Carl Schmitt: An Improper Name

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1.

The proper name, it must be said, has a curious place and function in the discourse of the history of political thought. On the terms of this discourse, a name like "Aristotle" does not designate a specific mortal being who lived and died in a particular place and at a particular time. Quite the opposite: it designates something in this mortal being—his thought—that exceeds his mortal being, and thus too his particular place and time. Even so, "Aristotle" doesn't refer equally to all of Aristotle's thought: political theorists typically use this name to designate the positions in The Politics and Nicomachean Ethics, not those in Quaestiones Mechanicae or The Souls of Animals. The name also can be used to refer to works not written by Aristotle at all. Converted into an adjective, "Aristotelian" refers to transmissible attributes that have come to be associated with Aristotle's thought—idiosyncratic conceptual habits or techniques that are common enough to be found reiterated in the works of others, and that with sufficient iteration can come to constitute a school (the "Lyceum") or tradition ("Aristotelianism"). This adjectivalization can go to such an extreme that some thinkers can come to be categorized more with reference to Aristotle's name than by their own (Aquinas, for some, always will be first and foremost a particular sort of "Aristotelian"). These descriptions, paradoxically, can even come to displace the objects they ostensibly only nickname. Certain passages in Aristotle's Politics, for example, have been said to be "un-Aristotelian." Still

other works, meanwhile, which may not have been authored by Aristotle at all (such as The Constitution of Athens), have been attributed to Aristotle and reproduced in under his name in his collected works. As a classifying device within the discourse of the history of political thought, in other words, the proper name would seem to operate not with the simplicity of Aristotelian taxonomy, but with the perplexity of Cantorian set theory.

All the more strange, therefore, that historians of political thought should make the proper name so central to their pedagogy. It's not uncommon to find entire anthologies and syllabuses organized exclusively with reference to proper names, as if knowing how to think were synonymous with knowing how to properly name thinking. In theory, it's not difficult to defend this practice: the proper use of the proper name in the history of political thought, it would seem, is to allow students to acquire an awareness of the sense in which their own thoughts are but "residues and abbreviations" of thinkers who thought before them. But in practice, this theory does not so much spur the genesis of thought as produce the most excruciating chronicles ("Plato begat Aristotle, Aristotle begat Cicero, Cicero begat St. Augustine…"), which seem designed to filibuster young thinkers into conceding that there is indeed nothing new under the sun. By turning thinking into something tedious, wearying, and even melancholic, this mode of transmitting thought achieves nothing so much as the complete de-eroticization of thought: its unstated institutional function is to anesthetize curiosity, to tame an otherwise polymorphous libido sciendi. Defended as a mnemonic device for sustaining pious fidelity to lost objects, the proper name instead gives one permission for misreading and forgetfulness, allowing the

student to forget everything in a given text except the one or two concepts that consensus and opinion, not to mention Wikipedia, attribute to a thinker prior to any reading, and thus qualify as memorable whether or not any reading ends up happening at all. Or else it becomes the opposite: an instrument for the obsessive and pointless accumulation of memory, for the excessive recollections of historicism, which unthinkingly seek to reduce the infinity of thought to the circumstances of a finite time and place. In either case, political thought that organizes itself with reference to the proper name—which is, let's be clear, almost always a patronym—comes to possess a testamentary function, and thence to arrange itself implicitly around forms derived from inheritance law. Scholarly disputes in the history of political thought thus come to resemble paternity suits in courts of law: "Plato, not Aristotle, is Aquinas's true father." A subtle but decisive irony: it would appear that the history of political thought depends for its intelligibility upon forms that are not primarily political at all, but that are, more precisely and directly, jurisprudential—juridical forms that are authored by no one in particular, but that nevertheless govern the historiography by which that history arranges its authors; and that historians of political thought, more often than not, unthinkingly accept as unhistorical and apolitical necessities. Thought thus taught wilts on the vine that should allow it to flower, suffocated by its self-proclaimed stewards. As it functions within the discourse of the history of political thought, the proper name does not teach one how to think, only to categorize and to cite. It does not explain anything, as someone once said; it must itself be explained.

2.

The political thought of Carl Schmitt presents a limit case of this peculiar dynamic. Especially in the Anglophone academy, where the reception of Schmitt lags behind that in other languages, to speak of Schmitt's thought is more often than not to produce an occasion for rhetoric centered directly upon the sense and meaning of the proper name "Carl Schmitt" itself. One of the main points of reading Schmitt, or so it would seem, is to attach praise or blame to this name, to defend this good name from its accusers or to make a case against that same name. So powerfully entrenched is this premise today that even to name it as a premise—even to treat this approach to the reading of Schmitt as a debatable proposition, and not as a natural, self-evident, or inevitable necessity—would seem to miss the point of reading Schmitt in the first place.

And yet, far from being the necessary condition for a reading of Schmitt on Schmitt's own terms, Schmitt's proper name in fact inhibits the possibility of that reading. Consider, in this light, what is probably the very first attempt at a comprehensive introduction to Carl Schmitt in the Anglophone world. Titled "Observations on the Personality and Work of Professor Carl Schmitt," this four-page memo was composed in November 1945 by the jurist and political scientist Karl Loewenstein (1891-1973), a student of Max Weber who claimed "thirty years of experience with Schmitt," and who wrote in his capacity as a consultant for the Legal Division of the United States Office of Military Government for Germany (the administrative body responsible for Schmitt's post-war detention).[1] Interpreted on strictly bureaucratic terms, Loewenstein's memo was

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a response to a request jointly submitted by Schmitt's wife and jurist Hans Schneider for the recovery of Schmitt's library, which Loewenstein had helped Allied forces sequester a month earlier on the grounds that it was an "invaluable…source of information on pre-Nazi and Nazi law and political science" ("about the most complete," Loewenstein noted, "I can imagine").[2] For our purposes, Loewenstein's text is instructive for the way in which the category named in its title—"the Personality and Work of Professor Carl Schmitt"—contains a symptomatic conflation—"personality and work"—that, in turn, explicates the horizon that implicitly governs the interpretation of Schmitt even today.

Loewenstein's memo opened by praising Schmitt in the most unconditional terms.

> I do not hesitate to qualify Carl Schmitt as the foremost German political scientist and one of the most eminent political writers of our time, comparable in influence on world opinion perhaps only to Harold Laski, though in the reversed sense in that Laski is the literary protagonist of democracy while Carl Schmitt, on the other hand, has become the leading authority on authoritarian government and totalitarianism. Broadly

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[1] Karl Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt" (November 14, 1945), Karl Loewenstein Papers, Box 46, Folder 46, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, Massachusetts.

[2] Karl Loewenstein, "Library of Professor Carl Schmitt" (October 10, 1945), Loewenstein Papers, Box 46, Folder 46, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, Massachusetts. Schmitt's library would be returned to him in 1963.

> speaking he is a man of near-genius rating. He possess…a vast and by no means sterile erudition, drawing from an immense store of factual information such constructive conclusions as have greatly contributed to the shaping of the things to come in the past. He is one of those rare scholars who combine learning with imagination; book knowledge with a realistic sense of what is possible in politics; scientific training with political versatility. Without doubt Carl Schmitt is the most prominent personality in the field of public law and political science Germany has produced since Georg Jellenik.[3]

Loewenstein's praise then took a very different turn. "To his and the German people's misfortune," Loewenstein then asserted, "Carl Schmitt abused his gifts for evil purposes."[4] To support this accusation, Loewenstein proceeded to produce an abbreviated biography of Schmitt's work and conduct under Weimar, ranging from his academic career (his appointment at the Handelshochschule in Munich and his rejection by the Law Faculty at the University of Munich) to his first marriage and divorce (Schmitt's application for which was rejected by the Catholic Church, an event which, in Loewenstein's view, turned Schmitt against the Church) to his sudden turn to anti-Semitism after 1933. Schmitt, Loewenstein claimed, was

[3] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 1.

[4] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 2.

> the first and certainly the most influential of all German writers who enthusiastically joined the Hitler Government after it had won the elections of March 5, 1933…[H]is writings revealed him at once as an ardent supporter of Hitler's dictatorship which seemed to him the fulfillment and climax of his intellectual desires and for which he had prepared himself and his public by his scientific research and writings. Suddenly he became an enthusiastic anti-semite…In April 1933 he published in the leading newspaper of Munich a vicious attack against what he considered the evil influence of the Jews on law and politics directed specifically against his benefactors [Stier Somlo and Hans Kelsen, two Jewish professors who helped Schmitt obtain his professorship at the University of Cologne]. Likewise he helped the Hitler Government in the drafting of its early anti-democratic laws.[5]

After drawing several direct connections between Schmitt's writings and Nazi policies, Loewenstein then praised Schmitt once again, this time for his international influence in France, Spain, and Latin America. "In due course," Loewenstein wrote, Schmitt "became the recognized authority on German law and political philosophy….He is probably the most quoted German legal author

[5] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 2-3. A month earlier, Loewenstein put the case more forcefully. "In the opinion of this writer Schmitt qualifies as a war criminal. He is one of the intellectual instigators of Hitlers [sic] acts of aggression and aided and abetted them by his influential authorship. I hardly know of any individual person who has contributed more for the defense of the Nazi regime than Carl Schmitt. I suggest that the case be submitted to the War Criminals Commission for further action" (Karl Loewenstein, "Library of Carl Schmitt," October 10, 1945, Loewenstein Papers, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts).

of this generation, with the possible exception of Hans Kelsen….Hardly any contemporary writer can claim for himself to have influenced his time to such an extent as Carl Schmitt."[6] But precisely because Schmitt was so influential, Loewenstein continued, it was essential not to neglect his prosecution. Schmitt's arrest, Loewenstein argued, "will be considered—and is so considered—by responsible Germans as an act of justice on the part of Military Government. His release, if such is contemplated, would constitute a blow to incipient democracy in Germany and to public opinion abroad. Particularly in such countries where Carl Schmitt is considered the standard authority of totalitarianism, his immunity from punishment will be rated as a victory of Nazism over Military Government."[7]

We should not overlook the surprising form that begins to take shape here. For Loewenstein, praise of Schmitt was not at all the opposite of blame of Schmitt. It was its counterpart and double, if not also its very condition of possibility. In Loewenstein's view, the fact that Schmitt enjoyed such a strong international reputation was also a reason that Schmitt could not but be tried as a war criminal. Because Schmitt was so visibly and publicly acclaimed as an authority on constitutional law, Loewenstein reasoned, Schmitt not only must be prosecuted, but also must be seen to be prosecuted. Surprisingly, however, something like the converse held true as well. Loewenstein's recommendation

[6] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 4.

[7] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 4.

that Schmitt be prosecuted as a war criminal—a much harsher fate, needless to say, than de-nazification alone—nevertheless concluded by sounding a note that also could amount to a defense against that selfsame prosecution. Schmitt, Loewenstein argued, was such a tool—he was such a craven opportunist, such a careerist, so devoid of substance or character, so thoroughly governed by his personal interests—that he could be expected to function perfectly well as a democrat were he permitted to return to teaching under conditions of democracy.

