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[Ong, The Barbarian Within, 1962 - suite]

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Présentation de la fiche

Coteb020_f0254

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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item, a bit of imaginative décor, but something basic to the whole symbolic economy, so that St. Ignatius' inclination to throw great weight on this symbol becomes eminently understandable. Ultimately, the connection of the *Spiritual Exercises* with the world of symbolism is due to their concern with the self, which is a major preoccupation of the mind's unconscious and conscious symbolic activity. To glimpse some of the connections here, we need only draw on certain notions current more or less everywhere along the contemporary intellectual front, notions which are here taken as being, in general, well enough known in their larger aspects to make unnecessary any detailed documentation—which would run on endlessly anyhow, and which can be had by those who wish it in the various reports on contemporary developments in psychological research, anthropological studies, and phenomenological and personalist or "existentialist" analysis.¹⁰

In St. Ignatius' image of a prison-cage, the notion of separation or estrangement is evidently paramount. This is due to a concern with self, which means, conversely, a concern with the nonself or the other, and with the line of separation between myself and other selves. In terms of this separation, the body functions not in the way it functions in the rather more mechanistic body-soul or matter-form point of view, for it functions not as the seat of sense organs, the starting point for concepts connecting man with his surroundings, but rather in terms of man's interior, personal, and incommunicable self-consciousness, the individual's own private experience of his own individual existence which he can never impart to anyone else nor share directly with anyone else (save God). In terms of this self, the body is less a connecting than an alienating mechanism, for our consciousness is our "interior," and, while contact with the external world is a necessary condition of self-awareness, it is necessary not because it supplies the stuff of self-awareness—which it does not do at all, since the self is precisely what does *not* come *into* my consciousness from the outside—but because it gives us something, the "other" as a kind of background against which self-awareness can be constituted.

My interior is for me, but for no one else (save God), bright, luminous, vivid, by contrast with the dull, dead stuff of the world outside consciousness, and my body is the transit between the two realms of the interior and the exterior. The ambivalent character of St. Ignatius' prison-cage is due to the mediating role of the body here. In one way

it functions as a prison, a limit, not only differentiating the interior from the exterior but actually constraining the interior, for, as Heidegger has well explained, the human self *ex*-ists. It does not merely *in*-sist but rather seeks to spread out, to bring the dead, dull, outside world within the circle of its own luminosity. But the body, the very organ through which the self becomes aware of the exterior, stands in the way, for it itself, despite its intimate connection with the self, is in a sense exterior, so that everything which comes *into* the soul through its mediation is invested with exteriority. There are other human selves, but, since the bodily senses mediate my contact with them, my knowledge of them remains radically an exterior knowledge. Even a husband cannot experience the consciousness of his wife as she does herself, nor a wife that of her husband. The one does not really know what it feels like to be the other.

As body, St. Ignatius' prison-cage symbolizes this tantalizing situation. It is a part of the self and it is not a part of the self. It is a prison and yet it can be thrown with the self into exile. Moreover, it can positively protect the self—from brute beasts. And why from brute beasts? Rainer Maria Rilke, very much in the Kierkegaard tradition, speaks occasionally of the dull, blank emptiness which stares out from the animal's eye. The animal is a living being, and as such suggestive of the human self, but he has no interiority, no self-consciousness, no self-possession. Because of this he symbolizes the situation we find ourselves in—or at least half of this situation. We have no direct access to the self-consciousness of others, although we know indirectly that such self-consciousness exists. In a world filled with real personalities we are, in a radical way, totally isolated, incapable of communicating our self-consciousness or of intimately registering that of others. The brute animal, totally devoid of self-consciousness, thus impressively symbolizes our isolation.

St. Ignatius slips quite naturally into this symbolism because he feels the isolation by reason of his religious preoccupations. Concern with God is in one way or another tied up with concern about this isolation of the ego. For God alone shares the interior of my self-consciousness, knows intimately what it feels like to be *me*. "*Homo videt in faciem, Deus autem in corde*"—"Man looks into the face, but God sees within the heart." Moreover, on the strength of the Pauline text, "*Cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum*" ("I shall know even as I am known"—I Cor.

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