

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXERCISES

Recognising the Spirit

Santiago Arzubialde

IGNATIUS REACHED VENICE towards the end of 1535. He spent the whole of the year 1536 in that city, waiting for the arrival of the Companions from Paris; he welcomed them on the 8 January 1537. Before being ordained, each member of the small group individually pronounced vows of poverty and chastity in the presence of the Legate, later Cardinal, Verallo. On the 24 June, the Feast of St John the Baptist, all were ordained priests by the Bishop of Arbe, Vicente Nigusanti, in the chapel of his own house. During the month of October 1537 Ignatius experienced great consolations.¹ Perhaps at this time, ‘once his studies were finished’, as he put it, he began the revision of the ‘exercises’ mentioned by Jerónimo Nadal.² Finally, in November, Ignatius had the vision at La Storta (about twelve miles from Rome), and during that same month he entered Rome by the gate leading into the Piazza del Popolo, along with Pierre Favre and Diego Laínez.

We know that it was during this period of great consolations that Ignatius revised all the existing text of the *Spiritual Exercises* and made some additions (such as the ‘Mysteries of the Life of Christ Our Lord’ [Exx 261–312]). However, he concentrated his attention on working out the final Rules for the Discernment of Spirits. The title that, in my opinion, best suits this re-elaboration of the text is ‘pneumatological’,³ for reasons that will become clear. In my opinion it is in Venice, in

This is an abridged extract from Santiago Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio: Historia y Análisis* (Bilbao and Santander: Mensajero and Sal Terrae, 2009), 665–693. We are very grateful for the permission of both publishers to translate it here.

¹ *Autobiography*, nn. 94–95.

² MHSJ FN, 318–319.

³ In theology a special treatise is devoted to the Holy Spirit, the *Pneuma* or Third Person of the Trinity.



Ignatius' ordination

1536, that we can place the pneumatological development of the book of the *Exercises*. The perspective is one that corresponds to the time of the resurrection. Even if he has not yet found the right words to express it precisely, Ignatius is on the point of living in the Spirit the Trinitarian and Eucharistic experience of 'being placed with the Son' in the bosom of the Church and in the context of mission.⁴

The State of the Rules for Discernment of Spirits in the Helyar Text, Paris, 1535

In order to pinpoint the development of this text, I think the best place to begin is Paris, in 1535, with an analysis of the Helyar⁵ text to see what stage the writing had reached when Ignatius left Paris for Azpeitia.

In particular three paragraphs from this text deal in an irregular way with both Election and the Rules for Discernment. An analysis of

⁴ See Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits, Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice: A Historical Study* (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 50–58.

⁵ The Helyar text consists of the notes written by an English priest, John Helyar, while making the Spiritual Exercises in Paris, probably with Pierre Favre, in 1535. This is the earliest written version of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. It is not available in English—see MHSJ MI Exx, 418–454, in particular 429–454.

these shows, in my opinion, what was a major preoccupation for Ignatius while he was in Paris: how the gift of the Spirit is the foundation of freedom, and how one can reach a decision relying on the immediate action of God as distinct from a decision that proceeds from created causes.

Structure and Content of the Discernment of Spirits as Foundation for an Election

From the formal analysis of these paragraphs one can see that this text contains five ‘blocks’:

1. The *triple origin of thoughts* (Exx 32), which is placed before the General Examen:

There are in me three *thoughts*; the *first is proper to me*, coming from my own free will and choice, as if it emerged from inside and came out; the *other two* come within from outside, that is from the good and the bad angel into me.⁶

The significance of this is that by this time Ignatius had learnt (although we do not know how) of the text by Origen that appeared later in John Cassian.⁷ He was hesitating whether to keep it in its original place—the discussion of *diákrisis* (as it is naturally linked to discernment)—or to put it before the General Examen, as he would eventually do in the definitive text of the *Exercises* (‘I presuppose that there are three sorts of thought processes in me: one sort which are properly mine and arise simply from liberty and will, and two other sorts which come from outside, one from the good spirit and the other from the bad’, Exx 32).

2. The *definition of what consolation is and what desolation is*, within the framework of the Election (Exx 316–317).⁸
3. Following on from the Three Kinds of Humility, the Helyar text gives a paragraph on the *conduct to be followed in a time of*

⁶ Helyar text, MHSJ MI Exx, 430. The italics have been added.

