LIFESTYLES OF THE POOR AND CELIBATE

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ABSTRACT

Jesuits are members of the Society of Jesus, an organization of Catholic priests and Brothers. Through their roles as ritual, political, and educational leaders in the Catholic Church, Jesuits in English-speaking Canada participated in building up and maintaining a Catholic moral cosmos. But together with the non-Jesuits with whom they worked closely, Jesuits were also engaged in deliberate, intensive moral work on themselves, often explicitly attending to freedom, sincerity, and the personal appropriation of a range of dispositions and ideas deemed to be properly “Jesuit.” Morality, understood here as the socially laid axes along which persons evaluate themselves and the world, is shown to be a vital ethnographic focus for a deeper understanding of the kinds of persons Jesuits understood themselves to be.
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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Morality and Ethics

In his introduction to the volume “Ordinary Ethics,” Michael Lambek argues that anthropologists must attend to “an ethics that is relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief, and happening without calling undue attention to itself” (Lambek 2010: 2). The argument that ethics or morality belong to the realm of the “ordinary” or the “everyday” should draw the attention of anthropologists to them as matters worthy of study. Lambek provides a short list of ways in which ethics become explicit, one of which is “among priestly classes attempting to rationalize and educate” (Lambek 2010: 2). This serves, as a decent, if limited, summary of the Society of Jesus.

The Society of Jesus, more commonly called “the Jesuits,” is an order of Catholic priests and Brothers. That is to say, they are an all-male organization of clergy, that is, ritual specialists, within the larger organization of the Catholic Church. The Society, as it is often called by its members, was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 “to strive especially for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine and for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of the word, by spiritual exercises and works of charity, and specifically by the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity” (Pope Paul III, quoted in Padburg 1996: 3). The original mandate for Jesuits to educate evolved over time, so that until recently they were perhaps best known for their involvement in education. Now they are likely more famous for the fact that Pope Francis is a Jesuit.
Through their role as Catholic educators and as clergy, Jesuits certainly engaged, throughout the period of my research, in making explicit what might, by a loose definition of the term, be considered morality: the rules and principles which guide ethical decision-making, for example. This explicit attention also suggested that I ought to be attending to these matters. It would also be fair to say that Jesuits valued and practiced a version of the self-denying “morality” so scorned by Nietzsche, as they were explicit about their preference for poverty over riches and for the service of others over personal advancement (Laidlaw 2002: 316). So deeply-felt were ideas about, for example, the primacy of selflessness, that they were often assumed rather than defended in my conversations with Jesuits. On the other hand, as I will argue below in my discussion of the *Spiritual Exercises*, making these self-evaluations, and making them explicit, was for Jesuits a defining aspect of their moral framework.

I take the metaphor of a “framework” from the philosopher Charles Taylor. Taylor embraces as ultimate neither a particular set of moral standards and rules, nor what he calls the “naturalist temper” which claims to do away with all morality and all meaning (Taylor 1989: 19). Even the arch-rationalist, Taylor argues, who rejects all “traditional” moral rules and principles, “has a strong commitment to a certain ideal of rationality and benevolence. He admires people who live up to this ideal, condemns those who fail... feels wrong when he himself falls below it” (Taylor 1989: 31). This is an important point for an anthropologist, who must render a moral vision of the world comprehensible without losing sight of the fact that it is by no means the only

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1 Following Londoño-Sulkin (2012) I use the past tense in describing my observations as an acknowledgement of the fact that they occurred at a particular historical moment, sometimes at the expense of grammatical elegance. This choice should not be read as entailing that the practices I describe are obsolete or out of date as of this writing.
comprehensible way of viewing the world. The idea of a framework is a particularly good metaphor because it captures the sense that ideas about what is good can “frame,” that is, provide a context for understanding, much of one's experience. Furthermore, since a framework is not a whole structure, it can be thought of as reflecting the fact that while some ideas about what is good or preferable may be shared among people in a social group, these ideas are given shape in moral choices and evaluations which, while social, are also personal. A weakness of the metaphor is its implication of stability: as much as we may value the moral integrity of persons from moment to moment, like all of social life, moralities are subject to change.

I find it useful to take morality to consist of a framework of discriminations between better and worse or higher and lower, and the standards by which these might be judged (Taylor 1989: 4). This framework is sometimes brought to the fore in moments of choice or crisis but is normally a habitus or discourse that is not explicitly articulated (Zigon 2008: 18). These evaluations need not be limited to specific reference to “good” according to a narrower definition of morality; for instance, in some groups there is much admiration for a penchant for outrageous mischief. Jesuits’s evaluations, however, did seem to align with familiar understandings of the good in Western societies: they judged utterances, selected practices, and generated narratives according to their degree of sincerity, or inclusiveness, or orthodoxy, to name just a few examples.

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2 I am not, however, using Zigon's scheme of “morality” for one's unreflexive habitus and “ethics” for moments of crisis or decision. I am using “morality” to encompass both of these.
1.2 My Situatedness

The first Jesuits I met were professors at Campion College, the Catholic College federated with the University of Regina. At the time, I was an undergraduate, and in one of my first conversations with him, Father Peter Bisson—a professor—asked me what my major was. I told him I was studying anthropology, and he replied with the set-up of a joke.

“Why do anthropologists hate Jesuits?”

I was mortified by the tacit assertion that I was harbouring any ill will, and sputtered something inarticulate. Father Peter soldiered on.

“Because we were there first and we already speak the language.”

I have often thought about this joke over the years, especially as I have considered how my own attitude toward Jesuits bears upon this project. Are social scientists and Christians adversaries? Susan Harding recounts the suspicion of her colleagues toward a project about “religious cultural 'others’” leading her to the conclusion that “insofar as academic representations of fundamentalists are modern, then disrupting them may provoke charges of consorting with 'them,' with the opponents of modernity, progress, enlightenment, truth, and reason” (Harding 1991: 375). Although Jesuits have been stereotyped by fellow Catholics as liberal intellectuals, they were also still entangled in perceptions of Christians and Christianity as belonging to a bygone era, superstitious, anti-science, and inimical to progress. Joel Robbins (2004) explores the idea that Christians can be construed as the “other” to the modernist, anthropologist “self.” “To recuperate them to reasonableness by showing, as anthropologists invariably
must, that they make sense in their own terms would be to lose the assurance that we make sense in ours” (Robbins 2004: 29). Robbins concludes, as I do, that if one must indeed lose confidence in one's own worldview to understand an “other,” it is a price worth paying.

As for my own personal perspective, there is no escaping the fact that I am sympathetic toward members of the Society of Jesus, which counts among its numbers not only many whom I consider my friends, but also my own brother, Eric. I think it is a worthwhile goal on its own to make explicit the kind of sense that Jesuits make, but some of my reasons for undertaking this particular project at this particular time are also personal: I wanted and still want to better understand the kind of person my brother has set out to be.

I am convinced, however, that anthropology is a personal sort of endeavour. Ethnography is not science; the detachment and isolation of variables that are necessary to the production of good scientific data are, I would argue, perhaps impossible to generate and certainly poorly suited to the practice of participant observation, especially when its aim is to understand the self as a social entity. Truly scientific study is impossible where the object of that study cannot be understood without reference to its meaning for me and other subjects, or to its surroundings (Taylor 1989: 33). Certainly my personal feelings affected the kinds of interactions I had with Jesuits and the kind of thesis I wrote. This is true, I would argue, of any ethnography, because it requires that the ethnographer have a relationship, of one kind or another, with participants. Certainly having contacts within the Society of Jesus was very helpful, especially in the early
stages of my planning and research. My analysis is coloured, but also enabled by my relationships with Jesuits. I hope and anticipate that some Jesuits and non-Jesuits interested in these matters will engage with and perhaps argue with what I have written, as a number of them have expressed strong interest in reading this thesis.

I am further convinced that ethnography is a useful tool with which to study Jesuits. Pope Francis remarked in a recent interview, “...it is difficult to speak of the Society ... When you express too much, you run the risk of being misunderstood. The Society of Jesus can be described only in narrative form” (Spadaro 2013). There has already been a great deal written and said about Jesuits, from the official documents they have been producing about themselves since they became a religious order in 1540, to critiques from Enlightenment thinkers like Diderot and Voltaire (Wright 2008: 263), to shelves full of popular and academic works written by Jesuits and non-Jesuits in more recent times (Modras 2004; Burke and Burke-Sullivan 2009; Letson and Higgins 1995 were useful resources in the early stages of my research, but there are many others). Much of the data for this thesis relies upon conversations - interviews, informal chats, homilies – often dealing explicitly with my informants' theories about the “good” Ignatian life. I believe this reflects a reality that my informants experienced – they had spent time and energy actively considering the matters I wished to discuss. But I have also endeavoured to situate these theories and ideas in the social life that they produce and are produced by.
1.3 Religion

In my observations of and conversations with Jesuits and the people with whom they worked closely, I framed my questions and directed my attention according to my interest in morality rather than in religion as such. Certainly, the Jesuit moral framework had a great deal to do with ideas often associated with religion – belief in a deity, for example, and the study of sacred texts. But I argue that it is worth asking whether “religion” is useful, either as a category to be employed by anthropologists or by Jesuits themselves.

It is, of course, incomplete to define religion strictly in terms of ideas (like belief in a deity or the study of sacred texts) that came to be associated with religion in general by virtue of their association with Christianity (Asad 2008). Even the idea of religion as a particular kind of belief is problematic in this respect (Pouillon 2008, Ruel 2008). Asad concludes that efforts to generate a universal definition of religion are doomed to fail “not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes” (Asad 2008:112). I take his meaning to be that the very idea that religion can be or ought to be defined, distinguishing it from other domains (like power, for Asad, or indeed, morality) and that finding the domain of religion to be a recognizable entity in most or all contexts, are a product of our social and academic history.

I have used the word “religious” as a way of describing Jesuits, but I do so because of its specific meaning in a Catholic context. Catholic priests could be “secular,” in which case they worked in a particular geographical location and were
under the direct authority of a bishop, or “religious,” meaning that they belonged to an
order which determined their location and were under the authority of a superior from
their own order. The word “religious,” then, was used by Jesuits to distinguish
themselves from other kinds of Catholic clergy, but it did not seem to be much used by
Jesuits to distinguish between different kinds of experiences, practices, or dispositions.
For example, the association between Jesuits and education was a site of some moral
evaluations – some found their intellectual engagement to be praiseworthy, others
expressed discontent with the fact that their academic pursuits took attention away from
the direct service of others. The religious character of these evaluations is not
immediately apparent, but I found that it became so through my conversations with
Jesuits. Whether it was their education, their personal finances, their food choices, or
any other facet of life I brought up with them Jesuits seemed able to trace them back, in
some way, to a Christian understanding of the cosmos. Indeed, “finding God in all
things,” was an often-cited Jesuit catchphrase, and striving for an awareness of the
sacred in seemingly mundane activities was talked about as a worthwhile activity. It
seems to me that forcing an argument for the “distinctiveness” of religious dispositions
(in the manner of Geertz 2008, for example) would be to obfuscate my interlocutors'
approach to the world, rather than understand it.

It may well be argued that morality” only fails to fall into the same pitfalls as
“religion” through its rather vague and mutable definition, which for me rests only upon
qualitative evaluations of better and worse. My interest lies, however, not in
distinguishing that which is moral from that which is not, but in understanding the bases
upon which such evaluations may be made, and the ways they are used and cited so that they contribute to the formation of particular kinds of persons.

1.4 Working With Jesuits

As a religious order (in this case, I use “religious” in its limited Catholic sense), the Society of Jesus was organized into Provinces, geographical and administrative units under the authority of a Provincial Superior. In this project, I focussed on the Province of English Canada, which included just over 150 Jesuits under the Provincial Superior Father Peter Bisson, S.J. Jesuits became tied to a particular Province upon deciding to join the Society and did not, in any case of which I am aware, lose official ties to this Province, though they could be sent anywhere in the world. I did not consider myself bound by the “official” boundaries of Provincial belonging, since they seemed to represent practical realities only imperfectly. Many Jesuits in the Province of English Canada spoke French, and quite a few Jesuits in the Province described themselves as Francophone. Many great insights on life as a Canadian Jesuit also came from Jesuits who were attached to one of the Provinces in the United States, but were living in Canada.

Jesuits live in Community, which I capitalize here because I use it in the sense that Jesuits used it, as a term which stood both for a group of Jesuits living together as an administrative unit under a Superior, and for the sense of common purpose and care for one another that seemed to be an ideal for Jesuits. “The horror story.” explained one Jesuit, “is hotelling, where [a Community] just live together and don't interact meaningfully.” Jesuits were expected to, at least some of the time, pray together, eat
together, work together, and engage in leisure activities some of them referred to, rather ruefully, as “fun-datory.” I spent time among two different Jesuit communities in the course of my research, one in Regina and one in Toronto. In Regina, much of my experience was with Jesuits at work, in the classrooms, hallways, and chapel of Campion College. In Toronto, I spent two weeks staying at the Jesuit Community called Cardoner House, getting a sense of Jesuit home life. I experienced very little in the way of culture shock, since I had spent time with some religious Communities of another order before, and many of the Jesuits I interviewed were, as graduate students, my peers. I did have to accustom myself to the fact that since I was not officially part of the Community, some activities were strictly out of bounds for me. One of these moments was a game night in the basement of Cardoner House, which was private because it was an official Community activity.

Jesuits were also like other religious orders in taking vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. These, also, are terms with definitions specific to this context, and I will discuss them each in some detail below.

I spent about an hour on each of my interviews, and asked questions aimed at situating my interviewees within the Jesuit cosmos and finding out what they deemed to be important about Jesuits. I spoke to my interviewees in their homes or offices, and encountered no particular resistance to my academic scrutiny. Indeed, I found the Jesuits I met to be generous in their support of my project. Some of the Jesuits I interviewed requested that their names be left out of my thesis, and this accounts for my attribution of some opinions and anecdotes to “a Jesuit.” I chose not to provide context clues about
these individuals beyond what I deemed necessary for understanding, in the hopes of respecting my informants' desire not to be identified in a relatively small community.

While it feels strange to write in absolutes about gender, a salient fact about the Society of Jesus is that it consisted entirely of men. Some of my interviews were with women who work with Jesuits, and women certainly figure in the lives of Jesuits, but my data are necessarily skewed toward male perspectives. I will discuss matters of gender in more detail below. All of my informants had been associated with the Society for at least a few years, and their ages spanned from Jesuits-in-formation in their twenties to priests in their seventies. I would categorize most of my interviewees as white, and while the vow of Poverty, which mandated that Jesuits not own personal property, somewhat complicates questions of socioeconomic standing, I would describe my interviewees as middle class.

