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more on

Knowledge and the Mind

James Le Fanu's *Why Us? How Science Rediscovered the Mystery of Ourselves** (2009) was published by Pantheon. Daniel Ritchie's *The Fullness of Knowing: Modernity and Postmodernity from Defoe to Gadamer** (2010) was published by Baylor University Press. Novelist Marilynne Robinson's latest book is called *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self** (Yale, 2010). In it, she criticizes the reductionist tendencies of various scientists in their efforts to define human nature in entirely material terms, thereby reducing—if not eliminating—the truly human. Craig Gay's *Dialogue, Catalogue, & Monologue: Personal, Impersonal & Depersonalizing Ways to Use Words** (Regent, 2008) is an insightful examination of dehumanizing tendencies in the modern use of language, as well as a summary of a Christian corrective to such temptations. One of the most penetrating critics of the assumption that knowledge can be fully mechanized is Hubert Dreyfus, for many years a professor of philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. As early as 1965 (in a paper called "Alchemy and A. I.") and then in a 1972 book called *What Computers Can't Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence* (Harper & Row, revised in 1979), Dreyfus argued that human intelligence could not be artificially replicated because it relied on tacit awareness of the world conveyed in non-analytic forms irreducible to digital algorithms. His book was originally treated with scorn. But by 1992, when he wrote *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason** (MIT Press), many A. I. and robotics researchers had come to the point of reluctantly acknowledging the power of his arguments. Other books by Dreyfus include *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of Computing** (co-written with his brother Stuart E. Dreyfus; Free Press, 1986) and *On the Internet: Thinking in Action** (Routledge, 2001), which he discussed on volume 58 of the *Journal*.

more on

Monasticism, Old & New

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove's *The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture** (2010) was published by Paraclete Press, which also published Robert Benson's *A Good Neighbor: Benedict's Guide to Community** (2009); Benson's *A Good Life: Benedict's Guide to Everyday Joy** (2004); *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love** (2005), by Daniel Homan and Lanni Collins Pratt; and Michael Casey's *Strangers to the City: Reflections on the Beliefs and Values of the*

Disc 1

1 Introduction

- 2 **James Le Fanu**, on the mistaken assumption that modern medical science has eliminated the fittingness of a sense of mystery and wonder at the human mind and body
- 3 **Garret Keizer**, on how many noises in modern life reveal a state of warfare with the limitations of our embodiment
- 4 **Daniel Ritchie**, on how Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748) anticipated late twentieth-century critiques of the Enlightenment

Disc 2

- 1 **Monica Ganas**, on how the distinct vision of life embedded in "California-ism" has exerted a powerful cultural influence
- 2 **Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove**, on how the search for faithfulness to Christ led him to the wisdom of the Benedictine Rule and a "new monasticism"
- 3 **Peter J. Leithart**, on why Constantine has an unfairly bad reputation and on how his rule dealt a severe blow to paganism in the West

*An asterisk means that the book is in print; if you wish to purchase it from our friends at Splintered Light Books, call 1.800.979.3310.

*Rule of St. Benedict** (2005). Kathleen Norris wrote the foreword to Wilson-Hartgrove's book. Her *A Cloister Walk** (Riverhead, 1996) was a popular introduction to monastic life. Her 2008 book, *Acedia & Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life** (Penguin) examined the temptation to listless boredom that afflicts monks and many others. Norvene Vest has written a number of books applying principles of the Benedictine rule to personal devotion, including *No Moment Too Small: Rhythms of Silence, Prayer, and Holy Reading** (Cowley, 1994), *Friend of the Soul: A Benedictine Spirituality of Work** (Cowley, 1997), *Desiring Life: Benedict on Wisdom and the Good Life** (Cowley, 2000), and *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict** (Morehouse, 2004). Eleanor Shipley Duckett's slim historical volume *The Gateway to the Middle Ages: Monasticism** was originally published in 1938, and has been kept in print for many years by the University of Michigan Press.

more on

Other Works Mentioned

Garret Keizer's *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want: A Book about Noise** (2010) was published by Public Affairs. Monica Ganas's *Under the Influence: California's Intoxicating Spiritual and Cultural Impact on America* (2010) was published by Brazos. Peter J. Leithart's *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (2010) was published by InterVarsity Press.

The **MARS HILL AUDIO** *Journal* is produced at our studio in rural central Virginia, outside of historic Charlottesville. The *Journal* is one of several audio products we distribute, all of them intended to encourage greater wisdom about interaction with contemporary culture.

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