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THE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF IGNATIUS' RULES FOR DISCERNMENT*

Oliver G. Dy, S.J.

> When he went to bed, often great ideas would come to him, great spiritual consolations, in such a way that they were making him lose a lot of time that he had allocated for sleep, which was not much …. That led him to begin to doubt if these ideas were coming from the good spirit. — *Autobiography of Ignatius, 26*

The section of the *Spiritual Exercises* (SE) customarily entitled the Rules of Discernment (#313–336) can be understood as a systematic codification of the lessons in discernment that its author, Ignatius of Loyola, underwent in his personal faith-life. As such, it is no mere random assembly of spiritual insights about the charism of discernment that is ever-present in the life of the Christian community. The Rules are a carefully mapped-out text that not only appropriately instruct the retreat director, given a particular kind of directee, but also subtly describe the paradigmatic interior journey of an exercitant undergoing the *Exercises*. Michael Buckley already alludes to this in his own investigation into the internal structure of the Rules of Discernment when taken as a single literary unit. With the aid of

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other existing commentaries in English, Buckley's analysis is further developed in this article.[1]

The Two Sets of Rules

The Eighth Annotation (SE #8) located in the introductory part of the *Exercises* already indicates that the Rules are subdivided into two parts, namely the Rules for the First Week and those for the Second Week. The Ninth Annotation (SE #9) instructs the director that the first set of Rules is more helpful for "a person who has not been versed in spiritual things and is tempted grossly and openly" [*si es persona que en cosas spirituales no aya sido versado, y si es tentado grosera y abiertamente*] while undergoing exercises of the First Week. In this particular case, the Rules for the Second Week will also be harmful as they are "too subtle and too high" for the exercitant in such a situation [*le deñarán las de la 2ª, por ser material más subtil y más subida que podrá entender*]. On the other hand, the Tenth Annotation (SE #10) advises the director that the second set of Rules properly applies when the exercitant is perceived to be "assaulted and tempted under the appearance of good" [*batido y tentado debaxo de especie de bien*].

The Tenth Annotation also clarifies that the exercises of the First Week correspond to the purgative life while those of the Second Week to the illuminative life. According to Ganss, "the mention of the purgative and illuminative life clearly refers to the classic doctrine

[1]Michael J. Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises*, ed. Philip Sheldrake S.J. (London: SPCK, 1991), 219–37; Jules J. Toner, S.J., *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1981; reprint, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1982); George E. Ganss, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, Jesuit Primary Sources in English Translations 9 (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 189–95; Herve Coathalem, *Ignatian Insights: A Guide to the Complete Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Charles J. McCarthy (Taiwan: Kuangchi Press, 1961), 243–78.

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of the three ways (*viae*) or stages of growth in the spiritual life: the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways."[2] In this regard, W.H. Longridge remarks:

> What is said in this [Tenth] Annotation (SE #10) refers not so much to the part of the Exercises upon which the exercitant is engaged, as to the habitual state of his soul. For it may happen that retreatants who are making the Exercises of the First Week are, as to the habitual dispositions of their souls, in the illuminative way, and consequently may need the rules belonging to the Second Week, even while they are engaged in the Exercises of the First. And, on the other hand, there may be some who, even when they have passed on to the Second Week, may still at times be subject to gross and manifest temptations which need to be dealt with by the rules belonging to the First Week. The truth is that souls are for the most part tempted in this way or that according to the progress they have made in the spiritual life, and the director must apply to them the Rules of the First or Second Week according to the character of their temptations, irrespective of the precise part of the Exercises in which they are engaged, whether it be the First Week or the Second, or even the Third or Fourth.[3]

In short, the first set of Rules applies to an exercitant in the purgative life while the second set to an exercitant located in the spiritual stage of

[2]Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, 144. For more on the purgative and illuminative life, see also sources mentioned in 144–45. The difference between the purgative and illuminative stages cited here are for technical purposes only. See Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 181: "An overemphasis on separate, successive stages, with universal application, conflicts with a sense of the uniqueness of each person's spiritual journey as well as with the freedom of God and unpredictability of grace. Equally, the experience of spiritual guidance suggests that the characteristics which give names to the traditional three stages (purgative, illuminative, unitive), that is repentance, enlargement of vision, and growth in selfless love for God and neighbour, are present in different proportions at *every* point on our journey."

[3]W. H. Longridge, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (London and Milwaukee: A. E. Mowbray, 1930), 13–14.

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the illuminative life.[4] The labels of "First Week" and "Second Week" of the Rules do not strictly correspond to the exercises in the First and Second Week of the *Exercises* as such,[5] but rather to the "habitual state of the soul" of the exercitant undergoing the *Exercises*. Hence, the "First Week" and "Second Week" in each of the respective subtitles of these two sets of Rules for Discernment actually refer to the purgative life and illuminative life, respectively.

Furthermore, this also means that "the Second Week Rules need the First Week Rules as a building needs a foundation."[6] Just as a person has to pass through the purgative life in order to arrive at the illuminative life, so too do the Rules for the Second Week presuppose and build on those for the First Week. There is a certain hierarchical relationship between these two sets of Rules. Just as the illuminative life presupposes and builds on the purgative life, so too does the second set of Rules assimilate and develop the first set.

