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Cover Page Footnote

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Reimagining the Humanistic Tradition: Using Isocratic Philosophy, Ignatian Pedagogy, and Civic Engagement to Journey with Youth and Walk with the Excluded

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Abstract

The world is in a perilous place. Challenged by zealots, autocrats, a pandemic, and now a war in Europe, elected officials and their constituents no longer exchange ideas in a functioning public sphere, once a hallmark of the humanistic tradition. The timeliness of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), therefore, is profound as they provide beacons of light for dark times. In this article, I trace Isocratic philosophy through Ignatian pedagogy and contemporary civic engagement to argue that we can use these three models to help us Journey with Youth and Walk with the Excluded. Key to this approach is a reimagined humanistic tradition, one that fosters a networked, “multiple public sphere,” as discussed by Robert Asen, where people collaborate to bring about positive change. Specifically, I posit that enacting Isocratic philosophy through civic engagement in our Ignatian pedagogy and research will help us join with our students to address issues facing marginalized people. This reimagined humanistic tradition supports the Jesuit mission of social justice, and it supports the core Jesuit value of *vita activa*, that is, active civic engagement. To explain how these theories can be enacted I discuss a community-based digital humanities project at Loyola University Maryland.

Introduction

In his forward to *Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies*, John O'Malley, S.J. writes, “Prudence is the virtue of making appropriate and humane decisions, the virtue of the wise person, who is the very opposite of the technocrat, the bureaucrat, and the zealot.”¹ I write now with the world in a perilous place. Challenged by technocrats, bureaucrats, and zealots, elected officials and their constituents no longer exchange ideas in a functioning public sphere, once a hallmark of the humanistic tradition. This occurs during a time when we need prudence and a functioning public sphere to discuss and overcome a pandemic, a host of autocrats, and now a war in Europe. The timeliness of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), therefore, is profound because they provide beacons of light for dark times. Using the UAPs offers us opportunities to reimagine our traditional approaches and embrace exciting new strategies in pedagogy and research. In this article, I trace Isocratic philosophy through Ignatian pedagogy and contemporary civic engagement to

argue that we can use these three models to Journey with Youth and Walk with the Excluded. Doing so will help our students gain the necessary skills to interact with people different from themselves while also using prudence in working toward positive change in the world around them. Key to this approach is a reimagined humanistic tradition, one that moves off campus and fosters a networked, “multiple public sphere,” as discussed by Robert Asen, where people collaborate to address injustices that oppress and marginalize.² Specifically, I posit that enacting Isocratic philosophy through civic engagement in our Ignatian pedagogy and research will help us join with our students to address the most pressing issues facing our world and those who are excluded.

Despite the success of Isocrates' school in Athens, which predated Plato's Academy by about a decade, Isocrates is normally omitted from the canon of early Western philosophers, replaced instead by Plato and Aristotle.³ Isocrates' concept of philosophy and his path to wisdom and virtue are cited as reasons for his omission. In his

defense, Isocrates argued that he was indeed a philosopher, not a sophist as his rivals asserted. He argued that to be wise and virtuous one *must* participate in the *polis* (city-state), which in turn fosters *phronēsis* (practical wisdom). Kainulainen writes that “In the end, for Isocrates *phronēsis* was the only kind of wisdom.”⁴ This contradicts Plato’s and Aristotle’s paths to wisdom and virtue, which exclude *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) and instead focus on *philosophia* (philosophy) and *theōria* (contemplation). Isocrates’ engagement with the *polis* (city-state) was also anathema to Stoics, Neoplatonists, and medieval thinkers adhering to *contemptus mundi* (contempt for the world). The split between Platonic and Isocratic philosophy has contributed to a historic division between those who prioritize the life of the mind over participation in civic affairs. This division lives on today and may have even contributed to the devolution of the public sphere. In contrast, the Jesuits embraced Isocrates and his concept of *phronēsis* (practical wisdom), combining Isocratic philosophy with their core value of *vita activa* (active engagement in civic affairs), their pedagogy, and their faith.⁵ As a religious order focused on evangelizing and educating rather than monasticism, the Jesuits have adapted the Isocratic model through the works of Cicero and the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, which supports their core values.⁶ For example, Jesuit universities enact *vita activa* (active engagement in civic affairs) through community-based learning and scholarship.

In the following section, I provide two examples that illustrate the continuing demise of our public sphere, necessitating the need to integrate Isocratic philosophy, Ignatian pedagogy, and civic engagement into our work while we support the UAPs. Then I explain Isocratic philosophy and its influences on the humanistic tradition through Cicero, Ignatius, and the Jesuits. To illustrate the reimagined humanistic tradition that I posit in this article, I next provide an example of civic engagement that can guide our efforts to Journey with Youth and Walk with the Excluded. The example I use emerged from work at my previous institution, Loyola University Maryland, through a community-based digital humanities project, The Baltimore Story: Learning and Living Racial Justice. I end by discussing a networked, multiple public sphere and a discursive strategy from

classical rhetoric that will allow us to reimagine our humanistic tradition and close gaps between divisive ideas that threaten our democracy. By the end of this article, readers will better understand the value of integrating these ideas into curricular and cross-curricular activities in Jesuit higher education.

The Continuing Demise of the Public Sphere: Charlottesville, Virginia, 2017, and Washington, DC, 2021

The events of August 11 and 12, 2017 at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville illustrate what happens when functioning public discourse collapses. During the “Unite the Right” rally, white supremacists marched through the streets and across campus to protest the proposed removal of a Jim Crow-era statue of Robert E. Lee. The rally was a wake-up call for Americans who watched torch-wielding skinheads yell “Jews will not replace us!” and clash with counter-protesters.⁷ The violence culminated when a Nazi sympathizer drove his car through a group of peaceful counter-protesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring nineteen others. President Donald Trump responded to these horrific events by saying, “You also had people that were very fine people, on both sides.”⁸ If the rally and Trump’s comments were fissures in the collapse of a functioning public sphere, Trump’s behavior during and after the 2020 election was the sledgehammer that shattered the rest.

The insurrection (some have called it a failed coup d’état) in Washington, DC, on January 6, 2021, plainly signaled that civic discourse had been shunted aside and replaced by mob rules. The seemingly inevitable but utterly avoidable “Save America” insurrection jeopardized American democracy. This tragedy injured hundreds and caused the death of nine people—five died during the insurrection and four police officers died by suicide afterward.⁹ The insurrection was an assault on the body of American government charged with legislating policy in a peaceful manner. In short, the “Save America” rally speakers gathered at the Ellipse and roused their followers to violence. Trump provoked his supporters for an hour, saying “Fight like hell...you’ll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong.”¹⁰

Before long, Trump's followers were screaming "Fight for Trump!"¹¹ Trump even targeted his Vice President, saying "And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us. And if he doesn't, that will be a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our constitution." Soon after, "Save America" seditionists smashed through the Capitol's doors and chanted "Hang Mike Pence!"¹² We learned later that the mob was only seconds away from the Vice President and his family. Trump's response during the insurrection was "So go home. We love you. You're very special."¹³ This tepid reaction failed to prevent one of the lowest points in U.S. history. It is no wonder that one of the UAPs, *Walking with Youth*, asks us to help create "a hope-filled future."¹⁴ What sort of hope can we have when decency and democracy seem to be collapsing here and abroad? We must develop an alternative to, as Asen notes, the neoliberal public sphere where "the market treats all actors equally; differences of race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and more presumably play no role in the behavior of market actors and their successes and failures."¹⁵ He goes on to argue that "Incorporated into a neoliberal model of publicity, this assumption makes inequality invisible."¹⁶