Everyone I interviewed was well-educated. Sometimes this was a consequence of Jesuit formation, which includes several years of university training in philosophy and theology, but more often the Jesuits I met had studied before entering the Society, in fields as diverse as neuroscience, literature, economics, and Medieval studies. Most of the Jesuits I spoke to were in the midst of their studies, although I also interviewed a few priests working as academics in addition to their priestly duties. One of the lay people (that is, non-Jesuits) I spoke to also worked in an academic context, and the others worked at Jesuit agencies oriented toward social justice.

While I don't think it would be fair to generalize through the whole Society of Jesus, since I was working, for the most part, with Jesuits in an academic context, I do
hazard the claim that Jesuits resemble, in some ways, the stereotype that they are cerebral elitists. In my time at Cardoner House, I saw Jesuits in t-shirts and watching Hollywood blockbusters, but I also saw Jesuits in dress shirts and v-neck sweaters and watching foreign films. They were also not shy about speaking in an academic register or using Catholic- and Jesuit-specific jargon in my presence, and many Jesuits peppered their speech with occasional Latin words and phrases. At Cardoner House, the language of everyday interaction was English, but all the Jesuits there had at least some French, and “French table” was instituted at some meals to support and maintain proficiency in that language.

I am also aware of a stereotype among some Catholics that Jesuits play fast and loose with Catholic ritual. Certainly in their own homes, mass was a relatively informal affair, by Roman Catholic standards. At Cardoner House, members of the Community sat on wooden chairs in a simple chapel and sang hymns *a capella*, and took turns reading, serving the altar, and giving reflections. At the other Jesuit house masses I have attended, the group was too large to fit in the Community’s chapel, and so we gathered around a coffee table, with only a simple stole to differentiate the presiding priest from the others present. The Campion College chapel, like the Jesuits who worked there, was a space that embraced “traditional” Catholicism alongside more contemporary approaches. A pair of stained glass windows salvaged from a closed convent school flanked an abstract tapestry where one might expect to find a crucifix. Music at the Sunday evening services might be provided by an organ and a choir singing Renaissance chant, or a guitar and a few singers using the 2001 hymnal “Spirit and Song.” Jesuits
also presided over masses each Tuesday to Friday during the academic year, and on Mondays a group of Chapel “regulars,” including some Jesuits-in-formation, held a lay-presided communion service. I participated regularly in all of the Campion Chapel services.

1.5 The Official Story

While it is the job of an anthropologist to see beyond official, documented self-portrayals, I think it is worthwhile to explore what Jesuits have written about who they are, if only because some Jesuit documents offer very explicit accounts of what makes a “good” Jesuit. Furthermore, these documents were important to them. All Jesuits study their Constitutions at the beginning of their formation, for example, and I argue that the Spiritual Exercises are central to the development and maintenance of Jesuit moral frameworks. Both of these foundational documents were written by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Jesuits. The Constitutions were originally drafted by St. Ignatius in the early 16th century, with revisions and additions made through General Congregations, gatherings of representatives from all the Jesuit Provinces, of which there have been thirty-five in the history of the Society. They cover the qualities that make a suitable applicant to the Society, the governance of the Society, its mission, and the proper relationships for Jesuits with one another, with the hierarchy of the Church, and with lay people. The Spiritual Exercises could be viewed as a sort of guide book to the Ignatian way of relating to God, but I will provide a more thorough definition below.
Jesuits also studied St. Ignatius's autobiography, which is a narrative of his conversion and his spiritual and literal journeys before starting the Society of Jesus. While through the Constitutions and the *Spiritual Exercises* one can glean a sense of Ignatius's philosophy and spirituality, the autobiography gives one a strong sense of Ignatius's intense personality, as it relates gory tales from the battlefield, moves on to accounts of mystic visions, and alludes to the persuasive effects he had on the people close to him.

Through his writings, Ignatius was kept very much alive in the imaginations of Jesuits – the proper adjective for all things “Jesuit-like” is “Ignatian.” Ignatius's continued relevance is due, at least in part, to one of the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council, that religious communities ought to look to their founders for inspiration. Hugh, a young Jesuit, remarked to me that because of the way his formation proceeded, he knew more about the first twenty years of the Society (a period in the mid-sixteenth century) than he did about what the Society was like a hundred years ago. Learning and remembering history in this way was just one of many tools or techniques by which some men became Jesuits and some people became Ignatian.

### 1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into two parts below, each dealing with a different kind of moral discrimination. Each of these serves, in a different way, to show how attention to matters of morality serves as a path to an understanding of the social making of persons. In section A, I will discuss how
Jesuits and non-Jesuits defined themselves in relation to one another, by examining the kinds of subjects who inhabited the Jesuit vision of the world, the transition from non-Jesuit to Jesuit that occurred through the processes of formation, and my observations on the relationships between men and women and clergy and laity that bore upon Jesuit lives. In section B I will delve further into the kinds of evaluations that were used to construct ideas about what made a “good” Jesuit. These included discriminations according to sincerity, that is, the reconciliation of thought and word that were part of the practice of Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, and discriminations between freedom and boundedness, which were central to Jesuits' talk about their vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience.  

Central to this thesis is the argument that Jesuits and their social lives are best understood by proceeding from a definition of morality in line with the anthropological pursuit of ordinary ethics. I intend to contest the limitedness of Lambek's assessment and argue that, far from being the primary or only way in which Jesuits engage with explicit morality, rationalizing for and educating others is far overshadowed by the moral work Jesuits do on themselves. Moral questions along the lines of “who am I?” establish “the horizons within which we live our lives and make sense of them” (Taylor 1989: 27). These questions point out the very idea that a Jesuit is something it is possible to be. If a person answers “I am a Jesuit,” he cites a complex of ideas and practices that have a history, that are reiterated in social life, and that have moral entailments. Matters of what might be called Jesuit “identity,” of who can lay claim to this “Jesuit-ness,” of being

3 I capitalize Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience throughout this paper to indicate that I am referring to the terms as they are used in reference to the religious vows, and not to their more common usages. I will elucidate the distinctions in the section on the vows.
“Ignatian,” become all the more interesting in an historical moment when Jesuits increasingly rely on non-Jesuits to assist in their work.
CHAPTER TWO: BECOMING JESUIT

2.1 Moral Self-Making

It is a fundamental assumption of this project that, as Charles Taylor puts it, “one cannot be a self on one's own” (Taylor 1989: 36), but in the context of and as the product of concrete social arrangements. A Jesuit may choose to define himself as a Jesuit, according to an internal decision and sense of “what it means to me,” but in doing so, he cites a category, a complex of ideas and associations that is not wholly of his own making. And he does so socially, being caught up in “webs of interlocution” (Taylor 1989: 36) with fellow Jesuits, and with non-Jesuits who participate in creating, reproducing, and transforming the ideas, practices, and relationships which constitute the Society of Jesus. The “webs” are formed in the particular kinds of relationships that Jesuits have with one another, their families, co-workers, fellow Catholics, and casual acquaintances. In this section, I will discuss the nature of some of these relationships, with particular attention to the ways in which they worked to create the sense of being “Jesuit” for individuals.

2.2 In a Catholic Cosmos

The question of which relationships are meaningful in understanding Jesuits is an important one. Here I include not only the ones I mentioned above, between family, friends, colleagues, and so on, but also the supernatural relationships that were equally part of Jesuit daily life. Primary among these was the relationship with God. A complex breakdown of the Catholic conception of God as Trinity, that is, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit, is beyond the scope of this paper.⁴ Jesuits reached out to God through prayer in various ways, by the contemplative reading of scripture, participating in liturgies, or simply internally “talking to God.” These conversations were definitely construed as two-way, though God's responses were not always clear and easy to understand. Both Jesuits and non-Jesuit Catholics also made reference to “seeing God in the other;” either gaining understanding of the nature of God through someone's actions or words, or expressing devotion to God through service to others.

The North American popular imagination has produced some very clear images of Satan or the Devil as God's and humanity's perpetual adversary, but I found Jesuit portrayals of what St. Ignatius calls “the enemy” (Spiritual Exercises 8) to be often vague and abstract. When Father Frank talked about certain “impediments” in the way of his becoming a Jesuit, he said he ultimately realized that these were “false impediments, things that had been put there by,” and here he hesitated before saying, “by the one who doesn't want you to do what you're supposed to.” It was unclear to me, based on this and other conversations on the subject, whether “the enemy” was generally thought of as a personal being or merely as verbal shorthand for the evil tendencies of humanity or the depersonalized forces of darkness.

Saints, particularly St. Ignatius, were also important figures for some Jesuits. I mentioned above that Ignatius was a part of Jesuits' lives through his writing, but I should add that he is also kept alive for them through the Catholic belief that holy men and women continue to care about human affairs, even after they have died. One Jesuit

⁴ An anthropologist's perspective on this can be found in the Introduction to Cannell 2006. For a discussion by a Jesuit theologian, see Rahner 1975.
cited as particularly formative the biographies of Matteo Ricci and St. Edmund Campion, but referred to the influence of the Jesuit founder as personal and direct. “What keeps me a Jesuit is Ignatius,” he said, “to the extent that the Lord can make me into a Jesuit, he makes me like Ignatius.” Later in the interview, he added, “I pray to [Ignatius] an awful lot ... and I have received graces that I know are the result of Ignatius's intercession.”

Brother Dan talked about one of the benefits of the Spiritual Exercises being an opportunity to be “in communion with the saints,” and another Jesuit priest spoke breathlessly about the experience of being in communion with Jesuit saints when he presided at a mass.

I mention these supernatural relationships not because they were unique to Jesuits or even because there seemed to be strong, clear consensus among those who embraced Ignatian spirituality on what the precise nature of those relationships was or should be. Rather I find it important to emphasize that when I describe the social life of Jesuits, it would be incomplete to discuss only human relationships. For people who define the proper course in life as following the call of Christ, or who understand themselves to resist the impediments of the enemy through the prayers of the saints, it is impossible to talk about the moral universe without mentioning the kinds of beings who populate it.

2.3 Formation

From some of the many books written by and about Jesuits, and especially from browsing websites designed to provide information to men considering becoming Jesuits, I got the idea that the distinction between Jesuit and non-Jesuit in a man's life
history must be rather sharply delineated for Jesuits, and I wondered how this delineation was enacted or otherwise expressed. It was often presented as straightforward: after the two years of novitiate, you take first vows and you are a Jesuit. When I interviewed Jesuits, I asked them, “when did you feel like you were fully a Jesuit?” Perhaps naively, I expected that their responses would align with the script I had read on vocation websites: first you are thinking about being a Jesuit, then you spend two years in Novitiate becoming a Jesuit, then you profess your first vows and you are a Jesuit. The ceremony in which a Jesuit professed his first vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience was certainly a rite of passage. After vows, he could append the letters “SJ” to his name, and if he said, “I am a Jesuit,” at that point, there would be no basis for anyone to argue. However, though all of the Jesuits with whom I spoke had passed this milestone, they were not uniformly confident in saying they “felt Jesuit.” This surprised me, and I think it would surprise some Jesuits as well, since each of my interviewees treated his own answer to this question as natural and self-evident.

Adam, a young Jesuit who had only professed his vows a few months before I interviewed him, expressed the gradualness of becoming a Jesuit, reflecting, “I thought the vows would be more earth-shattering, but my spiritual experience generally has been more one of slow growth.” He described the vows as “the next logical step” on his Jesuit path. The metaphor of a “path” of Jesuit-ness was echoed by another of my interviewees, who, despite being years into his post-vows Jesuit life, referred to his “identity” as Jesuit as part of a process of “self-appropriation,” using the terms of Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan. Brother Dan responded to the question “do you feel like
a Jesuit?” with a flat negative.

“That's never going to happen. You spend your whole life trying to become a Jesuit. That's the point. We all live our own version of what it means to be a Jesuit; if I forget that, I'm no longer a Jesuit.” The profession of vows, then, seemed to me to be a performative “moment” in which the right words are said in the right context, such that they bring about what they name, as in Austin's (1955) scheme. But the lived experience of becoming a Jesuit would seem to fit more closely with Judith Butler's vision of performativity, not as an act but as a “reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect that it names” (Butler 1993: 2). By reiterating and citing discourses of Jesuit-ness, by publicly and self-consciously “living a version of what it means to be a Jesuit” men participated in defining who and what Jesuits were, and eventually became Jesuits themselves. One of the ways in which this process was made explicit was through the formalized steps of “formation,” which, far from being a momentary statement, was a matter of years, and was in fact often conceived of as a lifelong project.

Despite the lack of clear consensus on the matter, it was evident that a question about the degree to which he was or felt Jesuit was comprehensible, even important to each of the Jesuits I spoke to. Some Jesuits volunteered reflections on the degree to which they “felt Jesuit” with little or no prompting from me. I would argue that the structures of formation served to mould each man into a Jesuit by giving him the tools with which to think about this question. Each man was taught what Jesuits were like and to evaluate his own life in those terms. The language of “self-appropriation,” as used by
Lonergan, was cited more than once by Jesuits talking about their formation. This language is notable for entailing an essential self that is “appropriated,” rather than generated by introspection, prayer, or social activities. Lonergan wrote that “being oneself” is “a becoming aware, a growth of self-consciousness, a heightening of one's self-appropriation, that is possible because our separate, unrevealed, hidden cores have a common circle of reference, which is 'God’” (Lonergan 1973: 34).

It was neither uncommon nor surprising, then, that Jesuits described the journey of becoming a Jesuit as one of becoming more “themselves.” Adam told a story of attending a Jesuit “Come and See” event at the Novitiate in Montreal when he was considering joining. In the weeks that followed, “my family noticed that I was back to my old self.” He described another step in his formation as bringing about “an unmasking.” Eric talked about a pivotal moment in his process of deciding to become a Jesuit by saying that “it wasn't about convincing me, but to better understand the call.” The prayers, activities, and relationships of formation were talked about in these terms – one must discern whether this is the life to which God is calling you. They were a way, not just of seeing how one's life could be aligned with Jesuit principles now or in the future, but of seeing one's past as leading up to a commitment to the Society of Jesus.

The idea of a “call,” while it is frequently applied to Catholics in all walks of life, is perhaps the signature preoccupation of religious-in-formation. It implies a fairly strong fatalism that is unsurprising, given the image of the self as an essential “core.” The idea that one's Jesuit life is to some degree predetermined (because God has been calling you to be a Jesuit from the beginning) would seem to stand in contradiction to
one of the foundational elements of the Jesuit moral framework: freedom. Jesuits, however, would no doubt take issue with this interpretation.

