







# Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits

JAN 14 1992

A Company of Critics:  
Jesuits and the  
Intellectual Life

*John A. Coleman, S.J.*

22/5      November 1990

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A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence the Studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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A Company of Critics  
*Jesuits and the Intellectual Life*



John A. Coleman, S.J.

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits  
22/5: November 1990

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
1950

REPORT OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THE  
ORGANIZATION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

Presented to the  
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AT THE MEETING OF THE FACULTY  
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BY  
THE COMMISSION ON THE  
ORGANIZATION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
1950

## *For your information . . .*

If this November issue of *Studies* comes to you somewhat later than usual, the reasons should be laid to my account. In earlier October, when these paragraphs and the last editing touches for *Studies* would have been prepared, I was away in Rome for several meetings and for two memorable celebrations.

The first of the meetings involved the staff of CIS, the Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis. As many of the readers of *Studies* know, the Institute of Jesuit Sources is preparing a one-volume edition of the complete works of St. Ignatius in English translation, along with the translation in that volume of about two hundred of his letters. The members of CIS have been very helpful in assisting with what will involve translators and writers from several parts of the world. A second meeting with Father General and with Father John O'Callaghan, one of the general assistants, dealt with a computer-software-program project which will make easily available for research purposes all seven thousand letters of St. Ignatius. The curia and the Max Planck Institute for Mathematical Research in Göttingen, Germany, are working together on creating the program. The Institute of Jesuit Sources may well be the place in which the results of the project will be housed.

One of the two memorable celebrations was very public, the other rather private. At the first, the Vatican Library on October 23 formally and splendidly opened the 140-piece exhibit commemorating the 450th anniversary of the Society and the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Ignatius. Pope John Paul II personally attended the opening, a rare occurrence for such an occasion. The exhibit is entitled "Saint, Life, and Sacred Strategy: Ignatius, Rome, and Jesuit Urbanism." It maintains that St. Ignatius, through pastoral experience, trial and error, and intense reflection, developed an urban theological vision and proposed an expanded model of religious presence which was specifically shaped by the social and economic exigencies of urban life in the fifteen hundreds. The exhibit contains illuminated manuscripts, maps, engravings, original autograph documents, paintings from the Jesuit archives, the Churches of the Gesù and St. Ignatius, and several Italian state galleries. Among the original documents, for example, are the 1534 diploma of St. Ignatius from the University of Paris, the

signed formula of the vows taken by the companions in 1541 after the official founding of the Society, and a handwritten copy of the Constitutions with corrections in St. Ignatius's own hand. It is a wonderful exhibit, well worth seeing, lodged in the Salone Sistino, the largest and most beautiful hall of the Vatican Library.

From the large and public to the small and rather private: the second occasion was a Mass in the newly and lovingly restored rooms of St. Ignatius. Father Thomas Lucas, S.J., of the California Province and a group of his friends took part in it as something of a conclusion and surely a thanksgiving for all the work that had gone into the restoration of the rooms and into the Vatican exhibit, both of which owed their execution in great part to Father Lucas. The rooms are utterly moving in their simplicity and in their authenticity to the times in which St. Ignatius lived and worked in them.

Not very many people will have the opportunity to go to Rome before early next April, when the Vatican exhibit is scheduled to close. More people will get there in the years to come. If you ever do, be sure to visit those rooms of St. Ignatius right next to the Church of the Gesù. They will be there permanently and so, I am sure, will be his spirit.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*

*Editor*



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# A Company of Critics

## *Jesuits and the Intellectual Life*

### I. A CHORUS OF VOICES DOES NOT A CONVERSATION MAKE!

I invite the reader to join me and imitate a fly on the wall in selected Jesuit recreation rooms around the country. Let us unobtrusively listen to some variant voices addressing the motif "Jesuits and the Intellectual Life." These Jesuit voices represent both what sociologists call "a convenience sample" (that is, a sample easy for the interviewer to locate) rather than a clearly scientific survey; they are, moreover, an ideal-type composite portrait rather than direct citations from actual informants. Nevertheless, they would seem to articulate some of the most important concerns about Jesuit intellectual life found among a wider set of American Jesuits. Hearing these voices in unison convinced me that we need a renewed conversation on this issue.

After we have heard these voices, I will attempt in this essay to develop three theses:

**Thesis No. 1:** The intellectual life is a vocation for all Jesuits and every Jesuit apostolate.

**Thesis No. 2:** There need be no discrepancy between the call of General Congregation 32 for Jesuits to put a priority on the faith which does justice and a vigorous commitment to the intellectual life. Indeed, the congregation actually made up for some earlier lacunae in the Jesuit intellectual tradition.

**Thesis No. 3:** An essential component of a genuine commitment to the Jesuit intellectual life demands a closer integration of spirituality and the intellectual life than has always been usual in Jesuit circles.

Because I am a sociologist by training and inclination, these three theses will involve us at times in sociological evidence and argument, most especially Thesis No. 2, which will address two issues: the appearance of a new knowledge class in advanced industrial societies, and the ways in which schools can affect the political attitudes of their students. But throughout this essay my main concern focuses on a spiritual reality and issue: the renewal of an articulate Jesuit vision of how the intellectual life can inform our apostolates—especially but not uniquely the apostolate of education—and the integration of Jesuit spirituality with this vision.

Now, back to the voices. As if you were a good and practiced eavesdropper, dear Reader, listen initially, without passing any prior critical judgment, to the substantive content of each voice's discourse. In any event, be assured that my own citing of a voice does not indicate initial editorial endorsement or condemnation. Each voice represents a real theme I heard when I was brainstorming on the topic of this essay and haphazardly asked two dozen Jesuits around the country to respond to the Rorschach stimulus "What comes to mind when you hear the topic 'Jesuits and the Intellectual Life?'"

## The Voices

*Voice No. 1 (an established Jesuit, 55, full professor at a large Midwestern Jesuit university):*

I think someone should write about the topic in *Studies*. Our young people seem to want ministerial careers mainly in the social apostolate, spiritual direction and counseling, or pastoral ministry—frequently one-on-one ministries which are not always the most efficient use of Jesuit manpower. Actually, I fault the formation teams around the country for inculcating a kind of anti-intellectualism. Jesuits don't learn a spirituality geared to the intellectual life. Few of

our established scholars are asked to serve on formation teams or to address younger Jesuits.

I wish more of our young people would hear the words of GC 31 in its treatment of scholarly work and research, when it reminds Jesuits called and missioned to this apostolate: "They are to be on guard against the illusion that they will serve God better in other occupations which can seem more pastoral. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

**Interviewer:** "How do Jesuits at your institution react to the fact that it is very unlikely that they will be replaced by a sizeable cohort of Jesuit university scholars and teachers?"

**Voice No. 1:**

Sometimes by despair or denial or some grumbling, but mostly by going about their business. Probably it's true, alas, that they are not making any obvious concerted effort to articulate for younger Jesuits a compelling future vision of the excitement and apostolic meaning of this apostolate. Yet most Jesuits in this work remain, comparatively speaking, very enthusiastic and deeply committed to their apostolate.

**Voice No. 2 (a younger Jesuit, 36, pursuing doctoral studies in a large secular university in the South):**

I am not sure I can really pursue an intellectual life in any of our Jesuit universities as presently constituted. I have pondered Jacques Barzun's question "Why has the American college and university so little connection with intellect?"<sup>2</sup> and I think we need in the United States something like our Latin American SEAS research and action centers. I think Paul Goodman was right in his *Growing Up Absurd*<sup>3</sup> when he declared on page 15 that in America academic freedom has degenerated into the mere freedom to be academic. I don't want to become a desiccated scholar, a mere cog in the machine of the mass "knowledge industry," cranking out yuppie technical intelligentsia instead of vibrant intellectuals. Quite frankly, Jesuit universities

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), no. 549 (p. 241).

<sup>2</sup> Barzun's essay appears in Theodore Caplow and Reece J. McGee, *The Academic Marketplace* (New York: Basic Books, 1958), 55-72.

<sup>3</sup> New York: Random House, 1962.

don't strike me as embodying any very notable academic, let alone intellectual, vision for a transformed culture and society. Sometimes I wish I belonged to a Latin American province. I notice that Canadian Jesuit Michael Czerny, who earlier refused to take an academic position in a Jesuit university because he felt it militated against a true intellectual life, has recently volunteered to serve as a faculty member in El Salvador's Jesuit university.

*Voice No. 3 (a middle-aged Jesuit, 45, teaching at a large East Coast Jesuit university):*

Well, to tell the truth, I don't feel much like an intellectual myself. Few Americans do except a certain New York literary or politically leftist crowd. I think Jim Hennesey, our Jesuit historian, was right when he claimed that, if given a choice, Jesuits prefer working in the dorms with students to interaction with their professional colleagues. They want to be teacher-campus ministers more than teacher-intellectuals and scholars. In fact, I sometimes think that Jesuits should stick to what we do best: run high schools or small liberal-arts colleges and not try to be scholars. Two things strike me about Jesuits and the intellectual life. First, in our own training we do not really receive a liberal education. We remain, most of us, scientific illiterates.

The second thing I notice is the absence of stimulating intellectual conversation in our rec rooms and at meals. Our talk remains pretty much small talk of campus politics or gossip and practicalia. Amazingly, so many Jesuits at my place are gifted, learned, and widely read. I know this when I interact with them one-on-one, but rarely does this cultural wisdom surface in our more collective conversations. Maybe I romanticize the possibilities, but I have always envisioned Jesuit communities as places of lively conversation and exchanges of points of view about the most burning issues of the day; yet so little of that sort of conversation really takes place in our Jesuit rec rooms. Somehow I experience better intellectual stimulation at parties and gatherings of lay faculty. We seem afraid to disagree, argue passionately, query and press one another at home. As a community we have agreed to be civil with one another; effectively this has come to mean avoiding all conflict and controversy. Yet I read somewhere that, "if it were possible to imagine a world or even an individual society without conflict, hermetically sealed and

fully integrated, there would be no intellectuals, though there might still be new ideas and men to formulate them."<sup>4</sup>

If as a group we can't achieve enough union of hearts and minds to allow lively, civil, if loving and respectful, conflict and disagreement in our communities, those communities will never be seedbeds for a real intellectual life.

*Voice No. 4 (an older Jesuit, 63, associate professor at a Midwestern Jesuit university):*

I agree very much with Avery Dulles's presentation at the Georgetown jamboree last spring. Dulles claimed in that talk that we need "a necessary correction of course from the direction set by the decree "Our Mission Today." He also asserts that "unlike GC 31, GC 32 said nothing about contributing to the progress of human knowledge through scientific research, or about carrying on the Jesuit tradition in music, poetry, the theatre, and architecture. It is not easy to vindicate these scientific and cultural pursuits under the rubric of faith and justice." Is it any wonder, then, as Dulles claims, that "some, feeling that their vocation is to the intellectual apostolate, do not enter the Jesuits or leave the order"?<sup>5</sup>

Don't get me wrong. Decree 4 of GC 32 has its place. With Pedro Arrupe I support making the social apostolate one of our four top ministerial priorities (along with communications). But Arrupe put theological research and reflection as our first priority and education as our third. To try to make Decree 4 the lens by which we adjudicate the intellectual apostolate strikes me as a purely utilitarian understanding of the intellectual life: it is good only inasmuch as it promotes faith and justice. This won't wash.

It is unfair to our own Jesuit intellectual tradition. Think of Ricci or Bellarmine, who did not justify the intellectual vocation like this! It's unfair, too, to a much more contemplative understanding of intellectual life in the Church. I would refer your readers of *Studies* to

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<sup>4</sup> J. P. Nettle, "Ideas, Intellectuals and Dissent," *On Intellectuals*, ed. Philip Rief (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969), 83.

<sup>5</sup> Avery Dulles, "Faith, Justice and the Jesuit Mission," address at the 1989 assembly of Jesuits, Georgetown University. Father Dulles graciously sent me a copy of his unpublished manuscript when we talked last summer about this essay.

