St. Ignatius' Quill Pen: Exploring the Orality-Literacy Difficulty in the Spiritual Exercises

Hongchao Qian

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ST. IGNATIUS’ QUILL PEN: EXPLORING THE ORALITY-LITERACY DIFFICULTY IN THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Hongchao Qian

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Hongchao Qian

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ABSTRACT

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May 2020

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Janie M. Harden Fritz

Informed by the work of Walter Ong, in the first prelude of the First Week in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius of Loyola used an emblematical image, the “prison-cage”, to provide phenomenological accounts for the exercitants to examine the existential situation within. This dissertation explores into the difficulty of being rhetorical in mediating on the existential situation emblematically. I try to understand the orality-literacy dynamic within the Exercises through the theoretical framework of semiotic phenomenology. The Ignatian emblems can be understood as phenomenological descriptions that asked the exercitants to provide the parts of moral-phenomenological reductions and phenomenological interpretations within personalism.
DEDICATION

Dedicated to Walter J. Ong S.J., with whom I am guided to the intellectual sphere.
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CHAPTER ONE

Orality and Literacy and the Difficulty in the Word-Image Dynamic

The *Spiritual Exercises*¹ is regarded as the best-known work of St. Ignatius of Loyola² as the founding father of the Society of Jesus.³ Ever since the publication of the *Exercises* in 1548,⁴ this little book has been within the intellectual arena, with debates around Ignatius’ protecting and promoting the training of mnemonics (in contrast to the natural memory), the application of the whole sensorium organization into the meditations, and more personal conversations with the Three Persons.⁵ With or without conclusions to these debates, the distinctive value of the *Exercises*, as a book that has been read and used continuously for more than 470 years, should become more interpretatively approachable in the current historical moment.

The recent wave of interest in the *Exercises* was riddled with a rich dynamic between considering the Ignatian imagery as calculated literacy⁶ and considering it as genuine orality.⁷ Multiple issues can be examined derivatively from this dynamic, but

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¹ Throughout this project, I use “*Spiritual Exercises*” to refer to the particular book, and “*Spiritual Exercises*” to refer to the Jesuitical way of meditation.
² To call Ignatius of Loyola a “Saint” should not be far from calling Lao Er “Lao Tzu”. “Saint” and “Tzu” are to honor the person.
⁵ The Three Persons and One God can be understood as the Christian way of dealing with the dynamic between the synchronicity of phenomenological perceptions (one God) and the diachronic phenomenology of time (the Three Persons).
⁷ See Walter Ong. *Hopkins, the Self, and God* (University of Toronto Press, 1986). Also see Antonio de Nicolas. *Ignatius de Loyola, Power of Imagining: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining through the Collected Works of Ignatius de Loyola, with a Translation of These Work* (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 1986).
first of all, for us to be aware of the riddle, we already stand upon “the modern discovery of orality”, both benefiting from and being puzzled by it.

The riddle itself is clear: when understanding the Exercises, there were two intellectual traditions in combat. One can be traced back to Claude Lévi-Strauss’ publishing La Pensée Sauvage in 1962 at the birthplace of structuralism, from which Roland Barthes was able to perform a critical media reading on the Exercises. In Barthes, Ignatius was understood as a film director who wrote scripts in the Exercises to cater his powerful imagination to the mass. The other can be traced back to Eric Havelock’s publishing Preface to Plato in 1963 at the birthplace of orality studies, with which Walter Ong was able to understand the difficulty of being rhetorical in the Exercises. One way or the other, as Ong had it, “the question [of orality and literacy] is more focused today than ever before”. In this dissertation, I try to understand Ignatius’ difficulty in dealing with the situation of the spoken word.

In the field of communication, interpretative efforts on the rhetoric of the Exercises can be dated to 1962 when Ong republished “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage and the Existentialist Situation” in The Barbarian Within as a collection of Ong’s essays around the theme of personalism. “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” was originally published in Theological Studies in 1954. From 1954 to 1962, to the extent of this research, the only article was George Tade’s “The Spiritual Exercises: A Method of Self-persuasion” published in Quarterly Journal of Speech in 1957. Tade was interested in the use value of the Exercises for rhetoricians. Here, it may be noted Ignatius was a man with a profound

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resemblance to Martin Luther\textsuperscript{10} – part of the practical implication of the \textit{Exercises} was that Ignatius lived in a time when the word-image dynamic was framed and examined within the dynamic between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.

Among more recent work, in \textit{Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies}, the rhetorical elements in the \textit{Exercises} were highlighted.\textsuperscript{11} In \textit{Eloquence}, the questions were self-confrontational indeed. One could almost hear these communication scholars ask: as rhetoricians, why are we interested in the \textit{history} of rhetorical studies? And why do we find that we have been collaborating with the Jesuits (and now consciously do so)? And why do we feel it necessary to always have the communication practitioners in mind? Within those questions, some legitimation may be established for pinpointing “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” as a starting place to understand the orality-literacy difficulty in the \textit{Exercises}, given the innate dynamic between rhetorical praxis and religious studies built into Fr. Ong’s work. A brief review of Ong’s work should follow.

Much has been done to trace this line of thought in Ong around the theme of “the technologizing of the word”. This line could go roughly from \textit{Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue} (the orality-literacy bluntness in Ramus’ dichotomy), to \textit{Rhetoric, Romance and Technology} (the rebellion against the oral tradition in Romanticism), to \textit{Presence of the Word} (the orality-literacy intensity in the Judeo-Christian tradition), to \textit{Interface of the Word} (the orality-literacy dynamic as ways to study the history of


consciousness), and to the conclusive masterpiece *Orality and Literacy*. When we take this line, it should be cautioned that Ong was indeed critical of using the term “media” overtly. On the structural approaches to the *Exercises*, Ong was critically concerned with reading the four-week Exercises (communication) as tautological to a four-side structure (communicative architecture in which communication happens). But to praise or to blame “the technologizing of word” was also not Ong’s central concern. Epideictic rhetoric is after all between man and man, and less of the “I-It” relationship. Here, it may be more accurate to say that Ong was interested in offering phenomenological accounts for the difficulty of the spoken word to become “things”, and for “things” to be after all different from “objects” (in phenomenological terms, “objects” are simply there, while “things” exist into the human perception along with communication). For the current project, in order to better understand the orality-literacy difficulty in the *Exercises*, another line of thought in Ong around the theme of “personalism” may be proposed.

This line could go roughly from *The Barbarian Within* (1962), to *In the Human Grain* (1967a), to *Presence of the Word* (1967b), to *Fighting for Life* (1981) and to *Hopkins, the Self and God* (1986). As Farrell indicated, Ong was “broadly interested in working out an adequate personalist philosophy”. By “adequate”, this personalist

13 See Ong, *Orality*, 175.
philosophy should then reveal the difficulty within the particularity of a person, hard to be rhetorically generalized while wired into the public sphere via rhetoric. In the context of the Counter-Reformation, personalism can also be understood as the very existential effort to conquer the word-image dynamic within the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word. In the Preface of the Barbarian, Ong said,

> The personalist theme involves a subsidiary theme, that of voice itself, the most sensitive manifestation of personal presence and the normal mode of communication opening persons to one another and rendering fertile the grounds on which relationships with the object world was established …

What is said tells off against what is not said, reminding us that total explicitness is impossible to human beings: one always means more than one says or, in another sense, says more than one means. In being to some degree necessarily occult, myth is a by-product of this limitation of human voice. It exists by virtue of what is says not explicitly but symbolically.

*Mythos* complements *logos.*

As *mythos* is bound with *imago,* “*mythos* complements *logos*” should be a good interpretative entrance into the Ignatian imagery in the *Exercises.* In the context of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, *mythos* also complemented *logos* by combating and confronting *logos.* Now, Ignatius was a sixteenth century man; in the *Exercises,* he simply could not calculate the meaning of an image in a way that a contemporary visual artist could do. If indeed the *Exercises* was “mystical”, the Ignatian mysticism should be within the complexity between human imagination and communication. Simply put,

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imagination is occult in the sense that one runs his or her own risk in understanding or misunderstanding a watermark on the wall to be in the shape of a holy cross, but it is fundamentally a Christian emblem to present a holy cross without the body of Christ as a form of meditation.

With Ong’s work on personalism, we may outline two general tasks for this dissertation: to make the meaning of Ignatius’ images in the Exercises more explicit, and to understand the difficulty within the Ignatian imagery. As a preliminary definition, personalism can be defined as a particular kind of philosophy of history that focuses on the difficulty in communicating with the spoken word—a diachronic phenomenology in which there are good reasons to refrain from visual synchronicity. And to highlight communication ethics in personalism is also a philosophy of communication in which one tries to understand the real difficulty in the birth and the birthplace of a strong moral consciousness. Moreover, in the pragmatic sense of practicing the paradox in “visual (versus) communication”, personalism can also be understood as a way to understand the phenomenological nuances within the Ignatian imagery in the emblematical tradition.

The Ignatian emblems can be an important counterpart to a digital New Criticism in

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18 See Ong, Grain, 127-29; Hopkins, 19-21; Barbarian, 233-41.
22 To offer one connection between digitalism and New Criticism, both the psychology of “flow” (knowing exactly what to do at any given moment) and the New Criticism doctrine of understanding an art piece independently from the artist, can be traced back to the Greek mythos of Hercules’ twelve labors—for the oral poets to highlight the action, the myth must be one labor after another in which the rhetorical clarity on the continuity and the independence of the labor cannot be disturbed. This is the psychological blind spot of an Apollonian-centric rhetorical education.
which one tries to explain away the problem of selfhood and authorship in both words and images.²³

Keeping in mind the discursive discourses on media (as technologies of communication), as much as “mythos complements logos”, media also complements communication. Modern communication theories were not image-shy in borrowing from the symbolic meaning of things in order to study inter-subjectivity. On one hand, communication scholars knew that these images were meant to be incomplete in explaining human communication. On the other hand, such intellectual habit certainly came from the Western imagerial thinking tradition, within which images had a social function that in turn promoted theoretical collaborations.

For example, in the age of electronic communication when our imagination of human communication can be heavily influenced by the sender-receiver model, it is not that the sender-receiver model is over-determined to be structurally reductive; rather, it is that the existential element within must be dug out from the deeper. As Mumford had it, in an industrial factory polluted by the noise of the machine, it was a communicative virtue for one worker to use his or her human chest in “fighting” against the mechanical noise in order to get the message delivered.²⁴ The moral implication in Mumford’s elaboration should not be neglected. Therein, to raise an incomplete parallel between modern communication theories and the Ignatian emblems, the emblems in the Exercises should function in a similar way by picking up an inner movement which exists

²³ See Barthes, Loyola, 41-44.
independently of the image itself.\textsuperscript{25} Without the emblems, the psychological movement inside would be difficult to examine and exist.

In the vicinity of media ecology, the media ecologists tend to understand the existential element of the medium as the excessive expressiveness of the man-made technologies of communication (in Mumford’s term, the machine-tools\textsuperscript{26}). As a good emblem book writer would not avoid moral reductions, the ethics of studying communication as media should be in the capacity to reveal the phenomenology of the spoken word as both between man and man and between man and things.

Accordingly, my argument in “St. Ignatius’ quill pen” (with the meaning of an earlier writing tool) is of a developmental parallel: as much as the consonant was a technical closure, nonce internalized by the Greek orality so that in rhetorike (the Greek word for “public speaking”), the speaker’s vocal intensity could reach a wider variety of audiences,\textsuperscript{27} the printing press (as if one were holding a pen with extreme firmness) was a technological\textsuperscript{28} closure that was meant to create a communicative intensity that went beyond the realm of human voice. The quill pen, as within Ignatius’ using the emblematics in the Exercises, was to hold the writing tool sophisticatedly, with a half-open and half-closed gesture, not without a good sense of media ecology (on the social level of promoting wider uses of quill pens, and on a more personal scale in developing a bodily habit of using the quill pen).

\textsuperscript{25} Ong, \textit{Barbarian}, 255
\textsuperscript{26} Mumford, \textit{Technics}, 237.
\textsuperscript{28} In this project, I use “technical” to highlight body-tools, and “technological” to highlight machine-tools.
In this first chapter, I will start with a prelude by calling attention to teaching media ecology related courses in the field of communication. The aim is to bring the American ethos (personalism in America) onto the table. Then, I will focus on one particular “composite of places” in the *Exercises* that Ong called a “prison-cage”. The aim is to better understand the “media archeology” of the emblematics – “archeological” in the sense of studying the non-movement by moving it intellectually again. Eventually, I will examine a perceivable post-structuralism critique of the *Exercises* as a digital decision-making matrix. The aim is to better understand the debates around the freedom of will in making a decision.

**The Emblematical-Moral Implication in Teaching Media Ecology**

Teaching media ecology related courses started recently, indeed not until the 20th century, which now seems to be as popular and problematic as teaching literary criticism in the English department few decades earlier. Here, I do not aim at covering the full varieties of the media ecologists’ intellectual backgrounds, in which for instances, one may learn a good deal from Lewis Mumford about the German literature on the existential implication of the machine, and from Jacques Ellul about modern propaganda studies. But I do want to highlight a commonplace among the media...

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29 Ong, *Barbarian*, 246.
31 A temporal reference may be that Frank Raymond Leavis was appointed the director of studies in English at Downing College in 1931. He was then the chief editor of *Scrutiny* from 1932 to 1955. And he published *The Living Principle: English as a Discipline of Thought* in 1975 during his late years.
32 In *Technics*, Mumford’s mastery with the German literature on machines could remind us of the hard thoughts on the existential philosophy of machines in a high-technologized society like Germany.
ecologists in terms of being self-confrontational by being emblematical. And McLuhan’s first book *The Mechanical Bride* may be the best example.³⁴

In *Mechanical*, McLuhan almost felt it habitus to structure his examination on modern advertising with a three-part organization. 1) Before showing the advertisement, McLuhan would start with three or four questions that playfully touched upon the hidden message of the advertisement, 2) which was followed by his descriptions on the content of the advertisement with all the possible intellectual materials that one can sort through via public media. 3) After showing the advertisement, McLuhan concluded the examination with the moral implications that were implied in those questions that started the examination.

Now, for those who are familiar with the three-part organization of an emblem, commonly defined as *inscriptio* (the motto), *pictura* (the enigmatic image) and *subscriptio* (the epigram), the above explanation of McLuhan’s interpretative habitus on “the industrial folklore” would seem rather unnecessary – it was already a playful thing at the beginning for a man of letters to formalize an incomplete parallel between the tripartite of an emblem and the comic content of modern advertisements. However, if one is not familiar with the emblematic tradition, the moral basis in McLuhan’s playful examination can be easily neglected: part of McLuhan’s critique was on the lack of good intellectual puzzles in modern advertisements. In contrast to Barthes’ teaching modern advertising in terms of semiotics as in his famous essay “The rhetoric of the image” (1965), McLuhan’s approach in *Mechanical* was to be intentionally within the

commonplace. The difference between Barthes and McLuhan was that in Barthes, one had to understand semiotics so as to understand advertising, and in McLuhan, the structure of *Mechanical* was the interpretative habit that used to be common in the Western imagerial thinking tradition, to which McLuhan necessarily belonged.

McLuhan’s work was confrontational if one may pay more attention to his emblematical-moral wittiness. In fact, this strong confrontational tone was built into teaching media ecology related courses, about which Neil Postman’s revisiting the dystopian hot air in George Owell’s *1984* (1949) by titling his work on public discourse as *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985) made the moral element even more straightforward. It is easy to ignore that the media ecologists talk to the adolescent inside, who does from time to time find the comic content to be more persuasive than a fully elaborated critique.

In reviewing Postman’s *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Havelock had it that “as the written book in turn now yields pride of place to the televised image in human experience, so we all – children and adults alike – re-enter that shared world of our remoter past in which children are small adults, and adults revert to being grown up children”35 As a classist, Havelock reminded us that part of the problem of “the televised image” was about the revival (from the Greek rhetorical generality) of a rhetorical polemic as in the excessive expressiveness of modern existentialism. To put this in Ongian terms, “secondary orality” both made “primitive orality” as the collective

childhood of mankind more examinable, and brought out a new kind of “child cult” due to the contemporary situation of the spoken word.

If indeed McLuhan’s work was to conquer Romanticism from within, Ong’s work was to conquer the situation of the spoken word from within. With Ong, one way to think about the lack of intellectual nuances in today’s visual communication (with extreme binaries that even superseded the rhetorical polemic) was that genuine orality was muted. Here, it should be noted that “secondary orality” was first of all a critical term used in the contexts of criticizing Romanticists’ mocking at the redundancy of orality (in Ong’s example, a modern speaker’s using “blah-blah-blah” in the speech) and the excessive emphasis on the candidates’ televised images in American presidential debates. The paradox within “the muted orality” in the age of “secondary orality” can be understood as a special complexity within the silence of an imagery as a fully technologized word.

Within the critical contexts above, on a brighter note of the “secondary orality”, it would then be fair to observe that not only the former institutions of Latin acquisition gave ways to a variety of language studies, from which masterpieces of the past century certainly benefited. Auerbach’s philological training in Mimesis should be a good example. More importantly, in America, teaching media ecology itself should be an important counterpart to the irenic turn of the academy. No less problematic than the polemic mindset of an orator (as well as the counterbalancing effort to be more well-

36 Ong, Grain, 46
38 Ong, Romance, 21.
39 Ong, Orality, 136-137.
rounded), the effort to be *not* irenic can be even richer with intellectual complexities. To raise a classroom incident here, one student in a history of communication class in Duquesne University wrote that “the world is full of prison cultures” after reading Postman’s *Amusing*. If we may pay attention to the self-confrontational tone of our student’s message, to say “full of prison cultures” was in fact an existential intake of Postman’s original saying, “culture becomes a prison”. Postman simply used the prison imagery in its common sense for a more descriptive account on the lack of vitality in an overtly technologized society; yet, to say “the world is full of prison cultures” was more or less saying that “we all live in prison cultures” with a much more self-confrontational tone. Regardless of the risk in our student’s personalizing or internalizing the original message, it should be noted that it was not until a Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins that this kind of self-confrontational messages, with some self-anguish but genuinely expressive, became so prominent to the degree of contemporary critics’ considering Hopkins to be a modernist ahead of his own time. But as Ong constantly reminded, there is no ahead of time, only in time. Keeping in mind the vocal strength of our student’s written message, personalism can be as simple as the writer’s challenging the readers with the writer’s confronting himself or herself.

Now, it can certainly be said that the early American personalists have prepared a collective literary expression for those who want to follow this “errand into the wilderness”41 – the formation of an American ethos so to speak. But this inward-directed self-confrontation of our student’s aphorism, if put in contrast to the axiomatic *interr-*

personalism of the Hebrew thinkers such as in Levinas’ saying “I am my brother’s keeper”, indeed opens the dynamic between the spoken word and the written word like never before. It appears that Levinas’ built-in rhetoric – the declaration of “I” must claim the independence only by “being my brother's keeper” – took the reader’s breath away into a powerful human relationship, fictional but fundamental.\(^{42}\) The *inter*-personalism here is that it was certainly Levinas’ saying the message, but it was also more than Levinas’ personal saying.

More straightforwardly, to say “the world is full of prison cultures” was to challenge oneself by understanding the matrix of media effects, and to say “I am my brother's keeper” was strictly interpersonal and exceptionally poetic by not referring to the thing-character of any medium at all. To say this fondly, not only the Greek boys grew up, the Hebrew thinkers also became much more self-aware of the situation of the spoken word. Hence, what Ong wrote at the end of *Orality* should not be a shock that stops, but a research question. Ong said,

Yet Christian teaching also presents at its core the written word of God, the Bible, which, back of its human authors, has God as author as no other writing does. In what way are the two senses of God’s "word" related to one another and to human beings in history? The question is more focused today than ever before.\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) See *Communication Ethics: Between Cosmopolitanism and Provinciality*. Edited by Kathleen Roberts and Ronald Arnett (Peter Lang, 2008), 80.

\(^{43}\) Ong, *Orality*, 175.
Ong contended that it is only in this historical moment that we may examine the situation of the spoken word, and understand the real reasons for the orality-literacy dynamic to exist. In other words, why and how the orality-literacy dynamic can be better studied today? With this question, let us move towards understanding the orality-literacy dynamic in the Exercises.

**The Initial Probe into the Ignatian “Composite of Places”**

*The Spiritual Exercises* is considered to be the best-known work among Ignatius' writings, and one of its keynote characteristics was that Ignatius asked the exercitants to examine their moral consciousness meticulously. Therein, the book is first of all valuable in terms of the history of moral consciousness itself, which arguably has been moving from being organized by the rhetorical formation of commonplace sayings, towards being driven by the details of an event in today’s information societies.

At the beginning of this section, in order to highlight Ignatius’ dealing with this dynamic between “rhetorical generality” and “moral particularities” in the context of the early Renaissance, I should firstly offer a comparative moral philosophy that sat more comfortably within the rhetorical tradition. A cross-cultural parallel to Confucianism should be very illustrative. In the *Analects*, one of Confucius’ students, Teacher Zeng said at the beginning of Book One,

> Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have undertaken on another’s behalf, have I failed to do my best? In my dealings with my

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friends have I failed to trustworthy in what I say? Have I passed on to others anything that I have not tried out myself?46

In terms of self-examination, Zeng offered three situations along with his own practicing Confucius’ virtue theory. For those who are familiar with Confucianism, the three keynote virtues in Confucianism was “ren” (familial relationship), “yi” (socially just), and “li” (communal rituals). From the above quote, it is clear that Zeng did not aim at a perfect correspondence with Confucius’ three keynote virtues; rather, the situations seem to be genuinely personal, which was certainly part of the merit of the Analects as recorded teacher-student conversations. However, in the quote above, Zeng did not explain “why on three counts?” or “why these particular three?”, and he offered no temporal framework except “every day”. One could assume that Zeng’s saying was still a formal rhetorical practice on Confucianism towards a group of audiences already familiar with Confucius’ teaching.

In comparison to Zeng’s teaching, the “Daily Particular Examination of Conscience” in the Exercises was demanding indeed. Ignatius said,

The first time is in the morning. Upon arising the retreatant should resolve to guard carefully against the particular sin or fault he or she wants to correct or amend. The second time after the noon meal ... then the retreatant should make the first examination ... He or she should run through the time, hour by hour or period by period, from the moment of rising until the present examination ... The third time is after supper. The

exercitant should make the second examination, likewise hour by hour ...

For each time he or she fell into the particular sin or fault, a dot should be entered on the lower line of the G____.47

With the above quote, the “particular examination” in the Exercises almost taxed the exercitants with detailing the details. Not only Ignatius provided instructions for “daily” as from “morning … upon arising”, to “after the noon meal” and to “after supper”, he also supplemented “morning”, “noon meal” and “supper” with further structuring details as in “hour by hour or period by period” and eventually to the capta of “a dot … entered on lower line of the G ____”.48

Around the 1500s, Ignatius was certainly not the only one who wrote manuals for moral examinations. As the Christian priests then were able to recognize that they were often addressing similar kinds of sins, it gradually became a common practice to write down the sermon beforehand,49 and moreover with the printing press, to print out a general “list of sins” for self-examinations.49 But the distinctiveness of the Exercises seems apparent. By asking the exercitants to pay even more attention to the particularities, Ignatius was dealing with the problem of the rhetorical generality between and among sins organized by a list, in which the hermeneutic space in-between was further removed from the rhetorical interrelations between and among the Grecian virtues organized by Homeric epics.50

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49 Boyle, Loyola’s Act, 120.
50 By the rhetorical interrelations among the Greek virtues, I mean that the oral habit of mind was able to relate the virtue of “courage” to the virtue of being “cunning” with Odysseus. Without Odysseus, such interrelation would be hard to build and keep.
Now, with the help of the modern field of psychology, it is an ontological commonplace to indicate that the *Exercises* roughly followed the three stages of spiritual growth: from purgative, to illuminative and to unitive.\textsuperscript{51} Yet, as illustrated above with Ignatius’ particularism accounts for the particularities of “daily”, in the *Exercises* there was also a time-within-time kind of architectural details, being built into the general pattern of the spiritual growth. And to say “time within time” here is to highlight the difficulty in being narrative when communicating with an imagery. After all, an image is more of visual synchronicity than of the oral-diachronic order of perception. Therein lies the difficulty of a particular kind of Ignatian imagery that may be deemed as “emblematical”.

In the first prelude of the *First Exercise*, when asking the exercitants to be preparative throughout the first-week exercises, Ignatius used the imagery of “my whole compound self as in exile in this valley [of tears] among brute animals”. The basic text follows:

When a contemplation or mediation is about something abstract or invisible, as in the present case about on sins, the composition will be to see in imagination, and to consider my soul as imprisoned in this corruptible body, and my whole compound self as an exile in this valley [of tears] among brute animals. I say, my whole self as composed of soul and body.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} Ong, *Barbarian*, 242
\textsuperscript{52} Ignatius, *Exercises*, 45.
In the above quote, the major comprehensive difficulty itself is simple: why the composition as almost jumping from “soul”, to “prison”, to “body”, and to “self in exile among brute animals”? (not without a sense of a post-modern search for the genuine uncertainty of meanings)

Among modern readers, the late Roland Barthes considered the Ignatian imagery as an “image reservoir” that “forms an *ars obligatoria* that determines less what has to be imagined than what is not possible to imagine – or what is impossible not to imagine”.53 Here, Barthes used *ars obligatoria*54 as an equivalent of his term “image reservoir” which can be understood as an enforced ideographic “filling in the blank” when a media environment was flooded with similar kinds of artful images. Simply put, Barthes was criticizing that in a media environment in which the holy cross without the body of Christ no longer functioned as a form of mediation but became a sign in itself, it was only natural to misunderstand the watermark on the wall as the holy cross.

Not to diminish his contribution to critical media studies, Barthes missed the real difficulty in the Ignatian “composite of places”. In the *first prelude*, not only Ignatius wrote “will be to see”55 in dealing with the difficulty in the passivity of a future-orientated imagination (the Grace), within which it is safe to say that the imagery was more complex than the Platonic craftsman’s blueprint that aims at bringing things in the

54 The structuralists used the term *ars obligatoria* loosely in allusion to the complexity within the meaning of “artificial” as both “artistic” and “fake”. The term *ars obligatoria* in itself had scholasticism root in dealing with the theological difficulty of the Trinity – in particular, the perceptive order of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as “one God in three Divine Persons”.
55 In the “Vulgate” version of the *Exercises* in classical Latin, Ignatius’ original “la composicion sera ver” was translated by the Jesuit Latinist, Pere des Freux as “poterit loci constructio talis esse, ut si … cernamus” (the composition of places could be such as though we were to see). The point here is that Freux highlighted the imagery was after all invisible; in other words, an incomplete metaphor with a more complete imagery. See Ong, *Barbarian*, 243.
future (the *ideal* thing in heaven) to the present (the real thing that the craftsman shall build) with the power of imagination. More importantly, if indeed Ignatius was good enough to compute the “negative” spaces in a figure-ground imagination, why did he emphasize at the end that “I say, my whole self as composed of soul and body” as if he was clearly concerned with possible misinterpretations? It only seems fair to say that Ignatius was an early printing man, and he simply could not calculate the effect of printing to the degree of a contemporary visual artist’s managing the meaning of an image. In other words, Ignatius was not manipulating the imagery; rather, his message somewhat exceeded the framework of the imagery – there are simply too many meanings.

On this kind of word-image dynamic in Ignatius, Ong’s insight was helpful indeed. In “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage”, Ong pointed it out that,

Exiled among brute beasts, the soul should certainly find its prison-cage a decided asset. When you are surrounded by wild animals, the very next best thing to having them in cages is to be in one yourself. Cunning as Ong may sound, the argument was true: in imagining a “prison” among brute animals with “the whole self” in it, the “prison” must also be a “cage”. Therein, Ong called the imagery “prison-cage” in order to highlight the emblematical enigma within.

Now, at the initial probe into the Ignatian imagery, it is certainly too early to form a full interpretation on the meaning of the “prison-cage” emblem. But within Ong, the existential element of the imagery was highlighted. For a convenient illustration, keeping

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56 See Hannah Arendt. *Lectures on Kant’s Philosophy*. Edited by Ronald Beiner (Chicago: The University of Chicago), 82.
57 Ong, *Barbarian*, 246.
Barthes’ critique of the “image reservoir” in mind, the co-presence of the “sun” and “moon” in the Chinese character for “ming” (明, “brightness”) was certainly an effort to communicate the effect of brightness, without caring to discern the cause. “Ming” is rather rhetorical as if the written word were talking to the user that “[this is] as bright as the sun and the moon being put together”. In terms of the a\textit{rs obligatoria}, as this Chinese character may be in artistically imagining the artificial situation of the sun and the moon in the same sky so as to communicate the meaning of brightness, the “sun-moon” imagery only seems to be a philosophical entertainment if in comparison with the “prison-cage” emblem. In short, the way “prison-cage” (two things similar but different) works is more complex, and therefore more study-worthy, than the way “sun-moon” (two things different but similar) works.

In “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage”, Ong did not put an end to all the interpretive difficulties within the \textit{first prelude}. One may only ask more questions: why did Ignatius consider the “prison-cage” invisible? Why valley of tears? Why this particular image compound as meditating on sins? Why did Ignatius prioritize the existentialist’s situation at the very beginning throughout the first week? The \textit{Exercises} was filled with this kind of minor puzzles, and I shall deal with these questions in the following chapters. Here, it should be pointed out that Ong’s call for future research was clear: some sort of “media archeology” or hermeneutic work on the proto-phenomenological should be developed, given that we now lack interpretative tools to enter into the symbols (not yet signs) in the rituals of communication, of which Barthes’ critical media approach was symptomatic.

As a Jesuit himself, the “prison-cage” was certainly Ong’s own hermeneutic effort on Ignatius’ original narrative. To say “prison-cage” with some degree of Romanticism in
aligning cause with effect closely, was also a reminder of the difficulty in Ignatius’
writing, without reifying the commonplace on the “divided self”\(^{58}\) about which a man of
letters knew too well. In contemporary times, the Jesuits are sometimes judged to be
“military” with overly full chests that simply love rhetoric too much.\(^ {59}\) Although this
dissertation is not an *apologia*, I do want to make the following argument: the
ideographic technique was indeed developed in the West with “the composite of places”
in the *Exercises* as good examples. However, with the spoken word being built into the
alphabetic writing, the Western intellectual sphere did not proceed with the silence of the
ideographs. Although the acoustic basis in the alphabet can be problematic (as writing
was meant to be read), “secondary orality”, if to use Ong’s term radically, also demands
us to conquer the “oral traditions” by being even more attentive to the way the spoken
word works. To use the word “conquer” is to indicate the problem of all kinds of critical
recognitions of the oral traditions. With this, I shall move towards examining a post-
structural critique of the structure of the *Exercises*.

**Post-Structural Critiques of the *Spiritual Exercises***

The structuralists were after all not interested in deconstructing the *Spiritual
Exercises* in the sense of revealing the difficulty of using a binary system in decision-
making. In *Loyola*, Barthes’ argument can be no more than that: in providing a structural
solution to a difficult situation, Ignatius also run the risk of making the decision-making
tool to be more powerful than the decision-making itself. Therein, Barthes considered the

\(^{58}\) This project tends to refrain from the psychology of the divided self. I tend to agree with Havelock’s
remarking on the dividing power of the consonants, which was a technique designed to promote public
speaking, rather than examining the private realm of psychology.

First Week of the Exercises as a decision-making tree. Barthes, Loyola, 57.

His argument was that in the First Week, Ignatius wanted the exercitants to be aware of that “choosing to be a priest can be good” as much as “choosing not to be a priest can be good”.

In other words, rather than highlighting the significance of the First Week as the birth of a strong moral consciousness, Barthes simply weakened the First Week as Ignatius’ calming the exercitants down by providing foresights into the possibility of having the same result with making opposite choices. If indeed we may consider Barthes’ critique of the Exercises as in modernity that Barthes himself taught semiotics as a structural solution to the problem of having a structure, the post-structuralists were indeed attacking the very idea of the “freedom of the will” in making a decision. Keeping in mind the discourse discourses on “free will”, it seems to be my obligation to start with “the discernment of the spirits” in the Exercises before handling post-structuralism.

The Discernment of the Spirits

Once again, it may be clarified that the Exercises was less about forming a rhetorical generality for decision-making, and more about the existentialist’s making a decision. For a convenient illustration, it is artistically touching for a modern filmmaker to portrait a good teacher, when making a hard choice of leaving the students, to be standing in front of an empty classroom, with candles on the students’ desk whose little drama of fire becomes a good signifier for the students with the appearance and then the disappearance of the students’ faces. The movie being referring to is Chen Kaige’s King of the Children, released in 1987.

60 Barthes, Loyola, 57.
62 The movie being referring to is Chen Kaige’s King of the Children, released in 1987.
Rather, it is about the Grecian “ideal spectator” on mankind’s shared difficulty in decision-making. In other words, this movie scene was meant to be seen, and the pictures had good reasons to be silent.

With the Exercises, as Ganss noted, the exercitants were more or less already on their ways to be conscious of the meaning and the difficulty in being a “companion of Jesus”. For instance, before his becoming a Jesuit in 1571 and applying to do missionary work in China in 1577, the famous Jesuit Matthew Ricci was already a very competent young man, who started to study law in Rome when he was sixteen years old. Though we do not know for sure if Ricci practiced the Spiritual Exercises especially for the sake of deciding to apply for the missionary work in China, it was unlikely that Ricci did not know the difficulty before making that decision. Here, the point is that: in writing the Exercises as a manual, Ignatius had good reasons to be less orientated towards reminding the exercitants of the difficulty in decision-making in that nobody else (save God) should know the history of that difficulty better than the exercitants themselves. In other words, the epideictic part of the Exercises was built upon this interpersonal difference, rather than the readily available options.

