THE EPIC IMAGINATION

A Comparison between The Exercises and Dante's *Commedia*

By JAMES TORRENS

THE poet Robert Duncan has remarked that he recognizes three saints in the western catholic tradition as true poets: St Francis of Assisi for his canticles, St John of the Cross for his mystical lyrics and, surprisingly enough, St Ignatius Loyola for the *Spiritual Exercises*. The Exercises, Duncan maintains, is a great dramatic poem: a view very rarely expressed about a book normally categorized as a practical manual of spiritual 'hints and helps'.

At the same time, we are all aware that the Exercises derive from the epic pilgrimage of Ignatius, even as the lyrical outpourings of the other two saints have a similarly original and exemplary source. In addition, the extent to which Ignatius calls upon those who make the Exercises to use their imaginative powers is so salient a feature as to pose a problem for people raised in other traditions of prayer, such as the Carmelite. At the same time, there appears to be something of the bizarre in Duncan's claim, particularly if we take as a term of comparison the religious epic *par excellence*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*: 'that sacred poem to which heaven and earth have set hand' (*Paradiso* XXV,1-2).

Even the briefest reflection suggests the highly different cast of the two works. The Exercises, as a guide book in outline form for the use of the director, is spare and highly selective in subject matter. As a whole, it has nothing immediate to offer on such matters of crying interest as a just social order, the proper relationship between men and women, specific sins and virtues, nagging theological questions. Nonetheless, Duncan's observations may well contain a hidden wisdom. Certainly, they can underline a definite cultural as well as spiritual relationship between the fourteenth-century Italian and the sixteenth-century Basque; whilst rumination on the *Exercises* by one familiar with the *Divine Comedy*, evokes many parallels and imaginative similarities.

Both Dante and Ignatius were immensely serious in purpose, truly catholic in the late medieval understanding of the word: that is, wholly dedicated to the conversion and healing of Europe and of Moslem lands as well. Depressed by the state of public life, the would-be *civitas christiana*, they were still immensely optimistic about the healing that God could work. Both seemed to have been by-passed by their times; both operated according to an ideal long past realization: Ignatius with his image of a christian monarch rallying generous citizens for a war on evil forces; Dante hankering for a kind of republican *puritas* and spartan integrity, of which the Medicis were to make a mockery. To both men, the conversion of the individual was the key. Ignatius, as his title-page plainly tells, is proposing a set of martial or field activities for what had been stressed from the beginning as the Christian's battle against the powers of air, the spirits of evil, not just in high places, but deep within the human psyche (cf Eph 6,12ff).

His contemporary Erasmus, who, like Ignatius himself, straddled the end of the middle ages and the Renaissance, and was likewise influenced by the *Devotio Moderna* (he was educated by the Brethren of the Common Life), reveals something of the same spirit in his *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*: 'whatever you encounter as you press towards your goal, that you must reject or accept solely to the extent that it hinders or helps you on your pilgrimage'. Some of these things, such as learning, health and so on, are indifferent; 'but none of them should be pursued for their own sake, nor should anyone rely on them except in so far as they help him reach his final goal'.[1] At the same time, this fellow alumnus of Montaigu College at Paris worried Ignatius, who considered him to be invested with a critical and contemptuous spirit and to yield too much ground to the teachings of Luther.[2]

Dante's purpose is equally educative. To judge him on any more recent theory of 'pure poetry' would be anachronistic. In his letter which presents the third part *Il Paradiso* to 'Can Grande della Scala', he speaks of the whole of the Divine Comedy as 'a didactic work'. It may surprise us to discover him ranging its philosophical content under the severely practical heading of morals or ethics: 'For even though in some place or passage it is treated in the manner of speculative philosophy, this is not for the sake of speculation but for the sake of practice'. He clinches the matter in his explanation of the allegorical nature of his work. Although the *Commedia* treats literally of the after-life — 'the fiction of the *Divine Comedy* is that it is not a fiction', to use Singleton's axiom — in its other sense, the *sensus spiritualis* of medieval biblical interpretation, which becomes primary for any mortal reader, it considers the sorry state of individuals here

on earth and the requirements as well as the possibilities for their passage into blessedness. The *Comedy* is written in a 'polysemic' way, with fruitful reading possible on four levels. Dante wished to have the four-part biblical exegesis applied to his own scripture: *Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia* (the history tells what is said and done; the allegory, what you are to believe; the moral sense, what you are to do; the anagogical, where you are to go).[3] The *sensus spiritualis* (or what Auerbach calls the figural sense, applicable to personages in Dante's Otherworld, whom we recognize through some salient quality exhibited when they were on the stage of earth) is a more encompassing if less precise term; it covers all three 'allegorical' levels; that is, symbolic faith-teaching (*allegoria*), the moral homily (*sensus moralis*), the exposition of the 'last things' (*anagogia*). The term *sensus spiritualis* has the advantage of playing down abstract equivalencies and strained myth; for example, the 'allegory of poets' in such personifications as *Amor, Philosophia, Fortuna*. The *Commedia* turns from the allegory of poets as practised in the *Convivio* and *Vita Nuova* in favour of what commentators now call the 'allegory of theologians'.[4] The psalm, *In exitu Israel de Aegypto* (113,1: 'In the passage of Israel out of Egypt'), sung by the faithful who are being transported to purgatory, is also explained by Dante as normative for his whole method (*Purgatorio*, Canto II).

Blessedness as the goal of this literary exodus: this is the one concept which Dante was intent on having emerge from his title *Commedia*; the word *divina* is an expansion of this. He assumed this title, aware of its grounding in classical theatre, because he intended his poem to be authentic drama throughout: action unfolding in stages, human agents faced with decision, large stakes, unpredictability. He was stretching the graeco-roman categories, leaving in parentheses the folk-spirit of the farcical *commedia* of his own time, in order to make clear how all is directed towards the happy ending.

Yet Dante's poem earns its title not merely on the strength of its final scene, the achievement of the beatific vision. Dante the poet wants us to keep in mind that dramatic development, the establishment of direction, is always at work amidst the absorbing encounters along his route as pilgrim. At each of the descending levels and ditches, or ascending terraces and soaring spheres, he is challenged to act in some new way integral to his spiritual growth. There is real adventure at thresholds and crossing points: at the entrance to the inner city of Dis, at the ruined bridge of the sixth moat in the Inferno, at the hard uphill scramble of the anti-Purgatory, or when he passes through the refining fire with the lustful at the top terrace of Purgatory. And from the beginning there is Beatrice, 'the one

making a man happy', the real woman laden with symbolic meaning, who is leading him towards a blessed conclusion.

