

---

*The Collected Works of Jacques Maritain. Volume 7: The Degrees of Knowledge.* Trans. under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan. Presented by Ralph McInerny. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995. ISBN 0-268-00876-0. Pp. xxviii+500.

---

This Notre Dame revised edition of Jacques Maritain's celebrated work, *Distinguer pour unir, ou Les Degrés du savoir* (1932), is almost wholly a reprint of Gerald B. Phelan's supervisory translation of the fourth and final edition of the French text (1942) first published in 1959 by Charles Scribner's Sons. Except for certain minor corrections, mostly typographical, and rare instances where the honorary editor-in-chief, Theodore M. Hesburgh, and the editorial board (Ralph McInerny, Frederick Crosson and Bernard Doering) deemed a more felicitous rendering necessary, Phelan's translation remains largely intact, from Prefaces and Appendices to the Index of Names. Clearly the reissuing of *The Degrees* relates more to the purpose of The Jacques Maritain Center (University of Notre Dame) than it does to the English reader hopelessly awaiting the equivalent of a French critical edition, something translations cannot hope to offer.

Among the projects of the Center, established in 1957, is the projected twenty-volume series, *The Collected Works of Jacques Maritain*, of which *The Degrees* (vol. 7) and Maritain's three masterworks, *Freedom in the Modern World* [1933], *Letter on Independence* [1935], *Integral Humanism* [1936] (vol. 11), serve as the initial installments. This undertaking facilitates one of the Center's main aims, paraphrased here from the Center's Web site: to provide an ideal place for scholars working on the North American response to the papal encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), as well as subsequent encyclicals that encourage the study of St. Thomas; and to consider Maritain's massive contribution to that papal invitation. However one may view the "profoundly original" nature of Maritain's work (xx)—William P. Alston at least was indecisive about this as late as 1963, but not so indecisive to exclude Maritain from his and George Nakhnikian's important anthology, *Readings in Twentieth Century Philosophy* (1963)—his place in twentieth-century Thomism merits the attention and re-examination by those who, on the brink of the twenty-first century, continue to take epistemology seriously, a breed considered rare, if not strange, nowadays.

To outline the contours of Maritain's widely publicized view, that there exists degrees or kinds of rational and supra-rational knowledge (philosophy of nature, experimental science, metaphysics, and mystical experience) that are "hierarchically related and united" (xx), would be to spill ink on already countless gallons of spilt ink. Of more pressing philosophical concern is the significance that such a reissuing poses for the Maritain scholar who is attentive not only to the *vetera*, but also to the *novis*. The contemporary situation does not appear to be, for better or for worse, the one Maritain ably engaged. It will be interesting to see how, in the years ahead, those given to the study of Maritain's *Collected Works* in general, and *The Degrees* in particular, which "remains both his major achievement and a convenient summary of his thought" (xix), will contribute to the North American

scene, a scene that has experienced and continues to experience the effects of the largely "Continental" dismantling of unifying discourses. This, of course, is the challenge that faces most thinkers inspired by the Angelic Doctor's tendency to synthesize. If it is at all intelligible to speak of Maritain's philosophy as one that assumes, at least implicitly, the posture of "transformation"—to borrow a familiar category from Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy, editors of the influential book *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* (1987)—how might one spell out such a stance responsibly without capitulating to disparaging dialectics of superiority? This, as I see it, is one of the fundamental philosophical challenges posed by the appearance of this new series for future Maritain scholarship.

With regard to the present format of the book, my only complaint is that it does not contain an analytic index of technical terms and concepts. The book does include an insightful but short introduction by Ralph McNerny (xix–xxi), Director of The Jacques Maritain Center (University of Notre Dame), and a somewhat detailed Maritain Chronology (xxii–xxviii), which pinpoints the dates of his many publications as well as certain significant events surrounding his life. However, I suspect that the serious student and the busy scholar of Maritain, not to mention the "casual" reader, would have profited more from a detailed, analytic index. One only hopes that the editors will rectify this in future volumes, even though such a practice should have begun with an elaborate volume like *The Degrees*.

Jim Kanaris

McGill University

---

*Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ.* By Peter Martyr Vermigli. Trans. and ed. with introduction and notes by John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. The Peter Martyr Library 2. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies, 1995. ISBN 0-940474-33-6. Pp. xxvi+214.

---

With Patrick Donnelly's translation of Vermigli's 1561 Latin edition of *Dialogue on the Two Natures of Christ*, the editors of the Peter Martyr Library continue to treat the modern reader of ancient controversies to yet another easily accessible text. Care has been taken to translate sense rather than letter, without, however, sacrificing the integrity of the original. A succinct introduction sets the scene within which Vermigli's *Dialogue* must be read, namely as a response to the Lutheran theologian Johannes Brenz and his notion regarding the ubiquity of Christ's body. As such, the eucharistic quarrel that Vermigli's *Dialogue* reflects comes rather late in the sixteenth century and indicates the hardening of positions on the matter in the Lutheran and Reformed camps.

To give this particular eucharistic text a frame of reference, Donnelly writes a brief introduction. As he rightly indicates, Vermigli entered the inner-Protestant debate rather late. Earlier discussions date back to an exchange of eucharistic tracts between the Swiss (notably Calvin and Bullinger) and the Lutherans Joachim Westphal and the younger Martin Chemnitz. Donnelly leaves his reader with