To continue the example of Ricci’s missionary work, in The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci, Jonathan Spence (like most of us) tended to think of the Spiritual Exercises as Ricci’s significant source of faith, and therein, “the discernment of the spirits” would be understood as a psychological approach to Ricci’s own “believing and doubting game”

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64 Ignatius, Exercises, 4.
along with his facing the socio-political difficulties in China then. And this may be evidenced in Ricci’s journals in which he clearly knew well about the problems of China during the Ming Dynasty.

However, on a second thought, even if the spirits were Ricci’s own rational and irrational “logic of the heart” that being more conscious of the real problems of China could make him more doubtful of doing the missionary work (though the opposite should be true), it would not be in Ricci’s psychological blind spot to recognize that such doubt should in turn make him the rightful candidate for this particular mission. Again, if Ricci already knew that the spirits were his own believing and doubting, there was no genuine uncertainty to be discerned.

Alternatively, we may understand the “spirits” as effect that problematically coincides with cause. For Ricci, when applying for the missionary work, the decision was indeed a polemic one – to go to China or to not go to China. Therein, the technical difficulty was that the cause, which is having the idea of going to China, was also the positive part of the effect which is actually going to China to do missionary work. To put this differently, from the making of decisions (the “choice of contexts” as the open system of all the things Ricci could do as a Jesuit) to making the decision (the “context of choices” as the existential situation in Ricci’s deciding to go to China or not), Ricci have already phenomenologically reduced (with the Ignatian emblem that Ong revealed as the “prison-cage”) the original phenomenological description. And it was the original phenomenological description (as the difficult narrative in the “composite of places” of

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66 Spence, Ricci, 54-55.
“prison”, “valley of tears” and “among brute animals”) that needed to be discerned.

Moreover, in making the decision to go, Ricci was then “divided”. The existential situation could only hope for a reunion (with God). In this sense, the Jesuit’s motto “Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam” (AMDG, “for the greater glory of God”) can be understood as pivoting on the existentialist’s situation. Of course, the real “sin” here would be for someone to will too much, and simply go to China without making the decision.

In terms of this particular kind of cause and effect that coincide, as I have mentioned the Chinese character “明” with the “sun-moon” imagery, it would make some sense to give up discerning cause and effect by focusing on the effect of “brightness” alone. To borrow the terms from semiotic phenomenology, we may call this a “phenomenological reduction” with too much difficulty in offering the real “phenomenological description”.68

As a side note, similar to the “sun-moon” imagery as a phenomenological reduction without the description, the “moment of Zen” in Zen Buddhism can be understood a phenomenological description without the reduction. As a Chinese media ecologist Peter Zhang noted, the Chinese painter-poet would use the compound image of the “pine-wind” (松风) to communicate two phenomenological perceptions at the same time – the wind makes the pine more perceivable with the pine otherwise being in stillness, and the pine makes the wind more sensible with the wind otherwise being tactile only. Here, the point is that: without reductively judging the wind to be cause and the

pine to be the effect, the Chinese painter, with the help of the poetics, contended that the pine and the wind are cause and effect to each other.⁶⁹

Now, in contrast to the poetic effort of not distinguishing the cause and the effect (necessarily of Romanticism), the distinctiveness of dabar (Word) in the Hebraic tradition should be salient. In Genesis 1:3, we read, “And God said, let there be light, and there was light” – the Old Testament writers at the very beginning chose to not give up discerning cause and effect, and the perceptive order was established within the diachronic phenomenology of the Word. To use Lanigan’s terms, we may call this a particular kind of Phenomenological Description with a built-in diachronic phenomenological order of perception. In this sense, for Ricci, talking to the Three Persons of God would be the phenomenological way to examine having the very idea of going to China. As Auerbach reminded in Mimesis, in the Old Testament, to say “yes” was more of a moral relationship than a personal will.⁷⁰

In contemporary times, we have heard the American personalist Stanley Cavell point out that “God created the Day within a day”⁷¹ in remarking on this conquering time within time as part of Thoreau’s mission in Walden. And we have heard the media ecologists like Eric McLuhan saying that “a chicken is the egg’s idea to have more chicken”⁷² as a comic reconciliation of the cause-and-effect grievance in the “chicken or egg” conundrum. Be it more personalistic as in Cavell or more emblematical as in Eric McLuhan, in terms of “the discernment of the spirits”, I tend to agree with Carl Jung in at

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least not reducing “God” into an excessive obsession with causes. In *God and the Unconscious*, as White reminded, the devils in the Old Testament were more of the effect than of the cause.73 With this elaboration on the “discernment of the spirits”, I shall move towards a preliminary examination of the post-structuralism take on the *Exercises* via the notion of the decision-making matrix.

*From the Decision-Making Tree to the Decision-Making Matrix*

In *The Clash of Empires*, Liu did a rhetorical performance on a word-image *impasse* between the Chinese character and the English word. She put the Chinese character “yi” (夷 or “barbarian”) right beside the English word “barbarian”, and divided those two languages with a slash. So it became “yi / barbarian”. Using Derrida’s term, Liu called “yi / barbarian” a “super-sign”. And she defined the “super-sign” in the following way.

A super-sign is not a word but a hetero-cultural signifying chain that crisscrosses the impact on the meaning of recognizable verbal units ... the super-sign emerges out of the interstices of existing languages across the abyss of phonetic and ideographic differences.74

To put Liu’s term differently, in “yi / barbarian”, “/” then became a mirror that *con*-fused the signifier and the signified – who was the barbarian? In the context of critical translation theories, Liu contended that it was the nihilism in-between that became the fuse of the two Opium Wars between the British Empire and the Qing Dynasty.75

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75 In Slavoj Zizek. “ISIS Is a Disgrace to True Fundamentalism” *The New York Times* (Sept. 3, 2014), Zizek made a similar argument on the “passive nihilism” of the West and “active nihilism” of the Muslim radicals as two mirrors with nothing in the middle. Retrieved from https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/03/isis-is-a-disgrace-to-true-fundamentalism/
Moreover, drawing attention to the military use of the Morse Code, Liu argued that the code for Morse’s system – A . ___ and B ___. . . – was memorized as “Ag.ainst Barb.a.ri.an”, and no longer as “Al.pha B.e.t.a”.

From the above quote, Liu’s “super-sign” was a post-colonial and post-structuralism take on the early structuralists’ critique of the *ars obligatoria*. The radicalness in Liu’s argument in fact made the problem of *ars obligatoria* more straightforward – in a time when the perceptive order between word (the English alphabet) and image (the Chinese ideograph) became rather confused, the moral order was then reduced to the existential polemic of “which came first, word or image?” which, according to Liu, was an intellectual impasse that led to the warfare between two empires.76

Now, although “yi / barbarian” could be reviving the argument from the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation by remarking on the word-image impasse, the cross-cultural element between the Chinese character and the English word certainly made Liu’s argument compelling to today’s media studies. In *The Freudian Robot*, Liu continued to alert us of the “ideographic turn of the phonetic alphabet”,77 within which, for example, one can still recognize “uvernisty” as “university” in a sentence, but the good fear in not being able to pronounce “uvernisty” was cancelled out. For Liu, the word in its digital form is therefore no longer a word, but an ideograph whose strangeness lies that also no user of the Chinese characters would know how to approach the ideograph of “uvernisty” in meaningful ways. Furthermore, with the Chinese visual artist

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76 See Liu, Empires, 32 for the banning of 夷 in Chinese foreign-affair documents.
Xu Bing’s *A Book from the Sky*, Liu cautioned against a digital Freudian nightmare about ideographs that look like Chinese characters, while no-body could understand the meaning of these ideographs. In other words, Liu was critical of both the Chinese character and the English word in falling into some digital nihilism.

Now, Liu’s radical critique should be not be excluded too conveniently. In a time when we hardly used the “discernment of spirits” as in Ricci’s conquering his having the idea of going to China with the Ignatian emblem, or the “decision-making tree” in which the moral weight was still kept in evaluating the choices analytically, by using the “decision-making matrix”, a digital New Criticism could eventually claim that some hyper-structuralism has fully replaced the notion of “authorship”, as there is no way to identify the “author” in a globalized age when all art pieces must somewhat involve industrial collaborations that are indeed impossible to trace completely.

From the perspective of a contemporary rhetorician, meaning is always in danger of losing its own meaning. Meta-communication or communication theories are particularly in demand in this historical moment when we become more conscious of the situation and the difficulty of the spoken word. How to apply the *Exercises* into today’s media environment? I shall deal with the complexity in this question in the last chapter. Before that, in chapter two, let us examine the *Exercises* within Ong’s work which should better ground this project in the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken (speaking) word.

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78 A good example should be the Trolley Problem as the modern way of teaching moral dilemmas.
79 Walter Benjamin’s *The Word of Art in the Age of Reproduction* was to not give up “author and authenticity”.

CHAPTER TWO

Rhetorical Movement, Built-in: Walter Ong’s Appropriation of the Spiritual Exercises

The Spiritual Exercises, written as a manual, can be understood as a guiding form in which Ignatius asked the exercitants themselves to provide the content. Different exercitants from different historical periods then provided different contents. For example, the “Victorian particularism” in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ appropriation of the Exercises would simply be unavailable to an early Renaissance man,¹ and Walter Ong’s appropriation of the Exercises with contemporary developments in the Jungian psychology would be unavailable to Hopkins.² In short, different historical moments call for different appropriations of the Exercises, which should be the openness of the Exercises, arguably as Ignatius’ advantage as an early printing man in being able to write the Exercises with a good structure.

Among this rich varieties of different appropriations of the Exercises, it is often neglected that a keynote component in Ong’s oeuvre was indeed in response to the Exercises. In general, Ong approached the Exercises with contemporary developments in existential philosophies (with an even more self-conscious personalism) and in studying the history of consciousness (as in Teilhard de Chardin’s work on the noosphere). Ong’s appropriation of the Exercises, in the vicinities of rhetorical studies and orality studies, should be a distinctive contribution to understanding the contemporary meaning of the Exercises.

¹ See Ong, Hopkins, 54-56.
² See Ong, Barbarian, 249.
In reflections, this line of thought in Ong on “the technologizing of the word”, if indeed in direct responses to Ignatius, was in fact a powerful synthesis of the frontiers of scholarly perceptions on the situation of the spoken word. If to take the vantage point of such synthesis, we may recognize the toil and trouble in reaching the current effort to understand the real reason for the orality-literacy dynamic to exist. The toil and trouble was sometimes with residues of Romanticism that promoted intentional rebellions against the formulaic expression demanded by the oral memory, and sometimes with failures to reveal the urgency in examining the situation of the spoken word, such as Polanyi’s merely remarking on that “we can know more than we can tell” as phenomenological description without reductions. Overall, the existential complexity of the spoken word was implicit in the Exercises, and became more explicit with Ong as “a specialist among specialists” on the spoken word.

As stated in chapter one, if Ong can help us better understand the real reason for the media-communication dynamic in the Exercises, in chapter two, I should explicate what is indeed Ong’s appropriation of the Exercises by tracing its history of ideas, from “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” (1954/1962), to Presence of the Word (1967), and to Hopkins, the Self, God (1986). Moreover, keeping in mind today’s discourses on the ideographic bias of the digital media at the price of the phonetic-alphabetic edge of perception, I should also elaborate on Ong’s relating the Exercises with the emblem book (which was notably the “new media” in Ignatius’ time).

3 Ong, Romance, 8.
4 Michael Polanyi. The Tacit Dimension (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), x. A phenomenological reduction of “we can know more than we can tell” would be to reveal the difficult dynamic between “knowing” and “telling”.
Before reviewing Ong’s work on the *Exercises*, it should be clarified beforehand that Ong was not a theologian. Ong was well-read in English literature (he dedicated his master thesis and his final book project to Gerard Manley Hopkins), and he was well-informed of the excitement in the air then around modern psychological studies (with the most notable reference being the section “Communication media and the Freudian Psychosexual Sequences” in *Presence*). With this intellectual background, Ong entered the *Exercises* from the vantage point of English and psychology. And this may be best evidenced in Ong’s essay “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” on the *first prelude* in the *First Week* of the *Exercises*, which was an interdisciplinary work with methods of hermeneutic phenomenology (on Ignatius’ original text), semiotic phenomenology (on the forgotten meaning of signs and symbols in the ritual of communication) and media ecology (on the resemblance between television and the “prison-cage” imagery as mandalas). In short, Ong was interested in the orality-literacy difficulty in Ignatius’ image compounds where the rhetorical elements remain to be discerned more carefully.

Though Ong was not a theologian, the Ongian entrance into the *Exercises* by no means lacked materials. The Ongian tradition was rich, and one should take advantage of the richness. To simply offer one genealogical trace here, Ong once pointed out that Marshall McLuhan was after all a Cambridge man whose teacher was Frank Raymond Leavis.5 And F. R. Leavis was someone who would start a discussion on “imagery and movement” by saying the following:

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“Image” and “imagery” are insidious terms; they have prompted an immense deal of naive commentary on (for instance) Shakespeare’s verse, and, in general, has encouraged confident reliance on two closely related fallacies: (i) the too ready assumption that images are visual, (ii) the conception of metaphor as essentially simile with “like” or “as” left out.”

It is first of all noteworthy that similar to Leavis’ forefront of being an English professor, Ong approached the word-image dynamic with a critical recognition of the Romanticism movement (if indeed as the 100 years old English versus the 1200 years old Latin) both as the starting place to be intensely aware of the oral tradition, and as the intentional rebellion from the “old rhetoric” which could at times seem unnecessarily ornamental and excessively oratorical. However, as much as there is no “old rhetoric” in the sense of exploiting or over-personalizing rhetoric for private uses (rhetorike is after all public speaking), there is also no “new rhetoric” (such as in the New Criticism) in the sense of anti-personalizing the interpersonal root of human communication. For this project, we may keep in mind the question of whether the Ignatian images were romantic, and I will address this in the next chapter.

**St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage and the Existentialist Situation**

As Gronbeck once indicated, with Ong it was always an “intellectual marathon” in which understanding the continuity matters more than identifying a specific place. Accordingly, this review will be arranged roughly in accordance with Ong’s life of the

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7 Ong, *Reader*, 71.
mind, from “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” as the first probe into the proto-personalism in the *Exercises*, to *Presence of the Word* as further explorations into the dynamic between the human sensorium organization and religious and cultural communication, and to *Hopkins, the Self, and God* in which Ong extended his master thesis on Hopkins’ “sprung rhythm” towards his thoughts on the media element in the Ignatian emblems. Throughout this review, the question may be put as: is there a theory of “oral image” in Ong’s work on the *Exercises*. And by “oral image”, I mean those image-makers who wanted to conquer the synchronic perception of the *imago* with the diachronic phenomenology of the *logos*. Let us begin with “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage”.

“St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” should be at the forefront of understanding the *Exercises*, as Ong responded critically to two major historical backgrounds. The first background had to with a Neoplatonic reading of the *Exercises* even within the Jesuits’ circle. This can be indirectly evidenced by George Ganss’ citing Ong’s essay to defend against reading the “prison-cage” as supporting a Cartesian mind-body dualism. And the main problem here was about the Platonic *a priori* in which one would understand the power of imagination as bringing things in the future to the present, while Ignatius’ imagination involved the Grace of God, with both the hope for having and the fear of losing. The other background had to do with the field of communication then to be troubled by the over-excitement of critical approaches to mass media communication. This can be evidenced by Roland Barthes’ reading the *Exercises* as a “mantic art”, not far

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9 Ignatius, *Exercises*, 156
from modern game theories. For Barthes, the Exercises was a “dream factory” in which Ignatius catered his own powerful imagination, like a film director, to the mass who lacked it. With Ong’s essay, we may say that both Cartesian meditations and Barthes’ structuralism critique can be understood as lamenting the inadequacy of an oral cognition based tenaciously upon the way the spoken word works.

Both Descartes and Barthes were suggesting that the true noetic activity should exist independently of any sensory perception – Descartes more radically in insisting on the “thinking self” alone, and Barthes more cunningly in suggesting that there were indeed four texts within the Exercises. For a convenient illustration, this is to say that when one touches the fresco of, let’s say, Fra Angelico’s the Annunciation, instead of at least meeting the author, one can only be certain of feeling the wall. Of course, such statement is not entirely wrong. In terms of sensory inputs exclusively, the fresco was visual-tactile, and the interpretative difficulty and joy was in the interpreter’s mind. However, as we have analyzed in chapter one, it is not that the interpreters are sensorily numb that they fail to be attentive to the fresco at the beginning; rather, the interpreters are often aware of the “there-ness” of the art piece, and by calling it “fresco” they have already communicated.

Especially in Barthes, the image compounds in the Exercises were understood as landscape views that implied a certain method of seeing. Barthes contended that there were “four texts” in the Exercises, respectively between Ignatius and the director, between the director and the exercitants, between the exercitants and divinity, and between divinity and Ignatius. And those four texts constituted the indeterminacy of four

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12 Barthes, Loyola, 44.
interwoven *codes* of communication as an overarching structure of sender-receiver matrices, in which God was understood as a divine decoder, and a divine encoder (if the message comes from Him). Again, the problem of Barthes’ critique was that the signified was predetermined, which even if true, should be precisely because of an excessive accessibility to the rhetorical commonplaces. After all, what is the point of practicing the *Exercises* if the exercitants already knew if the sign came from God or from the devil? As Ignatius himself indicated, if sure of (the message) is from the devil, condemn it, and if unsure, decide it.

In the next chapter, I shall examine the difference between the Ignatian meditation and the Cartesian meditation in greater detail. And keeping in mind the risk in connecting the *Exercises* to *Meditations on First Philosophy*, I will make those connections as carefully as crossing a winter river. For now, we may examine “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” section by section, given the varieties of topics in this essay.

I.

In the first section, Ong alerted us of a visualism reading of the *Exercises*. He pointed out that the “prison-cage” imagery was in fact different from other image compounds in the *Exercises*; in Ong’s own example, in the *Second Addition* at the end of the *First Week*, Ignatius advised,

Similarly, in the second Exercise, making myself out to be a great sinner in chains, that is to say, that I move about as though encumbered with chains on my way to appear before the most high Eternal Judge, picturing
to myself as an example the way in which chained prisoners condemned to death appear before their temporal judge.\textsuperscript{14}

The above image compound that roughly moved from “a great sinner in chains”, to “... appear before the most high Eternal Judge” and to “chained prisoner condemned to death...” was in fact more of being sculptural than of being narrative. The imagery was close to the “heavy figures” in the Greek oral tradition about teaching the cultural-moral lessons to the young by making the imagery excessive (rather than repetitive).\textsuperscript{15} To be more specific, as much as the young in the Hellenistic culture was put on by the epic hero with the excessiveness of his character (Odysseus was more of bravado than of bravery),\textsuperscript{16} the above Ignatian “composite of places” also exceeded for the effect of weight so that the moral lesson can be memorized not entertainingly but painstakingly. Here, if we are concerned with the rhetorical excessiveness in the Ignatian image compounds on guilt consciousness, it may be a helpful reminder that we now know from contemporary pathological studies that the addicted are often aware that they are inside their own addiction.\textsuperscript{17} “Sins” are after all not problems that need solutions, but situations that must be overcome.

To say this fondly, with modern psychology, we poked fun at the gambler’s saying to his wife “I will never ever gamble again” in that we were persuaded by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Also see Ignatius, \textit{Exercises}, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{15} See Ong, \textit{Orality}, 69.
\item \textsuperscript{16} This is a critique of Aristotelian virtue theories in finding the Golden mean between the excess and the deficiency. The oral poets indeed wanted to move beyond excessiveness for the power of story-telling in giving birth to the personas like Prometheus or Sisyphus.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Freudian psychologists that the excessiveness of the gambler’s expression was in itself symptomatic. From a Freudian perspective, if the gambler truly wanted to quit gambling, the determination should be better expressed silently in that “actions speak louder than words”. Here, Ong would question the silence of the expression – if determinations should be in total silence, why do we still say “actions speak louder than words”? Here, with an incomplete parallel to the *Exercises*, Ignatius was almost contending that when the gambler said, “I will never ever gamble again”, the saying itself should not be over-determined by its own expressiveness. We simply don’t know if it is angel or the devil in the gambler’s saying. On this, a visualist tends to pay less attention to the diachronic evanescence of the spoken word (with the innate request for changes and differences), and insists on the visualized existence of the spoken word as problematic in itself. In this sense, Ong reminded us of a potential psychological phenomenology in the “prison-cage” emblem by dealing with the communicative difficulty of psychological complexities beforehand in the *first prelude*.

II.

In the second part, Ong reminded that “thing themselves can signify”. And he used the example of Baptism in which Ong suggested that water in fact meant both life and death, instead of meaning life alone. Here, an exploration into the theological background may help us better understand Ong’s concern.

Informed by the German art historian Hans Belting of “the paradox of the crucifixion and the reality of the image”, the ways in which water meant both life and

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death should be more salient within the difficulty of representing the meaning of the crucifixion with an image. In Belting’s explanation, the double stream of water and blood that flowed from Christ’s pierced sides was an image compound that stood for Christ’s two natures – water as a sign of the divine nature and blood as a sign of the human nature. In other words, the difference between water and blood, when put together as one signifier with another signifier, was employed as a symbolic dynamism to deal with the paradox of the crucifixion. Simply put, different from the philosopher’s death as Socrates’ which was the end of his life in the polis, the death of Christ as a martyr was meant to complete the symbolic meaning of his life, with a built-in hope for the participation of Christians in the future. Therefore, water and blood in fact worked together to deal with the paradox of life and death and (future) life in Christ’s existential choice. Water can symbolize life and/or death, as much as blood can symbolize life and/or death; the “water-blood” imagery was an image compound that responded to a compound meaning.

Moreover, the paradox of the crucifixion was indeed different from the modern existentialists’ insistence on the freedom in choosing one’s own death. The paradox came from the existential situation within the psychological movement of Christian martyrs. The real discernment is that choosing to die can complete one’s life, as much as choosing to live can complete one’s life. For a doctrinaire theologian to fix the meaning of water as life, and blood as death would in fact create more confusions than clarifications, and such fixation more or less came from the lavish uses of the signifier and the Signified (or Signifier and signified) model of semiotics with “dead” meanings. In short, in the case of
the “water-blood” imagery, there was a particular reason to not distinguish the temporal sequence within the diachronic order.

As Ong also explained, the disagreement between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on the meaning of the wine and bread in the Eucharist should further clarify. For the Roman Catholics, the wine and bread is the blood and body of Jesus Christ. The tautology should be true not only in terms of the phenomenology of homo ludens – when a child plays the role of a kangaroo in the theater, he becomes the kangaroo.20 More importantly, in terms of the noetic economy, the very attempt to fully explicate the meaning of the blood and body with metaphysical concepts would run its own risk of cancelling out the symbolic economy within the wine and bread. As a witty interpreter might remark: are the concepts explaining the wine and bread, or is the wine and bread explaining the concepts? For the Protestants, the wine and bread only happen to be the signifier for Christ’s blood and body, and falls short of being a competent sign. In this regard, the Protestants tend to consider the written word to be more complete a sign than the symbolic meaning of the wine and bread.

Within this dynamic between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, part of the issue here was about the phenomenology of play.21 Primitive orality may be understood as the collective childhood of mankind, and to poke fun at the inadequacy of the spoken word carries the risk of building a playground with no play. And another part of the issue had to do with that both words and things can signify. As I have illustrated with Fra Angelico’s painting, the perceptive order is that “this thing” precedes “calling it a

fresco”, while the communicative situation asks us to begin with taking “fresco” for granted, indeed as combining the word and the thing together. In this sense, the written word runs the risk of being too complete a sign in itself, with no more need for things.

Therein, if indeed both the spoken word and the imago can be symbols (raw signs), Ong’s argument was that in the ritual of communication, the imago or the “archetype” in Jungian psychology should be much more effective than the metaphysical reasoning (as in Descartes’ meditations) when approaching the communicative power in religious symbols. Here, with Ong, we reach the first good reason in this dissertation for the emblem book writer to intentionally relate words (in particular, mottos) with images. And we may propose that in the Exercises, the “prison-cage” imagery belonged to the kind of emblems as “oral images”.

As a site note, in terms of the effective persuasion, how we choose to communicate the meta-communicative level matters. For example, in the New Testament, Jesus was more than aware of human communication as generative rather than consumptive. In John 6:9, the symbol for the resource of human communication was “five barley loaves, and two small fishes”, notably as things themselves, which turned out to be enough for “five thousand men”.22 No wonder Ong said that,

We are a far cry here from a scriptural or patristic age which was intensely aware that not only words but things themselves can signify, for we are victims of the tendency, which set in during the Middle Ages but was perfected only later, to reduce all symbolism with which the Scriptures

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22The Bible: Authorized King James Version (Oxford University Press, 2008).
and Fathers abound to a kin of pious but ineffectual and rather irrelevant patter.\textsuperscript{23}

To extend Ong’s argument, it is only in the contemporary field of communication that we may have an American scholar like James Carey to define communication as: we are constantly using the unlimited resource of human communication (the spoken words are inexpensive, but the technologizing the word is costly) to negotiate and better distribute the limited materialistic resources on planet Earth.\textsuperscript{24} The powerful rhetoric in Carey’s polemic, if indeed as a phenomenological reduction of the phenomenological description in “five barley loaves, and two small fishes”, should be heuristic in understanding why the emblems needed a motto. Let us examine this in greater detail with Ong.

III.

In the third section, Ong examined the rhetoric and philosophy in the “prison-cage” imagery. He said at the beginning, “St. Ignatius’ prison-cage is not part of the sacramental symbolism of the Church, but it seems to be a part of the world of symbolism into which the sacraments were inserted.”\textsuperscript{25} The question is then: what part of the world of symbolism (on the existentialist situation)?

Within this question, it is perhaps no coincidence that the American personalists shared with Ignatius the intellectual habitus of using the “wilderness” imagery in communicating the existentialist’s situation.\textsuperscript{26} In the \textit{Exercises}, the “prison-cage” as “in exile among brute animals” may even be considered as “classical” in the sense that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ong, \textit{Barbarian}, 249.
\item \textsuperscript{24} James Carey. “Communication and Economics.” In \textit{James Carey: A Critical Reader}, edited by Eve Stryker Munson and Catherine A. Warren (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 60.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ong, \textit{Barbarian}, 249.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ong, \textit{Barbarian}, 240.
\end{itemize}
Ignatius’ viewpoint was not far from Aristotle’s saying that “But who is unable to live in a society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of the state.” To be more straightforward, both Aristotle and Ignatius presupposed communication, while they also left some room for Plato’s insistence on the “idea” as an appropriate term for purely cognitive beings (with no human body), which for Aristotle was “either a beast or a god” and for Ignatius, either “a devil or an angel” that precedes communication. To put this into a question: what is the pre-phenomenological or where is the beginning of a phenomenological perception?

Now, Aristotle’s “a beast or a god” was closer to the Platonic ideal: if indeed for an animal, there is only “this-ness” without the problem of having to bring “this” into presence with communication while “this” is physically absent, an animal is outside the polis as much as it is beyond the polis. But given the innate difficulty of the Exercises as asking the exercitants to know something that they have not known yet, in comparison to Aristotle’s philosophical reasoning, Ignatius was more attentive to the beginning of a phenomenological perception that necessarily involves confronting the complexity of self-consciousness or simply the “I”. Therefore, Ignatius did not make the “prison-cage” imagery easy: “I” (the whole composite of body and soul) am the “prison”, and “I” am in exile among brute animals in which the “prison” becomes a “cage”. Ong had this better:

The world outside the self is potential self, in that the self is continuously seeking to exist toward it, to assimilate it, but it will not assimilate, it will cooperate only negatively, giving force to the self by contrast. This world, marked off by the body, is inhabited by brute animals as symbols of pure

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otherness, almost-selves which are nevertheless not selves at all. They are the un-contained. They are those beyond the pale, outside the prison-wall. Their presence shows why this prison is both stronghold and cage, partaking of the ambivalent situation of the human consciousness, where the notion of estrangement from others and that self-containment are complementary. The interplay of the two notions of self-perception and self-limitation thus produces the inevitable awkwardness in St. Ignatius’ picture, in which that which causes the soul embarrassment (the “prison-cage) at the same time affords protection from the brute animals who would swallow man up in pure other ness.²⁸

From Ong’s elaboration on the philosophy of the “prison-cage”, in terms of the rhetorical part of “the inevitable awkwardness in St. Ignatius’ picture”, to say the least, in the actual practice of the Exercises, knowing that Ignatius did not make it easy, the exercitants had to examine the “prison-cage” imagery meticulously.

As a side note, in order to understand the emblematical element in the “prison-cage”, it should be worthwhile to take a moment to examine F. R. Leavis’ insight into Shakespeare’s built-in movements in Macbeth. And this should help us better understand both the Ignatian emblem and the interpretive method. The imagery under scrutiny follows.

Macbeth: If we should fail, -

Lady Macbeth: We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking place,

²⁸ Ong, Barbarian, 252.
And we'll not fail.  

As Leavis reported, when the *Arden* editor of *Macbeth* tried to understand the emblematical “screw your courage to the sticking place”, he indeed experienced three interpretive stages. 1) At first, the editor considered the imagery as screwing the cord of a musical instrument to the right place, but the harmony of the adjusted musical instrument would not fit into the radical existentialism which Macbeth was cast into. 2) Then, the imagery was discerned as screwing a crossbow to the striking place, which should prepare the audiences with the upcoming violence by revealing the violent activities in Macbeth’s mind. 3) Eventually, the editor recognized that the crossbow should necessarily become a longbow, since Macbeth himself would have to hold the longbow at the sticking place all night for making the terrible decision (instead of the sticking place being mechanically held in place as with the crossbow).

Here, if we may call “screw your courage to the sticking place” as the “crossbow-longbow” imagery, this would not be far from Ong’s calling “the whole composite as in exile among brute animals” as the “prison-cage” imagery. Therein, we may notice Ong was an English professor who taught the *Exercises* similarly to Leavis’ teaching *Macbeth*, which indeed gave us a good impression of being at the frontier of literary criticism around the 1960s. More precisely, it should be said that both Ong and Leavis were in the hermeneutic tradition to which Ignatius also necessarily belonged – things themselves can signify, and in particular when signifying the existentialist’s situation.

In terms of the interpretive method, as the *Arden* editor experienced three stages of development from “musical instrument” to “crossbow” and to “longbow”, it should be

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reasonable to deem that Ignatius also asked the exercitants to examine the imagery meticulously so that the exercitants would not stop at the initial misinterpretations – Ignatius reminded, “I say, the whole composite, soul and body.” And in terms of the emblematical element, in comparison to the awkwardness of the emblems in the “prison-cage”, Shakespeare’s “crossbow-longbow”, though with more elegance to imply the hidden shift from “decision-making” to “decision-made” (the terrible existential situation into which Macbeth was persuaded), indeed shared with Ignatius the habit of using emblems or para-emblems on the existentialist’s situation. But Ong’s essay did not end here by concluding that since the existential situation must be communicated indirectly, it should be better communicated with emblematical metaphors with implicit patterns of development. Ong moved on to the difficulty of “media”.

IV.

In the fourth section, Ong eventually touched upon media ecology in saying that “the Ignatian image, like a television set, picks up a pattern which exists independently of it.”30 This sentence has many comprehensive difficulties, and the major one must be within “like a television set”, which is not without a McLuhanian sense of using one media (in this case, “television”) to understand its media archeological predecessor (in this case, “the Ignatian image”).31 But as stated, Ong was more cautious than McLuhan in using media analogies; in the above quote Ong must have a particular reason to highlight the media element in the Ignatian image. We should focus on revealing the rationale in Ong’s first statement on the media element of the Exercises in the field of media ecology.

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30 Ong, Barbarian, 255.
From Evan Illich, we have learned that “tools” are different from “objects”. For a radical example, as Zhang contended, when a good rider “uses” the horse, he will not do anything contrary to the horse’s nature. The horse is simply moving within its own nature, and the rider is heading towards his destination bodily unhurried and spiritually firm. Therefore, as much as there is no horse being ride, there is also no rider on the saddle. To put this “man-horse” aphorism (notably an emblematical image) more straightforwardly, the defining character of a good tool is indeed that when we use it, the tool disappears into usage. And this is the case of many “convivial” tools we use in daily life.

From Lewis Mumford, we then have the term “machine-tool” as Mumford’s teaching the complexity of “media” as a compound of “machine” and “tool”. For example, the bridge should be a “tool” when we use it. When we walk on the bridge, the bridge disappears into usage, and we are using the space provided by the bridge. But when we look at the bridge from some distance, the bridge then becomes a “machine” with its own automatism of traffic lights, lanes, cars and people passing through and etc. As Kenneth Burke fondly pointed out, the economical design of the bridge can be a huge psychological relief for a mind in troublesome thoughts – the real bridge can be the Platonic “ideal” if one is not on the bridge.

To take a step forward, the “machine-tool” is the twofold direction of media: if the bridge is a “tool” when in usage and a “machine” when in examination, from “tool” to “machine” we focus on technological development, and from “machine” to “tool” we

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33 McLuhan and Zhang, “Poetics”, 60.
focus on human cognition and imagination. And this is the reason that the “crossbow-longbow” metaphor (from “machine” to “tool”) would work. Were it from longbow to crossbow, Macbeth’s existential situation would be lost into the total passivity of being persuaded by Lady Macbeth.

