

## “How Humanistic is the Jesuit Tradition?: From the 1599 Ratio Studiorum to Now”

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The topic assigned me is huge and filled with perils for anybody rash enough to address it. My experience has been, however, that sometimes tackling an issue in such global terms can, though frustrating, be helpful in flushing out our assumptions and thus helping us deal with them more effectively. I hope that a result something like that will be the outcome of this morning's session. I take my part in these proceedings to be the setting of the stage, as best I can, but I warn you that you will find just fleeting glimpses of that stage as we hurl through the centuries as in a fast-moving rocket. I rely on the panelists to supply further information and to correct my prejudices, omissions, and mistakes.

Before moving to the Jesuits for that panoramic rush, I want to review the history of the humanistic tradition before the Jesuits appeared on the scene. I realize that many of you already know the story well, but I hope that a review of it can sharpen our discussion by providing a common base for it.

Our terms "Humanism" and "the Humanities" derive from the Italian Renaissance and its promotion of what was called the *studia humanitatis*--which we might freely translate as literature dealing with what it means to be a human being. That literature consisted in the Greek and especially Latin works of poetry, oratory, drama, and history that, when properly taught, were believed to develop an upright, articulate, and socially committed person. I hardly need add that this meaning of "Humanist" and "Humanism," which arose in a Christian context, bears little, if any, relationship to the way the terms are often used today to indicate somebody with faith in humanity but not in God.<sup>1</sup>



## **Platonic and Aristotelian vs. Isocratic Tradition**

Let us begin at the beginning by moving for just a moment back to the Athens of the philosophers Plato and Aristotle and of the Sophist Isocrates. We are all familiar with the battle Plato waged with the Sophists through his dialogues, in which he had Socrates attack those teachers of public speaking on two grounds: first, for their intellectual shallowness--they spoke of justice but could not define what it meant; secondly, for their moral deviance--they perverted their skills in the art of persuasion by being willing to teach their students how to argue either side of a moral issue--to WIN the case was what was important. Plato made the Sophists look like charlatans and peddlers of bombast.

Plato may have bested the Sophists in philosophical argument, but it was the Sophists who, through their most eminent thinker Isocrates and his followers, won the battle to educate fourth-century Greece and subsequently the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.<sup>2</sup> Isocrates was basically a teacher of oratory, that is, of rhetoric. A younger contemporary of Socrates, he was stung by the criticisms Plato leveled against his kind, and he to a considerable extent refashioned the Sophistic tradition to try to make it intellectually and morally responsible. He too wanted to be known as a philosopher, that is, a lover of wisdom.

But he clearly recognized the gap that separated his wisdom from that of Plato, to say nothing of the even wider gap that would separate it from Aristotle. For Isocrates and his disciples the education Plato envisaged was ridiculous, for it required most of the years of a man's life and it also isolated the student from the urgent concerns of society. It produced ivory-tower intellectuals, not the men of action society required. The kind of learning that later Aristotle pursued, especially in "natural philosophy," that is, what we would call the sciences of physics, astronomy, zoology, and so forth, was even farther removed from life in the polis. It did not deal with human issues.

If Plato and Aristotle based their education on the idea of Truth with a capital T, Isocrates based his on the virtues of speech, which for him and his followers was what distinguishes human beings from animals. The burden of speech was to convey noble and



uplifting ideals. The goal of education was to produce eloquent and morally effective speakers. The axiom beloved in the nineteenth century by British educators in this tradition captured the goal for their times by saying it was to produce "gentlemen," that is, persons who said what they meant and meant what they said. "Said what they meant"--that is, their words accurately transmitted their thoughts. "Meant what they said"--they were men of moral integrity who stood by their words.

Such a goal required in students diligent study of "good literature," for through such study they would acquire an eloquent style of speaking and, just as important, be inspired by the examples of virtuous and even heroic behavior they would encounter in the best authors. Through such study they would especially acquire a practical prudence in human affairs, a wisdom that would enable them to influence others--for the good--in the law courts, in the senates, in the antechambers of power. They would be, as we in the education business love to say today, "leaders."

The curriculum itself, centered on the Greek and Roman literary classics, could be mastered in a relatively short time, so that the young man could be sent into society to play his part when he was in his late teens. Rhetoric, the art of speaking persuasively, the art needed by a man committed to public life, became the central discipline in the curriculum.

