IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA AND C.S. LEWIS IN DIALOGUE ON DISCERNMENT

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Since my prep school days, I have been fascinated with stories I read in books. Such stories brought me to another world where I imagine myself to be a part of battles that fight the forces of evil, where I, together with the protagonist, would solve murder mysteries. I would also find some stories that uplift my spirits and remind me of love.

My love of such stories also introduced me to various authors, one of which is the atheist-turned-theologian, a patriotic soldier whose affluent creativity brought him from the hills of Poland to the farthest corners of the world: Clive Staples Lewis. His creativity in weaving theology into his narratives can inspire anyone to look into one's heart and discover God.

But this does not mean we cannot access theological premises, even truths, from fiction novels. A critical reader can notice that the author's beliefs and ideologies[1] (societal, religious, philosophical, etc.) are inserted, consciously or otherwise, in the complexity of their plots. Among theologians, it is challenging to look for streaks of faith in very secular or out-of-this-world stories that are available, put them into light, and bring to the public the message of The Divine Author.

[1]Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Ken Follet's Pillars of the Earth, Tom Clancy's The Hunt for Red October.

One such example is CS Lewis. One can find that his novels and stories are imbued with his faith, theology, and beliefs. A good example of this is his famous anthology, the *Chronicles of Narnia*. He alludes to several theological themes in this 7-book series: from creation to eschatology, from soteriology to ecclesiology, and other central Christian themes. These books were originally meant for children to learn key Christian concepts through adventure stories. He has other works that talk about more serious things with regard to his faith. One of these is *The Screwtape Letters.* This novel is a compilation of 31 letters of a master tempter teaching his nephew how to ensure his patient stays far from their Enemy (God). One can enjoy the satirical attacks of Screwtape Letters without going through the details of Christian doctrines. Translating theological concepts, Church doctrines, and dogma into enjoyable stories and good plots can help greatly in this age of New Evangelization.

With all the varieties and genres of novels and fiction stories, the challenge remains on how to identify which ones are worth reading and are in line with Christian doctrines. Some of which are not even intended to convey such truths. This is where Ignatian Spirituality comes in very handy.

Ignatian Spirituality was practiced not only by the followers of St. Ignatius of Loyola but also by those to whom the Jesuits ministered. Now, its popularity is widespread among Christians and non-Christians alike. The practicality and depth of this type of spirituality are a living testimony of one of its pillars: finding God in all things. St. Ignatius of Loyola also designed a set of meditations, contemplations, and other prayer exercises that are divided into four weeks and done within 30 days.

However, though it is divided into weeks, each week does not have to correspond to seven days. Each week, the Exercitant[2] begs and prays for a particular grace. The general movement of the Spirit may indicate the Exercitant's readiness to move on to the following weeks of exercises. At the root of the Spiritual Exercises[3] of St. Ignatius is the principle and practice of discernment. The goal of SpEx is to help the retreatant (hopefully by God's grace) make an Election and become a person of discernment.

Upon reading *The Screwtape Letters* of Lewis, one can glimpse what may be happening on the other side of the fence. Though fictional in character, the intricacies of the advice of Screwtape to his nephew mirrors the advice of Ignatius to the director and exercitant that can be found in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

Characters

Any narrative that has no characters is not a story. The characters are those who do the events discussed above. The characters are those who showcase different points of view. "Characters are the actors in a story, the ones who carry out the various activities that comprise the plot"[4]. However, the characters must not be limited to human beings. Some stories have animals or even inanimate objects that were personified. Others have groups of people that act as one character. To dig deeper into a story, one can get to know the characters more.

The implied reader can either tell or show the attributes of a character. In the case of *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape may

[2]The person making the retreat.

[3]From here on, this will be referred to as SpEx.

[4]Mark Allan Powell, What is Narrative Criticism (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1990), 44.

be the only character that can be shown. To get to know the other characters, the reader only has Screwtape's descriptions to rely on.

The first character that must be explored is Screwtape. Screwtape is a devil that seems to be an expert in tempting. From his stories to Wormwood, his nephew, he must have seen different wars. He is also aware of the different strategies to snatch a soul from the grasp of the Enemy. He must also be one of the higher (or lower, depending on how one looks at it) officials of Hell. Clearly, he is an experienced follower of their Father Below. From his strategies and anecdotes, Screwtape is very cunning, calculative, opportunistic, and brilliant in his own craft.

However, what is interesting about Screwtape is his discourses. Reading through his letters, one can certainly say that deep within himself, he believes that the Enemy is good and loves human beings beyond even his imagination. He believes this to his core but is bound by his being, bound because he is a devil that must always look for what is evil in the world. Screwtape is also great at nuancing things. He does not take things as they are but thoroughly thinks about them and carefully decides what to do after. Throughout the 31 letters, the reader can feel his paternal affection (if they are capable of it) towards Wormwood. Nonetheless, as warned by Lewis, readers should not trust Screwtape at all. His warning is this, "Readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar. Not everything that Screwtape says should be assumed to be true even from his own angle."[5]

All these characteristics of Screwtape are shown by the implied author through Screwtape's letters and his anecdotes

[5]Lewis, The Screwtape Letters (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), xi.

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when he was still on earth, tempting humans. Other characters can be known only through his perspective. Wormwood is Screwtape's nephew. No one can really know if there exists any familial love down below, and devils can raise their own families and clans. At this point, readers can only take in what Screwtape has to say. Wormwood is a tempter that is assigned to a patient. It is not also indicated in the novel if this particular patient is his first assignment. However, from his correspondence with Screwtape, Wormwood seems to be an inexperienced tempter. He has a lot to learn. He is also easily distracted by simple victories and often loses his focus. On the other hand, he also has good points. Some letters begin with Screwtape praising his progress. Perhaps, Wormwood is a tempter who is still trying to make a name for himself in their home down below. Consequently, as much as Screwtape cares for him, he, in turn, probably in his lack of experience, tries to clear things up with other authorities that may have caused Screwtape's incident with the Secret Police. Compared to his uncle, Wormwood lacks the cunningness that is needed in their line of work. He also lacks the practicality of Screwtape when it comes to using neutral things and turning them into opportunities for others to belong to their Father Below.

The character who is the center of contention throughout the story is called by Screwtape as the Patient. The Patient is most probably a young adult that is beginning his own life. He still lives with his mother, though. He belongs to the middle class of European society, as indicated by his friends and acquaintances. The Patient, just like Wormwood, seems to be trying to find his rightful place in the world. He recently converted to Christianity and is trying very hard to live virtuously. Though there are times when Wormwood wins, the Patient slowly and continuously progresses toward the Enemy's favor. His relationship with his mother is not that

perfect, and is being exploited by Wormwood at Screwtape's suggestion. He is quite friendly but still has his old habits that Screwtape wants to use as leverage. He fell in love with a young woman of high Christian values. Eventually, his relationship with this woman and her family brought him closer to the Enemy. His patriotism is not clearly seen, but he surely has fears just like anybody else. He is afraid to be drafted to war. He is afraid of the imminent danger brought about by the war. Unfortunately for Wormwood, he is a casualty of bombings and is snatched immediately by the Enemy from their grasp. This allows the Patient to see Wormwood with all his ugliness.

Finally, there are two more characters that are not directly involved in the events of the narrative per se but are vital in the overall plot: the Enemy and their Father Below. These two characters are two opposing poles that constantly persuade the patient to be on their side. The Enemy, though Screwtape already has thousands of years of experience, remains mysterious. Screwtape even said in his last letter to Wormwood that their Intelligence Department continues to fail to know why the Enemy loves so much the hairless bipeds. Screwtape cannot understand why the Enemy wants these creatures to love him freely and without any stain of coercion. On the other hand, Screwtape understands the Enemy has an advantage because He has become a human being.

The Father Below, on the contrary, seems to be, in Screwtape's perspective, the incarnation of evil. He wants to get as many souls as he can by all means possible. He wants these souls to be eternally damned Below. He is the source of Screwtape's cunningness and his fear of him is what drives him to be the best tempter he can be. He is full of pride that he distanced himself from the Enemy a long long time ago. The Enemy wants all beings to be united with Him but still be distinct. On the contrary, their Father Below wants all beings

to be absorbed by him. He wants all things to be him, the epitome of pride and greediness.