Jean LeClercq's classic *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*<sup>6</sup> for an alternative, less utilitarian and deep-rooted understanding of a Christian humanism in the intellectual life, free of any explicit thematization in and through concern for changing unjust social structures. Quite frankly, I think the Society has lost touch with an older Jesuit intellectual tradition of Christian humanism because of its one-sided preoccupation with Decree 4. This distresses me.

*Voice No. 5: (a middle-aged Jesuit, 46, assistant professor at a West Coast Jesuit university, where he serves as coordinator for interactive programs with the minority population in the university's city):*

Actually, when I hear "Jesuits and the Intellectual Life," I want to address the key issue about the relation of theory to praxis. The major social psychological finding about learning new ideas reads as follows: "People change their thinking by new ways of acting and not vice versa. People do not **think** their way into new ways of acting and new attitudes, they **act** their way into new ways of thinking." No one around here really wants to hear or digest that. But this "fact" about learning means that we need to put much greater emphasis on experience, on praxis, on a learning which take place out of life commitments.

When I talk this kind of language to the university administrators, they come back at me with the code word "academic," as in, "Well, that's fine and good but it is not academic. We stand for academic excellence here!" With Karl Mannheim, the German sociologist, they think intellectuals can be above and beyond all class interests or that the university can be value neutral and apolitical. Sometimes around here I am accused of not being an intellectual, but this is not true.

I follow Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, in his idea of the "organic intellectual."<sup>7</sup> Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual is now very current among Jesuits in Latin America. The organic intellectual is the man or woman who does research, makes arguments, seeks data in service of an explicit ideal of emancipation for the poor and marginalized in society. Organic intellectuals articulate an alternative social model for society and culture.

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<sup>6</sup> New York: Fordham University Press, 1982.

<sup>7</sup> See his *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1957).



This ideal of the organic intellectual doing research and teaching in service of the poor holds up a model of the intellectual life no less rigorous than that of the spurious free-floating intellectual simply pursuing pure knowledge. The organic intellectual, after all, is constrained to follow the same canon of research procedures, arguments, and so forth as any other intellectual, to make his or her argument in the public forum. But organic intellectuals know that knowledge and commitment are tied together.

The people around here simply do not want to rock any boats or to see that what is at stake is not the question, Should the university **as such** take committed value positions on social issues, since, willy-nilly, it does anyway? We need to analyze the shifting social ties of intellectuals and of our Jesuit institutions to various groups, classes, and interests. If you ask me, our refusal to do that here, in a consequent way, is what I find uncritical and anti-intellectual.

I stick to my battles to keep raising this question because I believe our educational institutions count, have clout, and shape communities. But, when push comes to shove, Jesuits can tolerate an organic intellectual in their midst as an individual; what they cannot do is really ask what this notion of the committed intellectual means for the institution **as such**. After all, as Gramsci argued, the organic intellectual is really a collective. I want us Jesuits to be that collective.

We recruit minorities, to be sure, and applaud the few praxis-oriented token organic intellectuals in our midst. But who takes seriously Father Kolvenbach's words at Georgetown: "The service of faith through the promotion of justice remains the Society's major apostolic focus . . . and that is why it is urgent that this mission, which is profoundly linked with our preferential love of the poor, be operative in our lives **and in our institutions. It must be up front, on the table.**"

For me, this question of what kind of intellectuals we are going to be is central. The "traditional" intellectual, in Gramsci's classic argument in his *Prison Notebooks*, serves the powers that be and upholds the status-quo arrangements in society and culture. He or she is innocuous to any ongoing social project or hegemonic social class. The organic intellectual, in contrast, serves the poor, to be sure, by research, writing, teaching, argument in the public forum. The organic intellectual works for some—even if vaguely articulated—alternative mission for Church and society. In my view, the Jesuit commitment to the intellectual life, like all our commitments, must

be apostolic. Thus, if the service of faith through the promotion of justice remains, as Kolvenbach states it, the Society's major apostolic focus, our ideal and practice of the intellectual life must reflect that focus.

Secular academia in this country has no room for this kind of explicit vision for the society it serves. It can never answer that burning question of Robert Lynd, the sociologist who did the famous Middletown Studies and then wrote a book entitled *Knowledge for What?* Precisely! Knowledge for what, serving what aims, what causes and groups? If we do not ask Lynd's question explicitly, then society becomes the master and mover of the university. Everything at the secular university, as in our wider secular society, is so-o-o-o very pluralistic. In his study *One Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse was right when he saw that this kind of pluralism is a species of "repressive tolerance." What gets repressed is any explicit social and value commitment or argument about it.

I also think Jon Sobrino is exactly right when he claims—in that wonderfully disarming, mild, and charming Basque style of his—that the university **as such** can sin, can be part and parcel of sinful structures. So the bottom line for me is that, if our universities or high schools choose to endorse this false ideal of the free-floating intellectual or professional, they become dangerous places—dangerous to the faith which does justice and dangerous for a genuine Jesuit intellectual apostolate. In that old bromide of the 1960s, they become part of the problem instead of being part of the solution.

*Voice No. 6 (a middle-aged Jesuit, historian, identified by Jesuits in his Midwestern Jesuit university as the most serious scholar in their midst):*

How do I respond to the Rorschach phrase "Jesuits and the Intellectual Life"? Probably negatively. Administrators at my school don't really believe in it. They want us to write enough to get tenure, to be sure. Then they want us to teach and serve on committees, live in dorms, and so forth. Sure, they pay lip service to scholarship, but they don't put money or support into it. Do you want to know what I really think? Neither as a province nor as a university do we Jesuits any longer have a coherent philosophy or rationale for the intellectual life or the learned ministry. But strangely, few Jesuits talk about this.

*Voice No. 7 (the final voice in this chorus, a younger West Coast Jesuit, 34, active in Hispanic pastoral ministry and work with refugees):*

I have been recently urged by friends and superiors to think of pursuing a Ph.D. My past record as a student and my grades show I could successfully do that. But I need to decide very soon. In two or three years I'll be too old to want to do doctoral studies. With Jesuits entering at a later age, you will need to get them committed early to doctoral studies, in the first years of formation, or it might be too late. There wasn't much pressure on me during formation to make that choice. I like very much what I am doing now, but I do see the need for a stronger institutional base than a parish to fight for immigrants' rights and analyze the economic and social structural causes of continued Hispanic poverty.

But do I really need a Ph.D. to take part in the intellectual life? There is an important distinction between the scholar and the intellectual. The latter typically addresses a wider general audience about important cultural and social concerns. I would have thought that all Jesuits, no matter what their apostolate, are called to be intellectuals. I like the definition of an intellectual which Edward Shils, the University of Chicago sociologist, proposes. "Intellectuals exhibit in their activities a pronounced concern with the core values of society. They are men who seek to provide moral standards and to maintain meaningful general symbols and who elicit, guide and form the main dispositions within a society."<sup>8</sup> Well, I think all Jesuits are called to something like that.

For me, an intellectual must be a social critic, as Michael Walzer argues so well in his recent book *The Company of Critics*. I miss this note of social criticism in more traditional Catholic or Jesuit rationales for the intellectual life. Actually, I think that Father Bill Wood, S.J. (executive director of the California Conference in Sacramento for the California bishops), is as much an intellectual in this sense as many of our people in our universities. Yet he does not have a Ph.D. So, too, is John McAnulty, who does spiritual direction for Los Angeles priests and California bishops. For that matter, so is John Murphy, who teaches a crack senior-English course at St. Ignatius Prep in San Francisco.

Where I am working now, I speak all over Los Angeles, organize, serve on civic committees, lobby to effect legislation on immigration, engage in private study. I even write from time to time op-

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Shils, "Intellectuals and the Powers," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (October 1958): p. 5.

ed pieces for the *Los Angeles Times*. Doesn't this sort of activity make me already part of the sample of Jesuits pursuing the intellectual life?

### The Issues

The voices now fall silent and *exeunt*. But you, dear Reader, before you exit may well want to ask yourself: With which voice do I most identify and why? If interviewed, how would I have responded to that Rorschach motif "Jesuits and the Intellectual Life"? Which, finally, of the varying issues raised in this conversation so far strike me as central themes for a continuing conversation about Jesuits and the intellectual life?

As I listen to these voices, three issues stand out above many others in my mind:

1. Should we conflate the intellectual life with the apostolate of higher education? Perhaps aspects of our educational institutions actually constrict the intellectual life. Are only university teachers or scholars our real intellectuals?
2. Are GC 32 and the intellectual life compatible? Does GC 32 legitimately shape the way we should envision the intellectual life; or, as Avery Dulles observed in his intervention at Georgetown, does our Jesuit understanding of the intellectual life need to appeal to other sources for its grounding, beyond the one-sided emphasis of GC 32?
3. Are there any lacunae in more traditional Jesuit ideals for the intellectual life; and, if so, what does this mean for present-day Jesuit practice and spirituality?

## II. TURNING THE VOICES INTO A CONVERSATION

In my scattershot-and-snowball-sample interviews, I frequently heard Jesuits say that very little explicit conversation about Jesuits and the intellectual life occurs in their communities, institutions, and provinces. Yet, when asked, none hesitated even for a moment

before venturing an opinion or thesis. I became convinced that for several reasons an explicit conversation by Jesuits on this topic is both possible and crucial.

First, as the sometimes-cacophonous chorus of voices illustrates, Jesuits strongly disagree about central aspects and directions of the Jesuit intellectual life. These disagreements—even if they remain subterranean in our ordinary discourse—are bound to surface in some guise when we discuss policy issues for formation (initial and ongoing), our apostolates, choice of ministries, the meaning for us of GC 32. The lack of a consensus on the issue of Jesuits and the intellectual life is less troubling to me than the lack of a lively argument about it. For much is at stake. Remember Alasdair McIntyre's comment in his book *After Virtue*, that a truly living tradition consists precisely in a lively argument about the elements which make it up. Absent such argument, the tradition dies.

Jesuits in our universities, especially, but also in our secondary schools may seem to their non-Jesuit colleagues to lack any coherent philosophy or rationale for the intellectual life or the learned ministry. At least three thoughtful non-Jesuit scholars at as many Jesuit universities with whom I talked about this essay claimed as much. One, a woman scholar at a West Coast Jesuit university, put it this way: "It's hard to see how we non-Jesuits can be asked to collaborate with an Ignatian and Jesuit vision of the intellectual life when it does not seem apparent that the Jesuits themselves have their own act together enough to actually have any clear vision of what this enterprise of a Christian intellectual life is or should be really all about." Before addressing my three theses, I want to put forward boldly a basic presupposition or conclusion I have drawn. I will not argue it extensively in this essay; it must serve somewhat as a stipulated presupposition to the conversation which follows: **American Jesuits at present do not have anything like a coherent operative philosophy or rationale for the intellectual life or for our insistence on a well-trained ministry in all of our apostolates.** I agree with Voice No. 6 on this point. I emphasize the word "operative" to underscore my referen-

tial meaning. An operative theory refers to a theory in possession which serves as a taken-for-granted background assumption. It represents a digested, articulated, and functional theory about why Jesuits now (as before in our history) engage in the intellectual life and make it an essential component of the training/formation of every Jesuit. An operative theory would be clear to us, available in a few ready slogans, and widely communicated to our non-Jesuit colleagues and public. It would, as well, state how the intellectual life articulates essentially with Jesuit vocation and apostolate. I submit that nothing like this lies readily at hand.

To be sure, someone might point to some official documents or some individual Jesuit's ingenious ideological underpinning for the intellectual life. But I do not find that anything now compels widespread consent among Jesuits to ground our historic and present commitment to the intellectual life and a learned ministry.

### No Coherent American Intellectual Ideal

On the one hand, the absence of a currently available coherent account for Jesuit intellectual life could be readily explained. If we don't talk about it much, how could it have emerged or been sustained? Moreover, as Lewis Perry argues in his standard intellectual history of American intellectual ideals, *Intellectual Life in America*,<sup>9</sup> there exists more generally in our culture "a fragmentation of intellectual life in our times" (p. xvi).