⁷ The text from John Cassian reads: ‘Above all we should realise that there are three sources for our thoughts: God, the devil, and ourselves’ (‘The Goal or Objective of the Monk’, chapter 19, *Conferences*, translated by Colm Luibhéid and Eugène Pichery [Mahwah: Paulist, 1985], 52). This seems to be indebted to a passage in Origen: ‘We find that the “thoughts which proceed out of the heart”, whether they are a memory of deeds we have done or a contemplation of any things or causes whatsoever, proceed sometimes from ourselves, sometimes are aroused by the opposing powers, and occasionally also are implanted in us by God, or by the holy angels’ (*On First Principles*, book III, chapter 2, n. 4, translated by G. W. Butterworth [Gloucester, Ma: Peter Smith, 1973], 216).

⁸ Helyar text, MHSJ MI Exx, 445.

desolation (Exx 318).⁹ Thus this text contains Rules 3, 4 and 5 (Exx 316–318), the nucleus of what will be the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, dealing mainly with the language of God.

4. Immediately after some advice recommending perseverance there comes a paragraph with the title '*de discretione spirituum*'.¹⁰ This reveals the existence of at least an *outline of the Rules for the Second Week*, consisting of the following elements: *the distinction between consolation with and without cause* (Exx 330–331), with the added comment that only the infinite power of God is capable of consoling without cause in this way, and also the remark:

There are two ways in which the soul is consoled: *the first way*, by God alone without cause. *The second way*, with cause; and the soul can be consoled in this second way because of God, or because of a good angel, or because of a bad angel.¹¹

- a) Only God can console without cause (Exx 330), that is, without previous disposition, thought or mediation. To do this, the infinite power of God is needed:

I understand *without cause* to mean without any previous disposition or thought; and for this infinite power is needed.

- b) As for consolation *with cause* (Exx 331), it can come from God and equally from the good or the bad angel, or through some other medium—that is to say, with a previous disposition, thought (or speech?):

I understand being consoled *with cause* when there is some previous disposition, or thought or words. And the soul can be consoled in this way as much because of God, as by a good angel or a bad angel, or by any human agent.

In the light of this distinction it is possible to deduce which consolations come strictly and *immediately* from God and which have *a different origin*. Incidentally, this passage shows how preoccupied Ignatius was to clarify, in the light of his studies in Paris, the difference in intensity between truly divine speech

⁹ Helyar text, MHSJ MI Exx, 446. At this stage the further rules, Exx 318–321, are missing.

¹⁰ Helyar text, MHSJ MI Exx, 450.

¹¹ In the definitive text of the *Exercises* (Exx 331) God disappears as the *created* (or secondary) cause.

(*immediate*), with its consequences, and the consolatory communication that comes to us from God via some intermediary (*mediate*).

5. This whole block finishes with some *complementary remarks on the effect of the immediate action of God that are not preserved in the definitive Rules*. They can be simplified as follows: if I have decided to choose some particular thing, and I experience consolation in its favour and no desolation against [and later, in relation to a different choice, the opposite happens], it does not follow that the two groups of consolations come from God. *Some* may be from God (without cause) and the *others* may come from some other agent (with cause) which is alien to freedom as such.

Consequently, when I have decided because of my way of life (*ex habitu*) to have something (*habendi*), and I receive consolation *without cause* that inclines me towards something radically different, to the point that this *does away with the first intention*, such a consolation can only be caused by the Divine Infinity itself acting in an immediate way (on its own) on the inner core of free human choice.¹² On the other hand, when consolation, accompanied by tears, comes to reaffirm the intention that I had in mind (the intention that led me to decide, or at least to incline in one direction), such a consolation *is not necessarily without cause*, because it can be caused either by the good spirit or by the bad. This initial line of thought shows that, while in Paris, Ignatius was still hesitating. He was then

¹² In his *Autobiography* (nn. 26–27) Ignatius describes how he discerned in such cases: ‘But 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 the time that he had allocated for sleep, which was not much. And mulling this over a few times, he came round to thinking to himself that he had a certain amount of time set aside for dealing with God, and all the rest of the day afterwards. That led him to begin to doubt if these ideas were coming from the good spirit, and he came to the conclusion that it was better to leave them aside and to sleep for the allotted time; and so he did. He was continuing in his abstinence from meat, and was firm on that—in no way was he thinking of making a change— when one day, in the morning when he had got up, there appeared to him meat for the eating, as if he could see it with his bodily eyes, without any desire for it having been there before. And together with this there also came upon him a great assent of the will that, from then on, he should eat meat. And although he could still remember his intention from earlier, he was incapable of being doubtful about this: rather he could not but make up his mind that he had to eat meat. And when he recounted this afterwards to his confessor, the confessor’s line was that he should consider whether perhaps this was a temptation. But he, examining the matter well, was incapable of ever being doubtful about it.’ It was probably at this point in dictating the *Autobiography* (in 1553) that Ignatius broke off, and did not resume until two years later.

attributing a change in a concrete decision to the experience of a special kind of consolation (one *without cause*).

