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**Preface**

Contemporary scholars who still believe there is much to be learned from the great arguments of the past - indeed that they are absolutely prerequisite to any concrete comprehension of modern freedom - find themselves swimming against a tide of conventional wisdom that is systematically hostile to the whole speculative legacy. The seeds of a contrary, ultra-philosophical thinking have grown to full maturity. It has become a point of intellectual correctness to presume that the history of western thought is to be viewed as nothing more than a series of "meta-narratives" whose real purpose was quite other than they proposed - to conceal some ideological prejudice, perhaps, or dignify linguistic distortions by dressing them in pseudo-theoretical garb.

The ultra-modernist siege against the citadel of philosophy would now appear to have been somewhat lifted as the radical critique of the western tradition has taken a distinctly skeptical turn and no longer speaks of a final conquest of the legacy of speculative thought, only of its intellectual suspension. Perhaps the time has come to begin to recover its original sense.

This first issue of Animus shows how the original sense of various classical arguments has been missed or trivialized by assimilation to ultra-modernist conceptions. The first essay surveys the 19th and 20th century seen as a single project specifically aimed at the radical critique of the thinking standpoint of philosophy, a project Jackson argues has reached its denouement in post-modern thought. In the aftermath of its attempt skeptically to nullify the philosophical spirit the recovery of that spirit itself and what it has actually accomplished becomes urgent. The four following articles draw upon the Greek speculative tradition to show how, working from ultra-modern assumptions, later interpretations of key themes and arguments have obscured and even obliterated their original sense.

Thus Andrews reviews the presumption of using modern truth-functional logic to analyze and correct elements of Aristotle's logic; she shows how important logical distinctions have been altogether lost in attempts to transpose them into the classical Russellian mode. In a timely riposte to Derrida's para-Freudian reading of Antigone, Epstein next makes the case that "the Nietzschean view of tragedy as showing the identity of the particular individual with 'being' cannot withstand the examination of a play central to the tragic world"; his analysis demonstrates how the essentially speculative intent of Greek art is entirely corrupted in attempts to reduce it to non-speculative post-modern terms. House's article considers the long-standing and current misrepresentation of Aristotle as the "earth-bound empiricist" who debased the pure gold of Plato's idealism into his own bio-materialist currency; House enlists the texts to show how the Platonic idealism, far from confuted in Aristotle's criticism, is indeed completed in it. Finally, Johnston distinguishes Augustine's concept of time from the Plotinian, and in this essentially shows Augustine as beyond Neoplatonism.

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The common method followed is to argue classical positions from their own principles rather than, as is the prevailing custom, from later ones. The aim is restore some sense of what has been accomplished already in philosophy. In the next issue the focus will be on similar issues seen from a contemporary perspective. The whole interest of *Animus* is to encourage the rebuilding of the ruined bridges that link contemporary thought to its own origins, a task which requires construction from both sides of the divide. For the proper outcome of the western speculative tradition is just the contemporary world itself, and the principle of freedom that informs it has no other source than in that very same tradition. Any whose habit is to damn modernity in defense of the philosophical tradition, or who takes as gospel the post-modern view of the latter's final obsolescence, will find little of interest here.