Thus was created within one or two generations the basic design of the Humanistic tradition of education that would prove itself so resilient for the next 2500 years. Bit by bit the ideal took firm institutional forms in the ancient world and produced Cicero and Quintilian, as well as Saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great. Cicero summed up the broad moral ideal of this tradition in a line in his *De officiis* that Renaissance Humanists and then the Jesuits loved to quote: "*Non nobis solum nati sumus*"--we are not born for ourselves alone. The most succinct Roman articulation of the "ideal graduate" of the system was Cicero's simple description of the orator: "*Vir bonus, dicendi peritus*"--a good man, skilled in speaking. This combination of probity, eloquence, and commitment to the public weal would be the unwavering ideal of rhetorical, or Humanistic, education through the centuries, but it would often be compromised, diluted, mystified, and made subservient



to other ideals.

### **Renaissance Humanism**

As the Roman Empire declined, the educational system declined as well, surviving in barely vestigial form until it experienced a resurgence in the twelfth century. And then came the fuller and more lasting one in Italy in the fifteenth century that we indeed call the Renaissance principally because it caused this cult of "good literature" (*bonae litterae*) and this ideal of education to be reborn in a particularly effective way.<sup>3</sup>

Fifteenth-century humanists, as they tried to recreate the educational program and ideals of the *studia humanitatis*, in effect created the basic design of "good" primary and secondary schools that persisted in the Western world until the middle of this century. (I use "secondary" as a convenient but not perfectly accurate shorthand.) The principles upon which these schools were based were essentially the following: first, the curriculum was centered in works of Latin history, oratory, drama, and poetry, for these taught eloquent expression; second, these works also had a didactic purpose, that is, they gave guidance in morals and in practical affairs; thirdly, the assumption behind the curriculum was classicist, that is, the best thoughts had been thought, the best style fashioned, so that what was needed in the student was to appropriate such thoughts and style; fourth, formal schooling was to end when a boy was in his late teens. Fifth, the formation of an upright person was the goal of the system, which Erasmus would later specify with the word *pietas*.<sup>4</sup> *Pietas* in the context included and was conditioned by Christian godliness, but it more directly denoted maturity of character. Although he and other Renaissance writers on the subject believed *pietas* was imbibed through the works in the curriculum, they gave perhaps even more emphasis to the moral and human qualities required in the teacher in order to accomplish the goal, an emphasis the Jesuits later enthusiastically appropriated.

In a sense this model can be called a *pure* embodiment of the humanistic tradition in that, despite the centuries that had elapsed, it so faithfully recapitulated the program of ancient Greece and Rome. But the Humanist movement in the Italian Renaissance had at



least one important characteristic that distinguished it from its ancient counterpart.<sup>5</sup> The Italian Humanists were Christians. This meant, for instance, that the way they developed certain aspects of the discipline of rhetoric, combined with certain traditions of Christian doctrine and theology, resulted in a new and often resounding surfacing of the theme of human dignity. Thus this new rhetoric tended to promote a more optimistic Christian anthropology than the more pessimistic emphasis in the so-called Augustinian tradition, with its often dour fixation on human depravity and moral impotence.<sup>6</sup>

I need also to mention another aspect of the Humanists' enterprise that qualifies some of the generalizations I have been making. They developed the basic techniques and principles of textual criticism and, while not lacking some prototypes in the ancient world like Saint Jerome, constructed for the first time in history critical editions of classical and patristic texts. In other words, they created the highly technical discipline of philology, more or less as we know it today, that, because it required such long and disciplined study, was not open to the young generalist that the Humanistic schools themselves produced. As textual critics the Humanists were professionals. In 1516, for instance, Erasmus, "the prince of the Humanists" published the first critical edition of the New Testament.<sup>7</sup>

### **Veritas vs. Pietas**

The mention of "professionals" allows us to backtrack to the striking innovation in education that took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the creation of the universities. It was, in fact, somewhat in reaction to the educational ethos of the universities that the Humanists of the fifteenth century developed their schools. There are several characteristics of the university that made it almost the polar opposite of the Humanist ideal.

First of all, the content that beginners principally studied when in the "undergraduate" or "Arts Faculty" of the university was not literature but Aristotelian science, with some admixture of metaphysics and ethics. Literature and history as such had no place in this system. Secondly, the goal of the university was not to produce an upright person ready for



public life, but to pursue truth through ongoing analysis and refinement of argument. The university was not about *pietas* but *veritas* (as Harvard's motto has it). It was not centered on the development of the student or the betterment of society but on the solving of intellectual problems. It gloried not in the *vita activa* of public engagement but in the *vita contemplativa* of study and research.