> It may be added in conclusion that Carl Schmitt if permitted to write and publish and teach would be perfectly capable of becoming as successful and ardent a democrat as he was a defender of totalitarianism. His political versatility is surpassed only by his ability to adjust his vast learning to that doctrine which seems most convenient of his personal interests.[8]

The true crux of Schmitt interpretation, Roberto Racinaro once observed, is the problem of Schmitt's occasionalism.[9] For Loewenstein, Schmitt's occasionalism was to be interpreted on grounds that were at once personalist and instrumental: Schmitt the person was such a tool that he would turn his work into a tool for use by whatever regime happened to be in power, up to and including the worst of the worst. But note well: at the same time that Loewenstein's interpretation of

[8] Loewenstein, "Observations on the personality and work of Professor Carl Schmitt," 4.

[9] Roberto Racinaro, "Carl Schmitt e la genealogia della politica," Filosofia politica 11:1 (April 1997), 130.

Schmitt's person and work served as grounds to accuse Schmitt as a war criminal, it also served as grounds for Schmitt not to be permanently banned from teaching.[10] On the terms of Loewenstein's memo, the strongest charges against Schmitt doubled as the best reasons to mitigate Schmitt's punishment: the accusation that Schmitt was a tool who allowed his work to be used as an instrument of totalitarianism was perfectly commensurable with a defense of Schmitt on the grounds that, precisely as a tool, his work equally might be useful for democracy.

Praise and blame, accusation and defense—Loewenstein's brief not only mobilized these antitheses as the definitive coordinates for the first Anglophone attempt at a comprehensive reading of Schmitt; it also revealed the sense in which each of these terms could pivot into its opposite. Holding these couplets in place—crucially—was the judicial form of Loewenstein's brief, which obliged Loewenstein to interpret the proper name "Carl Schmitt" as a "case" not only in an epistemological sense (an object of study) but also in a strictly juridical sense (as an object of legal action). Determined in this way, the question of interpreting

[10] In the event, Schmitt was not permitted to return to teaching: he was submitted to denazification, but only as a prelude for his "renazification," i.e., his remorseless repetition of the same anti-Semitic thematics that governed his pre-war writings. See, on this point, Raphael Gross, "Afterword," in Carl Schmitt and the Jews: The 'Jewish Question,' the Holocaust, and German Legal Theory, Trans. Joel Golb (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 230-240. Played out to its logical conclusion, Schmitt's analogy of himself to the eponymous figure of Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" implies that Schmitt was able to find within himself the magnanimity that allowed him "to forgive" his American judges for condemning him. See, on this point, Adam Sitze, "A Farewell to Schmitt: Notes on the Work of Carlo Galli," CR: New Centennial Review 10:2 (2010), 53-4.

Schmitt's work becomes indistinct from the question of passing judgment on Schmitt's person. For Loewenstein—as for many contemporary readers of Schmitt—the answer to both questions is clear: because Schmitt's work was complicit in or even justified an unprecedented crime, that work has the character of a criminal wrong-doing, a deed that can and even must be attributed to Schmitt's person.

Prior to this answer, however, is a series of unasked questions: what does it mean to displace the work of reading Schmitt with the very different work of imputation—of attributing a doer to a deed for the purposes of specifically legal judgment?[11] When the work of reading is pre-interpreted in this way, what

[11] To clarify the concept of "imputation," a short digression may be useful. In Kant's revealing analysis, which orients itself with reference to the concept of imputatio in Roman Law, imputation is "the judgment by which someone is regarded as the author of an action, which is then called a deed and stands under law." Kant's recourse to "as" indicates that imputation—this power by which judgment retroactively adds a doer to a deed—is not primarily a juridical phenomenon, but is instead an effect of what Kant would call the "productive imagination" (produktive Einbildungskraft). Expressed on the terms of Kant's system, this "as" is a sign that imputation derives neither from pure reason nor from pure practical reason, but from the faculty of judgment in its properly aesthetic sense. On Kantian terms, in fact, we may say that imputation is the power by which the faculty of judgment produces or invents an author, who then in turn functions as that "necessary fiction" in the absence of which the faculty of judgment would not be able to judge at all.

For Nietzsche, meanwhile, it would become perfectly clear that the metaphysics of morals (and not only in the Kantian sense) is a tautology that depends for its intelligibility upon a prior power that is, in essence, extra-moral—an aesthetic capacity to invent or imagine something that does not in fact exist. In The Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche famously would call the very idea of a "doer" a "supplement" [hinzugedichtet]. For Nietzsche, as for Kant, the "doer" is retroactively added to the deed as its cause through a kind of poesis (Gedicht: "poem"). As distinct from Kant, however, Nietzsche will underline the

alternate possibilities for reading might we unwittingly abandon? Upon what other modes of reading might imputative reading foreclose? Once reading becomes juridified as imputation, needless to say, the possibilities for reading

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non-necessity of this fiction: in Nietzsche's view, the "doer" is an impossible echo, a double of the deed that is subsequent to the deed but that comes to precede the deed itself, a preposterous repetition of the deed that at once fully explains all deeds and precludes the possibility of thinking any deed on its own terms. For Nietzsche, crucially, the exemplary instance of this doubling is the lightning strike—the flash of light and sound that ruptures my experience before I know what hit me, and which I then try to explain by retroactively positing lightning not only as a flash but also as an agent that is prior to and causative of that flash. From this one may infer that the metaleptic repetition of the deed as a doer is occasioned by something that very much resembles a trauma. This inference, in turn, positions Nietzsche's account of repetition as a homologue to the analysis of Nachträglichkeit ("afterwardsness") that appears in certain of Freud's writings.

Imputative reading, from this perspective, would seem to imply at least three unthinkables: it would seem to derive its intelligibility from a juridical form from Roman Law (imputatio) that it cannot also pose as a problem for thought; it would seem itself to produce or invent the very author whose acts and deeds it then authorizes itself to judge; and its retroactive invention to this effect would seem to be occasioned by some sort of traumatic event that it cannot then in turn cognize or narrate for itself. To stand at a critical distance from the horizon of imputative reading is not of course to propose a reading of Schmitt that absolves his thought of its relation to Nazism, since absolution itself is simply one among many declensions of imputative reading (its negation, to be precise). It is simply to prepare the possibility for a different approach to the reading of Schmitt, one that corresponds to a different way of conceiving the relation between his thought and his Nazism.

See, variously, Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in Practical Philosophy, Ed. Allen Wood, Trans. and Ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1996), 381-2, emphasis added; Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals: An Attack," in On the Genealogy of Morals/Ecce Homo, Trans. Walter Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 45, translation modified; and Jean Laplanche, "Notes on Afterwardsness," in Essays on Otherness, Ed. and Trans. John Fletcher (New York: Routledge, 1999), 260-265.

narrow considerably. On these terms, before one can read Schmitt's work, one must first decipher his person (to try to figure out whether he was a true anti-Semite, an evil genius, a Machiavellian opportunist, or simply a victim of his circumstances). But before one can decipher Schmitt's person, it's first necessary to interpret his work as evidence (cross-examining it for signs of guilt or innocence, good or bad intentions). Reading so construed silently assumes the form of a trial whose possible outcomes are at once highly constrained (a verdict of either guilt or innocence) and indefinitely postponed, such that scholarly commentary itself comes to assume the form of a series of endlessly repeated appeals of prior verdicts. Juridified as imputation, reading never fully comes to a close; worse, it never actually begins in the first place.

3.

However neglected and even maligned by Schmitt scholars it may be,[12] Loewenstein's memo nevertheless remains paradigmatic for the Anglophone

[12] Among Schmitt scholars, only Joseph Bendersky has written about this memo in any detail. See Joseph Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt's Path to Nuremberg: A Sixty-Year Reassessment," Telos 139 (Summer 2007), 6-34. On Bendersky's reading, Loewenstein is a man of ressentiment: he is merciless and prejudicial; he is filled with hatred for the German people en masse; he hypocritically consorts with Nazis who were much more committed to Nazism than was Schmitt; and his various defenses of democracy were, ironically, derived from Schmitt (reproduced, Bendersky goes so far as to say, "without attribution"). Bendersky presents a Loewenstein who is, in short, Schmitt's uncanny double: for Bendersky, Loewenstein is a figure who is more "Schmittian" than Schmitt himself, and who embodies all of the intolerable characteristics and traits that present-day critics of Schmitt attribute to Schmitt's work and person. Up to a point, one can see the truth in Bendersky's claim. Loewenstein's argument for the prosecution of Schmitt certainly does seem to rest on the assumption that for Military Government not only to be legal but also legitimate, the author of

reception of Schmitt: it outlines, with uncanny precision, the deadlocks that continue to determine Schmitt commentary in English today. Even and especially where contemporary readers of Schmitt oppose Loewenstein's damning conclusions, they do not seem to oppose the terms on which Loewenstein read Schmitt. Then as now, the question of what it means to read Schmitt seems to be tantamount to the question of whether or not judgments on Schmitt's "personality and work" should be inclined more toward praise than blame, more towards accusation than defense.[13] The intensity of debates over this question, however, belies the underlying consensus that enables their seemingly interminable persistence. All parties to the dispute seem to agree with Loewenstein that the terms of epideictic and forensic rhetoric provide the best or

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Legality and Legitimacy must be legitimately brought before the law. And Loewenstein's half-hearted apology for Schmitt—that Schmitt, a tool, could be as successful a democrat as he was a totalitarian—seems to presuppose the commensurability of democracy and dictatorship—a Schmittian argument with which Loewenstein was well familiar, having written to Schmitt about Schmitt's 1923 book on The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy. Yet what this goes to show is not that Loewenstein is a plagiarist, but that Schmitt's thought is dialectizable beyond the limits of his proper name. In its vigorous attempt to defend Schmitt's name against Loewenstein, Bendersky's essay deploys that same dialectizability without also thematizing it as a problem for thought.

[13] These dynamics are not, of course, limited to Anglophone scholarship on Schmitt. See, for example, Helmut Quaritsch, "Einleitung: Über den Umgang mit Person und Werk Carl Schmitts," in Complexio oppositorum: über Carl Schmitt (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), 13-21. See also the polemics that followed the translation into French, in 2002, of Schmitt's 1938 Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes (in particular Yves Charles Zarka, "Carl Schmitt, nazi philosophe?," Le Monde [Friday, December 6, 2002], VIII) or the disputes that emerged following the 2011 publication of Jean-François Kervegan's Que faire de Carl Schmitt? (Paris, Gallimard, 2011) (in particular the contributions by Olivier Jouanjan).

perhaps even the only coordinates for the interpretation of Schmitt.[14] This consensus extends, above all, to include those who attempt to avoid debates over Schmitt by trying to discover a sort of liberal-technicist "golden mean" or "middle of the road" between praise and blame, accusation and defense, as if one escapes the hermeneutic difficulty of reading Schmitt by proposing that his work can be used as some sort of a neutral "tool" by each after her own fashion.[15] To the extent that the Anglophone reception of Schmitt accepts these terms as the indispensable coordinates for any valid interpretation of Schmitt, it unwittingly obeys the precedent established by Loewenstein's memo, and renders itself vulnerable both to that memo's vicissitudes and to its limits.

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the symptomatic way in which citations of the proper name "Carl Schmitt" operate in Anglophone Schmitt commentary today. Beginning with Loewenstein, "Carl Schmitt" would be translated into English as a name for political thought that is as essential as it is unseemly, as imperative as it is unacceptable, as inescapable as it is immoral. In Schmitt's work and person, in other words, the category of the proper name (understood as a classificatory operation internal to the discourse of political

[14] Aristotle, Rhetoric, I.9-14.

