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## Ong, The Barbarian Within, 1962

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### Présentation de la fiche

Coteb020\_f0251

SourceBoite\_020-8-chem | [sans titre]

LangueFrançais

TypeFicheLecture

Personnes citées[de Loyola, Ignace](#)

Références bibliographiques[Ong, The Barbarian Within, 1962](#)

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

### Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

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could be such as though we were to see). Frusius' difficulty is obvious: St. Ignatius seemed to be making too much of the image, and to be suggesting too strongly that it should be used for all meditations on things invisible.

St. Ignatius let his subject's alteration stand. He did not regard his text of the *Exercises* as partaking of the infallibility or inalterability of the Scriptures, and his whole attitude toward everything short of God, including certainly the *Exercises* themselves, is elastic and adaptable. But the fact remains that in the extant text which seems best to represent his thought and which he has annotated in his own hand, the Spanish *texto autógrafa*, with which the Latin "Versio Prima" slavishly agrees, he says that "the composition *will* be to see . . ." and, unless we interpolate some sort of emendation or *subintelligo* for which he provides no warrant, he proposes this "composition of place" for any and all "meditation on something invisible." Actually, this carries the composition forward only through the first four exercises of the First Week, for the fifth exercise is on hell—something visible, at least after the resurrection—and thereafter one is in the Second Week and the Incarnation, the regions of invisibility left behind. Still, the fact remains of the curious emotional strength attaching to this prison-and-brute-animal picture in St. Ignatius' mind, not to mention his curious association of it, above all other imagery, with the "invisible."

## II

The immediate source of St. Ignatius' imagery need not trouble us here, although it is evident that what he invites the exercitant to picture has a long history in human thought, particularly in Western thought, Christian and non-Christian. The imagery suggests passages from the Old and the New Testament, as, for example, Wisd. 9:15: "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things," or Gal. 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Echoing such passages, countless other passages can be gathered from Christian secular and spiritual literature, and in particular from the Carthusian writers of whom St. Ignatius was so fond.

But sources in this case operate viciously. Instead of reassuring commentators of the validity of St. Ignatius' imagery so as to bring them

to put themselves more thoroughly into it, these sources at best only deflect the commentators' attention back from what St. Ignatius says to analogies from elsewhere which say something like what he says without really saying the same thing at all. The general procedure among commentators has thus been one of blurring, comparable to, but rather more advanced than, that of Frusius in his Vulgate version.

Without going into all the interpreters, we can take three well known modern ones, one in French, one in German, and one in English—Longhaye, Meschler, and Gabriel. Longhaye sees the prelude as expressing two things: (1) the sorry plight of the soul in the body (in prison, loaded with chains, etc.) and (2) the sorry plight of man in his resemblance to brute beasts. The second of these two things reduces immediately to the first, for man is at the level of brute beasts because his soul is imprisoned in a body: "Je les domine par l'esprit; mais je me trouve à leur niveau par mes appétits corporels."<sup>3</sup>

Meschler does not consider the prison situation and the brute-animal situation as separate at all, but lumps them together and simply regards the first prelude as a whole as expressing "forcibly the sinner's vileness and degradation almost to the level of brute animals."<sup>4</sup> Gabriel considers the two situations separately.<sup>5</sup> The body has become a prison because, since the Fall, it has overpowered the soul. The brute-animal situation seems to have two phases: man is first pictured by Gabriel as in exile among "a rude and savage people," and then as among "filthy animals" because living as though "devoid of reason and judgment." These interpretations are not exhaustive, but they are typical of all the explanations or commentaries which I have ever been able to find—except for the large number which quickly skip the passage and move on to less puzzling phenomena.

The first thing to note about these explanations is that, beyond a doubt, they are doctrinally orthodox. Their general manipulation of the prison and brute-beast symbolism is well within the *analogia fidei* and can be paralleled by countless examples from spiritual writers. It is also well within what we might style the *analogia Ignatiana*, for in the second Addition at the end of the First Week we find this advice:

similarly in the second Exercise [on rising I should recall the subject-matter of meditation to mind], making myself out to be a great sinner in chains, that is to say, that I move about as though encumbered with chains on my way to appear before the most high Eternal Judge, picturing to myself as an

pas de verso