Thirdly, rhetoric, the art of persuasion, played second-fiddle in this system to dialectics, the art of debate. This is a shift from the art of winning consensus to the art of winning an argument, from the art of finding common ground to the art of proving your opponent wrong. Fourthly, a full course of study might last fifteen or more years because the five or six years in the Arts Faculty that I have been describing were really preparation for entering one of the higher faculties of Law, Medicine, or Theology--"graduate school."

Finally, this meant for the first time in the history of the West the systematic professionalization of learning, for this style of education could be pursued only within the highly sophisticated and elaborate institution known as the university. The gentleman scholar who ruminated over his texts of Virgil or the Bible was replaced with the professional, who brandished his degrees and licenses to prove he had mastered all the technicalities of his profession. Further proof of his mastery lay in his being able to speak a technical jargon that nobody outside academia could possibly understand--for eloquence he cared not a whit!

In the sixteenth century Erasmus saw this system as the mortal enemy of all that the *studia humanitatis* stood for. Yet, these two modes of education, despite the great differences that separated them, had an important link in that the medieval *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric, and logic were taught in both the Arts Faculty of the university and in the Humanistic schools, albeit with different purposes, methods, and emphasis, and they were taught to students of approximately the same age. As early as the fourteenth century the poet Petrarch, rightly regarded as the Father of Humanism, taught rhetoric in the Arts Faculty of the University of Padua, and later other Humanists did the same in other universities. By the middle of the sixteenth century Peter Ramus proposed for the Arts



Faculty of the University of Paris a seven and a half year program in the subjects contained in the original humanist curriculum that would lead to a Master of Arts degree; the idea was that that degree would enable the student to pursue further studies in a graduate faculty.<sup>8</sup>

This incorporation of the Humanist curriculum into the university system is what Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine call the transformation of Humanism into the Humanities. By this they mean that education even in the *studia humanitatis* was for pursuing information and skills, not for inspiring the development of good citizens. Incorporation into the university curriculum thus meant a radical reordering of the scope of *studia* as they were transformed into skills to aid professional advancement.<sup>9</sup>

### Jesuit Humanism

By the mid-sixteenth century, therefore, the Humanistic tradition had found a home in two locations that would persist in the Western world down to the present century--the secondary school and the Arts College of the university, and they thereby manifested two quite distinct modalities. It is precisely at this point, mid-sixteenth century, that the Jesuits enter the scene. The original ten companions were all graduates of the University of Paris, yet after 1540 they had their headquarters in Italy, where Humanistic secondary schools had already been in existence for at least a century.

In 1548 the Jesuits opened their first real school in Messina, Sicily, and others followed in rapid succession. All at once they had become a religious order whose principal and most distinctive ministry was the managing and staffing of schools--at both the secondary and university level, though the former were almost incomparably more numerous than the latter. They could not avoid the issue of the *studia humanitatis*, nor did they want to.<sup>10</sup>

In this regard they made two fateful decisions in 1547-48 that manifest the two, somewhat competing aspects of their relationship to those *studia*. That year Juan de Polanco, Ignatius' secretary, wrote a letter justifying the study by young Jesuits themselves of the *cosas de humanidad*. The reasons he adduced favoring such study were borrowed from the humanists themselves but were not the ones that made the broadest claims. The study



of *humanidad*, Polanco argued, helps in the understanding of Scripture, is a traditional propaedeutic to philosophy, and fosters the skills in verbal communication essential for the ministries in which Jesuits engaged. These are basically utilitarian arguments that see the *studia humanitatis* not as goods in their own right but as fitting into a broader program of professional education. Missing in Polanco's letter is any suggestion that the *studia* have anything to do with making the Jesuits better human beings.<sup>11</sup>

Yet the very next year Jeronimo Nadal, Ignatius's most trusted agent in the field, prescribed for the new school in Messina a basically humanistic curriculum for young boys from important families, most of whom would not go on for further professional training in a university. With the founding of Messina, no matter what the original plan was there, the Jesuits entered into the field of what we can call secondary education, where the training ended in a boy's late teens and was considered complete in and of itself.<sup>12</sup>

Why did the Jesuits enter this field? There is no easy answer, but I am convinced that even from the beginning they saw a correlation between the *pietas* beloved of the Humanists and the kind of personal conversion and transformation that were the traditional goals of Christian ministry, in which the Jesuits were so assiduously engaged. In 1552 Nadal explicitly asserted the primacy of *pietas* in the educational system the Jesuits were beginning to build and of which he was the first architect: "Everything is to be so arranged," he said, "so that in the pursuit of these studies *pietas* holds first place."<sup>13</sup>