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[4]It is to be noted here that whatever applies henceforth to the illuminative life applies also to the unitive life which, according to the theory, is a more advanced stage of spiritual development.

[5]See Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 215–16: "Nothing whatever is said as to whether the second set of Rules should be reserved till the Second Week of the *Exercises*, or whether the first set or rules should be explained before the Second Week begins. Explain them or not, according to the need of the exercitant [SE #8]—that is the Ignatian rule from Annotation 8 by which one should guide oneself. Two conditions are set down which, taken together, indicate when the director should not bring up the second set of rules with a person engaged in the exercises for the First Week: (1) the exercitant is not versed in spiritual things and (2) he or she is tempted grossly and openly [SE #9]. When neither of these two conditions is present and the exercitant could profit by understanding the second set of rules, it is in accord with Ignatius' instruction to explain them."

[6]See also David Lonsdale, "'The Serpent's Tail': Rules for Discernment," in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises*, ed. Philip Sheldrake, S.J. (London: SPCK, 1991), 165.

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The Rules for the First Week

According to Buckley, there are three fundamental categories that have often been applied throughout history to describe religious experiences: preternatural influences, processes of human intellection, and attractions of human affectivity. Different individuals and traditions emphasize one or two of these factors in their particular approach to religious experiences. Not only was Ignatius one of those who accounted for all these three factors in framing his own spiritual experiences, but it was his genius to provide a general coordinating matrix where each of these finds its proper place. In Buckley's analysis, Ignatius erects in the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits "a tripartite division distributed into two contradictory schemes." By this, he means that there are three horizontal rows representing the three factors of preternatural influences ("Preternatural"), human intellect ("Thoughts"), and human affectivity ("Affectivity") traditionally used to describe religious experiences. Each of these rows is also split into two parts corresponding to the mutually opposing terms of good and evil. As will be visually presented in tables 1 and 2, "the first and second rules [of the First Week] set up the initial schematization of the three levels of religious influence, a matrix whose variables are affectivity, imagination or intellectual intentionality, and preternatural influences."[7]

This can be more clearly seen in the schema derived from the First Rule of the First Week (SE #314) that establishes the basic structure for understanding the entire text of the Rules, as seen in the diagram below:[8]

[7]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 219–24.

[8]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 222–23, 235.

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Table 1. Buckley's Schema for the First Rule for the First Week

Good Spirit	Evil Spirit	(Preternatural)
↓	↓	
Judgment of Reason	Imagination	('Thoughts')
↓	↓	
Remorse	Sensual Pleasure	(Affectivity)

Here, the two terms from the left on the same horizontal level are also mutually opposed to each other. For example, there are three different sets of oppositions here: "Good Spirit" versus "Evil Spirit" on the level of preternatural influence, "Judgment of Reason" versus "Imagination" on the level of "Thoughts," and "Remorse" versus "Sensual Pleasure" on the level of human affectivity.[9] Furthermore, each of the three levels under the same column are also "intrinsically and causally connected." In the case of a person in mortal sin referred to by the First Rule of the First Week (leftmost column), the good spirit operates through the judgment of reason (or conscience) of the human intellect in order to cause remorse on the level of human affectivity. On the other hand, the evil spirit causes sensual attraction in the human affectivity through the imaginations produced in the human intellect of a person in the state of mortal sin (central column). In both cases, there is a line of causality that can be traced from the preternatural influence to the human intellect and finally to the human affectivity.[10]

The Fifth Rule of the First Week (SE #318) follows the schema of the First Rule (SE #314), but in this particular case, the "causal lines" are reversed:

[9]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 223–24.

[10]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 224.

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Table 2. Buckley's Schema of the Fifth Rule of the First Week[11]

Good Spirit	Evil Spirit	(Preternatural)
↑	↑	
Thoughts	Thoughts	('Thoughts')
↑	↑	
Consolation	Desolation	(Affectivity)

The line of causality starts from consolation or desolation on the level of affectivity, and then moves up to the commensurate thoughts generated by such affective experience, and finally arrives at the proper preternatural source. The causal line is reversed because the Fifth Rule of the First Week deals with a person no longer in mortal sin:

> For a person moving through purification, the modes of temptation are dialectically reversed, and the instrumentality of evil is no longer imagination but thought. A higher level of human development is presupposed: a person no longer dominated by imagination and sensual pleasures but operating by reason and insight. Here the evil spirit through false reasoning brings about pain and sadness and a sense of futility, the reasoning devolving upon obstacles to a continuation of the process of conversion.[12]

As is visually presented in tables 1 and 2, "the first and second rules [of the First Week] set up the initial schematization of the three levels of religious influence, a matrix whose variables are affectivity, imagination or intellectual intentionality, and preternatural influences."[13]

Three things are to be noted with regard to table 2 above. First, whereas in the First Rule the movement is from the row of the preternatural influence to the human intellect and finally to the affective state, in the next set of Rules the movement of discernment in the line of causality from the level of affectivity to thoughts arises

[11]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 236.

[12]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 224–25.

[13]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 224.

