4 *Ut Fiat Aequalitas*

Spiritual Training of the Inner Man in the Twelfth-Century Cloister

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Abstract

While for the period before the thirteenth century the sources concerning the formation of interior spirituality insist on the importance of verticality and hierarchy, there were also pedagogical modalities that depended upon contact between equals or indeed with one's self. With reference to these, the twelfth century seems to occupy a special place, because of the appearance of a corpus of spiritual texts that become points of reference for the training of novices. This essay presents the work of three authors (Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of Saint Victor, Aelred of Rievaulx) from the following points of view: how do these spiritual texts teach the cloistered monk or canon how to live with himself, with his neighbour, and lastly with a particular neighbour, namely a spiritual friend.

Keywords: Medieval/Middle Ages, monasticism, friendship, spirituality, teaching, learning

To embrace the subject of horizontality in the formation of interiority in medieval cloistered communities is to choose Robert Frost's 'road not taken'. For the period before the thirteenth century we have model descriptions of spiritual experiences rather than precise reports, and in these normative texts, the part that bears on learning attends to the hierarchy of merits and to the theme of spiritual birth. The texts insist on the importance of verticality and hierarchy because the spiritual education of monks is based on exemplary morals and the superiority of certain figures of authority, mainly the abbot and the master of the novices. The matrix is the Gospel and the *Rule of Saint*

Benedict, which create the vertical model *par excellence* of 'father-son' in the religious engagement. As Honorius Augustodunensis sums it up in his *De vita claustrali*, life in the cloister is comparable to ten realities, one of which he calls a 'school for children where the little ones in Christ are taught by the Master through the Rule'.¹ Among the Cistercians, the importance of the vertical model in the formation of the monks is illustrated by the description of the master of the novices, such as the one given by Adam of Perseigne in his letter *De institutione novitiorum* for the monk Osmond at Mortemer. Among the six ways used to prepare a novice, the fourth provides the following description:

In the fourth place, we put the religious comportment of the master, which must be extended to the novice like a mirror, because when an example of good behaviour is proposed near to him, he is encouraged to imitate it more efficiently. On the mountain, Moses was shown a model on which he should construct the tabernacle, because the life of superiors ought to be so elevated that it fashions by its example the behaviour of inferiors.²

Likewise in the famous letter of William of Saint Thierry, intended for the edification of the Carthusian novices, where the neighbour is logically rarely present in this semi-hermetical context, William says: 'If you run after health, be sure not to dare to do anything, great or small, to yourself without the advice of a physician'.³

This diagram, although frequent and an essential backdrop in the spiritual education of the monks and regular canons, does not exhaust all the modalities of transmission during the twelfth century. In addition to the vertical formation there existed other pedagogical modalities that depended upon

1 Honorius Augustodunensis, *De vita claustrali*, col. 1248A: 'Quinto est schola infantium, in qua parvuli in Christo a Magistro regula ad virtutes informantur'.

2 Adam of Perseigne, *De institutione novitiorum*, col. 585B: 'Quarto loco ponitur religiosa magistri conversatio, quae quasi in speculum est adhibenda novitio, quia, dum ei exemplum honestatis e vicino proponitur, ad imitationis studium efficacius provocatur. In monte quippe Moysi est exemplar ostensum cuius instar debuit componere tabernaculum, quia tam sublimis debet esse vita praesidentium ut ad exemplum ipsius formetur conversatio subditorum'. Nonetheless, as a reader of the Victorine authors, especially Hugh, and a former regular canon himself, Adam shows some interest for 'horizontal learning' and sees external behavior as a way of edifying other members of the religious community: on this point, see the recent contribution by Micol Long, 'Entre spiritualité monastique et canoniale', 247-260, and her chapter in the present volume.

3 William of Saint Thierry, *Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*, ed. Déchanet, 223: 'Si ad sanitatem festinas, vide ut nil vel modicum de temetipso agere praesumas, medico inconsulto'. On the success of the text, Honemann, *Die Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*.

contact between equals or indeed with one's self. And here chronology is important. The twelfth century seems to me to occupy a special place because, in the wake of the reforming monastic movement, a topic appears that is stressed more and more in the education of the novices; viz., that of the interior life.⁴ I would like to address this precise moment, calling into play the texts that attest to the institution of a 'horizontal learning' pattern. In the twelfth century a corpus of spiritual texts appears that becomes a point of reference thereafter and that emerge as the best and most essential texts for training novices. In this sense, the appearance of these works seems to me to be a distinct historic phenomenon that deserves special attention. In order to prove how new spiritual writings mould interiority according to the 'horizontal learning pattern' I present this new context and the texts of three important authors from the following points of view: how do these spiritual texts teach the cloistered monk or canon how to live 1) with himself, 2) with his neighbor, and lastly 3) with a particular neighbor, namely a spiritual friend.

