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Carl Schmitt's 'Hamlet oder Hekuba' and the question of a philosophy of history

Zapata Soto, G.I.

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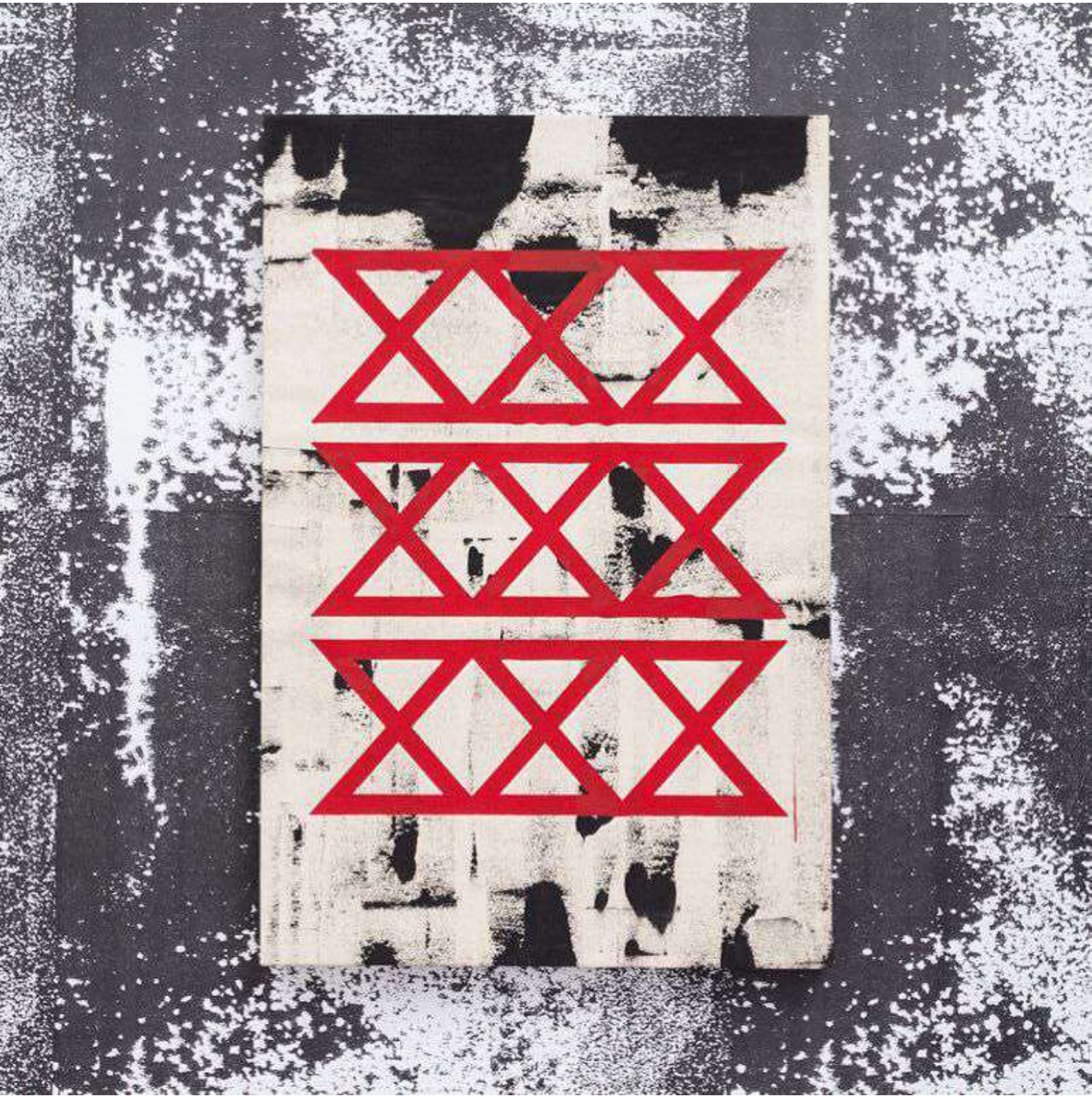

Carl Schmitt's Hamlet oder Hekuba and the Question of a Philosophy of History

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Gonzalo Zapata Soto

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Promotores: Prof. Dr. Susanna Lindberg

Prof. dr. Ovidiu Stanciu (Universidad Diego Portales, Chili)

Promotiecomissie: Dr. Johan de Jong

Dr. Marie Louise Krogh

Prof. Dr. Carolina Bruna (Universidad de Chile, Chili)

Prof. Dr. Florencia Abadi (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentinië)

Prof. Dr. Douglas Berger

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Preface

In 2009 I was working on a lengthy essay devoted to an all-forgotten but essential theological concept, that is, the Greek notion of *homoousios*[1]. As I was delving into extremely complex matters, such as the ones related to the quarrel ignited by Arianism, I found myself puzzled at the moment of studying the revisiting of such debate in a famous twentieth century political discussion. Its main interlocutors, Erik Peterson and Carl Schmitt, championed if it was possible—or impossible—the coming of a "political theology" government in modern Europe. Schmitt's *Politische Theologie I* was not only a thought-provoking, erudite piece on classic theological thinking from an ius-philosophical standpoint, but also an elegant set of arguments sustained by a tragic view of existence. And while already from the early 2000s the theme "political theology" was once again brought up to life by neo-Foucaltian, post-Benjaminian, leftist Heideggerian thinkers and their numerous acolytes—English and Latin-American philosophers and political scientists—Schmitt's thesis somehow stood out the trend itself. Later on, I bumped onto his *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. This time, his theses on history and tragedy, presented through a particular comprehension of art—the Shakespearean theater—, somehow shed new light onto his 1921 monograph on "political theology".

Even then, I asked myself an obvious question: "why Carl Schmitt?" Why even bothering with a prominent brain trust of Nazi Germany? Why not just dismiss this cryptic, baroque thinker, whose political choices stained any intellectual bona fide of his work? Would it not have been a better choice to pay attention to the major contributions of Hans Urs von Balthasar[2] or Jean Daniélou[3]? It seemed, as it is now, that one needed to glove on at the moment of dealing with any segment of the oeuvre of Carl Schmitt. However, how much control can we grant to morality at the moment of facing important philosophical discussions? Would not this mean that we should immediately ban the poetry of Stefan George or the reconstruction of Kant's third critique by Alfred Baeumler? Moreover, why

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1. Rowan Williams, *Arius. Heresy and Tradition,* Revised Edition (SCM Press: Cambridge, U.K., 2001), 68-72; Pier Franco Beatrice, *"Homoousios" from Hellenism to Christianity*, in *Church History*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 2002, 252.
2. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. III. Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, translated by Graham Harrison (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1992).
3. Jean Daniélou, *La Trinité et le mystère de l'existence* (Desclée de Brouwer: Paris, 1968).

the contemporary scholar would omit the mental and conceptual connections of key historical moments? It is certainly true that an Alfred Rosenberg advocate or a jurist who theoretically justified the Röhm purge cannot perform in the slightest sense as intellectual guides for any kind of politics or civil action. Nonetheless, and in the case of Schmitt, the breadth and length of his work can positively elicit a good number of reflections akin to the current political and philosophical debates. Compulsory ethical policies demanded inside and outside academic discussions are often moral prescriptions performed in hindsight. And as long these uncomfortable themes are discussed within the "author and work" framework, they will be still circumscribed in the narrow margins of morality.

As for Carl Schmitt goes, his work does not have to be sanitized or merely condemned to a permanent exile from the modern intellectual grandstand. Like any other thinker, his contributions need to be questioned, that is, they have to be pondered according to what they mean—namely, to what extent and according to which criteria they connect to its immediate background—, how they theoretically perform, and what do they have to offer to present times. Conversely, this type of reconstruction has to tackle the inner meaning of its semantics, style, and both its visible and non-visible political stands. Put differently, any scientific reconstruction of morally tarnished thinkers must confront them through its conceptual dimension. To support—or even withheld—their actions evidently lead to an epistemic faux pas[4]. Nonetheless, to blindly loathe both their thought and work, should be a good reminder of how a moral a priori demands abiding and obedience from the social community that contemporary academy aims and longs for.

In 2015, I was granted with the Instituto de Filosofía (Diego Portales University) / Institute for Philosophy (Universiteit Leiden) joint program scholarship. The first drafts of my investigation proposed a point-by-point analysis of Schmitt's concepts of "play" [*Spiel*] and "seriousness" [*Ernst*]. While my former thesis supervisor, Hugo Herrera Arellano, encouraged me to embark on such a theme, I soon noted the theoretical narrowness of an investigation of this kind. It was not until 2018 that Reinhard Mehring, who kindly invited me to his home at Düsseldorf—right by the Rhine—, that I dared to expand my investigation to a broader—and more challenging—problem, that is, the importance of *Hamlet oder*

4. Manfred Frank, *Gott im Exil. Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie. II. Teil* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1988), 107ff.

Hekuba within Schmitt's intellectual order, but also its place and meaning amidst Germany's postwar pummeled self-consciousness. *Herr* Mehring gently brought to my attention the unattended question of Schmitt's own vision of art, tragedy, history, and politics, from an aesthetical viewpoint. Likewise, Prof. Mehring pointed out the crucial role that *Political Romanticism* played for Schmitt's 1956 essay on *Hamlet*, but also the esoteric dialogue that Schmitt developed with Max Kommerell's 1934 essay on Schiller. To his uninterested suggestions, hospitality, and to his friendly advice, I am deeply indebted. The fifth and last chapter of this thesis—which profits from Prof. Mehring's guidance—is dedicated to him.

The theme of *Hamlet* in Germany has been thoroughly studied by Andreas Höfele. In his 2016 book on the subject, Höfele dedicated two chapters to Schmitt's interpretation and usage of Shakespeare—first, in his identification with Otello, and then with Schmitt's great reflections on *Hamlet*. Whether reading Höfele's book or other like-minded investigations, one could think that maybe some other choices would have been more interesting take into account, like Schlegel, Tieck, Stefan George, Friedrich Gundolf[5]—or even the French and contemporary English interpretations[6]. However, the impact of *Hamlet* in Schmitt's late thought is manifolded. He was not simply dabbling in literature—like he did from the very beginning of his academic career[7]—when he wrote *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. On the contrary, the Mona Lisa of theatre awe-struck Schmitt as a powerful, historical model for contemporary events. The copious amounts of entries and annotations in his personal diaries and correspondence, radiobroadcasts, and talks, are massively entangled in a non-systematic yet cohesive comprehension of a philosophy of history. *Hamlet* became both an existential and cultural model to Schmitt. I think this reason alone is sufficient to justify a lengthy reconstruction of this theme in his late thought. In this perspective, I have certainly picked up the gauntlet apropos this suggestion of Schmitt himself: "A desirable subject of dissertation for young, diligent male and female German students of the Federal Republic of West Germany of the year 1950: Carlo Schmid et les beaux arts"[8].

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5. Béatrice Dumiche, *Shakespeare und kein ende?*, in Béatrice Dumiche, *Shakespeare und kein Ende? Beiträge zur Shakespeare – Rezeption in Deutschland und in Frankreich vom 18. Bis 20 Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Romantischer Verlag, 2012).
6. Jennifer E. Nicholson, *Hamlet's French Philosophy*, in Aidan Norrie and Mark Houlahan (eds.), *New Directions in Early Modern English Drama. Edges, Spaces, Intersections* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter – Medieval Institute Publications, 2020), 178ff.
7 Andreas Höfele 2022, 9-17.
8. Schmitt 2015e, 235.

In the following, I propose a painstakingly account of Carl Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. In the first part, I offer an alternative method of reading and interpreting this rare monograph on Shakespeare's essential drama. By surveying its conceptual architecture—mapping out its main theoretical elements and all of its bibliographical ecology—, I explore each one of its sections, in order to offer to the reader an exhaustive and detailed analysis of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* as a singular theoretical piece. The second part of my investigation displays a chronological review of Schmitt's work in the 1950s. I champion that Schmitt—just after his detentions by U.S. Forces between late 1945 and early 1947—developed across the 1950s an esoteric, unsystematic, and nonetheless original vision of a philosophy of history. Such a level of comprehension was possible due to a very particular mindset of Schmitt, namely, that greater political events could escalate through a series of historical singularities, all of them politically chained. This kind of philosophy of history—which eschewed itself from the leftist Hegelian, Marxist, and Spenglerian historical models—could be named as inceptional, for its inner dynamics surges from a unique, unseen, massive event, that continuously implodes through—at first sight—unrelated political, cultural, and historical episodes. What Schmitt sought and reflect on from the late 1940s and through all the 1950s, was the morphology of the century that began with the social revolution of 1848, and the dreadful European aftermath of both WWI and WWII. The figures of Hamlet and Demetrius became to him not masks but mirrors of doom.

His public withdrawal from German academy, teaching activities, along the moral punishment of the new democratic European consciousness—a natural consequence of the banishment that he was imposed to after being kept held by American Forces—, led Schmitt towards a non-academic, highly spiritual path of self-awareness. But this existential escape was not encompassed with tepid cultural diagnoses performed with historical justice. Moreover, most—if not all—of his personal considerations are soaked with hatred, loathe, and contempt. But this mood does not comprise the whole intellectual atmosphere where *Hamlet oder Hekuba* came to life. There were also deep personal reasons to endeavor on Shakespeare.

In 1952, his daughter translated to the German Lilian Winstanley's already forgotten investigation on Shakespeare's drama. Carl Schmitt prologued the book, avidly praising Winstanley's thesis. And then something just clicked in Schmitt, for the theme of *Hamlet*

grew on as he started to frequently reflect about contemporary events, modern history, and art—not to mention his private annotations about his fate during and after World War II. Amidst the haplessness and rejection from both German academy and public debate, *Hamlet* irrupted as a chance of spiritual cooperation between father and daughter[9]. Schmitt's much sanctioned "separation of inner from outer and public from private governed" ironically became to him the only available space to dwell in subterranean, complex matters. The "relegation of the state to an outward cult"[10] was suddenly the obliteration of the self to an inward cult. Thus his *Glossarium* and his late thought of the 1950s.

It is not my intention to offer an aesthetic redemption of the work of Carl Schmitt. Even this mostly unexplored dimension of his thought is sinuously connected with his political choices. In this perspective—and once the reader has been able to disentangle the main theoretical elements and crucial concepts of the monograph on Shakespeare—, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* reveals itself as an obscure political caveat. Its central message reads thus: "WARNING. FLAMMABLE CHEMICALS ARE LOCATED WITHIN THE STATE ENCLOSURE. Political exposure may result in severe injury. Refer to *Hamlet* before servicing". Schmitt did not provide any kind of therapeutic prescriptions on the theoretical plane. On the contrary, he displayed an upside-down picture of postwar Germany and Europe through the lens of *Hamlet*. The themes of power, law, sovereignty, dictatorship, order, and exception, were now presented in a compact study on the hermeneutic potential of mythic art regarding the historico-political present.

A late but crucial advice came from my new thesis co-supervisor from Leiden, Prof. Susanna Lindberg. Not only she thoroughly read my whole thesis in manuscript—she probably broke the clock—, but also provided me with generous commentaries and insightful observations. Details about stylistics and on the sometimes sloppiness of some of the arguments here presented, I owed her to Prof. Lindberg as well. Likewise, Prof. Ovidiu Stanciu, my new thesis supervisor, gave me important insights regarding the structure and methodology of my investigation. Some crucial, final remarks became possible thanks to Prof. Stanciu.

9. Mehring 2012, 12-3.
10. Schmitt 2008a, 59.

I received support from the Instituto de Filosofía – Universidad Diego Portales, specially of Aïcha Messina, Ovidiu Stanciu, and Hernán Pringe. Although most of my investigation was developed in solitude, the solid friendship and sharp reading at early stages of Víctor Ibarra B. was more than important. I am grateful for the comments and observations of Constanza Terra and Rudy Pradenas. The constant caring and support through my PhD years of Gonzalo Marambio and Alexander Hopkinson cannot be enough appreciated. The love of my grandparents, Raúl Enrique Soto Pardo (†) and Rosa Aretio Núñez (and the rest of my family) is one of the reasons that guided my academic efforts. Sandra Soto Aretio (†), my mother, was present in every stage of this investigation.

The brief dialogue I had with Prof. Mehring in late 2018 was essential at the moment of planning an exhaustive reconstruction of *Hamlet or Hecuba*—just like the damn good coffee and *Mozartkugeln* with which our conversation on Schiller's *Wallenstein* and Schmitt's mastery at the subtle art of *Widmungs* was enhanced with.

I dedicate this thesis to my son, Sandro. *May the Giant be with you*.

Introduction

The following study conceptually reconstructs Carl Schmitt's 1956 *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. In this succinct yet fertile monograph on *Hamlet*, Schmitt develops a particular notion of a philosophy of history. The canonical definition of this expression can be found in Hegel's introduction to his *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*: "The point of view of *philosophical world history* is not that of a particular, abstract universal but of a *concrete* universal, which is the 'guiding soul of events', (…) it is *spirit* that guides the world." Hegel's spirit is a supreme standpoint, a *Weltgeist*. "Thinking is the self-production of spirit. Spirit's highest goal is to know itself (…). World history is the matrix in which this transition comes about."[11] Thus, the expression "philosophy of history" champions a superior comprehension of human events according to a universal viewpoint, which is reflective—namely, philosophical. Put differently, historical events are to be grasped by "spirit's" thinking.

However, both "philosophy" and "history" meant something different for Schmitt, who was—despite his heterodoxic approach to different disciplines—a jurist. In his provoking *Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft*, Schmitt states "[f]ür mich waren Sokrates, Platon und Aristoteles primär Rechtslehrer und nicht das, was man heutzutage Philosophen nennt (…)."[12] Nonetheless, this does not mean that Schmitt matched philosophy with jurisprudence. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were *like* jurists, that is: as philosophers, they performed like jurists. They thought and reflected within a determined order, in a specific time, and according to a concrete situation. In this perspective, Schmitt can be considered a philosopher, namely, as a jurist who thought essential problems that belonged to a concrete order of human life. Some authors[13] have seen in Schmitt's theoretical procedure a theory of understanding, as for Schmitt any problem can be comprehended from a legal structure. Such a perspective always provides to the observer a "transcendental" element. All in all, Schmitt's statement on philosophy as the intellectual expression of jurisprudence is very akin to the definition of philosophy stated by Kant in his *Lectures on*

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11. George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Volume 1. Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822-3*, edited and translated by Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson, with the assistance of William G. Geuss (Oxford University Press: New York, 2011), 20-21.
12. Schmitt 2012h, 427.
13 Hugo Herrera, *Carl Schmitt Between Technological Rationality and Theology. The Position and Meaning of His Legal Thought* (Suny Press: New York, 2020), 32.

logic. "In the former respect [that is, in the scholastic sense] it is thus a *doctrine of skill*; in the latter [in the *worldly concept*], a doctrine *of wisdom*[,] the *legislator* of reason[,] and the philosopher to this extent not an *artist of reason* but rather a *legislator*."[14]

On the other hand, "history" meant to Schmitt the supreme structure where human actions are contained. His idea of history is theological, not teleological. In his early essay on Roman Catholicism, he asserts: "This is the only revolution in world history that deserves to be called great—Christianity provided a new foundation for mundane authority (…)." Human reality is nothing without a theological framework. A few lines later, Schmitt adds: "Individuality coexists only in that God keeps the person in the world. His relation *ad se ipsum* is not possible without a relation *ad alterum*."[15] And in 1969, in his last published essay, he returns to this viewpoint after his discussion with Hans Blumenberg on secularization: "All detheologised concepts carry the weight of their scientifically impure origins. (…) All de-theologisations, de-politisations, de-juridifications, de-ideologisations, de-historicisations, or any other series of de-prefixed entities tending towards a *tabula rasa* are nullified."[16] According to Schmitt, the exponential growth of technology will never supersede the theological framework where all human actions are developed. "The new, purely human and secular science is a continuing and process-progress of a widening renewal of knowledge in purely secular human terms, driven by an ongoing human curiosity."[17] History, then, meant for Schmitt that reality is grounded in theological foundations. Man imposes and creates different kind or orders. The legitimacy of such orders depends on their relationship with their theological origins.

"Philosophy of history", therefore, can be broadly defined in Schmitt's late thought as it follows: a type of reflection on human events comprehended according a concrete order; an enclosure where reality unfolds from a greater theological source. Throughout the 1950s, Schmitt grasped his historical context—namely, World War II and its aftermath—in historico-philosophical terms. However, he somehow distanced himself from the strict jurisprudential standpoint, and delved into the hermeneutical possibilities of art. Schmitt

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14. Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on logic*, translated and edited by J. Michael Young (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2004), 537.
15. Schmitt 2008b, 50-51.
16 Schmitt 2014c, 128.
17. Schmitt 2014c, 128.

chose *Hamlet* for its mythical significance. On his account, the archetypical aspect of *Hamlet* is essentially modern, as Prince Hamlet acts and behaves indecisively. He procrastinates, and prefers a maze-like reality of ponderings and impressions. His delayed actions occur amidst secrecy, treason, and the political decay of Elsinore. Schmitt acknowledged the actuality of all of these elements, and specially the character of Prince Hamlet, the prototypical "European intellectual". In *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, Schmitt accounts each one of these problems from a non-psychological, non-aesthetical, non-sociological, and non-historiographical perspective. His resistance to such approaches was not a mere reaction, but a political statement. *Hamlet* is the perfect example of philosophy understood from its jurisprudential nature. Its historical aspect fuels Shakespeare's artistry. The intellectual crisis of Prince Hamlet is the perfect mirror where reality can be reflected upon.

How, then, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* contributes to and enhances Schmitt's conception of a philosophy of history? I argue that Schmitt's monograph on *Hamlet* displays a twofold historico-philosophical argument. First, that the mythical aspect of this play of Shakespeare demands a profound hermeneutical analysis. In the case of Schmitt, this kind of approach—as it underlines the constant attrition of psychology, historiography, sociology, and art history at the moment of interpreting *Hamlet*—relies on a marked and particular conception of philosophy of history. Second, this type of hermeneutics aims to prove the normative force of history and how it elevates a notion of art purely based on its autonomy (and the genius of Shakespeare's playwright) to an everlasting actuality of both its content and main themes. I consider that *Hamlet oder Hekuba* performs as an essential work in order to comprehend Schmitt's considerations of philosophy, history, and tragedy.

Schmitt's theoretical methodology is not conventional in academic and philosophical terms. Schmitt's erudition—like his unique conceptual dexterity—was often expressed through a complex, and sometimes even cryptic train of thought. He never acknowledged a scientifical subject determined by a friendly consideration of his readers. On the contrary, he demands a good amount of interpretation and analysis. Every time that Schmitt put into words his thoughts—whether he reflected on a jurisprudential theme or meant to communicate bigotry-drenched ideas—they were invariably communicated through obscure bibliographical references, with a brilliant series of sentences, and through compelling yet questionable thesis. The reader would be right, then, if she or he consider Schmitt's overall

analysis as dubious. If *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is a central piece of Schmitt's unsystematic concept of philosophy of history, why he never accounted such a problem explicitly? Why the reader cannot find in any of his writings of the 1950s a crystal-clear examination of Hegel's canonical concept of philosophy of history or even his own?

As valid as these claims can be, they presuppose exactly the kind of approach that Schmitt preferred to avoid. His constant meanderings and subtleties at the moment of phrasing an idea needed an heterodoxic and non-academically conventional model of reflection. Schmitt was well aware of his impact on old and new readers, and he knew that his theses were constantly being reviewed and scrutinized. Put differently, Schmitt lured his readers to a work of further exegesis—his style is aphoristic and often hyperbolic. As Schmitt's does not seem to care in providing a traditional breakdown of his theses—for instance, how his idea on the "Hamletization of the avenger" differ to that of the classical conception of the hero as a tragic agent? —, to provide a systematic interpretation of such ideas could end in a quite interesting trade-off situation.

I would like to argue that the two-folded philosophical dimension of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* perform as a note-worthy theoretical piece. Schmitt's heterodoxic interpretation has a philosophical value, as its conceptual foundations develop a hermeneutical analysis that questions the core aspect of philosophy of history. Schmitt's homologates "time" with "history", and the "irruption of time", thus, offer a fertile contribution when it comes down to the significance of philosophy of history in the post-war German academic debate. History, according to Schmitt, is not the mere background where the work of art is produced, but the guiding force that ultimately pushes art—*Hamlet*—toward a mythical plane. Moreover, "time" does not stand out for Schmitt for its ontological nature, but for its concrete status. Although this argumentation is not carefully elaborated by Schmitt through an in-depth scientifical approach, it prompts important philosophical questions.

Therefore, the notions of "time", "history", "tragedy", "myth", and "irruption", are the key concepts to analyze and eventually decipher Schmitt's own conception of a philosophy of history within the theoretical margins established in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. As chapter III will demonstrate, Karl Löwith's epoch-making book *Meaning in History* elicited in Schmitt a new set of philosophical arguments regarding his theological comprehension of history—an echo of Donoso Cortés' ideas on the subject. Although Schmitt did not recoil to

his previous statements or re-evaluate his theological premises—widely spread in the German intellectual milieu after his 1921 *Politische Theologie*—, Löwith's ambitious thesis was certainly a new chance for Schmitt to delve into philosophy of history from a non-exclusive jurisprudential viewpoint. Likewise, his private notes in *Glossarium* slowly gave rise to a new mode of philosophical argumentation. If the reader keeps these biographical and intellectual elements in mind, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* will reveal its true philosophical physiognomy.

That Schmitt had chosen a literary theme for close examination was something quite characteristic in his work ever since his first publications[18]. However, by interpreting *Hamlet*—through a conceptual expansion of the thesis stated by his old acquaintance, the Anglicist Lilian Winstanley—, Schmitt aimed at something more than a purely scholarly exercise. Being aware of the trend-smasher interpretation executed by Max Kommerell on Schiller's playwright—which brilliantly connected Schiller's theory of agency with the political events unleashed in Germany in 1933—, Schmitt opted to recreate a similar analysis with his study on *Hamlet*. If Kommerell signaled the figure of Hitler with his expression "creator [*gestalter*: literally, "designer"] of men of action", Schmitt intended to depict this very same gruesome character through a warped image of both his ruin and demise—a fate that, according to Schmitt, he also unjustly shared.

Hamlet oder Hekuba was for a long time eclipsed by Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*—and its famous "friend and foe" criterion—, along with some other of his most distinct works. That the contemporary philosophical debate of the late 1990s and early 2000s was prone to study the political dimension of Schmitt's thought seems to be in hindsight somewhat a comprehensible phenomenon, if one considers the main world events occurred at that time. Schmitt's intellectual connection with Walter Benjamin monopolized any attempt of pondering on *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s own importance. It was not until the English translation of Schmitt's monograph on *Hamlet*, that the fundamentals of this essay could be unconcealed. Nonetheless, most of the English literature on *Hamlet oder Hekuba* conventionally followed a methodological and philosophical approach to Schmitt strictly based on his works available in English. *Hamlet or Hecuba*'s genesis, main concepts, and its connection to Schmitt's personal meditations, were still faded in oblivion.

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18 Schmitt 2022b, 12-28.

However, the need for a complete examination of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is not enough in order to justify a conceptual and philosophical reconstruction of its main arguments. If this was the case, one should attend to some other themes within Schmitt's oeuvre. For example, the theoretical value of his ideas that were revealed strictly in the correspondence with key acquaintances, friends, and interlocutors often ignored—like Ernst Rudolf Hubert, Gottfried Salomon, Franz Blei, and Konrad Weiß. Likewise, most of the well-known bibliography on Schmitt—like the interpretations provided by "post-structuralist" philosophers, Italian thinkers, and English critiques—has consistently skipped both his early and legal writings, which represent a significant portion of Schmitt's work. As the scholarly production devoted to Schmitt's thought continuously increases in Germany, his stereotypical figure grows within the conventional, narrow margins cemented by the editorial successes of the aforementioned scholars. Therefore, the expression "the crown jurist of the Third Reich" philosophically avows a controversial thinking with little to say about any other thing but friends and enemies, states of exceptions, political theology, and several anti-liberal banters.

Schmitt reflected his own persona in Prince Hamlet, and his own context through *Hamlet*'s political debacle. Thus, the betrayed King Hamlet could be a nation—Germany—, Claudius his usurper—Hitler—, Prince Hamlet a deceived German intellectual unwilling to fulfill his revenge—Schmitt—, and Elsinore a maimed continent—Europe—. One would rapidly note that Schmitt's identification with this character obeys to a psychological reason. While this similitude is more or less undeniable, Schmitt's interest in Prince Hamlet responded to some other motives. Every action, every decision of Prince Hamlet is *existentially* disturbed. He knows no direct passage from A to B. His deed is eventually fulfilled, but with several—and often unnecessary—detours. Such a spirit represented for Schmitt the intellectual axis of modernity. Roughly speaking, both Prince Hamlet and modern thinkers—including Schmitt, one could add—were a "full of himself" type of person. According to Schmitt in his Aachen conference[19], such a feature is present in most of intellectuals, that is, the proneness to philosophize at the moment of resolution. This attribute cannot be fully understood from a psychological perspective. Rather, it is a trademark of existentialism. Otherwise put, the world is a surface onto which reflections must be made before taking any kind of actions.

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19 See chapter 4.5.

Likewise—and with the exceptions already pointed out—, the biographical and conceptual genesis of the 1956 monograph has received little consideration in the philosophical margins of the contemporary debate on Schmitt. In this respect, it is important to underscore that what is at stake at *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is Schmitt's self-awareness regarding his turmoiled past and the havoc wrecked after 1945 in German society. With this monograph, he industriously attempted a multileveled intellectual exercise, namely, a cultural, philosophical, historical, and conceptual critique that circumscribed the history of Europe within its veiled inner dynamics.

Simply put, the current debate on Schmitt's[20] takes on aesthetics and history—two themes seriously modified in Schmitt's idea of philosophy of history—is quite inane regarding both Schmitt's biographical context and his conceptual modifications. There is no a single study, nor an exhaustive account, on the evolution of Schmitt's thought during the 1950s[21]. The elusive yet cohesive body of work elaborated by the jurist during this decade, once it is unraveled and then systematized, exhibits an impressive and consistent intellectual dimension. The question, scope, and limits of the possibility of a philosophy of history then emerge. What to make when facing the desolated political landscape of a now ruined and re-educated-in-democracy Europe in the course of a fully-technicized world? Through a fragmentary reasoning, and esoteric dressing-down critiques, Schmitt aimed at asking such a question. Nowadays, in the very brink of environmental collapse, when economical éminence-grise are lurking and casting their geopolitical shadows over international politics, where outstretched nuclear catastrophes are looming every day, Schmitt's ponderings on a philosophy of history are worth reconsidering. *Hamlet oder Hekuba* performs as an airtight effort that gloomily encapsulate this.

Nonetheless, the reader could ask: were no other far more interesting, crystal-clear, scientifically consistent, and not morally stained intellectual efforts regarding the historical present in the 1950s? Why even bothering with the conceptual entanglements delivered by the troubled mind of this "prominent constitutional lawyer and historico-litterateur

20 See chapter 2.11.
21 This thesis was already completed when Andreas Höfele book on Schmitt's relationship with literature was published. In it, Höfele carefully examines Schmitt's writings of the 1950s.

outsider"?[22]. If the essential subject was *Hamlet*, were not some other studies by Anglicists and Shakespeare's specialists more appropriate? The crucial aspect of Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is the expansion of the standpoint through which the play is analyzed. This means, first and foremost, a conscious disregarding of the aesthetical, psychological, and sociological perspectives through which *Hamlet* was often comprehended. *Hamlet* is grasped by Schmitt not according to its modern value—nor by its solely historical dimension—but through a formal model of historical mirroring. In this sense, Schmitt contemplated *Hamlet*—as his conception of the artwork—through an ius-philosophical examination of the historical forces liberated from the play itself. Schmitt, therefore, proposes a hermeneutical approach to fully understand *Hamlet*, as its main aspects can be efficiently disentangled through a philosophical examination. But history meant for Schmitt something quite different than the Hegelian-Marxist or Spenglerian perspectives. It meant, roughly speaking, an oriented power that always—through different events and different personas—outlines a concrete order where political existence can be sustained. If such a position can be superseded—arguing that, in fact, Schmitt muffled a psychological feature in his non-psychological approach—, it is something quite auxiliary to the problem itself. The very core of *Hamlet* as a play is its public nature. Public, according to Schmitt, presupposes the attunement between a people and its common space, namely, its order. Likewise, the public sphere—according to Schmitt—belongs to the State as the primal political force. As it reads thus in his *Verfassungslehre*: "Volk ist ein Begriff, der nur in der Sphäre der *Öffentlichkeit* existent wird. Das Volk erscheint nur in der Öffentlichkeit, es bewirkt überhaupt erst die Öffentlichkeit. Volk und Öffentlichkeit bestehen zusammen; kein Volk ohne Öffentlichkeit und keine Öffentlichkeit ohne Volk."[23]

Another considerable problem with which the reader could make bones about it, it is the so-called "irruption of time" into the play. The dark uncertainty of the Elizabethan years can be recognized in *Hamlet* as "allusions"—just like the jurisprudential structure of succession performs as a historical "parallel"—, but the true "irruption" is the coalesce of Prince Hamlet's indecision and Queen Gertrude's part in the conspiracy against King Hamlet. Put differently, the "irruption" is the energy of a concrete time performing within

22. *Der Spiegel*, 28.8.1956 (https://www.spiegel.de/politik/die-mutter-ist-tabu-a-cbd48c8f-0002-0001-0000-000043063974), last accessed: 02.06.2022
23. Schmitt 2017, 243.

Shakespeare's play. However, Schmitt does not acknowledge how this *Einbruch* manages to fulfill its outbreak into *Hamlet*. It is a process? It is something that can be recognized by anyone at the moment of its realization? It happened the very first time that *Hamlet* was performed at *The Globe*, or, on the contrary, it is an everlasting phenomenon that manifest its constant activity in each interpretation? Its publicity—namely, its mythic nature—does simply crush any subjectivity or, in fact, can coexist within a modern, capitalist, technology-driven world? Its power, is strictly limited to the life in the theater or—like Aristotle's comprehension of tragedy—can also be found in the text itself? Does the myth eventually wane over from generation to generation, or its ever-fueled by the energy liberated from a historical singularity? Can its unadulterated force be conserved through over-technicized means, like a live performance streamed online through different digital platforms?

Hamlet portrayed the main political themes of the Elizabethan years. However, this would have not been sufficient enough to consider Shakespeare's play as a "myth"—despite its undisputed classic status—, as such themes perform at its best as topical elements. On the contrary, the procrastination of Prince Hamlet is what really stands out in the play. He is the archetypical figure of modern individuality, and the tragic fate that surrounds him. His existential dead-ends foreshadow what will become the main feature of the modern individual, namely, an overgrown feeling of impending doom. Such a distinctive trait developed in the onset of political catastrophe. According to this, *Hamlet*'s energy is raw action, a sudden shock of emotions that were able to signal the immediate biographical context of the Elizabethan audience. Its mythical status, therefore, cannot be ignored, as it compels the shared historical experience of the public sphere. Conversely, it cannot be simply created with artistry and zest by the genius of a single individual, even if the individual in question is Shakespeare himself. It transforms the hearsays, rumors, and secrecy into a lively yet modified image of the very content that could not be explicitly mentioned. The smothered political discourse of Elizabethan citizens was taken into full extent through an extraordinary conversion of materials. Human voices were now deposited in linguistic somersaults interpreted by dream-like characters, whose aching and discomfort coalesced into an eerily, familiar sensation. The play was transformative, it transforms, and certainly transformed the mindset of an old Carl Schmitt. The "mirror of nature" is a massive surface, resistant enough to become impervious to coming centuries, and larger than life. It is both a social and

psychological index, as peoples and individuals can see themselves living in Elsinore and in the metaphysical whereabouts of Prince Hamlet's soliloquies. Therefore, every character and every situation in *Hamlet* function as a mirror where Schmitt was able to recognize and acknowledge current events and situations. And yet some other obscenities needed to be uncovered, a nameless act that unnerved and pervaded the common ground of a people, namely, its reality. If the killing of King Hamlet exposed the treason that wretched for good the political harmony of Elsinore—early sixteenth century England—and its future, perhaps the atrocities of WWI and WWII were a topic too obscure to refer directly to. Therefore, the greatest of all plays was the precise artifact where a complex set of puzzling calling-outs could be shouted at safe distance. By baptizing its universal, artistic features in mythical waters, Schmitt used *Hamlet* as his personal spiritual totem. Also, this mythic attribute performed as an ideological firewall for Schmitt, as its higher power could back down any accusation of a merely psychological *Selbstidentifikation*—as Walter Warnach's indulgent and mildly censored by the FAZ review[24] of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* reminds—of his author. In this perspective, Schmitt would have failed to his own anti-romantic credo, for his essay on *Hamlet* could have been understood as yet another kindred-oriented exercise towards *Hamlet*—a modern tradition of its own within the German spirit. In this perspective, I do not share the views of Andreas Höfele[25]—whom revivifies Hugo Ball's considerations on how fond of romanticism Schmitt was—concerning the unassumed romantic orientation of the author of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. This would mean that there is a strict, single use of literary sources, namely, self-identification through speculative fiction. On the very contrary, self-identification comes as the first, mandatory level of usage of literature—and outside literature, too, as one can only seriously relate with subjects which more or less touch one's own biography. This is rather a condition more than a choice; a condition that, in fact, later on, could lead to a higher level of comprehension—which is indeed the very aim of Schmitt at the moment of underlining the hermeneutical advantages of art regarding history. Schmitt beamed through the play a reversed image of Germany and Europe, where the latter was devastation and historical debris, now placed within the foreign limits imposed by the social architecture of the Allies. The former, a docile set of instructions of intellectuals and political

24. See Höfele 2021, 7.
25. Höfele 2021, 8-9.

clerks whose national relinquishment was safely hidden in plain academic sight. A reviled jurist dared to defy both faces of a single taboo, that is, that good does not prevail over evil. Good, in fact, was evil. *Hamlet* always comes in clutch.

A final word must be said regarding the meaning of the concept of "myth" in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, namely, what does the myth—or the "mythical"—stands for according to Schmitt? It is somehow difficult to provide a positive account of what "mythical" meant for Schmitt, as he uses this word as a superlative; that is, as a higher quality that only *Hamlet* could achieve. One might think that "myth" meant for Schmitt secularized myth; namely, the afterlife of allegoresis depicted in mirrorings of decisive vignettes of history. Put differently, Schmitt's theory of the myth meant the historical irruption of primitive forms of reality within a non-sacred, secularized epoch. There is not true politics without an authentic myth. In this perspective, the figure of Hamlet provided a well-rendering service.

The following investigation is divided into **two parts**, and displayed through five chapters. In the **first part**, I present a full examination of Carl Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. **Chapter 1** offers a methodological analysis of the monograph on *Hamlet*. It surveys its theoretical structure, and highlights the importance of Schmitt's main interlocutors by testing their intellectual contents regarding Schmitt's essay on *Hamlet*. Also, **Chapter 1** studies Schmitt's prologue to Lilian Winstanley's German version of her book on *Hamlet*. In it, the reader can have a glance of Schmitt's early takes on the "topicality" developed by Winstanley. This prologue—quite apologetic—performs as a blueprint of the monograph of 1956. In conjunction **Chapter 1** presents to the reader a full account of the philosophical dimension of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

Chapter 2 unfolds a point-by-point explanation of each one of the sections of Schmitt's essay on *Hamlet*. By conceptually connecting Schmitt's early notions of reality and seriousness—fully unfolded in his *Political Romanticism*—, **Chapter 2** emphasizes on the intellectual continuity of Schmitt's negative, reluctant considerations on modern art, and explains why this counter-modern perspective finds in the coarse nature of *Hamlet* its antidot—in this perspective, Schmitt's concurs on Hegel's dismissal of romanticism. The main goal of this second chapter is to display a structured reading of the *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, and to restore Schmitt's reluctance to modern art to its first theoretical sketches. His position regarding art never abandoned the philosophical range of Hegel's conception of the artwork.

The **second part** of this investigation expands both the theoretical and historical context of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, that is, it proposes a detailed account of Schmitt's meditations on an alternative philosophy of history. **Chapter 3** outlines a chronological and schematic survey of Schmitt's thought of the first half of the 1950s. In this third chapter the reader will be shown how the Spanish thinker Donoso Cortés spearheaded Schmitt's outlook of a philosophy of history. Donoso Cortés apocalyptic vision of historical events—a comprehension that curtailed any traits of social activity, and intensified the theological ground upon which human history unravels—fitted in the drop of the dime Schmitt's speculations on the inner dynamics of modern events.

Chapter 4 continues the exploration of Schmitt's work during the last half of the 1950s. Along *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, a series of essays and even Voltaire-esque dialogues on order and power encompassed—and strengthen—Schmitt's much scattered intellectual efforts on accounting for the conceptual grounds for a philosophy of history. Also, the two talks which accompanied the publication of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—and its philosophical counterparts—are here thoroughly discussed and studied.

Once this amplification of the conceptual core of the essay on *Hamlet* has been paved both in its genesis and intellectual context, **Chapter 5** explores the almost unknown meeting of the minds that somehow enabled the style and interpretation developed in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, namely, the importance of Max Kommerell's 1934 dissertation on Schiller for Schmitt's own theoretical interests. **Chapter 5** flags how crucial Schiller's *Wallenstein* became for Schmitt's ideas on historical parallels, allusions, and intrusions. Kommerell—the best friend of Hans-Georg Gadamer—posited a particular thesis regarding Schiller, that is, that the German playwright drama offers a hermeneutical background at the moment of evaluating political actions. In this perspective, in Schiller's *Wallenstein*—based on Albrecht von Wallenstein, the Bohemian mercenary of sixteenth century—an intrusion has been performed, too. While *Wallenstein* it is not mythical as *Hamlet*, its historical nature elicited in Schmitt several reflections on parallels and mirrorings. Along with the figure of Demetrius—the main character of Schiller's fragmentary play—, both Wallenstein and Hamlet are summoned in Schmitt's private reflections on history, art, and politics as a tragic activity. These meditations were put down in the very same years of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

Therefore, their place amidst Schmitt's conceptual hierarchy of his late work, becomes utmost important.

Finally, I conclude by assessing the importance the importance of Schmitt's work in the 1950s and his actuality regarding the current political and aesthetical debates is formulated. His non-systematic idea of a philosophy of history championed inner historical dynamics that conducted significant political events. Schmitt even saw in *Hamlet* a historical index—a curve—, where the Revolutions of 1848 unleashed a series of political episodes that were circumscribed to the historical horizon of the social upheaval that occurred that very same year. As Martin Tielke has recently stated, "Wichtiger aber ist, Hamlet ihm zur Chiffre bestimmter Situationen wurde"[26]. Governed by the dramatic rise and fall of Modern state, contemporary history cannot be properly grasped—according to Schmitt—through the Hegelian, Marxist, and Spenglerian perspectives. These models of historical interpretation simply denied or ignored the theological axis that was present in every political event. Moreover, such visions of history were unable to capture its tragic nature. Prince Hamlet's demise, Wallenstein's-stained moral duties, and Demetrius's political delusions, rightly proved the uncontrollable forces of history. A drab postcard of both Germany and himself was signed by Schmitt's reckless, perplexing ideas of the future in an already condemned technological world. Through *Hamlet*, Schmitt hit a bid away from his contemporaries. Hi exiled himself to historical connections and parallels. Schmitt's dying breed approach ultimately pointed at a complex yet fascinating concept of reality.

26 Tielke 2020, 23.

CHAPTER 1
HAMLET ODER HEKUBA'S GENESIS

Introduction

Carl Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba* (1956) is commonly referred to as a "little book" [*Büchlein*]. Indeed, it comprises no more than sixty-six pages—seventy-two, if we consider the sixth edition, revised and augmented.[27] The digest-size book's contents are divided into eight brief sections, two of which are appendixes. The aforementioned sixth edition adds the until recently unpublished 1956 conference entitled "What have I done?" ["Was habe ich getan?"], a private dissertation held in Peter Diederichs' home, one of the sons of the famous publisher Eugen Diederichs, given before his host and some other guests[28]. This monograph on *Hamlet* posits a particular thesis: Shakespeare's play was elevated into a myth as history—a concrete "piece of time"—intruded in it, enhancing its autonomous power and converting the play into a mythical entity. *Hamlet* is thus understood to be a political affair representing the events that surrounded the days of James I and Mary Stuart. This interpretation leads, in turn, to the following two sub-hypotheses: (1) the "taboo of the Queen"; namely, Mary Stuart's infamous remarriage, and (2) the "Hamletization of the avenger"; i.e., the never-ending intellectual procrastination of the prince. The first sub-hypothesis performs as a "historical parallel", an idea that Schmitt took up from Lilian Winstanley and then extended it according to his own reflections on the jurisprudential meaning of such a taboo. Schmitt points out the power of the concept of "play" [*Spiel*] by comparing the abiding status of drama, both serious and real. The conjunction of these elements made *Hamlet* so historically rich that it turned into a "modern myth." Thus, tragedy—according to Schmitt—flawlessly addresses history, just as history enables and drives higher art.

Despite its brevity, Schmitt's *Büchlein* is truly a powder keg of a monograph. In fact, as I aim to demonstrate in the following analysis, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is at once a political manifesto, a curious, enticing exercise of self-interpretation, and a witty and dead-serious portrayal of a post-war world. While *Hamlet* could be seen as another mask plucked by

27. The first edition of *Hamlet or Hecuba* is, indeed, seventy-two pages long.
28. See chapter 5 (5.1).

Schmitt from literature's[29] hall of fame, the melancholic prince avidly channels Schmitt's intellectual elements into a fitting endeavor. Schmitt's 1956 study of Shakespeare dwells on both esoteric and exoteric dimensions. Its thesis on "parallels", "allusions", and "intrusions", aim at demonstrating how modern history mirrors itself not in the reflection of classic tragedy, but in the delay of concrete actions. In the following chapters, I will closely read and analyze the sources and theses used and presented by Schmitt. My goal is to elucidate the structure, method, and vocabulary of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. I will now offer a full-fledged account of it.

1.1 A possible system of reading *Hamlet oder Hekuba*

It is important to mention that, despite being published in the mid-fifties—that is, amidst a fair amount of essays and monographs where Schmitt, on the one hand, continued the topics that he had first raised in the 1940s (international law, the concept of *nomos*, Hobbes's political theory, etc.), and, on the other, began to address the new crop of German intellectuals (Karl Löwith, Eric Voegelin, Reinhart Kosselleck)—the monograph on *Hamle*t was slowly put together upon a *geistigen Weg* (spiritual path) on which the main themes mentioned above—tragedy and history—are discussed by recurring to esoteric, non-academic sources. This viewpoint will distinguish Schmitt's writings from the beginning of the fifties onward. For example, at the very beginning of his essay on *Hamlet*, Schmitt makes the following warning:

> The following pages discuss the taboo of a queen and the figure of the avenger. This discussion leads into the question of the true origins of the tragic action, the question of the source of the tragic, which I can only locate in a historical reality.[30]

So far, so good. The theses are presented; namely, the unspoken principle that guides the drama toward history (the "taboo of a queen") and the unseen growth of subjectivity due to an utter avoidance of duty (the status of the "avenger"). Nonetheless, from these theses, one cannot simply be drawn to "the question of the origin of the tragic action" or "the source of

29. See Jiang 2017, 66–91; Mehring 2016, 142–143; Höfele 2022.
30. Schmitt 2009b, 5.

the tragic"; that is, the nexus between these theses and "historical reality" is not immediately logical. It can be considered necessary only if the following hypothesis is considered to be suitable; that is, the normative aspect of the "historical reality" regarding the topic of the tragedy. Otherwise, one could easily posit a more fitting alternative to the case—just as Gadamer did in his critique of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* in one of the appendixes of *Truth and Method*;[31] for instance, the autonomous yet spontaneous—and, therefore, incomplete and not omniscient—quality of every work of art or artistic expression with regard to its time. But it seems that history determines the lifetime of the artwork.

However, it is precisely from this normative dimension enabled by "historical reality" that I will elaborate a reconstruction in both analytical and interpretative terms—and I will do so, to put it in Schmittian terms, by addressing the esoteric and exoteric dimensions of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Normative here refers to the centripetal force of historical situations. In order to establish a clear distinction—but also a degree of inner cooperation—between these dimensions, I will first present a thorough analysis of the monograph on *Hamlet*. Second, I aim to prove the connection between Schmitt's essay and other texts he has published. Establishing this connection would allow us to grasp the unsystematic yet coherent development of Schmitt's thought in his late work. Conversely, I also want to show how this material was strongly connected to the "spiritual path" followed by Schmitt in his later years. Finally, I will posit that the "historical reality" thesis is praised as "objective" by Schmitt only because it is through this objectivity that he detaches himself and his interpretation of *Hamlet* from any kind of Romanticism. Politics is better understood onstage.

1.2 The Sources

1.2.1 Walter Benjamin's *Der Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*

Just after the quoted statement regarding the method chosen for his analysis of *Hamlet*, Schmitt mentions three books that he considers to be apt for both the Shakespeare "lover" and the "expert." I will commence with the last one: Walter Benjamin's *Der Ursprung des*

31. Gadamer 2004, 498–500.

deutschen Trauerspiels (1928).[32] It needs to be stated that, however much Schmitt stresses how this and the other two investigations provided him with "valuable information," Benjamin's book can hardly be considered apt for those uninitiated in Shakespeare. Even if we were to accept Schmitt's view, the extent of the theoretical impact of Benjamin's *The Origin of the German Trauerspiel* on *Hamlet oder Hekuba* remains unclear. Nonetheless, I shall now quote a long excerpt from the extremely uncanny *Erkenntniskritische Vorrede*:

> If the task of the philosopher is to practice the descriptive exposition of the world of ideas, such that the empirical world enters of itself into the world of ideas and dissolves in it, then the philosopher attains the elevated midpoint between scientist and artist. The latter devises a diminutive image of the idea-world and precisely thereby—because he renders it as figurative—devises an ultimate image in each present. The scientist predisposes the world to dispersion in the realm of ideas by dividing it up from within by means of concepts. (8)

Benjamin distinguishes the "descriptive exposition" provided by the philosopher from the scientist's "predisposition" of the world. This distinction is intended to be both a critique and a defense of the problem of "presentation" [*Darstellung*] in philosophy—much like Hegel's gesture in the preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*,[33] although from a more phenomenological-Husserlian perspective. While I cannot fully address the philosophical core of Benjamin's *Epistemo-Critical Foreword* and its impact on Schmitt's reflection on *Hamlet*, this quotation proves its epistemic kinship with Schmitt's notion of "intrusion." The cold work of the scientist presupposes an immediate affinity between the chosen subject of study and its content. This affinity is no other than the supposed coherence between concepts and ideas—which explains why the term *Wahrheit* appears as often as it does in the preface. However, Benjamin demands a keen, phenomenological approach that serves as a "revelation that does justice" to the "truth." This is the reason why I included the above quotation by Benjamin; it is precisely the artist who can devise "an ultimate image in each present." When Benjamin posits the theme of "justice" [*Ob Wahrheit dem Schönen gerecht zu werden vermag?*] regarding the truth, he consciously addresses the normative aspect that the work of

32. Benjamin 2019, 134–142. Page references are given in parentheses in the text.
33. Hegel 2018, 6–7.

art—or, according to him, the artist—engages from its privileged interpretation of its context (Benjamin's "each present" [*des Wirklichen*]). This is strikingly familiar to Schmitt's considerations on how the "intrusion into time" is to be seen within its "historical reality." Hence, in both Benjamin and Schmitt, the artist positively accesses the authentic core of a context by crafting a genuine image of his present. The normative aspect of tragedy is granted not by its ruling concepts but by the adequate viewpoint where ideas reveal themselves in their chaotic yet organic unity. This explains Benjamin's well-known sentence:

> Ideas are to things as constellations to stars. This is to say, first of all: they are neither their concepts nor their laws. They do not serve the knowledge of phenomena, and in no way can the latter be the criterion determining the existence of ideas. Rather, the meaning of phenomena for ideas is exhausted in their conceptual elements. […] Ideas are eternal constellations […]. (10)

What is the relation between this quotation and Schmitt's thesis on "intrusion" and, more specifically, his statement about Benjamin's book being highly *wertvolle*? First, because ideas—following Benjamin—hold a superior status when compared with the interpretations achieved by way of concepts. "[I]deas are the objective virtual arrangement of phenomena," states Benjamin following Kant. This means that in order to achieve the epistemic community sought by concepts, the philosopher must address the phenomena—the content of which is not ideas, however—"as their representation." The German *Trauerspiel—Hamlet* included, according to Benjamin—is meant to be grasped in its nature as an idea:

> The idea is something linguistic and, indeed, in the essence of the word, it is in each case that moment in which the word is symbol. (13)

If I am bringing up these almost undecipherable considerations, it is in order to expose Schmitt's baffling treatment of Benjamin's views in his considerations on *Hamlet*. What I am suggesting is that, if Schmitt had meant to consider *The Origin of the German Trauerspiel* in all seriousness, he evidently would have started by connecting these initial remarks. Indeed, Benjamin's views are connected to his interpretation of history through the epistemic potential of tragedy—given its ability to explain history by way of a non-historical

approach—and, thus, so too is Benjamin's conception of art as a beacon of comprehension. However, Schmitt mentions Benjamin on only two occasions; the first is found at the very beginning of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, when he mentions the "three books"; his second and final mention of Benjamin takes the form of an allusion to the last chapter of Benjamin's post-doctoral thesis on the German *Trauerspiel*. I will not extend my analysis of Benjamin further. The aforementioned excerpts are sufficient enough to take issue with Schmitt's claims that this investigation was one of the crucial materials for *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. However, Schmitt's appraisal for Benjamin is guided by a specific interest that is hard to detect in his published material—in fact, only by studying his unpublished documents can one fully appreciate that Schmitt quoted Benjamin's work precisely in order to gain visibility in the democratic context that arose within the German academy after World War II. Also, Benjamin is not mentioned in Schmitt's 1957 conference in Aachen. The key references to fully understand the "Hamlet-myth" were some other authors, like Goethe, Schlegel, Hermann Türck, Julius Bab, etc.

1.2.2 John Dover Wilson's *What Happens In Hamlet*

The second book recommended by Schmitt is John Dover Wilson's *What Happens in* Hamlet (1935–[51]).[34] Granted, because this is by far the most quoted author in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Although Dover Wilson's *What Happens in* Hamlet—along with his lifelong work devoted to the Bard—is still considered a classic for its global mapping out of Shakespeare's most famous drama, its place in Schmitt's own study is, again, not completely clear. Schmitt relies on Dover Wilson for two reasons. The first and quite obvious point is that Dover Wilson highlighted Shakespeare's historical context and the importance of the figure of James I (278). However, the second reason—unclearly linked with the first one—is Dover Wilson's critique of Salvador de Madariaga's interpretation of *Hamlet*—subsequently quoted by Schmitt in the following section. Rallying against "Señor de Madariaga," Dover Wilson argues that:

34. Dover Wilson 2003, 321–326 at 5. Page references are given in parentheses in the text.

> [t]he foregoing conclusions, for example, rest upon a number of broad historical and political generalizations which, coming from so eminent a publicist, are not for me a mere commentator to question, but which an Englishman, who has read a little in the literature of Shakespeare's time, finds somewhat perplexing. (322)

One might ask: What conclusions are those? It bears recalling that de Madariaga's main thesis was that *Hamlet* could never be grasped following the approach of a "modern Englishman," for "[t]he era of Shakespeare is the era of Spain" (vii). De Madariaga aimed to prove that *Hamlet* was a "philosophical" portrayal of Cesare Borgia (327). Dover Wilson, on the contrary, provided a stylized critique of de Madariaga's vitriolic analysis. And just after laying bare de Madariaga's rhapsodic approach and interpretation, he concludes:

> This is to read *Hamlet* like a book, a historical monograph, or a personal record such as the *Autobiography* of Benvenuto Cellini, instead of being, as it was and is, an elaborate work of dramatic art, written for an acting company in London at the beginning of the seventeenth century. (328)

What is at stake for Dover Wilson is precisely the artistic genius of Shakespeare and the autonomous feature of this "work of dramatic art." In de Madariaga's case, *Hamlet* represents a work of art in which modern understandings of the play are inevitably skewed, while historical—and Hispanic—approaches catch the spiritual significance of Shakespeare's virtuous, moral, and deeply Catholic characters. The main problem with this type of identification is that it leaves the door open for a progressive asymmetry of, on the one hand, the cognitive potential of the work of art, and, on the other, the false impressions that an era might have of it. Following this perspective, Dover Wilson impressively warns of the dangers posed by de Madariaga's approach:

> […] while from among the various "psychological spines" offered by the critics, each age selects the one which corresponds best with the human type most in the popular eye. Thus it was left to the period of Hitler to reveal Hamlet as a ruthless paranoiac. Such in effect is Señor de Madariaga's solution; for though he speaks of the Spaniard Cesare Borgia, not the Austrian Adolf Hitler, the two men belong to the same type;

> and I hazard the guess that but for the paperhanger of Vienna the eminent publicist from Spain would never have taken to redecorating Hamlet's soul. (325)

However, it will be this kind of assimilation that Schmitt will outstrip with his thesis on "intrusion." Schmitt positively addresses the critique of Dover Wilson, but neither approves nor rejects Madariaga's claim. He merely mentions how this critique "demonstrates" the "unfathomability" of "the secret of Hamlet" (19). How, then, does he dismiss de Madariaga's thesis while simultaneously acknowledging its epistemic potential (something quite Hegelian)?[35] Schmitt stresses the value of Dover Wilson's exposition on the "three different views on ghosts and ghostly apparitions"[36] and then goes on to ask if, in not addressing the relationship between Hamlet and James I, Dover Wilson had not himself fallen prey to the aforementioned taboo. It must be noticed that it is by means of the thesis "of the taboo," in conjunction with the "Hamletization of the avenger," that Schmitt will craft his concept of "intrusion." De Madariaga missed the point in his interpretation of *Hamlet* by not addressing this very *Zusammenhang* in its profoundness; instead, he merely scratched the historical surface of the "modern myth" by the limited means of historical description and literary comparisons. Schmitt's "intrusions," on the contrary, develop the normative aspect of a crucial event—the "concrete situation"—by stressing how history fuels tragedy to the point of turning a "work of dramatic art" into a myth. Thus, de Madariaga's intuition is now recast into a new interpretation, now sufficiently broadened to include Dover Wilson's warning about seeing Hamlet through the popular, tormented eyes of a war-time public.

1.2.3. Lilian Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession*

Finally, the first book that Schmitt claims is crucial for *Hamlet oder Hekuba*: Lilian Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession: Being an Examination of the Relations of the Play of* Hamlet *to the Scottish Succession and the Essex Conspiracy*[37] (1921).[38] It is probably Winstanley's investigation on the historical connection between Shakespeare's

35. Hegel 2018, 16.
36. Schmitt 2009b, 28.
37. Page references to this edition are given in parentheses in the text.
38. Schmitt's daughter, Anima, translated the book into German in 1952. See Winstanley 1952, 7–25. Schmitt's preface to the German edition is clearly the overture to *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

tragedy and the political events surrounding the creation of *Hamlet* that made Schmitt consider establishing the "intrusion" thesis that fully articulates his book on *Hamlet*. But, then again, we face a blurry landscape when attempting to account for the impact of Winstanley's book on Schmitt's. I will anticipate that the critical notion common to both books is the concept of "history." Here are the very first words of Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession*:

> It is the purpose of the following essay to study the play of *Hamlet* from a somewhat fresh point of view by endeavoring to show its relation or possible relation to contemporary history. (1)

While for those readers whose knowledge of *Hamlet* ends with Fortinbras's seer-like last words or even for those familiar with Shakespeare Winstanley's statement may present a compelling point of view, the truth is that—following Schmitt's knowledgeable awareness of Winstanley's critiques—for some European scholars this whole "relation to contemporary history" was fanciful at best. Schmitt mentions "[o]ne well-known Anglicist in Zürich" who tried to "destroy the disruptive book once and for all."[39] Schmitt himself then mocks this critique and dismisses it. For both Winstanley and Schmitt, the core of *Hamlet* lied precisely in the strength of the relation between history and tragedy. However, while for him this connection was far from linear and far closer to an unrepeatable formula whose elements were able to renew the everlasting power of the myth, for Winstanley, the link between history and tragedy was the common theme of a strong, undeniable comparison:

> Is it probable that Shakespeare selected his material and chose his plot largely that his play might appeal to interests then paramount in the minds of his audience? (14)

So asks Winstanley after establishing an array of similitudes between Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice* and respectively setting them against the historical context of sixteenth-century Scotland and the trial of Roderigo Lopez—a Jewish citizen who "attempted

39. The "well-known Anglicist in Zürich" is Bernhard Fehrn, who acridly dismissed Winstanley's all-too historicist thesis on Hamlet "being" James I. See Fehrn 1924, 1–15 at 7–8. According to Fehrn, Winstanley's far-fetched hypothesis is based on an erroneous equivalence between the work of art and that which attains, through the "artistic symbolic," an eternal-like status of "truth."

to murder the queen and Don Antonio: Lopez was executed in 1594" (11). Here is another difference between Schmitt's approach to *Hamlet* and Winstanley's: while for her, most of Shakespeare's dramas were subject to a "relation or a possible relation to contemporary history," according to Schmitt, on the contrary, only *Hamlet* surpasses the condition of historical sketch and reaches the "mythical" dimension of tragedy. According to this perspective, *Hamlet* is an exception. Although Schmitt does not mention this word, he was so fond of it in either his *Hamlet* essay or in the prologue of Winstanley's book German translation, that one easily can think of *Hamlet* as an exception to this view: an "intrusion" is certainly neither a formula, nor a genre. Despite how much Schmitt positively assimilates Winstanley's investigation, his claim of the historical strength of *Hamlet* being surpassed by the play's mythical dimension evidently were not sustained by Winstanley's expansive analogies. Schmitt did take sides with her when it came to the psychological scope given to the play by "modern criticism." Winstanley asks: "Are we justified in interpreting Shakespeare, as completely as we do, from a modern psychological standpoint? (22). Naturally, we are not, for "Shakespeare's greatest characters are not predominantly psychological, in our sense of the term […]." Her approach, subsequently, must address both the differences between sixteenth-century psychology and the current concept of it and "a careful study of the history of the time." Winstanley sums up her investigation as follows:

> Shakespeare wrote his plays for a definite audience at a definite point of time. […] It should, therefore, be possible to discover with more or less accuracy what the plays would mean for their intended audience, and we cannot be sure that we comprehend them fully until we study the point of view of this audience. (31)

And so Winstanley proceeds to list in detail the "political situation at the exact moment *Hamlet* was written" (44). It is worth mentioning the similarities one can, in fact, establish between her concepts and Schmitt's notions. "Definite point of time" does indeed point to the same local phenomenon that Schmitt, at the beginning of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, refers to as the *geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit* of *Hamlet*. Also, for both Winstanley and Schmitt, the focal point is how Shakespeare—who wrote and created in service of the "Elizabethan audience"—brought to life an unwashed, raw piece of dramatic work. This tragedy thus demands an organic comprehension. In sum, for both Schmitt and Winstanley, "modern

criticism's" fragmentary and partial approach to the play should be corrected by establishing a link between the political events of the early sixteenth century and Shakespeare's earthly yet supreme talent for correctly portraying and mirroring James I and Mary Stuart. *Hamlet* was a tragedy because times were tragic.

But is this truly so?

To posit an authentic comprehension of a tragedy—perhaps *the* tragedy—by way of a historical method so profoundly based on "topicality"[40] certainly entails serious difficulties, especially when it comes to pondering questions that go beyond Shakespeare's status as a creator. The second obstacle is connected with the fact that any historical context can potentially be scrutinized by studying the cultural artifacts produced within the frame of its time. It would only take a thorough survey of the correspondences between a number of well-heeled individuals, but also books, notes, and popular themes, and then a further comparison between these and a drama or play—say, a tragedy of early modernity—to outdo any other approach that aims to decipher the core of a historical work. Furthermore, such a thesis would seemingly call for a strange notion of history; namely, a linear, causal time where events move forward, going from left to right. This kind of historicism could only prove that history rules everything. How then, despite their methodological differences, does Schmitt make use of Winstanley's investigation?

1.3 The Method

After reviewing these three books, Schmitt establishes his own approach:

> Whoever has thought long enough about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and its many interpretations is familiar with the unfathomable depths of this topic. He sees that many tracks lead into these depths but only a few lead out again. Whoever, in addition—like myself—arrives at the conclusion that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has something to do with historical King James, the son of Mary Stuart, runs into many taboos as well as the risk of additional misreadings. (5)

40. See Kurland 1994, 292–3.

"He or she" being clearly Winstanley or Schmitt. Likewise, characterizing *Hamlet* as a topic whose "unfathomable depths" [*die Abrgründigkeit des Themas*] invariably entails a misleading number of interpretations is a gesture of sheer rhetoric. According to this dramatic conception, an examination so aware of, first, the inner difficulties of *Hamlet* and second, the kinship between King James and Hamlet, immediately rises above any other approach—be it psychological, sociological, aesthetic, etc. This is one of the reasons that made *Hamlet* such an interesting topic for Schmitt in the fifties: the risk of conjuring current taboos by unmasking the themes on which these very taboos were established. Winstanley posited a similar yet very different view:

> My method will be to compare the play with the *Amleth* story on the one side and the historical details on the other, and to show that the action of the play far more closely agrees with that of history than with that of the saga, and also that the main problems of the play are not the problems of the saga but are certainly of the history. (49)

What differentiates Winstanley's interpretations from Schmitt's is the performative aspect of their approaches. While for the former, these comparisons did not involve any kind of "risks," for the latter, an interpretation of this type was not only to be seen as atypical but exceptional. Its dangerousness lay in proving the uncomfortable similitude between Elsinore's bloody secrecy and modern Germany—and maybe all of Europe. *Hamlet* was the starting point of an unphased schlep that was visible by very few minds. If, in Winstanley's position, *Hamlet* was to be comprehended by history, according to Schmitt, history was meant to be accessed through *Hamlet*[41]. Winstanley's approach was deeply entrenched in historicism. Schmitt's method established a new threshold: from history to tragedy. While Winstanley reconstructs a déjà vu, Schmitt's reminds us that the play embodies, in fact, a déjà vécu. Schmitt summarizes this idea as follows in his *Vorbemerkung*:

> I could easily help my cause by citing the statement of a very well-known English author, who writes: "About any one so great as Shakespeare, it is probable that we can never be right; and if we can never be right, it is better that we should from time

41 See *Introduction*, 9-10.

> to time change our ways of being wrong." […] I would like to ask the reader for a few moments of his attention, presuming that the topic of *Hamlet* is dear to his heart. And this is something that I may be permitted to presume, as otherwise he would not have opened this book and read this preface. (5–6)

This is indeed a strange way to end a preface. First, quoting T. S. Eliot's essay *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca* (1927)[42] can turn out to be a double-edged sword, especially when attempting an analytical reconstruction of the sources and Schmitt's use of them for his views on *Hamlet*. While this assertion sums up the immense number of modern interpretations on Shakespeare, Eliot's aim was no other than to detach himself from those scholars who made Shakespeare out to be a "fatigued, retired Anglo-Indian, messianic, ferocious" author. Eliot's humble interpretation is focused on how Shakespeare used the cultural material available in his time—just like did Dante with "the system of St. Thomas"—namely, Stoicism, Machiavelli, and Montaigne, to create, "from his own emotions," a colossal work of art. The creation of *Hamlet*, for instance, should be grasped as the brilliant process of an individual who did not think, but rather used and felt the "greatest emotional intensity of his time." As can be seen, this kind of approach severely differs from that of Schmitt. Whereas Schmitt—via Winstanley—acknowledges the work of Shakespeare as a process perfectly synchronized with both the political circumstances of Mary Stuart and James I and the passions of the Elizabethan audience, Eliot merely sees *Hamlet*'s unique combination of simplicity and brilliance as the organic unity created by Shakespeare within the bloody context of the sixteenth century. Moreover, the distance between these two approaches—which can be mistaken for affinity if Schmitt's 1956 book preface is read naively—is even more blatant in Eliot's *Hamlet and His Problems* (1919). Here are the very first lines of this essay:

> Few critics have ever admitted that *Hamlet* the play is the primary problem, and Hamlet the character only secondary. And Hamlet the character has had an especial temptation for that most dangerous type of critic: the critic with a mind which is naturally of the creative order, but which through some weakness in creative power exercises itself in criticism indeed. […] Such a mind had Goethe, who made of Hamlet a Werther; and such had Coleridge, who made of Hamlet a Coleridge. (141)

42. Eliot 1999, 126–140. Page references to this edition are given in parentheses in the text.

The play being the "primary problem" naturally means that Shakespeare did not create his classic hero from an individualistic standpoint. The character is not the core of the play: on the contrary, *Hamlet* abounds in centers—or, using Schmitt's vocabulary, *Hamlet* is a *pluriversum* and not a dramatic unity as such.[43] And while Schmitt certainly did not feel tempted to turn Hamlet the character into a Schmitt—although he did so with *Othello* and some other like-minded figures—his approach bluntly differs, again, from that of Eliot. The American poet ponders:

> It is not merely the 'guilt of a mother' that cannot be handled as Shakespeare handled the suspicion of Othello, the infatuation of Antony, or the pride of Coriolanus. The subject might conceivably have expanded into a tragedy like these, intelligible, self-complete, in the sunlight. *Hamlet*, like the sonnets, is full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art. (144)

Eliot's well-known statement that *Hamlet* "is most certainly an artistic failure" finds its significance in this quote. Shakespeare cannot be seen as a genius gifted by the gods with "the eye doth see the heavens opening," of which Schiller sings in *Das Lied von der Glocke*.[44] Likewise, the so-called taboo postulated by Schmitt as half of the spiritual kernel that transmogrifies *Hamlet* into a "modern myth" is nowhere to be found in Eliot's article. The "guilt of a mother" is just another element that expresses the human excess at which Shakespeare excelled, addressing it vigorously in all its murky unconsciousness. To ascertain that "the taboo of a queen" and the "person of the avenger" were an unseen reflection of the political turmoil of a "historical reality" and then include these elements in a thesis which posits that they were scattered throughout a peerless dramatic work might appear as an enticing yet far-fetched thesis for Eliot. However, Schmitt's thesis on "the intrusion of time into play" should still be considered seriously for the following reasons. First, Eliot stresses the limits of modern interpretations regarding an incomplete work of art from the sixteenth century. One cannot simply address the character Hamlet as a conscious, pioneering agent of whatever feature the modern discipline of contemporary criticism wants to pin on him.

43. Schmitt 2015a, 51.
44. Schiller 1992, 56–68. The English translation quoted is Marianna Wertz's. See Wertz 2005.

Hamlet the play represents Shakespeare's greatest use of the material of his own life. Second, when Schmitt discusses his notion of "intrusion," he is addressing the shared value that *Hamlet* represents for us. Even when he concurs with Winstanley's historical approach, his insistence on the uniqueness of this myth-making play in comparison with other dramatic creations—say, those of Schiller or Grillparzer—hinges on the spiritual community opened up by *Hamlet*. This community—namely, an intergenerational public that is able to feel represented by Shakespeare's work, notwithstanding the four centuries that separates the play from its twentieth-century spectators—asks not for the interpretation but for the signification of *Hamlet*. Schmitt, as both an interpreter and a member of this public, aims to uncover the historical significance that structures *Hamlet* and not, on the contrary, to enhance the play by way of a novel interpretation. There is a distance between Eliot and Schmitt for the simple reason that the poet stresses the interpretative aspect of *Hamlet*, while Schmitt analyzes the significant—or juridical—dimension of the play. That is why the latter presumes that *Hamlet* "is a topic dear" to the reader's "heart." This "closeness" is the spiritual community that comes to life after a dramatic play reaches a mythical status—or so we are told by Schmitt. Although the modern critics of *Hamlet* could outwardly be seen as vying for the correct approach when it comes to the ultimate, definitive analysis of Shakespeare's tragedy, Schmitt is more interested in objectively retracing the momentous emergence of a play that transformed a finite historical stage into theater overflowing with myth. Schmitt obviously does not come to terms with those Shakespeare scholars that set the standard for reading *Hamlet*. Moreover, he scathingly ends the preface of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* by stating that the reader "otherwise […] would not have opened this book and read this preface." If the book on *Hamlet* is an airtight monograph on the historical input that electrified *Hamlet* for the centuries, the expression "this preface" should be read in the broadest sense of the term; that is, both as the *Vorbemerkung* to a little book dedicated to Shakespeare's tragedy par excellence and as a preface dedicated to the fate of a death-ravaged Europe. While the conception of history upheld by Schmitt might be seen as inevitable, like some meta-historical Markov chain charging future events with the significance of past and crucial situations that ultimately remain beyond the diminished minds of the present, his uneasy approach to *Hamlet* is to reveal the current coordinates of Europe and their recasting within the plot lines of past turmoil and historical events.

1.4 Introduction to *Hamlet oder Hekuba*

Schmitt asserts that "[t]he drama *Hamlet*, *Prince of Denmark* has been the subject of an endless number of interpretations."[45] That is a first. However, Schmitt endeavors to remind readers that his essay is not just another interpretation. He says that "[t]he mournfully dressed, melancholy prince has become in the end a primal image of the human condition" [… *ist schließlich zu einem Urbild menschlicher Problematik geworden*]. A "primal image" is an endless source of identification. *Hamlet* is a universal figure, close at hand, primed for any play. Considering this context, Schmitt goes on to say:

> The symbolic force of this figure has produced an authentic myth that finds its justification in a process of inexhaustible transformation. The eighteenth-century poets of the German *Sturm und Drang*—Lessing, Herder, Goethe—began this process by making their own myth out of Hamlet. […] In the first third of our own twentieth century, the founder of the psychoanalytic school, Sigmund Freud, put forth the assertion that every neurotic is either an Oedipus or a Hamlet, depending on whether his neurosis is fixated on the father or the mother.

This is almost identical to the considerations made by Eliot almost 40 years before *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Nonetheless, Eliot did not believe that critics could find the myth in *Hamlet* following an individualistic approach. Schmitt's use of adjectives—*Hamlet* is an "abyss," "a primal image of the human condition," a myth that has suffered "inexhaustible transformation"—might convince the reader that his is an isolated, groundbreaking viewpoint. The truth is that, at least in the very first paragraphs of his monograph, Schmitt describes *Hamlet* in the same dispassionate fashion as Eliot—drawing the line precisely with his boldly revisionist vocabulary. He mentions that "[f]rom such an excess of psychological interpretation, an inescapable labyrinth has been created." Now Schmitt let himself be guided by the same anti-psychologism as Winstanley. This approach was replaced, after World War I, with a "strictly historical approach." Without naming him, Schmitt is referring here to Dover Wilson. And then he concludes:

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45. Schmitt 2009b, 7.

> Shakespeare was now above all a dramatist of the Elizabethan age, his plays written for his London public. We will have more to say about this.

This is the exact moment of departure of Schmitt's approach from that of both Winstanley and Eliot. Considering the character of Hamlet an endless vessel, capable of carrying any psychological content, would be playing with that "stick with two ends that one can turn round and round" that Schmitt indirectly quotes from Dostoevsky.

1.4.1 On Freud's *Dostoevsky and Parricide*

In fact, this is a paraphrase of Sigmund Freud's essay *Dostoevsky and Parricide* [1927–8].[46] Freud detects "in the rich personality of Dostoevsky [f]our facets: the creative artist, the neurotic, the moralist and the sinner." Freud proceeds to shed light on the figure of Dostoevsky through a psychoanalytical account of the Russian writer's epilepsy. Freud posits that this was a symptom of his inner affliction; namely, his "strong innate bisexual disposition" that "becomes one of the preconditions or reinforcements of neurosis." The expression of this condition was, according to Freud, Dostoevsky's "latent homosexuality." The writer retains himself. This explains "the repression of the hatred of the father" and its lingering manifestation in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–80). Freud asserts:

> But what has been said so far does not exhaust the consequences of the repression of the hatred of the father in the Oedipus complex. There is something fresh to be added: namely that in spite of everything the identification with the father finally makes a permanent place for itself in the ego. It is received into the ego, but establishes itself there as a separate agency in contrast to the rest of the content of the ego. We then give it the name of super-ego and ascribe to it, the inheritor of the parental influence, the most important functions. (242)

It is not difficult to see how Freud's thesis on Dostoevsky could hold as long as the "identification with the father finally makes a permanent place in the ego." This identification

46. Freud 1997, 234–55. Page references to this edition are given in parentheses in the text.

entails a productive dimension. The "ego becomes masochistic," while the super-ego "has become sadistic." This asymmetry enables the relation between ego and super-ego to become dynamic. Hence, the figure of the father foreshadows the increase in the sadistic element by intensifying the prevalence of the masochistic aspect. In other words, the ego achieves its representation in a foreign yet kindred presence. Representation, then, must be reproduced in a different realm. Freud states:

> To sum up, the relation between the subject and his father-object, while retaining its content, has been transformed into a relation between the ego and the super-ego—a new setting on a fresh stage [*eine Neuinszenierung auf einer zweiten Bühne*]. (243–244)

What could be seen as a mere boutade aimed at the modern interpretative trends of *Hamlet* provides, in fact, a considerable hermeneutic insight into the esoteric architecture of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. There are three reasons for this. First, that in *Dostoevsky and Parricide*—which Freud himself considered a "trivial essay" that was "written reluctantly"[47]—even the psychoanalytical approach must surrender to the vocabulary of theater. Just as Freud posited that the ego of Dostoevsky accepted his political imprisonment in Siberia "as a substitute for the punishment he deserved for his sin against his real father"—for the sadistic super-ego rules the "mental economy" that the ego must blindly satisfy and pay—so too the psychoanalytical approach has to establish a new identification outside its own ego. This odd feature of the "complex of Oedipus" can be understood through Freud's caveat:

> Everyone who is familiar with the complicated transformation of meaning undergone by hysterical symptoms will understand that no attempt can be made here to follow out the meaning of Dostoevsky's attacks beyond this beginning. (245)

It is not for a moment my intention to turn Freud against his own thesis. To do so would only confirm his quotation from Dostoevsky regarding the "stick with two ends," which so incisively depicts psychology. On the contrary, I argue that Freud's use of the image of the

47. The quotations are taken from a letter Freud sent to Theodor Reik apropos of the stinging review written by his Austrian student. Both the review and the letter were published in 1929 in the *Imago* journal. See Reik 1940, 158–76 and 73–4.

theater—quite significant if one notes how the expression *die Bühne* is used just once—must be considered crucial. That the ego—finite and limited by a greater economy—undergoes a "transformation of meaning" on "a fresh stage" bluntly means that the ego's history (here, the guilt of Dostoevsky "for his sin against his real father") inevitably crushes against its "new setting": in Dostoevsky's case, "his attitude towards the authority of the state and towards belief in God." These attitudes developed that "guilt" in his works, the most important of them being *The Brothers Karamazov*. Freud sums up the dynamic between the spheres of "the authority of the State" and "belief in God" in the following terms:

> In the first of these he ended up with complete submission to his Little Father, the Tsar, who had once performed with him in *reality* the comedy of killing which his attacks had so often represented in *play*. Here penitence gained the upper hand. (…) If on the whole he did not achieve freedom and became a reactionary, that was because the filial guilt, which is present in human beings generally and on which religious feeling is built […]. (245–246)

By now, it should be obvious why I am quoting these excerpts from *Dostoevsky and Parricide*. I consider that Schmitt mentions this essay precisely due to the similitude between Freud's model of the Oedipus complex and his notion of "intrusions." That the ego transports itself onto a "stage" is more than significant when it comes to Schmitt's quoting Freud's quote from Dostoevsky. For both thinkers, a "transformation of meaning"—in Freud's terms—or an "intrusion of time"—following Schmitt—necessarily implies a creative, theatrical expression. Dostoevsky's "guilt" could then, by escaping to its manifestation in the ego's own finite setting, be "represented as *play*." Freud means by "play" the actions of Dostoevsky as a die-hard gambler—and yet the autonomous aspect of "play" is also implied in this kind of agency.

The second reason why I believe that Freud's *Dostoevsky and Parricide* had an important impact on *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is the article's reference to *Hamlet*. After determining Dostoevsky's "intellectual inhibition due to his neurosis," Freud asserts:

> I can scarcely be owing to chance that three of the masterpieces of the literature of all time—the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Dostoevsky's

> *The Brothers Karamazov*—should all deal with the same subject, parricide. In all three, moreover, the motive for the deed, sexual rivalry for a woman, is laid bare. (246)

Freud does not state that these "three masterpieces" possess a common core: parricide. On the contrary, while Sophocles represented how Oedipus committed "the frightful deed unwittingly," only to "then realize after [that there was] blood-relationship,"[48] or Shakespeare depicted Elsinore in line with the obscure rumors about Mary Stuart's actions, or the fact that Dostoevsky masterly elaborated how a desired woman led both a father and his son to enter the eternal fire—significantly, in all three tragedies the bloody rivalry "of a woman" takes center stage. While I cannot tackle Freud's view regarding Sophocles and Dostoevsky, I will focus on his remarks about *Hamlet*.