There are also minor characters that contribute to the plot as a whole in their own right. The mother of the patient has her share of peculiarities. Glubose, the one assigned to the patient's mother, handled her well enough. She is guilty of Gluttony not of excess but of delicacy as described by Screwtape. The love interest of the patient is another minor character that earned her right to be explored briefly. She is a woman of middle-class society. She is classified by Screwtape as virtuous and very Christian in her ways. Her family also lives Christian lives. Her presence and her relationship with the patient affected his spiritual growth. There is also Fr. Spike who ran dry of anything spiritual in his life and unfortunately became the cause of so many disappointments.

Most of the characters in the novel can be considered flat. Flat characters are those characters that are typically boring and have no development. Screwtape is arguably round. The patient is the only character in this novel that can be classified as a round character. His developments are at the center of the plot. "Narrative critics sometimes distinguish different kinds of characters on the basis of their traits. The best-known such distinctions is that which Forster makes between round characters, who possess a variety of potentially conflicting traits, and flat characters, whose traits are all consistent and predictable."[6]

Settings

Events and Characters cannot be imagined and placed correctly without the setting. The setting of a story is where and when the characters enact the events. The setting also adds

[6]Powell, What is Narrative Criticism, 48.

another layer to a beautiful fabric interwoven by events and characters. "Settings serve a variety of functions. They may be symbolic. They may help to reveal characters, determine conflict, or provide structure for the story."[7] Settings can also be divided further into three: Spatial, Temporal, and Social.

The settings in *The Screwtape Letters* are very simple. However, like the plot and the characters, there are several layers one can dig through. Since the whole novel rests on Screwtape's narration through his letters, the general setting would be his office Down Below. One can imagine Dante's cantos and circles deep down and find somewhere there a humble office of one of the senior tempters. It all depends really on the reader's colorful imagination. With these letters and Screwtape's narration of events, the implied reader can go from one place to another in an instant. The patient goes around from a church to his bedroom to their dining room with his mother. Another important spatial setting is the house of the patient's love interest. Though this may be brief, this is where the patient learns and develops most of the virtues that snatched him away from Wormwood and toward the Enemy. Even with all these places, there is a general spatial background where all the events in the life of the patient took place: Europe. The exact location may not be specified, but the anonymity of the patient and where he is serves a deeper purpose.

The setting of the story sometimes feels like a blast from the past as Screwtape talks about the strife that happened thousands of years ago between the Enemy and their Father Below. Or, when he talks about the advantage of the Enemy as he became a human being and thus had an advantage over them. As discussed above, there is no concrete time frame with regard to the letters or their interval. However, from

[7]Ibid., 61.

Screwtape's description of the time, the reader can place the first four letters before the war. The rest can be placed during wartime. Screwtape calls it the 'European War' and most probably he pertains to the Second World War wherein Europe, led by Churchill, is the center of the resistance against Germany and Hitler. Unfortunately, the readers cannot know exactly how long is the correspondence between Screwtape and Wormwood. It could have happened in one year or the whole 5 to 6 war years. World War II is a good starting point to determine the social setting of this novel. The social crises happening during that time must be the current problems in the social background of the novel. However, unlike the novels *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Winter of the World*, *The Screwtape Letters* does not capitalize much on the events of the war. Though there were mentions of the bombings, it is not described as detailed as in the other novels. The readers may also place the patient in the middle class or the upper-middle-class society from his acquaintances.

Sympathy, Empathy, Antipathy

One of the benefits of reading novels and various stories is the chance to live a thousand lives. Any bookworm can attest to this. There are even times when the reader identifies himself or herself as one of the characters or feels like one of them. The reader can be a wizard, a member of the Fellowship of the Ring, or a believer of Aslan. He/She can also be a member of the high society in Russia post-war or out in the streets with Tom Sawyer. The reader can be anybody he/she wants to be while reading. "Literary critics call such an effect empathy. It has been described variously as an 'involuntary projection,' as an 'inner mimicry,' and as an 'observer's participation in the sensation of that which is perceived.'"[8] This usually happens

[8]Ibid., 48.

when the character has a similar evaluative point of view as the implied reader. The connection between a character and the implied reader becomes stronger as the list of similarities adds up.

Readers can find themselves in characters that are similar to them. This is called realistic empathy. Others empathize with whom they want to be. This is called idealistic empathy. However, there are other reactions aside from empathy. The implied reader can also feel sympathy for the characters. Though this may seem similar to empathy, sympathy is lesser in quality. Instead of feeling like one of the characters, entering into their consciousness, sympathy is feeling for the characters; it "consists of a 'feeling- alongside-of.'"[9] This happens when the implied reader does not fully agree with the character's evaluative point of view but can feel the character's anguish of joy and the like.

Another reaction an implied reader can have is antipathy. Antipathy is the aversion or dislike of the implied reader with a character or characters that may or may not be disliked by the character with whom he or she empathized. However, more often than not, the one the protagonist hates or dislikes is the one disliked by readers.

In the novel *The Screwtape Letters*, there are only a few characters to choose from. However, not naming the Patient, who is arguably the main actor in the novel, is a good move. Even though the gender of the Patient is revealed, any man or woman who reads the novel can easily empathize, or at least sympathize, with the character's predicaments as he transitions from a non-believer to a believer. Other readers may also find themselves under similar conditions as that of the patient. Placing one's self in the shoes of an unnamed

[9]Ibid., 50.

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character is easier in the long run. Moreover, by adding the events of the story, the plot, the different levels of conflicts, and the setting of the story, the implied reader can even more empathize or sympathize with the patient. Tying all the elements of the narrative together, having a bigger picture and whole view of the narrative, an implied reader can even feel sympathy with Screwtape as he struggles to understand why the Enemy loves the 'hairless bipeds' so much despite their imperfections. Perhaps the abundance of irony and sarcasm in the novel elicits a feeling of dislike for those characters praised by Screwtape like Fr. Spike. On the contrary, the implied reader can feel sympathy for those who receive the ire of Screwtape, like the patient's girlfriend and his family. Furthermore, the implied reader can also empathize or antipathize with the Enemy and their Father Below respectively.

Empathy, sympathy, and antipathy can also lead the implied reader to a deeper experience. These can lead to an encounter with the implied author or for some can even lead to an encounter with one's self, or for others even an encounter with the Divine Author. Reading a story, a narrative, and a novel can bring the implied reader or real readers not only to places described in the novel but also to self-actualization or to spiritual maturity. This deeper connection to the self and the Absolute will be discussed in the next chapter.

Core Memory

Inside Out is a 2015 movie produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures. It is about Riley, an American girl, and her emotions. The movie happens inside her head where five personified emotions namely Joy, Anger, Sadness, Fear, and Disgust, control her actions. Riley's experiences turn into memories like colored orbs and are sent to the long-term memory area regularly. The memories that

power different aspects of her personality are called "core memories." The aspects of her personality take the form of floating islands.

Just like Riley, Ignacio de Loyola has his core memories that greatly influenced his life, conversion, and works particularly his Spiritual Exercises. Ignacio or Iñigo Lopez de Oñas y Loyola was born in Basque Country, Spain. He grew up in Castle Loyola where he learned how to live a life full of vanity. His ambition and thirst for fame drove him to be a great soldier. There are accounts of his life that describe him as a womanizer, sensitive to insult, and a fancy dresser. He participated in a lot of battles and survived them without any injury. However, in the Battle of Pamplona in the year 1521, he was hit by a cannonball that greatly injured his leg. What happened next turned his life upside down and brought him closer to the Light and must be recounted slowly and carefully. This particular part of his life will serve as a "core memory" powering his advancement in Spiritual maturation.

After the momentous battle, Ignacio was brought back to his father's castle at Loyola. Because of the cannonball, his leg was shattered and he had to undergo several operations without the not-yet-invented anesthetics. His leg has to be set and rebroken several times to eventually arrive at some semblance of the natural leg. Consequently, and in the absence of modern medicine, his recovery period took months. It was said that he suffered so much pain but because of his strength and patience, he did not show any sign of it more than a clenched fist. After the bones were set, there remained a bone on top of another below his knee. It did not look good and was also painful. Because of his vanity, he asked the doctors if they could cut it despite their warning that the pain would be greater.

They waited for the wound to close and heal. To ensure that his leg would not be too short because of the operation, ointments were applied and, with the use of an apparatus, he was regularly stretched. Despite all these, he continued to recover. After some time and because he was accustomed to reading books of chivalry, books about great battles, he asked for these to pass his time. Unfortunately, they have none of what he wanted. Instead, he was given a copy of the *Imitation of Christ* and a book of the lives of the saints.