Spirituality and the Formation of Interiority in the Twelfth Century: A New Context

The first notable point concerns a sociological reality, which also applies to literary history. Starting at the end of the eleventh century, the rise of monastic reform precipitates a redaction of tracts devoted to the interior life and the education of monks.⁵ For the historian, it is a question of understanding how spiritual works exercised an action and giving them meaning across European history. Obviously there is no automatic relationship between a text and a mode of comportment.⁶ Nonetheless spiritual texts, which reside in a dynamic of conversion, exercise an action in time and space. In this sense, the High and Late Middle Ages, which disseminated throughout society the different exercises of the spiritual life (reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation), transformed spirituality into a social practice.⁷ Twelfth-century spiritual authors push to the limits the intuitions

4 Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 257-295; Giraud, *Spiritualité et histoire*.

5 Giraud, *Spiritualité et histoire*, 38-96. The spiritual treatises took many forms, among which letters are one of the most important; see in this volume the contribution of Babette Hellemans about the genre of letter collections and the case of Heloise.

6 Stock, 'Lecture, intriorit', 103-112, and Stock, *Ethics through Literature*. See also Pranger, 'On Devotional Historiography', 523-536.

7 Corbellini, *Cultures of religious reading*.

of Augustine concerning the disquiet of the human heart and of the *Deus interior intimo meo*.⁸ And to a further degree, they transpose the experience of the individual Augustine onto a collective and social plane, making the spiritual reading practised in a cloister or in the world a way of cultivating an interior life. In the history of that transposition, the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries hold a central place because they witness three main turning points. With Anselm of Canterbury, in the late eleventh century, a new relationship with the self is invented. This 'Anselmian revolution' engenders during the twelfth century the increasingly refined formalization of spiritual exercises that give body to this new relationship with the self.⁹ Reading helps one find a truth, which meditation will interiorize, before contemplation offers it to the inner senses. Then, in the course of the thirteenth and subsequent centuries, the more perceptive clergy, especially Bonaventura, confirm a new phenomenon. The dominion of interior life, having found its autonomy, possesses henceforth a separate literary repertory that is not reserved for monks but in fact touches a new range of contemplative souls, both clerical and lay.¹⁰ This medieval invention of spirituality as a literary genre in the late eleventh century – formalized into a spiritual technique in the twelfth century and then extended to everyman in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries – is at the heart of our interpretation.¹¹ Moreover, in this context, the status of literary culture and of textuality itself changes. In the medieval cloister, the codex is not just a material vector of content, but also an element in a widely shared symbolic system. A metaphor of the world and of nature, the book within the biblical and Augustinian tradition also represented the different types of interior life: *liber conscientiae* (book of the conscience), *liber cordis* (book of the heart), *liber experientiae* (book of the experience). The image of the book thus serves to describe and mould the conscience, the heart, and interior experience, each of which can be written, deciphered and corrected like a *codex*. Henceforth medieval readers had to be provided with reading material to meditate, and spiritual authors composed Latin model texts that form the prime matter of our study.

In this framework I treat three virtually contemporary authors who wrote about training novices and who seem to me to be the most representative of the phenomenon that I wish to describe. They are the pseudo-Bernard

8 See Stock, *Augustine the Reader*.

9 On the 'Anselmian Revolution', see Southern, *Saint Anselm*, 42-47, and Cottier, *Anima mea*.

10 On the question of the literary genres in the Middle Ages, see, *inter alia*, Jauss, 'Littérature médiévale', 37-76.

11 See also Constable, 'The Popularity', 5-28 and Constable, 'Twelfth-Century Spirituality', 27-60.

of Clairvaux, a monk who wrote his *Meditationes* between 1160 and 1190; the Victorine canon Hugh of Saint Victor (d. 1141) and his *De institutione novitiorum*; and last, the Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx, author of a *De spiritali amicitia*, written when he was a mature man, and the last two chapters of which were composed between 1164 and 1167. Each of these three works was quite successful and has been preserved in dozens of manuscripts, along with many adaptations and revivals.¹²

Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux or How to Learn to Live with One's Self

The most obvious case is that of the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, for whom we have nearly 700 manuscripts spanning the Middle Ages. We know that all three texts were explicitly used for the private reading of the novices. This reality of solitary reading manifests the first modality in the formation of interiority: namely, one's rapport with one's self. To become a good monk implies living intelligently with one's self and improving this self-instruction through *lectio divina*. The flourishing of spiritual texts in the twelfth century and their wide diffusion broadened the traditional repertory of readings for the cloister by introducing, alongside Scripture, the lives of saints and patristic texts, new writings concerning spirituality. In the new context of the cloister in the twelfth century, spiritual reading makes interiority the starting point and the destination in the process of training and transformation of the novice. What I am saying of reading also applies to other cloistral exercises, such as meditation, prayer, and contemplation, all of which are ancient spiritual practices but whose articulation is now rethought.¹³ For our three authors, the spiritual life is the object of a codified teaching that organizes traditional cloister practices into a unified whole. Creating and cultivating an interior space, these exercises give interiority a pedagogical mantle. Once one has gone beyond inculcating novices with the respect for customs, a rule, and the practice of virtues, the goal becomes to help him reach a union with God by means of an interior pathway.

