Cynthia Gannett and John C. Brereton, eds.

Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. xx + 444. Hb, \$125. Pb, \$45.

This collection of thoughtful essays on the role of rhetoric in Jesuit colleges and universities from their origins to the present arises from the editors' interest in rhetorical traditions and from current conversations among Jesuits and their collaborators on pedagogy, educational renewal, and the order's efforts to update the historical missions and ministries of the Society of Jesus. From the sixteenth century until roughly the mid-twentieth century the required study of rhetoric in Jesuit schools aimed at that singular endowment of the well educated individual—*eloquentia perfecta*, that harmonious union of eloquence and wisdom, "that blend of verbal facility and ethical action" (39). This work reviews the privileged status rhetoric once enjoyed but has since lost, and assesses the relevance and place of rhetoric in Jesuit education today.

Divided in three parts, these twenty-five essays (with foreword, preface, and introduction) examine the Jesuit rhetorical tradition in Europe and parts of North America before the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773) and from its restoration (1814) to the present. They probe critically the curricula of some Jesuit universities today for surviving elements of that tradition, whether in various pedagogical methods, in courses on rhetoric, in writing centers and programs for writing and speaking across the curriculum. The essays make the reader aware that the idea of *eloquentia perfecta* in today's academic milieu is not one grasped easily by many non-Jesuit faculty, nor one that all faculty have been eager to embrace. At the same time, most contributors (eighteen of whom are not Jesuits) seem to appreciate the pedagogical value of this educational ideal and labor to "infuse the Jesuit curriculum with a reimagined notion of rhetoric, aligned with both historical heritage and modern embodiments" (296).

Part one delves into the Jesuit idea of *eloquentia perfecta* as codified in the *Ratio studiorum* of 1599, which states that "perfect eloquence [...] includes two most important subjects, oratory and poetics ([with primary attention] [...] given to oratory)" and "consist[s] in [...] rules for speaking, for style, and for scholarly learning." Cicero's works on rhetoric and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* provide rules for speaking; Cicero's style is particularly recommended; "scholarly learning should come from cultural history based on authoritative writers" (Claude Pavur, trans. *The Ratio studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* [St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005], 155–56). The *Ratio* also prescribes pedagogical procedures for instructing Jesuit and non-Jesuit

students in the pursuit of *eloquentia perfecta*. While it does not specifically address the moral transformation of the individual, Cicero and the Roman rhetorical tradition from the ancient world onward envisioned the individual with *eloquentia perfecta* as a person of unimpeachable moral character: “the good man who speaks well” (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*). Jesuit pedagogy, too, steeped in traditions of Renaissance humanism, emphasized this moral dimension as crucial to its educational aims, and from its origins produced numerous individuals renowned for eloquence and virtue (understood widely) such as the Jesuits Pedro Juan Perpiñan and Antonio Possevino, and Francis de Sales.

Part two calls attention to Jesuit institutions in the US from the restoration of the Society of Jesus to the modern era. Significantly, the same educational model was reinstituted, though with judicious accommodations to the rapid changes throughout the world. As David Leigh observes, “the integration of past wisdom with new studies would become one of the perennial principles of Jesuit liberal education” (126). Since Vatican II (1962–65), dramatic changes have occurred and continue unabated. Yet, even with the sometimes painful concessions to the modern world several core principles and methods of the rhetorical curriculum have been passed down, often in roundabout ways, by Jesuit teachers and those influenced by them, such as Bernard Lonergan, S.J., Walter Ong, S.J., Daniel Fogerty, Albert R. Jonsen, Marshall McLuhan, Edward P.J. Corbett, and Paulo Freire.

Since discontinuing the *Ratio studiorum* as the code of Jesuit education, core principles and ideals of Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*, such as “discernment,” *cura personalis*, the *magis*, and “men and women for others,” have figured prominently in shaping a renewed pedagogy. Though the *Ratio* no longer holds sway, the contributors nonetheless value its wisdom and heritage and aspire to recover this, though in a new key, with the same ideal of transforming men and women in service to others. Indeed, it is the same goal, as David Leigh puts it: “to develop persons who are intellectually, morally, and religiously integrated and responsible to become public leaders in a well governed state” (126). While Greek, Latin, the classical authors, and many pedagogical procedures of the *Ratio* have lost their privileged place, other curricula in the humanities focusing on reading, writing, speaking, listening, and service learning appear promising for replacing what had once been essential subjects for the pursuit of *eloquentia perfecta*.

The third part of this book looks at modern rhetorical studies at some Jesuit universities today (e.g., Fordham, Loyola Marymount, Seattle), where proponents of a renewed *eloquentia perfecta* struggle to reassert its (rightful) place in the core of the curriculum (ironically when the study of rhetoric in many

non-Jesuit universities is experiencing something of a revival). Some contributors, however, find reason for optimism in the many writing-and-speaking programs, such as the “rhetoric across the curriculum” (342) as it is called at Seattle University, that seek to harness the intellectual, ethical, spiritual, civic ideals of that lost rhetorical tradition.

This volume is admirable on many counts, especially for the editors’ appreciation of Jesuit pedagogy over the ages, their perceptive introductions to each of the volume’s three parts, their thoughtful arrangement of these diverse essays in a way that lays out clearly the Jesuits’ four-hundred-year rhetorical tradition, probes its riches and legacies, frankly assesses the enormous challenges today in defining what a Jesuit college or university is, and takes us into the trenches, as it were, where the work of rhetorical education goes on today. Everyone involved in the educational enterprise at Jesuit institutions—and certainly many others as well—should find these essays singularly beneficial for recovering an incomparable value that has nearly been lost and is most worthy of renewal.

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