet to come. Their imagination is historical as much as it is prophetic. This is not to say that they don’t make a claim on the future, but it is a claim firmly rooted in their vision of the past – their imagination is not one of fantasy but one of knowing.

3.2.2. The epistemology of the image and the imagination (image-action).

To hear, to see, and to know (oir, ver y conocer) – Aside from the strictly theological implications of the biblical treatment of idolatry and creation in God’s image, etc., we might

¹⁷⁶ Jn 1, 1 - “In the beginning was the Logos.”

¹⁷⁷ Col 1, 15 - “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Rm 1, 20 - “Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made.”

also consider the epistemological implications of the prophetic and mystic elements within the tradition and its attempts to understand the complicated processes of our ‘coming to know’ God. In this tradition our *sense-making*, whereby what we see and hear (by our senses) becomes knowledge (is made known to us), our lived experience becomes our way of knowing God (religious epistemology). Perhaps nowhere in the tradition is this epistemic leap made more explicit than in the visionary literature of the middle ages. The mysticism of medieval visionaries became a way of knowing God, not by way of strict theological knowledge, but rather by experiential knowledge (images of God both seen and heard) - ‘first-person’ knowledge in the experience and the retelling of the mystic experience in the literary genre of *Vitae* (e.g. *Vita Beatriz*, etc.). Moreover, this experiential (sense-driven) knowledge begat other ways of knowing the world apart from the abstraction of ideas that was characteristic of Platonic knowledge up to that point – perhaps helped also in medieval Europe by the rediscovery of Aristotelian thought.¹⁸⁰

Modes of knowing - seeing (visual), hearing (acoustic) – More than literal or corporeal vision, the Christian-mystic tradition suggests that we consider other modes of ‘seeing and hearing’ as ways of knowing. We can speak of both visual and acoustic images and their concurrent modes of knowledge. The visual image has a certainty to it, but risks losing temporal dynamics; as noted above, frozen/static images risk idolatry. The visual image is saved from idolatry by its own metaphoric character.¹⁸¹ The metaphoric visual image becomes a means of transport; while the image itself is static, the viewer is not; the viewer is invited into another place in space, and the image stands as a witness to another time. Acoustic communication, on the other hand, risks the opposite. Acoustic communication is both ephemeral and eternally present; i.e. we cannot hear what happened yesterday, but we can see its effects.¹⁸² Visual communication is more external, linear (grammatical) where

¹⁸⁰ “Visionarias y místicas respondieron a una intensa crisis religiosa en la que se buscaba no ya el conocimiento teológico, sino el conocimiento experiencial de Dios. Posiblemente, fue en el ámbito teológico donde en Europa se vivió por vez primera la exigencia de fundar el conocimiento en la experiencia --en la visión, en el olfato, en el tacto--, lo que más tarde se amplió a otros ámbitos, como por ejemplo el conocimiento geográfico del mundo.” CIRLOT, V. y GARÍ, B., *La Mirada Interior: Escritoras Místicas y visionarias en la Edad Media*. Ediciones Martínez Roca, S.A. Barcelona. 1999, 36.

¹⁸¹ WUNENBURGER, J., *La vida de las imágenes*, Jorge Baudino Ediciones -- Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Buenos Aires, 2005., 48-49.

¹⁸² To properly understand the psychodynamics at play here we must liberate acoustic and visual from the merely (or momentarily) seen and heard - scientists listening to deep space quite literally are listening to the past...but this is a function of sound moving in time. Sound cannot remain still and always moves through time and space.

acoustic communication is more immersive and, in this sense, interior (resonant).¹⁸³ The Christian spiritual tradition has continually wrestled with these dynamics of communication (e.g. prohibition against idols - God claiming a preference for a mode of communication, the synesthesia of the mystics 'seeing voices', etc.). Insofar as we understand God to be a self-communicating revelation of Love, each of these modes of knowing are wrapped up in the communication of images in the faculty of imagination.

Facts and 'Fictions' - Imaginative Sensibilities – That there are modes of communication and that, during various moments in our lived experience, those modes appear to be more or less appropriate to the content or object of communication makes obvious a need for some criteria. *How and/or why does one mode of communication bring us closer to or further from the reality of things in any given circumstance?* Images have the capacity to bring us closer to the truth of existence or further off into the realm of fantasy. It appears evident that the faculty of the imagination can be a tool of fact or fantasy. But here, we must make a distinction between fantasy and fiction, for fiction has proven a reliable carrier of truth, a proven mediator of what it really means to be human. Our sensibility. Our capacity to make sense of the world. Our ability to receive communication.

Facts: Imagination and the Senses - Imagination engages the senses with memory, understanding, and will (spiritual senses and intellectual senses). Our imaginative sensibility is what Lynch defines as the first task of the imagination - it is simply the creation and/or reception of 'proper images of our concrete world'. In this sense, the 'fact-finding' task of the imagination understood as the cognitive operation of the application of the senses is rarely questioned.

'Fictions': Imagination and Metaphor - I put the term 'fictions' in scare quotes here because, as mentioned above, I do not intend to speak of fantasy or to suggest that metaphor is some kind of irreality. But returning to the two tasks of imagination defined by Lynch we can suggest that the first task is one of seeking 'facts' and the second is one of creative 'fictions' - the artistic ordering of the data of experience for the creative end of understanding some aspect of its truth, or the literary description of *imaginary* events. As the author Flannery O'Connor says of the truth-telling capacity of literary fiction, "You tell a story

¹⁸³ On the psychodynamics of acoustic and visual communication, c.f. ONG, W. *Orality and Literacy: The technologizing of the word*, Routledge, New York, (1982).

because a statement would be inadequate.”¹⁸⁴ It is the ‘fiction’ of metaphoric language that I’m after here. The image in space and time - the narrative turn - imagination liberated and understood not as mere fantasy, but as narrative - history, creativity, etc. Imagination as a carrier of memory, understanding, and will. It is in this sense that we can say that the imaginative method of Ignatian meditation accomplishes both tasks - seeking the facts of God’s incarnation in attending to the life of Christ, but not without the freedom to imagine a new version of the familiar story in discernment and in creative application of the senses - the narrative articulation (in thought and action) of imaginary experience.

3.3. An Ignatian Way of Knowing God

We can turn now, finally, to explore how the Ignatian imagination sits within the larger tradition of Christian narrative/imaginative epistemology and how this narrative imagination might give greater clarity to the distinctive nature of a so-called Ignatian theological praxis. Above (in Part 2.3.1) we mentioned briefly the importance of the Ignatian imagination. We can return to it now, putting it into dialogue with the broader Christian spiritual and theological tradition.

3.3.1 Ignatian Imagination and Narrative Epistemology

We come to know the content of the Ignatian tradition by way of its narratives (e.g. *Autobiography*). We also practice the tradition by way of narrativity (e.g. Exercises and their narrative praxis, and the commentary on the tradition made by successive generations of Jesuits). Perhaps this is the distinctive genius of the Ignatian spiritual tradition: it explicitly intends to teach us the way to know what we most want to know – the love of God. We come to know by knowing, and to love by loving. This, above all, is what I mean to say when I speak of the Ignatian imagination and narrative epistemology. It is our participation in the imaginative act of narrativizing that brings us to the experiential knowledge of God’s love.

3.3.1.a. The Biography – Three ‘views’ of the human person – Self, Theological, and Christic. Through the first movements of the *Autobiography* (7-27) we can trace a

¹⁸⁴ O’CONNOR, Flannery, “Writing Short Stories” in *Mystery and Manners* Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York (1957), 96.

‘self-examination’ (which is progressively devotional, mental, and imaginal) followed (28-29) by a theological view, culminating in a Christic-integration (30-31). The narrativity of the Autobiography stretches beyond mere recounting of a chronology. It is a purposive text intending to convey the facts of a life while simultaneously encouraging in the sense-making of meaning about that life. In this sense it is more concerned with the second function of the imagination (sense-making) than the first (fact-finding). The images of Christ which guide Ignatius in his own conversion are presented throughout the narrative in hopes of helping the reader in his/her own imaging of Christ in their own life. To imagine Ignatius imagining Christ and the Saints is, in our very reading of the text, at once a recounting of the story and a reenacting of it. We imagine Christ, by way of the life of Ignatius, and find ourselves converted by that active imagination. This narrative method of imagination and imitation, implicitly present in the text of the autobiography is made explicit in the praxis of the Spiritual Exercises.

3.1.2.b. *The Exercises* - Spiritual Senses and the Imagination – To see and to know – The narrativity of the Exercises has already been examined throughout the second part of this project. Here I will only comment briefly on how this narrativity turns over into epistemology – into a way of knowing. The method of contemplation of the life of Christ engages both tasks of the imagination identified above by Lynch – that is, the fact-finding use of the senses (“what happened” a concern for historicity and reality) followed by the creative narrativizing or relativizing act of putting those facts into a meaningful order (“what does it mean to me now?”). Ignatius found in the methodology of prayer being taught in his time a means of helping others to transition from reading to meditation as he did, using the imagination in order to ‘bring the past into the present’ and to foster imitation more than admiration.¹⁸⁵ The meditative act of “bringing to memory” (*traer a la memoria*) and contemplating what we find there in order that our interior knowledge might affect us and that we might take note of that effect in the examination of prayer and/or the colloquies seeks not only to transport us into history but to transform us by it: “It does little good to read unless you seek to imitate ... [as] ... an exercise in ongoing conversion.”¹⁸⁶ “Meditation on the life of Christ does not only make past events present; it reminds us that Christ himself is present, and that he gives us the

¹⁸⁵ WALSH, M., “To always be thinking somehow about Jesus. The Prologue of Ludolph’s *Vita Christi*”, en *Studies* 43 (2011), 14.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 15.

grace to follow his example. The grace of his presence moves us from meditation to prayer.”

¹⁸⁷ What Ludolph of Saxony said in the 16th century, the late father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach repeats in the twentieth: “La aplicación de los sentidos alcanza su objetivo no ya en la producción de nuestras imágenes por nuestra imaginación, sino en la transformación de nuestras energías de amor por el amor de Cristo.”¹⁸⁸ Here then we can say that an Ignatian way of knowing God is understood and practiced by way of a particular imaginative method: examine, study, and seek to imitate. All of this to say that the praxis of the Exercises as a method of engaging the imagination (as Lynch would say, both to sense and to make-sense of our concrete world) in the knowledge of God has been present throughout the Ignatian tradition, but, of course, not always without its difficulties.

3.1.3.c. The Tradition - Directories - A close study of the *Directories*, the commentaries of what we might call the first ‘Ignatian practitioners’, reveals a series of stages in the first generation(s) of interpretations of the Exercises with an alternating tendency between understanding the ‘application of the senses’ as an intellectual or as an affective exercise¹⁸⁹ – that is, an alternating tendency between interpreting the Exercises as a means of engaging ideas or images. Incidentally, the ultimate ‘official’ directory that would shape the large part of Jesuit praxis of the course of the coming centuries clearly preferences the ‘mental’ operations as superior to the ‘imaginary’ ones. Without diverging too far into the details of this rich collection of documents we can say that the art of giving the Exercises was considered, throughout the tradition, to be a way of helping a person in their relationship with God – whether that knowledge was intellectual or spiritual was not always agreed upon, but that the primary tasks of the Exercises were in a sense epistemic (concerned with knowing) is hard to dispute; the Directories in general are sure to encourage the exercitant in their attention, understanding, and reflection.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps it is enough to remember that the Ignatian spiritual tradition was guided by the Exercises themselves and the fundamental desire to ‘seek and to do’ (*buscar y hallar*) the will of God. In any case, in each of these three examples (the Autobiography, Exercises, and the Ignatian spiritual tradition) we can find traces of the most basic elements of an Ignatian narrative epistemology. This connection will

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 16.

¹⁸⁸ KOLVENBACH, P.H., *Decir ... al Indecible* (ed. Ignacio Iglesias) Mensajero-ST, Bilbao/Santander 1999, 58-59.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. ARZUBIALDE, 366-368.