12 To find a list of manuscripts, see the database FAMA (*Fama Auctorum Medii Aevi*) recently developed in Paris by the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) and the École nationale des chartes: <http://fama.irht.cnrs.fr> (accessed April 4, 2017).

13 On the question of spiritual exercises, see Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, esp. the chapter 'Exercices spirituels antiques et "philosophie chrétienne"', 75-98; Foucault, 'Les techniques de soi', in *Technologies of the Self*, 785 and, more broadly, *L'herméneutique du sujet*.

This work of the subject upon himself is a form of Christian stoicism that the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux emphasizes.¹⁴ The work requires that the novice exclude from his own thoughts all that is not himself and God. The novice is asked to make his own self his subject of study and to examine his conscience daily. This return of the subject unto himself concerns not only the spirit but also the flesh, which, according to our texts, dissimulates the truth of appearances. For example, the novice should represent his body just as it will be in the grave, once it has been eaten by worms ... And if that is not enough, the monk is asked by the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux to visit the community's cemetery in order to obtain a better idea of this reality: 'I hurry toward those who have already left this world through bodily death. When I look at their graves, I find only ashes and vermin, stench and horror'.¹⁵ This process of interior self-education is thus not just a solitary journey; it also implies creating a vertical relationship with the members of the community, even if they are dead.

14 On this form of stoicism, see Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même*. On the *Meditationes*, see Raciti, 'L'auteur du *De spiritu et anima*', 385-401; Bultot, 'Les *Meditationes* pseudo-bernardines', 256-292 and Id., 'Encore les *Méditations*', 425-427; Bertola, 'Il socratismo cristiano', 252-264, here 256-263; Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même*, 279-284; Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus', 109-152, 148; Giraud, *Spiritualité et histoire des textes*, 155-170.

15 Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes*, coll. 487C-D: 'Ad illos vero festino qui morte corporis hinc exierunt. Cum eorum sepulcra respicio, non invenio in eis nisi cinerem et vermem, fetorem et horrorem. Quod ego sum, ipsi fuerunt et quod ipsi sunt, ego ero. Quid sum ego? Homo de humore liquido.' This passage is to be compared with the *Speculum monachorum* often attributed in the Middle Ages to Bernard of Clairvaux, col. 1178A: 'Taedio affectus componat se meditando supra petram in qua lavantur mortui et cogitet apud se quomodo tractantur ibi sepeliendi, nunc in tergum, nunc in faciem versentur, quomodo nutet caput, cadant brachia, rigeant crura, tibiae jaceant, quomodo induantur et consuuntur, quomodo deferantur humandi, quomodo exponantur in tumulo, quomodo pulvere contegantur, quomodo vorentur a vermibus et quasi saccus putrefactus consumantur. Summaque est philosophia, meditatio mortis assidua' and with the *De quadripartito exercitio cellae* written at the end of the twelfth century by the Carthusian Adam Scot, coll. 834A-B: 'Non autem necesse habet multum laborare in praeviendo hoc meditatio tua, quia quid super hoc debeat sentire, ipse quoque te certum reddit corporalis aspectus. Nam vade modo et cujus volueris mortui sepulcrum aperi et inspice. (...) Certe apparebit cadaver horribilis fetens, putredine scatens, vermibus scaturiens,' and coll. 840D-841A: 'Videbis aperte quia quasi saccus quidem foris nitidus apparet, sed intus omni spurcicia et immunditia et corruptione intolerabili fetet. Nunc mentis tuae conspectibus talis per omnia appareat vivens qualis erit mortua in sepulcro jacens et vermibus scaturiens.' On the *contemptus mundi*, see Tuozzi, *La conoscenza di sé*, 130-142, esp. 140: 'Che cosa può diventare allora per una tale mentalità il concetto della conoscenza di sé? Niente di teologico o di moralmente e psicologicamente sottile. Per conoscenza di sé si intende essenzialmente orrore della miseria umana, esame di coscienza e invito alla confessione' and Giraud, 'Le *De vanitate mundi*', 67-92.