[15] For Aristotle, unlike Plato, rhetoric is a technē: it is a neutral art or skill, a means of persuasion that can be used by anybody who wants to speak convincingly, independently of the relation of those means to philosophic concepts of truth and justice (Aristotle, Rhetoric, I.3.54a). To claim the possibility of using Schmittian concepts as a means of persuasion without reference to those concepts' justice or injustice, truth or falsity, etc. is not then to avoid the reduction of Schmitt's thought to rhetoric; it is to radicalize that reduction, to take it to its most fundamental root and logical conclusion.

thought) would seem to become indistinct from the category of the improper name (understood as a name we experience as indecent or even intolerable). The unconscious dynamic set into motion by this indistinction hardly needs spelling out: operating both as a proper name and as an improper name, "Carl Schmitt" proves to be the source of an almost inexhaustible ambivalence—a hate that binds, that fascinates and paralyzes, that critics of Schmitt above all love to sustain.[16] Under the sway of this ambivalence, the strongest polemics against Schmitt also turn out to be the weakest critiques of Schmitt, since the very form of these polemics silently ratifies the content of certain works by Schmitt—most notably The Concept of the Political, in which Schmitt proposes hostility as the substance of the political relation.[17] As a rule: the more polemical one's political relation to Schmitt, the more one confirms Schmitt's thesis on the concept of the political, and the more one realizes one can't live either with Schmitt or without him. Needless to say, the more that the improper name "Carl Schmitt" becomes normalized as a category within the Anglophone academe—moving from critical theory and political theory to international relations and geography[18]—the more

[16] See, on this point, Sitze, "Farewell to Schmitt," 34-5.

[17] Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political, Trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), [PAGE]; but cf. Carl Schmitt, Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political, Trans. Gary L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press Pub., 2007), 91.

[18] The English translation of Schmitt's Nomos of the Earth in 2003 has contributed to something very much resembling a Schmittian turn in the fields of international relations and geography. See, variously, David Chandler, "The Revival of Carl Schmitt in International Relations: The Last Refuge of Critical Theorists?" Millennium: Journal of International Studies 37:1 (2008), 27-48; William Hooker, Carl Schmitt's International Thought: Order and Orientation (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2009); Benno Gerhard Teschke, "Fatal Attraction: A

this deadlock of ambivalence is destined to intensify. But the more this ambivalence intensifies, the more interminable becomes the reading of Carl Schmitt, and the more that interminability, in turn, becomes institutionalized as a normal state of affairs.

What's most interesting about this normalization and institutionalization, however, is how rarely its indispensable condition is posed as a problem for thought. No Schmittian turn is possible, much less valid, without some prior understanding of what it means to read Schmitt on Schmitt's own terms, and as such to know what one is talking about when one proposes to categorize this or that argument, this or that concept, as "Schmittian." But even in the journals that now seem to be devoted almost exclusively to the Schmitt defense industry, to say nothing of those who polemicize against Schmitt, there seems to be little to no interest in the question that alone would generate this knowledge. Why?

The task of reading Schmitt within the horizon of his own self-understanding is more difficult than it appears. Read alongside one another, Schmitt's terms and concepts seem to form nothing but an incoherent maze, a jumble of shifting terms that veer from the archaic to the pragmatic, from the systematic to the oracular. What indeed is the relation between the idiosyncratic theory of "irruption" Schmitt sets forth in his 1956 Hamlet or Hecuba and the obnoxious defense of Raoul Malan he lays out in his 1963 Theory of the Partisan?

Critique of Carl Schmitt's International Political and Legal Theory," International Theory 3:2 (2011), 179-227; Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt, Ed. Stephen Legg (New York: Routledge, 2011); Claudio Minca and Cory Rowan, On Schmitt and Space (New York: Routledge, 2014).

Between the crisp decisionist thesis he formulates in his 1922 Political Theology and the critique of decisionism he offers in his 1934 Three Types of Juristic Thought? Between the systematic analysis of "constituting power" he outlines in his 1927 Constitutional Theory and the rambling rant he addresses to his daughter in his 1942 Land and Sea?

Given this jarring conceptual excess, many Schmitt scholars have simply abandoned altogether the ordinary but indispensable hermeneutic task of inquiring into the common horizon and specific unity of the Schmittian oeuvre. In the absence of this inquiry, the reading of Schmitt has taken place largely by way of synecdoche, where a handful of faddish but partial concepts (decision and exception, friend and enemy, nomos, etc.) stand in as names designating the essence of the cryptic and forbidding heterogeneity of the Schmittian oeuvre,[19] and where Schmitt's own person becomes a synonym for a series of mutually exclusive political categorizations.[20] It is not uncommon these days for readers of Schmitt to interpret Concept of the Political in perfect isolation from Theory of the Partisan and Nomos of the Earth, to criticize the overt anti-Semitism of Three Studies on Juristic Thought and The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes while withholding comment on the analytic taxonomies of

[19] On the "cryptic" character of Schmitt's oeuvre, see Kervégan, Que faire de Carl Schmitt? 52.

[20] Carlo Galli, Genealogia della Politica: Carl Schmitt e la Crisi del Pensiero Politico Moderno, Second Edition (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), xi–xii. See also Gopal Balakrishnan, The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt (New York: Verso Books, 2000), 259; Jan-Werner Müller, A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 2; Ellen Kennedy, Constitutional Failure: Carl Schmitt in Weimar (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), 5.

Constitutional Theory, to reread Political Theology without reference to Roman Catholicism and Political Form, and so on.

To be sure, this haphazard approach to Schmitt rhymes perfectly with some of the most unshakeable habits of the contemporary humanities. A certain compulsory eclecticism—the analogue in scholarly interpretation to the eclecticism that is the "degree zero" of postmodern culture[21]—sometimes seems to be the dominant, even default, school of hermeneutics today.[22] Applied to Schmitt, however, this approach results in a compartmentalization of the Schmittian oeuvre that is lacking in both sense and purpose. Picture a group of Freud scholars each writing separately about distinct problems in psychoanalysis (one on sadism and masochism, a second on the death drive and the pleasure principle, a third on repression and sublimation), but all without a single mention of the unconscious, or a set of Marxist thinkers taking on distinct questions within historical materialism (commodity fetishism, use value and exchange value, base and superstructure), yet without also referring to labor. Strange though it may sound, an arrangement of this sort seems to pertain in Anglophone Schmitt scholarship today. While many intelligent studies have appeared in recent years on various elements in Schmitt's thought (such as the exception and decisionism, secularization and political theology, the distinction

[21] See, on this point, Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984), 76.

[22] The classical iteration of eclecticism is more intricate. See, on this point, The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in Later Greek Philosophy, Ed. John M. Dillon and A. A. Long (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

of hostis and inimicus, the nomos and the katechon, and above all Schmitt's Nazism, his anti-Semitism, and his relation to the Weimar Republic), very few, if any, have attempted to put a name to the common hermeneutic horizon from which all of these elements gain their singular sense and force. In Althusser's terms, commentary on Schmitt has largely limited itself to the thematics of Schmitt's various texts, without pausing to pose the question of its problematic—which is to say, the question of the implicit questions to which the modalities of Schmittian thought are the explicit answer.[23]

In the absence of an inquiry of this sort, our reading of Schmitt encounters a host of interpretive aporias. Certain of Schmitt's writings call the conflation of war and crime into question[24]; and yet the accusation that Schmitt is a "war criminal" in many ways remains one of the dominant hermeneutic horizons governing the reading of Schmitt, both for those who seek to criticize him and for those who seek to defend him. Other of Schmitt's writings oppose the listless pluralism of modern liberalism[25]; and yet certain readers of Schmitt seem quite content to interpret Schmitt's oeuvre according to the eclecticism that is the hermeneutic equivalent of liberal pluralism. Schmitt's writings certainly contain polemics against the idea that technics could constitute a neutral standpoint outside of the conflicts of the political; and yet readers of Schmitt regularly seek

[23] Louis Althusser, For Marx, Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso Books, 1969), 66-70, esp. 67 n30.

[24] See, for example, Carl Schmitt, "International Crime," Writings on War, Trans. Timothy Nunan (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011), 125-197.

[25] Balibar, "Le Hobbes de Schmitt, le Schmitt de Hobbes," 35.

to escape the polemics around Schmitt by claiming not to take sides in those polemics, only "to use" Schmitt's work as a "tool" or "lens." Certain elements in Schmitt's work point toward a general problematization of the concept of the "person"[26]; this has not stopped the most fervent disciples of Schmitt from defending Schmitt on the basis of a clear and distinct understanding of the "person." Still other of Schmitt's writings begin to question the very idea of the proper name, not once but several times over[27]; and yet commentators on Schmitt for the most part seem to be self-confident about the obviousness and self-evidence of Schmitt's own proper name. Citations of Schmitt's work today certainly are increasing; the same can't be said for self-consciousness about what it means to read Schmitt on his own terms.

4.

Carlo Galli's approach to the reading of Schmitt prepares the reader not only to enter these hermeneutic circles, but also to exit them in the right way. Galli is best known for his monumental 936-page Genealogia della politica. Carl Schmitt e la crisi del pensiero politico moderno ("Genealogy of Politics: Carl Schmitt and the Crisis of Modern Political Thought"). Written with a hermeneutic rigor and sustained analytic attention that reminded one reader of

[26] Sitze, "A Farewell to Schmitt," 48-9.

[27] Sitze, "A Farewell to Schmitt," 57. On the problematic of the name in Schmitt's thought, see also Jacques Derrida, The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume I, Ed. Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, Trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), 75.

"the august tradition of the great philological monographs of the classics,"[28] Galli's Genealogia is quadruply systematic. It is, to begin, a "historico-critical . . . reconstruction of the internal logic of Schmittian argumentation" that accounts for all of Schmitt's writings, in the mode of a symptomal reading, and that has as its aim a claim on the essence and basis of Schmittian thought from within its own immanent horizon.[29] Because no such reading could avoid paying attention to the crises to which Schmittian criticism is internal, Galli also engages in an "external contextualization" of Schmittian logic, discerning in the contradictoriness of Schmitt's texts the traces of select and pivotal events.[30] This contextualization is not, however, historicist; it does not seek to undercut the autonomy of Schmittian thought with reference to its determinants in its immediate cultural and political context. Galli argues that the fundamental crisis to which Schmittian thought is internal is not limited in place and time to the Weimar Republic or to Nazi Germany; it is instead an epochal crisis, the crisis of modern mediation as such. To support this claim, Galli situates Schmitt in the history of modern political philosophy, explaining how Schmitt inherits a crisis in philosophical mediation that begins with Hegel and Marx, reaches its turning point in Kierkegaard and Weber, and dissolves in Nietzsche.[31] In the process, Galli engages in a systematic overview of the secondary literature on Schmitt in

[28] Geminello Preterossi, "L'indeducibilità dell'origine: Tra Schmitt e Hegel," Iride: Filosofia e discussione pubblica 3 (1997), 574.

[29] Galli, Genealogia, xxv-xxvi, xxviii.

[30] Galli, Genealogia, xxvi.

