

Prof. Dr. Prof. h. c. **Kathy Hannah Eden**, Columbia University, USA

Kathy Eden is the Chavkin Family Professor of English and Professor of Classics at Columbia University in New York City. She has taught there since receiving her PhD from Stanford University in 1980. During that time has established herself both as a respected scholar of the rhetorical arts and a theorist in her own right.

Eden's earlier work was marked by close reading and re-interpretation of the classical texts of Western rhetoric. In *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (1986), she offers a potent defense of poetics. There is a practice, gleaned notably in the work of scholars like Philip Sidney, to defend poetry through its association with fiction and legal procedure. Deference is given to the methods of poets and lawyers as examples of poetry's potency. While not incorrect, such understandings of poetry offer an incomplete representation of language in its poetic form. Eden argues, rather convincingly, that by returning to Aristotle's *Poetics* and *De Anima*, and tracing its development in the psychological and rhetorical theory of the Middle Ages, to its culmination in the Renaissance's literary theory, that the rhetorical weight of poetry is given its due.

After a thorough reading of the tradition, Eden turned her sights towards a properly hermeneutic period of her work wherein she recontextualized insights from the classical period into the present moment. One of the most representative pieces of this effort is *Friends Hold All Things in Common: Tradition, Intellectual Property and the "Adages" of Erasmus* (2001). In it, she examines the publication of Erasmus' *Adages* in 1508 as a turning point in Western thought and the history of publication practices. For Eden, this text marks a suturing point between the ancient philosophical commitment to friendship and universal sharing and the development of modern copyright practices. Apart from a stunning display of theoretical prowess, this text also garnered her the Roland Bainton Award for Literature.

Other noteworthy texts among Eden's long list of publications include: *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and its Humanist Reception* (2005) and *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy* (2012).

Throughout her prolific career, Kathy Eden has received numerous awards. These include fellowships from the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. and a Guggenheim fellowship. In addition, she won the 1998 Great Teacher Award from the Society of Columbia Graduates and the 2001 Mark Van Doren Award.

In 2005 Eden was conferred the Hermes Award from the International Institute for Hermeneutics. Her work in the re-interpretation and re-contextualization of classical, Western humanistic texts serves as a beacon for the significance of these texts to the present day.