The practice of spiritual exercises also creates communication between the monks, if they are separated by some distance.¹⁶ In our exemplary literature, the novice is never designated as an individual but always as a person participating in the divine image. In the language of the present book, this ontological dimension makes all spiritual exercises horizontal, even the most vertical ones, *a priori*. Thus prayer not only puts the subject into a vertical relationship with God; it is also a way of binding members of the religious community horizontally and of rendering present those who are absent, by creating a spiritual community.¹⁷ The best expression of this process is furnished by pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, who describes the communal role of personal prayer:

Since I have known you, I love you in Christ and I make mention of you in the place where all evil thoughts merit a punishment and all good thoughts a reward. Every time that I, who am a sinner yet a preacher, stand before the altar of God, your memory is with me. Do the same for me if you love me and make me participate in your prayers. I desire to be present with you in memory at the moment when you proclaim your fervent prayers for yourself and for those dear to you. Do not be surprised if I say 'present', because if you love me and because you love me like the image of God, I am as present to you as you are to yourself. In substance, I am all that you are, because any rational soul is the image of God. Thus he who searches in himself the image of God is as much searching for his neighbour as for himself, and he who finds the image of God in searching, recognizes it in every man. For the soul, to see is to understand. Thus if you see, you see me, who is nothing other than you. And if you love God, you love me as an image of God and, I also, in loving God, love you. And while we look for unity and reach out for it, we are always present one in the other, and also in God, in that we love each other.¹⁸

16 Hence the use of the epistolary genre as a way to connect monks together and create a spiritual community between them, no matter how distant they are. On this aspect, see also in this volume the contribution of Babette Hellemans.

17 On prayer in the twelfth century, see e.g., Bériou, Berlioz, Longère, *Prier au Moyen Âge*; Henriot, *La parole et la prière*; Lauwers, 'La prière comme fonction sociale', 209-227.

18 Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes*, coll. 495A-C: 'Ego enim ex quo cognovi te, in Christo diligo te et illuc mentionem tui defero ubi et illicita cogitatio supplicium et honesta promeretur praemium. Ad altare namque Dei cum peccator sto, sed sacerdos, tui me comitatur memoria. Tu vero mihi vicem reddes, si me amaveris et orationum tuarum participem feceris. Tu vero mihi vicem reddes, si me amaveris et orationum tuarum participem feceris. Ibi recordatione tecum esse praesens desidero, ubi pro te et tuis familiaribus devotas preces coram Deo fundis. Nec mireris si dixi "praesens", quoniam si me amas et ideo amas quia imago Dei sum, ita tibi

For the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, reading, meditation, and prayer constitute different modes for perfecting the subject by proposing a formation of the self for the self. The neighbour is not totally absent in this process but is considered mostly through the figure of one who is absent, or the dead.

Hugh of Saint Victor or How to Learn to Live with Others

Unlike the work of pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, the passages in Hugh of Saint Victor's *De institutione novitiorum* that concern horizontal learning have a strong communal flavour.¹⁹ Canonical life at the abbey of Saint Victor sought to reconcile harmoniously the needs of the individual with the necessities of collective life.²⁰ The *De institutione novitiorum* is the practical complement to the *Didascalicon* on the art of reading.²¹ It describes the different stages that will lead the novice to happiness – in other words, allow him to attain spiritual perfection, which is the object of his life in the religious community.

To arrive at the perfection of the novice, Hugh distinguishes two stages: the first is acquiring the knowledge; and the second the practice of the discipline.²² 'Knowledge' is understood here as the formation of the moral conscience.²³ As with the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, spiritual training

praesens sum ut tu ipsi tibi. Quidquid enim tu es substantialiter, hoc ego sum. Imago enim Dei est omnis anima rationalis. Proinde qui in se imaginem Dei quaerit, tam proximum quam se quaerit et qui illam in se quaerendo invenerit, in omni homine eam cognoscit. Visio enim animae intellectus est. Si ergo te vides, me vides, qui nichil aliud sum quam tu. Et si Deum diligis, me imaginem Dei diligis et ego Deum diligendo, diligo te. Et ita dum unum quaerimus et ad unum tendimus, semper invicem praesentes sumus, sed in Deo in quo nos diligimus.'

19 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*. On this literature, see Riché, 'Les traités pour la formation', 371-377 and Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, esp. 267-269: 'Appendix: Monastic and Canonical Treatises of Practical Spiritual Advice.' Although Caroline Walker Bynum has rightly pointed out the differences between canonical and monastic spirituality and ideals, we still believe that regular spirituality can be studied as a whole ensemble of values.

20 On religious life and spirituality at Saint Victor, see mostly the studies of Jean Châtillon reprinted in *Le mouvement canonial au Moyen Âge* and also Stammberger, 'Via ad ipsum sunt scientia', 91-126 and Id., 'Tod und Sterben Toten', 127-177.