However, with regard to these complementary remarks, two points need to be noted: *first*, consolation *without cause* appears in them as the definitive criterion in an Election, one that can completely change a previous intention. This is a point that appears on three separate occasions,¹³ but Ignatius did not keep it when he came to the final composition of his text. *Secondly*, the brief remark that appears here about the source of consolation *with cause*, coming from the good or the bad spirit (the germ of Exx 331), will be expanded further by Ignatius when he provides the description of temptation under the appearance of good (Exx 332–334).

Conclusions from the Analysis of the Helyar Text

Viewed from the *pneumatological point of view*, there are three elements that stand out in this year, 1535. Ignatius, from the beginning but quite definitively in Paris, linked the consolation of the Spirit to human freedom when making an Election, seeing it as gift that is granted and as the ideal way (or time) for an Election. At this period he is specially preoccupied with the distinction to be made between the *immediate* action of God and God's way of speaking to us *through some means* ('with cause'). And he believes that only an *immediate* intervention, one proper to divine Infinity—known through its *origin*, *nature*, *luminosity* and *obviousness*—is capable of changing an intention that appeared to be immovably decided.



Collège Sainte-Barbe, where Ignatius studied in Paris

The State of the Rules for Discernment According to the Letter to Sor Teresa Rejadell, Venice, 1536

We can move now from Paris in 1535 (the Helyar text) to Venice in 1536, the city from which Ignatius wrote to Sor Teresa Rejadell on 18 June.¹⁴ The very change of location itself serves to highlight that even if in Paris Ignatius was already mulling over its fundamental components, he was still at an embryonic stage of his pneumatology. It was *once his studies were finished* that these components would appear, as much in the complete Rules for Discernment and the rest of the text of the *Exercises* as in the unction of the Holy Spirit that would preside over and inspire the text of the *Constitutions*.

We now intend to synthesize and classify those elements of discernment that appear in the letter to Sor Teresa Rejadell, with reference to the spiritual process that Ignatius describes in his *Autobiography*. He is concerned with the cause of spiritual disquiet, and why it is that *we separate ourselves from the greater service of God* and the peace of our souls. The most remarkable feature is that, in Venice, Ignatius links this temptation to two types of concupiscence: that of the flesh and that of the spirit. This is something that appears with great clarity in John Cassian.

Analysis of Temptation, Starting from the Bad Spirit's Way of Proceeding and the Weapons that It Uses

In general these are the tactics used by the enemy against those who begin to serve God. The *first weapon* is to make great display of the inconveniences and obstacles so that a person will proceed no further.¹⁵ The person *overcomes* this first temptation by deciding to break through the obstacles and choosing to suffer with the Creator and Lord (= Christ). Once the first principle has been established, Ignatius goes on to analyze what the outcomes both of consolation and of desolation are.

The seduction of the enemy in a period of consolation. The influence of the 'concupiscence of the spirit'—the impulse that attracts *upwards*, towards the good—is something more subtle than the mere former inclination to turn back. It is precisely the tendency to attribute to

¹⁴ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, in Ignatius of Loyola, *Personal Writings*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin, 1996), 129–135; MHSJ EI 1, 99–107.

¹⁵ See *Autobiography* n.20 and n.21: 'he began to undergo great variations in his soul', n.21.

oneself the gift of consolation. From this tendency the enemy forges his *second weapon* in the spiritual combat, encouraging *self-satisfaction* and *vainglory*. He gives the person to understand that he or she possesses great goodness or sanctity. The way to *overcome* this weapon is by resisting such an opinion, and trying to humble and lower oneself¹⁶ as much as possible.



The *third weapon* employed by the enemy, however, is to wound the soul by encouraging a *false humility*, preventing the person from talking to others about things that are good, holy and advantageous, received from the Lord. The enemy makes one think that it would be sinful to speak to one's own advantage of the gifts given by God, preventing their doing good either to oneself or to others (see Exx 351). Ignatius reacts by denouncing this subtle form of hypocrisy. We should be aware that those desires to serve Christ Our Lord do not belong to us, but are a gift given gratuitously by God. To talk of them is to praise God, because we do not attribute such things to ourselves, but to God.

In both these cases, as they involve an incorrect way to receive grace, overcoming the temptation consists in refusing to appropriate the consolation. We need to be humble and acknowledge from the depths of our extreme poverty that such an unmerited gift does not belong to us, but is completely the free gift of God.