Freedom, as Jesuits described it to me, was not a matter of doing whatever one wills, but rather to be unrestrained from doing whatever God wills. To be “free” was to be unbound by fear, earthly concerns, or even one's own preferences towards health or safety. Jesuits sometimes used the word “indifference” to refer to the value of laying aside one's own preferences, though this is not to say that Jesuits were not supposed to care about worldly matters, but rather that they were formed to let go of their own desires in favour of service to God.

It would be easy to take a cynical view of a process which has the avowed purpose of teaching people to let go of what might be considered the most intimate or personal parts of a person – sexual expression, for example, and not only the determination of one's future course, but even the preference for self-determination. What is more, forming new members in this way, to be obedient and unattached, supports and reinforces the structures of existing power, a possibility I consider briefly in my discussion of Obedience below.

One objection to a cynical view of formation, and Jesuit life in general, can be made on the grounds that the Jesuits with whom I spoke had a real choice when it came to whether or not to join the Society. Most Jesuits did not seem to suffer from a lack of options – most of them were privileged men, and many came to the Society with advanced degrees and marketable skills. One Jesuit, who was already many years into his formation, expressed gratitude for the certainty he felt that if he decided to leave, he
would be sent on his way with goodwill, and he felt confident that he would probably be offered some financial assistance as well.

One fundamental objection to the idea of formation as false ideology is the fact that it is essentialist. Understanding a life within the vows as the result of false ideology taking over or dominating one's own “true” desires, presupposes an image of the self as constituted, to an important extent, by the autonomous individual’s innate, authentic, and unique desires or preferences. The release from these desires could only be understood as the work of outside influences upon the authentic “self” if one accepts the common, historically specific concept of the self as a “core essence” which may be revealed or understood but cannot be changed without being rendered “inauthentic” in some way.

Certainly, Jesuits did sometimes cite a rather essentialist view of the self, in the way, for example, in which they talked about the interior changes that came from formation as uncovering, appropriating, or becoming themselves. But I consider it more productive to work from an account of the self as relational and contingent. To become a priest or Brother is to have new social roles, new kinds of relationships, to experience changes in established relationships, and, importantly, to develop a new moral framework with which to judge the success of those relationships and roles. Jesuits also had access to some version of this model of the self, in that they recognized the importance of these kinds of changes. There were, through, for example, the Spiritual Exercises, specifically Jesuit ways of viewing the “interior life” relationally – one's mental and spiritual health was evaluated on the basis of one's relationship to God, and was inextricably entwined with one's relationships to others. Eric's sense of himself as
brother to me, as we transitioned from the effortless sharing of our relationship as children under the same roof to the distance and divergence of two adults trying to make their way in the world – he as a Jesuit novice, me as a newly-minted bachelor of anthropology – could not be properly understood without considering both of our experiences.

That becoming a Jesuit is in many ways a matter of changing the footings of one's relationships is perhaps most evident in novitiate, the first stage of Jesuit formation. The fact that a novice had entered a new way of life was driven home with stark clarity in the “Old Society.” Father Frank entered the novitiate in Guelph, Ontario, far from his native Saskatchewan, around the time of the Second Vatican Council, in the 1960's. He talked about how, after the first week, he and his classmates donned their cassocks for the first time. It was “a moment,” he said, because all the Jesuits he saw in those days wore cassocks most of the time.

Many such trappings of the novitiate have changed. In the novitiates experienced by my younger informants, novices had more access to their families and the outside world. Novices were able to write letters without superiors reviewing them, consume radio, TV, and the internet, and even go home for a holiday at Christmas (Becker, 1992:243). But access to the outside world was still regulated for more recent novices. Brother Dan spoke of the challenge of being in the same city as his family members, but being unable to celebrate his mother's birthday or spend time with his baby nephew, because he was “preparing to be available to every person,” which is the commitment that he saw as being expected of him in his Jesuit life. I recall my own indignation when
I learned that my own brother and I would be expected to communicate by paper letters, rather than by telephone or email, at the beginning of his time as a novice.

Like other stages of formation, novitiate was characterized by a combination of prayer in the Ignatian style, education about the workings of the Society, and work of the kind that would be expected of a Jesuit. As in Father Frank's day, the experience more or less began with “the full Exercises” - a 30-day retreat based around the *Spiritual Exercises*, and it ended with the profession of first vows, two years later. In the meantime, the novices were given a taste of life in religious Community and, as they lived and worked together, were tested as to their “spiritual capital,” as one Jesuit trained as an economist put it to me. When I asked him to clarify, he said that the novitiate experience asked the question, “are you for real?” It is perhaps not surprising, then, that when Jesuits spoke about their novitiate experiences, it was often with some degree of ambivalence. Hugh used the metaphor of an emotional “pressure-cooker” to describe the environment as a group of men all tried to cope with a sudden change in lifestyle, while all of them were “in the midst of developing spiritual [and] emotional skills [they had] never touched before.” Adam put it flatly: novitiate is not easy. My economist friend identified one of the purposes of novitiate as “teaching you that religious life is not a fairy tale.”

That said, times of stress can easily also become times of bonding. Even though novitiates were no longer isolated in rural areas and cut off from outside communication, novices were systematically distanced from the relationships that defined their former lives by cutting down on outside communication, and brought close to one another
through mandatory shared experiences of work, prayer, and leisure. I attended an event organized by three Jesuits who had been novitiate “classmates,” and noticed (admittedly as I expected to find it) a strong brotherly camaraderie between them as they worked easily as a team and joked with and teased one another. I also participated in many conversations between Jesuits as they bonded over reminiscences about the difficulties and joys of novitiate life. I recall one in particular, when a couple of scholastics affectionately discussed their old novice-master, with the air of students remembering a strict but beloved former teacher. I am not alone in noting the influence of the peer group in the lives of novices (Becker, 1992: 245). In this way, among others, novitiate provided a first taste of what Jesuit life would be like, which had the incidental outcome of constituting and reinforcing the moral framework that is part of the fabric of the day-to-day living of Jesuits.

The dynamic of novitiate may point to something of what Jesuits meant when they said they valued community life: their commitment to the Society of Jesus, and the obligation to participate in its mission, began to trump their duties as sons, brothers, or uncles almost immediately. This is not to say those duties were ever wholly dispensed with. I am suggesting that Jesuits were trained to be less persuaded by the idea – traded on by sitcoms and politicians alike – that the family ought to be one's ultimate concern. Novices were also separated, if not permanently, at least practically, from their personal finances. Thus novices came to rely on the Society for their practical needs, as well as social ones. It is difficult not to think of van Gennep's words: “The novices are outside society, and society has no power over them” (van Gennep 1960: 114).
But the Jesuit life was not, even for novices, one of monastic isolation. Although the Jesuit Constitutions mandate two full years in the novitiate (Constitutions, 98), the location of the novitiate might be interpreted quite loosely, allowing novices to travel and work outside of their Communities, while remaining in their Community. Jesuit novices may also participate in “inter-novitiate” activities with the novices of other religious Communities. And one of the signature activities of the novitiate years was the “pilgrimage,” during which novices were given minimal funds, and were instructed to travel to a holy site in another city, relying almost exclusively on the kindness of strangers. I have heard more than one Jesuit wax poetic on the lessons in the generosity of God learned through unexpected assistance while on pilgrimage. In one such story, a Jesuit had expected to find shelter in the home of another religious Community in the city in which he found himself, but was turned away. He sat despondently on a park bench, resigning himself to sleeping there for the night, when a child approached him and began to ask questions. The Jesuit was given food and lodging in the child's treehouse, and came to tell and re-tell the story as evidence for ideas about the way God provides, sometimes in unexpected ways. This ritualized moment of uncertainty is perhaps especially poignant given the extent to which the needs of Canadian Jesuits were looked after – it would be rare, especially while they were in Canada, for a Jesuit to be unsure where his next meal was coming from.

Many of the characteristics of novitiate – detachment from possessions and outside relationships, the authority of superiors, an introduction to Community life – would no doubt seem familiar to religious of other orders. First studies, regency, and
theology, the phases that follow novitiate, would probably be less so. First studies and theology were both periods in which a Jesuit's main task, his “mission,” was to study. Most of the men living at Cardoner House were scholastics, in the midst of their first studies. While I was there, I got a sense of the rhythms of the place, and it was similar to my experiences in other religious Communities. People came and went, going to classes or working on their own projects, chatted in the halls or read in their rooms, watched movies alone or in little groups, but everyone in the Community came together for meals, masses, and pre-determined leisure times. On the other hand, the scholastics joked and commiserated about classes and professors, consulted one another on challenging assignments, and sometimes looked and behaved like a group of college roommates.

Most of the scholastics I spoke to were returning to student life, having completed degrees before entering the Society. One of my interviewees expressed frustration at this, saying he found it difficult to be a student when he wanted to be out doing justice. The scholastics I met were still engaged in service, within the Cardoner House Community and outside of it, but being a student and doing it well is a time-consuming task. And while the scholastics I spoke to were not strangers to the academic world, philosophy was usually the primary focus of first studies, and for some this was a wholly new area of study. This raises the question: why is it necessary to take an activist, an historian, a scientist, or a lawyer, and turn him into a philosopher in order to form him into a “good” Jesuit? Father Ben told me the story of a classmate of his whom he admired deeply, who had a degree from the University of Chicago and “could have
gone anywhere in the United States to teach and done quite well,” but volunteered instead to go to El Salvador, to replace the Jesuits who had been killed there. Is a certificate in philosophy necessary for the life of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience that Jesuits vow and aspire to live?

Of course it is not, but the Jesuit moral framework is not reducible to their vows. Until the election of a Jesuit pope brought the Society into the global spotlight, Jesuits were perhaps best known, at least in North America, for their work in education. Jesuits have been educators almost (though not quite) since the Society was founded (Burke and Burke-Sullivan 2009: 81). Much ink has been spilled on the subject of Jesuit schools, and I have been party to countless conversations on the subject of the benefits of Jesuit education and “what it means to be a Jesuit institution” among staff, faculty, and students at Campion, the Jesuit college at the University of Regina.

But though Jesuits often seem proud of their “tradition” as educators, not all Jesuits will have careers in education, so this tradition alone is not enough to account for the resources they used in educating Jesuits-in-formation. Indeed, for a group that expounds upon the virtues of “poverty,” investing so heavily in ensuring its members are comfortably situated in the ivory tower may seem somewhat hypocritical.

Brother Dan, who was not seeking priestly ordination, and had no expectation that he would find himself in a university milieu for much of his Jesuit life, initially questioned the decision to send him to study theology after his first vows. He was told that he needed to be educated to fulfil his responsibility as a representative of the Society. This points to one of the philosophies that underpinned the whole of Jesuit
formation, namely the necessity of producing individual members capable of carrying out a Jesuit mission even if they were cut off from the support of a Jesuit Community. It is easy to see how important individual autonomy would have been in the early days of the Society, when a Jesuit might have to be sent out alone with only minimal potential for communication with his superiors. In contemporary Canadian life, geographical distance is less limiting in the sense that a superior could, in theory, micro-manage the day-to-day work of the Regina Jesuits from his vacation in the tropics, but the interactions I witnessed between Jesuits and their superiors seemed to suggest that a superior giving orders was the exception, rather than the rule. Of course, to say that Jesuits were formed to be radically individualistic would be an overstatement; they were still, after all, a religious Community, and even as they went to university to become free-thinking liberal arts students, they had to fulfil their duties in participating in Community activities, do chores assigned to them by their superior, and have their course of study guided by a committee which included some of their superiors.

Most of the Jesuits I interviewed reported some variation on the notion that freedom is or ought to be a consequence of obedience. Taken on its own, this statement could foster the view that Jesuit formation is a kind of Orwellian brainwashing, but there was little of the dictatorial nightmare in what I witnessed of Jesuit scholastics' lives. Although they perhaps had little autonomy as compared to non-Jesuit students, their thought and expression were not noticeably limited. Many of my interviewees were tactfully critical of aspects of the Society or the Church they found objectionable, and good-natured ribbing of the Community's Superior was not censured. Philosophical
discussions and disagreements were thoughtful and free-flowing at Cardoner House, and scholastics took turns, along with the ordained members of the Community, writing and delivering homilies at daily masses in the house chapel. Some of the questions I asked in interviews generated very consistent answers from different interviewees, which led me to believe that there was a known “party line” on subjects like the proper meaning of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but I have no reason to doubt individual Jesuits’ sincerity when they spoke to me on these matters. The academic phases of Jesuit formation seemed to be designed to generate independent-thinking philosophers, and while not every Jesuit I spoke to felt comfortable in a philosophical mode, they all, at least, had the tools with which to philosophize.

When I interviewed Greg, who was in the midst of his second round of study-oriented formation, theology, he said, “I feel more like a Jesuit when serving others than when I'm studying.” In between first studies and theology, and after ordination (for Jesuits who are ordained), formation took on a more active character. It is difficult to generalize about these times, since they were different for each Jesuit. They were sent to teach and to do Campus Ministry in schools and universities, or to give retreats at Jesuit retreat centres or on the road, or to otherwise participate in Jesuit work in communities not explicitly devoted to formation. Service to others was part of other stages of formation as well, but in the two to three years of Regency between first studies and theology, and an undefined time after Ordination, it was intended to be a Jesuit's primary focus.

Ordination, that is, the sacrament which confers the role of “priest” on a person,
followed theology studies in the scheme of Jesuit formation. By the time he was Ordained, a Jesuit would have been living in Community and practising Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience for years, but to the person on the street, I would argue that the distinction between Jesuit and non-Jesuit is much more abstruse than the distinction between priest and non-priest. I have long since learned that to say at a dinner party that I study Jesuits will tend to engender blank stares more often than not, while to say that some of my research participants are Catholic priests tends to bring out a more concrete opinion, in the form of bewilderment, scorn, or fascination. Becoming a Catholic priest means participating in a dynamic of relationships which spans a spectrum from reverent hand-kissing to the anger tied up with abuse scandals. I will have more to say about the complexities of the role of “priest” below, but for now it is worth noting that although to be a priest was to be treated as a leader within the Church, Ordination was not the end or goal of the Jesuit formation process.

The final stages of Jesuit formation are Tertianship and Final Vows. Tertianship is notable for closely mirroring novitiate in structure, consisting of a repetition of the “full” Spiritual Exercises, more study of Jesuit founding documents, and relatively short-term service assignments. With final vows, in which a Jesuit may be invited to commit permanently and “fully” (Martin 2009) to the Society, Tertianship seems to serve as a “bookend,” closing out the formal years of formation.

