

Preface

Volume 12 of *Animus*, the first under the direction of the new editorial board, is dedicated to studies of the modern state.

The modern state is a vexed topic for many in the contemporary world. On the one side, the modern development of the state has been seen as the source of a manifold of evils: from new forms of modern evil in totalitarianism and genocide, to the perversion of forms of social life that would be pre-modern or post-modern, to the distortions of our very most intimate selves. On the other side, it can well appear that the modern state is not only an inevitable necessity, but the only remedy to modern forms of evil: indeed the *sine qua non* of any kind of realized human dignity or human rights.

The consideration of the modern state is easily polemicized and its historical development misrepresented. This edition of *Animus* is written from a variety of perspectives, but as a whole provides the opportunity to better understand the intellectual and wider cultural sources of the modern state. This is not intended as a defence of the modern state, but rather as a consideration of the deeper reality of the state as understood by some of the crucial thinkers of the early modern period, which in turn will provide us with a sense of the truth as well as limits of the modern state.

Perhaps at the heart of this consideration is the varied treatment of religion and secularity that plays itself out in the following papers. Hobbes famously described the state as a “mortal god” – a most ambiguous term. Are we to see the modern state as “secularizing” the absolutes of religion and so divinizing the human? Are we to see it rather as a humanizing of the divine and so drawing the human in its very freedom more deeply into the divine? In this relation of the mortal and immortal in the modern state, does the state betray its dependent (and hence limited) nature to a Christian tradition? Or is this secularization simultaneously the attainment of a fully universal humanity? This edition of *Animus* certainly does not resolve, but rather begins to ask anew these questions so central to our own world complicatedly crisscrossed by religion and secularity.

David Peddle finds prefigured in Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* certain core principles of the modern state. He argues that Calvin expresses in theological form the grounds for the equality of all individuals and the division between Church and State which will be worked out philosophically in modern political thought. Identifying these intimations of modernity undermines the persistent Enlightenment caricature of pre-modern religion as irrational and oppressive.

Ken Jacobsen proposes a parallel reading of two historically contemporary texts, Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*. On Jacobsen’s reading this juxtaposition reveals a common purpose in the two works: the

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willing reconciliation of the dissenting subject to a necessary social order. This reading allows a renewed appreciation of both texts which from various contemporary viewpoints appear repugnant or unintelligible.

Eli Diamond offers an interpretation of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* which shows how there is a common logical structure underlying the arguments in that treatise concerning philosophy and religion (chapters 1-15) and the Sovereign's power over individuals (16-20). Diamond further claims that this logical structure applies in important ways to Spinoza's metaphysical theology. The article seeks to show that this crucial foundational text in modern political thought opens a realm of autonomous secularity by re-thinking the nature of God and the relation of God and world.

Neil Robertson explores the relation between Montesquieu and Rousseau on the conception of the state of nature and the origin of the state. He identifies in the difference between the two thinkers the threshold between early modern and contemporary political philosophy, and argues that an adequate understanding of the state requires drawing both their views into a standpoint that can make room for the educative force of existing social forms along with the inner freedom of individuals.

The last of the articles addresses the analysis of modern state found in modernity's great critic and defender, G.W.F. Hegel. In his study of negativity in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Ken Kierans confronts contemporary critics who argue that Hegel defends modern freedom by underemphasizing or suppressing deep antagonisms and tensions in the modern State. Kierans argues that it is in fact Hegel's willingness to do justice to this extreme negativity that constitutes the very heart of the argument of the *Philosophy of Right*.

Like the very first volume of *Animus* published in 1996, the current volume consists exclusively of contributions from the five members of the editorial board. We hope that the articles in this volume will give a sense of the new editorial board's vision for *Animus*.