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from this state of affectivity, and finally to the preternatural influence. Thus, this general schematization of religious experience by Ignatius allows one to move from the preternatural source to a quality of thoughts down to resultant moods and emotions, or contrariwise from sets of feelings through a corresponding quality of thoughts and finally to their identifiable source under either an angelic or diabolical preternatural influence. Thus,

> … in these fourteen rules [for the First Week], a matrix emerges for synthesizing religious experience on three different levels: ultra-human, rational, and affective. This matrix provides both for the causal interrelationship among the three, and the contradictory antithesis between the evil and the good.[14]

Second, table 2 above shows that consolation and desolation are located exclusively on the level of human affectivity. According to Buckley, consolation and desolation are therefore not found on the levels of the preternatural agent or the thoughts in human intellect that proceed from the human affect. As affective experiences, consolation and desolation cannot be equated to preternatural influences external to a person, nor are they qualities of rational intentionality proper to the human intellect; rather, consolation and desolation are interior movements of emotionality, feeling, or sensibility. Consolation and desolation therefore refer to states of affectivity defined by the direction of their ensuing movement towards either the good spirit or the evil spirit as the respective causal agent.[15]

Third, there is commensurability between the affective-conditions, thoughts, and preternatural influences that belong to the same line of causality. The reason for this commensurability is that the Rules for the First Week are geared for an exercitant who is "tempted by obvious evil." The obviousness of evil is such that the reality of a temptation on the level of human affectivity can be easily identified through its phenomenological manifestation as evil on the level of the

[14]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 224, 27.

[15]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 225.

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human intellect. This means that the consolation and desolation can generate their own respective commensurate thoughts in accordance with the Fourth Rule of the First Week: "The thoughts that spring from consolation (*que salen de la consolación*) are contrary to the thoughts that spring from desolation (*que salen de la desolación*)." Consequently, these thoughts "almost mechanically" correspond to their respective preternatural influence, as stated in the Fifth Rule: "As in consolation the good spirit leads and directs us by his counsel, so in desolation does the evil spirit." In other words, during the First Week, the preternatural influences appear to be what they really are. At both the level of the affect and intellect, the preternatural evil spirit really appears as evil, just as the preternatural good spirit also really appears as good. This is what is meant by commensurability between the three levels of preternatural influence, human thoughts, and human affectivity.[16]

The Rules for the Second Week

With regard to the second set of Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, Buckley claims that the general schema of the First Week is restated in the First Rule for the Second Week (SE #313). That is, the three levels of preternatural influence, thoughts, and affectivity are once again established along with the antithetical relationships between the two opposing vertical lines of causality. However, the original flow of the line of causality is modified by a *consolación sin causa* or a consolation without preceding cause (SE #330).[17] According to Buckley, a consolation without preceding cause is characterized by "the

[16]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 224, 227–28. See also *SE* #317.

[17]The phrases *consolación sin causa* and *consolación con causa* in Buckley's text do not exactly appear as such in the *Autograph*. Cf. SE #330: *Sólo es de Dios nuestro Señor dar consolación a la ánima sin causa precedente*. Likewise, SE #331: *Con causa puede consolar al ánima así el buen ángel como el malo*. Mullan translates the phrase *sin causa precedente* of SE #330 as "without preceding cause" and the *con causa* of SE #331 as "with cause." The phrases "consolation without previous cause" and "consolation without prior cause" are also possible translations of the phrase

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total movement of affectivity and sensibility towards God without any proportional influence of imaginative or rational intentionality prior to the experience—whether this priority is conceived temporally or naturally."[18] It is marked by "the absence of any antecedent intentionality proportional to the drawing of affectivity into God."[19] It does not also have a preternatural influence as an agent. This means a good angel, much less a bad angel, cannot belong to the vertical line of causality proper to a consolation without preceding cause. Furthermore, unlike a consolation that can stimulate commensurate good thoughts (SE #318), a consolation without preceding cause has no intellectual intentionality as its commensurate object. It is instead a self-authenticating "movement of total affectivity and feeling towards God."[20]

Buckley provides no accompanying diagram for a *consolación sin causa*. Nevertheless, the skeletal structure of his basic schema can be readjusted in order to depict a consolation without preceding cause described in the Second Rule of the Second Week (SE #330):

Table 3. Buckley's Implied Schema for a Consolation Without Preceding Cause

God alone	
↓↑	
---	(Preternatural)
↓↑	
---	('Thoughts')
↓↑	
consolación sin causa	(Affectivity)

consolación … sin causa precedente. See Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 28.

[18]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 230.

[19]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 230.

[20]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 230.

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This simply means that in a consolation without preceding cause, the line of causality proceeds from God alone and bypasses the preternatural influence and the processes of human intellection and goes directly to the area of human affectivity. Conversely, it also goes directly from the level of affectivity to God alone, skipping the levels of the preternatural and human thoughts.

In contrast to this is a *consolación con causa* or a consolation with preceding cause. Here, the level of the human intellect is activated under the line of causality involving this particular kind of consolation. The Rules for the Second Week also stress that there can be an actual disjunction between a consolation with preceding cause and the thoughts of the human intellect that *appear* to be commensurate with it. This means that the quality of commensurability between thought and affectivity cannot be guaranteed during the illuminative life. One cannot immediately and know for sure whether the good or evil spirit is influencing a thought (the level of human intellect) that leads to or arises from a consolation with preceding cause (the level of human affectivity). The discerner cannot initially ascertain whether the accompanying thought that precedes or proceeds from a consolation with preceding cause is really, actually, and necessarily good:

> When imaginative or rational intentionality either precedes affectivity or is commensurate with it, as thoughts spring out of consolation, the consolation is an equivocal experience. This *consolación con causa* can be either divine or angelic or diabolic, and the quality of its commensurate thoughts [does] not remove this ambiguity.[21]

In other words, what appears as good may not necessarily and truly be good in reality. There can be the phenomenon of subtle deception by the diabolical preternatural agent (the evil angel). One cannot therefore automatically correlate the manifestation of good at the levels of the human intellect and affect with a good preternatural influence.