Our dysfunctional public sphere has caused a crisis of mistrust. A 2019 Pew Research Center study found that "Most Americans say political debate in the U.S. has become less respectful, fact-based, [and] substantive."¹⁷ Making matters worse, online platforms and social media now spin with disinformation. Today, people dispute verifiable facts, such as the efficacy of vaccines in reducing the spread COVID-19. "Post-truth" online culture produced the "deep state" and QAnon, which in turn sparked real-world violence in 2017 and 2021.¹⁸ A recent study conducted at MIT found that false online information spread

significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information, and the effects were more pronounced for false political news than for news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends, or financial information.¹⁹

While it is naïve to think that we can return to a romanticized ideal of the public sphere—let us

not forget the caning of Charles Sumner in 1856—we must explore how we can begin to repair our battered civic discourse.²⁰

One way we can restore our public sphere is by reimagining contemporary humanist thinking as more civically engaged. Following Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* and Asen's "Neoliberalism, the Public Sphere, and a Public Good," college offers a wonderful opportunity for this work.²¹ Research continues to show that civic engagement in college is a high-impact teaching model that leads to positive educational and transformational experiences.²² These experiences, which include direct service like tutoring high school students and project-based service like collaborating on a community website, help students learn course content, and they help students learn about issues of social justice.²³ Longitudinal research shows that civic engagement helps college graduates with "understanding the importance of, and the ability to work with, others from diverse backgrounds; also appreciation of and sensitivity to diversity in a pluralistic society."²⁴ Granted, there is no guarantee that increasing university civic engagement will moderate extremists. But increasing civic engagement in college *may* help reimagine our public sphere and reduce the type of violence that occurred in Charlottesville and Washington, DC. With extremist organizations like Turning Point USA (TPUSA) stoking right-wing grievances and actively recruiting in high schools and colleges nationwide, it seems prudent to offer alternatives to this type of radical ideology. Turning Point USA also runs the "Professor Watchlist" "which seeks to "expose" professors who allegedly "discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom."²⁵ It is no wonder that both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League have flagged TPUSA as extremist.²⁶ In addition to offering alternatives to extremist ideology, increasing civic engagement allows us the opportunity to journey with youth to address issues that oppress and marginalize those who have been excluded. So, what stands in our way? Unfortunately, there exists a tradition of non-engagement with worldly affairs in the humanities. A counter narrative to this, however, is the robust lineage of civic engagement in

humanistic thinking that now calls us to action—an especially applicable call given the four Universal Apostolic Preferences.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences: Journey with Youth and Walk with the Excluded

On February 19, 2019, Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, issued the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus, 2019-2029.²⁷ In this document, he outlined the four areas of focus that will guide the order's work for the next ten years. The preferences are as follows:

- A. To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;
- B. To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;
- C. To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;
- D. To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.²⁸

While all of the preferences are important and could be used together for impactful work, Journeying with the Youth to Create a Hope-Filled Future and Walking with the Excluded on a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice are most applicable to the work that I do in community-based learning and scholarship. This is not to say that the other two preferences have no connection to community-based learning and scholarship. In fact, all four preferences would align with a service-learning course at a Jesuit university where students collaborate with a local faith community to develop a sustainable urban garden. It just so happens that the community organizations my students and I have collaborated with are secular non-profit groups who requested work in digital literacy and employment. My point in outlining the UAPs here is to provide a basis of understanding for those who are unfamiliar with the guidelines and to explain why journeying with the youth and walking with the excluded fit particularly well with my work; in short, they most closely aligned with my argument for reimagining the humanistic tradition to reinvigorate our public sphere. In addition, I would like to state at the outset that elements of the humanistic tradition

are not exclusively found in Western philosophy. Many cultures cultivate humanistic values like working for the greater good and using logic and science to address our most pressing problems. Acknowledging this, I begin with Isocrates and trace his influence through Cicero, the early church, and Ignatius to show the influence of Isocratic philosophy on the civic engagement that my students and I enact at Jesuit institutions.

Defining Isocratic Philosophy

Beginning with Plato, scholars have argued whether Isocrates was actually a philosopher. Timmerman notes, "This confusion and resultant devaluation of Isocrates' philosophy is predicated on a platonically colored view of what constitutes philosophy."²⁹ Isocrates argued vehemently that his ideas were indeed philosophy and not empty rhetoric. While this debate continues, I use the term Isocratic philosophy for the purposes of this article because I agree with the large number of scholars who have concurred that he was a philosopher and that he taught and practiced a civic and educational philosophy.³⁰ Isocratic philosophy is a flexible (*kairotic*) approach to discourse that combines philosophy (*philosophia*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) to form a process (*praxis*) for use in education, and it assigns agency (*bios*) to action (*actio*).³¹ By studying philosophy and putting it to use as an active member of the community (*polis*), rhetors can develop excellence and moral virtue (*arête*) at home and in society.³² As Hauser writes

Isocrates was not just a scholar of his culture but an activist. His activism took the form of his own compositions and his pedagogy. He taught his pupils the agonistic and seductive arts of speech, but he also encouraged them to aspire beyond the pugnacity of the *agon* [competition or gathering] and the dazzle of seduction, to seek *arête* [excellence and moral virtue] through rhetorical practices aligned with the narratives of their intellectual and moral traditions. He taught them to be public speakers.³³

As such, the use of Isocratic philosophy has clear connections to 21st century pedagogy, civic engagement, and the public sphere. And it directly

supports *Journeying with Youth and Walking with the Excluded*.

Isocratic philosophy is influenced by the ancient Greek concept of *nomos* (convention), which is a more “relativistic” and discursive epistemology that allows rhetors to tailor discourse to different contexts and audiences.³⁴ To be clear, this connection to *nomos* (convention) does not mean Isocrates was a sophist. In fact, I argued against Isocrates as sophist in “Using Isocrates to Teach Technical Communication and Civic Engagement.”³⁵ Isocratic philosophy is a philosophy of education and ethics enacted through civic engagement—the goal is to educate young people to bring about positive change, hardly amoral. *Nomos* (convention) permitted Isocrates’ students to exercise “creative imagination” when responding to ever changing rhetorical situations.³⁶ *Nomos* (convention) stands in contrast to the ancient Greek concept of *physis* (nature), which is an epistemology based in objective truth.³⁷ For Plato, this objective truth is rooted in the transcendental philosophy he presents in *Gorgias*.³⁸ For Aristotle, this objective truth is based in the causal universe he discusses in *Metaphysics*.³⁹

The concept of agency through action is also a unique feature of Isocratic philosophy and marks an important difference between his theories and those of Plato and Aristotle.⁴⁰ To be virtuous, one must *act* virtuously, and virtuous action for Isocrates meant using skilled discourse to participate in the community. To Isocrates, a contemplative life spent pursuing higher philosophical truth betrayed the purpose of education, which was to prepare students for a virtuous life of contemplative *action*.⁴¹ In criticizing his Athenian detractors in *Antidosis*, Isocrates states

They characterize men who ignore our practical needs and delight in the mental juggling of the ancient sophists as “students of philosophy,” but refuse this name to those who pursue and practise [*sic*] those studies which will enable us to govern wisely both our own households and the commonwealth—which should be the objects of our toil, of our study, and of our every act.⁴²

Isocratic philosophy, as Bazaluk argues, is a “variety of *educational practices*, which are aimed at the full development of the internal potentials of man, the training of highly-qualified personnel that satisfies the needs of complicating sociocultural environments and the production sphere.”⁴³ To underscore these points, Isocrates believed that students who spend their time satiating sensual appetites rather than contributing to the good of society are the worst type of citizen. He writes that