In Marshall McLuhan and his son Eric McLuhan, this kind of two-directional inner logic of the “machine-tool” was better captured in the “laws of media”. In particular, the McLuhans pointed out that it is not that from “tool” to “machine”, there is mere technological development; rather, this development simply asks for a different kind of imagination. For example, in Marshall McLuhan’s observation, the invention of the bicycle (a tool largely considered to be convivial in today’s urban communication) has already made the invention of the airplane possible, but it took another hundred years for the Wright brothers (who were bicyclists) to recognize the airplane as a para-rhetorical variation and extension of the bicycle.

Now, as stated, Ong was less interested in predicting machines in the future with today’s tools, and he was more interested in the existential implication from “machine” to “tool” (from “television” to “the Ignatian image”), which was more salient in Shakespeare’s “crossbow-longbow” but also implicit in Ignatius “prison-cage”. Therein, Ong allowed us to study the media element in the Exercises, with the caution that Ignatius did not dissect the symbolic meaning of things – Ignatius was after all a companion of Jesus who used things like “five loaves and two fishes” to remark on a communication theory strictly within communication. To say it fondly, if McLuhan was the head of media ecology, Ong was the heart of the field. At the end of the essay, Ong said,
After all, the abiding worth of the *Spiritual Exercises* lies here: not that they provide some sort of system independent of the self, of engagement, of making a choice, but that they are a technique of engagement, of making a choice which has never been made before and can never be made again. They confront the self and the real.\textsuperscript{35}

By “technique of engagement”, Ong set the standard high in terms of communicating communication – we shall communicate communication within communication. To conclude, it is good to have Fr. Ong to insist on this particular kind of emblem in which the author re-fuses to deconstruct communication.\textsuperscript{36} If indeed the Greek emblems are by nature hermeneutically constructive as there is nothing to deconstruct, modern emblem book writers had to choose how to communicate communication. With this, let us move onto *Presence of the Word* as phenomenological methods that entered into the diachronic order of the spoken word.

**Presence of the Word**

In the first chapter of *Presence*, Ong proposed that cultural and religious studies can be approached by studying the sensorium organization. Keeping in mind that Ignatius asked the exercitants to apply five senses into the mediations, what Ong meant by “the shifting sensorium”\textsuperscript{37} at the beginning of *Presence* may be examined in relation to the *Exercises*.

From the previous section, we have reached a media ecological take on the word-image dynamic. Simply put, to think of the image as the technological development of

\textsuperscript{35} Ong, *Barbarian*, 257.
\textsuperscript{36} See Brianke Chang, *Deconstructing Communication* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{37} Ong, *Presence*, 1.
the word (from tool to machine) involves a built-in ecology to in turn enable existential examinations on the spoken word (from machine to tool). On the *Exercises*, Ignatius lived in a time when it was meaningful to make a choice if to keep the image close to the word or to move directly into the written word. And this choice was relevant not only to the Reformation and the iconoclasm (the “picture storm”), but also to the humanists’ stronger grasp of the Greek rhetorical tradition. Therein, some sort of reorganization of rhetoric had to be undertaken in that there was a conundrum in assuming some “genuine interiority” within the Greek *rhētorikē*, while a Greek rhetorician would know nowhere else to be other than within the commonplace tradition.\(^{38}\) As Auerbach pointed out, how Homer should make sure the audiences always knew what he knew was because of the rich repertoire of “formulaic expressions” owned collectively within the Greek culture, and the oral poets like Homer simply had them better.\(^ {39}\)

Of course, by “reorganizing rhetoric”, this is not to say the Christian humanists had to forcefully insert an interiority into rhetoric. First of all, as Havelock pointed out elaborately in the *Muse*, the early Renaissance was not the first time that the oral-rhetorical tradition was reorganized, and more or less, rhetoric was indeed the outcome of “the Muses learned to write” in the sense of the consonant as the convivial tool within the technology of writing. The ancient Greek culture, if judging from Plato’s account for Socrates’ philosophical dialogues, was still quite an oral one. The citizens of the *polis* simply had little need to be alone. Moreover, it was only till modernity, at least judging

\(^{38}\) The modern portrait of a rhetorician to be a hero of social reformations might produce more confusions than real changes. For the hero, some commonplace must be questioned, while for the rhetorician, to persuade by poking fun at the commonplace would create a conundrum for being at the edge of the commonplace.

\(^{39}\) Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 7
from Nietzsche’s writing that we felt somewhat rebellious against the Apollonian (the Greek god of education) public life as bright as the sun, from which we began to “deconstruct” the rhetorical tradition by categorizing art (and poetics in particular) into the realm of Dionysian unconsciousness. ⁴⁰

In the context of the early Renaissance, there were multiple proposals for this reorganization of rhetoric in the shifting sensorium from writing (visual-tactile) to printing (exclusively visual), which were implied in works like the Exercises as a good example in itself. And given our analysis on the emblematical nuances in the “prison-cage”, Ignatius inherited this intellectual habitus in which the word-image dynamic was not polemicized. Here, it may be specified that nowhere in Ignatius’ writing did he directly comment on the Reformation and iconoclasm. In this sense, the Exercises may be read strictly as a work on communication.

Now, to move back to the first chapter of Presence which may be understood as Ong’s implicitly comparing the early Renaissance (in particular the Exercises) with his own historical moment, the phenomenon Ong observed was that: the well-trained ears in the 20th century, when being applied to cultural and religious studies, have been producing some very nuanced phenomenological work. For a brief literature review, this phenomenology of sound was the interpretative framework first employed by Albert Lord and Milman Parry at the frontier of doing anthropological work in Yugoslavia around the 1930s. The framework was then developed by Eric Havelock in the 1960s to understand the triumph and the trouble of the Greek institutionalizing rhetoric. Around the same

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⁴⁰ In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche used “Apollonian and Dionysian” to pinpoint the true dialectics of the Greek culture, with “Apollonian” (the Greek god of sun) being the sun-bright clarity of the analytical mind, and “Dionysian” (the Greek god of wine) being the drunken ecstasy of the creative mind. Nietzsche categorized “art” into the realm of Dionysus.
time, Perry Miller (who was Ong’s teacher in Harvard) should be the first one to relate the American ethos to the “wilderness” imago in the framework of cultural studies.\(^4\) As a Jesuit, Ong simply joined in this phenomenology of sound by offering a built-in perspective on Catholicism and the American personalism (Ong was an American scholar). In many ways, Ong practiced the Exercises by teaching communication with the new discoveries in the “noosphere”.\(^4\) For example, in Fighting for Life, the newly discovered details in animal studies (which was then used to support human behaviorism) were used by Ong as supporting the rhetorical temper of communication in general.\(^4\) In Fighting, Ong was able to make an argument like the following: the industrial masculinity can be understood as the counterbalance to thousands years of the matrilineal society in the Paleolithic and Neolithic time – here, the rhetorical grandeur in the polemic between “industrial masculinity” and “matrilineal society” was powerfully heuristic, not without a good sense of being oratorical.

Among contemporary scholars of media studies, some criticized Ong for promoting a theology of “secondary orality”, and the main critique was that electronic communication should not be reduced to a phenomenology of sound alone, since electronic media have triggered a wholesome change in information and communication.\(^4\) Keeping “the shifting sensorium” in mind, this kind of critique of secondary orality should be precisely the outcome of the choice made by the early Renaissance men to further exteriorize the presence of the word with the printing press.

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\(^4\) Ong’s “sensorium” can be understood as complementary to Teilhard de Chardin’s “noosphere”.


The tactile intimacy within the electronic media (e.g. computer keyboard, touchpad, earplugs and etc.) is more or less an emergency solution to the elimination of sound with the printing press. Today’s effort to reorganize the ratio of senses with the electronic media should be in a heuristic parallel to the early Renaissance men’s technological-existential situation. Therein, in “Ritual and Movement as Communication Media”, Soukup provide a way to read Presence of the Word in comparison with Jacques Ellul’s Humiliation of the Word. And a comparison between Presence and Humiliation should clarify two different perspectives on the word-image dynamic arguably as extensions of the rationales and critiques of iconoclasm.

It should be clarified beforehand that both Ong and Ellul were openly supportive of a rhetorical education. In Humiliation, Ellul specifically said that,

A person who has been trained in rhetoric, in the strict sense of the word, can no longer learn in any other way. His thinking necessarily takes place in the world of reasoning, dialectic, analysis, and synthesis. This is not without its dangers, of course: we are aware that words can be abused. We know how an illusion allows us to take these symbols for reality, and how empty talk sometimes fails to be attached to anything concrete. Sometimes confusion between rhetorical reasons and reason exists. But these abuses in no way affect the authenticity of the intellectual mechanism that is formed by and for the word.

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45 Soukup, “Ritual and Movement”.
But as Soukup emphasized, for Ellul, word and image belong to two separate realms of communication, and it is only within the Incarnation of Jesus Christ that these two realms with an innate conflict can be reconciled. In other words, one has to be as good as Christ in conquering the synchronicity of the poetic perceptions so as to conquer the situation of communicating communication strictly within the spoken word. For Ong, word and image, although with different ways to signify, belong to the same world of symbolism into which Jesus’ rhetoric and poetics were built. In other words, the presence of the word is both between man and man and between man and nature, or in Buber’s words, the twofold nature of “I-Thou” and “I-It”.

Now, Ellul had an important point of view. In the history of visual communication, word and image were often combined in monstrous ways. For example, in the Chinese saying “bird dies for food, and man dies for fortune”, the rhetorical argument in “man dies for fortune” was complemented by the imagery of “bird dies for food”. The imagery of “bird dies for food,” which came from the realm of reality, provided “evidences” for the bad argument of “man dies for fortune”, while the argument itself can find little support in the realm of words. More straightforwardly, the image runs the risk of being too real to the degree of cancelling out the “rhetorical process of dialectics, analysis, and synthesis”. If this was the rationale for iconoclasm, we should agree with Ellul that many common sayings should better be forgotten.

On the other hand, as Soukup explained, the semiotics in Roman Catholicism is that the sign is composed of one signifier with another signifier. In other words, the

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image cannot be the signified of the word in Roman Catholicism. And the semiotics of one signifier with another signifier was certainly the essence of McLuhan’s method of “probes”, as the two faces of Janus who was the Roman god of beginnings and endings.49 Yet within Ong, one signifier with another signifier can also be understood as the beginning of a phenomenological perception in the presence of the word – not only in the kid’s communicative desire in catching the movement of a kangaroo (one signifier, the thing) by exclaiming “look, mom, a kangaroo (another signifier, the word)”, but also in the young adults’ existential situation of having to move things intellectually, otherwise in silent stillness, with the evanescence of the spoken word (one signifier, “I”) that lingers in the air for a moment so that the meaning can be caught by another man (another signifier, “You”).50 And the latter seems to be the essence of Ignatius’ asking the exercitants to use all five senses in meditating on something visible. With such dynamics between the emblematics in “something invisible” and the sensorium organization in “something visible”, let us move onto Ong’s work on Gerard Manley Hopkins’ appropriation of the Exercises.

Hopkins, the Self and God

If indeed the Spiritual Exercises (in itself more of a manual than of a literary work) may be understood as a particular kind of rhetorical organization that asked the exercitants to provide the content that the Exercises deserved, the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins then provided the content of “Victorian particularism” within which

Hopkins wrote his poems with a “panegyric accuracy” in detailing the natural, historical and spiritual details. In the second part of Hopkins, Ong contended that Hopkins’ particularism was a distinctive praxis of the Exercises. Ong said,

Ignatius’ particularist prescriptivism in the Spiritual Exercises represents not simply a religious phenomenon but an advanced analytic consciousness in some general way en route to Victorian particularism. But the Victorian particularist state of mind, as has been seen, characteristically concerned itself not so much with methodological or procedural details as with exactly articulated attention to physical particularities and to interior states of mind, both of which intrigued Hopkins. Is there anything in the Spiritual Exercise that would encourage precisely these concerns. There is, and certain effects are spectacularly evident in Hopkins.\(^5\)

This “spectacular evidence” was not only in that Hopkins wrote poems to practice the Exercises, but more importantly, unlike the Exercises was sometimes understood as a “memory theater” in silence, Hopkins’ particularism was unequivocally vocal. The poet himself indicated that some of his poems were meant to be read aloud, and in particular with a “sprung rhythm”.\(^5\) This phenomenology of sound in Hopkins’ poems (even in the “terrible sonnets” that Hopkins wrote in his late Dublin years) should be significant for Ong to consider Hopkins as a powerful interpretive entrance into the Exercises.

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51 Ong, Hopkins, 56.
52 Ong, Hopkins, 69.
53 See Ong, Reader, 111.
To be more specific, Hopkins embodied the *Exercises* and made the Ignatian images more vocal. The emblems in Hopkins’ poems should be good case studies for the Ignatian meditation, especially as counterparts to the Cartesian meditations. The American personalists often used “journals” as a form of philosophical thought, it can be neglected that Descartes’ meditations, in which the enquiring self overlapped with the narrative self, were more prevalent in American personalism. More straightforwardly, with “journals”, there was an innate bias towards meditating on something visible. On this, Ong provided some of Hopkins’ personal notes when mediating on the Ignatian “composite of places”.

Now, in the previous section, we have noticed the dynamic between meditating on “something visible” and meditating on “something invisible” in the *first prelude* of the *First Exercises*. In Hopkins, this dynamic between the visible and the invisible in Ignatian images simply became more understandable. As Ong reported, when Hopkins meditated on “something visible” as in the Last Supper where Ignatius asked the exercitants to “see the persons at the Supper”, to “listen to their conversation” and to “see what they are doing”, Hopkins noted,

All the places are at some point of the compass and we may face towards them: so every real person living or dead or to come has his quarter in the round of being, is lodged onewhere and not anywhere, and the mind has a real direction towards him. We are to realise this here of ‘the persons of the Supper’: as we have got the orientation of the room, its true

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measurements and specifications, probably furnished it and so on, so now
we are properly to people it and give it true personallings. 55

On “something visible”, Hopkins’ interpretation was not emblematical, and more of a
general order of perception from the scene to the agent. Ong’s point here was that
Hopkins did not consider describing the physical details in conflict with the “peopling” of
the scene; the scene was more or less the witness for the agent. 56 Though not
emblematical, Hopkins’ imagination had a sculptural gesture – especially as in “every
real person … is lodged onewhere and not anywhere, and the mind has a real direction
towards him” – which can be attributed to the merit of the movable types for
remembering the “peopling” by positioning them in particular places one after another.

However, from movable types to the printing press, it became more difficult to
distinguish sculptural weight from visual cliché due to the copia of the printing press.
With such difficulty, it was a common practice among Renaissance painters to craft a
small landscape that receded into the background, behind the main body of the painting.
And we may call this “the built-in landscape” or “the painting within the painting”.
Therein, the effort to catch the background details within the smallest scale can certainly
be understood as a built-in antidote to becoming a visual cliché that imposed the main
theme of the imagery upon the viewers. We may call this “cogito interruptus” 57 in the
sense that a powerful interruption to the topoi could be helpful to the interpretative
process. But by crafting such a perspective beyond which the human eyes can reach, the

55 Ong, Hopkins, 74
56 In Kenneth Burke’s pentad, the scene should be in a proper ratio with the agent – in other words, the
more on the scene, the less on the agent. This is part of the New Criticism element in Burke, as for Gerard
Manley Hopkins, it should be “the more on the scene, the more on the agent”.
Original work in Italian published in 1967.
painter indeed asked the viewers to pay attention to two things at a time – the event and the landscape, almost to the degree of the event’s “speaking” to the viewers and the landscape’s “whispering”. It is noteworthy that around the same time of Renaissance, the Chinese painters would exchange the figure and the ground – the person was often built into the landscape. When in comparison, the vocal and personalistic element in Hopkins’ “peopling” the room should be salient.

In Hopkins, Ong also had critical concerns with the visual clichés of the printing press which could be even more repetitive than the oral poets’ formulaic expressions that still required improvisation in front of the audiences. As Ong observed,

Emblem books, which greatly influenced many literary genre (Daly), presented individual illustrations in woodcuts or mental engravings accompanied by detailed commentary pointing out the particular persons or animals or objects or actions in a given print from which moralizing or other useful conclusions were to be drawn … emblem books were a new genre because they are a print product: they require that the graphic presentation be the same in every copy so that the text, which is the same in every copy, has exactly the identical texts … so that soon the text is referring to details that are not present or are present in impossibly altered form.58

In the above quote, Ong almost considered the emblem as the product of the movable types, and the emblem book as the product of the printing press. Ong cautioned that the text in the emblem book could be even more vulnerable to the repetitive pattern of the

58 Ong, Hopkins, 72.
printing press, especially given the comic nature of the emblem in which the Renaissance realism was not a necessary component. The question could be then: if the moral wit within the emblem book was particularly vulnerable to the printing press, was there any proto-media ecological concern among the emblem book writers, and in particular in Hopkins’ using the emblems?

This question may allow us to deem that if indeed part of the emblem book writers’ intention was precisely to be the counterpart of Renaissance realism, they were more likely to be aware of the essential effort as emphasizing the imagerial symbolic economy weakened by the copia of the printing press. Not far from the comic book writers today, the emblem book writers were to challenge the repetitive dullness augmented by the printing press, though without the comic book writers’ desire to mock at the redundancy of orality. In other words, the early emblem book writers almost demanded a proto-phenomenological approach to the commonplace imageries in order to avoid visual clichés.

This shared situation among users of the emblem should help us better understand Hopkins’ emblems. Again in Ong’s report, on the Principle and Foundation in the Exercises, Hopkins noted,

Within a certain bounding line all will be self, outside of it nothing; with it self begins from one side and ends from the other. I look through my eye and the window and the air; the eye is my eye and of me and me, the

59 Judging from the Hawstead Panels as a series of emblems in the 17th century, the landscape in those emblems had realism implications, but by no means to the degree of Renaissance naturalism. By “realism”, I mean the Ellulian differing the “real” from the “true”.
60 For example, the “Zzzz” in a comic book should be a mocking protest against the redundancy of orality that “bores me into sleep”.

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windowpane is my windowpane but not of me nor me. A self then will consist of a centre and a surrounding area or circumference, of a point of reference and a belonging field, the latter set out, as surveyors etc say from the former; of two elements, which we may call the insert and the outsetting or the display.\footnote{Ong, Hopkins, 40.}

And in the \textit{Principle and Foundation}, Ignatius’ writing was:

Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls. / The other things on the face of the earth are created for the human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created. / From this it follows that we ought to use these things to the extent that they help us towards our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it. / To attain this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things, in regard to everything which is left to our freewill and is not forbidden. Consequently, on our own part we ought not to seek health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short one, and so on in all other matters. / Rather, we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conductive to the end for which we are created.\footnote{Ignatius, \textit{Exercises}, 32.}

Hopkins’ take on the \textit{Principle and Foundation} turned out to be the best kind of hermeneutic phenomenology on the “prison-cage” imagery. He almost felt it naturally to relate the logos in the \textit{Principle and Foundation} (which Ignatius crafted carefully) to the
mythos of the “prison-cage” imagery in the first prelude of the First Exercise. To say the least, Hopkins’ emblem, especially as in “the eye is my eye and of me and me, the windowpane is my windowpane but not of me nor me”, made Principle and Foundation less vulnerable to doctrinaire readings. Ong compared Hopkins’ particularism with the modernist Jesuit, George Tyrell’s, note on the Principle and Foundation. And Tyrell wrote,

Not only must we perforce think of the spirit or real self, in terms of the body or apparent self, but we must also think of its timeless and indivisible action in terms of those appearances to which its action relates.63

In Tyrell, the interpretation was rendered too assertively without the same kind of discernment that Hopkins communicated with the emblematical imagery.

Moreover, it may be clarified that Hopkins’ emblem was indeed different from the Romanticists’ who also resorted to the daily experience for poetic moments. In his note on Principle and Foundation, Hopkins’ everydayness had a clear contention that “I” am, after all, within my senses and not the things: unlike the Romanticists such as Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud” in which Wordsworth chose not to distinguish “I” from the “cloud”, Hopkins felt it indispensable to specify that “the eye is my eye and of me and me, the windowpane is my windowpane but not of me nor me.” To put this more straightforwardly, different from Wordsworth’s bias towards perceiving the phenomenology of word as between man and nature, Hopkins problematized the subject-object interplay by confronting himself respectively within the senses and without the things. And this self-confrontation was the very emblematical part in Hopkins’

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63 Ong, Hopkins, 40.
meditation – the compound image of the “of-me-and-me” eye and the “not-of-me-nor-me” windowpane.

With this kind of complexities in Hopkins’ using emblems, in *Hopkins*, Ong called for more research to relate the Ignatian “composite of places” to the emblem book in the Renaissance. Ong said,

The composition of place likewise has a general cultural matrix, but one not at all so old. It is not biblical or classical: early cultures do not attend with this conscious clinical objectivity to specific visual details, and they certainly do not verbalize careful visual descriptions. Roland Barthes associates the composition of place with the “view” paintings becoming current in Ignatius’ day, such *A View of Naples* - although Ignatius is not particularly interested in landscape as such, but rather in physical surroundings as bearing on persons, who are his basic interest … So far as I know, the patent correspondence between features of Ignatian prayer and emblem books has never been studied or even previously adverted to.

Interestingly, Ignatius was Spanish and the Spanish Netherlands were a major center of emblem book publishing.64

In the quote above, Ong almost contended that the “composite of places” was indeed the “new media” in Ignatius’ time, and the difficulty of visualizing the emblem never occurred to the biblical writers and the Grecian emblem writers – they simply used the written words. But for the emblem book writers in Renaissance, this visualization should

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64 Ong, *Hopkins*, 71-72.
be a complex representational difficulty, especially with the discovery of “view” or methods of seeing in general.

To extend Ong’s concerns with visualizing the emblems, if we may consider Hopkins’ compound image of the “of-me-and-me” eye and the “not-of-me-nor-me” windowpane as a phenomenological description with the intention to be phenomenological, this phenomenological description on the experience of “I see through the windowpane” more or less had to be followed by a phenomenological reduction so as to make an argument for the merit of being rhetorical. This moral-phenomenological reduction in using the emblem as a “metaphor” with a signified meaning should be even more complex than visualizing the emblem straightforwardly. For example, I have in mind that at the end of The Abolition of Man, C. S. Lewis also borrowed from the symbolic meaning of “seeing through a window”. Lewis wrote,

The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. It is good that the window should be transparent, because the street or garden beyond it is opaque. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to see through first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To “see through” all things is the same as not to see.65

In the context of weighing the dynamic between science and truth, Lewis used the phenomenological complexity in “seeing through the window” to make the argument that one should not see through all things. The discernment was then: “am I seeing through this for a reason” which was necessarily a reduction of the phenomenological perception.

Since the emblem originally had a variety of different meanings, to choose one signified from the pool of meanings should be an ethical choice in itself. In comparison to Lewis, Hopkins seems to carry the intention of maintaining the original phenomenological complexity in using the emblem.

**Conclusions**

To conclude, in this chapter we have examined three keynote publications of Ong’s more direct work on the *Spiritual Exercises* from 1954 to 1986. Within roughly thirty years of work, Ong started with being interested in the media-mandala element of the *Exercises* that was “like a television set”, and ended by pointing this media element towards the emblem book in the early Renaissance. For the current project, Ong’s work was significant to understanding the *First Week* of the *Exercises* as the birth of a strong moral consciousness, with the beginning of a phenomenological perception being communicated emblematically.

Of course, more reviews can be done to extend Ong’s appropriation of the *Exercises*, to list a few, from the critique of American personalism that the American personalists simply could not get rid of the “things” as the phenomenology of “I-it”,66 to the critique of the intellectual bluntness in Jonathan Swift whose political satire should be the symptom of a overly reduced English emblem tradition,67 and to the critique of “cyclicism” in secondary orality with which the poetic structure was understood as the miniature of the repetitive nature of the world – such as the wheel of the nature from spring (birth), to summer (youth), to fall (sick), to winter (death) and to spring again (rebirth) – while the poetic-phenomenological perceptions were much more driven by the

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particularities. As the critical urgency itself indicated, Ong as a Catholic thinker was deeply concerned with how to rightfully reorganize the dynamic between phenomenological complexities (sensus) and the noetic economy (nous).

To say it radically, Ong’s work was to extend St. Ignatius’ difficulty in the *Exercises* of teaching the exercitants to know something that they have not known yet, which was similar to the built-in difficulty in orality studies of having to understand orality with literacy. In both cases, the emblematics should be a necessary awkwardness of the mind at the edge of knowing, within which the rhetorical contingency had a real reason to exist.

With this, we may end this chapter with one of Ong’s own emblems in *Orality* on the situation of knowing:

Thinking of oral tradition or a heritage of oral performance, genres and styles as ‘oral literature’ is rather like thinking of horses as automobiles without wheels. You can, of course, undertake to do this. Imagine writing a treatise on horses (for people who have never seen a horse) which starts with the concept not of horse but of ‘automobile’, built on the readers’ direct experience of automobiles. It proceeds to discourse on horses by always referring to them as ‘wheelless automobiles’, explaining to highly automobilized readers who have never seen a horse all the points of difference in an effort to excise all idea of ‘automobile’ out of the concept ‘wheelless automobile’ so as to invest the term with a purely equine meaning. Instead of wheels, the wheelless automobiles have enlarged

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toenails called hooves; instead of headlights or perhaps rear-vision mirrors, eyes; instead of a coat of lacquer, something called hair; instead of gasoline for fuel, hay, and so on. In the end, horses are only what they are not. No matter how accurate and thorough such apophatic description, automobile-driving readers who have never seen a horse and who hear only of ‘wheelless automobiles’ would be sure to come away with a strange concept of a horse. The same is true of those who deal in terms of ‘oral literature’, that is, ‘oral writing’. You cannot without serious and disabling distortion describe a primary phenomenon by starting with a subsequent secondary phenomenon and paring away the differences. Indeed, starting backwards in this way—putting the car before the horse—you can never become aware of the real differences at all.

If indeed the situation of having to perceive the “horse” from the “wheelless automobile” (as a machine-tool imagination that implies both the movement from tool to machine, and the movement from machine to tool) was not far from the situation of having to understand the “oral image” from the Ignatian emblem (as a phenomenological analysis that both moves towards phenomenological interpretation and moves back to the original phenomenological description), we should simply examine the Ignatian emblem as meticulously as possible. With this, let us move towards the next chapter, with the second probe and the third probe into the “prison-cage” emblem.
CHAPTER THREE

The Quill Pen within the Emblem Book: Further Explorations into the “Prison-cage” Emblem

In the previous chapter, I have reviewed Ong’s appropriation of the *Spiritual Exercises*, in particular the way Ong could help us better understand the emblematical nuances in Ignatius. With Ong, my arguments were that: 1) the “prison-cage” was emblematical not only in the sense that the imagery formed a rhetorical generality for the well-known difficulty of decision-making, but more importantly, this image compound provided phenomenological accounts for making a decision that has never been made before. And the rhetorical connection within was between man and man, and with a strong demand for an even more intense personalism. 2) In the light of Hopkins’ note on the *Principle and Foundation*, the *mythos* in the “prison-cage” was also complementary to the *logos* in Ignatius’ dialectical reasoning in *Principle and Foundation*. As Ong pointed out, this kind of dialectical movement could be understood with St. Thomas Aquinas’ presenting an argument in the form of “question, objection and reply to objection” in *Summa Theologica* in that Aquinas knew no other way but in imitation of dialogues.¹ 3) Within the framework of semiotic phenomenology,² we should be able to examine the ratios between and among phenomenological description, reduction and interpretation within being emblematical. Here, to take the example of the media ecologists, McLuhan favored the phenomenological interpretation in almost challenging the audiences by asking, “do you know that you know?”, and Ong preferred to be

¹ Ong, Hopkins, 17.
phenomenologically descriptive in examining the situation of “I am trying to know”. In this chapter, we shall also take a closer look at the history of consciousness within considering the “prison-cage” as a phenomenological reduction of Ignatius’ original narrative. The point is to highlight the three stages of making an emblem – from “motto”, to “image” and to “epigram” as a built-in semiotic-phenomenological perception.

Accordingly, in chapter three, I want to further develop Ong’s exploration into the media-communication dynamic in the Ignatian emblems. The “prison-cage” emblem should be a good case study for the beginning of a phenomenological perception since the First Week of the Exercises was also the birth of a strong moral consciousness. Ignatius felt it naturally to teach the beginning of a phenomenological perception with the moral-phenomenological reduction.

In this chapter, I will start with a comprehensive introduction to the Spiritual Exercises. Then, after exploring into the meaning of the image compound (as the built-in dynamic between semiotics and phenomenology), I shall move to the second probe and the third probe into the “prison-cage” emblem, respectively in the realms of rhetoric and hermeneutics, and rhetoric and poetics. Eventually, I will close the chapter with Kierkegaard’s distinguishing the genius (giving birth to) from the apostle (the messenger in moral errands) in order to better understand the orality-and-literacy difficulty in Ignatius’ being in-between the commonplace and the frontier for using the emblems. Therein, I outline six keynote characteristics of the “prison-cage” emblem in preparation for chapter four.
A Comprehensive Introduction to the *Spiritual Exercises*

The *Spiritual Exercises* came from Ignatius’ own conversion from the life of a soldier to his deciding to live a spiritual life in total dedication to God. Gradually as it worked out, the Exercises became a common praxis in the Society of Jesus with a built-in dynamic of meditating into action. The little book *Spiritual Exercises* then became the “teacher’s manual” for the directors of the Exercises, a role mostly played by Ignatius himself before the foundation of the Society (and during the early years).

The full Exercises require more or less thirty successive days to complete, with the exact length depending on the exercitants’ various experiences in living the spiritual life. Ignatius organized the Exercises into four weeks, with the length of each week being also adjustable to the exercitants’ various situations. The four-week Exercises follow four major themes: meditations on sins and the consequences, contemplations on the incarnation and the life of Jesus, meditations on his passion and death, meditations on his resurrection and ascension and eventually with the unitive “Contemplations for Attaining Love”. For those exercitants who are well experienced with the Exercises, they may perform the Exercises by himself, often with an abridged version in eight successive days.

For those of us who firstly read the *Exercises* as a book, there were some interpretive difficulties. Ignatius wrote the *Exercises* as a portable manual for the directors’ referential uses and not for the exercitants to read. His concise way of writing could make the book seemingly rather dry, if in comparison to, let’s say, the literary affections in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. Antonio de Nicolas, a contemporary commentator on the *Exercises*, had this fondly that Ignatius must have written the book
“not with a pen but with a hammer”. The conciseness of the *Exercises* can certainly be attributed to the fact the Exercises came from Ignatius’ own reflective notes, along with his deciding to live the spiritual life. In this sense, the genre of the *Exercises* could be understood with an incomplete parallel to those scholarly work based on a powerful thinker’s personal notes, though the *Exercises* was of course a complete work.

Ignatius’ manuscripts of the *Exercises* were in Spanish, and occasionally with the Basque language. The vulgate version of the *Exercises* was printed and published in 1548, with Ignatius’ own approval and usages. Here, it should be noteworthy that the writing of the *Exercises* was further complemented by the art form the printing press. The degree of the structural clarity of the *Exercises* would be unimaginable for Christian writers in pre-typographic cultures. Although as an early printing man (the printing press was about eighty years old when the *Exercises* was published), Ignatius maintained the habits of writing in the chirographic culture; for instance, many titles of the *Exercises* were simply the beginning words of the opening paragraph. Therein, it should be reminded that Ignatius wrote and edited the *Exercises* over an extensive period of time, along with his own spiritual growth. The book was only later edited and printed for better visual retrievals. For example, the “points” in the *Exercises* were therefore not to exhaust all the possible topics with a given subject (divisions and sub-divisions); rather, the rhetorical connections between the “points” came from the diachronic development of Ignatius’ own life of the mind. Such interpretive spaces gave birth to those hermeneutic

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3 De Nicolas, *Imagining*, 103.
4 As De Nicolas contended, “Letter g=” in the *Exercises* could be the first letter of the Basque word *guar* that means today. See De Nicolas, *Imagining*, 330.
5 See Ignatius, *Exercises*, 9 for Ganss’ elaborations on the 1548 Vulgate version of the *Exercises*.
7 See Ong, *Hopkins*, 68.
work on the *Exercises* almost as an elaborative response to the *Exercises* – Karl Rahner’s *
Notes on the* Spiritual Exercises may be a good example as another distinctive appropriation of the *Exercises.*

The Exercises are different from the Eastern meditative tradition, mostly in that they are embedded within the diachronic phenomenology of the word. As stated, a Zenist would choose to not differ cause from effect in claiming that the phenomena are cause and effect to each other, while Ignatius had to deal with the genuine uncertainty in the grace of God as fundamentally unpredictable. In the Christian meditative tradition, the distinctive characteristic of the *Exercises* is that the Exercises pivot on the making of a decision: in the Second Week, notably in the mid of the Exercises, the exercitants are asked to make the *election* for the important choices in their minds. Here, it is noteworthy that as an early Renaissance man, Ignatius was unknowing to the Romanticists’ trivialization of daily spirituality, but the *Exercises* was not without a sense of modern existentialism in Ignatius’ paying a good deal of attention to the exercitants’ making choices in the ordinary life, for instances, when the exercitants have to choose between priesthood or layman, marriage or single, and etc. Moreover, as shown in “The Deliberation on Poverty”, Ignatius himself made the decision that the Jesuits should have no personal financial possession, which should be a good equivalent of contemporary leadership studies. It may also be clarified that the Exercises are not exclusively about making the decisions that have never been made before; they are also about making

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decisions that “renew” and revitalize the spiritual life. And the uncertainty in changing
the decisions remains.