[21]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 230.

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This can be schematically depicted as follows:

Table 4. Buckley's Implied Schema for a Consolation with Preceding Cause[22]

God			
↑			
---	good angel	evil angel	(Preternatural)
↑	↑	↑	
		apparently	
truly good thoughts:	truly good thoughts:	good thoughts:	('Thoughts')
beginning, middle, end	beginning, middle, end	beginning and/or middle only	
↑↓	↑↓	↑↓	
consolación con causa	*consolación con causa*	*consolación con causa*	
("divine")	("angelic")	("diabolic")	(Affectivity)
↑	↑	↑	
	consolación sin causa		

Here, Buckley claims that there are three possible influences behind a consolation with preceding cause: God, good angel, or the bad angel—"this *consolación con causa* can either be divine or angelic or

[22]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 228–229. It can be seen from the broken line in Table 4 that a consolation with preceding cause can proceed from a consolation without preceding cause. In saying "rules three to eight [of the Second Week] deal with *consolación con causa*, and the last [Rule of the Second Week] combines both kinds of consolation into a single directive," Buckley considers the "afterglow" of a *consolacíon sin causa* (SE # 336) as a *consolacíon con causa*. For a different viewpoint, see Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 246–48. Toner distinguishes between the "afterglow" of a consolation without preceding cause and a consolation with preceding cause.

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diabolic."[23] This means that the bad angel is the prompting agent behind a *deceptive* consolation with preceding cause while God or the good angel is the agent responsible for an *authentic* consolation with preceding cause.

Buckley however does not cite the specific Rule which supports his claim that a consolation with preceding cause can be attributed to God. When one examines the third Rule of the Second Week (SE #331) that specifically introduces the concept of a consolation with preceding cause, one can notice that the word *ángel* or "Angel" (angelic) and not "God" (divine) is explicitly used:

3ª regla. La terçera. Con causa puede consolar al ánima así el buen **ángel** como el malo, por contrarios fines: el buen **ángel** por prouecho del ánima, para que cresca y suba de bien en mejor; y el mal **ángel** para el contrario, y adelante para traerla a su dañada intención y maliçia.	Third Rule. The third: With cause, as well the good **Angel** as the bad can console the soul, for contrary ends: the good **Angel** for the profit of the soul, that it may grow and rise from good to better, and the evil **Angel**, for the contrary, and later on to draw it to his damnable intention and wickedness.[24]

On the other hand, when one examines the eighth Rule of the Second Week (SE # 336), one can also observe that the word "spirit" instead of "Angel" occurs in the text: "through the good **spirit** or through the bad, he forms various resolutions and opinions which are not given immediately by God our Lord" [*o por el buen* ***espíritu,*** *o por el malo, forma diuersos propósitos y paresçeres, que no son dados inmediatamente de Dios nuestro Señor*].[24] As will be shown later, the phrase "good spirit" here can mean either God or the good Angel. It seems that Buckley makes the claim that a consolation with preceding cause can be attributed to

[23]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 230.

[24]Boldfacings supplied.

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God on the basis of the word "spirit" that appears on this eighth (and last) Rule for discernment.

A question may be raised in this regard: how does one distinguish between a *divine* and an *angelic* consolation with preceding cause? In response to this, Toner opines that

> … it makes no practical difference. Even when God alone gives consolation with previous cause, it is such that it could be given by him through a good angel; and when it is given through an angel, it is still from God principally and given for his purposes. The purpose of the good angel could not be other than what God intends. The ambiguity about God alone or God acting through an angel to cause such a consolation can never be resolved—nor is there any practical need for doing so.[25]

This functional principle is not explicitly stated in the original text of the *Autograph*. In any case, this is the unstated theological background that enables Buckley to reduce the causal agent in the Rules for the First Week to the preternatural influences which he describes as mediatory "personalities or realities which—while not divine—so transcend and influence the human that they alter thoughts or control destinies or marshal forces or tempt resolution or effect liberation or deceive intention."[26] By this, Buckley seems to imply that the Rules for Discernment for the First Week can be understood without formally attributing the "good spirit" to God. The good angel, insofar as it mediates and represents God, can sufficiently substitute for God insofar as the Rules for the First Week are concerned. This substitution of the good preternatural spirit (good angel) in place of God would not hamper the operational logic of the Rules for the First Week.

Consequently, this also means that the good angel ("Preternatural") can operationally replace God as causal agent without destroying the essential logic of the consolation with preceding cause described

[25]Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 219.

[26]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 221.