You see some of them chilling their wine at the “Nine-fountains”; others, drinking in taverns; others, tossing dice in gambling dens; and many, hanging about the training-schools of the flute girls. And as for those who encourage them in these things, no one of those who profess to be concerned for our youth has ever haled them before you for trial, but instead they persecute me, who, whatever else I may deserve, do at any rate deserve thanks for this, that I discourage such habits in my pupils.⁴⁴

In contrast to Isocratic philosophy, Aristotle’s rhetoric is divorced from ethics and is merely “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”⁴⁵ Conversely, as O’Malley writes, “Isocrates...worked at constructing a system for training young men for active life in the Athenian democracy, where the ability to speak in public and persuade one’s fellows of the right course of action was essential for ensuring the common good.”⁴⁶ Isocrates’ idea that virtuous actions create virtuous people is a line of thinking that can be found in the work of Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian and in Jesuit pedagogy nearly two thousand years later.⁴⁷

The Influence of Isocrates on the Humanistic Tradition

In reviewing the tenets of Isocratic philosophy that are outlined in the previous section, it is not difficult to understand how Isocrates inherited and then expanded on the first traits of humanism in the West from Thales of Miletus, Xenophanes of Colophon, and Protagoras.⁴⁸ These pre-Socratic philosophers helped Greek thought move from mythology—or “mythic-poetic tradition”—to a

more systematic and scientific epistemology that encouraged “multi-perspectivism” and thus democracy.⁴⁹ In opening the first school of philosophy and rhetoric in Athens, Isocrates taught his students to use their reason and skillful communication to take an active role in the Greek democracy.⁵⁰ Moreover, he exhorted them to take personal responsibility for their behavior by emphasizing the importance of virtuous discourse and action. He even asserted that how one speaks and acts reflects who one actually *is*. These are all foundational concepts of the humanistic tradition.

Given Isocrates’ humanistic thinking, it is also not difficult to see how Isocrates was influential in Greek society. Poulakos and Depew write “Isocrates was a more central figure in discussions of civic education, and especially the role of rhetorical training in civic education, than Aristotle ever was.”⁵¹ Isocrates’ pedagogical methods produced influential Greek leaders—Nicocles among them—and “his school became the model for the Roman world and ultimately Christendom.”⁵² Marrou argues that,

The importance of this fact must be emphasized from the beginning. On the level of history Plato had been defeated: he had failed to impose his educational ideal on posterity. It was Isocrates who defeated him, and who became the educator first of Greece, and subsequently of the whole of the ancient world.⁵³

Isocrates was introduced to the Roman world by Cicero. Leff notes that the humanism honed by Isocrates then “appears in Rome under the sponsorship of Cicero and Quintilian, rises to prominence again in the Renaissance ‘humanists,’ and still commands attention from some contemporary rhetoricians.”⁵⁴ One of the more obvious connections between Isocrates and Cicero is found in an excerpt from Cicero’s *De officiis*, 1.7.22 and 1.9.29, as noted by O’Malley,

We are not born for ourselves alone... We as human beings are born for the sake of other human beings, that we might be able mutually to help one another. We ought, therefore, contribute to the common good of humankind.⁵⁵

So, what led the humanities away from Isocrates’ civically engaged humanism? As noted in the Introduction, many scholars simply preferred Plato’s and Aristotle’s focus on the life of the mind, their elevation of Platonic philosophy over rhetoric and its messy engagement with the realities of civic life. Isocrates maintained that the *only* way to achieve true wisdom was to step out of the Academy and the Lyceum into the harsh realities of civic life to develop *phronēsis* (practical wisdom), which contradicts many scholars’ collegiate aspirations. Because of this, many in the humanities have embraced Plato and Aristotle, despite Aristotle’s morally ambiguous approach to rhetoric and the dismal outcomes of using Plato’s *Republic* as a political playbook in Sicily.⁵⁶ Muir argues that the academy’s fixation on Plato and Aristotle is misguided: “Beginning in classical antiquity, our conceptions of most branches of philosophy have derived from Plato and the Socratics, but our conception of educational philosophy derived much more from Isocrates.”⁵⁷ O’Malley points out that the split between a socially-engaged humanism and civic life continued due to the differences between the thirteenth century concept of the university and the humanistic concept of the college.⁵⁸ The focus on highly specialized research at universities siloed faculty members and rewarded detached scholarship.

The result of this divergence between the humanities and its humanistic roots of civic engagement is evident today. The humanities are often connected with pursuing a higher truth, celebrating stately architecture, and cultivating bucolic quads rather than fostering pragmatic civic engagement that addresses the complexities of poverty and systemic racism. I noticed it in my work with community-engaged learning and scholarship when I spoke with faculty members in the humanities. Some faculty members would say, “I just don’t see the connection between [whatever their field was] and service-learning.” Not without justification this ivory tower identity has drawn criticism from those who perceive the humanities’ lack of civic engagement as disconnected and a continuation of *contemptus mundi* (contempt for the world).⁵⁹ But if the humanities do not provide students with models for exchanging different ideas and taking action to address the most challenging problems of our

time, who or what will? In this way, the humanities are well positioned to lead the way on journeying with youth and walking with the excluded.

Isocrates and Cicero offer us solutions to the isolated ivory tower. Haskins argues that “Isocrates accents his role as an agent of knowledge to oppose precisely the sort of theoretical detachment one finds in the intellectual projects of Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum.”⁶⁰ The Society of Jesus recognized the value of Isocratic philosophy as they developed their pedagogical model in the 1500s. The Jesuits inherited this humanistic tradition from their early Christian predecessors.

The Influence of Isocrates on Cicero and the Early Christians

As noted in the previous section, Isocrates’ philosophy and the humanistic tradition strongly influenced Roman pedagogy and concepts of civic virtue. For instance, Cicero and Quintilian admired Isocrates and incorporated his philosophy into their work. Marsh reminds us that in *De Oratore*, Cicero called Isocrates “the father of eloquence.”⁶¹ Marsh also states that in *Institutio Oratio*, Quintilian argued “The pupils of Isocrates were eminent in every branch of study.”⁶²

When looking to the classical writers, however, early Christians did not immediately embrace Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian. As non-Christians, Greek and Roman philosophers were considered pagans, and according to Johnson, “it seemed to many that pagan culture was a Satanic invention.”⁶³ Nevertheless, by the second, third, and fourth centuries, Church leaders, such as Origen of Alexandria, St. Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage), St. Gregory of Nazianzus (Archbishop of Constantinople), and St. John Chrysostom (Archbishop of Constantinople), were integrating Greek and Roman rhetorical strategies into their work.⁶⁴ Because of these early Christians’ acceptance of pagan rhetoric, “the Fathers of the Church received their training in school in Isocrates’s tradition, even though they may have enhanced it with the study of Aristotle, or, more likely, Plato. That was the pattern followed, for instance, by Augustine.”⁶⁵ In addition to reading Isocrates, Augustine’s exposure to Isocratic

thought likely came through Cicero. Johnson writes,

It was the *Hortensius* of Cicero that turned the young Augustine to philosophy. Cicero thought of himself as a Platonist, but we do not; we cannot. The young Augustine tried to think of himself as a Platonist, but even before he read the *Hortensius* his mind had been deeply stamped by the doctrines of Isocrates as Cicero had elaborated them...when Augustine assumed his duties at Hippo, he had Plato in his heart, but he had Isocrates in his blood.⁶⁶

As one of the most influential Christian theologians trained in pagan rhetoric, Augustine likely had the strongest impact on incorporating Greco-Roman discourse into the work of the Church, though he struggled with its use at points during his life.⁶⁷ Johnson writes,