¹⁹⁰ *Los Directorios de Ejercicios (1540-1599)*, ed. Lop Sebastián, M., Mensajero, Bilbao, 2000, 655-662.

be treated in greater detail in Part IV. But hopefully, for now, this presentation has been sufficient to make the basic point: that, in the Ignatian way of theology and spiritual praxis, the tasks of the narrative imagination are critically important in our coming to know the reality of God.

Conclusions: “It is not too much but too little imagination that causes illness.”¹⁹¹

It would be hard to underestimate the negative implications of a loss of imagination in moments of personal or cultural crisis. When we lose or are denied this imaginative way of knowing, we suffer various kinds of epistemic injustice and impoverishment. We lose our identity as persons (C.Taylor¹⁹²). We lose our historical memory (Ricoeur¹⁹³). We lose our sanity (Lynch¹⁹⁴). We lose a capacity to see clearly and creatively the beauty and the beasts before our very eyes (Argullos¹⁹⁵). We lose our closeness to God, or what was once called simply the soul’s salvation (Ignatius). To struggle against this loss, to stand against forgetting, to stand against the atrophy of the imagination, is to help people in their narrativity, to encourage their participation in the creative articulation of our shared salvation history. The danger of not doing so is, to be sure, very real and very present:

“Furthermore, in postmodernism there is no longer any possibility of a metanarrative, an overarching story, myth or belief-system that is capable of giving meaning to all the dimensions of human lives. Hence Christianity is undermined because it professes to proclaim such a metanarrative, a good news story that offers meaning, and indeed salvation, to every person in every situation. Christians today are caught in a confluence of two opposing sets of presuppositions, one emanating from their faith convictions, the other from the dominant culture. The clash of these mutually antagonistic world-views is experienced both in society at large and in the inner life of each individual person.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ LYNCH, 243.

¹⁹² “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 agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood.**” TAYLOR, C., *Sources of the Self*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, (1989), 27 - emphasis, in bold, mine.

¹⁹³ RICOEUR, P., *La Memoria, La Historia, El Olvido*, Editorial Trotta, Madrid, 2010.

¹⁹⁴ LYNCH, 243.

¹⁹⁵ ARGULLOL, R. y DJERMANOVIC, T., “La filosofía, arte del pensar.” en *Razón y Fe*, t. 273, n. 1408, (2016), 119.

¹⁹⁶ O’LEARY, B. “Ignatian Mysticism and contemporary culture”, in *The Way* 52 (2013), 4.

The antidote to this ill, the remedy, is to be found in our active engagement of the external world by way of the depth of interiority - both our own inner depths and the depths of the things around. The social meta-narrative consists in our sense of *external* context, our worldview and its 'depth of field', and it is engaged by way of the inner-life of our personal narratives, our *interiority*. The eternal Word of God seeks incarnation in us and, in turn, the indwelling Christ seeks expression in our action. Our image is brought to life in imagination. The Jesuit spiritual tradition has spoken in poetry and prose about the importance of interiority and indwelling (e.g. Hopkins). The Exercises are a theotic spiritual method of imaging Christ - our invisibility made visible in and by divine action, our image brought to life in imagination. The value of of imagination is not limited to the transcendental (spiritual or religious) spheres of our lives. It is the interiority of imagination that makes possible the exterior response of interpersonal/social action. It is in this way that Ignatian discernment and election helps us to arrive at a point of seeing and choosing, that is to say loving, in a way that will save us from hopelessness.

“The argument for interiority today is not simply that it has been a constant part of the Christian spiritual tradition. It is also that interiority is the antidote to much that is insidiously destructive in our contemporary society. The spread of materialism, the speed of life, the pressures of competition, the seductiveness of consumerism, the threat to our sense of security generated by economic recession, the mind-controlling power of the mass media, the intrusiveness of advertising--these and other influences mould our way of living. Busyness replaces reflectiveness, anxiety replaces serenity and the craving for instant gratification replaces thoughtful attention to long-term goals, especially those of the spirit. Even the quality of our most precious relationships is frequently put at risk. We are drawn to live superficially, on the surface of things, losing touch with our deeper and more real selves. The question, ‘What do you *really* want?’ (as opposed to ‘What would you *like*?’) is often surprisingly difficult to answer.”¹⁹⁷

Without images and our engagement with them in imagination we lose our sense of meaning, our perspective, our view. Add to this the diagnosis of our lack of ability to ‘see’ at all and the danger of losing our capacity for ‘viewing’ things in freedom and intimacy - the overabundance of words and images in the age of ‘hyper information’ - expressed by Rafael Argullol in his conversation with Tamara Djermanovic: “Por consiguiente, lo que está en

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 12-13.

peligro es tanto el valor de la palabra como el valor de la imagen por falta de calidad en la mirada. Cuando la imagen pierde valor se convierte en idolátrica. Si tenemos poca resistencia de palabra y una mirada de poca calidad, somos susceptibles de ser manipulados, de que aparezcan los brujos que manipulan a través de trampas, de engaños y de sortilegios. Este es un peligro real.”¹⁹⁸ And we realize that many of the ills that face us, or at least some of the most pressing among them, are caused and made worse by a chronic lack of imagination.

In a world, all too often fooled, by the ghosts of fantasy and escapism, the Ignatian imagination presents itself as a real and present need. An authentic imagination capable of carrying us more deeply into our reality and not any further from it. We can turn now to the final part of this project - sketching the foundation for an Ignatian theological framework of selfhood, knowledge and experience of God.

Up to this point I have argued that Ignatian narrativity is fundamentally a function of the 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. 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.

I will turn now to see how this narrativity might inform an Ignatian perspective on anthropology, epistemology, and mystagogy – something like an Ignatian theology. A distinctive Ignatian contribution to theology will necessarily be rooted in and oriented toward the transformative/salvific/theotic relationship with Divine Love. Ignatian epistemology must

¹⁹⁸ ARGULLOL, R. y DJERMANOVIC, T., “La filosofía, arte del pensar.” en *Razón y Fe*, t. 273, n. 1408, (2016), 119.

include aspects of all areas of theological inquiry. The Ignatian theological offering is one of unity - of the 'whole person'. 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), how we come to know God (epistemology) and how we understand and experience this Spirit communally (ecclesiology) all must be interwoven 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? The medium is the message...the meaning is in the method. This Ignatian theology will be rightly understood therefore as an Ignatian way - a way of being, of knowing, of becoming - and it is these three Ignatian ways that I will now turn to in the final chapter of this project (Part IV).

Part IV -- Becoming Love: Selfhood, Knowledge, and Experience

*Introduction: Love itself is a form of knowledge.*¹⁹⁹

What does it mean to *know* God? To know *about* God? To *experience* God? When speaking of the knowledge of God I have preferred to use the progressive/gerundial expression '*coming to know*' wherever possible throughout the course of this project. This preference reveals something of my perspective on the matter; I suspect that knowledge of God cannot be frozen in a particular moment or articulated once and for all in a definitive teaching, but rather must be revealed over time in a transformative process of becoming. Knowledge of God necessarily transforms us, converts us, challenges us, inspires us, etc. I have argued that this God-knowledge is distinctively (perhaps even necessarily) narrative. As Flannery O'Connor says, "You tell a story because a statement would be insufficient."²⁰⁰ So too with theology, so too with God. To speak of our relationship to God is to speak of our own becoming.²⁰¹ It is not enough to simply say who we are and who God is - such statements demand a story. We must also speak of who we become in one another's presence. We must speak of love. To know God, who is love, we must become lovers.

¹⁹⁹ Gregory the Great, *Forty Homilies on the Gospels*, 27.4 (PL 76:1207 A).

²⁰⁰ O'CONNOR, F., *Mystery and Manners* Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York (1957), 96.

²⁰¹ Human becoming as a process - RUIZ PÉREZ, F.J., "Para en todo acertar (Ej. 365) La persona como proceso según la espiritualidad ignaciana." *Manresa* Vol. 80 (2008) 19-31.

What appears here as poetry or sentimentality actually reveals a theological need. This project intends to contribute to the theological conversation about Ignatian spirituality, not to distract from it. I have argued that by attending to the narrativity of the Spiritual Exercises (Parts I & II) we might understand more clearly how this ‘becoming’ dynamic (a dynamic of narrative identity formation and moral orientation) of our relationship to God is experienced and how it can be fostered. I have tried to demonstrate (in Part III) how Ignatian theology, if there is such a thing, seeks to engage this experiential dynamic in a kind of transcendental method whereby the theologian (the one seeking knowledge of God) partakes in a transformative process of ‘imaginative construing’ which leads toward an ‘authentic Christocentrism’ - a process with its own particular epistemological characteristics. In all of this there is a suggestion that our sense-making narratives are formed by way of a *theotic* relationship with the divine will of God - a process made explicit in the Ignatian praxis of examen of personal experience and contemplation of Gospel narratives in the context of a relationship of praise, reverence and service.

What I will present in this fourth and final part of the project is a kind of extended conclusion to everything I have argued so far. I would like to explore how this narrative ‘becoming’ can be described as a ‘personal way of knowing God’ - a *way* or a *becoming* that implies a certain understanding of selfhood, knowledge, and mystical experience. These three pillars of Ignatian theology (anthropology, epistemology, and mystagogy) are taken together as a kind of comprehensive Ignatian worldview in which the narrative and theological concerns expressed earlier in this paper find their fruit. Beneath it all is a conviction (expressed well by Lonsdale²⁰²) that the ‘knowledge of God’ which Ignatius was after, was the kind of knowledge that gives rise to love, the kind of knowledge that doesn’t end in the mind but that moves also the soul²⁰³, the kind of knowledge that will make lovers out of us.²⁰⁴

This final chapter (Part IV) contains three sections concerned with selfhood, knowledge, and experience. The first section will be an approximation of Ignatian anthropology, or the Ignatian perspective on the human person before God (e.g. the First

²⁰² LONSDALE, D. *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*. Orbis Books. Maryknoll, New York. 2000.

²⁰³ *Sp.Exs.*, 2 - “...porque no el mucho saber harta y satisface al ánima, mas el sentir y gustar de las cosas internamente.”

²⁰⁴ This notion of various kinds of knowledge is not new to Ignatius: “The monastic theologian was always concerned to distinguish two kinds of knowledge of God (*duplex Dei cognitio*): knowledge about God -- or ‘God-talk’, to use the modern phrase, and that intimate knowledge of a person which always involves a growing knowledge of the self.” WALSH, J., 313.

Principle and Foundation and the Ignatian concern for the posture of prayer). The second section treats the epistemic relationship between the person and God (e.g. ‘internal knowledge of Christ’ and the ‘application of the senses’). And the final section presents an Ignatian ‘mystagogy’, understood as the fundamental Ignatian conviction that we can come to direct knowledge of God at the heart of our lived experience - our coming to know God in all things and all things in God, in our coming to love and to serve God in all (e.g. Contemplation to Attain Divine Love, vocation and mission, etc.).

4.1. Ignatian Anthropology - Getting Free to Love

In his treatment of the Exercises, Dean Brackley describes the praxis of Ignatian spirituality as a ‘getting free to love’.²⁰⁵ It is a fitting description in part because it affirms the dynamic of personal becoming that I discuss in the introduction above. It also acknowledges the purposive nature of human becoming - that we are made for and oriented toward a particular end - God, who is Love. And, finally, it acknowledges our need of help, our need of freedom. In this brief statement we have a rather comprehensive description of the Ignatian project and a good sense of a basic Ignatian anthropology - the human person is in need of freedom in order that they might come to love. In what follows we will explore what is at stake in saying that we are capable of personal knowledge of God, what Ignatius says about the freedom/indifference necessary for this kind of love-knowledge, and finally the way in which Ignatius makes explicit/practical the ‘space of indifference’ in a brief recommendation about how to arrive at the moment of prayer - how we come to know God in reverence.