While recovering, he also had thoughts of future glory. He continued to plan on how he could go to a certain lady, do her service worthy of her status and that would eventually win her attention, on what verses he would use to woo her. He dwelled on these thoughts, basked in them, and enjoyed every drop even though he knew that it was very unlikely to happen because of her very high status. He stayed with these thoughts sometimes for hours. Upon noticing how much he spent with them, he set them aside to think of other matters.

Other times, as a result of what he was reading over and over again, his mind would wonder about things he would do to be like the saints. He would imagine himself doing the work of God. He would tell himself that if St. Francis could do it, so could he, that if St. Dominic could do that, so could he. He would also think of begging and going to Jerusalem to make a pilgrimage. These thoughts come and go like that of worldly things.

For a time his thoughts would wander from one set to another, from the vanities of this world to the deeds of the saints. After some time, he noticed that there was a difference between the two sets. "When he was thinking about the things of the world, he took much delight in them, but afterward, when he was tired and put them aside, he found that he was

dry and discontented."[10] However, when he thought of the pilgrimage he wanted to do, the long journey, the hardships along the way, and the things the saints would have done, he would not only feel consoled but after putting them aside, would remain contented and happy. Little by little and just after lingering and reflecting on this difference did only he realize and recognize the movements of the spirits.

This recognition of the movement of the spirits, one from the demon and the other from God, is the foundation of what is now called Ignatian Discernment. Though this may not be the only source of experience, nonetheless, the great injury he received paved the way for his metamorphosis not only physically but more importantly, spiritually.

This movement of the spirits was further developed in his writing of the Spiritual Exercises. Though this is his life's work, he did not write it as a whole in one night. Another life marker happened when Ignatius was passing by the river Cardoner. While walking he was suddenly immersed in the presence of God. In an instant, an insight came to him and he understood "how all creatures emanate from God and, in Christ, return to God; how Jesus Christ completes human nature in taking our flesh; and how Christ is present in the sacrament."[11] This encounter emboldened him to venture into deep spiritual conversations with others even without the proper academic training in theology. At first, he cannot stop talking about the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. However, he noticed that this topic that he enjoyed much was not as appealing to others.

[10]Ignatius of Loyola, The Autobiography of St. Ignatius of Loyola with Related Documents, trans. by Joseph F. O'Callaghan, ed. by John C. Olin (New York: Fordham University Press: 1992), 24.

[11]Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J., Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), 22.

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Later on, "he grew bold enough to start talking with them on topics they need to hear about: the waste of any sinful action, the names of our daily evildoing, the threat of living lost forever."[12] Because of his natural gift of doing things systematically, he was able to talk through the rigors of revelation. At the same time, he was already starting to take notes of what later will be known as the Spiritual Exercises.

Carrying in his pocket the seed of his life's work, he started his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. From 1522 to 1540, he would work on completing the Spiritual Exercises even though its outline and core ideals were already clear in his mind. By the time he went to Paris to do his theology and after studying Latin, he had given the Spiritual Exercises to several people already. He even had a couple of skirmishes with the inquisition that apparently condemned and accepted it alternately several times. Finally, sometime in the year 1540, "Ignatius of Loyola put the final touches on the sheaf of notes that became Spiritual Exercises."[13] When it was already officially published, the Spiritual Exercises had already been used to guide people for years.

With a lot of principles and Christian doctrines found in the Spiritual Exercises, Discernment is at its center, if not its fundamental tool.[14] "However, discernment is not exclusive to Ignatian Spirituality nor an invention of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In fact, "the rules of discernment" in the Spiritual Exercises "incorporate a tradition which reaches back through the fathers of the Church to the New Testament, especially the Pauline

[12]Ibid., 23.

[13]Ibid., 30.

[14]Cf. James Walsh, "The Discernment of Spirits," The Way Supplement 16 (Sum 1972): 62; see also: Heinrich Bacht, "Good and Evil Spirits," The Way 2, no. 3 (July 1962): 188.

and Johannine writings."[15] Other spiritualities also have their concept of discernment but that is not the concern of this study. Nonetheless, what separates Ignatian Discernment from others lies in the two movements of the spirits: consolation and desolation. Discerning between these two and from which spirit they came are the basic tasks of Spiritual Directors during the Spiritual Exercises. Moreover, "Ignatius Loyola, whose Rules for the discernment of spirits are culled from a body of doctrine first developed by Origen and Cassian out of sacred scripture, states that his rules in their fulness apply to those who are exercising themselves in an illuminative way: that is, those accounted as proficient in the spiritual life, in as much as, purified from inordinate attachment to creatures, they are consciously enlightened by the Holy Spirit."[16] From this, one is almost certain that discernment is not an easy task nor a task for everybody and anybody without proper practice and guidance. Since even a seasoned spiritual director needs some guidance on how to properly distinguish one from another, Ignatius gives two sets of rules for discernment. These rules are to be used primarily not by the exercitant but by the director.[17] So much so that "their importance in the Exercises, as well as the need to apply them appropriately, is established in the Annotations 8th and 9th; the two movements they deal with are of central significance in the prayer of the Exercises from the First Day onwards."[18] Finally, as beautiful as it is, discernment is not an end in itself. It was, is, and always will be for the salvation of souls and the further glorification of God by following His divine will.

[15]Michael Ivens, S.J., Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, (Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Cromwell Press, 1998): 205.

[16]Walsh, "The Discernment of Spirits," 54-55.

[17]Cf: Bacht, "Good and Evil Spirits," 190.

[18]Ibid.

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Clive Staples Lewis's conversion is very similar to Ignatius's. Though he was born into a Christian family, he never really quite warmed up to it not because he is not religious but because his reasoning has not yet reached enough logic for him to believe in a deity. Just as Ignatius's conversion came about through reading, so did Lewis'. His quest to search for answers, and his love for literature, brought him close to that Which he wanted to avoid, to that Whom he wanted to deny. In his book *Surprised by Joy*, he even said that an atheist young man cannot remain so because of "traps everywhere." His life from an atheist to a deist to a Christian, his conversion though it may seem logical, is more of a crystalization of what has already been on his mind. The final step happened during a night conversation with J.R.R Tolkien. Lewis came to believe not only in God but in Jesus Christ, not because Jesus' story invalidates other myths but because Jesus' story enlightens every other story and clarifies the very logic of everything.[19]

After the discussion above, Consolation and Desolation will be defined in the light of Ignatian Spirituality. Thereafter, with Narrative Criticism in mind, a dialogue between Screwtape and Ignatius will be presented still following the basic structure of the Screwtape Letters. The exchange of pieces of advice between the masters shows how the Rules of Discernment found in the *Spiritual Exercises* are applied to everyday choices. This also exemplifies how much the Rules of Discernment is connected with the First Principle and Foundation of Ignatian Spirituality.

[19]Alister McGrath, C.S. Lewis–A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet, (Carol Stream, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013). See Also: C.S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy:The Shape of My Early Life, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956). William Broderick, "First Week: Rules for Discernment," The Way Supplement 48 (Fall 1983): 32.

Consolation

Learning from a master is already a blessing. Learning from two masters is like receiving a fruitcake in June. What kind of animal is Consolation then? How can it be felt? What are its characteristics? Effects? Telltale signs? On what occasion does one receive Consolation? Are their prerequisites? From whom is it? To answer these questions and maybe more, it is beneficial to call on that fruitcake and get into the business. The best way possible for anyone to know more about Consolation is to discuss it using the structure of Ignatius. Fortunately, or otherwise, Screwtape can add spice for further clarification about Consolation.

Ignatius knows very well how confusing and hard it is to identify consolation from desolation. He experienced it himself. With this in mind, he gave three signposts, markers, and indicators that he believes are true occasions of Consolation. However, "the definition does not claim to be exhaustive, and in describing three situations of consolation, does not exclude others."[20] The first situation is identified when one's soul is "inflamed with the love of the Creator and Lord" [Exx. 316]. This love for God is intense and includes the love for creatures. But this love of creatures is not ordinary. It must be a love out of one's love for the Creator and Lord. The intensification of love one feels for others is just a consequence, an outside indicator of her love for her Creator and Lord. This is in contrast with loving a creature for itself which for Ignatius means "is a love which disjoins the creature from the Love which is the ground of its being, and such a love is, therefore, a defective love."21 This has its roots in Ignatius's First Principle and Foundation which says that everything

[20]Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 214.

[21]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 215.