Augustine’s bold compromise triumphed, helped crystallize a fragmenting humanism into a forceful, enduring coinherence...what Augustine did that no one else did or tried to do was to give theoretical warrant for the transformation of pagan literacy to Christian literacy.⁶⁸

Once incorporated into the Church’s methods of educating its members and spreading its message, Isocrates’ “traditions migrated into the medieval world, sometimes in radically transmogrified but still identifiable profiles. Until the thirteenth century the tradition of Isocrates continued to predominate.”⁶⁹

The Relationship Between Isocrates, Cicero, and Ignatius

In 1345, Petrarch’s work with Cicero’s correspondence contributed to the Italian Renaissance and reinvigorated the widespread propagation of humanistic ideas. By the fourteenth century, some in the Catholic Church were more inclined to accept humanistic thought, allowing these concepts to spread within theological discussions.⁷⁰ The fourteenth century also ushered in the shift from the Medieval university to the Renaissance university. With the

rediscovery of humanism, the continuing conflict between Aristotle (the university model) and Isocrates (the college model) reignited. Rooted in Aristotle's drive to "understand the objects in question," universities catered mostly to "students'...desire to make a career in a challenging world."⁷¹ Conversely, colleges embraced the humanistic tradition derived from the Isocratic

system for training young men for active life in Athenian democracy, where the ability to speak in public and persuade one's fellows of the right course of action was essential for ensuring the common good.⁷²

By the fifteenth century, "civic humanists" like Colucci Salutati and Leonardo Bruni were challenging misconceptions of Cicero as a "contemplative thinker... [and] author of philosophical works."⁷³ Instead, these humanists highlighted Cicero's active involvement in politics and civic affairs, ideas he inherited from Isocrates. Kato writes that

The Ciceronian concept of *humanitas* [education, civilization, kindness] ... was the Ciceronian translation of the Greek *paideia* (education). In addition to its meaning of education or cultivation, this term had, for Cicero, two other meanings: "human nature (humanity)" and "refined social conduct."⁷⁴

Meanwhile in the Netherlands, Erasmus of Rotterdam struck an uneasy balance between the more moderate ideas of the Catholic Church and the Reformation, denouncing abuse and corruption while also expounding Christian humanism. Nowhere in Europe was Erasmus more celebrated than at the University of Alcalá, and this is where Ignatius of Loyola encountered Christian humanism.⁷⁵

In 1524, Ignatius of Loyola began studying basic Latin in Barcelona, Spain, and in 1526 he continued his education at the University of Alcalá. At Alcalá "the program of study was strongly influenced by both the University of Paris and certain aspects of the humanist movement of Renaissance Italy."⁷⁶ In addition to Christian humanism, Ignatius studied "dialectics, Aristotle's

Physics, and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*," while also developing his *Spiritual Exercises*.⁷⁷ Importantly, his *Exercises* would eventually shape the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm follows a continuing cycle of teaching: establishing the context of the situation; tapping into previous experience; encouraging reflection; taking action; and then observing results. The *Exercises* would, in turn, influence the Jesuit plan of study—the *Ratio Studiorum*, often abbreviated as *Ratio*. Continuing to pursue higher education as a foundation for his "apostolic career," Ignatius then "enrolled for his first year at the Collège de Montaigu, where earlier both Erasmus and John Calvin had been students" and where a "few elements of the new humanistic manifesto" were used.⁷⁸ As Ignatius writes in his *Reminiscences*, at Montaigu, "he settled himself in a house with some Spaniards and went to classes in humanities."⁷⁹

After studying at Montaigu for a year and a half, Ignatius attended the Collège Sainte-Barbe "for his philosophical studies."⁸⁰ Importantly, Sainte-Barbe was an institution where humanism and "genuine classical teaching was established in all the chairs of the college."⁸¹ Ignatius' time at Sainte-Barbe was meaningful because it was here that "he witnessed the final phase of the change from the old to the new education, which was in a sense the transition from the Medieval to the Renaissance."⁸² After his experiences at smaller, more humanistic institutions, Ignatius began the final leg of his studies at the University of Paris in 1528.⁸³ Ignatius' time spent in the University of Paris system influenced his future pedagogical model, and thus the model of all Jesuit schools. After three and a half years at the University of Paris, "Ignatius received the licentiate, and a year later... the degree of master of arts."⁸⁴

Ignatius took a mixture of Scholastic and humanistic courses during the first part of his education that today could be seen as an undergraduate experience in Latin as well as in elements of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic or logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). These subjects were, of course, augmented by courses in theology. After his introductory curriculum, Ignatius graduated to his advanced studies in the Arts: philosophy, higher mathematics, and

theology. Mixing old and new pedagogical models and combining his Christian faith with his *Spiritual Exercises* strongly influenced Ignatius' approach to education. This approach would later impact the Jesuit order's *Constitutions*, specifically Part IV, and the Jesuit Code of Liberal Education, which was codified in the *Ratio*.⁸⁵

The Relationship Between Isocrates, Cicero, and the Jesuits

Ignatius' education helped him establish a pedagogical model that, at first, educated future Jesuits, and later, educated lay people. Influenced by his *Spiritual Exercises* and the valuable input of the first companions, his classmates from the University of Paris, Ignatius adjusted his model to accommodate the different political, geographical, and economic contexts in which learning took place.⁸⁶ Still, Ignatius insisted that Jesuit teachers were to "look first to a thorough foundation in the Humanities and then follow with the equal thoroughness the entire course in arts."⁸⁷ Ignatius even established the daily schedule of courses that were divided into "three hours of class for the morning and the like number for the afternoon."⁸⁸ And his instruction on the coverage for the types of classes was just as clear. Farrel writes that "[t]he division of the classes into grammar, followed by Humanities and Rhetoric, was the application of the principles of distribution according to the capacity and step-by-step progression" and followed the *modus et ordo Parisiensis*, the Paris Mode.⁸⁹ For the Jesuits, the study of rhetoric included both eloquence *and* the study of Ciceronian *humanitas* (education, civilization, kindness), which originated with Isocrates.

In 1540, Pope Paul III recognized the Jesuits as a religious order. At this point, the Jesuits lived in dormitories and attended courses at "the University of Paris...or at its other colleges," all the while guided by Ignatius' system, or as he wrote, "our way of proceeding."⁹⁰ The Jesuit way of proceeding, their *Formula*, allowed the order to open seven dormitory-style colleges by 1544. O'Malley writes that "at the University of Paris, Louvain, Cologne, Padua, Alcalá, Valencia, and Coimbrã"⁹¹ these dormitory colleges allowed Jesuits to pool resources and attend the universities and other colleges nearby.⁹² It wasn't until 1546 that Jesuits "began to teach "publicly"

in Gandia, Spain.⁹³ We know that Cicero and Isocrates, among other classical thinkers like Quintilian, were studied in Jesuit colleges because we have Ignatius' curriculum, and we have the library catalogs from Florence, Loretto, Perugia, and Siena from the mid- to late-1500s. This list shows us that "The texts themselves, commentators (particularly those with a Ciceronian emphasis) and a sprinkling of historical and mythological works, make up the bulk of this section."⁹⁴ Even the smallest of the inventories, the catalog of Siena that housed 194 titles, contained six books of Aristotle, *ten* books of Cicero, and one of Isocrates.⁹⁵ While the Siena library contains five titles of Aquinas and five copies of Augustine, it is notable that Plato is nowhere to be found. Building on early educational successes, the Society was asked to launch their first college designed to educate clergy *and* lay people.