21 On the *Didascalicon*, see recently Poirel, 'Tene fontem et totum habes', 293-328.

22 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 18, 7-11: 'Si igitur Deum queritis, immo quia queritis, veram profecto ac perpetuam beatitudinem habere desideratis. Ad beatitudinem nemo venire potest, nisi per virtutem et virtus non alio modo veraciter apprehenditur, nisi disciplina virtutis non negligenter custodiatur'.

23 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 22, 62-67: 'Primum igitur scire debetis quod hanc scientiam, que ad utilitatem recte et honeste vivendi pertinent, multis modis hominem colligere

is also a horizontal self-to-self exercise, what Pierre Courcelle suggested calling a 'Christian Socratic method' – in short, a Christianization of the Socratic principle of 'know yourself'. With Hugh, this training is not only a religious discipline but also, in a wider sense, a social practice that involves reason. For the novice to behave properly, he should know how to act in a rational manner with everyone. This ethic of communal life is based on the distinction between a social role and natural virtue or, in the words of Blaise Pascal, between 'established and natural magnanimity'.²⁴

The monastic world, as has often been written in this book, is structured by hierarchies based on ranks and functions. In the monastic world, social positions are relative, and consequently horizontality is not a value in itself. One must obey his superiors, maintain peace among his equals, and help inferiors without giving an absolute position to each member of the community.²⁵ With equals one must try to give them a superior place, and with inferiors Hugh tells us that one must 'love the communal life and equality' (*societatem atque equalitatem amare*). The hierarchy between the three social types is thus constantly subverted, because the crucial spiritual value that moderates the life of the novice is humility, the self-abasement that always makes way for others, even those who are inferior to one's self.

Things are different when it comes to merit. Certainly the tripartite model is the same, because man, from the moral point of view, possesses, as in any social domain, superiors, equals, and inferiors. But in this spiritual context, which ignores the social hierarchy, horizontality becomes a value in and of itself. Hugh tells the novice not to become too attached to superiors in emulating their virtue, lest he risk presuming to appear as their equal. Collaboration with them is thus ruled out.²⁶ The same distance is to be

et comparare sibi oportet: partim ratione, partim doctrina, partim exemplo, partim meditatione sanctorum Scripturarum, partim assidua inspectione operum ac morum suorum'.

²⁴ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 28, 154-161: 'Discretio personarum, quantum pertinet ad dilectionem, secundum meritum, quantum vero ad venerationem, secundum etatem et officium habenda est. Meliores diligere, superiores honorare debemus, quia par contumacia est sive in eo qui propter inferiorem gradum in homine virtutem despicit, sive in eo qui propter vitam inferiorem gradum superiorem contemnit. Istis ergo honor, illis amor impendatur, sic tamen ut et honor istorum sit voluntarius et illorum amor venerandus'.

²⁵ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 30, 181-186: 'Inferioribus semper beneficium et auxilium impendere, numquam impropere, sine contumelia corripere, sine superbia gubernare, sine crudelitate corripere, cum pietate fovere; venerationem non exigere, societatem atque equalitatem amare, majoribus per timorem subdi, equalibus per caritatem obsequi, minoribus per humilitatem coequari'.

²⁶ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 32, 206-215: 'Proinde in his talis habenda est discretio ut superioribus quidem in omni loco et in omni opera vel sermone exhibere studeamus reverentiam et quicquid egerint aut ubicumque fuerint, non presumamus impudenter eis nos quasi coequando

observed with inferiors, for fear of being led into evil.²⁷ By distancing inferior men in the moral sense, the novice also proves his innocence at a moment in his training when he is considered to be spiritually fragile.²⁸ The daily life of the novice should take place mostly with equals, from the spiritual point of view.²⁹ But that equality is not a stagnation. The horizontality is made dynamic by the emulation of virtue, and thus by imitation. The equals are thus caught up in a sort of spiral that engenders a progression. But Hugh, as a keen psychologist of communal life, knows that the hierarchy is slippery everywhere, and he advises against spiritual competition that tends to oppose monks or canons in the practice of good works.³⁰

Horizontality is even mentioned when Hugh raises the question of the use of speech by the novice. Addressing a group of men still in full training, Hugh distinguishes between two types of conversation: the conversation used for instructing the novice; and the conversation by which one novice instructs another.³¹ In the first case, vertical communication exercises all its rights, and the novice should seek out the conversation of the wise. But in the second case, when the novice tries to propagate good through speech, horizontality is preferred. The novice thus should avoid the two extremes, which are conversation with the wise or with sinners, because for Hugh, the first amounts to instructing

ingerere. Sic namque debemus in ejusmodi virtutis exemplum quod imitemur quodammodo taciti et quasi de longe considerare, ut tamen consortium cooperandi nunquam presumamus expetere, quatinus, dum eis ubique cedimus, facile ex nostra modestia clareat quam humilia de nobis et quam sublimia de illis sentiamus'.

