

The Maritain Notebook

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION / VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1 / SUMMER 2017

President's Letter

In my first President's Letter, I asked "Where to start?" Now I can ask "Where to continue?" Isn't the answer, for us, "On every front, as we follow Jacques and Raïssa Maritain in engaging our 'interesting time' from the perspective of the perennial philosophy." It is a perspective that draws on the legacy of thinkers that have come before us, and it is equally one that looks always to our end. Alasdair MacIntyre, an AMA member, makes this very point in his new book *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*. Practical reasoning, he urges, is an avenue that readily invites its practitioners "to a shared belief in God, to a belief that if there is nothing beyond the finite, there is no final end, no ultimate good, to be achieved." (A salute to John Haldane, who cites these words in *First Things*, May, 2017.)

Many of the ancients, and all of today's New Atheists, dismiss "*Respice finem*" as an empty injunction. Contemporary science is, at best, wary of teleological explanation. Hylomorphism has not been explored and found wanting; rather, it remains largely unknown. Jacques Maritain, for his part, proved to be an ambassador to contemporary science. In our next meeting we have the opportunity to follow his lead. Our theme is Thomism and Science; our project is building the bridges of scholarly exchange. There's time for

significant construction projects, since the deadline for proposals is December 15, 2017. See our Call for Papers for other particulars.

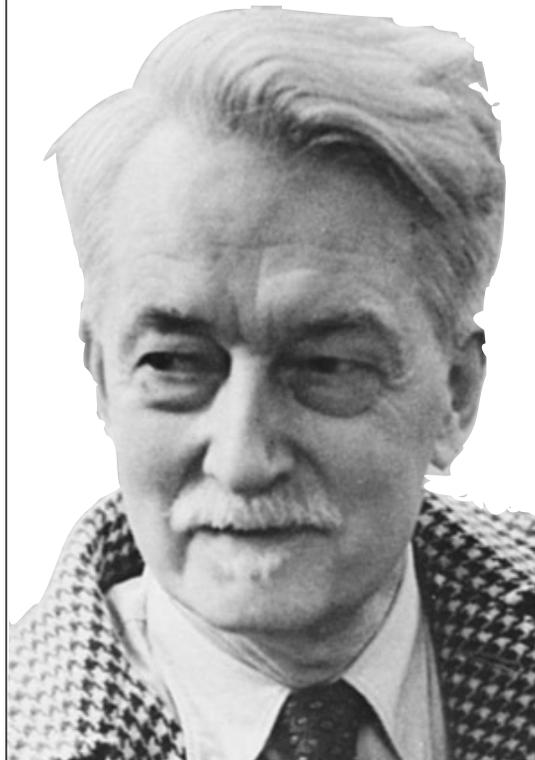
As announced, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, in Philadelphia, will host our 41st annual meeting. Please join us, whether you come from East or West, North or South. We can't promise you the Cajun delights of last year in New Orleans. But, "*Heus (!)*, a hoagie ain't half bad." The Seminary's own Eric Manchester is proving to be an indispensable local organizer for the event.

Our plenary speakers include Nicanor Austriaco, O.P. (Providence), Dr. John (Jack) Cahalan (Independent Scholar), Prof. Michael Tkacz (Gonzaga), and of special note Sr. Prudence Allen, R.S.M. (*emerita*, Concordia, St. John

Vianney Seminary). Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. will be the recipient of our Humanitarian Award.

I close with two reflections. The first is that the American Maritain Association has lost some dear friends this year. We've bade farewell to Bernard Doering, John Deely, and Michael Novak. Each made enduring contributions. *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt*, wrote Virgil. The second is that these companions of ours would never let sadness dampen hope. The Maritains were friends of Charles Péguy, and in his *Strangers in a Strange Land*, Archbishop Chaput tells us of Péguy's challenge: "like men and women passing held water from hand to hand," we are with God's help to pass on the reasons for our hope. This we aim to do. We look forward to your joining us in Philadelphia.

~James Hanink



The Maritain Notebook

Published in the Fall and Spring. Please contact the editor regarding books for review, guest columns, news and announcements.