In 1547, the city of Messina, Sicily, petitioned Ignatius to send a team of Jesuits that would teach clergy and "their sons in 'good letters."⁹⁶ In response, Ignatius sent "ten Jesuits—four priests and six scholastics," and in 1548 they opened the College of Messina.⁹⁷ Messina was a turning point for the order because the Jesuits were able to apply their entire *Formula* in "harmonious union of instruction and character formation."⁹⁸ Kainulainen notes that "Jesuit education cannot be separated from notions of virtue and civic life" and that this approach "was beneficial to teachers, students, parents and the society alike."⁹⁹ This instruction and character formation included significant study of Cicero and Quintilian at all levels of coursework.¹⁰⁰ Combining the humanistic tradition with the Paris Mode and organizing the course of progression in a stratified model proved wildly successful.¹⁰¹ Requiring students to begin with the basic grammar courses and systematically work their way through the more difficult courses, with options for struggling students, helped boys and young men progress through their studies more effectively than other pedagogical models. The *Formula* also helped students avoid the disorganized and confusing coursework Ignatius had experienced when he returned to school.

Moreover, both clergy and the citizens of Messina benefited from the *Formula*. Within a year the number of students "had surpassed the 180

mark,” and soon after the College of Messina opened, representatives from Palermo, Italy, contacted Ignatius to open “a similar college in their city.”¹⁰² From here, Jesuit colleges began opening in rapid succession across Europe.¹⁰³ A vital part of these colleges’ success was the Jesuit emphasis on learning through doing, a reflection of Ignatius’ emphasis of showing love through deeds explained in his *Spiritual Exercises* and a clear connection to Cicero and Isocrates. One can also see connections to Isocrates and Cicero in the mission statement of Jesuit colleges during this time: work for the Society, work for the students, and work for the locality.¹⁰⁴ Rooted deeply in the humanistic tradition, the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm prepared Jesuits and lay students to engage in civic affairs.

The Ratio Studiorum and the Humanistic Tradition

Reflecting on the success of Jesuit schools patterned after Messina, T. Corcoran, S.J., writes that “By 1556...thirty-five similar colleges of arts and sciences had been established...[and] that the great religious and civic service of liberal education, open to and availed by all social grades, would evoke the fullest efforts of the new Order.”¹⁰⁵ As these colleges multiplied and refined their curricula, the order completed the first *Ratio Studiorum* in 1586. This document detailed every facet of Jesuit education. The *Ratio* was revised in 1591 and then finalized in 1599. Not surprisingly, the Jesuits “crystallized the Ciceronian tradition which was embodied in the *Ratio Studiorum*.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, O’Malley argues that “by the late sixteenth century, the literate of every religious confession were products of the Renaissance revival of the *studia humanitatis* (studies of humanity), in which rhetoric was the configuring discipline.”¹⁰⁷ A key part of this education in rhetoric was a textbook included in the *Ratio* called *De Arte Rhetorica*. This rhetoric and composition textbook by Cyprian Soares, S.J. was first published in 1562. The book integrated Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian for its instruction on writing and oratory. Like the *Ratio*, *De Arte Rhetorica* was so successful that the order used it worldwide, and the book enjoyed reprints throughout its lifetime until 1735.¹⁰⁸

Beyond the measured and systematic rigor of the *Ratio*, the success of the Jesuit Code of Liberal Education may be measured by the number of Jesuit schools that spread across Europe and the Americas. Corcoran writes that “By 1740...there were over six hundred...Jesuit urban secondary schools, many of them with from 1,500 to 2,000 day students.”¹⁰⁹ For the time period, this is a large number of students enrolled in schools (*paideia*) that used the *Ratio* and its Ciceronian *humanitas* (education, civilization, kindness) to strive toward perfect eloquence (*eloquentia perfecta*) with the goal of forming people for others and bringing about positive change in the world (*vita activa*).

Though the order was suppressed at the time, Bishop John Carroll, a former Jesuit, opened Georgetown College in 1791 using his network of colleagues: “most of those associated with the college were ex-Jesuits or (after the partial restoration of the Society in 1805) Jesuits.”¹¹⁰ In 1814, Pope Pius XII reinstated the Jesuits in the Catholic church. And by 1828, the order further expanded their influence in the United States by developing an existing college in Missouri into Saint Louis University. Saint Louis University “not only developed into a major educational institution in its own right, it also served as the central establishment of the Jesuits’ midwestern staging area.”¹¹¹ Between 1828 and 1869, the Jesuits established many colleges and universities in “five staging areas—Georgetown, St. Louis, San Francisco, central Kentucky and Buffalo [and] thus developed practically all the Jesuit institutions of higher education existing in the United States.”¹¹² The Jesuits’ *Ratio* was part of this success.

The *Ratio* was a proven model in Europe, and so the Jesuits applied this framework to their educational endeavors in the United States. Gleason writes,

The Jesuits were fiercely committed to a strong classical form of tradition liberal arts education, one that emphasized Latin and Greek as the authentic content of genuine humanistic learning. Their *Ratio Studiorum* (plan of studies)...embodied a version of the classical curriculum typical of the Renaissance.¹¹³

Adjusting to the modern needs and expectations of American higher education proved difficult for an institution that had experienced success by resolutely adhering to its own plan of study. Probably the most difficult part of this process was maintaining the focus of Jesuit pedagogy on humanistic thinking while the fields of science, technology, and business emphasized specialization. But slowly the order adapted their way of proceeding to fulfill the modern requirements of higher education while also maintaining their unique Jesuit identity. One strategy that helped this transition was framing Jesuit education as the ethical option. For instance, students were free to specialize once they had completed a robust core of courses meant to form them into “people for others.”

Arrupe and Kolvenbach: Enacting the Mission with the “Third” Society

While Jesuit colleges and universities shared the goals of *vita activa* (active engagement in civic affairs), *eloquentia perfecta* (perfect eloquence), and *cura personalis* (care of the whole person), the manner by which they did this in the 20th century was often perceived as religiously dogmatic, out of step with the modern age, and elitist.¹¹⁴ Four events in the history of the modern Jesuits helped the order address these issues: The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965); the rise of Liberation Theology (1968); the 32nd General Congregation (GC32) (1974-1975); and the vision of the 29th Superior General Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., which he outlined in his speech at Santa Clara University in 2000. In a recent article on the impact of the Vatican II on the Jesuit order, Rev. Federico Lombardi, S.J., writes that it “undoubtedly constitutes a watershed in the history of the Church, and consequently, in that of religious institutes, called to renew themselves in depth.”¹¹⁵ Beyond groundbreaking changes to other aspects of the Catholic Church—openness to other Christian denominations, religions, and peoples—Vatican II established the foundation for more civically-oriented activities through evangelizing and mission work.¹¹⁶ Though Catholic social teaching had called for more equal access to resources since at least 1891,¹¹⁷ Vatican II provided a more focused direction for these efforts.¹¹⁸ Vatican II also recognized the value of input from the non-ordained, which in turn

opened the way for more diverse perspectives on a wide variety of issues including social justice.¹¹⁹ Finally, one cannot ignore the influence of the American Civil Rights movement on how these diverse views impacted Jesuit social justice.