To raise an incomplete but heuristic parallel to the intellectual sphere, the election
in the Exercises can be understood as the genuine risk of scholars’ making choices in
living the intellectual life. In the intellectual sphere, bad choices were made for a variety
of different reasons. Scholars could make bad decisions due to lacking enough
information (e.g. Sartre’s open admiration for the Chinese cultural revolution); having
too much sympathy (e.g. the modern Chinese Confucianists’ entanglement with the
Chinese Communism Party), 11 or having too little sympathy (e.g. Heidegger’s joining in
the Nazi Party). In the Exercises, Ignatius was deeply aware of the real difficulties in
making the election, sometimes for not having enough information, other times for
having “too much” or “too little” emotion and etc. In particular, within Christian
mysticism, Ignatius knew that the existences are often problematically expressive, on
which he included “Rules for Discernment of Spirits” at the end of the Exercises.

Today, we know better some of the literary influences on the Exercises. 12 In
particular, since his conversion, Ignatius had read diligently The Imitation of Christ by
Thomas a Kempis at the frontier of the Devotio Moderna as the ascetical movement in
the Low Countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. And the Exercises itself was
within the Devotio Moderna. The characteristics of the Devotio Moderna should certainly
help us better understand the historical moment to which Ignatius responded. As cited by
Ong, Ricardo Garcia Villoslada listed ten of these characteristics:

11 See Guy S. Alitto. The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity
12 See Ong, Hopkins, 58.
The Devotio Moderna was 1) Christocentric, focusing more on Christ’s humanity than on the divine nature and attributes – hence the “imitation” to which human beings are called. It stressed 2) an affectivity allied with rationality rather than with what would much later be styled “enthusiasm”. It sought to introduce some kind of 3) method into meditation and life generally, and thus was to some degree monastic. It stressed 4) self-knowledge and obligation, in a way suggesting the strong Stoic influence that marked much late medieval and, even more, Renaissance thought, religious and other. Its concern with mysticism had a strong 5) moralistic cast, stressing self-abnegation and effect – more Stoic influence, though combined with biblical. It was 6) anti-speculative: knowledge was inconsequential and indeed useless without fear of God. “I would rather feel compunction than know how to define it.” The Imitation of Christ states. It was 7) deeply interiorized and subjective in focus: external works and ritual were far less important than intention, reflection and inner fervor. It favored 8) solitude and silence. The Devotio Moderna encouraged 9) Bible reading for devotional purpose, not for scientific research. It was 10) anti-humanistic to the extend that it despised not only mere human values but also secular knowledge generally. 13

In this project, we may consider the Devotio Moderna as the context for Ignatius’ feeling naturally to teach phenomenological descriptions with moral-phenomenological reductions. In the Exercises, Ignatius tried to help the exercitants to understand Christ’s own making the decisions in his life and death. In many ways, the desire to be artistic also found its own expression in the diachronic phenomenology of the word. The

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13 Ong, Hopkins, 59.
Exercises was truly valuable in understanding the early stage of a hermeneutic phenomenological method that coincided with the development of the printing press.14

The Meaning of a Compound Sign

In chapter two, we have noticed that the “prison-cage” was Ong’s effort to teach the meaning of Ignatius’ compound image by revealing the built-in rhetoric in the image compound. As a reminder, the original imagery in the Exercises was a “compound sign” with multiple signifiers that moved from “my soul”, to “this corruptible body”, to “in a prison”, to “in exile among brute animals”, and to the strong postscript of “I mean, my whole self as composed of soul and body.” If for Ong to call this compound image “prison-cage” was to highlight the built-in rhetoric, we should be able to notice the inner dynamic within the Exercises between “perceiving existentially” (which came as a compound of phenomena) and “communicating rhetorically” (within the diachronic order of the word). As I have contended with the framework of semiotic phenomenology, the Exercises was proto-existential with real difficulties between and among phenomenological description, phenomenological reduction, and phenomenological interpretation.

For this section, in concerns with the meaning of the compound sign, we may then understand the Ignatian “composite of places” as a compound sign with multiple signifiers in search for a more definitive meaning. And we may start with a compound sign not from the Exercises but from the Autobiography in which Ignatius openly recalled one of his own discernments of the spirits. And the compound sign from the Autobiography follows.

14 See de Nicolas, Imagining, 75-84.
While in this hospice it often happened that in broad daylight he saw something in the air near him. It gave him great consolation because it was very beautiful – remarkably so. He could not discern very well the kind of thing it was, but in a way it seemed to him to have the form of a serpent with many things that shone like eyes, though they were not. He found great pleasure and consolation in seeing this thing, and the oftener he saw it the more his consolation grew. When it disappeared, he was displeased…15

As Ignatius was unsure if the sign was from the devil or from God, he then performed a discernment of spirits with five points. The basic text follows.

FIRST… one day while saying the Office of Our Lady on the steps of the same monastery, his understanding began to be elevated so that he saw the Most Holy Trinity in the form of three musical keys. This brought out so many tears and so much sobbing that he could not control himself…

SECOND. Once the manner in which God had created the world was presented to his understanding with great spiritual joy. He seemed to see something white, from which some rays were coming and God made light from this. But he did not know how to explain these things, nor did he remember too well the spiritual enlightenment that God was imprinting on his soul at the time.

THIRD. At Manresa too, where he stayed almost a year, after he began to be consoled by God and saw the fruit which he bore in dealing with souls,

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15 Ignatius, Selected Works, 79.
he gave up those extremes he had formerly practiced, and he now cut his nails and his hair. One day in this town while he was hearing Mass in the church of the monastery mentioned above, at the elevation of the Body of the Lord, he saw with interior eyes something like white rays coming from above…

FOURTH. Often and for a long time, while at prayer, he saw with interior eyes of the humanity of Christ. The form that appeared to him was like a white body, neither very large nor very small, but he did not see any distinction of members. He saw it at Manresa many times. If he should way twenty or forty, he would not dare judge it a lie. He has seen this another time in Jerusalem and yet another while traveling near Padua. He has also seen Our Lady in a similar form, without distinguishing parts …

FIFTH. Once he was going out of devotion to a church situated a little more than a mile from Manresa: I believe it is called St. Paul’s, and the road goes by the river. As he went along occupied with his devotions, he sat down for a little while with his face towards the river, which ran down below. While he was seated there, the eyes of his began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.

…

After this had lasted for a good while, he went to kneel before a nearby cross to give thanks to God. There, the vision that had appeared to him many times but
which he had never understood, that is, the thing mentioned above which seemed very beautiful to him, with many eyes, now appeared to him. But while before the cross, he saw clearly that the object did not have its usual beautiful color, and he knew very clearly with a strong agreement of his will that is was the devil. Late it would often appear to him for a long time; and by way of contempt he dispelled it with a staff the used to carry in his hand.\textsuperscript{16}

At the first glance, the above exercise that Ignatius himself practiced seems to be a structural solution to the first sign in discernment which came with the imagery of a “flying serpent with many eyes”. The following five points – as a compound image that moved roughly from “three musical keys”, to the “white rays”, to the “white body” and eventually to “not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt” – served as the counterpart to the first sign so that at the end of the exercise, Ignatius could “dispel it with a staff he used to carry in his hand”, knowing that the first sign came from the devil. In short, it was seemingly that the divine signs themselves conquered the first sign from the devil within Ignatius’ discerning efforts. It should not be surprising that the above image compound from the Autobiography caught the attention of many contemporary rhetoricians and semioticians. For example, in Boyle’s Loyola’s Acts, she considered the “flying serpent with many eyes” to be Ignatius’ playing the cultural riddle with the signified being the “peacock”, and the peacock imagery (as half snake and half bird) was commonplace then to remember one’s committing the pivotal sin of vainglory.\textsuperscript{17}

However, on a second thought, without neglecting that the Autobiography was dictated by Ignatius to his assistant, Gonçalves da Câmara who wrote the Autobiography

\textsuperscript{16} Ignatius, Selected Works, 79-80.
\textsuperscript{17} Boyle, Acts, 111-119.
arguably with a preference to rhetorical grandeur, we should at least presuppose the genuine uncertainty of the first sign which was the flying serpent imagery. It is noteworthy that throughout the five-point exercise, the flying serpent imagery itself did not appear, which was certainly efforts to keep the flying serpent imagery as the “daemon on the shoulder” that Ignatius himself could not see until the end of the exercise. In other words, the uncertainty of the first sign only gradually became the moral reduction of either imp on one shoulder or angel on the shoulder. More straightforwardly, if Ignatius already knew if the sign came from God or from the devil, the five points exercise, even in autobiographical recollections, would be rather redundant as post-eventful rejoices. Yet given the kind of suspicion from the first glance, we should firstly focus on the difficulty in the orality of the compound sign, and in particular the Muses within.

The Orality of the Compound Sign

The Japanese writer Haruki Murakami, in his novel *Norwegian Wood*, offered a narrative account for how a modern girl would discern if a boy’s romantic love was true. And the discerning process was that: to start, the girl would ask the boy to bring her an apple, and when the boy brought the apple to her; then, the girl would ask the boy to instead bring her an orange, and the boy brought the orange to her; at the third time, the girl would ask the boy to instead bring her a strawberry, and the boy brought the strawberry to her. Eventually, the girl could decide to love the boy a hundred times more than the three-part miniature of the “Hercules’ labors” that the boy just completed.

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18 Da Cámara himself reported that “he [Ignatius] said he had noticed that I greatly exaggerated things, and that was bad when I was reporting a matter, because it destroyed my credibility.” See Luís Gonçalves da Cámara. *Remembering Íñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: The Memoriale of Luis Gonçalves Da Câmara*. Translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (Gracewing, 2005), x.

19 See Haruki Murakami. *Norwegian Wood*. Translated by Jay Rubin (New York: Vintage International, 2000), 76. The original signifier was “strawberry shortcake”, to illustrate the point, I changed the signifiers to “apple, orange and strawberry”.
If my comparing the Ignatian discernment of spirits to the psychological movement of a modern girl’s may be excused, both situations indeed had the same difficulty with the evanescence of the orality. The particular radicalness in Murakami’s story was that the signifiers in the girl’s discerning process should not have any meaning. This lack of the signified was not only in the sense that the compound sign of “apple, orange and strawberry”, along with the errands, only happened to be the signifiers of the boy’s love; more importantly, the compound sign was also the girl’s hidden protest against the indeterminacy of love in that none of the “apple, orange, strawberry” could be an adequate sign for love. In other words, the meaning of the compound sign was entirely within the girl’s psychological movement, along with the boy’s errands.

In many ways, Murakami’s story was a structural solution to Shakespeare’s writing, “O, swear not by the moon, th’ inconstant moon, that monthly changes in her circle orb. Lest that thy love prove likewise variable” as Juliet’s lamenting on the incompetence of the common sign for love. And it is noteworthy that the girl’s discernment in Murakami’s story was more existentially complex than Juliet’s yearning for a better sign – not only the former had good doubts for the common sign for love, but she also tried to conquer the evanescence of the spoken word by de-signing an independent discerning process with signifiers whose meanings were equivalently evanescent.

Murakami’s story on a modern girl’s discerning method should be heuristic in understanding the difficulty of orality, because our girl was not to poke fun at the way the spoken word works. Her existential situation was much more complex than one’s saying

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“blah, blah, blah” as a contempt for the redundancy of orality. As stated, the “apple” momentarily became the signifier for love as the beginning of a phenomenological perception, which was in parallel to the evanescence of orality. With today’s acute awareness in sexuality and consciousness, we may even say that the girl deconstructed and reconstructed the forward movements in Hercules’ labors: if indeed the meaning of Hercules’ labors was that each labor should be able to claim its own realm of sovereignty, the girl then built an inner rhetorical connection into the labors, as counter-movements to the psychological blind spots in the boy’s identifying himself. With this kind of difficulty within orality, we may better understand the significance of the Muses as the counterpart to the Greek education based on rhetorical movements – Apollo, as the Greek god of education, found himself in combative collaborations with the local nymphs.21

*Understanding the Flying Serpent Imagery*

If indeed we may understand the Muses as counterparts to the rhetorical movement (rather than part of the rhetorical education), the images in Ignatius’ five-point exercise to discern the flying serpent imagery should be better understood as efforts to build counterparts to the Greek rhetoric into the Christian commonplace imagery. The flying serpent imagery was in the dynamic between “making a common sign with the art of public speaking” and “making a decision by examining even the slightest psychological movement inside”.

Contemporary critiques of the rhetorical movement in Ignatius’ images often went too conveniently into attacking the knightly romance in Ignatius, with which imageries like the “flying serpent with many eyes” were then considered to be the same as the

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Greek epic writers’ mnemonic tool of the “heavy” figures.\textsuperscript{22} And the element of New Criticism within was that: just like Hercules’ twelve labors in which each labor should claim its own realm of sovereignty, in Ignatius’ discerning the flying serpent imagery, the five points exercise had to be almost “military” in the sense that the continuity and the completeness of the signifiers should not be disturbed. Therein, the Ignatian compound sign was criticized to be some ontological determinism. However, if only we may pay attention to the changes of the meaning of the compound sign in the interpretative process, such critique of Ignatius’ being “military” necessarily fell short in that the signs in knightly romance often remained the same.\textsuperscript{23} Erich Neumann, in \textit{The Origins and History of Consciousness}, had it precisely that “the hero myth” was the stage before “the transformation myth”.\textsuperscript{24} In other words, the very ability to use a compound sign that in itself changes should be the phenomenological basis of the Ignatian emblem.

Now, instead of contending that the Signifier (the flying serpent) should be more meaningful than the signified (the peacock) as a Jungian Signifier-signified exchange, we should focus on a more complete stages of semiotic phenomenology in the Ignatian emblem from description, to reduction and to interpretation, regardless of Da Câmara’s assistance on the \textit{Autobiography} with rhetorical decorum. This pattern of 1) discovering a difficult sign, 2) followed by one signifier with another signifier in the process of discernment, 3) with the decision if the sign came from God or devil, indeed coincided with the built-in stages of development of the birth of a strong moral consciousness in the \textit{First Week} of the \textit{Exercise}. In this sense, the “prison-cage” was Ignatius’ leaving the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ong, \textit{Orality}, 68.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Auerbach, \textit{Mimesis}, 139.
\end{itemize}
work of semiotic phenomenology to the exercitants. The connection to the tripartite of the emblem ("motto", "image", and "epigram") can be quite salient here.

It should also be noted that the structural approach to the Exercises can be traced to Gaston Fessard’s guiding question in The Dialectics of the Spiritual Exercises. Fessard asked, “how can [one] get the four weeks and three ways to coincide?”25 And to put it differently, the question was that: if indeed the Exercises followed the spiritual growth from purgative, to illuminative and to unitive, why didn’t Ignatius directly teach “the three ways”, rather than asking the exercitants to practice four weeks of actual exercises? In other words, the “four weeks” could not ensure the “three ways”. It is possible for someone to practice four weeks of exercises without experiencing the grace of God. In this question, Fessard was very attentive to the dynamic between the temporal-diachronic order and the spatial-architectural order in the Exercises.

As Fessard himself reported, back to the 1930s, his solution was of an a priori reduction which was not necessarily of Hegelian dialectics (though Fessard openly resorted to Hegel’s work), but certainly contending that the contingency of the “four weeks” must be conquered by the ontological stages of the “three ways”.26 For the current project, Fessard’s being at the frontier of reading into the Exercises should highlight Ignatius’ insistence on approaching the first sign in the temporal-diachronic order. Even in discerning the flying serpent imagery in the Autobiography where the “old Ignatius” could confidently say that the “young Ignatius” made the right choice, the

26 Fessard mentioned that “in the introduction of 1931, it is more a question of Descartes, as the father of modern philosophy, than of Hegel.” See Pousset, Faith and Freedom, xxiii.
perceptive order was still well maintained. In this sense, the compound sign in the emblem, regardless of the amount of interpretive clues being built in, should be based more on the diachronic order of the spoken word than on the synchronic view. Keeping in mind this kind of “transforming” the evanescence of the spoken word into the emblematics, we shall move to the second probe into the “prison-cage” imagery.

“Prison-cage” and “Carcass-lion”: The Second Probe into the Ignatian Emblem

In this section, I want to understand better the relations between the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word and the emblematical or para-emblematical imagery. In the initial probe into the Ignatian emblem, I have argued that the “prison-cage” was innately an oral image with a built-in bias towards “ritual and movement”, for a comparative insight, I should then choose an almost sculptural imagery from the Old Testament without movements. Let us start with the “prison-cage” imagery again.

In his endnotes on the Exercises, George Ganss pointed out that the “prison-cage” imagery came from the symbolic economy of scholasticism. In Ganss’ explanation,

The description of human beings as composed of body and soul was commonplace terminology of the scholasticism which Ignatius studied at Paris for 3 1/2 years; and philosophers and preachers alike often spoke of the “corruptible body”. Mark 1:13 states that Christ was in the desert, tempted by Satan “among the beasts.” It is easy to see how these ideas, so commonplace in his day, had a direct influence on Ignatius. In his search for a vivid image to stir up the shame and confusion he counsels the retreatant to pray for in the second prelude immediately below, he

imaginatively combined the above notions, probably without reflecting where he first learned them. His image was effective for his purpose.  

Ganss emphasized “commonplace” twice in the above quote and he contended for the effectiveness of the “prison-cage” imagery, from which it should be safe to say that Ganss welcomed us to examine the rhetorical element in the Exercises. After all, if rhetoric can get the content it deserves, half of the problem is solved. But there is this other half of the problem within being rhetorical itself that Ganss referred to Ong’s essay “St. Ignatius’ Prison-cage” that the ways in which the implicit “cage” cancelled out the effectiveness of the explicit “prison” were indeed at the edge of the commonplace tradition. To put Ganss’ argument differently, it was the merit of scholasticism that allowed Ignatius to be poetically creative in the sense that everybody in Ignatius’ time knew the “prison-cage’ imagery well, and Ignatius simply had it better in the Exercises; more precisely, the “prison” imagery was evidently in the commonplace, and with the help of the emblem, Ignatius had the “prison” imagery better as the “prison-cage”. Therein, the interpretative effort was both in the classical hermeneutics based strictly on the original text, and with a literary criticism kind of work that sit on top of the original content. Granted by Ganss’ welcoming the rhetorical perspective in hermeneutics, we may take a compound image from the Old Testament to further examine the word-image dynamic in the “prison-cage”. And the compound image in 1 Kings 13:24-25 should be a good choice. The biblical text follows:

28 Ignatius, Exercises, 155
And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his
carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by
the carcass. And behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the
way, and the lion standing by the carcass, and they came and told it in the
city where the old prophet dwelt.  

In the above image compound, at first, there were movements that were not hard to
follow with the verbs – from “gone”, to “met”, to “slew”, to “cast”, and to “stood by”.
But after “behold”, the imagery turned to be static: if there were movements, why was the
lion still there after slaying the young prophet and why didn’t the men in the city run
away from the lion? A particular kind of surrealism with non-movements seems salient:
why a proto-emblem here? To answer the question, Ong’s hermeneutic-
phenomenological approach should be helpful indeed.

As Ong phenomenologically reduced the imagery of “prison, valley, and among
brute animals” to the “prison-cage” in order to understand the rhetorical element, we may
also reduce the compound image of “the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by
the carcass” to the “carcass-lion” to first of all highlight the incompatibility between
“carcass” and “lion”. But we should not rush into claiming the “carcass-lion” to be
rhetorical, because unlike the “prison-cage” which was a prelude to the meditations on
sins, there was no clear upward or downward movement in 1 Kings 13.

In 1 Kings 13, the worst kind of drama between two good men just happened.
Since the hospitality of the old prophet did not come from God, the young prophet was

slew by the lion, and the tragedy was brought to an end with the old prophet mourning
and trying hard to not forget the young prophet. With the “carcass-lion” imagery, the
“existential absurdity” in the young prophet’s sudden death had a persuasive power that
was difficult to explain.

As a further comparison between the “carcass-lion” and the “prison-cage”, unlike
the “prison-cage” imagery that tried to catch a psychological movement “like a television
set”, the “carcass-lion” was to be synchronic, almost like two photographic cameras
working on the same event. Although the “carcass-lion” had a strong call for memory in
being almost sculptural, the powerful presence of the “lion” indeed cancelled out the
effectiveness of the “carcass” by turning the tragic event to be surrealistic. In short, the
“carcass-lion” made 1 Kings 13 difficult to comprehend, as if the imagery “fought back”
when one tried to approach the story hermeneutically.

Furthermore, it may be noted that if merely for the sake of memorizing the
tragedy, to make a sculpture on “the lion stood by the carcass” should work better than
the spoken or the written words. But perhaps because the Old Testament writers felt
themselves to be totally within the tragedy, a distanced moral reduction was simply not
available to them. Now, with the modern mindset, one might say that 1 Kings 13 lacked
the element of “crisis communication” to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the
future. However, the “carcass-lion” was an oral image precisely in the sense that the
narrative implied both the lingering “carcass-lion” and its evanescence – what a poor lion
if it were going to be posed in a sculpture with the young prophet’s carcass forever!

30 Ong, Barbarian, 255.
Therein, we may start to consider the “carcass-lion” to be rhetorical in the sense of the plantation of a movement by burying the movement like a seed. And it is only in contemporary times that we began to recognize the significance of the nomadic scriptural culture as essentially moving forward by writing the words down, and against the medium.\(^{31}\) The Old Testament writers must hold the writing tool very firmly.

On this dynamic between the Greek sculptural memory and the Hebrew oral memory in which the images had different difficulties to appear strange, Auerbach’s insight on the strong personalism in the Old Testament should be a good interpretative entrance. As Auerbach explained,

This becomes still clearer if we now turn to other person in the dialogue, to Abraham. Where is he? We do not know. He says, indeed: Here I am - but the Hebrew word means only something like “behold me”, and in any case is not meant to indicate the actual place where Abraham is, but a moral position in respect to God.\(^{32}\)

To extend Auerbach’s argument, we may say that there were indeed two kinds of “behold” in the Old Testament: one as in Abraham’s “moral position in respect to God” (the invisible), and the other as in the “carcass-lion” proto-emblem with confrontational resistances to the very happening of the tragedy (the visible). By neglecting the personalism basis in the “carcass-lion”, some modern semioticians went too conveniently into suggesting that the lion was the signifier of God so as to indicate the young prophet

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was slew by no one else but the lion. Again, such rationalism was over-determined by the Signifier-signified model in suggesting that the Signifier should be more rhetorically effective than the signified.

For this project, a better interpretation could be in the framework of semiotic phenomenology. We may say that the “carcass-lion” was exclusively within phenomenological description, with one signifier (the carcass) and another signifier (the lion) that refused to be phenomenologically reductive. To be more specific, the meaning of the “carcass-lion” was genuinely uncertain: was the author protesting the existential absurdity in the worst kind of “good men’s drama”, or was he holding the young prophet responsible for his blindness to the old prophet’s vainglory – we would never know the particular arguments. Therein, the proto-emblematical element in the “carcass-lion” can be considered as proto-rhetorical in the sense that the author felt the exegesis for some rhetorical effect to contend with the happening of the tragedy, while ended up with finding no particular argument. And in this sense, the “carcass-lion” can be understood as an argument filled with pathos, though still at the edge of the diachronic phenomenology of the word.

In Mimesis, Auerbach rightfully concluded that “what [the Old Testament writers] produced, then, was not primarily oriented toward ‘realism’ (if succeeded in being realistic, it was merely a means, not an end); it was orientated towards truth.”33 Here, we may add that when the writing appeared to be “surrealistic”, it was still orientated towards the truth. The word-image dynamic can be put as: mythos combats logos, but

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33 Auerbach, Mimesis, 14.
ends up with complementing the contentiousness of *logos*. To put this in the McLuhanian way, effect here can be the content in a way that content can never be.

As a site note, we are perhaps too familiar with the Grecian concern with “fate” as the “spoken” word, about which we have known well from Shakespeare’s effort to be more existentially *accurate* in describing Macbeth’s radical situation with the “crossbow-longbow” imagery. Yet within the “carcass-lion”, the author of 1 Kings 13 was indeed proto-existential in being concerned with the “speaking” word in the strict sense of a diachronic phenomenology, unknowing to rhetorical expectations. And it may be clarified that in 1 Kings 13, the author was not to give up the effort to be more existentially accurate: the “carcass-lion” tried to resist the existence of the tragedy, while this resistance ended up being even more expressive. In other words, the accuracy was already in the author’s using the words. Here, it is conventional to say that the Old Testament writers contended with God, but within the “carcass-lion”, there was a particular kind of word-image dynamic in which the existentialism was built upon the very dynamic between word and image.

A lot more can be said on the dynamic between the Grecian *logos* as the spoken word and the Hebraic *dabar* as the presence of the word, and it is certainly beyond the capacity of this dissertation to criticize the iconoclastic movement within the Old Testament images. But the basic point is that: it was not that the Christian thinkers exploited the Greek rhetoric for more effective persuasion; the theologians (e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas) were often at the frontier of dealing with the orality-literacy dynamic.

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34 In the *Exercises*, Ignatius shared this difficulty of the “speaking” word within the grace of God.  
Once again, for the Greek, rhetoric was primarily of public speaking, and the Greek emblems had a playful basis more approachable to the modern mind. This can be exemplified by the waxwing of Epicurus (the risk in the pursuit of living an intellectual life) or Athena as Zeus’ brainchild who came from the spilt of Zeus’ head (the intellectual birth-labor) – multiple arguments can be made on the meaning of those emblems, and none of them can be deemed as “wrong” interpretations. If indeed the Greek emblems were “artistic”, the Grecian artists then resorted to the unlimited resource of human communication, with the alphabetic joy in talking itself. We have known well that the temporal flow of the alphabets was the very basis of a democratic society.\(^{36}\)

On the other hand, with the Christian thinkers’ intense concerns with the Person, to use the alphabet to examine the inner movement, though both in time, was in fact not easily compatible with the outward movement of the Greek rhetoric. As a partial solution, it would be rightful to indicate that there were indeed two kinds of rhetoric – the “rhetoric playful” and the “rhetoric serious”, and one needs to constantly shift from one to the other.\(^{37}\)

Now, in terms of the *Exercises*, we say Ignatius tried to conquer rhetoric from within in the sense that he refused to draw a line between the playful rhetoric and the serious rhetoric – after all, this line was a rhetorical invention in itself. Therein, it should be more understandable that Ignatius would both ask the exercitants to catch even the slightest psychological movement, and he would manage the symbolic economy with the

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polemic between the army of angels and the army of Lucifer’s. For Ignatius, it was not that the images cannot be artistic; rather, it was that they had to be true.

In comparison with the proto-emblematical “carcass-lion”, the “prison-cage” emblem was close to a modern communication theory, not only in the sense that Ignatius kept some communicative distance in referring to the existentialist’ situation, but more importantly in the sense that Ignatius paid more attention to the dynamic between action and meditation, if indeed essentially as the dynamic between the Grecian rhetoric and the Hebraic word. Moreover, if only we may notice the built-in existentialism in the “carcass-lion”, Ignatius’ contribution to a more phenomenological existentialism can be put as: he made self-consciousness more examinable; after all, it was “I” (the exercitants) who was able to reconcile the Greek rhetoric with the Hebrew word.

To conclude, in both the “carcass-lion” and the “prison-cage”, the second signifiers, respectively of the “lion” and the “cage”, indeed generated some genuine uncertainty for the first signifiers; without the second signifiers, the “prison” and the “carcass” could easily fall into the cliché of “the sorry soul in the prison” or some rationalism account for the divine authority. And from “carcass-lion” to the “prison-cage”, Ignatius made phenomenology more examinable in existentialism. If indeed we may consider this cognitive necessity of having two signifiers to be a particular kind of “moral consciousness” that aimed to be true, how could Ignatius teach us better the coincidence between the desire to be artistic and the birth of a strong moral consciousness in the First Week of the Exercises? With this question, let us move to the third probe into the “prison-cage” emblem.
“Prison-Cage” and “I-Thou”: The Third Probe into the Ignatian Emblem

In the previous section, I have examined a proto-emblem in the Old Testament and contended that the “carcass-lion” was a particular kind of phenomenological description that could not be reduced into rhetorical arguments – in trying to “see”, the author (and the audiences) of 1 Kings 13 ended up having to “listen”. In the age of “secondary orality”, although artists were openly rebellious in aiming at being “visual”, often times such visualism attempt still ended up being even more “oral” – to take McLuhan’s example, cubism became the very art form of newspaper columns, as a powerful medium to connect two separate events together in the global village.\(^{38}\)

The “oral image” was never lost, and in many ways, it has become more prominent in contemporary times, though the built-in word-image dynamic (such as in the “carcass-lion”) was reconciled to be more “irenic”.\(^{39}\) Therein, Martin Buber’s “I and Thou” should be an important counterpart to this irenic turn. For this project, “I-Thou” as a particular kind of oral image deserves detailed examinations since “I-Thou” was only possible with careful reflections on the situation of the spoken word. If indeed the current status of the poetics has become a competition for the most powerful turn away from rebelling against the oral tradition, the voice in Buber’s “I and Thou” should have particular significances.

It should be clarified beforehand that to highlight the voice in “I-Thou” is not to indicate that there is no vocal element in the “prison-cage”. If we may recall, the voice in

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\(^{39}\) Ong’s term “irenic” can be understood as a pedagogical response (in particular, speech and writing as self-confrontations) to Neumann’s “mass man and the phenomenon re-collectivization”.
the “prison-cage” was most noticeable with Ignatius’ reminding the exercitants, “I mean, the whole self as being composed of soul and body” – the speech element was not carefully planted, but a powerful amendment.

Therein, we have the first dynamic between “I-Thou” and “prison-cage”: unlike Ignatius’ borrowing from the biblical imagery, “I-Thou” aimed to be almost exclusively within the realm of poetics so as to deal with the existentialist situation more directly – to supplement “I-Thou” with the imagery of two men sitting face-to-face with each other would be rather unnecessary and indeed harm the symbolic economy. On one hand, the economy and the directness of “I-Thou” in providing access to the “namelessness of the self”40 was simply not available to Ignatius as an early Renaissance man. On the other hand, it is precisely this lack of access to modern existentialism that makes Ignatius’ postscript, “I say, the whole self as being composed of soul and body” enticing and powerful indeed. Given the complexity of this issue on the voices in the images, a parallel between “prison-cage” and “I-Thou” should help us better understand the Ignatian emblem as being at the edge of the commonplace, and the Buberian three-word poem “I and Thou” as strictly within the realm of poetics. A particular kind of dynamic between rhetoric and poetics can be perceived here, and to examine, we may begin with the opening section of I and Thou. Buber wrote,

Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations,

Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.

40 I use “namelessness” in reference to the beginning of Tao Te Ching: “you may name the Tao, but Tao is not the ordinary name”. Gerard Manley Hopkins had this existential phenomenology better as “the selfless self of self”, without the metaphysics of the Tao.
Primary words are spoken from the being.

If Thou is said, the I of the combination I-Thou is said along with it.

If It is said, the I of the combination I-it is said along with it.

The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being.

The primary word I-it can never be spoken with the whole being.

There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary word I-Thou and the I of the primary word I-It.

When a man says I, he refers to one or other of these. The I to which he refers is present when he says I. Further, when he says Thou or It, the I of one of the two primary words is present.

The existence of I and the speaking of I are one and the same thing.

When a primary word is spoken the speaker enters the word and takes his stand in it.41

The above quote was composed with the poetic structure of Buber’s philosophical anthropology; it was poetic mostly in the sense that the act of knowing was implicitly kept: without Buber’s claiming to reveal the thinking process, the reader may still perceive that sometimes Buber began to know, and other times he knew better, and when Buber was fully conscious of the meaning of his thinking, he said it aloud – “the existence of I and the speaking of I are one and same thing.” In the quote above, Buber was by no means shy of rhetorical movements, and the argument moved forward. To make the point clear, we may add several transition words to the original text:

Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations,

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[In other words] Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.

[To again put it differently] Primary words are spoken from the being.

If Thou is said, the I of the combination of I-Thou is said along with it.

[Not too far from this] If It is said, the I of the combination of I-it is said along with it.

[But it should be clarified that] The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being.

[while] The primary word I-it can never be spoken with the whole being.

[This is because] There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary word I-Thou and the I of the primary word I-It.

[Therefore] When a man says I he refers to one or other of these. The I to which he refers is present when he says I. Further, when he says Thou or It, the I of one of the two primary words is present.

[Let us say that] The existence of I and the speaking of I are one and the same thing.

[In particular, in the realm of human communication] When a primary word is spoken the speaker enters the word and takes his stand in it.

For a well-trained scholar, the added transition words may appear rather unnecessary, but the point here is not about the intellectual habit of building logical orders into the argument; rather, it is that regardless of the dialectical movement of his thinking process, Buber chose to present the argument affirmatively in the realm of poetics.42 Maurice

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42 John Durham Peters called Marshall McLuhan a “grammarian” for the same reason that McLuhan often presented the argument affirmatively. If Peters were right, the only dialectical movement in McLuhan’s
Friedman had this wonderfully by titling his own book on poetics *The Affirming Flame* which should be a good metaphor for Buber’s poetic rendering of rhetorical utterances.\(^4\) And the effect of Buber’s making the argument in a poetic way was certainly that the affirmative movements in fact asked the readers to examine the section more carefully in order to be able to discern Buber’s beginning to know (description), his knowing better (reduction), and his being fully conscious of the meaning of his poetic utterances (interpretation). In Buber, we have also noticed a built-in semiotic phenomenological way of moving intellectually.

Moreover, not far from Ignatius’ strong reminder, “I mean, the whole self as being composed of soul and body”, Buber ended his thinking with a strong moral note, “when a primary word is spoken the speaker enters the world and takes his stand in it” which made it clear that this section was not about the problem of existence as necessarily expressive, but about the birth of a strong moral consciousness – “I” take my stand in “I-Thou”. As a further comparison between “prison-cage” and “I-Thou”, both Ignatius and Buber indeed provided the phenomenological interpretations as their own powerful moral amendments. In terms of the tripartite of the emblem, we may consider such moral amendment to be the equivalent of the “epigram”.