A few years later Polanco wrote a letter to the members of the Society giving fifteen reasons why the Society had so resolutely undertaken formal schooling, especially on the secondary level, as its principal ministry. Although he does not explicitly mention *pietas*, in the last of his reasons he well captures the Humanistic ideal of producing leaders in the polis: "Those who are now only students will grow up to be pastors, civic officials, administrators of justice, and willful other important posts to everybody's profit and advantage."<sup>14</sup>

We often read that the Jesuits founded schools so that they would be bastions of orthodoxy to train young Christian soldiers to do battle against the Protestant threat. In Polanco's fifteen reasons, however, there is not a single one that even suggests such a





preoccupation. The same can be said about the section on education in the Jesuit *Constitutions* written by Ignatius and Polanco, and for the most part about Nadal's early writings on the subject. The Jesuits had many and complex motives for undertaking the ministry of formal education, but absolutely fundamental to them was their faith in the almost limitless potential for the individual and for society of the *studia humanitatis*, as this was preached by earlier Renaissance Humanists.

Nonetheless, there can be no denying that with varying degrees of emphasis, depending partly on where in Europe the schools were located, concern for orthodoxy affected what the moral and religious formation of the student entailed, and changed it from its earlier even Christian manifestations. As Europe moved into the Confessional Age, Jesuit schools--to a greater or lesser degree even on the secondary level--became ever more clearly confessional institutions, which added a further conservative dimension to what was already a fundamentally conservative educational ideal.

Two other factors that derived from the Jesuits' religious commitments affected, I believe, the Humanistic ideals they adopted for their schools and that almost seem to cancel each other out. The first was the call to interiority of the *Spiritual Exercises* that correlated well with the inner-directedness of the leader envisaged by the Humanists. That leader would when necessary defy convention to follow what in these concrete circumstances was the better choice. He would be a person of discernment.

The second was an ever increasing emphasis within the Society and within the church on exacting obedience to rules and church discipline. This emphasis arose partly out of the Observantist Movement of the late Middle Ages whereby strict adherence to rules was almost the very essence of religious life--a belief to which many Jesuits gradually succumbed and which made a resoundingly strong comeback in religious orders in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also arose more broadly in Catholicism from the strong social disciplining that permeated Catholicism in the wake of the Council of Trent. The social disciplining that the Jesuits to a large degree adopted for themselves and that broadly characterized both Protestant and Catholic churches in the late sixteenth century had to have



an impact on the ideals Jesuits communicated to their students--or imposed upon them. Professor Scaglione has indeed spoken of an "authoritarian humanism" as the Jesuit legacy in education.<sup>15</sup>

### **Ratio Studiorum of 1599**

In any case, after a half century in the education business, the Jesuits produced in 1599 the definitive version of their *Ratio Studiorum*, a document basically structured as a collection of job-descriptions of everybody directly connected with the process of education in the Jesuit system.<sup>16</sup> For teachers this job description includes the texts they are to teach, the order in which they are to teach them, and some pedagogical techniques and procedures, often pedantically detailed, to make their teaching more effective. The *Ratio* is concerned with doing a job in the most effective way possible without very clearly declaring the philosophy of education that might make the job worth doing in the first place. That philosophy, the authors surely but perhaps mistakenly presumed, would be known to those involved in doing the job.

The *Ratio* is an altogether top-down document in two crucial ways. It begins with the Jesuit provincial superior and works down eventually to the students. It also begins with the so-called "higher faculties"--Scripture, scholastic theology, cases of conscience or ethics--and works down the program through philosophy to rhetoric and grammar, the "lowest" disciplines in this system but the heart of the matter in the traditionally humanistic program.

Three observations are apposite. First, it is clear from some details in the "Rules for the Provincial" that the *Ratio* is designed first and foremost as a master plan for the training of Jesuits themselves.<sup>17</sup> We know from other sources that in the Jesuit system relatively few besides Jesuits ever got as far as the "higher;" that is, the theological disciplines--even diocesan seminarians were not expected to study theology beyond "cases of conscience." This fact gives the *Ratio* a rather curious twist as a blueprint for the wide range of institutions and the diverse student-bodies the Jesuit network of schools embraced.