27 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 32, 215-221: 'Negligentes vero et maxime eos quorum opera vel studia reprehensione digna apparent, tali nos cautela declinare oportet, ut et fugiamus quod faciunt et tamen judicare non presumamus quod sunt. Cogitemus in ejusmodi nobis neque dari exemplum neque permitti iudicium, quia hoc in eis fortassis ignorantia seu infirmitas excusat quod, si a nobis fieret, excusationem non haberet'.

28 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 32, 229-231: 'Et ideo, cum malorum consortium appetere nolumus, duplex nobis utilitatis fructus provenit, quia et culpam fugimus et innocentie nostre testimonium perhibemus'.

29 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 32-34, 231-235: 'Quotidiana igitur et frequens conversatio nostra cum mediis et equalibus nobis esse debet, ita ut inter eos etiam quoscumque in bono opere ferventiores cernimus, eorum societatem atque familiaritatem avidius appetamus'.

30 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 34, 242-248: 'Et quia inter pares nonnumquam perverse quedam virtutis emulatio esse solet, ut videlicet sibi invicem de successu virtutum invidiant, et ob hoc in exercendo bono opera tantum ne inferiores videantur alterutrum sese prevenire contendunt, tanto nos discretionis moderamine, continere necesse est, ut operam nostram, sicut dictum est, neque ingeramus nolentibus, neque petentibus subtrahamus, quia in utroque livoris suspicio esse potest'.

31 For a comparison with the Cluniac context, see in this volume the chapter of Marc Saurette.

the wise, which is pride, while the other seeks to correct the obstinate, which is stupidity.³²

Aelred of Rievaulx or How to Make of a Friend Another Self

With Aelred, we move on to a new level.³³ The problem is no longer how to act with the other members of the community but how to promote spiritual friendship as a form of interpersonal relationship within the community.³⁴ For Aelred, spiritual friendship represents a total life project that reconciles both ancient wisdom transmitted by the *De amicitia* of Cicero and the heritage of the Church Fathers.³⁵ In this sense, even if Aelred does not state it explicitly, the theory of spiritual friendship represents the most important contribution that a wise man can offer to his world, because it allows him to offer the best of pagan philosophy in aid of Christianity. Consequently, this text is, in the true sense of the word, an aristocratic text because it proposes the best path for an elite group that has chosen to withdraw from the world in order to practise the philosophical life, which is monastic. In the monastery, charity is given full rights because it is a requirement of divine law. But the monks ought to learn to practise another form of love, which is spiritual friendship and which is different from charity in that it concerns a small number of people and, as such, can create tensions within the community, like other informal forms of horizontal learning.³⁶ This distinction between the inclusive love of charity and the selective love of

32 Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione*, 78, 919-927: 'Cum ergo propter nostram edificationem loquimur, cum illis loquamur quorum doctrina possimus ad virtutem instrui. Cum autem propter edificationem proximi loquimur, cum illis loquamur quos speramus per nostram exhortationem a pravitate sua posse emendari. Alioquin et sapientes velle docere superbia est, et obstinatos corripere insipientia. Quia et injuriosus promixio est qui meliori non exhibet reverentiam et injuriosus sibi est qui non emendat, sed provocat erga se insipientis vesaniam'.

33 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*. On Aelred's teaching on friendship, see recently e.g., Haseldine, 'Friendship, Equality', 192-214; Sommefeldt, 'Aelred of Rievaulx on Friendship', 227-244, esp. 231-238; Morales, *Dieu est amitié*, 17-45 (devotional approach).

34 The bibliography on spiritual friendship during the twelfth century is a *mare infinitum*, so I can only cite a very small selection of important and/or recent studies: Leclercq, *Monks and Love*; McGuire, *Friendship and Community*; McEvoy, 'The Theory of Friendship', 3-44, esp. 20-22; Verbaal, 'L'amitié et les lettres', 351-381, esp. 352-369; Haseldine, 'Monastic Friendship', 349-393; Sablotny, 'Abaelard und Heloisa', 73-99, esp. 92-99.

35 On the reception of Cicero, see the recent paper by Ward, 'What the Middle Ages Missed', 307-326 (Aelred is mentioned on p. 326); for the adaptation of classical ideas of friendship, see Ziolkowski, 'Twelfth-Century Understandings', 59-81.

36 See, for example, in this volume the contribution of Nicolangelo D'Acunto about Saint Gall.

friendship is not self-evident; it results from a dramatic human history, which life in the monastery tries to repair.