Freud states:

> In the English play the presentation is more indirect; the hero does not commit the crime himself; it is carried out by someone else, for whom it is not parricide. The forbidden motive of sexual rivalry for the woman does not need, therefore, to be disguised. Moreover, we see the hero's Oedipus complex, as it were, in a reflected light, by learning the effect upon him of the other's crime. (246–247)

It is somehow amusing that Freud considers Hamlet's indirect "learning" by way of the crime committed by King Claudius and not, on the contrary, the evident "guilt" that he felt after Ophelia's suicide—a much more concrete guilt, for it recalls the sexual assault that she suffered at Hamlet's hands.[49] At Ophelia's burial, the tormented prince exclaims:

> I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
> Could not, with all their quantity of love,
> Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?[50]

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48. *Poetics*, IIII, 43, 32–3.
49. The following account of Ophelia's rape is based on Bonnefoy 2015, 82–99.
50. 5.1.66–8. Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

Too little, too late. Ophelia and Hamlet's affair was a poisoned one. And although she sings of how everything was promised to her in the day of love—"To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day, / all in the morning betime, / And I a maid at your window, / To be your Valentine"[51]–. Ophelia's heart was first plundered by Hamlet's vicious actions. Just after Polonius bids goodbye to Reynaldo, Ophelia enters:

> My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
> Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
> Not hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
> Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
> Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of horrors, he comes before me.[52]

The reader may infer that this pathetic image of Hamlet is related to the shock provoked by the sudden appearance of the Ghost. However, fast-forwarding to the scene between Queen Gertrude and Ophelia, the pain-induced ditties sung by Ophelia are eerily related to that "doublet all unbraced" she mentioned to Polonius: "Larded with sweet flowers / Which bewept to the grave did go / With true-love showers."[53] The musical death-wish of Ophelia sings of a physical infatuation that destroyed a stillborn "true-love." And the last hours of her existence are now devoted to collecting flowers, each one of them mourning the mangled shreds of her soul:

> There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.[54]

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51. 4.5.47–50.
52. 2.1.78–85.
53. 4.5.37–39.
54. 4.5.175–176.

Laertes's momentum impedes him from fully addressing the hidden content of Ophelia's other-worldly instructions: "A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted,"[55] he will retort with gripping awe. Moreover, the compelling demand for memory—the word "remembrance" is here twice repeated by both brothers: first as a last will, then as the unexpected lucidness of madness—is openly related with Hamlet. He needs to remember because the unguided force of his hesitation constantly replaces the sole moral task that he must fulfill with new, abstract affairs. Also, the frailty of the flower was first considered to be a feature of Hamlet, while Ophelia had earlier been described by her brother as "[a] violet in the youth of primy nature."[56] It is indeed an impeccable description of the prince: "[…] sweet, not lasting." Laertes pleas for "remembrance" as the primal protection for his sister—"Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well / What I have said to you"—the sister then protects the sacred word of her brother under oath: "'Tis in my memory lock'd, / And you yourself shall keep the key of it."[57] But in *Hamlet*, the place of women is displaced, "out of joint." Memory, then, becomes the ultimate human resource for Ophelia. And although she will eventually be totally displaced, Hamlet is constantly misplaced. The value of repetition is a crucial element of all interactions with the prince: "Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me," the Ghost urges Hamlet. "Hold, hold my heart […]" he goes on to say in ardent tones. And then: "O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain."[58] The unsung voice of the Ghost now becomes a motto for the prince: "Now to my word; / It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'" As soon as the dead king leaves, both Marcellus and Horatio exclaim: "My lord, my lord." Just as King Hamlet acts within a two-fold sphere—both as a majestic, unresolved crime and as a ghost—everything inside *Hamlet* is in conflict with reflexivity. "Who's there," asks Bernardo: a dead body. Who is Bernardo? Nobody. And while everybody will be touched by Hamlet's overelaborate plans, our final bleak vision of Ophelia is cast aside and superseded by Queen Gertrude's guilty body.

If I am delaying the analysis of Schmitt's book with these considerations, it is for the following reason: I do not share Freud's interpretation of Hamlet's Oedipus complex being manifested "in a reflected light." On the contrary, I posit that the prince's guilt is, in fact,

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55. 4.5.178.
56. 1.3.61.
57. 1.3.85–86.
58. 1.5.106.

related to his lustful attitude—and hubris—toward Ophelia. The considerable disadvantage of reading *Hamlet* according to this psychoanalytical approach lies in dismissing the prince's unstable agency. Although it deals with "the sexual rivalry for the woman," *Hamlet* loses strength as a play when interpreted from the psyche of its characters. I consider that while Schmitt shared and saw the similarities between the ego/super-ego dynamic and his notion of intrusion, the grave lack of historicity in Freud's analysis convinced Schmitt to dismiss any psychological viewpoint in his reading of *Hamlet*. This leads me to the third reason why Freud's *Dostoevsky and Parricide* was important for Schmitt. While "the taboo of the Queen" is one of Schmitt's strong theses, its relation with the taboo developed in Freud's essay is weak. The "indirect" parricide of King Hamlet, seen by Prince Hamlet in "a reflected light," is the expression of an inherent condition of the human psyche. By contrast, the "taboo" on which Schmitt bases his concept of "intrusion" is enhanced by politics. Its unspeakable content bends the future of the state—with Denmark mirroring the "Scottish Succession"—until this world crumbles to hell. If the taboo—parricide—is the guiding principle of those "three masterpieces of literature of all time," the taboo invoked by Schmitt demands that the political factor be taken into account. Moreover, this political attribute of the taboo developed in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* represents at the same time nothing more than a significant first step if the ensuing analysis does not account for the tragedy arising from politics. It is in the frame of this connection between politics and the taboo that Schmitt's approach is to be comprehended, including his decision to view *Hamlet* in the historical and tragic light of his own times. Those "three masterpieces" inwardly dealt with parricide: actually, they dealt with civil war.

1.4.2 Apropos Gerhard Hauptmann and the historical approach

In the second paragraph of the introduction to *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, Schmitt remarks that after "an excess of psychological interpretation" came "a strictly historical approach"—the reason no doubt being World War I. Without naming him, Schmitt is pointing to Eliot's essay—because the play is "full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art." That is how "[t]he traditional understanding of the strict unity of his characters and the artistic perfection of his works were destroyed," asserts

Schmitt.[59] However, between the psychological approach and the subsequent, violent return of Anglo-historicism, an unnoticed phenomenon took over Germany:

> From different, and often even opposing, sides, Hamlet continues even today to function as a living myth. I take here two examples as signs of this inexhaustible mutability. A renowned German poet, Gerhart Hauptmann, published a play in 1935 with the title *Hamlet in Wittenberg*. […] But in spite of the sometimes obscene romanticism, a historical connection cast its shadow across this sad play.

One has to suppose that those "opposing sides" are related to the fact that *Hamlet* was represented in Germany under the veil of "Romanticism." While I cannot, for now, address the importance and nuances of the play by Hauptmann[60]—a German Nobel laureate so obsessed with *Hamlet* that he even molded his autobiography around the Prince of Elsinore—especially considering that it was not the most idiosyncratic work created for "the German Stage,"[61] I will focus on Schmitt's expression "living myth" [*ein lebendiger Mythos*]. Fundamentally, Schmitt remarks that this myth "has not yet lost its power." I consider that this sentence anticipates Schmitt's notion of "intrusion" by proving how the "myth of Hamlet" comes to the fore in the first decades of the twentieth century in Germany. However, to demonstrate this, one needs to account for Schmitt's notions of "myth" and "Romanticism." I will now continue the analysis of Schmitt's *Einleitung* before tackling those two concepts.

Schmitt then provides another example of the "inexhaustible capacity of mutability" of *Hamlet*:

> The other example comes from an entirely different direction, not from the north but from the south. A world-renowned philosopher, Salvador de Madariaga, considers Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in a surprising new light in a 1948 book, *On Hamlet*. He makes him into an unscrupulous Renaissance man of action and violence, a Cesare Borgia.

59. Schmitt 2009b, 8.
60. See Höfele 2016, 228–229; see also Stirk 1937, 595–597.
61. See Hortmann 2009, 78–147. Pages references to this edition are given in parentheses.

It is rather misleading to read first that Hauptmann's play was "obscenely romantic" at times and then read that de Madariaga's book is "full of apt observations and uninhibited remarks." Hauptmann's *Hamlet in Wittenberg*—so we are told by the author himself—is a "humble homage" to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Hauptmann's states:

> His *Hamlet* has been endlessly reworked and revised for the theater in old and new times: something crucial in the nature of the theater business and industry. Here, it is not even a pious or impious—the latter are in the majority—editing, but a creation in the empty space. (460)

One of the essential elements in Hauptmann's play is the connection between Hamlet and his home city. This explains the importance of one of the main characters of the play, Philipp Melanchthon—professor at Wittenberg, one of the leaders of the Reformation, and intellectual sidekick to Luther. However, to label *Hamlet in Wittenberg* a Romantic work is only possible under a very narrow notion of "Romanticism." Whereas Schmitt sees a "historical connection" [*ein geschichtlicher Zusammenhang*], Hauptmann simply addresses the ongoing activity of theater as such. This is important because it means that one simply cannot criticize the rehashing of *Hamlet* from a standpoint other than that of theater. The very core of theater, then, is "mutability"—*Hamlet* being the most important yet not the only drama to immerse itself in the inevitable waves of change. The use and reuse, as well as the rehashing of old material, leads to the distinction between the masterpiece of a poet—Shakespeare, in this case—and the blank spaces available for further creations. Hauptmann set his "humble homage" precisely in the context of King Claudius's instruction to Hamlet not to return to Wittenberg.[62] Moreover, here lies the "historical connection" acknowledged by Schmitt. But, then again, just like Eliot went beyond the established interpretative bounds in his hair-splitting analysis of Hamlet, Hauptmann's self-indulgent preface to his *Hamlet in Wittenberg* invokes the autonomous nature of theater to justify his reprise of Shakespeare's medieval drama. Following Schmitt, one could likewise argue that this creative recasting obeys a superior power: namely, the mythical core that Shakespeare instilled in *Hamlet*.

62. 1.2.118–119.

To call Hauptmann's play "Romantic" and de Madariaga's *On Hamlet*[63] "apt" is misleading, for Schmitt approves of the Spanish scholar's historicism precisely because his interpretation shows both restraint and "creativity." On the contrary, Hauptmann can be considered the author of a romantic drama insofar as his interpretation does not address a key aspect; that is, the emergence of the "myth" of Hamlet from a "historical reality." To say that the prince of tears was a Cesare Borgia and that the whole spirit of this drama is "Spanish," as far-fetched as this thesis may seem—and surely it was for Dover Wilson—it nonetheless does address the "political" aspect of the play. De Madariaga asserts that:

> Now nations reach the apex of their power when the genius of the time is in harmony with their own genius; when, in other words, the age acts as a sounding board for their own peculiar note. The sixteenth century was the Spanish era because then the subject of the world's debate was man on a background of absolute values—God, evil, death, love, free will, and predestination; all preeminently Spanish themes. (viii)

This is a thesis à la Winstanley but restrained to the metaphysical spirit of "absolute values"—something "preeminently Spanish," according to de Madariaga. Here is where the Spanish writer and the German jurist agree: for both, the value of *Hamlet* lies in its capacity to mirror the sixteenth century; that is, its epoch. However, one can see how Schmitt's reading of de Madariaga was also sloppy. In the preface to the second edition of de Madariaga's *On Hamlet*, Schmitt sharply rebukes the English critics:

> Two ways were open: either to adopt the view that Shakespeare did not mean Hamlet to behave in a coherent way at all; or to seek a fresh interpretation of the characters and of the play. The first solution had behind it the authority of the "historical school" and of its leader, Professor Stoll. According to his way of thinking, Shakespeare's purpose is not to depict human character as such; but to contrive "situations." He was a theatre-man. (xii)

Does the word "situation" possess the same meaning for both de Madariaga and Schmitt? The Spanish writer elaborates further on the subject:

63. De Madariaga 2012, vii–xiii, 48–52 at 1. Pages references to this edition are given in parentheses in the text.

> The idea of reducing him [Shakespeare] to a mere deviser of cleverly contrived *situations* is typical of our mechanical age. It savors that *behaviourism* to which a modern school of psychology would reduce man, perhaps in the hope of manufacturing him by a chain-factory process. (xiii)

Evidently, there is quite a difference between de Madariaga's idea of "situation—namely, a one-dimensional portrayal of an epoch, unable to explain the "genius" of the poet through the "sounding board" of the present—and that of Schmitt. By contrast, for Schmitt, a "reality," a "concrete situation," is to be comprehended from its historical core, which is always a normative origin—thus his insistence on both "the taboo of the queen" and "the person of an avenger." De Madariaga fails to see the broad spiritual context in which *Hamlet* was created, and while he does use the same "historical method" that Schmitt borrowed from Winstanley—de Madariaga even goes as far as to state that "[t]he design of *Hamlet* is rich in parallel lines" (52)—he limits himself to pointing to a number of "transpositions" between the historical sources and Shakespeare's creation. But these transpositions are limited for de Madariaga to the attention span of Shakespeare, and thus any genuine interpretation of *Hamlet* must surpass the "situational" aspect of the play. That is why, for Schmitt, de Madariaga's thesis can be considered no more than "apt." Such an interpretation does not appreciate the unique phenomenon of a play that, mythical as it is, can self-mutate without losing its authentic significance. Herein lies the limited reach of de Madariaga's conception of "situation" and the motives behind the rebukes from those "English critics" who did not fail to note "that such an interpretation," remarked Schmitt, "might be more easily explained by impressions from the Hitler years rather from the Elizabethan age."

While it is customary for German scholars to quote Ferdinand Freiligrath's expression "Germany is Hamlet!" when dealing with Shakespeare's eponymous tragedy, Schmitt also touches on a broader sense of what *Hamlet* embraces:

> Interpretations and symbolizations of Hamlet are incidentally not limited to the psychology of the single human individual. Entire nations can also appear as Hamlet.

> Thus, in the nineteenth century, journalists of German liberalism like Börne and Gervinus recognized the tattered and fractured German people as Hamlet […].[64]

The natural question is, of course, which nations? Could a non-European nation be Hamlet as well? Schmitt does not provide any further analysis on the subject.[65] Regarding Ludwig Börne, his analysis of *Hamlet*[66] is particularly interesting for two reasons. The first, quite anecdotic, is that this German writer is confronted by Kierkegaard in the latter's *Stages on Life's Way*. The second is that Börne and Schmitt share a common vocabulary.

1.4.3 The meaning of Börne's analysis

The analysis of *Hamlet* given by Börne is quite amusing. He aims to tackle the play through its symbolism. For him, Hamlet the character is not important. Börne calls him the "nothing," someone "worse than death," "the unborn." He correctly thinks that housing *Hamlet* in the North, far from England—Shakespeare's only play set outside his native land—is connected with Shakespeare's desire to create something in a healthy environment. Likewise, Börne highlights the positive features of King Claudius, greatly eclipsed by Prince Hamlet, "the only concave character whose rays diverge." His opinion of the Ghost is even more alluring. Börne asserts that "the most horrible thing of a spirit is that it emerges and speaks," for that which the Ghost says as the most terrible is, in fact, "childish" (98). It lacks all wisdom. The Ghost's awareness is the same as when he lived. Why? Because he seeks revenge through Prince Hamlet, that "concave" character "full of "mysticism" (94). He is no avenger, but a Fichtian par excellence:

> Hamlet is a holiday-man, totally incompatible with his daily grind. He mocks the vain conduct of men, and they reprove his idle idleness. […] Like a Fichtian, he thinks nothing but "I am," and does nothing but place his "I." (99)

64. Schmitt 2009b, 9.
65. See chapter 5 (5.7).
66. Börne 2013, 94–103. Pages references to this edition are given in parentheses.

Börne's analysis is certainly spot on, although quite harsh. And however much I would like to tackle this assimilation of Hamlet as a "Fichtian"—mainly because Börne is indirectly stressing the crucial connection between Romanticism and philosophy—I will instead focus on his non-psychological, non-historical interpretation of the play. Börne continues his depiction of the prince in the following terms:

> Hamlet is a philosopher of death, a night scholar. When the nights are dark, he stands indecisively, immobile; if they are bright, it is only at midnight, which shows him the shadow of the hour—he acts inadequately and goes mad in the deceptive light. Life is a tomb to him, the world a churchyard. That is why the churchyard is his world; there is his kingdom, there he is Master. (100–101)

At this point, it should be evident that Börne is advancing an interpretation that could be described as religious. The symbolism mentioned by Schmitt—the rays that "diverge" due to Hamlet's concavity, the "midnight hour" and its bleak lights, the "world as a churchyard," etc.—obeys a higher priority; namely, to reveal the ominous yet veiled theme that rules over the play:

> Much has been said about Shakespeare's irony. Perhaps I did not understand correctly what they meant by that; but I sought for vainness everywhere in vain. Irony is narrowness—or limitation. […] But in *Hamlet* I find irony, and not refreshing. The poet, who always instructs us so friendly, solves all our doubts, leaves us here in grave misgivings and worries. […] nature revolts against its creator and conquers […]. (101)

"Here" being the death of Prince Hamlet, who allegedly was born to "set right" an "out of joint" time.[67] Börne portrays him as a "blind horse on the wheel of fate" until "it falls and is subject to a poor beast, the lashes of its drivers!" The artistic elements of the play, coordinated by that pale "irony," are indeed wrong. However, just like Eliot here found the excess which marked *Hamlet* out as an "artistic failure," for Börne this supreme awkwardness—considering that Shakespeare was English and not, on the contrary, German, as Börne would

67. 1.5.189–190.

have thought if he hadn't known of the author's origin—is related to the combination of Shakespeare's genius and other elements that were always available; nature as such, eternity, good and evil, justice and injustice. Börne concludes:

> In vain our own heart warns us not to respect evil, because it is strong not spurn good, because it is weak; we believe our eyes more. We see that who tolerates much, has little lived, and we waver. *Hamlet* is a Christian Trauerspiel. (102)

While I cannot elaborate on Schmitt's mention of Börne's "liberalism,"[68] I will stress the expression "Christian Trauerspiel." This is something very interesting to think about, even more so if one ponders how Schmitt will tackle the creative limits of the "play" and its relation to the "seriousness of life"—an expression that is ironically used by Börne himself when he remarks that Shakespeare never mocks "life's ridiculous seriousness" [*des lebens lächerlichen Ernst*] (101). That ominous aspect of *Hamlet* represents the coming together of genius and the unavoidable Christian image of the world. Prince Hamlet could never be successful in "setting right" the damaged hourglass of time. His mission was stillborn. His desire was meant to decay. This is the not "refreshing" irony, according to Börne. And if one could then ask why Schmitt merely considered Börne to be a "journalist of German liberalism," the answer must be found in the very fact that for anyone who thinks of this tragedy as a brilliant work of mourning grounded in Christianity, the political aspect of *Hamlet* is naturally of little relevance. Either the hero falls at the cruel hand of destiny, or he simply dies in a wretched world, all his actions amounting to nothing but shadows in the sun, empty and insignificant. According to this perspective, the modern reader should grasp the "vainness" of politics—so one surmises from Börne's essay on *Hamlet*. To conclude, even if Schmitt considered the "Christian Trauerspiel" thesis as original, he surely must have rejected out of hand Börne's position regarding Hamlet's lame attempts to vanquish the tainted "churchyard" that was his world. The term "Christian Trauerspiel" implies that the autonomy of the play is inevitably affected by a colossal, unsurpassable system of beliefs that commands the times. On the contrary, *Hamlet,* as the guiding force of an "intrusion,"

68. See Chase 2000, 123–138.

aims at developing a "concrete situation" into a broader, more powerful meaning. This was, for Schmitt, the "myth" of this play.

1.4.4 On Gervinus' interpretation

Regarding Gervinus[69], the analysis becomes more complicated. Gervinus was a prominent historian and literary scholar. He managed to combine creative and powerfully these two disciplines in major works devoted to German history and the impact of literature—including Shakespeare—on it. Gervinus was a scholar of unmatched erudition. His knowledge of Shakespeare was impeccable—his interpretation tackles the whole sphere of Shakespeare's art, from the metrical to the historical. Nonetheless, I will concentrate on his thoughts on *Hamlet.*[70] Gervinus's commentary is valuable not only because it was labeled "liberal" by Schmitt, but more importantly because Gervinus established an analogy between the prince and Germany. Of course, Freiligrath has addressed this connection previously. However, to synchronize the political interests of a budding nation with the spiritual clockwork of an English tragedy implied something altogether different. Apropos of Shakespeare's use of available sources; namely, the Nordic "Amleth" by Saxo Grammaticus, Gervinus remarks:

> It is a text from true life, and therefore a mine of the profoundest wisdom; […] a work of such prophetic design, and of such anticipation of the growth of mind, that it has only been understood and appreciated after the lapse of nearly three centuries; a poem which has so influenced and entwined itself with our later German life, as no other poem even of our own age and nation could boast of having done, with the exception of Faust alone. (548–549)

There are evidently a number of themes in common with Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—"a text from true life," its "prophetic design," its true unveiling "after the lapse of nearly three centuries," the parallels with "later German life." This convergence can be explained because both political Gervinus and Schmitt grasp *Hamlet* by its spiritual significance, something that Börne's religious approach eventually canceled out. According to Gervinus, what the play

69. See Höfele 2021, 19.
70. Gervinus 1892, 548–582. Pages references to this edition are given in parentheses in the text.

demands is a global approach: "[L]et us once more clearly consider both; namely, the facts and the elucidations which the tragedy itself unfolds" (551). Gervinus drastically disagrees with the views held by Börne regarding the "honest" nature of King Claudius and Prince Hamlet's contrasting toxicity. The German historian considers the "ambition, thirst of power, and evil desires" of the assassin, married consequently to the Queen, who "surmises not the murder." The "Ghost" now "rises from the grave." The prince is "conjured." But then things become strange: the avenger delays his revenge; his claim for justice is taken over by his overelaborate "riddles." He soon forgets. His memory needs to be refreshed—and it is "two-months" later, calculates Gervinus—but that does not translate into a necessary call-to-action. Instead, he rejoices at his own artistry: the "Mousetrap." Gervinus's analysis follows the play act by act. But then something happens. The order in which these actions begin and end is no longer important. Gervinus ponders:

> Yet, however well this whole action and its inner connection are designed and accomplished, we feel in no play no more […]: that with Shakespeare the action is ever secondary, that it ever holds a subordinate place, and that the true point of unity in his works ever leads to the source of the actions, to the actor themselves, and to the hidden grounds from which their actions spring. […] Yet we take the deepest interest in this Hamlet—proof sufficient that the special charm lies in the character. (560–561)

According to Gervinus, Hamlet's mental ravings—along with his equally faulty prose and inaction—lead us to the "feeling" of being expelled from the play itself. Agency as a paramount feature of theater as such is banished. The main locus now is the "charm" of the character. He promotes nothing and yet promises everything. Gervinus reminds us how Goethe stated that Hamlet lacks "the external strength of the hero." One could agree with the German historian that both King Claudius and Queen Gertrude are afraid of Hamlet because they are constantly aware of the dangers that are precisely enabled by the prince's inner delay. While Hamlet waits for the proper time, everyone else becomes anxious: "A psychological circle," concludes Gervinus (495). This circle expands and becomes broader before finally reaching an international status. A ruthless call leads several nations to lose their wits:

> From this one source there springs among whole nations, as Montesquieu has observed—among the old Iberians and Indians for instance—the same mixture of mildness combined with exaggerated energy under provocation; the sensitiveness of their organization, which causes them to fear death; causes them to fear a thousand things still more than death, the same susceptibility leads them to flee from danger, and to scorn it when compelled to face it. Thus it is with Hamlet. (561)

This quotation brings us back to Schmitt's thesis on "intrusion," but also to his comprehension of history through *Hamlet*. The common ground between Gervinus's and Schmitt's thesis is crucial, for it allows one to understand that "mythical" feature that made Shakespeare's supreme tragedy so unique. Gervinus views *Hamlet* as a "source." Now not only the "Elizabethan public" but also "whole nations" are enthralled by the expansive "fear" that went "beyond the death" of Hamlet. It is quite a feature: Gervinus calls it "elasticity" (563). The historian analyses every detail of the prince. He even considers that Hamlet is more a comedy character than a tragic hero. He probably is just a victim caught in "the false culture of the age" (566). The character lacks unity because he embodies several dimensions. At this point, one can see why Schmitt thought the "liberal" Gervinus was worth mentioning in his introduction to *Hamlet or Hecuba*. He read *Hamlet* beyond psychology and even historicism. The play is a combination of individual acts of genius and historical and spiritual inspiration. A conjunction of elements is constantly swirling around in *Hamlet*. So, what is the gist of Gervinus's interpretation? Reflecting on the pioneering subjectivity of the prince, the historian states:

> Our modern sensibility is anticipated, as it were, by two centuries in *Hamlet*. The words, 'Alas, poor Yorick!' which Hamlet utters in the churchyard with bitter tears, in the superabundant emotion of his soul, have become a sort of fruitful source of those tender and gentle moods which in the last century spread like an epidemic in England and Germany. (574)

"Our modern sensibility" — (as Germans) once should add. The moods of the prince were amplified among nations because such an anticipation was not intended to be understood by Shakespeare's contemporaries. "The honor of being in advance of the age is in most cases

only equivocal," complements Gervinus. And although such asymmetry could be grasped as the "incapability of idealist enthusiasts to bear the actual"—this will resonate in Schmitt's *Politische Romantik* as I will demonstrate later—in the case of Shakespeare, "this advanced position" is to be held "as the token of a true and great superiority." This parallel between the play and Shakespeare as a master of anticipations—perhaps a seer—and Gervinus's native land is elaborated in the following terms:

> If Hamlet, as regards his sensibility, is an anticipation of the feeble generation of the last century, he is, as regards this bitterness of feeling, a type of our German race at the present day. […] We look upon the mirror of our present state as if this work had first been written in our day; the poet, like a living man, works for us and in us in the same way as he intended to do for his own age. (575)

Börne's unorthodox conclusion about *Hamlet* being a "Christian Trauerspiel"—namely, a work of art which is unparalleled due to its powerful surrounding themes, akin to the German spirit—is shared by Gervinus from a political standpoint. However, this must not be viewed as an edifying description. The ultimate moral value of this nation is "bitterness." And the very fact that that English poet could "anticipate" the exhausted ways of the "German race" serves as a historical beacon for those who are willing to take a glance at the withering "mirror of the present":

> A poem by one of our present political poets begins with the words, 'Hamlet is Germany.' And this declaration is no ingenious play of words or confused ideas […]. Just like Hamlet we lost delight in our existence, and fled from the real world to the kingdom of the ideal […]. Just so we grew skeptically embittered against the world, life, and mankind […], and with such a vocation for active service in the world, we indulged in a passive universal sorrow (*Weltschmerz*). (575–576)

Gervinus attempts to dismiss the positive aspect of Freiligrath's famous sentence. No intellectual bloom or "delight in existence" is to be found in Germany. Gervinus seems to also draw a line regarding the concreteness of life and the empty creativity of Romanticism, for the "kingdom of ideal" is an expression eerily similar to Hamlet's "churchyard" and his

everlasting eulogy "Alas, poor Yorick!" A feeling of revenge sweeps across Germany, which logically leads to that expansive yet personal ache sung by Jean Paul.[71] It is interesting to note how this conscious shift from an "active service in the world" to the unabated "skepticism" that Gervinus strongly stresses bears an undeniable resemblance with Börne's depiction of Prince Hamlet as the "no-thing." For both the historian and the political thinker, the slumber of a nation expresses the utter abdication of moral struggle; namely, responsibility. Germany chose "not to be." Thus, "Hamlet is Germany!" is the expression of a Romantic landscape caged in "sorrow." A tethered world where shackled passers-by do not find the adequate means to leave behind their own restraints was, indeed, a classic German theme. Freiligrath's words nourished Helmuth Plessner's characterization of Germany as a "delayed nation"[72] or even Ernst Jünger's critique of the German bourgeoisie in his epoch-defining *The Worker*,[73] in which he admonished the broken "magical unity of blood and spirit that makes the world irresistible." But Gervinus goes further—just as does Schmitt in *Glossarium*—and states that *Hamlet* indoctrinates "the whole race of mankind." Could the monologues of an "Elizabethan" theater piece be that corrosive? *Hamlet*, as we read in Gervinus's last considerations of the play, is the supreme backdrop of modernity's universal values:

> Thus, then this bloody conclusion is not the consequence of an aesthetic fault on the part of the poet, but of a moral fault on that of his *Hamlet*, a consequence which the sense of the whole play and the design of this character aim at from the first. (582)

Gervinus points to Fortinbras's dreadful expression, "This quarry cries on havoc."[74] The Norwegian prince immediately confirms the lowly triumph of death. But the bloodshed must necessarily lead to something better. Elsinore must be cleansed, and people should know that. Horatio demands that the corpses must "[h]igh on a stage be placed to the view; / [a]nd let me speak to the yet unknowing world / [h]ow these things came about."[75] The witness

71. See Beiser 2016, 1–4, 31–42.
72. See Plessner 2001, 36–45. The original title of this book first published in 1935 was *Das Schicksal deutschen Geistes im Ausgang seiner bürgerlichen Epoche*.
73. See Jünger 2017, 5–8.
74. 5.2.358.
75. 5.2.572–574.

becomes the spokesman of tragedy: the agent now communicates the "purposes mistook / [f]all'n on the inventor's reads."[76] Horatio needs to accomplish this urgently, "[e]ven while men's minds are wild."[77] He is now a middleman, the voice that chains the past to the uncertain future of Denmark. The landscape is covered with blood, and this means that "havoc" means failure—but what kind of failure? We now learn, through Gervinus, that this failure is plainly a moral one. Shakespeare placed himself at the floodgates of eighteenth-century Germany and eavesdropped on both national and international quarrels. Gervinus's interpretation, then, is—along with Börne's—superior. They comprehended *Hamlet* through their own "havoc"; namely, through their own "historical situation." And to grasp the "design" of the play from that standpoint necessarily means to take issue with a concrete, historical reality. And so they did.

1.5 Schmitt's psycho-political approach on the notion of myth

As I already proved Schmitt's assertion that both Gervinus and Börne "recognized the tattered and fractured German people," I will now tackle the introduction to *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Once again, one reads Freiligrath's famous poem where Germany is Hamlet, a nation which, "procrastinating and dreaming," "cannot take the decision to act," Schmitt states. "The labyrinth becomes ever more impenetrable," reads the warning. As we learned from Gervinus and Börne, the correct starting point to analyze the play was to account for its historical dimension. *Hamlet* is a play that creates its own public by transcending time. This means that although Shakespeare's play does possess a strong historical theme, it travels beyond this sphere:

> Instead, transcending both alternatives, the question of the source of the tragic action as such arises as a question that, if left unanswered, would render incomprehensible the entire specificity of the *Hamlet* problem. […] What caused a play of the last years of the Elizabethan age to produce that rare case of a modern European myth?[78]

76. 5.1.378.
77. 5.1.387.
78. Schmitt 2009b, 10.

It is important to mention that the "European myth" is considered a "case." Schmitt uses the expression *diesen seltenen Fall*: a unique, rare case. To describe *Hamlet* in these terms implies developing a normative comprehension of the play. Although one may frown at the fact that Shakespeare's had to wait until Schmitt's study to lose its "incomprehensibility," it is certainly a refreshing interpretation to think of *Hamlet* as a case—a finite and concrete creation—that became a myth. By extension, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is thus a case study. Schmitt wants to focus on "the dramatic events of the play itself"—which can be seen as a hermeneutic gesture—in its "composition and structure." He conceives this through the Greek notion of "hypothesis,"[79] which resonates in the modern concept of "story."[80] Finally, the case study is described by way of two questions:

> Let us stick close to the matter as it presented in the play and ask: What is the action of the drama and who is the actor Hamlet, the hero of this drama? (10)

The "factual content" [*den Sachverhalt*] is the material already tackled by Winstanley. The historical index of the play is to be considered in its "effectivity"; namely, through its actions. This implies both the dynamic and static aspects of the drama. Finally, this phenomenological approach leads toward the identity of the core of *Hamlet*; that is, the main features and significance of Hamlet the character. This is the outline of Schmitt's plan. We are to deal not with an interpretation but a reading of *Hamlet* as *the* case of literature.

1.6 Schmitt's Preface to Lilian Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession*

Hamlet oder Hekuba was primarily composed after Schmitt wrote the preface to the book on *Hamlet* published by Winstanley in 1921 and translated and published in German in 1952. Apart from some mentions and references found in several of his monographs written during the twenties and some others in the mid-forties, Schmitt had not tackled art and literature explicitly since *Political Romanticism*. Did his views on this field evolve? And if they did, how so? In order to answer these questions, I will thoroughly analyze his prologue to

79. See chapter 3 (3.2).
80. See chapter 2 (2.1).

Winstanley's German version of her book[81] and then schematically address *Political Romanticism*'s main theses.

The prologue is heavily guided by the following idea: that Prince Hamlet represents James I, son of Mary Stuart and her husband:

> Shakespeare's *Hamlet* drama is grounded then in a direct relation to the times. It contains the kind of dramatization that results from participation in an immediate present. The full historical topicality of its place and time of origin lives in *Hamlet*. (164)

Up to now, there are no differences between this assertion and that of Winstanley regarding *Hamlet* being chained to the historical present—and the revolving politics—of the "Elizabethan" era. However, what the play does is secure "its place and time of origin" by withholding its significance through artistic means. Here Schmitt begins to further distance himself from Winstanley's thesis. His concept of "participation" will address the political aspect of the play that will go on to develop into a "myth." He continues:

> It is well known that a great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, fiercely criticized the foolishness of the action in Shakespeare's drama, but this brilliant Russian should have recognized that the utter foolishness in *Hamlet* is finally nothing other than the real historical event itself and that his criticism applies less to the drama than to world history.

Schmitt is referring to Tolstoy's *Shakespeare and the Drama.*[82] In this work, the Russian writer aimed to go against the grain of "the whole European world." In a way, he does. While I cannot focus here on Tolstoy's critiques, I would like to stress how Schmitt highlights the "historical event itself." One could ask, then: So what did Shakespeare do after all? Tolstoy

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81. Pages references are given in parentheses.
82. Tolstoy 1906, 70–76 at 2–3. Schmitt's paraphrase is originally as following: "But Shakespeare, putting into Hamlet's mouth speeches which he himself wishes to express, and making him commit actions which are necessary to the author in order to produce scenic effects, destroys all that constitutes the character of Hamlet and of the legend. […] There is no possibility of finding any explanation whatever of Hamlet's actions or words, and therefore no possibility of attributing any character to him." It is important to say that one of the sources of Tolstoy's critique is Gervinus's previously mentioned essay.

views the play primarily as an artistic piece of work. Schmitt, on the contrary, argues that *Hamlet* belongs to two realms—history and tragedy. In this perspective, Andreas Höfele argues that Schmitt "is concerned with the tripartite causal connection between contemporary history, tragedy, and myth"[83]. This proves that such themes were already put forward in his 1952 prologue. What de Madariaga criticized in the second edition of his *On Hamlet*—namely, the elaboration of "situational" interpretations—is for Schmitt the starting point of a "concrete" analysis of a piece of work of the "Elizabethan era." In *Hamlet,* that particular moment in history "reappears." Does this mean that politics becomes universal only through art and not, on the contrary, through politics itself? It is too soon to answer the question. Nonetheless, the first paragraphs of Schmitt's prologue are pretty much the same as those of his 1956 *Vorbemerkung*. James I's father was murdered, and Mary Stuart married the murderer. This is a "tragic situation," notes Schmitt. That concrete event differs from that of Orestes because, according to "the general opinion of the English," "Hamlet went to extraordinary lengths to protect his mother" (165). This was the material that flooded Shakespeare's scrapbook. This historical reference gave rise to *Hamlet*. However, one could argue that such a poetic interpretation is overly linear:

> So, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* presents a mirror to, but by no means a mere reflection of, this historical reality. It is not a *roman à clef*, nor is it an old-fashioned form of what today would be called the weekly news. On the other hand, it is also not the case of a freely invented, free-floating fable. (165)

Via negationis at its best. The "mirroring" achieved in *Hamlet* is warped, then. Agreed. Likewise, the play is not a *roman à clef*, a nineteenth-century expression of that which today is commonly referred to as "based on a true story." However, many questions quickly come to mind, including: Was Shakespeare a realist poet? Are the characters in *Hamlet* first-hand representations of certain "Elizabethan" individuals? It seems that Schmitt's approach to literature—however insightful and deep—is quite traditional, for it presupposes a distinction between reality and fiction, which replicates, at the same time, the ongoing philosophical

83. Höfele 2021, 5.

quarrel between what is true and what is not.[84] His interpretation, however, offers a view of literature and reality as interwoven entities. One could ask: Does reality need a form of legitimacy other than history itself? I do not wish to distract myself with these enticing and difficult questions. The point is, all in all, quite clear: *Hamlet* dwells somewhere between human artistry and historical events. Shakespeare did not invent the plot and secrecy regarding the circumstances of Mary Stuart and James I, nor did he pull the dramatical structure of the play out of nowhere. Then what did he really do? This tragedy is all about "convergence." At this point, one could suppose that maybe *Hamlet* was just a "happy accident" after all. This meeting between a "concrete" historical agenda and the fumbling development of a tragedy set close to "doomsday"[85] was certainly one of a kind. Shakespeare grasped his present. He was, "unlike the spectators of Ancient Greek tragedy," contemporary to the individuals that were to become his characters. While Aeschylus's *Persians* did manage to link the drama to the contemporary campaign of Xerxes, he and his followers "were not sitting in Greece in the seats of the theater." The *Amleth* of Saxo Grammaticus, Shakespeare's company, the "stage in London," and the impious actions taking place in the inner circle of Mary Stuart, all of these references were translucently available in both the drama and the reality of early-seventeenth-century England. Shakespeare's drama can be considered as "historical" because its dynamic directly "affected" the "fathers and grandfathers" of actors and spectators. *Hamlet*, Schmitt continues, "presents extreme simultaneity"; "the convergence of the theatrical with the historical present" (165). But this

84. I consider that the most eminent modern contributions regarding this problematic connection are those made by Heidegger in his *Parmenides* seminar (1942–1943, published in 1981) and Vaihinger's *The Philosophy of As If* (1911). See Heidegger 1998, 152: "It could then be objected that this is to hale poetry in an unauthorized way before the court of philosophy. If philosophy and poetry were simply two different human occupations, existing each in itself and distinct by their very essence, then what we have been saying could be condemned as nonsense. But what if the essence of thinking and the essence of poetizing were to receive again their originary entitlements!". See also Vaihinger 2009, 27: "There is another variety of fiction important for science which I call *tropic* fictions; they may also be called *symbolic* or *analogical*. They are closely related to poetic similes as well as to the myth. In these fictions, the mechanism of thinking is as follows: A new intuition is apperceived by an ideational construct in which there is a similar relationship, an analogous proportion to that existing in the observed series of perceptions. In such cases, relationships constitute the apperceiving power. This is also the formal origin of poetry." It is quite significant that Heidegger ends this seminar by analyzing Rilke's *Duino Elegies* just as Vaihinger dedicated the last chapter of his book to Nietzsche's posthumous writings apropos of the concept of "mythology." What Heidegger means by the expression "originary entitlements" points in the same direction of Vahinger's conception of fiction as a "regulative" notion. Moreover, these two views are strongly akin to Schmitt's thesis on "intrusion" and his analysis of *Hamlet* from a concrete situation: i.e., the normative—serious—aspect which is enhanced in the play until reaching the status of a myth.
85. 2.2.241.

convergence can be questioned, as—according to Stephen Greenblatt—"even when he came closer to the world, (…) Shakespeare carefully kept at least a full century between himself and the events he depicted"[86]. On the contrary, Schmitt barely kept a safe distance between himself and the events he reflected. He knew that the fact that Hamlet was a "mythical for the present" was not in any case a positive signal.

In the 1952 prologue, Schmitt analyzes *Hamlet*'s very own lie detector—"The Mousetrap." He gives some sociological yet general insights into the theatrical "atmosphere around 1600." These assertions are identical to those that the reader can find in his rapid analysis of *Das Spiel im Spiel* in the monograph on *Hamlet*. In those years, everyone felt that they were actors, "all the world was a stage." The theater even acted as a stimulus to politics, although in *Hamlet*, "we see the first symptoms of this weakening" (166). However, the civil status of Shakespeare's play is clearly differed by that French phenomenon that Schmitt called the "peculiar triumvirate of continental society"; namely, how "people and society" were "policed" in "the continental state": "[P]olitics, the police, and *politesse*"; "[a]ll three combined to transform the barbaric events, the bloody actions of drama in Shakespeare's time, into brilliant intrigue or topics for educational problems" (166). Schmitt dwells no further on this topic,[87] which he abandons in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. But *Hamlet* is raw, "Shakespeare's drama was still much a brutal, elementary play, a severe play, not yet "political" in the sense that the word held at that time, rather still very barbaric" (166). Schmitt overemphasizes this organic, brute feature of *Hamlet*. He was no Schiller. Schmitt quotes the *Homage of the Arts*,[88] the last piece of theater created by the German poet, first performed on 12 November 1804 in Weimar. This brief work was to honor the marriage of Maria Paulowna—a Russian princess—and Charles Frederick, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. *Die Huldigung der Künste* tells the story of a farming family that holds a festival to receive their new queen. The event brings together the Seven Arts while the family plant a tree. The Genius suddenly appears and plays the role of a messenger, allowing the youth

86. Greenblatt 2018, 5.
87. See Assmann 2014, 94: "In the eighteenth century, pedagogy, cultivation of the self (*Bildung*), biographical development and human formation moved to the forefront of literary production, giving rise to the *Bildungsroman*. The genre got underway with *Telémaque* (1699) by François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon. The novel *The Travels of Cyrus* (1727) by Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, who soon after was to play a leading role in the Masonic Grand Lodge that formed in Paris, adhered to this model."
88. See Alt 2004, 586–591 at 9.

and their parents—along with the maiden—to communicate with the Seven Goddesses. The maiden is none other than Princess Maria Paulowna, who also was the sister of Tsar Alexander I—their father was murdered in 1801, and his son was subsequently enthroned. Thus, Schmitt quotes[89] the speech of Drama, the two-faced goddess. Schmitt remarks how the public of Schiller's plays "viewed world history as world theater and delight in its tragedy for their self-edification" (167). From this perspective, Schmitt brings to light the verses of Drama, for he aims to prove how Shakespeare's public did not yet participate in "the realm of human innocence." So we read in *Homage of the Arts*:

> The mask of Janus have I in my keeping –
> On one side sorrow, on the other joy;
> For man must alternate 'twixt bliss and weeping,
> And with the dark is mixed a light alloy.
> In all its deeps profound, its dizzy heights,
> Life's tale before thine eyes I can unroll,
> And make thee turn, richer for these great sights,
> Into the peaceful silence of thy soul.
> Who the whole world in one wide view surveys,
> In this own heart no civil strife dismays.

Schmitt quotes lines 4–8. In the fifth line, Drama states that she can combine the severe, the extremely serious [*dem Ernste*] with jest [*der Scherz*]. Drama grants spiritual wealth to whoever can envision the "great play of the world" [*das große Spiel der Welt gesehen*]. Thus, Schmitt points to these lines as a beautiful yet inoffensive message to the educated public of early-eighteenth-century Germany. These spectators are quite far from the raucous audience that was contemporary to the events included in Shakespeare's drama, for this audience more or less directly participated in the actions represented in *Hamlet*. However, it would be the words from Schiller's lines– expressed through *Der Schauspielkunst*—that will be revamped by way of the notions of "play" and "seriousness" studied in Schmitt's thesis on *Hamlet*.

89. The English version of Schmitt's prologue uses Brooks's translation of *Die Huldigung der Künste* (see Brooks 1847, 1–16 at 4–5). In the following, I will guide myself by P. Coleman's version of *Homage of the Arts* (see Francke 1913, 366–376 at 5).

Moreover, Schmitt should have quoted not Drama but the vigorous speech of Poetry. Once again, in *Homage to the Arts*, Schiller writes:

> Through farthest space I fly on soaring pinion;
> I know no limits; naught disputes my rule
> Or bids me stay. I hold supreme dominion
> O'er realms of thought – the Word my winged tool.[90]

Poetry speaks after *Die Malerei*; *ut pictura poesis*. The Goddess communicates her limitless dominion [... *kein Band... keine Schranke*]. If Drama oscillates over the surface of all emotions, Poetry rules the space where both the most serious and funny elements emerge. Indeed, the power of this Goddess displays mastery over both telluric and aerial dimensions [(*w*)]*as sich bewegt im Himmel und auf Erden*]. Finally, she states that her godly tool is the Word [(*u*)]*nd mein gefügelt Werkzeug ist das Wort*]. If one accepts this broad, stylized distinction made by Schiller in his *Homage of the Arts*, the following problem arises: is *Hamlet* a work of Poetry or Drama? What is the realm in which his tragedy—or, perhaps, tragedy as such—is crafted? While I cannot offer at this moment a partial although convincing answer to this question, I can anticipate the following: Shakespeare's tragedy is inseparable from theater. This is important because Schmitt's idea of "intrusion" will eventually face its final test by answering if said concept is taken from *Hamlet*, the written play, or *Hamlet*, the everlasting play which continues to conquer the stage to this day. If by "intrusion" Schmitt meant the former, his study of *Hamlet* would fall under the traditional—and confusing—banner of tragedy as an event that is unrelated to theater—a common misinterpretation that does not distinguish between "the tragic" as a feature of existence and "tragedy" as an independent, artistic apparatus. On the contrary, if Schmitt meant instead the former, then *Hamlet or Hecuba* could be considered an intelligent interpretation of the power of theater and its use of poetry.

Schmitt declares that "Shakespeare's great drama drew on the theatricalization of contemporary events for its poetic impulse, but much more for its very essence as modern drama." This is somehow odd, because it mainly addresses both aforementioned dimensions.

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90. Francke 1913, 374.

Schmitt explains that if in *Hamlet* we find a "play within the play," it is only because the work is a "theater within the theater." It is the theater of life: life's theater. Schmitt's "situational" approach comes to the fore in his 1952 prologue. He uses the information provided by Winstanley[91] in the prologue to the translation of her book (167–8). The "real events" that were "acquainted by a poet, by actors," and by the audience in London were "the immediate historical present for the poet, actors, and audience." Schmitt broods over this convergence several times during the 1952 prologue and his 1956 monograph. He envisions the possibility of a contemporary German play that could have represented the political catastrophe that the "death in 1889 of the crown prince Rudolf von Habsburg and the 'Tragedy of Mayerling' would have had for the Viennese public, or the significance of the Röhm affair for a Berlin public in the year 1934" (168). Unlike in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, here Schmitt presents two examples of what an "intrusion" could have been for his contemporaries. But this cannot be an intrusion: at most, it is a formula—even a genre, just like the strongly denied *roman à clef*. Avoiding this interpretation—namely, *Hamlet* as an artwork grounded in "topicality"—Schmitt soon offers examples devoid of any hint of naïveté:

> My claim here is not that sheer topicality makes great art. It is quite certain, though, that this sort of urgent historical presence and engagement is essential to Shakespeare's drama, because it was not written for some neutral or foreign audience. It was also not written for posterity, rather for his contemporaries, namely, as theater within the theater of their own historical present. (168)

Schmitt here stresses what *Hamlet* is not. Thus, this is not a claim. Such a negative approach establishes a safe distance from "topicality"—although Schiller will be mentioned again later in Schmitt's prologue. One could then think that Schmitt's argument loses weight. Nonetheless, the repeated dismissal of classic artistic attributes finally takes the form of a

91. Winstanley 1921, 50–56 at 5: "Now, does it not look as if Shakespeare were combining in one most powerful and dramatic scene these three attempts all associated with Mary Queen of Scots: the poison in the ear from the reputed murder of Francis II, the loathsomeness and vileness of the unhappy victim from the first attempt on Darnley, and the body of the victim found in the garden with the actual murder of Darnley? Why not? All these three attempts had already been associated together, one strengthening another, by the queen's accusers, and a dramatic poet very naturally desires to make his play as intense and moving as he can. The association, like the Darnley ghost, is already there. Why not use it?"

compelling argument for even the most skeptical reader. Schmitt will state again the unprecedented historical energy released in "The Mousetrap." The effectiveness of such a device is possible only there "where the reality of contemporary life itself is perceived as theater, as theater of the first degree, and where the theater itself is therefore essentially theater of the second degree, theater within the theater of life." This assertion requires further explanation, which I will endeavor to give.

To perceive "something" as reality necessarily requires that we know that it is only one perception among many others. The relation between perception and reality is a strong, constituent aspect of human knowledge. For the moment, I cannot go over the obvious resonance of this metaphysical vocabulary largely taken from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*;[92] instead, I will only limit myself to the temporal feature of "perceiving" reality as "something"; namely, to the self-consciousness that is needed to make further distinctions between what *is* and what *seems to be*. My claim here is that to assert that the "contemporary life" of sixteenth-century England was perceived as "theater" is a far-fetched thesis. However, to state that this perception possesses a "first-degree" quality is to establish that there is a social kinship between that "contemporary life" and its representation in "theater." Thus, when Schmitt points out that theater is at the same time a "theater within the theater of life"—namely, a "second-degree" phenomenon—he is positing its capacity to identify "contemporary life" with its own reality. This type of kinship is now artistic, enabling a strong connection between social life and arts—theater, in this case. Although the reader might be inclined to naturally think that Schmitt's claim here is merely a supposition—an extension of Winstanley's "topicality"—the description repeatedly held by Schmitt hinges on the concordance between the social milieu of the play and its very content. Schmitt considers that this phenomenon "lead to an intensification and not to a dissolution of the

92. See Kant 1968 A 264–5/B 320–1: "If reality is represented only through the pure understanding (*realitas noumenon*), then no opposition between realities can be thought, i.e., a relation such that when they are bound together in one subject they cancel out their consequences, as in 3 – 3 = O.[a,101] Realities in appearance (*realities phaenomenon*), on the same subject, one can partly or wholly destroy the consequence of the other, like two moving forces in the same straight line that either push or pull a point in opposed directions, or also like an enjoyment that balances the scale against a pain." This "no opposition" is the validity of reality for both cases. Such status does not narrow down the various sensations that are entangled between "realities in appearance" and "realities in negation." The example provided by Kant (3 – 3 = O…) stresses the different degrees on which realities—and the traffic of sensations—are perceived. The contribution of Kant lies in how understanding can cognize *a priori* the quantitative differences in degrees without altering the identity of such qualities. Thus, Kant seeks "the phenomenal reality" and not "reality" as such.

theater." The "double mirroring" of *Hamlet* implies not the comprehension of life as theater but the comprehension of theater as life. The only path that does not lead away from this kind of interpretation is the recognition of the key element of Schmitt's analysis: the power of theater.

Was that "Elizabethan" audience and those London-based spectators thrilled and daunted by Shakespeare's play? Schmitt now focuses on the actor's obeisance to the plasticity required by the play. The Shakespearean actor is certainly not the exciting juxtaposition of "the mask and the actor" depicted in Alexandre Dumas's *Kean* (1836).[93] Schmitt posits the following:

> In contrast, the play within the play in the second act of *Hamlet* is no play behind the scenes—on the contrary, it is the real play itself repeated *before* the curtains, similar to Velázquez paintings where we see that the painted scene is represented again in a painted mirror. The staged reality is itself identically reproduced and put on stage. This presupposes that the theater stands in extreme proximity to the historical present. (168–169)

The keyword in this quotation is, of course, "repeated." Repetition is a feature itself in *Hamlet*—as I have pointed out previously. Its most well-known expression appears in one of the dialogues between the prince and Polonius, when the former answers the latter's affable enough yet cynic question: "What do you read, my Lord?" with the stinging retort: "Words, words, words."[94] While it is hard to know if this is just plain chicanery or a genuine insight, it is not far-fetched to assume the crucial importance of repetition in Shakespeare's work. Later, in the third act, Hamlet and Polonius will again repeat themselves over and over. Before the haphazard assassination of Ophelia's father, Hamlet exclaims: "Mother, mother, mother!"[95] while Polonius's cry for help when he is about to die is: "What, ho! help, help,

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93. Dumas's *Kean, ou Désordre et Génie* is a five-act theater piece that depicts the life of the British actor Edmund Kean (1787–1833), a former acrobat who later became known as one of the most acclaimed—and scandalous—Shakespeare interpreters of the nineteenth-century. Kean's intense and morally dubious life was for his contemporaries heavily linked with his performance on stage. His own personality made him closer to Iago than Hamlet.
94. 2.2.194–195.
95. 3.4.4.

help!"[96] Every character in *Hamlet* is affected by this rule of repetition. Just when the prince jumps into Ophelia's grave, Queen Gertrude exclaims: "Hamlet, Hamlet!"[97] The prince even inconsolably sings the pains of Denmark using the ancient figures of the *aiodós* and the *rhapsöidós*:[98]

> An earnest conjuration from the king,
> As England was his faithful tributary,
> As love between them like the palm might flourish,
> As peace should stiff her wheaten garland wear
> And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
> And many such-like 'As' of great charge […].[99]

The value of repetition in *Hamlet* affects every situation. The characters are often juxtaposed against a second, negative presence that reflects an unknown inner theme of their lives. By glorifying names and insisting on different matters—like the chorus that cries in unison, "Treason, treason!"[100] after the prince stabs King Claudius, or the polite Danes, who, in the midst of a political rebellion and demanding that Laertes be named king, meekly answer: "We will, we will"[101] to Laertes's command that they leave—the constant evocation of repetition establishes an episodic upheaval within the vocabulary of *Hamlet*. Schmitt's much-emphasized "play within the play" emerges, then, as the grand design of the iterative theme present in the whole play. Nevertheless, its similarity with *Las Meninas* (1656)—or even Velázquez's late work *Arachne* (1659)—is limited in scope to the formal dimension. This means that the so-called "extreme proximity to the historical present" is, contrary to what Schmitt stated, subservient to Shakespeare's disjointed placement of "the play within the play." Schmitt stresses how the "staged reality is identically reproduced and put on stage"

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96. 3.4.23.
97. 5.1.262.
98. Gregory Nagy has impressively studied the Indo-European history of poetics. In his *opus maius Greek Mythology and Poetics* (1990), he analyzes the formal differences between the *aiodós*—a poet-like singer established in a local community—and the *rhapsöidós*—the oral poet who recites Hellenic tradition at large. See Nagy 2018, 39–47 at 1: "An oral poet in a traditional society does not 'make things up,' since his function is to re-create the inherited values of those for whom he composes/performs."
99. 5.2.39–44.
100. 5.2.317.
101. 4.5.113.

(169). I, for one, emphasize the use of repetition in *Hamlet* as a method of dislocation and refraction. The common ground shared between the "play" and "reality"—discussed at length by Schmitt—is irrevocably torn to pieces as the play develops. *Hamlet* is a grim stage where words are stripped of their original significance, moving its characters to woeful and often distorted conclusions. Even old age offers no clarity or epiphanic truths, but blunt despair: "O good Horatio, what a wounded name, / [t]hings standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!"[102] No lessons but lesions: "The rest is silence."[103]

Schmitt considers that "[t]he secret of the *Hamlet* drama is the immediate, self-evident proximity to the historical present of its time of origin." The play rapidly dwells on the immediacy of the present. The story of a murdered king, of his torpor-struck son, and the dubious morals displayed by the queen, the new king, and all the other characters—except Laertes—represents the meeting of reality with itself. *Hamlet* is a "singularity," Schmitt states. Its "mythic power" arises from an all-too accessible present. Once again, the play is compared with "antique tragedy." Schmitt denies that "Prince Hamlet-James" is "Orestes" and "Queen Mary Stuart-Gertrude" is "Clytemnestra." He correctly stresses that *Hamlet* is chained to the theater. The "myth," as such, was sired onstage. Once and again, Schmitt tackles "the play within the play." Now he considers it "a consummate experiment, one that is directed, namely, toward the question of whether a core of historical actuality has the power to produce a new myth in this way, by means of the theater" (170). Schmitt welcomes Winstanley's book with zest and marked enthusiasm. He highlights the "evidence" of her investigation:

> The mists of fantastic interpretation dissipate, the scintillation of psychological possibilities ends. One sees the granite rock of a singular historical truth materialize, and the figure of a real king with a concrete fate begins to take shape. (170)

The expression "granite rock" [*der stumme felsen*] will be again recovered in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* apropos of "the incompatibility of the tragic with free invention."[104] In the prologue to Winstanley's book German translation, it is used as the reader's encounter with the crystal-

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102. 5.2.338–339.
103. 5.2.352.
104. Schmitt 2009b, 38.

clear reality of *Hamlet*. The comparison becomes an unbiased identification. However, the important term in this quote is "fate." To link "the figure of a real king" with the coming into shape of a "concrete fate" presupposes an underlying comprehension of history from a tragic standpoint. This conditioned assimilation of history is very similar to the use of the following two terms in his prologue to Winstanley's book:

> At the core of Shakespeare's drama is the fact that the originary image [*Urbild*] for Hamlet is the concrete history of King James I […]. The situation of James I and the situation of Hamlet are identical in this core. The historical presence is the drama's primal phenomenon [*Urphänomen*], the essence of the great drama *Hamlet*. (170)

Schmitt then goes on to reflect on an aesthetic dimension. The notion of *Urbild*—Schmitt also uses the term *Abbild*—belongs to the classic vocabulary of Western philosophy.[105] It most probably comes from Plato's *Cratylus*,[106] where Socrates bases every human activity[107] on the existence of a primal image or archetype: "Further, primary names may be compared to paintings, and in paintings it's possible to present all the appropriate colors and shapes, or not to present them all,"[108] states the philosopher. An "originary image," then, is the ultimate and primal expression of that which is aimed to be created and perfected. Prince Hamlet is no mere copy but a creation —according to Plato's standards. Shakespeare's creation links back to a previously identified public persona; hence there is a bond of identity between the two figures. The theater storms the public sphere by recreating it. This "presence," states

105. See Regenbogen & Meyer 2013, 1–2.
106. *Cratylus* 432a-c: "Socrates: Suppose some god didn't just represent your color and shape the way painters do, but made all the inner parts like yours, with the same warmth and softness, and put motion, soul, and wisdom like yours into them—in a word, suppose he made a duplicate of everything you have and put it beside you. Would there then be two Cratyluses or Cratylus and an image of Cratylus? / Cratylus: It seems to me, Socrates, that there would be Cratyluses. / Socrates: So don't you see that we must look for some other kind of correctness in images and in the names we've been discussing, and not insist that if a detail is added to an image or omitted from it, it's no longer an image at all. Or haven't you noticed how far images are from having the same features as the things of which they are images? / Cratylus: Yes, I have."
107. *Cratylus* 389c.
108. The German translation reads as follows: "Jede sinnliche, also auch jede lautliche Nachahumg eines Seienden ist wie jedes Abbild seinem Urbild nicht angemessen […]." Both *Abbild* and *Urbild* translates Plato's *schemata*.

Schmitt, is an *Urphänomen*;[109] namely, it is so as due to its dependence on an archetypical image—based on a concrete image of a "historical reality."

The essence of the phenomenon birthed on the stage corresponds to the image of a Queen and a set of impious actions carried out by a murderer. This dreadful aftermath lived and experienced by that "Elizabethan audience" is now reproduced onstage. The "person of an avenger," the character of Hamlet, is literally thrust onto center stage.

Schmitt adds that "this primal image of historical actuality" must not "dissolve into mere Romanticism and subjective occasionalism." Both expressions were introduced by Schmitt in *Political Romanticism*[110]. Much of his 1952 prologue and *Hamlet oder Hekuba* depends, as I will prove further, on this thesis previously written by Schmitt. The "myth" of *Hamlet* depends on its use of a historical image. Maximum politics yields maximum results. Schmitt paraphrases Hölderlin's *Andenken*[111] (1803) when he reminds us that "[p]oets create that which endures"; at the same time, he also relies on Aristotle's difference between "lyric," "epic," and "tragic" poetry. *Hamlet* is no mere "poetic" creation; nor is it an epic, lyric, or tragic theater piece. Although these elements are amazingly displayed in Shakespeare's work—Schmitt reminds us of the character of Falstaff from *Henry IV* and his kinship with Cervantes's Don Quixote—they do not compare with the poetic force of *Hamlet* the drama and its portrayal of "contemporary life." The staging of that "historical reality" is not, thus, mere creation: it is organic. Put differently, *Hamlet* expresses the connection between life and creation.

The 1952 prologue's arguments are—with the exception of his mention of *Politische Romantik* or his proposal that *Hamlet* stands as a myth—resoundingly indulgent with Winstanley's book. James I did not "defend his right on the field of historical action"—such as Hamlet delayed his revenge and did not claim his right to the throne of Denmark. The parallels that Schmitt mentions are the same as Winstanley's. At this point, the reader may wonder what exactly Shakespeare contributed to his play. Did he create a compelling

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109. This expression was coined by Goethe in his *Theory of Colors* (1810) as a crucial, holistic element on which Goethe's idea of nature could stand for both a wider and visceral representation of nature's wholeness. See Goethe 1970, 3–6, 18–20.
110. See Schmitt 1986, 17–19 at 8.
111. Hölderlin 2005, 352–353.

masterpiece or merely recreate a ubiquitous image and stress certain historical elements along the way? Schmitt highlights once again the "tragic situation." I quote this point in full:

> In the hands of a great poet, this sort of disguising—with sagas, novellas, and histories—actually heightens the identity it makes use of, preserving its immediacy in a dialectic through the very act of veiling that identity—that is, the poet's application of this insulating layer actually prevents the fire of real life from simply consuming itself. (172)

It is not easy to be told first that *Hamlet* resoundingly echoes an archetype only to then be told that Shakespeare scoffed at "the historical" King James I's inactivity by projecting this very lack of initiative onto a foot-dragging laggard who happens to be a prince whose father—a king—has been assassinated. *À perte de vue*, Schmitt's prologue covers the history of philosophy from Plato to Hegel. The expression "the fire of real life simply consuming itself" is both primitive and dramatic. Was Shakespeare also a *feuerspucker*? Prince Hamlet is "the insulating layer" because he gravitates toward his own unbearable mission by avoiding what in "contemporary life" ought to be fulfilled—"the divine right of kings," as Schmitt assures.

Once again, Schmitt reminds to the reader that the cases of Mary Stuart and James I are not just content that is taken from history books and then gently worked into a drama piece like some sort of "raw material." The examples provided by Schmitt are Schiller's *Mary Stuart* (1800),[112] *The Maid of Orleans* (1801),[113] and *Demetrius* (1804-5, premiered in 1857).[114] He is right to do so because these three works are, indeed, historical dramas as such. He then uses once again the expressions *Urbild* and *Abbild* in his comparison of "Shakesperean and Schillerian drama." The German poet, despite his tremendous historical knowledge and intellectual genius, was unable "to capture the temporal and spatial immediacy of his own unique historical moment." He applied philosophy and drama for a better good; namely, "ethics." This is why "none of Schiller's figures attained mythic stature" (173). Neither his characters nor the stylized plight that they portrayed became "enduring

112. Schiller 2008, 9–148.
113. Schiller 2008, 149–278.
114. Schiller 2005, 245–412. See chapter 3 (3.8).

mythic figures" (173). Schiller mastered his plays by *Abbild*; that is, he imitated a present and built upon it a new, edifying posterity. Shakespeare pierced through the centuries via the divine process of *Urbild*; namely, he crafted a myth by capturing his own present through the public means of theater. He mythicized his present by theatricalizing the very present as an event. But this distinction seems somewhat narrow and unstable. Is it not up to the audience to unravel the wild chronology of theater and its events? Schmitt adds:

> Perhaps Schiller's captivating criminals—especially the false Demetrius—are still candidates for the mythic sphere, if somehow a new image of Schiller manages to establish itself and break out of the crusted layers of paint repeatedly applied in the course of the last century to the portrait we have of Schiller. (173)

It is quite interesting to notice how Schiller eventually entered the "mythical sphere" by creating a villain. Indeed, Demetrius was a deceiver.[115] The faux Russian tsar convinced the Polish *Reichstag* of his kinship with Ivan IV. Demetrius now acts as an ally of Poland in the mission of defeating Boris Godunov. Demetrius is encouraged by Marina, his fiancée. Then all hell breaks loose: Boris Godunov kills himself by drinking poison. Demetrius reigns for few days until he realizes that his claim to the throne is a façade: He had been tricked by Godunov's opponents. And when he forces his mother to prove his alleged kinship with the deceased king, she does not recognize Demetrius as her son. This is all we know, for *Demetrius* was never finished, and we only have the fragments of what this play might have been. However, it is not difficult to see why Schmitt's attention was drawn to Schiller's unfinished work. Demetrius's power is illegitimate. He convinced the people that he was the murdered son of Ivan IV, an assassination planned and perpetrated by Boris Godunov. He achieved power—total power—by seducing those around him. He was no one and suddenly became *the* one. But then he falls in disgrace, for his legitimacy crumbles around him. The deceiver can play with the truth precisely because he is not the true king. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," wrote Paul in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. This entanglement of seduction, power, and legitimacy was tackled twice by Schmitt: First,

115. See chapter 5 (5.3-4).

in *Legality and Legitimacy*,[116] and then in his *Glossarium*[117], where he retrospectively acknowledged the power of that book written in 1933. All in all, Schiller's immaculate "portrait" might be altered when readers learn to fully appreciate the importance of his *Demetrius*; that is, when readers fully recognize the mythic stature of Schiller's disguised outcast. A key contribution to this kind of awareness, Schmitt suggests, can be found in Max Kommerell's work;[118] Schmitt then rapidly covers how Kleist and Grillparzer also cultivated this historical soil with their peculiar dramatic tools. The important thing, Schmitt concludes, is to distinguish that "antique tragedy is grounded in myth" while, on the contrary, "Shakespeare's great drama has its origin in its own unique time." Shakespeare touched his time. By contrast, Schiller, in general, but also Kleist and Grillparzer, were touched by their times.

The next example given by Schmitt is awkwardly local. He mentions Kaspar Hauser, that confused, enigmatic kid who suddenly appears in "Nuremberg's town square," carrying a letter that read: "My name is Kaspar Hauser, and I want to be a cavalryman." Schmitt notes how this "peculiar event" triggered the imagination of "historians and jurists, pedagogues and journalists" (174). The names of Paul Verlaine, Stefan George, Richard Dehmel, and Georg Trakl are quickly mentioned in the 1952 prologue. Schmitt aims to demonstrate how poets are able to take an event or situation and rip it brilliantly from history's grip. Plain historicism—namely, formal documentation—would have reduced that lost kid's story to nothing more than a curious anecdote. Nonetheless, the force of this myth does not come from poets as such—they just enhance a "historical singularity" (174). Regarding the mythical, Schmitt conveys how poetry decodes an encrypted historical message and lifts it onto a higher, public yet irrational sphere. Without explicitly covering the subject, he offers a taxonomy of creation: Achilles's deeds were sung by Homer, Kaspar Hauser's singularity was put into verse "by lyric poets." None of them belonged to the stage. Achilles needed to appear close to other mortals, even though he was the son of a goddess; otherwise, he would have been just another character on the stage and not a hero per se. Kaspar Hauser did not have such an origin, but within the theater, he would have likewise appeared dull, his dark persona progressively thrust into the light of understanding. On the contrary, King James I

116. Schmitt 2012e, 32–37 at 6.
117. Schmitt 2015e, 47–54, 137, 155 ff.
118. See chapter 5 (5.4).

was presented to himself and to the London-based audience by a dramatist who knew more about fate and revenge. Culture needs to change and mutate, and so too does myth. This uninterrupted flux offers multiple reflections through which all manner of readers and interpreters can see themselves or their own present-day reality. Schmitt recalls once again Freiligrath's oft-cited line, just to repeat that, beyond these inevitable waves of change, *Hamlet* "succeeded in preserving within the drama itself the real core of its origin, realizing the play of history in the stage" (175). It is worth mentioning that at this point, just as will happen in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, Schmitt does not see the possibility of new investigations arising that will change the image that we have of Mary Stuart and King James, thereby also changing the "real core" that lies at the heart of Shakespeare's intentions. Schmitt does recognize how Winstanley's work devoted to Shakespeare cracked open an unknown theme in historical investigations—the label *comparative literature* was not yet developed in Germany by 1952. Schmitt brings to the fore nearly a dozen of *Hamlet*'s nineteenth-century interpreters just to admit that the trend of "contemporary-historical connections" was far from new.[119] However, Winstanley's investigation—and thus, also Schmitt's—"has now provided the decisive turn" (176). Schmitt acridly rejects the opinion of one "well-known Anglicist in Zürich," who "in 1924" aimed "to destroy the disruptive book once and for all" (176). Schmitt heavily mocks the aforementioned critic: "Today we find the life, the fate, and especially the sentiments of the ill-fated king less boring than that overbearing Anglicist of 1924, who unlike the ill-fated James unfortunately has no Shakespeare to put him on stage in the alienated form appropriate to his time" (176). The critic in question, Bernard Fehr, did

119. Schmitt stresses how Karl Silberschlag's *Shakespeare's Hamlet, Sources and Political Connections* (1877) "requires special mention," for he—a German scholar who published several works on Ancient Greek philosophy—had already accounted for the parallelisms that could be drawn between *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's sixteenth-century political and historical context. Schmitt questions those "critics" that "have invoked" Silberschlag's essay "in order to cast doubt on the originality of Lilian Winstanley's thesis." See Silberschlag 1877, 278: "Die Anspielungen in unserer Tragödie haben unserer Ansicht nach Ihren Grund vorzugsweise darin, dass es Shakespeare ein Bedürfniss war, Charaktere und Begebenheiten des wirklichen Lebens, welche ihn selbst lebhaft angeregt und viel beschäftigt hatten, poetisch darzustellen." Although this does recall Winstanley's thesis, it is actually Silberschlag's, who at the very beginning of his essay calls for a shift from the aesthetic interpretations of *Hamlet* toward historical ones: "Unter historischer Kritik verstehen wir die Kritik, welche die Entstehung der Dichtung betrachtet, also die Quellen, welchen der Dichter benutzt hat und die Beziehungen auf bestimmte Ereignisse oder Personen, welche sich in der Dichtung finden" (Silberschlag 1877, 269). This means, according to Schmitt, that Silberschlag's reading remains tied to the descriptive historical level, while Winstanley, on the contrary, went beyond this dimension by taking into account concrete political events.

not see the sociological potential of Winstanley's thesis[120]. On the contrary, Augustus Ralli, a Shakespearean scholar who wrote *A History of Shakespearean Criticism* in 1932, did comprehend Winstanley's—and, logically, Schmitt's prologue and later 1956 investigation. He "concluded […] that the light thus cast on the historical events of Shakespeare's time is like the fire stolen by Prometheus" (177). Of course, the positive reviews of Winstanley's work—which Schmitt naturally took to extend to his own—ignored the simple fact that history, a concrete situation, needs to be first aestheticized in order to be mythicized.[121] Schmitt continues Ralli's depiction of *Prometheus* by asserting that "the great dramatist found it in the historical present of his time." His prologue ends as follows:

> With the help of Lilian Winstanley's book, we become aware of this important process, extricating ourselves from the morass of academic controversies. We begin to grasp a crucial event of our European history: the birth of the Hamlet myth in a play of contemporary-historical presence. (177)

The reader may ask herself now if Schmitt's indulgent tone in this preface was not intended to achieve something bigger and personal; namely, Schmitt's lending substance to his own thesis on "the capture of contemporary life"—which later in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* would become the idea of "intrusion"—by heralding an all-too narrow and expansive thesis on *Hamlet*. At this point, one could think that Schmitt confused the realms of real-life and creation by thinking of *Hamlet* and its current impact on the culture of the modern era as an event that took place in the "historical reality of James I and Mary Stuart" (18). Was the death of King James that decisive for Europe? By considering that event a "taboo," his interpretation distances itself from "the morass of academic controversies" and transforms him into a veritable taboo-buster. Moreover, the core of the foreword of Winstanley's investigation is not directly related to Shakespeare and his critics. It draws primarily on the thesis already established in PR. In order to prove this, I will now tackle the main theoretical

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120. Bernard Fehr's critique was severe, as it practically severed Winstaley's central thesis: "'Die Verfasserin'", writes Fehr, "glaubt heute fest an die Wirlichkeit ihrer Entdeckungen. Wenn sie nach Jahren in aller Ruhe ihr Buch wieder liest, wird sie zur Einsicht kommen, daß sie einst mit Peter Pan nach *Neverland* geflogen war", quoted in Höfele 2021, 4.

121. See Höfele 2016, 259: "But in order to explain Hamlet, Schmitt, like Winstanley, must first Hamletize James. In his account, James becomes a tragic character, but also with those that would befall his doomed progeny in the course of the seventeenth century."

elements in PR and show how the biased and disguised reception of Winstanley's thesis can be found in Schmitt's take on "the myth of Hamlet."

CHAPTER 2
HAMLET ODER HEKUBA'S INTERNAL SOURCES

Introduction

By acknowledging the importance of *Political Romanticism* (1921), I develop in this chapter a thorough analysis of Schmitt's conception of political life as existential seriousness. His dismissal of romanticism foreshadows his later rejection of disciplinary scopes at the moment of studying the historical core of *Hamlet*. A methodological breakdown of *Political Romanticism*'s main thesis shed light, then, in several statements that the reader will find in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Schmitt's idea of an internal methodological flaw in the main contemporary disciplines that had delve into the significance and intricacies of Shakespeare's drama—that is, that their conceptual a priori is rooted in liberalism, whether its manifestation comes as romanticism, sociology, psychology or art theory—find in *Political Romanticism* its very first version. After having accounted the monograph of 1921, then I proceed to offer a point-by-point examination of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s theoretical structure.

2.1 The Importance of *Political Romanticism*

Most of Schmitt's published works—monographs, essays, correspondence, notebooks, and posthumous diaries—belong to Duncker & Humblot. This Berlin-based publishing house was founded in 1798 by Heinrich Frölich. In 1809 it was purchased by Carl Duncker and Peter Humblot, just a few months before Frölich's death. They continued and expanded their initial publishing ventures—mostly literature and philosophy—and later added political science and law studies to their portfolio.[122] Schmitt's PR[123] was the beginning of a long, fruitful relationship not only with Duncker & Humblot but also with Ludwig Feuchtwanger—his editor until 1933 and "one of the most important Jewish intellectuals of

122. Norbert Simon (hrsg.), *Duncker & Humblot. Verlagsbibliographie 1798-1945* (Duncker & Humblot: Berlin, 1998), 11ss.
123. Page references to the German edition will be given in footnotes, while the page references of the English translation will be given in parenthesis. Any modification of these translations will be given in footnotes.

the Weimar Republic."[124] *Politische Romantik* was Schmitt's "first major monograph" (84). It is a three-chapter examination of "the structure of the Romantic spirit."[125] It is quite ironic, however, that a book that dealt with the spiritual beginning of an "individualistically disintegrated society"[126] was published under the very same firm whose first owner, Heinrich Frölich, was no other than the editor of the six-issue legendary *Athenäum*, the intellectual house organ of Novalis, Schleiermacher, and the Schlegel brothers: basically, the birth of Romanticism. This was the topic treated in *Political Romanticism*.

Schmitt's well-known thesis states the following:

> Romanticism is subjectified occasionalism because an occasional relationship to the world is essential to it. Instead of God, however, the romantic subject occupies the central position and makes the world and everything that occurs in it into a mere occasion. (18)

As is easily recognizable, the central concept here is "occasion." However, to grasp what an occasion is and how it can be treated creatively in all its many facets, it is first necessary to comprehend the concept of "world." While a critique of subjectivity can be fulfilled by formal, philosophical means—just as Hegel did by negatively acknowledging Novalis's unthinkable power of consciousness and creativity[127]—, an inquiry into the spiritual phenomenon that is invariably dependent on the very substance of the world necessarily must address metaphysical, historical, and political sources in order to distinguish between different forms and types of "Romanticism." Moreover, by establishing the "spiritual structure" of such phenomenon, Schmitt explicitly values Romanticism as a mutation or at least as a momentous shift from its original sphere of faith to other realms. To consider "the world as an occasion" presupposes a renunciation to any commitment within the "world." Thus, "the world" can be anything and nothing at the same time. One day it is "the Middle Ages," another day, it is "the feudal aristocracy, and feudal castles" (9). Romanticism and its

124. Mehring 2014, 84.
125. Schmitt 1998, 62.
126. Schmitt 1998, 20.
127. See Siep 2014, 198.

agent, "the Romantic," find themselves within the world without really being "in the world." Externality becomes virtual. The Romantic enters nowhere and leaves everywhere:

> The possibility of a real political revolution in which he could personally take part did not occur to him. Regardless of whether his phraseology was revolutionary or reactionary, belligerent or pacifist, pagan or Christian, he was never resolved to leave the world of his impressionistic experience and change anything that occurred in commonplace reality. (99–100)

It was binary or bust. In his 1924 *Vorwort,* Schmitt named these dichotomies "the objective oppositions and distinctions."[128] They are "profound and mysterious only as long as they are taken[129] with objective seriousness in the domain to which the romanticized object belongs." It is important to note how five years after *Politische Romantik*, Schmitt still insists on the epistemic value of what is "objective"—namely, deduced. Moreover, the distinctions that Schmitt dismisses are the following—"good and evil, friend and enemy, Christ and Antichrist" (16). But this is hardly objective. In fact, it is objectively moral—or, in the case of the dichotomy "friend and enemy," meta-moral. However, the point is clear. The Romantics display their images and "tumultuous polychromy" in a dynamic, self-destructive, and unpredictable mental playground, where almost everything is serious except seriousness. Romanticism is the play of the game. While Schmitt aims for a "third possibility", the structure of his analysis remains binary.

PR aims to analyze "the spiritual structure" on which all these astonishing possibilities are able to exist:

> As for every genuine explanation, here too the metaphysical formula is the best touchstone.[130] Every moment is based, first of all, on a specific characteristic attitude toward the world; and second, on a specific idea, even if it is not always conscious, of an ultimate authority, an absolute center. The romantic attitude is most clearly characterized by means of a singular concept, that of the *occasio*. […] It acquires its real significance, however, by means of an opposition. It negates the concept of

128. Schmitt 1986, 17 (translation modified).
129. Translation modified.
130. Translation modified.

> *causa*, in other words, the force of a calculable causality, and thus also every binding norm. (16)

This is the approach and method of the book on early romanticism. In his 1924 prologue, Schmitt reviews the different and often contradictory scopes that have been used to study Romanticism. Just like in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, historicism, psychology, and even politics miss the mark when it comes to capturing the core of this phenomenon. Schmitt thus offers a classification, a typology, a study of the "concrete" aspect of Romanticism. And what could be more concrete than the life and events of a Romantic; namely, Adam Müller? Müller is the exemplum. The final opposition is between a carefree, genius life and the juridical aspect of existence—that which Schmitt calls "every binding norm" (17). But this is just the formal dimension. Even more profound is the distinction between facing existence in its inner seriousness and, on the contrary, degrading the very institutional foundations of the epoch by calling out its murkiness and infirmity, to finally escape through an endless kaleidoscope of possibilities unable to ground themselves in reality. The vitriolic march of Romanticism put seriousness to the side. Its "real significance" is to be revealed in non-Romantic terms. Schmitt offers a descriptive approach by proving the main features of Romanticism—its phenomenal themes—in his portrayal of Adam Müller. He possessed "an insignificant and questionable personality," his life was of a "vital incongruity," he even was a "fraud," merely a "poor rabbit," "a wretched sub-Romantic legend" (21). Schmitt, finally, aimed "to give an objective answer to a question that is seriously intended" (21). He who grounds reality in real life is no Romantic by definition. The aesthetic outlook championed by Romanticism is linked with "the relation of the fantastical, and also […] the relation of intoxication or the dream, the relation of the adventure, the fairy tale, and the magical game" (19).