Secondly, the design of the *Ratio* reduces the *studia humanitatis* to a preparatory program for academic specialization, namely, for further studies in science and theology. It is true that in the "Common Rules for the Teachers of the Lower Classes" the *Ratio* takes as its focus young boys in Jesuit secondary schools and indicates ways teachers may train the boys in "Christian conduct" (*mores etiam Christianis dignos*) through certain devout practices like requiring daily attendance at mass, but it falls short of suggesting the inner-directed wisdom implicit in Erasmian *pietas*.<sup>18</sup>

Thirdly, the *Ratio* insists that the acquisition of the power of self-expression or eloquence is the scope of the class devoted to rhetoric and, more broadly, of the "lower" disciplines, with the acquisition of information a secondary goal. Missing in the *Ratio* are the highfalutin claims of the humanists, Jesuits included, that this training will produce the leaders society needs, but such claims were surely presumed by the authors as not needing to be stated.<sup>19</sup>

I think just these few observations about the *Ratio* alert us to the danger of trying to recreate what happened in the past through the exclusive study of official and normative documents like the *Ratio*. The vast majority of Jesuit schools implemented only a truncated version of the grand design envisaged by the *Ratio*, and many, perhaps most, schools in that majority went little beyond the so-called "lower" disciplines. Rhetoric, "humanity," and grammar were what practically every Jesuit taught at sometime in his career and were much more important in the total network of Jesuit schools through the centuries than the *Ratio* suggests. We need more studies especially of the secondary schools like those by Professor Scaglione and others, but my hunch is that in them the *studia humanitatis* retained more of the scope originally claimed for them by the humanists than the *Ratio* suggest.<sup>20</sup> Just how successfully that scope was actually attained is another question for which we have no secure answer, but Grafton and Jardine have alerted us to how plodding and lowly much teaching was in Humanistic schools, and we should not automatically assume Jesuit schools were an exception.

In neither the university nor even in the humanistic secondary schools was any provision made for any appreciation of arts like painting and sculpture, and this deficiency is reflected



in the *Ratio*. These were text-based systems. The humanists did make provision for dance, a "performing art" as a requisite for the gentleman, and therefore dance, though not mentioned in the *Ratio*, was taught in at least some Jesuit schools. In the seventeenth century the College Louis-le-Grand in Paris was renowned for its ballet.<sup>21</sup> Theater, another performing art, is mentioned, but in restrictive terms. We know from other sources, however, of the theatrical pieces that were produced in the Jesuit schools in such number and with such exuberance and excellence that they must be considered an integral part of those schools' self-definition.<sup>22</sup> The two new books from the University of Toronto Press provide incontrovertible evidence of how important the arts were in the corporate culture of the Society of Jesus, and they thus raise interesting questions about how the arts impacted formal schooling in the Jesuit system.<sup>23</sup>

We also know especially through the studies of Marc Fumaroli that Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced serious and important books on rhetoric and other aspects of what we might call literary studies, so that we cannot say categorically that in the Jesuit system such studies inevitably and invariably were reduced to pragmatic uses, without appreciation for their aesthetic qualities.<sup>24</sup>

Until fifty years ago the Jesuits in theory stuck adamantly to the Greek and Latin classics as without question "the best literature," which therefore required a privileged and unassailable place in the curriculum, but we know that already in the seventeenth century vernacular literatures were to some degree and in certain places making inroads into the Jesuit schools. The Jesuits at least in France seem to have been slower to make room for such literature than were other educators, including members of other religious orders.<sup>25</sup>

### **The *Ratio* in the Restored Society and Beyond**

In 1773 the Society of Jesus was by papal edict suppressed throughout the world. I think most scholars would agree that when the Society was restored in the early nineteenth century it at least on the normative level approached the *studia humanitatis*, as well as many other matters treated in the *Ratio*, with a tired and defensive formalism. In 1903, for instance,



Robert Schwickerath published an important book on Jesuit education exalting the perennial value of the *Ratio* down to its last detail and attacking modern educational theorists who dared propose such heresy as elective courses. He vigorously advocated the Greek and Latin classics as the indispensable cornerstone of any genuine education. He practically ignored the traditional rationales for them by substituting the vague argument that they were "the best means for training the mind."<sup>26</sup> I recall from my own training as a young Jesuit that that same argument was adduced for our intensive study of the classics, but I could never quite understand just how they were making my brain so much better. In my malevolence I sometimes speculated that they had not done much for the brains of my teachers.