Ignatius himself displayed the same constructive instincts needed by the playwright, though the literal was vivid enough for him to still any desire for dreaming up a *historia*; as we have it, for example, in the powerful interplay between the literal and the imaginative in the first exercise on Three Sins (Exx 45-54). A sense of order, the marshalling of means and skilful placement of steps towards a desired end, is a characteristic of the Spiritual Exercises familiar to all who have made them, in any form. Ignatius formulated these serial prayer activities at the height of the Reformation, desiring to help others through their own equivalent of the total conversion which God had granted him, without the confused wandering (hence with the essential steps set forth in order) and without all the disastrous mistakes to which Ignatius himself was exposed: scruples leading almost to despair, health ruined by excessive penance, and prayer that ate into essential study time.

The *Divine Comedy* is just as tight an *ordo*, its artistic choices governed by the didactic or visionary ends. Dante's grid of adventures, if we may call it that, draws upon such otherworld journeys as the descent of Odysseus and of Aeneas to the land of the dead and, likely enough, the *Somnium Scipionis*, the *Liber Scalae Mahomatae* and the *Anti-Claudianus* of Alain of Lille. Yet there are two immense differences: the first, a clear, logical progression of steps proper to the philosophical age presided over by Aquinas; and secondly, the hitherto unknown personal address to the reader. The descent into the self, the harrowing of the heart in its three reaches, each lower than the preceding, is a design influenced by the *Nichomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. 'Don't you remember', says Virgil, Dante's guide, as he explains the structure of the *Inferno*, 'the words with which your *Ethics* treats the three dispositions hateful to heaven, incontinence, malice, and mad beastliness?' (Canto XI). The purification, the freeing of oneself from illusions of good, the drawing erect or upright of the free will, the rise towards recovery of innocence at the top of Mount Purgatory (a place referred to obliquely by T. S. Eliot as *The Sacred Wood*): all this is enacted by means of the traditional spectrum of faults, the seven capital sins, on a sliding scale from the most deadly, pride, to the less deliberate.

The ascent of paradise is plotted on a pseudo-Dionysian order, a step-by-step increase in light such as would have pleased the neo-Platonic humanists of Loyola's day. Dante used this pattern according to his own purposes: in order to celebrate the gradations in type and intensity of choices for the good. Even the culmination of the *Paradiso* — the discovery of all saints gathered in a celestial rose,

rooted though it clearly is in chivalric romance-symbolism, seems to derive also from the dionysian hierarchical universe:

> According to neo-Platonist theology, God is light, and reality is the 'ninefold chain of Being' ranged in concentric circles around the centre. Every appearance reflects, more or less brightly depending upon its spiritual distance from the God-head, the eternal light. Man holds a high position in this God-centred 'flower of a universe'.[5]

Reflecting on Dante's way of engaging his reader in the story and assuring an intent response from him, we may wonder what he could contrive in any way analogous to the prayer-periods of the Exercises, in which Ignatius calls for the maximum response. These begin with the exercitant recollecting himself before God and, after imaginatively settling himself in the scene which initiates the meditation or contemplation, asking for the special grace proper to the particular phase. The retreatant is often reminded to approach the awesome workings of God with the consciousness that they are really and truly 'for me'. Each prayer session is meant to end in what Ignatius calls a Colloquy, a direct conversation with God the Father, or Jesus, or Mary (or each in turn). And he is insistent upon recourse to intercessors: to all saints as intercessors in a group, to Mary as an intercessor with her Son, to Jesus as mediator with God the Father.

The fact is that Dante, with his own remarkable realism, strives at the same effects from the opening line of the *Comedy*, which informs us that we are all bewildered and astray, with him, in the middle of a walk of life that is not just his but ours: the *vita* is pointedly *nostra*. From the early pages Dante confides in us. In the *Inferno*, when his way into the inner city of hell is blocked by Furies and Medusa, he turns to each of us: 'Think, reader — *Pensa, lettor* — whether or not they panicked me! I thought sure I never would get back to you' (VIII, 94-96). Further along in the *Inferno*, he comes across the sorcerers and diviners, their heads twisted around on their bodies, and wants us to share his disturbance at the sight:

> So may God grant you, Reader, benefit
> from reading of my poem, just ask yourself
> how I could keep my eyes dry when, close by,
> I saw the image of our human form
> so twisted; the tears their eyes were shedding
> streamed down to wet their buttocks at the cleft.
> (XX,19-24; cf also XXXIV,22; *Purgatorio* X,106-08)

Indeed, Dante wants the reader to 'gather fruit' (the phrase common to the Exercises, where Ignatius warns against any restlessness or hurry to speed on, and prescribes repetitions), to come eventually with him to that condition in which our thoughts and desires are entirely in tune with God's.

> Now stay sitting there on your bench, reader,
> thinking over this foretaste I give you,
> if you want our quest to rejoice, not tire you. (*Paradiso*, X,22-24)

Dante calls for those true passionate readers who take literature not as a diversion but as a vivid and rich account by someone who wants to help us pass through the harrowing human adventure. He has had precisely this impact upon many: on T. S. Eliot, for example, who confesses that only by way of Dante did he come to perceive that blessedness was really possible here below to man; or George P. Elliot, who tells us that the convictions and values which have left so distinct a stamp on his literary criticism and on his stories derive almost wholly from Dante.[6]

Means directed to end, text painstakingly directed to effect: this brings us to the language of Dante, and the special insight of T. S. Eliot in his major essay on Dante: 'The style of Dante has a peculiar lucidity': even though the underlying thought is difficult, 'the word is lucid, or rather translucent'; and notable also for 'directness of speech', a quality he shared with other pre-Renaissance poets, notably Chaucer and François Villon.

Ignatius, who sat on those benches in his thirties with school-children, had little renaissance elegance. A biographer remarks, about an early poetic tribute of his to St Peter, 'I would be curious to see what the poetry of this man would be like, since he had so much difficulty in writing prose all his life long'.[7] Ignatius in his writing was given to doublets; his sentences tended to be rather cumbersome; he favoured abstract terms; euphony, adjectival colouring, specificity of verbs were not a concern to him. It is also admirably concise and compelling: 'That style so foreign to colouration and embroidery, is concentrated, interior, psychological'.[8] It is perhaps the functional aptness, the very humble act of refraining from elaborate verbal assaults on mystery, his scrupulous honesty, that turn out to be memorable and impressive, as in his summary statement about the coming Jesus in his Nativity:

> Gaze and consider what the persons in this scene do. They travel and toil so that the Lord may be born in the most abject poverty, and after so many toils, after hunger, thirst, heat and cold, after

> slights and rebukes, that he may eventually die on the cross, and all this for me (Exx 116).