Already in *Political Romanticism*, it seems that the unveiling of a phenomenon by studying its concreteness can be achieved only by juxtaposing "the spiritual core" against the "concrete life," just as happened with James I, who became Hamlet through his likeness with Shakespeare's artistic creation. Schmitt states:

> This romantic productivity also treats all traditional art forms as a mere occasion. Thus even though it repeatedly seeks a concrete point of departure, it must alienate itself from every form, just as it does from concrete reality. The remote—in other

> words, that which is spatially or temporally absent—is not easily destroyed or negated, either by the consistency of actual reality or by a norm that ordains compliance in the here and now. (19–20)

If life as such is concreteness—gravity, blood, bones, and death—how can productivity detach itself from reality? An occasion is not an exception but another aspect of concrete life itself, which is produced, imagined, reproduced, re-imagined, destroyed, and renewed once again only to consolidate a new face of reality and a new world of realities. There is no *occasio* that does not belong to concrete life. The problem is, to Schmitt's unfair interpretation, that the significance of such actions is measured according to its political impact. In this sense, was Schmitt's approach historically biased? Unorthodoxy does not equate with Romanticism. And although "subjectified occasionalism" might sound like a cutting-edge formula, is it historically adequate? Schmitt's typology considers that the many approaches to the critique of Romanticism—the mercurial diplomat Gentz, the Hegelians, especially Arnold Ruge and Karl Marx, etc.—failed at "capturing their contradictory and multifaceted enemy by means of a succinct concept" (25). Thus, a conceptual scope alone cannot achieve an exhaustive reconstruction of Romanticism. *Political Romanticism* is by turns revisionist, taxonomical, philosophical, and typological. This is a great combination that, however, does not often endure. Schmitt argues why a conceptual approach is insufficient:

> Therefore, nothing is achieved when the romantic is paraphrased as a mystical-expansive impulse, a longing for what is higher, an admixture of naiveté and reflection, the domination of the unconscious, or in a similar way—not to mention the self-definitions of romanticism. (30)

Schmitt shores up his study by concentrating on the theoretical failures that the "expansive" approaches were built on. From this perspective, the Swiss jurist Karl Ludwig von Haller is akin to Müller and, thus, a Romantic; but, then again, he is the contrary of a Romantic, just like Adam Müller was. Therefore, Schmitt's assertion that "[b]efore we ascertain the structure of political Romanticism on the basis of spiritual-historical and systematic relationships, however, the praxis of a political Romantic must be shown by means of an

example."[131] While he addressed that Romantics also possess and carry on in "concrete situations," the reader now may skeptically ask if maybe the Romantic can find herself in a concrete situation that, nevertheless, it is not authentic. Schmitt stresses the importance of "the actual conductor of the political Romantic who is given an opportunity" (37). Schmitt studies the cases of Friedrich Schlegel and Josef Anton von Pilat: the former was the editor and "war correspondent" of "the *Österreichische Zeitung* and of the *Österreichischer Beobachter*." Schlegel was succeeded by the German publicist Pilat (1782–1865). Schlegel and Pilat, along with Gentz and Adam Müller, were trustees of Metternich. Schmitt limits himself to quoting from the letters of the leaders of all of these "political Romantics." This is enough for him to address how their time in politics was insignificant, a string of futile exercises. The reader may thus consider it prudent to ask: Are the letters by those chiefs a definitive proof on which to properly gauge the political significance of "Romanticism" as such? Schmitt—referring to Schelgel—answers:

> Nevertheless, where we are to consider the historical impact of the political personality, it has to be noted that whereas most of his political contemporaries had virtually no other immediate impression of his personality beyond that of corpulence, as a politician he was not taken seriously at all. (39)

Schmitt's argument continues to lack weight. How can the irrelevance of Schlegel's work as an "editor and war correspondent" have a bearing on an entire movement or a "historical-spiritual" phenomenon? Moreover, the wave of politics held little sway over the lives of Schlegel and Müller. It seems that the "political" is authentically present only at the bureaucratic offices where chiefs, chancellors, and princes subtly reject the metaphysical gridlocks of those "Romantic" clerks. This is quite amusing if one compares it with one of Schmitt's most well-known maxims; namely, "[t]he distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation."[132] Therefore, the "political Romantic" reached low levels of political participation. But what if this was intentional? Friedrich August Wolf—the German classicist who coined the discipline and concept of "philology"—remarked in a note that Schlegel was "a man who

131. Schmitt 1986, 39 (translation modified).
132. Schmitt 2007a, 27.

wants to go beyond 'assured success.'"[133] Perhaps the "political" arena was not his intended sphere of activity after all. At the same time, Pilat was awarded a third-class Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle and, in 1831, was recognized as a member of the Austrian nobility. Is the global upheaval caused by the Romantic—which is the problem that Schmitt wholeheartedly tackled in his considerations on romanticism—just vain political outcry? While Schmitt unfolds a very detailed analysis of Müller's biography—his life in Dresden, his crooked actions in the Tyrol "as an aide-de-cape and journalistic attaché," and, finally, his conversion to Catholicism—he suddenly forgets that Müller's constant bureaucratic reshufflings do not apply to the cases of Schlegel and Pilat. Scholars have recognized the political potential of Schlegel: for instance, his concept of "urbanity"[134] or his notion of "irony," which turned out to be widely used. It is not hard to figure out that the "political Romantic" simply stands for the non-political. Moreover, the inauthenticity of Romanticism extends not only to the political sphere but also to the spiritual—the poles which Schmitt specifically considers serious realms of thought. This explains Schmitt's remark about how "Catholicism is not something Romantic":

> Regardless of how often the Catholic Church was the object of romantic interest, and regardless of how often it also knew how to make use of romantic tendencies, the church itself was never the subject and bearer of a romanticism, no more than this was the case for any other world power. (50)

The expression in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* that depicted reality as "the mute rock upon which the play founders, sending the foam of genuine tragedy rushing to the surface"[135] must be comprehended as the attestation of Schmitt's thesis regarding Catholicism as the ultimate limit of Romanticism. In both cases, the image of the "rock" stresses the "concreteness" of reality as such. At the end of the first chapter of *Politische Romantik*, Schmitt states that "the Catholic Church turned out to be the rock on which Romantic vanity […] was shattered." However, if one is to approach this metaphor literally, the truth is that only a concrete object

133. Quoted in Hessling 2014, 37.
134. See Breuer 2014, 131–132; Breuer 2015, 60–75.
135. Schmitt 2009b, 45.

can be "broken" [*zerbrach*][136] against a rock. While Schmitt establishes an opposition between the "concrete"—the rock; that is, reality (the Catholic Church)—and the non-concrete—the "tumultuous" waves of the sea; namely, Romanticism or the free creation of tragedy and drama—this typology does not and cannot endure. Likewise, the metaphor does not belong to Schmitt—nor does he claim that it does. It is a classic locus of Stoicism established by Marcus Aurelius (121–180 AD). In his 49th meditation, he states:

> To be like the rock that the waves keep crashing over. It stands unmoved and the raging of the sea falls still around it.[137]

The rock [*der Felsen*] that Schmitt refers to is a manifestation of the callousness of reality as such. The shape, color, intensity, texture, or frequency of the wave does not matter: It will inevitably succumb against the relentless rock. However, for Marcus Aurelius, the image of the rock was not supposed to describe a dismal crashing against an impervious opponent performing a stable, everlasting role. The Roman emperor followed in the footsteps of Seneca (4 BC–65 AD), who compared the life of the sage with that of a rock. I quote at length from the *Letters on Ethics: To Lucilius*:

> I do not put the sage in a separate class from the rest of humankind, and neither do I eliminate pain and grief from him as if he were some sort of rock, not susceptible to any feeling. I keep in mind that he is made up of parts. One is nonrational, and it is this that experiences the biting, the burning, the pain. The other part is rational; it is this that holds unshakable opinions and that is fearless and unconquerable. In this latter resides the highest good of humankind.[138]

The "rock" of Stoicism is not simply a metaphor. It is rather a task, a state of mind that has to be achieved by the sage with increasing lore and loving fairness. This rock is a two-fold entity, part non-rational, part rational. This means that the non-rational part is passive; it only "experiences the biting, the burning, the pain." The other is active—it can be fine-tuned

136. Schmitt 1998, 61.
137. Marcus Aurelius 2002, 48.
138. Seneca 2015, 220.

throughout the life of the sage. It becomes stronger—it is "fearless and unconquerable." Seneca finds in this part "the highest good [*cum vero perfectum*...] of humanity." "Humankind" [*hominum*] is *humanitas*, a concept first used by Cicero in opposition to *inmanitas* (the barbarians), which meant the combination of "the traditional virtues of the past with a new refinement of intellect and manner."[139] The rock of Stoicism is intertwined with humankind. By contrast, Schmitt's *rupe* is pure unawareness. It is a fact, a neutral object which stands for nothing. The two parts mentioned by Seneca are merged in a single mineral, deaf to external yearnings and mute regarding all positions, contents, or decisions. What was for Stoicism a genuine depiction of the turmoil of existence and the inevitability of grief and despair—namely, the image of the dualism which characterizes the meaningful yet fortunate life of the sage—is now for Schmitt the landscape on which an opposition simply takes place. Schmitt's metaphor of the "mute rock" is the expression par excellence of the institutional aspect of life—or at least what can be controlled within its chaos. By "institution" Schmitt means—at least from *Der Wert des Staat und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen* onward[140]—the state but also the church as the most important historical institution—the Church *mediates* the traffic between "reality and ideas and concepts"[141]. Therefore, the "Romantic" wave beats against the institutional rock only to disappear in vain. But the metaphor of the concrete is ironically still too abstract. The dualism celebrated by the Stoics develops into a narrow typology where a complex phenomenon is analyzed in terms of legitimation. The "political Romantic" existence was indeed paradigmatic. However, to classify its agents according to a typology whereby the "utmost degree" of reality is to be found in the unsubstantial clerks who never had access to the folders with which moguls, kings, and queens orchestrated the politics of their "concrete situation," might be a fair accepted examination that it is, nonetheless, historically biased. Even if the reader is willing to accept the contemporary interpretation of Romanticism by going back to its metaphysical roots—the "two major transformations that together form an interesting countermovement"; namely, "the

139. See Vasaly 1993, 183: "The word implies, first, the possession of a broad literary education, including familiarity with and enjoyment of poetry, as well as knowledge—although not a specialist's knowledge—of history and philosophy. *Humanitas* describes a quality of spirit as well, perhaps expressed in its most attractive aspect in the peroration of the *Pro Roscio*, where Cicero pleads eloquently for the return of the tolerance, pity, and humanity that had once existed in public life."
140. Schmitt 2014e, 127. It is in this monograph that Schmitt first establishes the distinction between the concrete and the non-concrete (or abstraction).
141 I thank to Hugo Herrera for this observation.

Copernican planetary system" and "the philosophy of Descartes"—and thus the branding of the Romantic movement as a specific kind of opposition to "eighteenth-century rationalism" (53), it is not so easy to concede the following:

> The origin of romantic irony lies in this suspension of every decision, and especially in the vestige of rationalism that it reserves for itself in spite of its thoroughly irrational bearing, the origin of this clear criterion that immediately makes the difference from mysticism evident, since there is no ironic mysticism. (56)

The "political Romantic" merely languishes in his "concrete situation" by escaping to infinity by various means. The "political Romantic" is at most do-nothing functionary. This is the lesson that Schmitt holds as universal while pointing out Adam Müller's regrettable mischievousness. Schmitt nevertheless insists. He proposes a new, more essential opposition: namely, "the Romantic conflict between possibility and reality" (65). The Romantic "reversed" this relationship, something that "also signifies a reversal philosophically" (66). The concrete becomes limited; ergo, something false. This new model now "is fused with the opposition of the infinite and the finite, the intuitive and discursive" (67). If Schmitt was too hasty in dismissing the positive contributions of psychology and sociology when he attempted to grasp "a definition of political Romanticism" (51), now he is quite optimistic in thinking that the Romantic phenomenon behaved according to the terms of his oppositional typology. Schmitt classifies the Romantic as the one who served "the two new demiurges, humanity and history" (67). How much more abstract can Schmitt's thesis get? According to this view, the use of typology leads only to revisionism, while a sociological approach would take the reader to a more specific and "concrete" explanation of Romanticism.[142] Schmitt's analysis, after having highlighted the highest expression of the demiurge of "humanity"—

142. Just like Michael Mann did in the second volume of his classic *The Sources of Social Power: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760–1914* (1993[2012]), 230–238 at 6–7: "The 'national' identities of these ideologists [Mann refers to the German Romantics] were ostensibly apolitical, yet they carried varied political implications. They imbibed Enlightenment advocacy of reason, education, and literacy to modernize, usually with liberal political implications. But other ideological currents had conservative implications […]. German Romantics saw progress carried less by the individual than by the community, the *Volk*." And later: "All of this might have mattered little. Central European protonationalism concerned small groups of intelligentsia, mostly loyal to their rulers, busying themselves with abstruse forms of knowledge." The "two demiurges" here are adequately replaced by a genuine historical analysis of the social aspects of cultural and political change in eighteenth-century Germany.

namely, children, the "undetermined children" (Novalis), "the happiest state […], [the] eternally unrealized, possibility"—proceeds to analyze the spiritual character of Romanticism:

> The romantic does not escape into nothingness. On the contrary, he seeks a concrete reality, but it is a reality that does not disturb and negate him. […] Its terrible decision—eternal bliss or eternal damnation—turns all the fits of romanticism into an absurd trifle. Finally, the romantic world is not utopian either. […] He has a reality that he can play out today. He does not want to be bothered with the task of a concrete realization. (71)

Reading this paragraph, it seems curious to suggest, for instance, that *Athenäum* simply aimed to "play out" reality, rejecting "a concrete realization." At the same time, it is natural to view the aforementioned "absurd trifle" as related to Müller and his lack of verve for politics. Up to now, it seems that the Romantic was an eighteenth-century Zerco. The reader who is familiar with German Romanticism might picture these men as slack-jawed honorary members of some political organization, who busy themselves with minutiae of various kinds while they walk unscathed toward an unapproachable and, therefore, perfect reality. This is crucial, the bottomless distance between the Romantic and his decision. "Romantic irony is essentially the intellectual expedient of the subject that keeps its distance from objectivity" (72). It seems that the devil finds work for Romantic hands. At this point, Schmitt's typology is perfectly accurate; his description of the main agents of this short-lived cultural phenomenon, simply flawless. Whether the subject is Müller's incapacity to define anything—x "is nothing other than…"—or Novalis' never-ending exchangeable realities, Schmitt never fails to provide a correct formal description of Romanticism. "Everything real is only an occasion," as we read apropos of "this Romantic productivity" (84). Schmitt now develops a general sketch of the word "occasio." This is a philosophical concept—one may conceive of it as a reaction, in view of the development of Schmitt's analysis—opposed to the concept of "causa." Schmitt analyzes the "structure of political Romanticism," which is logically linked to a specific metaphysical standpoint. It is not hard to see that the main objection here is the "ocassio's" lack of normativity and its free setting rooted in God's

supreme occasion: the world. The connection between Romanticism as an exotic knee-jerk reaction to rationalism is historically postulated in the following terms by Schmitt:

> […] we see the justification of the view that the discussion of the structure of the romantic spirit began with Descartes, who was led from the argument that I am[143] because I think—from the inference from thought to being—to the distinction between internal and external, soul and body, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. This resulted in the logical and metaphysical difficulties of bringing the two into interaction with one another and of explaining the mutual interaction of soul and body. (85–86)

That "interaction" was not explained by the philosophy of "occasionalism." "This distinctiveness rests on the consideration that the 'occasionalist' does not clear up a dualism, but rather lets it stand" (87). Consequently, Romanticism sought not to set aside these "difficulties" or obstacles but regarded them as part of a "higher third." Schmitt acknowledges the philosophy of Schelling—along with that of Fichte—as major clarifying elements[144] when it comes to tackling the mile-wide metaphysics of the "*höhern Dritten.*"[145] The philosophy of "occasionalism," according to Schmitt, was at its best a source of traffic between unfinished and non-concrete "realities." Suddenly, "Romanticism" is over. The intellectual phenomenon which took over from "occasionalism," producing an array of possibilities regarding life—"true" life (92)—ended up merging with the *Biedermeier* epoch. But Schmitt's rather biased brand of revisionism does not quite match his talent for establishing that typology which opposed "occasio" to "causa"; "Romanticism," to "concreteness" (the church, the state, the different articulations of seriousness where real

143. Schmitt 1986, 94 (translation modified).
144. However, this was already pointed out by Heinrich Heine's classic critique of Romanticism, *The Romantic School* (1836), which was also an in-your-face critique of Madame de Staël's quasi-ethnological portrait of Germany's early eighteenth-century intellectual milieu *De l'Allemagne* (1813). See Heine 1986, 16–17: "A lot of nonsense is talked about the influence of Fichte's idealistic philosophy and Schelling's nature philosophy on the Romantic School, even to the extent of maintaining that it had its origin in these philosophies. But I find, at most, the influence of a few fragments of Fichte's and Schelling's ideas and no influence whatsoever or a philosophy. Mr. Schelling, who was then teaching in Jena, did however, exercise a strong personal influence on the Romantic School: he is a bit of a poet—a fact not known in France—and they say he is still uncertain as to whether he should publish his collected philosophical doctrines in poetic or even metrical form." Schmitt's highly biased examination on the "personalities" of the Romantics is firmly based on the same bias that the reader finds in Heine's depiction of Schlegel and Schelling.
145. Schmitt 1998, 98.

tragedy emerges from). The cadence of the "Romantics" could not establish an ethics. Their project simply petered out. Fichte's "I" did not provide an answer to the question: "[W]hat does human activity consist in?" (94). Fichte's answer was merely a *Gemütsbewegung*,[146] a dynamic affection. The competence between reasonable options and decisions is "bent out of shape" [*umgebogen… ist*] by Romanticism. Here the reader may detect the bias behind Schmitt's revisionism: in his quest to justify his typology, Schmitt equated Adam Müller's life with Novalis's *Pollen* or Schlegel's letters on physiognomy. But when Schmitt aims to prove the connection between Malebranche's philosophy of "occasio" and the metaphysical thought of Romanticism, the inner complexities and considerable distinctions of this cultural phenomenon are severely reduced. Müller and Schlegel are made out to be the heirs of the godly philosophy of Descartes and the Catholic interpretation of Malebranche. The metaphysical origin of Romanticism finds its perfect application in those non-Hegelian, quasi-Schellingian, half-Fichtian,[147] emotion-fueled, reality-defining thinkers who were known to "romanticize" with unflinching creativity any object, only to start over again and again. Schmitt refers to them as "spiritual revolutionaries,"[148] but are we really to believe that Romanticism as such can be grasped solely by way of Müller's philosophical contributions or Schlegel's work as an "editor" without also taking into account the politics of the early eighteenth century? The Romantics even found an "order," "which of course limited itself to the region of the aesthetic" (97). A constant stream of "new worlds" portrayed their "occasionalism." Even God or the French Revolution were considered "occasions." Schmitt argues that this was possible because the Romantics always restrained themselves to the "spiritual" aspect of life; namely, "aesthetics." Schmitt next unfolds the taxonomical aspect of his analysis:

> The "antithetical" structure of manifestations of romanticism has a twofold basis, one formal and other material. Words, concepts, and images are formally grouped under

146. Schmitt 1986, 102.
147. See de Pascale 2017, 346: "For example, Fichte was not only an inspirer, but also an actual teacher, at Jena, of both Novalis and Friedrich von Schlegel, both of whom (the former in particular) started their course of studies with philosophy. Later, in their early political publications, they showed how close they had remained to their master on some of his favourite themes of investigation."
148. Schmitt 1986, 105.

> the aesthetic perspective of contrast. […] The romantic wants to do nothing except experience and paraphrase his experience in an emotionally impressive fashion. (100)

The so-called "structure of Romanticism" reveals its core; that is, "morality." The perpetually flummoxed Romantic devolves into a stressed agent who is unable to achieve anything "practically." Externality becomes forbidden. It is curious that Schmitt focused so keenly on this hyper-awareness of the "Romantic"—and on his incapacity to participate "in the moral sense" in the "material" realm—but ignored, on the contrary, that "Romanticism" was the first sign of stress of the modern epoch. To posit such a statement does not necessarily imply embracing a sociological or psychological standpoint. Do not the cases and production of Schlegel, Novalis, Solger, Tieck, Müller, or even the suicide of Kleist demonstrate that *Gemütsbewegung* was, indeed, a swamp of stimuli greater than the social capacity of any individual? In any case, Schmitt points out that the "Romantic" endeavor was at most a "transcription" [*der Umschreibung*][149] of the agent's experience; perhaps the true testimony of how the agents listed above marshaled their astonishing emotions. The Romantics were lost wanderers who dwelled in the threshold of life. To be an eighteenth-century pedestrian, a citizen, required an act of self-relinquishing, this is, to bow [*zu verzichten*] to the "superior irony." By re-absorbing their experiences, the "Romantics" developed a technique: their "arguments and inferences become the reverberating figures of his emotional states of affirmation and denial, emotional states that […] revolve around themselves 'in sublime[150] circles'" (101). This technique is brought to the fore in Schmitt's typology. Schmitt offers a logical framework gleaned from "the essays of Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller." "The vital" is a positive feature; the negative is, naturally, "death." Schmitt's analysis aptly unpacks the hitherto unconquered material counterpart of the "Romantic production." PR now turns to compare the work of art as such with the artistic achievements of Romanticism. Music was the object into which Romanticism claimed to have delved furthest. Nonetheless, this identification with music—although the style of Romanticism was the "lyric"—happened to be too expansive. The abstract nature of music was another "occasion" for Romanticism to nourish its experiences "into associations without any further object" (105).

149. Schmitt 1986, 107.
150. Translation modified.

A melody can conflate a whole world of emotions. The artistic debris of Romanticism remain scattered and lacking any chance to achieve unity. Romanticism was the immaterialized organization of chaos. The second chapter of *Political Romanticism* ends as follows:

> Lacking all social and intellectual stability, they succumbed to every powerful complex in their vicinity that made a claim to be taken as true reality. […] They characterized and criticized. As romantics, however, they attempted to achieve the productivity of the genial subject in precisely this fashion. […] Entire worlds seem to be conquered. (106–107)

Thus, Schmitt resumes his analysis of the most passive of all "Romantic" subjects. Was he an agent at least once? Schmitt seems to attribute little importance to the impact that "Romanticism" had on his own epoch. While he recognizes that "they provided a stimulus for great poets and scholars," this assertion ends without any kind of insight (107). This view would have the reader believe that Romanticism amounted to an ungraspable epiphany. The Romantics were the lost dwellers of inconclusive thresholds. The "conquering of worlds" was a sign of their production, their "ocassionalist, subjectified production." Production led to fragments, fragments meant life, life led to infinity, but infinity only led to demise. The "genial subject" became his own scrivener: his transcriptions, however, were largely crossed out.

2.2 Schmitt's historical critique of Romanticism

I will now present a schematic analysis of Schmitt's essay on romanticism last chapter, which is devoted to the "production" of Adam Müller. After doing this, I will offer an alternative to Schmitt's thesis on "Romanticism." I posit that this phenomenon was far from an irrational spiritual movement in which a posse of writers, philosophers, translators, and poets was defeated by their own political aspirations. This alternative will show how Schmit''s typology—reality (concreteness, institutions, seriousness) vs. creation (drama, tragedy, play)—is active in his book of 1956, to the point that it acts as the theoretical framework for the analysis of *Hamlet*.

Schmitt puts forward a historical synthesis of Europe's intellectual assimilation of the French Revolution from 1796 until the spiritual closure of the event in 1810. He portrays the political approaches of the counter-revolutionaries; namely, Edmund Burke (1729–1797), Louis de Bonald (1754–1840), and Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821). The German "Romantics," however, merely indulged in approving or disapproving the historical event, even retrospectively—Schlegel being one such case, according to Schmitt, in his *Die Signatur des Zeitalters*. "This survey of the development of political ideas among the Romantics shows that the Romantic sense of the world and life can be combined with the most diverse political circumstances and with antithetical philosophical theories" (115). This statement is strikingly akin to that power of representation that so distinguished the Catholic Church in *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (1923). But, then again, to adapt to any situation is merely to be able to merge with any content without establishing any further direction except for the initial instance of sympathy or rejection of this or that event. By contrast, the Catholic Church does provide meaning and guidance: It is normative in the highest sense.[151] The morass of Romanticism complicated access to the much-fancied political power sought by intellectual diplomats—some theological, others ultramontane—who were eager to leave their mark on European history.[152] According to Schmitt, Germany did not elaborate a political philosophy like that of the counter-revolutionaries. Schmitt acknowledges Schelling's *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1803), an essay written "under the influence of Hegel and after the dissociation from Fichte," as the milestone of German political philosophy.[153] "The state *is* in the idea" (113). However, once again, something is missing: love. This philosophy's "one defect" was, according to

151. Schmitt 2008b, 12: "Traditionalists, mystical, and Romantic tendencies made many converts. Today, as far as I can judge, Catholics are profoundly dissatisfied with established apologetics, which appear to many as sophistry and forms without content. But all this misses the essential point, because it identifies rationalism with the thinking of the natural sciences and overlooks the fact that Catholic argumentation is based on a particular mode of thinking whose method of proof is a specific juridical logic and whose focus of interests is the normative guidance of human social life."

152. See Peter 2003, 196: "Romanticism wanted to have a political effect; yet, at the same time, it rejected politics. As long as politics and morality in regard to the French Revolution could be thought of as one and the same; that is, as long as it was possible to believe that the moralization of politics had become a revolutionary reality in France, Schlegel, Görres, and others identified themselves with political events."

153. It is hard not to think, however, of Fichte's remark in the draft of a letter to Jens Baggessen, a Danish poet, in April/May 1795. See Fichte 1970, 298: in it, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is depicted as "the first system of freedom. Just like this nation [Fichte refers to France] freed man from external chains, my system liberated him from the yoke of the thing-in-itself, from outside influences and its first principle, by placing him as an autonomous being."

Schleiermacher, its "loveless wisdom" (113). The "Romantic" version of the state—taken from Adam Müller's most prominent lectures and essays and Schlegel's late monographs—is the object scrutinized by Schmitt in his detailed examination. PR now carries out a hermeneutic exercise. The indirect uses of de Maistre or Bonald's concepts are carefully studied by Schmitt. The "Romantic" understanding of the French Revolution is paradigmatic for Schmitt. At one point in time, it was considered wrong, a "mere abject slavery"; at another, Burke's thoughts on revolution are "revolutionary." Schmitt insists:

> Any relationship to a legal or moral judgment would be incongruous here, and every norm would seem to be antiromantic tyranny. A legal or a moral decision would be senseless and it would inevitably destroy romanticism. This is why the romantic is not in a position to deliberately take sides and make a decision. (124)

A "legal or moral judgment" implies the acknowledgment of "legitimacy." But this was an "unromantic category." To adopt a political position, one needs to abandon the sphere of aesthetics first. At least, that is how the moral compass of reality worked for Schmitt. However, there was "no political productivity in the Romantic." The Romantic theories on the state—which went from agrarian considerations to far-fetched reflections on money—were stillborn subjects. Schmitt wrote countless pages on the writings, letters, affairs, and speeches of Adam Müller. Any reader would be forgiven for thinking that Schmitt's book was, in fact, entitled *Adam Müller*: *Rise and Fall*. Schmitt considers Müller "a more pure type of the political Romantic," because "to a higher degree than Schlegel or the other Romantics"—but who are those "other Romantics" at this point?—"he had a specific talent that even made the technique of political romanticizing plain to him" (132). Schmitt's analysis of Müller is philological. Schmitt focuses on Müller's weak and predictable oppositions but also on his use of "superlatives." The study ends with the concept of "conversation" developed by the Romantic thinker. Müller undoubtedly coined extravagant ideas but never achieved conceptual clarity. Schmitt adds: "There is no substantive or conceptual discussion that extricates his account from the empty rounds of these affirmations and negations" (143). The next paragraphs do not build on what Schmitt had previously said about "Romanticism" or Adam Müller. The aim is merely to justify the preceding typology. The definitions of "political Romanticism" abound. Schmitt even offers a subtle distinction

between the attributive adjectives in the noun phrases "*political* Romantic" and "*Romantic* political." If Müller is an example of the former, for Schmitt, the latter is embodied by Karl Ludwig Sand, who killed Kotzebue while he still "retained the unromantic capacity for psychic innervation," and by Don Quixote, "[t]he immortal type of this politics of romantically construed opportunities" (147). The difference between the Cervantes archetype and the cases of Schlegel or Müller—one is certainly baffled at this comparison—is that Don Quixote does "not withdraw aesthetically into his own subjectivity" (148). It was Don Quixote's decision; it mattered little to him if "external reality" was an illusion. Don Quixote's endeavors put him in constant danger. But even "the Spanish nobleman often approximates a subjectivistic occasionalism" (148).

The very same "parallelisms" and "analogies" that Schmitt so embraces in his investigation of Winstanley and, later, in his essay of 1956, are nonetheless criticized in 1921. "Whoever draws a parallel between a Roman emperor and a ruler of the nineteenth century makes out of each a figure whose lines are often determined more by the constant regard for mutual similarity, which remained to be demonstrated, than by substantive investigations" (148). Any object of the past becomes a potential element for "literary composition." Nonetheless, if those parallelisms are drawn out of "political interest," then the result is certainly non-Romantic. Schmitt provides a detailed discussion of David Friedrich Strauss's (1808–1874) *Julian the Apostate* (1847) to prove this point. He considers this German theologian's work to be non-Romantic—and therefore, analytical and historical; Strauss "wanted to refute [*wollte… widerlegen*] Wilhelm IV and his conservative and anti-liberal politics"[154] by satirizing his persona with that of Julian the Apostate (331[2]–363 AD), the short-lived Roman emperor and philosopher who was most known for storming Christianity. He considered that "his duty" was "to restore the ancient civilization—Hellenism, as he called it—and he thought he would be able to do so by reconstructing polytheism."[155] The conservative Wilhelm IV possessed striking similarities to Caesar. The very title of Strauss's satire anticipated his thesis: *The Romantic on the Throne of the Caesars*. Schmitt emphasizes Strauss's accurate analogies. He quotes at length the "detailed definition" of "Romanticism" offered by the German theologian because it is "the best summary (*die beste*

154. Schmitt 1986, 155 (translation modified).
155. See Negri 1905, 608.

Zussamenfassung] of the viewpoint of Romanticism" (151). The reader can easily see how this high praise is an expression of the kinship between Strauss's satire and Schmitt's analysis of "Romanticism"—both typological and concrete analogies are possible when a concrete situation finds its logic in the process occurred within another previously existing event. Strauss's thoughts on the persona and character of Julian the Apostate portrays the view commonly held in 1848 on "Romanticism." Once again, a definition of the "Romantic" is not achieved. An array of disparate elements distract Strauss and lead him to wrong conclusions. Therefore, Schmitt rectifies:

> German romanticism began as a youth movement, and as long as it was really blended with the philosophy of nature and with mysticism, it assumed a revolutionary posture. When it joined the political reaction, it embraced a strict, positive orthodoxy that rejected that elucidation of Christian ideas as "atheism" and a "fraud of the philosophy of nature." (153)

Strauss did not capture the "subjectified occasionalism" of "German Romanticism." As soon as those "Romantics grew older," the promise of the "new" established by Novalis turned into the opposite: the "old" became a token of the "authentic" (*das echt*). The opposition elaborated by Strauss in his analogies between Caesar and Wilhelm IV relies on an antithetical insufficiency; namely, "the new" vs. "the old," or "the political" vs. "the spiritual." "In spite of this, the state and society were the real object of the struggle" (153). Indeed, Strauss's definition of "Romanticism" stresses the importance of the analogies that were distorted by the turmoil of "the restoration": "The story of Julian is only the history of an unsuccessful cult reform and the inner mission of paganism" (154). It is important to note how Schmitt's typology—which the reader who reads these paragraphs attentively will find superior to that of Strauss—presupposes an epistemic minimum; that is, the existence of acknowledgeable "political units." "Christianity did not confront him [Julian the Apostate] as a political enemy" (155), rapidly asserts Schmitt. This is not explicitly posited, but even the impossible political life of "Romanticism" marked a tension with reality, creating those "oppositions" on which the "friend and enemy" criterion is based on. Julian the Apostate was a Caesar who aimed to philosophize politics and ended up distorting both Paganism and Christianity as effective political units. At most, he cemented a "counterreligion." His lobby-

driven politics cut him out as a proto-liberal. Nevertheless, he is no Romantic; therefore, the analogy becomes an unjustified juxtaposition of misunderstood historical events. The "Romantic" romanticizes. Julian was tolerant; Wilhelm IV, restrained; Jesus wept. So what? If the "occasional" element is not highlighted, even Strauss's analytical study cannot but fail. Schmitt writes in the *Schluß* of *Politische Romantik*:

> Every political activity—regardless of whether its content is merely the technique of conquest, the claim or the expansion of political power, or whether it rests on a legal or a moral decision—conflicts with the essentially aesthetic nature of the romantic. […] Because the concrete point around which the romantic novel develops is always merely occasional, everything can be romantic. (158)

If "everything can become Romantic" [*alles romantisch werden*],[156] then everything can be "deromanticized." The "occasio" is not negated but restored to its antithetical locus. However, this housing of "Romanticism" in the spiritual palace of eighteenth-century Germany is, let us repeat, biased. The *höhest Dritter* that distinguished the "Romantic" from the Ancient sophist was not the backdoor to that inaccessible reality into which "Romanticism" so strove to enter. The so-called "core of political Romanticism"—the "Romantic wants to be productive without becoming active"—is an immaculate definition of Adam Müller's political biography, but not of "Romanticism" as such. Schmitt overly relies on his typology, to the point of even letting loose one of those axiomatic sentences that he was so fond of: "Where political activity begins, political Romanticism ends […]" (160). Just as politics and the authentic work of art was out of bounds for the "Romantics"—no representation, political adherence, or bonding with concrete situations—so was the unflinching power of the myth. The reader may grasp here the theoretical connection between *Politische Romantik* and *Hamlet oder Hekuba*: in this 1919 monograph, the myth and the true work of art realize their true nature not because of the unseen creative power of the genius. On the contrary, they find their authenticity—what fuels them to become universal and elevate themselves through time—in the normative aspect through which they were created. The thesis already sketched in *Der Wert des Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen*

156. Schmitt 1986, 164 (translation modified).

and then expanded and adapted in Schmitt's monographs devoted to the inner logic of legal science—*Gesetz und Urteil* and *On the Three Types*...—now becomes paradoxical. The individual—the reader may now know that this is the Schmittian byword for the "soon-to-be liberal"—finds her place and meaning in the godly work of the state. Schmitt concludes:

> Conceptually, the normal is unromantic because every norm destroys the occasional license of the romantic. […] As such, legal ideas are unromantic in the same way. […] There is a political romanticism in the same sense that there is a political lyric. (161)

The "Romantic" is the political driver's co-driver. He sees pavement where the road is not paved. His far-reaching gaze drifts back and forth from the earth to the cosmos and vice versa. He surely has ideas and observations regarding the speed and roads that the driver should take. Even if he sits behind a steering wheel, like anyone practicing for their driver's license, he is not in charge of the brakes, clutch, or accelerator. At most, he is granted a learner's license. The driver hits the gas. The co-driver retreats to the depths of his mind. He becomes a stressed passenger. The road and the map become a starting point for new roads and news maps. The driver sighs. The scene is a Romantic plight.

But, then again, and as I emphasized a few pages back, everything can be deromanticized too. The metaphor I just described depicts a classic prejudice toward Romanticism; namely, Hegel's paramount critique of Schlegel and the whole Romantic movement. A critique that, from a more historical-ontological standpoint, Schmitt develops further by way of his unfair typology. To say that Romanticism was "subjectified occasionalism" is equivalent to condemning through rationalism—in this case, a juridical-historical viewpoint—a historical expression that is rooted to the very core of modernity. Romanticism was an uncomfortable presence from the very beginning. However, it emerged from—and belongs to—the same household as rationalism.

Schmitt wrote *Political Romanticism* with the intention of finally providing a concrete assessment of the Romantic movement. The previous attempts to do so were too close to psychology, sociology, or plain historicism. When Schmitt states that "[t]he elucidation of Romanticism, like that of every important situation of modern intellectual history, must begin with Descartes" (52), he is spot on regarding the authentic locus of this intellectual

phenomenon. Such a statement deeply resonates even in the socio-genesis of fascism developed by Lukács in *The Destruction of Reason* (1954), that, while critical to Schmitt, nevertheless expands his thesis:

> The ideology of extreme reaction first took shape intellectually on the right wing of romanticism, in very close conjunction with the most retrograde circles of *Juncker* reaction in Prussia. It received a powerful boost in that the democratic critical resistance opposing it, the democratic critical exposure of reactionary ideology in Germany, was far weaker than in any other country in the world. This even applied, save for the periods when Marx and Engels were exerting an immediate influence, to the German labour movement.[157]

Hegel's dictum against modern subjectivity; that is, "the hollow object which it generates to itself"[158] is expanded by Lúkacs—who was, likewise, strongly influenced by Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*[159]—and projected onto his own present: decadence.[160] This very same "hollow object" was detected in its ontological roots by Schmitt. However, to criticize Romanticism is to criticize modernity in other terms. Romanticism was almost pathologized from its very beginning. Schmitt's typology; that is, a detailed analysis that nevertheless reduces the inner complexities of an intellectual phenomenon to the biographies of Müller and Schlegel—the justification for this being the alleged epistemic power (perhaps the legitimacy?) of the exemplum—rabidly repeats Hegel's viewpoint, which was, indeed, biased as well. Schmitt's analysis in *Political Romanticism* is akin to writing a monograph that aims to capture the essence of twentieth-century democracies by analyzing the lives of Radovan Karadžcíc and Suharto. Why did Schmitt not once mention Thibaut (1772–1840), that German jurist whose passion for music and forests did not exclude his concrete contributions to legal science and jurisprudence—he was the Dean of Heidelberg University—nor mention his political life? Thibaut was a member of the Baden parliament. Schmitt also omits Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852), the German pedagogue who coined not only the concept but the whole structure of the modern *kindergarten*. Fröbel's *The Education*

157. Lúkacs 1981, 718.
158. Hegel 2018, 380.
159. Lúkacs 1981, 754. See Bohrer 1989, 12.
160. Lúkacs 1981, 753–757 at 6.

of Man (1826) is evidently inspired by early Romanticism: his pioneering concept of *freiarbeit* is as Romantic as it gets. However, Fröbel was Christian. He was no "occasionalist." His concept of play—observed in and applied to children—unifies that which in Schmitt is opposed:

> By no means, however, do all the plays and occupation of boys at this age aim at the representation of things; on the contrary, many are predominantly mere practice and trials of strength, and many aim simply at display of strength. (…) For, while during the previous period of childhood the aim of play consisted simply in *activity* as such, its aim lies now in a *definite, conscious purpose*; it seeks *representation* as such, or the thing to be represented in activity.[161]

My intention here is not to provide counter-examples to Schmitt's 1921 essay on romanticism. To do so would be to mirror Schmitt's gesture of unfolding a typology that stresses the "intellectual" while justifying itself through revisionism, empirical yet selective facts, and a strong, ultimate opposition: concrete vs. non-concrete, although these two variables entail and dispose of values that are ultimately moral. Likewise, the importance of Hegel for Schmitt is not philosophical but normative (or juridical): it leads Schmitt toward a concrete comprehension of civil life that is simultaneously guided by the philosophical standpoint of a self-conscious Christian history. The reader will easily guess that Romanticism's never-ending lack of commitment was considered—for Hegel, Heine, and Schmitt—a failure at reality as such. Romanticism is everything but real. Through this entanglement of realism and politics, the critique of Romanticism developed into a normative guide to living the political present. That the "hollow soul" eventually becomes "evil" is something quite natural: "Each of these self-certain spirits has no other end than its pure self and has no other reality and existence other than just this pure self," states Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.[162] The epistemic shock wave unleashed by Hegel's philosophical prejudice against Romanticism influenced Schmitt's analysis of the subject.

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161. Froebel 2013, 112–113.
162. Hegel 2018, 388.

So far, I have shown the theoretical elements that eventually will sustain and cooperate with the thesis developed in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. These are: (1) the opposition of the concrete and the non-concrete, a logic which encloses, on the one hand, the normative power of historical institutions (the church and the state), and, on the other, the non-serious—ergo, morally decayed—comprehensions of life; the rejection of political actions (the lifestyles of Romantics); (2) the normative aspect that rules history; namely, the parallelisms of concrete events that connect past and present: in PR, this is to be seen in Schmitt's appraisal of David Friedrich Strauss's critique of Romanticism and, of course, in his mapping out of the ontological sources of the Romantics; i.e., Descartes and Malebranche; (3) the failure of Romanticism at achieving anything endurable, as far as reality is concerned. The passive feature of Romanticism voided any chance, according to Schmitt, of producing a true, representative art. By contrast, Shakespeare aimed for and achieved authentic (historical) representation. This concept of representation also applies to Schmitt's 1956 thesis; namely, the "mythical" status of *Hamlet*—that is, the ultimate representation of modernity. By transforming the moral criticism put forward by Hegel and completing, almost a century later, an account of Romanticism based on his own interpretation of human agency as hyperrealism—that is, a dimension in which the existential nuances and distinctions of reality are reduced to simple, almost primitive oppositions—Schmitt now possessed an epistemic criterion resistant enough to analyze Shakespeare's drama through its inner political momentum. His stubborn insistence on choosing the correct approach—neither psychoanalytical, nor sociological nor historical—in order to establish a crystal-clear definition of the "core" of *Hamlet* was already sketched in *Political Romanticism*, where he distanced himself from not only the usual critiques of Romanticism—those of Hegel, Heine, Ruge, and David Friedrich Strauss—but also those of Nietzsche and, albeit with some positive remarks, Kierkegaard. So, when he asks in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, "What is the action of the drama and who is the actor Hamlet, the hero of this drama?" he is already stating the representative power of *Hamlet*.

2.3 Taboo

The first paragraph of the second section of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, which is entitled *Das Tabu der Königin*, is a paradigmatic example of Schmitt's style of analysis. In it, he makes four blunt statements regarding the dramatic core of *Hamlet*. These considerations are, nevertheless, quite tricky: the facts of the play are tangled with Schmitt's interpretations. That Hamlet 1) "is the son of a father who was murdered" and that 2) "the ghost of the murdered father appears and demands that the son avenge the murder"[163] are, sure enough, undeniable facts of the play. They are its starting elements. However, to say that 3) *Hamlet* opens with a "typical situation for a revenge drama" and that 4) Queen Gertrude, by marrying Claudius, "has legitimated the murder and the murderer," is to confuse a topical interpretation with a fact. Moreover, this argument is equivalent to saying: The dramatic core of *Hamlet* lies in the "legitimation" carried out by the "highly suspicious" Queen Gertrude. This core, according to Schmitt, is the immediate, brute force of history (Queen Mary Stuart and James I) intruding into the play of Shakespeare. Finally, we have learned from a long tradition of scholars[164] that *Hamlet*'s "opening" is by no means "typical." The play starts with futile characters who soon disappear as the secrecy and murky environment of Elsinore announces the fragile politics where dreadful actions took place. If I am making these remarks, it is only

163. Schmitt 2009b, 11.

164. Harold Bloom is exemplary. Bloom 1998, 383: "Hamlet appears too immense a consciousness for *Hamlet*, a revenge tragedy does not afford the scope for the leading Western representation of an intellectual. But *Hamlet* is scarcely the revenge tragedy that it only pretends to be"; Peter Alexander, in his still insightful *Hamlet: Father and Son* (1955, 142–143), has argued how the revenge theme is guided by the "union of opposites" of both king and prince. Likewise, Coppélia Kahn has impressively proved in her *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* the nuances within the problematic father-son relationship. Kahn 1981, 133: "So long as he can blame a woman's frailty for the indignity his father suffers, as the conventions of cuckoldry enable him to do, that image can be saved. But at the same tie, his concern with his mother's crime diverts him from revenge and inevitably reminds him of his father's weakness: King Hamlet, like the most ordinary cuckold, was hoodwinked by his own wife. Thus to the extent that Hamlet sees his father as a cuckold, his anxiety and propensity to delay revenge are increased by a paralyzing ambivalence." Even an authorized scholar like Edgar I. Fripp—in his *Shakespeare. Man and Artist*—has distinguished between the "typical revenge"—namely, Thomas Kyd's own version of Hamlet (which "Shakespeare knew it, possibly had acted in it, and he made it the basis of his matchless study of decadence of culture, disillusion, and paralysis")—and *Hamlet*, a revenge play where the main character and "[h]is feigned madness, and deception of Ophelia (in order to deceive others), and his chef-d'oeuvre, the Play, are his undoing. They betray him. […] His effective doings are on the impulse. […] And because he has a noble nature, disillusion is the more cruel—his father's murder, his mother's 'incestuous' marriage (for so it was regarded) with the murderer (a despicable creature, 'a king of shreds and patches'), the State of Denmark under such a ruler (drunken, and on the verge of revolution), and Ophelia's petty lying. His culture fails him, his manly strength, his popularity, and, chiefly, his good cheer" (Fripp 1938, 550–551). Bloom, Alexander, Kahn, and Fripp accord in acknowledging the different centers of *Hamlet*, no single one being more important than the other.

to stress the subtlety that allows Schmitt to base his thesis on intrusions, the first of these being the "taboo of the Queen."

Schmitt now asks about the "participation" of Queen Gertrude in the assassination of King Hamlet. He wants to elucidate if the queen was an active or, on the contrary, a passive agent in relation to the death of the king. A fifth question, now related to the son, is raised: "[W]hat should a son do if he wants to avenge his murdered father but, in the process, comes up against his own mother, now the wife of the murderer?" (11). Nevertheless, and without being explicit about the nature of this inquiry, such an approach belongs to the sphere of deontology. Should the mother have killed Claudius? Should she be considered a victim or an accomplice? What should Prince Hamlet do in the face of these kinds of actions? By placing his analysis in the very center of deontological ethics, Schmitt links the normative aspect of the starting elements of the "opening of this tragedy" with the historical events that reenter through the convoluted eyes of the "Elizabethan audience." When it comes to Prince Hamlet, Schmitt recalls how ancient tragedy and Nordic legend allow "for only two possibilities," which are: or the prince acts like Orestes and crushes Claudius, or he joins forces with his mother to kill the murderer. This "duty of vengeance" [*der Pflicht zur Rache*] cannot be fulfilled in a third way. In this perspective, the much-criticized "higher third" of *Politische Romantik* reappears here almost forty years later. "Even today, one would have to say that there is no third way and the mother cannot remain neutral, provided that one takes seriously the son's commitment to revenge and fully accepts the mother as a human person," asserts Schmitt (12). Put otherwise: Prince Hamlet's delay exposes the necessity of a decision, not the prevalence of indecisiveness. These "two possibilities" prove for good that *Hamlet* is a myth because it is not Romantic in nature and that Romanticism is not a myth insofar as it champions an unrealistic third possibility.

However, the questions brought up by Schmitt are "carefully avoided throughout the drama" and remain "unanswered" (12). This does not prevent Schmitt from studying the implications of Queen Gertrude's probable responsibility in the king's death. Schmitt reminds us once again of John Dover Wilson's book, only to say how even such an interpretation cannot be considered "indisputable." Not only Dover Wilson, but a good many "scholars have analyzed all the hints and clues in the play" (13). Schmitt quotes dialogues from the third act in order to illustrate the complex debate about the obvious role of Queen

Gertrude as the murderer. Two German Shakespeare scholars are mentioned by the jurist, "my friend," recalls Schmitt, Albrecht Erich Günther (1893–1942) and "the legal philosopher and historian Josef Kohler."[165] Schmitt switches viewpoint once again, for he does not forget that *Hamlet* became a myth on stage; therefore, "the audience member who follows the play," he asserts, "has no time to engage in psychological, philological, and legal-historical investigations." But was the "Elizabethan audience" as skeptical about these disciplines as Schmitt was? There can be no definitive answer to the question of Queen Gertrude's "participation" in King Hamlet's murder. Even the deontological approach cannot come to terms with this "intentional obscurity." This moral blank space is the setting where Schmitt will establish his interpretation of the "taboo of the Queen."

Schmitt carries out a philological account of the three versions of *Hamlet*; that is, the two Quartos (1603, 1604–1605) and the Folio (1623). He reminds us how in the first Quarto, "one finds a scene (4.6), from which one could conclude that the mother was privy to the revenge plan and was allied with her son against her second husband."[166] Is this important for *Hamlet*? From a philological standpoint, perhaps. The crucial aspect of the three versions is that "the revenge of the son begins with an oddly restricted assignment" [*mit einem merkwürdig eingeschränkten Rache-Auftrag*] (14). This curiosity is, of course, the fact that Prince Hamlet judges his mother's actions—such is the strange mission announced by the Ghost. Schmitt highlights this core aspect of *Hamlet*, to the point of unnecessarily repeating that one must "leave aside here all explanations that refer to patriarchy or matriarchy using a legal-historical approach or to father and mother complexes using a psychoanalytical perspective"; that is, neither Kohler's nor Freud's approaches are suitable for this matter. This core is precisely that which is "enshrouded and evaded": the "taboo." According to the 1956 monograph, Shakespeare "simply respects" this "taboo." Does this mean that taboos cannot be surpassed? Schmitt nods: not even "The Mousetrap" could determine if Queen Gertrude was guilty or not. Leaving such a matter in the shadows was not a sign of the Bard's

165. Kohler 1883, 225: "Und so tritt denn auch im Hamlet das Mutterrecht auf, furchtbar, gewaltig, wie die Erdgöttin, deren Töchter die Erinnyen sind. Hamlet soll kein Orestes sein: diesen furchtbaren Schritt, wo Unsittlichkeit in Sittlichekit, Unrecht in Recht sich verkehrt, diesen furchtbaren Sprung über den Abgrund des bodenlosen Unrechts, unter welchem eine ganze Hölle gähnt, diese unerhört kühne That des Orestes soll Hamlet nicht vollbringen." The "ethical-juridical conflict" of the blood revenge that Hamlet must fulfill, which is "permissible" and "morally necessary," is analyzed by Schmitt in the very same terms of Kohler. *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is theoretically indebted to this investigation.
166. Schmitt 2009b, 13.

"sympathetic feeling for women," especially considering that "Shakespeare is otherwise very direct and open to the point of brutality in these things" (15). Schmitt distinguishes the Shakespearean ladies from Goethe's "Princess Leonore or Iphigenia"[167] and Schiller's "Theklas or Berthas."[168] Queen Gertrude, by contrast, is a dark lady. Her guilt cannot be proved, nor her innocence. This, according to Schmitt, "proves that a concretely determined inhibition and concern prevails here, a genuine taboo" (16). The obscurity onto which no philological, psychoanalytical, historical, sociological, or philosophical light can be shed is taken by Schmitt as a taboo: "It concerns Mary, Queen of Scots," he claims (16). Suddenly, Schmitt adopts Lilian Winstanley's approach, but only to readapt it to a normative schema. By schema, one needs to understand the concrete location and time of a specific event; in this case, "the time and place of the origin and initial performance of Shakespeare's play, during the years 1600–1603 in London" (17). However, Schmitt is no specialist in the history and literature of that era. General statements of the cultural behavior of sixteenth-century England are given in order to prove "the problem of royal succession." "Shakespeare and his troupe […] pinned their hopes on James, the son of Mary Stuart, as the future heir apparent" (17). But their suffered banishment, just like the Earl of Southampton, "a Catholic, was sentenced to death but not executed" (17). Schmitt sees a hint of these events in "the opening of the player's scene." Even if this is so, the reader still cannot support the argument of the intrusion of the "taboo of the queen." *Hamlet oder Hekuba* provides abundant information—taken from Winstanley's investigation—about the aftermath of Mary Stuart's death in 1603: "Shakespeare's troupe was permitted to perform again in London and before the court" (18).

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167. Schmitt refers to the play *Torquato Tasso* (1790), where Leonore Sanvitale and the princess are both enamored of the Italian poet Tasso. These two characters are, despite their obvious conflict, quite passive regarding the political environment that surrounds them (the kingdom of the Duke of Ferrara in the sixteenth century), and *Iphigenia in Tauris* (1779), a rewriting of Euripides's tragedy *Iphigenia en Taurois*. In Goethe's version, Iphigenia is a priestess in Tauris, where she serves the goddess Diana out of gratefulness for being rescued from Agamemnon, her father, when he offered her in sacrifice. Iphigenia longs for Greece. The coming of her brother Orestes—although his identity is only later revealed—and her cousin Pylades convince her to escape. The subsequent actions—the plan to steal the statue of Diana, the fight with Toas, deceiving the king—converge in a peaceful goodbye, leaving behind the struggle and revenge that assailed Agamemnon's kin. Both Leonore and Iphigenia are described in positive, gentle terms by Goethe.

168. Thekla is the daughter of Wallenstein. She is in love with Max Piccolomini, son of Octavio, one of the agents who will commit treason against the main character. *Wallenstein*'s trilogy (1799) is perhaps the dramatic landmark of German literature for Schmitt. Thekla is an introverted young woman, respectful of her father but also trapped in her love for Max. This tension explodes when she escapes to the already deceased Max; Bertha von Bruneck is a female character from *William Tell* (1804), the penultimate play of Schiller. Bertha is an intelligent and cautious character. Her actions and words convince Ulrich von Rudenz, the nephew of the baron Werner von Attinghausen, to ally himself with the Confederate party.

Schmitt writes a paragraph on the succession of James I and his affection for his mother; he also mentions the *Basilikon Doron* (1599) in order to show how he even "admonishes his son […] to always hold the memory of this queen in honor."

The "taboo of the Queen" describes a son's succession during years of "utmost tension" in England. The political circumstances from 1600 to 1603 were complex: a queen who managed to accumulate an impressive "political power" did not want to address the question of her heir. Although her son, James I, was never acknowledged by Mary Stuart as the next king. Uncertainty and secrecy fueled probable scenarios of turmoil and civil war. That which was forbidden from being pronounced in public was captured by the genius of Shakespeare. Mary Stuart married Earl Bothwell, who had murdered Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, in 1566. Guilt and innocence became the dimensions between which the persona of the queen oscillated, just like Queen Gertrude. This blank space was not filled but lurked in the background of *Hamlet*:

> A terrible historical reality shimmers through the masks and costumes of the stage play, a reality which remains untouched by any philological, philosophical, or aesthetic interpretation, however subtle it might be.[169]

2.3 Revenge

In the third section of Schmitt's book, the quarrel against those much-criticized approaches to *Hamlet* intensifies to the point of separating the two interpretative dimensions that the reader must choose between in order to grasp this tragedy from its true, authentic core. Schmitt now informs of "a second, still more powerful intrusion: the transformation [*Abbiegung*; literally, the *deviation*] of the figure of the avenger into a reflective, self-conscious melancholic" (19). Just like the first paragraph of the second section, here too the reader encounters more expansive statements, now targeted at "Hamlet's strange inactivity." The reason, according to Schmitt, that we fail to thoroughly comprehend the prince as such is the presupposition that he merely is "a state figure, a mask, and not a historical hero" (19). Schmitt quotes three different, eminent Shakespeare experts—Robert Bridges, Keats, and,

169. Schmitt 2009b, 18.

again, John Dover Wilson—just to prove how even these great interpreters missed the point when it came to offering a convincing answer to the natural question about the prince's well-known "inactivity." They cannot provide a solid argument on the topic precisely because their knowledge and interpretative skills dwell within the subjective dimension:

> The astonishing transformation of the typical avenger, the deformation and refraction in the character of the hero of the revenge drama, this entirely surprising turn toward weakness caused by reflection, only becomes comprehensible in the context of the historical situation of 1600–03, and through the central figure of these years, King James.[170]

The "context of the historical situation of 1600–03" is, needless to say, the objective and, thus, the authentic dimension where the reader can correctly grasp the full significance of Hamlet's "inactivity." However, to draw a parallelism between the prince and King James is different, Schmitt suggests, than simply identifying the former as the "copy" of the latter. On the contrary: the autonomous space of the theater was surpassed by "a piece of historical reality" (20). This imposition is, just like the "taboo of the Queen," a normative event. Yes, any event is "normative" as long as actions are oriented by it. However, by "normative event," one needs to understand the duration of such normativity; that is, an event that goes beyond immediacy and, due to its force, manages to stand still in time. The reader must not forget that the power of intrusion relies on its normativity; its core is not history as such, but the consistency—namely, the density or different layers—of a concrete event. "However, for an insightful interpretation of *Hamlet*," Schmitt ponders, "it becomes necessary to distinguish several degrees and kinds of historical influences" (22). But to prove this would be a titanic, endless endeavor. To attempt to disentangle the multiple cross-references in *Hamlet* is to indirectly claim that the merely allusive elements found in Shakespeare's oeuvre must be strongly differentiated from their historical kernel. Schmitt distinguished "three […] mere *allusions* in *Hamlet*." These are examples of real sixteenth-century events. For instance, in the "third allusion," he analyzes the renowned "to be or not to be" soliloquy in order to stress that "[t]his phrase is missing from the Second Quarto because James was sharply sensitive

170. Schmitt 2009b, 22.

about this point." Allusions are merely indicative elements. However, there appears another kind of reference in *Hamlet*. Schmitt names them "true *mirorrings* [*Spiegelungen*]": "Here, a contemporary event or figure appears in the drama as in a mirror and determines a picture there in its lines and colors" (23). According to Schmitt, who partially follows Dover Wilson, this mirroring is found in the "figure" of the Earl of Essex:

> Thus, features of the character and fate of the Earl of Essex wove themselves into the image otherwise determined by James. This is not unnatural because such stage plays form a kind of "dream-frame" [*Traumrahmen*], as Egon Vietta has noted.[171]

The reader will note how the concepts and expressions coined and reused by Schmitt multiply as he gets closer to his main argument; that is, the justification of his "intrusion" thesis. However, the nature of such ideas is not as objective as in the early statements that claimed to offer the true interpretation of *Hamlet*. To say that the juxtaposition so characteristic of dreams, where "people and realities merge […], events and situations are interwoven in a dream-like way on stage" is to assert a number of aesthetic intentions that neither the Shakespeare expert nor the dilettante can properly demonstrate. Suddenly, aesthetics become politics:

> The dying Hamlet names Fortinbras as his successor and gives him his voice, his *dying voice* (5.2.354). This has an obviously political implication that functions as an acclamation *before* the accession of James to the throne in 1603 and as an act of homage to James *after* the accession, and was also understood as such. (24).

The "implication" is obvious as long the reader is willing to grant the "historical influences" an epistemic status with regard to the "concrete" elements that charged both *Hamlet* and Hamlet the character with a mythical vigor unlike anything seen in other plays. The interpretation of *Hamlet* elaborated by Schmitt attempts to supersede the subjective dimension on which sociology, psychology, jurisprudence, and, finally, aesthetics had based their interpretations of *Hamlet*. Finally, there appears a "third" type of "historical influence"

171. Schmitt 2009b, 24.

[*Einwirkungen*], of the "highest kind" (25). "These are the structurally determining, genuine *intrusions* "[*Einbrüche*]" (25). From a philological viewpoint, the reader may detect how important it is for Schmitt to highlight the status of unity that "intrusions" and historical influences possess. They are not random signs or casual representations of persons and events, but genuine "pieces" of history—"concrete events"—that managed to burst into Shakespeare's most famous play. "They cannot be common and ordinary, but their consequences are that much stronger and deeper," Schmitt declares (25).

Schmitt posits that two "intrusions" are present in *Hamlet*. These two pieces of reality elevated the play from a mere artistic creation into a myth. The "historical influences" establish that there exists a hierarchy of elements that belong to reality, only to later be entangled, interwoven, juxtaposed, mirrored, reflected, and refracted onstage. But "intrusions" are active agents of history that channel the momentum of concrete—and decisive—events:

> The distortion that differentiates the Hamlet of this drama from all other avenger figures and that is otherwise inexplicable, even through reference to the fate and character of the Earl of Essex—in short, the Hamletization of the avenger—finds a suitable explanation only here, in James.[172]

Schmitt considers that it is in tragedy—and perhaps exclusively in it—that history manifests its decisive core. Classic German plays like those of Goethe or Schiller do not offer the proper space for "intrusions." While they do abound in allusions and references, their connection to the present is either too far from a "concrete" event, or their dramatic kernel is meant to cause satisfaction. They are plays that edify their public. However, the reader could ask: Why, then, did Shakespeare not create another tragedy like *Hamlet*? Schmitt includes a footnote about the importance of allusions and symbols. He commends once again Winstanley's life's work and even Benjamin's book on the German *Trauerspiel*. At this point, the Schmitt scholar will note how another previous method is present in his interpretation of *Hamlet*; namely, his study of Hobbes. I cannot but mention this minor observation regarding Schmitt's monograph on Hobbes: the study of allusions and references between history and literature

172. Schmitt 2009b, 25–26.

was more than just a mere thought that occurred to Schmitt during his exploration of *Hamlet* through Winstanley. Just as in his early essay devoted to Theodor Däubler, where Schmitt found in the poet a clear example of the drab landscape of the twentieth century—a similar conclusion is present in *Dictatorship* concerning Wallenstein—in his takes on *Leviathan*, Schmitt posited his notion of "parallelisms" in order to identify Hobbes as the intellectual forefather of the "total state." Though not without its tongue-in-cheek nuances, the esoteric image of the *Leviathan* gave him the chance to do away with those customary, obvious historical allusions that were so popular in early-twentieth-century Germany[173] and move toward a superior, epistemic notion of references between history and tragedy. Karl Löwith's 1953 *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. Die theologischen Voraussetzungen der Geschichtsphilosophie* had a major influence on Schmitt and his reflections on these issues.[174] All in all, it was in his *Leviathan* that Schmitt elaborated—and proved—the analysis which, starting with the study of allusions and references—"parallelisms"—finally was shaped into the concept of "intrusion." His highly introspective *Glossarium* is a vigorous testimony of this.

The transfigurative expression "Hamletization of the avenger" intentionally posits the normative bond—that is, a non-exclusive aesthetic bond—between creation and history. Once again, the reader could turn the argument upside down and retort: Is it not, on the contrary, to the Jamesification of Hamlet that we attest in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*? A more insightful question, however, would be: Is there another intention, besides the purely interpretive, behind Schmitt's insistence on the crucial aspect of this "third, higher" type of allusion? This question is not directed at the individual dimension of Schmitt the author, but rather at the global value that such a thesis may or may not provide. If, as previously stated, *Hamlet or Hecuba*'s "intrusions" are somehow Schmitt's final conceptual meditation on the topics of history and creation (that is, poetry, if the reader considers the original meaning of this word), and the conclusion of his long-standing study of crucial events that occurred in

173. See Mehring 2014, 349–350: "Historical parallels became the background against which authors would take critical positions at the times of political repression and censorship. However, the space for the direct expression of one's opinion was not that small either, and ambiguous esotericism was often just literary playfulness. […] However, such historical reflections were not entirely without their risks. […] Hermann Oncken presented Hitler as reflected in Cromwell, Hans Freyer used Machiavelli and Borgia, René König soon saw Schmitt as Machiavelli. Over the years, Schmitt developed a series of catchwords and images that reflected Hitler, National Socialism, and his own role."
174. See chapter 3 (3.8).

the past and the attendant creations that they determined, it is quite clear that such "intrusions" perform a political role. What was at stake in those turbulent years of "1600–03" was, precisely, civil war. And, if the reader recalls that Schmitt mentioned Wallenstein in *Dictatorship* in order to posit the distinction between absolute power and dictatorship[175]—the very same Wallenstein from Schiller's play, disputed in the 1952 prologue as a potential "mythical" work—then is not difficult to see how politics enhances creation to the point of giving an organic, existential feature to a dimension that was grounded in plain technique. Thus, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is not an isolated work, a simple "little book" on *Hamlet*. It is a cryptic testament of the present and future of politics comprehended through a tragic scope.

The last paragraphs of the second section of Schmitt's essay brought up again the similarities between Prince Hamlet and the life of James I. The difference is that Schmitt now mentions the troubled king's incursions into the field of literature: James I's 1597 *Daemonologie* dealt, Schmitt assures the reader, with the "problem of ghostly apparitions." This point leads to a massive traffic of similarities and references in the tragedy of Shakespeare:

> The point of departure for Hamlet's doubt and "inaction" is the paralyzing question of whether the ghost of his father that appears to him might be the devil from hell. This question only becomes meaningful and concrete in terms of the contrast between Catholic and Protestant demonologies of the time.[176]

The "Ghost" is, then again, the spectral reference of a theological debate about worldviews. "Above all, James defended the divine right of kings with great fervor in treatises and

175. Schmitt 2014a, 69: "Despite his actual and real power, Wallenstein was only a commanding general at his first assembly of generals. Because in reality the military operation was always directed toward its military aim, so that it could take into account any other concerns, in this case, too, a situation frequently occurred in which Wallenstein could be portrayed as a dictator—in other words as a dictator of commission entrusted with absolute powers, that is, powers defined only in relation to the goal. But according to his legal status he was not a dictator, as the emperor had given him special functions, tailored to the fulfilment of a specific task." This distinction foreshadows those paragraphs of *Glossarium*, where Wallenstein is identified with Hitler's absolute power, only to later be compared to Kaspar Hauser: "This Caspar Hauser and *soldat inconnu* was adopted as the false Demetrius by Mother Germania. Between 1933 and 1941 she said again and again: Even if he is not the son of my heart / He shall be the son of my revenge. / Yet faithless Mother Germania could not carry through her role when she realized that things were moving toward the abyss. He [Hitler] however pulled down the house with his fall. Only the Catholic and Wallonian Joseph Goebbels from the left bank of the Rhine remained faithful until the end" (Schmitt 2015, 239; quoted by Hohendahl 2018, 44–45).
176. Schmitt 2009b, 28.

disputes," Schmitt remarks (28). To champion such a juridical figure was James I's "existential problem." Up to now, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* has provided a summary of James I's up and downs, much in the vein of Schmitt's analysis of Adam Müller. Schmitt mentions his "political enemies," who, just like those of Schlegel, mock him with gusto. But "[h]e has found truly intelligent defenders, though, among them Isaak Disraeli, the father of the famous Benjamin Disraeli […]." Why does Schmitt bother with this account of James I's life? He wants to challenge those Shakespeare scholars—Dover Wilson being the first among them—who dismiss any connection between the son of Mary Stuart and the son of Queen Gertrude. "Historical reality," Schmitt asserts, "is stronger than every aesthetic, stronger also than the most ingenious subject" (30). Strong, the reader will remember, as a rock. Obscure, dream-like transmissions of concrete events impact the finite work of a genius. "The figure of Hamlet had entered into the world and its history, and the myth began its journey" (31).

2.5 Tragedy

The fourth section of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, entitled "The Source of the Tragic," presents a serious modification in both tone and intention regarding the "intrusions" thesis and, more particularly, Schmitt's "objective" interpretation of *Hamlet*. One should recall how from its very beginning, Schmitt's approach on *Hamlet* was chosen following the dismissal of various canonical scopes of interpretation. The standpoint selected by Schmitt was that of Winstanley's; however, while the latter recognized the powerful historical references of Mary Stuart and James I, the former grasped the unique power of concrete politics as a "third, higher" type of allusion which, eventually, turned *Hamlet* into a myth. Nonetheless, when it comes to the conceptual framework established by Schmitt, the reader will likely ask questions such as the following: What is Shakespeare's artistic status if one accepts as correct the thesis on "intrusions?" If *Hamlet* does not belong to the aesthetic plane, where should the critic relocate its dramatic locus? Finally: If Shakespeare's archetypal play is less a tragedy than a myth, then what is the importance of tragedy, let alone theater, as an autonomous type of agency?

The blunt statements found at the beginning of previous sections of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* are now transformed into a more amicable invitation to rethink not only *Hamlet*, but

Schmitt's suggestions as well. This epistemic gesture—namely, shifting from assertions to questions—is needed for the simple reason that the greatest obstacle to convincingly proving that *Hamlet* is what it is (namely, the result of two events that managed to intrude into the play), is at stake. The questions are:

> Should historical arguments even be included in the consideration of a work of art? From where does the tragedy derive the tragic action upon which it lives? What is—in this general sense—the source of the tragic?[177]

The first question discusses the relevance of history regarding aesthetics; the second inquiries about the locus from which tragedy attains its permanence; finally, the third seeks to identify the underlying core of "the tragic." These three questions provide different angles on a single issue: Does art—the "work of art"—possess an independent status from that of politics, or of concrete events that occurred in time?[178] Schmitt notes how the aftermath of the specialization of "academic fields and disciplines" has ended up creating an irreconcilable distance between "different perspectives." The reader will safely assume that this critique is aimed at the immanency of viewpoints; namely, the impossibility of any transcendental—objective—access to reality. As regards *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, such situations can be expressed in the following terms: History is not linked to any epistemic bond to art. Regarding inspirations or references, Schmitt reminds us to think about "literary historians";

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177. Schmitt 2009b, 32.

178. It is somehow curious to note how close this inquiry is to that of Heidegger in his epoch-defining essay *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (1950) apropos of the privileged metaphysical kernel that the phenomenon of art represented for the manifestation of truth. See Heidegger 2002, 1: "Origin means here that from where and through a thing is what it is and how it is. That which something is, as it is, we call its nature [*Wesen*]. The origin of something is the source [*Herkunft*] of its nature." But, then again, the similarities disappear soon. The German word *Herkunft* refers to the provenance of something, where this something belongs to and is as such through a process that ended up in that something being what it is. On the contrary, Schmitt uses the word *Quelle*, a much more concrete notion that expresses the direct source of which anything is part of. The concreteness of this word is palpable in his monograph on the work of art: "The structure of both sentence and thing derive, in their natures and the possibility of their mutual relatedness, from a common and more primordial source [*einer gemeinsamen ursprünglicheren Quellen*]" (Heidegger 2002, 7). However, as regards the public dimension where both the work of art and myth-fueled tragedy are present as such, Schmitt and Heidegger are quite near. The latter writes the following in *The Origin of the Work of Art*: "The world is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The earth is the unforced coming forth of the continually self-closing, and in that way, self-sheltering. World and earth are essentially different and yet never separated from one another." One could then say: *Hamlet* belongs to the "world"; tragedy is a representation of "destiny"; the autonomous realm of the play emulates the "unforced coming forth of the continually self-closing." For both thinkers, the "world" (time) plays a normative role.

Shakespeare could easily have taken them from different "literary" sources. Schmitt then highlights the contemporary conflict between "a broadly prevailing philosophy of art and aesthetics" (32). Whether the reasons are to be found in the current "division of labor" is something that is not important regarding this topic. The crucial aspect of this conflict, on the contrary, relies on the comprehension of the work of art "as an autonomous creation, self-contained and unrelated to historical or sociological reality" (32). At this point, one can point out that such a dispute is highly similar to that found in the opening lines of Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*: "The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation. It can exist theoretically and practically, without having simultaneously to draw upon all those moral, aesthetic, economic, or other distinctions."[179] Politics is the magnitude from which the different realms of human agency are defined. That being said, Schmitt offers an alternative way to tackle this problem. He puts forward a threefold analysis regarding (1) the agency of the writer, (2) the significance of the notion of "play" for tragedy, and, finally, (3) the importance of *Hamlet*'s "play within the play" ("The Mousetrap"). *Hamlet or Hecuba*'s theoretical import is almost entirely located in these pages.

2.5 Between Creation and Coercion

Schmitt's first concerns regarding the agency of the writer are placed in Germany. For too long, Germans have seen the writer as an agent whose creations resemble those of a modern demiurge:

> The cult of genius that arose during the German *Sturm und Drang* period of the eighteenth century has become a *credo* of the German philosophy of art, precisely with respect to Shakespeare's supposed arbitrariness. The creative freedom of the writer becomes thereby a defense of artistic freedom in general and a stronghold of subjectivity.[180]

179. Schmitt 2007a, 26–27. See also Schmitt 2009a and Schmitt 2012c.
180. Schmitt 2009b, 33.

Schmitt's meditations are quite clear. The "cult of genius" became the spot where the defense of subjectivity found its ultimate argument; namely, that specific agents are above the rules and norms defined and imposed by politics or other realms. The "genius" does not have to acknowledge references or allusions to his present. He has superseded his own time. Many of the points shared here can be found previously in *Politische Romantik*. That "realm of the beautiful, where historical and sociological questions become tactless and tasteless" shares a great kinship with the criticized, playfully uncommitted agent of Romanticism.[181] A further statement is now provided by Schmitt; that is, the conceptual conflation between "poetry and drama." This confusion is more palpable in the German language, where "aesthetic concepts are generally determined more by poetry than drama" (33). What are the consequences of this misleading situation? The decisive experience of theater is eclipsed, for it is considered a "lyric poem." In theater, the audience needs to be fully in sync with its time. Raw interventions come back and forth, as well as inputs and outputs of creation and the time reigning over that very creation. In the "lyric poem," an entirely different process occurs. The elemental bond that characterizes theater—or "mythical theater"—is ostracized in the mental and spiritual depths of the poet's subjectivity—Schmitt brings to mind Stefan George's dictum on the vain status of experience for the artist. The poet delves into the tranquility of his thoughts, unlike "the epic writer" or "the dramatist." Apropos of this last figure, Schmitt summons "Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Grillparzer, and Hebbel" to point out how these authors worked under the understanding that their books would be published. They were "domestic workers." They needed furniture in which to place their "manuscripts," which later were published. By contrast, "Shakespeare's plays were produced in a completely different way" (34). Shakespeare wrote for the public, not for the presses. "Not one of Shakespeare's plays anticipated spectators who had read it beforehand and recognized it from a published book," continues Schmitt (34). Such a distinction will satisfy the reader's doubts regarding the differing status of Shakespeare and that of those German classics. Thus, one of the

181. Schmitt 1986, 20: "It is only in an individualistically disintegrated society that the aesthetically productive subject could shift the intellectual center into itself [*das geistige Zentrum in sich selbst verlegen*], only in a bourgeois world that isolates the individual in the domain of the intellectual, makes the individual its own point of reference [*an sicht selbst verweist*] […]. Because of the central significance and consistency of the religious, it is also left to him to be his own poet, his own philosopher, his own king, and his own master builder in the cathedral of his personality."

consequences of the existing bond between Shakespeare and his public was, naturally, the use of allusions and references—which were "unavoidable," according to Schmitt. His plays remind us of the disclaimer typically found in television shows: "All characters and events in this production are fictional […]." Although Schmitt does not pretend "to treat the author of Hamlet on the same level with contemporary production of films and period plays," he nevertheless acknowledges the relevance of such a point in relation to the use of references in Shakespeare. Shakespeare's London-based audience embraced his *Hamlet* just as he embraced their worries and preoccupations. They share "a common public sphere," meaning limits and "restrictions":

> Observance of this limit is guaranteed by the fact that the audience will no longer follow the events on stage if they deviate too much from the audience's knowledge and expectations and become incomprehensible or meaningless. […] The knowledge of the audience is an essential factor of the theater.[182]

The restriction affects creativity; ergo, it affects the playwright's subjectivity. Once again, the reader will be taken by Schmitt toward another conceptual elucidation. A restriction of creation does not mean that Shakespeare's liberty was curtailed. On the contrary, he was—Schmitt here quotes Paul Ernst—"essentially anti-historical" (36). However, this expression relates to "literary sources," for regarding his use of the figures and problems of his own time, they were and must have been well known for his audience too. Schmitt quotes Jean Paul's "dictum" on the "sovereignty" of the writer; namely, the transformation of history but also the maze of "situations" that shape the references made by the author. Nuances and even a subtle set of misspelled names and lookalikes are concentrated onstage. A similar situation was experienced by the audience of *Hamlet*.

2.7 Play and Seriousness

Another batch of bold statements articulates the sub-section of *Hamlet or Hecuba* devoted to the relationship between tragedy and the concept of "play." Schmitt states that that

182. Schmitt 2009b, 35–36.

"knowledge" of the audience does not suffice to thoroughly comprehend a creation of this kind. "The theater itself is essentially play," observes Schmitt (37). Such a notion is polyhedral. It embraces all types of oppositions and has its own logic:

> The play has its own sphere [*Bereich*] and creates a space for itself within which a certain freedom is maintained both from the literary material as well as from the originating situation. Thus it creates its own field of play in both space and time [*ein eigener Spiel-Raum und eine Spiel-Zeit*]. This makes possible the fiction of a completely self-contained, internally self-sufficient process.[183]

This enticing definition of the notion of "play" is crucial for both the reconstruction and the comprehension of *Hamlet or Hecuba*'s intellectual architecture. The quoted paragraph asserts the autonomous aspect of the "play." However, the reader cannot forget that such understanding is inseparable from the theater. While the concept of "play" is acknowledged as a self-generating space with its own rules, the "fiction" pointed out by Schmitt is, of course, the play performed on stage. Nonetheless, a question arises: How does the play communicate with its context? Does this fiction shun its environment and hide in a non-existent "self-sufficient" enclosure? Yes, but "[t]his is true only for *Hamlet*" (37). Why? Schmitt considers that most of the scenes of this tragedy are "pure play." One then sees the stark difference between the allusions and references so well-articulated by Winstanley and the mythical strength of Shakespeare's mirroring of the years 1600–1603. A simple reflection of Shakespeare's political context would imply, according to Schmitt, something typical of any other drama. But *Hamlet*, despite being considered a "tragical history" and also a "tragedy," is not—Schmitt reminds the German reader—*only* a tragedy. Yes, it is quite tragic and may even be considered, perhaps, the paradigm of modern tragedy. But it is not tragic in the way a *Trauerspiel* or a "mourning play" is. Schmitt logically equates "tragedy" with "seriousness." However, if *Hamlet* were a painting, it would certainly not be painted exclusively with dark colors. Schmitt elaborates further on the idea of "play." The key points through which this notion will unfold its conceptual orientation are philosophy and theology. Schmitt mentions a number of references regarding Protestantism, Catholicism, and

183. Schmitt 2009b, 37.

Kabbalism. Monotheism presents an entrenched affinity with the concept of "play." Nonetheless, Schmitt keenly stresses how far-removed Shakespeare was from "church liturgy." The examples are taken from the Religions of the Book simply wanted to claim that "the idea that God plays with us can elevate us to an optimistic theodicy just as well as it can lower us to a despairing irony or bottomless agnosticism" (39). The point should be stressed—Schmitt is again thinking of the German word *spiel*—is that "all possible and contradictory meanings—from the dispensations of an omnipotent and omniscient God to the activity of irrational creatures—can be circumscribed by the concept of 'play'" (40). The universal aspect of play confirms that "auto-sufficient" nature mentioned by Schmitt:

> The tragic ends where the play begins, even when this play is tearful—a melancholy play for melancholy spectators and a deeply moving *Trauerspiel*. It is with Shakespeare's *Trauerspiel*, whose "play" character also appears in the so-called "tragedies," that we can least afford to ignore the unplayability of the tragic.[184]

An ultimate opposition is thus presented between "play"—a Luhmann-esque, "self-centered," self-generated, normed space—and seriousness—and the irreducible drama presented onstage, which emulates the finite nature of an existence grounded in death. While the concept of "play" is systematic, the notion of "seriousness" is entropic. *Hamlet* is charged with these two types of energies. Thus, the reader will discover that Schmitt's insistence on the "mythical" status of Shakespeare's drama is entirely convincing: King James is not merely mirrored, nor is *Hamlet* arbitrarily based on literary sources. A concrete reality was adapted to the theater, while the audience itself was already immersed in the reality the play endeavored to treat.

2.8 Hamlet *or* Hecuba?

The arguments on "intrusions" and its vocabulary—"tragedy," "play," "seriousness"—have been adamantly repeated throughout *Hamlet or Hecuba*. However, the attentive reader will not have forgotten her first, obvious question: Why is this little monograph titled *Hamlet or*

184. Schmitt 2009b, 40.

Hecuba? Schmitt tackles this issue by interpreting the "play within the play." This is probably the most compelling and difficult section of the book.