Perry notes that "there is no longer a ruling consensus about the nature of intellectual life" in America. Earlier ideals of the intellectual life which tied it to Christian civility and virtue (for example, the Puritans), to republican virtue (the Founding Fathers), to an elitist high culture (the late nineteenth century), or to service (the Progressive Era through the New Deal, when William James could speak of the nation's intellectuals as "healthy critics and constructive functionaries in society[; t]hey are responsible citizens, the

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<sup>9</sup> Rev. ed., University of Chicago Press, 1989.

technicians of a brightly unfolding future")—these earlier intellectual rationales fell apart on the shattering shoals of modernity under the onslaught of the New Criticism and other Modernist movements deeply infected by radical relativism. They became centers which could not hold.

Perry comments that after the late 1950s "nothing was possible except internal snatches of meaning in a culture without verities." Finally, argues Perry, countercultural movements from the 1960s on and trends toward deconstructionist ways of thinking, coupled with a wider cultural narcissism, "all converged to damage seriously, perhaps to destroy, the conception of intellectual life as a network of prestigious vocation, informed by acquaintance with a single [high] culture, with peculiar responsibilities for leadership."<sup>10</sup> Little wonder, then, that, if the American intellectual ideal itself underwent fissiparous fragmentation and decay, American Jesuits may now find it somewhat difficult to articulate their own alternative vision for it.

### A New Knowledge Elite

Moreover, as we will see, since World War II in the advanced industrial societies, especially the United States, a new and growing "knowledge class" of technical intelligentsia has risen to social dominance. For this class, knowledge for the information society represents both power and exploitable human capital. This new class and the specialized vocabulary it uses now infiltrate American discourse and theory about the intellectual life. Older Jesuit *rationes studiorum* addressed a now-vanishing knowledge elite.

The very meaning of this new class for American society and the prognosis for ideals of the intellectual life connected to its rise remain at present much disputed. Beyond controversy, however, rest the existence and social location (as university graduates) of a new class of knowledge elites in modern industrial society. An older

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<sup>10</sup> For the two citations see Perry, *Intellectual Life*, 338, 432.

Jesuit set of ideals about the intellectual life has as yet to address fully this new class of technical intelligentsia. Yet, I will argue, traditional Jesuit intuitions about the apostolic importance of the intellectual life still contain nuggets of wisdom for a renewed Jesuit ideal. As we will see, not everything, to be sure, is bankrupt in the Jesuit treasure house! In fact, Fathers Arrupe and Kolvenbach and GCs 31 and 32 contain the nucleus for what could become a new **operative** theory for the intellectual life.

The voices we heard at the beginning of this essay should have alerted us that a renewed conversation about Jesuits and the intellectual life is both possible and urgently needed. It would be impossible, of course, in one essay to address all of the topics raised by that chorus of voices. Moreover, I do not feel competent—nor am I arrogant enough—to attempt some global and totally new vision on this topic. I leave that to some explorer's eye which can spy further than I can see, or to some creative intellectual whose voice can speak more cogently than my initial probings here. In any event, my purpose is to get a needed conversation going, not to stop it with a finished treatise and/or a rounded wisdom. Rather, dipping into Jesuit tradition and contemporary experience, I will begin this conversation by merely stating and defending my three focal theses. As you will recall, the first thesis reads, **The intellectual life is a vocation for all Jesuits and every Jesuit apostolate.**

### III. EVERY JESUIT IN MICROCOSM AN INTELLECTUAL'S VOICE

The above subtitle can serve as a shorthand restatement of my first thesis. In effect, I want to argue that every Jesuit is called to be an intellectual. Just as it has become normative since GC 32 to insist that commitment to the faith which does justice must not be restricted only to certain experts or specialized social apostolates, but should instead permeate every Jesuit's vocation and each apostolate, so, too, I want to claim that the intellectual life should be viewed as



an essential component of each Jesuit's vocation and every apostolate. I agree with Voice No. 7 on this point. Pedro Arrupe caught some of the flavor of this contention when he used to insist that every Jesuit (whether in parish ministry, communications, or retreat work) remains an educator. We ought not to reserve the vocation to the intellectual life for an elite in our midst. For every Jesuit is called in some form to the ministry of the word, to communication of values, and to education. Yet "using words" to explore critical meaning lies at the very heart of the intellectual's calling. As Charles Kadushin notes in his sociological study *The American Intellectual Elite*, "the main characteristic of the intellectual's role . . . is using words." Kadushin further defines the intellectuals' calling as "experts in values who communicate their ideas to others." Indeed, he notes, "the intelligentsia are increasingly becoming important as opinion leaders on moral issues." Finally, Kadushin wisely comments, "the intellectual is a social role, for nobody is wholly an intellectual."<sup>11</sup>

"Using words," "experts in values who communicate their ideas to others," "opinion leaders on moral issues"—who can deny that these qualities of the intellectual belong properly to each Jesuit's vocation? To be sure, the very definition of an intellectual involves appeal to an inherently contested concept. In a thoughtful book-length treatment of the French intellectual Julien Benda, who wrote the often-translated polemical tract *The Treason of the Clerics*, Ray Nichols comments, "The intellectual seems to be an especially striking case of an 'essentially contested concept,' a concept whose very nature and meaning is made up of the history of controversy over it."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Kadushin, *The American Intellectual Elite* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ray Nichols, *Treason, Tradition and the Intellectual* (Lawrence, Kansas: Regents' Press of Kansas, 1978), 10.

## The Contested Nature of the Intellectual's Vocation

One controversy about the meaning of an intellectual stems from the first uses of the term, which highlighted the sociocritical function of intellectuals as a self-conscious group who submitted society and its ideas to criticism. Thus, in nineteenth-century Russia, where the term originated, the intelligentsia referred to persons who (1) were concerned with matters of public interest; (2) felt personal responsibility for the state and the solution of problems of public interest; (3) tended to view political and social problems as also moral questions; (4) felt an obligation to do something about these problems in life as well as thought; and (5) addressed their complaints and proposed alternative solutions to public problems, not just to elite technocrats, but to a more general audience of educated public opinion. In this sense the first intelligentsia represented populism more than elitism.

The more precise modern term, an intellectual, entered into modern languages at the turn of the century in France during the famous Dreyfus affair, when Emile Zola, Marcel Proust, Anatole France, and others published their famous and electric "Manifeste des intellectuels" in the January 14, 1898, edition of *L'Aurore*. In this salvo the intellectuals attacked the Third Republic's manifest crime in the Dreyfus case. Dreyfus was a Jewish military officer who was unjustly framed by agents of the state, who accused him of military treason for passing secrets to Germany. When it became clear that Dreyfus was innocent of the charges, the French government feared that to admit that it had engaged in a frame-up would undermine its own authority. It argued that, for the good of societal authority, Dreyfus should remain condemned even if he was innocent. Many French Catholics and French Jesuits supported the government in this rank injustice.

In response to this new sociocritical role of a party which self-consciously called itself "the intellectuals," Julien Benda and other more conservative intellectuals contested this self-appointed prophetic role for intellectuals. Benda, a neo-Kantian rationalist, saw the socioactivist intellectual as a betrayer of the noble vocation of

the cleric-intellectual. In Benda's view the territory of the intellectual remained limited, circumscribed, and sacred. Benda envisioned only a narrow domain for the contemplative theorist or scientist who never moved into political action. In appealing to the more ancient notion of the cleric-intellectual, Benda shows that it lacks the modern note of social criticism as a necessary component of the intellectual life.

Benda's main complaint against the activist intellectuals of his time was that they became an active force for the profit of nationalistic egotism or the egotism of a class. He called them to a more universal standard and argued instead for the purely speculative thinker as the *grand cleric*.

Out of this controversy (although a century old, the arguments still sound the same today), it emerged as clear that even organic or critical intellectuals needed to base their political thought on more than passion, pure emotion, or a "mere cult of action." The intellectual remained bound to certain objective standards for public reason, argument, evidence, and discourse. Recalling these French controversies, social historian Edgar Morin argues that the social role of the intellectual came to embrace four dimensions: It (1) involves a profession which is culturally validated, (2) entails a role that is sociopolitical and critical, (3) utilizes a consciousness that relates to "universals" (that is, general guiding images or ideas which touch core cultural symbols and values), and (4) involves the intellectual in publicly validated criteria for evidence, warrants, and logical argument.<sup>13</sup>

This earlier tradition of the intellectual as social critic has left its mark on history and on our language. As sociologist Edward Shils comments, "The tradition of distrust of secular and ecclesiastical authority and, in fact, of tradition as such, has become the chief

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<sup>13</sup> Edward Morin, "Intellectuels, Critique du Mythe et Mythe de la Critique," *Arguments* 4, no. 20 (Oct. 1960): 35.

secondary tradition of the intellectuals in modern times." Shils continues:

It is practically given by the nature of the intellectuals' orientation that there should be some tension between the intellectuals and the value-orientations embodied in the actual institutions of any society. This applies not only to the orientations of the ordinary members of the society, i.e., the laity, but to the value-orientations of those exercising authority in the society.<sup>14</sup>

Sociological studies of intellectuals typically cast a wide net in their definitions of this social type, so that the category of intellectuals comes to include journalists, teachers, policy makers—indeed, in the words of Seymour M. Lipset, "all those who create, distribute and apply culture, that is, the symbolic world of man, including art, science and religion."<sup>15</sup> How do sociologists picture the role of the intellectual in society?

Typical of this attempt at a broader definition would be Charles Kadushin's: "An intellectual is one who is an expert in dealing with high quality general ideas on questions of values and aesthetics and who communicates his judgements on these matters to a fairly general audience."<sup>16</sup> As Kadushin sees it, intellectuals primarily engage in "the analysis, development, revision, representation and even sometimes the creation of basic values and opinion. They create and disseminate "symbols of general significance." In another place, Kadushin succinctly sums up his definition: "If one set of concerns can be said to be the specialty of intellectuals, then it is surely culture and values."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Edward Shils, "The Intellectual and the Powers," *On Intellectuals*, ed. Philip Rieff, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), 311.

<sup>16</sup> *American Elite*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

### University Location for the Intellectual Life

It is important to note that being an intellectual does not as such constitute an occupation, but rather an attitude or stance. The longshoreman-essayist Eric Hoffer may be more of an intellectual than a specialized scholar who remains otherwise unconcerned with basic values and opinion and who never addresses a fairly general audience. Indeed, Lewis Coser, in his highly regarded comparative study of intellectuals and their institutional settings, argues that the rise of the university as the primary locale for American intellectuals (as opposed to salons or bohémias or intellectual circles or literary magazines) has taken its toll on the quality of intellectual life. Coser notes how career pressures and the departmentalization of knowledge in university settings tend to yield skilled, specialized, narrow scholars more than cultivated generalist intellectuals.<sup>18</sup>

Russell Jacoby takes up this complaint. He composes his threnody for the decline of generalized intellectuals in *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*.<sup>19</sup> At the outset Jacoby states his objective. "My concern is with public intellectuals, writers and thinkers who address a general and educated audience." Jacoby has in mind people such as Christopher Lasch, Hannah Arendt, Susan Sontag, Erik Erikson, Noam Chomsky, David Riesman, R. F. Stone, John Kenneth Galbraith, Robert Bellah—men and women who escape the constraints and corruptions of merely academic life to address an educated public about important cultural or symbolic issues. Jacoby laments that "younger intellectuals no longer need or want a larger public; they are almost exclusively professors. . . . As intellectuals became academics, they had no need to write in a public prose; they did not, and finally they could not."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Lewis Coser, *Men of Ideas: A Sociologist's View* (New York: Free Press, 1965).

<sup>19</sup> New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987.

<sup>20</sup> *Last Intellectuals*, 185.

The discontent with the excessive professionalization in university settings has exacted its price. One recent report in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* found college and university faculties "deeply troubled," with almost forty percent ready and willing to leave the academy.<sup>21</sup> Jacoby remarks, "A specter haunts American universities, or at least its faculties: boredom."<sup>22</sup> How has the Society of Jesus responded to this new intellectual climate in American life? We already heard in Voice No. 2 an echo of Jacoby. This young Jesuit wants to avoid the university precisely to pursue a more serious intellectual life. But we have also had creative responses from a higher level in the order.