Few of my interviewees had completed these final steps, but even those who had completed them characterized formation as an ongoing process. Father Ben, who has been a Jesuit for decades, talked about the way he came to understand his Jesuit calling
in retrospect, seeing how it “all fit together.” When he looked back at his life, it was clear to him that it had been leading toward and converging at Jesuit experience. In this way, remembering was part of the process of making a Jesuit. Using the tools of moral evaluation that they gained in formation – the rigorous self-evaluation of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the reorganization of desires entailed by the vows, an education in philosophy and theology, and the perspective granted by changes in roles and relationships – some of my interviewees came to see not only that they were Jesuits in that moment, but that their lives had been ordering themselves toward becoming Jesuits since long before they entered. Eric gave me an explanation for this.

...as Jesuits we're always seeing how God's action through the Holy Spirit is at work in our life-stories. We ourselves are not the sole interpreters of the meaning of our life's events. We're always going to prayer and trying to see our narratives from the perspective of a God who is active and forming us.

Eric also talked about the habits engendered by Jesuit styles of prayer, inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises*, of looking for the meanings of one's experiences from the perspective of the quality of one's relationship with God, which he said would cast a different light on his autobiography. I would argue that many aspects of Jesuit life had a similar effect – the study of philosophy and theology, life in Community, even coming to see God as a partner in the interpretation of experience would, along with other facets of Jesuit experience, could change the way a person viewed his life story, and becoming a
Jesuit partly consisted, I would argue, in this creative remembering of the past. The
tendency to interpret one's life as oriented to becoming a Jesuit from the beginning was
especially clear as I listened to Jesuits' vocation stories.

The “vocation story” was a recognizable genre in Catholic circles. They were
told in blogs and vocation pamphlets, were shared at youth events, and could be solicited
at informal gatherings. It was a frequent refrain that marriage or life as a single lay
person are vocations, but priests and religious were most often asked to tell their stories,
often in a context where the intention was clearly to instruct young people and encourage
them to choose a similar path. Eric also remarked on the way people seemed to have an
“oddball curiosity” about his life, which also seemed to motivate requests for vocation
stories. Many priests and religious I have spoken to, then, had well-rehearsed vocation
narratives and it was not difficult to persuade them to share.

It was because of this convention, I believe, that when I asked Jesuits “how did
you decide to join the Jesuits,” the response was usually a story which stretched from
young adulthood or even childhood all the way to the moment of the interview. There
was usually a strong sense that the tale had been crystallized and simplified over the
course of many re-tellings. The stages of formation took on the character of a timeless,
repeating pattern through which individuals passed. Particular moments of one's
personal history or of Jesuit history took on greater significance, and one's past
experiences could be viewed in light of the insights gained through retreats, reflection,
and study. Father Frank looked back on a retreat in his senior year of high school, and
alluded to “impediments” to becoming a Jesuit, and said that he came to see those
impediments as “false.” Eric described how the *Spiritual Exercises* led him to move from examining the structures of life for sins to “fix” to examining life to find experiences of love. Brother Dan looked back on his romantic past and determined that he “was not happy in relationships.” Greg reflected on his suitability to the life of poverty in terms of his long-standing aversion to money, even “the touch of it,” saying that he saw poverty as a “natural” way of life for him. These Jesuits learned, then, to look inward at themselves and backward into their own histories and see the ways in which they were Jesuit.

I should reiterate that the making of a Jesuit is not limited to the ten-year-or-so period of formalized formation, but was often discussed as ongoing. It is true that Jesuits continued to reflect upon and refine their understandings of how to be good Jesuits, and, as I underscored at the beginning of this section, to think of themselves as Jesuit more and more over time. But it is important to remember that the Jesuit of the present moment and the non-Jesuit man he used to be are not the only distinctions salient to this discussion, and that the constitution of the idea of what a Jesuit is or should be does not occur in a Jesuit-only vacuum.

### 2.4 Men and Women

During my time at Cardoner House, it was frequently at the forefront of my mind that I was a woman entering a man's world. A woman's presence in the building was by no means unprecedented – the Cardoner Community often accommodated out-of-town visitors, male and female, and hosted guests for meetings and social gatherings. There
was no escaping the fact, however, that everyone who lived there was a man, and that a Jesuit's life was skewed heavily toward the company of men.

A man's capacity to relate to women was a site of moral evaluation for some of the Jesuits I interviewed. One Jesuit went so far as to say that most Jesuits “are either awkward around women or overly affectionate toward them.” He told me that one of the characteristics he found admirable about a particular fellow Jesuit was that he was simply “comfortable” with women. Another Jesuit gave a small start as he entered the dining area, where I was eating breakfast and reading the newspaper, and commented frankly that he had grown accustomed to not seeing any women in his home. Other Jesuits dismissed this sentiment as ridiculous, but it speaks to the importance of masculinity as one of the essential characteristics of Jesuits. This masculinity reproduced gendering practices from outside of the Jesuit world, with some elements particular to the context.

I will use the language of “performativity” to talk about gender, but it is with an awareness that I am imposing my own theoretical point of view on the experiences of my informants. Jesuits, it seemed to me, tended to inhabit a world in which there were two genders, biologically given, immutable, and easy to distinguish from one another. By contrast, in the performative understanding of gender, as articulated by Butler (1993) and others, “‘Feminine’ and ‘masculine’ are not what we are, nor traits we have, but effects we produce by way of particular things we do” (Cameron 1997: 49). The Jesuits I engaged with in the process of this research project performed masculinity in their talk, in ways both obvious – describing themselves or their activities as “manly,” for example
– and less overtly, through postures, conversational styles, and gestures that could be read as “masculine” by fellow Canadians.

It could be argued that, through the vow of Chastity, Jesuits lost access to a primary site for performing a kind of masculinity that might be easily understood by contemporary North Americans. However, as some of my conversations on the subject of Chastity showed, some Jesuits expressed masculinity by talking about their attractions to women, past and present. More than one Jesuit, when I asked him about Chastity, told me that he had considered the idea of being a husband and father, and had chosen the life of a priest even though he believed himself to be suitable for other roles as well.

Edmund said, “the idea of being a dad and husband brings joy, but something would be missing, I'd regret it. I have a bigger attraction to chaste/celibate life, and that's saying something.” These ways of talking about their life trajectories, with the role of *paterfamilias* as the road not taken, are, I would argue, performances of masculinity.

Masculinity need not only be a matter of sexuality, either. Jesuits used the language of fraternity for their relationships to one another, calling other Jesuits “my brothers,” or “my brother Jesuits.” As I discussed with regard to novitiate above, I could think of no better way to describe the relationships between Jesuits who were in formation together than “brotherly,” reflecting a view of male siblingship as I understood it in contemporary Canadian life. One of the Jesuits I interviewed also cited a kind of masculinity when I asked him to describe a Jesuit whom he admired. He said that one of the man's admirable qualities was “gentlemanliness,” which he defined as “a profound reverence for others.” After that interview, I noticed the Jesuit who gave it performed a
kind of genteel masculinity that involved holding doors open for me and referring to me as a “lady.” I recall a moment in which a Jesuit played with expectations about what men should be like. I was remarking on the tidiness of Cardoner House, saying it did not match my mental image of a house full of university students. He replied by imitating the gruff voice of his Superior, saying, “Gentlemen, this is a religious house, not a Fraternity.” Jesuit masculinity was also tied up with the fact that they performed roles like “priest” and “Brother,” which, for Catholics, are for men only. As a woman, I was not one of them and, further, I never could be.

But there I was, a woman in their home, and I have at other times been a woman in spaces dominated by Jesuits. I have had several experiences of what I took to be Jesuits’ strategies to mitigate the feelings of alienation that arose from my being an outsider in this fundamental way. My primary example for this is the one that was used most often: I have frequently had Jesuits inform me or remind me that there were once women Jesuits. This, of course, did not come as a surprise to me after the first time I heard it, though I continued to be surprised that they seemed to feel it would welcome me into the fold. Though I cannot be certain of my interlocutors' intentions in bringing up the history of women Jesuits, the deep-felt connection Jesuits seemed to feel with the earliest history of the Society suggests to me that the comment was meant to bridge the gulf between us, by pointing out that women and Jesuits had some shared history, after all.

This is problematic in a few ways. First, make no mistake: the period in which there were women Jesuits is an historical footnote from the earliest days of the Society.
In 1545, a wealthy widow named Isabel Roser was granted a petition to the pope to oblige a reluctant Ignatius to accept vows of obedience from herself and two female companions (Simmonds 2008: 122). The more famous case is that of Juana of Austria, who served as regent of Spain but lived secretly as a Jesuit, under a false name, until her death in 1573 (Simmonds 2008: 122). There are many women's congregations inspired by the Jesuits and their foundational documents, and these exist to this day, but I consider them to be a separate consideration – I was more likely to hear about them if I pressed the discussion about women Jesuits, or in the context of a conversation about my own possible future as a religious. Usually, the offer of solidarity referred to the four sixteenth-century women, and I admit, I sometimes replied to it with a snappish, “what have you done for me lately?”

The other difficulty is the fact that the early “women Jesuits” seem to have been a failed experiment. Isabel Roser and her companions were transferred to a female religious congregation, and while Juana died still secretly a Jesuit, no others followed her. “So problematic were the founder's own relations with those women who persisted in their desire to live as Jesuits that he petitioned the pope to render it impossible” (Simmonds 2008: 121). This is not to say that Ignatius' misgivings were merely due to unfortunate circumstances or a conflict of personalities. Rather, they were born of a prevailing view in Ignatius' time and place that women could not participate in the mobile, active lifestyle that was part of what set the Society of Jesus apart from all other orders (Simmonds 2008: 121). The stories of the women Jesuits, then, are tied to the dominant narratives of gender from sixteenth-century Europe.
Another common way in which Jesuits tried to reach out to me was by saying, “you're a Jesuitess.” Occasionally, this title was invoked as a sort of congratulation for my knowledge of some obscure piece of Jesuit history or custom. More often, it was bestowed upon me for producing some piece of insight that fell in line with the Jesuit way of thinking, or, for Jesuits who knew me well, for generally being well-aligned with Jesuit values. It seems obvious to me that the Jesuits who called me a “Jesuitess” did not mean to suggest that I was a member of their order in any real sense, merely that I was in some ways like them. For example, I have learned to use the language of the *Spiritual Exercises* – praying with the imagination, colloquy, spiritual conversation, freedom – to understand and explain my own spiritual experiences, and using these terms in a meaningful way often prompted the light-hearted declaration that I was a “Jesuitess.”

A third strategy for manufacturing inclusion in the Jesuit circle was grammatical in nature. At Cardoner House, I noted that in liturgical settings, phrases like, “my brothers” were often amended to “my brothers and sister.” That kind of inclusive language was also very common at the Jesuit-led services in the Campion College Chapel, even after a change in liturgical rubrics reinforced male-only language in Catholic masses.

It would be going too far to suggest that Jesuits were cloistered, without contact with people of other genders. I feel safe, however, in saying that Jesuits lived in a world of two distinct genders, and that, in a radical sense, to be Jesuit was to be male. On top of the facts that the vocations of priest and Brother are only available to men, and that for more than four centuries, only men have been Jesuits, Jesuits were entangled with the
male-bias of the Catholic Church as a whole. By this I mean everything from the preference for referring to God in male terms to Vatican documents that employed a theory of gender based on biological determinism (Helman 2012: 211).

Some Jesuits seemed to take great pride in the fact that they were known within the Catholic Church for being “on the frontiers.” Historically, these frontiers were literal – early Jesuits were sent to parts of the world that were not yet much explored by Europeans. More recently, though, I have heard Jesuits talk about being “on the edge” in a more abstract sense,”pushing the edges of custom or ideas,” as Father Frank put it. I heard ambivalence in Jesuit talk about this sort of “edginess.” Some Jesuits seemed to take a certain pride in standing apart from the mainstream, using words like “counter-cultural” to characterize the Jesuit life. Father Frank clearly saw merit in the way Jesuits were charged with challenging received wisdom, but also said that task could be “a source of trouble.” He did not elaborate on the specific nature of this trouble, but he might have been referring to the unofficial censure of overly radical Jesuits in the last century or the official suppression of the entire Society of Jesus in the eighteenth century.

I will admit that I was impressed, as much as I was surprised, to hear that one of the reasons Brother Dan had made the unusual choice to join the Society as a Brother, rather than as a priest, was because he would have felt hypocritical if he had become a priest when his female friends could not do so. But whatever his private feelings on the matter (and there seemed to be no lack of private support of women among my Jesuit acquaintances) the policies of the Catholic Church were clear: women were properly placed in roles different from those of men, and the tradition that only men should be
ordained has been affirmed and re-affirmed through official Church decrees (Helman 2012: 242). This is just one issue in the broad range of attitudes and ideas about women in Christianity, but it speaks to an important point: while Jesuits are on the frontier, they run up against certain hard limits. Even if all Jesuits were extremely forward-thinking and well-educated with respect to their own privileges and the marginalization of women (relatively few seemed to be), with the best will in the world they could not invite women to join their numbers or grant them representation within the Church hierarchy.

What I have been discussing here, then, as offers of inclusion or solidarity, the strategies of calling women in Jesuit circles “Jesuitesses” or hearkening back to an imagined history of happy co-ed Jesuits, do not do justice to the realities of relationships between women and Jesuits. Jesuits juggled their love for mothers, sisters, and lay Catholic women with whom they worked, the need for diplomacy with respect to official Church teachings, a strong emphasis on justice, and the mostly invisible effects of (largely white) male privilege, and a perhaps “counter-cultural” approach to performing masculinity, and the result was, predictably, complicated. Jesuits may have boasted a relatively progressive stance with respect to women in the Catholic Church – actively seeking out female employees to work in positions not filled by Jesuits, for example – but they exceeded this rather low bar while working within and therefore reinforcing some of the unequal structures of the Catholic Church. The dynamic of inclusiveness tempered by the boundaries set by Church doctrine in the Society of Jesus’ relations to women was echoed in the relationships between Jesuits and the non-Jesuits with whom they worked closely and who participated in, to a greater or lesser extent, the moral and
spiritual universe that Jesuits created for themselves. This was a diverse, malleable category, but I will do my best to give a sense of the people I am referring to.

2.5 Clergy and Lay

I have alluded more than once to the fact that a key distinction for understanding Jesuits was that between Jesuits as clergy and others as lay people. Jesuits, in their roles as priests and Brothers, were clergy, members of the hierarchy of the Church and part of a chain of command that extends all the way up to the pope. Priests had more special privileges and responsibilities than Brothers – presiding over masses and other kinds of services and being authority figures in parishes are just two important examples – but Jesuits were careful to tell me that no one vocation was inherently better than any other. Some Jesuits talked about disparagement of the vocation of Brother as part of an ignorant or misguided past, when Brothers in the Society were more strongly associated with manual labour and priests with spiritual or intellectual matters. But it was clear that some of this hierarchical arrangement, with priests above and Brothers below, was active in Jesuits' understandings of their roles. A Jesuit must choose whether he is entering with the intention of becoming a Brother or a priest when he first joins the Society. When Brother Dan made the choice to be a Brother, an older Jesuit predicted he would be questioned by fellow Jesuits and by others, a prediction that was borne out by Dan's experience, though he noted that the question, “why be just a Brother when you could be a priest?” was more likely to come from people outside of the Society of Jesus.