The seduction of the enemy in a period of desolation. The tendencies that flow from the 'concupiscence of the flesh', by contrast, have a *decided downward movement*. They may, at times, *either* take the form of distrust in the Lord, *or* fasten on to a psychological deformity, either laxness (*the 'coarse conscience'*) or narrowness (*the 'sensitive conscience'*).

¹⁶ This effort in self-persuasion will later lead to the writing of Exx 323–324.

During a time of desolation the enemy raises all sorts of obstacles to turn us away from what we have begun. He causes *sorrow*, and makes us think that *we have been completely forgotten by*, and cut off from, God. He wants us to *lose confidence* in God's Providence.¹⁷ But if he fails in this, he 'brings after this another far worse fear that we are distant, separated and exiled from Our Lord'.¹⁸

If the enemy perceives that some *psychological weakness* is present, he exerts pressure on the *coarse* or on the *sensitive* conscience. In the first case, that of the *coarse* conscience, he works to make it more and more lax so that even grave mortal sins will be *thought of no account*.¹⁹ But if he finds that a person has a *sensitive* conscience he tries to entangle the person, by upsetting, afflicting, and tormenting him or her, if possible, even more.²⁰ The two sorts of concupiscence return once more, but now in relation to a person's moral conscience. Here is a foretaste of what will become the 'Notes on understanding scruples and the insinuations of our enemy' (Exx 345–351).

How to Find a Path Avoiding the Double Concupiscence—of the Flesh and of the Spirit—Produced Either by Consolation or by Desolation

The conclusion that Ignatius draws is that at the root of the disturbances, variety of feelings and fears are to be found two different forms of speech. Thanks to the alternating phenomena of consolation and desolation, the Lord is inclined to teach in two ways or in two languages:

Further to clarify in some way how the fear is caused, I shall speak, though briefly, about two lessons that the Lord is accustomed to give, or at least permit (he gives the one and permits the other).²¹

Definition of consolation (Exx 316)²²

The one he gives is interior consolation, which [1] casts out all disturbance [2] and draws us into total love of the Lord. [3] There

¹⁷ See Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 133; and Exx 317.

¹⁸ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 132; see Exx 317, 318–321; *Autobiography*, n. 21.

¹⁹ See Exx 349.

²⁰ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 132; Exx 349; *Autobiography*, nn. 22–25.

²¹ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 132.

²² Another account of the 'most holy gifts' of spiritual consolation comes in the letter to Francisco Borja, 20 September 1548: 'Instead of drawing blood and somehow trying to force it out in some

are some whom the Lord lights up in such consolation, [4] and there are others to whom he uncovers many secrets and more later. [5] With this divine consolation, all hardships are ultimately pleasure, all fatigues rest. For anyone who proceeds with this interior fervour, warmth and consolation, there is no load so great that it does not seem light to them, nor any penance or other hardship so great that it is not very sweet. [6] This shows to us and opens the path with the direction we are to follow, and the opposite we are to avoid. [7] This consolation is not always with us, but proceeds always at specific times as arranged. [8] And all this is for our profit.²³

Description of desolation (Exx 317)

[1] ... our old enemy places before us every possible obstacle to divert us from what has been begun, attacking us very much. He acts completely counter to the first lesson, [2] often plunging us into sadness without our knowing why we are sad. [3] Nor can we pray with any devotion, or contemplate, or even speak and hear of things about God Our Lord with any interior savour or relish. And not stopping there, if he finds we are weak and let ourselves be subjected to such tainted thoughts, [4] he brings us to think that we have been completely forgotten by God, and we end up with

way, you should seek *more directly* from the Lord of everyone *His most holy gifts*, for example, a flow or even a sprinkling of tears. These may come, (1) over your own sins or those of others, (2) over the salvific events of the life of Christ Our Lord, here or in heaven, (3) from thinking of the Divine Persons, or from love of them. The more sublime the thoughts and reflections that give rise to these tears, the more valuable and precious they are. But though the third of these reflections is in one sense better than the second, and the second than the first, what is best for each individual is that in which God Our Lord imparts Himself more fully, *displaying His holiest gifts and his spiritual graces*. It is God who sees and knows what is better for a person, and God, knowing everything, shows the person the way forward. However for our part, to find that way through the medium of His grace we will be greatly helped if we search about and make many kinds of experiments, so that we can follow the route that He *most clearly shows to one*, the happiest and most blessed route in this life, completely governed and directed towards that other life, which is without end, embracing and united to *those most holy gifts*. By these I mean those gifts which are not *in our very own power* to summon *when we wish*, but which are purely gifts from the One who gives all that is good, and can do all that is good, gifts such as the following (always understood as being directed and aimed at His Divine Majesty): intensity of faith, of hope, and of love; *spiritual rejoicing and repose*; tears; intense consolation, the raising up of the mind; impressions or illuminations from God; and all the other spiritual relishings and intuitions that lead to such gifts, together with humility and reverence towards our holy mother, the Church, and towards the rulers and teachers who have been appointed within her. Any of *these most holy gifts* must be preferred to any physical activities. These latter are good in so far as they lead to the attaining of the former gifts, or some part of them. I do not mean that we should seek these gifts *only* in order take pleasure in them, or to enjoy them, but rather so that all our thoughts, words and deeds can be warm, clear, and just, and thus be of greater service to God. For we know within ourselves that without such gifts our thoughts, words and deeds get *mixed up, becoming cold and confused*. Thus we should desire such gifts, or parts of such gifts, or such spiritual graces, to the extent that they can help us, and thus be of greater glory to God.' (*Personal Writings*, 206–207)