### A Jesuit Response

Throughout the 1970s Pedro Arrupe wrote a number of very original letters to the Society addressing such issues as "The Intellectual Apostolate in the Society's Mission Today," "Theological Reflection and Interdisciplinary Research," "Jesuit Mission in University Education," "Our Secondary Schools Today and Tomorrow," and "Education for Faith and Justice."<sup>23</sup>

Like the sociologists, Arrupe notices the new compartmentalization of the secular specialist-scholar ideal. In response he argues for a countercultural alternative:

The tendency of scientific specialization is to create separate fields or compartments, smaller day by day and limited, with the purpose of going deeper and deeper in each discipline. This carries the danger of an atomization of science and of limiting our mental horizon to a bare minimum. The remedy against this fragmentation consists in creating a new category of researchers whose task is to

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<sup>21</sup> *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Oct. 23, 1985): p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Last Intellectuals*, 213.

<sup>23</sup> Arrupe's letters can be found in Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *Other Apostolates Today: Selected Letters and Addresses—III*, ed. Jerome Aixala, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1981).

be to offer a synthesis by developing interdisciplinary comprehension and creativity. . . .

The creation of this type of research workers, who without losing in depth may be able to correlate the various branches of knowledge, is one of the greatest services we can render to mankind today.<sup>24</sup>

In his letter on the intellectual apostolate, writing once again like the sociologists, Arrupe adopts a broad definition of intellectuals:

I visualize at one and the same time an apostolate through intellectual activities and an apostolate among intellectuals. I have in mind involvement in science, research, reflection, literature, art; but I think also of many other tasks of training and teaching, of publication and also of popularization. And when I speak of "intellectuals," I mean not only scholars, research specialists, academicians and also artists, but no less, professional men whose activity is more specifically intellectual. Moreover, I think also of the young who are starting out on serious study. Intellectual pursuits begin even as early as the secondary school level.<sup>25</sup>

Quite clearly, both Pedro Arrupe and the recent general congregations of the Society assume that the intellectual apostolate involves every Jesuit. Thus, in his letter on the intellectual apostolate, Arrupe states, "I write to all Jesuits because they all need a correct understanding of its place in the whole spectrum of our ministries. . . ." <sup>26</sup> In a related address on theological reflection and interdisciplinary research, Arrupe argues that sustained theological reflection on the human problems of today (the first-mentioned of his four major apostolic priorities for the Society) pertains to all. "The permanent attitude of theological reflection is necessary for

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<sup>24</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "Theological Reflection and Interdisciplinary Research," *Other Apostolates*, 37f.

<sup>25</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "The Intellectual Apostolate in the Society's Mission," *Other Apostolates*, 112.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

all, both for our spiritual life and for our pastoral ministry: this is what constitutes the 'Contemplative in action.'"

"The contemporary contemplative in action," Arrupe asserts, "engages not only in classic Jesuit examination of conscience and spiritual discernment but also in that 'reading of the signs of the times' whereby we interpret the phenomena of history and the world."<sup>27</sup> Quite evidently, this latter involves sociocritical intellectual work.

Arrupe stresses that the emphasis of GC 32 on the faith which does justice also entails serious intellectual dimensions which call for intellectual work by all Jesuits:

First, the service of faith. "We must find a new language," the Congregation says, "a new set of symbols" (D. 4, n. 26, a) for the renewal and adaptation of "the structures of theological reflection, catechesis, liturgy and pastoral ministry" (D. 4, n. 54) and for the study of "the main problems confronting humanity and the church today" (D. 4, n. 60).

Likewise, the promotion of justice. It implies that we "are prepared to undertake the difficult and demanding labor of study" required for understanding and solving contemporary problems (D. 4, n. 35; cf. n. 44). At the same time, the General Congregation lays stress on the unjust structures of society (D. 4, nn. 231, 40). But how can we understand these structures and discover ways to modify them, without serious study?<sup>28</sup>

For this reason, in his ground-breaking letter "On Our Four Apostolic Priorities," when Arrupe speaks of the social apostolate as the second in order of precedence among the ministries of the Society today, he pointedly remarks:

Just as in the theological field, so too in the social field it will be the task of the Society, **assuming serious and scientific preparation** [emphasis added], to be of assistance especially to all those who seek the solution of these problems throughout the world, and at the same time along with them, to discover the nature of the humanism

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<sup>27</sup> "Theological Reflection," 34.

<sup>28</sup> Arrupe, "Intellectual Apostolate," 113.



of the technical world, of the true social order, of the meaning of natural values, on which the well-ordered evolution of man is based, finally what is the meaning of the presence of the Church and the priest in the world today. But all of these are products of deep and accurate scientific inquiry; and the danger is present that we may be unprepared to attain to that summit, where the learned debate, as something beyond our reach.<sup>29</sup>

In this text we do not hear the voice of someone calling for some species of mindless "cult of action" or a social activism cut off from intellectual depth. When we listen to Arrupe, we hear that Jesuits in the social apostolate need to engage in serious social analysis as a necessary intellectual component of their very vocation as Jesuits in the social apostolate. Jesuits in pastoral enterprises, retreats, and so forth must seek for that entirely new language and new set of symbols for the renewal and adaptation of catechesis, liturgy, and pastoral ministry. Arrupe speaks to all Jesuits when he says, "But what is important and must be common to all Jesuits, especially in our days, is the permanent attitude of reflection in the light of faith."<sup>30</sup>

### GCs 31 and 32 on the Intellectual Life

Inasmuch as Arrupe spoke out of and articulated a wider ethos of the contemporary Society, it should not surprise us that GCs 31 and 32 place a similar emphasis on the essential nature of the intellectual apostolate for all Jesuits. Thus, Decree 9 of GC 31, "On the Training of Scholastics in Study," insists that "through their studies, the scholastics should acquire that breadth and excellence in learning which are required for our vocation." They should become "skilled in the arts of writing and speaking" (note here what are essentially the intellectual skills to communicate broadly). More especially, in this same Decree 9, GC 31 envisions special studies "not only for those who are destined to teach but also those

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<sup>29</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "Our Four Apostolic Priorities," *Other Apostolates*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> "Theological Reflection," 40.

who exercise other ministries of the Society." It explicitly states, "Men skilled in pastoral work should also be trained with special studies."

For its part, Decree 4 of GC 32 no less explicitly links the option for the faith which does justice to the intellectual apostolate.

We cannot be excused from making the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation. This will require the utilization of the various sciences, sacred and profane, and of the various disciplines, speculative and practical, and all of this demands intense and specialized studies. Nothing should excuse us, either, from undertaking a searching discernment into our situation from the pastoral and apostolic point of view. From analysis and discernment will come committed action; from the experience of action will come insight into how to proceed further.<sup>31</sup>

In Decree 6 on the formation of Jesuits, GC 32 even goes beyond its own concern for the training of scholastics and speaks of **continuing formation**. As ministers of the word of God, we are all called to a personal and accurate assimilation of the Scriptures and the full Magisterium which "cannot be obtained without continued discipline and the labor of tireless and patient study."<sup>32</sup> With this in mind, GC 32 reaffirmed the Society's commitment to a learned ministry.

Thus, the Society has opted anew for a profound academic formation of its future priests—theological as well as philosophical, humane and scientific—in the conviction that, presupposing the testimony of one's own life, there is no more apt way to experience our mission. Such study is itself an apostolic work which makes us present to men to the degree that we come to know all the more profoundly their possibilities, their needs, their cultural milieu. Our studies should foster and stimulate those very qualities which today are often suffocated by our contemporary style of living and thinking: a spirit of reflection and an awareness of the deeper, transcendent values.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Documents of GC 31 and 32*, D. 4, no. 44 (p. 426f).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, D. 6, no. 21 (p. 450).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 22 (p. 450).

I have taken us again over some of this familiar terrain of texts from Arrupe and GC 32 because I am, to be quite frank, astonished that some Jesuits claim that GC 32 scouted or undermined the intellectual apostolate. Clearly, my thesis that all Jesuits are called to the intellectual life is not idiosyncratic to me.

It is worth recalling some of the qualities which GCs 31 and 32 and Fathers Arrupe and Kolvenbach have insisted on for all Jesuits: They should be

1. Skilled in writing and speaking about general ideas, symbols and values
2. Knowledgeable and acculturated in their own culture and literature
3. Adept in at least one other modern language (Kolvenbach, GC 32)
4. Capable of critical social analysis of our societal (and international) social structures and their impact on the practice of faith and justice
5. Cosmopolitan (not only in language skills but in taking a consistently international outlook and self-identity)
6. Trained, all of them, collectively in a long and specialized formation in philosophy and theology (with at least a licentiate in the latter), with additional specialized studies for all apostolic works (including initial studies and later updating)

Many individual Jesuits may wonder, perhaps, if they are really intellectuals themselves. But Diderot, Sartre, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Habermas, Havel, or Foucault would have no doubt at all what they were looking at if they inspected the Society's ideals and practice for all Jesuits. They would know a knowledge elite when they saw one! They would recognize immediately a cosmopolitan corps of critical intellectuals. Indeed, they would see that precisely at GC 32, when it adopted Decree 4, the Society's tradition for the intellectual life finally filled in an earlier lacuna by incorporating—in a consequential manner for the first time in the Society's history

—the distinctive sociocritical function of the modern general intellectual.

With GC 32, for the first time the Society joined the modern intellectual tradition of what Michael Walzer calls the "Company of Critics." Moreover, for the first time it proclaimed itself to be essentially a company of critics. Recall Edward Shils's remarks that the intellectual as social critic lives in tension with the authorities in society. It is probably much too soon for Jesuits to have realized what consequences may flow from their choice at GC 32 to become a company of critics. Presumably, if we follow this choice faithfully, we will soon hear from the authorities in both Church and state. Indeed, our martyred Jesuits in El Salvador and jailed Jesuits in Venezuela and Chile already have learned the price of this new intellectual emphasis.

I turn now to my second thesis: **There need be no discrepancy between the call of GC 32 for Jesuits to put a priority on the faith which does justice and a vigorous commitment to the intellectual life.** Indeed, the congregation actually made up for some earlier lacunae in the Jesuit intellectual tradition. In this thesis we will want to inspect some sociological evidence about the rise of a new knowledge class and about the way schools come to have an impact on the political orientation and values of their students.

#### IV. THE VOICES OF A COMPANY OF CRITICS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GC 32

I have some mild sympathy for the argument of those who maintain with Avery Dulles that a sole and single-minded appeal to CC 32 could yield a lopsided rendition of the Jesuit intellectual tradition (recall Voice No. 4). Such an appeal could reduce the intellectual life too narrowly to utilitarian motifs which justify the true and the beautiful by purely ethical criteria of the good. While these great transcendentals mutually imply one another, they should never be reduced to one another. If this reduction took place, the *contempla-*

*tivus* in the famous formula could be subverted totally by the *in actione* clause. I agree thus far with Dulles that GC 32 remains insufficient to fully ground Jesuit intellectual life. But does GC 32 distort the wider Jesuit tradition when it gives a new and pressing apostolic direction to Jesuit intellectual life? I think not.

In fact, I fear much more that those who champion Dulles's argument may too easily refuse to come to grips with the challenge of GC 32 to and for the Jesuit intellectual life. After all, the members of the congregation explicitly reaffirmed GC 31 and its emphases (and implicitly the Society's longer tradition). It is not fair, then, to try to play GC 31 off against GC 32. At GC 32 the participants desired to supplement rather than supplant a wider Jesuit tradition.

Obviously, a deep Ignatian grounding for the intellectual life derives from the Exercises' Contemplation for Obtaining Love. The Ignatian intuition directs us to look to God's presence and activity in all of creation, including the cultural products of human history. Science, philosophy, history, the social disciplines, literature, and the arts—all constitute aspects of that "long, loving look at the real." The *Contemplatio* invites us to see and taste all that is real in our cosmos, history, and culture. But the *Contemplatio* presupposes the rest of the Exercises which went before. So the First Principle and Foundation also functions as a norm for Jesuit intellectual life, as do the meditation on the Incarnation, which invites us to a profound enculturation, and the Two Standards and the meditations on the suffering of Christ. What is important for our theme, these last two exercises suggest to us that we desire, all things being equal, to choose actual poverty. This option gives an essential directionality to all Ignatian apostolic choices. We would be poor if we could be; if we cannot, we will want to come as close to being it as we can.