[31] Galli, Genealogia, xiv-xv, xxv.

German, Italian, Spanish, French, and English. The critical apparatus that results from this labor (Galli's footnotes alone take up nearly three hundred pages) does not, however, merely communicate bibliographic information; it adds up to a second book, an extension of Galli's earliest work on Schmitt, his 1979 "symptomal reading" of Schmitt commentary in Italy to Schmitt commentary worldwide.[32] Galli's Genealogia is, in short, a "gloss" in the best and strictest Bolognese sense of the word.[33]

The central claim of Galli's Genealogia is that Schmitt's accomplishment was to have opened himself to, in order to radicalize, the crises that together constitute the origin of the modern epoch (where "origin" is understood as Entstehung or archē).[34] Schmitt is consequently, on Galli's read, a specifically genealogical critic of modernity: Schmitt's single-minded focus, according to Galli, was to grasp the origin of the strangely double-sided energy he perceived

[32] Carlo Galli, "Carl Schmitt nella cultura italiana (1924-–1978): Storia, bilancio, prospettive di una presenza problematica," Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica, 9:1 (1979), 81-160.

[33] The "gloss" is a method of legal commentary that emerged in the eleventh century at the University of Bologna, where Galli currently teaches. Roberto Esposito has argued that "Italian philosophy" historically has been "a philosophy of cities—of diverse and multiple territorial centers—rather than states" ("The Return of Italian Philosophy," Trans. Zakiya Hanafi, diacritics 39:9 [Fall 2009], 57, 59; see also Roberto Esposito, Living Thought: The Origins and Actuality of Italian Philosophy, Trans. Zakiya Hanafi, [Stanford: Stanford U P, 2012], 1-43). Understood on these terms, Galli's "gloss" of Schmitt is "Italian" to the precise extent that it is not Italian but "Bolognese." Elsewhere I have tried to situate Galli's own political thought with reference to the political space—the internally divided city of Bologna—from whence it derives. See Sitze, "Editor's Introduction," lxxviii-lxxxv.

[34] Galli, Genealogia, xv.

in the institutions and practices of modern politics. Schmitt's discovery, Galli argues, was that this energy derived from "an originary crisis—or, better still, an originary contradiction—which is not a simple contradiction, but, rather, the exhibition of two sides, two extremes," such that "the origin of politics is not, in either of its two sides, an objective foundation for politics, but rather its foundering or unfounding (sfondamento)."[35] The "political" is Schmitt's name for this originary crisis, this free-floating energy that undermines the very institutions and practices it simultaneously founds, that deforms the same political forms it produces, and that disorders the very systems of thought to which it gives rise. By fixing his gaze on this origin, Schmitt realized that modern political thought (and consequently too the liberal democratic institutions and practices whose modes of self-justification it grounds and sustains) is divided against itself in a nondialectical manner. At the same time that it emerges from and even implicitly feeds upon a crisis it is incapable of resolving, modern political thought also accounts for this incapacity by suppressing the symptoms of the crisis, compensating for its own incoherence with ever more moralistic reaffirmations of the unquestionable necessity of its own explicit goals. The core problematic of Schmittian thought, Galli will consequently argue, cannot then be reduced to any one of the themes of Schmitt's various texts (the distinction between exception and norm, theology and politics, decision and discussion, friend and enemy, constituting power and constituted power, land and sea, limited and unlimited warfare, European center and colonial frontier, and so on). It is Schmitt's discovery that all of the forms of modern politics share a common

[35] Galli, Genealogia, xvi.

trait, a birthmark that, in turn, attests to their common origin; despite the many and various differences between modern political thinkers—indeed as the silent but generative core of those differences—the epochal unity of modern political thought derives from its distinctive doubleness, its simultaneous impossibility and necessity, or, in short, its "tragicity."[36]

Developing claims he had already announced in 1979,[37] Galli argues that the specificity of Schmitt's genealogical insight into this "tragicity" derives from the occasio—the crisis—that is the kernel of Schmittian thought. Schmitt wrote at a juncture in European politics in which inside and outside, peace and war, civil and military, enemy and criminal were entering into the gray of a twilight, and in which a certain warlike polemicity was consequently emerging as the normal mode of being for political institutions and practices the explicit and definitive aspiration of which was reasonable discussion, transparent representation, and

[36] Reviewers of Galli's Genealogia have not failed to note Galli's emphasis on the tragic quality of Schmittian thought as one of the hallmarks of Galli's specific contribution to Schmitt scholarship. See Vittorio Dini, "Oltre la mediazione. Origine, decisione, forma: il 'politico' schmittiano come lettura del Moderno," Iride: Filosofia e discussione pubblica 3 (1997), 571, 574; Giovanni Messina, "Genealogia della politica. Carl Schmitt e la crisi del pensiero politico moderno (Review)," Rivista internazionale di filosofia del diritto 75:3 (1998), 498; Racinaro, "Carl Schmitt e la genealogia della politica (Review)," 127; Danilo Zolo, "Schmitt e la ragione politica moderna," Iride: Filosofia e discussione pubblica 3 (1997), 577–78. This is not an emphasis one generally finds in Anglophone scholarship on Schmitt. See, for example, Christian Thornhill, "Carl Schmitt after the Deluge: A Review of Recent Literature," History of European Ideas 26 (2000), 225–64; Peter Caldwell, "Controversies over Carl Schmitt: A Review of Recent Literature," The Journal of Modern History 77 (2005), 357–87.

[37] Galli, "Schmit nella cultura italiana," 153.

rational mediation.[38] Instead of interpreting this crisis of representation from modernity's own various privileged points of internal self-understanding (the state, the subject, society, or reason), Galli argues, Schmitt instead sought to understand it with reference to the catastrophe from which modernity itself emerged, namely, the dissolution of the specifically Christian form of representation that governed political order in medieval Europe.[39] To give a name to this lost form of representation—this peculiar and specifically imperial ability to embrace any and all antitheses (life and death, Heaven and Earth, God and Man, past and future, time and eternity, good and power, beginning and end, reason and nonreason, etc.) in order to absorb them into one unified form—Schmitt took a term from the medieval Catholic thinker Nicholas de Cusa: complexio oppositorum. According to Galli, Schmitt understood the complexio neither as a dialectical synthesis (a simple coincidence of opposites), nor as an eclectic relativism (a jumble of plural and variegated qualities), but rather as "a form in which life and reason coexist without forcing," a single hierarchy the integrity of which derives, above all, from the way it reconciles and preserves many different, even opposed forms of life in the single "glorious form" of Christ's Person.[40] For Schmitt, Galli argues, the genealogical significance of the complexio is not theological but political: Schmitt is interested in the complexio

[38] Carlo Galli, Political Spaces and Global War, Trans. Elisabeth Fay, Ed. Adam Sitze (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), [PAGE]; Carlo Galli, "Introduzione," in Guerra, ed. Carlo Galli (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2004), xxv.

[39] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

[40] Galli, Genealogia, 239–40, 244-5; cf. Carlo Galli, "Presentazione," Carl Schmitt, Cattolicesimo romano e forma politica, Ed. and Trans. Carlo Galli (Milan: Giuffrè, 1986), 13–14.

because of the way in which its mode of representation—the extreme publicity and visibility through which all opposites coincided in the immediate mediacy of Christ's Person—in turn called into being a relatively stable and enduring political order.[41]

It is on the basis of this capacity for a mode of representation to constitute a political order (or what Galli calls "morphogenetic power") that Schmitt understands the modern. With the events that together opened the modern epoch (such as the Copernican Revolution, the Wars of Reformation, and the conquest of America), the complexio and the order of being it sustained could no longer be treated as a self-evident "given" that could be presupposed by political thought. In the absence of a coherent and integrative Idea in which opposites can coincide without conflict—indeed, under the unprecedented conditions of theological civil war in which the Person of Christ was no longer the basis of European peace but was now precisely both a source of and a stake in European conflict—political and juridical Power became disconnected from theological and moral Good, and the question of how to mediate opposing forces and qualities through representation suddenly emerged as an anxious and explicit question for political thought.[42]

According to Galli, Schmitt understands modern mediation to originate as an unwitting, precarious, and partial response both to this question and to the epochal catastrophe that occasions it. Modern mediation marks the attempt, on the part of a European subject who suddenly finds himself alone in the universe,

[41] Galli, Genealogia, 242, 245.

[42] Galli, Genealogia, 4–5.

to accomplish a set of morphogenetic tasks bequeathed to him by the complexio—such as the creation of order, the reconciliation of opposites, and the accomplishment of peace on Earth—but now without the support of a Gestalt in which everything, however opposed, had its place—now, in other words, only through an ad hoc use of his own immanent powers.[43] In modernity, in short, the European subject is faced with the task of producing ex nihilio the political form, peace, and reconciliation it once could presuppose in the complexio. It pursues these aims through, on the one hand, instrumental reason (the mathematization and technical mastery of nature, up to and including human nature), and, on the other, through a new form of representation, which seeks to mediate contradictions between opposing forces, but which also recognizes, without also fully realizing why, that its attempts at mediation are somehow already destined, in advance, to failure. The reconciliation of opposites the complexio achieved felicitously with reference to the Person of Christ, is now the work of an unhappy consciousness, a person in the juridical sense who is capable of peace, reconciliation, and order only at the cost of a ceaseless and restless reflection on division and disorder.[44]

The State is modernity's solution to this predicament. In the place once occupied by the hierarchical complexio of the Catholic Church's "glorious form," Hobbesian political philosophy proposes the egalitarian simplicity of a new beginning—a revolutionary tabula rasa that articulates the rational necessity of

[43] Galli, Genealogia, 11; cf. Carlo Galli, Modernità: Categorie e profili critici (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), 8.

[44] Carlo Galli, "La 'macchina' della modernità: metafisica e contingenza nel moderno pensiero politico," in Logiche e crisi della modernità (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 113–20.

peace, and establishes the impersonal laws of the State, through a manifestly geometrical deduction.[45] But the impersonal laws of the State can only produce political form and exercise morphogenetic power in an ungrounded manner, by presupposing the complete separation of Power from the Good. Indeed, the strength of impersonal law (its principled insistence on the formal equality of all persons before the law) is predicated on a displacement of the morphogenetic power of the complexio (a hierarchy centered upon the Person of Christ). In the absence of a felicitous use of morphogenetic power, the State finds that law alone is insufficient for accomplishing the aims it inherits from the complexio, and discovers itself to be in need of supplements for its impersonal law. The State discovers this supplement by placing instrumental reason (which is to say, the neutralization of conflict through dispositifs of discipline, governmentality, and security, but also, if necessary, through the use of military and, later, police forces) at the service of repeated sovereign decisions that reproduce a semblance of the unity and integrity of Roman Catholic visibility and publicity by setting aside the impersonality of law (with its insistence on formal equality) in order to fabricate a public enemy, whose schema can then serve as the point of reference for the formation of the unity and integrity of a newly secular public.[46] In short, the State achieves the aims bequeathed to it by the complexio to the extent that it now includes exclusion.[47]

Both of these techniques, however, repeatedly undermine the end at which they aim. The State's attempt to create political form and maintain order

[45] Galli, "Presentazione," Cattolicesimo romano, 13.

[46] Galli, "Presentazione," Cattolicesimo romano, 24.