²³ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 132–133.

the impression that we are completely separated from Our Lord. Everything we have done, everything we were wanting to do, none of it counts. In this way, he tries to make us lose trust in everything. [5] But we can see from all this what is the cause of so much fear and weakness on our part: at one stage we spent too long a time with our eyes fixed on our own miseries, and subjected ourselves to his deceptive lines of thought.²⁴

The Purpose of Both Lessons: the Need to Find a Balance, Not Trusting in Myself but in the Power of God to Save Me; Thus Moving beyond My Own Self (Subjectivity) and beyond the Temptation That Has Come 'From Outside'

'While the Enemy does not care whether he is telling the truth or lying, but only wants to overcome', the *general principle* with regard to the *best way to react* to these types of persuasive tactics is to *agere contra* ['do the opposite'].²⁵ This may be against a natural, but disordered, inclination, or against a temptation itself, or against a psychological weakness. Ignatius advises, '*vigorously to make changes in ourselves*' (Exx 319, 350).

So here the person fighting has to identify the enemy. If it is a time of *consolation*, we must lower and abase ourselves, and reflect that soon the trial of temptation will come [that is, desolation].²⁶

If the enemy *raises us*, we are to lower ourselves, reminding ourselves of our sins and worthlessness. If he *lowers and depresses us*, we are to raise ourselves in true faith and hope in the Lord, and wait with patience for the consolation of the Lord.

If *temptation, darkness or sadness* come, we must act against them without allowing any bitterness, and wait in patience for the Lord's consolation, which will evaporate all disturbances and shadows from outside.²⁷

To sum up, if the enemy tries to *coarsen our conscience*, we should try to make it more sensitive; and if he tries to *over-sensitise our conscience*, 'one should seek to establish a position in the just mean so as to be entirely at peace' (Exx 350).

²⁴ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 133.

²⁵ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 131.

²⁶ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 133; see Exx 323–324.

²⁷ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 133; see Exx 318–321.

Despite such ups-and-downs, the good spirit aims to establish a *balance* (the 'just mean'); this is brought about by God's gratuitous gift of salvation (compunction). After the drama of sin and pardon, the exercitant should not feel buffeted and wounded. Rather, with eyes turned not on the self but on the inexhaustible power of divine mercy, the retreatant should feel solidly supported in the confident abandonment to the power of God and also in the truly *gratuitous* relationship of friendship,²⁸ far beyond any merits or personal failings. To do this, we have to try to achieve *balance* in ourselves, *putting all our confidence* not in our own strength, but *only in God* and in God's provident plan. Here is the foundation of true humility and the authentic search for God's glory (Exx 351):

That is how we must proceed if we are not to be upset, and if the mocker is to be mocked.²⁹

An Initial Description of 'Consolation without Cause'

The letter finishes on an incomplete and enigmatic note:

It often happens that Our Lord moves and forces us interiorly to one action or another by opening up our mind and heart, i.e. *speaking inside us without any noise of voices*, raising us entirely to His divine love, without our being able to resist His purpose, even if we wanted.³⁰

We are led, moreover, to be submissive to the precepts of the Church, and to show 'obedience to our superiors',³¹ being filled with feelings of humility.

These remarks form a transitional passage to *the analysis of the second period of consolation* (without cause?).³² This is another concluding point:

Where quite often we can be deceived is that, following on such a consolation, or as it fades away, while the inner mind remains in delight, the enemy arrives *completely cloaked in joy and gladness* [*sub specie boni*]³³ in order to make us *add* to what we have sensed from God our Lord, to make us fall out of order and become totally

²⁸ However, in the letter that openness to appreciating the complete 'gift and grace' that will be found later in the Rules for Discernment (Exx 322) is not yet explicitly apparent.