4.1.1. In Image and Likeness - Personal Knowledge of God

The Christian tradition has long included ‘self-knowledge’ among the strategies for coming to know God. A more comprehensive way of describing this self-knowledge might be something more like ‘personal’ knowledge. That is to say, we are not only invited to come to self-knowledge, but rather somehow - by the revelatory nature of creation, the grace of incarnation, and the humanity of Christ - this self-knowledge gives over to the experiential

²⁰⁵ BRACKLEY, D., *The Call To Discernment In Troubled Times*, Crossroad, New York, 2004.

knowledge of and relationship with God.²⁰⁶ This relational knowledge has epistemic consequences appropriate to God - i.e. epistemic consequences fitting of a morally perfect being worthy of worship. If we are to accept the theological claim of Genesis, that we are created in God's image (personal identity), then we must accept the moral imperative that follows from it, that we ought to act in God's likeness (moral orientation). From the beginning then, personal knowledge of God, familiarity with God, comes with certain anthropological consequences and moral obligations. Created in and of love we are called to become love in return.²⁰⁷

There is consistent scriptural precedent for this kind of personal, narrative, and transformative 'self-knowledge' of God. Such interior 'self-knowledge' is what the disciples on the road to Emmaus describe when they say, "Were not our hearts burning within us as he talked to us and explained the Scriptures to us? ... Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread."²⁰⁸ The passage presents a conversation revisited in imagination and articulation, the sharing and breaking of bread united with a narrative sense of identity, relationship, and recognition. In the letters of Paul are varied types of discourse according to the demands of various types of knowledge. "...my teaching and message were not in plausible philosophical language, but they were attended with convincing spiritual power, so that your faith might rest, not on human philosophy, but on the power of God." Paul makes a distinction between human and divine wisdom, and the

²⁰⁶ "Theology, then, though it needs the whole complex of the scholarly apparatus of today's academic world as it investigates all that the Church 'communicates to every generation', always begins from a 'happening', in the concrete circumstances of the christian man's life in community. The family, the parish, the prayer-group, the religious community: it is here that the knowledge of God is first and constantly communicated." WALSH, J., "Knowledge of God and of Ourselves", in *The Way* 12/4, 1972, p. 312.

²⁰⁷ "My knowledge of myself in silence (not by reflection on my self, but by penetration to the mystery of my true self which is beyond words and concepts because it is utterly particular) opens out into the silence and the "subjectivity" of God's own self.

The grace of Christ identifies me with the "engrafted word" (*insitum verbum*) which is Christ living in me. *Vivit in me Christus*. Identification by love leads to knowledge, recognition, intimate and obscure but vested with an inexpressible certainty known only in contemplation.

When we "know" (in the dark certitude of faith illumined by spiritual understanding) that we are sons of God in the one Son of God, then we experience something of the great mystery of our being in god and God in us. For we grasp, without knowing how, the awe inspiring and admirable truth that God, bending over the abyss of His own inexhaustible being, has drawn us forth from Himself, and has clothed us in the light of His truth, and purified us in the first of His love, and made us one, by the power of the Cross, with his only begotten Son. "Let us make man in our own image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26) "From the womb before the daystar have I begotten thee" (Psalm 109:3)." MERTON, T. *Thoughts...* 68-69.

²⁰⁸ Lk 24, 25-35.

revelation to the perfect, through the Spirit: “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”²⁰⁹

In the Exercises, Ignatius makes explicit what is at stake in this act of self-knowledge and provides an ordered and detailed technique for practicing it. The First Principle and Foundation begins the Exercises by placing the person before God in a kind of global philosophical vision statement. And then, throughout the Exercises, the person practices this ‘standing before God’ in prayer.²¹⁰ It is these two pillars that we will explore in the following sections - the posture of reverence suggested by the First Principle and the practice of reverence described in the addition about preparing oneself for prayer. Inspired by the epistemology of Bernard Lonergan, I will present the practice of ‘self-knowledge’ in the Christian tradition as an externalization of the subject, a way of knowing that comes from auto-reflection or intentional awareness of God’s working in our interiority. With this we will arrive at the second section of this chapter to explore the relationality of knowledge, the epistemology of communication and the Ignatian ideal of coming to the interior knowledge of Christ.

4.1.2. The Indifference of Reverence - First Principle and Foundation

The basis for an Ignatian theological anthropology is clearly stated in the First Principle and Foundation which opens the Spiritual Exercises with a description of the human being before God. The human person is made to act - to praise reverence and serve God - that is, the human person is defined by a relationship, an experience, and an end or purpose. All created things are to be held indifferently before this end. This so-called *Ignatian indifference* can be understood as a kind of *distance sufficient for reverence*. The practice of Ignatian prayer literally encourages this ‘sufficient distance’ in a simple way when Ignatius recommends that ‘one or two steps’ before the place where we are going to pray we pause to collect ourselves ‘for the space of’ an Our Father. It is a distance (and a moment in time) that makes possible both the internalization of divine moral character (the distance of the creator before the goodness of his creation) as well as the externalization of that character in acts of

²⁰⁹ 1 Cor 2: 3-9.

²¹⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 75.

praise reverence and service (the distance of work and worship between the lover and the beloved).

God grants knowledge of his will to those who become indifferent to their own.²¹¹ In other words, the removal of bias (disordered affections) is necessary for the knowledge of truth. Anthropologically speaking, the human person is predisposed to knowledge of God, if only they could get themselves out of the way. We are made for adoration - for praise reverence and service²¹²; that is our purpose. The indifference called for is a means, a needed freedom, which allows for our coming to know God and, thus, fulfilling our purpose. Indifference is not apathy, but rather freedom - a freedom from bias in order that we might come to know truth.²¹³ Our indifferent disposition is not neutral, but rather affectively charged - it is oriented toward the love of God and linked directly to our desire for the knowledge of God's will.

In order to become free to love we must also create distance between our intellect and affect. We must become free enough from attachments (affections) in order to know love. This too is the sufficient distance for reverence: to adore, to praise honor and serve, one must be near enough to know/love the other but not so close as to lose oneself. It is a kind of balance - a happy medium. "Indifference is an attitude or posture of (disjunction) separation or distance in the immediate relation between the intellect and affect which makes possible free choice."²¹⁴ This means that the distance sufficient for reverence is not only a subject-object distance but rather an epistemic distance within the subject themselves. Both are necessary. In order to love I must not only place myself before the beloved, but I must become free within myself. I must not be driven blindly by a blended knowledge-affect but choose freely to love that which is worthy of worship. I must get free to love. This double-distance (subject-object and intellect-affect) helps to explain how (as we will see below in part 4.2.1) Ignatius comes to a double play on 'interior knowledge' of God - both knowing intimately the other as well as a kind of knowledge proper to the subject themselves (i.e. to know Christ and to know as Christ knows).

²¹¹ Cf. ARZUBIALDE, 117.

²¹² *Sp.Exs.*, 23.

²¹³ Dean Brackley expresses this well when he summarizes the Exercises as a process of "Getting Free to Love."

²¹⁴ A. Demoustier, *L'homme a été créé pour*, 365 - cited in Arzubialde, 117 n. 21. - My translation.

Interestingly, Ignatius explicitly mentions the need for reverence in matters of affectivity in the third Annotation.²¹⁵ It's as if he understands that it is necessary to intentionally guard the 'subjective distance' of affection with reverence in a way that comes more naturally in the 'objective distance' of understanding. Love without the sufficient distance of reverence, ceases to be free and confuses our feelings *about* God for the truth of God, confusing our notions of love for the authentic experience of Love. It is by the preservation of the sufficient distance between the subject and the object as well as the interior distance between the intellect and affect that we become persons free to love. In this way we redeem our understanding and preserve the intellectual and affective balance of the whole person.²¹⁶

Knowledge gives over to reverence in prayer: The Ignatian desire for the kind of knowledge that gives rise to love does not diminish the importance of cognitive or intellectual knowing²¹⁷; it merely seeks to fulfill it and to rightly order it toward its divine purpose. Knowledge, like freedom is for something greater than itself - it is for the fulfillment of a personal relationship capable of love.²¹⁸ In Spanish we would say that it is not enough to 'en-tender' (understand) if we become unable to 'a-tender' (serve, care, respond, etc.) - it means little to know if we are unable to serve.

All of this points to a particular kind of knowledge, a knowledge that makes us who we are and orders our life toward God. The author of the Cloud of Unknowing describes this 'higher power' knowledge well: "All rational creatures, angels and men alike, have in them one principal working power which is called a knowing power, and another principal working

²¹⁵ "Como en todos los ejercicios siguientes espirituales usamos de los actos del entendimiento discurriendo y de los de la voluntad afectando, advertamos que en los actos de voluntad, cuando hablamos vocalmente o mentalmente con Dios nuestro Señor o con sus santos, se requiere de nuestra parte mayor reverencia que cuando usamos del entendimiento entendiendo." *Sp.Exs.*, 3.

²¹⁶ "Entre el conocimiento teórico, intelectual, y el conocimiento emocional, el conocimiento interno salva la unidad antropológica del ser humano. ... El objetivo de los EE. no es la elección, sino el ser como el Señor, en el estado que Él manifieste como su querer." Palacio, C., "'...Ansí nuevamente encarnado' (A propósito del 'conocimiento interno del Señor')", *Manresa* Vol. 71 (1999), p. 31-44.

²¹⁷ For a treatment on the Ignatian spirituality of study and attentiveness cf. AUSTIN, N., "Mind and Heart: Toward an Ignatian Spirituality of Study", *Studies in Jesuit Spirituality*, 46/4, Winter (2014).

²¹⁸ "It is not that one should despise the philosopher, the man of science, much less the speculative theologian: all these are diligent students either of the book of Scriptures or the 'book of God's creation'. It is simply that when the limits of human knowledge are reached -- and all that can be known is the proper object of human knowledge -- there remains a whole dimension of knowledge of itself limitless, open to the man who has been converted: that personal, intimate knowledge of God, which is the love poured out in our hearts. To know the world of men, to know oneself, to know God by the power of human reason: all this is indeed contemplation; but it is the antecedent, preparatory to that contemplation which is union with God - in which God and the self are known in the one glance." WALSH, J., "Knowledge of God and of Ourselves", in *The Way*, 12/4, (1972), 318.

power, which is called a loving power. To the first of these two powers, the knowing power, God, who made them both, is eternally incomprehensible. But to the second, the loving power, he is completely and fully comprehensible ... so much so that one loving soul alone, by the power of love, can comprehend in itself him who is enough and more than enough to fill all the souls and angels that could ever be.”²¹⁹ Our way of knowing, then must become a way of prayer. We turn now then to what Ignatius says about the posture of prayer and what can this posture of reverence teach us about the Ignatian way of knowing God.

4.1.3. The Person in Prayer and The Mind of Christ [*Sp.Exs.* 75]

A key expression of the Ignatian posture of reverence before God is found in one of the additions given in the First Week of the Exercises. Ignatius speaks explicitly of the place and posture of prayer saying, “**Un paso o dos antes** del lugar donde tengo de contemplar o meditar, me pondré en pie, por espacio de un Pater noster, alzado el entendimiento arriba, **considerando cómo Dios nuestro Señor me mira, etcétera**; y hacer una reverencia o humiliación.”²²⁰ He repeats a similar admonition later: “...ante de entrar en la oración repose un poco el espíritu, asentándose o paseándose, como mejor le parecerá, considerando **a dónde voy y a qué**.”²²¹ In both of these instances we see Ignatius describing in practical terms what he has established in the First Principle and Foundation - the placement of the person before God in reverence. It is, in the narrative sense, a moment of ‘staging’ wherein the ‘actor’ prepares themselves to embody a role (or the audience preparing themselves to be attentive in the momentary span of darkness before the curtain rises). It is a brief distance (a moment of time expressed as a space ‘por espacio de’) wherein reverence become possible. But how? What happens in this space?

In his definitive text, *Method in Theology*, Bernard Lonergan²²² suggests that knowing is a function of intending, that our desire guides our knowledge and that our coming to self-knowledge is a process of externalization of the self. This Ignatian moment of pause

²¹⁹ Cited in WALSH, J., 318.

²²⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 75. Emphasis, in bold, mine.