This is precisely the moment to re-assert the stylistic honesty of Dante. True, the *Divine Comedy* is a poem on a huge scale, one of those rhythmical and indefinable suspensions of words which Paul Valéry characterized as a charm put upon language. But Dante was scrupulously direct. There is no precious ambiguity in him, no vagueness; always amidst the brilliantly apt imagery and phrasing, his startling directness, his passion for clarity, even his scholastic proneness to explain, as well as his economy of language, are the predominant features.

The truly common ground between Ignatius and Dante is in their thematization of free choice. Each is intent on staging free choice, though distinct modes are dictated by wholly distinct purposes. The purpose of the Exercises is to enable an individual to order his life, to give it direction, free of the dominance of unruly leanings. At the head of the Exercises, as a consideration to start the retreatant off, Ignatius affixes the dry yet very bold statement of total priorities before God, reminding us, as Jon Sobrino says, of something structurally unconditional about reality: 'The anthropological presupposition for making the Exercises is to take human existence seriously. . . . Man can understand himself only from the standpoint of something radically different from himself'.[9] The formulaic pre-note, which Ignatius calls the Principle and Foundation, comes to rest wholly on the term 'indifference' (Exx 23). It is not that one is no longer to care about anything, but rather to remain relaxedly and delicately poised, ready to move with the least suggestion of God's will breathed by the Spirit, not wedded to any state of being or course of action unless, of course, one's responsibilities are in some way already set.

Ignatius sought only good ground for the seed of his word, only retreatants who were extremely well-disposed, prepared to be generous: 'with greatness of soul and liberality towards one's Creator and Lord', as he puts it in his famous fifth annotation. The most characteristic gesture called for in the Exercises, which rests precisely upon our realization that God forgives us all, is the *obsequium libertatis*, the total offering of one's freedom. From servitude one springs to service.

With very good reason, Ignatius and the Jesuits are thought of as strenuous and intense partisans of the free will. As a contemporary writer puts it: 'There is a modality about the jesuit life and apostolate which strikes one throughout Ignatius's writings, and I know of no better way to describe it than by the word energy'.[10]

Candidates for the Jesuits should be *estrenuos*. Another describes it as 'intensity', a quality he finds noticeable in contemporary jesuit scholastics, as it is to devoted readers of the poetry of another Jesuit, Gerard Manley Hopkins.[11] The follower of Christ, according to the Exercises, should be ready to labour *intensamente*. He uses words and expressions such as 'strive', 'bend every effort', 'strain every nerve' in the Constitutions and other writings. The parting shot of Ignatius in the Exercises, part of the Counter-Reformation argument with Luther, is the seventeenth of his 'Rules for Thinking with the Church': 'We ought not to talk so profusely (*tan largo*), insisting so much on grace, as to brew that poison by which freedom is killed off' (Exx 369).

Dante anticipated Ignatius fully in his staging of the drama of choice, choosing with fictional and thematic aptness the modality of the way of the pilgrim — one that Ignatius adopted and enacted for his conversion and journey to the Holy Land, but which is rather muted in the Exercises: although the long slow climb to the light in the tale of sins as well as in the movement towards Christ on the cross is a pilgrim way (cf Exx 56-61,53). Dante, with characteristic unambiguity, sets his story along a route, *un cammin*, 'the way of our life' (*Inferno*, 1,1).

The metaphor of the pilgrim way is a commanding one for Dante, with his experiences of romantic and moral wandering, and of political exile. The terrifying helplessness in the dark wood, the silent pensive moments along the road with Virgil ('Silent, unaccompanied, alone we went, the one in front and the other after' *Inferno* XXIII,1-2), the homesickness (*Purgatorio*, VIII,1-9), the bitterness of exile (*Paradiso*, XVII,58), are drawn to the life. And not only this, but closely interwoven in the texture of the whole epic are other christian concepts of 'the way': in the *Purgatorio*, for instance, the unredeemed sinner's futile run, and St Augustine's sense of life as a 'race to the death' (Canto XXXIII,53-54);[12] and in the *Paradiso*, the last stages of the *itinerarium mentis in Deum* — the Victorine sense of the mystical life as the quickening flight of the ascent to God. Perhaps Dante's most vivid depiction of the compulsive race to everlasting death is of his old encyclopaedic teacher, Brunetto Latini, running futilely for fame, as though for the *palio*, the prize of the green cloth at the famous foot-race in Verona. And the race for the good — desire rightly directed to the true end — appears best enacted in the *Purgatorio*, on the terrace of the slothful in process of conversion: 'Hurry, hurry, not to lose time for too little love' (Canto XVIII,103-04).

Dante's account of his own pilgrim way begins with an evocation of enslavement experienced as a beleaguered wandering. The first

two cantos of the *Comedy*, which introduce the whole, take place in an allegorical half-light, and show the wanderer, not yet pilgrim, as entirely at the mercy of brute, domineering forces, sensual, proud, rapacious. This notion of the beastly — the threatening, the uncontrolled and irrational which menace all civilization — is a commonplace in Scripture — for example, the goring horns of the beasts in Daniel 7, and in early medieval literature,[13] as well as in christian preaching. 'Woe to the soul if the Lord does not walk within it to banish with his voice the spiritual beasts of sin'.[14] It is no far cry from this to Ignatius's first 'composition of place', composing one's good in one's own hell, the preliminary to the first meditation of the first week: 'With the gaze of the imagination, I am to look upon and consider my soul imprisoned in this corruptible body and the whole composite [of body and soul] in this valley as if exiled among brute animals' (Exx 47).

The foot planted by Dante the wayfarer as he attempts to climb out of the dark valley under his own power, achieves no real hold. He takes for granted our familiarity with the psalmist's image 'the proud foot' (*pes suberbiae*, Vulgate Ps 35,12). 'In his ill-fated attempt to ascend, Dante was led to a sinful sense of self-sufficiency'.[15] Just as Ignatius begins his Exercises speaking about the soul and about saving one's soul — gospel language which he addressed to Francis Xavier to change his life ('What does it profit a man . . . ?'), so Dante begins the *Commedia* with soul-language. Soul, in the terminology of both, is not so much a plotinian principle of being which is opposed to matter; rather it refers to whatever is precious and lasting about man, his inner life, his dignity and self-respect and identity as an image of God. The soul is in flight from the evil urges which pursue it, from the tempests experienced 'in the lake of the heart'. The body is in consequence *lasso*, exhausted. The soul of Dante has definitely to be saved.