Clearly, the drafters of the decrees of GC 32 did not in any way intend a purely utilitarian reading of the Jesuit intellectual tradition. They would be the first ones to register shocked surprise that GC 32 could lend itself to such a fundamental misreading. Nor do the best voices of those who invite us to take seriously GC 32's

challenge to Jesuit intellectual life envision a reductionist view of that life.

### How a University Can Embody GC 32

In a remarkable speech commemorating the centenary of the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain, Jon Sobrino insists that a university's Christian inspiration demands that the university place itself at the service of God from an option for the poor.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, he hastens to add, "this service must be done as a university, and even by means of a university's particular nature." To be sure, "a university can vitiate its Christian inspiration." Assuredly, Sobrino notes, "it would be an illusion to think that the university can not be an instrument of the anti-kingdom and of sin."

Sobrino issues a profound challenge to the contemporary university from the vantage point of GC 32:

Today's world as a whole, the third world certainly, but also with analogies in other worlds, is a world of sin, in which falsehood prevails over truth, oppression over justice, repression over freedom and—in words which are, unfortunately, not at all rhetorical—death over life. In this real world, the university has been invited and required to incarnate itself in one reality or another, placing its social weight on behalf of one or the other.

Far too frequently Christian universities have not questioned a society's unjust structures nor used their social weight to denounce them, nor have they made central to their work the research and planning of new just models for society. As a matter of fact, by producing professional people who, in most cases, have served to shore up unjust systems, Christian universities have effectively supported the evils of today's world.

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<sup>34</sup> Jon Sobrino, "The Christian Inspiration of the University." I am citing from an unpublished English translation of this manuscript which Sobrino gave me. The original Spanish text appeared in the journal of the University of Central America in El Salvador, *Eclesiastica Revista Americana* (February 1988).

Sobrino will not allow us to get off the hook cheaply by letting the challenge of GC 32 to our educational institutions remain only in campus-ministry programs or university-based volunteer social-outreach schemes. The challenge penetrates to the very heart of the teaching/research enterprise.

This is to say that knowledge can respond to different interests, consciously or unconsciously, and that the inevitable need to verify which interests are served by knowledge does not disappear by any appeal to the autonomy of knowledge; that knowledge can be reduced to the noetic moment itself, thereby intentionally evading ethical and practical responsibility; that knowledge can discover and demonstrate reality but also cover it over and suppress it. A university, like any other institution, can serve one group of interests or another, can serve reality or abandon it. And this ambiguity is typical of the university in its specific instrumentality: knowledge.

Citing the martyred Ignacio Ellecuria, Sobrino insists that the "study of a situation" is indissolubly linked with "accepting the burden of that situation" and "becoming responsible for that situation." Mere noetic moments to knowledge do not suffice. He further suggests that the option for the poor,

before becoming concretized in pastoral forms or ecclesial activity, is a hermeneutical principle, a pre-understanding which is consciously adopted, a hypothesis . . . in order to observe and analyze reality and to act accordingly; and it is a conviction—present in Christian faith and confirmed historically by many—that from this perspective one can observe reality better and more thoroughly and act more effectively to improve reality.

Nor does the option for the poor negate the universality expected of a university. "Nor is it a threat to the universality of the university; empirically, because humanity in general is quantitatively poor; but more important yet because the option for the poor does not mean to focus on a part of the whole in order to ignore the rest but rather to reach out to the whole from one part."

Quite evidently, those in the social sciences—sociology, economics, and political science—can rather easily, if they desire, exercise this hermeneutical choice to study issues connected with the plight of the poor and the marginalized. They can direct their re-

search and teaching to issues of justice. In literature, too, a new concern focuses on texts from the underside of history (popular literature; ethnic, black, and women's studies). As for history, in its own way the new social history reaches out to include for the first time voices of the poor and the unheard. To study a *mentalité* involves much more than attention to the lives and thoughts of the "great men" of history. And in the sciences Jesuits can address issues of the environment and the arms race, of medical distributive fairness and the discovery of appropriate technologies which humanize. There would seem to be no areas in art or science which cannot be touched in some way by the challenge of GC 32. Would they not be enriched as well by this contact with the legitimate concerns of the poor?

In his address at Assembly 1989 at Georgetown, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach could assert:

The famous Decree 4, in spite of erroneous interpretations, actually asked that the educational apostolate be intensified. . . . Therefore, instead of seeing the promotion of justice in the name of the Gospel as a threat to the educational sector, this apostolic priority that we have received from the church is to be seen as a pressing commitment to reevaluate our colleges and universities, our teaching priorities, our programs, our research efforts, to make them even more effective.<sup>35</sup>

### GC 32: Grounding or Apostolic Priority?

To be sure, our option for the poor should not and cannot replace academic excellence as such. But, as Sobrino notes, "Without taking account of the poor, a university can tend to degenerate into pure, sterile and even alienating academicism." But Sobrino himself argues that, if an option for the poor must be absolutely central and essential to our educational apostolates inasmuch as they are instruments of God's kingdom against the reign of the

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<sup>35</sup> Kolvenbach's speech appears in the *National Jesuit News*, supplement (June 1989): p. 1.



anti-kingdom of "riches, honors, and power," this option does not exhaust the **grounding** for our intellectual apostolate.

Although the university should place truth on the side of the building up of the kingdom, the cultivation of truth is not exhausted by it. To seek truth, to be open to it as both inspiration and critique, to let it be and to contemplate it is something deeply humanizing and necessary. . . . It is a way of being open to the mystery of God. . . . With the mystery of reality and of God we must come into affinity and produce results, but we must also contemplate it, let it be, receive from it. The true continues, then, to be something useful, but also, more than the merely useful. . . . The university can be, therefore, a place for cultivating the true and the beautiful, a place for contemplation and artistic expression. In this sense, it can also be a place of culture, a place for cultivating and encountering cultures with their human and Christian values.

In other words, the Jesuit intellectual life is a species of our famous contemplation in action. Neither contemplation nor action should be reduced to one another, but neither should they be separated. To ground our intellectual tradition entirely on GC 32 would entail losing a contemplative aspect of that tradition. But to separate that tradition from the apostolic priority of GC 32 would in the same measure deny the integration of contemplation in and through action.

It would be wrongheaded to reduce every ground for the Jesuit intellectual apostolate to GC 32's "the faith which does justice." The classic triad of the true, the good, and the beautiful—as both Avery Dulles and Jon Sobrino insist—remains the lure to our research and knowledge. Neither the congregation nor voices who try to link GC 32 to our intellectual life envision reductionist or utilitarian understandings of that life. But it would be equally wrongheaded to resist the congregation and our generals' invitation to see GC 32 as a precision for the Jesuit intellectual tradition, an apostolic orientation for Jesuits in their intellectual apostolates, what Kolvenbach calls "an apostolic priority."

It is instructive in this regard to juxtapose the words of GC 31 treating of the training of scholastics in studies ("The purpose of

studies in the Society is apostolic, as is the purpose of the entire training" [ No. 13]) with Peter-Hans Kolvenbach's remarks at Georgetown, "The service of faith through the promotion of justice remains the Society's major apostolic focus." To so juxtapose the two propositions leads, in almost tight syllogistic logic, to the necessary conclusion: The purpose of studies and of the intellectual life in the Society, because these two are essentially apostolic, must somehow, minimally, be illumined by the service of faith through the promotion of justice. Ideally, they will also advance it. Otherwise, our studies cease to be either apostolic or connected with our major apostolic priority. That priority can legitimately determine and, at the very least, shape the research topics we pursue in our teaching and writing, the manner in which we teach and preach, the development and review of curricula in our schools, and the total educational climate of our institutions.

Recall the excessive static of the background noise of a fissiparous ideal for the intellectual life in modern American culture and the grave difficulty—I dare say near impossibility—for secular secondary schools or universities to ask the questions "Knowledge for what? serving whose interests? including and leaving out which groups?" Given these two, only a concerted Jesuit conspiracy (I use the term consciously) to tilt our educational institutions in the direction of GC 32 will allow a serious collective conversation within them about the structural prerequisites for an intellectual life in service of the faith which does justice. Almost nothing in American culture, structure, or academic life will naturally impel us in that direction. Obviously, too, Jesuits will seek genuine lay collaboration in this endeavor to stamp our intellectual institutions with the values of GC 32. At times lay colleagues will represent the special *insignes* for the faith which does justice (perhaps more so than the Jesuits). But only a cadre of committed Jesuits can see to it that the values of GC 32 become more than a mere "extracurricular" good work of social outreach or a public-relations appendage to our schools. Some Jesuits (remember Voice No. 5) insist that GC 32 must penetrate to the very heart of the teaching and research operation

of our schools and direct curricula and put a decisive stamp on our educational environment. They claim, however, that we lack consensus in our schools on this goal and merely pay lip service to it. Foreseeing this possibility, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach exclaimed at Georgetown, "What a marvelous opportunity for the *magis!*" To which I add, What a special and marvelous opportunity, as well, to regain a cohesion and collective apostolic meaning for our corporate Jesuit intellectual enterprises!—something many Jesuits in higher education lament that we have lost, and something a number of young men insist on finding when discerning their future ministry.

I have already mentioned how GC 32 supplemented an earlier Jesuit intellectual tradition of clerical learning by joining it to the secular intellectual motif of social criticism, hitherto lacking in the Jesuit ideal as an explicit theme. Following the wider Church's lead, GC 32 also focused its attention on the structural prerequisites for an intellectual life in service of faith and justice. The congregation spoke to the "social and structural" level of analysis (see *inter alia* Nos. 32, 40, 42, and 44 of Decree 4). What are some of the things we know about the structural aspects of the intellectual life and its service to the faith which does justice?

### The New Knowledge Class of Technical Intelligentsia

I want to turn very briefly to evoke two excellent sociological essays which throw light on this question. Alvin Gouldner has written a slim classic entitled *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*.<sup>36</sup> On pages 15 to 17 he argues that, in modern technical, industrialized societies, we have seen the rise of a new knowledge class which represents, in his view, a phenomenon in world history tied to deeper economic and cultural shifts. Economically, the new knowledge elite (representing at present nearly one fourth of America's work force and growing) derives from the emerging information-fueled society where knowledge represents both power

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<sup>36</sup> New York: Seabury Press, 1979.

and capital. Those who have access to the information machines (principally computers) and privileged nodes in an information network gain wealth and influence.

The skills of this new technical intelligentsia form a crucial element in capital accumulation. "The education of the new class is part of its capital. It is not capital because it necessarily increases productivity but simply because it provides incomes, because these incomes are enforceable and because they are legitimated intrinsically."<sup>37</sup>

According to Gouldner this new class is both emancipatory and elitist. It remains locked in battle with the older capitalist-entrepreneur class now in decline. In this battle for the minds of modern society, the new class relies principally on an ideology of professionalism. This ideology appeals to precise, delimited, and certified skills and perquisites to warrant the claims of this new class in communication and argument. Only the certified and skilled, this ideology proclaims, can judge. This represents the elitism of which Gouldner speaks.

Like all rising classes, this new class appeals to its own culture of discourse. The emancipatory potential in this discourse (not only for its own members but for outsiders as well) lies in its essentially meritocratic appeals that undercut social status as such as a legitimate authoritative warrant. "Claims and assertions may not be justified by reference to the speaker's social status. This has the profound consequence of making all authority referring claims potentially problematic."<sup>38</sup>

The new class relies primarily on its human capital. "An investment in education is not simply a consumable. Something is left over which produces a subsequent flow of income. It is cultural capital, the economic base of the new class."<sup>39</sup> Without the cultural

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<sup>37</sup> Gouldner, *Future of Intellectuals*, 23.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

capital of the new class, its knowledge and skills, the old-style bureaucrats, politicians, and entrepreneurs become impotent. Without this new class neither ships of state nor those of commerce could run.

Several important issues divide the old class from the new and point toward the emancipatory potential of the new class.

