interpretation and discussion of these authoritative texts remained so little touched by political, social, and economic forces for change enables the author to study the corpus quite adequately within its own context, Maclean attributes the tenacity of the "outmoded" notion of woman within this universe of discourse to two factors, "the desire to foster and preserve the scholastic synthesis" and "the influence on thought of the institution of matrimony" (p. 82), although the latter is not central to this particular study. "The complexity of the notion of woman, and the dislocations which occur within that notion ... reflect well the hesitancies and incoherences inherent in Renaissance modes of thought" (p. 3-4).

Maclean uses carefully-structured sets of questions (worthy of the texts he is analysing) to lead his reader through the commonplaces about woman's "defective" and "inferior" nature as developed by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas from misinterpreted Pythagorean dualities, and re-interpreted and reinforced through the interaction of all the major disciplines within the scholastic synthesis: theology, medicine, ethics, and law. Neither Protestant re-definition of marriage nor medical functionalism (Fallopio) nor neo-platonic idealism (Castiglione's *Giuliano de' Medici*) nor humanist legal historicism could dislodge the notion nor its effects, so that it still prevailed in the 17th century (and, it might be added, prevails in some quarters today). Besides those extra-intellectual factors Maclean encourages others to analyse, linguistic strategies such as paradox and humour, humanist relativism, neoplatonic spirituality, marianism, and representations of handsome, active women in the visual arts had some effect for change. In all of these, the defense of woman often "represents a strategy of discourse which is subversive in intention" (p. 91) not only with regards to women but with regards to the scholastic synthesis as a whole.

Thus Maclean carefully selects and effectively musters information about the Renaissance notion of woman, and about the flaws and the tenacity of the scholastic synthesis itself. Further, his documentation of the incredible force of linguistic commonplaces translated between disciplines within an authoritative but increasingly irrelevant synthesis suggest a model for the analysis of any rigid, restrictive or outmoded intellectual system.

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Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy. The Humanist Tradition*, translated by Michael Krois and Azizeh Azodi. University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980. P. 122. \$14.95.

Here is a book that should command the attention of a wide range of scholars well beyond the philosophical circle that is targeted in its title. To be sure, the author is chiefly concerned with the theoretical problems of modern philosophy, especially epistemology. His solutions to those problems, however, carry him far afield, so that his reader is treated to a panoramic, if somewhat impressionistic, view of the literary-philosophical tradition in the West, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and beyond. Between these poles the reader is offered insight into important texts from all periods of Western history, but it is to the major

texts of Renaissance Humanism, together with their classical antecedents, that the author returns again and again for special treatment. It is especially to be desired, therefore, that students of the Renaissance have their attention drawn to this important book.

In accordance with the arguments of his book and "because," as he says, "it is always important to return to the personal situation out of which one's own thought arises" (4), Grassi begins on an autobiographical note. He tells the story of his intellectual maturation under the influence of German Idealism, including its Italian variants (Spaventa, Croce, Gentile) and later under Husserl and Heidegger. It was the latter's rediscovery of Greek thought, the corollary of which was a rejection of the Latin tradition, that prompted Grassi, together with Ortega y Gasset, "to reconsider," as he says, "the question of my intellectual identity" (4). That reconsideration led him to a series of theoretical problems which in turn generated the three governing questions not only of the book here under review, but of Grassi's entire intellectual career: "Does the Italian humanistic tradition have a philosophical or only a purely historical significance? If it has a philosophical importance, of what does it consist in our contemporary situation? Finally does this tradition have its origin in the Latin literature, and if so, where primarily?" (4).

Consistent with his title, Grassi answers his first question in the affirmative, and he does so on the basis of a distinction he draws between "rhetorical" and "rational" language or speech. According to Grassi the rational process is demonstrative: in it we claim to know something when we are able to prove it, i.e. to show something to be something on the basis of something. "In ancient times," he says, "this language was called 'apodictic' insofar as it showed something (*deiknumi*: I show) upon (*apo*) the basis of reasons" (96). Rational language is universal, in the sense that it cannot be bound to times, places or personalities; and it is strictly deductive: it must restrict itself to finding what already is contained in its premises but not yet explicit or obvious. Understood in this sense, the tradition of rational speech can be traced from ancient Greek thought (e.g. the *Prior Analytics* of Aristotle) through the logicizing and rationalistic Scholasticism of the Middle ages, through Descartes, Locke and Kant, including even German Idealism, right down to the analytic philosophy of our own century.

The second or rhetorical form of speech is the one that determines the premises of rational language, which, "since they cannot be proven, are the *archai*, the principles" (97). In contrast to the apodictic character of rational language, rhetorical speech is thoroughly indicative. "The indicative (*semeinein*) speech provides the framework within which the proof can come into existence. Such speech is immediately a 'showing' – and for this reason 'figurative' (*theorein*, i.e., to see)" (65). Thus rhetorical speech is based on fantasy: it has an imaginative structure that, in contrast to the deductive logic of rational speech, is based on a logic of images and metaphors – what Grassi calls a "logic of invention" (99).