On the outskirts of hell proper, Dante presents the reader with a long, windblown, drifting file of the soulless (Canto III). His spiritual insight here is similar to that of Ignatius in the panoramic contemplation of the Incarnation, where we are to 'behold all nations in great blindness, going down to death and descending into hell', that hordes of people are living on so spineless and base a plane that they do not deserve more than a passing glance (Exx 102). The wonder, for Ignatius, is that humans in this abject state draw the loving and compassionate regard of the Holy Trinity.

Dante is also saved from this pitiable condition by intercessors who send him help in the guise of a literary master much loved and emulated: Virgil, to whom he pays one of the most moving tributes recorded anywhere in the annals of western literature (*Inferno*,

1,79-87). The initiative for salvation thus comes as a surprise from elsewhere. The holy ones form an intercessory chain of concern, with the Virgin Mary at the pinnacle. The ultimate source of the salvific movement, as Beatrice speaks of it to Virgil, is that 'Love has moved me and makes me speak'. The sense of Love as person, distinct from the allegorical figure who dominated the young Dante upon meeting the girl Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova*, is already unmistakable:

> In this episode, Beatrice is not just a post-figuration of her earthly self, or an allegory of revelation; rather she fulfils the role of Christ-figure she assumed in the *Vita Nuova*. Christ's last act in his first coming was to harrow hell. Beatrice's descent into Limbo completes the analogy to Christ in his first coming established in the *Vita Nuova*; she is expressing not just her own love for Dante, but God's love for mankind.[16]

Virgil's earliest dealings with Dante, who had lost 'all hope of the high place', are aimed at arousing his courage. Virgil warns him, 'Your soul is overcharged with meanness' (*viltà*): that is, with shameful faintheartedness and flinching. He urges Dante rather to assume daring (*ardire*) and openness (*franchezza*). Through such encouragement he is given 'heart' ('good purpose rushed into my heart'); he finds himself with a 'heart disposed for what is coming'. The battle will severely try this courage. Often in the *Inferno*, he turns to Virgil in terror, even running to him as a child to its mother (an image employed of the soul and God by Hugh and Richard of St Victor, and others after them); and, in the final canto (XXXIV,8), hiding behind him as a shield from the cold blasts of the satanic wind.

The *Inferno* then, is a careful pedagogy of the pilgrim. The bewildered Dante, who passes through hell's gate with no true power to discriminate between good and evil, is tutored not only by the feelings of revulsion aroused in him at the sight of the damned, but also by the corrections Virgil administers for improper displays of sympathy. With Virgil as his lantern, who lights the way for the Christian, though he himself, alas, walks in darkness (*Purgatorio*, XXII,67-75), Dante is freed to acknowledge his own sin and his solidarity with those of others, and to see how his sin distances him from his God.

From the first moment of his arrival in hell, various feelings of pity, fear and revulsion sweep over him. He weeps at the tumult of sounds — groans, sighs, curses — that strike him all at once and throw him into confusion. Horror fills him at the first tableau of

sufferers he sees. Even Virgil's face turns pale with terror and anguish at the prospect of descending from a cliff's edge into the 'blind world' below. There will be many such moments of panic before Dante gets to the dead, icy centre of hell. His reaction of pity, for example, to the story of Paolo and Francesca's seduction by the literature of courtly love, is itself a product of confused values, making known to him his own complicity with seductive powers. The episode is treated by the poet as a fall; for at its conclusion Dante himself faints away like a dead body. The pilgrim has other such moments of weakness, as when he tells us that his fondness for the glutton Ciacco 'weighs upon me and invites me to weep'. The difficulty of the lesson to be learned is comprised in the ambiguity of the word *pietà*, which can mean both 'piety', always appropriate to the passenger through hell, and 'sympathy', which is not.

At other times in the *Inferno*, Dante seems to enter into the wrath of God (imaginatively experienced by the grace-less pagan as: 'the Emperor of up there'), the Power whose mere act of willing is tantamount to performance. The absence of divine love, which the reader senses as the great distance of God from everyone here, is the most terrifying infernal reality. Ignatius, in his First Meditation on Sin, has the redeemable sinner kneel humbly before Christ on the cross. God as experienced by a lost soul, however, is merely the executive of justice, *vendetta*. Dante, distancing himself from the more odious sins, identifies himself with divine justice. He responds with anger, and the blow of an oar, to the anger of Filippo Argenti, boiling in the mud. He rejoices at the blood-curdling attack by serpents upon Vanni Fucci, who has made an obscene gesture at God. He even makes a false promise to a wretch frozen in the ice for treachery to his own people: he will alleviate his pain upon learning his secret; but then he fails to keep the promise.

Dante sees the law of *contrapasso* at work in the *Inferno*. The condemned suffer within themselves what they have made others suffer. The situation is explained very well by a commentator on the *Exercises*: 'Hell is the abandoned sinner delivered over to his sin (Rom 1,24). Everything is already completed when the act is committed; there is nothing lacking except the sensible manifestation of the situation already created'.[17] We may also note that Ignatius, like Dante, does not so much present doctrinal considerations, but rather inserts the exercitant into their historical dynamic; 'His method is to make us present to a concrete, evolving reality, just as scripture reveals it to us'.[18]

A final theme which merits our consideration in the *Inferno* is the oppressive weight of sin, and the explicitly physical terms used to convey its gravity. As Dante and Virgil are climbing down (always

turning to the left) over rocks and ice to the core of earth — 'the bottom of the universe', the poet says: 'We were going to that middle whereto all that is heavy gathers'. The gravest sinner, Lucifer, has plunged to the geometric bottom and is frozen there in his brute ugliness, 'constrained by all the weights of the world' (*Paradiso*, XXIX,57). This is utter servitude, the complete absence of freedom. Ignatius would say that it is good, very Catholic, for Dante to be exposed to evil in its unmasked form. 'If a person does not attain to anything better and more useful, servile fear will help him emerge from mortal sin, after which he can easily arrive at filial fear, a condition entirely acceptable and pleasing to God since it co-exists with divine love' (Rules for Thinking with the Church XVIII, Exx 370; cf Exx 65).

Dante and his guide Virgil struggle up from the depths, through a narrow opening, onto the shores of Mount Purgatory. Here his pilgrimage is about to acquire a new sense. Virgil explains to the jealous guardian Cato: 'He goes searching freedom (*libertà va cercando*), which is so dear to him'. We have to be snatched by God's intervention from attachment to the world: a truth underlined by Dante when, on the lower slope of the mount in the Valley of the Good Princes and weighed down 'by my inheritance from Adam', he is borne away up to the gates of Purgatory proper by an eagle, an exalting force, purifying his love in its burning light.