**1. Academic freedom and freedom of speech:** The new class depends on ready access to communication networks as a source of its power to make its case publicly and influence cultural formation. It opposes censorship, then, and champions free speech and unbridled access to the media. Indeed, the media intelligentsia in an information society represent an important core of this new class.

**2. Consumer rights:** The knowledge and skills of the new class represent its human capital. Although not totally a consumable, neither is this human capital as directly transferable (to heirs, for example) as money as such. As a salaried class, the new class remains closer to issues of consumer rights since its salary differentiates it from the older class. Clearly, a consumer-rights movement represents a powerful counterweight in any culture of consumption. Ralph Nader-like consumer-rights advocates force that culture to become conscious and deliberate in consumer choices rather than mindless and automatic. In this respect, too, the new class is emancipatory.

**3. Scientific management, an independent civil service, honest government reform, and women's liberation:** This set of issues feeds into the new class's culture of professionalism. Each stresses the importance of demonstrative skill as the authoritative basis for the exercise of power, thus undercutting "old boy" status claims or the mere claim of money. If money can buy the skills it needs, it may not always control how those skills are used. Equality of opportunity remains the new class's dominant slogan. This slogan erodes institutional fortresses of racism and sexism. Again, in political-science polls testing for voting behaviors of this new class, ecology and support for women's issues show up as important indi-

cators of the new class's ideas and attitudes. Here, too, we see emancipatory potential.

For our purposes here, however, Gouldner's conclusion is most important. He sees the new professional knowledge class of staff intelligentsia and technical elites (word and information wielders) as a "flawed, universal class." It is flawed because it has its own narrow interests and because frequently it serves as the willing ally or servant of the old class. It is equally flawed in its elitist presuppositions. It is a "universal class," however (in the same sense that Marx had in mind when he called the proletariat a universal class), because it is the carrier of a potentially emancipatory interest in equality of opportunity and judgment and reward based on merit. It is emancipatory in its power to undermine the old class. Gouldner capsules his judgment of it by calling it "a morally ambiguous, historically transient but still universal class."<sup>40</sup>

### The New Class: Our Students

Why should we American Jesuits be at all interested in this new class of technical intelligentsia in an information society or in theories about it? Two reasons suggest themselves. First, these technical intelligentsia represent our students of today and our alumni/ae of tomorrow. Pedro Arrupe once put it this way: "Our cultures, ideologies, and structures are shaped by cultural, political and economic leaders, who in turn draw their views about man and the world in part from the 'knowledge industry,' at the heart of which we find the university."<sup>41</sup> Our universities serve as feeder systems to this new class.

A classic Jesuit apostolic priority in education and the intellectual life focused on society's cultural elites—not, I would argue, because as cultural elites they were elites as well in the economic or

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>41</sup> Pedro Arrupe, "The Jesuit Mission in University Education," *Other Apostolates*, 83.

status sense of that term, but because they represented the prime shapers of culture. In their apostolic priorities Jesuits have classically focused on the greater good and paid attention to those who could more effectively shape a society's course of development. The new class, Gouldner argues, can do that in our own society.

In eschewing aspects of an older elitism associated with the Jesuit intellectual ideal (especially a focus on the education of the rich in some societies), we would be mistaken to reject as well this older concern for the values of a culture-forming, -creating, -shaping elite, those likely to have a great impact on the values of a society. Indeed, even when we educate the poor and minorities in our schools, we are preparing them to enter this new class and cultural elite.

If Gouldner is correct, the new knowledge class represents such an elite in our time. They are bearers, in his terms, of a new culture of critical discourse which includes strongly meritocratic ideals and an emancipatory potential. He sees this critical discourse as a flawed but potentially emancipatory ideal. Like all discourse, this discourse of the new class is capable of ideological distortion. Jesuit strategies for the intellectual life will need to address both this new class and its culture of discourse to correct its flaws and coax out its strengths. Structurally, the new class are the mandarins of today as Ricci's Chinese mandarins were the culture-forming cadre of his time and culture. In both cases the mandarin class relied on skill and knowledge, its human capital, rather than on inherited wealth or initial class position.

### Forming Social Values in Our Schools (Higher and Secondary)

But how do we form this new class to the values of GC 32? A second sociological study, Robert J. Brym's *Intellectuals and Politics*,<sup>42</sup> can instruct us on this question. Brym's densely written research bears close study. In it he asks, using political terms, what

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<sup>42</sup> London and Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1980.

makes some intellectuals and intellectual classes politically more left-leaning than others? (Classically, this means more open to welfare functions for the government and democratic processes in society.) Brym draws on the work and insights of Antonio Gramsci (you will remember hearing that name in the conversation with Voice No. 5) to "analyze the shifting social ties of intellectuals to various classes and other major groups."<sup>43</sup> Brym argues that in large part the worldviews of intellectuals result from "their patterns of social mobility through changing social structures." In effect, three main variables explain why some intellectuals or intellectual groups become or remain more leftist or rightist in their political orientation:

1. The social origins of intellectuals, the class from which they come
2. The group character of the education they receive
3. The opportunities for becoming occupationally and politically tied to a variety of social groups during and after their formal education

Brym notes that exclusive focus on only one of these variables remains insufficient.

An intellectual's political allegiance is influenced by the social position of his family of origin, by the class or group character of the education he receives and by the structure of occupational and political opportunities which he faces during and after his formal education. Thus, intellectuals are more likely to align themselves with the left the more left-wing (1) the class or group from which they originate, (2) the class or group which effectively controls the educational institutions through which they pass, and (3) the class or group to which they become occupationally and politically tied to during early adulthood.<sup>44</sup>

Quite obviously, I do not want to equate, in some reductionist manner, "the faith which does justice" with "left-leaning politi-

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<sup>43</sup> *Intellectuals*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 72f.



cal movements and orientations." The neoconservative critique must be taken seriously when it warns us against turning the faith which does justice into warmed-over platforms of the left wing of the Democratic Party. Yet, we can yield to this criticism and still employ Brym's three variables for our own purposes, since in general they refer to attitudes which transcend class interest and position.

**1. Family of origin:** Schools can selectively recruit from poorer families and minorities. Memories of the poverty of one's family of origin frequently continue to have influence on an option for the poor in later life. Jesuit schools that want to take GC 32 seriously will, accordingly, actively recruit (and, if necessary, pretrain by working with students younger than the usual high-school and university populations, and preparing them to meet our standards) from minority populations (black and Hispanic, for example). Jesuit schools may want to include pro-active affirmative-action recruitment of the poor and minorities as part of their commitment to GC 32.

Just as frequently, however, poor and minority students internalize the values of their new milieu and forget the poor kin they conveniently leave behind. Some have claimed that this holds for many in the new black middle class in America. In any event, history teaches that not every system of recruitment of the poor leads inevitably to fruitful and continuing options for the poor. To be sure, in all likelihood minorities who pass through our Jesuit schools will become members of the new knowledge class. If we merely turn ghetto youths into glittering yuppies, however, we have achieved nothing for either faith or justice. Recruitment of minorities is a necessary but not sufficient condition to institutionalize the values of GC 32 in our schools.

**2. Educational climate of the school:** Brym ably demonstrates that the educational climates of schools make a decisive difference in shaping adult political attitudes and orientations. In some cases, the evidence shows, this variable looms larger even than family of origin as the explanation of adult political behavior and attitudes. With family of origin held constant as a sociological variable, educa-

tional climate can sometimes sustain attitudes and value orientations at variance with class background.

The specific content of the curricula and the educational climates of the schools shape those who are recruited to these schools, no matter what their family of origin. "The specific content of these ideas," however, claims Brym, "is a function of the interests of those groups which control the institution."<sup>45</sup> If we follow him, correlating the intellectual apostolate with the values of GC 32 means making sure that these values are, in Kolvenbach's terms, "operative in our lives and in our institutions. They must be up front, on the table" in our curricula, in our requirement that service with the poor be a component of education in our schools, in our conversation with boards of trustees and benefactors. Regarding these groups, we need to ask what are the interests of these bodies which control and shape our institutions. Recruitment, along with attention to educational environment and content, adds seriousness to our commitment to GC 32 in our schools.

**3. The opportunities for becoming occupationally and politically tied to a variety of social groups during and after their formal education:** A structurally complicated and pluralist society such as the United States offers many different avenues for career mobility and occupational placement. Not all of them promise to further equally well the values of GC 32. Surely we would be disturbed if a large majority of our graduates went on to specialize in leveraged buy-outs or become shyster lawyers! A consistent concern for GC 32 will not only take into account those who attend our schools and their experiences and development while they are in them, but also note where they go when they leave. The shaping of our students and socializing them to values connected with justice and faith continue after they leave our schools.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

## Society as Horizon for Our Schools

Specific outreach programs for alumni can continue the schools' implementation of the apostolate of GC 32; but, to be realistic, we can probably expect very little from this. Energies of schools are limited. This third variable of Brym's would seem to reinforce an argument of Jon Sobrino in his essay on the Christian inspiration of the university. There he insists that the sufficient horizon for the Christian university is neither forming university members, including students and faculty (although this is indeed necessary), nor inculcating religious knowledge and practice (desirable and laudable, of course). Society itself, argues Sobrino, must become a horizon of our universities. "With rare exceptions," he comments, "university graduates reinforce the social systems which do not benefit the poor minorities."

Hence, Sobrino claims,

the finality of a Christian university does not lie formally in the defense of truth accepted a priori but rather in making society grow in the direction of the kingdom of God through whatever is true in the tradition and through the continuing clarification of that truth so that it may become more fruitful.

Not our students or faculty—in isolation—nor the defense of Christian truth, but society itself becomes an ultimate finality of our schools. They serve the kingdom of God by bringing values of the kingdom into society.

We are back to a fundamental claim of Kolvenbach, Arrupe, and GC 32. Our schools cannot succeed in their formative purposes unless society itself becomes an object and horizon of their apostolic outreach. Schools both mirror society and selectively change it. Because of this finality of our schools, which must take society itself as their horizon, our intellectuals in university settings may need to listen again to Kolvenbach's exhortation at Georgetown for inter-apostolic initiatives:

It is of the greatest importance that in one way or another those engaged in the educational apostolate in the Society take the initiative to collaborate with those Jesuits who work full time in the direct

promotion of justice. The competence that is necessary for pastoral and social ministry, a knowledge that is broad and deep and constantly being updated, can only come from serious and disciplined university studies. So, it is clear that those missioned to these apostolates have need of the university.

But, on the other hand, university Jesuits run the real risk of living at a distance, or with an information gap but especially a distance of affectivity from realities off campus.

Society as such (its structures of sin or graced opportunity, its discourse, its embodiment of kingdom values) must be a necessary horizon of our schools; for society itself will become the larger formation school of our graduates and willy-nilly will impinge on our schools. Clearly, we need Jesuit intellectuals both within and outside the university context, and we need mutual collaboration between both groups.

For some purposes intellectuals outside the university will have greater leverage and access to segments of society (for instance, the political world, the media, business, the union movement). So it is vital that we do not too narrowly equate the intellectual apostolate with our universities. Voice No. 7 correctly stated it: The director of a state Catholic conference, the confessor/spiritual director of bishops, or those who lobby for immigration laws are no less valuable intellectuals than those in our schools. If we remember that society itself is a horizon of our schools, we will have little difficulty agreeing with this point.

In sum, then, GC 32 adds a sociocritical element to the older Jesuit intellectual ideal and calls us to see the intellectual life as it articulates with social realities of occupational mobility and new classes of a knowledge elite. GC 32 invites us to imagine the Jesuit intellectual life with a new "structural" figuration. Finally, although GC 32 remains insufficient as a ground for the Jesuit intellectual life, it legitimately gives apostolic direction and shape to it. My second thesis has been amply substantiated: There need be no discrepancy between the call of GC 32 for Jesuits to put a priority on the faith which does justice and a vigorous commitment to the in-

tellectual life. Indeed, the congregation actually made up for earlier lacunae in the Jesuit intellectual tradition.

