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Modernity -- Chapter 7. Bacon's New Magic: The Transfigured Aim of the Sciences -- Chapter 8. Technology Displaces Metaphysics - Bacon's New Hierarchy of the Arts and Sciences -- Chapter 9. Breaking Aristotle's Bridge: The Modern Philosophical Critique of Teleology -- Chapter 10. The Enlightenment as a Baconian Revolution -- Chapter 11. Metaphysics Dethroned: Hume, Kant, and the "Self-Limitation of Reason" -- Chapter 12. --Progressivism, Commerce, and the Triumph of Machine Civilization -- Chapter 13. The Classical Ideal of High Culture in the Democratic Age -- Chapter 14. Dewey and the Greeks in Contention: The Theoretic Life and the Challenge of American Pragmatism -- Chapter 15. A Reply to Dewey -- Chapter 16. The Contemporary Crisis of the Humanities: The Ideological Attack on the Western Canon and The Long Arm of Nietzsche, Marx, and Foucault -- Chapter 17. The New Protrepticus: A Concluding Exhortation to the Theoretic Life -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

In this work, Alexander Rosenthal Pubul presents a broad examination of the ancient philosophical question: "What is the good life?", while addressing how the liberal arts can help us to answer this question. Greek philosophy distinguished between the "noble" (what is good in itself), from the merely "useful" (good for something else). From thence follows the distinction between the liberal arts which pursue such noble goods and the mechanical arts which are only instrumental. For Aristotle, the most noble and excellent good is wisdom itself. Hence the theoretic life devoted to the love of wisdom for its own sake – philosophy - is the highest and the most excellent. This work theorizes the origins of modernity in a rebellion against this Greek conception resulting in a complete inversion of the classical hierarchy. Sir. Francis Bacon reconceiving the purpose of knowledge as power, enthroned technology over philosophy and the liberal arts. The unfolding of the modern Baconian revolution progressively sidelines the liberal arts, as practical economic and technical utility become the standard of value. In assessing this problem, the book engages in a capacious journey across disciplines like philosophy, history, art, politics, and science. It is also a veritable tour across the Western intellectual tradition including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Thomas Aquinas, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Dewey, Berdyaev, Einstein, and Heidegger. It pleads the urgent need to preserve the humanizing cultural ideals of the ancient classics against the modern tyranny of utility and the dangers of a new barbarism. .