Another influential event in the evolution of Ignatian pedagogy was the rise of Liberation Theology, which emerged from Catholic theologians and priests working in Latin America. Two of the four leaders who championed Liberation Theology were Jesuits: Rev. Juan Luis Segundo, S.J. and Rev. Jon Sobrino, S.J.¹²⁰ Sensing the substantial shift in the Church and in the Jesuit mission in the late 1960s, Superior General Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., organized GC32 in 1974 and 1975. Of the many outcomes of GC32 that Lombardi discusses, is the “4th Decree, Our Mission Today: Diakonia of Faith and Promotion of Justice” that influenced Jesuit civic engagement the most.¹²¹ In many ways, Lombardi asserts, the 4th Decree influenced the rise of the “Third” Society—a more civically-engaged society—which has been “generally active during the period from the Second Vatican Council until today.”¹²²

Echoing the theme of humanistic thinking that I have traced in this article, the 4th Decree states that “the mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement.”¹²³ Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, discussed these activities and how they should be enacted in Jesuit higher education in his address to the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in 1973. In this address, “Men and Women for Others: Education for Social Justice and Social Action Today,” Arrupe states,

Education for justice has become in recent years one of the chief concerns of the Church...there is a new awareness in the Church that participation in the promotion of justice and the liberation of the oppressed is a constitutive element of the mission which Our Lord has entrusted to her.¹²⁴

He continues by asserting that “Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-and-women-for-others...men and women who cannot

even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors.”¹²⁵

Faith and Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education

Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., was heavily influenced by Arrupe’s work. Kolvenbach expanded justice efforts in the order and in Jesuit higher education while also appeasing critics in the Vatican who resisted the Society’s social activism. From 1983, when he was elected Superior General, to the time of his death in 2016, Kolvenbach skillfully led the order through tumultuous times and provided strong leadership in reimagining Jesuit education, especially in the U.S.¹²⁶ As part of these efforts, Kolvenbach addressed the 2000 Conference on Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education at Santa Clara University. In the address “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in Jesuit American Higher Education,” Kolvenbach explains his vision for enacting the 4th Decree from GC32 in the new millennium. Kolvenbach’s ideas—what he describes as a “new direction” for the order—are groundbreaking because he defines and operationalizes the service of faith and the promotion of justice. He also helps turn the page from the Church’s charity model to the reciprocal and participatory model of social justice designed to address systems of oppression. In doing so, Kolvenbach argues that we must do more (*magis*); we must act (*vita activa*).¹²⁷

In his speech, Kolvenbach asserts that guidance from the Vatican II and GC32 are clear: the service of faith for the Jesuits has expanded, “bring[ing] the counter-cultural gift of Christ to our world.”¹²⁸ He also states that the promotion of justice includes “a concrete, radical but proportionate response to an unjustly suffering world.”¹²⁹ In addition, he points out that,

Fostering the virtue of justice was not enough. Only a substantive justice can bring about the kinds of structural and attitudinal changes that are needed to uproot those sinful oppressive injustices that are scandal against humanity and God.¹³⁰

Kolvenbach argues that these principles are vital to the “formation and learning” of students and that they should even guide faculty members’ research and teaching.¹³¹ He states,

When faculty do take up inter-disciplinary dialogue and socially-engaged research in partnership with social ministries, they are exemplifying and modeling knowledge which is service, and the students learn by imitating them as “masters of life and of moral commitment.”¹³²

In fulfilling this new direction, Kolvenbach asserts, faculty members should include community members to “be involved together in all aspects...designing the research, gathering the data, thinking through problems, planning and action, doing evaluation and theological reflection.”¹³³ Here, Kolvenbach advocates for the co-development of knowledge between campus and community. Thus, he is asserting that faculty members, members of the community, and students should collaborate on an *epistemological level* in a participatory way, enacting Isocrates, Cicero, Ignatius, and the humanistic tradition. In his 2019 letter to the order promulgating the new UAPs, Superior General Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J. cites Kolvenbach’s influence: “Thanks to the Universal Apostolic Preferences formulated by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach...several processes have been initiated which must be continued.”¹³⁴ Today, Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S. maintain offices of civic engagement that coordinate service-learning and other co-curricular activities to fulfill Kolvenbach’s vision.

Reimagining the Humanistic Tradition at Loyola University Maryland: The Baltimore Story Digital Humanities Project

To continue my work in civic engagement using Isocratic philosophy and to fulfill Kolvenbach’s call for participatory community-based research while I was at Loyola, I completed engaged scholarship with my students by collaborating with residents of Baltimore City. By doing this, I tried to maintain the tradition of humanism at Loyola that has been present from its founding in 1852: “Loyola offered an integrated curriculum...study of the ancient classics and philosophy was then considered essential to

creating...eloquent, dignified leaders.”¹³⁵ As a faculty member in the Writing Department, I also ran literacy and employment workshops with professional writing service-learning students that helped almost half of community attendees find jobs.¹³⁶ But these projects have broader impact. As I wrote in “High-Impact Civic Engagement,”

When civic engagement is thoughtfully and collaboratively designed, institutionally supported, and rigorously assessed and revised based on those assessments, it can be a high-impact practice as defined by current scholarship.¹³⁷

Research shows that students learn course content more effectively, have more transformational experiences, maintain higher GPAs, and have a greater chance of graduating when they participate in civic engagement.¹³⁸ Likewise, community members learn more about their neighborhoods and have more transformational experiences when they participate in civic engagement.¹³⁹ These educational and transformational experiences for students and community partners increase when relationships extend beyond one term.¹⁴⁰ Based on the success of these previous projects and to answer the call to support the new UAPs, Dr. Stephanie Brizee, an administrator at Loyola, and I collaborated with the Loyola Writing Department in 2019 to launch The Baltimore Story: Learning and Living Racial Justice digital humanities project (<https://thebaltimorestory.org/>). And while I now work at Saint Louis University (SLU), we are still involved with The Baltimore Story as we begin to develop a sister digital humanities project in St. Louis.

The Baltimore Story digital humanities project is a collaborative effort between the Govans neighborhood that borders campus, other nearby Baltimore communities, and the university. We collaborated with Govans to foster my ongoing work with local community members and to support Loyola’s place-based justice model. The Baltimore Story focuses on research and educating its Baltimore users about slavery, segregation, and systemic racism in Maryland. The project also highlights achievements by African Americans. To do this, community members work with Loyola faculty members, administrators, and students to

conduct historical and community-based research, and they complete neighborhood-focused projects that have measurable, positive impacts. To support participatory collaboration, my team and I organized The Baltimore Story Advisory Board. The board and the project’s contributors included Govans residents, a Baltimore City school teacher, Loyola students, and Loyola faculty members from multiple disciplines at the undergraduate and graduate levels: writing, engineering, education, fine arts, history, sociology. The lead archivist from the Loyola-Notre Dame Library sits on the board as do administrators from Loyola’s Center for Community, Service, and Justice; the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion; and ALANA Services—the program that supports students of color at Loyola.

As a digital humanities and engagement project, The Baltimore Story includes a continually updated archive of Maryland, Baltimore, and Govans history. Community members have collaborated with service-learning students and a student intern to complete educational projects, as well as historical and community-based research that contribute to knowledge development in Baltimore City. As an educational resource, The Baltimore Story is a teaching tool for community members and schools. One project to be housed on the project site is called “The Baltimore Story: Teaching Racial Justice” and has just received a three-year \$30,000 grant from the McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation. The Baltimore Story will provide learning modules, oral histories, images, and videos of local heritage, ensuring that the truth of racism in America is available to middle schoolers in a time when accurate history is under attack across the country. Middle school educators will be able to use online resources in their classrooms and train other teachers to do the same. To achieve this, the co-director of the project, Dr. Stephanie Flores-Koulish, is working with a Baltimore City schoolteacher, RaShawna Sydnor (an alum of Loyola’s graduate education program), to develop curricula with other teachers over the next three years. These teachers will then use the resources in their schools to answer students’ demand for more information on systemic racism in Baltimore. Figure 1 illustrates The Baltimore Story project participants and their roles.