²⁹ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 131–132.

³⁰ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 133; see Exx 330.

³¹ See Exx 42; consolation is at the base of having 'a true attitude of mind' in the Church.

³² See Exx 336.

³³ See Exx 332–333; perhaps this is the starting point for the description of temptation by the bad angel in 'the form of an angel of light', Exx 332.

unbalanced. At other times he has us *reduce* the *lesson received* [the *good message* received] ... so that we do not wholly carry out everything that has been shown to us [by God]. Here one needs more care than anywhere else³⁴

The Advance Made in the Letter in Relation to the Helyar Text

We are able to draw some conclusions from the analysis of these two documents. In the letter to Teresa Rejadell the first three Notes (Exx 346–348) of the ‘Notes on Scruples’ are not represented, but the rest of these notes are present. The reason why we should treat ‘gross and manifest’ temptation separately has not been fully developed (Exx 325–327), and there is only a brief allusion to temptation that comes ‘*in disguise*’ as good, without any further explanation.

On the other hand, the letter suggests a clear progress in relation to the text of Helyar. There are several new points, but clearly the *main stress* is on the conduct to be adopted, especially by beginners, when faced with *the double concupiscence, that of the flesh and that of the spirit*, that emerges both from consolation and from desolation. The letter deals intermittently with the different sorts of conduct required during the alternating phases of consolation and desolation; it also deals with the periods of scruples or deviation of moral conscience that may be brought on by the complex experiences of sin.

The aim of the letter is to overcome excess in either direction, so that a person may *advance further* in the service of God. Thus (a) one excess, that brought on by desolation, is an inclination to be downcast and lose hope. This may come about owing to the innate force of human sensibility, or may derive from the personal psychology of an individual. It may also be due to psychological deformity, or how coarse or sensitive a particular conscience is. (b) On the other hand, the excess may come about because of the incorrect use of a given grace: we may try to appropriate this improperly, indulging in conceit and vainglory over our own goodness; or we may, through false humility (pusillanimity), fail to acknowledge God’s gifts or fail to trust in God (mistrusting God’s grace and power). Such false humility, however, cannot be identified as such with temptation ‘in the form of an angel of light’ (Exx 332).

³⁴ Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, *Personal Writings*, 134.

In Venice St Ignatius was clearly preoccupied with the difficulties of a beginner who is struggling with the blatant temptations brought about by the seesaw effect of consolations, and who is seeking a way to overcome the concupiscence of both the flesh and the spirit (Exx 313). It is obvious that later Ignatius recognised the need to separate the treatment of those excesses that are the effect of consolation and desolation from those due to scruples. Whereas everyone has to have some experience of consolation and desolation—this being a universal law—not everyone undergoes the experience of scruples, especially in the transitory form of suffering from pusillanimity (proper to false humility). However, if the scruples are prolonged, they can cause serious harm both to the person and to the apostolic work. It appears therefore that the writing (but not the experience) of the Notes on Scruples, and also the composition of parts of the Rules for Discernment, Exx 319–321, 323–324, took place after 1536. But Ignatius also realised that the spectrum of problems to be faced in following the spiritual life included not only the alternation between consolation and desolation, and the difficulties arising from them. He saw that it was necessary to deal much more fully with the subject of temptation.

To sum up, the letter deals fundamentally with themes proper to the Rules of Discernment for the First Week, with an appendix on ‘consolation without cause’ (Exx 330) and on the ‘period following’ such consolation (Exx 336). Several of the Rules for the First Week are not mentioned (Exx 325–327), nor is special attention given to the ‘gross and manifest’ temptation (Exx 9–10), nor to the temptation *sub specie boni* (*sub angelo lucis* = ‘camouflaged as good’; Exx 332–334). One is led to think that only later, around 1539, did Ignatius work out and elaborate the distinction between the First and the Second Week in terms of temptation.

Finally, it is strange that in the letter to Teresa Rejadell he did not enter in any depth into the distinction between ‘consolation without cause’ (one caused only by God—as the Helyar text especially emphasizes) and the other sort of consolation which has a different cause (angel, demon or human impulse).

The New Development: The Pneumatological Cycle

It seems to me that at this stage Ignatius must have had access to some *monastic texts* which dealt systematically with the basic elements



of *diákrisis* (*discretio*): the spectre of *temptation* and its various weapons; the subject of penance and self-control in eating; psychological *balance*, avoiding extremes, or finding the ‘mean’ that is best for each one in what concerns the interior life; the *spiritual* equilibrium proper to someone who no longer relies on the self, but rather on God, as a result of an authentic christological experience of justification.