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Editor's Corner

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Dear Friends,

When we last met in New Orleans, we spoke about our need to recruit new members, especially graduate students. To this end, the executive committee has put together a suite of materials, including a formal letter describing our organization, a poster-style CFP directed at graduate students (see below), and a new opportunity. Beginning with our 2018 conference, we will publish the best graduate student paper (peer-reviewed, of course!) in the AMA Conference volume in addition to the usual \$250 prize. You can help us make the most of our recruitment campaign by doing the following:

- **Download and distribute the recruitment materials as widely as possible**, e.g., on social media, within your own departments, etc. The materials are available on our website, maritainassociation.com
- **Send me a list of departments you would like the materials sent to.** I'll put together a contact list and make sure our CFP and recruitment materials are sent there each Fall and Spring. You can reach me at joshua.schulz@desales.edu.

With your help, we can make the American Maritain Association's annual conference a premier opportunity for new scholars to showcase their work in a friendly environment while networking with a world-class group of Thomists!

~Joshua Schulz, editor



Ernest Board, *Albertus Magnus expounding his doctrines of physical science in the streets of Paris* ca. 1245, Wellcome Library, London.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION
invites you to submit papers for its 41st annual meeting
March 1-3, 2018 in Philadelphia

THOMISM AND SCIENCE

We invite proposals on diverse topics, e.g., causality, chance, scientific explanation, evolution, hylomorphism, physicalism, and teleology; on the cultural impact of contemporary science and its related technologies; and proposals on Thomists who help to clarify our "interesting times."

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

- **Best Graduate Student Paper** will receive \$250 and guaranteed publication in the conference volume.
- **All presented papers** can be submitted for publication in our double-blind, peer-reviewed conference volume series published by the Catholic University of America Press.
- Graduate students receive **discounted** conference registration and AMA membership (optional).

Proposals, no longer than two pages long, should be sent to Dr. James M. Jacobs at jjacobs@nds.edu. Submissions are due **December 15, 2017**.

Visit us at <https://maritainassociation.com>

In Memoriam

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The American Maritain Association has lost a keen mind and a dear friend. On January 7, 2017 in Greensburg, PA, John Deely, passed from this mortal vale. Born on 26 April 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, Deely was educated at the Aquinas Institute School of Philosophy, River Forest, Illinois, receiving a PhD in 1967. After briefly holding several academic posts, John's first major career accomplishment was his work for Mortimer Adler at the Institute for Philosophical Research (1969-1974). His early experience and reflection during this period of his career arguably played a pivotal role in the formulation of his later work in the field of semiotics.

As is well known, John was a vociferous proponent of the metaphysical and philosophical tradition of semiotics, grounded in the robust theory of relation and signification found in the works of John Poinset, most especially in the *Tractatus de signis* elaborated in the questions on material logic in his *Cursus philosophicus*. During his days with Adler, John undertook a number of researches into the nature of language and meaning, while simultaneously beginning work on his monumental edition of the *Tractatus de signis*. This research solidified major themes in John's thought, themes that would remain central throughout his later work.

According to John's own account, he parted ways with the Institute because of insuperable differences of opinion between him and Adler concerning the importance of relation in the treatment of language (and more broadly throughout human experience). Indeed, John refused to be listed as a co-author of the ultimate fruit of their collaboration, *Some Questions About Language: A Theory of Human Discourse and Its Objects*, which bears only Adler's name. The astute reader of Adler's text can sense the important role played by Deely in Adler's own final text, especially the fourth chapter in which Adler deploys the theme of thing and object, a central theme in Deely's thought, which he believed to be an elaboration of remarks made on this subject by Maritain, especially in *The Degrees of Knowledge*.

Members of the American Maritain Association know John for his many works—his edition of the *Tractatus de signis*, his *Basics of Semiotics*, which has been translated into numerous languages, the historical tome (and *magnum opus*) *Four Ages of the Understanding*, the lucid thematic summaries found in *Intentionality and Semiotics*, and many others. And while it is elucidating to define a thinker's orientation by the *terminus ad quem* of his thought, it is also quite useful to ponder those initial insights that are—to steal an expression from Maritain—the “many-eyed cloud” from

which a thinker's knowledge emerges into full elaboration. To this end, two early-career quotes should stand as a testimony to this early insight in John's life and work. His later work in semiotics—the investigation of experience and the world in the nexus of things and objects that constitutes the context of our human life—is merely a development of these earliest insights concerning the pivotal importance of *esse intentionale*. Indeed, as his thought developed, John's entire *perspective* opened up from this initial direction, spreading out over new ground to be developed: the all-embracing activity of signs found not only in anthroposemiosis but also throughout all of reality in physio- and bio-semiosis.