As outlined in Figure 1, community members and non-profit organizations help guide the project's work and collaborate with Loyola students and faculty members to co-develop knowledge for use on the project's website. Once service-learning students read excerpts from Isocrates and are prepared using the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, they collaborate with residents and non-profit organizations on direct service and engaged scholarship to learn more about one another and to contribute to the information posted on the website to share with the broader community. Administrators help guide the project and provide

executive-level support. Writing interns, who are often double-majors or minors in subjects like education and history, work with other contributors to learn more about the digital humanities and to develop content for the website. Faculty from multiple disciplines help guide the project and raise awareness of The Baltimore Story in their own departments to recruit students for the initiative. Lastly, open-access resources that will be housed on the website will be available for community members, middle and high school teachers, as well as college-level instructors.



Figure 1. The Baltimore Story Digital Humanities Project, Loyola University Maryland

The information on the site is based on scholarship but is delivered in an accessible way. The Baltimore Story, therefore, differs from many other digital humanities projects because it is participatory—knowledge is co-developed by community members, students, and scholars—and this information is useful for *all* stakeholders rather than a niche audience of academics. The site also works around white-dominated middle school curricula that omits information on systemic racism and local Baltimore history, thus enacting the term Asen references from Felski “‘parallel discursive arenas’ where participants ‘invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.’”¹⁴¹ In addition, The Baltimore Story answers Asen’s call for counterpublic field methods that “‘complement... traditional text-based methods... [and where] a local community may foster more widespread change.’”¹⁴² And, as I noted in the Introduction, the project supports Walking with Youth and Journeying with the Excluded as a nexus of work involving college students as well as students in middle and high school as they learn more about racial injustice. Lastly, as I have shown by tracing Isocratic philosophy through Cicero and Ignatius, the project enacts the humanistic tradition and moves

into a networked, multiple public sphere as outlined by Asen.¹⁴³

To illustrate how these materials are displayed online, Figure 2 shows The Baltimore Story homepage. Figure 3 shows the site’s history timeline, and Figure 4 shows one of the history pages. Figure 5 displays one of my service-learning student team reports developed for a professional writing course in fall 2020.

As part of their work with The Baltimore Story project, students performed direct service with the local non-profit organization GEDCO/CARES Career Connection to help their clients find and apply for jobs online and to help them write cover letters and résumés. They also collaborated with Govans residents to conduct research on the negative impacts of mass incarceration, as displayed in Figure 5. Students’ participation in fall 2020 was especially *kairotic* (timely) given Loyola’s pivot to all online service-learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service-learning students completed their direct service with GEDCO through Google Meet, and to complete their community research, students used digital secondary resources and conducted their interviews through Zoom.



Figure 2. The Baltimore Story Homepage



Figure 3. The Baltimore Story History Timeline

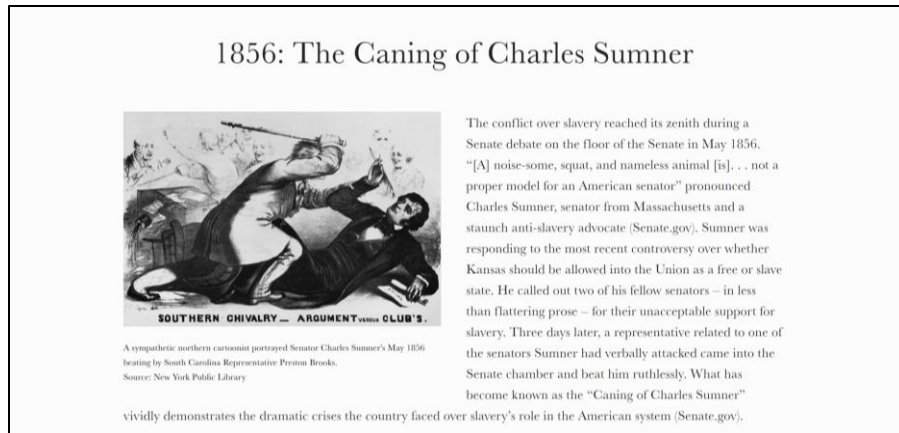


Figure 4. The Baltimore Story History Page: 1856 The Caning of Charles Sumner

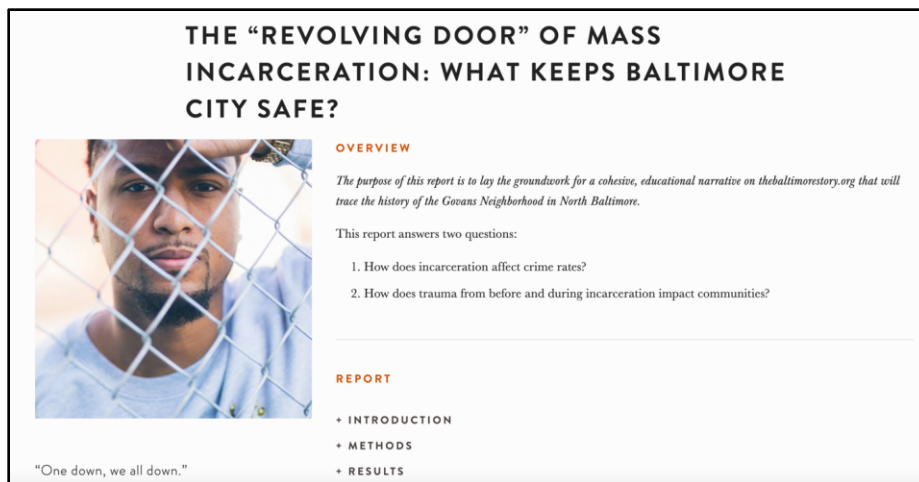


Figure 5. The Baltimore Story History Report Page: “The “Revolving Door” of Mass Incarceration: What Keeps Baltimore Safe?”

As I discussed in “High-Impact Civic Engagement,” students working on projects like The Baltimore Story benefit in a number of ways that can be divided into two categories: transformational experiences and educational experiences. Transformational experiences include making measurable impacts on the community, collaborating on needed services and/or deliverables, developing meaningful relationships with community members, and working with community members. Educational experiences include learning about the local community, learning and applying course concepts, and learning about systemic causes of injustice and social justice in general.¹⁴⁴ Students working on The Baltimore Story exhibit all of these tendencies, which indicates that the project is following high-impact teaching practices. Moreover, community partners involved with the project have responded in overwhelmingly positive ways, as illustrated through this email message from one of our oral history participants in 2020: “I am in a state of joy upon reading your post on the Govans Project! I am a proud Baltimorean, born and raised and attended Govans [Elementary] until the 3rd grade. We lived on Ready Avenue and moved to Sheffield Road, where my baby sister still resides. Please add me to your list serve. I look forward to witnessing the history and wish you continued success with the project. Thanks a million!”

My purpose in discussing The Baltimore Story is to illustrate how the contemporary humanities can reimagine a humanistic tradition that integrates civic engagement to help reimagine our public sphere while also supporting the UAPs, specifically Journeying with Youth and Walking with the Excluded. In short, students who participate in civic engagement learn how to communicate in the public sphere so when they graduate, they can take these skills into their adult lives.¹⁴⁵ Likewise, research shows that local communities benefit when civic engagement projects are reciprocal and sustained.¹⁴⁶ This type of success is not possible without effective interaction through oral, written, and digital venues in the public sphere. And while The Baltimore Story project focuses on place-based justice civic engagement, this type of work is no longer limited to local communities. For instance, during the fall 2020 semester one team of my

service-learning students in a web writing class at Loyola collaborated with GEDCO/Govans, and another team collaborated with CRISPAZ, a non-profit peace and solidarity organization in El Salvador. This second team ran usability tests on the CRISPAZ website to help them revise their online presence while also learning about the history of El Salvador. Both groups of students interacted with their community partners online, and both completed impactful work.