But, besides helping us get better brains, the classics were also supposed to help us young Jesuits achieve "perfect eloquence"--*eloquentia perfecta*. I did not find this claim absurd even for the twentieth century because I knew that Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, perhaps the last truly great political orators in the English-language world, were products of schools where the classics were central to the curriculum. But I also knew all too many products of Jesuit classical education who were insufferably pompous windbags.

In any case, sometime shortly after the middle of this century the *Ratio* went into semi-official but definitive retirement, and the *studia humanitatis* and all they stood for were in colleges and universities left to fend for themselves.<sup>27</sup> This was not such a dramatic trauma as my words imply, for those *studia* had in actual fact been fending for themselves for a long time, certainly on the college and university level. On that level classics departments were fast shrinking and being absorbed by other departments, and even English and history departments, the most obvious core of humanistic disciplines, were, though heavily enrolled, just departments among other departments. Philosophy departments, which in the course of time had come to be considered a humanities discipline, went the same way. To the ordinary observer Jesuit colleges and universities in these regards did not look much different from other colleges and universities.

"The sixties" in the view of some people stand for nothing but drugs, sex, rock and roll, and the decline of the West. For persons involved in Jesuit educational institutions, however,



they should stand for the first radical attempt to re-examine the whole system since the sixteenth century. They should stand for intelligent and less defensive attempts to discover and update the most vital and life-giving elements in the tradition, while sloughing off old pieties. The Jesuit high schools, as a result of hard work beginning in that decade, have refashioned themselves in this way so that, within the severe limitations of that very imperfect instrument known as formal schooling, they have with notable success produced informed, articulate, well-read, and socially committed young leaders--"men and women for others" to use the words of our beloved Pedro Arrupe, words which of course sound almost like a paraphrase of Cicero's "we are not born for ourselves alone."

Jesuit colleges and universities have not been so successful, due to a number of factors, not least of which is their almost infinitely greater complexity, as well as the long-standing polyvalence of the humanistic tradition in the university system. However, as early as 1964, a thoughtful and, for the times, persuasive and thorough rethinking of what Jesuit colleges and universities were about appeared in a book edited by Jesuit educators entitled *Christian Wisdom and Christian Formation*, and many studies along the same line have appeared since then, including Martin Tripole's and Michael Buckley's new books, which take up many of the issues I have been describing.<sup>28</sup> Of special import in recent years has been the serial entitled *Conversations*, which this spring published its fifteenth number.

As with other colleges and universities the sixties marked a profound shift in every aspect of Jesuit higher education, at least in the United States. The impact of the GI Bill, for instance, had by then drastically affected Jesuit schools as it had others. But there were two important forces that were, in the first instance, peculiar to Catholic schools and in the second peculiar to Jesuit schools. They are of great importance.

### **Vatican II as Erasmian Council**

The first is the impact of the Second Vatican Council, which met between 1962-65. The Council shook Catholicism and, with it, the Society of Jesus to its foundations. The aspect of the Council to which I want to call attention, however, is something quite specific. It is my



conviction that the Council in adopting the rhetorical style of discourse of the Fathers of the Church unwittingly adopted the great themes and issues present in the Humanistic tradition from its inception, themes and issues that were baptized by the Humanists of the Renaissance--social commitment, human dignity, freedom of conscience, respectful dialogue. Like some other scholars, I have gone so far as to describe Vatican II "an Erasmian council," for it was Erasmus who gave particularly powerful voice to these ideals in the Renaissance.<sup>29</sup>

Second, what the Council helped the Jesuits to do was to discover and affirm in their own spiritual tradition fundamental themes along the same line that had lain dormant or that had for a long time lacked clear articulation. Fortunately, scholarship on Jesuit sources like the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* was already at the time of the Council producing results consonant with what the Council expounded. I refer to such things as the discovery of the centrality of discernment in the process of the *Exercises* and of spiritual freedom as the goal toward which discernment is geared, and I refer to the vision, in the final exercise in the book, of the world as suffused with grace and charged with the grandeur of God. I refer in the *Constitutions* to the basic harmony between nature and grace that runs as a leitmotif through them, a far cry from Augustinian or Jansenist views that the world is corrupt and human nature depraved--and all human actions little more than disguised plays for power.

## Conclusion

In sum, what I have been trying to say is that in answering our question about how humanistic the Jesuit tradition in education is, we, while making use of normative documents like the *Ratio*, must move back from them to try to see what the actual practice was. We must move back even from that point to examine the specific context in which that tradition was located, whether in university or secondary school. We must examine, as well, the national context. And we must move still further back to locate the tradition in the even broader traditions of the Jesuit order and, of course, in the mood and ethos of Catholicism at any given period of history.