Schmitt points out the importance of theater for that "already intensely baroque atmosphere around 1600." The world was a stage; people were actors, and life was a play. "This sense of the staged nature of the world existed in other times, but in the baroque epoch it was especially intense and widespread," explains Schmitt. In 1600, life consisted in "role-playing." This applied for both "men of action" and James I, who "admonished his son to always remember that as a king he would be onstage and all eyes would be focused on him" (40). It is possible, then, that this "theatricalization of life" was the context for *Hamlet*'s "play within the play"? Schmitt considers that in "Shakespeare's Elizabethan England the baroque theatricalization of life was still ungrounded and elementary" (41). This means that theater was not linked to the state—and thus, politics. The Shakespeare scholar might think that such a statement is unfounded. On what sources does Schmitt base this assertion? Likewise, the reader might think that the encompassing influence of Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Trauerspiel* is undeniable. However, this is not entirely true.[185] Schmitt's intellectual reference points were, as the reader grasped in the first subsection of this chapter, Winstanley's and Dover Wilson's investigations on Shakespeare. All in all, the view analyzed here is clear; upon closer examination, the "Mousetrap" is a scaled miniature of reality itself. Shakespeare's "raw" treatment of *Hamlet* made such an operation possible:

> Even a double magnification was possible: the play within the play, whose possibility found its astonishing realization in Act Three of *Hamlet*. Here one can speak even of a triple magnification, because the preceding pantomime, the "dumb show," once again mirrors the core of the tragic action.[186]

If the preceding sections of *Hamlet or Hecuba* aimed to prove the thesis on "intrusions," this subsection insists on the dimensions and scales of those "intrusions." If James I was mirrored in the "highest" sense through Hamlet the character, then the "play within the play" is a

185. An examination of the unpublished material and notes from the 1950s, available at the Schmitt *Nachlass* in Düsseldorf, suggests that Schmitt's use of Benjamin's thought was a later development. I am indebted to Reinhard Mehring for this reference.
186. Schmitt 2009b, 41–42.

miniature version of the complex political environment of the years "1600–03"—as such, the foreboding "dumb show" develops "the core of the tragic action." Schmitt distinguishes this unique theatrical gesture so well masterminded by Shakespeare from those "originated in the nineteenth century in the wake of social revolution," or even Sartre's theater. In both of these cases, the audience is safely disconnected from the current events of its context. At its best, these works could be considered stinging propaganda pieces. Schmitt next paraphrases Marx: "The emancipation of the actors is achieved in such a way that they become the heroes, and the heroes become the actors."[187]

However, no answer has been given yet about the title of this monograph on *Hamlet*. The justification for such an election is to be found in the "play within the play." The reader should bear in mind the main elements of "The Mousetrap"; Prince Hamlet has summoned a handful of players to perform a little act. The play will be presented at night—this is quite symbolic, because the absence of light is one of the key elements of the play: the Ghost is a shadow, Prince Hamlet cannot tell King Claudius from Polonius due to his "wildness,"[188] while Queen Gertrude frantically exclaims "Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!"[189] The play is known to Prince Hamlet. Its name is "the Murder of Gonzago."[190] Prince Hamlet arranges the details but then ponders over the fiction. He asks himself:

> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul to his own conceit
> That from her working all his visage wann'd,
> Tear in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
> For Hecuba
> What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?[191]

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187. It is not quite clear if Schmitt is referring to *On the Jewish Question* (1844) or some other short political writing of Marx.
188. 3.1.43.
189. 4.1.4.
190. 2.2.539.
191. 2.2.553–62

This besotted speech expresses the philosophical question of truth vs. fiction. However, this problem is posed within the sphere of Prince Hamlet's intimacy. Just like those players, he presented himself with great zeal before the performers, just as he did with Ophelia before and with King Claudius and his mother. However, once Hamlet finds himself without company—"Now I am alone,"[192] he states almost surprisedly—he unmasks his true feelings. If everything is just theatricalization, mimicry, pantomimes, a never-ending game of fakeness and deceit, then what good is truth anyway? Prince Hamlet rebels against this subpar reality. The play is transformed into a lie-detector,[193] the prince becomes an agent who judges others, but also a playwright. He instructs the actors on how to perform. The "mirroring" that Schmitt has posited so many times was crucial for Prince Hamlet's carefully orchestrated "Mousetrap":

> Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.[194]

These are the theatrical elements that help to solidify the play. The link between fiction and reality must be raw, not "overdone." The "play within the play" must act as a mirror; namely, it has to reflect the attributes of a whole, as the whole is recognized in its global dimension. The play then begins. The kind and queen enter before King Claudius and Queen Gertrude. A tender scene is performed, and then the murder of the beloved king is committed. Poison has been poured in the king's ear. The murderer "woos" the queen who, all-too-soon, will accept the one who defiled the state in the bed. Two monologues are performed, both good enough to distress and shock an audience in which two spectators are eerily connected with the "murder of King Gonzago" and his "wife Baptista." The mirror reflected a dark lady and a murky yet familiar murderer. The night embraces Elsinore, just like the "thoughts black."[195]

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192. 2.2.551.
193. See Menke 2005, 161–165.
194. 3.2.17–25.
195. 3.2.243.

King Claudius demands that light be cast over such a gloomy setting: "Give me some light: away!"[196]

Hamlet is engaged by the "dumb show" that he himself had requested be played out before him. It was "Aeneas' tale to Dido." Yet, he hides his thoughts from Polonius, who was the first to express the obscenity of such deceit: "Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more."[197] Hecuba is not mentioned in that monologue. However, the reader partially familiar with Greek mythology will know that Hecuba, the "mobled queen," wept for the death of Priam beside the "mincing" sword of Pyrrhus. Hecuba writhed "[w]ith bison rheum,"[198] just "[w]hen she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport."[199] Up to now, Prince Hamlet has bested that player by far. Polonius cannot be aware of the prince's inner-self, constrained in sorrow. Hamlet outperforms the performer. The prince carries on in order to capture the king of carrion. It is time to return back to *Hamlet or Hecuba*:

> Hamlet, however, does not weep for Hecuba. He is somewhat astonished to learn that there are people who, in the performance of their duties, weep over something that does not concern them in the least and has no impact upon their actual existence and situation.[200]

Schmitt considers that Prince Hamlet's silent outburst represents "astonishment," not despair. Shakespeare did not want to provoke the very same effect that Hecuba's weeping had on Hamlet. If that were the case, "[w]e would, however, in point of fact weep for Hamlet as for Hecuba if we wished to divorce [*abtrennen*] the reality of our present existence from the play on the stage" (43). But this would be off, untrue. Schmitt further stresses this point: "[T]hat would be bad, because it would prove that the gods in the theater are different from those in the forum and the pulpit" (43). The importance of the "play within the play" must be acknowledged in its organic gesture: "It is the real play itself repeated *before* the curtains" (43). Repetition belongs to reality, Schmitt ponders. No artifice was performed in "The

196. 3.2.257.
197. 2.2.522–523.
198. 2.2.509.
199. 2.2.517.
200. Schmitt 2009b, 43.

Mousetrap." The play orchestrated by Hamlet was for real—and, indeed, it reeled in reality. As for Schmitt, he finds here "a consummate test of the hypothesis that a core of historical actuality and historical presence—the murder of the father of Hamlet-James and the marriage of his mother to the murderer—has the power to intensify the play as play without destroying the sense of the tragic" (44). Schmitt recoils from Eliot view that *Hamlet* is an "artistic failure." The intrusions, he adds, are "dark areas." This play is no "unity," "riddles flow," unanswered questions abound. Those intrusions are "shadows":

> They disturb the unintentional character of pure play and, in this respect, are a *minus*. Nevertheless, they made it possible for the figure of Hamlet to become a true myth. In this respect they are a *plus*, because they succeeded in elevating *Trauerspiel* to tragedy.[201]

The unfinished feature of *Hamlet* is enhanced by "intrusions." Its imperfections grant enough space to history, even if it is through a refracted, oneiric-like image. The "play within the play" is reality, just like that "mirror up to nature" demanded by Hamlet. Amidst allusions, reality was pinned down in theater, just like a familiar portrait is hung on a wall in a dream.

2.9 Is Creation Grounded in Norms?

Schmitt titles this last subsection "The Irreconcilability [*Unvereinbarkeit*] of Tragedy and Free Invention." Up to this point, the main aspects of *Hamlet or Hecuba* can be summed up in the following terms: (1) the rejection of specific disciplines as regards "objectively" interpreting *Hamlet*, (2) the importance of the historical context in which Shakespeare participated, (3) the thesis of "intrusions"; namely, a "third type" of allusions that prove that the play is grounded in reality; and (4) the limits of artistic creation regarding the tragic aspect of life itself. *Hamlet or Hecuba* seems to develop a particular theory of tragedy—or, at least, it provides the elements of a notion of tragedy and the tragic aspect of life as such. Tragedy, according to Schmitt, "has a special and extraordinary quality, a kind of surplus value that no play, however perfect, can attain because a play, unless it misunderstands itself, does not

201. Schmitt 2009b, 44.

even want to attain it" (45). While to the reader this was obvious, Schmitt's position regarding creation now is crystal clear: tragedy—not drama, nor comedy—is the ultimate artistic approach to history. The reason for this was also stated in the previous arguments of Schmitt's 1956 essay; namely, the status of "objective reality of the tragic action itself" (45). There is an "enigmatic concatenation and entanglement of indisputably real people in the unpredictable course of indisputably real events" (45). One now is able to grasp why Schmitt held that tragedy was characterized by its entropic status. Amidst chaos, real-life events occur. Schmitt equates, as he already asserted, "tragic action" with "seriousness." While tragedy belongs and happens in reality—where no human control is possible—the "tragic action" is the event mirrored and emulated onstage:

> This is the basis of the seriousness of the tragic action, which, being impossible to fictionalize or relativize, is also impossible to play. […] This unalterable reality is the mute rock upon which the play founders, sending the foam of genuine tragedy rushing to the surface.[202]

A few sections back, I addressed the origin of this metaphor as well as its meaning regarding the hypotheses of Schmitt. One of the questions that the reader may be tempted to ask here would be: Is Schmitt a realist? What is the origin of said "realism?" Is "realism" the dimension where political action—and thus art, too—is properly developed? While I cannot tackle this matter here, the reader shall be warned about the importance of *Hamlet or Hecuba*'s vocabulary. Reality has to be distinguished from realism; namely, an ideology that functions on purely immanent terms. According to Schmitt, reality itself cannot be measured, controlled, or dominated. On the contrary, human agency is rooted in this chaotic, unthinkable space. The events that occurred in reality are objective; that is, they cannot be disputed by any theory. Tragedy unfolds in reality, while a tragic action emulates it. The theater becomes a privileged means, just like true poetry, to access reality through history. Schmitt is no realist. He merely acknowledges the main forces—politics, law, art, theology—that can face what cannot be acknowledged:

202. Schmitt 2009b, 45.

> This is the final and insurmountable limit of literary invention. A writer can and should invent a great deal, but he cannot invent the realistic core of a tragic action. […] The core of tragic action, the source of tragic authenticity, is something so irrevocable that no mortal can invent it, no genius can produce it out of thin air.

The reader is now familiar with most of the vocabulary of *Hamlet or Hecuba*. She or he knows how, at this point, theater has become a threshold of experiences. Life manifests its raw nature on the stage. However, theater is not a simple combination of different elements (reality + drama = authentic tragedy). All the points made by Schmitt can only be applied to *Hamlet* (or Schiller's *Wallenstein*, if one recalls the 1952 prologue). Schmitt does not mention any other play akin to the most important of Shakespeare's plays. So, the thesis of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* being a "case study" comes immediately to mind. Moreover, the title of this monograph can be considered appropriate: "Hamlet or Hecuba" refers to the connection between tragedy and drama, between seriousness and play, between reality and fiction. The conjunction "or" is the grammatical basis on which Schmitt stresses the fictional element that finds its limit and powerless when confronted with reality. "Hamlet"; namely, the "Hamletization of the avenger," is the second "intrusion," and, thus, the "test" that assures how time (history) is prevalent over creation.

Just as in his prologue to Winstanley, Schmitt now meditates on "Schiller's historical drama." The approach is almost identical. If the answer is positive, Schiller could then achieve the status of authentic tragedy (and, thus, of myth). If it is negative, his dramas would have only represented magnificent *Trauerspiele*. Schmitt thinks that "knowledge of history" cannot "replace myth" (47). Even Schiller's "philosophy of play" cannot fully account for the creation of a myth. "In such a philosophy," Schmitt adds, "play must become superior to seriousness. Life is serious, and art is jovial; indeed, but the serious reality of the man of action is then ultimately 'miserable reality,' and seriousness is always on the verge of becoming an animal brutality."[203] It seems that, according to Schmitt, Schiller's theater is too joyful or, as he labeled it, was made for the sole purpose of "self-edification" (47). The quote from his *Homage of the Arts* is brought up once again for the reader. Schmitt even quotes Nietzsche's eponymous *The Birth of the Tragedy* (1867) and states that "music cannot be that

203. Schmitt 2009b, 47.

which we designate here as the source of tragic action" (46). Such a quotation does not seem too appropriate, mainly because Nietzsche was concentrated on the tragic chorus of Ancient Greek theater and, also, because Schmitt already stated how *Hamlet* became a myth through a two-folded historical process. However, the next quote makes this reference more understandable: Schmitt now clings on to Willamowitz-Moellendorf's conception of "Attic tragedy," which is defined "as a piece of myth or heroic legend" (46). While Schmitt disapproves of how the ruthless opponent of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* is not "consistent with this insight"—that is, how he grasps myth as mere "content"—he does acknowledge the non-literary source of myth. "Tragic figures like Orestes, Oedipus, and Hercules are not imaginary but actually exist as figures from a living myth that are introduced into the tragedy from an external present," concludes Schmitt (46).

Hamlet or Hecuba keenly compares Schiller with Shakespeare and his fierce, raw brand of theater. In that "sixteenth-century England," "the play still belonged to life itself—that is, to a life full of spirit and grace, but not yet 'civilized' [*poliziert*]" (47). Schmitt stresses—as he returns to both *Nomos* and his book on Hobbes—how this epoch is to be understood as "the first stage of an elemental departure from the land to the sea, the transition from a terrestrial to a maritime existence." Hence, the theater, by then, was merged in that condensed, monolithic reality where no great division of spheres of action had yet developed. That is why "the play was still barbaric and elemental."

Schiller, on the other hand, mastered both play and theory. His "philosophy of play" supports the tendency of a "self-edifying theater, as Schmitt labels it. His relation to history was studied in hindsight. Schiller, in fact, was a historian. His use of sources led him to the use of history as a literary source—so we learn in the last section of *Hamlet or Hecuba*. None of this happens in Shakespeare's creations: "[H]is plays are always straightforward theater—burdened neither with philosophical nor aesthetic problems" (48). Underdeveloped and "straightforward" as it was, *Hamlet* allowed allusions both to the low and the high. Moreover, the two "intrusions"—that is, the "taboo of the Queen" and "the Hamletization of the avenger"—were "the two doors through which the tragic element of an actual event enters into the world of the play and transforms the *Trauerspiel* into a tragedy, a historical reality into a myth" (48).

It is curious to note how Schmitt became more ambitious and even strove to develop a quasi-normative[204] theory of tragic theater. While his forerunners in Shakespeare studies had attempted to draw up a global interpretation of *Hamlet*—i.e., Schmitt's main sources: Dover Wilson, de Madariaga, and Winstanley—Schmitt was more interested in stating the basic assumptions that one must accept in order to tackle *Hamlet* from an objective basis. "Intrusions" are the irrevocable, normative figures that, ultimately, will define and shape the play. That is why "[t]he core of historical reality is not invented, cannot be invented, and must be respected as given" (48). If in the "myth of classical tragedy," that core penetrated through the mediation of "tragic action," in *Hamlet* no mediation is needed: reality and theater, audience and people, tragedy and reality are one. This is, Schmitt asserts, "typically modern" because Shakespeare was "a playwright who establishes a myth from the reality that he immediately faces" (49). His invention was great, universal. But so were the "intrusions":

> Shakespeare […] was capable of extracting from the confusing richness of his contemporary political situation the form that could be intensified to the level of myth. […] Thus, the myth of Hamlet was born [*entstanden*]. A *Trauerspiel* rose to the level of tragedy and was able to convey in this form the living reality of a mythical figure to future ages and generations.[205]

2.10 *Ergebnis*

Hamlet or Hecuba ends with four conclusions. Each one of them summarizes the views established in the previous sections. The first "result" is a state of the art; that is, a general description. Schmitt is amazed by "the unbelievable excess of existing interpretations of Hamlet" (50). All of them tried to solve this "riddle"; however, "[t]he riddle does not allow

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204. See chapter 2 (2.1; 2.8). As I have already argued in the introduction, Schmitt is quite respectful of Aristotle's paramount reflections on tragedy. The whole "intrusion" thesis can be seen as a political interpretation of that hidden "logos"; namely, the theoretical logic that builds and sustains tragedy. Hence, what really "intrudes" is the plot of "historical reality." See *Poetics* 20, 16–22: "For tragedy is a *mimesis* not of men [simply] but of actions—that is, of life. That's how it is that they certainly do not act in order to present their characters: they embrace their characters for the sake of the actions [they are to do]. And so the [course of] events—the plot—is the *end* of tragedy, and the end is what matters most of all."
205. Schmitt 2009b, 49.

itself to be elucidated by the content of the stage play itself, nor by the inner relations of a self-contained process" (50). Otherwise put, neither historicism nor aestheticism can properly explain *Hamlet*. Subjectivity will always be insufficient when it comes to accounting for "historical reality."

The second result again distinguishes "mere allusions from true mirrorings of the contemporary historical present (Essex) and from genuine intrusions." This conclusion is epistemic. Such a distinction is effective due to its capacity to differentiate the authentic from the inauthentic. Three types of historical degrees were developed in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*: (1) allusions (references, names, cities, people, conflicts, etc.), (2) mirrorings (the dramatic creation unfolds a fiction that is ruled by the same structure as the original model it is based upon), and (3) "genuine intrusions" (the core of "historical reality" expanding through its normative nature over creation, to the point of limiting its scope). However, if the intrusions are accepted as autonomous and separate from the tragedy—namely, if they are seen as two contents placed outside its reality—then the correct interpretation of *Hamlet* is endangered. "One can then perform *Hamlet* as pure theater, as Jean-Louis Barrault did in 1952."[206] Even if that was the case, it would still be better "than the continuation of attempts to deck out the two intrusions with philosophical or psychological superficialities" (51).

Schmitt's work contains a third result, which is of methodological importance. His interpretation of *Hamlet* eschews "all historical and even anti-historical misunderstandings" (51). Prince Hamlet is not James I: "This would be either a historical panopticon and nineteenth-century costume drama or, alternatively, the attempt to pump blood into a specter, a kind of vampirism" (51). Such an expressionist remark aims to prove the inconsistencies of an exclusively aesthetic approach. Shakespeare, on the contrary, "recognized and respected the tragic core" (51). Hamlet is no doppelganger; he is Prince Hamlet of Elsinore, a universal creation under the rule of its reality. A further conceptual clarification is provided by Schmitt, who remarks: "[w]here history is only understood as the past and that which 'has been,' and no longer as present or real, the protest against period costumes becomes meaningful, and one must perform *Hamlet* in tails" (51). No sooner than such approaches

206. Schmitt 2009b, 51. Schmitt is referring to the performance of André Gide's (1869–1951) version of *Hamlet*.

show themselves as "the enemy," they are soon banished: "Its consequence is a rapid self-destruction."

The fourth and final result is conceptual; namely, the already stated difference between *Trauerspiel* and tragedy. While subjectivity shapes those mourning plays, tragedy is enhanced and optimized by "that incontrovertible core of a singular historical reality that transcends every subjective invention and can then understand its elevation to myth" (52). A last meditation on the three representative figures of literature is provided by Schmitt; namely, "Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust. […] Let us pay attention, then to their origins and provenances." The first, "Spanish and Catholic," the third "German and Protestant," and the second "stands between them in the middle of the schism that has determined the fate of Europe." The continent rises as the great spiritual context in which only *Hamlet* managed to become a myth.

> Mary Stuart is still for us something other and more than Hecuba. Even the fate of the Atreiade does not affect us as deeply as that of the unhappy Stuarts. This royal line was shattered by the fate of the European religious schism. Out of its history grew the seed of the tragic myth of Hamlet.[207]

"Us," of course, means "us, Europeans." The actuality of *Hamlet* is, needless to say, in tune with our present because its creation is marked by our own fate. Tragedy reigns supreme where tragedy has not ended. That fate is located in "the European religious schism." *Hamlet or Hecuba* is a report of that tragic backdrop against which the people of Europe saw themselves reflected. This book was written in 1956, although it was first outlined in 1952 and planned in 1947 as a discussion of Kommerell's book on Schiller. *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is not a book merely about *Hamlet*, just like Prince Hamlet was not a mere copy of James I. If that is the case, how did the "tragic seed" evolve in the years leading up to 1956?

2.10 On the Three *Exkursen*

207. Schmitt 2009b, 52.

Schmitt offers two appendixes and one bibliographical note[208] after the last section of his monograph on *Hamlet*. This should be questioned by the reader for the following reasons: First, the appendixes elaborate two approaches regarding two different issues that are not directly related to the prior considerations on "intrusions" or the vocabulary developed in his 1956 book. They are, so to speak, a philological afterword. Second, the use of such material has a strong resemblance with those subsections introduced in Schmitt's classic essay *The Concept of the Political*. This essay's standard edition[209] is divided into eight sections and eight subsections or notes, plus "three corollaries." Those notes are meant to further develop some of Schmitt's typically emphatic statements,[210] and they abound in erudition and insights. Moreover, and regarding the economy of both *The Concept of the Political* and *Hamlet or Hecuba*, these annotations express the inner dynamism of Schmitt and his habit of revisiting his own texts. He was more interested in opening new perspectives. More often than not, these perspectives involved different disciplines, like jurisprudence, aesthetics, philosophy, and philology.

Appendix 1. The first *Exkurs* provides a juridical account of *Hamlet*. Schmitt discusses in positive terms the second chapter of Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet*, which carries out a "careful analysis of the question of Hamlet's succession to the throne" (54). From a juridical standpoint, the question is whether Claudius was a usurper or not and if Hamlet "was the rightful heir to his father's throne." The answer to this question would determine if "[t]he drama would not only be a revenge play but also a drama of succession" (53). Schmitt tackles this matter by planning his analysis and firstly examining passages of the three first acts. Only "when one connects the points in act 1.2.1–089 […], act 3.2.90–92 […], and 3.2.342–4," does the problem of succession become visible to the reader. Schmitt

208. In the English translation of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, the footnotes are found at the bottom of the text. In the original, footnotes are found at the end of it. The following section follows the original German text.
209. See Walter 2018, 7–34; Franco de Sá 2015, 12–14.
210. Schmitt 1986, 18: "Romanticism is subjectified occasionalism because an occasional relationship to the world is essential to I"; Schmitt 2007a, 19: "The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political"; Schmitt 2007a, 26: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy"; Schmitt 2007a, 30: "First, all political concepts, images, and terms have a polemical meaning" (every section of CP is accompanied with such statements); Schmitt 2005, 5: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception"; Schmitt 2005, 15: "The exception is more interesting than the rule. The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything…"; Schmitt 2014c, 128: "All de-theologised concepts carry the weight of their scientifically impure origins"; Schmitt 2004b, 73: "Legal and jurisprudential thought expresses itself only in connection to a historical, concrete, total order." These are quotes from Schmitt's canonical essays. His large correspondence and diaries are full of these kinds of statements as well.

supports Dover Wilson's statement on the rightfulness of Prince Hamlet's claim to the throne, which makes Claudius a usurper.[211] Schmitt then goes on to link Dover Wilson with Winstanley's book. Schmitt next offers some conceptual reflections on the "hereditary monarchy" and compares it with today's "elective monarchy." Crucial to this point is the notion of "election." Modern law's "*free* election" does not accurately describe the original term, so "we thus need a legal-historical clarification" (55). Schmitt—just like Dover Wilson before him[212]—unfolds his analysis of Prince Hamlet's "dying voice," conveying how he rightly had the power to name his successor. This was determined by an "old blood right" and, subsequently, "had a sacred character" (56). The jurist briefly focuses on "the history of our German Kings"—"the naming of the Saxon Duke Heinrich by the dying King Konrad, who was Frank"—to assert how "[t]he norm is thus confirmed in light of this exception": Frank was, of course, a member of another clan (56–57). The "third factor" is the acquired influence of those figures who accepted to be his successors. Thus, along with the "dying voice" and "the old blood right," the third factor proves how "these events" need to be grasped "within the context of its own time period and its own people."[213] Schmitt concludes that King Claudius "stifled the *dying voice* and violated young Hamlet's right of succession to the throne," which also means that Dover Wilson's thesis was not entirely correct. There is an objective relationship between Hamlet and James I; namely, the "sacred blood right." A last consideration is made regarding the importance of these issues in Q1 and Q2. But the reader now knows that this first appendix stresses, again and again, the magnitude of Schmitt's notion of "intrusion" to the point of championing an authorized interpretation: Dover Wilson's.

Appendix 2. This supplement is an acknowledgment of Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Trauerspiel*. Even today, the motives for Schmitt's recognition of this book remain unclear. Benjamin's analysis of *Hamlet* was, to say the least, exotic. And while Benjamin praised Schmitt in a letter sent to him in 1930, the jurist did not return the gesture in any of the essays published in the late twenties or the next two decades. Thus, the reader

211. Dover Wilson 1952, 31: "The throne was the centre of Elizabethan political life in a way it has long ceased to be in ours, and the question of succession, as Laertes puts it, affected "the sanity and health of the whole state. How, then, would the second scene of *Hamlet* strike an audience with this political outlook?"
212. Dover Wilson 1952, 33–38.
213. Schmitt 2009b, 57.

is right to be baffled by those contemporary accounts that go as far as to speak of an "entire exoteric debate between Benjamin and Schmitt."[214] Although a good amount of philological and conceptual connections can be made between these two authors, such "debate" is at best an anecdote. Schmitt's made several observations in his personal copy of Benjamin's book, but neither the author nor his essay was important for Schmitt leading up to his book on *Hamlet*. His notes and loose thoughts in *Glossarium* barely mention Benjamin at all. It is more likely that Schmitt was aware of the rising relevance of the author of *On the Concept of History* and saw an opportunity to engage with this philosophical phenomenon ex-post. Also, the connection between Schmitt and Benjamin was soon noted by Kurt Marko, who published a review already in 1957[215]. The very same author who coined the expression "secret dossier" does not mention Marko's insightful comment of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

Schmitt asserts that "the book is rich in important insights and perspectives both for aesthetics and intellectual history in general, as well as for Shakespearean drama and *Hamlet* in particular" (59). Benjamin's thesis on the "allegorical aspect" of *Hamlet* is the point of departure for Schmitt's reflections on the German philosopher. The allegorical leads to the Christian element of Shakespeare's tragedy. Benjamin's book deals with fate, but for Schmitt, "*Hamlet* is not Christian in any specific sense" (61). The latter stresses how in entering "into theological controversies about special and general providence," Benjamin missed such a crucial distinction. Schmitt discusses these concepts in a scholarly fashion, engaging them on his own terms; namely, his remarks on "the difference between insular England and continental Europe, and therewith also between English drama and the seventeenth-century German baroque *Trauerspiel*."[216] The criteria, then, for analyzing *Hamlet* should be provided between these "historical coordinates" and not according to "intellectual or aesthetic categories like the Renaissance and the baroque" (62). And those coordinates are "the antithesis between the barbaric and the political" (62). Schmitt thus provides an account of English history, and insights already developed in *Nomos* are given to prove that opposition. "In this situation, the word *political* acquires a polemical meaning and consequently the thoroughly concrete sense of an antithesis to the word *barbaric*" (63).

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214. See Agamben 2005, 55. The Italian philosopher was probably drawn to this issue by Samuel Weber's article published in 1992.
215. Marko 1957, 386-388. See also Mehring 2022, 59-61.
216. Schmitt 2009b, 62.

The rationalism of the state diminishes and punishes anything that opposes its "civilized existence." Hence, barbarism is banished. The expressions of European theater are deeply affected by this piece of juridical reasoning: French theater finds here its origin, and Germany's *Sturm und Drang* rediscovery of Shakespeare acts as a reaction to it, as well. *Hamlet* was written and performed in the century spanning from "1588 to 1688," where "the island of England withdrew from the European continent and took the step from a terrestrial to a maritime existence" (64). The play participated in that "departure," as it was a brilliant expression of it. *Hamlet* is not Christian—the reader recalls how this drama can be found somewhere in between "Don Quixote and Faustus"—because its time, the time of the Stuarts, was unaware of "the sovereign state of the European continent" and "the transition to a maritime existence that England achieved during their reign" (65). Benjamin's book proved to be an insightful exercise on philosophy and history, philology, and aesthetics. However, and according to Schmitt, it missed the point in relation to those epoch-defining historical phenomena. Whereas the philosopher was directly influenced by Schmitt, the jurist mentioned Benjamin only in order to highlight, again, his own standpoint on *Hamlet*.

2.12 Conclusion

In the last twenty years, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* has received renewed critical interest. A constant stream of articles and papers are now focusing on Schmitt's thesis on "intrusions." However, this critical rediscovery is quite particular. Victoria Kahn's *Hamlet or Hecuba: Carl Schmitt's Decision* has triggered a considerable number of critiques. These reactions are often negative, although they do recognize the merit of Kahn's study of Schmitt; namely, her account of the German jurist's "insensitivity to literary form"[217] and the relation to his critique of liberalism. Her approach is, while pioneering when it comes to the English-language reception of Schmitt, quite typical. Schmitt's significant oeuvre is reduced to the bibliography available in English; the most significant debate in *Hamlet or Hecuba* is purported to be that with Benjamin. When the reader is informed that "[i]n recent years, there has been a notable revival of interest in the work of the German Jurist Carl Schmitt,"[218] it

217. Kahn 2003, 69.
218. Kahn 2003, 67.

bears keeping in mind that this "revival" only covers the English translation of Schmitt and some of the well-known philosophical studies that obliquely interpret his most famous assertions. Such a "revival" helped bring about a second wave of studies: largely reactions to Kahn's article, most of them grouped and published by the *Telos* Journal. Just like Kahn's, most of these interpretations propose a comprehension of *Hamlet or Hecuba* as a short yet exotic treatise on the aesthetics-politics connection.[219] Even these new approaches to Schmitt's essay on *Hamlet*[220] respect Kahn's outline of Schmitt's work: the importance of sovereignty, and, thus, Schmitt's idea of authentic, anti-liberal politics; the shift from Hobbes to Hamlet; the crucial philosophical-historical element provided by Benjamin; the epistemic unfolding of Schmitt's "disjointed" approach—"either/or" becomes the locus to interpret the 1956 book in individual terms, so *Hamlet* becomes Schmitt, Hitler is Prince Hamlet, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is the return of *Der Begriff des Politischen*, etc.

Nonetheless, basic questions apropos of the origin, structure, and method of *Hamlet or Hecuba* are missing from these critical efforts. Likewise, the so-called "revival" does not acknowledge those previous efforts that dealt with the significance of the 1956 book within the broader context of Schmitt's work.[221] Hence, the debate about the "core" of this little book is confined between two theoretical dimensions: the English bibliography on Schmitt (including his own material) and the dialogue with Benjamin. Within these two coordinates, the aforementioned "revival" has proposed different scopes of analysis. Most of them posit that Schmitt's monograph on *Hamlet* is a crucial piece of Schmitt's bibliography—which is true. However, the reasons for such a viewpoint are not adequate. This short essay on *Hamlet* is linked with *Roman Catholicism*, *Political Theology I*, *The Concept of the Political*, and *Nomos*. When it comes to Benjamin, the aforementioned letter of 1930 is valued as an incontrovertible document that enables all kinds of enticing theses and points of contact between these two authors. Finally, *Hamlet or Hecuba* is read without even considering the bibliographical context of the contemporary studies on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* published in

219. Kahn 2003, 89; Türk 2008, 74; Rust & Lupton 2009, xix; Pan 2009, 72–73; Michelbach & Poe 2016, 6; Mosssa 2016, 72.
220. Daniel 2010, 53–54; Trüstedt 2010, 110–111.
221. Altmann 1956, 39; Tommissen 2001, 51 ff.; Flügel 1965, 170; Mehring 1992, 47–48; Noack 1993, 276–277; Menke 2005, 210–212; Cacciari 2009, 15; Hofmann 2016 [1964], 241–243.

Schmitt's time. A great number of these publications fell under Schmitt's attention. He was, indeed, undoubtedly aware of this situation.

Thus, *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s current approaches, while productive and interesting, are biased from the very beginning. It was not until Reinhard Mehring's definitive biography of Schmitt and Andreas Höfele's reconstruction of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* that the reader finally found the opportunity to delve into the context in which the little book on *Hamlet* was written. Schmitt's main correspondents at the time—Ernst Jünger, Nicolaus Sombart, Reinhart Koselleck, Rüdiger Altmann, Heinrich Gremmels, Ernst Forsthoff, Armin Mohler, and Ernst Rudolf Huber—were aware of the importance that Schmitt granted to his book. But even both Mehring and Höfele do not address the main interlocutors identified in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—Winstanley, Dover Wilson, de Madariaga, Eliot, Freud—and their connection to the secondary sources used by Schmitt (Gervinus, Börne, Kohler), which are, if the reader investigates them further, nothing but crucial for understanding *Hamlet or Hecuba*. Hence, a second type of bias is generated: the theoretical implications of Schmitt's short essay on *Hamlet* are unbalanced. Benjamin's *The Origin of the German Trauerspiel* is praised as the key text, and Schmitt's notions of "play" and "seriousness" are relocated toward *The Concept of the Political* or Schiller's philosophy of play—although such a conceptual connection has yet to be demonstrated.

It is necessary to mention a third bias regarding *Hamlet or Hecuba*: its genesis. While the previously mentioned Mehring and Höfele have provided important information regarding the origin of Schmitt's reflections on *Hamlet*, a full investigation on the genesis of his essay is missing—only an isolated article written by Mehring tackles this issue. Thus, the reader is not told that Schmitt had already planned an article on Kommerell's interpretation of Schiller in the 40s (something that can be partially proved by reading Schmitt's 1952 prologue), or how Schmitt even used his thesis from *Politische Romantik* in his interpretation of Shakespeare's drama. The current "revival" or "renaissance" of Schmitt studies also fails to point out to the reader the strong links between *Hamlet oder Hekuba* and the arguments he put forward and defended in *Glossarium*. Schmitt's interest in *Hamlet* was not exclusively fueled by Winstanley's book or his eerily early identification of the figure of Othello.[222] The thesis on the relationship between "politics and aesthetics" needs to be corrected: the main

222. See Schmitt 2014d, *passim*; see Höfele 2016, 160–191.

topics that kept Schmitt busy before and after *Hamlet or Hecuba* were history and tragedy. These two fields were approached from Schmitt's usual viewpoints: legal science (jurisprudence), politics, theology, etc. Unsurprisingly, each one of these scopes has been championed as *the* locus from which Schmitt's 1956 essay should be grasped.

Finally, a more implicit fourth bias needs to be demonstrated when it comes to a full assessment of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*; namely, Schmitt's use of concepts and terms not when interpreting *Hamlet* exclusively, but the aforementioned themes of history and poetry. Interpreters of the 1956's essay reflect on Schmitt's vision of "aesthetics," "tragedy," "politics," and "play." However, they hardly distinguish "aesthetics" from "theater"—which is the exclusive topic of *Hamlet or Hecuba*—"tragedy" from the "tragic," or historical from non-historical tragedy; they also fail to describe "politics" and both the specific, "concrete" political situation into which *Hamlet* was introduced and the German tradition to which Schmitt himself contributed; and, finally, the importance of the concept of "play," which is much more related to the logical standards of modern critical thought. According to these scholars, the concept of "play" is merely a combination of Schillerian philosophy and a vague outline of liberalism. Hence, there is no exaggeration in asserting that—at least in the most visible spot of the debate on Schmitt's book on *Hamlet*—we have barely scratched the surface of its genesis, structure, method, and vocabulary.

Amid these complex, biased hermeneutic levels of interpretation, the more obvious and logical questions have yet to be truly raised. Why did Schmitt turn his mind to literature—specifically, to *Hamlet*? Why did he choose such a title for this short essay? Why is *Hamlet or Hecuba* so brief (as compared, for instance, to *Political Romanticism*? If the early plans of the book of 1956 were to give an account of Kommerell's Schiller—and, thus, the question of art as a comprehension of history—what did he find in *Hamlet* and consider much more enticing? If, as Kahn herself argues, "Schmitt, that is, uses the aesthetic power of Shakespeare to allegorize his own situation in World War II as genuinely classic–tragedy,"[223] what are the differences then between his also contemporary notions of "parallelisms" and "analogies"—both regarding history and tragedy—that the reader finds in the essays on *Donoso Cortés* and *Glossarium*? Otherwise put, why has *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s vocabulary

223. Kahn 2003, 89.

not been tracked down to its original locus; namely, the draft based on an article concerning Kommerell's Schiller and, hence, art, tragedy, and history?

In the last eight sections, I have attempted to develop these modest, although essential questions regarding *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. That is the main reason why I described in detail the apparently minor bibliographical elements surrounding this essay. Conversely, it is quite clear to the reader that my intention has not been to diminish or dismiss those interpretations that represent the "revival" of Schmitt's *Hamlet or Hecuba*. On the contrary, my aim was none other than to elaborate a thorough account of this enigmatic "little book." By achieving this, I hoped to revisit the logical amazement that this book arouses in all readers: Why did one of the, if not, *the* most brilliant jurist of the Weimar Republic choose *Hamlet* as a topic? While before 1956, Germany had given rise to other intellectual efforts that singled out the present-day relevance and nuances of this drama,[224] there was no substantial reason for Schmitt—aside from the fact that he had already written in his prologue—to delve into *Hamlet*. As I think I have convincingly outlined the theoretical architecture of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, the following chapters will tackle those other eccentric and implicit elements that lead Schmitt to elaborate his reflections on *Hamlet*. In the next section, I will analyze a handful of Schmitt's essays written during the 50s. The reader will encounter, by following the train of thought established by the jurist in these texts, two major topics that defined and shaped the approach through which the reflections of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* were made—namely, the normative relationship between history and art—this, one could say, is a method of hermeneutical nature. I posit that such material will help determine the proper place of the essay on *Hamlet* within the greater context of Schmitt's oeuvre. By scanning his considerations on Donoso Cortés, Karl Löwith, Ernst Jünger, and Erich Przywara, but also his thoughts on space, the "unity of the world," and the problem of the "power-holder," I aim to develop a full account of the main topics that determine Schmitt's vision of tragedy.

224. For example: Gerhardt 1950; Belinskij 1952; Glaser 1952; Port 1953; Kreft 1955; Knorr 1956; Döblin 1956; Lehmann 1956; Glaser 1956; Schulze 1956. I have not listed, for obvious reasons, both Winstanley's German translation and Schmitt's *Hamlet or Hecuba*.

CHAPTER 3
SCHMITT'S OEUVRE IN THE 1950S

Introduction

What was Schmitt's intellectual environment onto which the essay on *Hamlet* was placed? Some interpreters defend the idea that Schmitt's enormous *Nomos* is undoubtedly his central work of such a decade—and, in fact, that the *nomos* concept (order) itself rises as the conceptual axis of his thought[225]—, something that leads, eventually, to think that *Nomos* performs as the theoretical context on the essay[226] on *Hamlet*. However, *Nomos* was already finished by 1945, and only the corollaries of the book were added in the 1950 edition. And while there is a strong link between the historical thesis on *Nomos* and those of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—stressed by Schmitt himself—, namely, that the singularity of England at achieving a "maritime existence"[227] was a historical phenomenon that took place in the very same years when *Hamlet* was performed at London, some other crucial works of the 1950s coalesced in the monograph on Shakespeare. Therefore, this third chapter elaborates a chronological survey of Schmitt's ideas in the early 1950s. By connecting reviews, articles, think pieces and essays, chapter 3 emphasizes Schmitt's interest in the field "philosophy of history". In this perspective, his conceptual dexterity now was strictly fixed in the importance of the 1848 Revolutions. His legal thinking was soon housed in a greater historical context.

3.1 Themes and interlocutors

What was Schmitt's theoretical standpoint in the 1950s? While crucial works such as *Nomos* and the *Hamlet* essay were published in that decade, little has been investigated about the intellectual impact that certain personal events had on Schmitt's thought. His personal library was confiscated by the American forces in October 1945 and only returned[228] to him in 1952.

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225. Herrero 2015, 22-3.
226. Rust and Lupton 2009, xliii-iv; Berman 2015, xiiff.
227. Schmitt 2009b, 64; Schmitt 2021, 360ff.
228. From now on, the arguments developed here are based on Reinhard Mehring's biography of Schmitt. See Mehring 2014, 459 ff.

Likewise, his wife Duška passed away in 1950—the last year of contact between Schmitt and Ernst Jünger, another personal landmark. Four years later, his sister, Anna Margaretha Schmitt, passed too. At the beginning of the 1950s, Schmitt wrote a review, deeply moved by Karl Löwith's German translation of *Meaning and History* (*Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*). Löwith was a former critic of Schmitt whose remarks still model the way the jurist is interpreted today. The coming together of philosophy and history presupposed for Schmitt the equation of "the possibility of historical prognoses to the Christian theology of the *katechon* and the 'great parallel.'"[229] Löwith, according to Schmitt, "has pointed to the 'great historical parallel' between early Christianity and the present time" (442). This concept of "parallel" is essential to understanding the intellectual landscape of Schmitt's oeuvre during the fifties. His thought and language, torn asunder after 1945, became more esoteric than ever.

However, and despite the quality of some of the essays published in the early 1950s—like his "Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft"—Schmitt was soon banned from the German public sphere. An article entitled "Against the Cynicism of Yesterday's Men," by Karl Thieme, "expressed the public mood at the time," a mood triggered, in this case, by minor yet significant notes, columns, and public interventions by the German jurist in important media outlets such as newspapers and radio broadcasts —although he wasn't trying "to restore his reputation and extend his intellectual influence", like some interpreter has recently stated[230]. Schmitt's political past cast a shadow over him until his last day and continues to do so to this day.

Schmitt was drawn to Shakespeare due to personal circumstances—his daughter translated Lilian Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession* to obtain her degree at the Institute for Translation in Heidelberg; Schmitt consequently began to seriously study the Bard's work. He not only attended two conferences on Shakespeare in 1952 but also planned to write about *Hamlet* in connection with his previous reflections on history and Christianity, now cast into titles such as *Der Antichrist und die Schöpfung* or *Der Antichrist und was ihn aufhält* [*The Antichrist and What Delays Him*].[231] Notwithstanding the fact that he was banned from participating in several places, the fifties presented Schmitt with a new

229. Mehring 2014, 442.
230 Muller 2022, 453.
231. Mehring 2014, 455.

intellectual opportunity, and he developed and wrote several articles and theses on the aforementioned themes —like his reading of Hobbes or his reflections on the power-holder— . It also marked the beginning of new acquaintances, such as Rudolf Augstein from *Der Spiegel* or fellow editor Dieter Brumm, who "wanted a conversation about Walter Benjamin" at some point. Finally, during that decade, Schmitt also gave several radio interviews. And it was one hosted by Nicolaus Sombart in July 1954, entitled "Benito Cereno oder der Mythos Europas," that pushed Schmitt to "engage in intensive conversations, which in turn influenced his interpretation of Hamlet."[232]

Hamlet oder Hekuba suggests to the reader several important questions, the essential one being the connection between history—"concrete reality"—and tragedy—the representation of events according to the law of brute historical episodes. How does this relationship work? It is merely the transfer of a particular structure (in the case of *Hamlet*, the political, juridical, and historical themes that surrounded those murky Elizabethan years) through the means of art, or it is a more complex and hence non-one-dimensional phenomenon that needs to be thoroughly grasped? In the following sections, and taking off from Schmitt's book on *Hamlet*, I will tackle these challenging problems by making visible the footprints of Schmitt's thoughts on history and philosophy. Otherwise put, I will concentrate on reconstructing the intellectual genesis of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

3.2 Schmitt's Views on History

If Schmitt was, as one German scholar has argued, "a dangerous mind,"[233] one of the reasons for such a characterization was his uncanny capacity to profoundly address a wide array of themes, such as theology, European and American jurisprudence, literature, art, philosophy, and, last but not least, history. This is evident even in his first monographs published in the 1910s, such as *The Value of the State and the Significance of the Individual,* or, even more clearly, in *Political Romanticism* (1919/1921). In these works, Schmitt delved into significant problems—the bond between power and law, in *Der Wert des Staates…*, and the historical structure that drove the "Romantic spirit" in *Politische Romantik*—by unfolding the

232. Mehring 2014, 465.
233. Müller 2003, 56–62.

historical inheritance of certain phenomena. But this use of historical information was not just a mere opportunity to exhibit his erudition. Indeed, even in his early contributions, he attempted to stress the importance of history and the past for comprehending and analyzing problems of the present. But, as always happen within Schmitt's thought, he never attempted to provide a crystal-clear definition of history or other concepts. Throughout his whole life, Schmitt's "method" was to select a particular problem—say, for instance, the interpretation of article 48 of the Weimar Constitution [234]—and then to elucidate said problem by bringing to the fore its theoretical and historical heritage and stressing this convergence through axiomatic and often cryptic assertions. This opens a good deal of space for the scholar and the interpreter, but leaves a very narrow surface for the regular reader to move across. I will prove this by quoting three different passages from three different monographs that belong to three different, paradigmatic phases of Schmitt's thought:

> The highest and most certain reality of traditional metaphysics, the transcendent God, was eliminated. More important than the controversy of the philosophers was the question of who assumed his functions as the highest and most certain reality. Two new worldly realities appeared and carried through a new ontology without waiting for the conclusion of the epistemological discussion: humanity and history.[235]

> Every form of political life stands in direct, mutual relationship with the specific mode of thought and argumentation of legal life. The sense of justice, legal practice, and legal theory of a feudal community, for example, differs from the societal legal thinking of a bourgeois legal system of exchange in more than methods and the content of the individual juristic line of argument.[236]

> No one can escape the immanent logic of value-thinking. Whether subjective or objective, formal or material, as soon as value appears a specific thought circuit becomes unavoidable. It is—one must already say: compulsorily—given with every value thinking.[237]

234. Schmitt 2015f, 99–117, here at 105–107.
235. Schmitt 1998, 58–59.
236. Schmitt 2018d, 45–46.
237. Schmitt 2018d, 31.

The first quotation belongs to *Political Romanticism*. As I have already stated,[238] the success of Schmitt's critique of Romanticism—or "political Romanticism," if the reader will allow such an oxymoron—depends on the historical presupposition that marked the conceptual schism of Modernity; namely, the metaphysical eradication of God, and, consequently, the modification of an ontology that subsequently had to manage its own reality without the coordinates provided by the model of Christian productivity—i.e., God as a creator and the world as a creation granted a set of moral rules. Schmitt's reflections usually are presented as axiomatic descriptions. However, most of the time, they are history-driven considerations that are guided by juridical and political arguments that are expressed philosophically. If the reader returns to the aforementioned quotation from PR, she will rapidly grasp that although a Descartes scholar could argue that such a claim is far-fetched, the most important point is determining the "who" of the passage, which in turn leads to one of Schmitt's core words: *legitimacy*.[239] If one analyzes the previous study of *Political Romanticism* developed earlier, the quotation can be unpacked in the following terms: Romanticism cannot gain political legitimacy, nor does it have any. Why? Because its historical roots are biased, they depend on the "schism between thought and being."[240] According to this caveat, Romanticism was stillborn at its best. No decision can achieve legitimacy upon the blank space left by God. Thus, the historical dimension of a specific subject—i.e., Romanticism—is driven back to its political inanity by authentic politics—the state—and then presented as an epistemological description of its elements. In any case, one here must ponder why Schmitt almost always chooses to delve into the historical aspect of a phenomenon. Even the sociological approach of the second quotation, which belongs to his 1934 *On the Three Types of Juristic Thought*, is posited within a historical consideration of *Recht*[241] and the different contemporary descriptions of the subject. Likewise, this quotation introduces the reader to a second level of the concept of history; that is, how a "concrete situation" becomes historical. In the

238. See chapter 2 (2.1).
239. See Hoffmann 2010, 122 ff.
240. Schmitt 1998, 52.
241. Schmitt 2004b, 44: "The theme of this treatise, however, involves another problem. Namely, that the various theoretical, practical, and intellectually prominent kinds of jurisprudential thought must here be identified and differentiated not from outside, but rather from the intrinsic nature of the jurisprudential work." The "intrinsic nature" of any problem—as the average Schmitt interpreter will agree—is mostly historical, or at least an important element in the chaotic, preposterous traffic between theology and human history.

theoretical context of *On the Three Types*..., this means how "rules and status, decision, concrete order thinking"[242] are entangled in a single scenario; namely, the fall of the Weimar Republic and its National-Socialist present. From this perspective, history is essential for Schmitt, because a "concrete situation" becomes a singularity that, nonetheless, is only possible thanks to some other major singularity buried in the past and yet still conducting—via its conceptual legacy—to the current state of affairs.[243] Finally, Schmitt's 1962 *Tyranny of the Values*, a short essay-like collection of thoughts and observations apropos of the revival of the German concept of *Wert* in post-World War II Germany, seeks an objective description of a concept that quietly becomes a prognosis of the destiny of the modern world. Schmitt analyzes the main aspects of the "philosophy of value," a complex set of perspectives and *Standpunkte* where a higher "value"—whether it be human life or the objectivity of modern sciences—rules over the other ones. Schmitt asks: "How should then the battle of the subjective or even the objective values end otherwise? The higher value has the right and the duty to subject the lower value to itself, and the value as such annihilates with right the non-value as such."[244] Time and again, a description is rhetorically transformed into a sharp evaluation of a phenomenon; the phenomenon being in this case "the philosophy of value" and the endangered "domains of our social being"[245] due to its "transformation in values," something quite related with the development of twentieth-century capitalism[246] and the serious deprecation of social life—and life itself—at the hands of an all-powerful economy. And while that "logic of values" was, indeed, a far from innocent nomenclature that stood for the manifoldness of life understood as existence, that "specific thought circuit" only becomes "unavoidable" if the problem is examined according to its proper place within European history. Otherwise, the complete analysis of "values" that the essay carries out would have been a scientific description of the function of the word—its use, its semantic intention, and its importance for the modern social sciences. However, Schmitt is very on point when he claims in the introduction of his think-piece "that the strongest oppositions in

242. Schmitt 2004b, 43.
243. Schmitt 2004b, 82: "A dominating kind of legal thought based on the complete antithesis of norm and command, *Lex* and *Rex* cannot at all legally grasp leadership thinking (*Führergedanken*). It demands, therefore, an oath to the constitution, to a norm, instead of to a leader (*Führer*)."
244. Schmitt 2018d, 36.
245. Schmitt 2018d, 8.
246. Schmitt 2018d, 10.

the decisive moments are fought out as a mere battle about words,"[247] which means that the study of the conceptual dimension is essential for any analysis. This proves how concepts are for Schmitt the chosen threshold to delve into history. History, in this perspective, is the history of concepts.[248]

I have deliberately pinpointed these three passages in order to illustrate the overall global importance of history in Schmitt's oeuvre. Moreover, the third quotation from *The Tyranny of Values* has been consciously—yet briefly—commented on due to the insight it provides regarding the genesis of the book. This article was originally a piece written by Schmitt for the *Ebrach Colloquiums* (*Ebracher Seminare*) organized by a group of important scholars—like Arnold Gehlen, Joachim Ritter, Hans Barion—and young intellectuals—Reinhart Koselleck, Marianne Kesting, Helmut Quaritsch, among others—that took place in the late fifties. The first edition of *The Tyranny of Values* was privately published with an initial print run of 200 copies, then republished in 1967 with an added introduction by Schmitt himself.[249] This means that *The Tyranny of Values* is the last of Schmitt's reflections of the 1950s, a decade during which he was absent from the mainstream debate, despite being particularly present in the intellectual discussions of post-World War II Germany.

In the following pages, I will schematically give an account of the main texts and articles of that decade,[250] proving how the 1950s provided Schmitt the chance to merge into highly philosophical and academic debates without an academic perspective. This examination will show how a philosophy of history was roughly sketched by Schmitt in most of the material he produced during that decade. Second, the importance of history is highlighted through perspectives that do not usually belong to the study of history; namely, art and—more specifically—poetry. Third, by establishing a map of Schmitt's intellectual endeavors in the 1950s, I will demonstrate why any serious interpretation or reconstruction

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247. Schmitt 2018d, 6.
248 See Koselleck 2006, 56: "Alles menschliche Leben konstituiert sich aus Erfahrungen, mögen diese nun überraschend und neu oder aber wierderkehrender Natur sein. Um Erfahrungen zu machen oder zu sammeln und sie in sein Leben einzubinden, braucht man Begriffe"; see also Koselleck 2004, 245: "Historical concepts, especially political and social concepts, are minted for the registration and embodiment of the elements and forces of history. This is what marks them out within a language. They do, however, possess, by virtue of the difference that has been indicated, their own mode of existence within language. It is on this basis that they affect or react to particular situations and occurrences."
249. See Zeitlin's footnote in Schmitt 2018d, 3; see also Giesler's editorial note in Schmitt 2011, 7–8.
250. I will follow Alain de Benoist's chronological list of Schmitt's works during the fifties; de Benoist 2003, 32–41; 97–108; 129–139; 140.

of *Hamlet or Hecuba* must necessarily be in command of Schmitt's intellectual production regarding history, poetry, and, as the reader will be aware by the end of this chapter, tragedy. While I will not analyze all documents—such as articles, reviews, interviews, or two-page reflections—thoroughly,[251] some other texts will be reconstructed and analyzed in great detail. These reconstructions and analyses need to be aware, too, of the main interlocutors and intellectual adversaries of Schmitt in the fifties, such as Karl Löwith[252]—who even wrote a critique of *The Tyranny of Values*[253]—Eric Voegelin,[254] and, finally, a philosophically-driven Hans Kelsen.[255]

3.3 "Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft" (1950)

The 1940s were largely the years in which Schmitt reinterpreted his reflections on international law and German state law[256] already tackled in 1928 (although he had already dealt with this problem in *Die Wendung zum diskriminierenden Kriegsbegriff*).[257] "Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft" was originally published in 1943–4. Its title is ironic, if not a dark witticism. The reader is quickly warned that there is no European jurisprudence whatsoever—just as it was impossible for any sphere of human life to be "neutralized"[258] at

251. For example, although *Nomos* was published in 1950, it was already finished by 1945. That is why I will only focus on two of its appendixes published during the 1950s. On the other hand, articles like "Das Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" (the first article published in the 1950s), *The Problem of Legalität*, *Recht und Raum*, or *Zum Gedächtnis an Serge Maiwald*, will not be treated here either due to their strictly legal scope or because they repeat remarks already presented in other articles. Brief interviews—like "Der Mut des Geistes" or "La guerra giusta"—and also brief reflections—like "Welt großartigster Spannung"—will not be developed for the same reasons. Finally, Schmitt's reviews—for example, of Max Weber's critical edition of *Economy and Society* or the review of Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise*—do not add anything substantial to what he already stated in works like *The State of the European Jurisprudence* or his essays on Donoso Cortés. Posthumous writings and correspondences will be used intermittently. Relevant passages of *Glossarium* will be commented on, too.
252. Löwith 2004, 11–29, here 19–22.
253. Löwith 1964, quoted in Schmitz 2007, 163–173.
254. Voegelin 1987, 1–26.
255. Kelsen 2012, 17–9.
256. Schmitt 2019, 673–683; 683–731;732–752; 755–778; 779–806; 808–871; Schmitt 2009d, 22–73, here at 31–39; Schmitt 2012h, 7–8, 43–58; VA, 376–430, here at 387–891; 431–440; Schmitt 1995, 166–183; 184–217; 234–68; 441–452. See also Quaritsch 2018, 58.
257. Schmitt 2012d, 23.
258. Schmitt 1993, 91: "But the neutrality of technology is something other than the neutrality of all former domains. Technology is always only an instrument and weapon; precisely because it serves all, it is not neutral. No single decision can be derived from the immanence of technology, least of all for neutrality. Every type of culture, every people and religion, every war and peace can use technology as a weapon."

all. It was defeated by "positive law." Therefore, the situation of "European jurisprudence" in the twentieth century is solely regional. There are different, local interpretations, which coexist with a positive discipline based on norms and formal laws. The authentic "European jurisprudence," with which every other non-European country would have to reckon, was existential; that is, a material expression of the law. One of its origins was Roman law.

Even the reader only vaguely familiar with Carl Schmitt's work is aware of his despise for liberalism, democracy, positivism, and technology. The reader would be right in considering that this essay is unrelated to Schmitt's intellectual horizon in the 1950s. As for the scholar, the correct acknowledgment[259] of "Die Lage" as one of Schmitt's crucial essays does not exclude the fact that this piece of work—due to its technicalities and specificities—is rather isolated from Schmitt's other reflections on the philosophy of history, tragedy, and art during the 1950s. However, the core of this essay indirectly features the core of Schmitt's theoretical path during that decade; namely, the normative power of historical concepts that are later seized, assimilated, translated, used, and recast from their original significance. The factual life of a concrete time is already guided by the historical singularity from which those concepts and notions were first crafted. This explains Schmitt's assertion that "[t]he 'reception of Roman law' is the great recurring event in the history of jurisprudence."[260] However, for the sake of argument, a distinction must be made; namely, that "[t]he European significance of the rebirth of Roman law in the Middle Ages and its influence in various countries and epochs are not the same as the 'positive validity' of precepts and concepts found in the *Corpus Juris Justiniani*" (10). Or, put in other terms, the burden of the tradition of Roman law and its "precepts and concepts" should not be mistaken with the existential aspect of Roman law as both a historical and spiritual scheme of European self-interpretation.

"Die Lage" is a critical approach to the history of European jurisprudence. Its remarks and stresses the origins of the discipline and its assimilation in Europe—although Schmitt mostly refers to Germany and France. In its very first pages, Schmitt champions "positive law" as the mortuary drape of "European jurisprudence." The jurist repeats once and again the word "crisis." Indeed, this is a critical analysis in both the original sense of the term and—

259. Reinhard Mehring, *Savigny or Hegel? History of Origin, Context, Motives and Impact*, in Schmitt 2022, 75-6.
260. Schmitt 2022b, 10.

by that time—the contemporary usage of the notion.[261] "The positivism of domestic law corresponds to the positivism of international treaties," asserts Schmitt, as he depicts the dynamic between the "internal" and the "external" as "sham bridges over the gulf that separates inner and outer" (11). Thus, "positive law" is an utter disenfranchisement of the centurial, vital episteme that guided and normed the existence of Europe as such.

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261. See Roiman 2014, 15: "The very etymology of the term 'crisis' speaks to that requirement of judgment. Though the details of its semantic history can be found in many places, it is worth reiterating that its etymology is said to originate with the ancient Greek term *krinô* (to separate, to choose, cut, to decide, to judge), which suggested a definitive decision. It is said to have had significance in the domains of law, medicine, and theology, with the medical signification prevailing by the fifth and fourth centuries BC." For a thorough account of the notion of "crisis" in Schmitt's own Weimar, see Graf 2010, 592–615, here at 602–603: "All of the contemporary authors, at least, left it undecided in which way the crisis would be resolved, of the old or the new—and in their view good—powers held an advantage and would succeed. Most of them considered the 'horrible, low state of the present' not as the end, but believed that the current 'Krisis' was a state of 'extremely severe, confused fermentation,' heading toward a near, light, and better future." On the limits and scope of twentieth-century "critical" analyses, see Bidney 1946, 534–552, here at 535: "Cultural fatalism as a philosophy of cultural evolution owes its plausibility to the divorce of abstraction of human achievements from the psychobiological processes by which they are produced. Once human ideals, social institutions and technical inventions are regarded as impersonal 'superorganic' entities with a force of persistence and development of their own, independent of their human creators, it seems plausible to disregard human agents as the primary determining factor. In this manner, what began as a scientific quest for empirical factors involved in the cultural process ends by becoming a mystical metaphysics of fate in which non-empirical forces are presumed to shape human destiny in accordance with their own laws of development." For a sociological account of the "critical" viewpoint of philosophers and historians, see Rader 1947, 262–278, here at 275: "Why, in our remarkably well-equipped civilization, has there been such a great discrepancy between potentialities and achievements? The answer, as I have suggested, is to be sought in the disproportionate development of cultural factors resulting in a profound disequilibrium and the consequent fettering of the culture's potentialities by the conflict between the hypertrophied and the atrophied phases of culture." Rader, at 274, provides a deadpan yet accurate definition of what must be understood as a crisis: "A crisis, therefore, is a dynamic state of disequilibrium, in which wants are frustrated, resources are unused or misused, and potentialities are fettered by the disproportionate development of cultural factors." For an analytical genealogy of the notion of crisis, see Habermas 1973, 643–667, here at 660: "[…] Only a rigid sociocultural system, incapable of being randomly functionalized for the needs of the administrative system, could explain how legitimation difficulties result in a legitimation crisis. This development must therefore be based on a *motivation crisis*–i.e., a discrepancy between the need for motives that the state and the occupational system announce and the supply of motivation offered by the sociocultural system." While the analytical sociology of modern history sketched by Habermas is fueled by Luhmann's approach, his critique, for example, of "civil privatism," and much of his considerations are surprisingly similar to those of Schmitt's regarding the downfall of political existence due to the ultra-technological social conditions of capitalism (or ultra-liberalism). For a study of the concept of "crisis" as a highly effective discursive metaphor, see Holton 1987, 502–520, here at 504: "The crisis metaphor has of course been translated into social enquiry as a means of dramatizing perceptions of social pathology, social breakdown and disorganization, and to give full vent to feelings as to the intolerability of the present. Its use is thus embedded in discourses about social change and debates about appropriate forms of political action. […] The crisis idiom is thus closely connected with the practice of social criticism, involving both standards of cultural evaluation, and preferred modes of political mobilization." For a still fundamental inquiry of "crisis" as a threshold of modernity's self-interpretation by non-empirical means, see Koselleck 1976, 6: "Gerade daß dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert der Zusammenhang zwischen der ausgeübten Kritik und der heraufkommenden Krise entging – ein wörtliches Zeugnis für das Bewußtsein des Zusamenhanges ließ sich nicht finden –, führte zu der vorliegenden These: der kritische Prozeß der Aufklärung hat die Krise im gleichen Maße heraufbeschworen, wie ihr der politische Sinn dieser Krise verdeckt blieb. Die Krise wir so sehr verschfärft, wie sie geschichtsphilosophisch verdunklet wird […]."

Jurisprudence becomes micrological. Schmitt vividly reproaches the fact that the positive practice of law "can never constitute a concrete order"—with "concrete" treated here as being both historical and existential. A formal expression of juridical practice ultimately depends on "those treaties between states and the internal laws on which they rest" (12). Schmitt considers this a "normative fiction";[262] namely, a merely temporal binding between a local order and its fragile understanding with one state or another. Throughout this extraordinary essay, Schmitt brings up this critique on several occasions; that is, the inauthenticity of positivism. "European jurisprudence," as both a material and historical expression of a people, provides a "fundamental standpoint" (28). "Substantive" as only a "community" can be. Schmitt describes this community as a large "membership." This exclusive spiritual club was open to guests as long as they abided by and accepted the rules of the club. A true partaking in the highest game of life. Therefore, a "standard" was needed; namely, a "European" criterion of identification and, subsequently, "recognition." However, positivism turned this heavy historical burden into a set of norms and formal principles, conducting an unseen impairment of the "substantive standpoint,"[263] which Schmitt also called "nihilistic opportunism"—quite the oxymoronic expression. While this discussion is evidently close to that of Kant regarding "perpetual peace,"[264] Schmitt elevates the theme of international law—by studying a handful of cases—to a plane where "jurisprudence" meant something more than the juridical practice of an eternal discipline.

> What from a positivistic perspective of "formal legitimacy" appears legally banal and as a coincidental aggregation of legal arrangements becomes from a substantively jurisprudential perspective a genuine European community characterized by a true

262. SS, 172–175, here at 3. It is necessary to remark that in 1913, the term "fiction" held a positive value for Schmitt. Jurisprudence, along with mathematics, provided a pure dimension of exercise and development for any science, the practice of (penal) law being among the most important. The considerations entitled *Juridical Fictions* were obviously based on Vaihinger's post-Kantian theory of "fictions." However, the reader can see in this early distinction a foreshadowing of Schmitt's debate regarding legitimacy and legality.
263. Schmitt 2022a, 13.
264. Kant 2006, 78: "Peoples, as states, can be judged as individual human beings who, when in the state of nature (that is, when they are independent from external laws), bring harm to each other already through their proximity to one another, and each of whom, for the sake of his own security, can and ought to demand of others that they enter with him into a constitution, similar to that of a civil one, under which each is guaranteed his rights. This would constitute a *federation of peoples*, which would not, however, necessarily be a state of peoples. Herein would lie a contradiction, because every state involves the relation between a *superior* (who legislates) and a *subject* (since we are to consider the right of *peoples* in relation to one another here insofar as they make up so many different states and are not to be fused together into one state)."

> common law, despite major differences between German, Anglo-Saxon, Latin and various other legal realms [*Rechtskreise*].[265]

While the reader might think that "Die Lage" is an analysis of the pros and cons of two different viewpoints, Schmitt stresses that positivism is simply a point of view [*Gesichtspunkt*], while "European jurisprudence," the "genuine" [*echte*] "common law"[266], is a standpoint—a "substantively jurisprudential perspective" [*eine sachlich-inhaltliche, rechts wissenschaftliche Betrachtung*]. Otherwise put, the superficial account of legal practice vs. a spiritual—metaphysical and historical—jurisprudence of existence. However, Schmitt is interested in proving the "interaction" between the different legal spheres of juridical practice, because "[t]he present law of individual European states was developed in such an ongoing, internal European process of such inclusions and interactions" (39). While this might sound like Sociology of Law 101, Schmitt's argument aims at demonstrating both the inward and outward process of the "reception of Roman law"—"the great recurring event in the history of jurisprudence." Roman law has shaped the self-consciousness of Europe, a "five-century" development. Schmitt stresses the importance of Latin as a means of communication for such historical events. Likewise, "Roman law" and its impact reached "the European spirit as a whole" (40). Schmitt sketches out in broad terms the history of this reception, as he fashions a specific analysis of "the" Roman law instead of busying himself with the various strata of its history.

Thus, "Die Lage" unfolds a global analysis of the crisis of "European jurisprudence" by acknowledging its malaise; namely, positivism. A number of names that belong to the history of German jurisprudence are mentioned in order to identify the different authors who—either ahead of their time or belatedly—grasped correctly the inner decay of true jurisprudence.

> Through the work of all European jurists, Roman law became a *lingua franca*—the language of a jurisprudential community, a recognized model of juridical thinking, and thereby a spiritual and intellectual "common law" of Europe, without which

265. Schmitt 2022b, 13.
266. Schmitt 2012, 391. Schmitt uses the English expression "common law."

> (even on the theoretical level) there could be no understanding among jurists of different nations.[267]

True common law gives rise to true common people. Schmitt remarks on the commonality of "European jurisprudence" and considers Europe first, then the world. This "true" practice of jurisprudence shares the same spiritual dimension "of those great works of art and literature usually identified as the sole representatives of the European spirit" (19). Conversely, Schmitt studies one of the many available examples of the reception of Roman Law. Whilst the previous pages of "Die Lage" developed a historical landscape of European jurisprudence, Schmitt subsequently focuses on "the wake of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions". Once again, this enigmatic year is held as a historical figure of Schmitt's contemporary world. Crucial intellectual transfers of jurisprudence were made in this period because "there were numerous uniformities and reciprocities linked with the codification of civil law, criminal and trial law, criminal procedure and civil proceedings" (19). This means, and even a history of law dilettante would agree, that modern European society rose by way of a jurisprudential model. If that was the case, why did a crisis emerge?

Schmitt detects an "internal and immanent problem of jurisprudence" (19-20). By this point, the reader will know that "legal positivism," as a spiritual and jurisprudential alternative, utterly decimated the historical landscape of Europe as a whole. Such a diagnosis directly or indirectly addresses the finite nature of jurisprudence—therefore, its "immanent" failure. However, neither "positive law" nor the "repercussions of the world war" are the primary causes of such a failure. Schmitt returns to "[t]he great turning point" that "was the 1848 Revolution" (20). An unprecedented array of novelties occurred that year. One could rightly speak of 1848 as the year in which politics began to be ruled by the principles of historical thermodynamics[268]—for the heat of civil war transformed the internal structure of European jurisprudence. Social revolutions contributed to political acceleration, leading to a negative comprehension of past disciplines, which consequently were considered obsolete.

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267. Schmitt 2022b, 18.
268. See Collins, et al. 2016, xx: "Kelvin took to heart Fourier's message that the behavior of heat can be described mathematically without knowing what heat is. This was a good thing at the time – before the mechanical equivalent of heat was known (Joule, 1843) and incompatible and incomplete theories of heat, or 'caloric' to use the then current name, were in circulation. He first introduced the word 'thermodynamics' in 1848."

Schmitt recalls a memorable phrase by Windscheid, "[t]he dream of natural law is over," which meant, roughly speaking, that positivism had collided with the eventful years following 1848. At this point, the legal scholar may frown upon Schmitt's review of nineteenth-century jurisprudential history,[269] specifically on account of Schmitt's fixation on positivism as a central element of disgrace. While Schmitt's reflections and quarrels with positive law are certainly imbued with a degree of bias—heavily influenced by Schönfeld's 1932 article "The Dream of Positive Law"[270]—the reader should not forget that "Die Lage" aims to provide a historical account of jurisprudence within the horizon of events that occurred in 1848. Schmitt's juridical performance here is notable. From this perspective, Schmitt's goal is to prove the serious menace that positivism was and is for Europe as a people—highlighting, too, some of the now-forgotten efforts of other jurists, such as Kirchmann and Greifswald:

> Kirchmann meant that jurisprudence could never catch up with legislation. Thus our predicament becomes immediately apparent. What remains of a science reduced to annotating and interpreting constantly changing regulations issued by state agencies presumed to be in the best position to know and articulate their true intent?[271]

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269. See Pound 1911, 140–168, here at 142: "In the last half of the nineteenth century, the Romanist legal science of the historical jurists in Germany was coming to be out of touch with practical life. It was academic for the reason that much of our common-law legal science, *e.g.* assumption of risk, liberty of contract, right to follow a lawful calling, etc., is academic, – because derived by deduction from historical premises which had lost their value and hence much of their meaning for the society of today"; Hart 1958, 593–629, here at 595: "The nonpejorative name 'Legal Positivism,' like most terms which are used as missiles in intellectual battles, has come to stand for a baffling multitude of different sins. One of them is the sin, real or alleged, of insisting, as Austin and Bentham did, on the separation of law as it is and law as it ought to be." For a contemporary, non-biased account of positive law illustrated in concrete court cases, see Alexy 2004, 27–28: "The problem of legal positivism is discussed for the most part as the problem of a classifying connection between law and morality. One asks whether contravention of some moral criterion or another exacts from the norms of a system of norms the character of legal norms, or from the whole system of norms the character of a legal system. If one aims to answer this question in the affirmative, one must show that legal character is forfeited when norms or systems of norms cross a certain threshold of injustice (*Unrecht*). It is precisely this thesis that I shall call the 'argument from injustice,' the thesis; namely, of forfeiting legal character by crossing a certain threshold of justice, however that threshold is to be determined. The argument from injustice is nothing other than the connection thesis focused on a classifying connection."
269. See Quaritsch 2000.
270. The non-law scholar might barely grasp the goal of this byzantine exposition. However, several assertions made by Walter Schönfeld can be identified in "Die Lage." See Schönfeld 1932, 1–66, here at 34: "Den die Rechtswissenschaft als die Wissenschaft von dem oder einem, nämlich diesem Recht ist weder Positivismus noch auch Naturrechtslehre. Sie ist nicht Positivismus, weil ihr das Recht und das positive Recht der Gegenstand ist; sie ist aber auch nicht Naturrechtslehre, weil ihr Recht und nicht das Naturrecht gegenständlich ist."
271. Schmitt 2022b, 22.

"Die Lage" now exhibits its full credentials; namely, the fact that its critical tone was directed toward the transformation of jurisprudence into a formal and empty technique.[272] And while Schmitt recognizes that this is "an age-old problem"; that is, that which exists between the concrete aspect of law and the "written law" or the abstract plane of jurisprudence, this was "only the first and still quite harmless stage of the problem" (22). All sciences reach a point of systematization of their own knowledge, the Kantian scholar might add.[273] As regards "European jurisprudence," there are no small number of examples available, and Schmitt scholarly points out various of them to the reader. However, a certain equilibrium, he asserts, was possible between "the method and tempo of legislation" regarding "jurisprudence."[274] Even if the debates and the creation of civil codes were rooted in "the pandectic tradition," jurists and scholars of law were devoted to their practice without the automatic formalities of the "legislator." However, "the sphere of jurisprudential interpretation and systematization of positive law" widened the range of jurisprudence agency, converting "juridical practice" and "juridical science" in almost auxiliary branches of positive law (23). The eventual struggle between the objective status of law and the rapid process of interpretation via the "legislator's personal opinions" came to the fore; namely, it became "political" (23). "The law became the majority decision of a divided legislative body," as "separated" by the

272. Schmitt's position was very attuned with that of Santi Romano, Maurice Hariou, and Germany's own Karl Larenz. Namely, the global players of European law.

273. Kant 1998, 358: "The Transcendental Analytic accordingly has this important result: That the understanding can never accomplish *a priori* anything more than to anticipate the form of a possible experience in general, and, since that which is not appearance cannot be an object of experience, it can never overstep the limits of sensibility, within which alone objects are given to us. Its principles are merely principles of the exposition of appearances, and the proud name of an ontology, which presumes to offer synthetic *a priori* cognitions of things in general in a systematic doctrine (e.g., the principle of causality), must give way to the modest one of a mere analytic of the pure understanding." For the importance of Kant's division of *a priori* judgments into "analytical" and "synthetically" regarding the systematization of knowledge as such in the perspective of modern philosophy, see Zöller 1989, 222–235, here at 231: "Kant explicitly rejects the innatist attempt to base the objective validity of the principles of theoretical knowledge on the notion that those principles are implanted in the human mind. […] Historically, this critique of a 'pre-formation' system (B167) in the epistemology of *a priori* knowledge refers to the position of the 18th-century German philosopher, Christian August Crusius."

274. See Schepel 2007, 183–199, here at 185: "In truth, the import of this history [the debate on codification] in current legal thought is usually reduced to one aspect of it, the exchange between two eminent scholars, Thibaut and Savigny, on the desirability of enacting a civil code for the whole fragmented Germany. Anton Thibaut considered such a possible codification as 'the most beautiful gift from heaven' the German people could receive […]. Against Thibaut's specific project, he [Savigny] posited the necessity of historical research into the origins and contents of legal principles; against, presumably, any idea of codification he posited the organic character of the law that can only be stifled by enactments of all-encompassing legislation; indeed, he explicitly substituted an 'organically progressive legal science' for Thibaut's legislator […]."

plurality of opinions that needed an immediate decision for the unseen growth of civil lawsuits. A collision of personal interests and logical negotiations—which obviously aimed to attain political advantages—generated "internal antagonisms of the legislative body" (24). Despite such a situation, "the objective norm embodied, so to speak, the objective reason of political unity."[275] Regarding this objective superiority of law as an agency and the legislator as a mere subjective interpreter of it, Schmitt lays out another aphorism: "[t]he law is wiser than the legislator"—yet this only brought further collateral damage to "European jurisprudence," this time affecting intellectual dimensions such as criminology and sociology.

Schmitt now continues his historical analysis on the crisis of jurisprudence by studying the figure of the "legislator," who is called out for being "motorized"—a positivist theme that Schmitt already treated extensively in his early *Law and Judgment.*[276] The expression itself manifests a quantitative nature. Even after the events of 1848, "the situation of jurisprudence was in many respects favorable," states Schmitt; however, following World War I, the scenario abruptly changed (50). Jurisprudence was thrust into an age of "acceleration," and its own temporal range of comprehension, decision, authorization, and resolution became increasingly shorter. "Die Lage" does not offer empirical, actual data to support this statement. Schmitt merely sketches out the—then-current—state of the jurisprudential art, as he stresses a true division of labor within jurisprudence. Schmitt mentions the figure of the "directive" as a legal yet not authentic franchise of legislators—the "directive" might bring to mind the clerks from some of Kafka's novels, those zany, vexing characters that strive for nothing but their useless activity.[277] "[L]aw itself […] was

275. Schmitt had already studied these problems. See Schmitt 2017g, Schmitt 2012e, and Schmitt 2016a.
276. Schmitt 2009a, 33–59.
277. See Kafka 2009b, 61–62: "The nights and the days Gregor spent almost entirely without sleep. Sometimes he dwelt on the thought that when the door was next opened he might take the family's affairs fully in hand again, as he had before; figures reappeared in his thoughts after long absence: the boss, the chief clerk, the lesser clerks and the apprentices; the porter who was so stupid; two or three friends from other firms; a chambermaid in a hotel in the provinces, a sweet, fleeting memory; a girl, cashier in a millinery shop, he had been seriously courting, but too slowly—they all appeared mixed in with strangers or people already forgotten, and he was glad when they vanished"; Kafka 2009a., 157–158: "In front of the desk and close to it there are low tables at which clerks are seated, taking dictation when the officials want them to. It always surprises Barnabas to see how that is done. There is no express order from an official, and the dictation is not loud, in fact you hardly notice that any dictation is going on. […] Often the official dictates so quietly that the clerk, sitting down, can't hear him. Then he has to keep jumping up to catch what is being dictated, sit down again quickly, write it down, jump again quickly, and so on. How strange that is, how almost incomprehensible!"; Kafka 2009c, 37: "An organization which not only employs venal guards, foolish supervisors, and examining magistrates who are at

in question," Schmitt posits, as all that acceleration was not merely a current development of law practice but a sign of the times, where the warnings of, for example, Binding and other jurists went unnoticed. Schmitt provides examples of the situation almost ten years after World War I that illustrate the total transformation of the comprehension of law. Even his close study of "Art. 48 of the Weimar Constitution"[278] is now deemed a symptomatic element of this disruptive specialization in law practice, as it served as a criterion for the promulgation of an "emergency tax decree." Schmitt considers this a "structural transformation" to which many legal scholars in 1925 were blind. He now expands on this by studying the case of England and France, whose history, culture, and political and legal system Schmitt was always so familiar with.[279] All across the continent, "systematic commentaries" were "replaced by the practical commentaries of private lawyers or experts in the ministries" (29). Thus, the expression "motorized law" [*motorisiertes Gesetz*] and Schmitt's question regarding whether jurisprudence as such should be motorized too. The creator of the "friend and enemy" criterion resents the "simplifications and accelerations" caused by the churning gears of this so-called sudden motorization of the law. Schmitt remarks: "Law became a means of planning"; otherwise put, law became a type of engineering.[280] This denied the "independent third force" that came "between the directive and the issuer […] as was still possible in the 19th century between law and legislator"; i.e., the crucial role of the jurist, who was not indebted or controlled by the blazing schedules of twentieth-century legislation. Nonetheless, was another alternative even possible in the context of such an unprecedented scenario?[281]

"Die Lage's" next section is entitled "Savigny as a Paradigm for the First Distancing from the State Legality." Its content and perspective make it perhaps the most difficult section of this essay. Schmitt's post-World War II experience murkily merges with hatred-fueled

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best unassuming, but which, beyond that, doubtless maintains a bench of judges of high, indeed the higher standing, with their inevitable numerous entourage of ushers, clerks, police officers, and other assistants, perhaps even, I do not hesitate to use the word, executioners. And the point in this large organization, gentlemen? It consists in arresting innocent persons and instituting pointless and mostly, as in my case, fruitless proceedings against them."

278. Schmitt 2014b, 205–211; 228–233. For an in-depth account of Schmitt's intellectual liaison with France regarding translations and bibliography, see Baume 2008, 279–287.

279. Schmitt 1995, 195–201.

280. However, in a conversation with Klaus Figge and Dieter Groh, Schmitt considered himself, regarding his days as a "collaborator" with Hans Frank, as a "technician of law." See Mehring 2014, 520.