After a ritual of submission to an angel at the threshold, allegorically suggestive of sacramental confession, Dante and Virgil pass through the crevice beyond the narrow gate, and emerge, *liberi e aperti*, 'free and open', onto the first terrace. The word *libero* and its variants is used twenty times in the *Divine Comedy*: fourteen of these occur in the *Purgatorio*, all but two of them after the entrance into Purgatory proper. Purgatory exists (so we learn in Canto XVI) for those who have abused liberty, their power to decide, by running after false images of Good.

In the *Purgatorio* Virgil, esteemed by Dante as *dolce padre caro*, has again to encourage, as well as to enlighten, Dante's 'timid will, failing to open' to the truth (XVIII,8). The truth in question is very similar to Ignatius's Principle and Foundation. It occupies the central cantos of the *Purgatorio*, and therefore the middle place of the three-part *Commedia*. In these cantos, which bring Marco Lombardo into the conversation, Dante depicts the human spirit sent into the world on its own, *l'anima semplicetta che sa nulla*, 'the simple little soul which knows nothing'. T. S. Eliot paraphrased and slightly refocused this section in his poem *Animula*. Dante is here at the heart of human conduct, and the inner constitution of man as he has issued from God's creative act. It is, in fact, a highly scholastic pedagogy on the

metaphysics of behaviour — man's attraction to the good and his discernment of it. In Canto XV, the sun, as an image of the true good which all luminous substances share without exhausting it, strikes Dante full in the face. Yet to know who the sun represents and where specifically lies the All-Good who is to be rejoiced in by all, as 'ours' and not merely 'mine', awaits the coming of revelation, personified in Beatrice.

How rare goodness is these days, says Dante and, always the puzzler about human existence, he asks Marco Lombardo why. The answer, says Marco, is not in bad influences but in ourselves. We are all moved dynamically toward the good. Despite all evil pressures we have an inner light to discern evil from good, freedom to choose, *libero voler*. 'You lie free before a greater force and better motive than that of the stars'. But we lose out in the initial stages, straying without governance or good example, giving up too soon, our attention warped away from the true good to wrong objects. In the declining light of this second day in Purgatory, Dante struggles for reason. He shows the human being as propelled generally towards the good, with prudence, 'the virtue that counsels us', responsible for and helped along by that moral philosophy which the great sages have left us to guide our freedom.

Our internal response, or the absence of it — that motivation which can prove truly effective: this is a mystery beyond philosophy's grasp. The story of Dante's servitude, his abuse of freedom, is summed up as follows:

> He turned his steps along a way not true,
> followed false images of good
> that never yet delivered on a promise (*Purgatorio*, XXX,130-32).

He is prepared for true penitence as, one by one, the evil dispositions, the seven sinful tendencies weighting him down, are removed from his brow by the angels of penitence after each of the seven terraces of Purgatory. Virgil, personifying the wisely guiding human forces in this process, tells him at the end:

> Free, upright, and healthy is your will
> and it would be folly not to follow it,
> so I both crown and mitre you over yourself (XXVII, 140-42).

He is then able to confess and do true penance, admitting manfully that he had followed a siren, backsliding despite his entry into the *vita nuova*, where he had achieved the new image of the goodness and beauty of a spouse of Christ. He is ready for the experience of blessedness. He is not so much now over-mastered but purified and

upraised and willingly carried by Beatrice, *mater* and hence *Ecclesia*, and in particular the lover: the power of her goodness erotically attracting but also steering him towards God. The two-phase principle of Dante's progress through heaven is traced in many passages, with Canto XVIII as typical as any. Here he sees in Beatrice's eyes *il piacere eterno*, God's good pleasure, reflected and strengthening his will against the base motive, vengeance against his enemies. She in turn has to detach him from herself, directing him to others, 'for not in my eyes alone is Paradise' (XVIII,21). At the very end of the *Paradiso*, Dante, by the miraculous elevation of powers, is made capable of the vision of God in himself. His will is thus fixed and stabilized in the good.

The tutor and the revealer, Virgil and Beatrice, educative power of literature (where nature can appear, as in the supposedly messianic Eclogue, attracted beyond itself towards the revealed God) and illuminating grace (the Truth in constant response to the pilgrim's *dubbi*, or nagging questions): this strongly-matched pair find their analogues in the Spiritual Exercises in the director and the good spirit. The director plays an indispensable role in the process of this change of heart, helping the retreatant to apply the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, by which he can detect whether the spirit of evil, Satan, 'the enemy of human nature', or the good Spirit, is at the source of inner movements and experiences.

The director first makes known the rudimentary rules: when the person is sunk in sin of some kind, the enemy tends to keep before him the pleasure of his evil ways, to make the thought of change distressing; whilst the good spirit uses the bite of conscience to goad him towards change (Exx 313-27). But the director's major and more subtle task is as a guide to truly generous souls, laying bare to them the tactics of the emissaries of evil. 'First, they will tempt people by greed for riches, which suffice to ensnare most people. Thereby they will lead them more easily to worldly vanity and thence to great pride' (Exx 142). The retreatant is urged to take a sharply opposing action: to pray humbly, in the measure given, first for poverty, then for deprivation of goods such as cultural or professional talents, as well as God's special consolations, and finally perhaps even to be subjected to lying reports, such as evil gossip or a bad press (Exx 167). In testing out one's prayers, reactions, and choices, one is taught how our Lord gives 'inner consolation without any preceding cause' (Exx 336), and is cautioned against the evil one transfiguring himself into an angel of light (Exx 332), with his own view to disturbance. The similes, the imaginative deftness with which Ignatius pictures the action of both good spirit and evil in these Rules, strike a truly poetic chord.

We have discussed how Dante carries on his pedagogy of evil and its effects in the *Inferno*. The spirits of evil appear there occasionally as part of the evidence: as the coarse and even farcical brute demons torturing malefactors in the pits, as depraved monsters or chained primitive forces, with Lucifer himself at the icy bottom. We have discussed the pedagogy of liberation from illusions of the good, in the *Purgatorio*: in the valley of the Princes, two protecting angels are needed against the serpent lurking in the shadows (VIII). In the nightmare of the siren, we have a symbolic presentation of allurement and illusion unmasked before the susceptible pilgrim (XIX). Dante does not draw much explicit attention to the Holy Spirit; but in the *Paradiso*, he achieves a remarkable linguistic rendering of the interiorization of grace. On an average of once per canto he coins some compound verb with the preposition 'in', to show how God is present *in* the one being made blessed. Beatrice, for example, is the one who *imparadises* Dante's mind. The number of the stars in the heavens *immillions* itself, like the progressive doubling of chess squares. The closest of the nine spheres, to the intensely active 'still point' of God, whirls fastest because it *intruths* itself more in him.