You are all acutely aware of another context that is profoundly affecting our subject today. I refer to postmodernism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism, and the revolution in education being affected by the electronic media, all of which challenge premises upon which the traditional *studia humanitatis* rested. These contemporary realities are pervasively and aggressively present in higher education, affecting every aspect of our enterprise. The cultural wars are no less vicious for being fought on such small turf.<sup>30</sup>

"How humanistic is the Jesuit tradition--from 1599 to now?" That is the question before us. I think we can answer it by saying the tradition has been deeply and consistently humanistic on two levels. First, on the level of belief in both the practical and the more broadly humanizing potential of the humanities, and, secondly, on the level of concern for the yearnings of the human heart arising from Ignatian spirituality--the two levels that Professor Fumaroli designated as *rhetorica humana* and *rhetorica divina* in the Jesuit tradition.<sup>31</sup> In an ideal world these two "rhetorics" should have impact on every aspect and every discipline of the educational enterprise.

The Jesuit Humanistic tradition has been filled, I believe, with much light but also with many shadows. It has always for better or worse been much affected by larger contexts in which it has found expression, and thus it is not a uniform or easily defined tradition. It was Humanistic, but it also had a deep concern for science. Despite these problems and complications, I venture that it still provides us with a helpful legacy with which to address the new and radical issues that face the humanities today in Jesuit colleges and universities. The tradition will not make our decisions for us, but it provides, I think, a privileged vantage point from which we can do so.

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## Notes

- 1.<sup>[back]</sup> See especially Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).
- 2.<sup>[back]</sup> The basic study remains H.-I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: New American Library, 1944). See also his *Saint Augustin et la fin*





*de la culture antique*, 4th ed. (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1958); as well as Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); and Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), especially 121-96.

3.[back] The basic sources can be found in William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963), first published in 1897, and his *Desiderius Erasmus concerning the Aim and Method of Education* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964), first published in 1904. For the historical background, see Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

4.[back] On this concept in Erasmus, see John W. O'Malley, "Introduction," in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 66: ix-li.

5.[back] An international consensus on the nature of Renaissance Humanism has developed over the past thirty years; see, e.g., Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). See also, however, Kenneth Gouwens, "Perceiving the Past: Renaissance Humanism after the 'Cognitive Turn'" *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 55-82.

6.[back] The classic study remains Charles Trinkaus, *"In Our Image and Likeness": Humanity and Divinity in Italian Renaissance Thought*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). See also O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c.1450-1521* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1979).

7.[back] See, e.g., Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

8.[back] See Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities:*



*Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), especially 161-200.

9.[back] *Ibid.*, especially 58-98.

10.[back] On these foundational years, see Grendler, *Schooling*, 363-81; Allan P. Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education: Development and Scope of the Ratio Studiorum* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1938), 3-216; Gabriel Codina Mir, *Aux sources de la pedagogie des jésuites: Le "Modus parisiensis"* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1968); and O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 200-42, 253-64.

11.[back] See O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 210, 256.

12.[back] Technically speaking the school at Messina was a university, but at the beginning the Jesuits were frustrated in their hopes of teaching subjects beyond the studia humanitatis; see Daniela Novarese, *Istituzioni politiche e studi di diritto fra Cinque e Seicento: Il Messanense Studium Generale tra politica gesuitica e istanze egemoniche cittadine* (Milan: Giuffrè Editore, 1994).

13. [back] See O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 212.

14.[back] *Ibid.*, 212-13.

15.[back] See Aldo Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1986), 95.

16.[back] On the *Ratio*, see Farrell, *Jesuit Code*, 219-362; John W. Donohue, *Jesuit Education: An Essay on the Foundations of Its Idea* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963 ), 32-62; Gian-Mario Anselmi, "Per un'archeologia della Ratio: dalla 'pedagogia' al 'governo'" in *La "Ratio studiorum": Modelli culturali e pratiche educative dei Gesuiti in Italia tra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. Gian Paolo Brizzi (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1981), 11-42. For the text in English, see *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum of 1599*, trans. Allan P. Farrell (Washington D.C.: Conference of Major Superiors of Jesuits, 1970). The new critical edition of the Latin text is to be found in *Monumenta Paedagogica Societatis Iesu*, ed. Ladislaus Lukiics (Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, vol. 129) (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1986), 5:357-454, with an excellent "Introductio Generalis" by Lukacs, 1 \*-34\*.