Rational language, therefore, which is apodictic and demonstrative in character, always begins from a set of ultimate principles or *archai*. Those basic premises, however, are nondeducible: "they cannot have an apodictic, demonstrative character ... but are thoroughly *indicative*. It is only the indicative character of *archai* that makes demonstration possible at all" (19–20). Thus our only access to the premises of

a rational demonstration is provided by rhetorical speech. Hence, Grassi concludes, rhetoric "is the basis of the rational thought" (20).

Now Grassi finds the roots of this rhetorical tradition, as well, in Greek soil (e.g. in Aristotle's *Topics*), from which point he traces it through Cicero and Quintilian to the Humanists of the Italian Renaissance. "The new era of philosophy," he says, "the Copernican turning point, started neither with Descartes nor with Kant, but with Italian Humanism" (66–7). And it ended with Vico, "in whose theories," he announces, "the whole humanist tradition reached its highest philosophical consciousness" (37). It is this Latin rhetorical tradition that Grassi highlights in his book in an effort to vindicate its legitimacy in the face of a persistent rationalist critique, and his clear perception of the lines of demarcation between these two traditions gives him much new insight into some old authors.

One such author is Plato. Grassi begins his discussion by recalling the prevailing interpretation, based primarily on the *Gorgias*, which finds in Plato a dualism between rhetoric and philosophy. As is well known, the common view of scholars sees Plato rejecting the 'opinions' (*doxa*) of rhetoric in favour of the 'knowledge' (*episteme*) imparted by the rational process. In the *Gorgias* Plato seems to be unequivocal in his rejection of rhetorical speech in favour of rational. But in the second part of the *Phaedrus* Grassi claims to have found evidence to contravene this interpretation. In that dialogue Socrates relates to Phaedrus the myth of the cicadas, concerning which he comes to speak of the Muse of philosophy. In this passage (259d), according to Grassi, Plato implies that "philosophy is not a posterior synthesis of *pathos* and *logos* but the original unity of the two under the power of the original *archai*." Thus, he concludes, "the true philosophy is rhetoric and the true rhetoric is philosophy, a philosophy which does not need an 'external' rhetoric to convince, and a rhetoric that does not need an 'external' content of verity" (32).

By calling attention to this passage in the *Phaedrus* and recalling, at the same time, the connexion that Plato makes between *eros* and the philosophical process (most notably in the *Symposium*) – a connexion leading to the conclusion that Plato attributes a decisive role to the emotive in the philosophical enterprise – Grassi is able to raise serious doubts about the traditional, dualistic interpretation of Plato. This new emphasis on the rhetorical side of Plato's thought might, in turn, provide important clues about the way that Plato was read during the Renaissance.

It is especially among the authors of the Renaissance that Grassi's interpretations run counter to the prevailing scholarly opinions. His reading of Vives' *Fabula de homine*, which occurs early in the book, is a case in point. It is well known that most interpreters highlight the parallelism between Vives's elevation of man in his *Fable* and that found in *De hominis dignitate* of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and in Gianozzo Manetti's work of the same name. Vives' English translator, for instance, claims that the *Fable* "is directly based on Pico's conception of the dignity of man" (*The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 385). Against this interpretation Grassi maintains that, when compared with the views of Pico and Manetti, the *Fable* represents "a complete reversal of interpretations concerning knowledge that is based upon *contemplatio*" (12); and he does so by way of a somewhat convoluted analysis of the dramatic imagery employed by Vives in the story. Here the result of Grassi's revisionism is something less than felicitous, his argument against the prevailing

opinion ending up, at best, as opaque. He concludes by drawing a comparison between Vives' ideas in the *Fable* and Vico's doctrine that the world of man, because it has been made by man, is more accessible to human intellect than is the world of nature (*New Science*, pars. 331, 349). It is perhaps this similarity to Vico that serves to distinguish Vives, in the eyes of Grassi, from Pico and Manetti. The similarity, however, derives from Vives' doctrine that man's nature is akin to that of the gods, a doctrine which can be found in Pico and Manetti as well. If we thus conclude that all three authors anticipated Vico, we are still left wondering why it is that Grassi rejects the traditional reading of Vives.