Now, at the beginning of *I and Thou*, we have noticed a heuristic collaboration between rhetoric and poetics which may be best explained with Aristotle’s blueprint for rhetoric. For Aristotle, a rhetorician did not have to move back and forth dialectically; in *Rhetoric*, Aristotle granted rhetoric to be the “counterpart of dialectics”.\(^4\) In other words,

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unlike in a logical discussion in which the conversation must move back and forth, in rhetoric, with Aristotle’s highlighting its function in political communication, the speaker may enjoy the privilege of being monological, though still governed by the art of public speaking. As Arendt had it in *The Human Condition*, in the Greco-Roman world the self in the public sphere was often portrayed as a “daemon on the shoulder” that only the other citizens could see. Here, the myth of communication is that the existential self coincides with the political self in the public sphere, and most likely in no other place. To put this differently, within rhetoric, as the closure of the consonants was meant to be opened to reach more audience, the public speaker often ended up demanding a dialogue even more intensely. In fact, one could go so far into arguing that the Greek rhetoric was the first phenomenology of a dermatological “scar” in the sociological sense of two men’s being able to disagree with each other. To put this with a McLuhanian emblem, the technology of writing (that enhanced rhetoric) was to plant the dragon’s teeth that further “bite” and “divide”.

Therein, with the rhetoric of Buber’s “I-Thou” if indeed close to Aristotle’s blueprint for communication in the *polis*, we may happily include the *Spiritual Exercises* to be Aristotelian in three ways. 1) There was a strong call for action in the *Exercises*. Ignatius was known for insisting the *Exercises* as a meditative process towards action, and he indeed expelled those who merely wanted to meditate out of the Society. 2) Similar to Aristotle’s defining rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion”, Ignatius asked the exercitant to examine the details

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45 Aristotle continued to say, “it thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies.” Aristotle, *Rhetoric and Poetics*, 25.
with the whole sensorium organization in the *First Week*, which should help the excuritants discerning rightfully. 3) As Aristotle’s hope in rhetoric was to persuade the Greek citizens to make *better* political choices, the Jesuit motto “for the *greater* glory of God” (which was crafted by Ignatius) was to make the election in living a spiritual life that necessarily involved choosing one way over the other. In short, Ignatius’ “prison-cage” and Buber’s “I-Thou” had their claims in Aristotelian rhetoric.

*The Frontiers of the Poetics*

However, as in examining the “prison-cage”, we have tried hard to reconcile the eccentric imagery of the “cage” to be at the edge of the commonplace, in examining Buber’s “I-Thou”, the dynamic between being in the commonplace and being at the frontier could be even more difficult since “I-Thou” did not provoke an imagery. “I-Thou” was strictly in the realm of poetics by referring to no thing but the dialogic relationship.

To better understand the rhetoric-poetics dynamic in “I-Thou”, we have to draw a line between a “rhetorical poet” and a “poetic rhetorician” to highlight “I-Thou” was more poetical than rhetorical. In terms of a poetic rhetorician, in *Poetics*, Aristotle valued Homeric epics over other kinds of Greek poetics in that Homeric epics imitated human actions.\(^48\) As stated, in the chirographic ancient Greece, Hercules’ twelve labors were to promote the psychology of “flow”\(^49\) – one labor after another, and each labor should claim its own realm of independent achievement.

In *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, Walker explained the problem of a “poetic rhetorician” in greater details. Walker was clearly concerned with rhetoricians’ exploiting

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the poetics in ancient Greece, as well as the contemporary narrowing rhetoric down to being merely concerned with the persuasive power of the speech. Walker said it straightforwardly,

     What we today call poetry continues generally to be thought of as a discourse that expresses, dramatizes, represents, or “models” states of subjectivity, or that adumbrates complex “meaning”, rather than offering argument/persuasion. This tends to be true even for contemporary critics, and poets, who want to envision (and practice) poetry as viable medium of ideological contestation, or as a means of promoting social change … such views often depend on an extraordinarily narrow and inadequate conception of what “argumentation” is.50

Walker’s statement should be helpful to understand the poetics in Buber’s “I-Thou” as well as in Ignatius’ “prison-cage”, and the question can be put as: what is the poetic “argumentation” indeed? This question then asked us to examine different kinds of Greek poetics other than the Homeric epics. Here, we may use the example of Sappho to whom Walker also referred. And the point is to extend the dynamic between mythos and logos to the dynamic between Eros and logos, not necessarily with Barthes’ crudely fusing Sade, Fourier, with Loyola, but more in the sense of Arendt’s discussion on “caritas” and “cupiditas” in St. Augustine.51 It should be a good reminder that the Exercises involved the genuine uncertainty of “grace” – in particular, the joy of having, the fear of losing, and the desire to be able to have it again.

In *Eros the Bittersweet*, Anne Carson explored into the “alphabetic edge” of love as a four-letter word whose best expression is the three-word sentence, “I love you”.

Carson pointed out that when the Greek poets tried to express “love as bittersweet”, unlike Homer’s inventing Helen to signify the actions of *Eros* and wrote “I will come to hate you as terribly as I now love you” with an explicitly polemic structure, Sappho wrote, “Eros once again limb-loosener whirls me sweet-bitter, impossible to fight off, creature stealing up” with a built-in polemic of sweet-bitter. Now, as Walker would challenge us: was Sappho not making an argument with a more accurate presentation of the rise of *Eros* and the fall into love? With Walker, the term “rhetorical poet” should be helpful in understanding the argument in Sappho’s “sweet-bitter” as both psychologically real and narratively grounded. And the same idea of “argumentation” should also be true in “I-Thou” and “prison-cage”. To say it radically, personalism was to argue that Homer was a rhetorician and there were multiple Homers, and Sappho was a poet and there was only one Sappho.

Not far from Walker’s contention, Carson had some good reasons to teach the “Dionysian side” of Greek poetics in opposition to the Apollonian Homeric epics, given that Homer’s “I will come to hate you as terribly as I now love you” was indeed a non-phenomenological reduction of Sappho’s original phenomenological description. Homer simply made it easy by focusing on the actions alone. In many ways, within the “bittersweet”, Sappho’s trying to catch even the slightest psychological movement was not at all far from Ignatius’ asking the exercitants to discern carefully within the “prison-

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cage”, though part of the “prison-cage” did belong to the commonplace imagery. In terms of the dynamic between being in the commonplace and being at the frontier, Ignatius’ difficulty was to find the interface between the commonplace and the frontier, and Sappho’s difficulty was to find ways to be at the edge of the frontiers.

Here, to clarify, I am not to blur the difference between the Greek poets’ concern with mankind’s fate, embodied in human actions, and the Hebrew poets’ concern with Yahweh as the cosmic “fate within fate”. In fact, from the “carcass-lion”, to the “prison-cage” and to “I-Thou”, there was arguably a history of moral consciousness with Buber’s not borrowing from the symbolic world of things as a pinnacle for staying strictly within the realm of poetics as dialogic communication. My point is that: by noticing the similarities respectively between “carcass-lion” and “prison-cage”, between “prison-cage” and “sweet-bitter”, and between “prison-cage” and “crossbow-longbow”, as well as the robust difference between “prison-cage” (the word-image dynamic) and “I-Thou” (the fundamental difference between “I-Thou” and “I-it”), we have reached the point of being able to argue that Ignatius had good reasons to borrow from the media-communication dynamic so as to make the Exercises more adaptable to the Renaissance men. As stated, the emblem book had a long tradition that can be perceived as roughly from the proto-emblem as in “carcass-lion”, to the para-emblem as in “Icarus’ waxing”, to the emblem as in the “crossbow-longbow”, and to the post-emblem as in the McLuhanian habitus of making a moral statement. To call “prison-cage” intrinsically as an “emblem” was to

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54 Buber’s I-and-Thou, as a three-word poetic argument that was neither of enthymeme nor of syllogism, was by all means at the frontier of conquering the contemporary situation of the poetics. In many ways, “I-Thou” was only possible when we became more conscious of both the Greek rhetoric and the Hebrew word.
indicate that between the Greek para-emblem which could afford many points of view and the Shakespearean emblems that inherited the witty fabrics of Latin commonplaces, Ignatius’ using the emblem in the *Exercises* was indeed very distinctive for both being able to afford multiple viewpoints, and at the interface between the commonplace and the frontier. The question was then: in Ignatius’ *Exercises*, was there a Jesuitical emblem book tradition that can teach us better the situation of the *emblematica* in contemporary times? I will try to answer this question in chapter four with the field of emblem studies.

As a site note, it should be emphasized that good phenomenological reductions mattered. In this project so far, I have considered James Carey’s definition of communication as “the limited resource on Earth versus the unlimited resource of human communication” as a phenomenological reduction of the biblical imagery of “five loaves of bread and two fishes” that were enough to feed five thousand men. And I have contended that the “prison-cage” was a phenomenological reduction of Ignatius’ original narrative, which was Ong’s effort to highlight Ignatius’ built-in rhetoric. I have also argued that Homer’s “I will come to hate you as terribly as I love you” was a non-phenomenological reduction of Sappho’s “sweet-bitter” for Homer was a rhetorician who started with the rhetorical generality of mankind, rather than the existential situation of the person. If to conclude, the essence of phenomenological reductions may be understood as a hermeneutic habitus to rightfully use the rhetorical organization in revealing the poetic myths. On the constructive side, good phenomenological reductions often followed the history of consciousness to make the original symbolic meaning of

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55 For example, Albert Camus’ essay “The myth of Sisyphus” indeed came from modern men’s sympathy with Sisyphus, which would be unknowing to the ancient Greek citizens.
things (e.g. “five loaves of bread and two fishes”) more examinable in the noosphere as sensus (e.g. Carey’s rhetorical-polemic structure) with nous (e.g. Carey’s trying to define “communication”). On the critical end, semiotic phenomenology enabled us to question the legitimacy in Homer’s signifying “I” where “I” indeed had no real significance.

Kierkegaard’s Account for the Realm of Truth and the Realm of Reality

Before moving to chapter four, we may try to better understand this particular kind of dynamic between the commonplace and the frontier in Ignatius as the founding father of the Society of Jesus. On this, in Of the Difference between a Genius and an Apostle, Kierkegaard made a radical point that should be heuristic to the discussion here.56 In his essay, Kierkegaard wanted to draw a clear line between a genius (“give birth to”) and an apostle (“the messenger” in moral errands). At the very beginning, Kierkegaard said,

[The priests] talk in exalted terms of St. Paul’s brilliance and profundity, of his beautiful similes and so on – that is mere aestheticism … This kind of thoughtless eloquence is quite as likely to celebrate St. Paul as a stylist and an artist in words … As a genius St. Paul cannot be compared with either Plato or Shakespeare, as a coiner of beautiful similes he comes pretty low down in the scale, as stylists his name is quite obscure … As an Apostle St. Paul has no connexion whatsoever with Plato or Shakespeare …

57 Kierkegaard, “Genius and Apostle”, 90.
In the above quote, if in comparison with Auerbach’s reconciliation that be it realism (or surrealism), the biblical writers were orientated towards the truth, Kierkegaard’s argument was much more radical and even anti-rhetorical. He was almost contending that the apostle should remain in the oral tradition by keeping a noble distance from the overtly rhetorical organizations. Kierkegaard continued to say,

> An Apostle is not born; an Apostle is a man called and appointed by God, receiving a mission from him. An Apostle does not develop in such a way that he successively becomes what he is … For to become an Apostle is not preceded by any potential possibility; essentially every man is equally near to becoming one. An Apostle can never come to himself in such a way that he becomes conscious of his apostolic calling as a factor in the development of his life. Apostolic calling is a paradoxical factor, from which first to last in his life stands paradoxically outside his personal identity with himself as the definite person he is. A man may perhaps have reached years of discretion long ago, when suddenly he is called to be an Apostle. As a result of this call he does not become more intelligent, does not receive more imagination, a greater acuteness of mind and so on; on the contrary, he remains himself and by that paradoxical fact he is sent on a particular mission by God.⁵⁸

Here, it must be pointed out the above quote in itself was a powerful interpretation of Ignatius’ deciding to be an apostle; Kierkegaard challenged our attempt to engage with the “media” element in the *Exercises*. But we may now understand that Kierkegaard was

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⁵⁸ Kierkegaard, “Genius and Apostle”, 92.
not anti-rhetorical: his argument was that in becoming an apostle, rhetoric, once as the political identity of the person, should finally get the real content that it deserves. Therein, Kierkegaard suggested that the only legitimation an apostle could have was that “he is sent on a particular mission by God.” In other words, any penetrative insight for the effect of persuasion would violate the being of an apostle who stayed exclusively in the oral tradition. In the vicinity of media ecology, Jacques Ellul’s *Humiliation of the Word* held the same ground with Kierkegaard. And as we have analyzed in chapter two with Soukup’s essay, if Ignatius was an apostle strictly in the sense of Kierkegaard’s telling a genius from an apostle, the nonce “prison-cage” was then Ignatius’ momentarily earning the right to merge the two incompatible roles together. And this once-only art experiment in the *Exercises* eventually gave birth to Matthew Ricci’s way of relating Chinese characters with biblical imageries and Gerard Manley Hopkins’ emblematical mysticism.

Now, Kierkegaard, in protecting and promoting the oral tradition, had some good reasons to assign rhetoric and poetics to each other’s strict and specialized function. With Kierkegaard, we are indeed cautioned that not all emblems are good communicative resources. Again, to take the example of a Chinese idiom, such as “a fine fowl perches only on a fine tree, and a virtuous minster serves only a virtuous master”, the critique is not necessarily that this para-emblem gives an unethical advice for political disloyalty; rather, it is that: since the poetic meaning of “a fowl on a tree” is used to support the rhetorical argument of “serving only a virtuous master” which would be hard to support otherwise, we almost have to be critical of the rhetorical utterance, especially with this arranging the poetic symbol before the rhetorical utterance.
In *Poetics, Rhetoric and Logic*, Wilbur Samuel Howell elaborated on this difference between rhetoric and poetics. Howell indicated,

The simplest way to describe the difference [between rhetoric and poetics] is to say that the words which makes up the rhetorical utterance lead the reader to the states of reality, whereas the words making up the poetic utterance lead the reader to things which stand by deputy for the states of reality.\(^{59}\)

Howell maintained rhetorical utterance as “mimetic discourse” and poetic utterance as “non-mimetic discourse”. Not far from Kierkegaard’s central concern with the realm of “truth” and the realm of “reality”,\(^ {60}\) Howell paid more attention to the different ways in which words and things can signify: words signify by making a statement, and things signify as “stand by deputy” or when words are unsure of what to signify. In other words, the symbolic meaning of things may be strictly para-rhetorical as the poet’s way of making an “argument” in not knowing where to start. To put this differently, poetic arguments are phenomenological descriptions that should be reduced phenomenologically, but may not be ready to be phenomenologically reduced.

Therein, as a site note, contemporary defenses of the poetics often came from the rhetoricians – for examples, Kenneth Burke “perspective by incongruity”\(^ {61}\) and Umberto Eco’s “cogito interruptus”\(^ {62}\). With “incongruity” and “interruptus”, Burke and Eco each explained one particular function of the poetics if being put into good uses in rhetoric.


\(^{60}\) This is to relate Kierkegaard to Ellul’s differing “the real” from “the true”.

\(^{61}\) Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 89.

\(^{62}\) Eco, *Hyperreality*, 211.
And of course, for a rhetorician to draw a good line between rhetoric and poetics was inevitably a rhetorical movement in itself. In this sense, the way Kierkegaard pointed out the difference between a genius and an apostle was in itself an act of giving birth to future discourses that started with a strong existentialism note. But we should not attack Kierkegaard’s rhetorical organization, since it was heuristic indeed to call Ignatius of Loyola an “apostle” or a great man, and to call Gerard Manley Hopkins a “genius” or a hero.

On these post-Romanticism issues around whether a contemporary poet could borrow from the symbolic meaning of things, in *Personalism and Wilderness*, Ong indeed offered some critique of the American personalism by questioning the whisper that the American personalists heard in the wilderness, and Ong was particularly critical of relating the whisper of nature to the whisper of things.63 Therein, Ong often cited Buber as at the frontier of personalism in our time for Buber’s phenomenological poetics as dialogic communication. In this sense, Kierkegaard’s telling the apostle from the genius may fall short, since it was both Buber’s genius and his being in the errand of morality that made “I and Thou” to be the frontier of 20th century existential thinking (and it still is in the 21st century). After all, orality and literacy can only be a “dynamic”, but not a “divide”. As Ong would say, the good poet was not ahead of his own time, but he was deeply in time.64

Therein, we have a good reconciliation on Kierkegaard’s differing “apostle” and “genius” in the history of consciousness. Again, roughly from “carcass-lion”, to “prison-

63 Ong, *Barbarian*, 236-239.
cage”, and to “I-Thou”, there was a history of moral consciousness in which the desire to
be artistic coincided with the birth of a strong moral consciousness.

Now, to conclude this chapter on the Ignatian emblem, we have reached the
following characteristics of the “prison-cage” emblem.

1) In the First Week of the Exercises, a strong desire to be artistic and the birth of
a strong moral consciousness overlapped in the “prison-cage”.

2) “Prison-cage” aimed at a more precise representation of the existentialist
situation.

3) The media element in the “prison-cage” was Ignatius’ efforts to make the
Exercises more adaptable to the Renaissance men, as well as Ignatius’ hoping
the exercitants to be more resourceful in terms of the structures of meditation.

4) “Prison-cage” still wanted to conquer the word-image dynamic from within
(with the “carcass-lion” in mind).

5) “Prison-cage” left the semiotic phenomenology work to the exercitants, and
called for hermeneutic duty for the exercitants to read more carefully (with “I-
Thou” in mind).

6) “Prison-cage” could be intellectual materials in the history of consciousness
for future thinkers’ further elaborations.

With these characteristics of the “prison-cage” emblems listed, we may now move to
chapter four to examine the Ignatian emblem in the field of emblem studies. Again, the
guiding question is: in Ignatius’ Exercises, was there a Jesuitical emblem tradition that
can teach us better the situation of the emblematics in contemporary times? And keeping
in mind that emblems themselves did not ensure cultural prosperities, was there a theory
of the media-communication dynamic in the *Exercises*?
CHAPTER FOUR

From Oral Images to the Art of Emblems: The Final Probe into the “Prison-cage”

Emblems were compound images in the Western imagerial thinking tradition, with which arguments could be made in imaginative ways. With those complex signs, rhetoricians were able to find intellectual materials by reflecting upon the ways “things themselves can signify”,¹ which in turn constituted the joy and the wit in the social fabric of the commonplace tradition. More straightforwardly, the emblematics can help us better understand the innate dynamic between “common things” and “common sayings” as two parts of the locus communis.²

Textual uses of the emblematics can be traced back to antiquity.³ Yet to call the compound image “emblem”, mainly as a visual form of art, should refer more specifically to the Renaissance emblem book culture that started from Andrea Alciati (1492-1550). Alciati was an Italian jurist whose Emblemata (1531) was considered to be the first emblem book.⁴ It is noteworthy that Alciati, as a legal humanist, was already well aware of the relations between jurisdiction (the faculty of judgment) and literary imagination.⁵

¹ Ong, Barbarian, 248.
² This is to extend the locus communis tradition in order to highlight Ong’s argument that “things themselves can signify”. The way things can signify (synchronic and intimately silent) is not always compatible with the way words can signify (diachronic and acoustically eventful). See Ong, Interface, 149 for the original two realms of locus communis.
³ The essence of the emblematics was phenomenological reduction with an underlying moral force. In this dissertation, I call the Hebraic emblematics “proto-emblems” to indicate they were more genealogically related to the Renaissance emblem book culture than the “para-emblems” of the Grecian emblematics. However, it should be noted that the Ignatian emblems had both Hebraic and Grecian characteristics.
Since St. Ignatius of Loyola was Spanish, and since Spanish Netherlands were a main field of emblem book publishing, Ignatius was certainly within this media environment and its intellectual milieu. This should be well evidenced by the “prison-cage” emblem in the *Exercises* that I have examined from a variety of perspectives in the previous chapters. After the foundation of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits took the leadership in publishing emblem books. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits produced some 1,700 of emblem books of which 500 were first editions. This has been strongly evidenced by Daly and Dimler who compiled a complete Jesuit series of emblem books. In their more recent work *The Jesuit Emblem in the European Context*, Daly and Dimler provided a comprehensive bibliographical review on the emblem books written by the Jesuits, with explorations into a Jesuitical appropriation of the emblematics and a Jesuit theory of symbols and signs. In this chapter, without neglecting the Jesuits’ protecting and promoting the emblem book, I should focus more on the Ignatian emblems in the *Exercises*.

Before the probing, it may be pointed out that the common definition of an emblem as the tripartite of “motto, pictorial image, and epigram” indeed indicated that the emblem book was already a well developed form of art in the Renaissance. In this project, I have used semiotic phenomenology (“image” as phenomenological description,
“motto” as phenomenological reduction, and “epigram” as phenomenological interpretation) in trying to reveal some of the real reasons for this three-part structure (or more precisely, three stages of phenomenological perceptions). Yet as careful readers must have noticed, in the *Exercises* the Ignatian emblems were textual, without the visualized “pictorial image”. The question is then: why shall we still consider the Ignatian compound images as “emblems”, rather than “para-emblems”?

Here, it may be clarified that Ignatius, though living in the historical period with the Reformation and the iconoclasm movement, was not biased towards the *logos* or the *imago*. In fact, the Ignatian emblems in the *Exercises* may be considered as “classical” in the sense that Ignatius still wanted to conquer the word-image dynamic within the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word. Moreover, given that the stages of the spiritual growth (from purgative, to illuminative and to unitive) were complete in the *Exercises*, I have contended that Ignatius simply left the work of phenomenological reduction and phenomenological interpretation to the exercitants. The *Exercises* was not a-theoretical as phenomenological descriptions without phenomenological reductions and interpretations.

To be more specific, for Ignatius, the dynamic between the “visible” and the “invisible” was built in. In the *first prelude* of the *First Exercise*, history, as in the events of Christ’s life, was considered “visible”. When “meditating on something visible”, Ignatius asked the exercitants to encompass as many *sense data* as possible in the form of conscious experience. Yet when “mediating on something invisible”, Ignatius indeed

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10 It is fond to note that in today’s marketing communication, we use the term “logo” in fact to describe both the *logos* (the written word) and the *imago* (the emblematical kind of image). This kind of “emblematical residues” may indicate the influence of the iconoclasm movement on the commercial mind.
asked the exercitants to make the emblems themselves by phenomenologically reducing the original “composite of places” to the rhetorical organization as in Ong’s “prison-cage” emblem. With the rhetorical organization, the exercitants could then complement the emblems with the “epigram” (a moral postscript), by phenomenologically interpreting the arguments just made as in the rhetorical organization within the “prison-cage” emblem. This should be best evidenced with the rhetoric-poetics dynamic in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poems. For example, Hopkins ended one of his late poems with “mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain” after his contending with God – the rhetorical organization worked in a way that the final line (the “epigram”) cancelled out all the effectiveness of the arguments just made. Here, the point is that: when some exercitants, like Hopkins, examined the existential situation (the “invisible”) with the kind of particularities in examining history (the “visible”), the dynamic between the “visible” and the “invisible” then generated some real difficulty for this exercitant to be able to still maintain some noetic economy.

With the above clarifications, we may start the final probe into the “prison-cage”. The general argument of this chapter, as indicated in the title “from oral images to the art of emblems”, is that: with the “oral images” of the proto-emblems (as in the “carcass-lion” imagery), the author(s) knew no other way but to conquer the word-image dynamic within the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken (speaking) word; yet in becoming a “form of art”, the emblems in the Renaissance (as in the “prison-cage” imagery) could

then be applied with more existential accuracy and critical reflectiveness, though the “medium” no longer had to be built into the “message”.  

Accordingly, I will start with some reflections on applying semiotic phenomenology into the Ignatian emblems. Semiotic phenomenology can help us better understand that: to say the Ignatian emblems were composed of multiple signifiers is not to indicate that there is no demand for the signified; rather, the exercitants must form a sign (make an *election*) with the signified being conquered within the signifiers themselves. Then, I will offer a tentative definition of the Ignatian emblem as “one signifier with another signifier” by highlighting the difficulty of phenomenological reductions in the emblems. Therein, I use an early American semiotician, Frederick A. Rauch’s work to examine the nuances between and among “symbolical” (raw symbols), “emblematical” (contingent symbols/signs), and “semiotical” (common signs). Eventually, the final probe into the “prison-cage” emblem will focus on the dynamic between phenomenology and personalism within the historical development of the emblems.

**Reflections on Applying Semiotic Phenomenology into the Ignatian Emblem**

At the end of chapter three, we have reached six characteristics of the “prison-cage” emblem, and the main argument is that the Ignatian emblem should be examined within the history of consciousness. In this section, I want to elaborate on this “history of consciousness”.

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13 Once again, this is to highlight the moral implications in Marshall McLuhan’s appropriation of the emblematics. With the spoken (speaking) words, the medium is innately the message.

14 See Soukup, “Ritual and Movement”.

consciousness” by reflecting upon the ways in which the current project has been working with semiotic phenomenology.

Semiotic phenomenology came with a built-in dynamic between semiotics (in concerns with the obligation to signify and the meaning of the signs and symbols) and phenomenology (in concerns with the obligation to start with phenomenological description when meanings are yet uncertain). With this dynamic, from the perspective of a semiotician, rhetoric was about the obligation to make arguments as the essence of intellectual movements, and from the perspective of a phenomenologist, rhetoric was more about recovering and re-discovering the rhetorical contingency (within the enthymeme and within the emblematics) whose phenomenological birthplaces could be long lost or forgotten. When examining the rhetoric of the “prison-cage” emblem, this dynamic between semiotics and phenomenology was applied to understand, respectively, 1) Ignatius’ adding “cage” (another signifier) after “prison” (the first signifier) in search for a more definitive sign, and 2) the original rhetorical contingency within the “prison” imagery as a biblical commonplace, renewed by the “cage” imagery.

Within the history of consciousness, the semiotics-phenomenology dynamic was reconciled and synthesized into the stages of development from phenomenological description, to phenomenological reduction, and to phenomenological interpretation.16 In Communicology: The New Science of Embodies Discourse, Isaac Catt and Deborah Catt emphasized semiotic phenomenology to be focusing on the interrelated domains of

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16 Lanigan, Communicology, 17.
communication, including the intrapersonal (corporeal-self domain), interpersonal (self-other domain), social (group-organization domain), and the cultural domain.\textsuperscript{17}

Accordingly, on the intrapersonal level, when exploring the “prison-cage” imagery, I was indeed hit by the synchronicity of the meanings of the “prison-cage”, simultaneously as the biblical commonplace, as the hermeneutic difficulty to discover Ignatius’ original narrative as emblematical, and as potential appropriations of the Ignatian emblematics in today’s media environment. Semiotic phenomenology then offered ways to deal with this all-at-once complexity by establishing the perceptive order as from the commonplace, to the emblematics, and to the meaning of the emblematics in the current historical moment. Therein, I learnt to be phenomenological by roughly following the “order of experience” and the “order of analysis”\textsuperscript{18} within phenomenological description, reduction and interpretation, although it may be cautioned that the intrapersonal domain could be close to the speculative introspection with a hint of Cartesian meditations. Rather than starting with “having the idea”, I had to bracket the status of “having”, and start with examining “the idea” critically.

On the interpersonal level, this dissertation was built upon Walter Ong’s appropriation of Ignatius’ \textit{Exercises}, Gerard Manley Hopkins’ appropriation of the \textit{Exercises}, Matthew Ricci’s appropriation of the \textit{Exercises}, as well as Ong’s call for future research on Ignatius’ using the emblem in the \textit{Exercises} to which I responded. On the social level, as stated in the first chapter, the current ware of interest in the \textit{Exercises}


\textsuperscript{18} Lanigan, \textit{Communicology}, 20. In this project, the “order of experience” is to move from “tool” to “machine” in tracing the technological development of media, and the “order of analysis” is to move from “machine” to “tool” in understanding the human imagination in the rhetoric and philosophy of communication technologies.
was still part of the ongoing debate between the structuralists (e.g. Peter Ramus, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida) and the phenomenologists (e.g. Ignatius of Loyola, Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong) on the very notion of “structure”.  

On the cultural level, towards which this dissertation heads in concerns with a particular kind of intercultural communication between English alphabet and Chinese ideography, semiotic phenomenology then provided the meta-meta-cultural framework of Phenomenology Description (as the way perceptions began in all cultures), Phenomenology Reduction (as the way all cultures have managed the noetic economy of perceptions in moral orders), and Phenomenological Interpretation (as the way all cultures must wake from their own “dogmatic slumber”, partly by rediscovering the phenomenological description, partly by understanding the difficulty in moral-phenomenological reductions, and partly by still choosing to complete the thinking process with an underlying moral force).

Within this meta-meta-cultural framework, the meta-cultural framework may also follow the stages of development from phenomenological description to reduction and to interpretation, which was often studied with the media-communication dynamic. In the current project, within the Judeo-Christian emblems, the meta-cultural framework then roughly moved from the “carcass-lion” imagery as the most powerful kind of phenomenological description in which the author refused to reduce and dared not to

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19 See Jacques Derrida. “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Science.” In Writing and Difference, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). To take the example of the tool of a tea cup, for Derrida, the cup is what it is, but we use what it is not – the Buddhism contention is that there is no cup. For McLuhan, the cup is the medium, and we are in the environment provided by the cup – the phenomenon of using the cup should be examined phenomenologically. McLuhan was not a poststructuralist in that he did not exclude the metaphysics of the tea cup. For McLuhan, all technologies are innately communication technologies.

20 In Communicology, Lanigan moved from radio, to painting and to television.
interpret, to the “prison-cage” imagery as Ignatius’ teaching phenomenological perceptions with moral-phenomenological reductions (the *Exercises* pivoted on making the election), and to “I-Thou” as Buber’s phenomenological interpretation on the situation of the spoken word by staying strictly within the realm of poetics as dialogic relationship. And it is within the meta-meta-cultural and meta-cultural framework that we may understand better the culture of the Renaissance emblem book to which the *Exercises* belonged and responded.

In *The Human Science of Communicology*, Lanigan’s elaboration on semiotic phenomenology should be very helpful in better understanding the real difficulty of the “prison-cage” emblem. As Lanigan explained,

> “Communication” (information per se) in this information theoretic view is a choice made in a given context and it is susceptible to an either/or logic of digital selection. *Here, the process of signification as the “reduction of uncertainty” provides a referential practice (probably as a signifier), but no referent (signified). In fact, we should realize that the formal and operational procedures of information theory require a symbolic equivocation of the signifier and signified in the conception of the sign.* (italicized mine) From a postmodern perspective, then expression and perception are collapsed into the operational concept of *representation* and it empirical manifestation as the *symbol* in speaking and writing.\(^\text{21}\)

The postmodern implication of the *Exercises* (with image compounds like “prison, valley [of tears], and among brute animals”) was indeed that Ignatius “deconstructed” (cut it

\(^{21}\) Lanigan, *Communicology*, 14.
open) the binaries in the making of decisions. With Lanigan, we may say that “the discernment of spirits” should be difficult, because the “reduction of uncertainty” is essentially the situation of a signifier without a signified, in search for a more definitive meaning (a sign). Without the existential effort to search for a sign, the ritual of communication can fall into being phenomenological description without reduction and interpretation, as raw symbols in which, as stated, one takes his or her own risk in understanding and misunderstanding the watermark on the wall as in the shape of a holy cross. Lanigan continued to say,

According to Bourdieu, the methodological problem of analysis is the theoretical problem of *hexis* (L. *habitus*), i.e. the *problematic* of habit in which the choice made (consciousness) demands that its own context (experience) be taken as thematic. This way of formulating the issue of analysis is strictly phenomenological. A *problematic* is a description of a phenomenon from which essential characteristics are abstracted as the criteria for defining that concrete example of phenomenon.

With Lanigan, “the making of decisions” (choice of contexts) and “making the decision” (context of choices) in the *Exercises* can have theoretical implications. To take the example of Matthew Ricci’s appropriation of the *Exercises*, Ricci’s difficulty in making the decision to do missionary work in China was that: the cause (having the idea to do missionary work in China) indeed coincided with part of the effect (actually going to China to do missionary work). In order to discern the cause and the effect, Ricci had to

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22 The structuralists’ and post-structuralists’ readings of the *Exercises* tended to ignore that the *Exercises* involved making a decision that has never been made before.

understand the status of having the idea of doing missionary work in China, and by making the decision to go, this election then required Ricci to be even more conscious of his experience. This was the dialectical movement of “from experience (of a strong desire to do missionary work in China) to consciousness (the making of decisions: to go or not to go)”, and “from consciousness (making the decision to go) to experience (the actual missionary work in China)”. In the above quote, Lanigan used the term “hexis” (the Greek word for the status of “having”) to emphasize this bodily-phenomenological necessity to problematize the coincidence of cause and effect. Again, the real vice here would be for Ricci “to just go to China” without any discerning effort. In Lanigan’s further examinations,

The validity of the eidetic realization can be checked by locating the original phenomenon or one like it as an empirical actualization in experience. Thus with the eidetic notion of hexis, the empirical practice of habit becomes a message that is communication theoretic. The meaning of the message is [?] in the communication theoretic sense of an embodied choice of context that is manifest in an analogue logic of both/and selection. Here, the process of meaning as the “constitution of intentionality” (conscious experience) provides a referential practice (i.e. possibility) as its own reflective referent (i.e. the sign as signifier and signified).25

24 In the Husserlian tradition, in order to examine “having the idea” phenomenologically, one must bracket the part of “having”, and starting with tracing the birthplaces of “the idea” critically. In the Heideggerian tradition, “having the idea” itself has phenomenological difficulties in that part of the past (“have had the idea”) indeed coincides with the future (carrying out the idea).
25 Lanigan, Communicology, 14.
From the quote above, Lanigan offered a powerful explanation of the performative nature of the *Exercises* as an embodied communication theory. To continue the example of Ricci’s, the *meaning in choosing* to do missionary work in China was essentially the birth of a sign, where the signifiers were able to find a signified within. In other words, Ricci “conquered” the situation of having the signifiers without the signified. As a side note, this kind of spiritual exercises should be indispensable for the missionaries – if a foreign environment cannot be conquered directly (such as by revolting the local government), the cross-cultural difficulties must be conquered from within.