The laity, or lay people, could be construed as at the bottom of the hierarchical
organization of the Catholic Church, or as not really included in this hierarchy, depending on one's point of view. Especially since the Second Vatican Council, there has been significant theological writing and discussion on the matter of the roles of clergy and laity with respect to one another. Jesuits, along with the lay people who are part of their lives, participated in the construction of these categories in everyday life. Lay Catholics, more than non-Catholics, actively cooperated with Jesuits to construct shared ideas about the nature, meaning, and content of the categories of Jesuit life.

Not all lay people were equally engaged with the creation and reinforcement of Jesuit structures, however. In the course of this project, I encountered lay Catholics who had hardly any notion of what a Jesuit might be, and lay Catholics who had been working closely with Jesuits for longer than I have been alive, and many in between. It would be next to impossible to count all of the people who have participated in “Christian Life Communities” (a project designed to bring together lay people interested in the Jesuit approach to Christianity), the family members and friends of Jesuits who have learned about and participated in Jesuit values and practices, and the lay people who have worked on Jesuit projects and bought in, to some extent, to the moral framework that was part of Jesuit works. Father Frank remarked that he “could not imagine a ministry that didn't depend mostly on lay men and women.” Jenny Cafiso, a lay woman working in a Jesuit institution and who had Jesuit contacts around the world, noted that there is significant variation in the extent and character of lay involvement in different Jesuit Provinces.

A consensus has not yet been reached as to how to refer this diverse subset of the
I have heard “lay partners,” “lay companions,” and “lay collaborators” used (and I know one Jesuit who insisted strongly on “co-laborers”) as well as “the Ignatian family,” which could refer to Jesuits and lay people all at once. Sean Mulrooney, a long-time member of this category of lay people, described himself as one “attuned to the Jesuit rhythm.” For the purpose of this paper, I have adopted the term “Ignatian lay people.” I believe this term side-steps the problems of terms like “partner” or “collaborator,” which refer to specific kinds of relationships and thus do not account for the variety of roles occupied by people the term is intended to encompass.

One of the reasons I wish to draw a distinction between Ignatian lay people and other lay Catholics is that Ignatian lay people were, by virtue of their understanding of the Jesuit moral framework and their proximity to Jesuits in everyday life, able to participate in the creation and re-creation of that framework. This worked, in part, because part of that moral framework is the idea that, as one Jesuit put it “Ignatius said that Spirituality was for everyone.” The *Spiritual Exercises*, for example, were available as a resource for me as much as for any Jesuit. I have engaged in spiritual conversation, a type of dialogue stemming from the *Spiritual Exercises* that is common practice in Jesuit communities, with many Jesuits and fellow lay people.

Xavier University produced a glossary and a manual entitled “Do You Speak Ignatian?” and “Do You Walk Ignatian?” for the explicit purpose of helping lay people employed in Jesuit educational institutions to understand and participate in the Jesuit philosophies of education. The “Do You Speak Ignatian” title was a tongue-in-cheek reference to idea that Jesuits had enough jargon to seem to be speaking a completely...
different language. Indeed, sometimes they were. I have heard Father John Meehan, S.J. joke that “Jesuits use Latin because it obfuscates reality.” In fact, in order to sufficiently understand my interviews with Jesuits, I needed to learn a few key Latin phrases. The phrase “Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam” (for the greater glory of God) is intended, for example, to sum up what is unique about the entire Jesuit approach to life. Certainly the use of Latin marked out Jesuits with a certain kind of stereotypical scholarliness. Latin terms like “cura personalis” (often translated as “care of the person” or “care of the whole person”) which was used in the context of Jesuit education to refer to the need to look after a student's body and soul, as well as his or her mind, would not be comprehensible in their Jesuit usage even if one had a firm grasp of Latin. They could be used, therefore, to mark out those who were and were not “in the know” with respect to Jesuit education.

On the other hand, Jesuit catchphrases like “Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam” and the non-strict interpretations of the vows I will describe below were formulated in ways that could be applicable for lay people as much as for religious. The language was a resource available to both Jesuits and non-Jesuits. By using it, or simply by being associated with Jesuits (either by choosing to identify in that way or by virtue of employment) Ignatian lay people participated in creating a sense of what “Ignatian” meant.

Jenny Cafiso was the Executive Director of an organization founded by the Jesuits but staffed by lay people. In describing how she came to be in her current position, Cafiso said she “was formed as a lay leader before I met the Jesuits.” Although in her own case, she didn't identify the process as stemming directly from Jesuits, the
idea that lay people are “formed” in a way analogous to the formation of Jesuits themselves is an important one. In the Province of English Canada, the last few years have seen a concerted effort on the part of Jesuits to include lay people in formative activities. For example, in 2011, the celebrations surrounding the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jesuits to Canada included a “Congress” that brought together Jesuits and their lay colleagues, and made lay collaboration the theme of a retreat including Jesuits and lay people the following year. These events included a lot of discussion on the subject of Jesuits and lay people working together, but the formation of lay people as Ignatian also takes other forms. As a young woman with Ignatian sympathies, I was frequently invited to participate in retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises, to attend lectures by Jesuits expounding upon Jesuit spirituality or values, to pray prayers composed by St. Ignatius or other Jesuits, to read the blog run by the scholastics from the Province of English Canada, and been told innumerable historical anecdotes from the early days of the Society of Jesus and jokes comparing Jesuits to other religious orders. Importantly, many of these promptings toward all things Jesuit came from fellow lay people, and it was not long into my association with Jesuits that I found myself able to reproduce them. I have even told other women about the female Jesuits, though my own version of the story is less congratulatory in tone than the ones I have heard from Jesuits.

It was also a simple fact that in much of Jesuit work, Jesuits and lay people were colleagues, working toward the same goals. This was by no means a new phenomenon: Father Frank, one of the older Jesuits I interviewed, noted that since his career was in education, he had always worked alongside lay people. Father Frank, however, entered
the Society in the 1960’s, in a novitiate class of 21 men, while the 2013 novitiate class of only six was widely considered to be a bumper crop. Many, if not most, Jesuit projects would be impossible without lay people filling roles that might, at other points in history, have been filled by vowed Jesuits. However, I was much likelier to find, in Jesuit talk about their relationships with lay people, an emphasis on the idea that lay people have been present throughout Jesuit history. Eric said “collaborators are peers because everyone is working towards a common goal.”

The idea that Jesuits and Ignatian lay people share common goals and even ways of thinking was popular, to the point that some of my interviewees seemed not to deem it worthy of much comment. Some of the Jesuits-in-formation I interviewed remarked that they spent most of their time “in the Jesuit world,” surrounded by Jesuits or people who understood what it meant to be a Jesuit, so that they did not feel the fact of being a Jesuit bore very strongly on the footings of their relationships. And my own experience has borne this out, to a certain extent. As I outlined above, I developed a robust sense of who Jesuits were and what qualities and ways of seeing the world were Ignatian. Furthermore, I actively reproduced that sense, and continue to do so through this project. I have learned how to cite certain kinds of utterances – jokes, prayers, and historical anecdotes – and non-verbal acts – attending retreats based on the *Spiritual Exercises*, a relaxed attitude toward liturgical correctness, interest in Jesuit history – that contribute to a performance of Ignatian-ness. I witnessed performances of that kind from other Ignatian lay people as well. When Anne-Marie Jackson described her work at a Jesuit organization, she said that the work they do “is based on Ignatian Spirituality...we make
no bones about the faith perspective, but we want a wide spectrum [of participants in the organization's projects], to be out in the world.” On top of explicitly mentioning the Ignatian character of her work, Jackson referred to her work as both stemming from “spirituality” and being “in the world,” citing, I would argue, some of the ideas contained within the Jesuit idea of “contemplation in action.”

I have argued that lay people were engaged, along with Jesuits, in constituting the Jesuit universe, but if the Society of Jesus were to incorporate lay people too fully, they would cease to be a religious order. One of the Jesuit priests I spoke to put it bluntly: Ignatian lay people “share a sense of the charism, but like it or not, Holy Orders is a particular thing.” Indeed, push-back against the idea that Jesuits and Ignatian lay people were all the same came from both sides. Sean Mulrooney, another lay person who worked closely with Jesuits, talked about the ultimate separation between lay people and Jesuits as an asset – he described his experiences, like fatherhood, that a Jesuit would not have, as “a resource.” The Jesuits who hired Anne-Marie Jackson seemed to have a similar mindset, because, as she reported to me, they had been looking for a woman, and one who was not, primarily, an academic. She noted that while usually her Jesuit colleagues have been warm and open, and enjoyed having a woman to “mix it up,” there were times when a Jesuit had been made uncomfortable by having to work with a lay woman.

It was with the best of intentions, seemingly, that Jesuits and Ignatian lay people came together, and indeed, the majority of my interviewees gave a vaguely favourable assessment of the state of Jesuit-lay relations. There were, however, many sources of
tension in those relationships. Some tension arose from the difficulties of meshing a
more-or-less ordinary working environment, with employees who were paid salaries and
who went to their own homes at the end of the day, with the organizational peculiarities
of a religious order. More than one non-Jesuit employee brought up the issue of
financial compensation when I asked about working for a Jesuit organization. It does not
require too great a stretch of the imagination to suppose that living in communities of
men who have all taken vows of poverty might create something of a blind spot with
respect to the needs of wage-earners. As one lay woman put it, “there is no discussion of
salary increase with increased responsibility. It's simply not in the psyche.” My lay
interviewees also brought up the fact that Jesuits do not pay competitively, and that there
is little or no consistency in the way people are paid across different Jesuit organizations.
Furthermore, more than once I heard of difficulties stemming from the fact that Jesuits
live all together while lay people live apart; for instance, a matter from the office might
be discussed at home, or one might be inadvertently excluded because of the closeness
bred by many years of common life: “they know the secret handshake and I don't,” as
one Ignatian lay man put it.

However, the people I interviewed were those who stayed with the Jesuits,
despite the challenges. They were reluctant to complain of their employers, and hastened
to emphasize the non-financial benefits of working for or with the Society of Jesus. As
one employee of the Society put it, “I feel appreciated... This is important, because they
don't necessarily pay competitively. But I'll settle for being appreciated.” Through this
tension, and especially by attributing it to ideas like Jesuit Poverty, lay employees of
Jesuits recognized that there was something different about who they worked for that had to do with the very fact of their being Jesuits. In this way, these employees helped to form ideas about who Jesuits are, especially in the way that these tensions highlighted the differences between the Jesuits and the lay people who worked side by side.

Not all Ignatian lay people worked directly for the Society of Jesus, but they could still experience a tense separation between themselves and Jesuits through the phenomenon of clericalism. Clericalism refers to the inequalities in relationships generated by the power and privilege granted to Catholic clergy. Some of my Jesuit informants were of the opinion that clericalism was not much of a problem in the Society of Jesus, but it was clear to me that the relationships between Jesuits and lay people of all kinds were necessarily coloured by imbalances of power.

Perhaps it goes without saying that priestly authority is context-specific, but I think this point bears on Jesuits' own ideas about clericalism. Within a mass or other formal Church event, there were many cues that signified clearly who was in charge: a priest wore vestments to set him apart from the rest of the congregation, was flanked by one or more altar servers to hand him things, sat and stood at the front of the sanctuary, apart from the congregation, and was listened to (or at least, not generally interrupted) when he spoke. Furthermore, for practising Catholics, a priest was a necessary part of liturgical life, having the exclusive right to the consecration of the Eucharist, hearing confessions and granting absolution, and performing marriages, among other things. Many of the practices deemed essential by devout Catholics, in other words, could not be undertaken without a priest. Priests, especially Jesuits, also tended to have more
theological education than the average lay Catholic. These privileges were so great (and
the distinctions are often so nebulous for those not directly affected by them) that they
often, if not usually, extended to non-priestly clergy, like Jesuits-in-formation and, to a
certain extent, Brothers.

A degree in theology and an assortment of sacramental privileges do not
necessarily mean much to non-Catholics, however. Father Ben, one of the older Jesuits I
interviewed, remarked that being a priest and a Jesuit was harder than it used to be,
saying that in the wake of child abuse scandals, it could be “embarrassing” because,
“people don't hold back in their remarks.” Adam, a much younger Jesuit, described his
experience of family members ambivalent to all things religious, saying, “they don't
know what to do with me, and keep their distance...The religious thing is weird and
separate, and [they] don't share in it, not maliciously or anything.” Hugh also mentioned
interactions with non-Catholics in his interview. “When I'm on the internet, I'll surprise
people by saying I'm studying to be a priest, just with the idea that we're not fictitious.”
Greg reported that many of the people he encountered in his day-to-day life would not
know he was a Jesuit. So with a range of reactions from obliviousness to curiosity to
confusion to hostility, in an environment where, in Father Ben's view, “people are losing
awareness of the Church as a daily reality,” there was by no means universal agreement
on the matter of priestly authority. Jesuits sometimes brought up these matters to
illustrate the point that clericalism was not as great an issue as it might be made out to
be. For some, it seemed, there was enough perceived animosity or apathy toward priests
in the wider world to counter-balance any privilege they received from fellow Catholics.
I would argue, then, that there is no straightforward way to organize Jesuits and non-Jesuits according to a clear-cut scheme of high/low or centre/periphery. Despite their power and privilege in liturgical settings, among non-Catholics the status of “clergy” could prove to be a social liability.

Interactions with people outside of the Catholic sphere were part of Jesuits' self-understandings, but Catholic lay people interpellated Jesuits as clergy in a very different way. Father Frank also described feelings of embarrassment from people's reactions to his being a priest, but “in the way that one can be embarrassed by a compliment ... what do you do with people's adulation?” Other Jesuits attributed intense clericalism to immigrant communities. Edmund found it to be a negative aspect of the Chinese Catholic community in which he grew up in Vancouver, a community where “there is a clear hierarchy in everything. Fathers and Sisters are always right.” But none of the Jesuits I spoke to (much less the Ignatian lay people I spoke to) denied that they had witnessed clericalism or experienced it firsthand.