²²¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 239. Emphasis, in bold, mine

²²² For clarity of reference, citations from Lonergan’s *Method in Theology* will use the pagination of the Spanish edition readily available here in Madrid (LONERGAN, B. *Método en Teología*. Ediciones Sígueme. Salamanca. 1998) while English excerpts and quotations will be taken from the original publication (LONERGAN, B. *Method in Theology*. University of Toronto Press. Toronto. 1971).

before coming to prayer seems to be such a moment of ‘externalizing our interiority’. We pause before the place and imagine ourselves occupying the space; we ‘lift our mind to God’. This simple technique prepares the subject to enter into prayer, to become disposed to a transformative experience, to become capable of the knowledge of Christ.

It is after this preparatory moment that Ignatius, in the Second Week, invites the person to petition for ‘interior knowledge of Christ’. “Demandar lo que quiero; será aquí demandar **conocimiento interno del Señor**, que por mí se ha hecho hombre, para que más le ame y le siga.”²²³ What happens in Ignatian prayer is not mere introspection or self-reflection, but rather, as Lonergan would say, the externalization of our interiority, the objectification of our subjective experience before God - we make ourselves known, to ourselves as much as to God.²²⁴ This process not only makes Ignatian prayer effective, but it also makes possible all extraordinary/transcendent experiences of truth, knowledge, and beauty.²²⁵ It is this objectification of subjective experience, made possible by the surprisingly simple act of ‘coming to awareness of our intentionality’ (Where am I going and why? A donde voy y a que?) that lifts our gaze out of mere being and into something more like a ‘higher-level’ becoming.²²⁶ Lonergan explains this objectification of our experience as a way of not just *knowing* but *intending* (placing our mind on a higher level of consciousness) - a knowledge which is moved by desire and purpose.

I would like to suggest that this is perhaps what Ignatius understood as the *conocimiento interno* by which we can arrive at the goal of love and service (‘para más amar y seguirle/servir’) insofar as it involves not merely objective knowledge but subjective willfulness, desire and love. Moreover, this way of knowing not only describes our anthropological structure as knowers but includes a kind of moral imperative of how we ought to behave if we are to become more human - e.g. Lonergan’s so-called ‘transcendental

²²³ *Sp.Exs.*, 104. Emphasis, in bold, mine

²²⁴ “La ‘introspección’ puede entenderse no como la consciencia misma, sino como el proceso de objetivación de los contenidos de la consciencia. ... la objetivación de su experiencia subjetiva.” LONERGAN, B., *Método en Teología* (1973), 16.

²²⁵ “...es sólo gracias a una diferenciación especializada de la consciencia como nos apartamos de las formas ordinarias de vida para dedicarnos a una búsqueda moral de la bondad, a una búsqueda filosófica de la verdad, a una búsqueda científica del entendimiento, a una búsqueda artística de la belleza.” *Ibid*, 20.

²²⁶ “Todo hombre lo conoce y aplica [el método transcendental] precisamente en la medida en que es atento, inteligente, razonable, responsable. Pero, en otro sentido, es muy difícil familiarizarse con el método transcendental, porque no se adquiere leyendo libros, o escuchando conferencias, o analizando el lenguaje. **Se trata esencialmente de alcanzar un grado superior de consciencia objetivándola**, y esto es algo que en último término tiene que hacerlo cada uno por sí mismo. ... Se trata de aplicar las operaciones [cognitivas] en cuanto intencionales a las operaciones en cuanto conscientes.” *Ibid*, 21.

precepts': "be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible."²²⁷ Later, Lonergan adds 'be loving' as the thread and inspiration between and beneath each of the other imperatives. The basic understanding of the 'Ignatian person' then is one of identity and orientation - known narratively and imaginatively in prayer by their relationship to God.

The Christian person, understood in this way is the person 'with Christ in prayer' - attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving. In this way the person becomes participant, *intentionally*, in the self-communication of Divine Love - "...***alzado el entendimiento arriba, considerando cómo Dios me mira, etcétera...***"²²⁸ This personal transcendence is connected to knowledge by way of desire because the indifference of reverence is actually an interested desire to know and be known; it is a desire to be in relationship. There is no Ignatian person without relation to God. The person (creature) becomes who they are as they come to know God (creator). The Ignatian person is, at their core, a person coming to an ever greater knowledge of God, to interior knowledge of Christ. For this we can turn, as Ignatius does, to the theme of 'knowing'.

4.2. Ignatian Epistemology - Coming to Know God

In the First Principle and Foundation (as we noted above in Part II) Ignatius suggests an orientation of the self in moral space-time. In the addition to the First Week about prayer [*Sp.Exs.*, 75] he makes concrete what the 'sufficient distance for reverence' looks like: before going to pray the person must create, or experience, the sufficient distance between themselves and the one they seek to revere. Internally they allow for a distance to form between their affective drive and their reflective intellect by way of a turn of the imagination - externalizing the self - coming to intentional consciousness of their conscious operations. This 'sufficient distance for reverence' holds in tension the intellect and affect, the objective and subjective, the freedom of indifference and the desire for love. Lonergan helps us to understand how transcendence in the human person implies a kind of knowing that gives over to moral growth - a willingness to integrity, to make our doing consistent with our knowing:

"The immanent source of transcendence in man is his detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. As it is the origin of all his questions, it is the origin of

²²⁷ Ibid, 27.

²²⁸ *Sp.Exs.*, 75. Emphasis, in bold, mine

the radical further questions that take him beyond the defined limits of particular issues. Nor is it solely the operator of his cognitional development. For its detachment and disinterestedness set it in opposition to his attached and interested sensitivity and intersubjectivity; and the knowledge it yields demands of his will the endeavor to develop in willingness and so make his doing consistent with his knowing.”²²⁹

Ignatian anthropology, then, places the person before God in such a way that challenges them in their knowing and seeks to draw them beyond themselves (from ‘en-tender’ to ‘a-tender’).

²³⁰ There is no knowledge greater for us than the coming to know God and it is precisely this knowledge that Ignatius invites us to in the Second Week - the interior knowledge of Christ.

4.2.1. Conocimiento interno - *Imagination* - Internalization

With the anthropological foundation of the First Principle and Foundation and its call to indifference - understood as the sufficient distance for reverence - we can begin to ask what happens once this posture of contemplative reverence is adopted? What happens in our coming to know God? The anthropological question is primarily one of structure - what is the human person or human personhood and how is it structurally disposed to communication and/or relationship with God? The epistemic concern is one of intersubjective self-communication. From the structural concern of anthropology (Ignatian selfhood) we turn to a dynamic concern of knowing (Ignatian epistemology). Here we will explore two basic dynamics: *interior knowledge* (4.2.1) and the *application of the senses* (4.2.2).

It must be noted that the word “conocimiento” or “conocer” does not appear with great frequency in the Exercises (nothing quite like ‘contemplar’, for example), but it appears prominently in every significant transition of the Exercises. This is to say that it appears as a

²²⁹ LONERGAN, B. “Knowledge of God” in *The Lonergan Reader*, eds. Morelli, M.D. and Morelli A.M., University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2002, p. 292

²³⁰ “El conocimiento humano, pues, se remite radicalmente al instinto de vida, y ello nos descubre, tal vez de una forma descarnada, que formamos una unidad que nos vincula con las pulsiones más primarias de subsistencia. Así, el conocimiento se descubre como una relación con la ‘exterioridad’, ligado a la dirección de nuestras pulsiones. Dicho de otro modo, nuestro conocimiento está ego-condicionado. Esto es lo que quiere indicar Ignacio cuando da tanta importancia en los Ejercicios a los *afectos* y a las *afecciones*, que, inicialmente están desordenados, es decir, apegados a nuestro ‘yo’, distorsionando así nuestra percepción de la realidad. Desde ese ‘yo’ exterior y condicionado, no hay posibilidad ninguna de acceder a un conocimiento no interesado e interno que manifieste la presencia de Dios en una realidad que no es mero campo de batalla para la supervivencia, sino espacio de su Revelación.” MELLONI, J., “El conocimiento interno en la experiencia del Cardoner”, *Manresa* Vol. 71, 1999, p. 6.

desired ‘end’ in various key moments - to know my sins and their effects (first week), to come to interior knowledge of Christ (second week), and to know the goods and graces received (the contemplation to attain divine love). Internal knowledge is associated with humility and self knowledge [63,2], with Christ’s goodness as a model [104], with the discernment of spirits [139], and with indifference and the acceptance of graces [233,322]. That is to say, Ignatian ‘conocimiento interno’ appears in three basic movements or themes: *humility* (awareness of my sins), *compassion* (awareness of the mysteries of Christ), and *gratitude* (awareness of the many goods/graces received). That *conocimiento* appears in this way and in these moments of transition within the Exercises suggests that this ‘internal knowing’ has something to do with our becoming identified with and oriented toward Christ.

This dual play on identification and orientation hinges on the dual meaning of ‘interior knowledge’. Ignatius seems to invite us both to ‘know Christ in our own interiority’ as well as to ‘know the interiority of Christ’ - to know Christ and as Christ knows. We have seen this duality of self-knowledge in several other points in this project - narrative identity formation and moral orientation, the fact-finding and sense-making tasks of the imagination, the self-knowledge which leads to knowledge of God, etc. All of this affirms that Ignatian knowledge is never the cold knowledge of third-party objects, but rather the mutually transformative knowledge of second-person subjects. The Ignatian praxis of ‘coming to know’ God is a process of coming to internal (personal) knowledge of God in prayer. The internal knowledge desired puts us into a transformative relationship with Christ. We arrive in prayer (EE75) and consider ourselves welcomed - watched over - etc. (como Dios me mira). But this *internal* knowledge also necessarily transforms our perception of *external* reality.²³¹ Like Ignatius at the Cardoner, in coming to knowledge of God we are lead like a child by the hand, we are taught a new way of seeing and experiencing the world.²³²

²³¹ “De este modo, se muestra que el ‘conocimiento interno’ que tuvo Ignacio de Dios y del mundo en la experiencia del Cardoner es un ‘conocimiento’ que no devora ni encierra en uno mismo, sino que, dando a conocer ‘desde dentro’ y hacia el ‘adentro’ del Otro y de lo otro, abre a la más límpida percepción de lo Real, dinamizando y unificando las fuerzas internas para mejor colaborar en la transformación del mundo.” MELLONI, J., 18.

²³² “Creemos que la calidad del ‘conocimiento’ de la experiencia del Cardoner, manifestada tanto en sus efectos como en su duración, ha mostrado que tal *Ilustración* procede de otra hondura que la de la razón. Hemos tratado de explicar cómo esta ‘calidad’ de conocimiento está ligada a un proceso de transformación interior que conecta con el interior de la persona, en la sede del ‘corazón’. No hay acceso a este lugar cuando se vive desde la dinámica de la apropiación y de la dominación; se abre, en cambio, cuando se descubre la existencia como don. Este modo de vivir es lo que torna transparente la realidad, y descubre la presencia de Dios en todas las cosas y de todas las cosas en Dios.

4.2.2. Aplicación de sentidos - *Articulation* - Externalization

Arzubialde describes the application of the senses as the internalization of the knowledge of Christ.²³³ Lonergan describes the process of Ignatian insight as the externalization of the subject in the objectification of their experience. What sense are we to make of these two claims of internalization-externalization? I suggest that the truth of what is happening in Ignatian prayer is somewhere between the two. What Arzubialde means by his internalization of knowledge is that by imagining and imitating Christ we begin to appropriate (internalize) something of his divine moral character. What Lonergan describes is a cognitive process whereby we apply our intentional consciousness to our cognitional operations, i.e. externalizing our experience in order to understand and transcend it. In the application of the imaginative senses suggested by Ignatius²³⁴ we accomplish both tasks - we 'externalize our subjective experience' becoming conscious of the cognitive operation of our senses²³⁵ in order that we might apply those senses and internalize the knowledge of Christ - seeing what he sees, hearing what he hears, etc.