[47] Galli, Genealogia, 254.

through the use of force results in an "armed peace" that, in the concrete, amounts to a constant preparation for the next war, while its attempt to produce and maintain public unity and integrity through decisions on a public enemy constantly reintroduces into the internal space of the State a trace of the same unlimited hostility, the suppression of which is (as in Hobbes's elimination of the bellum omnium contra omnes) the main justification for State's existence in the first place.[48] The means for resolving conflict within Christian Europe turn out to be plagued by a similar infelicity, only now acted out on a global scale: Europe attempts to expunge and expel the trace of unlimited hostility by instituting the jus publicum europæum, which creates an order of limited hostility (formalized warfare, distinction of criminal and enemy) within Europe only by demanding and justifying an order of unlimited hostility toward Europe's exterior (in the form of colonial conquest and genocide). In every case, in other words, modern political order discovers that it must aim at, but cannot attain, a set of goals—peace on Earth, mediation and reconciliation between opposites, the production of political form—that have been set for it, and indeed bequeathed to it, by the very form of medieval representation it also aggressively displaces. Modern political mediation therefore finds itself in a position where it can only fully legitimate its existence with reference to a set of inherited concepts to which it is also especially vulnerable. It discovers that it is fated to attempt a set of tasks (the

[48] Carlo Galli, "Carl Schmitt's Antiliberalism: Its Theoretical and Historical Sources and Its Philosophical and Political Meaning," Cardozo Law Review 5–6 (May 2000), 1598, 1608–9, 1611; Carlo Galli, "Carl Schmitt on Sovereignty: Decision, Form, Modernity," in Penser la Souveraineté à l'époque moderne et contemporaine, Vol. 2, ed. G. M. Cazzaniga and Y. C. Zarka (Pisa-Paris: Edizioni Ets-Libraire Philosophoque J. Vrin, 2001), 465.

ex nihilio creation of political form, peace, and reconciliation) that is both necessary (because the complexio is now missing, because opposing forces remain, and because peace and reconciliation provide the modern state with its raison d'être) and impossible (because, above all, in the thoroughly secularized modern epoch, there is no equivalent to the theological concept of miraculous creation; there is only making, fabrication, production—or instrumental reason, the work of homo faber).[49] To even approximate the realization of its inner aims—which are, to repeat, not its own, but those it inherits from the complexio—modern mediation seeks to forget the medieval origin that is at once indispensable for it and unsettling to it, and to that exact degree leaves itself exposed to destabilization by a genealogy written from a Catholic standpoint.

But though Schmittian thought is thus, indeed, for Galli, a Catholic genealogy of the modern,[50] Galli also cautions that Schmitt's relation to Catholicism not be misunderstood as one of religious belief or even nostalgia. When Schmitt thinks the emergence of modern mediation with reference to its secularization of the complexio, he does not suppose that a return to the complexio is either desirable or possible.[51] Nor, on Galli's read, does Schmitt really even mourn the passing of the complexio. Schmitt's achievement is rather to have occupied that standpoint from which a thoroughly secularized modern mediation genealogically derives its innermost aims, through which a

[49] Galli, "Carl Schmitt on Sovereignty," 469, 473.

[50] See See Carlo Galli, "Il cattolicesimo nel pensiero politico di Carl Schmitt," in Tradizione e Modernità nel pensiero politico di Carl Schmitt, Ed. Roberto Racinaro (Rome-Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiene, 1987), 21–23.

[51] Galli, "Schmitt's Antiliberalism," 1599.

thoroughly secularized modern mediation refuses to understand itself, and to which all of its institutions and practices are thus especially vulnerable.[52] Schmitt's idiosyncratic reading of the complexio is, in other words, a way to think the "origin of politics" outside of the standard points of self-understanding that modernity privileges in its own self-justifying historical narratives of its emergence. It is an attempt to name a crisis in which the old order (the complexio) has irreversibly dissolved and in which the new order (the modern State-Form) cannot accomplish the goals it inherits from the complexio (reconciliation and peace).[53] Schmitt does not, then, analyze modernity from the standpoint of a fully intact Catholic faith or ideology; nor does he really even presuppose that his account of complexio is accurate (which is why empirical or historicist refutations of Schmitt miss the mark). The complexio is simply the blind spot of modern mediation, that concept that enables us to grasp in genealogical terms the reconciliation at which modern mediation must aim but cannot achieve.

Here, indeed, because of the manifestly tragic character of the crisis Schmitt thinks, we may clarify the way in which that crisis finds its double in the critic. For Schmitt, the crisis that the occasio imposes upon the thought and being of the critic is not the plentitude of an infinity. It is the poverty of a Nothing. It is the utter privation of order, an unsayable opacity internal to the critic's knowledge that is not a "trauma" in the psychoanalytic sense, but simply an absence of form-giving speech, the lack of any language that can resolve or even

[52] Galli, "Schmitt's Antiliberalism," 1604. See also Galli, "Carl Schmitt on Sovereignty," 463–64.

[53] Galli, "Carl Schmitt on Sovereignty," 467, 470.

just describe the unprecedented crises of the modern, the intrusion of the nameless into the order of the named. Indeed, it is this vacuum, this "inability to explain," that then serves as the inexhaustible resource for the prolixity of the critic's criticism. And while it would be tempting to make sense of this epochal crisis-event by calling it an interregnum, Galli does not, to my knowledge, do so in any of his writings, perhaps because this would be to use a juridical concept, and to give juridical form, to an experience and an event that, to the contrary, mark the failure of all juridical forms, both modern and medieval, and that consequently would be more properly characterized as an epochal anomie or, as Galli would later write, chaos.[54]

5.

On Galli's read, therefore, Schmitt's oeuvre amounts to a single metonymic chain, a single series of attempts to name a crisis that modernity itself cannot name, namely, the real contradiction that is the origin of politics.[55] Schmitt's achievement was to have written the genealogy of the political, where "the political" is a name for an unnameable crisis, an originary contradictoriness, a "drift" (deriva) of terms that can only be understood with reference to its derivation from the obscure Void at the origin of modern politics, and where "genealogy" is the work of tracking the twists and turns the "political" silently exerts upon the "schemata" or "figures" with reference to which modern theories, institutions, and practices try to attain stability and self-

[54] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

[55] Galli, Genealogia, XIII-XIV.

understanding.[56] What this genealogy finds is that modern politics acts out, without also remembering, the void that comes into being when the constitutive crises that give rise to modern politics negate the content of premodern concepts (e.g. that Jesus is God) while also elevating the form of those concepts (e.g. the Sovereign Person).[57] Modern politics, it would seem, would rather order itself around a void than be devoid of order. The hallmark of modern politics, from this point of view, is what Galli calls a "coazione all'ordine" or a "coazione della forma"—a "compulsion toward order" or "compulsion for form" in which modern politics discovers itself to be governed by a "compulsion to repeat" in an almost psychoanalytic sense of the word. Not unlike the compulsions produced by the death drive,[58] modernity's compulsions for form and order spur its theories, institutions, and practices to try repeatedly to return to a lost state of equilibrium or homeostasis. Not unlike the death drive, modernity's various attempts to actualize its inherited schemata of premodern equilibria succeed only in introducing disequilibria and excess (dismisura) into its very own political forms: the more modernity's compulsion for form actualizes itself, the more it simply injects its own unthought—its genealogical origin in the void—into the

[56] Sitze, "Introduction," lxxii-lxxviii. Cf. Theodor Adorno, "The Actuality of Philosophy," Telos 31 (March 20, 1977), 127.

[57] I discuss this at greater length in "Farewell to Schmitt," 39-41.

[58] On Wiederholungszwang, see Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII, Trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1962), 18-23. See also Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, Trans. Alan Sheridan, Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: Norton & Co., 1977), 17-66.

very forms it also seeks to stabilize, concretize, and order. For this same reason, the full or complete actualization of modernity's compulsion to form would—again, not unlike the death drive—end up zeroing out the forms of modern politics itself: unrestrained and left to its own devices, this compulsion would achieve only incoherence, deformation, and disintegration.

Schmitt sees the potential for this chaos; his philosophy is the genealogy of this anomic drive. That is why his thought can't be reduced just to this or that familiar keyword, stock formulation, or popular antithesis, or derived from any one of his texts to the exclusion of the others. For Galli, "Schmitt" is a name for a theoretical gaze that's able to track the symptoms of the "compulsion for form" in modern politics, and to trace those symptoms to their genealogical origin in the Void that founded modern politics in the first place. It's a name for a theoretical perspective that interprets modern politics not from the perspective of modern theories (where the modern appears as a self-founding system in which reason gives birth to the very practices and institutions it also then judges), but as a palimpsest, a text whose emergence from the premodern renders the modern constitutively non-identical with itself and permanently incomplete on its own terms. Far from being the name for a neutral "device" or "instrument," a theoretical "tool" to be used by a theorist who is implicitly figured as homo faber, "Schmitt" here then ultimately becomes a name for the irruption of the Void into theory itself. Or better: "Schmitt" here becomes a metonym for a crisis of representation so acute that it recoils on thought itself, manifesting itself in a most unexpected way: in the inability of thought to give a proper name to its own most intimate potentialities and activities.

From this, in turn, emerges a counterintuitive account of Schmitt's Nazism. Under conditions of a neoliberal political economy, whose structures of self-justification require a constant reference to the dangers of totalitarianism, discourses on Nazism tend to be more symptomatic than analytic.[59] The Anglophone discussion of Schmitt's Nazism is no exception. The prevailing reading of Schmitt's Nazism seems to pivot on the question of how to "periodize" Schmitt's Nazism, and as such more often than not dissolves into microscopic disputes over historicist and biographical details. To this reading, Galli offers a simple but bold hermeneutic alternative: There is only a single synchronic caesura that runs throughout Schmitt's entire oeuvre, a single "immanent risk" that marks all "phases" of Schmittian thought.[60] Galli draws out the dialectic of this risk by seizing upon a remark by Schmitt in his preface to the 1972 Italian edition of Der Begriff des Politischens. There, after a short précis of his theses on the criterion of the political, Schmitt addresses the question of the hermeneutic horizon within which his theses ought to be interpreted. The impulse of his theses, Schmitt insisted, is scientific (scientifico), in the sense that "they do not make any move to situate themselves in the right and to push their adversaries into non-right. On the other hand, 'science is but a small power'

[59] In an Anglophone world dominated by neoliberalism, for which opposition to Nazism is constitutive of self-affirmation, the imago of a brilliant but evil Nazi is dry kindling for the transferential relationships that enable all reading. On Nazism as a "field of adversity" constitutive for the formation of neoliberal thought, see Michel Foucault, Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France (1978-1979), Trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 120-133.

[60] Galli, "Carl Schmitt nella cultura italiana," 155.