## V. SPIRITUAL TIMBRE FOR THE INTELLECTUAL'S VOICE

For the most part, the presentation of my third thesis will be quite brief and evocative. It reads, as you recall: **An essential component of a genuine commitment to a Jesuit intellectual life demands a closer integration of spirituality and the intellectual life than has always been usual in Jesuit circles.**

My reason in addressing this thesis so briefly relates principally to considerations of space. In some ways this alone would be a topic for a whole separate essay in *Studies*. But such an essay would necessarily build upon the foundation that we have already covered in Theses 1 and 2. I even hesitated to include this Thesis 3 since in any case I could not develop it at any length. I decided otherwise, however, because I wanted at least to indicate that the issue of a spirituality for the intellectual life is not just a question of adapting to GC 32. My claim is broader. Even before GC 32 we Jesuits had not adequately integrated spirituality and the intellectual life. As I argue that thesis here, I will rely much more on evoking the imperfect articulation of Jesuit spirituality and the intellectual life than on constructing a positive spirituality for it. I will question much more than I will answer. Yet, as the slogan puts it, the beginning of wisdom often starts with positing some of the right questions.

Nor do I intend, in any way, to engage here in formation bashing or to underwrite claims I have sometimes heard Jesuits make that in recent years our formation teams have exhibited anti-intellectual biases. Certainly, with the exception of my own novitiate, anti-intellectualism was totally absent from my own formation. Nor do I see it in the young Jesuits I have taught for sixteen years at Berkeley in one of our theologates.

But there is a world of difference between anti-intellectualism as such and a genuine integration of spirituality and the intellectual

life. We can avoid the former without achieving the latter. We Jesuits, to be sure, admire our intellectuals and honor them as heroes: Rahner, Lonergan, Teilhard, John Courtney Murray, and Hopkins are names spoken with pride in the Jesuit litany. But we tend to forget to ask how these Jesuits' intellectual journeys and struggles represent a form of sanctity. We admire the achievements of these men, but see no clear relationship between their accomplishments and their specific way of being holy (and not just achieving) Jesuits.

Recently I have been in conversation with a friend who is writing a book about contemporary saint making and the saint makers in the Vatican. In discussing the proposed canonization of Cardinal Newman, Ken Woodward remarked to me that

very few intellectuals ever make it to the altars of canonization. Even when they do, it is usually for another reason: Augustine was a great bishop; Jerome an ascetic like the desert fathers; Bernard a reforming abbot and mystic. Even Aquinas was canonized because his *Summa Contra Gentiles* was seen as somehow missionary and his purity as an example of heroic virtue. In their spiritual perception, the contemporary saint makers in the Vatican Congregation for the Canonization of Saints look for humility in a would-be saint. They do not seem to know what the appropriate humility for a great intellectual would look like. Spirituality and the intellectual life have not yet been integrated in their minds.

In his new book, *The Saint-Makers: The Politics of Canonization*, Woodward expands on this theme:

Saints, of course, are not canonized for the excellence of their intellects but for the excellence of their lives. Charity not wisdom is the noblest of virtues. Still, anyone who examines the papal canonizations since 1588 is immediately struck by the absence of outstanding thinkers and writers other than a few monastic theologians.<sup>[46]</sup> How is it that a church which has, at least since Aquinas, insisted on the inherent compatibility between faith and reason has found

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<sup>46</sup> A notable exception is Blessed Niels Stensen, the outstanding Danish natural scientist; however, he was beatified in 1988 more for his personal asceticism, his manifest help of the poor, and his rich prayer life, and because he was a Danish candidate at a time when John Paul II was visiting Denmark in 1988.

no distinguished philosophers or other thinkers or writers to add to its list of saints? What is it about the passionate life of the mind . . . which seems to create obstacles to sainthood?<sup>47</sup>

Part of the reason is historical. In much of the Counter-Reformation period, the Church has frequently been in opposition to the main currents of modern thought, and Rome has proved an inhospitable home for its own best intellectuals and scholars. From its reaction to political Liberalism in the nineteenth century to Modernism and the *nouvelle theologie* in the twentieth, the institutional church has manifested a serious suspicion of untethered intellects.

The absence of canonized intellectuals in the Church means that an ordinary route for Jesuits themselves to understand the intellectual life and its relation to sanctity has been blocked; namely, the narrative lives of the holy ones who serve as models for growth in spirituality and holiness. We learn our spirituality through the lives of exemplars and saints, against whose patterns of life we mold and model (and adapt) our own struggles in the spiritual life.

But, as Woodward puts it in Chapter 9, cited above,

What matters is that much as the church needs saints like Newman, the canonization process still does not readily comprehend the intellectually gifted. Religious intellectuals and artists mediate Christ in ways that only powerful thought and art can do. Their asceticism is not the asceticism of the cloistered monk, their insights are not the insights of the mystic, their suffering, though often great, is not the suffering of the martyr. How many people, one has to ask, have come to know the meaning of Christ through the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the philosophy of Jacques Maritain, or a painting by Georges Rouault. Yet none of these have been proposed for canonization or even enjoy a popular reputation for holiness.

Short of canonization and a cult of intellectual exemplars of sanctity (especially telling for Jesuits, for whom the intellectual life

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<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Woodward, *The Saint-Makers: The Politics of Canonization* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990). I am citing from Chapter 9, "Holiness and the Life of the Mind," which I have in unpublished manuscript.

has been a hallmark of their apostolate), I do not think that we have found other ways of integrating spirituality and the intellectual life. Let some questions guide our further reflection on this topic. Ask yourself whether you think the necessary integration of the two has taken place.

### Some Questions about the Integration of Spirituality and the Intellectual Life in the Jesuit Tradition

Have we Jesuits looked at the kind of courage the intellectual life demands of us: to speak the truth honestly, to follow it wherever it may lead? Or have we looked at the virtues called for to live with ambiguities and nuance (since life is messy), knowing that at times discovering intellectual distinctions makes a crucial difference even for the moral and spiritual life? Living with ambiguity, it would seem, can point to a deep trust that God is larger than our ability to name experience, even in theological categories.

I question, too, if we have probed sufficiently what genuine intellectual charity and broad-mindedness entail (looking for the truth in the heresy, the good will in the dissident, the true zeal in the reactionary zealot). I am reminded of Thomas Aquinas's wonderful throw-away line in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*: "We must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in the search for truth and both have helped us in the finding of it."

Again, what kind of spirituality sustains the intellectual's willingness (often very painful for him or her) to live with conflict and mistrust or misrepresentations by Church authorities? (All the more painful for one who throws himself wholeheartedly into the furtherance of God's kingdom as an intellectual and does not stint to pour himself out for the Church and tradition.) I have known in my life theologians whom I consider brilliant and others whom I regard as not only brilliant but saintly as well. (Gustavo Gutierrez and Edward Schillebeeckx come to my mind as examples of the latter.) Their saintliness was not just an exemplification of garden-



variety asceticism, virtue, and zeal found in any disciple; rather, it was honed very specifically to their special role as intellectuals. Among the Jesuit teachers from my early years, George Klubertanz stood out not just as an intellect but as a saintly and ascetic Jesuit whose virtue was specifically tied to his vocation as teacher-writer.

Some other unanswered questions for me are: Have we thought through, as a group, the Society's and the Church's laws on censorship and the danger that they may curtail a genuine intellectual life? Have we talked enough together about the different logics and tensions between those who hold offices of government in the Society (and therefore, perforce, must give some attention to the logic of institutional maintenance) and the rest of us, whose mission may be something quite other than maintenance? How do we live with unsettling questions which can threaten the security of our fixed and sure faith and faith commitments—or what we conceive of as such? Indeed, have we really discerned the price we may have to pay, individually and as a Society, for deciding at GC 32 to become a company of critics?

I have no ready answer to these questions. They show me, however, that we still have agenda to fulfill before we learn to integrate spirituality and the intellectual life. We often hear, appropriately, exhortations to devotion lest the heart grow cold in intellectual pursuits. To be sure, there are shoals of shipwreck and temptations to delusion in the intellectual life. We all know the mythological figure of Faust trading his soul for knowledge as power. We need countermyths of some wise rabbi figure or priest-scholar who yields his soul to the larger beckoning of the truth who sets us free.

May I suggest at least one entrée to a discussion among us of the appropriate spirituality for the intellectual life. In Robertson Davies's novel *The Lyre of Orpheus*,<sup>48</sup> Simon Darcourt figures as a main character. He is a spiritually- and worldly-wise Jesuit-like Anglican priest and professor. When asked by another character in

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<sup>48</sup> New York: Viking, 1988.

the novel to explain the secret of his soul making (in Jung's sense) and spirituality, Simon replies:

I used to think it was religion. That was why I became a priest. But the religion the world wanted from me didn't work and it was killing me. Not physically but spiritually. The world is full of priests who have been killed by religion and can't, or won't, escape. So, I tried scholarship and that worked pretty well for awhile. . . . The funny thing is, the deeper I got into it, the more it began to resemble religion. The real religion I mean: the intense yielding to what is most significant but not always apparent in life.<sup>49</sup>

I could not help but think of examples of intellectual Jesuits I have known for whom their asceticism of research, teaching, and writing, as well as their suffering for what they had written, was a discovery of a religious journey, a yielding to what was most significant but not always apparent in life. Probing that sort of question would to a greater extent open up to us how we see the intellectual life to which all Jesuits are called as our vocation, charism, blessing—one characterized by specific spiritual virtues such as honesty, tenacity, generosity of mind, intellectual courage, steadfastness, and sometimes even attended by persecution or humiliation.

We know that God, after all, is truth and that a passionate longing for truth, wherever it might lead and however uncomfortable its disclosure, should be—and sometimes is—akin to the thirst to see God's own face whole. It is not that the intellectual life is intrinsically inimical or recalcitrant to spirituality. It is more that we have not explicitly thematized this apostolic priority in spiritual terms or sought to uncover the spiritual virtues appropriate to it. We need not engage in either formation bashing or a repudiation of our rich spiritual heritage in order to admit that a closer integration of the Jesuit intellectual life and spirituality still needs much work. After all, in the wider-church literature, it has been a very long time indeed since someone like Sertillanges has even broached the issue.

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<sup>49</sup> Davies, *Lyre*, 428f.

And how long has it been since we Jesuits have collectively done so?

And so, our conversation has come full circle. We have heard a chorus of voices commenting on Jesuits and the intellectual life and extracted therefrom three articulated theses. But will the conversation continue? May I suggest, in conclusion, a constellation of three process questions to keep the conversation going in your mind, dear Reader, but, more importantly, in your community.

## VI. THREE PROCESS QUESTIONS TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

1. Do you feel that contemporary Jesuits (and more particularly your own community and apostolic work) have a coherent rationale for the intellectual life (clear to you as Jesuits and to your colleagues and clientele, and expressible in a few ready slogans)? If so, please state it in one or two paragraphs. If not, what loss does this entail for your community and apostolic work?
2. Does your apostolic work try to integrate GC 32 and the intellectual life? Does it look to all three of Robert Brym's variables for this integration: (a) recruitment of minorities and the poor, (b) curricula and educational climate and attention to the values of those who control and finance the school, and (c) the kinds of occupational structures and life worlds your graduates enter? In what ways do you really see society as a horizon of your apostolate?
3. What element among the various virtues inherent in an intellectual life would you want to see more clearly integrated into your own (and your community's) spirituality? What impact might this have on the way your community sees or acts together?

With these three process questions, let the voices from the initial conversation no longer be silent, but in vigorous dialogue let them re-enter (stage left).

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## SOURCES

### *From Jerónimo Nadal's "Prayer: Especially for Those of the Society"*

*One of Jerónimo Nadal's finest treatments of the spirit and practice of prayer by Jesuits was his "Prayer: Especially for Those of the Society" of 1561-62. It voices his conviction, not only that a Jesuit should be able to reconcile the full depth of contemplative prayer with active spiritual ministries, but that the two could and should also mutually enhance and deepen each other. He is struggling towards the point of synthesis beyond contemplation and spiritual ministry, to what he calls "a state of spiritual life in Jesus Christ," "a living spiritually," "a finding God our Lord in every thing and every action." This excerpt is translated by Martin Palmer, S.J., from MONUMENTA HISTORICA SOCIETATIS IESU, Epistolae Nadal 4:672-77.*

The Society pursues and embraces prayer by the grace of Jesus Christ. It teaches prayer first and foremost through its Spiritual Exercises, to which we see that God our Lord has given such effectiveness, to the greater glory and praise of his divine majesty.

