Étienne Fouilloux and Frédéric Gugelot, eds.

Jésuites français et sciences humaines (années 1960): Actes de la journée d'étude (Lyon, 6 juin 2012). Collection Chrétiens et Sociétés Documents et Mémoires n° 22. Lyon: LARHRA-RESEA, 2014. Pp. 213. Pb, 20 euros.

This volume collects papers given at a conference held in June 2012 in Lyon. As Fouilloux and Bernard Hours have shown elsewhere (*Les jésuites à Lyon XVIIe–XXe siècle* [Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2005]), French Jesuits have been closely associated with the city for over four centuries, including the legendary Fourvière theologate. Since 1998, the municipal library has been entrusted by the province of France with a collection transferred from the former theological library at Fontaines near Chantilly, north of Paris (<https://www.bm-lyon.fr/nos-blogs/la-collection-jesuite-des>). Like its predecessor, *Jésuites et littérature (XVIIe–XXe siècle)* (Lyon: LARHRA-RESEA, 2011), this volume is owed to ongoing research activities organized around this Fontaines collection.

Fouilloux's introduction provides a lucid and succinct overview of a complex turbulent time. The title's *sciences humaines* (literally: human sciences) here specifically denotes varieties of structuralism as they appeared following Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962). Although usually translated as "social sciences," omitting the "human" in *sciences humaines* obscures the heart of this story. The structuralism beginning at the end of the 1950s and evolving throughout the 1960s was to some extent a reaction against the extreme subjectivity and impermanence of the existentialism that flourished during the German occupation and immediate postwar decade. Against the primacy of self-creating human subjects acting unpredictably in historical flux, structuralism underscored "the weight of the permanence of structures, in the life of individuals as well as in societies." Against the humanism of the young Marx, Louis Althusser's structuralist reading "affirmed that History is 'a process without a [human] subject' in which the confrontation with deep forces renders human pretensions at mastering [history's course] illusory."

The year 1966 proved to be "a seminal year" for publications expressing this "anti-subjectivist passion" (*passion antisubjective*). Fast on the heels of Althusser's *For Marx* (Paris: François Maspero, 1965) and *Reading Capital* (Paris: François Maspero, 1965) came Jacques Lacan's *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966); the first volume of Émile Benveniste's *Problems in General Linguistics* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1966); *The Love of Art* by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1966); and Jacques Rivette's film adaptation of the eighteenth-century *philosophe* Denis Diderot's *La religieuse* (*The Nun*). Significantly, Michel de Foucault's *The Order of Things* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard,

1966) inaugurated Gallimard's "Bibliothèque des sciences humaines" (Library of social sciences) series directed by Pierre Nora (later famed for editing the monumental multi-volume *Realms of Memory* [*Les Lieux de mémoire*], Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984–92). In retrospect, 1966 represents "the philosophical moment of the 1960s."

Fouilloux locates with precision the historical irony of this philosophical moment for French Catholicism. In December 1965—concluding the same year as Althusser's Marxist revisionism—the Second Vatican Council closed after promulgating *Gaudium et spes*. The constitution famously opened, "Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in the hearts" of the followers of Christ—a beautiful sentiment delivered with extraordinarily bad timing. For at precisely the moment the church succeeded (after so long a struggle) at making "humanism the touchstone of a Catholic anthropology," structuralism eclipsed the humanistic vogue of both Marxism and existentialism, substituting instead the anti-subjectivist passion for the permanence of structures. Reminiscences of Mgr. Gabriel Matagrín, auxiliary bishop of Lyon, capture the moment. Having returned from the council to France, he found it "impossible at that time to speak of humanism, of the human person, of anthropology. [...] [*Gaudium et spes* described] a world which, at that very moment, was becoming something else [*devenait autre*]."