Thus between 1536 (Venice and the letter to Sor Teresa Rejadell) and 1541, when the final version of the *Spiritual*

Exercises is ready, Ignatius is working out a pneumatological cycle based on criteria from the traditional teaching on *diákrisis* (John Cassian?):

1. adaptation (penance) starting from the language of God;
2. discovery of the mean (the ordering of one’s life as regards eating) or moderation;
3. moral or spiritual equilibrium (scruples) and Exx 318–321;
4. discerning the origins of the different spirits, between the extremes of concupiscence, different types of temptation and distinct forms of consolation, as the foundation of freedom (Exx 330);
5. the Spirit and the relationship between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church the Spouse (La Storta); definitive conversion to ecclesiality (in its Roman form) through the link with the Vicar of Christ;
6. the interior law and unction of the Spirit (*Constitutions*); the spiritual law (the norm or code of the religious life); *discreta caritas* as the specific virtue of a superior and the search for the greater spiritual good.

Once a chronological analysis of the Venetian period has been completed, it becomes possible to investigate the structure and content of the Rules for Discernment (Exx 313–370). In this final period of gestation, Ignatius, although he does not refer to it explicitly, begins the pneumatological process that corresponds to the experience of the resurrection: discovering the mean; discerning between extremes; investigating the causes of motions; moral equilibrium; and cultivating a true attitude of mind with the Church, in which is to be found the Spirit of God.

To sum up, this is a pneumatology that originates from the legacy of a tradition. Its analysis includes not only the action of the Spirit with reference to the spiritual life of the individual, but also the activity of the Spirit as a Person with reference to the formation of the whole Body of Christ (thinking with the Church). And it covers the wise and prudent way of proceeding while on mission (the movement coming from the interior law—the unction—of the Spirit). This is the *discreta caritas* that Ignatius will write about eventually in the *Constitutions*. Consequently, this Ignatian pneumatology, despite its simplicity and its debt to tradition, contributes three aspects to the divinisation of human freedom through a christology that is typically pneumatological: the (1) presence and (2) action of the Spirit, within and through (3) the humanity of Jesus.

The History of the Composition of the Discernment Rules and Their Structure

Using the information provided by *external*³⁵ witnesses we know that the analysis of ‘motions’ began for Ignatius in Loyola (1521–1522). He realised at this point that there was a difference in the ‘affective sediment’ left by the daydreams and thoughts in which he indulged.³⁶

The *text of John Helyar* provides proof that already in Paris (1535) the section of these Rules contained at least three main points: the definition of consolation and desolation linked to the Second Time of Election;

³⁵ An ‘external’ witness is provided not by the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* itself, but by some evidence from outside the text.

³⁶ ‘Still, there was this difference’: with some ‘he would find himself dry and discontented’; but with others ‘he would remain content and happy ... and little by little coming to know the difference in kind of spirits that were stirring, the one from the devil and the other from God’, *Autobiography* n.8. It is by the difference in ‘affective sediment’ that Ignatius divides the two types of thoughts and attributes the cause of one to the devil and of the other to God. See nn.21–25.

the beginnings of a rule about what one should do in a time of desolation; and the distinction between consolation with and without cause. With the *letter to Teresa Rejadell* (1536) we discover a greatly developed account of these points. There are six fundamental areas:

1. the normal course adopted by the enemy with those who begin to serve God;
2. the seductions of the enemy in the period that follows on consolation;
3. the same with regard to desolation;
4. the ultimate origin of these differences;
5. what general principle should be followed in reacting against such seductive means;
6. an initial account of 'consolation without cause'.

Close attention to the type of *Latin used* reveals that the first person to collaborate with Ignatius (Pierre Favre?) translated the first two rules (Exx 314–315) that Ignatius had just composed³⁷ and he touched up those (Exx 316, 317, 318) already translated (by Ignatius?). Moreover, we know that the person who translated the text from Spanish into Latin from that point onwards (from Exx 319 to Exx 336) was not Favre but Alfonso Salmerón.³⁸

Four Stages in the History of the Composition of the Rules

In the light of the above, and bearing in mind the interdependence of the Rules among themselves, it is possible to distinguish four successive stages of composition. The following is a brief outline of this evolution over time.

³⁷ It was J. Calveras who demonstrated that Ignatius wrote these two rules and placed them before the section (Exx 316–318) that already existed. He had already written the following rules (Exx 319–321), as is shown by the correction he wrote with his own hand, crossing out the words 'Fourth Rule' and replacing them with 'Sixth Rule'. This correction was duly copied, probably by Salmerón, in 1538 (or perhaps 1539), in Rome and is found in the Cologne manuscript of the *Spiritual Exercises* which must have had for its model a very early Latin version (prior to the *Versio Prima* of 1541, which is now the oldest extant full version).