One thing that binds Dante very close to Ignatius, and focuses our attention on the latter's insistence that we pray for poverty or deprivation (Exx 157), is his sense of how much goodness has been devoured by the cursed she-wolf, avarice (*Purgatorio*, XX,10). His insight is not so much that greed leads to pride as that it leads to oppressive violence. Its effect upon others is contagious, whereas any responsible citizen should be contributing to restraint of these unworthy passions; and civil chaos and religious degeneracy is the result. Canto XIX of the *Inferno* is perhaps his most vivid *exemplum* here. We find popes stuck upside down in smoking holes for their simony, with Dante excoriating them and lamenting the gift of the riches of this world supposedly made to the Church by Constantine. In Canto VI of the *Purgatorio* we find his most sustained outburst against all the irresponsible and divided princes of Italy.

> Alas, Italy, you slave, you house of sorrow,
> ship without pilot in a fierce storm,
> no lady over provinces, but a bordello.

There is a tremendous hunger for justice in Dante. Amidst the very tranquillity of heaven, we find one after another of the spirits or groups of spirits bursting into fierce denunciation against the Florentines for being so much more prodigal and self-indulgent than their forebears, and against the religious orders for wandering away

from the true way of gospel simplicity to fatten themselves in sloth; against high-living cardinals, and vicious tyrants like Ezzolino. What is the most surprising aspect of Dante's Paradise is that it turns out to be the realm of righteous indignation, with regular tirades against cupidity (e.g. Canto XXVII, 121-23) and against religious who violate their vows; whilst the whole heaven of contemplative saints are loud in their denunciations of degenerate priests (XXI,130-42). Ignatius too saw in his Exercises a tool for the reformation of the Church and its clergy, particularly of those who seemed most well-disposed and best placed to foster christian renewal. The change of heart of all Europe was at stake; and also his disciples were soon to be caught up in missionary ventures on behalf of the Kingdom across the entire globe.

The missionary Ignatius was the visionary, and the Exercises became the jesuit school for partaking in the mystic graces of their founder. The poet and the visionary are kin. Hugo Rahner speaks for generations of commentators when he asserts that the Exercises are rooted in the contemplative visions of Ignatius, particularly his vision on the bank of the Cardoner river in Catalonia, of the whole universe as streaming down *de arriba*, from above: that is, from the love of the Holy Trinity. And when the planet goes wayward, as we see in the panoramic prayer on the Incarnation (Exx 102-09), the Holy Trinity looks down with mercy and devises a way of descent, in view of salvation. Ignatius himself depended daily on consolation: the feeling of some movement in his soul which did not come from himself alone; and he was keenly aware of the 'below' of a world crying out for redemption.[19]

A second major vision, occurring at the wayside chapel of La Storta on his way into Rome to present himself and his companions to the pope, made real for Ignatius and those close to him what he had earlier derived from his readings in Ludolph's *Life of Christ* and the accounts of those hero-knights of the Lord, Francis and Dominic, in the *Legenda Aurea*, readings which Ignatius recast into the call of the King and the meditation on Two Standards. Ignatius beheld in spirit the Eternal Father, who in turn looked with love upon himself and his companions and recommended them to his divine Son, as he was bearing his cross. The Son in his turn promised: 'I will be favourable to you in Rome'. That constituted, for one all too aware how once he had played the 'caitiff knight', acceptance into the knightly service of our Lord the Señor, even to the heroism of the cross.

Perhaps the most poetic mark of all in the Exercises, by which Ignatius calls each one's imagination into fullest play, is the predilection for contemplating Jesus in his earthly life, the invitation

to enter into, one after the other, what Ignatius calls 'the mysteries of the life of Christ'. Fr David Stanley expresses the classic distinction between ignatian meditation and contemplation. 'Meditation' is that prayer which has as its object certain meta-historical realities of faith. It is proper to the First Week of the Exercises and reappears once or twice later. Contemplation is a species of *lectio divina*: the prayerful contemporary reading of the gospels or re-creation of the gospel scenes based on the persistent sense that 'the Lord is near'. 'I relate in faith to Jesus Christ . . . through these human experiences which befell the Word Incarnate in the days of his flesh, and do not merely belong to the past as past'. Stanley concludes: 'This form of christian prayer unquestionably constitutes the wellspring of ignatian spirituality'.[20] Indeed, one of the most sweeping visionary contemplations, on the Incarnation, is followed by one of the most humble and detailed, on the Nativity, which stands as a paradigm for the approach to subsequent events in Christ's life. The method of application of senses is best acquired here (Exx 121-26).

The Exercises in their progression foster the unitive way: 'the stage in the spiritual life when we move out of ourselves towards Christ'. As Fr John English explains, 'The Third and Fourth Weeks taken together may be considered the unitive way, for the grace being sought is union with Christ, first in his suffering and then in his glory'.[21]

Here we rejoin Dante. The *Paradiso* is dominated by the unitive impulse, and its crown is the visionary glimpse of the Triune God. Only those who have experienced a certain connaturality with the inner and spiritual life, says the poet, who have achieved a certain spiritual maturity, will be able to sustain their interest in my *Paradiso*, and prove to be worthy guests at the table of this Wisdom, to eat 'the bread of angels'. It must be said, however, that a sustained comparison between the Exercises and the *Divina Commedia* seems to founder on the christological rock, in the sense that gospel-contemplation is conspicuous by its absence. To put it another way, the typically franciscan *Life of Christ*, so long attributed to Bonaventure, seems operative in the Exercises, whereas the genuine Bonaventure, his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (Journey of the Spirit unto God), so imbued with stages and symbols of the mystical journey, is much nearer Dante's *Paradiso*: illuminative graces and the Way of Ascent seem to take us out of the sacramental realm and off the surface of earth. For example, in Canto XXII of the *Paradiso*, Dante, from the top of the Jacob's ladder of contemplation, is able to look down on the pettiness of worldly concerns — *terrena despicere* is the way Latin Mass prayers used to put it — seeing far below 'the tiny threshing floor that makes us so ferocious'. Serious attention is

given to the relations within the Trinity, as debated by Gilbert de la Porrée and Richard of St Victor, but the consequence is that the divine persons appear to be geometrical rather than live figures. In Canto XXIV, St Peter poses him questions about faith which come from theological treatises, and suggest the medieval disputation with its syllogistic method, and even the warm embrace of the successful examination pupil by the Master. Neither here nor in the subsequent questioning on hope and charity by James and John does the figure of Jesus appear.