In response, French Jesuits were persuaded that the Christian faith needed to pass through this "intellectual fire" in order to survive. In preparation for a 1966 meeting, Fr. Henri Chambre, the Jesuit Sovietologist, described the situation in a position paper. In spite of their polemics, both Marxist and Sartrean atheism had been open to dialogue. However, the "scientific posture" adopted by the new *sciences de l'homme* [sciences of man] no longer regarded religion as a possible interlocutor; rather, it had now become merely "one object of study among others." Hence, it was necessary for the Society to send several intellectuals to these fronts who were "*intimately* linked to this elaboration and not in a manner that was [merely] temporary or parallel." These pioneers would need to teach students in state institutions "*who would know who these Fathers are*" and who never frequented Catholic educational institutions (emphasis original).

In the end, the French Jesuits reached no unanimity with respect to establishing a single center or program. Perhaps the medium was the message, illustrating Fr. Michel de Certeau's 1967 formulation: "The privileged point of departure for structuralism is to say: there is no privileged reference, no center, nor subject." However, the Jesuits made numerous attempts in diverse disciplines, a number of which are recounted in the essays that follow the introduction: (1) "Kant, Hegel and Company" (the word-play *compagnie* connotes

both a “company” as well as the “Compagnie de Jésus” [Society of Jesus]); (2) “Conversion of the Society [of Jesus] to Teilhard de Chardin in the 1960s”; (3) “The Semiological Adventure of French Biblicists”; (4) “The Jesuits of France: Pedagogues and Educators and the *Sciences humaines* (1965–1976)”; (5) “Jesuit Spirituality and Lacanian Psychoanalysis”; (6) “Loudun, Certeau, Mandrou.”

After this heady mix, the tone turns elegiac in Gugelot’s chapter “From Estrangement to Rupture” as he recounts the “litany of names” of scholars who left the Society (especially after the events of May 1968). Gugelot deftly avoids attributing causality, citing the numbers (as does Fouilloux in his introduction) showing that the decline had begun long before Vatican II: in 1946, French Jesuits numbered 3,150; in 1960, 2,272; in 1964, 1,794. However, Gugelot does suggest that, while the *science humaines* did not play any direct role in departures, “they contributed to a strong critical interrogation regarding the faith and its representations. The consequences of the council and of May 1968 made possible not the departures but their magnitude.” In January 1977, recounting the case of the Hegelian philosopher Fr. Georges Morel (1921–89)—a decisive teacher in the youthful formation of today’s post-structuralist Jean-Luc Nancy (b.1940)—the sympathetic French provincial put the issue bluntly in a letter to Fr. General Arrupe: his superiors—“above all you yourself—have led him to understand [*lui avaient fait comprendre*] the impossibility of pursuing his life as an intellectual and writer as a priest and religious.”

Gugelot’s essay is followed by the poignant personal account of one of those in the “litany” of departures, former Jesuit Jean-Louis Schlegel, a philosopher and sociologist of religion who currently works as an editor at the journal *Esprit*. Schlegel recounts participating in a group of about ten scholastics reading Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) under the tutelage of Fr. François Marty for two hours a day, six days per week, over a period of six months. The same was done the following year while reading Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) under the guidance of Fr. Pierre-Jean Labarrière.

This anecdote inspires Gugelot’s wry question in the volume’s conclusion, “Human Sciences, Too Human?” (evoking Nietzsche’s *Human, All Too Human* [1878]). “But isn’t there a risk,” asks Gugelot, “when one spends more time reading [Hegel’s] *Phenomenology* than the breviary?” The line calls to mind John W. O’Malley’s quip about the early Jesuits: “They knew their Cicero better than they knew their Bible” (O’Malley, “Jesuit History: A New Hot Topic,” *America*, 9 May 2005). Over the centuries, there has indeed been a perennial risk for the Jesuit humanist particularity—namely, cultural accommodation to one’s audience here and now (see Schloesser, “Book Reviews,” *JJS* 3, no. 1 [2016]: 85–93). Occasionally, as the Chinese Rites Controversy painfully shows, the risk has resulted in dire consequences for the Society. However, it is a risk entailed by

and inseparable from Jesuit accommodation. This illuminating and poignant volume richly details both the *grandeur et misère* of that perennial risk in one exceptionally fascinating time and place: Jesuit humanist accommodations of the *sciences humaines* in post-conciliar France.

Stephen Schloesser, S.J.

Loyola University Chicago

sschloesser@luc.edu

DOI 10.1163/22141332-00303008-22