To conclude, semiotic phenomenology was truly a human science in being able to employ information theories in meaningful ways in order to study the networks of genuine communication. Yet in the above elaborations on semiotic phenomenology, Lanigan explained little the transition from the difficulty of a signifier without a signified, to the birth-labor of a sign in which one should find the signified within the signifiers. Again, as Soukup reminded, semiotics in Roman Catholicism can be put as: one signifier with another signifier,\textsuperscript{26} which was rooted in the missionaries’ situation of having to constantly negotiate between two worlds. In McLuhan, this was the essence of “probes” that granted *information* to be *communication* at the first place.\textsuperscript{27} In Ignatius, one signifier with another signifier could be the real reason for the “composite of places” to exist. If indeed the emblematics was innately one signifier with another signifier on the halfway towards being fully conscious, in the following section, I want to extend

\textsuperscript{26} Soukup, “Ritual and Movement”.

\textsuperscript{27} For McLuhan, “probes” do not necessarily have to give birth to a sign; however, organizing the “probes” does necessarily require some kind of structure which involves the act of signifying.
Lanigan’s work by focusing more on the dynamic between semiotics and phenomenology in the name of “communicology” that implies the unifying efforts.

**The Stage of the “Emblematical”: Phenomenological Accounts for the Life of a Sign**

In the previous section, I have contended that the “prison-cage” emblem was Ignatius’ effort to communicate the existential situation in the making of decisions and making the decision. To be more specific, when the exercitants had an experience (e.g. Ricci’s having the idea of going to China to do missionary work), being aware of this experience, they were existentially “prisoned” for having a signifier without a signified in the urgent need for a sign. In making the election, the exercitants became conscious that they must be even more conscious of the actual experience in carrying out the decision. Therein, the existential “prison” began to be conquered with the signified being planted into the signifier itself – the “prison” became a “cage” with the hope for a reunion, from having to be “divided” in making the decision. In short, Ignatius’ “prison-cage” emblem was a powerful *mimeisis* of the existentialist’s situation. With the Ignatian emblem, in this section, I shall explore into an alternative definition of the “emblem”, not structurally (as in “motto, image, epigram”), but within the stages of development in the life of a sign.28

In *Semiotics in the United States*, as Sebock reported, Frederick A. Rauch, who was one of the pioneers of American semioticians, wrote in the 1840s that “it [imagination] is at first symbolical, then it becomes emblematical, and finally semeiotical.”29 Here, Rauch’s account for the stages of development of human imagination, from “symbolical”, to “emblematical”, to “semioital”, provided some

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28 By “life”, I mean the “ecology” in the *eco-nomos* as the noetic economy of the mind.
phenomenological accounts for the emblematics as the middle stage in the history of image-making. Rauch’s full explication follows:

It is symbolical, then the object by which it represents a thought, and the thought itself are homogeneous. Darkness cannot be the symbol of light; but “when a genius with an inverted torch is placed as a monument upon a grave, it is symbolical. For there a life has been extinguished, a light on eye, beneath that monument the dead lies without life, without light – the light of torch and the light of life are homogeneous. On the other hand, the productions of imagination are emblematical when the form and content become inadequate to each other, or are heterogeneous. The feeling of thirst and a glass of beer on a tavern sign have nothing homogeneous; the sign is therefore, not the symbol of thirst, but its emblem. Yet there is still a relation between them; or if a relation no longer exists, the imagination works semiotically. Here the form intended to represent certain contents does not in the least resemble them; it therefore represents something entirely different from itself; the imagination determines that a thing independent of its fitness shall signify or indicate a certain thing, though it bears not the slightest relation to the thing signified. Two triangles, for instance, put into each other, are in many countries used as signs before beer-houses; there is certainly no relation between two triangles and beer. If the things used as symbols and emblems continue to have an existence, whether we place contents in them or not, the sign loses importance when the thought signified is drawn from it, or when it is no longer used.
significantly. Many signs which we daily make can be understood by no one except ourselves, the boy, for instance, breaks down a few branches near where he has discovered a bird’s nest; this is to him an indicative sign, but not to us, hence we can attach no importance to these broken branches.\(^{30}\)

In the above quote, Rauch provided a three-stage pattern of development for human imagination. In examining the emblematics as a semiotician, Rauch was interested in the life of a sign within which one of the stages was notably “emblematical”. As Sebeok considered Rauch to be a true pioneer of American semiotics, in the 1840s, there was already a built-in dynamic between semiotics and phenomenology in Rauch’s account. With Rauch’s “symbolical, emblematical, and semeiotical” (in relations to Peirce’s “icon/index/symbolical”),\(^{31}\) it is safe to say that the American semioticians have been very attentive to the orality of a sign that “picks up” a pattern of development which can exist independently of the movement of the spoken words. And it should be noted that Rauch was well aware of the vulnerability of the emblematics if being used arbitrarily – “if a relation no longer exists, the imagination works semiotically.” Given the good complexities in Rauch’s defining the “emblematical”, I shall examine Rauch’s statement in greater details.

The first example Rauch used was counter-intuitive; he considered “the inverted torch upon the grave” to be “symbolical” and not yet “emblematical”. To be more specific, Rauch considered the movement from “torch”, to “light”, to “life” and to “death” as within the commonplace tradition – the dis-familiarization in the “inverted”

\(^{30}\) Sebeok, *Semiotics*, 10

did not necessarily problematize the commonplace tradition. Here, we may add that “the inverted torch” should work better than “the extinguished torch”. The former indicated that the life of the genius would continue to be influential after the death. The euphemism worked well because “the inverted torch” was a more accurate representation of the life in the genius’ death. (This is similar to the existential accuracy in the Shakespearean “crossbow-longbow” imagery.) In short, the imaginative and the real are “homogenous” here – the author of the compound image of “the inverted torch upon the grave” simply had the topoi of the “death of the genius” better as the “life in the death of the genius”.

In the second example, Rauch was critical of using “the glass of beer” on a tavern sign as the emblem for the feeling of thirst. Yet, instead of condemning the heterogeneous relation between the place of the tavern and the bodily feeling of thirst, Rauch still considered “the glass of beer” on a tavern sign to be emblematical. Here, the critique was about the act of singling out one signifier from a pool of equally competent (and incompetent) signifiers – a rhetorician may point out that the more accurate representation should be the category itself, such as in the American way of saying “I need a drink”. In other words, it was not the types of drink that needed to be discerned, but the bodily feeling of thirst that one responded to. Again, the deconstructive argument could be: one can only be sure of the bodily feeling of thirst as the signifier (whose incompleteness in the need for a drink disqualifies it from being a sign). “The glass of beer” on a tavern sign should fall short in being the rightful signified, as much as the imagery of the glass of wine. However, Rauch’s point was that although all particular kinds of drink should work (and not work), “the glass of beer” simply worked out to be
the common sign. And it was this kind of representational accident\textsuperscript{32} that could be deemed as “emblematical”.

The third example Rauch used should be the most heuristic one to the current project. Rauch reminded that “two triangles” used to be the emblem for beer-houses. The relations between “two triangles” and beer-houses were formerly emblematical, and turned to be semiotical when the original perception could no longer be remembered.\textsuperscript{33} Here, it is particularly noteworthy that from “the glass of beer” to “two triangles”, Rauch indeed pointed out a general pattern of development within the emblems. “The glass of beer” was close to be “symbolical” and “two triangles” was close to be “semeiotical”, but both were still qualified to be “emblematical”. To extend Rauch’s insight, the questions are then: what was indeed the original phenomenological perception in relating “two triangles” to the beer-houses, and why were “two triangles” more emblematical than “the glass of beer”? To explore into the questions, it should be worthwhile to raise the example of the two stages of being emblematical in the river imagery, from the emblem of the “wavy line” to the emblem of “two drops of water”.

With the early American semioticians’ fascination with the Native Americans’ natural signs,\textsuperscript{34} the Native Americans’ sign for the river was commonly drawn as the “wavy line” which indicated the rapid movement of the water that made the river rough and risky. With Rauch’s general pattern of the development of the emblems, the “wavy line” was an early emblem for the river, which was close to being “symbolical” as the “wavy line” was still a realistic representation of the rapid movement of the water,

\textsuperscript{32} To say “accident” is not to say “randomness”; “accident” indicates an unexpected eventfulness.
\textsuperscript{33} The emblem of the “two triangles” can be connected to the symbolic system of the alchemy. Also see Carl Jung, \textit{Psychology and Alchemy}.
\textsuperscript{34} Sebock, \textit{Semiotics}, 14.
although the “wavy line” was heterogeneous to the danger of the rough river – were the “wavy line” imagined as a “snake”, in Rauch’s terms, the “snake” would be “symbolical” and homogenous to the danger of the river.35

Inter-culturally, the Chinese ideography for the river-related Chinese characters was composed of “two drops of water”,36 with the first drop of water dripping downward and the second drop moving upward. In order to convey the senses of downward and upward movements, the “two drops of water” then appeared vertical, which was different from the horizontal perspective of the “wavy line”.37 Within Rauch, “two drops of water” could be understood as a late emblem for the river, which was close to be “semeiotical” since the second, upward-moving drop of water was surrealistic and offered a phenomenological interpretation on the meaning of the river as the anti-naturalistic movement of the human life, although “two drops of water” was still emblematical in that the first drop of water was a realistic representation of the river’s flowing downward in nature. Therein, the designer of the “two drops of water” indeed made a powerful argument on the dynamic between the way of nature and the way of human life.

Similar to the development from “the glass of beer” to “two triangles”, there was a general pattern of development in being “emblematical” from the “wavy line” to “two drops of water”. Here, one may say that the upward movement of the “two triangles” was strictly a rhetorical hope for the spirit-lifting discourses in beer-houses, since a more

35 The early American semiocians were already well aware that the Native Americans’ natural signs were “signs” of cultures, not raw symbols.
36 The ideograph of the “two drops of water” (with one stroke moving downward and one stroke moving upward), like the two strokes of the dialectical movement (with one stroke moving towards the left and one stroke moving towards the right) should be within the Chinese writing system, long before the simplified Chinese.
37 Eric McLuhan once pointed out that the ancient Egyptians knew well how to play with the “perspectives” by dis-familiarizing gestures of hands. See McLuhan and Zhang, “Poetics”, 64-65.
dialectical representation should be with one triangle moving upward, and the other triangle moving downward. As Aristotle granted rhetoric (as political discourses) to be the counterpart of courtroom debates, the rhetorical movement had good reasons to move forward (and upward), rather than to move dialectically.

From “symbolical” to “emblematical”, and from “emblematical” to “semeiotical”, Rauch’s phenomenological accounts for the emblems highlighted two movements, with the latter movement revealing the meaning of things in the rhetorical hopes for human communication.

Eventually, in the fourth example on “the boy’s broken branch”, Rauch fondly remarked that human imagination allowed both more personal and more interpersonal connections. With Rauch, “the edge of the commonplace” could be perceived as: it was common for boys to break branches to signify a spot, but it was also personal that the sign only worked for the boy himself. Simply put, the sign of the broken branch was used by the boy.

To conclude Rauch’s phenomenological accounts for the emblems, Rauch, at the frontier of American semiotics in the 1840s, defined the emblems as one of the three stages of development in the human imagination from “symbolical”, to “emblematical”, and “to semeiotical”. With Rauch, the “emblematical” could be understood as the middle stage in the life of a sign, and when a sign reached the stage of “semeiotical”, the “emblematical” meanings could be forgotten, sometimes for the sake of cleaning out some rooms for phenomenological interpretations and other times with particular vulnerabilities to being used as propagandas.
Moreover, Rauch probed into the emblem artists’ contribution to dealing with the symbolic meaning of things as hermeneutic entrances into the meaning of human communication – the pragmatics of communication in the emblematics can be precisely to understand communication. Furthermore, Rauch touched upon the emblem artists’ reflection on human communication as the counterpart to the way nature works (e.g. the upward-moving drop of water). It should be noted here that in the modern field of communication studies, it was with Teilhard de Chardin that human communication was clearly understood as the antithesis to the evolution in the biosphere – this was very different from the American personalists’ listening to the whisper from the book of nature.\textsuperscript{38}

With Rauch’s defining the “emblematical”, I shall move towards a comprehensive review on the historical development of the emblematics with the field of emblem studies. With this review, I try to understand the Ignatian emblem as distinctively meta-communicative by understanding human communication (one signifier with another signifier) as the antithesis to the information systems of the world (infinite signifiers in the shape of an Ouroboros).

A Brief Historical Review of the Emblematics

Antiquity

As stated, textual uses of the emblem can be traced back to antiquity. In this project, as I have considered the “carcass-lion” compound image in 1 Kings 13:24-25 to be a proto-emblem, it should be noted that the \textit{topoi} of lion-and-kingship (Kingship) was within the biblical commonplace. For example, in 1 Kings 10:19-20, the author was by

no means image-shy in using the visual symmetry of “the twelve lions on each end of a step on the six steps”. The point here is that: when the author(s) used the emblem, being emblematical required him or her to be at the edge of the commonplace, not to be rebelliously visual, but to complicate the interpretative process since meaningful understandings were complex indeed. Again, the original image compound in 1 Kings 13:24-25 was:

   And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass. And behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass.

Till 1 Kings 20:36, the “carcass-lion” imagery was then used more directly as a learned lesson: “then he said to him, ‘Because you have not obeyed the voice of the lord, behold, as soon as you have gone from me, a lion shall strike you down.” And the same was true in 2 Kings 17:25 where the author wrote, “and at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the Lord. Therefore, the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them.” The question is then: why did the “carcass-lion” emblem only occur once throughout the two books of Kings? With the field of emblem studies, examining the emblematics allows us to understand such myth of communication as proto-phenomenological.

To explore into the question above, in today’s term, one may say the author(s) of two books of Kings was not without a habitus of using the “existential absurdity” in sudden deaths to communicate a particular kind of moral force, which can be understood
as a proto-existential perception of the very unpredictability in living the nomadic life.\textsuperscript{39} But again, it must be clarified that the author did not make the “carcass-lion” imagery beforehand, so that the image compound could be used as moral reductions later. Rather, within this proto-emblem, the birth of a powerful moral consciousness coincided with a strong desire to be artistic.\textsuperscript{40} And the author(s) seemed to be conscious of that the emblems should not be used lavishly.

In the field of emblem studies, the habitus of the author(s) of the two books of Kings in not using the “carcass-lion” imagery excessively might explain the situation of the emblems as being at the edge of the commonplace tradition. Case studies for studying biblical proto-blems were difficult to identify.\textsuperscript{41} And in terms of the myth of communication, the emblems has been used as supportive materials whose significance was to be complementary to the \textit{logos}. As Ong had it, the interpretative formula was: “\textit{mythos} complements \textit{logos}”.\textsuperscript{42} But this was not to suggest the emblems as logo-centric in that the emblem also completed the contentiousness of \textit{logos}. As evidenced in the “carcass-lion”, the author knew how to build the word-image dynamic into the narrative. In turn, such built-in dynamic between word and image should highlight the Western imagerial thinking tradition in which \textit{mythos} also combats \textit{logos} within the diachronic phenomenology of the “speaking” word.

\textsuperscript{39} The act of writing is essentially the pen’s moving against the medium (the parchment or the paper), with the thoughts moving forward.

\textsuperscript{40} Like the “prison-cage” emblem, the proto-emblem of the “carcass-lion” was more of an “artful event” than of an “eventful art”. By “artful event”, I mean that the spoken words are innately eventful.

\textsuperscript{41} The “carcass-lion” imagery was brought to my attention from Ailing Zhang’s fond remark on the “lovability” of the Old Testament writers’ occasional self-repeating and self-refuting. See Hu Lancheng, \textit{JinShengJinShi} [This life, these times] (Beijing: China ChangAn Press, 2013).

\textsuperscript{42} Ong, \textit{Barbarian}, 9.
In comparison with the strong moral consciousness in the biblical proto-emblems, the Grecian emblems or para-emblems, such as in Icarus’ wax-wing or as in Athena from the split of Zeus’ head often had more definitive meanings. As stated, the Grecian para-emblems were only concerned with the action of living an intellectual life, without probing into the inner movements. To take the example of Athena from the split of Zeus’ head, as soon as the action of mankind’s giving birth to an idea was caught, both the birth-giver and the idea were then rhetorically generalized into being “Zeus” and “Athena” – the author(s) had no intention to be personalistic. Homeric poets were concerned with communicating mankind’s shared situation in giving birth to an idea laboriously.\(^43\)

In this sense, the Grecian para-emblems can be understood as the most democratic kind of phenomenological description without reduction and interpretation. The openness of the Grecian emblematics, as the so-called “collective childhood of human imagination”, invites phenomenological approaches. A good example here could be Camus’ *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which Camus concluded with a phenomenological interpretation of a modern man’s sympathy and empathy with Sisyphus.\(^44\) Such personal connection with Sisyphus would be unknowing to the Grecian writers, and with Camus, modern painters could always highlight Sisyphus’ strong muscle to make the argument on the meaning of the existential absurdity in Sisyphus’ eternal ordeal of laboring.

Now, in chapter three, with Anne Carson’s accounts for Sappho’s “bittersweet”\(^45\), I have briefly addressed the dynamic between *Eros* and *logos* in the emblematics. The

\(^{43}\) Also see Arendt, *Condition*, 192-199.
\(^{44}\) Camus, *Sisyphus*.
problem is raised as: was “bittersweet” emblematical or anti-emblematical in the sense that the poetics in Sappho was to catch the psychological movement as e-motions, without resorting to any symbolic meaning of things? Here, it may be clarified that at least for Aristotle, psyche is not the inward aspect of being. The Greek had no word for the “self” until Plotinus (AD 203-270). In other words, it was not that Sappho was a proto-feminist to employ the synchronicity of Eros (that opposed the Homeric rhetorical “flow” in “I will come to hate you as terribly as I love you”) in defense of the poetics against the Apollonian dazzling sun-brightness. Rather, in Aristotle, psyche is “what sustains an animate being in a particular kind of movement – psyche is in that movement.” To put this differently, Eros in Sappho was close to the girl’s discerning romantic love in Murakami’s story: the synchronicity of Eros, along with the built-in diachronic attempt in the “bittersweet”, had to do with the rhetoricians’ discerning “all possible means of persuasion” with a feminine kind of meticulousness that stayed within orality, while the discerning process demanded some existential distance from the oral tradition.

Ever since the antiquity, the Western mind, with the so-called “divided self”, has been constantly dealing with the sometimes painful situation of having to communicate a synchronic moment in the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word. On a bright note, this alphabetic bias towards being narrative was the basis of the liberal temper of ancient Greece, which constituted the bodily joy in “talking” itself. Moreover, with the

46 Ong, Hopkins, 19.
47 I use “flow” in reference to “the psychology of flow” as the exclusively forward-moving rhetoric in Hercules’ twelve labors.
48 Also see Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy.
49 Patočka, Body, 154-156.
50 It may be reminded that in the history of ethos, the Greek ethos was more synchronic with multiple layers of meanings, and the Roman ethos was more diachronic that could be built in time.
Judeo-Christian tradition, the “presence of the word” then brought out a profound philosophy of time in which a deep personalism was built into history.\textsuperscript{51} However, perhaps as the side-effect of over-masculinizing rhetoric in the educational history, the poetic synchronicity (with built-in diachronic attempts in the act of communicating) was refrained into the private realm of psychology. Again, to say “there was only one Sappho (with both individualism and personalism) while there were multiple Homers” is to indicate that the innate difficulty in being emblematical has been present since the antiquity – both as part of the commonplace and at the edge of the commonplace.

*The Middle Ages*

In the medieval period, the individuality and the personalism in the emblematics continued to develop. This development can be examined not only with the heraldry, the alchemists’ symbolism, and the signs for public places (in Rauch’s example, “two triangles” as an alchemical emblem for beer-houses), which shared the main function to “divide” and to “differ”, and therefore formed a preliminary perception of the individual identity of things that was para-scientific and proto-existential; but more importantly, the emblematics started to be applied to the *imago* (as portraits or icons of the persons in Christian history), which formed the art of the “living painting” that “talked” to the audiences.\textsuperscript{52}

Before examining the rhetorical elements in the “living painting”, it may be clarified that in the Middle Ages, a good difference between word and image was kept in the cultural sphere. As indicated by Rauch’s example of the “two triangles”, the

\textsuperscript{51} Again, the Christian theologians had some real difficulty in reconciling the synchronicity in One God and the diachronic phenomenology in the Three Persons. This difficulty then gave birth to perceiving personalism as the counterpart to the natural law.

\textsuperscript{52} See Belting, *Likeness*, 261-281.
signboard for beer-houses in medieval times did not use the written words, but the emblems to distinguish the beer-houses from other public places. The written word was not used because it was rather unnecessary for the signboard to signify itself. A modern signboard that reads “Beer House” was indeed a comic representation by portraying the signboard to say “look, ‘I am’ a beer-house” which was symbolically misrepresentative (the signboard is not the actual beer-house) and mnemonically burdensome (nobody is speaking, but the oral residue still calls attention for human communication).

With the innate difference between word and image, the *imago*, in employing the emblems into the new icon of the persons in Christian history, aimed at conquering the word-image difference by combining poetics (as the inner psychological movements) with rhetoric (as verbal expressions that exist) in meaningful ways. Here, the distinctive characteristic of the emblems as “Western” can be highlighted by comparing the Chinese ideography (also as para-emblems) with the new icons in the Middle Ages. A comparison between the Chinese character for “goodness” (奵 or “hao”) and the icon of Virgin Mary in Göreme, Cappadocia (Tokali Kilise, 10th century) should clarify.

The Chinese character for “goodness” was composed of two ideographs – the ideograph for “woman” (女) on the left and the ideograph for “child” (子) on the right. In terms of semiotic phenomenology, the meaning of “hao” came from the moral-phenomenological reduction of the original phenomenological description on the commonplace of “mother and child”. However, though the designer of “hao” wanted to persuade the users the meaning of “goodness” by resorting to the aesthetics within the *topoi* of “mother and child”, there was no poetic movement in this Chinese character that
asked for participations with the psychological movements of the mother. Similar to the Grecian para-emblems, it would be unknowing for the ancient Chinese to be empathic with the “woman” in the Chinese character for “goodness”. And it was not that the ideographic writing system allowed no room for poetic particularities; rather, it was that the designers of the Chinese characters were well aware of their own spatial “bias of communication” towards meeting the communication demand of the ancient Chinese empires, with the help of rhetorical generality.

On the other hand, with the new icon of Virgin Mary in Göreme, an emblematical kind of poetic particularity was built into the imagery. The audiences were provided with the inner movement of St. Mary. As Belting observed,

In the icon, her meditative gaze is anticipating the sorrows to come. The device of anticipation (prolepsis) produces a synopsis of two feelings and two times places, when in a text famous at the time, the Virgin addresses Christ: “Then I touched with my lips your lips as sweet as honey and as fresh as dew. Then you slept on my breast as a child, and now you sleep as a dead man in my arms. Once I took care of swaddling clothes and now of your shroud…Once I lifted you up in my arm when you skipped and jumped like a child, and now you lie [motionless] in them like the dead.”

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53 I should note the Chinese calligraphy for “好” here. In the cursive script, “the mother and the child” in “hao” can be written within one stroke (as if the woman reaches out her arm to the child, and the child became part of the woman’s arm), but in the regular script, “the mother” and “the child” are two ideographic parts.
54 For example, Ricci simply added the poetic particularities within the memory palace.
56 Belting, Likeness, 285.
From the above quote, again, the notion of a “rhetorical poet”, rather than a “poetic rhetorician” should be emphasized to better understand the personalistic basis in the emblem. It should not surprise us that the inner movement of Virgin Mary was provided with texts – the new icon was formed by employing the emblematics, with a more personalistic imago that worked with the psychological movements in the logos. Though not without formulaic expressions like the “honey-sweet lips”, the “motionless limbs”, and the “silent mouth and the closed eye”, the new emblematical icon indeed challenged the rhetorical generality by asking the audiences to enter into Mary’s psychological movements as a particular person that “I” tried to understand.57 As a side note, it should be within the “Western drama” (with a rhetorical temper) to use baby Jesus’ bouncing against his mother to imply his grown-up sacrificial devotions.

By meaningfully relating rhetoric with poetics, at the end of the Middle Ages, the “dialogue with the images” gradually became a method of meditation that the emblem artists in the Renaissance inherited,58 and in terms of the emblem book culture in the Renaissance, the Ignatian emblem itself should be the best kind of example. The historical development of the emblematics enabled Ignatius to use the emblem phenomenologically as the birthplace of a strong moral consciousness in the First Week of the Exercises.

Renaissance

Writing in the early Renaissance, Ignatius already used the emblem in a very complex way. We should now realize that in the First Exercise, the way Ignatius

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57 Belting understood this as the rhetorical technique of “character studies”, but in this case, rhetorical analysis must be incomplete given the Grecian-Hebraic dynamism.
58 Belting, Likeness, 409-431.
designed the emblem of “in exile among brute animals” (the “cage”) as the prelude to asking the exercitants to apply the whole sensorium into the meditations on sins, indicated quite a developed Western imagerial thinking tradition. Ignatius’ philosophical thought, with the inclination to be phenomenological, started with understanding the animal as the pre-linguistic mode of being (in contrast to the linguistic mode of human beings), and moved towards practicing the human sensorium organization as bodily entrances into the world, along with the birth of a strong moral consciousness.

To be more specific, the “prison-cage” emblem was Ignatius’ nuanced argument that the presence of the animal should be different from the presence of human existence— for the animal, the presence must always be of the immediate (without the necessity for meditation) synchronicity that things are merely “there”, without concerns for the being of things in which the symbolic meaning of things lies, but for human beings, the presence involves both the presence of the current moment (the speaking word) and the presence of the presence (reflections on the spoken word). With the “prison-cage” emblem, Ignatius did not make the first prelude easy, in concerns with this innate dynamic between the presence of the current moment (the world as it is; visible) and the presence of the presence (the worldliness of the world; invisible).

In this project, I have emphasized several times that Ignatius had many good reasons to design the first prelude as the very preparative prelude throughout the First Week, particularly in terms of being able to tell the nuanced difference between two things similar (the “prison” and the “cage”). It is very noteworthy that the moment of election came after the First Week, more precisely in the middle of the Second Week,

59 In today’s evolutionary terms, the presence of the animal was one stage of the development towards the presence of human existence, with tensions of rhetorical variations built into these stages.
whence the exercitants, being prepared by the “prison-cage” emblem, should be well aware of that election involves an active hope for something to happen (rather than in the sense of the natural law that for example, a seed of watermelon shall grow into a watermelon). Therein, when making the election, “discernment” is needed not only in that a powerful imagination of the future can have a face (as the strong personalism or inter-personalism in making the decision) that appears differently with the movement of our being situated in the world, but also in terms of a preliminary phenomenological perception of the self. After all, it is “I” who hope an event in life to happen. In other words, “I” am no longer hidden in the symbolic meaning of things (waiting to be discovered); “I” am revealed in choosing to engage with the world within which “I” confront “myself” via the worldliness of the world.

Much more can be said about the imagerial thinking in the “prison-cage” emblem; the main point is that: as evidenced in Ignatius’ using the emblem, in the early Renaissance, the invention of the emblem book provided a way to recollect and to reflect upon emblems from the previous ages, and therefore, protected and promoted the emblematics to be an important part of the Western imagerial thinking tradition. The distinctive value of the emblematics should be well understood by Ignatius’ asking the exercitants to practice the actual exercises – Heidegger’s phenomenology of Dasein (existence) might be more elaborative on the existential philosophy within the Exercises, but for Ignatius, instead of directly teaching the three stages of the spiritual growth, he asked the exercitants to perform four weeks of spiritual exercises. The emblematics

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61 It may be noted that in 1909, Heidegger joined the Jesuit order as a novice, and spent weeks in a Jesuit seminary before studying theology at the University of Freiburg.
provided Ignatius with one way to challenge the exercitants with a preliminary phenomenological self-confrontation, rather than self-discovery.

Ignatius was within the emblem book culture in Renaissance. It should be no coincidence that the major “rebirth” of the emblematics came along with the invention of the emblem book in the early Renaissance. The emblem book, as a product of the printing press, provided the emblem artists ways to reflect on the emblematics in the re-collective form of a book. The art of the emblem was then reborn as a carefully reflected way of making arguments. Literate reflections on the emblematics were then built into the “oral images”. A good example here could be that the Roman myth of Cupid (a personification) should be a good para-emplematival remark on the lack of subjectivity (existential blindness) in Eros. When a Renaissance humanist, like Otto Van Veen (1556-1629), re-created an emblem of love with “two Cupids’ shooting arrows at each other”, not only Veen continued the Grecian concern for the rhetorical generality in the emblematics (we do not know which two particular lovers were fighting, but as long as the action of a combative love was captured, the communicative agents were generalized into being two Cupids), but more importantly, Veen offered a critical reflection on the lack of subjectivity in Eros as in fact the lack of inter-subjectivity. This kind of emblematical wit in Veen’s “two Cupids” was characteristic of the Renaissance emblem book culture.

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62 The Chinese character for erotic love is “色” that shared a similar technological metaphor in Cupid’s arrows with the ideograph of a “knife” (刃) on the upper part.
Accordingly, in *Presence and Likeness*, Belting considered the Reformation and the iconoclasm movement to be more of the Church’s concerns with using the image (rather than words) when a strong personalism was demanded.\(^6^4\) In the cultural sphere, if indeed Veen’s *Amorum Emblemata* could be an epitome of the humanists’ emblem books, today’s scholars of emblem studies should have good reasons to focus on the Renaissance emblem book as an important part of the cultural vitality in the Renaissance. On the other hand, within the Church, the emblems’ relations to the history of moral consciousness could not be overstated. Though the emblematics was not necessarily biblical (Hebraic) or classical (Grecian), the Christian emblem artists were at the frontier of finding new ways to communicate the moral force in communicating with the emblematics. A good example here could be Fra Angelico’s (1395-1455) *The Mocking of Christ* (1440)\(^6^5\) in which he used a para-hieroglyphic emblem in portraying the violence of “hands” as a phenomenological interpretation on the lack of personalism in the act of humiliating the Christ. And given that many of Angelico’s emblems (often in the form of frescos) were used particularly for meditations, he had good reasons to make those emblems difficult, because of the existentialist’s situation when a monk was in meditation. In the early Renaissance, not all emblems were of religious communication, but the best kind of Christian emblems demanded the best kind of hermeneutic effort, for the kind of phenomenological intricacy exemplified in Angelico’s criticizing the lack of personalism emblematically.

*Modernity*

\(^{6^4}\) Belting, *Likeness*, 460-469.
\(^{6^5}\) Lloyd, *Angelico*, 90.
The modern field of emblem studies came from the leisure of the classists, with whom the social fabric of Latin was still part of the scholarly environment and woven into the intellectual sphere. More straightforwardly, the significance of emblem studies could not be compared to the classists’ decades of training in Latin and with Greek as the satellite, but the emblems were still an important part of the intellectual milieu. For example, Ezra Pound, who was considered a “modernist” and was indeed well trained in philology, tried to “translate” the communicative architecture of the Chinese characters into poems. Pound’s effort was a playful challenge if indeed the scholars then were not unfamiliar with the emblematical tradition – after all, Mathew Ricci performed the ideography-emblematics experiment at the high time of the Renaissance. Yet in today’s media environment, Pound’s playful experiment with the emblems and the Chinese ideography could seem rather “modernistic”, strange and eccentric.

However, within this modernism, regardless of Pound’s dis-familiarizing the emblems and his misunderstandings of the Chinese characters, Pound’s critique of a reduced Western imagerial thinking tradition was more relevant to the field of emblem studies than to the field of critical mass media studies. At the birthplace of emblem studies, Henry Green, notably a Shakespearean scholar writing in the 1860s, was among the first group of classists who were critically aware of this loss of a Latin-based emblematical nuances in modern imageries. Green said,

We have not far to seek for a sufficient reason why the old emblem writers have been almost forgotten. The best of them, the founders and early masters in this school of poetry wedded to pictorial embellishments,

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excelled as Latinists, and sometimes ran wild amidst the conceits which Latin is so fitted to express. Their later imitators in the modern languages, without generally possessing their depth or their brilliancy, have followed them especially in quaint fancies, and thus have repeated and magnified their faults. Hence, as Latin was more and more disused among scholars, and as the modern languages, under skilled and vigorous cultivators, threw aside mere witticisms and affectations, men's minds grew beyond the pleasures of tracing out resemblances between pictures and mottoes.\textsuperscript{67}

Not far from Pound’s radical critique, Green’s critical examination was to alert of the emblematical residues that were often commercially vulgar and morally doctrinaire. Along with Green, in the vicinity of media ecology, McLuhan’s first book \textit{The Mechanical Bride} was a deconstructive and reconstructive critique of the emblematical nuances’ being exploited by the “industrial folklorists”. Here, we should not be shy in revealing the strong moral concern in McLuhan’s first book;\textsuperscript{68} McLuhan’s faith in communication was also that: such cultural sensitivity to visual rhetoric should in turn give birth to the American ethos of being even more attentive to the meaning of structure (the visible) as where communication happens (the invisible).