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that hinders a soul from loving God must be removed. If one loves others for their sake and not out of her love of God, then this hinders her from loving God freely. Screwtape knows very well that love of others must come from love of God when he said that

One must face the fact that all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom is not (as one would gladly believe) mere propaganda but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself—creatures whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because he has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His.[22]

He even tells Wormwood that the "Enemy wants to turn the man's attention away from self to Him, and to the man's neighbours."[23] One cannot love one's neighbors first before God. It has always been the other way around. The point here is, the love of God that one feels that Consolation must come first but this love will eventually lead to the love of others, not of themselves but because of God. "Such consolation, while it lasts, is incompatible with any feeling or attitude that, in the name of love, disconnects creature from Creator and the Creator's love."[24]

The second situation is "when a person sheds tears which lead to the love of our Lord" [Exx. 316]. Tears are an expression of intense feelings. Tears of consolation have very specific sources and effects. One's tears are a consolation if it comes from one's grief over personal sins and leads her to love God. "Sin has served only to bring out more strikingly

[22]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 39.

[23]Ibid., 70.

[24]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 215.

the goodness and love of God."[25] The other source is "grief over the passion of Christ our Lord" [Exx. 316]. Finally, tears are also considered consolation if they "in some way move the person forward to God's greater service and praise."[26] Screwtape cannot agree more with Ignatius. In his 27th letter, he said, "Anything, even a sin, which has the total effect of moving him close up to the Enemy, makes against us in the long run."[27] Ignatius and Screwtape both believe that even sin, if recognized, accepted, repented can lead anyone closer to God. There are also particular prayer exercises during the long retreat that specifically ask for this grace of tears. "Nevertheless, in spite of his own gifts, and the clear value he sets on tears in the Exercises, Ignatius held that tears were not 'absolutely good and fitting for everyone and should not be asked for 'unreservedly.'"[28]

Lastly, Ignatius calls consolation "every increase of hope, faith, and charity, to all interior happiness which calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, leaving the soul quiet and at peach in her Creator and Lord" [Exx. 316]. This may sound more general and all-encompassing than the first two occasions, but one has to take into consideration the criteria Ignatius gives for anything to be considered a consolation. An experience must result in an increase of either one or all of the cardinal virtues and happiness that will eventually give one peace. This experience of increase of virtues and happiness must always be directed to a deeper and more intimate relationship with the Creator and Lord, with God. Screwtape poetically expressed the

[25]Broderick, "First Week: Rules for Discernment," 32.

[26]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 216.

[27]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 147.

[28]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 216.

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same idea when he said, "even if we contrive to keep them ignorant of explicit religion, the incalculable winds of fantasy and music and poetry – the mere face of a girl, the song of a bird, or the sigh of a horizon – are always blowing our whole structure away."[29]

Desolation

Unlike popular belief, Desolation is also a spiritual experience in the mind of Ignatius. This is very evident in the opening line of the Fourth Rule: "On spiritual desolation" [Exx. 317]. The broadest and easiest definition of this may come from what Ignatius writes on the Fourth Rule which says that desolation is "everything contrary to what is described in Rule Three."30 Nonetheless, Ignatius gives three examples of how one can experience desolation for better clarification: darkness and disturbance in the soul, attraction to what is low and of the earth, and disquiet arising from various agitations and temptations. This may seem very general but Ignatius also gives explanations of how it can be distinguished from other similar experiences. Just as consolation leads to an increase of hope, faith and love, these experiences, on the contrary, lead to a lack of confidence when hope, faith, and love are absent. When the cardinal virtues are absent, one may feel "lazy, lukewarm, sad and cut off from one's Creator and Lord."31 The feelings of desolation can be known easier by their effect on one's soul and disposition. "The desolate feelings tend directly and by their very nature to destroy faith, hope and love."[32] Again, contrary to what is commonly

[29]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 156.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Broderick, "First Week: Rules for Discernment," 33.

known, spiritual desolation is not, however, a non-religious experience, an experience without God at the centre. It is as much a God-centred experience as spiritual consolation. Spiritual desolation is a faith- experience, with the desolation grounded in faith. Only a person who has living faith can experience spiritual desolation.33

Instead of just a lack of hope, faith, and love, one can look at the effects of desolation as a want of an increase in the cardinal virtues. With this in mind, the experience of desolation can be turned upside down and seen more as a way to develop and reach a higher, more mature spirituality. Desolation, therefore, is not just an end but a path. Ignatius is very aware of this fact which is why he devoted four more rules on how to deal with desolation. He knows that if one can handle desolation properly this may lead to wonders and changes unimaginable.

Just as in Consolation, the feelings draw a person toward God, so it is contrary to desolation. The feelings brought about by desolation move the person away from God. Screwtape's advice to Wormwood says the same. In all of his instructions, strategies, and actions, Screwtape has only one goal, to snatch away the patient from the Enemy. He may employ several tactics and strategies wherein the patient might feel he is drawing closer to God but in reality is doing the opposite. Somehow the wisdom he gained from being a tempter for centuries has allowed him to maneuver wilily. He even said that a lukewarm religion is as good as no religion at all. Screwtape is ready to allow his Enemy to win small battles as long as he wins the war in the end. In the same way, Screwtape is also aware of the uses of desolation for the advancement of one's soul to maturity. His discussion

[33]Ibid., 34.

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with the Law of Undulation, the troughs, and peaks of one's spirituality is very interesting and will be dealt with in more detail later. Finally, Ignatius and Screwtape are both aware that the thoughts that come from desolation are contrary to those that come from consolation, so much so that Ignatius's advice for those who are in desolation is to refrain from making any major decision.

The Dialogue

To better illustrate the interconnectedness of Consolation and Desolation, the different tactics of the devil, and how Ignatius would answer them, some things still need to be settled. A good fiction novel invites the reader to suspend her judgments and accept the realities found in the story and follow the logic presented. *The Screwtape Letter* is somewhat one-sided. It only talks about how the devil is trying to snatch the patient from the grasp of the Enemy. This section will supply the other half. As it was said earlier, it is very beneficial to learn from two masters. It is now time to allow them to work on the same patient and try to outdo one another. It would be very difficult if not impossible to have the opinion and advice of the real Ignatius because he is already living in the Eternal City. The Ignatius of the Spiritual Exercises following its various Rules of Discernment will be the one to dialogue with Screwtape and cross swords with him for the soul of the patient.

To do this in an orderly manner, four key turning points in the life of the patient will be identified. The pieces of advice from Screwtape to Wormwood on how to persuade the patient to remain on their side will be presented. On the side of Ignatius, imagine that the patient goes to him for spiritual direction, bringing with him the thoughts Wormwood implants in him.

The first significant event in the life of the patient happens in the second letter of Screwtape: his conversion. After his conversion, Wormwood asks Screwtape, his uncle, for advice on how he can snatch back the patient. Screwtape's advice is very cunning and clever. He says to Wormwood to be aware and be very careful with how he uses and let the patient use his reason. According to him, he must not let the patient properly use his reason for logical reasoning is in the realm of the Enemy. To allow the patient to think about the universal concepts and get into the habit of it. He must also not allow the patient to get used to arguing for this usually leads back to the Enemy. Screwtape recognizes that one's intellect and reason are from their Enemy and the constant, healthy use of it will only be for their destruction. Instead, Wormwood is to let his patient "fix his attention on the stream. Teach him to call it 'real-life' and don't let him ask what he means by 'real.'"[34] Haziness and confusion are the two tools of Screwtape that he wants Wormwood to use with his patient.

Ignatius is very aware of this tactic. He says in the Second rule of discernment that "it is characteristic of the bad spirit to harass, sadden and obstruct, and to disturb with false reasoning, so as to impede progress" [Exx. 315]. This is more true with those people who are advancing in their spiritual life. The patient's conversion to Christianity is an advancement, allowing the patient to climb higher toward God. However, this use of false reasoning of the devil will be more evident in the next life marker of the patient. Ignatius would probably point this out to the patient as he relates what happens to him whenever he tries to contemplate universal realities like his conversion, the teachings of the Church, God, and the like.

In connection with this, are the patient's habits and virtues. After his conversion to Christianity, Screwtape says

[34]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 2.

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that all his habits, mental and bodily, are still in their favor. Meaning, because the patient was so used to not having any belief in any Absolute, living primarily for himself, he has developed habits that are contrary to a life of moral standards based on one's belief. Screwtape did not elaborate on what these habits are. Nonetheless, it is easy to presume that these habits lead the patient to sin regularly. Screwtape unhesitantly encourages Wormwood to use these old habits to still keep the patient in their hands even though he is already a believer. He is very much aware that these habits are hard to unlearn.