A providential reading of *Quatre essais sur l'esprit dans sa condition charnelle* and key passages in *Distinguer pour unir ou les degrés du savoir* gave John the direction needed for developing his doctoral dissertation, which undertook a rapprochement between the Thomistic account of *esse intentionale* and the problematic of Being in Heidegger's thought. This doctoral work eventually bore fruit in Deely's first monograph, *The Tradition via Heidegger*, which he dedicated to the Maritains “at a distance” and was graced to present in person to Jacques on July 20, 1972. A telling text from the book bears witness to themes that would remain essential components of John's thought throughout his life:

For if the intentional order does not formally touch the entitative order in the particular kind of act / potency relation known as substance / accident composition, yet it does permeate it through other modes of act / potency composition—which is but to say that act / potency analysis as such cannot be reduced to substance / accident ontology, and that it is the former, not the latter, which provides the genuine categories of first philosophy, that is, of Metaphysics.

The second such text comes from an unpublished text dating from John's time working with Adler. In his last days, John often mulled over this text, and his reasons for doing so will be quite obvious to the reader:

Without pretending to complete confidence here, it nonetheless seems to me that on this score a meditation on the phenomena of intersubjectivity as such (and including the phenomena relating to the preconscious and unconscious life of the mind) may provide a deciding factor. As I have written elsewhere, "The insistence that the basic reality is "primary substance," that whatever exists depends upon primary substance, that basic existence has essential unity that can only be achieved by form, and that the life

John Deely

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*of the mind modifies accidentally the soul of the knower—all these propositions have worked together to (needlessly) blind traditional philosophy to the decisively intersubjective, formally constitutive features of cultural, social, and personal—in a word, historical—realities which are the preoccupation of contemporary reflections. What traditional philosophizing has failed to take sufficient account of, and what Heidegger demonstrates the need for considering thematically, is the possibility of understanding the irreducibility of the order of esse intentionale strictly and consistently as the sphere and level wherein man's historical existence is worked out and his "self-identity" in the properly human sense consequently maintains itself' [A footnote references his then-unpublished *The Tradition* via Heidegger.]*

It is impossible for me to see how, on Adler's accounting, the subjectivistic, if not the constructivistic standpoint does not again come to the fore. To consider, as Adler seems to tend to do, that intentional being is something which would make a thing known because it resembles it, rather than by *being* it, amounts to a throwback to one of those alterations of scholasticism which prepared for and, in a sense, made unavoidable the Cartesian theory of ideas and subsequently the modern idealistic noetic. At the same time, by suppressing the formal distinction between *esse-in* and *esse-ad*, or, if that be too strong, by refusing to treat the latter in what is proper and formal to it, Adler makes it impossible to understand the category of relation—and therewith the essence of intentionality.

Following his time with Adler, John went on to hold numerous posts nationally and internationally. Immediately after his time at IPR, he taught at Saint Mary's College, South Bend (1974–1976). He then was appointed at Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa (1976–1999), where he wrote many of his important works. Most recently he held the Rudman Chair in Philosophy (2007–2015) at the Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, Houston (1999–2015) and Philosopher in Residence at St. Vincent College and Seminary (2015–2016). John was a Fulbright scholar-professor in Brazil (1988–1989), Mexico (1994–1995), and Bulgaria (2005); he was also a visiting scholar-professor at University of Helsinki in Finland and at Tartu University in Estonia. His books, over thirty in number, are complemented by over 200 articles and a number of book series that he edited. His *magna opera* are his bi-lingual edition of John Poinsett's *Tractatus de signis*, which received the featured book review in the New York Times (Easter,

1986), and *Four Ages of Understanding* (2001), a tome presenting a full-scale narration concerning the centrality of the theory of signs to the history of philosophy, thereby establishing a semiotic-philosophical perspective for the twenty-first century.