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in the Rules for the Second Week. Just as a consolation without preceding cause is limited to God alone, so too can a consolation with preceding cause be operationally restricted to the preternatural agents. Seen from this perspective, the earlier schema of table 4 can be reconfigured as follows:

Table 5. Revised Schema for a Consolation With Preceding Cause

good angel	evil angel	(Preternatural)
↑	↑	
truly good thoughts:	*apparently* good thoughts:	
beginning, middle, end	beginning and/or middle only	("Thoughts")
↑↓	↑↓	
consolación con causa ("angelic")	*consolación con causa* ("diabolic")	
↑	↑	(Affectivity)
consolación sin causa ("divine" only)		

Based on tables 3 to 5, the difference between the consolation with and without preceding cause can be spelled out by looking at two correlative elements: the activity of thoughts in the causal line of the consolation, and the existence of the possibility of deception by the evil spirit in these thoughts. First, a consolation without preceding cause that occurs on the level of the human affect is not preceded by active thoughts that pave the way for such consolation. Commensurate thoughts do not also flow from it. In contrast, a consolation with preceding cause necessarily involves the processes of human intellection, whether as thoughts that generate or arise from such consolation. If thoughts in the human intellect are therefore actively present in the line of causality, then the kind of consolation is a consolation *with* preceding cause. Second, while there is absolutely no deception in a consolation without preceding cause [*quando la consolación es sin causa, dado que en ella no aya engaño*] (SE #336), a consolation with preceding cause cannot

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exclude the possibility of deceit. This is so because the possibility of deceit is, insofar as Buckley's schematization is concerned, coupled to the presence of thoughts in the human intellect. Where there are no thoughts in the line of causality as in the case of a consolation without preceding cause, then no deceit is possible. However, if there are antecedent or ensuing thoughts in the causal line, then the possibility of deceit emerges concurrently with these thoughts. In other words, the distinction between a consolation with and without preceding cause pivots on the existence of the possibility of such kind of deceit. A consolation without preceding cause absolutely negates such possibility, while a consolation with cause cannot deny such possibility by default. In other words, a consolation with preceding cause may turn out to be a deceptive or false consolation, although this may not readily and initially be identifiable as such.

The dynamics of deception is arguably the thematic thread that binds together the Rules for the Second Week. Ganss favors the topical organization of the second set of Rules constructed around the theme of deception which he borrows from Toner.[27] Regarding the subtitle "and they help more for the Second Week" [*y conduzen más para la 2ª semana*] (SE #328) (Mullan's literal translation), Ganss remarks that the second set of Rules deals with "cases more likely to arise during the Second Week, especially emotions caused by the evil spirit using his deceptive tactics during the time of election … [and] chiefly with demonic deceptions."[28] The phrases "apparent reasons, subtleties and continual fallacies" [*razones aparentes, sotilezas y assiduas falacias*] (SE #329), "covert deceits" [*engaños cubiertos*] (SE #332), "usual deceits" [*acostumbrados engaños*] (SE #334), and "no deceit in it" [*ella no aya engaño*] (SE # 336) give supporting evidence to the presence of this kind of deceit during the illuminative life.

[27]Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, 193–94.

[28]Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, 194.

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This is not the first time however that the subject matter of deceit is treated in the Rules. In the Rules for the First Week, the text already speaks of "apparent pleasures" [*placeres aparentes*] (SE#314), "false reasons" [*falsas razones*] (SE #315), "a licentious lover in wanting to be secret and not revealed" [*vano enamorado en querer ser secreto y no descubierto*] (SE #326) in reference to the enemy. These citations are already suggestive of the dynamics of deceit that can be operative from the very start. Given this, what is the difference, if any, of this kind of deceit in the Rules for the First Week from those for the Second?

The full text of Buckley is worth quoting here:

> The elaboration of discernment in the First Week is geared to people tempted by obvious evil. Now the much more difficult question obtains: how to respond to religious influences when the matter is much more subtle, when evil draws under the appearance of good? The First Week saw temptation as unified both as phenomenon and as real; evil appeared to be what it is. The Second Week takes up the disjunction between the two: when the phenomenon is good but the reality is actually evil.[29]

The dynamics of deceit in the Rules for the First Week are more obvious while those in the Rules for the Second Week are more covert or subtle. Furthermore, the subtlety of deceit in the Rules for the Second Week can only be fully grasped if obviousness of deceit in the Rules for the First Week are first understood. Because the purgative life is the foundation for the illuminative life, one of the prerequisites in the Rules for the First Week that is carried over to the Rules for the Second Week is "the knowledge that it is in the very nature of our resistance to the Spirit of God to be tricky and deceptive [SE # 139, 142, 325–7]."[30]

In this regard, Toner opines that the second set of Rules "are *directly* concerned only with two subtle diabolical deceptions that can hinder

[29]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 227–28.

[30]Lonsdale, "'The Serpent's Tail': Rules for Discernment," 166.