Jesuits tended to take a negative view of clericalism, talking about it as an unfortunate reality of their position. One Ignatian lay person I spoke to brought up the fact that Jesuits made the conscious decision not to wear clerics (the black shirt and white collar that marks a man out as a clergy) so as not to visibly separate themselves from lay people. The question of clerics-wearing came up over and over again in my interviews with Jesuits. For several Jesuits, clerics seemed to be a potent symbol for the dynamic of clericalism. Some Jesuits lamented the fact that clerics had come to stand for something negative, and were ready to “bring them back” in the hope of mitigating the
negative connotations associated with them. “[I want] to be proud of it, as a message that as a priest I'm there to serve, love, care ... [we] should be concerned if a symbol of the clergy is causing a bad reaction.” I observed that Jesuits had to walk a difficult line between wanting to maintain separation from lay people, and preserve their particular role, and wanting to be or be treated as equals by their fellow Catholics. Different Jesuits seemed to fall on different sides of that line. An editorial in the Jesuit publication *Promotio Iustitiae* suggests this issue extends beyond the Province of English Canada (Franco 2006: 8).

Jesuits needed lay people, I argue, to support what might be called the structures of Jesuit life. The laity were considered necessary to the existence of the Catholic Church, and were necessary co-workers in many Jesuit institutions and projects. Even the fact that being a Brother or a priest were viable roles in North American social life, and the fact of the attendant privileges and duties of these roles, were predicated on lay people’s belief. The difference between clergy and laity had a somewhat naturalized character – Jesuits and lay people alike seemed to simply see a distinction between one state of life and the other. Even the efforts of Jesuits to work against the separation between themselves and lay people reinforced this way of understanding it: to be distinct was the default position. To remove the distinction entirely would be to render the categories of clergy and laity (and, thus, Jesuit) nonsensical. And so efforts at inclusion could and did only go so far. Jesuits clung to their formation, their vows, and even their clerical power, because they could not let them go in favour of inclusiveness without losing grip on who and what they were.

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2.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I argue that Jesuit moral frameworks are built up in relationships. For all that Brother Dan asserted that they “all live their own version of what it means to be a Jesuit,” these individual experiences of Jesuit-ness were couched within a common frame of reference, and established through interactions with both fellow Jesuits and with non-Jesuits. Some of this was experienced as a relatively implicit, habitus-like moral framework, in which clergy were assumed to have particular roles and responsibilities, for example, with respect to lay people, and women were simply assumed not to be Jesuits. But both Jesuits and Ignatian lay people were actively and explicitly engaged in using and constructing the Jesuit framework to play with and negotiate assumptions of this kind.
CHAPTER THREE: Becoming a “Good” Jesuit

3.1 Both Public and Personal

Catholic priests, by virtue of the role, were given to obvious and public engagement with matters of morality. They were positioned as a moral authorities, physically and metaphorically, when standing at the front of a congregation to deliver a homily, often with explicit instructions as to how to live a good life, according to a personal vision of what that is. Further, as I noted above, it was the exclusive role of a priest to offer sacraments. It was priests who listened to confessions of sinful thoughts and deeds, and offered penance and absolution, which again has an element of explicit moral instruction. Through sacraments of initiation, priests participated in the formation of Catholic subjects. Baptism, for example, the ritual through which one is made into a Catholic, was, under most circumstances, performed by priests. Duties like these, which consisted of so many opportunities for performative pronouncements and the giving of advice, left Jesuits, and Catholic clergy in general, particularly open for moral evaluation as judgemental. One could draw the conclusion, based on the public roles of priests, that their moral worlds were concerned, mostly, with others.

I argue that from the perspective of Jesuits themselves, even those who were priests, these public displays of morality were not as important as the moral work that went on within themselves. As James Laidlaw puts it, following Foucault, morality “includes our response to invitations or injunctions to make oneself into a certain kind of person.” (Laidlaw 2002: 321). Treating morality as merely consisting in good or praiseworthy actions in opposition to bad or detestable actions is insufficient in this light.
– it is not only a matter of doing the right thing, but of becoming the right kind of subject (Laidlaw 2002: 323). Jesuits used a number of what Foucault called “techniques of the self,” that is, “operations on […] their own bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, their own conduct […] and this in a manner so as to […] transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state […] of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power” (quoted in Laidlaw 2002: 322). I consider the processes of Jesuit formation, outlined above, to constitute such “techniques.”

In this section, I will examine some more techniques of the self and the kinds of persons they seem to have produced. One characteristic of techniques of the self is that they “generally involve some kind of obligation to truth,” which in Christianity includes obligations to Truth of God and truth about oneself (Laidlaw 2002: 324). This search for truth and Truth was formalized, for Jesuits, in the Spiritual Exercises.

3.2 Sincerity and The Spiritual Exercises

The interview started badly. [Abbé] Gaudefroy [Chair of Geology at the Institut Catholique] began by saying that he distrusted the Jesuits because they were a secret society; that nobody was allowed to know their rules; and that their mail was opened by their superiors. Teilhard burst out laughing, opened a drawer, and took out the Exercises of St. Ignatius. “There you are,” he said, “those are my rules. I haven’t any others.” (quoted in Modras 2004: 175)
While “The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus” was the document that most clearly defines and delineates the structures and practices of Jesuit life, sources are nearly unanimous in naming “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius” as the true Jesuit handbook (Modras 2005: 175, Burke and Burke-Sullivan 2009: xvii, Lukacs 2004:3, Endean 2008: 64). The text is considered “the Society's distinctive spiritual resource,” (Endean 2008: 64), providing Jesuits with an approach to decision-making, a guide to prayer and relationship with God, and abundant metaphorical language and inspirational imagery with which to understand and explain themselves. The *Spiritual Exercises* (or simply, “The Exercises”) originated in the sixteenth century, though they underwent period of revival and revitalization in the twentieth century, and continue to be creatively used and interpreted in the twenty-first.

One of the most often-cited facts about the *Spiritual Exercises* is that they are not a text to be simply read, but are given full expression only when they are used to inspire a person to a closer and more profound relationship with God. Introductions to the Exercises frequently explain the proper relationship of reader to text through George Ganss' analogy: “It was not a book for a tyro athlete about “How to Play Tennis,” but rather one for his coach on “How to Coach a Capable and Eager Player” (Ganss 1969: 11). The Exercises were written not to directly guide a person's experience, but to guide his or her guide. Regardless of their original purpose, though, the way the Exercises are used today often involves a very direct engagement between “the exercitant” and the text itself.
The text is designed to be used in a month-long retreat, with four themed “weeks” and an Exercise assigned to each day. This basic structure has been much modified and adapted, so that retreats based on the Exercises may take place over the course of a weekend, or a week, or one may devote an hour or so a day to them over the course of a year. An Exercise is intended to last approximately an hour, and tends to include some combination of several typical elements: an opening prayer, a request for a particular “grace” associated with that Exercise, the imaginative contemplation of a scene from the Bible (or, less often, a non-scriptural Catholic stories), and a “colloquy,” a conversation with God the Father or another figure, like Christ or Mary.

The purpose, as defined in the text, is “preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul” (Spiritual Exercises 1). The Exercises have been presented to me by my many teachers on the subject as having the goal I cited above, that of a deeper relationship with the divine. In a 2012 homily at Campion College, Father Frank called the Exercises “a way to fall in love with God.” The Exercises were also used, however, as a means to make a decision. They were used in this way in the early stages of Jesuit formation, to help novices determine whether they ought to dedicate their lives to the Society of Jesus, and I have often been encouraged to undertake my own “full” forty-day retreat in order to help face decisions about where to go in life once I have finished my current course of study.

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5 I have chosen here to follow established convention in writing about the Exercises by citing specific passages according to the numbered paragraph or section rather than by page number. I believe this will enable the reader to find the passage in question conveniently, regardless of the version or translation used.
The process of making a decision using the Exercises or other elements of the Ignatian Spirituality “package” is referred to as “discernment,” and those who talked about it cited “religious” elements of the process to a greater or lesser extent. On one level, Ignatian discernment involved the deep and conscious examination of one's thoughts, feelings, and reactions, both by examination of one's life history, and by attending to them as one experiences the contemplations of the *Spiritual Exercises* and/or one's everyday life. On this level, it was like other Christian practices, such as confession, that enabled the participant to understand his or her thoughts in light of his or her relationship with God, and thus form or transform his or her self by “registering all the ways in which that self makes itself felt” (Laidlaw 2002: 325-6). This interpretation, however, may be limited by its over-emphasis on individual, independent experience. This emphasis is certainly present in the Exercises, with their imaginative contemplations and attention to affective dispositions. But, as I have been reminded by more than one Jesuit, discernment does not “count” unless it includes one's Superior. In the context of a retreat, that position was held, at least for practical purposes, by one's Spiritual Director, who could be a Jesuit, but could also be anyone trained for the purpose.

My own experiences as an “exercitant” included a couple of weekend retreats, an eight-day retreat, and an ongoing “retreat in daily life” or “Annotation 19,” which is named for the paragraph in the text of the Exercises that allows for an hour-a-day schedule, for those who are not able to leave aside their responsibilities for the full four weeks. In all of these cases, a meeting with a Spiritual Director has followed a
recognizable pattern. The meetings have been in small rooms, with myself and the Director seated across from one another in comfortable chairs, with the door closed. It is not unheard-of for Spiritual Direction to take place using voice-over IP software, but my own experiences have all involved face-to-face meetings. I often exchanged pleasantries, or information on the practical arrangements of the retreat, or trivial comments about the weather with my Directors, but the meetings really began when he or she had said an opening prayer, usually ad-libbed, usually inviting the Holy Spirit to be present or to guide the conversation or the retreat more generally. Then he or she might ask some open-ended question about my prayer experience since the last time we had met. And then the exercitant poured out her heart. The Director’s task, as it has been articulated to me and in my experience, was to listen actively, and to help the exercitant to understand his or her experience so as to know how to proceed. I have been told that this should not take the form of explicit instructions, but that the Director’s role is to pay attention to or interpret the action of God in the exercitant’s experience.

Webb Keane discusses sincerity according to its “common” English-language usage, and notes that the concept is, in Western linguistic ideologies, part of a scheme in which words are subordinated to thoughts, under which lies the assumption that words and thoughts are “parallel discourses (interior and exterior) such that they either could or could not match up” (Keane 2002: 74). At the heart of the Spiritual Exercises was the truth-speaking encounter outlined above, which seems built on the assumption that the parallel discourses of one's words and thoughts should be brought into alignment, that one should be, in a word, sincere. Even when not actively engaged in a retreat as such,
the Jesuits in English Canada were expected to meet regularly with a Spiritual Director, and the Community at Cardoner House incorporated an evening of formal “Spiritual Conversation” into their schedule about once a month. This practice of engaging in a particular kind of talk with a Spiritual Director or with a group on matters of one's prayer experiences and spiritual “movements,” can be thought of as an end in itself. Part of the rationale for talking to a Spiritual Director may involve enabling him or her to advise you better, and part of the rationale for group Spiritual Conversation may be to identify common concerns and generate an *esprit de corps* in a Jesuit Community, but these encounters would be considered worthwhile even if they failed on both these counts.

The notion of speech as parallel to thought was reinforced by the fact that Jesuits were also expected to pray individually, in addition to their group prayer activities. They were particularly encouraged (and particularly encouraged others) to engage in a daily “examen,” a prayer of intense introspection. Prayer was thus not complete unless it involved both inward experience and outward expression.

Another way of framing this notion of sincerity is to say that it was not enough for a Jesuit to gain some insight from an experience of prayer, he also needed to “share.” In my own experiences with the *Exercises*, I found it quite easy to get caught up in what I have come to call an “atmosphere” of sharing. It is quite common, for example, for retreats based on the *Spiritual Exercises* to be “silent.” On one such retreat, I spent eight days in “silence” at Loyola House, a Jesuit retreat centre on the outskirts of Guelph, Ontario. I place “silence” in quotation marks because I do not want to suggest that all noise or even all speech was prohibited. The retreat organizers made it clear that they
expected cell phones, alarm clocks, and other noise-making devices to be turned off, and
casual conversations and pleasantries were dispensed with, but there were prescribed
moments of sharing. This included daily conversations with my Spiritual Director, daily
small-group conversations, and several experiences of sharing with all of the
approximately thirty participants in the retreat. While this may give the impression of
quite a lot of chatter, one needs only to sit in a crowded dining room, sharing a meal in
close quarters with a group of silent strangers, staring at a plate or out the window to
avoid eye contact, to see how a retreat’s “silence” is a great and sometimes
uncomfortable departure from everyday life. The rationale for many of the trappings of
such retreats, from their taking place in locations outside the city to the silence to the
expectation that retreatants will eschew communication with the outside world was that
these things minimize “distraction” and allow for more direct communication with God.

More to the point, these restrictions meant that the only substantive conversations
I was permitted in the course of a retreat day were in this mode of “sharing,” of revealing
the results of deep introspection to others. Though I can't speak for my fellow
retreatants' experiences, after nearly eight full days, I found the pattern of contemplation
and sharing had become a habit. In the days that followed, I caught myself being over-
truthful with family members and acquaintances, expressing my inner feelings in a way
that was mildly embarrassing in retrospect. I felt something similar during my two-week
stay at Cardoner House. The Community there included, along with my older brother, a
few men I had met only once or twice before, and several others I was meeting for the
first time. I must admit that at first I was surprised by the degree of frankness and
intimacy with which they spoke to me in interviews. I had been concerned about the fact of my position as an outsider (and a female one at that), and the formality of our conversations, which began with the signing of a consent form and continued with my taking notes on all they said. I thought this would mean that the Jesuits I spoke to would be politely reserved, as I felt I would have been if I had been in their position. I also assumed I would be battling unspoken taboos, since I would be dealing with matters of sexuality, personal finances, and intra-Society politics. Further, I found I had unwittingly bought into a stereotype of which I myself have been a victim, that of imagining devout Christians to be prudish and emotionally repressed. I was surprised to find that many of my interviewees were open, even casual about discussing their emotions, talking freely about the emotions around intimate subjects like the death of a family member, the fears and difficulties of life before and during their time with the Society, and interpersonal conflicts with fellow Jesuits.

One particularly notable instance was an interview I conducted with a Jesuit, not much older than myself, whom I had met only the previous day. I asked him to talk about his experience of the vow of Chastity, and he said that while he didn't find Chastity difficult at this particular period in his life, it had been more of a challenge earlier in his formation. He elaborated on this for some time, then paused rather suddenly. He told me that he was struggling not to censor himself. I was surprised, since I felt it would have been unreasonable to expect the level of intimate conversation he was offering on the strength of a single dinner-party meeting, or my position as a researcher or as the sister of his friend. But this incident added strength to a growing impression about
certain kinds of conversations involving Jesuits – that sincerity was often given priority over polite restraint. It is also possible, since my interviewees were seated across from me in a small room as I asked leading questions, that the situation was more comfortable and familiar for Jesuits than I had anticipated.