Close to Green and McLuhan as English professors, this merit of being attentive to structure and communication may be best taught by Frank Raymond Leavis (who was McLuhan’s teacher in Cambridge). With Leavis, not only we were well informed of the moral implication in English emblems that the Shakespearean emblems (e.g. the

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\textsuperscript{68} See Peters, “McLuhan’s Grammatical Theology” for a misreading of McLuhan’s moral concerns.
"crossbow-longbow") asked the readers to experience stages of interpretations,69 but more importantly, Leavis was truly at the frontier of teaching the meaning of structure in English poetry. Here, a good example can be the way Leavis taught the poem *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* by William Wordsworth (1802). In Leavis’ meticulous examinations,

It seems a very generalized particularity, one easily attained. And yet we should by now be aware of a decided superiority in this sonnet that makes it a poem of some interest; so that some further inquiry is necessary. The clue presents itself in the unobtrusive adjective "smokeless". Though unobtrusive, it is far from otiose; obviously as it looks, it does more than it says. (Italicized mine) It conveys in fact both its direct force and the opposite, and give us locally in its working the structure of poem. For this poem ... has a structure, and what this now becomes place.70

As Leavis continued to elaborate on this “structure”,

Looking back, we realize now that “like a garment” has, after all, a felicity: it keeps the City and the beauty of the morning distinct, while offering to the view only the beauty. Any muffling or draping suggestion the simile might have thrown over the “ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples” is eliminate immediately by the “bare” that, preceding them, get the rime stress (so justifying, we now see, the "wear" that it picks and cancels). They

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69 Scholars of emblem studies emphasized the *emblematica* as more of a process of interpretations than of the structuralized persuasiveness of the *impra*.  
70 Leavis, *Principle*, 118.
lie

Open. ⁷¹

From the quote above, Leavis’ revealing the emblematical co-presence of the city’s “lying open” and “wearing a garment” (with the keyword as “smokeless”) was best illustrated by his own structuring: “They ... lie ... Open”. To the limit of this research, Leavis was the only critic who taught the meaning of poetic structure in this way.

Essentially, the technique of Leavis’ discernment was to reveal the built-in emblematics within the structure of English poetry. From Leavis, we may better understand the early Shakespearean scholars (e.g. Henry Green) who had good reasons to be critically concerned with a reduced emblematical tradition. We may also better understand that the noetic economy in an emblematical particularism was not about examining all the details (all the signifiers) of a sign, but about raising a questioning and questionable particularity that implied the change of a sign (one signifier with another Signifier). For a convenient illustration, if being visually represented, the “crossbow-longbow” emblem would look like both a crossbow and a longbow. In order to avoid such visual overlap that confused, the poets chose to use the emblematics to communicate this co-present change in a diachronic order. With the good complexity in such hermeneutics, it should be no surprise that in modernity, Shakespeare’s careful readers tended to devote a good deal of attention to the emblematical tradition, with scholarly interests in its former richness.

Post-modernity

⁷¹ Ibid.
Now, the paradox within the “co-present change” should be part of the “self-other” and “self-same” dynamic in selfhood after postmodernity, with the existential overlap of how did “I” change but will remain the same. Yet as Ong constantly reminded the “present moment”, it is only in the contemporary time that we may understand the true dynamic within the first prelude of the Exercises as Ignatius’ setting two particularisms (the particularism of history and nature, and the particularism of human communication) in combative movements.

To be more specific, in understanding post-modernity as various kinds of post-Romanticisms,72 the birthplace of any particularism implied an intentional rebellion from the rhetorical generality, with the innate difficulty that this particularism must still keep some noetic economy. There have always been two kinds of particularism: one about examining all the details of an event (signifiers ad infinitum, the McLuhanian probes, the “psychology of information”73), and the other about finding the questioning and questionable particularity that changes along with the sign (signifier with another Signifier, orality with literacy, the “psychology of form”). In the first prelude of the First Exercises, Ignatius used both the “visible” (the physical details in the events of Christ’s life) and the “invisible” (the “prison-cage” emblem) to ask the exercitants to understand Christ’s conquering the situation of communication. The “visible” and the “invisible” were not easily compatible. The “visible” had to learn from the rhetorical organization and reorganization of the “invisible”,74 and the rhetorical organization and reorganization

72 See, Ong, Romance, 255.
74 In the Chinese ideography, when representing the ad infinitum of trees (木) in a symbolic forest, the solution is then to draw three trees (森) in imitation of a three-part rhetorical organization. Here, in the Western imagery thinking tradition, a more powerful emblem could be drawing just one seedling (that shall grow into a tree with human care).
of the “invisible” had to conquer its own rhetorical generalization with the help of the emblems that was undiscoverable without examining the “visible”.

As a side note, the so-called “doctrinaire” emblems was simply that the signifier-Signifier emblems (s-S, the rhetorical poet) was exchanged to be the Signifier-signifier emblematical residues (S-s, the poetic rhetorician). For example, the Buddhists in China had a powerful phenomenological description on the pattern of bitterness and pain in life: “the sea of bitterness has no edge” (the first imagery). However, the following reduction “turning your head around is the shore” (the second imagery) weakened the first imagery. A good interpreter on the imagery of “the endless sea of bitterness” would know that “turning you mind around” may or may not be “the shore”. The rhetorical movement from “sea” to “sea-shore” indeed harmed the powerful imagery in the original phenomenological description. The poetic rhetorician exploited the first imagery to conveniently make the argument in the second imagery.

In postmodernity, we reflect upon the way the emblems has been working in order to better discern the different ways to be emblematical. In its most general sense, to offer a comprehensive theory of the emblems would be as difficult as crafting a wholesome theory for Chinese characters. The difficulties in understanding the emblems (and the ideography) are not only that these compound images have their own historical developments, with meanings built upon previous image-makings. But more importantly, as much as the Chinese ideography could be visually doctrinaire and overtly entertaining, the emblems in itself cannot promise a recovery and re-discovery from a reduced Western imagerial thinking tradition. If indeed the hope is true in the post-modern age, what could be some theorems on the Ignatian emblems in relation to
the post-modern situation of the emblematics? With this question, I shall move to the final probe into the “prison-cage”.

**Examining the Existentialist’s Situation Emblematically: The Final Probe into the “Prison-cage”**

The “prison-cage” emblem was within the development of human imagination as phenomenological approaches to the psychologically real, and it should continue to be a remark, with postmodern meanings, on the dynamic between rhetoric (in particular as using images in creating and reaching common grounds) and personalism (in particular as using words in examining and expressing the phenomenology of the self). In the final probe into the “prison-cage”, with the history of the emblematics, I want to focus on this dynamic between rhetoric and personalism.

*“Prison-cage” and the Art of Personalism*

When I was addressing the rhetorical distance in the Grecian para-blems, such as in “Athena’s being born from the split of Zeus’ head” that the oral poets were democratically tempered to distance the communicative agent as “Zeus” (from being “I”) and the message as “Athena” (from being burdensomely specific), it should be clarified that it would be ahistorical to suggest that the *locus communis* in “Zeus” and “Athena” was created to avoid being individualistic. Again, the oral poets had no word for the “self”. 75 The democratic temper in “Zeus” and in “Athena” was personifications (para-personalistic) of the communicative agent and the message.

However, in this case, since there should be a real subjectivity (and inter-subjectivities) in giving birth to an idea laboriously (unlike the lack of subjectivity in the

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personification of erotic love as Cupid), one should have good reasons to criticize the oral poets for being para-personalistic, in the sense of still resorting to the rhetorical generality when a strong personalism was in demand. This is my main rationale to consider the Grecian emblems as “para-emblems”, in critical concerns with the lack of a strong personalism which was prominent in emblems like the “prison-cage”.

Now, as stated in chapter three, in Preface to Plato, Havelock was already able to develop a constructive critique of the Greek orality, by focusing on the cultural transformation from the “image-thinkers”\(^{76}\) to the “necessity of Platonism”\(^{77}\). The technology of writing, with its communicative intensity, prompted the Greek oral poets to move towards being able to provide some existential reflections on the self. In Preface, Havelock had it wonderfully that the closure of the consonant (somewhat as a “communicative stutter” that imitated the synchronic moment of uttering many words at the same time) was meant to be opened in the diachronic phenomenology of human communication.

More straightforwardly, the rhetorical distance in “hiding” the agent and the message in “Zeus” and in “Athena” was not the intention of the oral poets – the “Homeric state of mind” simply did not know any other way to communicate the intellectual labor in giving birth to ideas. In this sense, the problematics of modern existentialism, such as in saying “I gave the hardest birth to the greatest idea” (in which the agent supersedes the action) can be understood as “literacy without any empathy towards the oral tradition” – there were also good reasons for the oral poets to highlight and empower the action, instead of the agent, as mankind’s shared situation.

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\(^{76}\) Preface has two parts. This is Havelock’s title for Part One.

\(^{77}\) Havelock’s title for Part Two.
In *Mimesis*, Auerbach, in relating the Homeric epic to the Old Testament which were historically unknowing to each other until later ages of communication, also contended that the proto-personalism in the Old Testament has always been the counterpart to the para-personalism in the Greek oral tradition. As I have examined the “carcass-lion” imagery, the emblematical surrealism in “carcass-lion” was the genealogical ancestor of the “prison-cage” emblem, though “carcass-lion” was the most powerful kind of phenomenological description that confronted any hermeneutical attempt to phenomenologically reduce and interpret the imagery. This is my main rationale to consider the “carcass-lion” to be the “proto-emblem”. Such “oral image” was at the heart of a strong moral consciousness in which the Ignatian emblem dwelt.

This twofold genealogy within the “prison-cage” emblem (both Grecian and Hebraic) was of course hard to reconcile. On one hand, the “prison-cage” was part of the Renaissance emblem book culture in expressing the existential situation by being witty, analogous and rhetorically distancing. On the other hand, the “prison-cage” emblem was quite an “oral image” in being able to address the existential situation much more directly and accurately. In this sense, the Ignatian emblem was truly at the frontier (edge) of the Renaissance emblem book culture.

“Prison-cage” and the Media-communication Dynamic

In the previous chapter, I have used a modern term “existential absurdity” to describe the emblematical surrealism in the proto-emblem of the “carcass-lion” imagery. Here, it should be clarified that one cannot enter into the world with the absurdity of the world; one must enter into the world with “the worldliness of the world”. If indeed the postmodern absurdity of the emblematics can be understood as “media without
communication” (emblematical effects without the content; strange for the sake of being strange so as to exploit the mnemonic function of the emblematics), in the emblematics, what is “the worldliness of the world” when being examined with the media-communication dynamic?

As an exploration into the question above, part of the phenomenology of religious communication is that the founding fathers of religious orders tended to set human communication at the foreground (or as the counterpart) of the way nature works. In the Exercises, the “prison-cage” emblem was built upon the difference between the pre-linguistic beings of animals and the linguistic human beings. In Personalism and Wilderness, Ong’s critique of the American personalism in Bugbee’s The Inward Morning was that the American personalists tended to set human communication at the background (or as part) of the way nature works. The American personalists’ fascination with the “wilderness” ended up becoming a particular kind of existential intimacy in listening to the whisper in the book of the nature (para-rhetorical, in low volume and pressure), though the solitude (the existential wilderness) of the American personalists also ended up becoming one man’s address to the whole world.

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78 This is not to indicate some “homo-centrism”; rather, this is an existential effort to rely exclusively upon human communication even though the spoken word is evanescent, rhetorically generalizing, and quite vulnerable to the repetitive mindset.

79 A good example should be that in Inward, Bugbee wrote that “I myself is the leaping trout”. Bugbee’s poetic affirmation moved beyond the Romanticism subject-object interplay such as in saying “am I the leaping trout, or the leaping trout is me?” as phenomenological description without reduction, but it was less existentially powerful than saying “how do you know that I am not the leaping trout?” (phenomenological reduction with interpretation) in both remarking on the I-You difference and the lack of the subject-object interplay.

The above difference between American personalism and the Ignatian emblematics may be examined as a rhetorical habit of mind at the heart of the phenomenology of religious communication. The kind of public contention with Yahweh in the “carcass-lion” imagery, if being examined with an incomplete parallel to epideictic rhetoric, must be both “blaming” and “praising” at the same time, though within the emblematics, “blaming” or contending publicly indeed preceded.

More straightforwardly, the synchronicity of the pathos in the proto-emblem of the “carcass-lion” imagery indeed had a diachronic phenomenology, which was built into the very act of “writing words down” or the downward movement of the spoken word. This should not to be confused with \textit{bathos} as there was no blasphemy in the proto-emblem of the “carcass-lion”. The emblematics in the “carcass-lion” offered \textit{real} existential accounts for the self in grievance.\textsuperscript{81} In this sense, the “proto-emblem” was the particularity of the Hebraic orality-and-literacy dynamic in which literacy must fulfill its existential obligation as the birthplace of a true phenomenological description.

To further clarify this “rhetorical habit of the mind in the phenomenology of religious communication”, I would like to raise the example of Lao Tzu’s \textit{Tao Te Ching} (\textit{Dao De Jing})\textsuperscript{82} within the merit of comparative religion studies. In Verse 5 of \textit{Dao}, Lao Tzu said,

Heaven and earth are merciless, and regard all things as straw dogs.

\textsuperscript{81} Also see Jacque Derrida. \textit{The Work of Mourning}. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2001)

\textsuperscript{82} Jing or “经” means “classics” in Chinese, but Lao Tzu would not consider his work “classical”. A better title may be “phenomenology of the Dao” as the philosophical epoché of Lao Tzu’s phenomenological accounts for the worldliness of the world. See Mu Xin. \textit{The Memoir of Literature} (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2013), 183.
The sages are merciless, and regard all people as straw dogs.\footnote{Lao Tzu. \textit{Tao Te Ching}. Translated by Stephen Addiss & Stanley Lombardo (Boston: Shambhala Publications), 5.} The above saying started with an existential remark on the “mercilessness” of the heaven-earth,\footnote{Heaven-earth or “天地”.} which itself cannot provide meanings (the absurd part), and followed by a critique of the sages, whom Lao Tzu alerted of and urged that people should not try to gain meanings from them.

Here, the point is that: Lao Tzu could have said that “heaven and earth are unknowing to the human idea of ‘mercy’, and it does not matter if one considers them to be merciful or merciless”. This would be even more existentially radical, especially in that the sentence started from the perspective of “heaven and earth”.\footnote{See Mu, \textit{Memoir}, 176.} But in \textit{Dao}, notably as Lao Tzu’s own meditations, he chose the standpoint of a person’s, as if a particular man or woman were saying “[I say], heaven and earth are merciless.” The question is then: did Lao Tzu hide the communicative agent (as the Chinese ideography were para-emblematical)? And the answer is: similar to the poetics in Buber’s \textit{I and Thou}, in such cases, the agent is built into the act of speaking.\footnote{Bakhtin’s theory of “speech genre” came into mind in which Bakhtin used the word “utterance” for the “speaking” word.} Without dissecting the existential complexity in saying “I”, Lao Tzu’s problematizing existence and expression was very similar to Ignatius’ in the \textit{Exercises}. Essentially, the technique was to build the communicative agent into the act of speaking. Again, within Daoism, “prison-cage” (牢笼) used to precisely mean the boundary of “heaven-earth” – the world as the existential edge of the Cosmo. This is the “rhetorical habit of the mind” shared by many powerful
religious thinkers who foregrounded human communication as the counterpart of the way nature works. \(^{87}\)

In *The Phenomenon of Man*, a more contemporary Jesuit, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was able to articulate this foregrounding human communication as the counterpart to the “para-rhetorical” organization of the earthly environment, with a more articulated existential philosophy on the act of bringing the information system of the world into the conscious examination of human communication. As counterparts to the Darwinian rhetorical generality that intentionally “misunderstood” \(^{88}\) a cat and a lion to be in the same family of the felidae so that rhetorical participations (deductions and inductions) may be planted into the scientific collaborations on studying the cat and the lion (which should be very different in real studies), \(^{89}\) de Chardin’s paleontology, in understanding the earth’s becoming more tolerating to the phenomenon of man, was “scientific” not in the sense of being accurately objective (following the natural laws), but in the sense of man’s in turn bringing “the world as it is” into “the worldliness of the world” within human communication. \(^{90}\)

Here, it should be a helpful note that after all, Lao Tzu had to use “Dao” to describe his philosophy of communication and Ignatius had to resort to the emblematics; de Chardin’s work acknowledged the innate difficulty in forming a competent sign for the complexity of the self in the world. From the *Exercises*, de Chardin was able to extend the existential exegesis (the invisible) to the examination of one of the keynote

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87 Regardless of Ellul’s differing the truth and the real may fall short in analyzing the emblematics, in the case of the phenomenology of religious communication, Ellul was right that the real should be the counterpart to the true.

88 Kenneth Burke call this “intentional fallacy”.


90 This is to offer an understanding of de Chardin’s term “the noosphere”.
stages of the development in the earthly environment (the visible). From the Ignatian emblematics to de Chardin’s paleontology, in the last part of this probe, I shall provide some prolegomenon on the emblematical approach to the existential situation.

**Some Prolegomenon on the Emblematical Approach to the Existential Situation**

In the previous section, I have briefly addressed the dynamic between the complexity of the self and the complexity of the world. This dynamic was problematized in the noetic economy of the powerful religious thinkers, such as in Ignatius’ emblematics and in Lao Tzu’s proto-phenomenological accounts. Such *eco-nomos* of the mind, simply put, was to build the existential “I” into the act of speaking. And it is only possible in contemporary times that in *I and Thou*, Buber had it precisely that “the speaking of I and the existence of I are one and same thing.”

Moreover, this ecology of the mind, with a particular dynamic between the hermeneutical complexity in understanding the worldly events and the existential exegesis in understanding the eventfulness of the self, can be genealogically traced back to the Old Testament writers’ using the proto-emblem. In this part, I would like to offer some prolegomenon on examining the Ignatian emblem along with this genealogy.

I. The Artful Event and The Eventful Art

In this project, I have used the term “art” mostly as a loose reference to the liberal art (alphabetic, diachronic, and democratic) in rhetorike as the Greek word for “public speaking”. My concern is with the Grecian para-emblem that had a bias of communication towards building common grounds – one should marvel at this kind of rhetorical generality that enabled the social empowerment and elegance of living in the

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polis, and one should also understand Plato’s critique of the oral poets if such rhetorical technique could not be counterbalanced with philosophical inquiries. In other words, a philosophy of rhetoric (in particular, a philosophy of communication with moral concerns) was in demand during the technological transformation of the ancient Greek society, from a more oral culture to a more technological culture of chirography.

When the Ignatian emblem is considered to be a form of “art”, I then mostly mean the Grecian part of the Ignatian emblems as the rhetorical distance in communicating the existential situation. After all, the Renaissance emblem book was an art form, with good reasons to draw attention to the medium of the emblems itself. And the emblem book was a “visual art”, not without a specialization in educating the young, given the existential revolt in “visual rhetoric” that in itself challenged the verbose of the oral-rhetorical formulaic expressions. In the context of the Renaissance, “visual art” (with religious contents but new artistic forms and techniques) became prevalent for the similar reasons of the existential rebellions from the oral basis of human consciousness. In contemporary times, visual rhetoric still draws the attention of the young, and has been innately a young man’s business. In the history of teaching rhetoric, the emblems should offer some good explanations and reconciliations for the kind of existential revolt that has prompted the pedagogical popularity within the so-called “visual rhetoric”.

On the other hand, when the Ignatian emblem is considered as an “oral image” (somewhat anti-artistic), I then mean to contend that “orality” does not necessarily equate to being a general term for the oral traditions (e.g. the Chinese oral tradition, the American oral tradition and etc.) When we talk about the oral traditions, we indeed

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92 Or, it is the grown-up man’s addressing the adolescent inside.
include all kinds of problems in the development of orality; in particular, we are critically concerned with the pattern recognition (cogito) that nature imposed upon the human mind, with which, for example, the cycling repetition of the four seasons of a year could reify the four-line organization of a stanza, or of a late Tang dynasty poem with complete symmetries – they could be simply too artistic. More straightforwardly, the oral traditions inherited both the problematics and the symbolical economy of the nature. All oral traditions were incomplete, although the Hebraic oral tradition was more interpersonally rooted and morally grounded than the Grecian oral tradition. But orality studies, after all, was only possible when communication scholars were able to relate the Hebraic and the Grecian to each other. And this particular act of relating, with one signifier and another signifier which were historically unknowing to each other, was only possible with modern existentialism – it was, after all, “I” (the author and the reader) who related the Hebraic (e.g. Buber, Levinas, Bakhtin) with the Grecian (e.g. McLuhan, Ong, Havelock).

Within the above act of relating, I then propose the difference between an eventful art (an art piece, no matter how eventful, is still an art in imitation of the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word; secondary orality) and an artful event (an event, no matter how artfully represented, is still an event that cannot exist without the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word; orality). Here, the critique, in Boorstin’s term, should be that the current nostalgia towards eventfulness (innately religious), which resulted in “pseudo-events” 93, was in fact at the very starting place of the Greek oral tradition as an eventful art. Therefore, when we speak of personalism as “requiring all of

us to be shamans of a society” that implies the virtue of poetics as a liberal art that teaches the living of a democratic life, it should be reminded that today’s common situation, not far from Ignatius’ being both within the commonplace and at the frontier of the emblematical tradition, is precisely to be at the edge of the common situation – the poets now must somehow conquer the situation of being a poet.95

II. Existential Complex and Complex System

In the discipline of communication, the field of orality studies has been mostly treated as the discovery of the Greek oral tradition, as conscious efforts into reaching the non-recordable unconsciousness of mankind’s collective infancy (primitive oral culture that was unknowing to literacy). But not many scholars have paid attentions to the existential implications in being able to distance oneself so as to study the oral traditions.

In the history of our existential awareness, the proto-existentialists, like Lao Tzu, should enjoy the privilege of forging a term (the epoché as a powerful philosophical start), such as the “Dao”, to be a philosophical-hermeneutical entrance into the worldliness of the world. Therein, Lao Tzu was enabled to offer phenomenological accounts for the “Dao” with analogies of worldly experience – “[Dao is] as careful as crossing a winter river”.96 Without “Dao”, the philosophy of communication in Dao De Jing simply could not exist, for the lack of a powerful epoché.

The modern existentialists, of course, could continue to use the noetic economy in such philosophical-hermeneutical terms (e.g. the Husserlian epoché that inherited

94 See Jasper Blystone. The Pragmatics of the Human Heritage (Long Beach Publication, 1997). Blystone meant that the shamans were the full person in a tribal society as much as “Zeus” was the full persona in giving birth to “Athena” from the split of his head. Blystone focused on the theatrical “ideal” of a person.
95 William Carlos William was so critically aware of this in saying “I am a poet! I am. I am a poet, I reaffirmed, ashamed.”
96 Lao Tzu, Tao, 15.
Descartes’s questioning the world), but none of them could merely use the proto-existentialist’s technique, because in distancing ourselves from the oral tradition in order to study orality, we knew that existence also involved informative systems of complexities that required meticulous examinations. In other words, the interface of the word is both between man and man (I-Thou) and between man and nature (I-it). Therein, to do justice to the “I-it”, a different kind of noetic economy had to be built into modern existentialism. The existential complex, therefore, invited a complex system.

In Ignatius’ time, the complex system he used was the art of the emblem which involved all kinds of human imaginations (image-makings) from daydreaming and thinking in dreams. The emblems, as a complex system, then provided the *Exercises* with good interpretative complexities that made it worthy of practicing and studying. And in order to examine the complex system of the emblems, we then further needed an equally complex framework, as provided by semiotic phenomenology which involved 12 steps (Phenomenological Description, Reduction and Interpretation, with phenomenological description, reduction and interpretation being built into each stage of Description, Reduction and Interpretation) of phenomenological analysis. The aim, of course, was to not miss any nuance in the Ignatian emblems. The way “communicative architecture” worked was in that the divisions and sub-divisions in the grandeur of buildings could be understood as an external memory system, with internal inputs in the personal act of signifying. In this sense, human science, in employing system theories into studying communication, should be the best kind of structural metaphor for human communication.
However, regardless of the merit of information and system theories, a different kind of noetic economy must still be reached, as there is no way to build a complex system in complete parallels to the existential complex. And the incompleteness of this parallel (between information system and human communication) also needs to be expressed, which then preferably take its shape in the rhetorical habit of mind that foregrounds human communication as the counterpart of the way nature works. Rhetoric, therefore, should affirm its incompleteness – an enthymeme should not be equal to syllogism with one-part missing. Therein, it should be meaningfully radical to argue that the symbolic economy in nature should be the same as the symbolic economy of the machine. The “nature versus machine” polemic is then synthesized and phenomenologically interpreted into being a personalism that confronts both nature and machine – “I” am no longer restful in the economical design of the bridge, or the symbolic economy of the forest. In this sense, Buber’s I and Thou (strictly interpersonal and exclusively within the realm of the poetics) should be celebrated as a powerful spokesman for contemporary personalism.97

III. The Pragmata of the Emblematics and the Pragmatics of Communication

Eventually, it may be worthwhile to relate the pragmata of the emblematics, not just to the American personalism (the American writers), but also preliminarily to the American pragmatism (the American philosophers), given that pragmatism also had to deal with the difficult uncertainty in relating one signifier with another signifier.

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97 Ong’s constantly referring to Buber’s work can be understood a contemporary Jesuit’s application and extension of the proto-personalism in the Exercises.
In *From Enthymeme to Abduction*, Lanigan reminded that in the classical law of logic, deduction was with a given rhetorical generality that asked for commonplace examples, and induction was with given commonplaces as a ceremonial practice of reaching the rhetorical generality; however, abduction, which was different from “deduction [that] proves something must be, and induction [that] shows something is actually operative”, merely suggested that “something may be … abduction must cover all the operations by which theories and conceptions are engendered”. Lanigan then highlighted the notion of “desire” (as the desire to “include others into communication”) in the postmodern situation of abduction that considered discursive discourses as incomplete signs.

With Lanigan, as I have analyzed the element of desire (*caritas*, love as desire) in the *Exercises* that involved the genuine uncertainty of “grace” – with the joy of having it, the fear of losing it and the hope in having it again, there was also this postmodern situation of abductions in the Ignatian emblem, as one signifier with another signifier in the hope for a genuine sign. Again, to take the example of Matthew Ricci’s making the *election* “if to do missionary work in China”, when the cause (having the idea to do missionary work in China) coincided with part of the effect (actually going to China to do missionary work), there was an existential complex, somewhat paradoxical, in making the *election* by phenomenologically reducing an “open system” (choices of context) into the rhetorical organization of “to go or not to go”. And as stated, this was certainly not the Shakespearean rhetorical practice on “to be or not to be”, but the *ecarte* (the “open

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cut”) of “a divided self” in making the election (by writing the choices down) that the self hopes for a reunion.

Within American pragmatism, the above existential paradox was perceived by the Palo Alto group (and Gregory Bateson) as the “therapeutic double-bind” in the paradoxical communication. In The Pragmatics of Human Communication, when approaching the problems of paradoxical communication, Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson related existentialism to theories of human communication. Here, for a convenient illustration, in a husband’s saying to his wife that “can’t you stop saying ‘yes’ all the time?”, the paradox in the husband’s saying then rendered his wife into an existential impasse. In relying “yes”, the answer defied the question; in relying “no”, the answer defied the questioner – a dead silence would be then the phenomenon.

The problematics of this phenomenon, in the Palo Alto group’s tribute to Gregory Bateson’s work, was understood as that the communicative agent (the self) became the very psychological blind spot of the speaker’s – the message was indeed “[I say], can’t you stop saying ‘yes’ all the time?”. On this, Bateson, along with Bertrand Russell’s “logical paradox”, suggested that “I say” should belong to a separate realm away from the content of the saying, and accordingly, “I say” was logically difficult to be examined. To put this differently, the excessiveness in the husband’s problematic expression – both with no meaning at all in rendering the audience silent and with two meanings that problematically overlapped, came from the existential complexity of an unexamined self. In this case, with the American ethos, “the examined self” was to be aware of the

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99 Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson, Pragmatics.
necessity of a rhetorical clarity (e.g. the Homeric approach to Eros as “I will love you as much as I will hate you”) in expressing self in action.

With Bateson, Russell’s logical paradox indeed coincided with the rhetoricians’ critical concern with the rhetorical generality – for instance, the category of “furniture” (the communicative value) should not be confused with the actual “table”, “chair”, “desk” and etc. (the use value). On this, the semioticians, with some special attention to “visual rhetoric”, were famous for advocating “this pipe is not a pipe” in alerting against the residues of the rhetorical generality in the visual representation of a “pipe”. And on a similar scale, the Chinese sophists (the bianshi) were well-known for arguing that “this white horse is not a horse” in problematizing “part” (this particular white horse) and “whole” (the category of “horse”). In this project, given our analysis of the Grecian para-emblems, the problem of expressing the self with a rhetorical commonplace has been within the myth of communication ever since the Greek studied and promoted rhetorike. The problem of using “Zeus”, instead of “I”, in expressing the labor in giving birth to ideas, could be diagnostic of the birthplace of the husband’s unexamined self in the Greek oral tradition.

Now, the logical solution in separating “I” from the content of the saying should not be excluded too conveniently. The paradoxical excessiveness of the husband’s expression indeed resulted from both the situation of “no self” (his saying had no meaning at all) and “too much self” (his saying had two meanings that overlapped and intertwined). It may be recalled that when a kid sees a squirrel and exclaims “look mon, a squirrel”, not only the squirrel exists independently of the kid’s saying, but more importantly, the kid is not saying “look mom, [I discovered] a squirrel”; rather, he
became the squirrel in that moment of saying – such existential “confusion” or “overlap” can be quite necessary in the development of human consciousness.100 As a side note, the post-modern remarks on inter-objectivity (against phenomenology) should not be far from the logical solution to the existential excessiveness. The interpretative formula was then not Subject [subject + object], but (subject) [object + object]. Inter-objectivity is more or less a retrieval into the cognitive function of the rhetorical generality.

By affirming the paradox as the “therapeutic double-bind”, the Palo Alto group then moved beyond the logical solution to the existential complexity in “I say”. Indeed, Watzlawick was almost contending for the twofold birthplace of human consciousness as both from nature and against nature: “from nature” in the sense that the signs in nature can also follow the pattern of one signifier with another signifier – a squirrel [the first signifier] moves towards the tree [another signifier], and “against nature” in the sense that “I” [the first signifier] whom catches the squirrel’s moving towards the tree [another signifier]. To put this differently, in “from nature”, “I” am not moving along with the squirrel, or “I” am part of this telos of nature (Zen), and in “against nature”, the movement of a squirrel has a para-rhetorical effect that “I” am moving along with the squirrel (Tao).101 More straightforwardly, it is, after all, not that the squirrel moves “me”, but “I” intellectually move both “me” and the squirrel in saying “look mom, a squirrel” with the spoken words.

100 With Rauch’s work, we knew that this is the birthplace of the “emblematical”.
101 Zhuang Zi was famous for pondering the subject-object interplay in asking “am I dreaming of the butterfly, or the butterfly is dreaming of me?”, but it must be noted that Zhuang Zi also said, “you are not me, how do you know that I do not know the happiness of the fish” in remarking on both the I-You difference and the lack of I-it interplay.
As a preliminary inclusion, the American pragmatism in the *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, has interesting connections with the *pragmata* of the *Exercises*. Both Watzlawick and Ignatius dealt with the difficulty in giving existential accounts for the movement of “I” as both from nature (the visible) and against nature (the invisible).

In critical concerns that the American pragmatism can be reduced to some kind of utilitarianism and the *Exercises* can be reduced to some military behaviorism, more work may be done to examine the notion of “abduction” (in the catching of the movement of the spoken word) and Ignatius’ uses of the emblematics as the “midway” towards fuller consciousness. With this kind of applicative mindset, I shall move to the final chapter that shall apply the Ignatian emblems (the first signifier) into the Chinese contexts (the second signifier), from the historical encounters between the ideography and the emblematics.
CHAPTER FIVE

Encounters between the Emblematics and the Ideography: Appropriating the Ignatian Emblems to the Chinese Characters

In the previous chapter, I have briefly reviewed the history of the emblematics from being an oral image to being a form of art in the Renaissance that provided Ignatius a way to perform the existential phenomenology in the Exercises. By “oral image”, I mean the innate habitus of the alphabetic mind that tried to conquer the word-image dynamic within the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word. By “the art of the emblem”, I mean the particular characteristics of the Renaissance emblem book culture in which the word-image dynamic was examined critically and applied more accurately, though the emblematics became more spatialized with a bias towards the mnemonics of organizing phenomenological perceptions with moral reductions. With this general transition of the emblematics, in chapter five, I should extend the Ignatian emblem – the “prison-cage” was more of an oral image than a form of art – to the contemporary situation of the Chinese characters that have been commonly considered as “ideographic”.¹

The main argument is that: if indeed ideographic, examining the Chinese characters as the emblems should help us better understand the history of consciousness within the Chinese ideography, as well as the efforts to recover and rediscover the original phenomenological descriptions within the Chinese characters. This argument will be formed with three historical encounters between the ideography and the emblematics:

1) from the Ignatian emblem in the *Exercises* to Matthew Ricci’s memory palace in the high time of the Renaissance and in the context of Ming dynasty China; 2) from Ricci’s memory theater to Ezra Pound’s appropriating the Chinese ideography as a medium for modernism poetry; 3) from Pound’s modernism to Xu Bing’s *Book from the Sky* in the contemporary field of visual art.

