

Editor's Note

In how many ways—and with what degree of certainty—do we know? The essays assembled within address these questions from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, but the thought of Jacques Maritain is never far in the background.

Grounded in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Maritain presented an account not only of the (more or less traditional) Thomistic-Aristotelian theory of knowledge, but also expanded it to include what he would call connatural, or artistic knowledge. Maritain was not afraid to claim that we do in fact know what we know, even if the experience cannot be taught or shared. The essays herein are therefore more wide-ranging than might otherwise be expected, as artists, historians, theologians, architects, musicians, social scientists and literary critics join professional philosophers in exploring the avenues opened by Maritain's work.

The essays contained in the volume are divided into three parts. The first grouping deals with basic questions of knowledge at a theoretical level, or what would be called "epistemology" in most contemporary Departments of Philosophy. The essays in the second section attempt to address the social consequences of how we know, taking the political and ethical implications of knowledge—or the lack thereof—into account. Finally, those in the third section deal with ways of knowing not often taken seriously by modernity. These authors touch on the knowledge conveyed through alternative modes of experience—from modern physics, through music and poetry, to even mystical knowledge of God Himself. Taken as a whole, the three sections present a credible alternative to the pervasive contemporary academic skepticism, or what Maritain describes as the "deep vice [that] besets the philosophers of our day."¹

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Finally, my thanks go to my wife and children for their patience as I took this volume through production. To my bride Jacalyn and children Evan, Caleb, Austin, Samuel, Hope and Grace—may you all know the depth of my love, and yet know that mine is but a pale reflection of that of God for each of you.

¹Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), p. 1.