281. Within Europe, naturally.

reflections made in hindsight. His remarks on Savigny are an intellectual declaration in their own right.[282] "Jurisprudence" is considered by Schmitt as "the last refuge of law" [*die letzten Asyl des Rechtes*], a portentous metaphor that indirectly embraces Schmitt as a refugee, a victim, and the last heir of a long classic tradition. The jurist once again withstood the jarring rule of chronological reality by championing the damaged yet far more authentic eschatological nerve of the times—in this case, by means of jurisprudence. Schmitt opposes the so-called "motorized" legislation to Savigny's *On the Vocation of Our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence*, which he considered a great diagnosis of law's inner problems. Schmitt offers a biographical portrait of the person and the importance of Savigny. He lavishly praises the author. His importance stretched beyond his lifetime, although he was ultimately subjected to a "negative evaluation." Schmitt mentions too the *Kodifikationsstreit* and the prejudices against Savigny as a delayer—perhaps even a *katechon*—of the "codification of German civil law for almost a century" (32). All in all, his sage advice against the early expressions of positive law are valued by Schmitt as a treasure of German jurisprudence:

> That his 1814 treatise was an existential self-reflection of jurisprudence [*eine existentielle Besinnung der Rechtswissenschaft auf sich selbst*], that it was a great call to jurisprudence to be more than the guardian of state law [*der Hüterin des nicht nur gesetzten Rechts war*], went unacknowledged, whereas his critique of state codification only sought to clarify jurisprudence as a vocation, to rescue the dignity of a legal state, and to contain the dangers of mere positive law.[283]

Savigny was interested in the origins of law, which is why he was interested in the "Roman" source, as pointed out by Schmitt. "Law as a concrete order must not be separated from its history," reminds the latter (33). At this point, one could ask if "existentialism" is a metaphysical label for "nationalism."[284] Be that as it may, Schmitt focused on these themes

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282. See Mehring 2017, 853–875, here at 867: "Die Titelformulierung legt nahe, *Schmitt* als Paradigma einer zweiten Abstandnahme für das zweite Stadium des 20. Jahrunderts hineinzuschreiben. Es wurde bereits gesagt, dass er nicht nur auf *Savignys* Aufruf von 1914 hinwies, sondern auch auf die spätere "unglückliche Rolle" und den "Widerspruch," dass der Kritiker der Gesetzeskodifikation zum "Minister für Gesetzesrevision" wurde. Es wunde gesagt, dass *Schmitt* hier nicht zuletzt auf die historische Parallele zum eigenen nationalsozialistischen Staatsrat-Fall zielte. Diese *Savigny*-Identifikation gehört also ins weite Feld der exkulpativen Legendenbildungen des Staarsrats *Schmitt* nach 1945."
283. Schmitt 2022b, 32-33.
284. Nationalism usually presents itself as culturalism.

in his homage to Savigny—which is more or less the core of his study of Roman law and his overall perspective on the meaning and importance of jurisprudence as a true guidance for a people's constitution.[285] To put it in other words, the term "positive" still held for Savigny an original significance, for it was the formal link that bound together the historical backdrop of a people's will. On the contrary, Schmitt rejects the predominance of contemporary "positive law," which aims for nothing but "control and calculability." Savigny's conception of jurisprudence sought for "stability and durability" as the safe ground in which legislation could freely operate. However, "[t]he experiences of the French Revolution showed how an unleashed *pouvoir législatif* could generate a legislative orgy" (34). These historical events did not catch on immediately in Germany, where Savigny's historical approach was still undiminished by France's legal eroticism. The counterexample provided by England as a "rule of a *Rechtsstand* of practitioners" served Schmitt as a paradigm for understanding law as an autonomous space indebted and created by and for its people—a "closed order." But Schmitt's homage should not be mistaken for a sign of juridical melancholy or a "back to Savigny" movement, as Schmitt warns. The keyword is "paradigm"; namely, the genuine efforts and words of wisdom of an intellectual giant like Savigny. Schmitt makes no bones about it:

> We know that there is no such thing as a restoration of past situations. A historical truth is true only *once*. The concept of the historical is itself subject to transformations and reinterpretations; its realizations in various areas of intellectual life take many different forms.[286]

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285. See Rückert 1989, 121–137, here at 124: "Nowadays, we are already accustomed to use Savigny bulk of indispensable information without his basic assumption of continuity. This latter part of Savigny's legacy does not belong to the actual property of legal historians. The idealistic concept of a law, which lives in the people itself, even in advanced periods of evolution, is nearly forgotten. The concept is idealistic because it works only if one believes in this inner necessity of every law to depend on the people itself. It succeeds because it uses the idealistic possibility to speak of something as identical in substance (e.g., law) in spite of being different in manifestation (e.g., law as people's and experts' law). Various antitheses such as 'internal-external,' 'natural-reflected,' can be used in the same manner"; Bindreiter 2011, 78–106, here at 82: "Savigny distinguished between an 'outer' (and purely formal) system of the law and an 'inner' (or material) system – a distinction that was adopted by his disciples Puchta, Gerber, and Jhering. However, whereas the methodology of legal doctrine, in Savigny's times, had addressed the formation, or structure, of a scientific system that was based upon the law as a historically evolving and culturally specific phenomenon, Gerber's and Jhering's interests were directed, not so much toward legal historical research but, rather, to the 'inner coherence' of, and the basic drive behind, the law."
286. Schmitt 2022b, 36.

These assertions offer a wide range of interpretations. For example, one could say that this is a very convenient theory of historical relativity. Likewise, the fact that "[a] historical truth is true only *once*" could lead to a creative account of jurisprudence and, therefore, to unseen forms of legitimacy of power—very dark ramifications, indeed. Nonetheless, Schmitt here states that if he has returned to Savigny's contributions, it is for the sole purpose of seeking an alternative to the wretched present of jurisprudence. While the "crises" across Europe had dramatically allowed the enhancement of the "knowledge of historical sources," Savigny, along with Puchta, stand as intellectual beacons for the present, whose wisdom and shrewd considerations can "become fruitful for jurisprudence and which must be acquired and used creatively" (37). The importance of Savigny, according to Schmitt, is not based on his thoughts regarding the 1814 treatise, contradictory as that piece is. Savigny's devotion to the classical world distorted his reflections and those of his successors. Schmitt is conscious of the limits and deficiencies of Savigny's "historical" approach. However, Savigny's contributions remarkably remain valid to this day. Beyond the rationale of the aforementioned treatise, there is something else.

> Its significance lies not in a type of argumentation but in an intellectual situation in which his main contention—his doctrine of the unconscious development of law—first gained historical significance, because it made jurisprudence the counterpole of mere positive legislation without abandoning law to the civil war slogans of natural law.[287]

Despite "Savigny's political failure after 1840"—an event that involved more complexity than one could infer from Schmitt's commentary[288]—his intellectual relevance did not wane.

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287. Schmitt 2022b, 38.
288. See Toews, 1989, 139–169, here at 161–162: "What had begun in 1840 as the apparent historical triumph of the Historical School seemed by the mid-1840s more like a revelation of its historical failure. In the struggle between Savigny and Gerlach in the Ministry of Justice this failure appeared primarily as a failure of will and self-confidence, as a submission to the more decisive, energetic will of an alternative position. Savigny had recognized and opposed the position of Gerlach and the other ultras as an alternative position throughout the 1820s and 1830s. […] In 1844 Gerlach still attributed Savigny's failure of will and lack of practical effectiveness to the fact that he understood law as 'the manifestation of the people's spirit' rather than 'as the word of the living God.' That there was also an inner experiential logic to Savigny's transformations, however, is made evident in the relationship between his positions and the stance of another young neoconservative who rose to public prominence in Prussia during the 1840s, Friedrich Julius Stahl."

Knowingly establishing an anticipatory parallelism between Savigny and himself, Schmitt finds that "he [Savigny] had become great and famous and entered a world which seemed to promise greater opportunities" (39). It seems that greatness only commits flaws through naiveté. Schmitt's indulgence regarding Savigny's work beyond the 1840s is remarkable. The jurist equates Schelling's pitfalls with those of Savigny and, thus, that of "a whole age of German idealist philosophy and theology" (39). Such a grand statement goes beyond the biographies of those exceptional individuals and moreover represents "a total historical and intellectual catastrophe" (40). By now, it is possible to recognize the figure of the "parallelism" and its multilayered nature. Savigny's fate foreshadowed Schmitt's fate, just as Savigny's experiences mirrored Schelling's experiences, which were ingrained just like the others "in the collapse of the old order and the emergence of new forces leading directly to 1848" (40). However, this might seem like nonsense for those positivists whose enslavement to the immediacy of "the world of mere enactments" soothingly prohibited them from comprehending "their own time" (40). Ironically, their cognitivist approach was insufficient when law split "into legality and legitimacy." Savigny's disparaged warnings went unheard—Schmitt mentions Alexis de Tocqueville as the next mind that was conscious of the dangers singled out by the great jurist. Savigny claimed that "history" be treated as a means to liberate jurisprudence from "theology and philosophy." Despite his close links to other jurists of the century, Savigny stood above his own time and correctly discerned "the core of the historical situation of European jurisprudence" (41).

"Die Lage's" last section is a profound meditation on this last sentence. It is entitled "Jurisprudence as the Last Asylum of Legal Consciousness." The word "consciousness" is crucial. It has a therapeutic value, as Schmitt demands a superior historical standpoint from which the development of jurisprudence can exhibit its essential features; namely, that "it has always been determined by two great oppositions: on the one side, to theology, metaphysics and philosophy; on the other, to mere technical affiliated craft" [*einer bloß technischen Normenkunde*].[289] Schmitt's scope oscillates between the autonomy achieved by jurisprudence "after the 12th century" and "Hegel's philosophy." Savigny is mentioned once again as the beacon of consciousness for denouncing the compartmentalization of jurisprudential practice and its division into "legal positivism" and its subsequent

289. Schmitt 2012h, 421.

"codifications." "Positive" meant something entirely different from "positivism," as it was a constructive concept tied to a specific past and a specific people; not a specialization, nor a consulting practice of legislation withheld by parties, corporations, associations, or other parastatal groups of interest.

> European jurisprudence is the first-born child of the Modern European spirit, of the "occidental rationalism" of the modern age. The modern natural sciences followed later. The first pioneers of this rationalism were the legists, who were great revolutionaries and shared the fate of all true revolutionaries.[290]

Schmitt's well-known assertion, "I have always spoken and written as a jurist and for other jurists. It was my misfortune that the jurists of my time had become positivist legal technicians [*positivistischen Gesetzeshandhabungtechnikern*] […]"[291] should here on out be compared with the meditation from "Die Lage" quoted above. The term "Jurist" held for Schmitt both a spiritual and historical weight that was nonetheless obsolete and had been marginalized long ago. Schmitt acknowledges the powerlessness of jurisprudence in positivist times. He even distinguishes the last head of the positive monster; namely, "an untrammeled technicism which uses state law as a tool" (43). The seldomly employed pronoun "we" is scattered throughout the last pages of Schmitt's "Die Lage." "[W]e fulfill a task which no other human activity can fulfill," reflects Schmitt in response to not providing psychological or sociological explanations. Who is "we?" Is Schmitt invoking contemporary jurists, or is he summoning the jurisprudential spirits of the dead? The sentences dotted with "we's" resemble a last will and testament. Phrases like "we defend this indestructible core of all law against all destructive enactments means that we maintain a dignity which today in Europe is more critical than at any other time and in any other part of the world" can be read either as a call to arms or as a proud consolation in the face of total defeat (44). Germany, "the most highly industrialized country," streamlined the precious discipline just like it would have any other product. The novelties of an industrialized market arrived from abroad, too, as "Napoleonic codifications" were mesmerizing, even more so than the French ruler's

290. Schmitt 2022b, 42.
291. Quoted in Schmitt 2012b, 102.
291. Quoted in Hohendahl, 2018, 42; Schmitt 2015, 13–14.

campaigns. “Thus it was in France that the split of law into legality and legitimacy was first perceived,” assures Schmitt (45). All human endeavors, including jurisprudence, gravitated toward the infamous year of 1848. Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism, that of Bentham and Austin, Schmitt reminds us, was finely recrafted in those new French legislative foundries. But only Germany had a delayer, Savigny, “a symbol.” The dramatism of Schmitt’s exordium intensifies. Astonishing visions of doom torment a post-World War II world. However, “a jurisprudence thrown back on its own resources will know how to find the secret crypt in which the seeds of its spirit will be protected against every persecutor” (47). At this point, one could think that the fate of jurisprudence was bleaker than that of Judaism. These are Schmitt’s bitter last words:

> Let us remember our history of persecution, for our strength lies in our willingness to suffer. Then the genius will not leave us, and even the confusion of tongues will prove to be better than the Babylonian unity.[292]

Overall, “Die Lage” is an important piece of work regarding the standpoint featured by Schmitt in the 1950s due to its remarks on historical continuity and the discovery of 1848 as a threshold where a reality, was extinguished and another world was created by unstoppable, inhuman forces. I have intentionally chosen an unorthodox perspective to highlight the most important aspects of this essay. While important scholars have emphasized its theoretical merits—and biases—[293] my intention has been to link the spiritual (esoteric) tone of “Die Lage” with that of the other pieces the thinker published—and did not publish—in the 1950s. In this sense, this essay offers an interesting example of Schmitt’s new intellectual direction, a mix of esoterism, self-righteousness, philosophy, non-empirical historical approaches, loathing, resentment, and hatred, coalescing into a vigorous perspective that no longer aimed to offer intellectual contributions to politics but spiritual guidance to the injured and doomed spirit of Europe.

At this point, an obvious question still remains: how *Die Lage* enforces Schmitt’s idea of a philosophy of history? Schmitt’s takes on Savigny and his critique of positivism as the

292. Schmitt 2022b, 47.
293. See Neumann 2015, 557; Böckenforde 2017, 87; see also Tomuschat 162-163, in Schmitt 2022b.

cesspool for legal mechanism stress on the need of a greater power of juridical reflection. Such a power could only be mastered by a major historical consciousness—and not by plain historicism—. This kind of consciousness can be enabled by a philosophical ratio, a rationality onto which converges history and philosophy. Savigny was the epochal symbol for a perspective of this type, and *Die Lage* a theoretical cry for help. There is not true legal jurisprudence without a historico-philosophical awareness. Legal thought longs for a spiritual compass in the bowels of a tech-fueled world.

3.4 *Ex captivitate salus* (1950)

The seven paragraphs—and the foreword to the Spanish edition—that divide Schmitt's remarks in *Ex Captivitate Salus* exhibit, for the first time in both his academic career and public position as a scholar of legal studies, the biographical aspect of Schmitt's thought. While shortly after his release from a twelve-month period in U.S. custody—and his self-exile to Plettenberg—he started with *Glossarium*, a compendium of private reflections, aphorisms, meditations, and even drafts for future works, like *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, the tone used in his private diaries makes its way into the cryptic assertions and analyses of *Ex Captivitate Salus*. Schmitt dramatically expands the scope of his jurisprudence-oriented intellectual perspective and moves toward apocalyptic visions of a technology-driven world. From the unethical inquisition Schmitt suffered at the hands of his friend Eduard Spranger during his first detention in Nuremberg in 1945, to self-glorifying verses voiced like a spiritual victim amid the turmoil of war and puppet masters and marionettes, the paragraphs of this 1950's testimonial notebook tackle what Kalyvas and Finchelstein call the change in "unexpected ways" of 1945's "global reality."[294] Schmitt, the reader will soon grasp, was done with his public affair as a Nazi legal spokesman,[295] but also as a scholar of academic jurisprudence. As much can be gleaned from "Wisdom of the Cell":

294. See Kalyvas & Finchelstein 2017, 1.
295. See Quaritsch 2000, 102–114.

> Is my enemy the person who feeds me here, in the cell? He even clothes me and shelters me. The cell is the clothing he donates. I ask myself, then: Who can my enemy be?[296]
>
> This is the wisdom of the cell. I lose my time and win my space. Suddenly the calm that holds the meaning of the words overcomes [*übereilt*] me. *Space* [*Raum*] and *Rome* [*Rom*] are the same word. Wonderful are the spatial force [*Raumkraft*] and the germinal force [*Keimkraft*] of the German language. It has brought about the rhyme between word and place.[297]

These words exude poetic dramatism. The uninitiated reader might even think that this kind of reflection belongs to the last moments of someone who is facing imminent death. These lines even could act as the last speech of a character before leaving the stage for good or disappearing from a Tarkovsky film. Truth be told, the nature of these paragraphs—just like *Ex Captivitate Salus* and *Glossarium*—can be revealed by placing them in the biographical in the context of Schmitt's frame of thought at the time of his detention. He mentioned the following to his wife Duška:

> You cannot imagine the state of the soul of the inmates of the camp, most of whom soon fall prey to a camp psychosis [*Lagerpsychos*e] and speculate about their fate day and night, whereby the self-obsession of the Germans comes to light to a fantastic extent.[298]

It is amusing how Schmitt talks about such a symptom as if he was fully immune to it. But the two paragraphs of *Ex Captivitate Salus* just quoted show how Schmitt reflected on his

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296. Schmitt 2017a, 70.
297. Schmitt 2017a, 72.
298. Quoted in Mehring 2014, 412. Mehring highlights the importance of this "self-obsession" as a symptom of "camp psychosis." One even can go further and see Schmitt's "self-obsession" as a spiritual—yet highly biased from a social and ethical standard—method of self-consciousness and inner-peace. However, the so-called "wisdom of the cell" was fueled by hatred and pulsating doses of loathing toward a long catalog of enemies: Hitler, Karl Löwenstein—who called out Schmitt's Nazism and ordered the inspection and confiscation of the jurist's private library—Eduard Spranger, the Jews, the United States of America, modern technology for altering the original space/time coordinates, and, consequently, the spiritual order of Europe, the Russians (but this is quite understandable if the reader recalls the atrocities they committed in their two-month rampage across Berlin after the surrender of Germany on 8 May at Karlhorts), etc.

own reality by way of a kind of daydreaming exercise. A concept like "enemy" that he was so fond of is now taken even beyond the realms of existentialism. The theme of political theology is again modulated in the form of theological dialectics. The "enemy" overcomes enmity and thus becomes some kind of spiritual savior, leaving the victim, pushed away by the "foe," somewhere between pure rapture and juridical mysticism. Likewise, Schmitt's "I lost my time and win my space," a Buddhist-like aphorism, dwells in a metaphysical alternative—or even a philosophical therapy—against the pains caused by an ultra-technified world. A world where time is broken, divided, and then sub-divided into unhuman fragments of infernal pace and an endless conjunction of schedules, projects, plans, and trials ruled by a new, illegitimate global force.

All in all, *Ex Captivitate Salus* serves as a great example of Schmitt's thought during the fifties and, in general, during his last years. The reader should not surrender in awe when confronting and facing Schmitt's considerations of this era. For instance, his reading of Tocqueville or his analyses of Karl Mannheim's radio speech in 1945—that were based on the "quasi-legal, and illegal possibilities of a modern system"[299]—are quite enticing, to the point of convincing the Schmitt scholar that the jurist intended to reestablish the entire trajectory of his intellectual adventure. Although Schmitt, even in his early writings, always strengthened his scientific[300] scope by taking examples and elements from literature (like Don Quixote),[301] art (like sculpture and music),[302] and even cinema,[303] the philosophical, esoteric, and mystical tone used in *Ex Captivitate Salus* went far beyond any past foray into non-juridical disciplines. Schmitt, probably for the first time, confesses:

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299. Schmitt 2017a, 18.

300. However, in 1928, as Mehring reminds us, Schmitt mentioned to one of his closest acquaintances, his editor at Duncker & Humblot, Ludwig Feuchtwanger, "that there is no such thing as 'being scientific' in matters pertaining to intellectual history [geistesgeschichtlichen Fragen]. That was only a happy moment in the context of bourgeois liberalism" (Mehring 2009, 214); see also Schmitt 2007c, 272: "Dagegen gehört die Beschreibung der heutigen wissenschaftlichen Gessinung, vor allem auch das Fehlen Wissenschaftlichkeit in den geistesfeschichtlichen Fragen, in unserem Zeitalter zur Kulturgeschichte Fragen, in unserem Zeitalter zur Kulturgeschichte und zur Curiosa. In geistesgeschichtlichen Fakultäten kenne ich mich etwas aus und Weiss ganz genau den Herd der Mystik und des Irrationalen."

301. See Schäfer, 1912, 348–350. The theme of literature in Schmitt's thought has been thoroughly studied. See Villinger 1996, 7–10; see also Jiang 2016, 10–12.

302. https://www.derwesten.de/incoming/carl-schmitts-kuenstler-kontakte-id4040038.html (last access: 12.06.2022).

303. Schmitt 2012h, 369: "Heute sind Rundfunk und Film mindestens ebenso wichtige, wenn nicht wichtigere und intensivere Mittel der Bildung einer öffentlichen Meinung." Mehring stresses how important the experience of watching Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* was for Schmitt, something which led the jurist to praise "the magic of cinematic art" (Mehring 2009, 206).

> The jurist in such fields [international law and constitutional law] cannot escape this danger [the political], not even by disappearing into the nirvana of pure positivism. At best he can temper the danger either by establishing himself in remote borderlands, under historical or philosophical camouflage, or by developing the art of qualifications and obfuscations to the highest degree of perfection.[304]

The reader should be warned that the generic expression "the jurist" is a euphemism for Schmitt, as a distinguished representative of a long-standing tradition.[305] Likewise, the endangered legal scholar is entranced by "the political": he cannot overcome this great danger, and, therefore, he becomes a victim—even if he or she (hint: he, Schmitt) strolled around comfortably during the halcyon days of the political. "[F]or they do not know what are they doing" (Lk. 23–34), if the reader wills. However, and while it is clear that *Ex Captivitate Salus* is a "historical or philosophical camouflage," the reader will still find the expression, "the art of qualifications and obfuscations to the highest degree of perfection" baffling (46). Is not law as a science and jurisprudence as a practice the art of unpacking imperfection? The strongly esoteric direction Schmitt gave to his writing demonstrates the profound impact that his detention had on both him and his family. Pain, as always, becomes the ultimate state of self-awareness. *Ex Captivitate Salus* came as the philosophical occasion where Schmitt pondered how crucial can be historical consciousness at the moment of pure despair.

3.5 *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation: Vier Aufsätze* (1950)

The four essays collected for this 1950 volume deal, mainly, with a historical interpretation of Europe after the 1848 civil war, the first of those three "dreadful beats" [*Drei harte Schäge*][306] that shook the old continent. Schmitt was first drawn to Donoso Cortés during his Berlin years, a time where Franz Blei, one of his closest friends—and easily one of his finest interpreters—said that Donoso Cortés served Schmitt "as an autobiographical mask."[307] The

304. Schmitt 2017a, 42.
305. See Rüthers 1988, 120–40, here at 139–40.
306. Schmitt 2012b, 7.
307. Quoted in Mehring 2009, 198.

jurist found in the Spanish thinker a useful Catholic ally against Berlin's Protestant milieu but also as an important source for his comprehension of dictatorship and Schmitt's rampant critique of liberalism. His first essay on Donoso Cortés was published in 1927.[308]

While the four articles on Donoso have been translated into English, the introduction to the 1950 volume has not. These pages are essential for correctly understanding Schmitt's idea of a "philosophy of history" but, even more, for *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s notion of "parallelism." In it, Schmitt answers the question of why Donoso Cortés was loathed, which he attributes to "metaphysical reasons."[309] If the Spanish thinker tackled the "authority vs. anarchy" opposition, Schmitt picks up the gauntlet and likewise tackles the contemporary schism between "anarchy and nihilism."[310] Donoso Cortés was not deceived by his "political reality" because his "historical observations" transcended mere contingency. Just like Schmitt, he dismissed any "sociological or psychological approach," for he knew that these motives are nothing but the "simple trivializations of fear," "as a pathological sub-phenomenon of a disturbed feeling of security."[311] The *Einleitung* on the volume on Donoso ends by conveying Donoso Cortés as a spiritual beacon surrounded by "enemies,"[312] who were defied by the acute, realistic proposals of this always on point Spanish politician. Indeed: Donoso Cortés portrayed the very same worries and struggles as Schmitt did.[313]

The first essay, *Zur Staatsphilosophie der Gegenrevolution*,[314] characterizes the intellectual contribution of Donoso by contrasting it with the German Romantics and their "everlasting conversation" [*ewiges Gespräch*].[315] The Spanish thinker, along with De Maistre and Bonald, "would have considered everlasting conversation a product of a gruesomely comic fantasy."[316] Contrary to "Novalis and Adam Müller," and just like Schmitt himself amidst that "terribly draughty passageway" that was Berlin in 1933,[317] these thinkers demanded a "decision" regarding the turmoil dragged up from the bottom of "the two

308. In the *Festgabe* for Carl Muth, the editor of *Hochland*, Schmitt 2002, 8. This essay was later included in Schmitt 2014b, 84–96, along with *Der unbekannte Donoso Cortés* from 1929, 131–6.
309. Schmitt 2002, 21.
310. Schmitt 2002, 9.
311. Schmitt 2002, 84.
312. Schmitt 2002, 21.
313. See Ulmen 2002, 69–79, here at 72–73.
314. Schmitt 2002, 22–40.
315. Schmitt 2002, 23. This essay is also included in Schmitt 2005, 53–66.
316. Schmitt 2005, 53 (from now on, I will quote directly from this version).
317. Quoted from Mehring 2009, 199.

revolutions of 1789 and 1848."[318] The essay deals, then, with the pros of the "counterrevolutionary thinkers" of the Restoration and the cons of the "Romantic philosophers" of the Revolution:

> For Bonald tradition offered the sole possibility of gaining the content that man was capable of accepting metaphysically, because the intellect of the individual was considered too weak and wretched to be able to recognize truth by itself.[319]

> De Maistre spoke with particular fondness of sovereignty, which essentially meant decision. […] Infallibility was for him the essence of the decision that cannot be appealed, and the infallibility of the spiritual order was the same nature as the sovereignty of the state order. […] De Maistre [on the contrary of the anarchists] asserted the exact opposite namely that authority as such is good it exists […].[320]

Thus, Schmitt summarizes the main features of the "counterrevolutionaries thinkers." Schmitt detects in Bonald a superior moral standing comprised of "moral disjunctions" that "represent contrasts between good and evil"; therefore, concrete categories that do "not recognize a synthesis and a 'higher third'"—like Schelling, Adam Müller, or even the Hegelian conception of history. Likewise, Schmitt praises De Maistre's decision, a monolithic act of sovereignty that annihilates any plea or further modification. Government as such, according to Schmitt's appraisal of De Maistre, is both absolute and good. Donoso Cortés, by contrast, advanced an entirely different view:

> What Donoso Cortés had to say about the natural depravity and vileness of man was indeed more horrible than anything that had ever been alleged by an absolutist philosophy of the state in justifying authoritarian rule. […] The despair of this man […] often bordered on insanity.[321]

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318. For Schmitt, 1848 is a paradox. It encloses the whole destiny of modern Europe. His "Hamlet curve" begins in 1848, leading him to the thought that history might be deciphered by connecting crucial events of the past with slightly occult signs of the present.
319. Schmitt 2005, 54.
320. Schmitt 2005, 55.
321. Schmitt 2005, 58.

Schmitt considers that Donoso Cortés's historical model was superior to those of Bonald and De Maistre, for the Spanish thinker relied on a confident yet apocalyptic, moral vision of history. Man, according to him, possess a low, obscene nature. And due to that very nature, one is able to grasp the importance of "the bloody decisive battle that has flared up today between Catholicism and atheist socialism."[322] Such a comprehension of history immediately dispatches any theory that aims to explain the impending doom of man. Donoso Cortés mocks those Romantics, just like did Schmitt in *Political Romanticism*, by calling them a "quibbling class."[323] Schmitt then provides the rare analogies that can be made between reactionaries and "revolutionaries such as Marx and Engels."[324] Again, the key for this is the development of a strong typology—namely, x vs. y; Restoration vs. Revolution; good vs. evil; bourgeoisie vs. proletariat. The target, in any case—and this is what Schmitt commended in the counterrevolutionaries—was liberalism. He recurs to the German critique of liberalism and mentions German liberals; thus, Lorenz von Stein and the already ridiculed F. J. Stahl,[325] crucial constitutional thinkers whose lucid critiques Schmitt agreed with. But, then again, "De Maistre and Donoso Cortés were incapable of such 'organic' thinking":

> De Maistre showed this by his total lack of understanding of Schelling's philosophy of life; Donoso Cortés was gripped by horror when he was confronted with Hegelianism in Berlin in 1849. Both were diplomats and politicians with much experience and practice and had concluded sufficiently sensible compromises.[326]

The reader must keep in mind that this essay was written in 1921; that is, just three years after Schmitt's seminal *Politische Romantik*. The criterion used in the 1919 book—namely, an institutional, practical, and concrete, political model of agency, against an abstract, non-

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322. Schmitt 2005, 59.
323. Schmitt 2005, 59.
324. Schmitt 2005, 59.
325. Schmitt 2008a, 70: "Stahl-Jolson, in accordance with the line developed by his people, used a deceitful manner to mask his motivation, which became all the more horrible the more desperate he became to be somebody other than he actually was." Friedrich Julius Stahl, born Julius Jolson, was an important German constitutional lawyer. Schmitt mocks his Jewish heritage ("his *people*) by adding his previous original last name to his renowned Lutheran persona, Friedrich Julius Stahl. See Alvarado 2007, 17–18. See also Meier 2011, 152: "The moral indignation with which Schmitt encounters the philosopher Spinoza reaches into the innermost core of his being, and the bitter hatred with which he pursues the political theologian 'Stahl-Jolson' likewise goes far beyond mere rhetoric" (in fn. 78 Meier offers a full account of the hatred for Stahl).
326. Schmitt 2005, 61.

decisive, always occasional viewpoint—is still active in these reflections. From this perspective, Schmitt does not point out anything new. The critique of the neglect of Schelling's or Hegel's theory in the thought of the "counterrevolutionaries thinkers" is purposely biased, for the reader automatically diminishes the importance of the theoretical exercise when it comes to the concreteness of history. There is no silver lining for philosophy in the train of thought of Donoso Cortés, Bonald, and De Maistre. For them, such a thing was simply "inconceivable." However, the reader must be aware that, despite the amusing study offered by Schmitt, and just like the methodological strategy developed in *Political Romanticism*, it is not that Hegel or Schelling are meaningless in the intellectual milieu of diplomats and politicians. Rather, they become unnecessary only if one confuses the discursive—and logically, slow—dimension of philosophy with the practical—and, naturally, immediate—dimension of politics. And once the reader is guided by these epistemic distinctions, the whole analysis of Schmitt shows its innermost understatement.

The first essay on Donoso Cortés continues and ends with this deceitful contrast. Philosophy, now named "liberal metaphysics," is loosely disenfranchised from the make-no-bones-about-it intellectual position of Donoso Cortés. Conversation and freedom of speech lead too soon to their liberal foundations, their "metaphysical core." But, if this was the case, is not, then, any "counterrevolutionary" thought a perpetual and paranoid state of mind? The reader of Schmitt's works might be tempted to think that the only way to escape to the "metaphysical core,"[327] to the "everlasting conversation," is an "everlasting" state of insomnia, a sleepless gaze that faces the political turmoil, a day-to-day reminder of history scattered in war-like Post-it notes stuck on the concrete wall of politics. Schmitt then provides the reader with another definition:

> The essence of liberalism is negotiation, a cautious half measure, in the hope that the definitive dispute, the decisive bloody battle, can be transformed into a parliamentary debate and permit the decision to be suspended forever in an everlasting discussion.[328]

327. It is impossible not to remind the surprisingly very same intellectual goal of Wittgenstein metaphorically illustrated in his famous bottle-fly example. See Wittgenstein 2009, 110 [309]: "What is your aim in philosophy—To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle."
328. Schmitt 2005, 63.

Considering that a large part of Schmitt's appraisal of Donoso Cortés—and, ergo, the encompassing critique of liberalism—is circumscribed to this intellectual ceremony of opposites, it is no wonder that Schmitt finally asserts "[d]ictatorship is the opposite of discussion," where "opposite" means: on the correct side of reality. Thus, the decisive moment basically emulates "the Last Judgment." At this point, the reader surely must be wondering if it is possible to comprehend history without faith. Human events are now unwitting invocations to Satan. Even the other extreme position, that of Proudhon, still "subscribes to the authority of the father and the principle of monogamous family."[329] According to Schmitt, Bakunin was the only one who elaborated a true "philosophy of life," of atheist life, as he considered that "[a]ll moral valuations lead to theology," leading, thus, to an "authority" that was none other than "greed and lust for power." The decay of an all-too corrupted world is an image in which both Donoso Cortés and Proudhon converge, despise the consequences of their positions, a Freud-esque outcome where the now maimed and dissolute father—Donoso—is followed by the "paradisiacal worldliness of immediate natural life and unproblematic concreteness"—according to the vision of Proudhon. All in all, the historical works of liberalism have led to "the onslaught of the political."[330] Schmitt considers that the authentic expression of that metaphysical core was subsequently assumed by the ravishing progress of modern technology. That onslaught is actively fulfilled in "the economic or technical-organizational" sphere and passively dissected "into the everlasting discussion of cultural and philosophical-historical commonplaces." Although it does seem strange and unpopular, somehow Schmitt has managed, by highlighting the decisionism of Donoso Cortés, to demonstrate that dictatorship is a logical consequence. Finally, this means that the "anti" becomes "ultra," and the "ultra" demands a decision.[331]

> […] Bakunin, the greatest anarchist of the nineteenth century, had to become in theory the theologian of the antitheological and in practice the dictator of a dictatorship.[332]

329. Schmitt 2005, 64.
330. Schmitt 2005, 64.
331. "Theology" represented a problematic linguistic threshold for Schmitt. It is a maze of historical concepts.
332. Schmitt 2005, 66.

3.6 *Donoso Cortés in Berlin* (1849)

This second essay reconstructs Donoso Cortés's stance as a Spanish "authorized representative" in Berlin in 1849. The year, once again, is crucial, as the reader may recall that for both Schmitt and the entire volume on Donoso Cortés, 1848 is the threshold toward which all reflections converge. That Donoso rejected the rowdy and rebellious atmosphere of Berlin—just like Schmitt did in 1934—did not impede him from following "politics and the struggle of political principles in Berlin with great clarity."[333] He needed little time to fully understand the situation in Germany, probably because "[h]is sense for revolutionary events was sharpened by his experience of numerous Spanish revolutions."[334] Schmitt, as usual, performs an in-depth analysis of Donoso Cortés's days in Berlin, both by studying his correspondence from the time or connecting his amusing observations on Prussia's day-to-day affairs. Thus, the reader is granted a comprehensive portrayal of the Spanish thinker, wherein the psychological and social views of Donoso Cortés are constantly guided by his straightforward political and theological thought. "For Donoso, German unity was essentially a matter of revolutionary democracy, whereas the German monarchy could be maintained only through a federation of states."[335] If the reader recalls the first essay on Donoso—with which Schmitt highlighted the importance of Donoso Cortés's conception of history, especially after 1848—she would immediately grasp how the expression "a matter of revolutionary democracy" means nothing less than impending doom—since contemporary democracy, for Donoso Cortés, inevitably implies the participation of liberalism, and, consequently, a fragile human endeavor. This "unified Germany" was, for Donoso Cortés, "the central question around which contemporary European politics revolved" (92). From this perspective, the imminent condemn was also a kind of secular delusion, where a nation on the rise such as Russia could accelerate the inner conflict of Germany, which was simultaneously "two separated nations: southern Catholic Germany and northern Protestant Germany."

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333. As has been already stated, there is no single-volume English translation of the essays on Donoso Cortés. However, this essay, just like *Der unbekannte Donoso Cortés* and *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpreation*, was translated in the 2002 (125) edition of *TELOS*. In the following pages, I will use these translations.
334. Schmitt 2002, 92.
335. Schmitt 2002, 91.

Schmitt stresses the fascination that Donoso Cortés felt for Prussia. Its "historical greatness remained its *Protestantism*" (92). For him, this was Prussia's spiritual *chiave di volta*; namely, the alpha and omega of its history. What does this mean? First, that "Prussia would grow and decline with its Protestantism," as such a religious model tends to opt for local monarchic politics amidst non-religious, massive processes of institutional upheaval. Second, the already condemned Prussia and its king would have questioned Germany's "Romantic disorientation," since Protestantism and its theocratic mindset—despite its evident rejection of "revolution," a rejection also shared by Donoso—eventually would demand the political machinations of liberalism. The Spanish thinker was aware of this, according to Schmitt. He saw Berlin as an example of that counterrevolutionary knowledge in times marked by momentous decisions:

> For Donoso, the Frankfurt National Assembly was a product of revolutionary principles. He knew that it counted exceptional politicians and scholars among its members, but he only had contempt for it as a political factor. He immediately recognized its lack of any executive, and that it tried to offset its helplessness with a flood of words.[336]

One may surmise that "lack of any executive" means "lack of any decision" and, thus, "lack of any authentic, and, ergo, any theological comprehension of history" (94). If Schmitt was so fond of Donoso Cortés, it was precisely because of his unconcealed despise for the communicative dimension of politics. One could even go as far as suggest that Hamlet's "words, words, words" is a proto-Donosian critique of liberalism. Prussia's three fatal elements—"an intransigent aristocratic party; a well-situated, liberal bourgeoisie searching here, as everywhere, for a *juste milieu* […]; and finally, a strong demagogic proletarian current"[337]—although correctly diagnosed by Donoso Cortés from an analytical standpoint, conform a typology that demands an urgent decision. Even Hegelianism seems to him an intellectual method of "disorganization." However, this vision, according to Schmitt, was not yet that of the "final battle between Catholicism and atheistic socialism," precisely due to Cortés's strange mixture of intellectual energy and political disorientation. "[I]n Berlin, he

336. Schmitt 2002, 94.
337. Schmitt 2002, 94–95.

appears to have become a little weary" (96). According to Schmitt, such weariness was a reaction to Berlin's two-sided nature, a city geographically and historically far from the epicenter at the time, i.e., Paris. "[I]n 1849 Berlin was neither politically nor intellectually the site where a dictatorship would have its great historical significance. The impact of 1848—the real panic—had already been overcome."[338] For the contemporary reader, it is somehow bewildering to notice that dictatorship was the ultimate criterion upon which the historical value of a European city was gauged. For this reason, Berlin in 1849 was for Donoso Cortés very hit and miss. So he turned his back on Germany and focused instead on England. Schmitt warns that the Spanish thinker's "opinions changed with the changing nature of foreign policy," a caveat that is astoundingly similar to that given nowadays by interpreters of Schmitt.[339] From this perspective, Donoso Cortés could not easily shake off the impressions caused by the dreadful year of 1848. Nevertheless, he knew how to adapt himself. Convulsed times were now best seen in England, perhaps the only remaining spiritual force able to "fight against European revolution" (96). That "conservative spirit" was grasped by him in Berlin, the very same city where he, just like Schmitt in 1927, felt the

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338. Schmitt 2002, 96.

339. See Herrero 2015, 3: "Some of Schmitt's theses have been interpreted in light of others without departing from their own assumptions by taking into account different criteria for analyzing texts, including chronological, rhetorical, and logical criteria. The first criterion is used because each of his publications springs from reflection on a specific historical-political situation from which his writings cannot be completely disentangled." The question is, of course: Can any intellectual work, any human reflection, be disentangled from its "specific historical-political situation"? Even the most abstract philosophical works, like, for instance, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, were written under well-known historical circumstances. See Siep 2014, 3: "Hegel's aim was to help the spirit of the age, as expressed in the great upheavals during the epoch of Napoleon and Goethe, to come 'consciousness' of itself. He therefore sought to provide a system of categories equally capable of making sense of the development of morality, art, the constitutional state, or the natural sciences." See also Jauss 1982, 11–12: "The orthodox theory of reflection stands in the way of this genuine task of a dialectical-materialist literary history and in the way of the solution of the correlative problem of how one is to determine the achievement and influence of literary forms as an independent kind of objective human praxis. The problem of the historical and process-like connection of literature and society was put aside in an often-reproving manner by the games of Plechanov's method: the reduction of cultural phenomena to economic, social, or class equivalents that, as the given reality, are to determine the origin of art and literature, and explain them as a merely reproduced reality. […] Literature, in the fullness of its forms, allows itself to be referred back only in part and not in any exact manner to concrete conditions of the economic process." The key to fully engaging in the correct scope of this debate is to first distinguish intellectual productivity from intellectual interpretation. This leads to the hermeneutic affair of the exclusiveness of literature and art regarding politics, law, etc.; and, thus, to the value given or not given to historical events. While it is clear that any intellectual reflection is a more or less complex process of a series of linguistic reshufflings of semantic sources and broad communicative data, it becomes more difficult to debate to determine the authenticity of this or that reflection. If Donoso Cortés, like Schmitt, was able to present his observations by strictly focusing on the concreteness of specific events, do not those very observations become untrue on account of their bond to a kernel of faith, Donoso's own faith?

upcoming menace of Russia, the "new enemy of European civilization" (96). The Spanish thinker, whose lucid analyses attempted to prove the inevitable rise of unrest across the continent, sought a historical asylum. England stood for "salvation," and thus, he elaborated impressive prophecies on the destiny of Europe. Schmitt celebrates most of the remarks made by Donoso Cortés "at the Madrid congress on January 30, 1859, which both Leopold von Ranke and Frederick Schelling admired" (97). Interpreters of Schmitt have failed to compare Donoso Cortés's speech with that which the jurist delivered in Barcelona, entitled "The Age of Neutralizations and Depolitizations," a true homage to the Spanish thinker's bleak sketch of the future of Europe.[340] But, as often happens with prophecies, these overblown images of destruction simply failed to determine ongoing historical conflicts that simply could not have been anticipated at all. That is why, Schmitt asserts, Donoso remained faithful to the "theological state and […] papal sovereignty," two institutions upon which revolution could be tamed. But his lack of faith in Germany proved to be wrong.

> Only *Prussia* remained too strange and incomprehensible [*fremd und unbegreiflich*] to him, despite the fact that there the strongest reserve of traditional concepts [*die stärkste Reserve überlieferter Vorstellungen*] had been organized politically, and that, half a century later, it was precisely Prussia against which the entire world would enter into a coalition in the name of democracy.[341]

I consider these views as the most accurate depiction of Schmitt's intellectual approach during the 1950s. The concreteness of any situation leads from a historical appendix—in this case, 1848 onward—to a conceptual index—unmentioned, but clearly pointing toward notions like state sovereignty, political economy, dictatorship, liberalism, etc. Donoso Cortés only relied on the historical appendix, so he sought theological signals in the available European leaders. So he found Napoleon III but also found "opposition" in "Russia and Prussia." But the last French monarch had no endorsement, whether it was "Catholic royalism of the Roman type, the dynastic feeling of evangelical Prussia, and the combination of Russian orthodoxy and tsarism" (98). These "three different religious and national conservative powers" were too far removed from each other to form a single European unity.

340. See Motschenbacher 2000, 70–72.
341. Schmitt 2002, 98.

They were nothing compared to that "international revolution, whose rationalism was capable of destroying traditional inhibitions with mechanical simplicity."[342] Donoso Cortés did not change his tormented views of history, so he was unable to acknowledge the fact that in the immediacy of revolution, any prediction becomes nothing more than a futile attempt to gather valuable information from historical dead air. Thus, once again, he went for dictatorship; or, otherwise put, he believed in the factual power of decisionism, "whose real energy lay in a revolutionary democracy and in a system of conservative ideas and feelings that could enter only from the outside as a foreign element" (99). The reader should be spared these euphemisms, for nothing is more foreign than the celestial hordes of God sent to set straight the human world.

3.7 *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation*

It is probably not far-fetched to state that *A Pan-European Interpretation of Donoso Cortés*[343] is arguably one of the best essays ever written by Carl Schmitt.[344] I posit four reasons for such a statement:

(i) Unlike the three other previous texts on the Spanish thinker, *Donoso Cortés im gesamteuropäischer Interpretation* works toward a global interpretation of modern history—the reader should take note of and reflect on the very title: *A Pan-European Interpretation of Donoso Cortés*. This means that by starting from a concrete point—the well-known year of 1848—Schmitt aims to unveil the spiritual themes that guided contemporary events. From this perspective, the essay formulates one of Schmitt's most remarkable ideas; namely, "the great parallel": an epistemic device that is able to decipher the invisible yet strong continuity between a decisive historical event—a singularity—and present, contemporary situations that are championed by intellectuals and all sorts of thinkers through general diagnoses.

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342. Schmitt 2002, 99.
343. In the following pages, I will use Mark Grzeskowiak's translation of this last essay of DC. See *Telos* 2002 (125), 100–105.
344. Andreas Leutzch has recently stressed this essay's importance for Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise*. See Leutzch 2019, 10: "This book (1950) might have inspired Koselleck's theory more than any other publication by Schmitt because Schmitt sketches a critique of modern (progress-oriented) philosophy of history and drops various keywords, such as "critique and crisis."

(ii) This essay and its insights are written in a very particular, nuanced style. While it is true that Schmitt, with the sole exception of his doctoral thesis devoted to the question of guilt[345], never wrote his monographs, essays, and articles in a strictly academic manner, the tone and pace of the Donoso's volume last essay resemble that of a last will and testament:

> I speak here of one of the very few who, in light of the 1848 outbreak, found both the strength and vision and the ability to transmit it. One hundred years separate us. During this century, European humanity ardently endeavored to forget the shock of 1848, and to remove it from consciousness, which was not difficult. Economic prosperity, technological progress, and a self-assured positivism all came together to produce a long and deep amnesia.[346]

The reader should note the use of the "I" in this quotation. "I," as in "I, Carl Schmitt, the person," and not "I, the writer who is merely taking into account a particular subject so as to bring something to the table." This is important, because here Schmitt is superimposing his own experiences and thoughts on those of Donoso Cortés. For Schmitt, the Spanish thinker even stands above Kierkegaard, a philosophical giant, and both Bruno Bauer and David Friedrich Strauss, outstanding disciples of Hegel. The main reason is linked to the fact that Donoso Cortés "confronted" the holy show that the events of 1848 represented for an extremely seasoned theological consciousness, and, like no one else, recognized the beginning of the end of Europe.

(iii) From this perspective, this essay—along with a handful of paragraphs and scattered insights in the other pieces on Donoso—continues the use of the "I" established previously in the other essays on Donoso and privately in *Glossarium*.[347] The fate of Donoso

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345. Schmitt 2017e, 181–182. Regarding Schmitt's first monograph, Mehring states: "Also noticeable is also the radical exclusion of philosophical, political and moral considerations, the exclusion of a 'character guilt' and the orientation toward the state. Schmitt did not equate 'guilt' with 'legal guilt,' as is shown by his acknowledgement of the possibility of a 'character's guilt' independent of any legal judgment. However, in 1910 he clearly put moral evaluations in second place behind legal judgments and viewed individual guilt solely from the perspective of state law." See Mehring 2014, 19.
346. Schmitt 2002, 102.
347 See Hohendahl 2018, 27–38, here at 34: "The Schmittian diarist denounces the moment of self-reflection in the context of everyday life and the careful, differentiated observation of the environment. This is not just a matter of defining the diary as a genre—which is clearly the case—but also of questioning the character of the writing subject (the diarist). How does the writing subject define itself? Who is the "I" responsible for any chronologically organized entries? Schmitt's critique of Jünger assumes a private subject, which is constituted through sensual observations of the environment as well as a mode of sustained self-reflection. Schmitt

Cortés' Europe is mirrored by the German jurist and reflects his own fate in post-war Europe. If that is the case, World War II and the rise and fall of National-Socialist Germany can only be comprehended by turning to the unique individual that had the courage to "look into the abyss." Schmitt never speaks better of himself than when he is speaking of others[348]—in this case, Donoso Cortés.

(iv) Finally, the main themes in this essay—modern European history, fate, tragedy, the spiritual demise brought about by technology, Donoso Cortés's being criticized for his exaggerated, over-the-top opinions, the superior scope of "the great parallel" over philosophy—are all found in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. The little book on Hamlet—and its thesis on "parallelisms"—finds its epistemic origin in this monograph. Thus, in the 1950s, Schmitt lived out a "second life" beyond academy and jurisprudence—which gave the thinker a strong opportunity, therefore, to champion his now re-stylized concepts. This is the decade where his whole oeuvre undergoes a self-reorganization process affecting the hierarchy and scope of his vast, well-known vocabulary.

This essay tackles a very specific matter: "[T]he question posed here is whether the Christian era has come to an end."[349] However, this clear formulation only comes after three paragraphs. In order to fully grasp the importance of this question, I will tackle the present monograph's main theses—and, just like this whole chapter, I will deliberately skip the minutiae.

The first paragraph explores the crucial event of 1848 by quoting Bruno Bauer's assertion, "[t]he men of the German National Assembly in Frankfurt in 1848 wanted to create an empire whose very existence would be tantamount to a European revolution" (106). Schmitt compares Donoso Cortés with Bruno Bauer and Kierkegaard throughout his essay. The jurist will prove how the Spanish thinker stands above the "hermit of Rixdorf" and the Danish philosopher—Stirner, Marx, and some others are treated in the same terms. However, Bauer's importance for Schmitt is to be found in his "critique of the age," which was an

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questions the value of this approach because he questions the legitimacy of this form of subject formation. […] Instead, Schmitt understands his own subjectivity as a theoretical or philosophical entity, as connected with the larger ideological issues that engage the fundamental questions of the present time."

348. Apropos of Schmitt's reflections in *Glossarium*, Mehring states: "All his identifications of important figures in intellectual history became for him aspects of self-reflection – aspects of his 'own question.'" See Mehring 2014, 427.

349. Schmitt 2012b, 106.

unseen mixture of "the theological and philosophical critique of reason, as well as textual and biblical criticism" (106). It is awkward, however, that Schmitt does not mention Bauer's avant-garde social criticism.[350] Nonetheless, Schmitt's erudition regarding the intellectual sources of both social criticism and nineteenth-century apologists of counterrevolution is second to none. He knows that, in order to provide a clear picture of the aftermath of 1848—which was, after all, Schmitt's study object—one needs to summon the strongest reflections of those who fully engaged with the events of their present. From this perspective, Schmitt's analysis of the 1950s unfolds a psychopolitical[351] approach. "The 1848 revolution was in fact a European event," posits the jurist. The most important nations of the continent had all gone sideways:

> With a single blow—when the first signs of a proletarian-atheist-communist movement became visible—all the harmonious accords that had been achieved by European liberalism since 1830 went torn apart. A completely new problematic

350. See Moggach 2003, 178: "Bauer's political position in 1848 is thus complex. He castigates the bourgeoisie and its liberal spokesmen for being deeply compromised with the old order. The primacy of property deforms their views of freedom. He identifies with the struggle of the unprivileged and the excluded, but is highly critical of socialism for reviving the authoritarian state as its organising principle. […] His two electoral addresses encapsulate many facets of the struggle against feudal retardation, proposing the doctrine of equal rights and the expansion of a new industrial order. As a dedicated partisan of this struggle, Bauer regains his stature as a protagonist of freedom in the moment of revolutionary confrontation itself."

351. While this approach has been widely used by Peter Sloterdijk since his *Spheres* trilogy and in his recent work as well, by "psychopolitical" I refer to Lloyd de Mause's notion of *psychohistory*. See de Mause 1982, 3: "[…] the central force for change in history is neither technology nor economics, but the 'psychogenic' changes in personality occurring because of successive generations of parent-child interactions." In the preface, psychohistory is defined as "the science of historical motivation." See Sloterdijk 2011, 630: "Thus the meaning of it changes once more; in the face of the globalization wars and technological departures that lent the twentieth century its character, being-n means this: inhabiting the monstrous. Kant taught that the question humans ask to assure themselves of their place in the world should be: 'What can we hope for?' After the un-grounding of the twentieth century, we know that the question should rather be: 'Where are we when we are in the monstrous?'" See also Sloterdijk 2010, 19–20: "Political science or, better, the art of the psychopolitical steering of the community, has had to suffer most from the thoroughly practiced but mistaken approach of psychological anthropology in the West. This approach misses a whole set of axioms and concepts that would be appropriate for the nature of its object. What from the vantage point of thymotics is seen unmistakably as the primary condition cannot be presented directly through the detour around available erotodynamic concepts." Although Schmitt always dismissed psychology when analyzing this or that subject or problem, his acute study of Europe's modern history achieved the main goals of psychohistory and psychopolitics; namely, the flawless convergence of the micro and the macro through analytical concepts that do not belong to Marxism, socialism, liberalism, or fascism—otherwise put, notions free of ideological/metaphysical values. What distinguishes him from both de Mause and Sloterdijk is his self-imposed sense of defeat and historical failure after World War II; for Sloterdijk, for instance, one of the main tasks was to elaborate a post-metaphysical vocabulary—driven mainly by a rehabilitation of Nietzsche's thought—that did justice to contemporary phenomena that could not be grasped by "theoretical monotheism." For the still underdeveloped connection between Schmitt and Sloterdijk, see Mehring 2018, 197–200.

> appeared under completely new slogans: socialism, communism, anarchism, atheism, and nihilism. The panic was great, but the terror quickly passed.[352]

The superior epistemic scope of "the great parallel" is already announced by the pejorative notion of "slogan" that characterizes intellectual and social criticism after 1848. Donoso Cortés, then, just like Schmitt's own depiction of postwar Europe, was the only one who was able to "look into the abyss" and ignore the intellectual falsity of these "slogans." They were nothing more than ideologies; namely, diluted promises of justice and peace—or, at best, utopias or other notions. The very fact that "the terror had passed" is, for Schmitt, the living proof of the undeniable presence of an unseen string of historical events. Just like him, Donoso too was considered "the most radical counter-revolutionary, an extreme reactionary, and a conservative of almost medieval fanaticism" (100). The Spanish thinker—contrary to those who quickly try to "cover the abyss"—did not fall prey to liberalism—let alone socialism or even Marxism. He was, as Schmitt recalls when speaking of other intellectuals, a curious and extreme case of the panic dredged up from the bottom in the bleak year of 1848.

This monograph aims to do justice to that exalted portrayal of Donoso Cortés. By doing so, Schmitt is able to complete his own self-depiction as a "crown-jurist of the third Reich." Having achieved this, his representation of postwar Germany can be considered not only a breakthrough in the second part of his career but one of the rare intellectual items that are still salvageable among the consequent economic miracle that occurred in the new and evidently liberal Federal Republic. That is why, when Schmitt openly rejects to highlight "the historical and psychological contexts" of Donoso Cortés, he states that the Spanish envoy's post-1848 reflections were not a mere product of "the shock." This means that Schmitt's thought after 1945—and between 1933 and 1936—was not the intellectual translation of his being caught in awe of Hitler's rise and fall and Germany's final defeat. Both Schmitt and Donoso—men of faith, victims of fate—transcend the social norms that rule over common pedestrians and civilians. "This type of psychology and sociology is nothing more than a product of the regained sense of security and an attendant phenomenon of an interval of illusory security."[353] Psychopolitics at its best.

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352. Schmitt 2002, 100.
353. Schmitt 2002, 101.

The reader should not spend more time observing the nuances of this rare exercise in self-indulgence. Schmitt wants to disclose a mentality that shaped the events after 1848. Europe chose security over reality. The price to pay was the abundance of "sudden insights"; i.e., unauthentic reflections. In the second paragraph, Schmitt states the following:

> Only the experience of two world wars, the mixture of state war and global civil war, and new forms of terror have brought European humanity once again in contact with the 1848 experiences, and have allowed it to see anew the light of that time – a light that flashed suddenly and then faded just as suddenly.

It is important to clarify that "humanity" as such never cared to connect the dots between the despicable consequences occasioned by the events that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century in Europe and the metaphysical, spiritual, and historical core of 1848. Schmitt wants to place these two historical scenarios on the same plane in order to prove his idea of "the great parallel." The reader correctly could refute this view as a bizarre form of revisionism. However, Schmitt's argument is not without its merit. His claim—although quite esoteric—is that those "sudden insights," just like the ones put forward by Spengler he is going to tackle later, were completely incorrect. Schmitt is not championing a unique interpretation of history but a method to access it. He sees in the "Bolshevik breakthrough in 1917" a renewed postcard of the "energies" liberated in 1848. Thus, a concrete event has surfaced as a historical implosion rather than an immediate social outburst. As regards the first, specific events are fixed within a political agenda, often quite ideological. In the case of the "Bolshevik breakthrough," Schmitt considers *The Communist Manifesto* its "constitutional charter." One then could easily grasp that the life of concepts has a momentum of its own and that the time of events, always immediate, eventually reveals its conceptual origins. The "socialist and communist authors" had the privilege of always stressing this "continuity" "over other historians." The latter had to choose between moral rejection and an ethical longing for restoration. Schmitt notices in the "latter half of the 19th century" a "darkening of European consciousness" (103). He argues this by recalling "the retreat of Russia […] and America," along with the fact that "Central Europe emerged through the successes of Bismarck and Cavour in 1860–71." Consequently, three main interpretations tackle the aftermath of 1848:

> The non-communist continuity with 1848 is supported by three factors: a foreign policy prognosis; a domestic political diagnosis; and a world-historical parallel. All three – prognosis, diagnosis, and parallel – are closely related. (…) In the interval, the cultural diagnosis became a triviality for the educated classes, and only today is the historical parallel being felt.[354]

Schmitt asserts that the "foreign policy prognosis was the first to enter European consciousness," indirectly proving, thus, the dynamics between concepts and their own development and events and their inevitable demand of immediate comprehension. However, and regarding the first interpretation, Schmitt considers that "[a]t the core of the foreign policy prognosis is the fact that European powers could no longer consider themselves the masters of the earth." To notice this displacement must have been one of the reasons to rapidly cover that "abyss," an expression that the reader could easily link to Nietzsche.[355] 1848 displaced land-grabbers like Napoleon. Schmitt considers "America and "Russia" as "two colossi that had arisen in the West and the East" in the third paragraph. Europe's consciousness noted but did not fully address them. Schmitt now shifts to Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*[356] and its great prognosis that "pulled the rug out under Europe's self-understanding" (103). Schmitt recalls German historians who presented views similar to that of Tocqueville. Donoso saw those "colossi," too. "For Tocqueville, the 1789 revolution was the symptom of a process of irresistible [*unwiderstehlicher*] centralization, which would serve all facets of the state, all political parties, and all ideologies and would continue unabated [*unaufhaltsam*]."[357] Nonetheless, Schmitt argues that Tocqueville's world vision was oriented toward "administrative" policy. By contrast, "a German historian, Friedrich List, had already observed it in 1825–30." Schmitt's intentions must be clear-cut to the reader. His interest is not to dethrone the intellectual contributions of Tocqueville, but, moreover, to expand the theoretical sources from which the "pessimist depiction of the

354. Schmitt 2002, 103.
355. See Nietzsche 2015, 98 [146]: "Wer mit Ungeheuern kämpft, mag zusehn, dass er nicht dabei zum Ungeheuer wird. Und wenn du lange in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein." For the relationship between Nietzsche's negative reception in the Marxist tradition of nineteenth century, see also Müller-Lauter 2019, 95: "Grundlegend für alle Äußerungen über Nietzsche in der osteuropäischen Welt is die marxistische Periodisierung der Gestesgeschichte nach Wandlungen im sogennanten Klassenkampf. Nietzsche erscheint dabei als ein historischer "Knotenpunkt" in dem von Marx verstandenen Sinne."
356. See 2.2.1.
357. Schmitt 2002, 104.

epoch," triggered by the "growing technology," reached the contemporary sociological consciousness of his time. Therefore, Spengler's *The Decline of the West* can be seen as a mere "coda to this critical European self-diagnosis" (104).

By expanding the philosophical constellation before and after 1848, Schmitt aims to reconcile the conceptual activity with its political singularity. Whether they were pessimistic or therapeutically driven—just like one of Schmitt's most lucid early interpreters proposed [358]—these diagnoses could not reach the profoundness achieved by Donoso and other thinkers. They "saw a great world-historical parallel that first provided the real meaning of the big picture of this European self-interpretation, and shed a multifaceted and illuminating light on it that eclipsed all ideologies" (104). Otherwise put, they could enter into "the core of all disputes that have filled the last century with rising vehemence until the present day" (104).

Schmitt lists well-known "historical parallels." They are Lucan, Cicero, and Plutarch. It is worth noting Schmitt's all-encompassing classicism.[359] These authors, in his opinion, were "forced to make numerous parallels with [their] own time." The reader is now forced [*gedrängt*] to speculate about what Schmitt means when he says that such parallels were made compulsively. Nonetheless, and beyond these discursive miscues, here Schmitt will distinguish between different types of parallels. This is methodologically crucial because such an evaluation is the direct precedent—along with the esoteric, unpublished reflections of *Glossarium*—of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s thesis on historical parallels. Thus, the reader can envision Schmitt's intellectual constellation in the 1950s clearly. His interest in a "philosophy of history," bluntly triggered in his interpretation of Hobbes and later

358. See Plessner 2018, 6: "What I try to solve here is the question whether the political sphere as such (which, according to Carl Schmitt, is given in the primeval life relationship of friend and enemy) belongs to the definition of the human or whether it belongs only to its contingent physical existential circumstances, which are external to its essence, whether politics is merely the expression of the human's imperfection, whose overcoming, even if it will perhaps never factually be achieved, is what the ideals of true humanity, what a moral education that liberates humans toward their authentic essence demand; whether politics only signifies the disadvantages of human existence, an existence into which the human as finite being has lapsed but, precisely, only lapsed."

359. Latin was, for Schmitt, a sacred language, a spiritual threshold. *The Concept of the Political* ends with a quotation from Virgil: see Schmitt 2015, 88. As far as I know, Hugo Ball was the first to point this out. See Ball 2013, 76–77, 89, here at 77: "Schmitt's position is the Latin one." In a letter to Carl Muth, Schmitt revealed that "in my *Concept of the Political*, every line is directed at him [Hugo Ball]." See Wacker 1996, 238. For the bittersweet affair between Schmitt and Ball, see Mehring 2014, 151–156. For the correspondence between Muth and Schmitt, see Ballestrem 1998, 131.

refurnished in his cryptic reflection in *Ex Captivitate Salus*, was confirmed by Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History*, Lilian Winstanley's *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession*, and, inwardly, in his private intellectual exercises sketched in *Glossarium*—scattered scholarly and often cryptic observations from the viewpoint of a self-righteousness victim of the postwar reality.[360] These intellectual sources converged in Schmitt's interest in "historical parallels." They were a crucial philosophical cornerstone of his interpretation of *Hamlet*.

Schmitt distinguishes "secondary, peripheral, and existentially not binding" parallels from "the encompassing [*umfassenden*], fundamental parallel" (106). The reader should note that the difference between them does not lie in their degree of intensity, but in their relatedness with contemporary events. The "great parallel" does not put forward an index of relatively evident similarities that are unearthed by the historian and which describe the present. On the contrary, the present unfolds as a chaotic immediacy precisely because its structural patterns have not been recognized by thinkers nor historians, nor their respective diagnoses and prognoses. The present—that is, Schmitt's "era as a whole"—is linked with the past:

> This is the relation of our present day to the historical turn with which our era began, i.e., the Roman civil wars and Caesarism. In this case, one is dealing with more than a simple parallel, and with more than analogies or Spenglerian homologies. The question posed here is whether the Christian era has come to an end [*Hier wird die Frage gestellt, ob der christliche Äon zu Ende ist oder nicht*].[361]

The question that logically should be raised is the following: Is the end of the Christian eon a historical event for both Christian and non-Christians? Otherwise put, is this end as such a historical event or, on the contrary, merely the last moment of some other historical chapter that has come to its inevitable end? According to Schmitt and to the overall tone adopted from his essays on Donoso onward, the question at stake is to determine the meaning of such an end. To ask the question from another angle: How and why did the Christian era end? What consequences did this involve? The jurist asserts that "everything that at first appears to be a historical parallel is immediately transformed into something completely different";

360. See Meierhenrich and Simons 2016, 138–139; Gross 2007, 214–218; Hohendahl 2018, 28–30.
361. Schmitt 2002, 106.

namely, something that is no longer isolated or, at best, a mere product of the present (106). This "parallel" compels us to think, and thus, "a simple definition" is required. In his own anachronic way,[362] Schmitt dismisses the so-called novelty of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, although he does recognize that it "was Spengler who first made the European public aware" of the parallel that could be drawn between "the age of the Battle of Actium" and "our own record of time" (107). Again, Schmitt differentiates——yet not does not fully distinguish—between "parallels, analogies, and homologies." Spengler opted to establish parallels in his theory of "cultural cycles." On the contrary, Schmitt is moved by the "specific power of a singular world-historical context"; namely, 1848. Roughly speaking, the year in question attracts, like gravity, a constellation of newborn planets. An important cultural event even occurred on one of those planets; for instance, Spengler's *The Decline of the West*[363] "owes its contemporary actuality" to that "specific power" (107). Whilst there

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362 Schmitt 2015e, 231: "Ich bin ein katholischer Laie deutscher Volks—und Staatszugehörigkeit!" For the contemporary topic of being "out of time," see Sloterdijk 2013, 31: "This expansion of the renaissance zone is no more than a first step, however. If one left it at that, one would only have re-dated Nietzsche semi-correctly at best. One would certainly have done him justice by assimilating his present into a past of his choosing; as far as his more radical 'chronopolitics' is concerned, however, his striving to break out of the Modern Age as such, one would not really be taking him seriously. […] Nietzsche was concerned with a radical allochrony, a fundamental other-timeliness in the midst of the present." Despite the fact that Schmitt never cared for him, the presence and use of Nietzsche in the jurist's works, specifically in the 1950s, has not been, to my knowledge, accounted for yet. Recently, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has provided another exceedingly forced paradoxical definition of the contemporary. See Agamben 2010, 11: "Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*." As is usual with Agamben, theological tidbits and etymological trivia come together mid-paragraph only to deliver an over-the-top thesis.

363. See Spengler 1996, 39: "The future of the West is not a limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries and can be viewed and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents." It is quite striking that Schmitt focused on Spengler's parallels, as opposed to his thesis of "the great parallel" that is 1848, and not on the fact that the German historian considered the "men of the Western Culture" to be "an exception." This would have displaced Schmitt's critique of Spengler's toward a "jurisprudence of history." Schmitt's negative appraisal of Spengler's historical assumptions mirrors the early, ireful critique made by Heidegger. See Heidegger 1992, 56: "Exclusively on the basis of Nietzsche's metaphysics and without any original metaphysical thought, at the start of the twentieth century the author O. Spengler drew up a 'balance' of Western history and proclaimed "The decline of the Occident." Today, as in 1918, when the arrogant book of this title came out, an eager public snap up only the outcome of the 'balance' without ever considering on which basic ideas of history this cheap balance of decline is concocted. […] Only to an age which had already forsaken every possibility of thoughtful reflection could an author present such a book, in the execution of which a brilliant acumen, an enormous erudition, and a strong gift for categorization are matched by an unusual pretension of judgment, a rare superficiality of thinking, and a pervasive frailty of foundations." Nonetheless, the consistent lack of "any original metaphysical thought" should not be a problem for the thinker who first stressed that in "the attempt to determine the essence of 'human being' as a being, the question of its being has remained forgotten." See Heidegger 2010, 48. Heidegger seems to overlook the simple fact that in order to sustain his thesis on the "forgotten being," Spengler's "balance"—just like any other

have been "essential trends" that are "easily recognizable" regarding 1848, no serious intellectual investigation has been devoted to it. Schmitt consequently outlines a brief archeology of the intellectual landmarks that have correctly grasped the monumental importance of "the great parallel," Saint Simon's *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825) being its "epochal onset" (108). His aim was to deliver a new ground for the shallow modern consciousness, now completely detached from Christianity. Thus, Schmitt conventionally treats "socialism and communism" as a "New Christianity"; that is, a new religion. The parallelism is fulfilled. The present sought its spiritual matrix in the past, despite the fact that the present had established a whole new vocabulary and an autonomous direction. Nevertheless, Schmitt highlights how, by the same token, "this use of the parallel can also be markedly anti-Christian" (108). Proudhon used it in this sense, but Marx did not. The latter never attempted to move mountains. This is the reason behind his critique of Bruno Bauer, for whom the importance of "the great parallel" was undeniable. It "became existential, and there lies his greatness in the history of ideas" (109).

Schmitt subsequently compares Bauer with David Friedrich Strauss.[364] According to Schmitt, Bauer stood above the latter, who "trivialized the parallel"; namely, Strauss merely carried out the inane exercise of contrasting the new against the old.[365] By contrast, Bauer's unflinching theological reason never waned.

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balance—had to remain unoriginal. Both Heidegger and Schmitt share a counter-modern comprehension of history, as they reject the evidence of real history. For a careful analysis of Spengler's "basic ideas of history," see Schröter 1949, 21–42.

364. The reader will recall the analysis of Strauss in *Political Romanticism*. The scholar, however, should meditate on the fact that, since the early book of 1919, Schmitt always reflected on history through the theme of secularization; namely, by focusing on the difference between day-to-day events and the invisible yet commanding driving force which they depend upon. Of course, this is the canonical difference between history and History elaborated by the late Schelling. See Schelling 2012, 164: "One can differentiate history [*Geschichte*] and history [*Historie*] as the accounts of things: the first is the series of the events and occurrences themselves; the second is the account of them. From this it follows that the concept of history [*Geschichte*] is more expansive that the concept of history [*Historie*] as the accounts of events. To this extent one could simply say pre-historical time [*voergeschichtliche*] instead of absolutely pre-historical [*vorgeschichtliche*], and pre-historical [*vorhistorische*] time instead of relative pre-historical [*vorgeschichtliche*] […]." Although Schmitt possessed a considerable knowledge of Schelling, his assimilation of his work was quite negative—unlike his reading of Hegel. It is quite baffling that he never mentions Schelling's scope of a philosophy of history. The similarities are evident.

365. Which was the main argument in Voltaire's article in the *Philosophical Dictionary*, entitled "Ancients and Moderns." See Burns 2016, 146: "The great dispute between the ancients and the moderns is not yet settled; it has been on the table since the silver age succeeded the golden age. Mankind has always maintained that the good old times were much better than the present day." See also Fumaroli 2011, 165: "In contemporary French, the expression 'quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns' has lost its historical anchor, designating instead the eternal recurrence of a generational conflict that pits old *laudatores temporis acti*, defeated from the start,

> This critical German would abandon neither his Protestant-theological, nor his Hegelian roots. That remains his glory. Therefore, he waited, unbroken, for a new era, and saw himself in the position of an early Christian living in a new, no longer Christian world empire. He did not achieve the highest degree of psychological and dialectical reflection. But his writings between 1843 and 1848 reflect the intellectual situation whose focal point was the outbreak of 1848.[366]

Schmitt's praise of Bauer is important, as the reader may see in it the purported superiority of "the great parallel"; namely, the "instrument" that holds the Christian consciousness together in non-Christian times. Bauer is now part of a philosophical diptych that he shares with Kierkegaard. For him, however, "the great historical parallel should be dissolved into a moment of the immediate present" (110). Schmitt does not scrutinize Kierkegaard as closely.[367] Rather, he wants "to demonstrate the continuity with the situation of 1848." He posits that the triad that rules the world—America, Russia, and the soon-to-be-replaced, yet still crucial Europe—was unleashed in 1848. Thus, he returns to Donoso Cortés. Although the Spanish thinker did not address the sociological elements that supported Tocqueville's diagnosis, he "recognized the historical parallel with Caesarism and the world-historical moment of the birth of Christianity" (112). Schmitt notes how Donoso Cortés turned his back on history and embraced eschatology. Following this shift, a new light was shed on his classic concepts of dictatorship and anti-liberalism. In the fifth paragraph of the last essay on

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against young Moderns with life, future, and progress on their side. This current and general meaning retrospectively colors the interpretation of the 'quarrel,' in the strict and historic sense."

366. Schmitt 2002, 109–110.

367. Schmitt indirectly refers to Kierkegaard's *Nutiden* (1846), a short cultural critique that was supposed to be the third part of a wider literary review of Thomasine Gyllembourg's *To Tidsaldre* (Two Ages). See Kierkegaard 2009, 68: "The present age is essentially a *sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in superficial, short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing in indolence*." Schmitt's *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* expands Kierkegaard's views by tackling the history of German and European jurisprudence. It is, like Kierkegaard's work, an open critique of liberalism. This essay is strikingly similar to Kierkegaard's *Critique of Our Age*. In his detailed introduction to the English version of *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, Ellen Kennedy fails to mention this. For this theme in Kierkegaard, see Perkins 1984, 214: "For Kierkegaard, the development of popular government answerable to the crowd was the way to anarchy. […] As Kierkegaard perceives the façade of the modern liberal state it is a mask for the grossest anarchistic hedonism imaginable. Everything in modern politics depends on who manipulates the crowd." See also Jaspers 1957, 10: "Kierkegaard was the first to undertake a comprehensive critique of his time, one distinguished from all previous attempts by its earnestness. This critique was the first to be applicable to the age in which we are now living, and reads as if it had been written yesterday."

Donoso, Schmitt asserts that for Donoso Cortés, politics never was able to elevate itself to a theological dimension. That is why he strongly prefers a "monarchial dictatorship" over other forms of "dangerous, mean-spirited" powers (113). The Spanish envoy's kindred spirit was Kierkegaard. Schmitt lists the intellectual generation among which 1848 found its more challenging critics. Donoso Cortés outstripped them all due to this lack of metaphysics, despite his "striking outburst" and "traditional rhetoric" (114). His exposition was complicated. His reflections, ingenious. He thought as he lived, and he lived out his "monstrous fate" in accord with his thought. Schmitt offers an example of this trait by analyzing Donoso Cortés's take on the death penalty:

> The division of human and inhuman necessarily leads to a still deeper division: *super*human and *subhuman*. The man who treats another man as if he is inhuman realizes in practice the distinction between superhuman and subhuman. For subhuman, there is no longer a death penalty. There is indeed no penalty at all, only extermination and destruction.[368]

From *Ex Captivitate Salus* onward, Schmitt will repeat this statement until his last days[369]—although it was already formulated in the first draft of *The Concept of the Political*, later

368. Schmitt 2015, 114.
369. Schmitt 2017a, 77: "The progress of modern technology is at the same time progress in the removal of Romantic subjectivism, progress in the appropriation of the human individual, progress in mass criminalization and mass automation"; Schmitt 2015e, 102: "Ein Unmensch hat natürlich nicht das Recht, einem andern Unmenschen vorzuwerfen, daß dieser ebenfalls ein Unmensch sei, wohl aber dürfen wir als Betrachter und Beurteiler festellen, daß es nicht Recht wäre, wenn sich einer, der selber Unmenschlichkeiten begeht, zum Richter über einen anderen etabliert und ihn als Unmenschen zum tode verurteilt"; 1995a, 564: "Der Hund stellt die Katze geistig oder moralisch mit ihrem Wesen nicht in Frage, and die Katze nich den Hund. Indem der Hund die Katze anbellt oder die Katze den Hund anfaucht, machen diese Tiere es nicht wie Menschen, die imstande sind, ihrem Feind die Qualität des Menschen abzusprechen"; Schmitt 2005, 94: "Men who use these weapons against other men feel compelled morally to destroy these other men, i.e., as offerings and objects. They must declare their opponents to be totally criminal and inhuman, to be a total non-value"; Schmitt 2018d, 38: "Value theory celebrates, as we have seen, its authentic triumphs in the interpretation of the question of the just war. This lies in the nature of the matter. Every reservation to the opponents falls away, indeed it becomes a non-value, when the battle against this opponent is a battle waged for the highest value. The non-value has no right with regard to the value, and for the enactment of the highest value no price is too high. Here then there are, by consequence, only annihilator and annihilated"; Schmitt 2010, 130: "Hat die Kultur, von dem Glauben des Christentums an die Verwerflichkeit der menschlichen Natur ausgehend, den Menschen verleugnet, so hat sie sich eben einen Feind erschaffen, der sie notwendig einst so weit vernichten muß, als der Mensch nicht in irh Raum hat: denn dieser Feind ist eben die ewig und einzig lebende Natur." Even in his last article, published in the late 1970s, Schmitt offered his new readers this old yet constantly current thesis. See Piccone 1987, 88: "Humanity as such and as a whole has no enemies. Everyone belongs to humanity. Even the murderer, at least as long as he lives, must be treated as a human being. If he is as dead as his victim, then he no longer exists.

tackled in an article[370] published in 1937, "Total Enemy, Total War, Total State,"[371] and then fully developed in Schmitt's 1938 *Die Wendung zum diskriminierenden Kriegsbegriff.*[372] These grim dynamics are a manifestation of "nihilism," whose aim was "to create the paradise of pure mundane existence for the chosen few of the new humanity" (114). In order to create a new humanity, the old humanity must be destroyed.[373]

Donoso Cortés presented an anti-metaphysical position that was comprehended by left-wing philosophers. "[T]hey felt that only he threatened their monopoly on the interpretation of the century" (114). After 1848, the world was up for grabs: so too its interpretation. Proudhon, among others, mocked Donoso Cortés. Later, he was altogether ignored. Schmitt asserts that after World War I, his thought became visible and valid. The

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However, until then he remains, good or evil, a human being, i.e., a bearer of human rights. 'Humanity' thus becomes an asymmetrical counter-concept. If one discriminates within humanity and thereby denies the quality of being human to a disturber or destroyer, then the negatively-valued person becomes an unperson and his life is no longer the highest value: it becomes worthless and must be destroyed." The vanishing of the essence of humanity by technology and machinery was impressively anticipated by Nietzsche. See Nietzsche 1996, 366 [218]: "The machine of itself teaches the mutual cooperation of hordes of men in operations where each man has to do only one thing: it provides the model for the party apparatus and the conduct of warfare. On the other hand, it does not teach individual autocracy: it makes of many *one* machine and of every individual an instrument to *one* end. Its most generalized effect is to teach the utility of centralization." Two names stand above all the other contemporary thinkers of technology, as they have approached this issue by questioning several metaphysical, conventional assumptions. I am obviously referring to Gilbert Simondon and Friedrich Kittler. See Simondon 2017, 258: "The technical world is a world of the collective, which is adequately thought neither on the basis of the brute social [fact], nor on the basis of the psyche. To consider technical activity as inessential in its very structure, and to take as essential either the social communities or the inter-human relations arising from technical activity, means not analyzing the nature of this very center of group and of inter-individual relationships, which is technical activity"; see Kittler 2013, 207: "And so nothing and no one –not even the *Führerprinzip*– was able to stop the technology transfer. After all, technology transfer means that communication technologies fulfill their definition and become transmissible communications themselves. If empires are media, and media are postal systems, then their destiny [*Schicksal*] must involve 'dispatches' [*Verschickung*]. When Zhukov's artillery shot down the last tethered balloon connecting the last radio link between the *Fuhrerbunker*, under the Reich Cancillery, and Army Group Steiner, nothing ended. It was all just getting started." For a contemporary reflection on the problem of the human risks as regards present-day technology, see Hogrebe 2004, 655: "Das Risiko übernimmt in einem gewissen Sinn die Funktion der Metaphysik, die intendierte, mittels der Ideen das Ganze unseres Leben im Blick zu behalten. Der Risikobegriff versucht eben das auf eine kognitiv-instrumentelle Weise, er zielt darauf ab, jene Totalität der Selbst– und Weltbezüge durch Isolierung und Modellierung von Risiken, durch Verteilung und Bewertung darselben kleinzuarbeiten."

370. Schmitt 2014b, 83: "Der Begriff des Menschheit schließt den Begriff des Feindes aus, weil auch der Feind nicht aufhört, Mensch zu sein, und damit die spezifische Unterscheidung entfällt."

371. Schmitt 2019, 494 ff.

372. Schmitt 2012d, 56: "Zwischen das universale Endziel und die Wirklichkeit des heutigen Zustandes würde also zunächst eben doch wieder ein Krieg treten, vielleicht wieder ein 'endgültig letzter Krieg der Menschheit', jedenfalls ein eben dadurch vertiefter und verschärfter, 'totaler' Krieg."

373. See Blanchot 2003, 130: "Man is the indestructible that can be destroyed. This has the ring of truth, and yet we are unable to know it through a knowledge that would already be true. Is this not merely an alluring formulation."

Roman Empire and twentieth-century Europe turned out to be spiritually akin. From this perspective, "the historical parallels disappear," as the "outgrowths [*Ausgeburten*] of our own European spirit that have come back to haunt us [*auf uns eindringen*]."[374] The disappearance of "historical parallels" implies their dissolution into a single event; namely, the singularity of a postwar Europe that was under assault from its own historical process. Accordingly, the analogies are succeeded by a broader comprehension of history. Otherwise put, the eerie acceptance that Christianity always had a non-Christian fate.

3.8 "Three Possibilities for a Christian Conception of History"[375] (1950)

This short review of Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History* was commissioned by Hans Paeschke after Löwith visited Schmitt in Plettenberg in 1949.[376] Schmitt's thoughts on Löwith can barely be considered a "review." The briefness of this text, however, is not the only noteworthy thing about it. Löwith published a thorough yet stinging review of Schmitt's thought in 1935.[377] Schmitt was well-aware of this critique. However, he thought that Löwith's book was great. In fact, a whole new debate on history and its method was starting in the early fifties.[378] But only Löwith was able to separate the wheat from the chaff:

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374. Schmitt 2002, 115.
375 The German title for this review was "Drei Stufen historischer Sinngebung". He regrets such a misleading title, given by *Universitas* journal. In a letter to Armin Mohler, Schmitt emphasizes that there are not "stages" [*Stufen*], nor "sense-giving" [*Sinngebung*], but "Drei Möglichkeiten eines christlichen Geschichtbildes"; see Tielke 2020, 28. Indeed, the question was what kind of image a modern, technological world could abide to regarding its self-comprehension, now detached from theological foundations.
376. Mehring 2014, 441–443. CSÖ, 83.
377. See Meier 1995, 7n6.
378. See Agamben 2011, 6–7: "In the second half of the 1960s, a debate on the problem of secularization involving, to different degrees, Hans Blumenberg, Karl Löwith, Odo Marquard, and Carl Schmitt, took place in Germany. The debate originated from the thesis enunciated by Löwith in his 1953 book *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*, according to which both German idealism's philosophy of history and the Enlightenment's idea of progress are nothing but the secularization of the theology of history and Christian eschatology." Agamben's radical conventionalism dates back to the "secularization debate" of the mid-sixties. It is quite baffling how he ignores the fact that Löwith's *Meaning in History* was published in 1949, along with several German reviews of it—including Schmitt's brief text. Likewise, the Italian philosopher does not mention Joachim Ritter's *Schule* (the Collegium Philosophicum), nor his *Hegel und die Französische Revolution* (1957), a book which aimed to demonstrate both the emancipatory and compensational element present in Hegel's philosophy of history. Herman Lübbe's *Säkularisierung: Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs* (1965) is also omitted. For an accurate account of the "secularization debate" and Ritter's *Schule*, see Schweda 2015 74–122, here 102–120. Jacob Taubes' *Abendländische Eschatologie* (1947) was probably the philosophical starting point of this debate.