- 17.[\[back\]](#) See *Jesuit Ratio*, 3,6-7.
- 18.[\[back\]](#) *Ibid.*,62-63.
- 19.[\[back\]](#) See, e.g., Donahue, *Jesuit Education*, 159-85.
- 20.[\[back\]](#) See, e.g., Scaglione, *Liberal Arts*; Brizzi, ed., "*Ratio studiorum*"; Brizzi, *La formazione delle classe dirigenti nel Sei-Settecento: I seminaria nobilium nell'Italia centro-settentrionale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976); Francois de Dainville, *L'education des jesuites (XVIe--XVIIIe siecles)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1978); John W. Padberg, *Colleges in Controversy: The Jesuit Schools in France from Revival to Suppression, 1815-1880* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).
- 21.[\[back\]](#) See Judith Rock, *Terpsichore at Louis-Le-Grand: Baroque Dance on the Jesuit Stage in Paris* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).
- 22.[\[back\]](#) The literature on the subject is abundant. Of special importance are the works by Jean-Marie Valentin, e.g., *Le theatre des jesuites dans les pays de langue allemande* (1554-1680),3 vols. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978); *Le theatre des jesuites dans les pays de langue allemande: Rptertoire chronologique des pieces re presentees et des documents conserves* (1555-1773) 2 vols. (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1983-84 ); "Gegenreformation und Literatur: Das Jesuitendrama im Dienste der religiösen und moralischen Erziehung," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 100 (1980): 240-56. See also now on the broader program of "ex:tracurriculars," Joseph M. O'Keefe, "The Pedagogy of Persuasion: The Culture of the University of Pont-a-Mousson," *Paedagogica Historica* 34 (1998): 421-42.
- 23.[\[back\]](#) O'Malley, et al., eds., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), and Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).
- 24.[\[back\]](#) See Marc Fumaroli, e.g., *L'age de l'eloquence: Rhetorique et "res literaria" au seuil de l'epoque classique* (Geneva: Droz, 1980); "Definition et description: Scholastique et rhetorique chez les jesuites des XVIe et XVI le siecle" *Travaux de Linguistique et de Litterature* 18 (1980): 37-48; "Baroque et classicisme: L'Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Jesu



(1640) et ses adversaires:' in his *L'école du silence: Le sentiment des images au XVI le siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 343-65; "The Fertility and Shortcomings of Renaissance Rhetoric: The Jesuit Case," in *Jesuits: Cultures*, ed. O'Malley, 90-106. See also, e.g., Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

25.[back] See Scaglione, *Liberal Arts*, 131-32.

26.[back] Robert Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education: Its History and Principles Viewed in the Light of Modern Educational Problems* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1904), 297-331. See also Francis P. Donnelly, *Principles of Jesuit Education in Practice* (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1934).

27.[back] I believe the last effort to revise and impose it was the edition published in 1941, which dealt only with the program of theological studies for Jesuits themselves, *Ratio Studiorum Superiorum Societatis Iesu, Mandato Congregationis Generalis XXVIII Exarata* (Rome: Curia Praepositi Generalis, 1941).

28.[back] J. Barry McGannon, et al., eds., *Christian Wisdom and Christian Formation: Theology, Philosophy, and the Catholic College Student* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964); Michael J. Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1998); and Martin R. Tripole, ed., *Promise Renewed: Jesuit Higher Education for a New Millennium* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1999). See also, e.g., Rolando E. Bonachea, *Jesuit Higher Education: Essays on an American Tradition of Excellence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1989).

29.[back] See O'Malley, "Erasmus and Vatican II: Interpreting the Council," in *Cristianesimo nella storia: Saggi in onore di Giuseppe Alberigo*, ed. A. Melloni, et al. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 195-211.

30.[back] See, e.g., Thomas Bender, et al., "The Transformation of Humanistic Studies in the Twenty-first Century: Opportunities and Perils," ACLS Occasional Paper, No.40 (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1997); Eugene Goodheart, "Reflections on the Cultural Wars:" *Daedalus* 126/4 (Fall 1997): 153-75; Charles Bernstein, "A Blow Is Like an



Instrument" *ibid.*, 177-200. See, more broadly, the recent number of *Daedalus* entitled *Distinctively American: The Residential Liberal Arts College*, 128/1 (Winter, 1999).

31.[\[back\]](#) Fumaroli, "Fertility and Shortcomings." See also Mabel Lundberg, *Jesuitische Anthropologie und Erziehungslehre in der Fruhzeit des Ordens* (ca.1540-ca.1650) (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1966).

