THE RECEPTION OF

PRAGMATISM IN FRANCE &

THE RISE OF ROMAN CATHOLIC

MODERNISM, 1890–1914



edited by David G. Schultenover, S.J.

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Preface

The idea for this collection of essays on the reception of pragmatism in France and Roman Catholic Modernism originated with contributor C. J. T. Talar, who proposed the subject for consideration at the 2004 annual meeting of the Nineteenth Century Group of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). The topical question of these papers emerged in the former Roman Catholic Modernism Group of the AAR, whose members, meeting over a period of some twenty years, would occasionally remark on the connection between identified Roman Catholic Modernists and pragmatism, particularly the pragmatism of the American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842–1910). Talar, who has a special interest both in Roman Catholic Modernism and in the thought world of modern France, was impressed by the resurgent interest in American pragmatism as evidenced by numerous publications in that area in recent years. So he submitted a proposal to the AAR's program committee to devote a session to what was then titled "The Reception of Pragmatism in France" and engaged me to convene the session and edit the papers.

The call for papers resulted in contributions from experts who are widely published in this field. John Shook, research professor of philosophy at University at Buffalo, vice president and senior research fellow at the Center for Inquiry, and webmaster of the pragmatism cybrary (http://shook.pragmatism.org) coauthored the introduction to this collection to explain the needed background for the discussions to follow. He has also contributed the book's second chapter, "Early Responses to American Pragmatism in France: Selective Attention and Critical Reaction," to more fully set the context and provide an overview of the subject.

Frédéric Worms, a specialist in the philosophy of Henri Bergson and professor at the University of Lille III, kindly permitted