In the beginning, everything starts out well. Friendship is one of creation's cosmic principles of ordering. Each element summons its likeness, from the smallest grain of sand to all mankind. As Aelred says, 'nothing exists alone, for each is created and maintains itself by bonding with others of its species'.³⁷ Consequently, friendship presupposes the social life, because a solitary element (a leaf, an animal, or a man) cannot experience love alone; and at the same time, friendship reinforces the horizontal social order by communion or alliance, as Aelred would say.³⁸ It is especially true for human creation, since God placed Adam and Eve in a strict relationship of equality and even collaterality, Eve having been taken from the rib of Adam. In the world before the Fall, as Aelred says, 'there was nothing superior or inferior, and this is the essence of friendship'.³⁹ But the disorder introduced by sin caused friendship to lose its cosmic character, giving it an individual value.⁴⁰ Friendship is no longer a natural trait but becomes a personal choice. The human world thus becomes a theatre of competition par excellence, of inequality, and of violence; and, moreover, there is no reason to suppose that monasteries escape these tensions among monks or canons of different social origin. In this new context, the monastery is called on to become the ideal place of fulfillment of spiritual friendship, since this is a way to pacify and consolidate the monastic community.⁴¹

Given the conditions of the present world, the model of monastic friendship is thus not that of Adam and Eve – because it is impossible to recreate the strictly horizontal duo – but, rather, that of pre-lapsarian angelic friendship, which unites inequality within friendship, both vertically and horizontally. The social virtue inherited from Aristotle, the friendship of the

37 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 1, chap. 54, 298, 309–310: 'Cum nihil eorum solum sit, sed cum quadam sui generis societate et creetur et persistat'.

38 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 1, chap. 55, 298, 312–318: 'Certe cum in caeteris omnibus irrationabilia deprehendantur, in hac tantum parte ita humanum animum imitantur, ut pene ratione agi aestimentur. Ita se sequuntur, ita collidunt sibi, ita motibus simul et vocibus suum expriment et produnt affectum, tam avide et jucunde mutua societate fruuntur ut nihil magis quam ea quae amicitiae sunt curare videantur'.

39 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 1, chap. 57, 299, 332–334: 'nec esset in rebus humanis superior vel inferior, quod est amicitiae proprium'.

40 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 1, chap. 58, 299, 336–341: 'At post lapsum primi hominis, cum refrigesciente caritate cupiditas subintrasset fecissetque bono communi private praeponi amicitiae caritatisque splendorem avaritia invidiaque corruptit; contentiones, aemulationes, odia, suspiciones corruptis hominum moribus invehens'.

41 See also Haseldine, 'Friendship and Rivalry', 390–414.

cloister, results from strictly individual strategies that make horizontality a positive value that depends on struggle. Horizontality in this context becomes a synonym for equality, and the monastery becomes the link where the social conditions are blurred. As Aelred says:

Returning to the original principle, these people should consider with care their equality received from nature, and not the little extras that human greed has added. This is why in friendship, which is nature's most precious gift, as much as grace, it is necessary that the greatest person lower himself and that the lowest rise up, that the rich be in need and the poor be enriched, that each share his condition with the other so that equality can be established.⁴²

In this training for spiritual friendship, the Bible plays the role of a reservoir of *exempla* by showing how such friendships are possible and by furnishing scenarios for implementing such friendships in the cloister. Aelred develops the story of David and Jonathan at length and illustrates the possibility of a supernatural friendship that ignores social conditions.⁴³ He proposes, moreover, a contemporary counterpart to the biblical examples by developing the story of two personal friendships that he had within the monastic world.⁴⁴

Spiritual friendship is thus not just an ideal. It should be put into practice in order to play its edifying role of correction. Once the friend becomes one with one's self, it is fitting to profit from the proximity that creates spiritual friendship in order to help the friend progress: 'Friends should empathize with one another, place themselves on the same level, see the faults of the other, just as one sees his own faults, and correct each other with humility and compassion'.⁴⁵ In this sense, horizontality and proximity that create friendship do not imply a leveling off, but, rather, imply a dynamic of spiritual progress. In practice, spiritual friendship is also based on a coded

42 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, chap. 90-91, 337, 682-689: 'Ad originis recurrentes principium, aequalitatem quam natura dedit, non circumpendunt quae mortalibus cupiditas praestitit, subtili examinatione considerare. Itaque in amicitia quae naturae simul et gratiae optimum donum est, sublimis descendat, humilis ascendat; dives egeat, pauper ditescat; et ita unusquisque alteri suam conditionem communicet ut fiat aequalitas'.

43 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, chap. 92-96, 337-339. See also chap. 97, 339, 747-748: 'Non enim amicitia recte colitur, a quibus aequalitas non servatur'.