A Reimagined Public Sphere as Part of a Reimagined Humanistic Tradition

So, what is a reimagined public sphere? To provide a definition of a reimagined public sphere for the purposes of this article, I turn to Asen who has published extensively on discursive community knowledge building and more recently on a multiple public sphere.¹⁴⁷ However, I do not want to lose focus on the *actions* that a reimagined public sphere will allow, especially when supporting the UAPs. A reimagined public sphere will welcome disputants into a discursive relationship that fosters productive and positive citizenship, a citizenship that allows people to collaborate democratically. In this sense, I am drawing on Asen’s concept of discursive citizenship where he argues that “Reorienting our framework from a question of *what*, to a question of *how* usefully redirects our attention from acts to action.”¹⁴⁸ Asen reimagines traditional concepts of civic discourse and civic engagement as rhetorical and more flexible notions of knowledge making. As I wrote in “*Stasis* Theory as a Strategy for Workplace Teaming and Decision Making,” this reimagining allows us to

shift the concept and definition of citizenship into a mode of public engagement (sustained process of action); and expand our notion of citizenship to include local, personal, and discursive acts, as well as national and public acts (such as voting and demonstrating) ... integrating discursive rhetorical strategies allows stakeholders in civic engagement more flexibility to develop their own identities and resist the misconception that expert knowledge rests only within certain populations, for instance, the ivory tower.¹⁴⁹

Such a public sphere will allow disputants—even those who participated in the insurrection on January 6, 2021—to feel empowered to enter into *discursive* contexts so that crossing the line into violence may be less likely. This is important because many attendees of the January 6 demonstration did *not* break the law. To reimagine our public sphere, we must figure out how to communicate with these people and a way to reach college students at risk for recruitment by extremist groups. Let us not forget that one of the organizers of the “Unite the Right” rally at UVA was Richard Spencer, a *UVA alumnus*.

In “Neoliberalism, the Public Sphere, and a Public Good,” Asen provides a clear idea of what this sort of reimagined discursive realm can be with a “multiple public sphere” and a “networked public sphere.”¹⁵⁰ He writes “the conceptual model of a multiple public sphere developed in response to a unitary model drawn from the bourgeois public sphere as well as critical attention to the practices of people excluded from particular publics, who have worked together to overcome exclusions and circulate alternative interpretations of their needs, interests, and identities.”¹⁵¹ Further, Asen argues that

Both the bourgeois public sphere and neoliberalism seek to promote singularity over multiplicity: the former by asserting the supposedly unique capacity of the bourgeoisie to discern a public good, and the latter by disaggregating a public good into individuals who can only act alone. In these ways, both the bourgeois public sphere and neoliberalism privilege established interests and raise obstacles for a vibrant critical publicity.¹⁵²

Ultimately, Asen argues for a multiple public sphere that is networked: “Because of its relationality, a networked public sphere exhibits flexibility and movement...while neoliberalism commands people to look within themselves to strengthen their competitive advantage, a networked public sphere informed by a dynamic public good invites people to seek connections with others.”¹⁵³ Informed by Asen’s networked, multiple public sphere, I argue that we can enact the civic engagement of the humanistic tradition while supporting the two UAPs I am focusing on

here as we help our students collaborate with one another and work with people who do not share their beliefs.

What are some rhetorical strategies we might use to engage those with whom we disagree? Drawing on Isocratic philosophy, we know that theoretical concepts for public discourse are only useful when they are practiced—*phronēsis* (practical wisdom). One such well-practiced model is *stasis* (pause in dispute) theory, a concept I discussed in “*Stasis* Theory as a Strategy for Workplace Teaming and Decision Making”; “*stasis* [pause in dispute] theory is a taxonomic heuristic of inquiry developed in ancient Greece...that assists in collecting information to determine the issues at hand.”¹⁵⁴ In addition, the *stases* may be used to problem-solve as they help disputants move toward action. The traditional *stases* are

1. Conjecture (*stasis stochasmos*): Is there an act to be considered?
2. Definition (*stasis horos*): How can the act be defined?
3. Quality (*stasis poiotes*): How serious is the act?
4. Policy (*stasis metalepsis*): Should this act be submitted to some formal procedure?¹⁵⁵

The traditional process for applying *stasis* [pause in dispute] theory moves linearly from conjecture, to definition, to quality, to policy, and if the disputants disagree on any of these, the discourse arrests. Once arrested, the discourse can then move into the interpretive *stases*¹⁵⁶ to determine where, exactly, the disagreement lies and if agreement and resolution are possible.¹⁵⁷ In a contemporary context, *stasis* [pause in dispute] theory may be used recursively, as Fahnestock and Secor note.¹⁵⁸ And as a process of inquiry focused on asking questions, *stasis* [pause in dispute] theory redirects discourse from confrontational and eristic to conflict-solving, as noted by Carter: “*Stasis* [pause in dispute] ...was an act of bringing the members of a community of knowledge—a resolution of a conflict of knowledge. And language was at the center of that act.”¹⁵⁹ Clearly, these sorts of sophisticated rhetorical moves require rigorous rhetorical instruction and practice—precisely the type of rhetorical instruction and practice fostered by the civic

engagement discussed in this article. While all disputants engaged in arguments over future presidential elections might not have this type of rhetorical and practical experience, if *some* of them do, then we might avoid the violence exhibited on January 6, 2021. At the very least, if we draw upon Isocratic philosophy, Ignatian pedagogy, and civic engagement, we will have provided opportunities to journey with youth and walk with the marginalized to support the UAPs, which is a calling we should not ignore.

Conclusion

I began this article with some dire examples of what happens when the public sphere fails, and I presented some of the architects of that destruction, seditionists whipped into a frenzy by hateful rhetoric. When I first began writing this article, I was able to look back at the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, and ruminate on the possible catastrophic outcomes they would have in the future when the public sphere had degraded even further. Then the insurrection occurred on January 6, 2021, and what was supposed to be a future calamity became a real-time reality. As I noted in the Introduction, I am not naïve or optimistic enough to believe that reading Isocrates and Ignatius and then integrating more civic engagement into our curricula will magically heal what ails us. Nor do I believe that civic engagement is the best fit for every course. What I *do* believe is that drawing upon Isocratic philosophy and Ignatian pedagogy and then integrating civic engagement into students' college experiences will provide them the opportunity to learn how to collaborate with one another and with their communities, fostering discourse on diverse issues. Moreover, I believe that learning how to interact and problem-solve in contexts that

challenge our students in the best possible ways *does* help form them into active members of our *polis* (city-state). Research tells us this, and I have seen it happen over the past eleven years.

I also believe that we are abandoning our humanistic tradition if we do not at least try to integrate civic engagement into our curricular and cross-curricular activities. Isocrates asserted that if students do not have the opportunity to develop *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) based upon the *philosophia* (philosophy) they learn in their coursework then they will not be able to engage in civic issues effectively. I agree with this position, and as I have argued in this article, we inherit a noble tradition in humanism from Isocrates and Cicero that enables us to do so. This tradition has been cultivated by the Jesuits, but it is by no means required that one work at a Jesuit institution to enact it. Many models of civic engagement exist that may be applied in secular settings. What the Jesuit model and the new UAPs offer us, however, are calls to action and unique approaches that may appeal to those who are seeking a more spiritual way of understanding and addressing the challenges we face as we “embrace reconciliation as the foundation of a new humanity.”¹⁶⁰ HJE

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- ¹⁵⁸ Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor, "The Stases in Scientific and Literary Argument," *Written Communication* 5, no. 9 (October 1988): 427-43.
- ¹⁵⁹ Michael Carter, "Stasis and Kairos: Principles of Social Construction in Classical Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Review* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 97-112.
- ¹⁶⁰ Sosa, "University Apostolic Preferences," para. 4.