[English in the original], and in the ambit of the political the freedom of independent thought always entails a supplementary risk."[61] It is essential to understand that even though, on Schmitt's own terms, this "supplementary risk" is antithetical to scientific thought as Schmitt understands it, there is nevertheless no way to rid or purify Schmittian scientific thought of that risk. The inconsistency of Schmittian science with itself—its permanent and constitutive openness to polemic, ideology, and propaganda—is utterly consistent with science in the Schmittian sense; it is the manifestation, in Schmitt's own criticism, of the crisis Schmitt thinks in and through his genealogy of the political, of his discovery that modern political institutions are radically incomplete in relation to their own attempts at peace, security, and reconciliation. "The objectivity of conflict," as Galli pithily put it in 1986, "implies the non-objectivity…of science."[62] Or, as Galli puts it below,

> Schmitt's work is born in, and is characterized by, a polemical impulse and an existential positioning that are targeted and militant. It is thanks to this impulse and this positioning—and not despite it—that Schmitt is capable of a radical analysis of politics. . . . Ideology is the "gate of hell" that leads Schmitt to knowledge of the "political," and it is the dramatic

[61] Carl Schmitt, "Premessa all'edizione italiana," in Le categorie del "politico", trans. Pierangelo Schiera, 25–26.

[62] Carlo Galli, "La guerra nel pensiero politico di Carl Schmitt," La Nottola 1–2 (1986), 150.

> and irritating condition thanks to which Schmitt is not only an ideologue but also an important thinker.[63]

If Schmittian "political science" is science not despite but because of its polemical and ideological character, then political science that is not plagued by the risk (and perhaps temptation) of its own polemicity is not political thought at all. It is thought that, to the contrary, suppresses the political, that stands outside the crisis it criticizes, that seeks to immunize itself from the crisis that the "political" itself is. Political thought that does not seek to immunize itself from the political, however, will suffer from a very different risk. It will share with modern politics a certain tragic susceptibility to dissolve itself from within. It will reproduce, now in the mode of thought, the constitutive risk that troubles all modern political institutions: it will be unable to become what it is without also supplementing itself with a polemicity that threatens to undermine its form, coherence, and integrity as thought. But just as political thought that fully suppresses its polemicity is not truly political thought, neither is political thought that fully succumbs to this immanent risk. By Schmitt's own account, it becomes something else: polemic, "an attempt to push its adversary into non-right," or, put simply, the epistemological equivalent of the destruction of the unjust enemy, the unbracketed hostility that Schmitt regarded as a plague upon the house of the modern.

This gives Galli a new and different way to avoid the paralogism that so often governs readings of Schmitt's relation to Nazism. According to this

[63] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

reasoning, if Schmitt was Nazi, then surely he was not a thinker; but if Schmitt was a thinker, then surely he was not a Nazi. It is, in short, inconceivable that one could be both a Nazi and also a thinker.[64] On Galli's read, by contrast, the task of reading Schmitt is not to quarantine his Nazism to the period from 1933 to 1936 in order to liberate the rest of his work for neutral analytic "use" or even for leftist reappropriation. Nor is it, on the basis of a deeply ambivalent logic of taboo, to treat the whole of Schmittian thought as if were tainted, as though Schmitt's anti-Semitism were somehow so powerful and mysterious in its ways that it is akin to a contagious and communicable disease, an incurable illness against which the only possible safeguard is complete and total immunization. It is to understand Schmitt's Nazism as the extreme actualization of a potential for regression and domination that is internal not only to Schmittian thought, but also, as Horkheimer and Adorno argued, the Enlightenment itself.[65] The immanent risk of Schmittian thought, Galli wrote in 1979, is "the risk of transforming scientific exposition into propaganda, of surrendering to the polemicity (polemicità) implicit in the discovery of the political in order to

[64] On this antinomy, see Barbara Cassin, "Nazi et philosophe, telle est la question…" Le Monde (Friday, December 6, 2002), VIII.

[65] Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "Preface (1944 and 1947)," Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, trans. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), xvi. For Balibar, similarly, the question of Schmitt's Nazism cannot be posed without asking about the place and function of Nazism within European history more generally. See Balibar, "Le Hobbes de Schmitt, le Schmitt de Hobbes," 10, 15. This line of interpretation is very different from the critique of anti-Semitism in the work of Raphael Gross, who cites Adorno approvingly, but without also adopting Adorno's dialectical relation to reactionary thinkers.

support, historically, a contingent political practice."[66] That, according to Galli, "Schmitt fell into this risk precisely when he 'used' the general form of the 'political' in a pro-Nazi sense"[67] does not, however, mean that this development of Schmitt's thought was either necessary or inevitable. To the contrary, Galli argues:

> if it is true that Schmitt's Nazi phase fully realized all of the risks inherent in the structure of Schmittian thought, it is also true that this realization is ultimately a betrayal—both theoretical and practical—that does not occur necessarily or automatically, but that instead requires a conscious personal will, dictated primarily by opportunism, and academic and political ambition.[68]

Here where Galli's understanding of Schmitt seems to be at its most "forgiving" (for having abstained from polemic), his immanent critique is in fact at its strongest, and his negative dialectical alternative to "imputative reading" becomes most apparent. Phrased in its sharpest possible terms, Galli's point is not only that Schmitt is personally responsible for his Nazism (he was not, in other words, "held hostage" by the Nazis), but also that Schmitt's evil is not to be sought in his thought, but rather in the immanence within his thought of what Hannah Arendt might call "thoughtlessness" (her later, more philosophical term

[66] Galli, "Carl Schmitt nella cultura italiana," 153.

[67] Galli, "Carl Schmitt nella cultura italiana," 153.

[68] Galli, Genealogia, 847-8.

for the "banality of evil").[69] Thoughtlessness is not the same as a simple lack of thought; it does not imply that Schmitt became a Nazi in a fit of absent-mindedness. It implies that Schmitt's Nazism is the complete actualization of the polemicity that Schmitt could not fail to think if he was to remain loyal to his insight into the 'political,' yet to which he needed to resist surrendering if his insight into the 'political' was to retain its character as thought. It is a sign that Schmitt's thought is, as Adorno might say, "non-identical" with itself. And this, in turn, has a startling implication: Another actualization of Schmitt's thought is possible, one to which Schmitt the person would not consent, but to which his impersonal thought cannot but yield.

Can we then also say that Galli does for Schmitt's oeuvre what Lacan did for Freud's and Althusser for Marx's? Galli does, after all, perform something very much like a "return to Schmitt," explicating the textual principles on the basis of which alone the specific unity of Schmitt's theoretical formation may then come to light. But as distinct from Lacan's return to Freud or Althusser's return to Marx, Galli's rereading of Schmitt is not, in the end, an attempt to retrieve or recuperate Schmitt's teachings. To the contrary, Galli's unprecedented philological labor culminates in a curt claim about the definitive and irreversible exhaustion of Schmittian thought in the global age. Galli's immanent critique of Schmitt—not only in the degree of its breadth and depth, but also in the quality of its immanence—amounts to a test addressed to readers of Schmitt.

[69] Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind, Volume 1: Thinking (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1978), 4–5, 13, 179–80.

If Galli's scholarship is any example, it would seem that the fewer Schmittian texts we read (the more we limit our reading of Schmitt, say, to Concept of the Political or Political Theology, or more recently Nomos of the Earth), and the more carelessly we read these texts (the more our hermeneutic encounter with Schmitt's texts is limited to the extraction of keywords, formulas, or timeless and abstract "logics"), the more acutely we will suffer from the illusion that Schmittian thought is adequate for thinking through our experience today, and the more we will prolong "Schmittian logic" past its own immanent expiration date. Galli's example also would seem to suggest that the converse is true as well: the more deeply and widely we read Schmitt's writings, and the more loyal we remain to the kernel of Schmittian thought in our own thought, the more we will realize just how pointless is Schmitt's thought in a present in which Schmitt's contradictory oeuvre no longer sustains a relation to the occasio—the emergence of modern politics—from which alone it originates.[70] In this case, the instrumentalist "use" of Schmittian thought in the global age not only betrays what was most alive in Schmitt's thought; it also allows us to comfort ourselves with the reassuring fantasy that coming crises will so resemble those of modernity that the critique of the latter will suffice for the former as well.

The true precedent for Galli's work on Schmitt, in this respect, is not then Althusser on Marx or Lacan on Freud. It is Adorno's "immanent critique" of Heidegger. Galli's achievement is precisely to have "reliquified" the occasio that

[70] On this point, see Sitze, "Editor's Introduction," Political Spaces and Global War, xx-xxv, xxxvii, xlvi-liv.

is the innermost core of Schmittian thought and that risks being "reified" to the extent that we limit ourselves to the instrumental "application" of Schmittian "logics."[71] His teaching is that it is ultimately Schmitt's own thought that obliges us to abandon the reification that anchors this consoling position. The challenge of Carlo Galli—the challenge of a post-Schmittian thought—is to read Carl Schmitt so completely, so carefully, and so loyally, that we therefore turn to face a set of crises in relation to which Schmitt has, precisely, nothing to say.

6.

In Janus's Gaze, Galli develops this challenge in a manner as understated as it is systematic. As distinct from his 2010 book Political Spaces and Global War, in which Galli treats Schmitt's thought as a point of departure for an analysis of the global age (which is also, for Galli, a post-Schmittian age), Janus's Gaze contains essays that, at least at first glance, seem to belong quite traditionally to the genre of the history of political thought (and in particular to the subgenre of Reinhart Koselleck's Begriffsgeschichte[72]). Janus's Gaze will therefore open with two chapters that explicate Schmittian thought from the interior of Schmitt's self-understanding, tracing Schmitt's thinking on the state

[71] On "reliquification" and "reification," see Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics, Trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1981), 97. It may be worth adding that Galli, who was a student at the University of Bologna from 1968 to 1972, wrote his laureato on Adorno's interpretation of Hegel under the guidance of the philosopher Felice Battaglia (a neo-Hegelian with a marked interest in the Frankfurt School). This resulted in Carlo Galli, "Alcune interpretazioni italiane della Scuola di Francoforte," Il Mulino 228 (1973), 648-671.

[72] On Galli's relation to Begriffsgeschichte, see Sitze, "Editor's Introduction," Political Spaces and Global War, xiv-xvi.

and political theology as it develops throughout his oeuvre. At the structural center of the book, meanwhile, the reader will find two chapters that clarify Schmittian thought from the exterior of Schmitt's self-understanding, with reference to three thinkers—Machiavelli, Spinoza, and Strauss—whose names are each "improper" in their own way, and whose thought has been confused or even conflated with Schmitt's at various points in Schmitt commentary. The intent of these four chapters is clear: to specify the sense in which Schmitt is a "classic of political thought,"[73] and as a means to that end to demarcate the precise line that distinguishes the inside of the Schmittian oeuvre from its outside. Implicit in these chapters, however, both as their condition of possibility and as their common horizon, the attentive reader will find the coordinates for a very new relation to Schmittian thought—one that turns away from the terms of epideictic and forensic rhetoric (centered on problems of praise and blame, accusation and defense) and toward those of negative dialectics (centered on the problem of the non-identity between the identical and the non-identical[74]). Only in the final chapter of Janus's Gaze, where Galli outlines the terms of Schmitt's desuetude in the global age, does this new relation begin to become explicit, and

[73] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

[74] Theodor Adorno, History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965, trans. Rodney Livingstone, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 92. Between 1964 and 1966, it should be noted, Felice Battaglia (under whom Galli studied at the University of Bologna) organized a lecture series at the University of Bologna in which a range of German intellectuals, including Theodor Adorno, presented papers. See Filosofi tedeschi d'oggi, Ed. Albino Babolin (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1967).

does it become clear that the use of Schmittian thought and the abuse of Schmittian thought are, increasingly, one and the same thing.