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such discernment [i.e., deceptive consolation with preceding cause and deceptive thoughts during the "afterglow" of a consolation without preceding cause], deceptions which begin with one or other of the two kinds of consolation distinguished and described in the rules for the sake of understanding these deceptions." However, he also adds that "the distinction between consolation with and without preceding cause is nowhere else so much as mentioned in Ignatius' writings [and this] suggests its [consolation without preceding cause] unimportance to Ignatius outside this limited context."[31] This statement of Toner can be taken to mean that a consolation without preceding cause is useful only to the extent that it is a negative instance of deceit. It appears based on this position of Toner that it is not so much important to positively resolve exactly what a consolation without preceding cause is as to recognize it negatively as a spiritual experience that is absolutely and purely without the possibility of deceit.[32]

As such, an absolutely non-deceptive consolation without preceding cause due to God alone becomes the clearest background and point of reference against which a consolation with preceding cause is discerned as either angelic or diabolic (i.e., from the good or bad angel). The superlative degree of clarity of a consolation without preceding cause is the same degree of clarity towards which the process of the further discernment of an initially ambiguous consolation with preceding cause should aspire. In other words, the outcome of the discernment of a consolation with preceding cause should ideally reflect that same degree of epistemological clarity possessed by a consolation without preceding cause. At the end of the discernment process, a consolation

[31]Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 214.

[32]For an overview of the different positions regarding consolation without preceding cause, see Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 291–313; see also Ramon Ma. Luza Bautista, S.J, "Ignatian Prayer and Ignatian Discernment: A Critical Evaluation of Recent Literature in English on Two Key Aspects of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola as a School of Love." Ph.D. diss. (Heythrop College, University of London, 1997), 182–225.

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with preceding cause should clearly be identified as either angelic or diabolic just as a consolation without preceding cause is clearly genuine. It is through the process of discernment that a consolation with preceding cause is gradually moved from its original ambiguity to its eventual superlative clarity with regard to its preternatural source or cause. Thus, the initial tension between a consolation with and without cause involves the tension between epistemological ambiguity and clarity.

According to Buckley, the flow of the discourse of the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the Second Week addresses this initial ambiguity of a consolation with preceding cause that concurrently arises with this covert dynamics of deceit. A new feature is integrated here from the original schema for the First Week, namely the temporal dimension of the course of thoughts. This addition to the matrix for the Second Week is based on three instructions for the Second Week that safeguard against the deceit of the evil angel. First, the Fifth Rule (SE #333) directs the exercitant to examine the beginning, middle, and end of the course of possibly deceitful thoughts that contemporaneously arise in the intellect. Second, the Sixth Rule (SE #334) advises a review of the history of the course of deceptive thoughts once the deceit has been uncovered somewhere along the way. These two Rules suggest that the deceit behind a false consolation can only be recognized once the affective markers of the ensuing desolation emerge in the affectivity of the exercitant. Just as there is a difference between the affective features of consolation and desolation in the purgative life, so too is there the same distinction between false consolation in the illuminative life and the desolation that is likely to come after it. Only when a false consolation turns into a desolation can it be retrospectively identified as a *false* or deceitful consolation. It is the ensuing desolation that allows one to view the antecedent consolation as false. Without this desolation that comes afterwards, the false consolation experienced will be mistakenly perceived as a true consolation. This means that, "affectively" speaking, there is a difference between false consolation and desolation. False consolation leads to desolation but is not yet desolation as such on the affective level. Third, the Eighth Rule (SE #336) also cautions against attributing immediately to God the

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apparently good "resolutions and opinions" that arise during the period of the "afterglow" (Toner) immediately following the duration of a deceit-free consolation without preceding cause.

Buckley also states that the Rules for the Second Week indicate "a pattern of progressive maturity in assimilating this kind of discernment." By this, he means that there are three Rules for the Second Week (SE #333–335) that correspond to each of the three temporal moments of "beginning, middle, and end" (SE #333) of "the course of thoughts" of a *consolación con causa*. Each of these three Rules in turn represents three different stages of spiritual progress for a person in the illuminative life. The fifth Rule (SE #333) deals with a person at the lowest level of spiritual growth in the illuminative life who realizes the deception only at the "end." The sixth Rule (SE #334) speaks about a person who uncovers the deceit somewhere in the "middle." Finally, the seventh Rule (SE #335) talks about a person who detects the deceit of a false consolation at the "beginning," that is, almost instantly. It is in this sense that the fifth to seventh Rules of the Second Week signify "a pattern of progressive maturity."[33] This means that the duration of time between a false consolation and the subsequent desolation that exposes it as deceitful is essentially dependent on the degree of spiritual maturity of an exercitant located in the illuminative life.

Furthermore, the spiritual maturity of the exercitant is also related to how he or she discerns whether or not a consolation with preceding cause is false. In the fifth and sixth Rules (SE #333–34), the manner of determining the existence of deceit is by examination at the level of rational intentionality (thoughts) or the level of affectivity. The fifth Rule refers to the least mature person in the illuminative life: if the course of thoughts "ends in something bad, of a distracting tendency, or less good than what the soul had previously proposed to do," or if "sensibility or the complex of human feelings has been weakened or made restless or so troubled that a previous peace and tranquillity have been lost," then "it is a clear sign that it proceeds from the evil spirit" (SE #333). At this point "neither affection nor

[33]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231–32.