Similarly, Ignatius is also aware of the difficulty of changing for the better. It is very clear in the First Rule of Discernment that for those who are going from one grave sin to another that "it is the usual practice of the enemy to hold out apparent pleasures; so that he makes them imagine the sensual delight and satisfaction in order to maintain and reinforce them in their vices and sins." To counter this, Ignatius says that the "good spirit uses the opposite procedure, causing pricks of conscience and feelings of remorse by means of the natural power of rational moral judgment" [Exx. 314]. With this, Ignatius could be imagined saying to the patient to be aware of these episodes of remorse and pinpricks in one's conscience, identify what causes them and try to find one's pattern of sin. To counter the old habits that are still in favor of the devil, Ignatius would advise the patient to slowly develop new ones that are in accordance with his newfound faith and ask the patient to be aware of the after-effects of these new habits. Later on, these habits develop into virtues.

Another aspect that Screwtape wants to use or attack during the initial stage of the patient's conversion is his relationship with his neighbors. Screwtape is aware that in connection with the habits that are still in their favor, Wormwood can easily guide the patient into thinking that he is doing better than

others. Take for example his advice as soon as the patient goes inside the church to pray. In Screwtape's mind, the patient, because of his old habits, looks at other churchgoers as flawed people. He cannot but compare himself with them. The patient is still full of himself and tries to feed his ego by saying to himself that he is better than most of them, if not all. Worst, he even uses the Church itself to advance his propaganda. He says to Wormwood, "Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like 'the body of Christ' and the actual faces in the next pew."[35] With this in mind, Screwtape wants the patient to focus on the imperfections of his neighbors without any hint of himself having the same or even more.

A particular relationship that Screwtape wants to exploit is the patient's relationship with his mother. Screwtape knows that it is very easy to form unhealthy relationships with people one lives with. In this case, the patient's mother. Screwtape's advice is easy. He wants Wormwood to highlight those qualities that the patient dislikes about his mother. He wants the patient to pray for his image of her and not the real her. Screwtape wants his relationship with his mother to be hazy and shady. He wants him to be kept in the dark without knowing it by replacing his mother with an illusion.

Ignatius will probably address the patient's relationships with the following. He would ask the patient which relationships are leading him toward God and which are not. He would advise the patient to also be aware of his thoughts while thinking about others during church services and advised him to focus not on his neighbors' flaws but on God. Furthermore, he might also ask the patient to pray over his own sins and allow him to be more realistic about his self-image. He would lead the patient to focus not solely on his

[35]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 6.

sins but on how God forgives them, how God really loves him. He would even go further by allowing him to be aware of his feelings whenever he prays for his neighbors, especially his mother. Ignatius would probably do these based on the Third Rule of Discernment and based on his First Principle and Foundation, wherein, anything that hinders one from getting closer to God must be removed. If the patient, by being aware of the effects of thinking ill of his neighbors and his mother, realizes that these thoughts stop him from advancing in his spiritual growth and that these ill feelings are brought about by the devil, he might freely choose to go against them. Secondly, by asking the patient to be aware of God's mercy amidst his sinfulness, he may be led to be more accepting of his neighbors and in turn, be also merciful with them. Ignatius's main weapon against Screwtape's deceit and manipulation is awareness. This will be repeated several times in the following life markers of the patient.

The next turning point in the life of the patient is more of a series of episodes rather than one single event like his conversion. Borrowing from Screwtape, "as long as [one] lives on earth periods of emotional and bodily richness and liveliness will alternate with periods of numbness and poverty."[36] Wormwood reported to Screwtape with glee that the patient is undergoing some dryness in his spiritual life. Screwtape, therefore, opted to explain to Wormwood what this phenomenon is. He calls this the Law of Undulation. It is when a person constantly changes from feeling high and low about something. Usually, at the beginning people often feel ecstatic and happy about doing something new but as soon as that something new feels repetitive, it becomes dull and tiresome. This is true with love, work, studies, and a whole lot more. It is also true with one's spiritual life. It is a series of

[36]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 36.

ups and downs, troughs and peaks. Screwtape, with his long experience of tempting humans, is aware of the dangers as well as the advantages of this series of episodes of troughs and peaks.

In his 9th letter to Wormwood, he advises him how to use the trough periods better. According to him, this is the best time to tempt the patient with sexual sins. He says, "trough periods of the human undulation provide an excellent opportunity for all sensual temptations, particularly those of sex… The attack has a much better chance of success when the man's whole inner world is drab and cold and empty."[37] Side by side with this is his main tool, confusion, and blurriness. According to him, these pleasures are still gifts from their Enemy and must be used sparingly. Otherwise, allowing the patient to experience real, authentic, pleasures will just push him farther away from them. He says, "Hence we always try to work away from the natural condition of any pleasure to that in which it is least natural, least redolent of its Maker, and least pleasurable."[38] Moreover, Screwtape also uses the troughs period to exploit further the patient's relationship with others. At this point in the life of the patient, he became acquainted with people who, in Screwtapes' mind, are skeptics and worldly. He wants the patient to develop a double life. He is allowing the patient to continue to go to the church hoping that he will compartmentalize this life and cultivate another for the amusement of his newfound friends. This life of double standards side by side by the tendency of the patient during trough periods to be lukewarm with his religion or newfound faith creates an atmosphere wherein, the patient effortlessly changes masks depending on who he is with. "If

[37]Ibid., 43.

[38]Ibid., 44.

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prolonged, the habit of Flippancy builds up around a man the finest armour-plating against the Enemy."[39] The key to these temptations lies in his advice found in his 12th letter. According to him, Wormwood must not let the patient realize that he is slowly moving away from the habits he formed after his conversion. He says:

Anything is better than that. He should realize the break he has made with the first months of his Christian life. As long as he retains externally the habits of a Christian he can still be made to think of himself as one who has adopted a few new friends and amusements but whose spiritual state is much the same as it was six weeks ago.[40]

Screwtape tells Wormwood to be very careful with his handling of his patient during this time. His advice is to be subtle and discreet. For Screwtape, "indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one-the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."[41] To ensure that the patient goes down without him noticing these signposts, Screwtape advises Wormwood to "Keep him out of the way of experienced Christians (an easy task nowadays), to direct his attention to the appropriate passages in scripture, and then to set him to work on the desperate design of recovering his old feelings by sheer will power."[42]

Ignatius, like Screwtape, is aware of the mechanisms of the Law of Undulation. In his 9th Rule, he enumerates three causes why people find themselves in desolation. The first

[39]Ibid., 56.

[40]Ibid., 58.

[41]Ibid., 61.

[42]Ibid., 45.

is primarily because of the lukewarmness, laziness, or carelessness of the person with regard to one's spiritual life. The second cause focuses on the ability of the person to remain faithful to the new habits one formed during consolation days. The second reason is more of a test of the quality of one's progress "without the generous remuneration of consolation and overflowing graces" [Exx. 322]. Finally, the third cause looks at periods of desolation as an opportunity to gain true knowledge and understanding that one cannot survive without God's graces. Screwtape agrees with Ignatius on these causes. He even warned Wormwood that their Enemy, in reality, depends more on periods of troughs. He says:

> Now it may surprise you to learn that in His efforts to get permanent possession of a soul, He relies on the troughs even more than on the peaks; some of His special favorites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else... He is prepared to do a little overriding at the beginning... Sooner or later He withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all those supports, and incentives.[43]

Ignatius knows the difficulty of being alone in one's journey to holiness. To counter Screwtape's advice with regard to hindering the patient from knowing a good Christian, he would probably tell him that going to him for direction is a big leap already. He will recognize that the patient is undergoing desolation and may slowly go into the depths if not checked early on. Ignatius, knowing that spiritual desolation is also an opportunity for growth much more than periods of consolation devotes Rules five to eight to deal with it. Based on these rules, he would probably tell the patient to continue making the new habits he formed during the time of consolation. Ignatius would give the patient three pieces

[43]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 40.

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of advice. First, that he "should never make any change but should stand firm and constant in the resolutions and decisions by which one was guided... during the preceding time of consolation" [Exx. 318]. Second, though he should not make any changes from past resolutions, he can still "make changes in [himself] against this desolation" [Exx. 319]. Ignatius would tell him to intensify his prayers and meditations and do some penance even provided that they were suitable to his conditions. Finally, he would guide the patient to a realization that he can win over this period for "although the Lord has withdrawn [his] fervour, deeply felt love and intense grace, He has still left [him] the grace sufficient for eternal salvation" [Exx. 320]. Ignatius then would probably remind the patient about the graces he received during the time of consolation. He would lovingly guide the patient to go through this phase of troughs, of desolation for he knows that this is an indication of spiritual maturity.

