
There are historical problems, which scholars have been able to research, present, and evaluate in a relatively precise and unquestionable manner. They very often refer to political, diplomatic, sometimes military history and, as long as solely “what has happened” is being asked, they do not result in controversy and historical debates. On the contrary historical processes, which demand an answer to the questions “why” and “how” certain things happened often bring new interpretations and suggestions and we do not seem to come closer to definite answers.

Among the latter we can name the problem of the formation of the state in the early modern period in Europe. Numerous authors have taken up the challenge, and we are in possession of many interesting and important works, including P. Anderson, I. Wallerstein, Ch. Tilly, J.R. Streyer, and D. Nichols, to name but a few. Yet with this numerous library of books and articles, we can always point to a period and a country, which evades the proposed model and is an exception to the general process presented. Recently one more analysis of the process of formation of modern European states was proposed by Philip Gorski in his excellent work on the disciplinary revolution and its consequences for the emergence of modern state structures in seventeenth-century Europe. Gorski starts off with the setbacks mentioned above in mind. Analyzing the Marxist and Bellicist models of state formation, he argues that many European states do not fit these models and should be treated and researched differently.

Gorski sets out to explore and analyze the role of the Protestant religion in the forming of modern states. More precisely, he takes into account Calvinism and argues that it was the Calvinist disciplinary revolution, which influenced people’s behaviours and souls and made them work towards a different, well-ordered, and disciplined state. “The building blocks for a comprehensive theory of social discipline can be found in the works of Foucault, Oestereich, Elias, and Weber,” claims the author (31). Taking their work into consideration, he suggests four types of discipline distinguished by differing levels and modes of discipline. In effect we get self-discipline,
corrective discipline, communal discipline, and judicial or institutional discipline (32). They are, Gorski claims, rarely found in pure form, but often found together and in various relations to each other.

The definition and analysis of discipline allows the Author to take a closer look at the disciplinary revolution, which he sees as an important factor of state formation in Protestant countries. In particular the book stresses the strong links between social discipline, state power, and confessionalization. Furnished with such a workshop, Gorski sets out to discover and discuss the disciplinary revolutions in two Protestant states—the Dutch Republic and Brandenburg-Prussia. In the first case he examines the said revolution from below, in the latter being introduced from above.

All these undertakings allow Gorski to propose a new approach to the problem of state theory and the analysis of state forming processes. The discussed work in a convincing and very elegant way points to those social processes which were very often overlooked by historians but were extremely important for the formation of modern bureaucratic communities in some Protestant states in Europe. Results of the analysis allow the author to put forth several conclusions and suggest changes in the theory of state formation in early modern Europe. In particular we should note the arguments put forth by the author. First of all, he argues that a state should not be looked at as only administrative, political or indeed military organisation. They are also pedagogical, corrective, and ideological entities (165). State power, he continues, does not solely operate through coercion but also through co-optation (166). State power is not only a function of structure, resources, and organisational autonomy but also of its infrastructure, its human resources and organisational entwining. Finally, Gorski argues that the process of the formation of state does not always proceed from top to bottom as a process of material interest but sometimes a bottom-top process through ideal interests.

Gorski’s analysis of the disciplinary revolution in European Calvinist states is very interesting and thought provoking. He uncovers for us the neglected and/or forgotten elements of the reformation and their effects on contemporary states through the disciplining of the citizens of those states. Thus the model of modern state formation needs to be enriched with new elements on top of or along with those proposed by Marxist and Bellicist models. This book is very valuable and should find its way to all early modern semi-
nars discussing various social and political processes changing the face of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.


“Catullan consciousness” could mean very different things. For readers of Celia and Louis Zukofsky's translation of the Latin poet (1969) it would evoke a close imitation of the very phonic shape of the author—so that, for example, the opening phrase of Catullus 69 (“Noli admirari”) becomes “No lift odd mere horror” and of poem 70 (“Nulli se dicit mulier”) “Newly say dickered my love.” Altogether different is the sense assumed by the phrase in Jacob Blevins’ monograph. For this critic Catullan consciousness does not entail even having read Catullus; Blevins is quite explicit on this point. Rather, the argument is that an awareness of the stances assumed by Catullus in his love poetry, however indirectly derived, helps characterize key poets of the English Renaissance, especially Wyatt, Shakespeare, and Donne, with some attention to other canonical figures (Sidney, Spenser, Herrick and Jonson).

Key terms for Blevins are disillusionment and realism. He contends that Catullan themes and motifs offered a counterpoint to the idealizing doctrines of Petrarchanism and neo-Platonism. Catullus in his view is a bruised flower of a poet, forever voicing his disillusion at the failure of a beloved to live up to a Roman code of fidelity. The same biographical account is provided for each of the English masters: the failure of the real to live up to the ideal generates verse.

The difficulties here are twofold. None of the readings breaks new interpretive ground. Little is gained from page after page of assertions like (in connection with Wyatt’s “They fle from me”) “Catullus’ lover is also thrown aside by his mistress, and he eventually attempts to overcome his lady’s rejection of him,” and “Catullus’ lover is suggesting that Lesbia will suffer in the manner in which he has been physically and emotionally suffering, and in essence Wyatt’s poet-lover is hoping for the same thing when he says ‘I wold fain knowe what she hath deserved’” (36). No surprises here for students of English literature, and no illumination of the familiar texts discussed. At the