Another text central to Grassi's interpretation of the rhetorical tradition is Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's treatise *De genere dicendi philosophorum*. Here Grassi carries on his polemic against Eugenio Garin, who reads Pico's treatise (actually a letter he wrote to Ermolao Barbaro, June 3, 1485) as emphasizing the dualism between *res* and *verba* and as rejecting the latter in favour of the former (e.g. *Storia della filosofia italiana*, Vol. 1, p-464ff). For Grassi, however, Pico's letter is significant precisely because it achieves a theoretically unequivocal union of *res* and *verba* and because it "discloses the difference between *rational* philosophy and primary topical philosophical insight," i.e. rhetoric as philosophy (56). Here the reader is treated to some fresh ideas on Pico's letter and, more important still, on Gianfrancesco Pico's treatise *De imaginatione*. But Grassi's revisionist reading of these texts is less likely to cause a stir among scholars on this side of the Atlantic, who have for several decades been reading the somewhat similar views of Paul Oskar Kristeller on the subject (e.g. in *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 58-9). Just the same, Grassi's claim that Gianfrancesco Pico, as much as Melancthon, carried forward the debate between Pico and Barbaro deserves to be taken seriously.

Grassi also argues most strenuously against the persistent tradition, including Hegel, Spaventa, Croce, Gentile and Cassirer, that interprets Renaissance philosophy "as more or less obscure 'premonitions' of ideas that were clearly developed later by Descartes and subsequent modern thinkers" (35). But modern (post-Cartesian) attempts to anchor the natural sciences in a 'first truth' and to give them a philosophical foundation are, according to Grassi, "diametrically opposed to the humanistic tradition beginning with Leonardo da Vinci and culminating in the theories of Galileo. In this tradition," he continues, "the natural sciences are interpreted exclusively with regard to their practical, purposeful performances, and are exempted completely from epistemological functions." So he concludes that "nature remains unknown to Leonardo; that is, it reveals itself each time only within the limits of those questions which man asks in the framework of an experiment" (39).

Here Grassi seems to imply that there is an independent scientific tradition within Humanism. But the precise sense in which this new tradition relates, on one hand, with the older (rhetorical) Humanist tradition and, on the other hand, with the later scientific tradition culminating in the theories of Newton remains unexplained by Grassi. Nor does he explain where Newton's younger contemporary, Giambattista Vico, fits into this complicated picture. We have already seen Grassi's claim that "the whole humanist tradition reached its highest philosophical consciousness" in Vico's theories. According to Grassi, then, both Galileo and Vico represent in some sense the culmination of Humanist thought. Perhaps this apparent contradiction can be resolved by making a distinction, whereby Galileo would represent the culmination of

the 'scientific' stream of Humanism, leaving Vico as the culmination of its 'rhetorical' counterpart. But surely Vico, the author of the *New Science* and devotee of Francis Bacon, has a legitimate claim to membership in the 'scientific' stream.

Troublesome as they are, these problems should not distract us from the main significance of Grassi's synthesis from the standpoint of Renaissance studies, viz. his clear understanding that Renaissance Humanism has had descendants in modern thought that deserve as much attention as its antecedents in classical and medieval thought. Most studies of Renaissance humanism – and among these the best – are devoted either to its origins or to a close study of its most important texts from the end of the fourteenth through to the middle of the sixteenth centuries. By that time, according to the conventional wisdom of scholars, Humanism had run its course. Not so, according to Grassi. In this book and elsewhere he demonstrates that only in the eighteenth century, with Vico, do we reach "the end of the humanistic tradition" (67). This connexion between Vico and the Renaissance has already attracted the attention of an impressive list of scholars, including, besides Grassi himself, Eugenio Garin, Isaiah Berlin, D.P. Verene and Donald Kelley. But much of this work of recovering the modern descendants of Renaissance Humanism is still left undone, even in the field of Vico studies. It is Grassi, more than anyone else, who has devoted himself to the task of making Renaissance history, in a meaningful way, the history of the present.

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Steven Ozment. *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1980. Pp. xii, 458. \$28.50.

The Age of Reform, 1250–1550 is the culmination of a decade of research by Steven Ozment into the intellectual continuity of religious reform movements in the medieval and early modern periods. Ozment's previous books (*The Reformation in Medieval Perspective*, *Mysticism and Dissent* and *The Reformation in the Cities*) and essays have pointed the way in this regard, each treating an element or elements of the thesis that the ideas and ideals of the Lutheran Reformation were not wholly children of the sixteenth century but arose through a maturation process, the origin of which was distinctively medieval. Ozment does not deny, of course, that much of the Lutheran religious programme was novel. His point, rather, is that the sentiments, as well as many of the solutions, endemic to the Reformation had a long history that can be traced far back into the Middle Ages. While Ozment's claim is hardly controversial, at least to those familiar with intellectual history between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, it has seldom been investigated thoroughly and in detail.

The great virtue of *The Age of Reform* is its clarity in the face of a labyrinth of religious traditions and movements. *The Age of Reform* weaves together the important primary sources and the outstanding secondary literature into a solid and readable introduction to the major figures, events and ideas of later medieval and Reformation Europe. The sheer scope of this enterprise poses certain dangers, however, which Ozment has not completely avoided. The most obvious of these is the manner in