How then does Christ figure in the *Divine Comedy*? First, in the *Inferno*, where the oppressiveness is seen in the reign of a spirit counter to his. The reader is made aware that the condition of the damned has been fixed by their future judge, that he has broken the power of this place by his resurrection; his passing through, his harrowing of this place to bring the holy ones of the Old Testament into glory with him, is symbolized by the cleft in the rock. Undoubtedly, Christ enters the awareness of the pilgrim from the first, as the authentic way.

In Purgatory, which respresents in homely detail our own world with its sequence of day and night, but transplanted to another hemisphere for purification, the Church of Christ predominates. All repenters have to enter through the narrow gate of sacramental confession, allegorized in Canto IX. Angel messengers abound. (There is more than a trace of Fra Angelico and other Quattrocento painters both in the courtliness of the angel addressing Mary in Ignatius's tableau of the Incarnation [Exx 102-08], and in the delicacy of that same scene, even to its streamers of latin wording, in Canto X of the *Purgatorio*.) Christ as the Jesus of Emmaus joining human wayfarers colours the liberation of Statius from his expiatory bond, with the whole mountain trembling in a *gloria* of praise (XXI,7-15). The *Purgatorio* focuses over and again on the communion of the faithful, helping each other towards salvation, kissing each other briefly as a greeting of peace as well as in expiation of lust, learning to compose 'that Rome where Christ is a Roman' (XXI,102), and that monastery 'in which Christ is abbot of the *collegium*' (XXVI,129). And we derive the same incarnational sense from the repeated turning to Mary: her intercession for the desperate, her example of humility and of other virtues.

The story of the Church, past and present, is acted out in the allegorical pageant of the last four cantos of the *Purgatorio*. In this elaborate tableau, redolent of processions, symbolic commemorations, mystery plays of the Middle Ages, especially the Corpus Christi festivities, the presence of Christ is signalized by the Griffin, symbol of humanity and divinity. Yet when the Griffin arrives, the

chariot remains empty and everyone is still waiting. Then a call, phrased in wording from the Song of Songs (Cant 4,8), is sent forth for the bride, the bride of Christ. On her appearance the welcome is addressed in the masculine form, *Benedictus qui venis*, 'Blessed are you who come', a greeting drawn from the Palm Sunday welcome of Christ and used in the Mass just prior to Christ's coming in the consecration. Like a sunrise, her way strewn with flowers, it is Beatrice who arrives.

The hardy, most daring stroke of Dante is to have Christ borne to the pilgrim at this point in the figure of Beatrice. Dante, applying the masculine metaphor to his lady according to the courtly love convention, not only successfully avoids bestowing on Beatrice traits proper to the Virgin Mary, but communicates the profound truth that his lady makes Christ palpably present to her lover. In the christian understanding of grace and indwelling, his lady is his Lord. Her action as stern judge of Dante, reducing him to penitential tears for his falseness to her image of the Good, fits in with this role. Marianne Shapiro puts it well: 'Beatrice is from the outset a character in a story, and a woman, *not*-the-Virgin, *not*-Christ, and yet gradually ever more imbued with Christological meaning'.[22] This woman, ideal and real, through whom the power of Eros has exercised itself on Dante — whose lovely eyes made the noose whence to snare him to blessedness (*Paradiso*, XXVII,62) — purifies him, for she refers everything to God; she is revealing, herself a medium as well as fit symbol for illuminating grace; she fulfils the promise made from the start of the *Vita Nuova* that her *salute*, greeting, would also be Dante's *salute*, salvation. The rhythm of Dante's ascent in Paradise is determined by the increase of divine glory which he sees as he looks into her eyes; it stems from her intenser love and contributes to his. The growth of vision and love in tandem is Dante's attempt to reconcile the view of Aquinas with the masters of affective theology concerning the question, which is prior in beatific union, vision or love?

Christ our Lord himself is a ruling presence in the *Paradiso*, he 'who opened the paths between heaven and earth' (XXIII,38). He is the bridegroom lovingly serenaded by the Church as spouse, and raised in the dance of theologians who are transformed with joy by the sun-like Truth. The lightning-stroke, the flashing of the cross in the heaven of Mars, recalls the basic duty of Christians, baldly stated by Dante, to take up one's cross and follow Christ (XIV,104-08). The wonderful passage in Canto XI of the *Paradiso*, which describes St Francis's romance with Lady Poverty, not only follows the love-service motif of the whole *Comedy*, but seems to capture the essential spirit of Ignatius's Third Degree of Humility

(Exx 167-68). Christ's presence is also implied at other crucial moments, as when Dante leaves to God's providence the salvation of the non-baptized, a matter which troubles him (XIX,103-11). Above all, the holy ones in heaven lament the betrayal of the image and example of Christ by so-called Christians yet alive.

One of the most famous and beloved passages of the *Commedia*, St Bernard's prayer to the Virgin, is, as Erich Auerbach explains, a masterpiece of the christian sublime; where, above all, the paradox of Christ's incarnation, infinite greatness descending to a lowly state, is celebrated.[23]

The culmination of the *Paradiso*, and of the *Comedy* as a whole, is Dante's sudden passing vision of the Holy Trinity. It is now far beyond his remembering or telling, but he recalls that within the triple circling of the divine light, the Word appeared painted with our image but in its own divine colour. Hugo Rahner has emphasized how carefully in the spirituality of Ignatius, where Jesus Christ is continually central, we find in his person divinity and humanity unmixed and inseparable.

There is something awesome about the end-point of Dante the pilgrim's journey, even in its preparatory moments. When he arrives among the blessed, who are gathered in the form of a mystical rose, he reflects: If the barbarian coming to Rome is so overwhelmed by the Lateran, imagine my feelings:

> I, coming to holiness from the profane,
> into eternity from hectic time,
> from Florence to a people just and sane —
> think what amazement at the sight was mine.
> As when a pilgrim by gazing is restored
> at his vow's shrine, and hopes within him rise
> that of its wonders he may take home word,
> so I. (XXXI,37-40;43-46)

Here he stands gaping like a pilgrim from Croazia, come to see Veronica's shroud, and exclaims: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, true God, this then was the semblance your face bore?' (107-08).