> Today, every attempt at a self-understanding ultimately proves to be a situating oneself by means of the philosophy of history or a utopian self-dislocation. Today, all human beings who plan and attempt to unite the masses behind their plans engage in some form of philosophy of history. They accept the existence of the means of extermination, which modern science provides to every person in power. […] [E]ven despair screams for the last time through threatening that world history has lost its meaning.[379]

This is one of Schmitt's more complex statements, and undoubtedly a strange way to start an academic review. The reader might think that such strong words act as a patronizing sign of approval; i.e., that Löwith's book is on point because it touches—according to Schmitt—the kernel of the main problem of modern history; namely, its unquestionable independence from theology and Christianity. Be that as it may, Schmitt's opening paragraph is a compressed evaluation of his age from a highly critical viewpoint. In fact, Schmitt is providing an epistemic caveat which, if ignored, will philosophically confound the reader. There are two options: a philosophy of history—namely, a reconstruction of the intellectual sources of theology on which the modern consciousness stands—or a progressive (non-theological) conception of history; that is, the idea that Christianity and religion were rightfully removed from the self-comprehension of the modern era—this option being a failed version of the first one. Schmitt then illustrates his first assertion by mentioning all those "human beings" who, with their plans and orchestrations, blindly endorsed a "philosophy of history." Schmitt constantly despised the notion of "plan" or "planning" and its implications for modern capitalism and technology[380]—let alone the meaning of such an expression in Soviet

379. Schmitt 2009d, 167.
380. Schmitt 2012g, 60: "Dies Zeitalter hat sich selbst als das kapitalistiche, mechanistische, relativistische bezeichnet, als das Zeitalter des Verkehrs, der Technik, der Organisation"; Schmitt 2014b, 245: "Außerdem sind viele Staaten, und zwar auch solche, die nicht etwa sozialistisch sein wollen, zu mancherlei Arten einer ökonomischen und finanziellen Planung übergegangen, mit Einrichtungen und Normierungen zur Steuerung oder Regulierung der Wirtschaft und mit Produktions –und Marktordungen, die ebenfalls neue Methoden der rechtlichen Normierung erforderlich machen"; Schmitt 2015e, 48: "Das Entscheidende bleibt doch, daß der Zwang zur bewußten Organisation, Bürokratisierung und Planung total wird… Wie klein, wie minimal ist der Spielraum einer solchen Opposition bei totaler Planung!"; Schmitt 2007b, 363: "Die Distanzierung von der 'Welt der bloßen Setzungen', der 'raum– und rechtlosen Planung', des 'legalitären Technizismus' und der 'subalternen Instrumentalisierung' erhebt unsere Wissenschaft zu dem, was ihre Würde und ihren Erkenntniswert ausmacht"; Schmitt 2014c, 128: "The new human being who produces himself in this process is no new Adam and not even a new pre-Adam. Even less is he a new Christ-Adam figure. Rather, he is the unplanned, arbitrary product of the process-progress of himself, which he both puts into action and maintains in operation."

Union[381]. This is the reason behind the bleak but faithful tone adopted in his review of Löwith.

In order to fully comprehend these reflections, it is necessary to provide a general analysis of Löwith's book. From that perspective, most of Schmitt's assertions—several of them, quite complex—will reveal their philosophical consistency.

At the end of Löwith's 1959 autobiographical note, presented to the University of Heidelberg, the author explicates the goal of his reflections from 1949:

> The intention of my book *Meaning in History* (1949), of which a German translation appeared later on (1953) under the more apt title *Weltgeschichte und Heilgeschehen*, was a critical one: it sought to demonstrate the impossibility of a philosophy of history. This intention was often misinterpreted as a positive Christian one because it seemed to conform to particular tendencies in Protestant theology.[382]

The reader rightly may feel baffled by this statement. Löwith's argument is the complete opposite of Schmitt's first assertion in his review of *Meaning in History*. Second, it is quite curious that Löwith recognizes the conceptual superiority of the German translation—perhaps due to the sacred element linked to the expression *Heilgeschehen*. Third, and even more obvious, is the fact that Löwith does not fully define what he understands by "philosophy of history." However, and a few more lines ahead, he determines why such discipline cannot positively be addressed:

> We cannot exist without the world for one moment, but it can quite easily exist without us. It is also impossible for us to imagine the state of things *before* the world or *after* it, but only a change in its condition within an already ever existing world, unless one postulated an absolute empty nothingness from which nothing can emerge, and which would additionally also be a nothingness of a world.[383]

According to Löwith, it is impossible to pretend that something could emerge from "an absolute empty nothingness," just as it impossible to imagine the world "before" or "after"

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381 I thank Ovidiu Stanciu for reminding me this.
382. Löwith 1994, 164–165.
383. Löwith 1994, 167.

us, because no worldly perspective can measure an otherworldly or divine dimension. The main goal of *Meaning in History* was to demonstrate "that only in the faith in a salvation history could one find an indirect, and even then, a most doubtful, answer; that it had to lead beyond the historical world and the historical way of thinking to the *world as such*, which is the One and the Whole existence by nature" (166). Thus, the impossibility of a "philosophy of history" refers to the fact that any concept of history—even one thoroughly elaborated by philosophy—cannot be unbound from a theological—and thus, eschatological—perspective. Otherwise put: any comprehension of history requires an acceptance of faith. Such is the human endeavor and its fate. Löwith's phenomenological approach to history aims to establish the limits of earthly wisdom when it comes to facing the meaning of a God-free history. In this perspective, Schmitt's claim for a philosophy of history is the mere opposite of Löwith's notion of the impossibility of such knowledge. By now, the reader may have grasped that Schmitt considers that expression an understatement; namely, that theology is the genuine comprehension of history. For Löwith, on the other hand, this authentic perspective did not dismiss any other approach. On the contrary, its presence acts as the philosophical compass of any modern discussion of history and politics. While Schmitt champions an active use of the "philosophy of history" amidst eventful times—i.e., that any discussion of this subject must be aware of its theological origin—Löwith stands for a therapeutic reconstruction of its concepts.

The introduction to *Meaning in History* states the following:

> The term "philosophy of history" was invented by Voltaire, who used it for the first time in its modern sense, as distinct from the theological interpretation of history. In Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* the leading principle was no longer the will of God and divine providence but the will of man and human reason. […] In the following discussion the term "philosophy of history" is used to mean a systematic interpretation of universal history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed toward an ultimate meaning.[384]

384. Löwith 1949, 1.

It is important to note how the expression "philosophy of history" is placed between quotation marks. Löwith knows that this so-called discipline is a radioactive element that must be carefully handled. Its sloppy use has caused substantial negative effects in the conceptual laboratory. Therefore, a positive definition is provided. Löwith aims to establish a very particular "systematic interpretation"; namely, a global analysis that boils the philosophical interpretations of history down to their absolute essence—even those rooted in the worldview of the Middle Ages. Finally, his hypothesis tackles the conception of history as a non-progressive arch of events whose meaning points forward to an "ultimate meaning"; that is, to an "ultimate" event. Löwith later asserts: "The very existence of a philosophy of history and its quest for a meaning is due to the history of salvation; it emerged from the faith in an ultimate purpose."[385] Thus, and after its introduction, *Meaning in History* lists in descending order the main interpretations of history, and it proves how each one of them—from Marx and Burckhardt to Vico and Joachim of Fiore—subscribed, conscious or unconsciously, to "our alienation from the natural theology of antiquity and from the supernatural theology of Christianity."[386] According to Löwith, it was "the break with tradition at the end of the eighteenth century which produced the revolutionary character of modern history and of our modern historical thinking."[387] However, the theological roots of any comprehension of history more or less overlap every modern interpretation of the subject. Löwith stresses how his contemporaries think that "natural science" serves as an almighty historical conscious, as it "accelerated the speed and expanded the range of sociohistorical movements and changes."[388] It is interesting to note how Löwith does not talk about "technology" but "natural science." All in all, the modern consciousness flounders in an acute state of historical delusion. The faith in natural science attempts to measure what cannot be measured because "[t]he problem of history as a whole is unanswerable within its own perspective."[389] History is not a massive blackboard where previous results provide reliable data upon which to calculate future events, even a last one. A "break" has been established, indeed, and this is what Löwith and Schmitt consider the central question; namely,

385. Löwith 1949, 5.
386. Löwith 1949, 192.
387. Löwith 1949, 193.
388. Löwith 1949, 193.
389. Löwith 1949, 191.

"secularization." Nonetheless, Löwith finally posits that "[t]he modern world is as Christian as it is un-Christian because it is the outcome of an age-long process of secularization."[390] The key, then, to Löwith's "systematic interpretation" is his account of such a "process"; namely, the unveiling of its masked theological elements by doing justice to the real value of "natural science" through a historical perspective. The "range" of the modern emancipation from theology is great, yet still Christian—and, thus, still profane in all its complexity.

The reader is now conceptually equipped to return to Schmitt's review. After his first cryptic statement, he praises Löwith as a thinker whose "historico-philosophical clarity and knowledge of the history of ideas" stands above any other author of the twentieth century. Schmitt values the intellectual compendium put together by Löwith. Moreover, he emphasizes the fact that *Meaning in History* goes beyond the academic dimension. It is, indeed, "a path of initiation" (212). This explains Schmitt's interest in reviewing "the results and conclusions of the book" and his haste to skip the "traditional questions of method." He agrees with Löwith's idea "that paganism is not at all capable of any form of historical thought because it is cyclical" (168). History, thus, arrives at "its specific meaning" through the endless beginnings and ends of these cycles. Likewise, "[w]e know that the Enlightenment and the positivist belief in progress was only secularized Judaism and Christianity."[391] By 1950, this thesis had been repeated throughout the last thirty years of Schmitt's academic career, so Löwith's book served as its ultimate confirmation. Martin Tielke reminds how "thrilled" [*elektrisiert*] was Schmitt after Löwith's book[392]. Conversely, Schmitt highlights Löwith's critique of "constructed justifications [*Sinn-Setzungen*]" and "the major acts of planning [*Groß-planungen*]," views that are akin to those held by Schmitt in *Glossarium*. "Divine providence, which the human being can recalculate or even predict, is after all also just a human act of planning," Schmitt states (168).

Meaning in History is "an unusual book"; that is, it is not merely a book. One of the advantages of Löwith's non-academic considerations is his acknowledgment of "the great

390. Löwith 1949, 201–202.
391. Schmitt 1986, 17: "Today, many varieties of metaphysical attitude exist in a secularized form. To a great extent, it holds true that different and, indeed, mundane factors have taken the place of God: humanity, the nation, the individual, historical development, or even life as life for its own sake, in its complete spiritual emptiness and mere dynamic. […] What human beings regard as the ultimate, absolute authority, however, certainly can change, and God can be replaced by mundane and worldly factors."
392 Tielke 2020, 28.

parallel." Our time can be better understood if the historian focuses on "the Roman civil wars as well as early Christianity"—even if two thousand years separate us from those events. "The great parallel" cannot be bested by "the entire Hegelian-Marxist-Stalinist dialectics of history" (238–239), as it develops a superior framework of historical understanding—for its aim is to restore the axial events of history and not to seize its dynamics of self-production. Therefore, no other access to history is available. Löwith demonstrated the use of "the great parallel" marked by the French revolution by confronting the contradictory views of different authors, "while the historical parallel as such always remains self-evident"—and thus, undeniable (168). Schmitt assures that this problem "has so far not been addressed in the form of an independent monograph" (168). Can the reader trust such a statement?[393] In any case, Schmitt concurs with Löwith's intellectual map of modernity and agrees with his most important notions, such as "[c]yclical thinking," "progressivist thinking," "eschatological thinking," and "Christians' belief in the "Resurrection of the Son of Man" (169).

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393. While in *Political Romanticism* Schmitt acknowledges this issue, in his general analysis of David Friedrich Strauss's *Julian the Apostate*; Schmitt 1986, 149: "One of the best known historical parallels that attempts to make a political type out of the romantic—David Friedrich Strauss's book […]—is based on such a topical political interest"—the expression "parallel" or "parallelism" did not have at the time the reflective use given to it in the 1950s. Strauss fails to grasp "the great parallel," as he "arrives at a clear disregard of obvious contradictions." However, to say that, at least in Germany, no monograph had treated the question of "the great parallel" might be inaccurate. Alfred Schuler (1885–1923), although he never published more than a single poem and a review during his lifetime, was often labeled as one of the visible thinkers of German "neopaganism" and devoted most of his life to developing a global conception of contemporary history as the mangled mirror of Nero's Rome. Schuler's gnostic comprehension of history is eerily similar to that of Schmitt—and so too his affair with National Socialism, his spiritual anti-Semitism, and his considerations of world history intertwined with theology. No independent monograph has addressed this relationship. For a comprehensive account of Schuler, see Plumpe 1978 121–126, here 1: "Das kaiserliche Rom, das Schulers bevorzugtes Objet stets war, nimmt dabei eine Sonderstellung ein"; for Schuler's views on contemporary life as the vital decay of what was once the Roman Empire, see Furness 2000, 75–94, here 78–79: "For Schuler, as for Klages, the corruption of life began with Judaeo-Christianity and a 'historical' (as opposed to a 'cosmic') viewpoint, a will to rational truth which 'de-actualizes' the world […]." For the appraisal of Rome as a spiritual parallel of the present, see Schuler 1940, 182: "Ich sehe im Imperium Romanum die letzte großartige Zellenausgeburt der Renaissance des urtümlichen Seins. Stellen Sie sich dieselbe vor, wie ich Ihnen den telesmatischen Licht-komplex geschildert habe, in vibrierender Kugelgestalt, etwa unter dem Bilde des Saturn. Drei Ringe sind es, die nach Rom hinführen, drei Ringe sind es, die wegführen von Rom in unsre Tage." Schuler's work was publicly available since Ludwig Klage's 1940 edition of Schuler's unpublished and posthumous material. Likewise, Schmitt was well aware of *George Kreis* and Klage's reflections. Schuler is mentioned on only one occasion in G. In a reflection found in 13.2.48 apropos of Bruno Bauer's *Christus und die Caesaren*, Schuler is highly praised by Schmitt, and his reflections on Nero and Rome are considered "the treasure of contemporary demonology" (Schmitt 2015e, 73), a theme that is often overlooked in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. It is quite significant that Schmitt's interest in Schuler occurs in the same years as his review of *Meaning in History* and his overall interest in a philosophy of history. Schmitt is referring to the book of Schuler previously quoted.

According to Schmitt, the second great strength of *Meaning in History* is to have addressed the possibility of "whether eschatological faith and historical consciousness can coexist" (169). Otherwise put, for a progressively acute historical consciousness, the promise of a final, total landscape—where the divine finally meddles with the worldly, finite dimension—becomes somehow a childish fairy tale—if not a harmful collection of religious drivel. Nonetheless, and this is a crucial point, Schmitt's considerations of history and his method—"the great parallel," analogies, similarities, etc.—are profoundly structural—although not one-dimensional or a-historical. This is the reason behind his attempt to establish a "bridge" between these two scopes; namely, a historical instrument that provides a communication channel between the factual immediacy of world events and non-historical, theological patterns that act as a normative theme in history. Schmitt uses a cryptic theological concept to express it: "*Kat-echon.*"[394]

> The conception of restraining [*haltender*] and deferring [*aufhaltender*] forces and powers can in some form probably be demonstrated to be active for every great historian. Nietzsche furiously identified Hegel and the sixth sense of the Germans, i.e., the historical sense, as the great deferrer on the way to expressed atheism. […]

394. The concept and its historico-theological nature are some of the most studied and interpreted themes among Schmitt's scholars. See Mehring 2014, 96: "Schmitt's continual reference to this figure [the "katechon"], which he frequently discussed in letters, thus shows that he was still playing with the idea of legitimizing the Reich. He interpreted the figure in various ways without committing himself to any one version. But, in any case, it signals a critical stage in the legitimation of Christianity." For the use of this concept in Schmitt 2009c, see Grossheutschi 1996, 90: "Immerhin hat sie den Vorteil, daß sie sich sowohl mit eneim 'kyklischen' wie mit eienem 'eschatologischen' Verständnis der Geschichte verbinden läßt." For a brief selection of the problem of "kat-echon" regarding world history in Schmitt's letters, see Schmitt 2004c, 306: "Zu allen Zeiten haben Interpreten im Ka-techon das römische Reich gesehen, sogar Kaiser Nero galt während der ersten Jahre seiner Herrschaft und bevor sich seine unheilvolle Geistesstörung zeigte, als Kat-echon"; Schmitt 2007b, 300: "Rudolf II. Ist ein echter Katechon 1325 und – wie mir Otto Brunner 1326 schrieb 1327 – ist dieses Wort die beste Formel für das 1318 Der dänische Philosoph Sören Kierkegaard (1813–1855) gilt als Begründer der Existenzphilosophie" (the fact that Schmitt mentions the years of birth and death of Kierkegaard is related with 1848 as a historical figure). For contemporary accounts of this figure, see Heimes 2009, 101–123, here 8: "Die Offenheit des Kampfes zwischen den ordnungsstiftenden Mächten und den anomischen Kräften, kann nicht einfach in der unbestimmten Sphäre mystischer Begriffe wie Katechon und Antichrist gehalten warden"; see also Kierdorf 2015, 165–174, here 74: "Zwar mag sein Versuch der theologisch bestimmten Feindidentifikation im Politischen misslungen sein, die Suche nach dem Katechon vergebens, das Dogma der Erbsünde keine überzeugende Begründung der eigenen anthropologischen Position, und die Diktatur als Antwort auf die Unvereinbarkeit von bürgerlicher Freiheit und staatlicher Souveränität keine annehmbare Lösung darstellen." Kierdorf is on point in stating that the question of the "katechon" became something deeply "personal" for Schmitt.

> The original historical force of the figure of a *kat-echon*, however, remains and is capable of overcoming the otherwise occurring eschatological paralysis.[395]

By using the notions of "restraining [*haltender*]" and "deferring [*aufhaltender*]," Schmitt is stressing the preservation force that characterizes the *katechon*. As it delays the inevitable, a legitimate conservation of the finite dimension is achieved. Likewise, Schmitt's mention of Nietzsche is crucial. The reader familiar with the history of philosophy should know that *The Birth of Tragedy* was the first modern intellectual landmark that sought to identify the historical genesis of a cultural phenomenon by recurring to non-historical normative patterns—just like Schmitt did with the *katechon*. Schmitt points to the fact that this force is not a mere reaction, but a very active instrument of self-awareness, "capable of overcoming the otherwise occurring eschatological paralysis." Finally, Schmitt highlights "the infinite singularity of historical reality." If Löwith strongly suggested that the New Testament was a "call to repentance" and not a "call to a historical deed," Schmitt opts for an anti-intellectual "leveling"; namely, the "historical" nature of Christianity, which is "infinite, non-appropriable, non-occupiable singularity" (169). Otherwise put, a non-human—inhuman, supra-human, and infra-human—and, thus, a non-factual historical event. Schmitt points to Pontius Pilate as a historical proof. "Christians look back on completed events and find a basic reason [*Ingrund*] and an archetype [*Inbild*]," therefore: their belief does not consist in a set of orders, deeds, and duties, but in a global comprehension of history, a history meaningful to a single, perpetual, and transformative event: the presence of Jesus Christ (169).

The mention of the *katechon* is linked with the expression "Christian Epimetheus," made popular by one of Schmitt's early and more important acquaintances, the poet Konrad Weiss. For him, "the merely restraining forces are not sufficient," for "[h]e claims that historical circumstances are more often to be seized rather than to be restrained" (169). The reader sees, then, how the *katechon* for Schmitt becomes an active path of non-cognitive yet historical comprehension and, more importantly, a path of historical action. The *katechon* is both the last and ultimate mode of agency before acquiescing in finite despair, whether it be civil war or World War III. Even if this blatant attempt of theological justification is rapidly

395. Schmitt 2009d, 169.

dismissed, Schmitt posits that "its dark truth is thereby not disconfirmed, and neither is its significance as a historical counterforce against the leveling of history to the status of universal humanity" (169). This murky critique of the present; namely, of technology and capitalism as predatory stages of liberalism, expands what Schmitt asserted in the first paragraph of the review of Löwith's book. Schmitt characterizes as "activist attempts" these modern efforts that "give meaning to the meaningless"; that is, to the factual surface of what can be calculated, molded, created, and eventually destroyed by the human forces of technology. These themes, Schmitt remarks, become necessary concepts for the reader of *Meaning in History*. One of Löwith's merits was to not indulge himself nor the reader in a scholarly exercise in "humanistic self-mirroring" (170). Rather, *Meaning in History* captured the historical singularity of Christianity and elevated history as the dimension where "the eternal" is "inserted into the course of time" (170). "Through scarcity [*Mangel*] and impotence [*Ohnmacht*], this history is the hope and honor of our existence" (170). Authentic existence, thus, is banned from a blustering techno-economic age. The "hope" [*Hoffnung*]" and "honor" [*Ehre*] of "our existence" [*unseres Dasein*][396] signify for Schmitt the assaulted dignity of a Christian self-consciousness that despite being displaced, is still not totally alienated from a history encoded in the exponential progress of the factual. Technological bliss gives rise to spiritual decay.

3.9 "Drei Hundert Jahre *Leviathan*" (1951)

Numbers and dates became more than simple data for Schmitt from 1945 onward. If the volume on Donoso constantly repeated the importance of the year 1848, this little essay on the anniversary of Hobbes's *Leviathan* will do the same but from a greater perspective. These brief considerations revolve around the importance of Hobbes's infamous book *Leviathan* and touch upon how the English philosopher was targeted as a scapegoat [*Sündenbock*]—much like Schmitt himself felt treated after his detention in Nuremberg.[397] Schmitt mentions

396. 2014f, 165.
397. Recently, an interpreter has claimed this knee-jerk interpretation as a crucial unmasking. See Tralau, 2013, 177–178: "Schmitt's puzzling interpretation of Hobbes's puzzling image is a mirror image of his own problems with the National Socialist state: he creates an image with which he cannot identify, a 'battle image' that is so ambiguous that it cannot be used in battle; for after the demise of the statehood to which he himself adheres he can no longer take part in the battle for the state." The fact that Schmitt identified himself with the times and

the year of publication of *Leviathan*—1651—Hobbes's age at the time—63—and the year of Hobbes's birth, 1588. Although this numerical fixation may not appear significant at first glance, in the next sentence, Schmitt uses the expression "[i]n the meantime" [*Inzwischen*], to refer not only to the three hundred years that passed between 1651 and 1951 but, moreover, to the factual historical time, indebted and ruled by the very themes unearthed by Hobbes; namely, the biblical figure of the Leviathan:

> We would actually be fools, if we celebrated the Moloch, who threatens to devour us. But we would deceive ourselves if we wanted to close our eyes before a reality that daily grips us more strongly.
> The Leviathan appears in many figures, as mortal God and great man, as great animal and great machine.[398]

Moloch, the Canaanite god of fire and war, was strongly active in twentieth-century Europe. Symbols and allegories are for Schmitt—progressively from the mid-1940s and exponentially by the early 1950s—esoteric thresholds to decipher present times. They are not worn out, irrational accesses to world phenomena, but dark mediums of comprehension. This explains the link between Moloch and "a reality," and thus, too, the many faces of Leviathan. In "Drei Hundert *Leviathan*," Schmitt is interested in the technological aspect of this figure and the taboo-breaker that was Hobbes. He even names Orwell's *1984* as a "futural vision" where "all the collectivistic consequences of the great machine are drawn" (95). Orwell's book was a lucid contribution to the sphere of individual self-awareness in the age of technology—as 1984 was contained within the Leviathan's shadow. Schmitt, just as Paul Valéry had already stated in 1928,[399] mentions "[t]he social registration and recording" as

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life of Hobbes is quite obvious. He made the very same from his early writings, like Donoso or—privately—with Othello. Tralau does not mentions "Drei Hundert Jahre *Leviathan*" nor the personal and public context of Schmitt during the 1950s. For a more detailed account on the English philosopher and the German jurist, see Bredekamp 2016, 92: "Nach Hobbes Umdeutung der Ungeheuer aus dem Buch Hiob, nach der Rückkehr zum Alten Testament durch Blake und nach der Kritik an Hobbes Bestimmung der Tiere durch Schmitt liegt hierin die vierte, systematische Wandlung dieser mythischen Tiersymbole der Macht."

398. Schmitt 2018d, 94–95.

399. See Valéry 1971, 226: "Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign. Just as we are accustomed, if not enslaved, to the various forms of energy that pour into our homes, we shall find it perfectly natural to receive the ultrarapid variations or oscillations that our sense organs gather in and integrate to form all we know. I do

something inescapable. No margins shall be left for the omnipresent "social welfare state," not even the "old state governed by the rule of law [*alter Rechstaat*]" (95). This was Hobbes's endeavor; namely, to delve into the dangers of this proto-machine and its ongoing optimization. However, to identify the crushing powers of technology within the eventual crumbling of the old state led the public to treat Hobbes as a scapegoat. According to Schmitt, the English philosopher was identified as "the originator and discoverer of the monster that he so intelligently treated" (95). The reader might be surprised to find that Schmitt is not exaggerating.[400] On the contrary, he sympathizes with the downtrodden Hobbes, for "[n]othing is easier than to stir up the public at a health resort against a doctor who has diagnosed a case of the plague" (95). The public blamed the messenger, not the message. However, before *Leviathan* came *The Prince*. Schmitt here compares two of his fellow spirits and their relation to the figure of the "scapegoat." Schmitt reminds the reader of a logical hypothesis that he put forward in *Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber*.[401]

> If Machiavelli were really a Machiavellian, he would not have written his infamous writings, but rather edifying, directly anti-Machiavellian books, brimming over with reaffirmations of peace in which he declares all his opponents to be rapscallions and criminals, whom he is nevertheless gladly ready to forgive if they only allow themselves to be instructed.[402]

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not know whether a philosopher has ever dreamed of a company engaged in the home delivery of Sensory Reality."

400. See Hull 2009, 1–2: "As early as 1673, one Dr. John Templar was moved to declare that Hobbes was the 'Malmesburian Hydra, the enormous Leviathan, the gigantic dragon, the hideous monstrosity and British Beast, the Propagator of execrable doctrines… the Nonsensical roguish vendor of falsifications.' […] Variations of this view continue to the present; writing at the midpoint between Hobbes's time and our own, Marx tersely observed that, in Hobbes, 'materialism becomes misanthropic'"; Mitchell 1993, 78–100, here 78: "Making Hobbes into a purely political figure, not attending to the theological context of his thinking, makes him, first, a scapegoat and then, perhaps, a convenient player in the mythical debate between the (secular) moderns and the ancients—a debate that supposes already that Christianity does not matter!"; see also Malcolm 2016, 113–136, here 113–114: "Thomas Hobbes was never a philosopher for the *bien pensants*. In the period between the publication of his most famous work, *Leviathan*, in 1651 and his death in 1679 he was the target of frequent attacks by academics, Anglican priests, bishops, and even a former Lord Chancellor. […] Many reproached him for believing that 'might is right,' substituting brute force for all the traditional justifications of political rule, and thus defending the power of tyrants"; Raylor 2010 153–164, here 155: "Yet external testimony suggests that, deprived of court protection, Hobbes was in real danger in Paris. Clarendon later recalled an imminent move against him by the French authorities. Such evidence also supports Hobbes's claim that his banishment from the court was a direct consequence of priestly displeasure over *Leviathan*."

401. Schmitt 2017b, 39–40.

402. Schmitt 2018d, 96.

This same logic applies to Hobbes. While the English philosopher created an ambiguous approach to his masterwork—by using as a frontispiece for his book the unsettling "figure of a giant whose torso emerges from the crest of the hills and towers heavenward"[403]—the truth is that with *Leviathan* Hobbes became "the first systematic thinker of modern individualism" (97). "Individual," indeed, is the keyword for Hobbes's understanding of modern politics. Schmitt lists three major contributions made by the author of *De Cive*:

> He intones the mutual relation between protection and obedience. He can distinguish enemy and criminal and always strictly upheld this fundament of all human law. He was the first who declared the retroactivity of penal law to be unjust and who overcame the obfuscation of this principle in natural law.[404]

Otherwise put, Hobbes championed the value of life, individual life, above everything else [405]—which explains the asymmetric relationship that the English philosopher posits between "protection and obedience" and the great reward of "life." The preservation of human life and its cessation is an essential element of penal law, the very discipline where Schmitt made his debut as an author[406]—and, of course, the concept of "individual life," highly akin to that of Hobbes, is crucial in Schmitt's first monograph and in his early analysis of Schopenhauer.[407] All in all, Hobbes thought and acted amidst turbulent times. His vision of the "commonwealth" arose before, during, and after civil wars.[408] Thus, Schmitt mirrors

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403. Bredekamp in Springborg 2007, 29–60, here 32, 48. Bredekamp rightly stresses Hobbes's deep awareness of the frontispiece and its meaning. The German art historian considers that "[b]y means of a visualization of the dichotomous forms of sovereignty and representation they show rather Hobbes's desire to grasp the concept of the political in all its complexity."
404. Schmitt 2018d, 97.
405. Hobbes 1998, II–38, 297: "The maintenance of civil society, depending on justice; and justice on the power of life and death, and other less rewards and punishments, residing in them that have the sovereignty of the commonwealth; it is impossible a commonwealth should stand, where any other than the sovereign, hath a power of giving greater rewards than life, and of inflicting greater punishments than death."
406. See Agamben 2012, 166: "In pratica io sono partito dal diritto penale, dove ho sostenuto una bella dissertazione di puro diritto penale (al cento per cento). Per il mio Maestro ho scritto su argomenti di diritto penale: per esempio sul tema del *nulla pena sine lege*, che però attiene anche al diritto costituzionale."
407. Schmitt 2017e, 167: "Es handelt sich also immer um den individuellen Willen, nicht um den allgemeinen Willen, der allem Leben und aller Erscheinung wesentlich ist. Die Ausdrücke Bejahung und Verneinung des individuellen Willens setzen selbständige Individualitäten voraus, die als solche sich gegen eine Verneinung verteidigen dürfen, und deren Wert somit in ihrer Individualität besteht."
408. See Lubienski 2009, 175–190, here 181: "All these struggles and controversies made a deep impression on Thomas Hobbes and inspired his political writings, which were composed chiefly in the eventful years between 1640–1650. S.R. Gardiner maintains in his *History of the Commonwealth* that Hobbes's political

himself in his perpetual reappraisal of Hobbes. The German critic of liberalism now longs for the mercifulness of the individual life:

> Whoever has once fallen into the role of the scapegoat has it hard. The scapegoat has no right to a hearing and no prospect of mercy. This lies in the nature of the matter. He ought indeed to pay for all, and when humans are once unified upon a scapegoat capable of bearing it, they will not easily renounce such a useful animal [*sie nicht leicht auf ein so nützliches Tier verzichten*].[409]

Guilt, injustice, sacrifice, dehumanized life. This is the price to pay for the courageous messenger who delivers the war-like, Molochian postcard of the future to the denizens of Eusapia.[410] However, and beyond Schmitt's sympathies toward Hobbes, the scientific-academic edition of the works of the English philosopher has transformed the prejudices built up over centuries regarding Hobbes. Schmitt mentions some articles dedicated to the author of *Leviathan*, one by Karl Pollack and the other by Kurt Schilling. The former account responsible to "Hobbes for the communist world-revolution and total collectivization," and the second posed "the question whether today there may still be another reasonable and passable exit out of the oppositions of our congealed politics other than *Hobbes*'s doctrine of the state and society."[411] According to Schmitt, such a range of theoretical discrepancies meant that the twentieth-century oriental world still found in Hobbes "an exploitable potential, an essential piece of Occidental rationalism, which it deploys for itself, whether

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theories were a reaction of monarchic ideas caused by the excessive parliamentarism which drove the country to long civil war. Indeed, not only Hobbes's monarchic views, but in all his system it is easy to detect repercussion of contemporary events"; see also Skinner 1966, 286–317, here 288: "Hobbes had first gained this high reputation among the continental *savants* a generation earlier, during his eleven years' exile from the civil wars in England. […] Many of the scientists and philosophers Hobbes is known to have met there were to become avowed followers and popularizers of his political theories. Several of them corresponded with Hobbes and even visited him after his return to England in 1651."

409. Schmitt 2018d, 97.

410. See Calvino 1978, 109: "No city is more inclined than Eusapia to enjoy life and flee care. And to make the leap from life to death less abrupt, the inhabitants have constructed an identical copy of their city, underground. All corpses, dried in such a way that the skeleton remains sheathed in yellow skin, are carried down there, to continue their former activities. And, of these activities, it is their carefree moments that take first place: most of the corpses are seated around laden tables, or placed in dancing positions, or made to play little trumpets."

411. See Rasch 2019, 7: "Schmitt, following Hobbes, houses concrete reason in the modern European state. That is, part of Schmitt's political theology consists in asserting that the sixteenth century, post-Westphalian state becomes the functional equivalent of the medieval church after the Reformation splintered Christianity's authority. [...] As with Hobbes, sovereignty remains the linchpin for the political in its secularized form."

this is now in dealing with atomic nuclear research or *Hegel*'s dialectic of history" (99). On the contrary, for the West, the bitter confirmation of Hobbes's "commonwealth"—the antithesis of civil war—has necessarily been accepted. Schmitt asserts that a third actor must take the gauntlet and provide a "great succession"—that is, Germany. "This is a world-historical process, to the knowledge of which the *Leviathan* of *Thomas Hobbes* also pertains."[412] Was Schmitt the scapegoat of this new stage of the "world-historical" process?

2.6 "Die Einheit der Welt" (1952)

Perhaps it is because it was first presented "in the Stadtgarten restaurant, in Cologne" as one of the activities of the recently formed "Academia Moralis,"[413] the think-tank of older and new disciples of Schmitt—and then read at a conference entitled "La unidad del mundo," at the University of Murcia, Spain, between 1950 and 1951—that "Unity of the World" represents one of Schmitt's bleakest statements on the drab landscape that appeared on the world history horizon. Whilst his writing in the 1950s contains cryptic sentences and beguiling opinions of the present, with "Unity of the World," Schmitt leaves no doubt regarding what he stands for in political terms:

> The unity of the World—of which I speak here—is not the universal biological unity of human species, nor a type of self-evident ecumene that notwithstanding all human oppositions, was somehow present in some form in every era. It is also not the unity of traffic [*Weltverkehrs*], commerce [*Welthandels*], postal service [*Weltpostvereins*] or such—rather, something more difficult and harsher. It is the unity of the organization of human power, which plans to guide and rule the whole Earth and humanity. The great problem is whether the Earth is already ripe for a unique center of political power.[414]

Schmitt's deep fear regarding the future of the Earth as a single unit of condensed power is evident. In the four paragraphs that divide his considerations regarding the "unity of the

412. Schmitt 2018d, 99.
413. See Mehring 2014, 462–463.
414. Schmitt 1995, 496.

earth," scholarly references are given in order to highlight the importance of unity within the human sphere—mathematics, theology, philosophy, morality, and politics are all invoked. As the figure through which divinity expresses its holy perfection, the unity must not be sought, according to Schmitt, in human endeavors. He even posits that the "Babylonian confusion" is more desirable than the "Babylonian unity." Schmitt suggests that if something such as the unity of the world were to become real, it would only be possible through the modern means provided by the "technical-industrial worldview" (494).

Time and again, Schmitt states that the origin of the historical debauchery of the present leads back to the year 1848. Outstanding observers and well-trained thinkers foresaw the upcoming technology-driven world born in the aftermath of 1848. The earth became a surface for technocracy and its never-ending planning—"the planet shrinks," adds Schmitt. Nonetheless, the "contemporary aircrafts, electric waves or atomic energy" outstrip in every sense the modest technological artifacts of that time. Just like Benjamin eerily announced in a peculiar fragment of 1921,[415] Schmitt too posits that this eventual "unity of the world" will act as a "religion" (504). The jurist considers both the "Stimson Doctrine" and Henry L. Stimson's Western film-like statement "today the earth is too small for two opposite systems" (510). Schmitt argues that this astonishing assertion even establishes a "metaphysical viewpoint"—although Stimson was thinking in "positive-pragmatist" terms (510). In Stimson's unheralded statement about world politics, an "involuntary" philosophical reflection—voiced by an American politician educated in the pluralist tradition of William James—meets world history. Unity became the word of the day.

In the second paragraph of "Die Einheit der Welt," Schmitt comes up with the paradox that the longing for unity is built on the contemporary dualism represented by the "colossal and inimical" opposition of East and West—or "capitalism" and "communism" (529). Any dualism demands a "decision." Until then, the individual could experience the thrilling tension of dualism as an eternal force. However, Schmitt thinks that such tension [*Spannung*] represents the transition toward unity [*Übergang zur Einheit*], "the last round in the great

415. Benjamin 2002, 289: "The nature of the religious movement which is capitalism entails endurance right to the end, to the point where God, too, finally takes on the entire burden of guilt, to the point where the universe has been taken over by that despair which is actually its secret *hope*. Capitalism is entirely without precedent, in that it is a religion which offers not the reform of existence but its complete destruction."

battle for the unity of the world."[416] As one of these rivals is defeated, the champion will be the "only master of the world" (530). Schmitt, however, strives to establish a broader analysis of this phenomenon. He seeks to arrive at an alternative solution to "today's dualist tension." As the earth is still—and will be—bigger than any "Eastern communism," a "third factor" is yet to be unfolded—Schmitt toys with "China, India or Europe, the British Commonwealth, the Hispanic-Lusitanian world, the Arab block, and several other unexpected approaches to a plurality of great-spaces" (530). All in all, the jurist stresses the temporal aspect that dualism is subject to. Thus, a future "equilibrium" can be seen.

Schmitt sketches the outlines of the philosophy of history here at stake. Indeed, in the times where the Iron Curtain defined the global participants in world politics, a "common ground" had to be acknowledged. Schmitt refers to Rudolf Kaßner's interpretation of *des Eisernen Vorhanges* as the separation of "existence and non-existence, of existence and idea" only to discard this thesis and stress instead his own thesis regarding the "commonality" between both rivals; namely, the philosophy of history underlying in the aforementioned "dualism." Modern-day technocracy and also communism are unconsciously indebted to this "philosophy of history." Although all ages have more or less depended on "the course of history," the contemporary "age of planning is in a special sense that of the philosophy of history"—"planning" matches the development of such a *Geschichtphilosophie* (530). Schmitt here anticipates the future analysis that he will develop in the 1950s in his critique of Marxism. Marx's appropriation of Hegel's philosophy of history—he "preserves" its "structure"—spins its dialectical wheels on a "materialistic" surface. "The opposition of materialism and idealism becomes superfluous when all matter becomes radiation and all radiation becomes matter"[417]—according to Schmitt's depiction of the bludgeoned present. The Five-Year Plan was possible precisely because it was embedded in a philosophy of history; this intensified the dialectical dynamics posited by Hegel's comprehension of history." The link between a metaphysical conception of history and the current historical development of a people's entrance into history—"a concrete situation"—is never explicated better by Schmitt or with more powerful philosophical concepts than in these lines. The closest intellectual opponent to Hegel's "philosophy of history" would have to be Toynbee,

416. Schmitt 1995, 499.
417. Schmitt 1995, 501.

and even his thesis on history as the burgeoning and rising of successive civilizations wanes when compared to Hegel's. The "self-interpretation" of the West is insufficient; and along with Toynbee's macro-explanation, Western statistical scholars pinpoint the booming population growth as the cause of global conflicts. This view is rooted in the previous works of Saint Simon, Comte, and Herbert Spencer—that is, progress as the inner process of history.

The Western intellectual "credo" is anchored in a vision of man as a self-productive agent—a self-made man, so to speak:

> These masses have a religion of technification, and every technical progress appears to them as a perfection of man himself, a direct step to the earthly paradise of the *one world*. Their evolutionist credo builds a straight line of human ascension. Man—a being extremely weak and needy by nature—uses technology to create a new world in which he is the strongest—even the only being. The dangerous question of who is concentrated in this monstrous power over other people, which is associated with this increase in technical means, must not be posited.[418]

Schmitt locates in the intellectual efforts of the eighteenth and nineteenth century the metaphysical sources of this "credo," now "enhanced" [*gesteigerte*] through modern technology. However, by outstripping the human sphere in general—politics, morality, art, etc.—technology cannot establish ad hoc a series of moral values. Schmitt paraphrases Otto Heuschele's quotation of Goethe's caveat on how an "increase" in power destroys [*zerstört*] man as it does not go hand in hand with an increase of goodness, too.[419] From this perspective, Schmitt is aware that the so-called "masses" do not regret nor pay any heed to Goethe's admonishment. They are enchanted with this "technological world." Lenin's vision of an "electrified earth"[420]—Schmitt is probably thinking about Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov's address to the Council of People's Commissars on 22 December 1920—matches from the East this magical portrayal of a wholly connected planet. The commonality mentioned earlier proves to be accurate indeed:

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418. Schmitt 1995, 503. "One World" is given in English.
419. Heuschele 1980, 14.
420. Lenin 1966, 420: "Economic success, however, can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state effectively controls a huge industrial machine built on up-to-day technology: that means electrification."

> West and East are today separated by an iron curtain. But the waves and corpuscles of a common philosophy of history penetrate through the curtain and form the unfathomable unity through which contemporary worldly duality is dialectically made possible. The enemies meet in a self-interpretation of their historical state.[421]

In the fourth and final paragraph of *Unity of the World*, Schmitt ponders whether this dualism will lead to the ultimate unity—the enclosure of the world itself—or to a new "multiplicity" [*einer neuen Vielheit*]. A tormented landscape will soon be juxtaposed against contemporary reality. Moral and technological progress will part ways. The question now reaches its decisive aspect: "Does it follow that the present dualism is only the final stage before unity?" Schmitt does not agree. A positive answer to such a question would presuppose the endorsement of this "philosophy of history." Furthermore, in this expression there is more philosophy than history. Any idea of history, whether it be vague, general, or even a great interpretation, can be understood as a "philosophy of history." From this perspective, pagans, Christians, and Jews also elaborated their very own philosophical image of history. Is this so? Schmitt considers this an adulteration [*eine Fälschung*] of what truly constitutes a "philosophy of history." Regarding this point, Schmitt presents several ideas. For example; that it is, first and foremost, "a component of human planning"—a "planning" embedded in an interpretation of history typical of the Enlightenment. The "philosophical" aspect of this interpretation becomes "concrete" as it expands the supposed monopoly of reality, which is ruled by "intelligence and science." When it comes to its normative dimension, this philosophy of history cements a scheme based on questions and answers—wherein such questions and answers are previously decided as valid or not by this very same cognitive monopoly. In this sense, this philosophy of history distinguishes itself not only from the theological interpretation of history but, moreover, from any "image of history" that does not submit [*unterwirft*][422] to its monopoly.

Schmitt's final reflections in "Die Einheit der Welt" follow those of Löwith's in *Meaning in History*; namely, that the philosophical conception of history in modernity starts with Voltaire. "The philosophy of history becomes historical," adds Schmitt. However, this knowledge is then objectified by those planners "who handle science and intelligence" (536).

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421. Schmitt 1995, 504.
422. Schmitt 1995, 505.

This objectification operated in the same vein as "Hegel's philosophy of history." Defying this earthly grandeur of "planners," Schmitt sentences that history will always be greater than any philosophy of history and that that the "contemporary dualism of the world" is nothing but a "preliminary stage," not of its unity but of a new multiplicity.

However, the conference that Schmitt gave at the University of Murcia in 1952 contains several remarks that are not included in "Die Einheit der Welt." For example, in the first paragraph of "La unidad del mundo," Schmitt reflects that "[e]l espíritu humano se halla hoy en trance crítico," which one should read as "the human spirit is today called into question," as "en trance crítico" is a rough Spanish translation of *in Frage stellen*, one of Schmitt's "existential" expressions that his Spanish translators—his daughter Anima being among them—tried to preserve in Spanish. Likewise, in "La unidad del mundo," Schmitt reminds us that Dostoevsky had already foreseen this "unity of the world" and pictured it as a nightmare.[423] Considerations on Nietzsche's "eternal return" as a new type of paganism or the ancient belief of the path of mankind across the four elements—"earth, water, air, and fire"—are made in order to assert that the contemporary age of the world belongs to the age of fire, the age "of explosions and the engine," and that "from the ashes of this age will be reborn a phoenix that will point out the beginning of a new cycle."[424] The most crucial passage of "La unidad del mundo" is to be found right after this mention of the age of fire.

> The ancient Stoics saw in the opportunity of the philosophical suicide a sort of humanitarian sacrament. Perhaps this would be tremendous but not absolutely unthinkable—that humanity commits this act with utter premeditation. The technic unity of the world makes possible too the technic death of humanity, and this death would be the breaking point of world history, a collective analogue of the Stoic interpretation—of which according to, the suicide of the individual represents the turning point of his liberty and the only sacrament that man can submit to himself.

Never did Schmitt pronounce darker words about the fate of humanity. Indeed, in the fifth paragraph of "La unidad del mundo" he warns the reader about "these frightful

423. Schmitt is probably referring to Dostoevsky's impressions of the Crystal Palace. See Dostoevsky 2001, 27–34.
424. Schmitt 1950, 351.

considerations." It is important to say, as the run-of-the-mill interpreter of Schmitt might not know, that both "La unidad del mundo" and "Die Einheit der Welt" are heavily influenced by Valéry's 1919 *La crise de l'esprit*—the first modern reflection to state that civilizations can die just like an individual dies.[425] To oppose this trend, Schmitt summons "historical forces" much greater than those that rose two-and-a-half centuries ago. These are the "splendid possibilities of a Christian image of history" (353). Schmitt is explicitly referring to his review of Löwith's book on Christian eschatology. Furthermore, Schmitt once again mentions the figure of the "Kat-echon" and the "great parallel" between the age of the Caesars and the contemporary stage of world history in order to prove the many alternatives still available within a "Christian vision of history." They are beyond any "utopias or uchronias," and beyond the suicide of a technology-driven humanity—Schmitt depicts this last alternative as "choosing death by shipwrecking within pure technicity" (354). The non-normative comprehension of history developed in "Die Lage" and later in *The Historical Structure of the Contemporary World-Opposition* are sketched here for the first time. A "Christian image of history" is the philosophical alternative that Schmitt will oppose to Marxism. Otherwise put, the "great parallel," the "Kat-echon" and all the other concepts and formulae that he will elaborate during the 1950s represent in conjunction the intellectual and spiritual *agon* that aims to rescue the lost consciousness of Germany and Europe.

425. See Paul Valéry 1963, 23: "Elam, Nineveh, Baylon were but beautiful vague names, and the total ruin of those worlds had as little significance for us as their very existence. But France, England, Russia… these too would be beautiful names. *Lusitania*, too, is a beautiful name. And we see now that the abyss of history is deep enough to hold us all [*l'âbime de l'historie est assez grand pour tout le monde*]. We are aware that a civilization has the same fragility as a life."

CHAPTER 4
THE QUESTION OF A PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Introduction

While chapter 3 provided a chronologically reconstruction of Schmitt's key texts of early 1950s, chapter 4 broadens the conceptual dimension of such material through a bibliographical survey of Schmitt's work. In this perspective, this chapter aims to systematize the texts where Schmitt's envisioned of a "philosophy of history". The reader should be reminded that Schmitt was no philosopher—at least not in the traditional sense, say, like Heidegger or Adorno—, and that his longing for establishing the fundamentals for a philosophy of history was cemented from a legal scope, now spiritually enhanced after grasping the immense historical horizon that came after 1848. Although his professional career was irretrievable, the intellectual isolation and new, young acquaintances—like Reinhart Koselleck or Ernst Wolfgang Böckenforde—gave Schmitt momentum, and a chance to be drawn some other subjects. A set of philosophical problems—which concerned strictly to newborn disciplines, such as hermeneutics, comparative literature, and Marxist historiography—were now plucked by Schmitt from unusual conceptual sources. An unrequired opportunity knocked to his door, and he took it right away. The "chameleon"[426] was suddenly granted with historical vistas on which he inventively reflected on, although retaining his central thesis of his early works. Chapter 4, then, reviews the conceptual shift of Schmitt's thought in the late 1950s, by addressing his radiobroadcasts, correspondence, reviews and some other brief publications.

4.1 *Nehmen, Teilen, Weiden. Ein Versuch, die Grundfragen jeder Social-und Wirtschaftsordnung von Nomos her richtig zu stellen* (1953)

In this first appendix of *Nomos*, Schmitt develops an analysis of the Greek word *nomos* that aims to provide a global comprehension of the term—namely, beyond the "scholarly" approach adopted by etymologists. Schmitt offers a "simpler" method; that is, to determine

426. Kaiser 2020, 3-4.

"the structure of various social orders and doctrines in all the specialized disciplines, and in finding the proper formulation of the questions with respect to the core of their ethic and their view of history" (325). Such an approach, then, aims to identify a structure—and thus, historical dynamics. Schmitt's appendix is divided into five brief sections.

In the first one, Schmitt reflects on the semantic vicinity between the Greek *nemein* and the German *nehmen*—a link also shared by *legein* (derived from *logos*) and *sprechen* (derived from the German word for language, *Sprache*). A second level of meaning is found in *nemein*, which appears as the German *teilen*. Possession and division emerge as a single original phenomenon that logically leads to distribution. Schmitt acknowledges Hobbes as the first modern thinker to recover this second semantic layer; that is, "division and distribution." Otherwise put, Schmitt stresses the interwoven condition of social life and its property—persons and things. A third meaning of *nemein* is *pasturage* [*weiden*],[427] the action of producing within property—through it, *nemein* acquires a deep technological dimension.

In the second paragraph of this appendix, Schmitt asserts that "these three processes" are the coordinates present "[i]n every stage of social life, in every economic order," and "in every period of legal history until now" (327). The place which each stage occupies within the hierarchy—depending on the "concrete" moment in which they take place—is, according to Schmitt, the "major problem." The order and sequence of the stages that these processes unfold "even changes in the image people have of themselves, of their world, and of their historical situation."[428] Schmitt argues that until the Industrial Revolution, the land was "the foundation of all productivity"—which explains the historical phenomenon of "land appropriation." The land was the matrix for any further "distribution" and "any subsequent cultivation" (328). The reader here is offered a primal image of world history—or a non-Marxist conception of history as a "class-struggle" process. "Land appropriation is always the ultimate legal title for all further division and distribution, thus for all further production," Schmitt concludes (328). But is not this *nomos* and its threefold process a primary example of juridical fiction? Viewed from a perspective beyond the mythical bustle, *nomos* and its

427. See Nietzsche 2006, 216–217: "When Zarathustra had left the ugliest human being, he was freezing and he felt lonely; after all, so much that was cold and lonely went through his mind, to the point where even his limbs grew colder because of it. But as he climbed further and further, up, down, now past green meadows [*an grünen Weiden vorbei*], but then also across wild stony deposits where previously an impatient brook might have laid itself to bed, then all at once his mood became warmer and more cordial."
428. Schmitt 2003, 328.

threefold processes simply imply power, brute force. His mention of the "man-earth" relationship ends in a grand show of forces. Schmitt links biblical narrative—via Plato and then Hobbes—with factual history. It is quite the story.

In the third paragraph, Schmitt mentions an occasion when Lenin attended a speech by Chamberlain in order to illustrate the "land appropriation" thesis. Chamberlain's imperialism was, according to Lenin, "inhuman." "[I]mperialism was nothing more than theft and plunder" (331). By eschewing Chamberlain's vision of "land appropriation," Lenin sought an alternative and a more human justification of expansion. With it, Schmitt considers that "socialism falls in with classical political economy and its liberalism" (331). But why? Liberalism endorses production through its ideology of "progress and economic freedom" (331). These elements are greatly expanded by technology to the point that "land appropriation" and "production" become "irrational" (331). The social dimension is deeply affected by an antisocial guidance of economic powers. However, this dimension is precisely what socialism supports and protects. The social aspect of life is championed by "all political parties in contemporary European democracies" (331).

Schmitt briefly comments on this phenomenon's place in mid-twentieth-century Germany—a theme to which he seldom referred after 1945—and stresses the current promotion of the democratization of "individual property ownership" to a "surplus (plural-, joint-) ownership" (333). Schmitt is convinced, and persuades the reader too, that in the early fifties, Germany was a "socialist democracy." In defending a democratic conception of property, socialism is confronted with the problem of "division and distribution," leading to a mishmash of interpretations and conceptions that "collectively are called 'socialist' and are said to fly the socialist flag." Schmitt recognizes in the utopianism of Charles Fourier—specifically, his idea of massive production as the solution to the problems derived from "division and distribution"—"a clear position with respect to the basic questions, and, thereby, to affirm the contemporary tie of socialism to the historical vision of technological progress and its unlimited increase in production."[429] Proudhon, one of the thinkers whose position Schmitt used to contrast his own, went as far as to call for land redistribution—taking the whole "land appropriation" phenomenon to a new moral sphere. Marx, on the other hand, sustains his position "in terms of a philosophical and historical dialectic." According

429. Schmitt 2003, 333.

to this view, "the bourgeois social order would suspend and destroy itself!" and the social dimension would eventually collapse as a result of the conflict between the growth and social order and the "inhuman" distribution. From this perspective, Schmitt is simpler, as he—continuing this extremely fictional perspective—entrusts the future to the party that already holds power—the landowners and their concrete "sequence." Early on, Schmitt stated that the shores of "socialism" and "liberalism" overlap. Socialism, by unleashing unknown stages of appropriation through the "expropriation of the expropriation," ends as "the strongest imperialism, because it is the most modern"—i.e., historically placed in a world wholly changed by technology. Time and again, Schmitt detaches himself from all the revised standpoints and merely concentrates on the "production" problem, where all social systems coalesce in a graded utopianism, for an unstoppable production would lead to the utter disappearance of the "economic systems," "because they always presuppose a certain scarcity" (335).

This first appendix of *Nomos* brings to mind the lucid diagnosis of Carl Brinkmann in 1925, who drew attention to the inner conflict between imperialism and the laws of "classical political economy concerning population and profit" (335). Schmitt supports this argument, although his concerns are located in other areas; namely, in the future stages that these three processes—"appropriation, distribution, and production"—will determine, and their impact on re-evaluated "social systems" through their legal and economic ramifications. Apocalyptic questions close the appendix, questions that, somehow, are eerily relevant for our present days.

> Has humanity today actually "appropriated" the earth as a unity, so that there is nothing more to be appropriated? Has appropriation really ceased? Is there now only division and distribution? Or does only production remain? If so, we must ask further. Who is the great appropriator, the great divider and distributor of our planet, the manager and planner of unified world production?[430]

Schmitt guarantees the reader that only by unearthing "original concepts" can a true answer be given to those enticing and ideologically charged questions. Both the concepts and their

430. Schmitt 2003, 335.

essential category have been put forward; that is, the *nomos*. Nonetheless, is this concept endurable enough to circumscribe an exotic, cryptic, and, at the same time, "concrete" approach toward the general draft of the "philosophy of history" that postwar Europe urgently needed and depended on?

4.2 *Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber*

The notion of "dialogue" does not do justice to this interaction originally written by Schmitt as a script to be interpreted and then broadcasted by Raymond Aron and himself[431]—Schmitt had practiced it previously with his daughter.[432] While the introduction provided by the English translators of this piece correctly addresses its origin and main biographical elements,[433] important remarks about the style and significance of this piece have yet to be fully noted. For example: although the English editors link this "dialogue" with Schmitt's "dialogues on Nazi power with the interrogators from Nuremberg"—along with other writings of his—and even comment on the text's resemblance to "Catholic education manuals that were typical of the 1920s and the 1930s"[434]—the reader will find no mention of the most important formal aspect of these *Dialogues*. That is, that the *Gespräch* is no dialogue, but rather an interrogation. As such, its formal structure is based on questions and answers—exactly the same model highlighted by Schmitt in his commentary of Jünger as the core structure employed to address a philosophy of history. Second, this scripted interrogation was meant to be performed live: which means, according to the formal statements regarding *Hamlet* in Schmitt's 1956 book, that this interrogation is a *play*—maybe even a "dumb show," just like "The Mousetrap" in *Hamlet*. From this perspective, it is not a "continuation of his dialogues on Nazi power" but rather a *play* that recalls Schmitt's subjection to interrogation in Nuremberg—ergo, it is a *play* on the Nuremberg interrogations but also on the ceremonial aspect of Nazi rallies. Third: while one can note the resemblance between this piece and dusty "Catholic education manuals," this interrogation was already outlined in one of Schmitt's early literary works; namely, his 1912 *Silhouettes* [*Schattenrise*].

431. Schmitt 2015d, 86n22.
432. Schmitt 2015d, 91n4.
433. See Kalyvas and Finchelstein in Schmitt 2015d, 1–14, here 1, 12–14, 88–89.
434. Schmitt 2015d, 10, 12–13. No examples from these manuals are given.

This early work is a parody that unfolds in twelve portraits of well-known German and non-German characters who belonged to the cultural atmosphere of the early twentieth century. Schmitt wrote it under the pen name of Johannes Negelinus, who states in the prologue: "Relativism is not dead, naturalism lives, and that belongs to the children of the century, too!"[435] While *Silhouettes* is neither a dialogue nor an interrogatory, it does offer a fictional portrayal of real people—just like the interrogation does and, later, the other "dialogue" published four years later—in an ironic and even mocking style. Schmitt's marked interest in literature, already seen in this parody but also in *Die Buribunken* and the short story "The Faithful Gypsy"—reaches its final form in the interrogatory published in 1954. Only by assembling these essential elements that implicitly surround the *Gespräche* can the reader fully appreciate its significance and importance.

The interrogation starts with "Y"—the "youth" or "the student" ["un joven estudiante, que pregunta], as it is depicted in the Spanish version[436]—and "C. S." (as in Carl Schmitt, a complex subject to play). The topic is quite clear: power. The viewpoint of "Y." is incisively moral. "C. S.," on the other hand, follows a merely "objective" criterion regarding the question of power. The latter states that "[h]e who speaks about power ought first to say in which power-situation he finds himself," only to then admit that he "belongs to the powerless" (27). "Y." immediately asks if, given such a condition, perhaps "C. S.'s" views on power might not be biased—conversely, the same would be true if "C. S." had or participated in power. Against this and any "intellectual" standpoint, "C. S." simply attempts "to see rightly a historical manifestation that we all experience and from which we all suffer" (26). This is how the presentation ends and gives way to the development of the interrogatory, which is divided into five paragraphs and one *intermezzo*—"that may be spoken by a third person" (27).

In the first paragraph, "Y." and "C. S." discuss the divine condition of power and its unholy modern version. Then the latter posits a general thesis on this transformation:

435. See Villinger 1996, 16. See also Huhnholz 2018, 74–88, here 80–88.
436. Schmitt 1963, 12.

> The human—by nature a weak form of life[437]—has raised itself above its environment with the help of technology. It has made itself into the Lord of Nature and of all earthly forms of life.[438]

Technology as the backdrop of the modern phenomenon of power will be a constant theme throughout the whole interrogation. Scholarly remarks by "C. S." answer the questions raised by "Y" regarding the genuine sources of power. Its origin, just like "the Latin adage: *Homo homini lupus*," must be traced to its pure execution; and thus, to its executant, who then becomes a God. Nonetheless, the core question within this "as above, so below" paradigm is that power "stems" from humans. "The human is a human to the human," asserts "Y.," confirming—or secularizing—the Latin adage (30).

The relationship between the immanency of power and obedience is tackled in the second paragraph: "He who does not have the power to protect someone also does not have the right to require obedience. And conversely: He who seeks protection and receives it has no right to withhold obedience."[439] Such a statement refers to the undeniable bond between security and obedience. In fact, "C. S." makes it crystal clear that he is thinking of "a political unity." "Y.'s" moralist "what-ifs" are rapidly extinguished by "C.S." and his dispassionate explanations regarding the coercive dimension of power. "Y." grasps the haunting potential of "contemporary power," to the point of picturing the contemporary holder of power as an almighty force. However, in the third paragraph, "C. S." warns "Y." about the autonomy of power, which encompasses even those who hold it. He is a human, after all, a mere biological episode that is born and dies. This "weakness" was the pillar of Hobbes's "state-construction," suggests "C. S." A spiritually-inspired technological sphere is created in order to raise a total apparatus of protection.

> But despite all of these protective measures, Hobbes says, in the right moment anyone can kill anyone. A weak man can come into the situation where he disposes of the

437. The expression "form of life" could ironically be taken from Eduard Spranger's considerations on the "man of power" as a type of "life form." See Spranger 1950, 212–235. In *Ex Captivitate Salus*, Schmitt critically addressed his old friend following the "questionnaire" he received from him in 1945. See Schmitt 2017, 15: "All that was right, all that rightness could provide, *iusta causa* and *res iudicata*, was on his side." At the end of this first paragraph, Schmitt considers himself "defenseless."
438. Schmitt 2015d, 28.
439. Schmitt 2015d, 31.

> strongest and most powerful man. On the points the humans are really equal, insofar as they are all threatened and endangered.[440]

This is the "objective" situation. Much to "Y.'s" dismay, "C. S." states that "consolation" or "angst" are considerable variables in the exercise of power. "C. S." talks at length of the "dialectics" of power; that is, "power and impotence" (34). The daily hardships of the holder of power, perpetually flooded with an "infinite sea of truth and lies," force him to delegate. Several unpredictable accesses to the source of power are demanded. The indirect path to the holder of power leads to an often-secret architecture of power. History proves it, and "C. S." provides the reader with several convincing examples. Another conclusive statement is established:

> In other words: in front of every chamber of direct power an antechamber of indirect influences and powers constructs itself, a path of access to the ear, a corridor to the soul of the holder of power. There is no human power without this antechamber and without this corridor.

How then can this untamed landscape of factual power be reconciled with its public display? Necessary as it is, the legal balance "cannot circumvent the antechamber itself" (36). Several portrayals of this "antechamber" are mentioned by "C. S."; "often, however, it is only a private cabinet" (36). One should not forget that this interrogation is a play. The mention of this "private cabinet" refers back to what happened before Schmitt's detention in Nuremberg; namely, his experience with power. Schmitt did not know Hitler, but he did know these golden-brown corridors of power.[441] "The process of constructing the corridor, which we're talking about here, plays itself out daily in minimal, infinitesimal maneuvers, on the grand scale and on the small scale, everywhere where humans exercise power over other humans."[442] Power consumes power to produce power. The dialectics of power are spatially

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440. Schmitt 2015d, 33–34.
441. See Ullrich 2016, 248: "Bursting with pride, Hess wrote to his parents: 'The showcase rooms, including the Führer's office, are so wonderfully beautiful that they could be used to receive any representatives of foreign states… My office is directly next to the Führer's, and next to his are the people who work for me, my office manager and two typists.'"
442. Schmitt 2015d, 37.

restrained.[443] Corridors and antechambers create distance. The holder of power becomes isolated. "No human power escapes this dialectic of self-assertion and self-alienation," concludes "C.S."

"Intermezzo: Bismarck and the Marquis Posa" is arguably one of the most enticing passages of the interrogation. The "dialectic" is exemplified by the use of "Bismarck's petition for release [*Entlassungsgesuch*] from 1890" (38). "C. S." demonstrates with this document how Bismarck, by championing "full liberty" regarding the self-information of "the Chancellor, the King and Kaiser," touched the core aspect of the problem of power (38). His position on the future "audience" with the king stresses "the problem of access to the peak" (39). The greatest tension through which the communicative means of power are revealed marks "the begin of the tragedy of the Second Reich" (39). The very same paradox is to be found, according to "C. S.," in Schiller's *Don Carlos*. In it, Phillip II is only accompanied by—and therefore, only accessible to—the Duke of Alba. A third character appears, Marquis Posa. As soon as he discovers a shortcut to the king, he is killed. The antechamber has endangered the cabinet. Power has defended itself.

In the fourth paragraph of the interrogation, "C. S." anticipates one of the main themes of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*; namely, the question of "succession." "Y.," on the other hand, yearns for "the splendor and misery of humans" (40). This leads her to the question of whether the exercise of human power by a human holder of power is "good or bad." The "friend and enemy" criterion helps to elucidate this: it depends on who is holding it. "Y." responds to "C. S.'s" erudite references with Jacob Burckhardt's maxim: "Power, in itself, is evil." "C. S." quickly corrects both "Y." and the origin of this phrase. At this point, "C. S.'s" overly-Socratic perspective becomes blind to other views. His mention of Gregory the Great regarding the divinity of power suffers an "essential" change. A "pious man of the seventeenth century held power to be good, while pious men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries held power for evil?" questions an alarmed "Y" (43). What has changed? Nietzsche's "God is dead" "and the other maxim *Power in itself is evil* both stem from the

443. See Kittler 2014, 213: "Carl Schmitt once wrote a short text, *Dialogue on Power and Approaching the Ruler* […], that culminates in the thesis that power amounts to its conditions of access: the antechamber, the office, or more recently, the front office consisting of a typewriter, a telephone, and a (female) secretary. With and by means of such instances of power, dialogue could in fact still occur. Technologically implemented levels of privilege, however, derive their power from the efficacy of silence […]."

same period and the same situation," acknowledges "C. S." The fifth and longest paragraph of this asymmetrical play develops Hobbes's theory on power before bringing the interrogation to an end.

Hobbes emphasized that technology helps mankind overcome its "biological weakness." This goes far beyond the predatory nature of humans posited by Spengler and mentioned by "Y." By 1650, the dangers posed by wild animals had been resolved by "the weapons of the human." The change came later.

> But today the dangerousness of the technological means has escalated boundlessly. Consequently the dangerousness of humans to other humans has correspondingly escalated as well. As a result the distinction between power and powerlessness is growing in such a boundless way, that it is drawing the concept of the human itself into fully new modes of questioning.[444]

"Y." is perplexed. Just as Schmitt asserted early in "Die Einheit der Welt," the advances in technology do not bring about advances in morality. Otherwise put, humans and their world are outstripped by technology. "Good or bad" no longer serves as a criterion. "Incalculability" surrounds normality by defeating the sporadic yet predictable exception. "The human brain," according to "Y.," has been bested. "Power has slipped out of human hands even more than has technology," according to "C. S." (45). Inventors unconsciously contribute to the work which transforms God: the "new Leviathan." Hobbes's state, "the machine of the machines," already exceeded "all human consensus" (46). Modern power dissociates from humans. It is now "an independent reality," suggests "C. S." Power is play and its display overcomes the players. "Power is stronger than any will to power, stronger than any human good and happily stronger than happy human evil as well," reads the statement that is designed to educate "Y." However, she fears that "C. S." is a Machiavellian. Time and again, "C. S." renews this prejudice: if that was the case, Machiavelli "would have written pious and devotional books, most likely an *Anti-Machiavelli*" (48). The interrogation comes full circle. The tables have been turned. "C. S." now asks "Y." if she has or does not have power. An answer is possible only with an example, which is what "Y." asks for. "C.

444. Schmitt 2015d, 44.

S." offers a quick description of the holder of power because, although one can give many examples, the crucial aspect of this "objective magnitude" is the possibility that "the real political power could appear publicly and visibly upon the political stage [*auf der politischen Bühne erscheint*].[445] Are these "practical applications" an ex-post message to those ministers and secretaries to which Schmitt became so close twenty years earlier? The dominant thesis, "the human is a human to the human," is now revealed as "the beginning of our problematic" to "Y." "C. S." ends with a quotation by Theodor Däubler: "To be human, nonetheless, remains a decision. / That shall be my last word" (49). Who were those, then, who resigned to be humans and decided which of their kin were to be above and which below?

4.3 *Die geschichtliche Struktur des heutigen Welt-Gegensatzes von Ost und West: Bemerkungen zu Ernst Jüngers Schrift: 'Der Gordische Knoten'* (1955)

Schmitt's erudite commentary of Jünger's *The Gordian Knot* (1953), included in the laudatory writings published for Jünger's sixtieth birthday, is a piece of its own. Although, as Mehring has stated, this article is "the most comprehensive account of his position" regarding the question of the *nomos* and the international affairs of global political players like Russia and the United States, compared to his little book on *Hamlet* or even to his review of Löwith's book, this essay has often been overlooked by Schmitt's interpreters. I would like to argue that this is perhaps the theoretical key to fully understanding Schmitt's reflections on history—and a philosophy of history—and one of the most ambitious and enticing reflections Schmitt ever wrote. I will prove this by studying the six sections of this essay, its main thesis, and its central theoretical elements.

Both Schmitt and Jünger think that the "geographic division" between "East" and "West" is secondary. Secondary here means a merely empirical description. By contrast, Jünger considers that the opposition as such is "a question of fate." How should the reader interpret said notion of "fate"? Schmitt scholarly reminds us of the origin of the expression "the Gordian knot." However, this specific analysis is not crucial for the moment. More important is Schmitt's interpretation of this legend; namely, that such a "knot"—or a "gnarl," as Schmitt likes to remind the reader of the text's authentic Arian heritage—can be cut off

445. Schmitt 2017b, 49.

by a single "sword stroke." This would be a "dictatorial-decisionistic" gesture. In any case, Schmitt makes no bones about the philological aspect of this image. He advances Jünger's conception of it; namely, the question of "polarity and transition" (103). This represents a model of analysis, and Schmitt will employ it throughout his general yet multitiered study. First, as a historical criterion, then as an epistemic device, and, finally, as a political argument. The reader must not forget that the early stages of the Cold War loom over both Jünger's and Schmitt's reflections.[446] Between the publication of *The Gordian Knot* and Schmitt's notes on it, the Korean War and the Warsaw Pact had already taken place.

Schmitt's first paragraph offers the vocabulary that will serve as a means of evaluation for this "contemporary world-opposition [*Welt-Gegensatz*]" (100). Schmitt refers to a "global tension" and to its "innermost opposition" (103). Much like he will do a year later in his book on *Hamlet*, here too, the reader is informed about the abundance of "historical interpretations" and bog-standard "diagnoses or prognoses"—just as in Schmitt's "Die Lage" article. It becomes crystal-clear that, once and again, Schmitt aims to reach a higher comprehension of the subject:

> But since the earth has become a surveyable globe even for our practical relation to space, the manifold rivalries and collisions of the great powers are elevated for a moment into a simple, global dualism. All the more does the question concerning the core and structure of this dualistic tension govern any further treatment.[447]

The earth as a "surveyable globe" [*einem übersehbaren Globus*][448] is a direct link to Schmitt's *Nomos,*[449] which means, therefore, that these comments on Jünger's *The Gordian*

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446. See Immerman & Goedde 2013, 9: "Most scholars now agree that once the political polarity is stripped away from the term "globalization," what is revealed is a long-term process that preceded the cold war; transformed and was transformed by the cold war; and continued at accelerated speed after the cold war. For cold war scholars the challenge thus becomes to determine precisely how the cold war altered the course of political, economic, and cultural globalization, whether it halted or simply redirected the trajectory of increasing international connectivity and exchange, and how these long-term processes of globalization might have altered or possibly even contributed to the demise of the cold war."
447. Schmitt 2018d, 103.
448. Schmitt 1995, 555.
449. Schmitt 2003, 86: "No sooner had the contours of the earth emerged as a real globe – not just sensed as myth, but apprehensible as fact and measurable as space – than there arose a wholly new and hitherto unimaginable problem: the spatial ordering of the earth in terms of international law. The new global image, resulting from the circumnavigation of the earth and the great discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries, required a new spatial order. Thus began the epoch of modern international law and lasted until the 20th

Knot unfold Schmitt's previous reflections on international politics and raise them toward a superior actualization of their theoretical elements. This intellectual gesture can be read inversely; that is, because these considerations also act as a self-laudatory exercise. The question of the "globe" was the starting point, and the "historical structure of the contemporary World-Opposition" is the major proof offered by the conceptual framework of the "*nomos*" that such a polarity can be rightly understood. On the contrary, the "historical, moral, cultural, and economic inventory" of the parties involved does not provide, through a simple comparative analysis, a convincing rationale with which such an opposition can be grasped. Schmitt eschews antitheses. Different criteria can provide a number of specificities at best, but do not lead to a global distinction. While Schmitt values Jünger's subtle differentiations—one should bear in mind how experienced the German writer was in establishing global descriptions, whether it was classifying insects or seeking comparisons between cultures[450]—these are left behind inasmuch as an ultimate criterion is needed in order to fully engage the spiritual core of the "contemporary World-opposition." Even Jünger's depiction of a final "world state" confirms, according to Schmitt, the fact that this global tension only "resituates" the current polarities, because "every solution […] signifies only a dissolution: circulation and dissolution of the problems, circulation and dissolution of the elites" (105).

The second paragraph of the essay expands on this last reflection. Schmitt unearths an expression found in Jean Gottmann's *La politique des États et leur géographie*, a long-forgotten French geographer. He posited the notion of *iconagraphie régionale*, a formula that condenses the manifoldness of every cultural "particular space." Likewise, the concept of "iconography" outperforms that of "ideology"—the latter circumscribes the political and, therefore, temporal dimension of a community, while the former is fixed in a "historically concrete" moment. Through such an expression, Schmitt stresses the concept's epistemic

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century." For an entirely different account of the question of the "globe" beyond the rather biased juridical-geopolitical scope of Schmitt, see Sloterdijk 2013, 21: "The world-navigators, cartographers, conquistadors, world traders, even the Christian missionaries and their following of aid workers who exported goodwill and tourists who spent money on experiences at remote locations – they all behaved as if they had understood that, after the destruction of heaven, it was the earth itself that had to take over its function as the last vault. This physically real earth, as an irregularly layered, chaotically folded, storm-eroded body, now had to be circumnavigated and quantified. Thus the new image of the earth, the terrestrial globe, rose to become the central icon of the modern world picture."

450. See Blumenberg 2007, 100: "Ernst Jünger ist ein erleuchteter Aufspürer von Analogien in Ober- und Unterwelten, in entfernten Kulturen und distanten Epoche. Was ihm auffält und zufällt sind die Ähnlichkeiten."

benefits regarding his current times and the need for a thorough yet global analysis. Focusing once and again on the backdrop of modern technology, Schmitt highlights how "iconography" can be seen in the contemporary development of "psychoanalysis" and "modern painting," for the former commences where old "iconographies" waned, and the latter develops its creations by destroying its own tradition. Three examples are given which belong to the Gordian knot paradigm.

> And finally both of these, among themselves in no way identical intrusions, stand manifestly in a relation with the depredations that the irresistible technologization wreaks in the East and in the West. The three intrusions—industrial technologization, psychoanalysis, and modern painting—can here be conceived by one differently: technologization as the sword, which cuts through the gnarl of old images and taboos, psychoanalysis as the loosing of the strap, and modern painting as a dissolution via overhaul.[451]

At this point, one can note how the roughly and briefly sketched "philosophy of history" present in Schmitt's review of Löwith's *Meaning in History* has now evolved into a conceptual meditation on the relationship between history and technology. Likewise, the notions with which *Hamlet oder Hekuba* treated the analysis of the bridged dimensions of theater and a "concrete historical situation" were already present in Schmitt's reflections on Jünger's *The Gordian Knot.* These "three intrusions" [*Einbrüche*] take the image of the "gnarl" toward a more concrete field; namely, the non-linear cooperation between history and art. History as a mere chronicle is outweighed by Schmitt's description of intrusions. The adopted expression of *iconographie régionale* is theoretically refurnished, giving birth to the concept of "intrusion." Put otherwise: by the latter notion, Schmitt means the cultural—and, therefore, political—dimension of a specific historical image of a people—be it the East or the West.[452] The "intrusions" operate within an ultimate framework, an "original opposition"

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451. Schmitt 2018d, 106–107.

452. This is the conceptual core of Hans Belting's monumental investigation of the history, function, and importance of the image regarding its pre-aesthetical stage—ergo, its origin as a Christian icon. See Belting 1994, 17: "Unlike medieval cult images in the West, the Eastern icon has always enjoyed a special place in modern thinking. The origin of its unique status is to be sought in the curious history of its rediscovery. Romantic utopias played a part in the mystique of icons but soon were dominated by issues of identity in Eastern

that Jünger could not see. "Every concrete localization is already a kind of visibility," asserts Schmitt in aphoristic fashion (106). If this is true, then every localization is already a kind of *nomos*—and every possibility projects itself against another visual unit. Gottmann's expression fueled Schmitt to elaborate a new "philosophy of history." Using Gottmann's notion of "iconography," Schmitt arrived at a theoretical threshold from which he promoted his own position regarding the Cold War as a renewed take on a long-standing opposition. The *iconographie régionale* gave Schmitt the opportunity to locate the dynamics of historical episode, but also prompt him to question his rigid theological comprehension of history.

The tormented Elizabethan years "were in reality battles for or against the image of Mary," and "[t]he war of images [*Bilderstreit*] in Byzantium touched in its theological foreground upon the Christian dogma of trinity" (107). However, any opposition inevitably occurs amidst a traffic of inputs and outputs on behalf of the parts involved. Here Schmitt departs from Gottmann's view, for the latter's scope proved to narrow the historical elements to particularities that do not establish a final opposition. From this perspective, East and West, considered through the criterion of *iconographie régionale*, establish a chaotic history of adaptations, interpretations, and complex cooperations.

In the third paragraph, Schmitt finally puts forward that long-desired opposition; that is, "land and sea." Nonetheless, are these concepts not unmistakably geographic? Schmitt considers "land and sea" to be an original opposition; namely, a clash between two spiritual forces: one deeply stationary and the other highly kinetic. "East and West" are, as far as differences go, "a composite continental land mass" on the one hand and "a hemisphere bedecked by world seas" on the other (109). Schmitt recognizes this opposition in Jünger's essay. However, in *The Gordian Knot,* the sea is valued according to incorrect parameters; that is, it is considered a matter of freedom—thus, of expansion—and property—therefore, of sovereignty. Schmitt recognizes this distinction already in Mackinder's 1919 *Democratic Ideals and Reality*—a book that reduces said opposition to a conventional "them and us" dichotomy—"barbarism and civilization." And although other authors pointed out similar arguments in the vein of those held by pioneer McKinder, Jünger's stand out due to his acceptance of a "polarity." However, Schmitt seeks a global criterion that assures an

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Europe, for the East used the icon as a means of self-assertion against the established culture of the rest of Europe by placing the icon outside the realm of historical thought."

epistemic endurance, a historical yield, and a political nature. All in all, Schmitt aims for structure, and the "land and sea" opposition provides it through its unique description of phenomenological features wide enough to cover massive historical segments and considerable periods of time.

> When the world-historical battle approaches its high point and both sides of the material, psychological, and spiritual forces are engaged to the extremes, then the enmity is spread across the entire environment of the battling peoples [*Völker*] and the opposition of the elements land and sea are drawn into the confrontation. The war then appears as a war of the land against the sea, or the sea against the land, as a war of the elements themselves.[453]

"Enmity" existentially—and historically—determines the agents—the "people"—driven by and with the "elements." The factual dimension of the ominous tension between the United States and the U.S.S.R.—anti-communist propaganda, brinkmanship, espionage between Moscow and Washington[454]—is nothing but the surface of a layered phenomenon that Schmitt aims to unravel to its Pindar-like core[455]. Schmitt agrees with the fact that a good number of similarities can be drawn regarding this "contemporary opposition"; "but despite the heuristic value of such historical parallels from out of the thalassic horizon," there is no "historical parallel" for "contemporary world dualism" (112). Just as he already had outlined in *Land and Sea*, Schmitt shifts from seventieth-century England to Napoleon in order to demonstrate the stability of the *nomos*. This equilibrium was disrupted for good in 1949, as the "oppositions between land and sea between East and West" took over international

453. Schmitt 2018, 111.
454. See Garthoff 1992, 287–293, here 288: "So the Cold War had both an ideological and geopolitical dimension. A Manichean Communist worldview spawned a Manichean anti-Communist worldview. Each side imputed unlimited objectives, ultimately world domination, to the other. In addition, each side's operational code looked to the realization of its ambition (or its historical destiny) over the long term and thus posited an indefinite period of conflict. But even though both sides envisioned a conflict of indefinite duration, and even though policy decisions were pragmatic and based on calculation of risk, cost, and gain, there was always the hazard of a miscalculation that could be especially dangerous, given the historical coincidence of the Cold War and the first half-century of the nuclear age."
455. Pindar 2007, 35, vv. 1–9: "Saviour Fortune, daughter of Zeus the Deliverer, I pray to you: / watch over Himera and keep its strength secure. / For it is you who guide swift ships on the open sea, / and on land order tumultuous battles and counsel-giving / assemblies. / But men's hopes are tossed up and down / as they voyage through waves of empty lies. / No man on earth has yet found out from the gods / a sure token of things to come; / man's perception is blinded as to the future."

politics following "the North Atlantic Treaty" (113). Schmitt warns how Goethe foresaw this in an 1812 poem "while Napoleon marched on Moscow." Time and again, the jurist indirectly emphasizes the anticipatory power of historical consciousness provided by aesthetics—in *Hamlet or Hecuba*, it is found in theater, while in this essay, it is found in poetry and literature. But inasmuch as Goethe—who lived a few generations before Jünger and was contemporary to Schelling—portrayed that "[o]nly land and sea here have weight," such an oppositional outline distances itself from "concrete historical thinking" (114). This polarity allows an inner-constructivism; namely, a creation of oppositions that repeat themselves through an iterative—therefore, logical—process that finally detaches itself from the "concrete" aspect that Schmitt so eagerly sought.

