THE FAILURE OF MODERNISM

The Cartesian Legacy and Contemporary Pluralism
American Maritain Association Publications

General Editor: Anthony O. Simon

Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Metaphysics
Edited by John F. X. Knasas, 1988

Freedom in the Modern World: Jacques Maritain, Yves R. Simon, Mortimer J. Adler
Edited by Michael D. Torre, 1989, Second Printing 1990

From Twilight to Dawn: The Cultural Vision of Jacques Maritain
Edited by Peter A. Redpath, 1990
★ ISBN 0-268-00979-1

The Future of Thomism
Edited by Deal W. Hudson and Dennis Wm. Moran, 1992
★ ISBN 0-268-00986-4

Jacques Maritain and the Jews
Edited by Robert Royal, 1994
★ ISBN 0-268-01193-1

Freedom, Virtue, and the Common Good
Edited by Curtis L. Hancock and Anthony O. Simon, 1995
★ ISBN 0-268-00991-0

Postmodernism and Christian Philosophy
Edited by Roman T. Ciapalo, 1997

The Common Things: Essays on Thomism and Education
Edited by Daniel McInerny, 1998
◆ ISBN 0-9669226-0-3

The Failure of Modernism: The Cartesian Legacy and Contemporary Pluralism
Edited by Brendan Sweetman, 1999
◆ ISBN 0-9669226-1-1

★ Distributed by the University of Notre Dame Press
◆ Distributed by The Catholic University of America Press
THE FAILURE OF MODERNISM

The Cartesian Legacy and Contemporary Pluralism

Edited by

Brendan Sweetman

Rockhurst University

American Maritain Association
To Brendan, John and Ciaran
Acknowledgments

Many people generously assisted me at various stages in the preparation of this book, and I am very grateful to all of them. Without them, there would be no book. (Despite what some people today seem to believe, nothing “pops into existence,” especially not books!)

I am especially grateful to Curtis Hancock, Anthony O. Simon, and Roman Ciapalò for their advice and unfailing support. Tony Simon, Doug Geivett and Ted Furton read various portions of the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to the staff at the Catholic University of America Press for their courteous and professional assistance, especially Director David McGonagle, and Ms. Marguerite Leonard and Ms. Beth Benevides.

I would also like to thank all of the contributors to the volume for their excellent essays, for their prompt editorial work and for their overall enthusiasm for and commitment to the intellectual life. They are a dedicated group of teachers and scholars who are an inspiration to many, and I am very grateful for the privilege to work with them.

Several people at Rockhurst University ensured that I had released time to work on the volume; I would like to mention in particular Teresa Reed and Corey Simmonds. I also wish to acknowledge Rockhurst University for a Presidential grant to support my work on portions of the book.

I owe a very special word of thanks to Jonathan Raymon, a philosophy graduate of Loras College, who designed the cover for the volume, and prepared the camera-ready copy with great skill and professionalism. Without Jonathan’s help, this volume would still be in the realm of conceptual knowledge.

Finally, my biggest debt of gratitude is to my wife Margaret, and my sons, Brendan, John and Ciaran, for their great support and encouragement, without which this book would not have been possible. My three boys have philosophically established to my satisfaction that it is possible to prepare and print manuscripts in almost total bedlam! This book is dedicated to them.
Contents

INTRODUCTION
   *The Failure of Modernism*
   Brendan Sweetman 1

1. *Why Descartes was not a Philosopher*
   Peter A. Redpath 10

2. *Descartes's Res: An Interactionist Difficulty*
   Robert Geis 22

3. *Descartes, Mathematics and Music*
   Donald DeMarco 35

4. *Maximum Influence from Minimum Abilities: La Mettrie and Radical Materialism*
   William J. Fossati 45

5. *On the Aristotelian Heritage of John of Damascus*
   Joseph Koterski, S.J. 58

6. *Transcendental Thomism: Realism Rejected*
   Christopher M. Cullen, S.J. 72

7. *Was Maritain a Crypto-Machiavellian?*
   James V. Schall, S.J. 87
8. Richard Hooker as Source of the Founding Principles of American Natural Law
   Edward Furton 101

9. Neutral Frameworks, the Rule of Law and the Common Good
   Terry Hall 110

10. Jacques Maritain and Alasdair MacIntyre: The Person, the Common Good and Human Rights
    Deborah Wallace 127

11. Jacques Maritain, Thomism and the Liberal-Communitarian Debate
    Michael Moreland 141

12. On the Purpose of the State: Continuity and Change in Political Theories
    Henk E. S. Woldring 155

13. Transcending Right and Left: A Question of Virtue
    James G. Hanink 171

    John X. Evans 179

15. Deconstruction, Onto-Theology and Thomas's Via Negativa
    Matthew Pugh 199

16. The Postmodern Notion of Freedom and Aquinas's Ratio Entis
    John F. X. Knasas 212
17. *The Pseudo-Problem of Skepticism*
   Brendan Sweetman  
   228

18. *A Critique of Social Construct Theory*
   Curtis L. Hancock  
   242

**Epilogue**
   *A Counterfeit Choice*
   Curtis L. Hancock  
   259

**Contributors**  
   263

**Index**  
   267