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rational intentionality is self-justifying; it is their unity which must obtain and in which one level is critically judgemental of the other."[34] In short, neither discursive examination of thoughts nor sensitivity to feelings alone suffices. Rather it is through their critical interaction with each other that the deceit of a false consolation is revealed. The more mature person of the sixth Rule (SE #334) employs this same methodology of discernment proper to the illuminative life, together with the additional provision that the discerner retrace in memory the steps which led to the present desolation so that the lessons learned from this review make him more sensitive to the introduction of the lesser and deceptive good by the evil spirit.[35] However, in the case of a person referred to by the seventh Rule (SE #335), it is no longer necessary to critically inspect the course of his thoughts using the methodology of discernment prescribed for the first two cases. On the contrary, this person *intuits* the existence of deceit solely on the basis of the immediate effects on his affectivity at the introduction of the deceptive thoughts by the bad angel. The interiority of this most spiritually mature person is exceptionally congruent to the good angel; so much so that through the spontaneous response of his affectivity alone, this person can rapidly or immediately (at the "beginning") discern the deceit behind a false consolation. Thus,

> it is subtly possible, even at the initiation of the consolation [with preceding cause], to discern the true from the false: the true consolation [with preceding cause] will enter a person given over to the Lord, almost imperceptibly, in silence, as a drop of water enters a sponge. On the contrary, that which is not of God will enter with the violence and perceptibility of a drop hitting a rock. The condition of affectivity indicates the authenticity of the consolation long before any discriminations are elaborated on the worth of the ideas which spontaneously spring from this consolation [with preceding cause].[36]

In other words, if the temptation of "good and holy thoughts" (SE#329) enters a person who is very mature in the illuminative life,

[34]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231.

[35]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231.

[36]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231–232.

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this will almost immediately (at the "beginning") be translated on the level of affectivity as a sharp touch with "noise and disquiet, as when the drop of water falls on the stone" (SE #335). It is as if the life-span of what the enemy had intended to be a false consolation is very short, so that the ensuing desolation of "noise and disquiet" is almost instantly felt in the person's affectivity—just shortly after the deceptive "good and holy thoughts" have entered the person. Unlike the first two cases where the exercitants go with the flow of the deceptive good thoughts that confer false consolation for some duration of time, in this case the very spiritually mature person in the illuminative life is able to instantly reject the proposed "apparent reasons, subtleties and continual fallacies" on the level of thought because they almost instantaneously translate into the quasi-desolation of "noise and disquiet" on the level of affectivity.[37]

This seventh Rule of the Second Week then provides the director reassurance that "even when the evil spirit comes as an angel of light, he is bound to reveal himself ultimately in *every* instance," thereby removing any doubt "whether the influence of the evil spirit will *always* or only sometimes show up in what follows on the consolation and holy thoughts with which the deception begins."[38] In effect, the seventh Rule of the Second Week guarantees that it is always possible to arrive, even almost immediately, in discerning an initially ambiguous consolation with preceding cause at that same degree of epistemological clarity that resonates with the benchmark clarity of an unmistakably non-deceptive consolation without preceding cause.

The supreme affective response to the deceits of the enemy of the most spiritually mature person alluded to by the seventh Rule epitomizes what is known as *sentir* in Ignatian spirituality. Although it can mean rational, conceptual, explicit knowledge, *sentir* almost always

[37]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231–32.

[38]Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 237.

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means a heart-felt and connatural knowledge flowing from love, a non-conceptual, non-verbal mystical knowledge.[39] It signifies

> a 'felt-knowledge', an affective, intuitive knowledge … that is not merely an intellectual grasping of abstract propositions but a total human experience of understanding with all its emotional resonance …. [It] is more complete than ideas possessed by intellectual knowledge, more solid than the fluctuations of superficial emotions.[40]

The person with the highest degree of spiritual conformity to the good spirit possesses that *sentir* which enables him to almost instantly respond in the proper affective way not only to an *overt* deceit in the purgative life, but also to a *covert* deceit that falsely consoles for some time less mature persons in the illuminative life. This way of discernment sketched in the seventh Rule of the Second Week is therefore "more perfect, less discursive, more spontaneous[,] … more direct and quicker."[41] Here, the spiritual maturity of an exercitant is proportional not only to the rapidity by which he detects the deceit behind a false consolation, but also the manner by which he quickly exposes it. As seen in the seventh Rule for the Second Week, the quasi-desolation of "noise and disquiet" produced in the affect of a spiritually sensitive person immediately unmasks what the enemy had intended to be a false consolation proceeding from deceptive "good and holy thoughts" (SE #332).

It is in reference to this most spiritually-developed affectivity that Buckley clarifies that "affectivity is not the criterion in the First Week;

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[39]Harvey D. Egan, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976), 49 in Ramon Ma. Luza Bautista, S.J, *A Way to the Desert: 101 Questions and Answers on the Ignatian Retreat* (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2001), 98.

[40]John Carroll Futrell, S.J., "Ignatian Discernment," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (April 1970) in Bautista, *A Way to the Desert: 101 Questions and Answers on the Ignatian Retreat*, 98.

[41]Piet Penning de Vries, S.J., *Discernment of Spirits*, trans. W. Dudok Van Heel (New York: Exposition Press, 1973), 51.