> The concrete-historical image, by contrast, contains a dialectic tension, namely, the sequential succession of a concrete question and an equally concrete answer. This dialectic of the historical-concrete defines the structure of unique historical situations and epochs. Indeed, we shall later show that this historical dialectic, as it meant here, may be understood neither as a general conceptual logic nor as a general law governing temporal events.[456]

Schmitt's opposition is dialectical—namely, self-productive. This means that between history qua history and temporal events—sequences that emerge and decline through factual contingency—there is an active connection, a bond that it is not ruled by a normative dimension—"a general law"—nor by some logic—nor, as one may infer, by a positivistic reconstruction of events. The exponential aspect of Schmitt's model is a crystal-clear rehabilitation of Hegel's metaphysical comprehension of history.[457] While Schmitt, just like

456. Schmitt 2018d, 114.
457. See Siep 2014, 237: "Finally, history likewise constitutes an otherness to spirit. We've already indicated that the structure of history's determining element –time – is 'analogous to [that of] the concept.' But in addition, the whole "sense" or "meaning" of history is only intelligible as the self-knowledge of spirit. Now history, too, contains "contingent events." Moreover, the historical education and enculturation of spirit is shaped by the alternation of recollection and forgetting—the precise opposite of the organic analysis of determinate concepts in the *Science of Logic*. History arrives at new 'levels' of spirit, where many developments of previous cultural states are 'forgotten,' or 'fade away' in the one-sided emphasis on the new—e.g., the emphasis on individual autonomy in modern ethical life." "Otherness" here means: temporally unknown, to be known gradually. This asymmetry between a consciousness that does not keep up with its own events and an ongoing history that never stops was resolved by Hegel through the dynamics provided by dialectics and its self-enhancement. See Hegel 1989, 86: "Die Weltgeschichte stellt […] die Entwicklung des Bewußtseins des Geistes von seiner Freiheit und der von solchem Bewußtsein hervorgebrachten Verwirklichung dar. Die

Hegel, share the self-consciousness of a historical subject"—that ultimately creates its own social institutions of self-development"—, Schmitt thinks of the exceptional aspect of such a model. Hence, history is regulated by concrete events, and not according to a teleological self-come-to-terms. Moreover, the "original opposition" aims to unfold the spiritual core in which "the elements" are entangled. Time and again, Schmitt's intention is to seek a "structure" and not a "theory of history." This caveat is highly important because (1) with it, Schmitt establishes a conceptual hierarchy for his approach to a philosophy of history: polarities, parallels, intrusions, oppositions; (2) by attempting to create a "structural" comprehension of history through a "concrete and unique" situation, Schmitt's analysis outperforms any preconceived formula and can thus make phenomenological distinctions amid the chaotic maze of sequential events; (3) Schmitt's idea of a "philosophy of history" encompasses an implicit, existential assumption; namely, the seeking of a "historical" truth:

> The truth of polar oppositions is eternally true, eternal in the sense of an eternal return. A historical truth, by contrast, is only true once. How often then ought they to be true, as they cannot be eternally true as that would contradict their historicity? The uniqueness of historical truth is the immemorial Arcanum of ontology, as Walter Warnach has called it.[458]

The Nietzschean expression "eternal return" [*ewige Wiederkunft* or *ewige Wierderkehr*],[459] refers, according to Schmitt, to the original, authentic nature of the elements that circumscribe a given event. A "historical situation" never repeats itself—nonetheless, it belongs to a major historical development housed in the dimension of being—"the

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Entwicklung führt es mit sich, daß sie ein Stufengang, eine Reihe weiterer Bestimmungen der Freiheit ist, welche durch den Begriff der Sache hervorgehen. Die logische und noch mehr die dialektische Natur des Begriffes überhaupt, daß er sich selbst bestimmt, Bestimmungen in sich setzt und dieselben wieder aufhebt und durch dieses Aufheben selbst eine affirmative, und zwar reichere, konkretere Bestimmung gewwint, – diese Notwendigkeit und die notwendige Reihe der reinen abstrakten Begriffsbestimmungen wird in der Logik erkannt." According to Gadamer—in his inaugural speech at Leipzig University in 1939—Hegel is the creator [*Schöpfer*] of the one and only "philosophy of history" of the present. See Gadamer 1940, 25–37, here 27.

458. Schmitt 2018d, 115.

459. See Friedrich Nietzsche 2006, 126: "And if everything has already been here before, what do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been here? / And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it *all* things to come? Therefore – itself as well? / For, whatever *can* run, even in this long lane *outward* – *must* run it once more!"; see also Nietzsche 2019, 464 (16[49]): "The teaching of return is the *turning point of history*."

immemorial Arcanum of ontology" (115). This paradoxical, almost amphibological account of history can be explained as a two-folded agency: first, the unrepeatable "concreteness" of any situation, and second, its bond with a greater opposition which, despite not being normative, rules over the events, as said bond provides the ontological structure through which all events emerge, develop, and finally wither away. At this point, one can also easily grasp that the individual has no place in this outline of history, and every human action ultimately meets its own limits, whether they are plans to assure world peace—Germany joined the NATO in 1955—or a call to arms against Soviet Communism.

Schmitt argues that within the dynamics of the authentic opposition, there is an "endless cycle of metamorphoses" (115). Therefore, events and situations are thrust into action. Likewise, "at particular times peoples emerge [*Völker*] amid groups that are capable of action and are historically powerful"—here it becomes clear how Schmitt approaches his "friend and enemy" criterion. The "contemporary world-opposition" is to be seen as a dangerous landmark of the history of the *nomos*. Regarding this productive enmity, Schmitt—who once again rallies against any form of psychology involving a perspective based on "individuality"—reminds us how such an attitude is to be understood as an original tension and not as a "natural" enmity; namely, a malevolent element rooted in human nature. Such a model is exemplified through the behavior of animals, as they are simply driven by instinct—one fish "devouring" another—and not by a "natural enmity" (116). Schmitt had already pointed out the importance of fables for politics—or "the political." His positing that "[t]he dog with its being does not put the cat spiritually or morally in question, and the cat does not do so to the dog"[460] quite boldly reaffirms the supposed non-morality that characterizes the oppositional arc enabled by enmity. At this point, one can naturally ask if perhaps the fable is a metaphor. However, "enmity" within the human dimension acquires a further connotation, a meaningful sense that does not apply, following the previous example,

460. This argument must be taken *cum grano salis*. While in the 1950s, the question of animal ethics—or morality as a dimension in which animals participate—was, of course, inexistent, recent studies have thoroughly tackled this issue. Schmitt—or anyone, for that matter—could only support such views on morality and animals by taking into consideration the empirical investigation they implied, whether this belonged to ethnological or interdisciplinary studies. See Benz-Schwarburg 2019, 175: "In animal ethics we ask whether and to what extent non-human animals can be potential victims of the effects of our behavior and whether and to what extent we should consider them morally. This question can be reformulated as "Do animals belong to our *moral community*? The members of this community are to be considered not only because of their monetary value or their instrumental usefulness, but also because they have *intrinsic value* to which a moral status and moral rights can be attached."

to cats and dogs. Schmitt uses the terms "surplus," "spirituality," "transcendence"—a vocabulary that obviously rises above the mere naturalness of animals. This intensification—the reader may have inferred by now that no peace is possible in the Arcanum of ontology"—achieves the "dialectical" feature of Schmitt's "oppositions." Otherwise put, "dialectics" is an exponential process where a situation is addressed as an answer to a problem—a question. It is not a mechanical reaction, but an organic development.

> Every historical action and deed of a human is the answer to a question raised by history. A historical situation is incomprehensible as long as it is not understood as a call heard by a human and simultaneously as an answer of the human to this call. Every human word is an answer. Every answer receives its sense from the question that it answers and remains senseless for those who do not know the question.[461]

These four programmatic assertions must be examined closely. The first one; namely, that *Jede geschichtliche Handlung und Tat eines Menschen ist die Antwort auf eine Frage*,[462] merges the historical dimension with human action. The latter is held accountable for a challenge—"the historical call"—that is interpreted as its own. It is important to note that the "answer" can be positive or negative and can include all the oppositions specific to the criterion—immanent/transcendent; regular/irregular; slow/fast; passive/active, or even normal/exceptional. The reader familiar with contemporary anthropology might be able to recognize in Schmitt's "original opposition" a proto-version of the "fight-or-flight" response, a criterion that belongs to the contemporary paradigm of stress."[463] All in all, history encircles human agency, and human actions drive historical events.

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461. Schmitt 2018d, 118.
462. Schmitt 1995a, 565.
463. See Viner 1999, 391–410, here 393–394: "In accordance with the usage of the period, Selye initially used the term 'stress' to name the noxious agents that caused his non-specific reaction. However, further laboratory work in the late 1930s convinced Selye that his triad of non-specific findings were the universal signs of damage to a mammalian organism, leading him to conceive disease and health in terms of successful or unsuccessful adaptation by an organic system in response to environmental agents. […] In this reconceptualization of Stress, Selye believed himself to have discovered a universal truth regarding the relationships of organisms with their environment, a truth he would sell to whoever would listen"; see Mühlmann 2005, 23: "The stress and cooperation unit results in populations reacting collectively to stressors, conflict cooperative units directing their conflict outwards and finally only cooperation being left within the conflict cooperative unit and the emotional harmony of relaxation spreading out within cooperating stress populations." The common ground between Schmitt, Seyle, and Mühlmann is evident; namely, they attempt to establish a universal criterion regarding human agency. In Schmitt, the paradigm follows an ontological scope that seeks to achieve

The "question-answer" constitutes a model of checking. Indeed, here Schmitt is positing the hermeneutical aspect of any agency. The fact that a historical situation is "incomprehensible" [*unverständlich*]—insofar as it is not addressed as a call that must be answered "by a human" [*als ein von Menschen vernommener Anruf*]—widens the communicative dimension of human agency. However, this hermeneutical scope presupposes that both the call and the answer operate as imperative practices. From this perspective, a call is a mission, and its answer fulfills it—something quite similar to the inner-dynamics of Heidegger's *Dasein* and its ungodly return to its master Being.[464] Comprehension goes before action. Furthermore, hermeneutics becomes constructive. Schmitt provides a model for historical agency. From this perspective, any scholar, interpreter, or even the amateur of Schmitt's infamous "friend or enemy" criterion, must submit this distinction—and, therefore, any analysis of the jurist—to the historical model outlined in this essay. Schmitt here quickly shifts from a juridical to a historical scope of human agency.

What does the statement "[e]very human word [*Jedes menschliche Wort*] is an answer" [*Antwort*] mean? First, quite obviously, that no "human word" can be neutral at all. Every "word" expresses someone's position—be it an individual or, more importantly for Schmitt, a collective understanding—regarding something other than herself. Thus, secondly, this means that every "word" is directed to an otherness. To acknowledge is to recognize all that is not an "I." Moreover, "every human word is an answer" also acts as a statement on the use of language as the supreme medium of politics—or "the political," if

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consistency by studying "concrete situations"; Seyle's early theory of stress aims to provide a distinction wide enough to cover all "environmental agents"; finally, Mülhmann's "MSC" equation strives to embrace all cultural phenomena—from "terrorist" attacks to videogames.

464. See Heidegger 2010, §54 (312): "With Dasein's lostness in the 'they,' that factical potentiality-for-Being which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards, the urgency and extent, of concernful and solicitous Being-in-the-world) has already been decided upon. The 'they' has always kept Dasein from taking hold of these possibilities of Being. The 'they' even hides the manner in which it has tacitly relieved Dasein of the burden of explicitly choosing these possibilities. It remains indefinite who was 'really' done the choosing. So Dasein makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity. This process can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the 'they.'" Of course, considered inversely, "Dasein" would be an inauthentic human agency isolated from the concrete life. In any case, Heidegger's "Dasein" is particularly sensitive to long-distance calls: although one can argue that the quality of the communication might mislead the "Dasein," to the point of spiritual calls being mistaken for historical pranks. See Trawny 2015, 42: "The range of understanding encompasses the finitude of Dasein and that of being, in other words, the finitude of the 'turn'—of this revolution—in being. The finitude of Dasein and of being is not a lack, because it is characteristic for both the one and the other. Dasein, affected by death, is a 'being toward the end.' Because history belongs to being, 'finitude and uniqueness' characterize it."

one is willing to follow Schmitt's expression. Nonetheless, this would mean that every word—and thus every notion, concept, and vocabulary—is a reaction; and, likewise, that every action must develop as an answer. This meta-cognitivism is a point on which Schmitt does not elaborate any further.

Schmitt's last assertion regarding his historical "call and answer" model aims to establish a social distinction between those who have correctly addressed the "question" and those who have failed to answer it due to their numbness, ignorance, or unawareness. How then can one be aware of the question and its call? Schmitt finds in the "concrete situation in which it is raised" the environment in which human actions can and must answer what they have been called to do. An "action," then, presupposes the participation of humans acting within their own medium—their cities, their countries, their "*nomos*." Those who fly past their own "situation"—i.e., the "Romantics," "liberals," and an array of "positivists"—do not hear the "call" nor answer the "question." This model stands for publicity and, at the same time, dismisses any innerness. Human actions, their words, their questions, and their eventual answers are played and displayed as a single public unit. A thousand voices always answer in unison. Schmitt links his model to that of Robin George Collingwood; namely, his "Question-Answer-Logic" model. The English philosopher, who was just as indebted to Hobbes as Schmitt was, still failed to approach the core question of the twentieth century because he was "stuck in the concept of science of the English nineteenth century," which was strongly based on a "psychological-individualistic interpretation of the question-answer-problem" (119). All in all, Collingwood developed an impeccable model of analysis.[465] Schmitt repeats his considerations on the "question/answer" framework, only to conclude that humans "from out of the state of nature, they step into the state of historicity." R. G. Collingwood's model was provided, continues Schmitt, by Arnold Toynbee and his "*Challenge-Response-Structure* of cultural history" (119). It is quite clear that Schmitt acknowledges in these intellectual efforts the conscious rejection of "psychological" and "individual" scopes. Their vision of history is fueled by dialectics, which thus enables an

465. Robin George Collingwood's framework was developed in a book first published in 1942. Its four chapters take the form of numerals, and each section addresses a question in order to answer it. See Collingwood 1942, 129 [18.92]: "It is in the world of history, not in the world of Nature, that man finds the central problems he has to solve. For twentieth-century thought the problems of history are the central problems; those of Nature, however interesting they may be, are only peripheral."

analysis of history by "concrete situations." By this point, Jünger's motivations for his *The Gordian Knot* are past and gone. Schmitt aims for an epistemic level of historical examination; namely, a dimension that is able to touch "the dialectical structure of every historical situation" (120). Otherwise put, Schmitt seeks to establish a non-linear, non-progressive, non-psychological, and non-normative account of history.

> For us, it is not a matter of general laws of world history. That would again be subjection under the law-governedness or statistical process. For us, it is a matter of the unique historical situation, namely, our own contemporary epoch, in which a global world-historical dualism of East and West has come to light. If we here pose the question concerning a dialectical tension, then we are not seeking a general law or statistical probability and even less the general logic of a conceptual dialectic in the systematic sense.[466]

Schmitt here is stating three different points. First, that in the Cold War scenario, an original "dualism" has been highlighted. To be aware of such an opposition does not depend on the correct functioning of eternal historical laws; on the contrary, it only becomes apparent through a "concrete situation" in which the historical core—dialectics, whose nature is not additive, nor progressive—reveals itself. Second, the non-normative aspect of this opposition impedes loose comparisons between one historical situation and another. Dialectics expresses itself through impermanent situations, which are nevertheless determined by a historical core—a *nomos*. Third, the "answer/question" model tackles the essentials of a "concrete situation." It does not aim to put forward a "systematic" account of history—as Collingwood and Toynbee did—but point out the "uniqueness" of a "situation"—and thus, its identity or even its morphology. Schmitt reminds the reader of Hegel's notion of "co-progression" [*Mitfortschreiten*] in order to prove the unfathomable nature of history—although the contemporary reader might think that such dramatism had been already mastered by Luhmann's theory of society—which is, in its formal aspect, similar to

466. Schmitt 2018d, 120.

Schmitt's[467]: the former's "inputs" and "outputs" can be seen as political and legal events co-participating through an ongoing communicative feedback in constant develop.

Every great perspective regarding a general theory of history has failed to grasp it correctly. Schmitt now dismisses the scope of the "law-ordaining-madness [*Vergesetzlichungs-Wahn*] of the nineteenth century" due to its ultra-normative approach to history. In the midst of all of these systematic efforts to capture the ultimate historical framework, Schmitt finds in Alexis de Tocqueville the only unadulterated comprehension of the arrow of time. The rest simply merged into "a thick fog of generalizations"—another metaphor for "positivistic" viewpoints. Here, Schmitt develops certain views already pointed out in his essays on Donoso about the different approaches to history, whether these came from Comte, Marx, or even Spengler, whose lucid conceptual apparatus—stages, centralization-technologization–revolution, and cycles—were nonetheless incapable of providing a comprehension of history's "concrete situation."

The fourth paragraph of Schmitt's homage to Jünger's considerations on the "East and West" opposition identifies the central elements of the dualism that Schmitt seeks to criticize. "Technologization and industrialization are today the fate of our earth," Schmitt asserts, echoing concepts that he had posited in his conference on neutralizations in 1929.[468] At this point, Schmitt attempts to discover the true concepts of the problem. Polarities are set aside, and the "dialectical" approach confirms its superiority. Schmitt briefly discusses Arnold Toynbee's *The World and the West* (1953) in order to rescue the British historian's

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467. See Luhmann 2012, 345–346: "In other words, evolution theory stresses the rather improbable, opportunistic tendency for structural changes, which, all in all, transform improbable opportunities through integration in systems into probabilities of maintaining and developing their possibilities. At any rate, no historiography can manage without the notion of structural change. It will also have to consult evolution theory; and the question can only be whether the revolution capacity of evolution theory takes the need for sources in historical research and its propensity for putting unanswerable questions so far that any account of a meaningful coherent history in which what comes later is explained by what comes earlier cannot be achieved in this roundabout way. Historians have anyway dissociated themselves from any notion of 'universal history.'" Luhmann made great use of Koselleck's vision of history, which was, as stressed at the beginning, triggered by Schmitt's *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. While this is no causal explanation of the influence one author had on the other, there is, however, a crucial coalescing of perspectives regarding a non-linear account of history. See la Cour and Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2013, 203–226, here 215–222.

468. It is not far-fetched to state that *The Historical Structure of the Contemporary World-Opposition* and *The Age of Neutralizations and Depolitizations* should be read in the same manner as *Theory of the Partisan* regarding *The Concept of the Political*; namely, as a meditated encore on the question of history and technology amid the spiritual decreasing of "the political." See Schmitt 2015a, 87: "Große Massen industrialisierter Völker hängen heute noch einer dumpfen Religion der Technizität an, weil sie, wie alle Massen, die radikale Konsequenz suchen und unbewußt glauben, daß hier die absolute Entpolitisierung gefunden ist, die man seit Jahrhunderten sucht und mit welcher der Krieg aufhört und der universale Friede beginnt."

idea of "opposition." Said conception is, however, quite conventional, as it identifies the West with mean-spirited features—"industrial technology"—and characterizes the East as a passive counterpart in the universal expansion of the West values.[469] As a spiritual backlash, now "[t]he contemporary communistic revolution of the East […] consists in the East empowering itself with European technology that has broken away from Christian religiosity," Schmitt paraphrases Toynbee (122). However, against Jünger's esoteric depiction of the intermingling of East and West and Toynbee's description of the frail accountability of Western values, Schmitt proposes "another historical image" (123). Schmitt carries out a relentless critique of all of those outdated diagnoses that are "partially optimistic, partially pessimistic impressionism," and which collide into "a chaos of theological, moral, and ideological approaches or damnations." These points of view are unaware of their role as value-givers or "re-valuers [*Verwerter*]" as Schmitt calls them—thereby anticipating his thesis on values published in 1960.[470] Some of them—"the technologists"—might even think that their viewpoints are neutral, as they only focus on successfully developing their plans. All in all, these intellectual parties cannot provide a "historical image" of the present, for they do not participate in the dynamics of the "question/answer" dialectical scheme housed in "the opposition between land and sea." Schmitt next posits a "departure" from Toynbee's views on technology in order to sketch the much-longed-for primal "historical image."

In the fifth paragraph of this essay, Schmitt turns back to *Land und Meer*;[471] namely, to the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath. The importance of England is once again emphasized.[472] Schmitt considers Lorenz von Stein to be one of the few intellectuals who recognized England's place in world history, specifically their contribution to modern

469 See Toynbee 1954, 4: "In the world's experience of the West during all that time [the last "four and a half centuries ending in 1945"], the West has been the aggressor on the whole […]."
470. Schmitt 2018d, 31: "No one can escape the immanent logic of value-thinking. Whether subjective or objective, formal or material, as soon as value appears as a specific thought circuit becomes unavoidable. […] Whoever asserts their validity must make them valid. Whoever says that they are valid without anybody making them valid, desires to deceive."
471. Schmitt 2018c, 20: "Alles, was die Englandschwärmer vom 18. Bis zum 20. Jahrhundert an England bewundert haben, ist vorher bereits an Venedig bewundert worden: der große Reichtum; die diplomatische Überlegenheit, mit der die Seemacht die Gegensätze zwischen den Landmächten auszunützen und ihre Kriege durch andere zu führen wußte; die aristokratische Verfassung, die das Problem einer innerpolitischen Ordnung gelöst zu haben schien; die Toleranz gegenüber religiösen und philosophischen Meinungen; das Asyl freiheitlicher Ideen und politischer Emigration."
472. Schmitt 2015e, 221: "Die moderne Industrie is die Fortsetzung des Überberganges vom Land zur See. Daher zuerst in England entstanden."

industrialization. However, it was not only England as a country but England's unique location that mattered:

> England was the island, which since the end of the sixteenth century was broken off from the European continent and had taken the step toward a purely maritime existence. This is that which is historically essential. Everything else is superstructure. […] It outflanked all its European rivals, not by force or higher moral or physical quality but rather singularly and alone via the fact that it had taken the step from the firm land to the free sea in all its consequentiality.[473]

According to the model previously drafted by Schmitt,[474] the English people heard a historical call and then proceeded to answer it; namely, by entering into world history and, subsequently, heading out to sea to conquer an unstable yet free space. That is why Schmitt can argue that "[f]or the first time the challenge was global," as England dominated the century due to its awareness of the world as a navigable globe. England was an isle, and its people responded to the call as such; that is, by extending this particular feature toward the horizon of the unknown. The word chosen by Schmitt, "existence," may be reminiscent of Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism.*[475] Indeed, England "existed" as it took off from the land and headed out to sea—namely, outside. Neither the Spanish nor the Portuguese nor the Dutch, as Schmitt insists, managed to truly abandon their soil. Thus, the "answer" was grasped and accepted as a challenge; it was thoroughly responded. Moreover, it was only through the "meeting" of the Industrial Revolution—enabled by the now thalassic nature of England—and the French Revolution that the "image" sought by Schmitt could be configured. "From the sea, for a purely maritime world image, the firm land becomes a mere

473. Schmitt 2018d, 126.
474. And already praised in the early 1950s, as can be gleaned from a passage from *Glossarium* dated on August 20, 1951. Schmitt 2015e, 247: "Question and Answer-Logik. Erfahrung lehrt mich sehr bald, daß man überhaupt nichts anderes herausfand als die Antwort auf eine Frage: alles (Philosophie ist Geschichte), alles historical inquiry; the conception of eternal problems disappeared entirely. Widerspruch zwischen zwei Aussagen nur dann, wenn sie eine Antwort auf dieselbe Frage sind!" (The terms "question," "answer," "historical inquiry," and "the conception of eternal problems disappeared entirely" are given in English.)
475. See Heidegger 1998, 249: "Ek-sistence, thought in terms of ecstasis, does not coincide with *existentia* in either form or content. In terms of content ek-sistence means standing out into the truth of being. […] Ek-sistence identifies the determination of what the human being is in the destinity of truth." The philosophical core of this forced neologism has been lucidly tackled by Johann B. Lotz. See Lotz 1965, 351: "Wegen der im Vorstehenden angedeuteten Sicht des Seins bestimmt sich auch das Verhältnis der Ek-sistenz zum *Untermenschlichen* und zum *Übermenschlichen* anders als bei Sartre."

coast with hinterland, *backland*," adds Schmitt (127). England undergoes a transformation. The "port" becomes "a gateway to the sea," and the island "metamorphoses into a ship" (127). Therefore, a new world emerges, and an initial estrangement brings about a sudden contact with otherness—otherwise put, according to Schmitt, "a new *nomos*." This means that a new order is set, and in order to accomplish such an order, "a new balance" guides the new and non-symmetrical relationships between "land and sea" (127–128 To phrase it in the language of systems theory, this implies a new level of "inputs" and "outputs." These streamlined considerations allow Schmitt to reject Toynbee's thesis regarding the "technological splinter" that reshaped modern history. At its best, such a phenomenon caused something much more original and crucial; namely, a "new maritime existence" that gave rise to the "first machines."

Schmitt returns to Jünger's reflections in the sixth paragraph of this essay. The German entomologist—in his *The Forest Passage*—"compared the ship and the forest with one another" (128). The reader should remember Jünger's talent for making vivid comparisons; already in the 1920s and then in the next decade, he compared the "worker" to the "soldier."[476] Nonetheless, Schmitt avoids Jünger's analogy and sustains the "elementary distinction between maritime and terrestrial experience," as now the "land" is the "house," and the "ship is the core of the maritime existence of the human" (129). A whole topology of historical existence can now be unfolded according to these central elements; furthermore, both of them—"ship" and "house"—ought to be seen as "different answers to a different call of history" (129). Technology sustains these counterparts, and their nature is now phenomenologically revamped by Schmitt. The jurist points to the "foreign" and "evil" character of the sea as set out in the Bible. An unprecedented series of exchanges and adaptations, fueled by technology, were made after England came up with its massive response. Schmitt uses the word "exertion" [*Antrieb*],[477] a notion employed in mechanics and

476. Jünger 2017, 27: "It would thus be worthwhile to pursue how the 'individual,' in his heroic aspects, appears, on the one hand, as the unknown soldier obliterated on the battlefields of work, and, on the other, as master and steward of the world, as the commanding type possessing an absolute power hitherto only dimly suspected. Both appearances belong to the form of the worker, and this is what unites them most profoundly even when they size each other up in mortal fight."
477. Schmitt 1995, 572.

machine technology,[478] to illustrate the unique driving force of technologization—and its role as an "autonomous force."

> While within a terrestrial order any technological invention of itself falls into fixed orders of life and is encompassed and ordered by these, within a maritime existence every technological invention appears as the progress of a value absolute in itself. The unconditional belief in progress is a sign that the step toward maritime existence has been made. [479]

It is more than obvious that through his insistence on the correct grasping of the historical core of a "concrete situation," Schmitt has managed to articulate an alternative approach for delving into the unreachable maze of past events and present contingencies. Time and again, Schmitt sought to establish a "structure" and find not only its origin but its dynamics. The impact of the "invention of gunpowder," which was first used on land, triggered unpredictable inventions as it was used overseas—otherworldly possibilities.[480] Schmitt thinks of the sea as "another kind of force field [*wesentlich anders geartetes Kraftfeld*]," something that would impede any type of conceptual traffic between terrestrial notions—"nomadism"—and the maritime dimension. However, the sea is also a "surface," and that leads to inevitable comparisons—like Homer Lea's likening of the sea to the desert. Comparisons that, nevertheless, are possible only from the point of view of a static existence. By contrast, Schmitt hauls in conclusions from the opposite shore. A new principle is unearthed by Schmitt: "Therewith it always remains decisive that the germ cell [*Keimzelle*] and origin of all orders of concrete human common life—house or ship—leads to opposite

478 For instance, the electrical connectors [*radarantriebe*] that enable electrical circuits to function.
479 Schmitt 2018d, 130.
480. See Herman Melville 2018, 354: "Death seems the only desirable sequel for a career like this; but Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried; it is but the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense Remote; the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored; therefore, to the death-longing eyes of such men, who still have left in them some interior compunctions against suicide, does the all-contributed and all-receptive ocean alluringly spread forth his whole pain of unimaginable, taking terrors, and wonderful, new-life adventures; and from the hearts of infinite Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them"; "Come hither, broken-hearted; here is another life without the guilt of intermediate death; here are wonders supernatural, without dying for them." Schmitt was always much more drawn to Melville's *Benito Cereno* (he commented on a copy of a Spanish translation published in Chile in 1944; see Schmitt 2015, 326) than to *Moby Dick*, something quite baffling if one meditates on the quoted passage above.

consequences for the relationship with technology and new technological inventions."[481] England's answer unleashed an ultraviolent technological gigantomachy, which even the main intellectual sources of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—that is, "the so-called national economy," and "sociology"—failed to grasp as a whole. It was only via the Marxist analysis of the situation that a new stage of collective awareness was attained and rapidly exported to the theoretical milieu of Russian intellectuals and politicians, "who achieved their empowerment in the October Revolution of the year 1917." Sea-fueled creations led to the unprecedented modernization of a largely "agrarian empire."[482] "Marxism" became "material" in the most literal sense. Therefore, another answer was also delivered.

Schmitt once again stresses a crucial aspect overlooked by Marx; namely, "§243ff." of Hegel's *Fundaments of the Philosophy of Right*, which tackles "the dialectic of a bourgeois society." In order to overcome its own impossibilities regarding the creation of a surplus that could balance poverty and wealth, bourgeois society outstrips itself. However, Hegel's insight regarding this social phenomenon is anchored—and this is what Marx failed to notice—in his "association of industrial development with maritime existence" (132–133). Neither *Land and Sea* nor *Nomos* nor any of Schmitt's analyses of world history, its politics and its juridical structure—all condensed in the birth of the *nomos*—would have been possible without paragraph 247 of Hegel's aforementioned book. If Marx developed his theory of society as class struggle from the standpoint of the technological overlapping unleashed by the Industrial Revolution, Schmitt somehow suggests an alternative analysis that is indebted to Hegel's comprehension of the sea as the spiritual gateway for future industry and technology.

The Historical Structure of the Contemporary World-Opposition concludes with the caveat presented in the long third paragraph; namely, the dialectical nature of the "land and sea" opposition and the departure from Jünger's "polar" depiction in *The Gordian Knot*. Schmitt finds that a "new question" looms over the horizon that is encompassed by a

481. Schmitt 2018d, 131.
482. See Lukács 1977, 416–424, here 423: "Bolshevism offers a fascinating way out in that it does not call for compromise. But all those who fall under the sway of its fascination might not be fully aware of the consequences of their decision. Their problem can be posed in these terms: Is it possible to achieve good by condemnable means? Can freedom be attained by means of oppression? Can a new world order emerge out of a struggle in which the tactics vary only technically from those of the old and despised world order?"

subsequent "danger." From the previous answer given by England, no useful knowledge can decipher the unknown question of the present.

> This is the danger: when the humans believe themselves to be historical and hold themselves to that which earlier was once true, they forget that a historical truth is only true once. They no longer want to know that the answer to a new call of history, seen from the human perspective, can only be a harbinger, and mostly is only a blind harbinger. […] And how should the victor understand that even his victory is only true once? And who may instruct him about this?[483]

The assertion already stated in "Die Lage"—"a historical truth is only true once"—is repeated once again. However, there is an enigmatic reference that should be addressed; namely, Schmitt's mention of "the victor" [*der Sieger*].[484] Who is "the victor" that Schmitt is referring to? In an entry in *Glossarium* dated May 12, 1957, Schmitt writes a substantial reflection in hindsight about the Night of the Long Knives, the question of the German guilt, the role of Hitler in 1934, and the Potempa murder and the ensuing trial. Whilst the whole entry is begrudgingly written—like most of *Glossarium*—a curious parallel is established between Germany in 1934 and the Roman civil war between Caesar and the beheaded Pompey. Schmitt finds that in 1934 there was no clear way of knowing the future of Germany; therefore, all the nasty [*grotesk*] shouting against Hitler's violation of the rule of law must be brushed off. From this perspective, the historical wisdom sung by Lucan in his *Pharsalia* remains unmatched. Schmitt then quotes the passage of the *Civil War* where Caesar receives the head of Pompey, with which the kingdom of Pharos had bought [*pignore*] a future and bloodless allegiance with Caesar. "If crime it be, then you admit a greater debt to us, because your own hand is not guilty of the crime."[485] This tainted trade-off resurfaces, Schmitt thinks, in the Babington Plot—a scheme to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I in order to enthrone Mary Stuart. Conversely, the Röhm Putsch could also be seen as a similar situation. If this is the case, then one could easily see here the unfortunate reemergence of a modern-day Lucan and his unheeded appeal for help, now sung not in verse but in the form of legal monographs.

483. Schmitt 2018d, 134.
484. Schmitt 1995, 575.
485. Lucan 2008, 204 [v. 1030].

Likewise, the head of Pompey now takes the disproportionate size of a whole country that has been bought by liberals and democratic nations in order to seal a bloodless allegiance—the "economic miracle," perhaps. This hypothetical/counterfactual train of thought reaches unknown moral consequences at this point. Schmitt, in self-righteous and self-celebratory lines, even flirts with a fantastical scenario in which Hitler seemingly read *Der Führer schützt das Recht* and became suddenly aware of his own faux-republican legal somersaults. The facts, however, were that the "Nazi jurists"—Du Prel and Frank—considered *Legalität und Legitimität* nothing more than a "liberal" piece of work. *The Führer Protects the Law* provided a legal analysis where political actions would collide with political and legal responsibility. In these astonishing mirroring exercises, in which Schmitt acts as Lucan, Hitler as the victor Caesar [*dem sieger Caesar*], Germany as Pompey, and *Legalität und Legitimität* as the *Pharsalia*, a dramatic conclusion is drawn:

> There is only one possibility for the philosopher or the jurist to deal with the power–holder: to take [*nehmen*] him at his word. This is also a form of acquisition [*eine form der Nahme*]. See the story by Funck Brentano, Le Roi (1907): Your Majesty, the trial will be decided by yourself.[486]

The concepts of "taking" and "acquiring" are a direct reference to the appendixes of *Nomos*. Schmitt somehow manages to enclose all his oeuvre—and its concepts—in this retrospective and esoteric report. Here the reader can undeniably confirm that Schmitt's thought possesses an intellectual unity—which means, in his own words, both a spiritual and historical nature. And although the previous quotation from *Glossarium* was written two years after this lengthy commentary on Jünger, an important number of entries and notices from the early 1950s show that Schmitt had convinced himself several years earlier that contemporary world events were the unresolved consequence of the dialectics of history. At this point, one has to accept Schmitt's cautionary remark about himself; namely, that "there are just two Carl Schmitts: the exoteric (who therefore calls himself Carlo) and the esoteric";[487] this,

486. Schmitt 2015e, 362.
487. Schmitt 2015e, 372.

analytically expressed, means that the interpreter must have a command of both Schmitt's published and unpublished work if she wishes to venture a reflection on *il giurista Carlo*.

Schmitt's analysis of the "world-opposition" praise Jünger's contributions to the ongoing East-West problem. The non-normative nature of Schmitt's opposition—"eternal recurrence on the one hand, uniqueness and unrepeatability of the historical events and epochs on the other hand"—elevates itself as the programmatic principle of his intellectual production during the 1950s. Put differently, Jünger's historical analyses sought to establish architectural connections and comparisons; Schmitt, by contrast, simply aimed to recognize the *chiave di volta*. Schmitt masterfully manipulates the shutter speed when producing historical images. He distances himself from Jünger by choosing the correct angle, but maintains a sense of spiritual kinship with him. "Today, as Jünger himself said best, we are all like 'sea people upon an uninterrupted voyage, and every book can be no more than a log book.'" The jurist becomes a mapmaker, and a new metaphor[488] encircles the esoteric dwelling where the dialectic dynamics of history await to be sung. However, it is necessary to remind the reader that before Jünger and Schmitt, another desperate image of the human situation on the high seas had been depicted:

> We are like sailors who must rebuild their ship on the open sea, never able to dismantle it in dry-dock…[489]

4.4 "Was habe ich getan?" (1956)

Schmitt wrote an article—"in the Flemish nationalist monthly *Dietsland-Europa*, vol. 2, no. 1"—just under a year after *Hamlet or Hecuba* was published. The aggravated tone of these paragraphs is strikingly similar to the opening statements of the defense that Schmitt

488. See Blumenberg 1977, 9: "The sea has always been suspect for cultural criticism. What could have motivated the move from land to sea but a refusal of nature's meager offerings, the monotony of agricultural labor, plus the addictive vision of quickly won rewards, of more than reasons finds necessary (the latter being something the philosophically inclined are always ready to provide a formula for)—the vision, that is, of opulence and luxury? The idea that here, on the boundary between land and sea, what may not have been the *fall* but was certainly a *misstep* into the inappropriate and the immoderate was first taken, has the vividness that sustains lasting topoi."

489. Quoted in Babich & Cohen 1999, xviii. However, this well-known quotation by Otto Neurath was originally made against Carnap's "fiction of an ideal language constructed out of tidy atomic sentences"—as Blumenberg also reminds us.

presented before both judge and jury. In this case, Schmitt acts both as a defendant and an attorney, and his pleas are directed at the public—the jury—and the judge—that is, those in power to accuse and sentence—. Moreover, the article is divided into five numbered sections, each tackling generalities and specificities surrounding the "*Hamlet oder Hekuba* case." After the interviews with Robert Kempner, Schmitt was subpoenaed once again—however, on this occasion, the crime transcended the finite standards of human jurisprudence. Thus, the doomed question, "what have I done?"[490]

This one-man scandal was triggered after Walter Warnach's apologetic review of *Hamlet oder Hekuba* and a more down to eath article by Rüdiger Altmann—both pieces published in June 1956. Warnach was a close acquaintance of Schmitt—a "Catholic philosopher of art"[491]—and Altmann, a former student who remained loyal to his master even after Schmitt's theatrical self-defense. Andreas Höfele has recently reconstructed this bloated affair to show how both reviewers were both far away from writing "hostile" articles. Schmitt exaggerated Altmann's and Warnach's comments so as to elaborate an ultimate appendix to his monograph on *Hamlet*—which tackles, following the indulging Schmittian critique of both disciples' reviews, both "Romanticism" and "Marxism"[492] as canonical, "unobjectionable" interpretations. The ceremonial show of self-defense carried out by Schmitt reminds one of the prosecutor Fetyukovich from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, whose impressive arguments were finally defeated by the humbler Ippolit Kirillovich. In a new mirroring act, Schmitt adopts the naiveté of Dmitri "Mitya" Karamazov, dissociating from himself so as to scrutinize his splintered being, simultaneously acting as both prosecutor and defendant:

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490. See Schmitt 2000, 62. Robert Kempner asked Schmitt how he could explain "psychologically" that someone like Lammers "signed hundreds of dreadful [*furchtbaren*] things"? Schmitt answered: "I do not understand that. I have not done that [*Das habe ich nicht getan*]," an uncanny foreshadowing of the question raised in the article of 1957.
491. See Mehring 2014, 429.
492. See Höfele 2016, 270–271: "Given that they were both written by card-carrying Schmittians, this is hardly surprising. Warnach leaves the reader in no doubt that he is on Schmitt's side in a very contemporary cultural war. Applauding Schmitt for taking the same stand against the 'bad subjectivity' of Romantic occasionalism as in his *Political Romanticism* of 1919, he calls *Hamlet or Hecuba* a 'most impressive example of intellectual continuity.' […] Altmann, too, is duly respectful of the master's 'magnificent' interpretation, and he castigates the usual Schmittian suspects, liberals, and leftists, with George Lúkacs being held responsible for a 'Marxist descent into the hell of rationalism.' At the same time Altmann insists that the consideration of what Hamlet meant to an Elizabethan audience should lead on to the more important question of what Hamlet means to us now."

> Thus, what have I done? At first glance something good or rather unobjectionable. I have written a book about Hamlet. Hamlet is a very beloved theme. I thus find myself in an unobjectionable society.
>
> […] What at first glance appeared good and unobjectionable, at once becomes suspect. Manifestly I have done something incautious. I betook myself to the shoreless sea of Hamlet interpretation.[493]

Schmitt repeats the innocent question twice and then proceeds to provide his answer, the question now having been transformed into an assertion. For the reader who is not familiar with Schmitt, his speech seems to resemble that of a clueless tourist who unwittingly committed a felony on foreign soil. However, one knows better. The initial argument carefully describes the actions and where and when they occurred. Schmitt refers to *Hamlet oder Hekuba* as a "book," although it is little more than a booklet. His initial argument is deductive. "x" wrote about "y," and "y" is valued as "y^1" by "z." Therefore, only a "z^1" set could positively value "y." However, if "x" surpasses the value of "y^1," then "x" is valued by "z" as "x_1" or even as "–x." The whole situation triggered by the publishing of his piece on *Hamlet* was the mistaken inclusion of a non-true element within a true set. Departing from this logical viewpoint, Schmitt is very vocal on how unjust his situation was: Why has he alone, among "ten thousand unobjectionable humans," been intellectually pummeled for his "book?" (137). Schmitt considers his endeavor "incautious." He has trespassed a forbidden zone on the "shoreless sea of Hamlet interpretation" (137). It would have been cautious to stay within his intellectual domain. But Schmitt crossed this line. That is the crux of the issue. Furthermore, he portrays himself as Don Quixote against "a whole army of hobbyhorse knights, whose newest crew is already Americanized, that is: motorized" (138). The "crew" are the ones who draw the line between right and wrong. Disenfranchisement is "motorized." Schmitt did not weigh the consequences of publishing his interpretation on *Hamlet*.

The second numbered section of "Was habe ich getan?" continues this dramatic proclamation. Schmitt admits he did "sense" the subsequent murmurings of discontent that *Hamlet oder Hekuba* would cause. Therefore, he opted to remain "objective." Now the reader

493. Schmitt 2018d, 137.

knows that his insistent dismissal of "psychological" approaches was no mere coincidence. Schmitt reminds us that he tried to remain as close as possible to Erich Franzen—a long-forgotten "jurist, theater critic, and translator of Beckett and Faulkner"—and his remark on the Bard: "Of all the scholars of Hamlet, Shakespeare came closest to the truth" (138). Schmitt paraphrases most of the introduction to *Hamlet or Hecuba*, only to then warn that "even the objective action that is brought before the spectator and auditor is full of riddle and rupture" (139). Otherwise put, the "objective" structure is unbalanced by something as subjective as "revenge." The question of the "guilt" of the mother is once again stressed, as is Schmitt's "treatment of the objective action"; namely, that in order to propose an analysis of Hamlet, the "concrete situation" within which it was created must be taken into serious consideration. Both situations are expressed as "the taboo and the queen" and "the deflection of the figure of the revenger" (140). The play qua play does not "come undone"; on the contrary, a masked "contemporary historical reality becomes visible" (140). Thus, "the intrusion of time into play" (140).

Schmitt's depiction of his own book aims to elucidate the method he has chosen. This approach, however, was knowingly developed in times in which a "division of labor of the academic factory" was marching ahead full steam. Therefore, Schmitt's view became the intruder, "the aggressor." While one may rightly feel bemused at this point, Schmitt's whimsical defense still yields new discoveries. In the third section, a hypothesis is put forward regarding the so-called "autonomy" of the artwork. Strongly blinded by "its historical and sociological composition," "deeply rooted in the tradition of the German educational culture," a contemporary taboo manifests itself (141). Schmitt mentions a letter by Gustav Hillard—"pseudonym for Gustav Steinbömer, a German writer"—in which the latter explains the particular aesthetic economy that rules over the artwork; namely, the deflating of "originary images [*Urbilder*] via the poet," and their subsequent reception on the part of the "reader and auditor." Then, Schmitt once again quotes Stefan George and his idea of how the artistic experience is meaningless to the artist and "more bewildering than redemptive" for everyone else. These two evaluations of the play are sufficient for Schmitt to unravel the core of the problem.

> *Hamlet* is a work of art; a work of art exists in a world of beautiful appearance and pure play [*ein Kunstwerk gilt in einer Welt des schönen Scheins und des reinen Spiels*].[494] Whoever speaks of James and Mary Stuart in an explication of *Hamlet* engenders bewilderment and questions the purity of a work of art. In speaking of the taboo of the queen Mary Stuart, I myself transgressed [*verletzt*] a taboo.[495]

While this explanation might ring hollow to the reader, a crucial point has been made; that is, the hermeneutical monopoly over the artwork. While this "transgressed taboo" may be nothing other than the usual intellectual bickering between an author and her critics, Schmitt's considerations on this "transgression" become crystal clear if compared with Gadamer's reflections on the same subject.[496] In any case, Schmitt has defied a whole school of thought—and with it, its inner-politics.

A third level of "danger" is yet to be acknowledged. In the fourth numbered section, Schmitt expands on the mention of Lúkacs made by both Warnach and Altmann. The Hungarian philosopher is certainly a leading Marxist intellectual and, therefore, the wielder of an undisputed interpretative method.

> Dialectical materialism identifies its analyses of the class situation of the artist and the period of composition of the artwork with historical treatment simply. In this way it created for itself a monopoly on the historical treatment of art. Whoever endangers

494. Schmitt 1995b, 223.
495. Schmitt 2018d, 141.
496. Gadamer 2004, 499: "Thus, in my opinion, Schmitt falls victim to a false historicism when, for example, he interprets politically the fact that Shakespeare leaves the question of the Queen's guilt open, and sees this as a taboo. In fact it is part of the reality of a play that it leaves an indefinite space around its real theme. A play in which everything is completely motivated creaks like a machine. It would be a false reality if the action could all be calculated out like an equation. Rather, it becomes a play of reality when it does not tell the spectator everything, but only a little more than he customarily understands in his daily round. The more that remains open, the more freely does the process of understanding succeed–i.e., the process of transposing what is shown in the play to one's own world and, of course, also the world of one's own political experience." Gadamer is on point when he acknowledges the inconclusive nature of the work of art as one of its central features. However, to state that Schmitt "falls victim to a false historicism," is quite a distortion of the method he chose to study *Hamlet*. In this case, the play is not calculated but created amidst historical conditions that ultimately intrude into it. These conditions perform as an array of intensities that cannot be commanded. There is quite a difference between an artist being "motivated" by something—in this case, the political context of Queen Mary Stuart—and re-creating historical motivations that ultimately will fuel—"elevate"—that which will be created.

> the monopoly is reactionary and a class-enemy. Between the *diamond*[497] and the beautiful appearance, the German is left merely with the anxious choice.[498]

Schmitt is probably referring to the fourth chapter of Lukác's *Theory of the Novel* (1920),[499] which dominated for a good amount of time the intellectual scope regarding literary studies—as well as Lukác's serious critique, found in *The Destruction of Reason,* of the "existential irrationalism" that ruled over Schmitt's comprehension of politics.[500] It was not until Hans Robert Jauss and Peter Szondi provided an alternative model of comparative analysis that new, post-Marxist philosophical and historical interpretations began to appear. Now, it should not be necessary to repeat that much of Schmitt's defense is a conjunction of loathing, patheticisim, and tongue-in-cheek intentions. The so-called "monopoly" of "dialectical Marxism" was at its best just a strong tendency in the German academy. No guarded garrison of Marxist academics had barred the brave non-specialist from contributing a novel approach to *Hamlet*. Moreover, the sentence, "[b]etween the diamond and the beautiful appearance, the German is left merely with the anxious choice" has been restored to its original meaning by Andreas Höfele,[501] who discovered, when comparing the original manuscript of *Hamlet or Hekuba* with this conference, that *Diamat*—which the English translator of "Was habe ich getan?" had mistaken for a typo of *Diamant*[502]—is actually an abbreviation of "dialectical materialism." Regarding this confusion, a baffled Schmitt wrote: "Note for the Schiller year 1959: Most educated Germans of 1959 are no longer able to read this last sentence; they will not know where the 'dilemma' comes from and be inclined to read 'Diamant' rather than 'Diamat'" (262). The logical question is: Why did Schmitt abbreviate an expression so

497. The italics are mine.
498. Schmitt 2018d, 142.
499. Luçáks 1971, 144: "The artist's epic intention, his desire to arrive at a world beyond the problematic, is aimed only at an immanently utopian ideal of social forms and structures; therefore it does not transcend these forms and structures generally but only their historically given concrete possibilities–and this is enough to destroy the immanence of the form." During the 1950s, Lukács published three monographs on the theme of realism.
500. Lukács 1981, 658: "In these central concepts of law philosophy as formulated by Schmitt, we can see plainly where the existentialist conception was leading: to the union of an extremely scanty and insubstantial abstractness on the one hand and an irrationalist arbitrariness on the other. It was precisely by claiming to solve all the problems of social life that Schmitt's antithetical pairing of 'friend and enemy' revealed its hollow and arbitrary character."
501. Restored for most contemporary English readers. Carlo Galli, in his introductory comment to the Italian translation of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, pointed out this fact. See Schmitt 2012, 28.
502. Schmitt 2018d, 142 f23.

commonly used inside and outside the academy? The only possible answer is that he felt genuinely persecuted by those who presented themselves as "dialectical materialists." Therefore, Schmitt took his provocation very seriously. Conversely, the expression "beautiful appearance" [*Schöner Schein*] belongs to letter 26 of Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man.*[503] Otherwise put, the historical-spiritual situation of Germany—depicted in the interpretative quarrel where Schmitt detected a taboo—must now opt between an authentic comprehension of its people through art, and a specialized—and thus, technified, "motorized"—group of experts, whose knowledge hides a dangerous ideology. Schmitt concludes: "I have experienced on my own body what this practically means" (142). Isolation, rejection, or even mockery, perhaps?

The fifth and last paragraph of this article places the injustice theme within the context of the wave of ex post "criminalizations" in postwar Germany. This is directly linked to the previously quoted passage of *Glossarium*; that is, the question of Schmitt's guilt. Likewise, his indirect mention of Schiller proves how important both Schiller and—as the reader will later see—Kommerell's interpretation of the German dramatist was for *Hamlet or Hecuba* and for Schmitt in general during the 1950s. Those who control the legitimacy of interpretative concepts also control the concepts of guilt and criminality. Just like "The Mousetrap" in *Hamlet*, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* was a performative test designed to unveil the underground operations of agents of secrecy and deceit. Schmitt states that he is merely offering a "candid" argument. At this point, this "old man" can only confess. The essay on *Hamlet* was not a mere insubstantial bottle tossed to the "shoreless sea of Shakespeare interpretation"; it was, rather, "in its thought as in its writing, inadvertent and merely faithful" (143). The defense rests its case and Schmitt quotes his beloved friend, the late Konrad Weiss: "I do what I want and hold what strikes me, / Until what I don't want, a meaning like writing does to me" [*Ich tue, was ich will, und halte, was mich trifft, / bis was ich nicht will tut mit mir ein Sinn wie Schrift*].[504] The verses belong to "Largiris"—Latin for "he who bestows"—a poem that explores the pure soul of the child and the innocence of infancy. This is something very interesting to think about, mainly because Schmitt decides to conclude his self-defense with a poem that is based on the division between man as a dark being [*der*

503. Schiller 2009, 116.
504. Weiß 1961, 595.

dunkle Mann], and the divine light shed on the child; that is, the child as a creature of light [*die Sonne scheint*]. Schmitt's words—that is, *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—were innocent, detached from any murkiness or dark intention. Schiller's "aesthetic semblance" [*schöner Schein*] meets Weiß's "the gleaming sun" [*die Sonne scheint*]—the graphic and phonetic similarities between each expression are striking. Thus, when Schmitt—in a letter to Armin Mohler—calls *Hamlet oder Hekuba* "merely faithful [*nur getreu*],"[505] he is stressing the non-academic nature of his work. Moreover, he is antagonizing with the politics that secured for itself the "monopoly of interpretation" (142). As a sentenced "class-enemy" [*Klassenfeind*], Schmitt posits through "Was habe ich getan" both the genesis of *Hamlet or Hecuba*—Schiller's comprehension of history through art—and the forbidden zone he trespassed with his interpretation of *Hamlet*; namely, the political monopoly of postwar Germany and its new ruling, unflinching morality.

4.5 The Aachen Conference

In January 21, 1957, Schmitt was invited by the head of the foreign office of the RWTH Aachen University, the philosopher Peter Mennicken, to pronounce a public conference. Andreas Höfele has recently unearthed the two-page typescript of Schmitt's allocution, along with his manuscript annotations and notes[506]—most of them written in the Gabelsberger shorthand, the very same style fashioned in several of the *Glossarium* entries. The title of the conference—which was also sent to Ernst Jünger in 26 January—was "Hamlet as a mythic figure of the present" [*Hamlet als mythische Figur der Gegenwart*]. Unlike the theatrical victimization performed in his private talk at Düsseldorf on 1956, the Aachen conference engages in a more straight-forward language.

> Wenn sie den Namen "Hamlet" hören, erinnern Sie sich wahrscheilich an ein Theaterstück von Shakespeare, dessen Held ein Zweifler und Zauderer ist,
> eigentlich ein sonderbarer Held, den er hat es mit großen Eifer übernommen, die Ermordung seines Vaters zu rächen, findet aber nicht den Entschluß zur Tat[,]

505. Schmitt 1995b, 224.
506. Höfele 2021, 12-3. For Schmitt's manuscript annotations and drafts, 14-37.

> sondern ergeht sich in Reflexionen und endet schließlich in einem wilden Durcheinander von Mord und Totschlag.

Schmitt propaedeutically breakdowns *Hamlet*'s structure. It is a play about a "peculiar hero" [*ein sonderbarer Held*] that although eventually will slash the murderer of his father, builds a metaphysical maze of reflections that neglect his concrete frame of references. The coalesce of such elements makes of *Hamlet* a "Tragic History", Schmitt continues, as it is swarmed with "violent actions and crime, murder and revenge, venom and betrayal, adultery and insanity, sophisticated exposure of astute villains". This ravenous meeting of hubris and confusion somehow endorses, according to Schmitt, the negative appreciation of both Voltaire and Tolstoy.

Schmitt seeks for the image that unravels amidst this violent search for bloodlust. "[W]elches Bild sich uns vor Augen stellt, wenn wir den Namen 'Hamlet' hören?" A tormented prince, dressed in black, whose philosophizing—a variety of word salads expressed through magnificent verses—only aggravates his inner suffering, amplified on the outside, too. "Until the events", that is, reality as such, "finally overwhelms him" [*bis ihn schließlich die Ereignisse überrollen*]. How, then, this somber figure could achieve the status of an archetype?

> Mit anderen Worten: wir sehen das, was man einen typischen Intellektuellen nennen kann. Das Typische daran ist das Mißverhältnis von Denken und Tun, die Lähmung durch Reflexion und Selbstbetrachtung, überlegene Intelligenz und Ironie aber kraftloses Versagen vor der Wirklichkeit. So ist dieser Hamlet Shakespeares zur mythischen Figur des europäischen Intellektuellen geworden.

The reader could rightly ask if by "typical" Schmitt meant "stereotypical", as—especially regarding the consolidated intellectuals still active by the late 1950s, like Sartre, Camus, Bohr, and Karen Blixen, all of them who were nothing but atypical—his depiction of Prince Hamlet as a conflicted bookworm might be slightly biased. The "disproportion between thinking and doing" is undoubtedly a trademark of Prince Hamlet. Likewise, the fact that these mental choreographies cannot stand a chance when facing reality is something human, all too human. Nonetheless, what really stands out in this "paralysis through reflection and

self-examination" [*die Lähmung durch Reflexion und Selbstbetrachtung*], is that occurs in a collapsed political environment, among murder, treason, secrecy, and the ruin of a State. Put differently, Prince Hamlet's mercurial persona disengages from reality. To ignore, to escape, to dissociate—whether it is through phantasy, procrastination, or the endless levels of self-diagnosing—from concrete, serious events, is the key aspect of Prince Hamlet, for only an intellectual can oppose an alternative to reality itself, namely, some other, inner, and greater worlds. And this is, for Schmitt, what enables Hamlet to become the "mythical figure of the European intellectual".

From now on, the Aachen conference takes an unexpected turn. Schmitt reveals the true meaning of the word "intellectual"—a notion that is barely mentioned in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—. That the very epoch that demythologized the theological image of the world could provide to coming centuries a myth-fueled figure is something simply paradoxical. Schmitt argues that Voltaire is, so to speak, "the greatest Church Father of the European intelligentsia". Or, put differently, the reactionary opinion of Voltaire regarding *Hamlet*—a "barbarian", as the French "intellectual" thinks—demonstrates how innovative was Shakespeare's play, as Prince Hamlet avantgarde persona combines deadly theological elements through a modern intellectual momentum. Schmitt thinks that this rare phenomenon—that is, the myth *Hamlet*—demands a "closer examination", for such an enigma could offer a "crystal-clear" recognition "of the true fate of the European intelligentsia" [*das wahre Schicksal der europäischen Intelligenz in aller Deutlichkeit zu erkennen*].

Schmitt now applies his "*Hamlet* curve" to the immediate political context. If Prince Hamlet performs as a "mythical figure of the present", several—if not the great majority—of politicians and important State authorities exhibit traits of Hamletism. Schmitt mentions "German Chancellor Brüning (1930-1931), the Italian Socialist Saragat (1951), or Prime Minister Segni (1956)", who have been described as "Hamletic figures". Does this mean that the presence of such a display of figures guarantees an Elsinore-like landscape by default? According to Schmitt, this acknowledgment has to be something more than "a journalistic catchphrase".

> Es gibt aber auch tiefer drigende Verwendungen des Namens, die sich daraus erklären, daß im Zeitalter der Massendemokratie vereinfachte und verkürzte Symbolfiguren unvermeidlich sind, eine Art von Ersatz-Mythen für die Millionen Zuschauer, Hörer und Leser von Kino, Radio und Presse. Die Tages-Publizistik bedarf ihrer und verwandelt echte Mythen in Slogans, wie sie ganze Urwälder in bedrucktes Zeitungspapier verwandelt. Aus diesem Bereich der Publizistik eines demokratischen Massen-Zeitalters möchte ich noch zwei Beispiele nennen, damit nicht der Eindruck entsteht, als spräche ich hier von schöngeistiger Literatur.

The summoning of these central figures of the "European intelligentsia" —Giussepe Saragat, the fifth President of the Italian Republic, Heinrich Brünning, chancellor of Germany during the Weimar Republic, and Antonio Segni, both Prime Minister and President of Italy in 1961-1962—demands a thorough examination of the profoundness of the "Hamletic" phenomenon. The shared *Hamlet*-esque feature of these men is guided by a greater context, namely, the "age of mass democracy". Even such a technology-fueled epoch must broadcast mythical content through "cinema, radio, and media". Up to this point, Schmitt's conference perceives as extremely akin with Barthes' *Mythologies*—which was published in the very same year of Schmitt's Aachen dissertation. "So that this myth of 'literary holidays' is seen to spread very far", Barthes reflects apropos a photograph published in *Le Figaro* of André Gide's reading Bossuet, "much farther than summer: the techniques of contemporary journalism are devoted more and more to presenting the writer as a prosaic figure. But one would be very wrong to take this as an attempt to demystify. Quite the contrary"[507]. Both Schmitt and Barthes note the subtle cultural control of public opinion through the use of specific techniques, amplified in media platforms. It is a conversion of energy, which nevertheless preserves a fierce guidance on the masses. "Daily journalism needs them, and transforms authentic myths into slogans, just like they convert entire jungles into printed newspaper", Schmitt states. Therefore, contemporary journalism commands the rise and fall of political myths.

Schmitt warns the audience on the fact that his dissertation is not lingering to an "aesthetical literature" [*schongeistiger Literatur*] standpoint. His unusual name dropping of

507 Barthes 1991, 29.

political figures aims at some other plane, namely, a broader comprehension of political phenomena through the recognition of mythical energies at play. That is why he now reflect on the 1956 USA presidential candidates Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson, "the Hamlet of Illinois".

> Erfahrene Sachkenner der amerikanischer Mentalität haben lange vor der Wahl Wetten gemacht, daß er den Wahlkampf gegen Eisenhower unmöglich gewinnen könne, weil bei der allgemeinen Abneigung gegen der Intellektuellen in Amerika der Name Hamlet genügt, um einen Kandidaten zu erledigen. Die Wetten sind allerdings nicht zum Zuge gekommen, weil – wie Sie sich erinnern – gegen Ende Oktober 1956 die Suez-Krise, der Premier-Minister Eden, in seiner halb-tragischen Rolle ebenfalls als ein Hamlet. Sein Anfall von Aktivismus hat ihm diese Bezeichnung eingebracht, denn solche Anfälle plötzlicher Gewalt gehören sowohl zur Psychologie der Reflexions-Gehemmten im allgemeinen wie auch zur Charakteristik von Shakespeares Hamlet im besonderen.

As it is well-known, Eisenhower defeated—just like he did in 1952—the democrat Stevenson, a result that ended the previous democratic party prevail (Roosevelt was a three-time reelected president, followed by the democrat Harry S. Truman). Schmitt is on point regarding the "general dislike in America for intellectuals" —after all, Stevenson's party pins message read as *All the way with Adlai*—, although Stevenson's defeat is correctly grasped if the reader reminds that the 1950s were one of the most uncertain years of the Cold War. Anthony Eden, the Conservative successor of Churchill in early 1955, is also mentioned by Schmitt. Eden's vouching for the Suez operation—a failed plan for conquering the Suez Canal amidst the invasion of Egypt in 1956, commanded by Israel and the Anglo-French allegiance—can also be seen as a "semi-tragic role as a Hamlet". The erratic political choices of Eden, his "bouts of activism have earned him this label, for such bouts of sudden violence are as much a part of the psychology of the reflection in general—as they are also a characteristic of Shakespeare's Hamlet in general". Schmitt reminds his audience how a verse of *Hamlet*'s Act III[508]—*O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!* [O, welche rasche blutge Tat

508 3, 4, 27.

ist dies!]—was "independently quoted by "many contemporaries in all European countries in light of the proceedings against Egypt".

The Aachen typescript ends here. Several manuscript annotations and drafts abound in the following pages, which also contains "parallel versions" three times sketched. The reader does not know if any participant asked the obvious question, that is, if the "mythical figure" of Prince Hamlet have or have not any true impact in the age of mass democracy. Andreas Höfele posits this question, as he reconstructs Schmitt's drafts on both the "history of the literary reception of the Hamlet-figure" and the "social history of the intellectuals". Schmitt does not further elaborate any kind of conclusion. His reflections on the importance of *Hamlet* in the late 1950s remain open. Moreover, the reader of *Glossarium* can easily note how several of this manuscript annotations—as the conference in Aachen itself—are taken from Schmitt's private entries during the mid 1950s. However, what really stands out of Schmitt's dissertation at the RWTH, is the formal yet oblique application of the main thesis of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—namely, that the mythical aspect of *Hamlet* is still contemporary as highlights the asymmetry of a tortured intellectual mind within the ongoing ruin of a belittled State. Höfele reminds, nonetheless, a minor but significant correction of one of Schmitt's sub-theses in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, that is, that "the eighteenth century poets of the German *Sturm und Drang*—Lessing, Herder, Goethe—began this process by making their own myth out of" *Shakespeare* —and not "Hamlet", as it reads at the beginning of the *Einleitung* of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*[509]. What does it mean such a correction? While Schmitt's notes compare *Hamlet* with Goethe's Werther, the read cannot discern what is Schmitt arguing here. Perhaps the fact that the production of a German myth on *Hamlet* once again proves the intellectual obsession of reproducing all sort of geniuses? In any case, what becomes clear in Schmitt's conference in Aachen—along with his manuscript notes—is how the importance of *Hamlet* performs within a great historical framework, that is, the year 1848 and all the subsequent political events. "Hamlet is an intellectual man, too sophisticated and noble for the world" [*Hamlet ist ein geistiger Mensch, der für die Welt zu fein und edel ist*][510], adds Schmitt in the first section of his conference. An "intellectual", unlike Goethe's Werther.

509. Schmitt 2009, 7.
510. Höfele 2021, 15.

What does "intellectual" means, then? First and foremost, a man—it is worth noting that, according to Schmitt, "Hamlet as a mythical figure of the present" does not contemplate women, as the self-centered, intellectual persona of Prince Hamlet is a strictly masculine feature—who is able to master everything but his relation with reality. The reader might remember Walter Bradford Cannon's fight-or-flight response, a biological model that explains the physiological reaction of vertebrates and other organism regarding the stress triggered in potential harmful situations. The intellectual does not fight nor he flights, but proceeds toward a series of makeshift U-turns back to himself. In this perspective, the intellectual suspends his fight-or-flight response in favor of a psychological gate, which includes a safeness only to be perceived by no one except him. His dissociation, however, is not terminal, as he eventually will return to reality—the deeds can certainly fail, but cannot be unfulfilled—, even if his delayed actions are to be performed out of time. Höfele underlines how ironic that subject of Schmitt's Aachen dissertation was the "mythical figure", a Hamlet-interpretation initiated by no other than Schlegel. Höfele also reminds he extensive use of *Hamlet* by Schmitt, in order to examine his own situation after 1945. While the aforementioned manuscript notes certainly provide interesting details to the hardcore interpreter of Schmitt—for instance, the use of unknown, unmentioned authors in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, like Hermann Türck, Hoffmansthal, and Julius Bab—they don't really add new or substantial elements to his ideas sketched in *Glossarium*, *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, and the two conferences already explicated.

4.6 *Gespräch über den Neuen Raum* (1958)

By 1958, all of Schmitt's crucial reflections regarding an authentic philosophy of history, art, world history, international politics and the momentous conflict between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R, power, and the key concepts necessary to tackle all these phenomena, had already been formulated. A good example of this is Schmitt's 1957 *Die Andere Hegel-Linie*, a brief homage to Hans Freyer on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Schmitt places Freyer on the same level as Dilthey and Hegel. This line "is a characteristic feature in the European physiognomy, an essential component of our European present, and a spiritual reality." This

is quite a compliment. Freyer's 1955 *Theorie des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*[511] was one of the main"—yet not explicit acknowledged"—references in Schmitt's vision of a philosophy of history. What Spengler's *The Decline of the West* was to World War I, Freyer's *Theory of the Present Age* was to World War II. If the classic Hegelian line reached Lenin and Stalin through Marx, by contrast, this "other" present-day line begins with Hegel's philosophy of history and then is materialized in the relationship of "knowledge and power in the age of the atom and thermonuclear bombs."[512] Jena meets Hiroshima. Can the philosopher voice an opinion that will be heard by the holder of power? Schmitt mentions the contributions of Chicago-based Leo Strauss and Paris-based Alexandre Kojève to this topic, as they represent a parallel between the legendary encounter between Simonides of Ceos and Hieron of Syracuse"—they both end working as diplomats"—. Hans Freyer's meditations on this same topic apropos of the death of Archimedes are simply "wonderful."

Die Andere Hegel-Linie ends with a reflection on Hans Freyer's intellectual contribution as the current example of the "unity of knowledge, life and personal destiny"[513] that characterizes the philosopher. In a single page, Schmitt somehow managed to reflect on the philosophy of history, the "spiritual" aspect of every concrete struggle—via the same quotation from Rimbaud he included in his commentary on Jünger: "[t]he spiritual combat is as brutal as the battle of men"—and the dark age of world-history and its politics amid the unfathomable advance of technology. All of these themes will be expanded in the three-way conversation included in his *Dialogue on New Space*.

This piece is quite different from the interrogation published in 1954. Although one can think of an updated version of Voltaire's swansong *Euhemerus's Dialogues*[514] or Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonus,*[515] each of the parties involved in this text represent a historical force. These three are Altmann—a German pun for "old man"—the Europe of the late *nomos*, Neumeyer (a chemical physicist), a liberal man of science and of secular viewpoints, and MacFuture, a cartoonish North American who barges into the dialogue at a certain point. The "question-answer" model is here enhanced with

511. The affinity was quite strong. The last chapter of Freyer's analysis of the present is entitled "The pluralism of the spiritual world and the present of the Earth." See Freyer 1955, 248–258.
512. Wirsing 1957, 2.
513. Wirsing 1957, 2.
514. See Voltaire 2009, 77–274.
515. See Berkeley 2007.

erudite references and lengthy explanations on the main topic; namely, the "opposition between land and sea and then to talk about the distinction between terrestrial and maritime existence."[516] The contrast between "A." and "N." is more nuanced than that between "C. S." and "Y." However, they are separated by a much more profound difference; that is, the "spirituality" of "A." against the parceled "secularism" of "N." This five-paragraph dialogue can be seen as a performative collage of Schmitt's thoughts from *Land und Meer* onward.

> A. When a world-historical opposition approaches its climax, then on both sides all material forces, all forces of soul, and all intellectual forces are brought to bear in the conflict to the greatest extreme. Then the battle extends across the whole environment of the participating powers. At this point, the elementary opposition between land and sea is itself brought into the confrontation. […]; in other words: as a war of the elements against one another.[517]
>
> N. To me it seems that everything that you draw into world-historical phenomena or constructions, including the highly interesting theory of the English geographer Mackinder, is only the form of appearance of an historically bounded picture of the world.
>
> A. Do you perchance believe that physicists, chemists, and technicians dreamed no dreams, produced no myths and were immune to anachronisms?
>
> N. Ah, so. I see you wish to go with this, honorable Mr. Altmann. You now wish to come at me historically [*Sie wollen mir jetzt historisch kommen*].[518] You are now working with the so-called historical sense and with historical dialectics.[519]

This provides a picture of the dynamic between the savvy Neumeyer and wise Altmann, who insists on establishing a structural opposition. But suddenly, a new player joins the play in the second paragraph. "MacFuture" does not participate in the dialogue; on the contrary, he

516. Schmitt 2015d, 53.
517. Schmitt 2015d, 60.
518. Schmitt 1995a, 588.
519. Schmitt 2015d, 62.

intervenes and proceeds to lay down new rules. One should keep in mind that each figure represents world players: the spirit of old Europe, the new depoliticized scientific ethos, and the United States' sudden emergence as a new form of twentieth-century global empire. From this perspective, MacFuture unfolds a statement that must be grasped as an explicit metaphor: "Up until now I have remained silent" (63). MacFuture marks his entrance with a bold and forthright statement: "[…] I find you both, excuse me, outdated [*ich finde Sie, entschuldigen Sie, beide veraltet*].

Both "A." and "N." are connected with a long-gone world. "Even the distinction between nature and history has long been superseded," adds MacFuture. "The atomic age" mentioned in *Die Andere Hegel-Linie* is the starting point from which the third player will demonstrate the obsolete standing of every word spoken by "A." and "N." "You intervene in the right moment," states Altmann. And then he warns: "We must ask what the new question is; we stand—if I may formulate it so pointedly for once—before the question concerning a question [*wir ständen – wenn ich es einmal zugespitzt formulieren darf – vor der Frage nach einer Frage*]" (64). However, MacFuture leaves no doubt about his presence: "I am for simplification and disentanglement [*Ich bin für Vereinfachung und Entflechtung*]" (64). The landscape that MacFuture announces is marvelous, but lacks an essential element—the human being. At this point, the "neutrality" sought by Neumeyer now is transformed into pure restraining power. MacFuture goes too far, anticipating the Californian nihilism expressed by the phrase "everything goes."[520] His message speaks of change brought about by "machines" and "apparatuses." Nonetheless, Altmann remains confident, even if MacFuture's demeanor suggests that "his brain relents" when facing Altman's mind-numbing "question concerning the great question." "A." answers with no irony and with a deadpan expression: "Then allow yourself to build a cybernetic apparatus that grasps and answers this question for you."[521] The second paragraph ends with Neumeyer's attempt to provide a "practical answer," while the third paragraph quotes almost line by line Schmitt's statements delivered in his commentary of Jünger's *The Gordian Knot*.

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520. See Welsch 2008, 135.
521. This could easily be read as one of Günther's considerations on polyvalent logic and his "ontology of cybernetics." See Günther 1976, 268: "For cybernetics, on the other hand, the fact of self-awareness is fundamental. It follows that Man is about to enter a new epoch in his scientific history."

The two last paragraphs of *Dialogue on New Space* connect the philosophical dots scattered from *Land and Sea* onward with the crucial remark found in "Die Lage," "[a] historical truth is true only once" (79). However, is Schmitt not confusing "a truth"—which, far from being objective, depends always on the agonistic dynamics that champions it as the ultimate value or criterion of truth—with "a historical fact"; namely, an empty event that is later filled and connected with other events with intellectual content?[522] In any case, the philosophy of history sketched in the 1950s here receives a dramatic presentation. MacFuture is rapidly educated in Altmann's simple phenomenology. "A." presents a new typology: the house vs. the ship. "N." admonishes him: "You are ripping an abyss, honorable Mr. Altmann" (74). But MacFuture does not abandon his simple analysis. "The historical call" that "A." so zealously wishes others to heed might go unheard or be ignored altogether. And what's more:

> F. Pardon me, gentlemen, but I find you both, both our honorable Mr. Altmann with his new order, but you, too, dear Mr. Neumeyer, with your call from out of the depths of the sea—I find you both not grand enough and much too modest. Fundamentally, for me, this no longer concerns the *call* at all. We have enough *drive*, that's more important, we even have an excess of drive. Thus, I would rather journey to the moon and to Mars than remain on this puny planet.[523]

The reader now sees how MacFuture was immune to the disquisitions of both "A." and "N." due to the protection afforded him by his ideological spacesuit. The dialogue ends with the three characters parting ways. "MacFuture" will probably launch himself into the unknown wonders of outer—inhuman—space, while the scientism of "Neumeyer" will lead him back to the sea. As for Altmann, he will honor the privilege of being born and raised as a devoted earthling, even if this means to "awake one morning after a hard night threatened by atom bombs and similar terrors and shall gratefully recognize himself again as the son of the firmly grounded earth" (82).

4.7 *Nomos – Nahme – Name* (1959)

522. This might be debatable, as there is no such thing as an "empty event." However, the meaning of any event must be re-codified into a higher meaning, which leads to new situations—and thus, new decisions.
523. Schmitt 2015d, 81.

The main lines of the conceptual biography devoted to the notion of *nomos* in Schmitt's article of 1953 are now afforded a more profound conceptual dimension. *Nomos – Nahme – Name* was written as a comment on the theo-philosophical remarks of Erich Przywara—who acted "as a priest to spiritual assistance" during Schmitt's detention in 1946.[524] In 1952, Przywara published *Humanitas: der Mensch gestern und morgen*. The book, a gargantuan intellectual effort spanning almost 1000 pages, is tackled by Schmitt, who specifically studies the chapter dedicated to the question of "power." Schmitt comments on Pryzwara's "three statements" on power; namely, power as a "secret sinister end," as "implicit centrality," and, finally, as "visibility and publicity"—which is a counter-reaction to the feature presented in the first sentence. Pryzwara's threefold manifestation of power is reflected by Schmitt in its relationship with the *nomos*. From this point onward, several semantic distinctions will be made.

> Power thus appears in many forms as *archy and cracy*. *Archy* means from the source, while *cracy* means power through superior force and occupation.
> […] Together with *archy* and *cracy*, there is still a third category, *nomos* […][525]

This is the first of the seven paragraphs that comprise Schmitt's commentary. The second paragraph demonstrates that *nomos* is the conceptual condition for both "archy" and "cracy," because "[a] word bound to *nomos* is measured by *nomos* and subject to it" (338). Schmitt points out the "impersonality" that rules over the word, which reminds one of the pedestrian expression "in the name of the law"—it is "impersonal" due to its efficacy within the social dimension. The conceptual strength of *nomos* is to be seen in the rise of modern science; namely, "economy," of which Schmitt will celebrate the "extraordinary expansion from house to *polis*" (339). Schmitt draws on the *pater familias* and the modern *statesman* in order to stress that "[t]he transformation of the community into an administrative state for total social welfare leads to a paternal totality without a house father" (340). This apparent vanishing of direct power allowed Engels—Schmitt thinks—to promise "that one day all

524. Mehring 2014, 669n207.
525. Schmitt 2003, 338.

power of men over men will cease." This, in turn, leads to utopia, as "those who swarm around a *nomos basileus* fail to notice that, in reality, they propagate just a formula" (341). Schmitt takes the reader to theological and post-Hellenic intellectual quarrels in order to prove how the organic, pulsating momentum of the original sound of *nomos* decayed into the abstract notion of "law." The dogmatic assumption of Homer's inexistent use of *nomos* is scholarly refuted by Schmitt, who points out that *nomos* is the same word as *nómos*—several words used by Homer include *nomos* as a suffix—for the accent was only added *ex post facto* by "Alexandrian scholars." Schmitt presents the opinions of three of his acquaintances to back up this alleged homonymy.

Schmitt traces the overall semantic traffic of the word *nomos* to the "fixed household: the *oikos*" (341). The article's third paragraph returns to Schmitt's reflections on "land appropriation" and establishes the current decay of *nomos* through "normativism and positivism"—a consequence of the completion of "land appropriation and land division" and the subsequent increase in the importance of "distribution." Then, when the "age of migrations and land appropriation was established on the new foundation," *nomos* was substituted for the notion of *thesmos*. From that point on, *nomos* became an "antithesis of *physis*" and an antithetical term in general. *Nomos* thus connected with *logos*, leading to the contemporary expression "in the name of the law," which presupposes an underlying comprehension of *nomos* as something almost technical, disconnected from Aristotelian "passion."

In the fourth paragraph, Schmitt establishes what he considers one of the most prevalent intellectual prejudices in Western thought; namely, the semantic fusion of *nomos* with *lex*. "The content and course of the claim that Homer never used the word *nomos* is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the intellectual history of mankind," Schmitt highlights. By stating the contrary—he briefly touches upon Przywara's assertion that "Philo's claim was decisive in what would become the Occident"—reminds us how the infamous migration of "Plato's *logos* to the Heraclitan *logos*" ended up equating the "intelligible" with the "perceivable"—as occurs with "Hegel and Schelling" via "St. Thomas Aquinas." Schmitt repeats again the subterranean link between *nomos* and economy—*oikonomia*—to then assert that "the unity of *nomos* is only the unity of *oikos*" (345).

Nomos – Nahme – Name's fifth paragraph mirrors nearly point by point Schmitt's 1953 essay on the same subject. The "three processes" unleashed from *nomos* are now seen in their consummated modern landscape; that is, by wondering how "this works in the atomic age and in technologically and industrially developed areas" (345). The "linguistic root" from which "*nemein – teilen* and *weiden*" originate is the semantic threshold, according to Schmitt, from which the historical biography of *nomos* can be grasped and revisited. After "land appropriation" has ended, further non-terrestrial appropriations must subsequently be carried out. In a world where production is the only iterative process, there are no longer "war and crises, because unchained production no longer is partial and unilateral, but has become total and global"[526]—thereby, "man can *give* without *taking*."