Thus far, however, I have given a decidedly incomplete account of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatian discernment is often talked about, to be sure, in the terms I have used above, as consisting of careful examination of one's interior state. I would argue that this is, in some ways, a defense mechanism. The process may be referred to as “the discernment of spirits,” and I believe that the “spirits” were sometimes left out of talk about these matters for fear of being misunderstood. One of my Jesuit interlocutors ruefully told me that he had used the language of spirits in talking to his family, who were what he called “non-practicing” Christians, and found that they were immediately suspicious of the idea.

In the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius refers to “the good spirit” or “the good angel” and “the evil spirit” or “the enemy,” which are external agencies, either of which could bring about “interior movements” like anxiety or sadness, a sting of conscience, courage, inspiration, or happiness. These movements are placed in two broad categories. “Consolation” is “when an interior movement is aroused in the soul by which it is inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord ... [and] every increase of faith, hope, and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one's soul by filling it with peace and quiet with its Creator and Lord.” (*Spiritual Exercises* 314-316). Conversely, “desolation” is “darkness of soul, turmoil of
spirit, inclination to what is low and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbances and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love. The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated, as it were, from its Creator and Lord” (Spiritual Exercises 314-317). The language of consolation and desolation is one clue to the extent to which the Spiritual Exercises inform Jesuits' everyday lives. At Cardoner House, Jesuits frequently used these terms to characterize their experiences. Moving moments were described as “consoling,” a period of unrest and indecision was “a time of desolation.” It is important to note that these are not straightforward stand-ins for terms like happy and sad or positive and negative, but “in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us ... [and] in desolation the evil spirit guides and counsels” (Spiritual Exercises 318). In my instruction on the Spiritual Exercises, from Jesuits and lay people, I was told repeatedly that consolation and desolation refer instead to closeness to or distance from God.

The distinction between “happy” and “guided by the good spirit” is an important one for the idea of sincerity, “which presupposes a self that knows itself. To be sincere, for words to match thoughts, those thoughts must be no more ambiguous or opaque than the words that express them. Moreover, both thoughts and words must be fully under the control of the speaking self” (Keane 2002: 75). I was told, as I learned about the Exercises, that it is not always clear, when one is experiencing a moment, whether it is one of consolation or desolation, so one must pray and reflect after the fact in order to determine which it was. One of the titular “exercises” is to evaluate one's actions, and especially one's thoughts and feelings, on the basis of whether they are moving closer to
or further from God. The rather obscure stated objectives of the Exercises, “finding the will of God” (*Spiritual Exercises* 1) or “falling in love with God” are clarified in this light. Elsewhere, the purpose is stated as “the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment” (*Spiritual Exercises* 21). The goal is to free oneself from the manipulation of the “evil spirit” or “inordinate attachments,” that is, selfish desires, in order to sincerely desire to think, feel, and act virtuously, which would be defined in the Exercises as thoughts, feelings, and actions that God desires.⁶

I would not expect immediate agreement from many Jesuits if I suggested a comparison between the *Spiritual Exercises* and nineteenth-century etiquette manuals. But Shirley Yeung's (2010) discussion of the relationship between etiquette and ethics provides a potentially illuminating approach to the Exercises. Yeung argues that etiquette manuals placed emphasis “not only on acquiring a set of procedures for social interaction but on acquiring the qualities of character that etiquette intended to express (Yeung 2010: 236). She cites a phrase from Charles Hirschkind's 2001 paper on Egyptian cassette sermons that could have been lifted straight from the *Spiritual Exercises*: speech could “act on the heart and reform it” (quoted in Yeung 2010: 236).

The *Spiritual Exercises* could be distinguished from other Catholic manuals for or practices of prayer in that the Exercises are intended to produce, and seemed to be successful in producing, a subject who sincerely feels a particular set of desirable emotions and dispositions. The Exercises express a particular relationship to the Divine,

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⁶ This idea of freedom will be discussed further below, with reference to the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience
but do so by explicitly setting out to generate that kind of relationship. Yeung identifies sincerity as “as much the result of disciplined cultivation as it is the quality of outright earnestness” (Yeung 2010: 244). That sincerity must be cultivated fits neatly into the Jesuit worldview, in which persons were subject to the predations of malicious agencies that sought to interfere with one's emotions and reactions. In this worldview, one cannot simply choose to love God sincerely and wholeheartedly, one must work to attain that goal. It is this moral work on the self that is the origin of the “exercise” metaphor. “For just as taking a walk, journeying on foot, and running are bodily exercises, so we call Spiritual Exercises every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments and...seeking and finding the will of God…” (Spiritual Exercises 1).

3.3 Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

"This is servitude: To serve th'unwise or him who hath rebelled

Against his worthier as thine now serve thee,

Thyself not free but to thyself enthralled...."  
- John Milton, Paradise Lost, VI, ll.178-81

“Well, the fullness of freedom is in Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience.” These words were said matter-of-factly, without a trace of irony and no sense that I might be surprised by it. Certainly, it seemed ironic to me, especially since the young Jesuit who said it declined to have his name used in this paper, citing the possible objection of his
Superior. However, as I interviewed more Jesuits, I came to see it as less and less surprising. As paradoxical as it sounds, nearly every Jesuit I spoke to identified the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience as means of increasing one's freedom. Like sincerity, freedom needed to be cultivated, and living out these vows was understood as a way to do so.

This is not to say that the Jesuits I spoke to did not comprehend my confusion at the idea that the restriction of property ownership, sexual expression, and personal decision-making should be construed as freedom. Indeed, they seemed to share a sense that the vows were not generally very well understood, even by fellow Catholics. To a man, all of the Jesuits I interviewed were prepared with explanations of what the vows really mean, as opposed to common misconceptions.

When I prompted him to philosophize on the vows in general, one of my interviewees said that even decades after joining the Society, he still saw vowing Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience as essentially, “what you did to become a Jesuit.” There is a great deal of truth in this idea, that taking vows was an important aspect of the moral making of a Jesuit. Another of the priests I interviewed said, “by taking vows, you sort of agree not to fit. The call of Christ, to the disciples and others, is a call to shared poverty, to zeal for service, to not being at home in the world...Our ultimate destination is not here, but union with God.” This sense, that living out one's vows set one apart as different from the ordinary progression of social life, ran through my conversations. I hope to make it clear, though, that committing to Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience by taking vows was a way that Jesuits defined and understood what it means to be a Jesuit.
every day, not just in the moment that they profess those vows.

I was reminded by more than one Jesuit that distinguishing between the vows is merely an illusion, that they are all really just one vow. This became comprehensible to me as I listened to the way the same philosophical underpinnings, of freedom and the complete surrender of oneself to God, were equally evident in Jesuits' discussions of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. For now, I will consider them separately, so as to get a sense of the nuances of each vow.

3.3.1 Poverty

I conducted many of my interviews in the parlour at Cardoner House. The setting brought the apparent contradiction of Jesuit Poverty into stark relief. It was remarked upon by Hugh, a young Jesuit who described the family he grew up in as “the top of lower class.” Citing the common benchmark that a religious Community should be modelled after “a family of simple means,” he described Jesuit life as “a step up” from his former life. He waved his hand at the ornamental chessboard in the room and said he sometimes felt overwhelmed by the decor in Jesuit houses. While the Province of English Canada had a history of taking in some of the people the more class-conscious Northern US and French-Canadian Jesuits would not, he told me, there was still “upper-class” influence feeding in from the universities.

Each Jesuit was given a regular stipend, which I was told was $300-400 per month for everyone, from students to fully-formed Fathers. The Jesuit who told me this described this “personalia” as “generous.” Another told me that the high maximum for personalia had become a problem in recent years, and applauded the late Provincial
Superior's decision not to cut the amount, but to express his thanks to those who decided to spend less. Jesuits tended not to gossip in interviews about particular Jesuits who were scandalously spendthrift, except in the vaguest possible terms. It seemed that the everyday expression of the vow of Poverty lay not in policing infractions like over-spending or indulgence in luxuries, but rather in cultivating an attitude of Poverty. Here I turn again to Shirley Yeung's (2010) insight, that the outward signs of ethics (in this case, Poverty, though I understand this to be true of all the vows) may engender and follow from sincere ethical dispositions, but ultimately exterior expressions may not be as important as those dispositions. One of my interviewees addressed this directly, saying, “Although the Jesuit life doesn't allow Jesuits to limit their contact with wealth as radically as other orders...internally they should be just as poor.”

One of these “good dispositions” came up often in interviews, with respect to Poverty as well as the other vows. Poverty, I was told, is to be understood as a means of detaching oneself from that which might get in the way of one's mission. Father Ben expressed a sentiment I heard over and over again, “Poverty is using riches, money as well as time and talent, for the service of the people of God.” Another Jesuit put the same sentiment in a different way, saying, “what I have belongs to the Community, belongs to God, and through God, to everyone.” This tie to the Community is not just philosophical. All property was held in common, so Jesuits did not, at least in theory, have possessions of their own. In practice, of course, Jesuits seemed to have a reasonable expectation that their confreres would respect exclusive claims on items like toothbrushes, clothing, and personal mementos. Even less obviously personal items, like
books for example, might come along with a Jesuit when he moved from one city to another, suggesting a kind of individual ownership. The discrepancy between the practical realities of personal usage and the ideal of complete freedom from possessions was explained using the idea of stewardship, as expressed in the quotations above – the idea that one merely looked after one's possessions and used them for the good of the Society as a whole, rather than for one's personal gain.

“Detachment” is not just about the altruism of giving to others at one's own expense, it was also, for almost every Jesuit I spoke to, a matter of personal freedom. Although he recognized that it was naive to think that the Society was not dependent on its benefactors, Brother Dan characterized the life of Poverty as “a life less dependent on money.” The idea that Jesuit life allowed an increase in freedom from encumbrances ran as a common thread through my conversations with Jesuits about all the vows. A few of the Jesuits I spoke to described themselves as the sort of person who took to Poverty without difficulty, preferring to be unencumbered by many possessions and having little or no desire to accumulate wealth or deal with money. They felt this attitude served them well as they became part of a Community for which “the simple life” was an explicit goal.

A few of the young Jesuits I spoke to were critical of the “Poverty” of their Communities. Eric told me the old joke, “if this is Poverty, bring on Chastity!” Certainly a comfortable home with multiple televisions and computers and many meals prepared by a paid cook does not bring the word “poor” to mind. Another benchmark for the quality of Jesuit poverty was the question of whether or not one would feel
comfortable inviting to the house a person who lived in poverty not of his or her own choosing – one of my interviewees used the phrase “imposed poverty.” Jesuits from three different Communities used this standard in conversations with me, usually to mention that their own or another Community had failed to meet it. The idea that the vow of Poverty lent one a kind of credibility when working with people who live with financial struggles was thus present in many of my conversations with Jesuits, along with the idea that Jesuits ought to live in close proximity to “the poor,” physically and metaphorically, because “the poor are close to Christ.” Edmund told me that for this reason, “there's something necessarily supernatural about poverty.”

3.3.2 Chastity

If the Jesuits I spoke to seemed to feel the vow of Poverty was poorly understood by those outside of their circle, they seemed to feel that even more keenly with respect to the vow of Chastity. According to Eric, people seemed to wonder what might be “wrong” with marriage. Certainly, celibacy was the source of much confusion and curiosity for people not very familiar with Catholic clergy, as I learned from talking to friends and acquaintances about this thesis.

I do not think that I am alone, then, in having been under the impression that the vow of Chastity could be summed up, more or less, as a prohibition against sexual relationships, but this is certainly not the only way Jesuits spoke about their experience of it. The *Constitutions* are famously vague on the matter – St. Ignatius goes on for pages on the subject of how Jesuits ought to live out their vow of Poverty, but follows that by saying, “What pertains to the vow of chastity requires no interpretation, since it is
evident how perfectly it should be preserved, by endeavouring therein to imitate the purity of the angels in cleanness of body and mind” (Constitutions 547). More than one Jesuit explained to me that Chastity has a broader meaning than its sexual one, for example:

“People think of it as referring to generative capacities, as sexual – it is, but it's not only that. It's about the purity of one's whole being. It is giving over yourself to your beloved – Christ, the Church – this is your sexuality, but it's also everything else. It affects the movies I watch, the jokes that I tell...”

Not all Jesuits spoke about Chastity in terms this broad, but they did tend to speak about it in opposition to “exclusive relationships” rather than sexual ones. When I asked Edmund what that meant exactly, he said that exclusive relationships were “BFFs [best friends forever]. They shouldn't exist in religious life...there's room for great friendships, but not exclusive. [They are] bad for a person's emotional and psychological health [in the context of religious life]” Adam illustrated the idea with a story he had heard in his novitiate years, of someone from another religious order who grieved the death of a close friend in the same Community “like a spouse.” He said, “There's a difference between a close friendship and the love-bonding friendship of a marriage. Close friendships are non-attached, non-exclusive. It's linked to sexuality, but not only to sex.”

Though he was clear about the fact that the vow of Chastity had implications for relationships with men and women, one Jesuit mentioned that he “feels the women
aspect of the equation more,” and the idea of exclusive relationships must certainly include the areas of romance and sex. I must confess that I was surprised to find that many of my interviewees seemed totally at ease broaching these matters with me, even when admitting to having had struggles in living out the vow. “My joke is,” said one young Jesuit, “if you put a blonde wig on a robot, I would say she's pretty cute. I'm still attracted to women, but I am more able to let it go.” I am also thinking here about the Jesuit I mentioned above, who made a conscious effort not to censor himself when talking about the difficulties he had experienced living Chastity in his novitiate years. This is not to say that any of my conversations were terribly detailed with respect to romantic entanglements, only that most Jesuits, even those whom I had just met, were comfortable telling me about girlfriends they had had before joining the Society, or crushes they had developed since then.

Many of my Jesuit interviewees were quick to point out that fundamentally, Chastity was much the same as Poverty. Eric said that they were both matters of “simplicity of life,” and that making a commitment to Chastity changed the way he thought about his relationships, just as a commitment to Poverty changed the way he thought about objects. Others emphasized the element of detachment also present in their talk about Poverty – just as possessions were talked about as having the potential to stand in the way of a Jesuit's mission, so were exclusive relationships. Adam described Chastity as like Poverty in that they were both kinds of freedom. He emphasized that sexuality is not bad in itself, but that Chastity offered a “radical freedom...Sexual drive still exists, but freedom is possible, and that's where I'm called. It's a freedom to go
anywhere and work with anyone."