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it is the criterion in the second." By this, he actually means that the affective response typified by an unconscionable person regressing in the state of mortal sin (first Rule of the First Week) should be absolutely distrusted. Conversely, the affective reaction exemplified by the spiritually keen individual pointed to by the seventh Rule of the Second Week should be upheld as the benchmark of discernment. These two illustrative sample responses on the level of affectivity of two entirely opposite persons must not be confused with each other:

> Mix these up, and you have a monster in your hands. The one who feels peace in cruelty is sick, or the religious who experiences joy in infidelity is pathological.[42]

This means that in terms of the subject matter of deceit, the affective experiences of an exercitant in mortal sin tempted with "sensual delights and pleasures" [*delectaciones y placeres sensuales*] (SE #314) and an exercitant in the illuminative life initially tempted with deceptive "good and holy thoughts" [*pensamientos buenos y sanctos*] (SE #332) are similar in that they both appear apparently good to the intellect. The "apparent pleasures" [*plaçeres aparentes*] (SE #314) due to the false thoughts in the imagination of a person in mortal sin and the false consolation due to illusory "good and holy thoughts" of a person in the illuminative life are affectively similar. The pricking and biting of the conscience through the process of reason [*punzándoles y remordiéndoles las consçientias por el sindérese de la razon*] by the good spirit can also translate on the level of affectivity of a person in mortal sin to affective features that appear to be comparable to a desolation of a good person in the purgative life or a desolation that succeeds a false consolation of a better person in illuminative life. Hence, affectivity without qualification cannot serve as the sole basis for discernment. It can become the singular basis for discernment to the extent that the person's interiority becomes more and more purified towards a degree of connaturality with God or the Angel in a way that mirrors

[42]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 232.

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the connaturality [*proprio es*] (SE #315, 329][43] of the good spirits and their proper operations on the good person. Hence, a person in the state of mortal sin journeys to the greater spiritual sensitivity pointed to by the seventh Rule of the Second Week through "the conversion and reorientation of human sensibility worked through the purifications and completions of the First Week." Therefore, "only when and to the degree that affectivity is ordered can it in turn become the clue to the direction in which one should go within the myriad good options which surround one's life."[44]

Inasmuch as these two contrasting types of interiorities (person in mortal sin and person of the seventh Rule of the Second Week) represent mutually opposing extremes, they at the same time trace out a path of spiritual maturation from bad to good to better. The difference between a good person in the purgative life and a better person in the illuminative presupposes and builds on the foundational difference between a person in mortal sin and a good person progressing in the purgative life (Table 3 and 4 respectively). Seen in this light, the seventh Rule holds a pivotal significance for the interpretation of the entire text of the Rules in that it is the climax of a hidden narrative of discernment embedded in the Rules. A person in mortal sin with an affectivity described in the first Rule of the First Week (SE #314) moves to a morally converted affectivity assumed in the second Rule of the First Week (SE #315). He or she then proceeds in his or her spiritual journey towards the illuminative life, where the Rules for the Second Week begin to take effect. Within this set of Rules lie three progressive gradations of spiritual maturation of which the seventh Rule is the high point. Thus, as a person moves from mortal sin to the purgative to the highest stage in the illuminative life, he or she progressively matures in the art of discernment along the way and brings it more to

[43]Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 56.

[44]Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment," 231–32. For another view regarding the criterion of affectivity in the process of discernment, see Bautista, *A Way to the Desert: 101 Questions and Answers on the Ignatian Retreat*, 110–14.

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its perfection. Thus, affectivity as the criterion of the Second Week is correlative to the centrality of the seventh Rule for the Second Week (SE #335) for the entire Rules for Discernment.

This embedded narrative also reflects the structural development of the Rules: the first rule of the First Week (SE #314) establishes the primary moral foundation for discernment; the second rule of the First Week (SE #315) presupposes and builds on this previous Rule and sets the general tenor for a good person in the purgative life; the seventh Rule (SE #335) forms a thematic capstone as it assimilates this second Rule and simultaneously binds these two previous Rules into a coherent unity:

> Explicitly, the [seventh Rule of the Second Week] repeats things said in [the first and second Rules of the First Week], and then adds an explanation …. This rule could, with perfect coherence, be inserted immediately after [them], as an explanation of them.[45]

It is not surprising, therefore, that these three fundamental Rules are not only literarily expressed in strikingly similar fashion, but also altogether contain the crucial determinative criteria in discernment: the habitual state of soul or fundamental interior disposition of the exercitant; the actual direction or orientation of his or her growth (progress or regress) already presupposing his or her habitual state of soul; the immediate affective effect of the spirit on the level of his or her affectivity given his or her current orientation at the moment; and the type of spirit that is the causal source or terminus of such immediate affective effect.

Conclusion

There are two sets of Rules for Discernment. The first set is different from the second set of Rules in the same way that, to use

[45]Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, 237; see also 51–54.

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Lonsdale's image, the foundation of a building is different from the building erected on that foundation. The first set of Rules (Rules for the First Week) properly applies to a person in the purgative life while the second set (Rules for the Second Week) is more applicable to a person in the illuminative life characterized by the phenomenon of a false consolation (or a deceitful consolation with preceding cause) operative in such a stage of spiritual growth (SE #9–10).

There are also three basic Rules that progressively sketch the ideal spiritual maturation in discernment of an exercitant during an Ignatian retreat. These are the first rule of the First Week (SE #314) that deals with a bad person in mortal sin; the second rule of the First Week (SE #315) that presupposes a good person in the purgative life; and the seventh Rule (SE #335) of the Second Week that describes the better person in the illuminative life who possesses the highest level of spiritual maturity in discernment. It is with regard to this seventh Rule of the Second Week that affectivity alone can be strictly and properly considered the sole criterion for discernment.

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