To be more specific, the above historical movements were: 1) the movement from the Ignatian emblem as a way of meditation that involved the building of a “mediated” (in opposition to the “immediate” and the “all-at-once”) director-exercitant relationship, to Matthew Ricci’s memory palace that emphasized the moral-mnemonic function of the Ignatian emblem. Within Ignatius, Ricci tried to build a preliminary philosophy of time and history into the Chinese characters; 2) the movement from Ricci’s appropriating the Ignatian emblem (the memory palace was innately a performance as the way the *Exercises* has been practiced), to Ezra Pound’s experimental translations and mistranslations of the Chinese characters into English in a para-emplmatical way. Pound (and Fenollosa) was not within the emplmatical tradition, but his approach should help us better understand the modern situation of the emplmatics; 3) the movement from Pound’s efforts to recover and rediscover the original phenomenological descriptions in

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2 “Memory palace” is used interchangeably with “memory theater” in this project, though “palace” emphasizes on the architecture, and “theater” emphasizes on the drama. In Spence’s *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, he used “Memory Palace” in reference to a special case of Ricci’s being invited to teach the memory palace in Chen Dayue’s new book *Master Cheng’s Ink Garden*. Chen was a technological innovator of ink then.


the Chinese characters, to Xu Bing’s *Book from the Sky* as a postmodern take on the nonsense (and meanings) in the Chinese characters. With a rich debate, Xu’s work can be understood as either the Freudian nightmare of the Chinese learned man’s fear of writing (with an emphasis on the post-colonial body) or as the prelude to the potential Chinese characters that could be born with renewing experiences.

With the above movements, this chapter will be arranged accordingly. From Ignatius to Ricci, I explore into the early formation of a Jesuitical emblem. From Ricci to Pound, I focus on the history of consciousness in Pound’s discovering the original phenomenological descriptions in the Chinese ideographs. From Pound to Xu, I enter into the discursive discourses on the problematics of the contemporary field of *visual* art. Eventually, I shall close this dissertation with my own tentative appropriations of the Ignatian emblem into the Chinese context.

**From Ignatius to Ricci: The Formation of a Jesuitical Emblem**

By “a Jesuitical emblem”, theorizing the Jesuitical emblematical tradition is not the aim of this section, especially in concerns with the rich variety of those emblems that were created and recreated by the Jesuits in early modern Europe. Yet the way Matthew Ricci’s memory palace was innately an inter-cultural performance should be a powerful reminder of the performative nature in practicing the *Exercises*. Ricci’s memory palace, which was both a particular case within the Chinese context and a common praxis among the Jesuits, should remind that for Ignatius, compound images could be eventful as much as words are innately eventful. With the implicit movements of the emblematical wit, the Chinese visitors to Ricci’s memory palace, like the exercitants of the *Exercises*, were

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6 See Daly & Dimler, *Jesuit Emblem*.  
7 Ong, *Presence*, 111.
asked to make more explicit both the meaning of the rhetorical movements and the rhetoric within these movements.

Now, Ricci was at the frontier of the Renaissance emblem book culture for being able to apply the Ignatian emblem into the context of Ming dynasty China (1368-1644). Within Kierkegaard’s distinguishing the “apostle” from the “genius”, it was certainly more about Ricci’s made-decision to do the missionary work than about his genius that prompted him to the building of the memory place. Moreover, Ricci simply felt it natural to begin the teaching of a philosophy of history with the emblematics, as he himself began to practice the Exercises with the Ignatian emblem of the “prison-cage”. In Ricci, the emblem book (the memory palace can be understood as a three-dimensional emblem book with four emblems) was not yet a form of art in the sense that art has become the cognitive edge of human experience, but still an oral image in which the word-image dynamic had to be conquered within the diachronic phenomenology of the spoken word.

In comparison to his well-known books, Ricci’s memory palace was not well-received in the late Ming dynasty. As the Exercises was attacked in Ignatius’ time for promoting artificial memory (“artificial” in the sense of being “in contrary to the way nature works”), the Chinese men of letters in the 16th century preferred the traditional mnemonic method of repetitive recitations over the communicative architecture in Ricci’s structural remembering. It was not until contemporary times, with modern Chinese scholars’ critical reflections on alternatives to the “dialectical materialism”, that the

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8 Kierkegaard, “Genius and Apostle”, 92.
9 See Spence, Ricci, 266-268.
10 In Spence’s report, Ricci was employed by the local governor of the Jiangxi province to teach his three sons the memory palace so that they could do better at the imperial examination. However, his three sons still used the traditional mnemonic method and did well in the highest exam in pre-modern China. See Spence, Ricci, 4.
philosophy of time and history in Ricci’s memory palace began to be revisited as an
alternative to Hegel’s and then Marx’s theory of historical movements. Limited by the
realm of this project, I shall review the way Ricci taught the building of the memory
palace concisely, based on the incident that Cheng Dayue, a Chinese intellectual and a
technological innovator of ink then, invited Ricci to contribute pictures (along with the
Christian teachings) to Cheng’s new woodblock-printed book *Master Cheng’s Ink
Garden*.12

In the reception hall of where the Jesuits resided in China, Ricci placed four
Chinese characters, written on the Chines scrolls, respectively on the four corners of the
room. Along with those Chinese characters, Ricci then placed four pictures on biblical
events. When those who were interested in learning the memory palace visited, Ricci
would then guide them through these four character-picture compounds, one after
another, anti-clockwise (writing from right to left was then the habit of mind in China),
and with Ricci’s narrating the biblical events from his memory. In the daily practices, the
pictures Ricci used were from Jerome Nadal’s *Images from the Gospel* that Ricci found
his woodcut copy to be even more helpful than the *Bible* in explaining Christianity, as
images are innately good cross-linguistic media.13 In special circumstances, such as when
Nadal’s *Images from the Gospel* was borrowed away by a fellow Jesuit,14 Ricci then had
to adaptively use other pictures with similar contents, though on different biblical events.

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11 In Hegelian dialectics, the sign (history) itself will conquer the demand for a signified, with one signifier
(thesis) with another signifier (antithesis). The oral residues in the Hegelian dynamic between the thesis
and the anti-thesis did not necessarily set the person in contrast to the sign, as the way Ignatius did within
the *Exercises* and Ricci within the memory palace.
Originally published in 1609.
Taken as a whole, the three-dimensional reception hall (with enough decorative designs for the remembering) with four corners (as cognitive edges) can be understood as Ricci’s appropriating the communicative architecture within the *Exercises*, although there were certainly pedagogical concerns that Ricci was introducing a foreign art of memory to the local Chinese intellectuals, as well as cross-cultural difficulties that Ricci simply couldn’t directly teach the *Exercises* which would require more space for isolations. And it should be noted that Ricci had his own doubt in being able to popularize the memory palace with the Christian teachings embedded.\(^{15}\) However, the memory palace was by all means a complete work. And this completeness was highlighted by the fourth character-picture compound in which Ricci simply considered the picture to be sharing the same phenomenological birthplace with the Chinese character.\(^{16}\) In order to reveal the process in which Ricci reached the fourth character-picture tautology, I shall review these four character-picture compounds one after another in the following.

For the first two Chinese characters, Ricci chose two events in the life of Christ’s, which was then straightforwardly related to the *Exercises*. The first Chinese character was “wu”\(^ {17}\) (武 or “violence”) which is composed of two ideographic parts of “stop” (止) and “war” (戈). “Wu” can be directly translated to “violence” (instead of the more descriptive “warfare”) in that there is a built-in argument in this Chinese character with the speech act of “stop the war”. With “wu”, Ricci used the picture of Peter’s floundering in the Sea of Galilee. Therein, Ricci was able to build a rhetorical connection from “stop

\(^{15}\) Spence, *Ricci*, 60.
\(^{16}\) After introducing the images and pictures separately for the former three character-picture compounds, Spence titled Part Eight as “The fourth image: the fourth picture”.
\(^{17}\) I use “pinyin” (the standard Romanization of Mandarin) here in remarking that part of the development of simplified Chinese indeed overlapped with the development of “pinyin”, though the causal relations between the “secondary orality” in “pinyin” and the “literacy” in simplified Chinese remain to be examined.
the violence” to “doubt in the faith”. A combined *topoi* was formed: those good and bad doubts in believing one’s being able to stop the violence. When narrating the biblical event, Ricci would offer his own phenomenological accounts for the good doubts (that happened to Peter as a particular person) in believing in one’s being able to accomplish something genuinely difficult.18

The second Chinese character was “yao” (要 or “want”) which is composed of the two ideographic parts of “west” (西) and “woman” (女). “Yao” can be translated to “want” for this Chinese character itself implies no moral-phenomenological reduction. As “yao” originally was an ideograph for the female body, the designer of this Chinese character could be simply interested in describing the psycho-sexual dynamic in human desires without reductions and interpretations. With “yao”, Ricci used the picture of Christ’s encountering two disciples on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection. Here, given the ambiguity and the hidden meanings of the story,19 one can only be sure that Ricci complemented “yao” with a moral-phenomenological reduction, though when narrating the event to the Chinese visitors, Ricci would highlight the existential meaning in Christ’s choosing the suffering over the ordinary happiness. The Ignatian element within was: it is only in making the election that having the idea “to suffer” or “to be happy” became an existential choice, within which the synchronicity of joy and pain should call for diachronic expressions. In this sense, the moral reduction was that Ricci alerted of the disciplines’ un-made choice in the ordinary happiness of jewels and cash. And it should be noted here that the complexity of Ricci’s character-picture compound was not at all far

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18 In *Mimesis*, Auerbach considered this to be a keynote source for the “realism” in the West.
19 See Spence, Ricci, 130 for questions like “why seven miles?”; “was ‘village’ the right word for Emmaus?”; “why did only one disciple gave his name?”; “why did the disciples say that they ‘had hoped’?” and etc.
from the “prison-cage” emblem that preluded the existential element of the *election* in which rhetoric should get the content it deserves.

In relation to the second character-picture compound, on the third Chinese character “li” (利 or “profit and harvest”) which is composed of the two ideographic parts of “grain” (禾) and “sickle” (刀) that describe [a farmer’s holding a] sickle, [to cut] the crops [in the field]. In connection to “yao”, Ricci complemented “li” with a moral reduction. Here, the designer of “li” was not without a sense of being emblematically witty in using “the sickle” to warn of both the hard labor in harvesting and the potential harm in wanting too much from the harvest (the farmer’s naiveté). With “li”, Ricci chose the meaning of “the sickle” to be the vice in wanting excessively; he used the narrative of the sin of Sodom to particularize the excessiveness to be the sin of lust. Now, the third character-picture compound could be doctrinaire for reducing the meaning of “profit and harvest” to excessive desires, though it was within Ignatius’ made-decision that those who decide to live a spiritual life should have no financial possession at all.²⁰

The fourth character-picture compound deserves some special attention, because in completing the memory palace, Ricci considered the Chinese character to be tautological to the picture. The fourth Chinese character was “hao” (好 or “goodness”) which is composed of the two ideographic parts of “woman” (女) and “child” (子) that together describe a mother’s [holding] the child [in the arm]. Here, it should be noted the designer of “hao” intended no particular gesture, but the *topoi* of “the mother and the child”.²¹ With “hao”, Ricci provided the particularity of the picture of Virgin Mary’s

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²⁰ See Ignatius, *Diary.*
²¹ This is very different from Greek rhetoric in which the actions were highlighted. Achilles’ mother (Thetis) would hold Achilles by the heel and dip his body into the River Styx, yet without his heel being
holding Baby Jesus in her arm.\footnote{See Belting, \textit{Likeness}, 290-91 for the complexities in the meanings of this picture.} Therein, Ricci’s habitus to be phenomenological in the emblematical way could not be overstated – not only Ricci revealed the structural similarity of the mother’s being on the left and the child on the right, but more importantly, Ricci challenged the rhetorical generality in “hao”\footnote{In terms of Innis’ \textit{Empire and Communications}, the designers of Chinese characters knew that their designs would be used by all the learned men in the empire; they tended to have a bias towards conquering “space” rather than “time”.} with the historical particularity of Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus. Ricci completed the building of the memory palace with a strong Ignatian meditation.

The importance of Ricci’s memory palace to the emblematical tradition should be that Ricci felt it habitual to approach the Chinese characters as emblems. Again, Ricci was in the emblematical tradition; it was both his genius and his being an apostle that made the building of the memory palace possible. Unfortunately, the memory palace was not well received in the late Ming dynasty, partly due to the prevalence of the traditional mnemonic method, and partly in that the Chinese intellectuals were by no means unfamiliar with the “deconstruction” of Chinese characters as Ciceronian inventions.\footnote{See Xu Shen. \textit{Shuowen Jiezi} [Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013). Originally published in the early 2nd century.} Regardless of the memory palace’s being less influential, Ricci was at the frontier of applying the emblematics to the Chinese written \textit{words} in the high time of Renaissance and within the Chinese context. In emphasizing the historical particularities and moral-phenomenological reductions, the personalism in Ricci was a powerful appropriation of the \textit{Spiritual Exercises}. 

washed over by the water. The concern with “fate” was that mothers cannot fully prevent the tragic destiny of the sons.
With the memory palace of Ricci’s, one may conclude a Jesuitical emblem to have the following characteristics. A Jesuitical emblem could:

1) Have a strong emphasis on the *First Week* of the *Exercises* in which the artistic desire in the *first prelude* lead to the birth of a strong moral consciousness;

2) Serve a particular purpose, with Ricci’s doing missionary work in China as a good case study.25

3) Be structured with a communicative architecture in the daily life (in Ricci’s case, the reception hall), within which lay the dynamic between mediating on something “visible” and on something “invisible”.

4) Protect and promote mediations towards action. In today’s terms, the memory palace was not an “installation art”, but was close to the art of rhetorical performance as “re-membered” speeches.

5) Have a strong philosophy of time and history that the users of the emblems (like the exercitants of the *Exercises*) should try to build a diachronic phenomenology into the rhetorical generality of the emblems.

6) Be highly adaptive, with an innate confidence in conquering the cross-cultural communication in the Western-Eastern word-image dynamic.

With the above characteristics, I move towards the modern situation of the emblematics as in Ezra Pound’s appropriating the Chinese characters as a medium for English poetry.

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25 I use Heidegger’s term *pragmata* to highlight the emblem as a tool for communication. When examining “this emblem”, in Husserlian phenomenology, one must bracket the “emblem” so as to examine what “this” is, but in Heideggerian phenomenology, “this emblem” is a *pragmata* in which one has already communicated by calling “this” an “emblem”. See Heidegger, *Being*, 64. Also see Patočka. *Body*, 122.
From Ricci to Pound: Understanding Pound’s Emblematics within the History of Consciousness

Ezra Pound’s appropriating the Chinese character as a medium for poetry may help us better understand the modern situation of the emblematics; Pound tried to recover and rediscover the original phenomenological description in the Chinese characters. To be more specific, within the stages of development in Chinese literacy (from phenomenologically descriptive, to morally and phenomenologically reductive and to phenomenologically interpretative), a significant part of the difficulty is that the moral-phenomenological reduction indeed overlaps with the original phenomenological description, and therefore, one needs to constantly “re-member” the original phenomenological description in order to prevent moral reductions from being non-phenomenological or even doctrinaire.

In Pound’s search for the lost phenomenological description in both Chinese characters and English poetry, he then no longer dwelt within the emblematical tradition that enabled Ricci to equate the Chinese characters to be the emblems. Unlike Ricci’s mastery in Chinese, Pound knew no Chinese, and therefore had to form his own phenomenological interpretation based on the notes of Earnest Fenollasa who provided Pound the basic meaning of the ideographic parts of the characters.26 Interestingly, without knowing the meaning of the Chinese characters – and it was knowing the meaning of the Chinese characters that enabled Ricci to make rhetorical movements from Chinese commonplaces to Christian commonplaces – Pound’s effort to fight the moral

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reduction by recovering the phenomenological description became his own phenomenological interpretation, which in turn provided refreshing insights into the original phenomenological description within the Chinese characters. Even more interestingly (inter-sectingly), in Pound’s take on the Chinese characters, his own phenomenological interpretation tended to coincide with the original phenomenological description.

Now, Pound’s basic technique was not far from the semiotics of Roman Catholicism that a sign is composed of one signifier with another signifier.²⁷ Like the McLuhanian probe, Pound understood the Chinese characters as being composed of one signifier (one ideographic part), with another signifier, and with another signifier, so on and so forth till the meaning became more definitive to the interpreter. Therein, Pound’s work can be understood as reversing the phenomenological perception from phenomenological reduction and interpretation to the original phenomenological description, and his own phenomenological interpretation tended to coincide the original phenomenological description within the Chinese characters.

More straightforwardly, my argument is that: it was not that Pound went against the perceptive order in the Ignatian emblem (Ignatius gave accounts for the phenomenological description, and asked the exercitants to provide the phenomenological reduction and the interpretation); rather, it was that this perceptive order was recovered and rediscovered within Pound. Pound used phenomenological reduction and interpretation to look for the description, which ended up becoming the

²⁷ See Soukup, “Ritu and Movement”. 
original phenomenological description. Examining one of the Chinese poems Pound translated should clarify the argument.

In “Some notes by a very ignorant man”, Pound revealed his creative process in turning the Chinese character into a medium for modernism poetry. Based on Fenollosa’s notes on the meaning of the ideographic parts of the Chinese characters, Pound translated a poem from Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) into English. And it may be noted that Sugawara wrote this poem when he was eleven years old in imitation of the Tang dynasty poems. My more literal translation of Sugawara’s poem follows.

The moon shines like snow in a sunny day,
And the plum flowers are the bright stars.
One may sympathize with the turning of the golden mirror,
The fragrance of this jade above the garden.

In his practicing the poetic style of the Tang dynasty, Sugawara achieved quite a witty simplicity. For instances, in the second line, a more logical order should be “and the bright stars are like plum flowers” with the first line’s starting with the moon, while Sugawara suggested the perceptive order as moving from the plum flowers to the bright stars as some inter-objectivity. In the third line, in using “the turning of the golden mirror” to describe the sunset, Sugawara imaginatively pictured the moon to be on the other side of the sun (less about the length of day and night as with the word “even-ing” in English, and more about the three-dimensional space). In the last line, by comparing

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the moon to be a jade in the sky, Sugawara suggested that the elegance of the moon could be smelled as the fragrance of a jade.

More can be said about Sugawara’s wit, but the keynote value of this poem, in imitation of the poems from the Tang dynasty, was in being able to “paint” a night with the bright moon in the sky. Interestingly, in Pound’s translation, the static painting within the poem claimed more movements. As Pound translated,

The moon’s snow falls on the plum tree,
Its boughs are full of bright stars.
We can admire the bright turning disc,
The garden high above there, casting its pearls to our weeds.  

Pound’s translation involved more movements than the original aesthetics. This can be directly evidenced by the last line in Pound’s translation “casting its pearls to our weeds” where Pound imagined the moon to be “the garden high above”. And this innate preference towards movements can be further evidenced in Pound’s interpreting the Chinese characters. For example, “jing” (鏡, “disc” or “mirror”) is composed of four ideographic parts. On the left side, there is “gold” (金); on the right side, there are “erect” (立), “sun” (日), and “the running legs [of the kid]” (兒). In Pound’s interpretation, the phenomenological description in “jing” was then: “[catching] the golden [light of the sun] [in the moment] of [the rising] sun that erects, [as if the sun has its own] running legs.”

Pound called himself “a very ignorant man”; he knew this technique of understanding the Chinese characters as compound signs could sometimes misguide the translator from the commonplace meaning of the Chinese character. However, as Pound’s phenomenological

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30 Fenollosa and Pound, *Chinese*, 64.
interpretation almost became the rhetorical variation of the original phenomenological description, his misunderstandings often renewed the original phenomenological description within the Chinese characters with unexpected insights. For example, Pound took “kid” (儿) as “the running legs” for granted, with which the phenomenological reduction of “kids” to “running legs” became explicit.

To conclude, not far from Ricci’s building a diachronic phenomenology into the Chinese characters, Pound simply moved the Chinese poems (that aimed to be painting-like) with the alphabetic joy of communication. The seeming opposition between Pound (phenomenological reduction and interpretation in search for description) and Ricci (phenomenological description that asked the exercitants to provide reduction and interpretation) can be reconciled within the history of consciousness. More straightforwardly, Ricci emphasized moral-phenomenological reduction to teach the birth of a strong moral consciousness in the Exercises, and Pound looked for the original phenomenological description that should recover the deadly fixed meanings of the Chinese characters. There was a shared moral force in both Ricci’s and Pound’s approaches to the Chinese characters, which were embedded within using the emblems. Within Pound, the modern situation of the emblems was not in total separation from the emblem book culture in the Renaissance to which the Ignatian emblem belonged.

**From Pound to Xu: Emblematical Residues in the Contemporary Field of Visual Art**

There were elements of Romanticism in Pound’s presuming a lost phenomenological description, which can be legitimized by the innate difficulty in
organizing human experience with moral reductions. In postmodernity, the most prominent characteristic of the emblems could be precisely the diminishment of good moral-phenomenological reductions. In this section, to borrow the term “oral residues” from Ong, we may call this “emblematical residues” to highlight the loss of the moral-phenomenological function of the emblems that used to be commonplace in more oral cultures.

Emblematical residues have been identified not only by critical media studies in pointing out that images can appear strange merely to exploit the mnemonic habitus in the emblems, without asking the viewers to provide phenomenological reduction and interpretation. More importantly, “the discernment of spirits” has been practiced more directly as “critiques”. Therein, it is well known that the “epoché” in Descartes’ first meditation was the “suspension of judgment” which tried to eliminate all confusions from the innate incompleteness of the oral tradition. In other words, unlike the Ignatian “discernment of the spirits” that demanded an emblematical kind of moral-phenomenological descriptions and reductions, Descartes’ way of questioning the realm of reality was by disembodying the image-generating body. In disagreement with Descartes, the Czech phenomenologist Jan Patočka had it wonderfully that: it is not that the daydreamer (who tries to generate images voluntarily) does not have a body; rather, he or she simply has a dream body.

In the emblematical residues, media and communication are divided, and one is no longer obligated to conquer the media-communication dynamic within the diachronic

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31 Ong, *Orality*, 35.
32 This is McLuhan’s constructive critique in *the Mechanical Bride* that one ought to learn to provide his or her own phenomenological reduction and interpretation even to non-phenomenological descriptions.
phenomenology of the spoken word. (This is the ethical implication in McLuhan’s saying, “the medium is the message).\textsuperscript{34} In postmodernity, the emblematics may have lost its \textit{pragmata} as a medium that used to have particular connections to rhetoric – not only as renewing ways of discovering possible means of persuasion, but also as the phenomenological basis of “believing in” that sets communication as the counterpart to the information world (“believe that”).\textsuperscript{35} More straightforwardly, “believing in” refers to the innate difficulty in making arguments within the truth (in the sense that one must divide and differ in telling the truth), about which the emblematics provided a way of expression and communication. This should be well evidenced in the \textit{Spiritual Exercises}.

Here, it may be clarified that in examining the postmodern situation of the emblematics, I do not aim at lamenting that the emblematical tradition in Matthew Ricci’s memory palace was long forgotten. Nor do I aim at promoting the Romanticism in Pound’s dis-familiarizing the Chinese characters. As Ong used the term “residue” to remark on both the problematics of “secondary orality” and the tenaciousness of the oral traditions, I do want to reveal the media-communication dynamic that is still embedded in the postmodern situation of the emblematics. After all, what is the present encounter between the emblematics and the ideography in post-modernity?

To explore into the question above, the Chinese system of writing is still under development; technologies of writing overlap with the development of communication technologies. On one hand, one has good reasons to alert of the ideographic basis of the Chinese characters. As the emblems could be used as propagandas when employed as

\textsuperscript{34} Eric McLuhan emphasized on the meaning of this tautology. See McLuhan and Zhang, “Dialogue”, 246.

\textsuperscript{35} This is part of Gabriel Marcel’s affirming the American personalism in Henry Bugbee’s \textit{Inward}. Bugbee would remark that as soon as he found out the meaning of nature, he has already forgotten what to say in trying to make arguments.
non-phenomenological reductions that discouraged the original phenomenological
description and potential phenomenological interpretations, the ideography can cancel
out the good difference between word and image (the realm of truth and the realm of
reality), and provide supports for bad arguments when no support may be found in the
phenomenological basis of the oral tradition itself.

On the other hand, the historical development of the Chinese characters may only
be more examinable when the Chinese characters have been related to the diachronic
phenomenology of the alphabet. This can be evidenced by the most recent development
of the Chinese written characters from traditional Chinese to simplified Chinese, within
which modern designers of Chinese characters were able to change many of the
ideographic structures of the traditional Chinese. Therein, users of the simplified
Chinese should have good reasons to re-member the traditional Chinese, in similar
concerns with the more nuanced complexities of the emblems in the Renaissance (in
comparison to modern-day emblems). But again, in examining the historical encounters
between the ideography and the emblematics, and not just by examining the history of the
emblematics since such examination would lead to a nostalgia towards the Renaissance
emblems (similar to the nostalgia towards the traditional Chinese), semiotic
phenomenology (as meta-cultural and meta-meta-cultural framework) has been a
powerful interpretative entrance into the stages of development of both the emblematics
and the ideography. One may even argue that the Chinese characters have become even

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36 See Peter Daly. “The Nachleben of the Emblem in Some Modern Logos, Advertisements, and
Propaganda.” In Companion to Emblem Studies, edited by Peter Daly (New York: AMS Press, 2008), 489.
characters and Simplified Chinese characters (Chinese Book Web, 2013) for a brief introduction of the
development of the current simplified Chinese. More scholarly work needs to be on the history of
simplified Chinese.
more “emblematical” (with more bias towards time and history), when both the ideography and the emblematics can be critically examined.

To elaborate the argument above, I shall examine one particular written character among the first group of simplified Chinese – the ideograph for “justice” (義 or “yi”),38 as a tribute to Havelock’s discussing the formation of the Greek concept of justice.39 The traditional Chinese character for “justice” (義) is composed of the two ideographic parts of “sheep” (羊) and “I” (我) that form the imagery of “three layers [of the body of the sheep] beyond me” which can be understood as implicitly emphasizing the collectivity (as in the flock of sheep) in carrying out just actions.40 In the simplified Chinese, the modern designers of Chinese characters were able to change the ideographic structure to “义” which is composed of “a dot [of heart] in the middle, with one stroke to the left and one stroke to the right”.

To examine “yi” with semiotic phenomenology, from “義” to “义”, there are two stages of development in the phenomenological perception of “justice”: from the phenomenological reduction in “義” that explicitly contended for the collectivity of justice, to the phenomenological interpretation in “义” where the designer remarked on the dialectical movement in “justice” with “one stroke to the left and one stroke to the right”, and with “a point [of heart] in the middle.” If indeed the argument is that the simplified Chinese for “justice” has become even more “ideographic” (and more “emblematical”) in moving towards phenomenological interpretation, the rhetorical

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38 The first group of simplified Chinese had 230 characters that started to be used from Feb. 1, 1956.
40 The original phenomenological description in choosing the “sheep” as the ideographic symbol may have been lost, but this is like asking why Jesus used the metaphor of “shepherd”.

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element within this movement was a particular kind of topoi that remarked on the
dialectical movement itself. If one may collect and recollect all the simplified Chinese
with the ideography of “one stroke to the left and one stroke to the right” such as in “文”
(literacy, or “wen”) or in “交” (communication, or “jiao”), the phenomenological
intentionality of the modern designers of Chinese characters to “getting to the dialectical
movement itself”, as embodied in compound words like “civilization” (文明, “literacy”
with “light”) or “communication” (交流, “exchange” with “flow” [of water]) should be
very close to the semiotics in Roman Catholicism as “one signifier with another
signifier”. 41

Within the change of the ideographic structure in the Chinese character for
“justice”, it is not only that the ideography must adapt to different emphasis on the
phenomenological perception of “justice” in different historical times, but more
importantly, the simplified Chinese has begun to be built upon this innate dynamic
between the obligation to make an argument and the effort to recover and re-discover the
genuine rhetorical contingency within the original phenomenological description, or
simply between semiotics and phenomenology. In short, simplified Chinese has been the
technological development of the Chinese writing system to be able to better manage the
phenomenological complexities in traditional Chinese with a noetic economy that allows
more participation by revealing the genuine rhetorical contingencies.

Now, in Book from the Sky, Xu Bing’s imitation of the way the Chinese characters
worked was certainly in the contemporary field of visual art, within which Xu played

41 See Richard Lanigan. “Netizen Communicology: China Daily and the Internet Construction of Group
Culture.” Semiotica 207 (2015): 94-101 for the difference between putting two Chinese characters together
and putting two English words together.
with the Chinese characters as media without communication (meaning). In comparison with Pound’s attack on the Western intellectual tradition (with an implied critique of the Western imagery thinking tradition), Xu’s descriptive neutrality was further removed from the moral embeddedness of the emblematical tradition. In post-modernity, Book from the Sky is open to interpretation as phenomenological description with some reduction and no interpretation. Xu refrained from making particular arguments on the Chinese characters.

Among contemporary scholars, Liu understood Xu’s work as part of the monstrous compound between Chinese characters and English words, which did haunt the modern mind of Chinese intellectuals who had perhaps over-dramatized the liberal temper of the phonetic alphabet. With Liu, Sky was then the Freudian nightmare of the Chinese “man of letters (characters)”, whose traditional training (along with the psychological intensity of writing) in the full complexities of Chinese characters has lost its meaning in a post-modern age. Given that in Sky Xu had a bias towards the ideographic structure of traditional Chinese, one could understand Sky as deconstructing the excessive complexities of traditional Chinese (with heavier oral residues).

However, Liu’s focus on the modern mind of Chinese intellectuals did not address that Xu was not the first one to use Chinese characters as a media for communication – Matthew Ricci did that almost five hundred years ago in the 17th century. Here, a better critique of the dynamic between Chinese characters and English word should be: Sky was indeed in parallel to the post-modern situation of the emblems, with an unresolved

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42 See Liu, Empire, 31-50.
43 Lu Xun was famous for advocating the total alphabetization of Chinese characters. See Lu Xun, Lu Xun Lun Hanzi Gaige [Lu Xun on the Reformation of Chinese Characters] (Shidai Publications, 1951), 10.
recognition of the necessity of moral reductions in the order of perceptions, and the loss of the original phenomenological description at the birthplace of phenomenological perceptions (in all cultures). The question is then: if indeed "nightmares", how to meaningfully interpret a "dream body" that can no longer re-member? With this question, I move towards the final section with my own mimesis of the Ignatian emblem in the Chinese context.

**Stages of Development: Compound Signs as Phenomenological Approaches to Ontological Growth**

In the previous sections, I have examined briefly the historical encounters between the emblems and Chinese characters, from Ricci to Pound and to Xu. My arguments are: 1) in Ricci, the Chinese characters began to be characteristic of the diachronic phenomenology of *words*; 2) rather than reversing the perceptive order in the Ignatian emblem to from reduction (Earnest Fenollosa’s notes), to interpretation (Pound’s take on Fenollosa) and description (the lost phenomenological description in Chinese characters), Pound’s work was indeed within the history of consciousness as his phenomenological interpretation often ended up complementing the original phenomenological description; 3) as an alternative to the post-colonial mindset, Xu’s *Book from the Sky* may be better understood as a "dream body" that cannot remember, and the encounter between the emblematics and the ideography in post-modernity demands even more careful examinations.

In the vicinity of media ecology, Zhang commented on the Chinese characters in the age of electronic communication wonderfully that “Reading a Chinese text feels like
watching a motion picture. How many frames per second is up to the reader.”

Here, Zhang’s phenomenological accounts could be understood as both pointing out the connection between ideographic writing and electronic communication (with emblematical residues) and the “technologizing of the words” as ideographs in the age of electronic communication.

More straightforwardly, reading into the space between the Chinese characters is not too far from examining the silence between the spoken words, as rests in communication and as potentials for communication. The “_”, as the space of silence between the written words, can be understood as the tenaciousness of orality. If indeed the Chinese characters are compound signs in the noetic economy of one signifier(s) with another signifier(s), what are the phenomenological approaches to the ontological growth in the noetic movement of the words, being built-into the characters-words?

To probe into the above question, I propose a contemporary appropriation of the Ignatian emblem as phenomenological approaches to the ontological growth. I choose the river compound for the oldest perception of time. The compound images follow:

1. "River-palm [of hand]". A wrinkled hand is a many-branched river. Hand in closure, a fist, creates a vortex. "I am caught up in the trend of more and more Chinese students are studying abroad. How am I going to survive the vortex?"

2. "River-blanket". Yellow river is the Chinese national identity. "I am protected by that nationality, which differs me from the fellow American students."

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3. "Stream-home". Spencer said that psychologically one will be forever in his hometown river. “This is where I am born in China, which differs me from other Chinese students.”

4. "River-mirror". Walking along the bank of the local river, the river mirrors not only me, but also the city that surrounds me. "I am in the provincial culture, and I interact with the local students."

5. "River-valley". Mississippi cuts the American land in order to form a valley. "I am to understand America historically as a whole."

6. "River-heart". A Spiritual River and the birth of a worldview. Mu Xin said that “if I must name some starting point or end point or some other point, I would have to say that European culture is my John the Baptist, the United States is my Jordan River, and Jesus lives only in my heart.”

It may be clarified that the above image compounds are not strictly Ignatian as the Ignatian emblem also had a Grecian element similar to Erich Newmann’s “history of consciousness”. Yet I try to follow the orders of phenomenological perception, from the phenomenological description in the compound signs, to the phenomenological reduction of the worldly experiences, and eventually to an existential statement in personalism. With this hope for a media-communication reunion, I shall close this dissertation with the stages of personal growth in the context of inter-cultural communication.

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46 See Newmann, History of Consciousness.
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