As the life of the patient continues, the plot also thickens. The third turning point in his life is a result of an experience of the Real, an experience of real pleasure, and an experience of God. For Ignatius, the grace of consolation may come from one's efforts to be faithful. However, he also recognizes that an experience of God cannot also be limited to these. In the Second Set of the Rules of Discernment, Rule Two says that there are consolations without a preceding cause. Ignatius would probably recognize this kind of consolation of the patient when he read a good book and had a nice walk toward the mill and had tea there. Furthermore, as a result of these two real pleasures, the patient underwent a second conversion. In Screwtape's words, "probably on a deeper level than the first."[44] This type of consolation is also an indication

[44]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 63.

"of a person moving from good to better, [which] Ignatius holds to be an unambiguous sign of God's leading."[45]

Screwtape, on his part, recognizes the danger of having a second conversion and thus, heightens his attacks with more cunningness. He takes up several virtues and twists them to his liking. In particular, he took up the virtue of humility as an example. This is an answer to the patient's development from someone who promises big things to God to someone who relies on God's everyday graces to fight everyday temptation. For Screwtape, the patient has truly become humble. Nonetheless, as a good tempter, he always has something up his sleeves. He advises Wormwood to take up this newfound humility and try to guide the patient to think that he is humble and therefore produce some pride out of him. His cunningness almost reached its full potential with this one. He allows the patient to develop virtues only to turn them upside down the moment the patient goes down from feeling high. His idea of false humility is very much to the point. He wants Wormwood to let his patient "fix in his mind the idea that humility consists in trying to believe those talents to be less valuable than he believes them to be."[46] On the contrary, Screwtape also gives a very good explanation of what real humility looks like. According to him, real humility is knowing one's real worth without being proud of it and without looking down on others at the same time. His illustration speaks better:

The Enemy wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more

[45]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 228.

[46]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 70.

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(or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another.[47]

Humility according to Screwtape is knowing how to appreciate one's gifts and talents without any prejudice against one's neighbors.

Another virtue that Screwtape twists is that of simplicity. He puts it beside a nuanced version of gluttony. In Screwtape's mind, humans are already very much aware of the danger of the gluttony of excess. The world has already, or almost, exhausted preaching against this capital sin. However, there are far fewer preachers against the gluttony of delicacy because it hides under the guise of simplicity. Taking the patient's mother as an example, he illustrates that this capital sin prejudiced the patient's mother into thinking that she only wants the simple things, like a perfect cup of tea and a perfect biscuit. And, because no one can give and provide her with these simple things, she often loses her temper or pretends to like whatever is given to her without really appreciating the sacrifices of the people around her. This "daily disappointment produces daily ill temper."[48]

Screwtape even tries to distort love. He uses the same strategy as with the previous two virtues. He is willing to allow the patient to fall in love only because he has some plan to distort it. According to him, because of their tireless efforts to get as many souls as possible, they have discovered that humans tend to focus on the good feeling that falling in love gives and forgets the real meaning of love. He is fully aware of the dangers of marriage and thus tempts humanity to get married in the pretext that the feelings of falling in love are constant and will never change. The moment these

[47]Ibid., 71.

[48]Ibid., 89.

feelings change, much so within marriage, they will have the opportunity to slowly snatch the souls from their Enemy. In reality, Screwtape admits that with all their research, they cannot believe nor accept that there is a kind of love that never asks anything in return and has no prior cause except love itself. Screwtape, though he contradicts himself in the other letters, cannot believe that the Enemy truly loves humans because, for him, it is an impossibility. For Screwtape, "all His talk about Love must be a disguise for something else--He must have some real motive for creating them and taking so much trouble about them."[49]

During the time of consolation, Ignatius gives two pieces of advice. In the case of the patient, after his second deeper conversion, Ignatius would ask him to gather his strength and save up enough energy to endure another episode of desolation. In helping the patient discern and develop further into becoming a virtuous person, Ignatius would probably ask him to practice true humility. Ignatius's idea of humility is almost parallel to that of Screwtape. He would tell the patient to "try to humble and lower [himself] as much as possible by thinking how little [he is] worth in time of desolation without the grace of consolation" [Exx. 324]. Instead of directing the patient's attention toward his humility, Ignatius would stir the boat toward an understanding of one's true standing in front of God. He would remind the patient of his nothingness without God's grace especially during the time of desolation. In doing this, he can prevent himself from being too proud of his newfound virtue. Ignatius would invite the patient to adopt and imbibe "a view not to self-belittlement, but to authenticity."[50] In the same manner, to counter Screwtape's temptation

[49]Ibid., 100.

[50]Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 224.

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concerning gluttony of delicacy packaging it as simplicity, he would invite the patient to look into himself closer and ask for the grace of authenticity. Knowing one's desires, prejudices and tendencies will allow the person to be equipped when the devil uses them. He would also again draw his attention to his relationships with his neighbors and ask him if he truly treats them with the same treatment he received from God during the time of consolation. Moreover, Ignatius would invite the patient to meditate and pray over the love he received during the time of consolation and remind him to love his neighbors not for themselves but out of his love for his Creator and Lord.

The final turning point in the life of the patient and marked the defeat of Wormwood is when he falls in love with a woman, a good Christian woman. Screwtape is very disappointed with Wormwood in his 22nd letter as he scolds him for letting the patient fall in love. This is the time when Screwtape unleashed his most dangerous advice. He advises his nephew to remember what he has learned and try to appear as an angel of light. Screwtape then begins to act more like a military leader who carefully inspects his opponents and attacks where the opponent is weakest.

As an angel of light, Screwtape advises Wormwood to do three things. The first is to allow the patient to assume that he knows the Enemy by using what scholars brand as the Historical Jesus. Screwtape says, "We thus distract men's minds from who He is, and what He did. We first make Him solely a teacher, and then conceal the very substantial agreement between His teachings and those of all other great moral teachers."[51]

Screwtape wants Wormwood to allow the patient to be exposed to these studies with the end idea of substituting

[51]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 125.

the real image with those of their creation. He also wants to use humanity's drive for social justice by focusing on it. He wants humanity to use religion and faith as tools to achieve such goals. He wants humanity to "first value social justice as a thing which the Enemy demands, and then work him on to the stage at which he values Christianity because it may produce social justice. For the Enemy will not be used as a convenience."[52]

Secondly, Screwtape wants to use the woman's religiosity and illicit in her some pride. Screwtape tells Wormwood to let the patient and the woman compare themselves with those who are not as learned as they are. From this comparison, he may tempt them to have, what Screwtape calls, Spiritual Pride. Screwtape says, "teach him to mistake this contrast between the circle that delights and the circle that bores him for the contrast between Christians and unbelievers."[53]

Finally, the third is to twist his patient and the woman's acts of selflessness. According to him, humans are fond of doing selfless acts only to feel proud of themselves for doing such. Moreover, while doing so, they tend to compete among themselves and try to outdo each other in being selfless. Screwtape wants to substitute "negative unselfishness for the Enemy's positive Charity [and]... teach a man to surrender benefits not that others may be happy in having them but that he may be unselfish in forgoing them."[54]

Ignatius, as a master discerner, would have seen through these temptations. He compares the devil to someone who flies immediately when confronted strongly. According to Ignatius, "it is characteristic of the enemy to weaken and lose

[52]Ibid., 127.

[53]Ibid., 132.

[54]Ibid., 141.

courage and to turn to flight with these temptations, when the person engaged in spiritual life shows a bold front" [Exx. 325]. However, if that person shows any sign of weakness, the devil will take advantage of it and attack the person immediately. Ignatius uses three images to capture the deceitfulness of the devil. The first image is that of a false lover, a seducer. The devil will use flowery words and package his temptations beautifully to make them attractive to the person. In the case of the patient, he uses selflessness, humility, and love and twists them at the end to his liking. "The enemy of human nature brings his deceits and inducements to bear on the just soul; he wants them to be received and kept secret." [Exx. 326] Equally, Ignatius compares the devil to a military leader, "setting about the conquest and seizure of the objects he desires. The commander of an army, after setting up his camp and inspecting the fortifications and defenses of a fortress, attacks it at its weakest point." [Exx. 327] Lastly, he would tell the patient the devil could appear like an angel of light proposing "good and holy thoughts well adapted to such a just soul, and then succeeds little by little in getting his own way, drawing the soul into his hidden snares and his perverted purposes." [Exx. 322]

After exposing the strategies of the devil to the patient, Ignatius would probably guide the patient to ask for the grace of clarifying two things. First, he would lead the patient to pray over his image of God. Only God can reveal Himself to the patient. If the patient receives this grace, then he could maintain his focus on the real Jesus and not the Jesus of the books. To achieve this, Ignatius would invite the patient to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus and ask for the grace to know him more clearly, follow him more nearly and love him more dearly. Equally, he would also invite the patient to purify his intentions in following his faith. Ignatius would

guide the patient to a better understanding of the centrality of his relationship with God and help him deepen this relationship.