As a philosopher, John developed this prospective semiotic viewpoint in the fertile soil of the Catholic intellectual tradition. The influence of Jacques Maritain was immense not only in John's professional life but also deeply within his personal life. His most treasured photograph was a picture of a very young John with Maritain himself. John was among the founding members of the American Maritain Association, of which he remained a devoted member throughout his life. He was devoted to carrying forward a Thomistic hermeneutic in line with that of Maritain's own—to be a member in the long and strenuous dialogue undertaken in the Dominican Thomist school. John's work in semiotics was merely a case of *vetera novis augere et perficere*. Joining his work with such unexpected thinkers as Thomas Sebeok and C.S. Peirce, John worked to sound out the depths of *esse intentionale* with contemporary thinkers who were ready to overcome the dead-ends of modernity. In so doing, John not only helped to inject a robust metaphysics into contemporary metaphysics; he simultaneously brought light to themes often overlooked and under-articulated by Thomists.

Most importantly, John met his wife Brooke Williams Deely, herself a noted Maritain scholar, at a meeting of the American Maritain Association. Throughout their married life, John and Brooke remained close collaborators in John's philosophical work. Brooke's devotion to John's vocation as a philosopher is a moving testimony to a wife's deep and mature love.

John's great discovery of the works of John Poinsett (also known as John of St. Thomas) as an explicit link between Baroque Thomism and the current emerging worldview of semiotics is his seminal legacy, a legacy that ties John's efforts not only to the work of semioticians such as C.S. Peirce and Thomas Sebeok but also to the historic Benedictine Order. Indeed, the Abbey of Solemnes is the publisher of the critical edition of Poinsett's writings. John's move to St. Vincent joined together his devotion to Dominican scholasticism and the ancient Benedictine order, thereby paralleling the intellectual-spiritual union of these orders in the lives of St. Thomas Aquinas and Jacques Maritain, himself a Benedictine Oblate for whom Poinsett was the "[Thomistic] Commentator with whom [Maritain] fell in love."

In Memoriam

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Though aware of his own philosophical accomplishments, John did not desire to have his life trumpeted in a grand, eulogistic manner. When recently asked whom he would like to be his eulogist, he conceded only slight ground to the request—he desired his eulogist to be his faithful canine companion, Bruno. Nonetheless, he was remembered in a moving homily by his friend and colleague Fr. Ted Baenzinger, C.S.B., who was joined by many friends and family members at the memorial service held by St. Vincent in John's honor on May 8, 2017.

St. Vincent College in Latrobe is working to establish and fund the John N. Deely and Jacques Maritain Chair in Philosophy to carry forward Catholic philosophical thought in the tradition of these two thinkers whose thought and lives have been so dear to all of us, members of the American Maritain Association. The Latimer Family Library contains John's extensive book collection, open to scholars interested in pursuing work relevant to his lifelong Thomistic-semiotic project. Having remembered John's work at some length, however, let us end by remembering him in our prayers—*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*



2018 CFP

THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION

41ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING,
THURSDAY— SATURDAY, MARCH 1–3, 2018, IN WYNNEWOOD, PENNSYLVANIA

Hosted by St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

∞ THOMISM AND SCIENCE ∞

Program Committee: James G. Hanink (President), James M. Jacobs (Vice-President and Program Chair), Joshua W. Schulz (Secretary and Web Editor), Heather M. Erb (Treasurer), Giuseppe Butera (General Editor)

2018 marks the 70th anniversary of Jacques Maritain’s acceptance of a teaching post at Princeton University. There he was to be a cultural ambassador between Europe and America. Maritain was often to serve as an ambassador and always as a constructive and creative Thomist.

In his great work *Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge* (4th ed., 1959), and in *Science and Wisdom* (1940) and *Philosophy of Nature* (1951), Jacques Maritain proved to be an ambassador to contemporary science and, more broadly, the many ways of knowing. Biology, physics, and psychology; space, time, relativity, and quantum theory—he engaged each in light of the perennial philosophy. Other Thomists shared his enthusiasm; Yves Simon and Charles De Koninck come immediately to mind.

The conference, then, invites proposals on topics including causality, chance, scientific explanation, evolution, hylomorphism, physicalism, and teleology. We welcome proposals that explore the contributions of Simon and De Koninck as well as figures like Stanley Jaki and William Wallace. We also encourage proposals on the cultural impact of contemporary science and its related technologies.

In the tradition of our Association, we look forward to proposals that in various ways further the understanding of the work of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain and of other Thomists who help to clarify our “interesting times.”

Proposals, no longer than two pages long, should be sent to Dr. James M. Jacobs at jjacobs@nds.edu. Submissions are due December 15, 2017. For more information, see <https://maritainassociation.com/>