³⁸ Ignatius, Favre and Laínez arrive in Rome in November 1537; a few months later, during Lent 1538, Ignatius gives the full Exercises at Monte Cassino to Dr Ortíz. After Easter, 21 April, the companions meet prior to undertaking extensive pastoral work in Rome. The need for more copies of the *Spiritual Exercises* gradually becomes evident, and Salmerón produces the Cologne copy mentioned in the previous note, that will be taken there by Favre. Meanwhile, Ignatius, with the help of Salmerón and others (such as Viola) is revising the text which will eventually be the *Versio Prima*.

1. The period of *Loyola and Manresa*. In his *Autobiography* Ignatius bears witness to the acute emotional strain that he was under both while convalescing in Loyola and during his stay in Manresa.³⁹ These aroused his interest in acquiring more information, by word of mouth and through writing, about the way in which the Spirit of God acted. We may deduce that even in the earliest written version of the *Spiritual Exercises* in Manresa there would already have been some description, even if very rudimentary, of the different types of 'motions'. However, it is not possible to say exactly what this contained or how it was organized.
2. The *second period precedes the year 1535*. The text of John Helyar (summarised above) provides most information about it.
3. For the *third period* we have the information supplied by the letter to Teresa Rejadell and also the work of the first corrector (who worked on the *Versio Prima* and was also the second translator of the *Exercises*). This person (perhaps Pierre Favre?) helped Ignatius prior to 1539, emending the primitive, defective Latin of some of the Rules (Exx 316–318) and himself translating those that had been added later (Exx 314–315).⁴⁰
4. The fourth period goes from 1539 to 1541. A second helper (Salmerón?) was the one who translated directly from Rule 6 (Exx 319) to the end. We know this for two reasons: there is no trace after this paragraph of any intervention by the first corrector (Favre?); and there are no further autograph corrections by Salmerón himself.

The Gift of the Spirit⁴¹ and Freedom: Discernment of Spirits

The study of the Ignatian 'Rules for Discernment' brings us to the core of his spirituality, the theology of the Spirit and of the Spirit's entrance into the heart, with or without intermediaries. This is the essential

³⁹ For the Cardoner experience in Manresa, see *Autobiography*, nn.30–31; also in Polanco's words: 'In a wonderful way, he was granted a sudden and extraordinary illumination concerning the divine mysteries; and that same light extended in particular to cover *the discernment of good from bad spirits*, so much so that he seemed to perceive with the new eyes of his mind all divine and human things; from this there followed the *greatest abundance of spiritual consolation* as the One who is the Father of mercies and the God of consolation flooded his soul abundantly with the treasures of His own divine goodness' (MHSJ FN 2, 526).

⁴⁰ Perhaps the writing of Rule 7 (Exx 335) should also be included in this stage as it is strictly parallel.

⁴¹ Paul mentions the 'discernment of spirits' as a gift of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12: 10.

presupposition for true freedom and the foundation of an Election. The subject has a special importance and relevance in today's world. A spiritual person always comes to decisions starting from the language of God. Such a language confers complete personal fullness. Decisions are made not from self-interest, but out of love. We are then able to act because desire and freedom coincide: the Election has been made because we choose what God in the first place has deigned to instil in our hearts.

The Language of God as the First Principle of Freedom

Human freedom becomes a reality and takes precedence once different motions have made their appearance. They are its natural support. That is why discernment consists essentially in discovering the *sources* (origin), *quality* (goodness or evil) and *orientation* (direction in which they point) of such motions. Through this process, I can reach a decision in accordance with the will of God. It is necessary for my inner feelings and motions to be at their most vigorous and dynamic, each with its emotional charge, so that I can allow myself to be guided by those that are good and come to reject those that destroy my true image. It is this that mirrors the figure of Jesus and makes me capable of accepting and fulfilling the Father's will for my salvation.

However, given that self-deception is so pervasive a danger,⁴² discernment can only be finalised when everything is over, and when historically reality has shown the result; thus the *confirmation* comes from what is the objective result in time.

Santiago Arzubialde SJ studied theology at the University of Deusto and philosophy at Complutense University of Madrid. He also studied at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome) and obtained his doctorate from the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid. He has taught at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas since 1982.

translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

⁴² The time of election 'is exposed to a variety of spiritual movements, and often to errors as well, in which a person may be not only overcome by evil, but quite often deceived by what appears to be good and right', *Official Directory of 1599*, chapter 22, 162, in *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, translated by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1966), 323 (MHSJ 76, 683).