44 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, chap. 119-127, 345-348.

45 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, chap. 107, 341, 847-849: 'Debet enim amicus amico compati, condescendere, vitium ejus suum putare, corripere humiliter, compatienter'.

communication of emotions that render fraternal correction psychologically acceptable: 'May they make their remonstrations with a sad expression, a distressed voice, and their words broken with tears, so that one can see and also feel that these reprimands come from love and not from rancour'.⁴⁶ Horizontal emotional communication must be expressive and transparent, inasmuch as it should reflect the intention of the friend. The text of Aelred in its theoretical and practical scope aims to become a veritable manual of knowing how to live together as friends in the monastery. His success, judged in numbers of manuscripts, proves, moreover, that he found his public.⁴⁷

This journey through the works of three authors of the twelfth century has taken us into the world of religious subjectivity, from control of the self to the recognition of the friend as a second self. In the history of the Middle Ages, the twelfth century plays a crucial role in the growing awareness of interiority in monastic life and in the engendering of new behaviors. To show the importance of the phenomenon, one need only turn to the texts of spirituality, which are historical documents of the same value as the rules, customaries, and other normative texts. The latter regulate the exterior time in the life of the monk or canon, whereas the texts on spirituality mark the rhythms of the interior life. The monastic ideal, as defined by these texts, should align the spiritualized interiorities, which are extended toward God and are also coordinated among themselves. More broadly speaking, after the twelfth century, these texts informed several major changes in the medieval Church, notably the greater attention paid by clergy to the laity and their interior life, but also the creation by the laity of a more personal and direct relationship with God, within or on the margins of the ecclesial institution.

But is this horizontal knowledge, based on deciphering the self and the other, always infallible? Our texts, which are normative by definition, are obviously discreet about those who fail, even if there are certain signs. The pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux acknowledges that there are failures in the process of interior transformation. Reading sometimes serves as an escape from other exercises such as prayer or attending Mass. There is quite a gap between the knowledge of the law attained through meditation, and its application.⁴⁸ Prayer, which is good in theory, can lead to discouragement

46 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, chap. 107, 341-342, 849-852: 'Corripiat enim vultus tristior, sermo dejectior, intercipiant verba lacrimae, ut non solum videat, sed etiam sentiat correptionem ex amore et non ex rancore procedere'.

47 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, book 3, 281-285.

48 Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes*, col. 498B: 'Vae mihi qui ista dico et ista non facio, et si aliquando facio, non diu perservero. Ista habeo in memoria et non servo in via, habeo

because in practice it seems fruitless. As the pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux says, 'I pray every day, yet I see no fruit from my prayer, but I begin again and again. No one answers me, no one speaks to me, no one offers me help, and I seem to be working uselessly'.⁴⁹

And if interior apprenticeship can be discouraging, what can be said about equals who are by definition fallible? To conclude, I quote a substitute remedy for horizontal learning, from an anonymous Italian treatise for religious training that is no later than the thirteenth century. The *Monachelus* says:

Examine with care the examples of good men whom you see in your monastery and, like a wise little bee, fly in spirit around the forest of your cloister. If you discover only dry trees in the forest of your brothers, in your community – may God forbid! – when you are in the church, raise your eyes to the walls and the paintings in the church, because if your brothers are silent when it comes to good works, the stones and paintings will proclaim loudly in their representations of the saints.⁵⁰

Horizontal learning and its interpersonal dimension thus leaves room for the visual language of the object. For the author of the treatise, with whom we tend to agree, better a good painting than a bad brother!

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in sermonibus et non in moribus. Legem in corde et in ore tota die rumino et contraria legi ago. Lego de religione in ea et plus diligo lectionem quam orationem. Verumtamen nihil aliud me docet divina Scriptura, nisi religionem amare, unitatem servare, charitatem habere. Ego autem miser et miserabilis, citius curro ad lectionem quam ad orationem, libentius volo legere quamd missas auscultare'.

49 Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes*, col. 496D: 'Sed dicis: "ego quotidie oro et orationis meae nullum fructum video, sed sicut accedo ad illam sic et redeo. Nemo mihi respondet, nemo loquitur, nemo quidpiam donat, sed incassum laborasse videor"'.

50 *Monachelus*, 398: 'Exempla vero bonorum quos in tuo monasterio perspexeris diligenter adtende et quasi apis prudentissima per silvam tui claustrum mente circumvola. Si autem nisi arbores autumnales in ipsa fratrum tuorum silva, id est congregatione, inveneris, quod Deus avertat, intra ecclesiam leva oculos tuos ad parietes et picturas ecclesie, quia si tui fratres tacebunt per bonorum operum exhibitionem, lapides et picture clamabunt per sanctorum representationem.'

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