When they talked about Poverty, it seemed to me that Jesuits thought of their vow as a peculiar expression of a good that was important to any Christian – indeed, the idea that it is possible to be too attached to the acquisition of wealth and that possessions may be a source of moral danger is easily visible in popular culture. “Religious life,” said one of my interviewees, “is a privileged place to taste the perfection we're all headed for,” referring to “union with God.” When they talked about Chastity, though, the attitude seemed to be that it was a less universal calling.

“For me in my affectivity, I don't feel called to relationship with just one person.”

“I'm not happy in [romantic] relationships.”

“If I had a wife, she would not be happy.”

One of my interviews, though, turned to the idea of a broader application of the idea of Chastity, and a Jesuit told me, “the Chastity of marriage produces children, the Chastity of religious life produces fatherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood.” This connects to the idea, alluded to above, that part of the reason Jesuits practice Chastity is so that they are not attached to any one person. Brother Dan said that he wouldn't want to be a father, because then other children would be secondary to his own. He wouldn't be as free, then, to show love to any and all other children. Statements like this make it seem that Jesuits understood the vow of Chastity as a way in which they carved out, with other priests and religious, their particular place in social life. By eschewing what might be called “conventional” family life in favour of Community life, Jesuits participate in the
construction and maintenance of a role for themselves, and by living within that role, 
create themselves as persons. The same Jesuit who spoke about “the Chastity of 
mariage” told me about the way his sister “became a mother in her self and spirituality 
as she became a mother physically...in the same way, I feel God calling forth paternity 
within myself.” An anthropologist might see it somewhat differently, that there is a 
dynamic interaction between the individual Jesuit and others with whom he interacts that 
creates both the person and the role. But the outcome is the same: Jesuits lived out and 
defined and created Chastity (and Poverty, and Obedience), and Chastity (and Poverty, 
and Obedience) defined and created Jesuits.

3.3.3 Obedience

Poverty and Chastity were both discussed by most of the Jesuits I interviewed in 
terms of the freedom they engendered, a freedom from the encumbrance of possessions 
or exclusive relationships. But the idea of the vows as freeing is perhaps more difficult 
to accept when it is applied to the vow of Obedience – the encumbrance from which 
Obedience was meant to detach Jesuits was “our own projects and aspirations,” as 
Edmund put it. Certainly we understand ourselves to be free even though we are subject 
to laws and social conventions, but Jesuits were, in theory, subject to the demands of 
authority figures in a way most of us will not have experienced since childhood. A Jesuit 
may defy a Superior if he has some reason of conscience, but Father Frank told me he 
“could hardly imagine a reason of conscience serious enough to disobey a superior.”

I should add here that Jesuits were also subject to Obedience at the corporate 
level, since they took a special fourth vow of Obedience to the pope with respect to
mission. This means that the Society of Jesus, more than other orders, was expected to take on tasks that the pope required of them, to have “radical availability” in terms of their mission as a group as well as on their individual missions. Ultimately, this is of little consequence in the everyday lives of most Jesuits, especially those who were as low in the hierarchy as were most of the Jesuits I interviewed.

Father Ben identified a key aspect of Obedience as “submission to the overarching plans of the Superior,” pointing out that in everyday practice, one doesn't consult one's Superior about everything. He gave the example of the rule that the Superior should approve any public writing or speaking done by the Jesuits in his Community. A letter to the Editor in the newspaper, though, where the results are immediate and public, is different from an academic paper he might write on the rhetorical devices in the Letter to the Hebrews, where there is little potential for controversy, and, he said, “I'd be happy if someone read the damn thing.”

Obedience did, of course, have a practical purpose. Adam told me, “It allows us to function as a Society, and as communities. It's humility- my desires are not the trump card.” Discernment, the proper making of decisions, he told me, was only true discernment if it involved one's Superior, and God. Jesuits have been given the nickname “God's soldiers,” and it is an easy comparison to make, since the Society is structured with “troops” in the form of priests, Brothers, and men-in-formation ready to mobilize under a clearly-visible chain of command. This structure was reproduced as Jesuits lived within the discipline of the vow of Obedience.

It would be imprecise to say merely that a Superior's every whim was inviolable
law. Eric was clear that to receive an order to do something you don't want to do and think won't work, and to do it without manifesting those concerns, was a violation of the vow of Obedience. I also witnessed a great deal of affectionate mockery of Superiors, which might be interpreted as a challenge to the idea of a Superior's authority over a Jesuit's life. I can warmly recall a Jesuit Christmas party at which a Jesuit took great delight in reducing another student and me to giggles during grace by muttering about his Superior interrupting our conversation by praying. “Well,” he huffed irreverently, “I guess he's the Superior, so if he wants to sing, we all have to.” I could not count the number of times, in my weeks at Cardoner House, I heard a Jesuit imitate the way the absent Community Superior addressed them, gruffly, as “gentlemen,” and I have heard Jesuits from all over the country share a fond laugh over the quirks of their Provincial, who seems to enjoy near-universal respect.

Obedience was the vow which Jesuits were most likely to express that they had difficulty living out. This might have been the product of a desire to be or seem like an independent and free-thinking sort of person. Brother Dan talked about his willingness to go anywhere for the sake of “the mission,” but said that Obedience was more difficult when it was something personal, as when a Superior told him that he was spending too much time on Facebook and needed to cut back (though he added that this was less likely to be an issue outside of novitiate, where he was granted less latitude than in the student life he was leading when we spoke). Greg said that Obedience was “the tallest order” of the vows, but that it was made easier by the relationships of trust between himself and his Superiors.
Hugh gave a specific example of a time when he disagreed with a Superior's decision: he was asked to stay in his regency position for another year after he had completed the customary two years. He felt he was ready to move on, but the then-Provincial Superior insisted. Hugh asked for time to pray and discern about the list of reasons he was given for the decision. He met with the Provincial the next day “determined to state his preference but ready to go along happily with the Provincial's decision.” He was told to do another year, and so committed with enthusiasm, and told me that the third year of regency ended up being a good experience. Edmund, too, had a disagreement with a Superior, when he was working in the hospital wing of a camp in post-earthquake Haiti in 2010. The Superior in question insisted Edmund not take on the task Edmund saw as the way to do the most good, for fear of stepping on the toes of another organization at work in the same area, which Edmund took to be a negligible risk.

“I said, 'this is where I stand, I understand where you're coming from. This is how to bring the most good, but you're my Superior. I prayed – it was tough. Eventually I began to see the other side more clearly [and] came to be at peace with it.’”

While it would be an exaggeration to characterize these stories of conflicts between Obedience and private inclination as crises in any real sense, they did seem to be moments of the kind that are used elsewhere (e.g. Zigon 2008) to differentiate between moral habitus and more self-aware ethical decision-making. For Edmund, especially, there was a genuine dilemma – there was some good that he believed could be served by doing what he wished instead of complying with his marching orders. Before
he told this story, though, Edmund expounded briefly on the theology underpinning Obedience. “You see the person of Christ in your Superior, your mission comes from Christ. Therefore, even if your Superior is an idiot, [you say] 'send me.' It's quite liberating...In the healthiest sense, the vow of obedience precludes bitching – you embrace your mission.”

Here again, this time in the context of Obedience, is the idea that the vows are not a matter of what you do or do not do so much as what you think or feel. Eric told me that the vows are not “traffic direction,” but are about “one's mind and heart, understanding where we're all going, where Christ is moving us out of love, and how we are called to participate.” One Jesuit told me that it was a misconception that Obedience meant “doing what the Superior or the Church tells me.” He told me that the vow was incomprehensible unless you understand the underlying premises, starting with the idea that God is essentially free, and humanity is given “a piece of that freedom,” that is, that humans are creatures capable of choosing not to follow the will of God. Thus, he said, there is a potential for a conflict between the two freedoms, or alternatively “a genuine coming-together in choosing what God has chosen.” A person may choose to go his or her own way, or may choose to surrender that freedom to God. Of course, if one does not accept the idea of an all-knowing, all-compassionate God, this sounds like so much doublespeak. But for the Jesuits I spoke to, the existence of God is a given, obvious fact about the world. Aligning oneself with the will of God, in this worldview, might well be worth the sacrifice of personal choice, even on matters of where one lives or how one spends his days. One Jesuit implied that the life of a vowed religious was proof against
existential questions like, “is this all there is?” In a similar vein, Adam said to me “Freedom is finding more meaning” than one finds when one is “bogged down by desires and ambitions.” Speaking of life outside the Society of Jesus, he said, “it's a society enslaved to themselves,” and told me about the lines from *Paradise Lost* quoted above.

### 3.4 Some Remarks on Freedom

The vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience are easy to place in a negative frame – you may not own property, you may not marry, you may not choose where you will work – and indeed, some Jesuits did use this language extensively in interviews. But I also heard reactions against this kind of framing. Said one Jesuit, “There is a tendency to treat chastity from a negative point of view, here's what you can't do, but it can be positive and life-giving. It's a series of ‘no's’ at the service of a big ‘yes.’” This statement helps to convince me that the vows are not best viewed as tools with which to reinforce relations of power. Laidlaw argues that “the freedom of the ethical self, for Foucault, consists in the possibility of choosing the kind of self one wishes to be. Actively answering the ethical question of how or as what one ought to live is to exercise this self-constituting freedom” (Laidlaw 2002: 324) By choosing, in the moment that he spoke his vows, and in the moment that he chose to obey his Superior over his own sense of how to do good, Edmund decided what kind of person he was. Here, again, living in the vows was a way that Jesuits decided and interpreted and explained who they were in social life. Like the kinds of subjects that can be produced with other kinds of techniques of the self, they are not born out of each unique individual, but are part of the
fabric of social life, and are defined to some extent by that greater fabric. “This does not mean that his doing so is not an exercise of freedom, but that the freedom he exercises is of a definite, historically produced kind. There is no other kind” (Laidlaw 2002: 323).

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have set out to show how, for those in the Jesuit world, explicit, conscious, moral evaluation was not the exceptional, out-of-the-ordinary “breakdown” envisaged by Zigon (2008), but rather a regular, even daily practice. Morality looked like a habit, as well as a habitus. Jesuits were prepared to answer my questions about the vows and freedom not only because they had been educated about them and thought about them, but because the ideas and practices surrounding the Spiritual Exercises were oriented toward generating evaluations of one's experiences and oneself, and particularly toward making these evaluations available for consideration.
CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions

Jesuits were explicit, in my interviews with them, when they explained exactly what they meant when they used the word “freedom.” Indeed, the Jesuits and Ignatian lay people who participated in this project showed themselves to be intentional, not only in the moral framing of their lives, but in making those frameworks coherent and available for scrutiny. Webb Keane (2010) argues that what is on the surface, those aspects of morality which are communicated between persons, are of singular importance to anthropologists of morality, who must navigate the social expressions of what are often interior thoughts or feelings. It is in this light that he quotes Anthony Appiah, who says that “the act of describing a situation ... is itself a moral task. It's often the moral task” (Keane 2010: 67, emphasis in original). It is also in this light that so much of this account is given over to Jesuits' and Ignatian lay people's explicit descriptions of their own situations.

I did not catch many interviewees in the midst of deliberating over some important decision, making excuses for their behaviour (Keane 2010: 68), or wrestling with a particular crisis of conscience or identity (cf Zigon 2008), but nonetheless I found that they often expressed detailed personal reflections on what constituted a well-lived life, what qualities were expected of proper Jesuits, and what behaviour was admirable or despicable. I have used this evidence to argue that explicit engagement with morality need not be reserved for specialized persons or situations, and certainly not, for Jesuits, for the enactment of their priestly roles. I have attributed this, in part, to the fact that one
of the dispositions Jesuits seemed to cultivate in themselves was a strong reflexivity. It may well be, however, that most people carry around a set of fairly explicit moral philosophies, the product of a lifetime of constant moral evaluations.

I consider this writing most successful, then, where it merely organized or contextualized in material practices and in particular social arrangements what Jesuits and Ignatian lay people had to say for themselves. But even as I try to step away and allow my interviewees to speak for themselves, I must recognize that the act of framing, ordering, disagreeing with, and remarking upon what I heard is as much a statement of what I take to be important and worthwhile as it is about what participants in this project felt to be so. I found a moral account of social life precisely because my questions and observations attended to issues of morality. Some of my Jesuit teachers have taught me to evaluate my experiences in terms of whether and how they “bore fruit,” another way of talking about the dynamic of consolation and desolation from the *Spiritual Exercises*. I was able to uncover some perspectives on what it means to be Ignatian that I had not yet encountered, better understand the impressions I had of Jesuits and Ignatian lay people, and organize my thoughts on these matters in a meaningful way, I judge this approach to have “borne fruit.” My account, like any interpretive claim, is intrinsically open to contestation, and certainly its value (or lacks thereof) may be gauged in different ways. Of course it does not seek to be predictive, but I do think it passes muster to the extent that it provides useful interpretations with which to engage with new social interactions among Jesuits as these swim into view. In this way, I find it to have been a useful test of the relatively new field of the anthropology of morality. I sought, and,
indeed, found nuanced accounts of who Jesuits were, to themselves and others, on the basis of their evaluations of what constitutes the “good” or “better.”
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DATE: May 1, 2012

TO: Sarah Hanna
2550 Cross Place
Regina, SK S4S 4C7

FROM: Dr. Bruce Plouffe
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Re: Lifestyles of the Poor and Celibate (File # 6251112)

Please be advised that the University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed your proposal and found it to be:

☐ 1. APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. Only applicants with this designation have ethical approval to proceed with their research as described in their applications. For research lasting more than one year (Section 1F), ETHICAL APPROVAL MUST BE RENEWED BY SUBMITTING A BRIEF STATUS REPORT EVERY TWELVE MONTHS. Approval will be revoked unless a satisfactory status report is received. Any substantive changes in methodology or instrumentation must also be approved prior to their implementation.

☐ 2. ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS (SEE ATTACHED). Changes must be submitted to the REB and approved prior to beginning research. Please submit a supplementary memo addressing the concerns to the Chair of the REB. **Do not submit a new application.** Once changes are deemed acceptable, ethical approval will be granted.

☐ 3. ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS (SEE ATTACHED). Changes must be submitted to the REB and approved prior to beginning research. Please submit a supplementary memo addressing the concerns to the Chair of the REB. **Do not submit a new application.** Once changes are deemed acceptable, ethical approval will be granted.

☐ 4. UNACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. The proposal requires substantial additions or redesign. Please contact the Chair of the REB for advice on how the project proposal might be revised.

Dr. Bruce Plouffe

Cc: Dr. Carlos Londoño – Anthropology

**supplementary memo should be forwarded to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at the Office of Research Services (Research and Innovation Centre, Room 523) or by e-mail to research.ethics@uregina.ca**

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