In the sixth paragraph, Schmitt provides two examples "to illustrate" the past ages of appropriation. For the contemporary reader, such examples can only be the product of a mind anchored in the mental activity of some character depicted in a canvas painted by Fra Angelico. The first example refers to the "family-based marriage" and the woman "taking" the name of the husband, just as the husband previously "took" the wife. Schmitt approaches the current stage of this historical institution in unholy times, bitterly stating that people will eventually forget "how we got our names" (348). The second paragraph mentions "Simone Weil's book, *Attente de Dieu*"—one has to stress that Schmitt rarely quotes a female thinker;[527] in this case, his interest in Weil is referred to her post-Catholic-non-Marxist-I-am-

526. Schmitt 2003, 347.

527. As was demonstrated in chapter 1, Lilian Winstanley was crucial for *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—although one can say that Schmitt carried out a stylized instrumentalization of her book on *Hamlet*, as in it, the reader can hardly surmise that Winstanley was even close to Schmitt's idea of "intrusion" and thus to an alternative historical scope regarding a philosophy of history. Likewise, the recently published posthumous diaries of Schmitt written in the early 1920s are full of entries and annotations regarding the intellectually erotic bond between Schmitt and the Australian Anglicism expert—and his former student—Kathleen Murray. See Mehring 2014, 113–20, here 118–9. Schmitt dedicated a cryptic novella to her, entitled *The Faithful Gypsy*, which has a good number of references to their affair through an impersonation of Shakespeare's Othello. See Höfele 2016, 174–8, here 174–6. In his answer to a survey made by the evangelical weekly newspaper *Christ und Welt* on December 6, 1956, entitled "Bücher von Morgen," Schmitt once again praises Theodor Däubler—whose work received a new edition by Friedhelm Kemp—calling him "a monad in the endless German sense of the word: he mirrors the universe." Moreover, two books written by female authors—one by Margret Boveri, a German journalist specialized in post-war Germany, and another by Ruth Fischer, one of the co-founders of the Austrian communist party—are positively reviewed by Schmitt, as in their contributions he recognizes themes which he was very fond of; namely, the question of "criminalization" and the "political fate" of Germany. See Schmitt 1995, 227–8. In one of his last interviews, Schmitt recalls the doctoral thesis of Johanna Kendziora on liberalism—*Der Begriff des politischen Partei im System des politischen Liberalismus*. See Agamben 2012, 171. In *Glossarium*, seven are the female thinkers quoted or mentioned by Schmitt: Annette von Droste-Hulshoff, Elisabeth Langgäser, Annie Kraus, Toni Sussmann, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, and Edith Stein (as a mere example of Jewish thought). Finally, the only published text where Schmitt quotes the intellectual

not-longer-I mysticism.[528] Weil's testimony is that God "took" her [*il m'a prise*]. Schmitt quotes Karl Epting's German translation of it; namely, *er hat mich genommen.*[529] Thus, in both examples, a taking is possible as someone or something has given by giving up something or part of herself:

> We are concerned with the legal-historical meaning of the relation between *Nahme* and name, power and name-giving, and, in particular, with the formative, even festive processes of many land-appropriations that are able to make *Nahme* a sacred act. A land-appropriation is constituted only if the appropriator is able to give the land a name.[530]

The seventh and last paragraph of this erudite article explores the "public dimension" of power previously stressed by Przywara. Power needs a means of expression, because true power tends to secrecy, to hide itself from the public. This paradox leads to the need for a responsible and shared view of power, and thus, to the silent share-holders of power. However, just when "abstractions cease," "the situation becomes concrete" (349). The contemporary stage of power, however, needs no names. The reader might be wondering whether Schmitt was carrying out a groundbreaking critique of corporations and all-powerful economic groups or whether he was just begrudgingly meditating on the wicked times that had toppled the classic historical institutions based on *nomos*. Schmitt puts forward a very off-the-cuff critique of colonialism, as he salutes the importance played by "the heroes of the *conquista* as a mission of the *jus commercii*" (349). Colonialism depends strictly on morality. Its examination is performed in hindsight—rendering useless any ex-post explanation. The doom and gloom surrounding the act of naming and taking is ironically portrayed by Schmitt in the current name of the "former German Supreme in Leipzig," now called "Dimitrov

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work of women is *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Along with Lilian Winstanley, Schmitt refers the reader to Laura Bonnahan's 1954 Shakespeare article on witchcraft, a piece made for the BBC's "Third Programme," and then to Eva Scott's German translation of her 1935 opus *Six Stuart Sovereigns, 1512–1701* (2009b 10n2, 27n16). An investigation devoted to the female impact on Schmitt's oeuvre is yet to be written, a piece of work that would shed light on crucial and unattended matters of his thought.

528. See Schmitt 2015e, 239.

529. Schmitt was very interested in Simone Weil but not enough to carry out further investigation on her work. Weil's testimony on God taking her is directly linked in her fixation with an expression used by Paul in his letter to the Philippians (Phil. 2:6). See Weil 2004, 212: "To empty oneself of the world. To take upon oneself the character of a slave. To reduce oneself to the point one occupies in space and time. To become nothing."

530. Schmitt 2003, 348.

House" (350). The jurist positively acknowledges Przywara's book, as "it contains one of the most magnificent answers that the German spirit has to offer to the enormous challenge of an epoch characterized by two world wars." *Nomos – Nahme – Name* acts then as a disguised political critique of post-war politics and policies, for, in their modern and neutral operations, politics and policies erode once again the sacred link between taking and naming.

4.8 Conclusion

Schmitt was almost 70 years old when *Hamlet oder Hekuba* was published. Although his brilliant academic career was covered in shame and subjected to public repudiation, he still managed to take one step further and reach a new intellectual level. He envisioned a "philosophy of history," a phenomenological approach to history and politics that, by reinterpreting Hegel's work, repelled both Marxism and historical positivism. In this great scheme of human activity, Schmitt sought to discover not a general law that could be applied to history but its inner-dynamics. In the dialectic of the "land and sea opposition," he discovered hidden threats that lead to crucial events of the past. He convinced himself that 1848 was the historical singularity that all contemporary events link back to. Art became for him the privileged form to analyze history. And thus, history revealed itself as an ongoing tragedy. However, the Industrial Revolution and the birth of modern technology marked, according to Schmitt, an unbridgeable gap between the classical and the new world. Technology detached itself from human history, leaving human beings under a colossal rule of law no longer anchored in morality, ethics, law, or state politics. This desolated present could only be the beginning of a dystopian future. Schmitt limited himself to examining the situation, searching for the causes, acknowledging the elements at play and simply aching for an uncertain future. He did not attempt to console himself or others through philosophy. The 1950s mark the last intellectual efforts of Schmitt. During those years, a long-forgotten project found the right time to be developed. Thus, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* came to life. However, what was the original aspect of this project and why did Schmitt want to address the topics of art and history in the past?

In the fifth and last chapter of this investigation, these two answers will be schematically answered by exploring the importance of Schiller's work for Schmitt and

explaining exactly how Schmitt tackled the aforementioned topics. Likewise, the reader will see how many of today's interpreters of Schmitt simply overlooked this point, or simply—as stated in the conclusion of the first chapter—associated *Hamlet or Hecuba* with the wrong references. As far as I know, no general account of Schmitt's thought in the 1950s has been completed. The fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation provide a schematic outline of the subject. Its intention was to prove the philosophical context in which Schmitt's articles, reviews, and essays appeared. The results are as follows:

1. *Hamlet oder Hekuba* condensed Schmitt's esoteric and exoteric views regarding his 1945 experience. From this perspective, it is a performative piece of work; that is, it acts as a political statement expressed through metaphors and inner references.

2. Schmitt could only outline a potential "philosophy of history." The short length of most of his work during the 1950s can be explained both by his age and the conflicts he had with the democratic policies that shaped the public opinion in postwar Germany.

3. During the 1950s, Carl Schmitt's conceptual framework was subjected to a dramatic transformation. In this sense, any approach to his work, even if only to describe his main concepts and thesis, must account for the spiritual and historical shift that his oeuvre suffered in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 5
KOMMERELL'S THESIS ON HITLER, ART, AND HISTORY, AND ITS CONNECTION TO *HAMLET ODER HEKUBA*

Introduction

It is somehow curious that two crucial references for *Hamlet oder Hekuba* are barely mentioned and even omitted from it. Schiller is merely named apropos the difference between modern German authors and Shakespeare's feral social environment. Max Kommerell is not mentioned in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, although his importance is underlined in Schmitt's prologue to Lilian Winstanley's German translation of her 1921 book. Were both Schiller and Kommerell simply avoided in 1956, for their impact on Schmitt's reflections was purely personal? Or were they simply a spiritual conveyance at the moment of approaching the main themes of *Hamlet*? This last chapter aims to ascertain these questions, that is, how and to what extent Kommerell's interpretation of Schiller—and Schiller himself—was essential to Schmitt's own reflections on *Hamlet* (both methodologically and philosophically). While his correspondence and *Glossarium* are showered with references and meditations regarding these two German thinkers, the reader cannot grasp their place in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s conceptual hierarchy—but also their overall importance in Schmitt's scattered considerations of a philosophy of history. Chapter 5, therefore, develops a systematized interpretation on Schmitt's bouts of historico-philosophical thinking in the 1950s via Kommerell and Schiller. This chapter amplifies such an analysis to Schmitt's personal annotations and even some of his correspondence. I argue that Schmitt's work in the 1950s was an ongoing philosophical workshop. The reflections of this decade are unfinished, somewhat obscure but intensively enticing. Schmitt learned from Kommerell's 1934—by way of example—how to account the name that shall not be named. By lingering to Kommerell's interpretation of action and tragedy of Schiller's plays, Schmitt's hoped-for philosophy of history—not another thing that an alternative conception of historical events, which eschewed from Marxism and Spengliarism—became possible. Chapter 5 thus enables a new interpretation of Schmitt's late thinking, and directly addresses Kommerell's 1934 speech on Schiller.

5.1 The Internal Genesis of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*

Politische Theologie II. Die Legende von der Erledigung jeder Politischen Theologie (1970) is the swansong of Schmitt's oeuvre. As far as both the topic and references acknowledged in it are concerned, this second and final inquiry on the theme of "political theology" was as surprising as it was unnecessary. By the 1970s, the main intellectual debates regarding political philosophy and even theology paid little heed to the views held by a 80-year-old jurist. The trenchant discussions triggered in Germany by Habermas, Luhmann, and Koselleck's sociology of concepts represented the leading intellectual viewpoints regarding philosophy and political science. The juridical discussions were quite detached from that rough division between positivism and the true law once posited by Schmitt. His phenomenological approach to *Hamlet* was undoubtedly bested by the comparative school of Szondi, Jauss, and Bohrer—and by the thought-provoking thesis on myths that Roland Barthes introduced in his *Mythologies* (1957). His well-known concepts of "dictatorship," "state of exception," and his "friend and enemy" criterion would have to wait another twenty years to be newly re-adapted by the editorial success of post-Foucaultian political philosophy. Beyond some minor intellectual circles in Spain, France, South America, and obviously in his native Germany, Schmitt was no longer a reference or a valid voice. The publication of *Glossarium* in 1991 left no doubts that the great jurist of the Weimar years was a rabid anti-Semite. A genius dwelling between the delusional landscapes of a forgotten world and the bitter discontent caused by an out-of-bounds, technology-oriented, and history-free arrow of time. Schmitt's last publications exhibit a painful acceptance of a new world order that, beyond his usual exaggerations, was surprisingly well captured in his brilliant and brief analyses of the figure of the "partisan" and the "state police." Its first seeds were projected by Schmitt into a new dark era.

However, this remains the conventional interpretation of Schmitt's late oeuvre. Chapters 3 and 4 have shown how several of his drafts—developed through different viewpoints—on the philosophy of history indeed aimed to establish a superior theoretical standpoint. This final perspective merged his "concrete" thinking with an existential comprehension of human dynamics. Schmitt made several attempts to achieve this goal, which suggests that *Hamlet or Hecuba* was one of the most important pieces of this epoch.

Schmitt's meditations on *Hamlet* were at the same time a sketch of the political role played by Shakespeare—although the Bard was no politician. Nonetheless, and according to Schmitt, his conscious mirroring of the Elizabethan scandal through the characters of Prince Hamlet, Queen Gertrude, and the infamous King Claudius changed the usual reflections of daily life on stage.[531] What Shakespeare did was create a fictional reality in which the intensity of a concrete moment managed to intrude into *Hamlet*, thereby giving rise to a myth.

And yet, this is only the visible half of the essay on *Hamlet*. By reading the personal reflections that Schmitt recorded in *Glossarium*—but also by reviewing his correspondence or even his other posthumously-published personal diaries—one may note how this merging of history and philosophy was triggered by a long-lost document that most of Schmitt's interpreters have simply ignored. Max Kommerell impressively reflected on the historical importance of Schiller in his welcoming speech at the University of Leipzig in 1934. His idea that the German playwright was a guide [*Führer*] of "men of action" certainly gave Schmitt new ideas regarding the importance of theater for interpreting history—as well as the play and its capacity to grasp concrete events. Kommerell's initial support for Hitler—still visible by 1934—was openly acknowledged in his portrayal of Schiller as a *Führer*. Likewise, Schmitt mirrored the Elizabethan years already mirrored in *Hamlet* in his reflections on Shakespeare, turning *Hamlet or Hecuba* into a retrospective piece on the havoc unleashed after 1945.

Why, then, have most of Schmitt's interpreters simply overlooked this? For example, one cannot find a single mention of Max Kommerell's essay on Schiller in the introductions to the English, French, and Spanish translations of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. It is only in Carlo Galli's introductory comments to the Italian translation of Schmitt's 1956 monograph that the reader is made aware of the importance that Germany's quintessential playwright and his concepts held for Schmitt.[532] But even these remarks fall short when compared to the key

531. This is very akin to the forced historical interpretation that Shane Leslie carried out on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. See Gardner in Carroll 2000, 34: "[T]he tarts represent the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican faith; a 'knavish Ritualist' (John Henry Newman) is accused of 'having removed their natural sense'; and the Hatter (High Church) and the March Hare (Low Church) are called as witnesses against him. Leslie concludes: 'it is interesting that the King's words to the Knave were exactly those which had been hurled at Newman and at everybody who had tried to equivocate on the Articles.' 'You must have meant some mischief or else you would have signed your name like an honest man.' It is not impossible, of course, that Carroll quietly alludes to Newman in this section, but the real impact of the trial scene in its Kafkaesque absurdity."
532. See Galli in Schmitt 2012, 20–21: "L'insistenza schmittiana sul rapporto immediate, non dialettizzabile, di gioco e serietà, e in ultima istanza di libertà e necessità, è una cosciente polemica contro Schiller, la cui "bella

document; that is, Kommerell's ideas on Schiller as the guiding figure of historical activity. As far as I know, this link between Schmitt and Kommerell has only been developed in an article by Reinhard Mehring in 2005. Mehring reconstructs "a thread of intellectual-historical interpretation that leads to Schmitt's little booklet 'Hamlet or Hekuba' from 1956, which research has so far attributed only marginal importance to the work as a whole." This thread is precisely Schmitt's private notes—that is, *Glossarium* and different parts of his correspondence—but also Schmitt's mirroring exercises carried out in his 1956 essay. "What emerges in the end," adds Mehring, "are two turned figures, Friedrich Schiller and Adolf Hitler."[533] Mehring recalls how before 1945, Schmitt's method was, so to speak, broadly "legal"; that is, the backdrop of most of his reflections was the unstable—and ultimately—doomed Weimar Republic.

However, an obvious question arises. Why did Schmitt approach Hitler through Schiller? Why did he not simply write a straightforward composition or an article expressing his ex-post considerations on Hitler as a "tyrant politician of the mind," as Mehring states? Regardless of the possible answers to these questions, the main connection through which Schmitt reflects on his immediate past is the relationship between "concrete reality" and art. Almost twenty years after the publication of *Glossarium*, eleven years after the publication of his definitive biography, and six years after the scientific edition of *Glossarium*—and the recent posthumous publication of his diaries and correspondence—it is a well-known fact that Schmitt never apologized for his outspoken position during the Hitler years. Likewise, he never addressed the subject explicitly. The postwar years came to him as an opportunity to delve into several subjects in a non-academic fashion, but also as a chance to acknowledge contemporary politics through both an esoteric and a historical scope. Schmitt despised Thomas Mann's radical critique of Hitler broadcasted in an NBC radio address on March 9, 1940—at that time, Mann was living in exile in California. Nonetheless, one can arguably

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parvenza" sviluppava il concetto espresso da Kant nella *Critica del Giudizio* di una finalità senza fine (*Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*) e di una legalità senza legge (*Gesetzmässigkeit ohne Gesetz*) e si concludeva nel progetto di un'educazione estetica dell'uomo, che nello "Stato estetico" realizzava "l'indifferenza per la realtà," e che appunto poteva avere come emblema l'espressione del *Prologo* del *Wallenstein*, citata da Schmitt: "seria è la vita, serena è l'arte" (*Ernst is das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst*). Galli tackles several problems that are, indeed, essential to *Hamlet oder Hekuba*; that is, the concepts of "play" and "seriousness," the importance of the conference "Was habe ich getan?" and, finally, the hidden references to postwar Germany and the new *nomos* rising over the over-technified future. Nonetheless, Galli does not mention how this quarrel (*polemica*) against Schiller is mediated by Kommerell's interpretation.

533. Mehring 2005, 217.

think that Mann's corrosive remarks[534] elicited in Schmitt a similarly bold, although contrary and delayed response. For instance, in *Ex Captivitate Salus* there is no clear mention of Hitler—nor in *Nomos*. His name is mentioned only in very local opinion pieces or articles—for example, the one written apropos of Ernst Jünger. However, Hitler's name is copiously repeated in his private correspondence and in *Glossarium*. The reader of Schmitt will have to wait until *Hamlet oder Hekuba* to find a statement about Hitler, National Socialism, and subjects related to those years. However, said statement, as has been exposed in the first and second chapters, is an obscure political manifesto. For instance, there is only one reference to Schiller, and it says almost nothing about his views on art and history. As Mehring suggests, Schiller, Kommerell, Hitler, and the question of tyranny can only be assessed by deeply pondering some of Schmitt's commentaries in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

This conclusion provides a schematic account of one of postwar Germany's most hidden "intellectual threads." The reader is faced at once with the spiritual defeat of a jurist, the isolated comprehension of art and history of an almost unknown German literary critic, the rising actuality of Schiller in a rogue failed state, and the everlasting enthrallment of Shakespeare's universe amidst the historical bankruptcy of Germany and Europe. Mehring has developed a thorough examination of such themes by retracing both Schmitt's early critique of the bourgeoise intelligentsia in Berlin and Kommerell's intellectual origins in Stefan George's esoteric household. By contrast, I will solely focus on Schmitt's interpretations of Kommerell's views on Schiller. My main interest is to provide a draft of this connection and its potential impact on a new interpretation of Schmitt. Thus, this perspective could eventually demonstrate why and how the German jurist's intellectual afterlife could dwell beyond the conventional theses surrounding his work.

5.2 The Intellectual Origins of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*

I have already demonstrated how Schmitt approached the themes of both Hamlet and Shakespeare. Likewise, Schmitt's theoretical perspective was explicated too. Namely, theater and art offer privileged access to historical comprehension, while the concept of "parallels"

534. Mann 1939, 31: "Here is a man possessed of a bottomless resentment and a festering desire for revenge; a man ten times a failure, extremely lazy, incapable of steady work; a man who has spent long periods in institutions; a disappointed bohemian artist; a total good-for-nothing."

acts as a spiritual threshold to correctly grasp concrete situations. Lilian Winstanley's approach came to Schmitt as a confirmation of his "concrete-order legal thinking."[535] His comprehension of the work of art can be seen to consciously avoid the prevailing bourgeois interpretation as early as the publication of *Political Romanticism*. In his dramatic conference, "Was habe ich getan?" Schmitt publicly addressed this quarrel. Schmitt's reflections on *Hamlet oder Hekuba* have thus been fully reconstructed and studied.

If one follows *Glossarium*, as Mehring did, there are several allusions to Kommerell as a mediator of German classicism—that is, of Goethe—and Germany's infamous theory of "race" during the National Socialist years. Schmitt here is pondering two different ideas of culture. The transition from one to the other—correctly grasped by Kommerell—was achieved in Hölderlin's new appraisal of poetry. Moreover, such a transition also implied an alternative interpretation of Schiller. Kommerell changed the prevailing hermeneutical view on the author of *The Robbers*. He acknowledged Schiller not as the classic author of edifying plays but as a true disruptor of bourgeoise morality—à la Nietzsche, as Mehring reminds us. While Kommerell displayed an unprecedented level of literary expertise in his *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik*, in his commemorative speech, he rejected those skewed interpretations of Schiller. This lecture—first given in 1934 and entitled "Schiller als Führer des handelnden Menschen"—was the starting point for Schmitt's innovative thesis on art and history. Schmitt saw in Kommerell's notion of action—which was uncannily similar to his idea of a "concrete situation"—the hermeneutical threshold for a broader interpretation of history. Actions come first; agents, second. Even more importantly, the agent as such—namely, the politician, but also the political advisor, as Schmitt pondered in *Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber* —represents the apex of ambiguity. As he pursues his steadfast mission—whether this is revenge or the complete takeover of Bohemia—he soon discovers that every great achievement is morally stained.

What does "Schiller als Führer des handelnden Menschen" stand for? Kommerell's lecture is certainly complex. As a welcoming speech, it obviously addresses a particular moment in time. One must remember that after Hindenburg passed away, the office of Reich

535. Some interpreters have wanted to see that therein lies Schmitt's "metaphysical" viewpoint. For example, Ojakangas was too philosophically driven to fully engage with Schmitt's position in the 1950s. His main interlocutors are Heidegger, Benjamin, Foucault, Derrida, and Agamben; that is, the conventional intellectual circuit that in the first two chapters was shown to be misleading and inaccurate. See Ojakangas 2004, 152–153.

President was merged with that of the Reich Chancellor. This meant that the total authority—and thus, legitimacy—of the Reich President was illegally transferred to Hitler. Therefore, Hitler became both Reich Chancellor and Führer at the same time. A plebiscite was then scheduled for August 15. Hitler was voted by 38 million Germans citizens—95% of the registered voters—which meant 90% of total voters. Absolute power became a reality. This explains Hitler's infamous words pronounced at the annual Nuremberg Nazi Party rallies: "The German form of life is definitely determined for the next thousand years."

This was the historical context in which Kommerell pronounced his peculiar thesis on Schiller at Bonn University in 1934. He was clearly signaling Hitler by calling Schiller a *Führer*. Kommerell asserted that "[s]eine Wirkung unter den Deutschen ist von seiner Dichtung nicht ablösbar". Schiller "ein Wille zu wirken hervorbrachte". Kommerell thinks that this was quite uncommon. The German playwright became a legend because he thought "poetically." Moreover, he managed to capture the mortality that dwells amidst "forms of thought that are eternal". Kommerell stresses that "Er hat die philosophische Bewegung des deutschen Idealismus vereinfacht zu einer Bereitschaft des Gemüts."[536] How did Schiller accomplish such a thing? While Kommerell's attention is interspersed across all of Schiller's oeuvre, he finds in *Wallenstein* the core of Schiller's considerations on historical—and therefore, political—agency. But before describing this trilogy, Kommerell takes a closer look at the orthodox interpretations of Schiller.

5.3 The importance of Schiller

Kommerell scans almost the entirety of Schiller's oeuvre. His speech lies somewhere between an intellectual biography and a thorough psychopolitical survey of the German playwright. The worn-out yet still current expression "to separate art from the artist" only applies if said art and said artist are exclusively confined within the aesthetic realm. This was not the case of Schiller. The reader should keep in mind the significance of the German word *Gestalter*, which encompasses the creative power of a male agent who both designs and arranges art-like artifacts. If one follows Kommerell, the artifact is nothing less than a

536. Kommerell 1934, 5.

historical event. This interpretation apparently differs from Schmitt's, who considered that the artifact was politically attuned to its historical reality:

> Als Darsteller von handelnden Menschen ist Schiller die Ausnahme der deutschen Poesie. Denn diese macht sonst die Momente des Herzens und deren Erwiderungen in der Natur zu ihrem Thema. Der Dichter ist kaum auch der Handelnde und weiß oft wenig von ihm. Seltene Bewegungen seltener Seelen, Bewegungen die selten vom dichterischen Bewußtsein angeleuchtet werden, fanden in Schiller ihren Anwalt, ihren Verherrlicher, ihren Richter und ihren Geheimnisverräter. Vielleicht ist er innerhalb dieser Bewegungen Realist und mitunter Naturalist. Wenn Schiller von Idee handelt, handelt er von Tat, wenn er von Tat handelt, wird er die Idee nicht los. Er begreift den Geist als wirkend auf den Weltstoff hin, sich selbst ebenso. Die Unversöhnlichkeit von Idee und Tat, und die Bedingung der Idee: Tat werden zu *müssen*, dies ist das Schneidende in Schillers Resignation. Die Idee, die sich verschiedenen Denkern verschieden geoffenbart hat, offenbarte sich ihm als Entwurf zur Tat. Diese Erfahrung der Idee ist tragisch.[537]

Who are these "men of action" [*handelnden Menschen*]? Kommerell finds such models, first and foremost, in characters such as Wallenstein—but, then again, also in Fiesko, William Tell, Don Carlos, Demetrius, and even La Valette, from the unsung *The Knights of Malta*. These are men, historical wild cards, both agents and performers. They were designers of fate. Führers, in sum.

These plays cannot be tackled in full here. Moreover, Kommerell does not address them particularly. Instead, he focuses on Wallenstein—but also Octavio and Max Piccolomini—and Demetrius. In order to unravel Kommerell's interpretation of Schiller, one needs to take a brief detour and revisit the main theme of both of these plays.

5.4 *Wallenstein*

The *Wallenstein* trilogy is a historical drama written while Schiller was carrying out his early investigation entitled *History of the Thirty Years' War*. Later on, in 1796, he writes

537. Kommerell 1934, 7.

to his beloved Goethe, telling him that the *Wallenstein* project will cost him "the entire winter and probably most of the summer as well"[538] Schiller states that he has to "handle intractable material, and only by heroic perseverance" can he "gain anything from it."[539]That Albrecht Wallenstein, duke of Friedland, was Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus's *bête noire* is something more or less known by the average history connoisseur. To transform this piece of history into one of the most acclaimed plays in Germany is to take both events and historical personas—life itself—to a whole new level. Schiller meddled with primal forces upon the altar of poetry.

This is not a metaphor. *Wallenstein*'s prologue, addressed by Schiller himself at *Wallenstein Camp*'s first performance at the Weimar Playhouse in October 1798, says:

> Here at the grave end of our century, where / Even reality has turned to poetry, / Where we see mighty nature struggle and / Perceive a weighty goal before us, and / Where the great objects of humanity, / Where rule and freedom are contested mutually, / There, too, may Art upon a shadow stage / Attempt a higher flight, indeed she must, / If she's not to be shamed by Life's great stage.[540]

The lofty dramatism of Schiller's first assertion—a century ends, a new, unknown one commences—rapidly gives way to a both superlative and mysterious sentence: "[e]ven reality has turned to poetry." What does this mean? Any turn or modification of reality expresses an unreal experience of life. Reality becomes important during unreal—non-real—events; we know this thanks to Hans Blumenberg's thoughts on the subject.[541] The fact that "even"—which is the keyword—"reality has turned to poetry" means that life itself demands safety, an ultimate asylum for its inner events. The logical contingencies of nature appear to humankind as spiritual challenges. The gap between "rule" and "freedom"—that is, what should be and what simply is—can be resolved at the unflinching ceremony where "art" and "life" meet.

If one now returns to Kommerell's quote, the concept of "action" immediately bridges the two sets of dichotomies put forward by Schiller. Action is to do. Only through

538. Dieckman 1994, 157.
539. See Dieckman 1994, 157.
540. Schiller 2017, 20–21.
541. See Blumenberg 2020, 110.

action can one confirm or discredit the rule. That is, by being someone and doing something. Likewise, the acts of life give way to the acts of art—and thus, the art of acting. To become a *Gestalter*, a great designer of worlds buried by and based on actions, Schiller needed to be: (1) a lawyer; (2) a glorifier; (3) a judge; and, finally, (4) a secret traitor. Otherwise put: actions can only be inspired by other actions. Schiller, the *Gestalter*, acted out his thoughts, and his thoughts were concrete designs. Any kind of fiction—it doesn't really matter if the created artifact resembles the Elizabethan era or a "ravaged war-torn Europe in the 17th century"[542]—is embedded in ideas. Ideas—following Kommerell—were acts for Schiller. To betray, to be a "secret traitor" [*Geheimnisverräter*], then, means to surpass the realm of actions; that is, to renounce or bluntly stain the deed—the superior act, the correct performance of an idea.

That "the experience of idea is tragic" can only mean that there is an unfillable gap between the projection of such an idea and its concretion. It seems that the highest deed is inevitably entangled with the very path of treason. This path was walked by Wallenstein. Schiller's colossal triptych—*Wallenstein's Camp*, *The Piccolomini*, and *The Death of Wallenstein (A Tragedy in Five Acts*)—tells the rise and fall of Albrecht Wallenstein. Nonetheless, this murky hero is in an entirely different category than Karl Moor, Wilhelm Tell, or Posa. Schiller's Kantian idealism is dramatically defeated by the political depths of history. Maximum concreteness yields maximum events.

Wallenstein represents the debris of humanity in his excruciating acts. Schiller touched a quite sensible subject when he addressed Wallenstein's doom as the gravitating center of the play. He is disenfranchised from the world—which explains his obsession with Seni's astral guidance. Wallenstein does not know how little it helps to know too much. It is true: *Wallenstein* is an entirely Shakespearean play. Seni's predictions cannot anticipate the voracious march of concrete situations clashing with each other in an endless, unfathomable maze. Art—and thus, theater—asks the compass of history for directions.

Nonetheless, Kommerell stresses the difference between Schiller and Shakespeare. The German playwright is closer to the Baroque than to the Renaissance, for his interest was less fate and character than those "(…) Fälle, an denen die Rechte von Instanzen gegeneinander geklärt werden" (7). Cases, as the individual situations judged in court.

542. Koser, 2020.

Kommerell thinks of Schiller as a "Psychologe des Tatmenschen" (8). Any action arises locally under specific coordinates. History is made of great actions, indeed. This is what Schmitt—by emphasizing on the mythical aspect of *Hamlet*—called "pieces of reality." Historical vignettes are the fuel on which art—and hence, theater—runs. In the case of *Wallenstein*, the tension between deed and treason, hero and perpetrator, establishes those "places of discharge" that Schiller was so fond of, according to Kommerell. In the prologue to *Wallenstein*, Schiller writes:

> Thus may the play we give today win your ear
> And heart for unaccustomed sounds and voices,
> May it transport you back to that far time,
> Back onto that far theater of war that
> Our hero will soon fill with deeds.[543]

"Theater of war" is a formula that blends history and art perfectly. Moreover, it expresses an inkling of superior knowledge. A science, if the reader wills. This kind of knowledge is the interpretation of history through art. Or, to put it in other terms, a very specific type of philosophy. A philosophy of history, in sum.

The prologue to *Wallenstein* is a unique combination of both metaphysical and artistic concepts. "Truth" and "Art" are the two faces of a diptych that takes an already trite subject to an astounding level of historical awareness. A haiku-like final remark thus commences a multi-layered journey of the deeds as the connection—a meta-Führer link—between man and world. "Our lives are earnest and our art serene" [*Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst*].[544]

5.5 Kommerell's Interpretation of Schiller's Play

An unmatched classification of human impulses revolving around the inexorable development of deeds is Schiller's major contribution, finds Kommerell. "Auch für das Menschengeschlecht ein Linnäus auf" declares the extremely right-wing host at his welcoming speech. Acts transform the agent, just as history is transformed by him. This great

543. Schiller 2017, 123–125.
544. Schiller 2017, 136.

design belongs to the spiritual schemes furnished by Schiller, as only a *Gestalter* could really think how a *Gestalter* really acts. "The deed is a chain," adds Kommerell. A chain: a set of transmissions passed through generations, bonding meaning through history. Moreover, once the deed takes place, both deed and treason command faith. They rule over the agent, inwardly and outwardly. A moral metric system has commenced.

It seems, then, that the highest deed is to abandon treason. The two sides of morality meet in the actions of Wallenstein. Indeed, the formal denomination of tragedy implies a paradox. Just like Wallenstein, Fiesko and Wilhelm Tell are also subject to similar circumstances. An act can now become poetry, if by poetry one understands the word-fueled awareness of that which one was given before—and is later seized, historically taken. This consciousness is none other than the moral commissar Schiller, a privileged witness of the depths of history sailing through stylized living artifacts—the works, the theater, the plays whose play goes deepest. Young heroes succumb to tyrants; kindred figures become immortalized by poetry. The young man, the tyrant—revenge drives both art and history. Kommerell continues his speech by stating that the arch of human nature is curved by dreams of justice and an all-too revengeful reality. The constant up and downs of that tortured relation between the state and the individual, one may feel tempted to add, following Schmitt.

Kommerell thinks that the experience of Don Carlos is entirely different from that of Wallenstein. He stresses that such a shift could only be explained by a change of ideas on the part of Schiller. An idea changes as one develops a set of transforming acts. To manage the historical length of Albrecht Wallenstein and Wallenstein himself must have required a monumental mental effort. "Weder Weltanklage noch innere Forderung helfen Geschichte deuten: sie ist sie selbst, irdisches Schicksal der Idee,"[545] adds Kommerell. "Earthly fate"; that is, our concrete destiny. Nonetheless, history, like nature, is difficult to master. Supreme acts are commanded by supreme ideas. In order to possess a supreme idea, one needs to be keenly self-conscious. These are the insights scattered in the inner self of Wallenstein. He obeys his rule. It is a shame that such a rule converges with his crime. Kommerell knows his Goethe well. The former calls such an occasion, simultaneously personal and historical, an *Urmoment*. This originary moment is *Wallenstein's Camp*. Piccolomini subsequently expands this stage of awareness and transmits it across to other plays by Schiller. The "chain"

545. Kommerell 1934, 13.

that the deed embodies becomes strained by the generational crush between Max and Octavio. The son knows better than the father; that is, he knows less, but he does more. The moral procrastinator is confronted by the active, quick-heeled doer. At this point in his welcoming address, it seems that Kommerell—like Schiller—cannot be lured by the juridical lattice of reason. He does not think that the German playwright was interested in designing a grand figure of "legal power." Somehow, all these human endeavors are entangled in a complex and fascinating web. One is fascinated with the place where the monstrous dwells, whether it be a colossal promise of power or partaking in action that leads to or guarantees what is right. Wallenstein is terrible, adds Kommerell, but even his moments of indecision are terribly long. Unlike the abstract deployment of time that affects Prince Hamlet, Wallenstein's procrastination owes itself to his highly active nature. Wallenstein acts by never acting out. The incalculable deed fascinates him, too. Kommerell once again claims:

> Die Tat ist das Erste, der Charakter das Zweite. Vor der Tat ist der Mensch noch unbestimmt, eine mehrfache Möglichkeit, die Tat bestimmt ihn. Von der Tat empfängt er seinen Charakter, wie der Siegel lack den Stempel. Etwas Schauriges hat dieser Monolog. Wesen entscheidet sich.[546]

This is the distance between Shakespeare and Schiller. Such distance has a name: Kant.[547] From this perspective, Prince Hamlet's tendency to drag things out is the symptom of his youthful mind par excellence. "Metaphysics is the youth of the mind," remarks Kommerell. Indeed, that "self-incurred immaturity"[548] stressed by Kant in his famous answer in *What Is Enlightenment?* Wallenstein slows his pace before the gleaming apparition of the deed. Contemplation here is transformed into a higher act. A reinforced consciousness enhances its own acts.

Kommerell picks up his thesis of Schiller as a *Gestalter* from different dialogues in *Wallenstein*. Again, these dialogues exhibit a vigorous tension between Max Piccolomini and Wallenstein, or Countess Terzky and Wallenstein. Wallenstein alarmingly depicts the

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546. Kommerell 1934, 14–15.
547. See Rothmann 2005, 78–9.
548. Kant 1999, 33: "Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit." This *Undmündigkeit* posesses a marked psychological nature. Prince Hamlet is a self-impeding agent.

opposition between what is right and the brief bounty rooted in random everyday facts. Such an opposition is not ceremonial at all, as doers such as Wallenstein tackle life stages—from politics to legality—as temporal structures that are soon-to-be vanished by absolute power. Kommerell is aware that this metapsychology is nothing other than the obscure connection between the person and the ongoing direction of the world [*Weltlauf*]. This darkness yearns for light, wherein the unreal guidance of Seni or the desperate voices of both Countess Terzky and Max act like decentralized stars on horrible nights. "Die Astrologie ist der verstockte Glaube eines Menschen, der sich an die Stelle des Ganzen setzt," states Kommerell (18). Otherworldly signals become important for those who have become the world itself. From this perspective, Heidegger's redesigned concept of the Greek word *aletheia* should be held in its astrological light. *Aletheia* is not a modal declination of *Being*[549]—a curved, scripted ping-pong between concealment and unconcealment. Rather, *aletheia* is the physical experience of confusion that seeks clarity in dark skies. What is manifested in it is not the "being" as such, but the dynamics of fate streamed in technological artifacts of faith. Wallenstein's "downfall," as Kommerell puts it, is certainly polygamical. Every feature of the character casts a different shadow depending on the moral light with which he is pointed at. In all of these cases, he is met with disappointment. Lost after following his stars, Wallenstein's denouement becomes tragic; he firmly grips the hand of doom, for he has held the course of the world. His is the tragic life of the deed.

Kommerell turns upside down his analysis and asks: "Hat nicht auch für uns die Geschichte in Rückblick und Erlebnis ein wechselndes Gesicht? Manchmal wie ein Gericht, vom tragischen Dichter entworfen?"[550] This would mean, following Kommerell, that the agent is perfectly attuned with the world in the very moment that he knows that his world is already gone. Such painful ambiguity is one of Schiller's fundamental contributions. It is profound, just like the personal depths of those men who inevitably stained themselves on their personal paths to purity.

There is no possible guidance for men of action when they are stubbornly drawn to what they believe is the true direction. Annihilation, destruction, self-destruction, chaos: these are the tragic fates that they meet as they crash into the unwavering course of the world.

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549. Heidegger 1992, 23: "Die Wahrheit, Unverborgenheit, das Aufgedecktsein, richtet sich vielmehr nach dem Seienden selbst und nicht nach einem bestimmten Begriff von Wissenschaftlichkeit."
550. Kommerell 1934, 19.

Reality is as solid as concrete. Moreover, this concreteness guarantees that, eventually, the actions of the agents will be neutralized by the shrewd authority of the *Weltlauf*. Whether it was treason or the utmost deviant behavior, the canvas depicted onstage by Schiller is nothing other than the course of the world. His pulsating creativity does not differ from the inhuman complexity of reality. This was, according to Kommerell, Schiller's mastery; that is, his historical, deep awareness. In Schiller's work, his actors play their roles in an endless back-and-forth game. These borders of the play are embedded in Schiller's *Wallenstein*. "Jedenfalls regiert über die Spieler dieser Art ein furchtbarer Ernst, denn ihr Spiel ist kein Scheinenwollen, sondern ein Scheinenmüssen. Durch Wallenstein kommt ein Zug des Falschen in die Miene des handelnden Menschen."[551]

5.6 The Connection Between History and Art

From this point onward, Kommerell's speech drifts toward Schiller's unsung fragment on the False Dmitry I affair.[552] This Pseudo-Demetrius became a historical fixation of Schmitt's in 1949. Much of Schmitt's interest in the topic stems from Kommerell's elusive piece on Schiller as Führer. The *Demetrius fragment* tells the story of a delusional impostor who claimed to be the long-lost son of Ivan the Terrible; he quickly rose to stardom thanks to his military expertise, only to be later betrayed by who he claimed was his own mother. It is an unfinished play about the perils of a bastard agent who tried to attain legitimacy. Put differently, Schiller's *Demetrius* plays out the sudden fall of a self-appointed hero accursed in a hall of mirrors. This play surely had a special meaning for Schmitt in 1949. His *Glossarium* abounds in annotations regarding this work of Schiller, as well as reflections about doomed Germany and how the USA had basically seized the whole German political consciousness. Conflating self-righteousness and an out-of-bounds revisionism, *Glossarium* examines the multilayered figure of Hitler through that of Pseudo-Demetrius.[553] Here one

551. Kommerell 1934, 20.
552. See Brody 1970, 5–45, here at 15: "The immortal torso of *Demetrius* marks the apex of Schiller's artistic growth. We can see the gradual expansion of ideas by a mature and sensitive intellect and notice a sharper psychological lens focused on the lives of his protagonists. Schiller shows a more intimate acquaintance with the living world, problems of his own times and human nature, and expresses the sentiments of his age and country in this drama of contemporary validity."
553. Hohendahl 2018, 44: "This juridical assessment also influences the conception of German history, notably the years of National Socialism. When reflecting on the concept of the tragic in Schiller's work, in particular

confirms the art of interpretation as the friendly face of persuasion. Whoever says hermeneutics intends to deceive, one could say paraphrasing Schmitt's motto regarding Proudhon. In any case, Kommerell's exegesis of the Demetrius fragment is the starting point for Schmitt's compelling ideas on the murky cooperation between art and history through tragedy. Demetrius's mother is Germany, and Demetrius himself, Hitler.

> Mutter und Sohn erwarten sich, die Mutter im vollen Glauben an die Echtheit dieses Sohns, dieser im Wissen des Trugs. Die Natur, als Ahnung des Wesens, steht gegen den Willen, der den Schein sein heißt. Da geschicht etwas, was zuerst wie eine gewaltsame Erfindung anmutet, um schließich eine schlagende Überzeugungskraft am Zuschauer zu beweisen; eine Ahnung steigt in Marfa auf, daß dieser Mann nicht ihr Sohn inst.[554]

Schiller here demonstrates that belief starts by believing oneself to be *other*. True identity begins when one knows whom one wants to be.

> Wirf das vergangene von dir, laß es fahren, ergreif das Gegenwärtige mit ganzem Herzen – Bin ich dein Sohn nicht so bin ich der Czar, ich habe die Macht, *ich habe das Glück*.[555]

Demetrius' regal outburst emphasizes how authenticity does not belong to an origin but to actual power. "If I am not your son yet I am the Czar; *I have power, I have fortune.*" Nonetheless, social security numbers—even those reserved for members of royalty—are issued only by the Reality Department and its multiple worldwide franchises. Self-consciousness must be in tune with the course of the world. If not, the world is a curse. The agent arranges that which history will sooner or later rearrange. It is a "disposition" [*Gesinnung*], as Kommerell calls it. This means, time and again, that the unnerving nature of the idea will be a divided, lesioned act. Indeed, such a coming to life by coming to terms with life is in itself a tragic experience. "Die Erde selbst, als der Schauplatz der Geschichte ist die

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on the tragic quality of the Demetrius fragment, the diarist touches also on the link between World Wars I and II."

554. Kommerell 1934, 22.

555. Schiller 2004, 452.

erste tragische Bühne, und Schillers Gefühl vor ihr ist Schauer."[556] One must recall that Marfa's rejection of her bastard son comes through a sonic betrayal. She remains silent as the crowd questions the identity of this self-appointed messiah and the conspirators come to seize the kingdom. Pierced by Polish swords, murdered and betrayed by silence, Demetrius finally knows his authentic destiny. Death.

5.7 Schmitt on Art and History

Kommerell's long bibliographical stroll across Schiller's work now pauses to take a closer look at *The Bride of Orleans* and *Don Carlos*. He analyzes the female figures of Schiller's dramas but also the variations of the unstoppable force of the deed—now turning to *The Robbers* and the hidden gem *The Knights of Malta*. But Schmitt was sold at Demetrius. The connection between "life and art," according to Kommerell, was wholeheartedly appropriated by the German jurist in the 1950s. The speech ends with medical metaphors, a rhetorical gesture that the reader might rightly frown upon. "Für die Krankheit 'Modernität' hat kein religiöses oder metaphysisches System der Erde, hat nur die Kunst das notwendige Heilmittel. Etwas geheimnisvoll Neues und Uraltes kann sie allein in ihm herstellen: die Einheit des Menschen mit sich selbst auf einer höheren Stufe."[557] But prognoses of these kinds often went unnoticed by Schmitt. Detaching himself from a new democratic world order, he sought a spiritual scope that was great enough to cover immense lengths of historical events. His various sketches of a philosophy of history—strongly ciphered in *Hamlet oder Hekuba*—were encouraged by Kommerell's interpretation of Schiller. "Dieser Schiller, der im Zwielicht des kämpfenden Zwischenreicher von Idee und Weltstoff heimisch, um die Unentrinnbarkeit des Frevels weiß, und wieder tragisch rein das Unbedingte gegen die Geschichte sichert?"[558]

At this point, a resoundingly obvious question may be troubling the reader. Why, then, did Schmitt not publish a little essay on Schiller instead of one on Shakespeare? *Noblesse oblige*. Lilian Winstanley's study of the Bard was the document that provided Schmitt with the methodological structure to delve into *Hamlet* as a mirror of his reality.

556. Kommerell 1934, 23.
557. Kommerell 1934, 30.
558. Kommerell 1934, 31.

Shakespeare managed to crack the artistic sense that lies inside the normal set of rules of reality. The myth was found within. Likewise, Kommerell's speech on Schiller was the intellectual force that lured him to establish the main concepts of his ideas on art and tragedy, both mediated in his great comprehension of life according to law. From this perspective, *Hamlet oder Hekuba* acts as the first stage of Schmitt's hall of mirrors. A second stage—esoteric, following the jurist—surrounds the first. So, the logical dyad of Hitler/Demetrius turns into a triad: Hitler/Demetrius/Schmitt. Moreover, the twofold *mater dolorosa* Marfa/Germany not only weeps, but also betrays. And so emerges the triad Marfa/Germany/Queen Elizabeth. Simultaneously, red-hot glass spews different variations of a single event onto different reflecting surfaces; the year 1848 imploding through different historical events, all politically linked.

If Schmitt was drawn to Kommerell, it was mainly due to his rejection of Goethe's comprehension of art—and thus, of life. Schmitt had little interest in the subject of the genius disrupting everyday politics. A genius is a complex, almost incomprehensible individual—and therefore, an avant-garde product of a liberal bourgeoisie society. Schmitt's anti-liberalism logically eschewed such a figure; he much preferred Kommerell's phrase "youth without Goethe"[559] and its revolutionary meaning. Nonetheless, Schmitt paraphrases a concept of "the greatest German poet"; namely, that of the "primal image" [*Urbild*]. This expression, one of the key notions of *Hamlet oder Hekuba*, was already grasped by Schmitt in 1949, the year in which he acknowledged the importance of both Schiller and the *Demetrius* fragment. In sum, the obscure title *Hamlet oder Hekuba* aimed to express how human—male—agency goes hand in hand with performance and deceit if a deed must be carried out. "The fake Demetrius as the primal image of every agent," Schmitt laconically asserts in his *Glossarium.*[560] It really does not matter if the player is mediocre—Hitler—or astounding—Demetrius—as long as self-deception alerts the agent's tainted consciousness along his path to justice. Schmitt here masters self-righteousness, which is a well-known moral gesture. Cynically, he denounces any other view as moralism. "One will be taken by these words by the annoyed moralists."[561] Hyperbolically, he adds: "Law is infinitely greater

559. Schmitt 2015e, 115.
560. Schmitt 2015e, 180.
561. Schmitt 2015e, 169.

than morality."[562] But only a great moralist could track so well the slightest hint of moralism. History and art are bridged together by tragedy.

5.8 Parallels and Intrusions

With his thesis on "parallels" and "intrusions," Schmitt intended to add something new to the vocabulary of the "philosophy of history."[563] "Parallels" mean the political traffic between art and reality. This concept was used by Schmitt already in 1948, apropos Toynbee and Spengler's theory of history[564]. Likewise, "intrusions" are the outbreaks of concreteness that perform as existential structures in great art. Both "parallels" and "intrusions" determine the intellectual structure of Schmitt's comprehension of art and history through a philosophy of history. This scope is philosophical, as its rationale is housed in the ontological dimension of agency. Such a dimension is also a matter of utmost seriousness due to its awareness of the exceptional nature of life—there is no safe spot in existence beyond the realm of death. A consciousness like this, trained in acting, meets tragedy precisely when it commits itself to carrying out what ought to be done—the deed.

Schiller—via Kommerell—and Shakespeare—via Winstanley—were the beacons with which Schmitt illuminated his own defeat—and that of his country. Schmitt chose Shakespeare as it was the safer option; Schiller would have implied greater difficulties in the context of the democratic intellectual policies that dominated the German public sphere in the 1950s. Time and again—and turning back to the aforementioned metaphor—Schmitt's hall of mirrors depicted in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* posits "intrusions" as the invisible script that every "human brain" unavoidably abides by. The reader would be right to think that such dynamics work in both directions; that is, that reality also follows invisible rules. Tragic, as the beginning of every rule and the end of every decision.

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562. Schmitt 2015e, 206.
563. Sloterdijk has recently traced the psychopolitical sources of such a dear expression for German thinkers. See Sloterdijk 2020, 146–147: "In its highest political form, the philosophy of history was the cognitive model for the transition from a feudal to a bourgeois society. It formulated the matrix for the processes of emancipation that were supposed to lead from the reign of peoples to the reign of law, from the psycho-politics of command and obedience to the psycho-politics of the self-determination of equal and free individuals."
564. Schmitt 2015e, 95.

5.9 Doomed Impressions

By the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, Schmitt's diary entries are written with hateful resentment. He started to dabble in esoteric literature and his interest in literature widened. In a letter to Ernst Jünger in 1957, he describes himself as a "destiny burdened elder."[565] One year later, he insists to Jünger: "I believe that what we call 'history" is not an ongoing flow, but rather an accumulation around a center (often fixed for centuries), which then suddenly passes through another center (another epoch)."[566] Schmitt here rejects any philosophy of history based on theories of lengthy temporal cycles. If Hegel thought history was the becoming of liberty, Schmitt considered it to be the mere drafts of a defeated consciousness.

Schmitt's doomed impressions from the 1950s—mostly private—found in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* an opportunity to be safely broadcasted to a limited public—scholars, most of them friends and new, young "informelle Schüler"[567]. Even his apocalyptic landscapes presented at the end of *The Theory of the Partisan*[568] were already foreshadowed in the 1950s. His meditations on art and history; that is, how history tragically develops, were riddled with caged-in views, inner-fear, and self-deception. All of these qualities are featured in that strange performance entitled "What have I done?" Just as the fake Demetrius, Schmitt felt the cold embrace of untrueness. He retreated toward a spiritual scheme where history was driven by political singularities and incalculable energies, entangled in a dark yet fathomable organization.

5.10 Ultra-history

The concept of "ultra-history" belongs to George Dumézil, who in his *Mythe et épopée* asserts: "[m]on effort n'est pas d'un philosophe, il se veut d'un historien, d'un historien de la plus vieille histoire et de la frange d'ultra-histoire qu'on peut raisonnablement essayer d'atteindre…"[569]. In the case of Dumézil, the "fringe of ultra-history" is connected to the

565. Schmitt 2012i, 382.
566. Schmitt 2012i, 382.
567. Tielke 2020, 17.
568. Schmitt 2017f, 93–94.
569 Dumézil 1981, 14.

comparative studies of Indo-European languages. Dumézil aimed to establish a methodological system of interpretation, that is, a historical model that could trace back to greater grammatical stadiums linguistic correspondences. Thus, and in its formal aspect, one could say that Schmitt performs the very same methodological gesture of Dumézil, as his "philosophy of history" ended up being—after several reflections and theoretical transformations along the 1950s—a two-faced model of historical analysis. Namely, a both formal and spiritual device; a system of reading for great historical events, and, finally, a political compass to guide oneself at the moment of confusion and social misguidance. Schmitt knew quite well that he stumbled upon something essential when he registered everyday world news in his *Glossarium* according to the "Hamlet curve", that is, a particular model of historical analysis of the present. Schmitt wanted to achieve social intelligibility without depending on philosophical ideologies, such as Marxism or Spengliarism.

5.11 Schmitt in the 21st Century

Schmitt has undoubtedly become an intellectual trademark in contemporary philosophy. His conceptual contribution has outstripped his unreserved political zest—although these two dimensions are more connected than most of his interpreters wish to admit. Books, essays, and theses on Schmitt's thought simply increase every year worldwide. Schmitt's original contributions to the themes of political theology and dictatorship have been warmly welcomed by post-Foucaultian philosophers and Walter Benjamin advocates. That is, his work has been enclosed under very specific intellectual coordinates. Put differently, most contemporary authors aim to prove their notion of Schmitt, not find something in his thought and then carefully reconstruct it. Minor works, most of them by German specialists, tackle Schmitt's theoretical value. Regarding his "philosophy of history" years and the significance of *Hamlet*, there are barely three or four monographs on the subject.

It is not my intention by any means to provide a redemptive depiction of Schmitt's persona. On the contrary, my investigation simply aims to correctly reconstruct the theoretical scope of his thinking in the 1950s and to critically reconstruct his intellectual place within the broad field of contemporary debates—namely, the possibilities of interpreting history through an artistic lens and of championing the question of tragedy as a

key theory for contemporary political philosophy. I consider Schmitt's thesis on this subject to be quite significant. Likewise, his introspective personal diaries—*Glossarium* and a good amount of his private correspondence during those years—transcend the realm of mere psychological or spiritual mourning. His provisional concepts regarding a "philosophy of history"—examined in detail in the previous chapter—offer to the contemporary reader a solitary yet brilliant interpretation of a long tradition of thinking; that is, the Aristotelian tropes regarding tragedy and history. From this perspective, in the 1950s, Schmitt carried out a subterranean, esoteric intellectual effort. Schmitt set in motion his own vocabulary and fundamental thesis and then amplified it outside the historical limits of Weimar and his political situation in the 1920s and 1930s. History is better grasped through its different mirrorings.

1848 became the center of Schmitt's historical attention following Germany's defeat in World War II. He fully engaged in a philosophy of history by developing his thought in different stages and through connections with various interlocutors—Lucan, Löwith, Jünger, Schiller, Kömmerell. His prideful, stubborn temperament prevented him from carrying out a self-critique. Schmitt saw his crestfallen postwar days—and that of his country and perhaps all of Europe—as an opportunity to demonstrate ex-post the real causes of such a defeat. He wanted to prove silently how right he was in being wrong. By rejecting time and again the main historical scopes—that is, Marxism and liberal progress (and all its variants)—Schmitt was convinced that the most compelling interpretation of history came by acknowledging that history mirrors great events through chained political singularities. *Hamlet oder Hekuba* is a reversed image of postwar Germany. Likewise, its intellectual source—namely, Schiller interpreted via Kommerell—proved this to be right. His use of the term *apocrypha* in several entries in his diaries and some minor opinion pieces ciphered his esoteric intention to expand the comprehension of the forces that guide history.

Therefore, the results from the last chapter are as follows:

1. *Hamlet oder Hekuba*'s origins are to be found in Schmitt's awe-struck reaction to Max Kommerell's speech "Schiller as Führer des Handelnden

Menschen." Schmitt aimed to draw up a cryptic political manifesto just as Kommerell did in his signaling of Hitler in 1934.

2. Schmitt sought to establish a supreme comprehension of history that could best the simple notion of historical progress and the cycles theory—that is, Marxism, progressive liberalism, and Spenglerianism.

3. A true comprehension of history through art demands the interpretation of objective real-life events through the spiritual dynamics of ultra-history. Namely, the cultural, political, and human energy curves that intensify or decrease in line with historical singularities.

In days when almost any moderately educated citizen can notice the eerie similitudes between the Weimar days and contemporary populism,[570] the cryptic words regarding history and art proffered by an old yet still insightful German jurist surprisingly take on a new relevance. If two colossal playwrights were able to scan the political DNA of history, then it might not be so preposterous to think that modern-day Führers aim to establish unprecedented parameters of what is authentic and what is not. Even if they are impostors. Even if they are no longer in command. Nonetheless, what is true and what is not when a technologically-driven world has flooded reality with its own limits?

570. See Bloch 1991, 59: "Thus these people are spellbound, something rages and dreams murkily within them. A piece of German brutality strikes up in them again, has in fact a subconscious or unconscious impetus, instead of a class-conscious one; posits not only folk and fatherland as a substitute for their own sinking caste, but fills the frame with very old pictures." Trump's farewell address at Joint Base Andrews in his last speech as president: "We will be back in some form."

Concluding Remarks

The aim of my investigation has been to reconstruct the internal and external theoretical dimensions of Carl Schmitt's *Hamlet or Hecuba*. While I have intended to offer a plausible exposition of Schmitt's monograph on Shakespeare's drama, the genesis of *Hamlet or Hecuba* involves a major question regarding Schmitt's late thought: namely, the possibility of a philosophy of history. Recently, Andreas Höfele has thoroughly tackled Schmitt's relationship with literature[571]. Höfele has systematized such a liaison chronologically, convincingly demonstrating how crucial a theme was literature for Schmitt's method of thinking. However, the link between literature and Schmitt's main philosophical goal during the 1950s—divided across a fairly extensive number of essays, reviews, articles, and think-pieces—, that is, a philosophy of history[572], remains concealed. Thus, my investigation explores an essential and yet non-thematized area of Schmitt's late thought.

Chapter 1 provided a structural revision of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, giving a detailed analysis of its methodology and displaying a point-by-point review of Schmitt's main interlocutors as well. Likewise, **Chapter 2** unfolded a conceptual study of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, from which Schmitt's "philosophy of history" profoundly takes shape. In this perspective, the first two chapters of this thesis have expanded a philosophical problem that has been held as secondary according to Schmitt's interpreters: how the bond between history and art (or tragedy) gives rise to a very particular way of philosophically—in Schmitt's terms, spiritually—understanding history. I once again quote at length Schmitt's *The Historical Structure of the Contemporary World-Opposition*:

> The concrete-historical image (…) contains a dialectic tension, namely, the sequential succession of a concrete question and an equally concrete answer. This dialectic of the historical-concrete defines the structure of unique historical situations and epochs. Indeed, we shall later show that this historical dialectic, as it is meant here, may be understood neither as a general conceptual logic nor as a general law governing temporal events.[573]

571 Höfele 2022, 9-17.
572 Schmitt 2015e, 247: "(Philosophy is History)".
573 Schmitt 2018d, 114.

As I have shown in this thesis introduction, such a way of comprehending history was prompted by Hegel's own philosophical project. Nonetheless, Schmitt also transformed the Hegelian scope, reframing it into a philosophy of concrete history—as he aimed to unconceal the uniqueness of every historical event. These events were politically fueled as well, conducted by a people (*Volk*) who ruled themselves according to a certain order (*nomos*). Hegel's "spirit" recoils at the moment of facing the portentous and unrepeatable power of historical forces rising and falling. However, such concreteness must be chained to a greater and defining *évènement*. Schmitt saw the year 1848 as the weathervane for the future of Europe, ominously foreshadowed in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thus, a complex comprehension of history came to the fore.

I have called this dialectic of a concrete historical situation "philosophy of history". Likewise, the operational function of this standpoint covers a dimension of history that operates beyond and above its very immanent plane. Such a dimension can be rightly named as "ultra-history", as—according to Schmitt—history is politically driven by spiritual forces that go beyond the immediate and causal comprehension of different events. "The enmity between humans contains a tension that far transcends the natural. With the human, the transcending always punches through, irrespective of whether one calls it transcendent or transcendental", states Schmitt, just to sentence: "One can call this surplus value 'spiritual'"[574]. This "spiritual" feature characterizes Schmitt's comprehension of history, namely, a polyhedric phenomenon where greater events cannot be devoid of transcendence. Such a vision of history compels a philosophical configuration. In the case of Schmitt, a philosophy of history necessarily demands a set of existentially-driven juridical concepts: order, enmity, concreteness, etc.

Moreover, Schmitt's outlook involves the homologation between politics and seriousness. In this sense, the intention of **Chapter 2** has been to address the theoretical elements that sustain such an equation by reading *Political Romanticism*. These elements remain almost unfettered in *Hamlet or Hecuba*, for they render a methodological enclosure from where Schmitt can elaborate further his comprehension of "historical truths" according to the concreteness of political events. This theoretical angle broadens itself during the 1950s,

574 Schmitt 2018d, 117.

to the point of reaching a structural way of surveying history. **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4** chronologically account Schmitt's angle regarding philosophy of history, demonstrating not only the continuity of his approach, but also showing how *Hamlet or Hecuba* appears as an intellectual hinge amidst Schmitt's thought in the 1950s.

Finally, **Chapter 5** establishes the connection Schmitt's essay on *Hamlet* with one of his most essential influences, namely, Kommerell's takes on Schiller and the place of the German playwright in Germany's political turmoil of 1933. Schmitt saw in Kommerell's monograph a formal method of approaching contemporary history. And while Schmitt departs from Kommerell's viewpoint, the former utilizes the latter stance: Modern politics are better understood through an examination of political mirrorings on stage. In conjunction, these five chapters aim to articulate an explicit account of one of Schmitt's unfinished projects, that is, a philosophical-juridical framework designed to interpretate—and even anticipate—historical events.

So, what to make with Schmitt's unguarded annotations registered in his *Glossarium*, implicitly connected with both his biographical whereabouts during the 1950s and the course of the world amidst Cold War? How do they enforce Schmitt's non-cohesive and at times rather fragile considerations on world events? What the reader is facing at the moment of reading *Hamlet or Hecuba*, his texts from the 1950s—including *Glossarium*—, and part of his private correspondence, is Schmitt's final intellectual installment: a philosophical comprehension of historical events, deeply enrooted in a concrete appreciation of the political nature of it. Art, according to Schmitt, serves as a means of political recognition, as its configuration demands an almost synchronized awareness of the political zeitgeist. His views on history, art, and politics, can be rightly summed up as an unconcluded "philosophy of history."[575] *Hamlet* was its symbol and 1848 its modern origin.

Furthermore, what underlies Schmitt's diverse array of statements on history, art, politics, and the spiritual fate of Europe? A possible answer might be: a hard-hitting concept of reality. When Schmitt talks about "historical reality" in *Hamlet or Hecuba*, a pre-conceived homologation of politics and reality expands into the aesthetic realm. Even more, all of Schmitt's noteworthy—and, up to this point, canonical—remarks on law and history

575 Schmitt 2015e, 220: "Weder Die Juristen noch die Theologen scheinen begriffen zu haben, daß alle wesentlichen und aktuelle Fragen inzwischen geschichtsphilosophischen Fragen geworden sind…".

ultimately depend on a fixed notion of reality. Such a concept transforms the creative forces of art into a historical regulated process of political representations. Aesthetics are culled from decisive political events. Thus, a hermeneutic viewpoint is needed to correctly interpret the artistic value of this or that artwork. Moreover, this hermeneutic approach can distinguish different forms of art, to finally grasp an essential feature: the mythical aspect of the work of art.

Put differently, *Hamlet* is the one and only modern myth. In this perspective, Shakespeare's most acclamated drama reveals itself to be a massive mirror, where modern politics can recognize its own identity. Schmitt's game plan during the 1950s is best summarized in *Hamlet or Hecuba*: a concise set of reflections about the actuality of a mythical artwork that would it been unconceivable without the intrusion of a political event. By assessing this little book on *Hamlet*, the reader is not lost on Schmitt's skeleton key: human existence is nothing but a juridical event. Thus, the proper hermeneutics to understand the core aspect of this event, is a philosophical account on history. These dialectics were drawn-out of Hegel's thought, to then be properly modified according a concrete historical episode: the Revolutions of 1848 and its subsequent series of events. Reality is the world theater of politics.

Carl Schmitt—as any authentic philosopher—was always interested in reality. His theological background did not impede him to acknowledge the insurmountable uniqueness of different historical events. His juridical tracking for the concrete aspect of political situations soon led him to create several concepts, substantive—and even plastic—enough to circumscribe the social turmoil of pre- and post-Weimar period. Schmitt saw in World War I and World War II as the echoes of a greater spiritual and historical event (the year 1848). *Hamlet* served as an artistic script to day-to-day modern politics. His *Glossarium*, a devotional testimony of universal decay amidst a word where the earth itself has become a "space-ship". And while his prognosis was certainly apocalyptical, he managed to describe the concrete origins of our modern political crisis.

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Carl Schmitt's Hamlet oder Hekuba and the Question of a Philosophy of History

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Samenvatting

Het voorliggende onderzoek reconstrueert conceptueel Carl Schmitts werk ¨*Hamlet oder Hekuba*¨ uit 1956. In deze beknopte, maar vruchtbare monografie over *Hamlet* ontwikkelt Schmitt een bijzondere notie van geschiedenisfilosofie. De canonieke definitie van deze uitdrukking is te vinden in Hegels inleiding tot zijn ´Lezingen over de Filosofie van de Geschiedenis´: "Het perspectief van de filosofische wereldgeschiedenis is niet specifiek, abstract universeel, maar concreet universeel, hetgeen de 'leidende ziel van de gebeurtenissen' is, (...) het is de geest die de wereld leidt." Hegels geest is een hoogstaand standpunt, een Weltgeist. "Het denken is de zelfproductie van de geest. Het hoogste doel van de Geest is zichzelf te kennen (...). Wereldgeschiedenis is de matrix waarin deze overgang tot stand komt." De uitdrukking 'geschiedenisfilosofie' pleit dan ook voor een superieur begrip van menselijke gebeurtenissen op grond van een universeel gezichtspunt, dat reflectief is – namelijk filosofisch. Met andere woorden: historische gebeurtenissen dienen begrepen te worden door het denken van de 'geest'.

Niettemin hadden zowel 'filosofie' als 'geschiedenis' een andere betekenis voor Schmitt, die – ondanks zijn heterodoxe benadering van verschillende disciplines – een rechtsgeleerde was. In zijn provocerende werk ¨*Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft*¨ stelt Schmitt: *"[f]ür mich waren Sokrates, Platon und Aristoteles primär Rechtslehrer und nicht das, was man heutzutage Philosophen nennt* (...)." Dit betekent echter niet dat Schmitt filosofie gelijkstelde aan rechtsgeleerdheid. Socrates, Plato en Aristoteles waren *als* rechtsgeleerden, dat wil zeggen: als filosofen traden ze op als rechtsgeleerden. Ze dachten en reflecteerden binnen een vastgestelde orde, in een specifieke tijd en volgens een concrete situatie. In dit perspectief kan Schmitt worden beschouwd als een filosoof, namelijk als een rechtsgeleerde die essentiële problemen overdacht die behoorden tot een concrete orde van het menselijk leven. Sommige auteurs zien in Schmitts theoretische benadering een theorie van begrip, omdat voor Schmitt elk probleem kan worden begrepen vanuit een juridische structuur. Een dergelijk perspectief biedt de waarnemer altijd een 'transcendentaal' element. Al met al lijkt Schmitts stelling over filosofie als de intellectuele uitdrukking van de rechtsgeleerdheid sterk op de definitie van filosofie zoals geformuleerd door Kant in zijn ¨*Lezingen over logica*¨. 'In het eerste perspectief [dat wil zeggen, in de scholastische zin] is het dus een *leer van vaardigheid*; in het laatste [in het *wereldse* concept] een leer van *wijsheid*[,] de *wetgever* van de rede[,] en de filosoof in dit opzicht geen *kunstenaar van de rede*, maar eerder een wetgever."

Aan de andere kant betekende ‘geschiedenis’ voor Schmitt de hoogste structuur waarin het menselijk handelen wordt vastgelegd. Zijn idee van geschiedenis is theologisch, niet teleologisch. In zijn vroege essay over het rooms-katholicisme stelt hij: “Dit is de enige revolutie in de wereldgeschiedenis die het verdient om groots genoemd te worden – het christendom verschafte een nieuwe basis voor wereldlijk gezag (...).” De menselijke werkelijkheid is niets zonder een theologisch kader. Een paar regels verder voegt Schmitt daar aan toe: ‘Individualiteit bestaat alleen doordat God de persoon in de wereld houdt. Zijn relatie *ad se ipsum* is niet mogelijk zonder een relatie *ad alterum*.” In 1969 keert hij in zijn laatste gepubliceerde essay terug naar dit standpunt na zijn discussie met Hans Blumenberg over secularisatie: “Alle gedetheologiseerde concepten dragen het gewicht van hun wetenschappelijk onzuivere oorsprong. (...) Alle de-theologiseringen, de-politiseringen, de-juridiseringen, de-ideologiseringen, de-historiciseringen, of welke andere reeks van entiteiten zonder prefix dan ook, die neigen naar een *tabula rasa*, worden tenietgedaan.” Volgens Schmitt zal de exponentiële groei van technologie, het theologische kader waarin al het menselijk handelen zich ontwikkelt, nooit vervangen. “De nieuwe, puur menselijke en seculiere wetenschap is een voortdurende en procesmatige vooruitgang van een steeds breder wordende vernieuwing van kennis in puur seculiere menselijke termen, gedreven door een voortdurende menselijke nieuwsgierigheid.” De geschiedenis betekende voor Schmitt dan ook dat de werkelijkheid is geworteld in theologische grondslagen. De mens creëert en legt verschillende soorten orden op. De legitimiteit van dergelijke orden hangt af van hun relatie met hun theologische oorsprong.

'Filosofie van geschiedenis' kan daarom in het latere denken van Schmitt ruim worden gedefinieerd als: een vorm van reflectie op menselijke gebeurtenissen, die worden geïnterpreteerd volgens een concrete volgorde; een ruimte waar de werkelijkheid zich vanuit een grotere theologische bron ontvouwt. Gedurende de jaren 1950 vatte Schmitt zijn historische context – te weten, de Tweede Wereldoorlog en de nasleep daarvan – in historisch-filosofische termen. Echter, op de een of andere manier nam hij afstand van het strikte juridische standpunt en dook in de hermeneutische mogelijkheden van kunst. Schmitt koos *Hamlet* vanwege de mythische betekenis ervan. Volgens hem is het archetypische aspect van Hamlet in wezen modern, omdat Prins Hamlet besluiteloos handelt en zich overeenkomstig gedraagt. Hij stelt uit en geeft de voorkeur aan een doolhofachtige realiteit van overpeinzingen en indrukken. Zijn trage handelen vindt plaats tegen een achtergrond van geheimhouding, verraad en het politieke verval van Elsinore. Schmitt erkende de actualiteit van al deze elementen en met name het karakter van Prins Hamlet, de prototypische ‘Europese intellectueel’. In *Hamlet oder Hekuba* behandelt Schmitt elk van deze problemen vanuit een niet-psychologisch, niet-esthetisch, niet-sociologisch en niet-historiografisch perspectief. Zijn weerstand tegen dergelijke benaderingen was niet zomaar een reactie, maar een politieke

verklaring. Hamlet is het perfecte voorbeeld van filosofie die wordt begrepen vanuit haar juridische aard. Het historische aspect ervan voedt de kunstzinnigheid van Shakespeare. De intellectuele crisis van Prins Hamlet is de perfecte spiegel waarin de werkelijkheid kan worden gereflecteerd en overwogen.

Hoe draagt *Hamlet oder Hekuba* dan bij aan en versterkt het Schmitts opvatting van een filosofie van de geschiedenis? Ik betoog dat Schmitts monografie over Hamlet een tweevoudig historisch-filosofisch argument bevat. Ten eerste dat het mythische aspect van dit toneelstuk van Shakespeare een diepgaande hermeneutische analyse vereist. In het geval van Schmitt berust een dergelijke benadering – aangezien het de voortdurende uitholling van psychologie, geschiedschrijving, sociologie en kunstgeschiedenis benadrukt op het moment dat Hamlet wordt geïnterpreteerd – op een duidelijke en specifieke opvatting van de geschiedenisfilosofie. Ten tweede beoogt deze vorm van hermeneutiek de normatieve kracht van de geschiedenis te aan te tonen en hoe het een notie van kunst die puur gebaseerd is op haar autonomie (en het genie van Shakespeare als toneelschrijver) verheft tot een eeuwigdurende actualiteit van zowel de inhoud, als de voornaamste thema's ervan. Ik beschouw *Hamlet oder Hekuba* als een essentieel werk om Schmitts overwegingen over filosofie, geschiedenis en tragedie te begrijpen.

Schmitt weerspiegelde zijn eigen persoonlijkheid in Prins Hamlet en zijn eigen context door het politieke debacle van Hamlet. Hierdoor zou de verraden koning Hamlet een natie kunnen symboliseren – Duitsland –, Claudius zijn usurpator – Hitler –, prins Hamlet een bedrogen Duitse intellectueel die niet bereid was wraak te nemen – Schmitt – en Elsinore een verminkt continent – Europa. Zo zou snel kunnen worden opgemerkt dat Schmitts identificatie met dit personage een psychologische reden heeft. Hoewel de gelijkenis min of meer onmiskenbaar is, had Schmitts interesse in prins Hamlet enkele andere beweegredenen. Elke handeling, elke beslissing van prins Hamlet is *existentieel* verstoord. Hij kent geen directe gang van A naar B. Zijn daad wordt uiteindelijk volbracht, maar via verschillende – en vaak onnodige – omwegen. Een dergelijke geest vertegenwoordigde voor Schmitt de intellectuele as van de moderniteit. Grof gezegd waren zowel prins Hamlet als moderne denkers – waaronder, zo zou je kunnen stellen, Schmitt – het type persoon dat ´vol van zichzelf´ was. Volgens Schmitt – in zijn Aken-conferentie – is een dergelijke eigenschap kenmerkend voor de meeste intellectuelen en komt ze tot uiting in de neiging om te filosoferen op het moment van besluitvorming. Dit kenmerk kan niet volledig worden begrepen vanuit psychologisch perspectief. Het is eerder een kenmerk van het existentialisme. Anders gezegd: de wereld is een oppervlak waarop gereflecteerd moet worden voordat enige vorm van actie wordt ondernomen.

Het voorliggende onderzoek bestaat uit twee delen en vijf hoofdstukken. In het **eerste deel** presenteer ik een volledig onderzoek naar Carl Schmitts werk *Hamlet oder Hekuba*. Hoofdstuk 1 verschaft een methodologische analyse van de monografie over *Hamlet*. Het analyseert de theoretische structuur ervan en benadrukt het belang van Schmitts voornaamste gesprekspartners, door hun intellectuele inhoud met betrekking tot Schmitts essay over *Hamlet* te testen. Bovendien wordt in **hoofdstuk 1** ook Schmitts proloog voor de Duitse versie het boek van Lilian Winstanley over Hamlet geanalyseerd. Daarin kan de lezer een glimp opvangen van Schmitts vroege ideeën over de 'actualiteit' zoals die ontwikkeld werd door Winstanley. Deze proloog fungeert – nogal verontschuldigend – als een blauwdruk voor de monografie uit 1956. Zo verschaft **hoofdstuk 1** de lezer een volledige beschouwing van de filosofische dimensie van *Hamlet oder Hekuba*.

In **hoofdstuk 2** wordt elk van de delen van Schmitts essay over *Hamlet* puntsgewijs toegelicht. Door Schmitts vroege noties van realiteit en ernst – zoals volledig uiteengezet in zijn werk *Politieke Romantiek* – conceptueel met elkaar te verbinden, wordt in **hoofdstuk 2** de nadruk gelegd op de intellectuele continuïteit van Schmitts negatieve en terughoudende overwegingen over moderne kunst en wordt toegelicht waarom dit contramoderne perspectief in de ruwe aard van *Hamlet* zijn tegengif vindt: In de context van dit perspectief is Schmitt het eens met Hegels afwijzing van de romantiek. Het belangrijkste doel van dit tweede hoofdstuk is het verschaffen van een gestructureerde lezing van *Hamlet oder Hekuba* en Schmitts terughoudendheid ten opzichte van de moderne kunst terug te voeren naar zijn vroegste theoretische schetsen. Zijn standpunt ten aanzien van kunst heeft de filosofische reikwijdte van Hegels opvatting van het kunstwerk nooit verlaten.

Het tweede deel van dit onderzoek breidt zowel de theoretische, als de historische context van *Hamlet oder Hekuba* uit. Dat wil zeggen, het introduceert een gedetailleerd overzicht van Schmitts overpeinzingen over een alternatieve filosofie van de geschiedenis. In **hoofdstuk 3** wordt een chronologisch en schematisch overzicht van Schmitts denken in de eerste helft van de jaren vijftig geschetst. Het derde hoofdstuk laat de lezer zien hoe de Spaanse denker Donoso Cortés leidend was in Schmitts visie op geschiedenisfilosofie. Donoso Cortés apocalyptische visie op historische gebeurtenissen – een beschouwing die elk mogelijk kenmerk van sociale activiteit aan banden legde en de theologische basis waarop de menselijke geschiedenis zich ontvouwt, versterkte – paste perfect in Schmitts speculaties over de innerlijke dynamiek van moderne gebeurtenissen.

Hoofdstuk 4 vervolgt de verkenning van Schmitts werk uit de tweede helft van de jaren vijftig. Naast *Hamlet oder Hekuba* omvatte dit een reeks essays en zelfs Voltaire-achtige dialogen over orde en macht, die Schmitts zeer diffuse intellectuele inspanningen om de conceptuele gronden voor een geschiedenisfilosofie te verklaren, versterkten. Ook worden de twee toespraken in het

kader van de publicatie van *Hamlet oder Hekuba* – en de filosofische tegenhangers ervan – hier grondig behandeld en geanalyseerd.

Nadat deze uitbreiding van de conceptuele kern van het essay over Hamlet, zowel wat betreft de ontstaansgeschiedenis als intellectuele context, is uiteengezet, verkent **hoofdstuk 5** de vrijwel onbekende ontmoeting van geesten die op de een of andere manier de stijl en interpretatie mogelijk maakte die in *Hamlet oder Hekuba* werd ontwikkeld; namelijk de significantie van Max Kommerells proefschrift uit 1934 over Schiller voor Schmitts eigen theoretische belangen. **Hoofdstuk 5** laat zien hoe cruciaal Schillers *Wallenstein* werd voor Schmitts ideeën over historische parallellen, toespelingen en inmengingen. Kommerell – de beste vriend van Hans-Georg Gadamer – poneerde een specifieke stelling over Schiller, te weten dat het drama van de Duitse toneelschrijver een hermeneutische achtergrond verschafte op het moment van de evaluatie van politieke handelingen. In dit perspectief is op Schillers *Wallenstein* – dat is gebaseerd op Albrecht von Wallenstein, de Boheemse huursoldaat uit de zestiende eeuw – ook inbreuk gepleegd. Hoewel *Wallenstein* niet zo mythisch is als *Hamlet*, riep de historische aard ervan bij Schmitt verschillende reflecties op over parallellen en spiegelingen. Samen met het personage van Demetrius – de hoofdpersoon van Schillers fragmentarische toneelstuk – worden zowel Wallenstein, als Hamlet opgeroepen in Schmitts persoonlijke overpeinzingen over geschiedenis, kunst en politiek als een tragische activiteit. Deze overpeinzingen werden in dezelfde jaren als *Hamlet oder Hekuba* op papier gezet. Daarom wordt hun plaats in de conceptuele hiërarchie van Schmitts late werk van het grootste belang.

Tot slot wordt het onderzoek afgerond met een beoordeling van het belang van Schmitts werk in de jaren 1950 en zijn relevantie in actuele politieke en esthetische debatten. Zijn niet-systematische opvatting van de geschiedenisfilosofie verdedigde een historische dynamiek die leidde tot belangrijke politieke gebeurtenissen. Schmitt zag in *Hamlet* zelfs een historische index – een curve – waarin de revoluties van 1848 een reeks belangrijke politieke gebeurtenissen die onlosmakelijk verbonden waren met de historische horizon van de sociale onrust die datzelfde jaar plaatsvond. Zoals Martin Tielke onlangs stelde: "*Wichtiger aber ist, Hamlet ihm zur Chiffre bestimmter Situationen wurde.*" Volgens Schmitt kan de hedendaagse geschiedenis, die wordt geregeerd door de dramatische opkomst en ondergang van de moderne staat, niet adequaat worden begrepen vanuit hegeliaans, marxistisch en spengleriaans perspectief. Deze historische interpretatiemodellen ontkenden of negeerden eenvoudigweg de theologische as die in elke politieke gebeurtenis aanwezig was. Bovendien waren dergelijke visies op de geschiedenis niet in staat om de tragische aard ervan te vatten. De ondergang van prins Hamlet, de bezoedelde morele plichten van Wallenstein en de politieke waanideeën van Demetrius bewezen terecht de onbeheersbare krachten

van de geschiedenis. Schmitts roekeloze, en verbijsterende ideeën over de toekomst in een reeds gedoemde technologische wereld onderschreven een somber beeld van zowel Duitsland, als hemzelf. Via *Hamlet* sloeg Schmitt een andere weg in dan zijn tijdgenoten. Hij verbande zichzelf naar historische verbanden en parallellen. Schmitts uitstervende benadering wees uiteindelijk op een complex, maar fascinerend concept van de werkelijkheid.

Curriculum Vitae

Gonzalo Ignacio Zapata Soto werd op 7 december 1984 geboren in Coya, Chili. In 2011 behaalde hij een BSc in Sociologie aan de Chileense Universiteit van de Kunsten en Sociale Wetenschappen (ARCIS). In 2012 volgde hij een masteropleiding in *Contemporary Thought, Philosophy and Political Thought*, die hij in 2015 succesvol afrondde met een scriptie over het Aristotelische pathos van Heideggers conceptie van het kunstwerk. In 2015 werd hij toegelaten tot het gezamenlijke Ph.D. programma aan het Leids Universitair Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte en het *Instituto de Filosofía* van de *Universidad Diego Portales (UDP)* met een studiebeurs van de UDP om zijn proefschrift te schrijven over Carl Schmitts late project van geschiedenisfilosofie.

Gonzalo wijdt zijn leven aan de filosofie. De afgelopen vijf jaar schreef hij essays, artikelen en kinderboeken. Zijn werk is gepubliceerd door verschillende Chileense en Spaanse uitgeverijen. In 2024 verschijnen zijn boek over het probleem van het onwerkelijke, een kinderboek over klimaatverandering en een artikel over Hans Blumenbergs beschouwing van technologie.

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I dedicate this thesis to Sandro, the chess king.