Earlier in this project I spoke of the narrative dynamic of imagination and articulation and here again we see how Ignatian interiority never remains purely 'imaginary', but seeks always articulated expressions - i.e. Divine Love longs for incarnation. Internal knowledge and application of the senses are linked insofar as the internal knowledge of Christ has as its end the external knowledge of the world around (in this way we can say that both the second and the fourth weeks are experiences of incarnation).²³⁶ In Ignatius we find the holiness of

Tal 'conocimiento' de la transparencia del mundo es el término mismo de los Ejercicios: *La contemplación para alcanzar amor*, donde se pide 'conocimiento interno de tanto bien recibido' [233]. La realidad y a no se percibe como amenaza o como objeto de conquista, sino como don por el que Dios nos hace participar de Él mismo." Ibid, 17.

²³³ "S. Ignacio aplica esta actividad del espíritu humano al conocimiento histórico sensible de la humanidad de Jesús, para pasar a través de ella al conocimiento interno de su persona y de ahí a un amor que se transmuta en imitación incondicional, en adhesión y servicio. De ahí que este género de oración no sea otra cosa que la prolongación y la gradual interiorización del conocimiento interno y sólo pueda ser comprendido en función de aquel." ARZUBIALDE, 361.

²³⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 121ff.

²³⁵ Elemento cognitivo de Cardoner: "Elevar el entendimiento" - la Santísima Trinidad (Au, 28); "se le presentó en el entendimiento" - la creación (Au, 29); "vio con los ojos interiores...vio con el entendimiento" la presencia de Cristo en la Eucaristía (Au, 29); "con los ojos interiores" la humanidad transfigurada de Cristo (Au, 29) - "conocer desde el corazón" MELLONI, J., 7.

²³⁶ "Este conocimiento, fruto de un trabajo interior, nos es propuesto en el cambio trazado por los Ejercicios, que culmina en la contemplación de cómo 'Dios habita en todas las criaturas' [EE, 235] y de 'cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mí en todas las cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra' [EE, 236], suscitando un dinamismo de

wholeness, the God in all and of all, an essential link between the head and the heart, a simultaneous knowing and loving expressed from the very beginning of the Exercises in the last line of the second annotation: “sentir y gustar de las cosas internamente.”²³⁷ Between the internal knowledge of Christ and the application of the senses what Ignatius is after is nothing less than a radically personal ‘heart-knowledge’. This ‘heart-knowledge’ is arrived at by revelation, by discovery, by humility²³⁸, that is, by way of the three moments of ‘internal knowing’ mentioned above - of self, of Christ, of God in all things.

4.2.3. Discernment and Conversion - Ignatian Insight

Perhaps no word is more frequently associated with Ignatian spirituality than discernment. Discernment is the definitive way of ‘Ignatian insight’ embodied in both internal knowledge and imaginative application of the senses. Ignatian discernment is not merely, or principally, a way of choosing but rather a way of knowing; it is significantly *purposive* - i.e. discernment *wants for knowledge* and this *wanting to know* the ways of God (an epistemic desire) is, in and of itself, a way of loving God. In this sense, discernment can be understood as a kind of practical religious epistemology - a way of *coming to know* the will of God. The cognitive anthropology of Lonergan mentioned briefly above is a foundation for what might be called an Ignatian epistemology of discernment - a way of knowing informed by reverence, a way of knowing which gives rise to love. Following Lonergan I will explore briefly the importance of conversion in all our knowing, deciding and loving.

Perhaps the easiest argument against understanding discernment as decision-making or choice is that for Ignatius the object of discernment was always the same: to seek and to find/fulfill the will of God (*buscar y hallar*²³⁹). When we insist on selling discernment as

participación. Se trata del mismo movimiento que suscita el ‘conocimiento del Señor, que por mí se ha hecho hombre, para que más le ame y le siga’ [EE, 104].” Ibid, 18.

²³⁷ *Sp.Exs.*, 2.

²³⁸ “Este ‘sensus cordis’, que es el conocimiento propio del amor, Ignacio lo vincula exclusivamente a aquel conocimiento religioso que, por su calidad, penetra en la profundidad en las cosas de Dios. Nace en virtud del acto religioso por antonomasia, como síntesis unitaria de la fe-esperanza y caridad, que anuda el encuentro. Este tiene lugar precisamente en el centro personal del corazón (‘operatio cum Deo, corde’). Posee el carácter de *descubrimiento* personal recibido, que afecta, de modo global a toda la personalidad. El hombre entonces se siente atraído y desbordado por el amor que experimenta. A partir de ese momento comienza a sentir y gustar interiormente del objeto conocido o bien adquiere evidencia del misterio de la revelación. Se funda, por consiguiente, en el acto humano totalizante del amor, desbordado por la actividad del Espíritu, quien le capacita para percibir, incluso sensorialmente, la infinita suavidad y dulzura de la divinidad. [124]” ARZUBIALDE, 217.

²³⁹ *Sp.Exs.*, 1.

decision-making (e.g. recent titles on Ignatian discernment: *What's Your Decision?*; *The Art of Choosing Well*, etc.) we risk confusing the rules for discernment with the modes of decision-making presented at the end of the Second Week (known also as three times of election²⁴⁰). This confusion misunderstands the heart of the rules of discernment²⁴¹, which are fundamentally about *spiritual sensitivity* to and *awareness* of the movements of spirit and the logic of our own interiority and/or affectivity. Ignatian discernment is better described as a way of knowing what *is* (both internally and externally - what we desire and what we perceive) in order that we might make a better choice (or no choice at all) about how to live in a free and loving relationship to the *is-ness* of reality. Discernment certainly involves a kind of choosing, but it would be better to understand discernment not so much, or not solely, as a way of choosing as much as it would be to understand it as a transformative way of knowing.

Where a decision-based model of discernment emphasizes human action and choice, an epistemic-based model of discernment emphasizes human responsibility and relationship. That is to say, Ignatian discernment begins with a structural attribute of being human²⁴², a communicative capability in the human person - i.e. we are capable of love, capable of knowing and being known, capable of divine self-communication. Love is a means of (self) communication and discernment is a method for our participation in that divine revelatory action. If there is choice involved in Ignatian discernment it is primarily a choice rooted in our responsibility, that is, our 'ability to respond' to the call of God in every moment. The 'no ser sordo a su llamamiento' of the Call of the King meditation²⁴³ (which precedes the election in the Exercises) suggests that the the most important thing, or at least the primary concern, is to be attentive, to be receptive to the revelatory action of God - 'to not be deaf to the call' and not, as one would expect in a theory of decision-making, to be simply decisive. If there is a decision to be made, it is always a decision to follow God, to hear the call of Christ the King. Discernment is first and foremost concerned with our ability to receive God's self-communication of revelation, to know something (or someone) in order that we might choose again and always to love.

²⁴⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 175-189.

²⁴¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 313-336.

²⁴² GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J. "La estructura interna del discernimiento", *Manresa*, Vol. 80 (2008), 125-140.

²⁴³ c.f. GARCIA, J.A., "El hombre es creado para..." (EE 23) Carácter vectorial y autotrascendente del ser humano." *Manresa*, Vol. 80 (2008) 9

The rules for discernment are presented in relation to the First and Second Weeks of the Exercises, and both are primarily concerned with awareness and knowledge, not decision. What we properly call the rules for discernment²⁴⁴ are themselves not concerned directly with the choice of election but rather an epistemological anthropology - a structural map describing how it is that we are capable of coming to know God's will. What is clear is that the first and second weeks of the Exercises are concerned with attentive examination of the interiority of the exercitant²⁴⁵ and the attentive following of the narrative of Christ.²⁴⁶ The practical invitation of these initial exercises is more about knowing than deciding: to bring to the memory, to set the scene (composition of place - to compose oneself), to know intimately the way of Jesus, to attain 'interior knowledge' of Christ.

We cannot talk about individual or personal conversion without recognizing its intrapersonal and ecclesial dynamics. Conversion does not happen alone, but rather is the effect of a transformative spiritual and/or religious relationship.²⁴⁷ When we understand 'knowing' as a transformative process of spiritual becoming, then conversion becomes a privileged place for theological reflection.²⁴⁸ Discernment is not merely or superficially a process of self-realization but rather a transformative relationship. Discernment demands alterity. Discernment is not about making the life of our choosing, but rather choosing the life we are given, deeply knowing and generously loving above all else the real and the difficult. Discernment helps us to see more clearly the complexity of reality and this implies a relationship with others, with the created world and with God - the God who longs for

²⁴⁴ *Sp.Exs.*, 313-336.

²⁴⁵ First Week - Examen, application of the senses, etc.

²⁴⁶ Second week - Traer, ver, conocer.

²⁴⁷ **“Though conversion is intensely personal, utterly intimate, still it is not so private as to be solitary.** It can happen to many and they can form a community to sustain one another in their self-transformation, and to help one another in working out the implications, and in fulfilling the promise of their new life. Finally, what can become communal can become historical. It can pass from generation to generation. It can spread from one cultural milieu to another. It can adapt to changing circumstance, confront new situations, survive into a different age, flourish in another period or epoch. ... **When conversion is viewed as an ongoing process, at once personal, communal, and historical, it coincides with living religion.** For religion is conversion in its preparation, in its occurrence, in its development, in its consequents, and also, alas, in its incompleteness, its failures, its breakdowns, its disintegration.” LONERGAN, B. “Theology in Its New Context”, in *The Lonergan Reader*, eds. Morelli, M.D. and Morelli A.M., University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2002, p. 418. Emphasis, in bold, mine.

²⁴⁸ “Now theology, and especially the empirical theology of today, is reflection on religion. It follows that theology will be reflection on conversion. But conversion is fundamental to religion. It follows that **reflection on conversion can supply theology with its foundation and, indeed, with a foundation that is concrete, dynamic, personal, communal, and historical.** Just as reflection on the operations of the scientist brings to light the real foundation of the science, so too reflection on the ongoing process of conversion may bring to light the real foundation of a renewed theology.” Ibid, 418. Emphasis, in bold, mine.

incarnation²⁴⁹. Our choosing may play a part, but only in moving us toward the reality of alterity, opening us to a greater truth which begs to be known. In this way the intimacy of Ignatian insight proceeds from and leads always toward conversion.

The Cardoner experience is without a doubt the peak-experience of Ignatian knowing. Ignatius himself reports that he learned more in this moment than in the all other moments of study combined. It is significant that this moment of knowing is at once a moment of *conversion* and a moment of personal *encounter* with God. Melloni understands the experience at Manresa as a ‘second conversion’ from the ‘will to conquer’ to the ‘posture of receptivity’, a moment where, in a kind of epistemic humility, Ignatius experienced a profound existential availability - where Ignatius experienced the indifference sufficient for reverence! God taught him as a teacher taking a child by the hand...²⁵⁰ For Ignatius, knowledge, encounter, and conversion are linked and we see again trinitarian roots to his anthropology and epistemology - i.e. the three-part process of coming to know self, other, God.

Discernment and conversion meet in our narrativity. It is the engagement with and consciousness of our own history - a kind of narrative sensibility - where we come to personal knowledge of the transformative relationship with God. The facts of our history find their meaning and purpose in the midst of this personal encounter as we come to know the God who is in the midst of our own is-ness.²⁵¹ The basis/foundation is simply the story/history and the praxis of the Exercises returns us to the fundamental simplicity of attentiveness to what has happened, to what is – “hallando alguna cosa que haga un poco más

²⁴⁹ Meditation on Incarnation *Sp.Exs.*, 101ff. – “conocimiento interno del Señor” *Sp.Exs.*, 104.

²⁵⁰ “La *Autobiografía* introduce esta tercera etapa de Manresa diciendo que ‘en este tiempo le trataba Dios de la misma manera que trata un maestro de escuela a un niño, enseñándole’. Es decir, la pequeñez se presenta como el umbral del ‘conocimiento interno’ de los misterios de la fe que le fueron revelados a Ignacio. Este ‘ser niño’ como condición para el conocimiento interno evoca las palabras de Jesús, ‘Te bendigo, Padre, porque has escondido estas cosas a los sabios y entendidos y las has revelado a los sencillos’ (Mt 11,25). La sencillez, la pequeñez expresan un estado interior que es la actitud del corazón en estado de receptividad y no de dominación. Extenuada la pulsión de conquista, desde lo hondo del ser se va abriendo la capacidad de acogida. Esa es la ‘pureza de corazón’ que permite ver a Dios (cf. Mt 5,8).” MELLONI, J., “El conocimiento interno en la experiencia del Cardoner.” *Manresa* Vol. 71, (1999), 10.