In the end, what gave Wormwood the *coup de grâce* is when the patient, because of his fear, felt no pride whatsoever and did "everything his duty demanded and perhaps a bit more."[55] Finally, because of the bombing, the patient "saw Him... clarity itself, and wears the form of a Man."[56]

The Benefits of Narrative Criticism

The use of Narrative Criticism, though it was developed with biblical stories in mind, has proven to be beneficial and serves as a midwife to smoothly deliver the dialogue of the masters. As discussed in chapter three, Narrative Criticism aims to return the biblical stories from the critics back to the readers. With that in mind, *The Screwtape Letters* has also been used by various academicians as a workbook about temptation, human tendencies, and the like. Subjecting it to Narrative Criticism brings it back to the original target reader of C.S. Lewis, back in the hands of people. Upon its return to the fiction shelf, space has been created, a chance for another voice to contribute to the overall plot without distortion. The suspension of disbelief that readers generously give to fiction novels opens a path wide enough for Ignatius to come in, interact with the patient, and crossword with Screwtape. Finally, the dialogue that emerged from the encounter of the two masters exemplifies that God is present in everyday living especially in the choices of every moment. This allows anyone and everyone to find God in all things, to be as close as possible to His will, to His very being.

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[55]C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 165.

[56]Ibid., 174.

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There is another way to look at stories as narrative: Paul Riceour's Threefold Mimesis. He playfully calls them $Mimesis_1$, $Mimesis_2$, and $Mimesis_3$. This threefold mimesis is a process that a reader, a listener or an author goes through. The first mimesis can also be called Prefiguration. According to Riceour, if it is true that the plot is an imitation of reality, the reader or the listener must have some experience of reality to recognize the elements found in both. For this to work, the reader, listener or the composer of the plot must recognize a structure that can be applied to the plot, and must be able to recognize a symbolic mediation that can be placed in time.

The second mimesis is called Configuration and is what is generally understood as narrative. It serves as a mediation between $mimesis_1$ and $mimesis_3$. It is the act of telling or receiving any story.

The third mimesis is called refiguration. For the cycle of mimesis to be complete, there has to be a third. Refiguration is the intersection of the world of text and the world of the reader and thus returns to the world of real action in real-time. Without this, Riceour says, narration is not possible. What is wonderful in this process from prefiguration to refiguration through configuration is its refinement every time a specific plot undergoes it. The more the story goes through this cycle, the more the reader understands its lessons, topics and ideas.

With this, *Screwtape Letters* and the dialogue of the masters can now go back to the real world, to the readers and listeners. With this, the story can pass through the spiral staircase of mimesis and help everyone understand discernment better.

Importance of Discernment

"Discernment of Spirits" is almost as old as Christianity. Like everything, the concept thereof was not spared of changes

over the centuries. Nonetheless, its importance remained constant and proven to be beneficial to humanity.

The ball started rolling with St. Paul's first letter to the Church of Corinth. Chapter 12 begins with Paul's recognition that the Christians of Corinth were pagans and were and still can be led astray to idols. With their newfound faith, Paul does not want them to remain ignorant of the various spiritual gifts that Christians receive. However, these come from the same Spirit. He then enumerated what these graces are. In verse 10, he mentioned the "discernment of spirits" among others. This is in line with the chapter's theme about having several members but one body, the Mystical Body of Christ.

In an article entitled *On "Discernment of Spirits" in the Early Chruch*, Joseph T. Lienhard, SJ traces the development thereof in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. He starts with the Greek commentaries spearheaded by John Chrysostom. Chrysostom discussed the "discernment of spirits" twice. Because the Christians in Corinth were once pagans, they received the grace of "discernment of spirits" to identify which of the soothsayers were speaking from the clean spirit and which were from the unclean. Secondly, for Chrysostom, Paul wants the Christians of Corinth to identify the true prophets from the false ones. "For Chrysostom, therefore, discernment of spirits was a gift whereby a Christian could identify the kind of spirit that spoke through a man (soothsayer, prophet or deceiver—i.e., false prophet) and also distinguish different kinds of persons, those who are spiritual from those who are not."[57] Lienhard proceeds to the Latin Fathers that generally took the list of the spiritual gifts to be meant for the clerics

[57]Joseph T. Lienhard, SJ, "On 'Discernment of Spirit' in the Early Church," Theological Studies Vol. 41, Issue 3 (1980): 509-510.

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that they "might understand and judge what is said, whether it is of a holy spirit or a worldly one."[58]

He then discusses Origen lengthy. In the third part of Origen's *On First Principles*, he presented a systematic discussion of freedom of the will and the question of evil as his answer to the Gnostic denial of human freedom. This is where he introduces the idea of "discernment of spirits." For Origen, human freedom is part of the whole doctrine thereof as well as the good spirit, which is "recognized by the fact that the soul's tranquility is undisturbed and its freedom is respected"[59] and the evil spirit. Finally, for Origen, to distinguish between these spirits is grace and a marker of the person's spiritual advancement.

In the fifth century, there came a change in the idea of "discernment of spirits." Spirits were largely understood as referring to the evil spirits and later to evil thoughts. Furthermore, in the monastic tradition, "St. Benedict makes *discretio* the basic virtue of his monastic constitution and therefore of Benedictine life."[60] St. Ignatius of Loyola, being immersed in Patristic and Monastic writings, must be aware and knowledgeable of the nuances of the use of "discernment of spirits."

The Second Vatican Council was driven, sustained, and energized by the doctrine of "discernment." In the discussion of the people of God as sharers in Christ's prophetic ministry, *Lumen Gentium* says that

The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole people's supernatural

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., 512.

[60]Ibid., 527.

discernment in matters of faith when 'from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful' they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals.[61]

Thus, the grace of discernment of spirits is offered to and shared by all. Pope Francis reestablished the importance of discernment in Christian life. After reaffirming the existence of the devil, he defined discernment as "something more than intelligence or common sense."[62] Moreover, through reason and prudence are included, this grace allows the person to have a "glimpse of that unique and mysterious plan that God has."[63]

He identified three particular purposes of why Discernment is important today more than ever. In addressing the young, he warns them of the danger of multitasking. A youth can interact virtually with several people while doing other things and thus can "become prey to every passing trend."[64] According to him, Discernment allows a Christian to be mindful and aware of one's surroundings and of what are the essentials. Secondly, Discernment is particularly important for identifying one's vocation. To help in identifying that vocation, one is led to know one's self deeper, and to realize how one can serve others better.

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[61]Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, 21 November 1964," in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975), sec. 12 (hereafter cited as LG).

[62]Catholic Church and Francis, Rejoice and Be Glad: Gaudete Et Exsultate; Apostolic Exhortation, (Manila: Paulines, 2018), section 166 (hereafter cited as GE). See also: Pope Francis, Christus Vivit (Manila: Paulines, 2019).

[63]GE 170.

[64]GE 167.

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Finally, Pope Francis also emphasized that discernment should not only be done during extraordinary circumstances but more so in everyday living, in small choices and decisions. "Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities."[65] This exercise of discernment in everyday living is intuned with the First Principle and Foundation of Ignatian Spirituality which states that all creatures are created to serve, love, and reverence God.

Finally, one thing that can be drawn about discernment from the dialogue above is the importance of the Image of God. From St. Paul, to the early Church Fathers, to Pope Francis, it is very important to have a true and clear image of God. This is one of the very basic yet powerful strategies of Screwtape which Ignatius is very much aware of.

Levels of Language

One of the greatest, if not the greatest, inventions of humanity is language. Expression of one's thoughts, ideas, dreams, emotions, and beliefs helped humanity form civilizations and arrive at today's standards of living. This is even more so important when one experiences something that is beyond one's limits. When the finite meets that infinite, wonderful things are bound to happen.