As the watchword for this unorthodox reading of Schmitt, the reader should bear in mind the name that provides Galli with the title of his book. For Galli, it would seem, "Carl Schmitt" is not actually the most felicitous name for the two-faced character of Carl Schmitt's person and work. For that purpose, Galli turns instead to an almost archaic figure, Janus, to whom Schmitt makes passing reference in his Roman Catholicism and Political Form to name the "diversity and ambiguity" of the Roman Catholic Church.[75] For Ovid, Galli reminds his readers, "Janus symbolizes the double aspect of things, the passage from inside and outside, and the transmutations and the determinations of the elements that emerge from the primordial Chaos (and "Chaos," don't forget, was Janus's ancient name)."[76] As such, Galli suggests, "Janus" is a fitting name for the unspoken core of Schmitt's genealogical inquiry into the "doubleness" or "contradictoriness" at the origin of modern politics.

Now, given the frequency with which Schmitt's name traps critics of Schmitt's work into becoming critics of Schmitt's person—or, more to the point, given the way that Schmitt's proper name also doubles as an improper name—the significance of Galli's displacement of "Schmitt" with "Janus" hardly can be underestimated. To nickname Schmitt's thought with a non-Schmittian name

[75] Carl Schmitt, Roman Catholicism and Political Form, trans. G. L. Ulmen (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 5.

[76] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

may at first seem but a small displacement. In fact, it accomplishes something quite significant: it prepares the conditions under which thought becomes able to release itself from the obligation to treat Schmitt's name as the object of love or hate, praise or blame, accusation or defense. It places thought in a position where it can relate itself instead to a certain doubleness or contradictoriness that's at once the very signature of Schmitt's thought and also the dynamic by which Schmitt's thought passes into non-identity with itself. Thought thus oriented no longer has any need to constrain itself to undialectical oppositions centered on Schmitt's name (praise or blame, guilt or innocence, etc.). It instead becomes able to train its gaze on a very different problem—the doubling of the crisis and the critic—that is at once the innermost operation of Schmitt's thought and the movement by which Schmitt's thought renders itself inoperative.

As a specifically negative dialectic, the "non-Schmittian Schmittology" that emerges from Galli's reading of Schmitt may be clarified by distinguishing it from the more traditional dialectization of Schmitt recently undertaken by Jean-François Kervégan. For Kervégan, the purpose of reading Schmitt today is "to depart from Schmitt" in a double sense: to use Schmitt as a point of departure for one's analyses of the present, and as such to take leave of Schmittian thought.[77] Whatever else it may share with Galli's approach to Schmitt, Kervégan's reading is incompatible with Galli's on at least one crucial point. Whereas Kervégan seeks to negate Schmitt's thought in order to preserve it at a higher level, the

[77] See Jean-François Kervégan, "Précis de Que faire de Carl Schmitt?" Philosophiques 39:2 (Autumn 2012), 452. See also Kervégan, Que faire de Carl Schmitt?, 71-6, 249-252.

dialectic of "passage" that Galli discerns in Schmitt's writings ends up leading to a very different conclusion: that today Schmitt's gaze has passed into its terminal phase, a phase characterized by its "outdatedness [inattualità] and disorientation."[78]

[78] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE]; see also [PAGES]. To clarify this claim, a short digression may be useful. In a strictly linguistic sense, inattualità is simply the privative form of attualità, which translates literally to "modernity" or "newness," such that "outdatedness" may stand as a rough translation of inattualità. But while "outdatedness" captures the sense in which inattualità designates a privative modality of historicity, it doesn't capture the sense in which inattualità also and at the same time designates a privative modality of concrete reality, effectiveness, or actuality. To grasp this dimension of the term, it's necessary to pass beyond linguistics not only to the history of philosophy but also to the history of the philosophy of history.

As Charles Alumni has demonstrated in a brilliant analysis, the term attualità emerges through a series of productive mistranslations (or "transductions") internal to the German and Italian Hegelianism of the nineteenth century. When Bertrand Spaventa used attualità to translate the German Wirklichkeit ("actuality") that Hegel made so famous in his infamous 1821 "Preface" to The Philosophy of Right, he conflated Wirklichkeit with a very different term: Aktuosität ("actuosity"), which for Hegel is not just any actuality but is the most profound mode of actuality possible—the actuality of substance itself. Although a deviation in the strict sense, Alumni shows, Spaventa's conflation ended up creating the conditions for a series of felicitous philosophical innovations—up to and including the idea of "intralinguistic translation" itself (the very mode of Alumni's own analysis). See, generally, Charles Alumni, "Attualità" in Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon, Ed. Barbara Cassin (Princeton: Princeton U P, 2014), 64-71.

The meaning of inattualità becomes clearer (and Alumni's analysis is confirmed) when we try to reintroduce inattualità into the coordinates of Hegelian modal logic. From this exercise we conclude, first of all, that inattualità cannot be understood as the opposite of actuality: for Hegel, actuality clearly already has a constitutive antithesis, and that is possibility (potentia). We also conclude that inattualità cannot be reduced to the category of the accidental or contingent: to the extent that inattualità partakes of actuosity (of which, by way of mistranslation, it would seem to be a privative mode), its accidentality is an expression of substance itself, and thus too of necessity (Alumni, "Attualità," 67). And yet, we also must conclude that inattualità can't be reduced to the category of necessity, since nowhere does Hegel allow for a privative mode of necessity (only for necessity's negation in contingency). Last but not least, we can't

understand inattualità as a negation of the empirical, sensuous, material world: to the extent that it partakes in actuality (of which it also, by way of mistranslation, would seem to be a privative mode), inattualità must be assumed to manifest itself in empirical existence, but without also of course being reducible to that existence (since not everything that exists empirically is also Wirklich in Hegel's sense, and not everything that is Wirklich in Hegel's sense also exists empirically).

In short, just as attualità emerges through a mistranslation of Hegelian thought, so too is it impossible to retranslate inattualità back into the terms of Hegelian thought.

From its errant provenance alone, however, we shouldn't conclude that the term is nonsense: as Alumni suggests, and indeed on directly Hegelian grounds, the term's errancy is precisely also the site of its unwitting truth. Given its lack of roots, the most direct way to spool out this truth is simply to translate inattualità to the letter, as the privative mode of attualità. On these terms, inattualità will designate a mode of actuosity that has so fully actualized itself—as the State, for example (but of course this is more than just any example)—that it is no longer actuosity at all, but is instead actuosity's own potential to not-be. Expressed in terms of modal logic, inattualità thus poses a philosophic problem that is the obverse of the familiar Scholastic schema of unactualized potential (of dynamis that turns into energeia, or in Hegelian terms, of an in sich that turns into the für sich). Inattualità would seem to designate the strange phenomenon of an impotent actuosity—a mode of actuosity that has so excessively actualized itself that it has exhausted itself without also, for that exhaustion, passing out of empirical existence.

A similar dynamic could be outlined in terms of Hegelian phenomenology, where actuality generally refers to the movement by which self-consciousness finds itself confronted by an alien world, externalizes itself in that world and remakes it in its own image, thus returns to itself having redoubled itself in the concrete—because of, not despite, its embrace of its own self-alienation. On these terms, inattualità would seem to designate a mode of actuality specific to a subject who no longer has the inner capacity to self-consciously alienate itself in the outer world, who instead confronts a world whose actualization has exhausted self-consciousness's own capacity for actualization, its own ability to grasp that world, and who is thus destined to a future in which the only mode of relating to the concrete reality of its own present (to its attualità) is stunned and dejected speechlessness, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, sterile but vehement judgments (declarations of what "ought to be" that are furious to the precise degree they are also ineffective and unrealizable). Impotent rage and melancholic shock, not ennui or apathy, would then paradoxically emerge as the phenomenological mode in which inattualità—understood as a privative mode of the subject's relation to the concrete reality of its own present—externalizes and manifests itself in experience.

Informing this claim is an unusual concept of historicity that can be sharpened by putting Galli into conversation with two thinkers who already are well known within Anglophone academia. In his 1977 Marxism and Literature, Raymond Williams outlined a fourfold schema for the analysis of what he calls "epochs." In order to recognize the "internal dynamic relations" that specify epochs, Williams argued, it first of all was necessary to understand what he called the "dominant" of any given epoch. The "dominant," for Williams, is not simply a synonym for "hegemony," as is often assumed. It's more precisely the closed circuit by which institutions, practices and traditions justify and explain themselves according to self-understandings that, circulating in culture, then come to reciprocally confirm those institutions, practices and traditions as reality itself.[79] In order to understand the ways in which the dominant maintains its dominance, Williams argued, it was necessary to attend to two additional sets of self-understanding: those that are "residual" and those that are "emergent." The "emergent" (which is not the same as the merely "novel") designates the way in which "new meanings and values, new values, new relationships and kinds of

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On the subjective side as on the objective side, therefore, inattualità would seem to designate those elements of concrete experience that have been excessively actualized and that persist in empirically existing, but that no longer have the energy to survive their own negation, that no longer are capable of living beyond the experience of their own alterity, and that so fully and completely partake in presence that they come to lack any negativity whatsoever. In the same way that Kafka's "Metamorphosis" closes not with Gregor's disappearance but (as readers of Kafka often forget) with a Grete who weirdly "blooms," so too a certain "excess of life" paradoxically turn out to be the mark of exhausted actuality, of experience that reveals itself to be devoid of the void.

[79] Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1977), 110.

relationships are continually being created."[80] It is an experience of cultural inception that produces inchoate structures whose effects can be felt and experienced at the limits of a given epoch, but that have yet to be effectively named.[81] The "residual," meanwhile, is what has been "effectively formed in the past," but "is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present."[82] In this respect the "residual" is distinct from the fourth (and oft-forgotten) element in Williams's schema: the "archaic," which is to say, "that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived,' in a deliberately specializing way."[83]

Glossed in Williams's terms, Galli's claim about the "outdatedness" of Schmitt's gaze amounts to an intricate claim about the place and function of Schmitt's thought in the present. Schmitt's great contribution, we might say, was to have interpreted the dominant with reference to the residual. Schmitt's insights into modern politics were grounded in a genealogical grasp of the traces of the premodern that remained active and effective within the modern. Today, however, the apparatus of modern politics no longer can be described as dominant, having lost any aura of inevitability or necessity. That aura has now passed to the institutions, theories, and practices of the global, which at the end

[80] Williams, Marxism and Literature, 123.

[81] Williams, Marxism and Literature, 126.

[82] Williams, Marxism and Literature, 122.

[83] Williams, Marxism and Literature, 122.

of Schmitt's life were only just emerging, and which today seem inescapable, self-evident and necessary—they seem to be reality itself. But under conditions where modern politics passes from the dominant to the residual, Schmitt's thought also undergoes a decisive shift: the coordinates with reference to which it orients itself, in turn, pass from the residual to the archaic. This is not to imply that Schmitt's thought will cease to be studied and discussed; to the contrary, the more that Schmitt's thought passes into the archaic, the more that Schmitt's thought will be ceremoniously and ritualistically "revived" in highly specialized ways. What will change in this shift is something much more precise and intricate yet also more difficult to grasp: the modality by which Schmitt's thought relates itself to its present. Under conditions where the coordinates of Schmitt's thought have become "archaic," the very premise of any revival of Schmittian thought will be the death of Schmittian thought: its inability to touch any effective and active element of the present, its complete exteriority to the closed circuit that exists between the institutions and self-understandings of the present, and its consequent deterioriation into a gaze whose pars construens—ability to produce claims to knowledge and truth—belongs wholly to the past.