²⁵¹ “Esta es la clave. La historia está ahí. La historia no se la inventa ni el que da los ejercicios ni, menos todavía, el que los está haciendo. Por tanto la historia es un dato. No pasa de dato. Pero el sentido de esa historia no se puede prestar, por muy sublime que sea, del que da los ejercicios. El ejercitante tiene que descubrir el suyo. Cada uno tiene que descubrir el sentido que esa historia tiene para él.

Así pues, el *conocimiento interno* va a ser algo totalmente personal e intransferible, en lo que va a entrar la propia búsqueda, intelectual y afectiva, y esa acción de Dios en la que el que le acompaña debe dejarse solo [15].” CHÉRCOLES, A., “El conocimiento interno en el proceso de los Ejercicios”, *Manresa* Vol. 71 (1999), 19-29. (20)

declarar o sentir la historia.” In this way, our narrativity calls us at once to identity (who we are) and to conversion (who we ought to be). The narrative flow of the Exercises moves us from knowledge to experience²⁵²...or rather, reminds us that knowledge is a kind of experience and that love is a kind of knowledge.

From reverence to knowledge to experience. [...and back again?] Knowledge is reverence. Knowledge of something presumes the ‘sufficient distance’ of reverence – close enough to be seen, not so close as to be lost. To know is to play – i.e. to put the subject on stage and to let the story be told. Self-knowledge requires externalization or objectivization of the subject (subjective experience). To speak of an Ignatian epistemology (an Ignatian way of knowing God) that gives rise to an Ignatian theology I have explored Lonergan’s transcendental method which involves the conversion of the knower as a better version of religious epistemology than a model which treats God as a mere third-party object. The narrativity of the Exercises invites this participative and transformative (transcendental) method – a method that both arises from the experience of God and aids in the systematization of and actualization of knowledge about God. We become convincing evidence for the existence of God by our “attaining Divine Love” and by our election of a form of life that seeks to love and to serve in all things, to know all in God and God in all. With the turn toward ‘forms of life’ (in vocation and creation) we can now turn from personhood and knowledge to the final piece of the puzzle – experience.

4.3. Ignatian Mystagogy - The Kind of Knowledge that Gives Rise to Love

A way of knowing arises, necessarily, out of a lived experience just as a way of loving arises, necessarily, out of an experience of love. In love and knowledge we often speak of a ‘*coming to*’ quality of experience - of insights, encounters, discoveries, or arrivals which result from a particular *way of proceeding*. In a significant way, for example, the arrival of the beloved is prefaced by the longing for their presence; love is, from the beginning, place (or a way) in which the experience of its spatial-temporal drama (longing and encounter) is played out. As we have seen, the narrative-biographic pedagogy implicit in both Ignatius’

²⁵² Del conocer al sentir, conocimiento interno (Meditación - contemplación - aplicación de sentidos). Three moments - 1a Semana - pecado, 2a Semana - Cristo, and the Contemplatio - ‘tanto bien referido’. Del sentir al conocer y determinar (Discernimiento -deliberación - elección) Cf. Ibid, 22-27.

Autobiography and his *Spiritual Exercises* suggests a mystical or religious epistemology whereby we come to an approximation of one of our most human concerns: *How might one come to know God?* In considering this question we can greater appreciate what it means to say that we are made in the image of Love and what it might mean for us to *image* Divine Love in our lives. If God is love, then our coming to know God must involve our coming to know love.²⁵³ This truth seems to be at the heart of the Christian understanding of all human and divine relations and is key to our understanding how our experience – lived and remembered narratively – might become a privileged place of encounter with God.

The practice of the daily Examen and the existence of the *Spiritual Diary* are evidence of Ignatius habit of ‘reviewing’ his personal experience as a way of prayer and encounter with God. This suggests a habit of ‘narration as spiritual praxis’ that, while not unique to Ignatius²⁵⁴, was certainly characteristic of his way of understanding his own spiritual life. We can affirm that the process of ‘narration’ was for Ignatius both *purposive* and *participatory*. This spiritual narrative praxis was *purposive* in that Ignatius would habitually ‘narrate’ his daily life (using the tools of imagination and memory) in order to discover the will of God, the Spirit of God moving in his life, and *participatory* in that his narratives become ‘colloquies’ wherein his action and God’s become intertwined in creative dialogue. Ignatian prayer is actively narrative, creative, and imaginative and it engages affective participation to achieve an inter-subjective purpose, namely uniting our will with God’s.

²⁵³ “God as the creator of heaven and earth is not a reality apart the world, he is the all-determining reality. So if we take seriously the words that God is love, then their logical conclusion is that love is the all-encompassing horizon of reality and the meaning of existence. With this we have the thesis that love is the horizon and the interpretive key for all reality. This thesis that love is the meaning of existence is not just any harmless pious affirmation; it represents a kind of revolution in the field of metaphysical thought. This insight leads to the realisation that neither the self-subsistent substance of classical metaphysics nor the autonomous modern self-assured subject are the real and fundamental reality; the starting point and the foundation are instead to be found in that which was for Aristotle merely accidental and the weakest reality of existence, namely relation. The theology of the Trinity leads us, as many contemporary theologians teach us, to a relational and personal ontology. Just as in God the subsistence of the Trinitarian persons is grounded in relation, so in an analogous manner ... relations are the fundamental reality also in the created realm. The human being must from this perspective be understood as a relational and dialogic being. He does not find his fulfilment in forcible self-assertion but in respectful recognition of the otherness of the other and loving in self-communication, where he or she makes him- or herself a gift for the other and receives love as undeserved gift from the other. This is the fundamental paradox and the dialectic of Christian existence: only he who loses his life will find it (cf. Mt 10:38-39; John 12:25). Only in love and in communion does freedom find its fulfilment.” KASPER, W., “The Timeliness of Speaking About God.” A public lecture given at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, March 2, 2010 (cited online April 2017
<https://actingpersonblog.wordpress.com/2010/03/07/walker-kasper-to-speak-of-god-now-to/>)

²⁵⁴ e.g. Devotio Moderna; Imatio Christi; *Exercitatorio de la vida espiritual*

The kind of knowledge described above in the section on Ignatian epistemology is a kind of love-knowledge. Lonergan describes knowledge as our “being grasped by ultimate concern”²⁵⁵; this knowledge demands *conversion*, a change in direction, which, “transforms the existential subject into a subject in love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an other-worldly love.”²⁵⁶ This conversion of the knower/lover is expressed in the universal call to holiness: “It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self-surrender, not as an act but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed in retrospect as an undertow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness.”²⁵⁷ Expressing this dynamic of falling in love as a call, a vocation, implies the presence of a transcendent other; that is, we are not just to come to some knowledge of self-realization, or freedom of self-transcendence, but rather we are called, by our being and becoming, into a direct and personal relationship with God.²⁵⁸ We are called to *experience* Divine Love.

4.3.1. The Mystagogy of Experience [*Sp.Exs.* 230-237]

Karl Rahner is widely recognized as the great advocate for the universal experience of God and the importance of mystical experience for all Christians. His famous claim that the Christian of the future will be a mystic or nothing at all captures well his sense of the value of authentic experience of God. The authentic Christian, for Rahner, is not so much someone who merely believes something or knows something, but rather someone who has experienced something, or rather, who has encountered someone. The true ‘idea of God’ is the result of an experience, that is, not so much the result of good theology as much as a function of authentic mystagogy.²⁵⁹ The truly radical notion that flows from this perspective

²⁵⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 242.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 240.

²⁵⁸ Knowledge, consciousness and desire: “In his earlier writings Lonergan speaks of ‘the purest desire to know’, but from *Method in Theology* onwards he speaks of ‘the pure desire for value’. And since God is the ultimate value, this pure desire for value is tantamount to the pure desire for God ... a movement for self-transcendence ... going beyond the self ... God is always the one who is *beyond*.” MALONEY, 125.

²⁵⁹ I’m paraphrasing and translating this impressively concise summary of Rahner and the implications of his work by J.A Estrada: “Karl Rahner fue el gran defensor de una experiencia universal de Dios y de la necesidad de la mística para todos los cristianos: ‘*El cristiano del futuro o será un ‘místico’, es decir, una persona que ha ‘experimentado’ algo, o no será cristiano. [...] La mistagogía es la que habrá de proporcionar la verdadera ‘idea de Dios’.*’ Rahner parte de la referencia esencial del hombre a Dios, y “de que Dios es esencialmente el Incomprensible, de que su incomprensibilidad, en lugar de disminuir, aumenta a medida que se le va conociendo

is not so much knowledge about the nature of God as it is about the nature of the human person. Following Ignatius' intuition in the First Principle and Foundation, Rahner and others like him affirm that we will only come to know God when we begin to understand our own relationship to God. That is, we must come to understand the relationship to God as constitutive of who we are as persons in order to approach an understanding of who God is. We have to come to an ever deeper understanding of what it means to say that we are made in God's image and likeness.

This *mystagogy of experience* explains how everything I've described up to this point makes any sense. Personal knowledge of God is experienced in relationship of reverent indifference; we come to such reverent indifference by our prayerful (conscious and intentional) posture before God; this posture of reverence is essentially an awareness of the space between our knowing and our longing to know, our affect and our intellect, etc. The trajectory of the Exercises leads us through these movements of interior knowledge (of self, of Christ, of Grace) and the application of our senses toward an ongoing life of discernment and conversion whereby we are made, evermore, in His image and likeness. The first parts of this project intend to explain how the narrativity of the Exercises make such a route possible and in the third and fourth parts we have seen how this narrativity gives over to the exercise of imagination and the work of theology.

Having opened the Exercises with the First Principle and Foundation Ignatius completes the circle with the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love.²⁶⁰ As the First Principle and Foundation summarizes Ignatian anthropology, the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love summarizes well Ignatian mystagogy. This final exercise of the Exercises guides the exercitant along a mystical 're-vision' of experience. After having spent several weeks in contemplation, in coming to interior knowledge of God, the exercitant is invited to come to 'interior knowledge' of all the 'goods/graces' received from God contemplating the truth of God in all and all in God. It is the definitive Ignatian contemplation and works to guide the person not only in the privileged space of the retreat, but in the sacred space of their ordinary lives.

mejor, y que Dios se acerca a nosotros en su amor, en el que se da a sí mismo." ... La relación con Dios es constitutiva de la persona, forma parte del orden de la creación y no sólo de la salvación, aunque personalmente haya muchos que no realicen o la rechacen. ... La persona 'espiritual' no es la que se despreocupa de lo humano para buscar lo divino, sino la que se humaniza en la búsqueda de Dios y espiritualiza su humanidad."

ESTRADA, J.A., *Religiosos en una sociedad secularizada*, 2008, 104-106.

²⁶⁰ *Sp.Exs.*, 230-237.

The Contemplation to Attain Divine Love moves the exercitant from contemplation to mission, from love to service, from reverence to knowledge to experience and back again. The preamble makes this clear: love is shown in deeds more than words and by the communication of the lover to the beloved²⁶¹ – i.e. knowing love is made possible by active and mutual self-communication. This communication of God comes to us not only in the personal (or private) interior knowledge, but through our interiorization of the capacity to know as Christ knows, by the experience of incarnation, the truth of God in all creation. Ordinary experience presents itself to us always as mystery, and our knowing the truth of any experience demands of us a kind of cognitive humility (unknowing what we knew before in order to know again, to open ourselves to the truth of the experience presented to us by the other). It is this mystagogy of ordinary experience that makes possible the Christian life of holiness – relationships of praise reverence and service – of Divine Love.

It is to that call to conversion and holiness that we will now turn in the final pages of this project. In these final sections I will explore how it is that the narrativity of Ignatian spirituality leads us ultimately to an epistemology of vocation (knowing ourselves called by God) and how that vocation is always an invitation into participation in the ongoing narrative of personal and communal salvation history.