In Robin Ryan's book entitled *Jesus & Salvation*, he introduced a lacuna in the theology of salvation. According to him, there was never a positive statement on how humanity is saved by the Jesus event unlike other doctrinal pronunciations like that of the Trinity, or even Jesus' full humanity and full divinity. As an introduction to soteriology, he discussed the distinction theologians make about the different expressions

[65]GE 169.

of the experience with the Divine. Theologians would distinguish between two levels or orders of language.

The first level of language is rich in symbols, metaphors, and images that try to encapsulate something inexpressible like that of a divine experience. They can be in poems, sayings, myths, legends, and other forms of literature that grapple with expressing something beyond human language. "These primary expressions communicate meanings directly and appeal to the imagination and the heart."[66] The first order/level language tries to show and illustrate an experience that is beyond one's finiteness. It aims to show rather than explain. Most of the salvific experiences of the people in the Old Testament are expressed through these. The narrative stories found in the four gospels are also under the first-level language. This primary form of expression is also used in prayers during liturgies.

The second-order/level language builds from the former and "is the language of doctrine and theology."[67] Thinkers, theologians, and the Church Magisterium formulate positive statements, pronouncements, and teachings. Unlike the first level language that aims to show, this secondary form of expression aims to explain that which is inexpressible. Second-order/level language can also be in the form of theories.

The doctrine of the Trinity was first defended by Tertullian in the 3rd century but is expressed and experienced by the apostles early on during Jesus' baptism at the river Jordan. In reality, the doctrines of the Catholic Church are codified

[66]Gerald O'Collins, Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

[67]Robin Ryan, Jesus, and Salvation: Soundings in the Christian Tradition and Contemporary Theology, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), xvi.

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religious experiences of the first Christians. Nonetheless, the codification of what is extracted from the first level language is still the result of an experience of the same Divine Being, of the same Absolute, of the same, one true God. However, these positive statements, though very true to the last iota, seemingly over time lose their flavor due to overemphasis on exactness and excessive philosophizing.

Just like in any translation, something of the original is lost in the process. The same is true with the process from the first level to the second level language. Since symbols, images and metaphors can be interpreted in thousands of ways and can carry several layers of meaning, they can have more flavor and can be absorbed easier as they appeal to the imagination and the heart of humanity. On the other hand, since the second-order/level language aims to explain and define boundaries, they tend to be drier and highly intellectual in form. Nonetheless, both are important and neither loses its redemptive quality over the advantage of the other.

As illustrated by the previous chapters, there can be a third-order/level of language. Just like the second is built upon the first, so is the third built upon the second. The first aims to show. The second aims to explain. The third order/level language aims to recapture what is seemingly lost in the process of codification. The third order/level language aims to rediscover mystery. Mystery here must be taken in two senses: St. Paul's *Mysterion* and Rahner's Mystery.

The word *mysterion* appears in Paul's letters 21 times. In his letter to the Ephesians, which is called the "epistle of mystery," he uses the word *mysterion* six times. How exactly does Paul use this word? Is it something new? In Paul's mind, *mysterion* is not something that is hidden in the future and cannot be seen, or known but something that is known

already but is not understood completely or properly. He usually uses *mysterion* to refer to salvation brought about by Jesus Christ because for St. Paul, this salvation has already been known in the past by patriarchs and prophets but is completely revealed only by Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of scripture. In Ephesians 3, Paul particularly discusses that the salvation of the Gentiles together with the Jews is not completely new but has already been written in parts and is completely revealed during the time of Jesus Christ. "What he does mean is that this mystery truth, although known and written in kernel form in the text of the Old Testament, was not fully comprehended nor understood until the times of the New Testament."[68] Paul's idea of mystery therefore is more of the process of revelation of what was previously known but has only been fully understood.

Rahner's idea of Mystery is deeper and more elaborate. Rahner is constantly mindful of the problem of one and the many. In his brilliant mind, the mysteries of Christian doctrine, "though spoken of in the plural, are really only so many facets of the one mystery with which the Christian revelation confronts mankind."[69] Rahner's anthropology says that the very being of humanity is transcendence, the holy mystery that has always been there and is also found in the whole of creation. Moreover, since the transcendence is in the very fiber of any human being, no person can escape the longing for the mystery. "It implies that the religious dimension of human life is not an option for people who happen to have a religious blik. According to this anthropology, every man

[68]W. Harold Mare, "Paul's Mystery in Ephesians 3," Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 8, no. 2 (Spr 1965): 83.

[69]Karl Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," in Theological Investigations IV, (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1966), 722

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is inescapably religious."[70] It is in transcendence that one finds the goal of humans "and that goal is nothing less than the infinite itself."[71] This transcendence is explicated by the unquenchable thirst of humanity for answers, for knowledge. Knowing the finite always has the Infinite as a background. The knowledge of the finite and the infinite always come together. The very ability of human beings for an infinite query. This unquenchable search can only be satisfied by Infinity itself, by God, but "God recedes as infinite horizon every time [humans] try to lay hold of him." However, God is not only the Infinite or the Transcendence. Revelation means God wants to communicate Godself to creation. For Rahner, God gives Godself in two ways. The first is through grace while a person is still alive. This grace is, in accordance with the doctrine of revelation, is Godself or in Rahner's terms, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of the Holy Mystery. Through this indwelling of the Spirit, humanity participates in the life of the Trinity. God then, after death, gives Godself through beatific vision.

With this doctrine of Grace, Rahner is saying that as much as humanity is made to journey towards the Infinite, towards the Transcendence, humanity is, at the same time, made with the Spirit within. What is distant, what is infinitely out of humanity's grasp is also in the deepest part of one's being. What is transcendent and Wholly Other is also found in the very fiber of humanity. This Holy Mystery is both within and without, near and far, very different and one with humanity. Rahner also argues that grace is universal and is offered to all. However, the universality of grace does not in any way diminish its giftedness. Moreover, the universality of grace,

[70]John J. O'Donnell, "The Mystery of Faith in the Theology of Karl Rahner." Heythrop Journal 25, no. 3 (July 1984): 302.

[71]Ibid., 303

or at least its offer, suggests that before hearing the proclamation of the gospel, "the soil for receiving the gospel has already been prepared."[72] By the time the person hears the gospel, and learns the doctrines and teachings of the faith, that person recognizes one's experience and personal story.

The third order/level language aims to recapture Paul's *mysterion*, that which is already known in the past but is revealed fully by Jesus, and Rahner's Holy Mystery, God who is both transcendent and immanent, outside and within. This Mystery is the same God that the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and early Christians encountered.

The only question that remains is how one can transition fully from the second-order/level language to the third level, the recapturing. There may be several ways for God can fully reveal Godself to whomever God wants in ways only known to God. Nonetheless, Christians, lay and religious alike, need to train their hearts to be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit so that they may recognize the Holy Mystery.

In Ignatian Spirituality, Consciousness Examen is practiced to help the individual to be more aware of these encounters with the Mystery. George Aschenbrenner, SJ in his article entitled Examen of Consciousness, identifies two kinds of spontaneity: one toward God and one away from God. Contrasted with the examen of conscience which is directed toward knowing the good and the bad, Consciousness Examen is being sensitive to how God moves a person. "The concern is with the way God is affecting and moving... (often quite spontaneously!) deep in [one's] affective consciousness."[73] In a

[72]Ibid., 307.

[73]George Aschenbrenner, S.J., Consciousness Examen, Ignatian Spirituality, accessed October 1, 2020, https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/consciousness-examen.

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more general term, this sifting through of God's involvement in one's affective life is called Discernment. The everyday practice of Examen of Consciousness to discern God and identify instances where one encounters the Mystery trains one's heart to be more aligned to that of God as each day passes.

Furthermore, the recognition of these encounters with the Mystery, the very encounter with the Mystery compels the person, still out of one's free response, to preach, to share, to tell one's stories. Consequently, these encounters with the Mystery not only fill one's soul but overflows with one's actions, words, and works consciously or otherwise. So much so that a person, who has trained one's heart to be sensitive to the Mystery, will encounter the same Mystery through stories, novels, artworks, through creation. C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* is an example of this overflowing experience with the Mystery, an example of a teacher becoming a preacher. The expression of these recognized experiences with the Mystery through one's work, passion, or life stories is an example of the third-order/level language, and Ignatian discernment through consciousness examen helps a person to do just that. Finally, the translation of the Christian doctrines into these stories imbued with the Holy Mystery is needed in today's world. With this, a teacher of Christian doctrines becomes a preacher of Christ. With this, every whisper is God's voice; every call is God's invitation; every bush is burning.

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