We can further clarify Galli's claim about Schmitt's "outdatedness" by translating it into the terms of a second text: Theodor Adorno's inaugural 1931 lecture at the Frankfurt School, called "The Actuality of Philosophy." There Adorno offered what at first seemed to be a very simple formulation of what it meant for philosophy to exist in relation to "actuality." "Only out of the historical entanglement of questions and answers does the question of

philosophy's actuality emerge precisely."[84] That question, he argued, is the following: whether there exists "an adequacy between the philosophic questions and the possibility of their being answered at all; whether the authentic result of the recent history of these problems is the essential unanswerability of the cardinal philosophic questions."[85] On the basis of this definition, Adorno then proceeded to express doubt about whether contemporary philosophy is "actual" at all. Certainly a philosophy would come to lack actuality if it made no attempt at all to question its present or to expose itself to the questions posed for it by its present. But given the extreme irrationality of that present, the converse holds as well: philosophy that does make an attempt to expose itself to its present, and that structures itself as a response to the irrational questions posed to it by its present, also risks the loss of its actuality, since "no justifying reason could rediscover itself in a reality whose order and form suppresses every claim to reason[.]"[86] Faced with such a situation, the only hope for philosophy is to produce a philosophical interpretation of the fact that philosophical questions, under historical conditions of peak irrationality, have become unanswerable: only by understanding the phenomenon of unanswerability not as a sign of the "unreality" of philosophy, but as a sign that philosophy's own act of questioning itself provides shelter for the traces of a "correct and just reality," is philosophy capable of "actuality." On Adorno's terms, in other words, philosophy is "actual" only if it is also, at one and the same time, a philosophical and historical

[84] Adorno, "Actuality of Philosophy," 124.

[85] Adorno, "Actuality of Philosophy," 124.

[86] Adorno, "Actuality of Philosophy," 120.

self-consciousness of "the inactuality of philosophy" under conditions where antiphilosophic forces have so fully actualized themselves that those forces have come to be synonymous with reality itself.

An aporetic claim, to be sure—but one that, for precisely this reason, clarifies the concept of historicity informing Galli's claims about the "outdatedness" of Schmitt's gaze.[87] On Galli's read, it should be said, Schmitt's questions were always unanswerable relative to their present. The actuality of Schmittian thought consisted precisely in its self-conscious inactuality, its ability to reactivate the traces of the premodern that subsisted at the limit of the modern, treating those traces as occasions to pose insoluble problems to the institutions, practices, and theories of modern politics. This is what Galli calls Schmitt's pars destruens: his ability to critique, demystify, and negate modern political forms.[88] If Schmitt's gaze is today "outdated," this is not because it poses questions that are any less unanswerable. It's because Schmitt's questions have become unanswerable in a new and different sense—unanswerable not because Schmitt's thought poses piercing questions that reveal the void concealed in modern political forms, but because Schmitt's thought is today devoid of any question at all, because the "revival" of Schmitt paradoxically has reduced

[87] Italian historicism, it should be noted, emphasizes an experience of the historical neither as an accurate recollection of dates and times, nor as the grand narratives of progress or decline, but as aphasia and aporia, as symptomatic blockage and obstacle. See, on this point, Remo Bodei, "Italian: A Philosophy for Nonphilosophers Too," in Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon, 523-527.

[88] Which, it should be said, is in Galli's view an element in Schmitt's thought that is not even specific to Schmitt in the first place. See Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

Schmittian thought to a disjointed series of faddish keywords, popular formulations, or, worst of all, neutral methodological instruments. Under these conditions, Schmitt's thought is unanswerable not because it poses riddles that resist any answer, but because it no longer poses any riddle at all—it is simply a series of unconnected texts, a "tool" to be employed, a proper name that may be attacked by some and defended by others, but that all parties nevertheless agree to "use."

7.

In general, the Anglophone reception of Schmitt has proceeded along the lines prepared for it in advance by the standard use of the proper name within the history of political thought. According to this thoroughly taxonomic operation, thinking and categorizing are one and the same thing, such that good thinking and clean categories become synonyms. What this operation cannot think, however, is the way in which thinking so construed allows itself to be governed by a form that is latently juridical in provenance. For Aristotle, it must be recalled, the juridical term that is translated into English as "accusation" is the Greek katēgoria, which gives rise to an English word that today seems altogether non-juridical: "category." On these terms, to categorize is precisely to accuse, such that the work of categorization (attributing predicates to various beings in order to divide them up into species and genres) doubles as the work of legal

judgment (attributing predicates to various beings in order to allocate praise and blame, innocence and guilt).[89]

Citations of "Schmitt," especially but not only in English, bring this doubleness to the surface: they excessively actualize the sense in which the practice of neutral categorization (of classifying thought with reference to the proper name) always already also hosts within itself the latent possibility for juridical accusation. From this perspective, in fact, Schmitt's name is in a category by itself. Here, after all, is a name that is so improper—so intolerable—that, for some, it even comes to exemplify the very paradigm of the intolerable itself—of evil that manifests itself, self-consciously, as philosophy. In the name "Carl Schmitt," therefore, we would seem to encounter a categorization that so fully exemplifies the juridical form implicit in the practice of categorization itself that it leaves us unable to distinguish between categorization and accusation at all. But where the taxonomic and the juridical enter into indistinction—where categorization begins to double as a form of accusation and vice versa—the work of categorization itself begins to short-circuit. In this instance, it's no longer possible even to categorize the category "category" itself. One can no longer sort out whether a category like "Schmitt" operates as a categorization or as an accusation, since "Schmitt" is both a categorization and an accusation—and therefore neither, since the disputes of judicial proceedings are the very antithesis of neutral taxonomic classifications. Brought to bear on Schmitt's person and work, it would then seem, categorization becomes non-identical with

[89] See, on this point, Derrida, The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume I, 150-2.

itself, passing from self-consciousness into unself-consciousness, and thus too beginning to exhaust its epistemological potential.

Faced with this dilemma, some readers might be tempted to snort and to carry on with business as usual, continuing to use the name "Schmitt" as if everyone knew what they're talking about. The history of philosophy, after all, has never assumed an especially philosophical relation to its presuppositions regarding history, and Galli's contributions are hardly likely to change that. Other readers, by contrast, might begin to doubt whether it is even possible to use this name in a fully self-conscious way—or whether, to the contrary, the proper use of Schmitt's proper name is to mark the constitutive limit of any use of any proper name whatsoever, up to and including Schmitt's, as a name for thought. For such readers, the proper name might cease to function as a classificatory operation, and might begin to emerge instead as a problem for thought itself—requiring us to think through the strange dynamic by which thought actualizes the potential for the proper name to not-be.[90] For these readers, the "improper name" might cease to function primarily as a synonym for an intolerable name. It instead might begin to serve as a metonym for a more radical set of phenomena, for the emergence of a set of experiences—call them "impolitical" or "impersonal"—that exceed both the horizon of modern politics

[90] That this dynamic gives rise to an "ethics" of its own is clear from Giorgio Agamben, "Ethics," in The Coming Community, Trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 44.

and the lexicon of modern thought (up to and including thought that positions itself, as did Schmitt's, at the very limit of modern thought).[91]

Still other readers might protest: to divest Schmitt's of his proper name is not at all to lance the boil of fascination with Schmitt. It's to absolve Schmitt himself, and as such to hush our conscience before a figure who, more than any other, clearly deserves its full fury. Nothing, however, could be further off the mark. The quietist reading of Schmitt is the reading that treats Schmitt as a touchstone by which we reassure ourselves of our own good names and clean conscience, at a moment in history where nothing could be less certain.[92] It's the

[91] Roberto Esposito, Categories of the Impolitical, Trans. Connal Parsley (New York: Fordham U P, forthcoming); Roberto Esposito, Third Person: Politics of Life and Philosophy of the Impersonal, Trans. Zakiya Hanafi (New York: Polity, 2012). For an inquiry into the problem of the "improper" from within the coordinates of this horizon, see Timothy Campbell, Improper Life: Technology and Biopolitics from Heidegger to Agamben (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). For Galli's critique of Esposito, see Carlo Galli, "Roberto Esposito, Nove pensieri sulla politica (Review)," Filosofia politica 1 (1994), 154-6. For Esposito's response, see Roberto Esposito, "Preface to Categories of the Impolitical," Trans. Connal Parsley, diacritics 39:2 (Summer 2009), 108.

[92] In the world of Anglophone neoliberalism, as we have noted above, the touchstone of clean conscience is self-conscious opposition to Nazism (and above all opposition to self-conscious Nazis, such as Schmitt). But conscience so construed already has proven itself fully capable of co-existing unselfconsciously with horrors born out of its own cherished inner principles. Property rights and the rule of law, which neoliberal thinkers sought to reclaim and to polemically reaffirm against Nazism, double as justifications for contemporary thanatopolitics. On this point, see Alain Badiou, The Century, Trans. Albert Toscano (New York: Polity, 2007), 4-5. Under these conditions, it's useful to recall Hegel's teaching in The Philosophy of Right: morality and evil alike spring inseparably from one and the same root, the conviction [Gesinnung] of a conscience that is fully self-assured of its own good faith and truth. See G.W.F. Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Ed. Allen Wood, Trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1991), 167-170 (§139).

reading that supposes thought's capacity for evil to be derived not from thought itself, but merely from thought's complicity with something supposedly alien to thought—evil. This is a reading that ultimately assimilates the problem of Schmitt's impropriety to the classic theme of the political philosopher's complicity with tyranny—a theme in the history of political philosophy that's as old as the history of political philosophy itself, beginning at least with Plato's service to Dionysus. But not only did Schmitt himself use this theme to rationalize his own relation to tyranny;[93] worse, it distracts us from a much more disquieting and intimate source for evil. Thought yoked to the proper name turns out to conspire against thinking itself: the more thought is named, the less thought is thought.[94] But the less thought is thought, and the more that thought deprives itself of itself, the more thought gives itself over to its own privative modality, its own deficit of existence—to its own immanent thoughtlessness. The path of least resistance, to be sure, is to let political philosophy's museum of improper names—Schmitt above all—reassure us that our own names, by contrast, remain proper. Even the most proper name, however, hosts a potential

[93] Galli, Janus's Gaze, [PAGE].

[94] This is the converse of Hegel's 1816 claim about the difference between political history and the history of philosophy. Political history, Hegel argues, takes as its subject the individual in the concrete particularity of his personality: its questions pertain to the character of historical actors, their natural make-up, genius, passions, energy, their weaknesses. The history of philosophy, by contrast, takes as its subject the "freedom of thinking" that belongs to "the general character of man as man." Here the question is not focused on the person. Quite the opposite: the problem is "thinking itself, devoid of personality." See G.W.F. Hegel, Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Trans. T. M. Knox and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1985), 9, emphasis added.

that resists the distinction between the named and the nameless. Amorphous and aporetic though this potential may be, no thinking that neglects it can resist what banality leaves in its place.