4.3.2. Epistemology of Vocation - Coming to know who we are called to be

Ignatian knowing is essentially a kind of following – to seek and to find the will of God. We can also say that this knowledge, a knowledge of discipleship is essentially an experiential knowledge whereby we move from individual choices to acts to committed vocational states of life. Using the narrative metaphor, the Ignatian way is a kind of method-acting whereby we inhabit a role and seek to conform our being with that of Christ. For Ignatius, vocational discernment is no mere ‘job-search’, but rather an experience of being created and called by God into a loving relationship, into fullness and life. Javier Melloni suggests that the ‘election’ of the *Exercises* is not merely a pragmatic vocational decision-making tool, but rather a mystical-existential option for God. At times it seems that Jesuits narcissistically confuse the object of the election in the Exercises – confusing the election for our way of life (a vocation) with the election for the way of Christ

²⁶¹ *Sp.Exs.*, 230-231.

(kenotic-theotic mystical union with the divine). We too often understand the election merely as a momentary vocational choice and not an ongoing existential choice to live always and evermore in union with the divine will of God – a mystical choice.

Ignatian mysticism is *participative*. Not merely (or wholly) active or passive, but participatory.²⁶² We are helped by the *Exercises* toward active participation (election) in the divine mystery; helped toward a freely chosen obedience (indifference) before God's will. We do this principally by way of narrative imagination – contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ. Ignatius' sparse 'points' guiding the contemplations of the 'mysteries of Christ' open up space for a sacramental participation in the mystery; he refuses to narrate and only invites the exercitant to call into memory the familiar narratives trusting that God will be active and immediately present to the person in the moment of their contemplation. It is by this contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ that the exercitant becomes 'sacramentally configured' to Christ.²⁶³ The imagination of an Ignatian contemplation becomes the passageway to 'participation' and 'interior knowledge' of familiarity with the divine – 'knowing' in the theotic sense.²⁶⁴ In Ignatian mysticism Christian holiness and contemplation are linked – contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ is the doorway to participation in Trinitarian divine love.²⁶⁵

²⁶² For a helpful treatment of what this participation looks like see GARCÍA DE CASTRO, "Qué hacemos cuando hacemos Ejercicios? La actividad del ejercitante a través de sus verbos." *Manresa* 74 (2002), 11-40, which systematically analyzes the many 'verbs' used throughout the exercises.

²⁶³ "Las personas que contemplan los misterios de la vida de Jesucristo y reflexionan sobre ellos son configuradas por la experiencia del conocimiento de la persona y de la misión de Jesucristo, son iluminadas por el Espíritu Santo y 'saborean' las palabras y las acciones de Jesús. Los misterios de la vida de Cristo no son simplemente 'ejemplos' a imitar, sino 'sacramentos', 'señales visibles y eficaces' de la salvación para quien los contempla." BARREIRO LUANA, Á. *Los Misterios de la Vida de Cristo*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander, 2014, 40.

²⁶⁴ Rogelio Garcia Mateo compares this 'theotic interior knowledge' to 'consolation without cause'; in light of Jose Garcia de Castro's interpretation of consolation without prior cause as the presence of the 'emergent God' we begin to see the continuity of this 'theotic' participation in mystical transformation. Another interesting comparison between Ignatius and his mystical contemporaries is Mateo's treatment of 'image', imagination and "intellectual vision" in his discussion of Cardoner -- using Teresa as an interpreter and guide -- in his treatment of how the 'Trinitarian Ignatian mysticism' in "Mística trinitaria" in GARCÍA MATEO, R., *Ignacio de Loyola: su espiritualidad y su mundo cultural*. Ediciones Mensajero, Bilbao, 2000.

²⁶⁵ "La perfección cristiana y la contemplación mística aparecen, pues, en la experiencia Ignaciana estrechamente unidas, en particular dentro de los dones de entendimiento, sabiduría y ciencia. Por consiguiente, al explicar la mística ignaciana, no se debe olvidar lo que es común a la mística cristiana como tal, y es el hecho de que Dios 'toca' el ser del creyente en su más profunda realidad. Es en la experiencia mística donde se experimenta profundamente lo que en realidad significa 'ser hijo de Dios', 'estar hecho a su imagen y semejanza', 'morir y resucitar con Cristo', 'ser una nueva creación', 'un hombre nuevo', 'vivir 'según el Espíritu', como anticipo, aunque imperfecto y transitorio, de la 'visio beatifica'." Ibid, 96.

Apostolic election and mystical ‘kenosis’ are essentially united in the experience of the first companions; the person and the mission of Christ are inseparable and apostolic life calls us to participate in the *kénosis* of Christ crucified, “under the banner of the cross.”²⁶⁶ One is not at odds with the other; the practicality of the election flows from and returns to the source of unifying grace. Election is a mystical act which holds in tension both the freedom of self-donation (*kenosis*) and the distinctive mark of unitive divinization (*theosis*) in what Ignatius might call passionate indifference.

Ignatian holiness can be understood as the unification of the whole person in the election -- a mystical-existential act of self-giving love - “*election is precisely the unitive and mystical way proposed by Ignatius.*”²⁶⁷ Melloni explains:

“Offering one’s own life, one empties oneself (*kénosis*), and receiving and welcoming the life of God, one comes to share in His nature, to be divinized (*theosis*). The nature of God is Love, the capacity to give and to offer oneself and to welcome without limits. To be ‘divinized’, then, means nothing other than to participate ever more profoundly in the act of giving. In the history of an individual life, the gift passes at each moment through an act of election. Thus understood, the capacity of self-gift by means of the election is the participation in the divine life to which one is introduced by the mystagogy of the Exercises. So election and the unitive way of the preceding mystical tradition are not mutually opposed. On the contrary, election is the historico-kenotic dimension of that union. Election is kenotic, as the life of Christ with the Father was kenotic; in the space left by his self-emptying the world is incorporated into Him to be transfigured.”²⁶⁸

Ignatian holiness is defined as the moment where, by the free and reverent election of the divine will of God, the person is made ‘wholly’ whom they are called to be:

“[Interior knowledge] is one of the keys of the Ignatian mystagogy; it implicates both the cognitive and the affective dimensions of the person. Both knowledge and affectivity are mobilized and worked on from the beginning of the Exercises. Both

²⁶⁶ “En la mística ignaciana la persona y la misión de Cristo son inseparables. Jesús desarrolla su misión mediante su Entrega a la voluntad del Padre hasta la muerte de Cruz. Ignacio desea conformarse con Cristo en esta misión, en esta *kénosis* que la cruz significa. ... Ignacio y la Compañía se sienten llamados a participar en la *kénosis* con que Cristo es enviado del Padre en la fuerza del Espíritu para reconducir todas las cosas a la gloria del Padre, lo cual implica cooperar con él bajo el signo de la cruz en la realización de su misión, como se declara en la *Fórmula del Instituto.*” Ibid, 133.

²⁶⁷ MELLONI, (2000), 52.

²⁶⁸ MELLONI, (2000), 52-3.

converge upon the act of election, where knowledge of the will of God is converted into a volitional impulse of the exercitant to commit him- or her-self to it. Hence the way to union with the will of God implies simultaneously a progressive unifying of the whole person.²⁶⁹

Ignatian mysticism presents a progressive view of human development and a radical view of participation in the divine life of Christ by way of a kenotic-theotic relationship with God. The election is no mere practical decision making tool, but rather a consistent existential consideration of our free agential self-gift which functions in mutuality with the free-self-gift of God. It is by our free (passive - indifferent) and conscious (active - intentional) participation in this mystery of the life of Christ that makes Ignatian mysticism truly 'holistic'.²⁷⁰

Ignatius is a prophet of mystical union par excellence not only for his implicit affirmation of the traditional three step ascent of union with the divine (purgative, illuminative, unitive) but in his appreciation of a kind of meta-unity where this ascent is understood and experienced alongside and through a simultaneous descent (kenotic-ascetic obedience²⁷¹). The mountaintop experience of transfiguration is made known to us in the incarnational mysticism of daily life. Unifying experience and interpretation, passive indifference and active (agential) election, the God who is no-thing becomes known to us in all things, etc. The particularity of Ignatian mysticism is precisely this: that the particular and the universal, the mystical and the spiritual are not, and need not be, at odds. Christian writers on mysticism and prayer have spoken of various ways and inevitably describe one way as 'more perfect'. Ignatian mysticism is distinctive in its understanding of 'perfection' not as superiority but as pluralistic unity -- the three in one; the God in all things; the creator dealing directly with the creature; humble obedience, passionate indifference, loyal election; the effect of profound consolation which emerges at times without prior cause. The more perfect way is the more complete way and the more complete way is one that allows for the plurality of human experience. In this we discover our 'wholly-ness'.

²⁶⁹ MELLONI, (2000), 53-4.

²⁷⁰ Describes a kind of Practical-Interiority "Así Los Ejercicios son, desde el principio, el fruto con jugando de una experiencia interior y una experiencia apostólica. ... 'Pedagogía práctica': según la palabra que expresará siempre su ideal, Ignacio quiere 'ayudar a las almas' mediante una educación espiritual que les permita comprender la acción de la gracia en ellas y saberle responder." GIULIANI, M., 22-23.

²⁷¹ MELLONI, (2001) – kénosis of the incarnation 168, of the third week 233 'configuración con Cristo Jesús'

4.3.3. Spiritual Autobiography - Personal Narrative and Salvation History

The election made throughout the Exercises is fulfilled in the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love and the ordinary mysticism of loving and serving God in all things and all things in God. The encounter is one to be lived and experienced over the course of a ‘whole and holy’ life. The vocation to holiness/wholeness then returns us to the narrativity of biography and the importance of personal/salvation history.

The *Autobiography* is decidedly not sufficient in its accuracy or detail if we’re looking for the bare-historical-facts. It is not comprehensive in its treatment of the life of Ignatius. But it is extraordinary in its overall communicative capacity and its creative expression of the phenomena of spiritual experience. While calling himself a pilgrim, the details of pilgrimage are episodic and reveal little of what moved in Ignatius ‘along the way.’ And yet, the text, taken as a whole, maintains a ‘traveling-theme’ and presents the entire span of life as an ongoing pilgrimage.²⁷² It is incomplete in many respects – missing the early years and the late, leaving out virtually any significant mention or detailed treatment of his traveling companions (e.g. women, family, professors, spiritual directors, Jesuits, etc.), and consciously avoids any recounting of his major work (e.g. *Constitutions*, *Spiritual Exercises*). And yet, it is complete in so far as it has a beginning, middle, and end; it has a protagonist, a developing plot, and a reasonable approximation of resolution. That is to say, it is a complete narrative. It has a story to tell.

It’s a *purposive* text. It’s a text that is written (and ought to be read) with *intention*. It seeks not only to convey information, but to engage the reader in a process of conversion, in a transformative relationship with God. It is also a *participative* text. More than a mere chronology or database, it wants for our *interpretation*. The decision to narrate the *Autobiography* was, for Ignatius, not an individual/autonomous choice but rather a response to a communal request. It was remembered, recorded, and written to fill a need (the Society’s desire for a founding biographical form) beyond that of the author’s own self-expression or narrative memory (as in the case of the *Spiritual Diary*). That is to say, that from the very beginning, it was written for the benefit (purposive) of someone else’s spiritual development

²⁷² RAMBLA, J M^a, “Del ‘peregrino’ a la ‘mínima’ Compañía de Jesús” *Manresa* 54 (1982), 5-23.

(participative). It is a text driven by and toward conversion. The pilgrim image itself suggests a serial conversion, a process of conversion over time, a pilgrim-way of being before God.²⁷³

1st Conversion (Loyola) – Conversion and Imagination. The first conversion in Loyola was a conversion of the imagination. This is not to say that it was an imaginary conversion or inauthentic, but rather that the content of this ‘first conversion’ was principally the content of Ignatius’ own imagination -- the structures and content of his *imaginarium*. Texts and images and visions combine in this moment to affect a broadening of Ignatius’ self-image. What was before a superficial (in the literal sense – preoccupied with appearances) sense of self becomes more nuanced. Ignatius literally (again, in the strict sense – by way of reading texts and imagining stories) begins to recognize levels of depth in his own recollection and imagination; he discovers, in a word, his own affectivity. In light of this newfound awareness of affectivity as an imaginative mechanism he is able to consider what must have been familiar images in a new way.