The passage also communicates Dante's reverential sense of wonder at the greatness of God. The *Comedy* is felt to have, above all else, tremendous cosmic reach. Christ the Redeemer, come to save us from the illusion of self-love, leads us in a progressively growing throng, at the centre of all creatures whose finality directs them along the same way, towards union at the heart of the unseen and all-provident God.

Beatrice, as she initiates Dante into the heavenly order, reminds

him that creatures are moved by instinct 'towards varied ports over the great sea of being' (1,112-13). Piccarda dei Donati, explaining why she is happy enough with a lower place in heaven, puts it yet more memorably:

> . . . The king inwills us
> to his desire; in his will is our peace.
> This is the sea to which all creatures stream
> that he creates or nature brings to be (III,84-87).

The most beautiful and comprehensive statement comes at the point of beatific vision:

> In that abyss I say how love held bound
> into one volume all the leaves, sewn tight,
> which scatter in the universe around;
> how substance, accident, and mode unite
> compiled, as it were, so wondrously
> that this I tell of is one simple light. (XXXIII,85-90)

We have never left Ignatius behind in all this. Though the focus of his attention may differ, that is, on the divine Goodness raining downwards from above rather than on God drawing all things together back to himself, the overarching vision is basically identical with Dante's: that is, all things proceed, with utter spontaneity and prodigality, from God's inexhaustible love. The Spiritual Exercises surprise the retreatant with one final, culminating prayer, The Contemplation for Obtaining Love, which opens up the unlimited vista of God's beneficence, his intense desire to give everything possible, himself included and all things in him, to me.

This all-inclusive consideration is meant to diffuse its light backwards, so that it colours the whole of the Exercises. But it also casts its light ahead, to govern the retreatant's life of prayer, helping him to the habitual grace 'of finding God in all things': the mystical grace granted to Ignatius, which led him to say, quite simply, that he had the gift of finding God immediately and at any time. It is meant as well to confirm the retreatant in his self-oblation to God's service, in that love which becomes, ever more wholly, the driving-force of his life (cf 2 Cor 5,14). The truisms, 'Love ought to be looked for more in deeds than in words', and 'love consists in that mutual interchange from either side, of what one has to the other', are given fresh vigour in the final gesture of returning 'all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my will' to God, our Creator and Lord.

Dante the pilgrim also ends at this point, confirmed in love by his experience of God, and returning to a life that must now find its constant guidance from this fixed star:

> And there already, rousing desire and will
> just like a wheel that is smoothly turned,
> was Love, who moves the sun and the other stars.[24]

At a Congress on the Spiritual Exercises in Vienna five years ago, Karl Rahner identified the pilgrim Ignatius as one who ushered in the modern era, which has now reached its term. The saint, he declared, asserted the unique and free subjectivity of each human being faced with the decision of directing his life's way towards God, the immediate source of his existence: a decision prior to all considerations of order, nature, authority and Church. Thus the Ignatius of the Exercises looks further ahead than Dante 'The Poet of the Secular City', to use Auerbach's phrase. But there can be no denying the strong line of Catholic and poetic kinship between the two.

NOTES

[1] *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, 4 (first published at Antwerp in 1503).

[2] Cf J. C. Olin, 'Erasmus and St Ignatius Loyola', in *Luther, Erasmus and the Reformation*, eds O. R. McNally S.J. and J. R. Swart (New York, 1969).

[3] Cf J. De Lubac S.J., *Exégèse Médiévale* (Paris, 1959), I, pp 25ff.

[4] The various distinctions here are drawn from Charles Singleton, *Dante's Commedia, Elements of Structure*, Dante Studies, I (Harvard Press, 1954), and *Journey to Beatrice*, Dante Studies II (1958); Robert Hollander, 'Dante, Theologus-Poeta', in *Dante Studies* (Dante Society of America, 1976); Erich Auerbach, 'Figura', in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (Gloucester, Mass., 1973).

[5] George Faludy, *Erasmus* (New York, 1970), p 77.

[6] T. S. Eliot, 'Dante', in *Selected Essays* (New York, 1964), p 223; George P. Elliot, 'Getting to Dante', in the *Hudson Review* (Winter 1958-59), pp 597-611.

[7] Antonio Astráin S.J., cited by Hugo Rahner S.J., in *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola*, trans F. J. Smith S.J. (Westminster Md., 1953), p 20.

[8] Pedro Leturia S.J., *Inigo de Loyola*, trans A. Owen S.J., (Syracuse, New York, 1949), p 25.

[9] Jon Sobrino S.J., *Cristología desde America Latina* (Mexico, 1976), p 339.

[10] Thomas Clancy S.J., *An introduction to Jesuit Life: the Constitutions and History through 435 years* (St Louis, 1975), p 110.

[11] Cf Michael J. Buckley S.J., 'Mission in Companionship: Of Jesuit Community and Communion', in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (September, 1979).

[12] Cf Thomas Werge, 'The Race to Death and Race for Salvation in Dante's *Commedia*', in *Dante Studies*, XCVII (1979), pp 1-21.
[13] A good example is Grendel in the Old English epic *Beowulf*. Cf J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 22 (1936), pp 245-95.
[14] From the homilies attributed to St Macharius, PG 34,710-11.
[15] Anthony K. Cassell, 'Failure, Pride and Conversion in *Inferno I*: a Reinterpretation', in *Dante Studies*, XCIV (1976), pp 9-10.
[16] Amilcare A. Ianucci, 'Beatrice in Limbo: A Metaphoric Harrowing of Hell', in *Dante Studies*, XCVII, pp 32-33.
[17] Winoc de Broucker S.J., 'La première semaine des Exercises', in *Christus*, 6,21 (1959), p 31.
[18] Giles Cusson S.J., *Pédagogie de l'expérience spirituelle personnelle* (Paris, 1968).
[19] Hugo Rahner S.J., *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans Michael Barry (New York, 1969), pp 1-31.
[20] 'Contemplation of the Gospels, Ignatius Loyola, and the contemporary Christian', in *Theological Studies* (September, 1968), pp 432,421.
[21] *Spiritual Freedom* (Guelph, Ontario, 1977), p 232. Ignatius himself states that the first week corresponds to the purgative, the second to the illuminative life (Exx 10).
[22] Marianne Shapiro, 'Figurality in the *Vita Nuova*', in *Dante Studies*, XCVII (1979), p 115.
[23] Cf his chapter on this topic in *Latin Literature and its public in the late Middle Ages*.
[24] All translations from the *Divina Commedia* are my own.