The Exercises have the greater spiritual effectiveness in our Lord the greater the humility and the less the curiosity, the greater the faith and trust that the Lord will act through them, the greater the desire for the salvation and perfection of our own souls, the greater the application and exactness, and the greater the desire for the glory and praise of Jesus Christ, with which we make them.

What in our Lord is of most avail in the Exercises and in all prayer is a great generosity in surrendering to God all our powers and operations, and all that we are;

and also that, while not failing with his grace to do our part by every virtue and means to perfection, we hope constantly, desire intensely, and beg from God that he will bring about in them and in all whatever will be for his own greater glory and praise.

Another great help is to exercise in prayer the will and affection more than the understanding. We should avoid an impertinent avidity to understand many things in prayer, and make it our aim to increase our affective attachment for whatever is to God our Lord's greater service. Thus, in every prayer we should draw fruit and light for our mind that is practical and connected with the virtues and their practice and the spirit of Jesus Christ.

After making the Exercises, the soul possesses by the grace of Jesus Christ the beginnings of prayer in

all three ways of which the contemplatives treat: through the First Week, of the purgative way; through the Second and Third Weeks, of the illuminative way, which is properly contemplation; and, though the unitive way is not to be excluded in the first three Weeks, nevertheless it is proper to the Fourth Week in the exercise on the love of God.

Likewise, by the grace of our Lord, there is drawn from the Exercises a quite special grace which enables an individual to obtain knowledge and interior awareness of his particular vocation. The soul thereby achieves a special peace and union with God in spiritual obedience and the particular fulfillment of the way by which he must go to God.

The starting point and the goal of prayer ought to be, as far as possible, warmth of charity in God and zeal for all souls, with burning desire for the salvation and perfection of one's own and everyone else's soul.

Feelings in prayer and desires for it that incline a person to recollection and solitude beyond what is necessary do not seem to be the prayer proper to the Society; rather, that which inclines a person to the practice of his vocation and ministry, and especially to perfect obedience according to our Institute.

Thus it is characteristic of the Society's prayer that it extends to the practice of vocal prayer and

every exercise of the Society's ministries; and that, so far as can be attained by the grace of Jesus Christ, the enlightenment of the understanding and the good affection of the will and union persist in, accompany, and guide all our operations, so that in all things God our Lord is found, and "the remainders of the thought keep holiday to the Lord" (Ps. 75:11 [Vg]).

In this way prayer should be so directed that by its extension it augments and guides and gives spiritual relish to one's works, along with strength in the Lord, and so that the works enhance prayer, giving it power and joy. In this way, Martha and Mary being joined together and assisting one another, not just a part of the Christian life is embraced—not even the better part that is contemplation—but, anxiety and worry about many things being set aside, Mary helps Martha and is united with her in the Lord. . . .

The state of prayer is a state of spiritual life in Jesus Christ: as he is eternal light and infinite goodness, he should be known and loved above all things; all other things should be known and loved in him. In this way the entirety of our living and understanding ought to rise above and be detached from these lower things, as we live and act not by a spirit that is human but by one that is heavenly and divine. In all things we should perceive inwardly and recognize the power and good-

ness of God which we ought to love and serve. . . .

Inasmuch as prayer is a gift of God our Lord, a living spiritually, a mystical understanding of things spiritual and of God, and a finding of God our Lord in every thing and every action, each one according to the measure of God's grace given him and his own cooperation with

it in great humility, simplicity, purity of heart, faith, and hope in God our Lord, being all afire with the fervor of charity and zeal for God's honor and glory in the salvation of souls—whoever practices prayer will easily find matter for meditation and every kind of prayer in the Lord.

## R E C E N T    B O O K S

Joseph Simons, S. J.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

I write to congratulate and thank John Shepherd and Paul Soukup for their excellent monograph on preached retreats and to make a few reflections of my own, based on my own experiences since devoting myself *full-time* to this apostolate in 1984 and averaging thirty retreats a year to priests, nuns, and lay persons.

I am most grateful to John for sharing his practice of beginning the periods of personal prayer following the conferences by briefly praying himself with the retreatants. I am sure this greatly helps them get started on their own private reflections and I hope I can successfully imitate this practice.

Let me begin my own reflections by taking up the objection that in preached retreats one is usually "saving the saved." Well, in the first place, I believe Jesus spoke and Paul wrote at least as much about sanctification—or growth in holiness—as about salvation! I hope this growth in holiness is what most retreatants are accomplishing in their annual retreats, yet it simply is not true that issues of basic salvation from serious sin do not come up often enough in preached retreats.

I presume this objection may spring from the fact that, especially in preached retreats to nuns and

often also in this type of retreats to the laity, the majority of retreatants may be older—over fifty or even sixty years of age—and have previously made numerous such retreats. As to the laity, this basis for the objection is becoming less and less true, since many retreat centers have the laudable practice of urging fathers to bring their sons and mothers their daughters to at least one retreat. Most of the time members of that younger generation then become regular annual retreatants. In groups of forty to ninety retreatants I am finding more and more persons in their twenties and thirties.

Yes, the majority of women religious who make preached retreats are older, for this is the type of retreat they made most of their religious lives and the type they prefer. Certainly their desires should be met. To the extent that the Catholic faith is flourishing in the United States, it is due basically to the religious education these women religious gave to millions of Catholics in their early school years, often under trying circumstances and for shamefully small financial remuneration. We owe these religious the consolation of the spiritual ministry they prefer. I have found it most rewarding to help them fully accept the mercy of God and to attain peace of soul after

decades, in some instances, of worrying about the past.

Regarding the older lay retreatants, we ought to consider the fact that many of them without further preparation simply do not have the spiritual background to make directed retreats. In addition, they cannot afford to give more than a weekend to their annual retreat; and it seems to me, at least, that this is too brief a time for a directed retreat. I would like to hear that my presumption here is incorrect, and I wonder if, perhaps, more could be done to prepare our regular weekend lay retreatants for a directed retreat. Or, if something is being done, I wonder what this is. But I do feel significant spiritual growth is achieved by the laity after a period of several annual preached retreats. Therefore, more Jesuits should be encouraged to take up this apostolate, at least part-time, an encouragement given recently by the provincial of the Chicago Province to its members.

Let me mention from my experience a few aspects of the preached retreat which may be of assistance. I have found that the Foundation is well received and most helpful if the aim is to give the retreatants a good "self image" to assist them feel deeply that they are **individually** chosen, created, and sustained in life by God out of infinite love; and to bring them to recall and feel deep satisfaction and joy about all the good things they have done and are doing in their lives. This pre-

pares them for a truer and more balanced appraisal of themselves when the prayer turns to their faults or sins.

A preached retreat enables the director to raise the consciousness of lay retreatants regarding social or institutionalized sin or injustice. Older retreatants belong to a generation for whom moral instruction stressed primarily personal sins against the Sixth Commandment but said little about the social ramifications of the Seventh Commandment. Frequently these retreatants are persons of influence, and a retreat conference on this latter topic moves them to vital involvement in civic and business action against such injustice.

Moreover, a preached retreat is often the only opportunity lay retreatants have to hear an explanation of the reasons for and the advantages of the changes in the Church since Vatican II, which many of them still find annoying. It is rewarding to help them accept these changes with greater peace, especially when the instruction is accompanied by their own greater participation in the liturgies in the smaller and controlled environment of the retreat house and by communal reconciliation and healing services.

I thoroughly agree with Father Shepherd in his recommended use of Scripture in a preached retreat. If the director suggests, either orally or on a mimeographed page, a few

key Scripture passages related to the topic of the previous conference, older retreatants, many of whom were never taught to read the Bible, find this reading inspiring and an excellent starting point for their personal prayer. A retreatant once remarked to me, "Father, there are some beautiful thoughts in this book!" He had never read the Bible; he had only listened to the passages read at Sunday Masses. Some bring such a list of texts home with them and use them to renew

the retreat graces and even to begin reading the Bible more completely.

So for all these reasons I decided to thank John publicly for his fine article and I shall pray for the continued success of these retreats. For myself, I hope God will give me many more years and opportunities to conduct preached retreats.

William G. Topmoeller, S.J.

Faber Jesuit Community  
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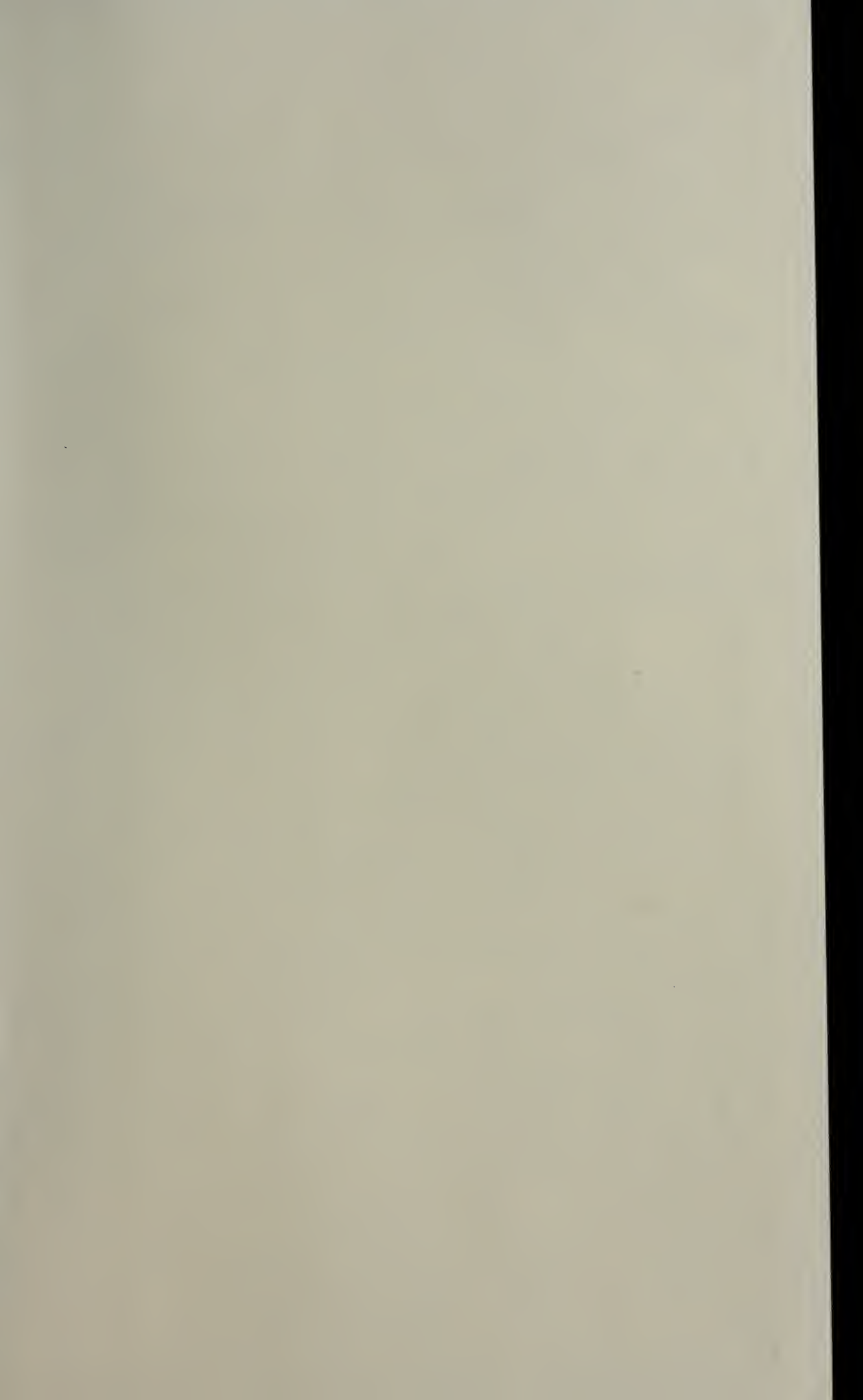
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