2nd Conversion (Manresa) – Conversion and Self. The second conversion, which builds upon the first, is more properly understood as a conversion of the self more holistically understood. The extended stay in Manresa gives way to a series of insights and understandings, a process full of suffering and struggle, that not only change the image of self, but the identity and function of the self, importantly, at the level of the will. Where in Loyola Ignatius’ expression of desire rightly-ordered was rewarded with consolation in Manresa such desires are frustrated and Ignatius is required to surrender (what he failed to do in Pamplona) totally to the will of God. In this surrender Ignatius deepens his understanding, not only of the presence of his own affectivity, but the power of its relationship (rightly or wrongly ordered) to God. Ignatius is learning a new way in Manresa. He describes this process as a learning and its fruit is transformation. Not only understanding all things anew, but as if he himself were a different person. Where the consolation of Loyola was a function of the exercise of his own narrative attention (imagining great deeds) the consolation of Manresa was a true revelation, a gift of God made possible not by Ignatius own imaginative capacity but rather his willful surrender of the imaginative faculties to God. The master-student theme continues after this conversion, he doesn’t find teachers or wisdom-figures in Barcelona, and so, he heads out to Jerusalem still convinced that in so doing he will be aligning his will with that of God.

²⁷³ Prologo del P. Nadal-- “desde el principio de su conversión”

In one sense it can be argued that the biography of Ignatius is representative of a humanistic or subjective shift in the history of the Church and its tradition of spiritual experience and theological understanding. In another sense the biography is an expression of deeply held Christian convictions about the nature of God and revelation: It is incarnational, revelatory, mystical (mysterious, enigmatic, in both divine immanence and abstraction). If we understand divine revelation as the self-communication of God, and, more to the point, the incarnation as the unique moment in which this self-communication erupts in a particular human being (Jesus Christ), then the autobiography as a literary form becomes an invaluable tool for exploring and understanding God. That is to say, the autobiographical literary form (in its authorship and interpretation) becomes a way of doing (spiritual) theology.

The *Autobiography* of Ignatius sits within this theological tradition, and transcends it by way of its peculiarities. Not strictly an autobiography in almost any sense of that term (not *auto*, not *bio*, not *graphy* – epideictic rhetoric: not about Ignatius in the strict factual sense, but about God/morality/spiritual experience cf. Boyle) the text invites a broader understanding of how the ‘personal’ nature of God is revealed in a narrative community (storytellers, authors, editors, publishers, readers and listeners). Ignatius had an experience of God that, by its very nature, called him to share that experience with others. That is to say, his experience of God was not complete without companionship. This sharing took form in the Society of Jesus and eventually (in mutuality) the Society of Jesus asked him to recount his story as a way of helping all to ‘share in’ his divine encounter.²⁷⁴ The text we have (requested, narrated, recorded, edited, and published) is representative, precisely, of this inter-subjective way of knowing God. The God of the *Autobiography* is a God revealed in ‘word’ and this word incarnated in the Society of Jesus.²⁷⁵

The *Autobiography* suggests the possibility of a theology of personal experience (in the most robust sense of the terms ‘personal’ and ‘experience’) and exemplifies the value (theological and spiritual) of purposive narration. In the *Autobiography* of Ignatius we discover a narrative soteriology whereby souls, his and ours, are helped to transformative union with God (theosis) by the sharing of stories – their authorship and their appropriation. In the *Autobiography*, purposive narration and creative imagination, the authorship of texts

²⁷⁴ Theosis and narrative empathy – do this ‘in memory’ of me. Performative ‘memoria’ cf. Boyle

²⁷⁵ Platica 3a (Coimbra 1561) – La vida de Ignacio forma de la Compañía – *Las pláticas del P. Nadal*. (Lop, M., ed.). Col. Manresa 45, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander 2011.

and their reading, become the seeds of conversion and salvation. The narrativity by which we engage and understand our lived experience becomes a place of encounter with the divine; our personal narrative becomes a purposive and participative part of salvation history. The God who is ‘Word’ invites our participation in the creative work of liberation as authors and readers, storytellers and listeners, narrative pilgrims seeking truth in a good tale well told.

Conclusion: True Love Stories

The epistemic value of the narrative imagination.

Simone Weil says that, “Studies are nearer to God for the attention which is their soul.”²⁷⁶ As in studies, so too in the spiritual life. Weil advocates that we study with a kind of pure mystical attention whereby the soul empties itself of content to receive the truth of the contemplated object – be it a math problem or the divine presence of God. Unfortunately, most of our lives are more busy and distracted than her ideal of self-emptying pure-attention allows. For most of us the presence of God is experienced as are the strange particles of quantum physics: a fleeting presence which appears variably as we change our mode of observation. For this reason, theologically and spiritually, our questions and methods, our ways of proceeding, our means of interpretation and communication, all become significant players in our understanding, in our coming to know the truth of the mysterious thing we’re after. We must exercise our attention, then, first by deciding what to look for and how. We must begin (perhaps as we will end) in humility and in mystery. Along the way we must make choices about how best to receive the grace we’re after. And, in the end, it is the intentionality with which we apply our attention – for both Weil and Ignatius a form of love – that will make all the difference.

If we are to speak of an Ignatian theology or an Ignatian religious epistemology we must acknowledge that Ignatius came to know God in a particular way, that he hoped to share that way with others, and that his *way of knowing* was uniquely related to *that which it sought to know*. Ignatius (like Lonergan and others) understood that we must find appropriate methods for coming to know particular subjects. That God is personal implies that our knowledge of God must also be personal. We might speak, then, of our coming to know God as a process of *personification* – that is, our becoming persons by way of our operating as

²⁷⁶ WEIL, S., *Waiting for God*. Routledge, London, 2010, 36.

such, *personally* (attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving). That God is love implies that our coming to know God will be a function of our loving. We might speak then of our salvation as a process of conversion or *divinization* (our redemption discovered in personal and transcendent experiences and acts of self-giving love).²⁷⁷ In either case, I believe that this epistemic process of coming to know God – the personification of love – is appropriated and understood narratively. I have argued that it is our narrativity, the intentional practice of imagination and articulation, which allows us both to *make-sense of* and to *make something of* the experience of love, the knowledge of God. For this reason, exploring the narrativity practiced in the Exercises can help us to explain the Ignatian understanding of the structures and dynamics of selfhood, knowledge, and experience.

I have tried to demonstrate how our coming to know God demands a particular kind of narrative attention – narrativity, understood as both an imaginative faculty and a quality of personal experience. I am convinced by Taylor’s argument that narratives play a key role in our identity formation and moral orientation (Part I) as well as Lonergan’s suggestion that it is love which moves us through transcendental stages of knowing (Part IV). To ‘be loving’ is to adopt a posture of reverence towards life that allows the truth and beauty of experience to reveal itself to you again and again. This is the vulnerability of falling in love with the reality of the other. This is the humility of knowing and of unknowing in every moment such that the truth of your experience might be a dynamic *becoming* more than a static *knowledge* trapped in bias or blindness. This is the dynamic narrative knowledge we seek to engage in the Exercises (Part II-III), a kind of interior knowledge that demands our ongoing conversion to love (Part IV). Our loving and our knowing returns us again and always to attend to our lived experience, to our subjectivity, to our being and becoming *persons*. This loving posture, this interior spiritual freedom, this passionate indifference, is at the heart of the Ignatian way of knowing God. It is this loving posture of reverence before God and all of creation that we practice as so-called *contemplatives in action* – in our praise, in our reverence, and in our service. We are called to be attentive in contemplation and whole-hearted in action. We must conclude, then, that the story of our life and that of all salvation history is meant to be, in the most robust sense, a true love story. We are meant to be lovers.

²⁷⁷ I’m thinking here of what Paul Moser calls ‘personified evidence for the existence of God’. cf. MOSER, P., *The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (2009).

The narrativity of the Exercises can be understood as a kind of love story which helps us to know who we are (identity) and where we are going (moral orientation) (Part I), a kind of a script to guide us in our process of personal becoming (Part II). This narrative dynamic of the Exercises has particular implications for our understanding of Ignatian theology, a theology which takes seriously the role of imagination and conversion (Part III) and, ultimately, for the Ignatian vision of selfhood, knowledge and experience of God (Part IV). Beneath all of this is a conviction that the narrative imagination has a particular epistemic value – that is, our narrativity is essential to our experiential knowledge of God. I believe this insight has broad value in communicating the spiritual wisdom and grace of the Ignatian charism as well as for our understanding of the work of theology. Narrativity engages both the creative faculty of our imagination and the existential (temporal-spatial) dynamics of our personal experience. It is in the narrative ordering and/or imaginative sense-making of our experience where we come to meaningful knowledge of God. For this reason, not only does the imagination play a role in our prayer and contemplation but the narrative imagination and its ways of knowing also ought to be taken seriously as a sense-making faculty; narrative analysis ought to be considered a legitimate and fruitful form of engaging theological discourse.

I have preferred to explore the dialogue between various disciplines and thinkers over a more detailed analysis of particular concepts and/or texts. I trust that further research will strengthen the meaning of these relationships even as it might call into question some of my interpretations and ask me to change some of my conclusions. I would like to return to the second part of this project and explore with greater precision a phenomenology of the narrative experience of the Exercises. Particularly I am interested developing the role of Ignatius' own experience as a source for our understanding and interpreting the theological and spiritual implications of the Exercises. *How does the graced experience of Ignatius find its way into the text of the Exercises or into a particular contemplation? And then, how does this grace find its way from the text of the Exercises into the experience of the person making them half a millennium later?* In each line of the Exercises we could pause to make an extended analysis of how storytelling becomes the means of experiencing and communicating the grace of God – the narrative communication of grace over space and time. It was with this intuition that I began the project – an intuition about the truth of experience and the meaning and value of a good story – and I believe there is more work to

be done in analyzing the Exercises in this narrative light. In some places I have attempted to make this analysis explicit (e.g. following Melloni's intuition about interior knowledge and the experience of Cardoner in Part IV) but it remains a much deeper well of reflection that I would like to return to and drink from again.

What I hope I have accomplished in this current paper is to make an initial and convincing argument for the value of narrative analysis in our understanding of what is at stake in the Ignatian spiritual and theological tradition. I believe that St. Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* for the same reason that Flannery O'Connor wrote creatively – not only as a practicing artist, but also as a master and teacher of 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, "the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story is only to help you experience that meaning more fully."²⁷⁸ What we have in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola is, like any good story, a text that doesn't intend merely to make abstract statements about the meaning of things, but hopes rather to help us in experiencing that meaning more fully.

Mine is the same hope. I hope that what I have written here is not only a fair description of the narrativity of the *Exercises*, but also some help for those who seek to experience their grace more fully. If I succeeded in this effort in even the slightest way, sharing some of the goodness and grace of the Ignatian spiritual tradition, that would be enough for me. I must conclude as I began, in humility and thanksgiving, for Ignatian knowledge is, to be sure, a function of gratitude²⁷⁹ – a way of knowing which demands the narrative reviewing of graces received. And so, I give thanks to God for the many teachers, friends, and companions who have accompanied me in the work of this project even as I recognize that the work is yet unfinished. We must continue to tell, in word and deed, in imagination and articulation, our small part of this story and in so doing I trust that we will become at once more grateful and more graceful, more like the Creator who does always and everywhere exactly that, more like the one who narrates in us a story of love and grace.

²⁷⁸ O'CONNOR, F., *Mystery and Manners*, Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York (1957), 96.

²⁷⁹ "To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us – and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful man knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference." MERTON, T. *Thoughts in Solitude*. Burns & Oates, Great Britain, (1958), 43.

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