

"On Carl Schmitt's Dialogue of Power and Space: Intellectual Life & Radio Broadcast in between Germany & Spain," "Germany & the Crisis of Liberal Democracy" Project, Institute for German Studies, University of Birmingham (25–6 June 2019).

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Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) has been a strong point of reference among social scientists and "humanists" from the Right and the Left in the three decades, at least in continental Europe, including to a lesser degree Britain, as well as intellectual circles in the United States, within the area that could be called the North Atlantic. I wish to come to terms with this visibility three decades after his demise. And I do so in the context of one of his latest works, recently published by Polity, Dialogues on Power and Space (2015), handsome slim volume largely based on the 1962 Spanish-language edition, published by the Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Madrid, and prepared by his daughter Anima Schmitt de Otero, who settled down to live in Franco Spain. Schmitt had an extensive relationship with Spain early in his career and this continued until his final years. I will address its intellectual and personal significance in the vicinity of the Franco Regime.

I will provide a detailed reading of one of these two peculiar dialogues including five to six voices in total engaging in polite discourse about political ideas in the context of 20th century politics. Mine will be an account of the interactions among the three actors in the second dialogue: Altmann (old historian), Neumeyer (chemical physicist) and MacFuture (North American). The working hypothesis is that the text in question is hybrid combination of Schmittian ideas inside a paratextual aural middlebrow script format. We are dealing with a provocative combination of popular culture, i.e. radio, and ambitious academic scholarship dealing with vast historical vistas of end of European dominance of world affairs, rising U.S. supremacy and liberal-democracy inconsistencies already detected by Schmitt, who occupies a complicated conservative Right-wing perspective, including the troubling Nazi collaboration in the 1930s.

What are we to make of this "power"? What are we to make of this "space" by at least one of the unacknowledged theoreticians of the lebensraum (or vital living space) and/ or the big space (grossraum order)? I will draw from the important volume by Timothy Nunan's Writings on War (Polity, 2011) and allude to his major work Nomos of the Earth. I put Schmitt in the context of his contemporaries, Toynbee and Ortega y Gasset, also against international Schmittian scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic prioritizing English and Spanish. I look at, how could I not?, the "island England" and a few of the meanings of the sign "Spain," against other national units, increasingly the dominant United States for example allegorized as MacFuture in the second dialogue. Schmitt repudiates this future, which is our present (Brexit Britain, Trump U.S.A., EU troubles, etc.). Could these dialogues hold provocative and challenging meanings for us today, six decades after these dialogues were conceived and three decades after the author's death? This presentation answers in the positive, distressingly so.

"Evelyn Waugh among the Barbarians; Or about Scott King's Modern Europe (1947)," Modern British Studies Beyond Boundaries, University of Birmingham (3-5 July, 2019).

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The English novelist Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) attended the Pax Romana Conference in Spain in the spring of 1946 in honour of the obscure Dominican figure of Francisco de Vitoria (1486-1546), branded "father figure of international law" by some groups; and he wrote a satirical piece about this experience titled Scott King's Modern Europe(1947). Nasty Albion abroad: our writer did not think much about any of it (Vitoria, Salamanca and other cities, the natives and their languages, the point of the Conference, the funny country under Franco dictatorship, the issues of law and peace, multilateralism, the public profession of the belief system of Catholicism, no utopian future out there, etc.). His verdict: "modern Europe" (Great Britain, always already eccentric insularity vis-à-vis the continent) is broken and degraded almost beyond repair. It is indeed a delicate geopolitical moment and knowledge, at least the one typified by the cartoonish figure of Scott King (paper-crown King, top of the pile of silliness, dusty, musty 'classicism') is not good at all. What would the positives be of this take-no-prisoners satire? It is not clear. This presentation will handle the uneven relationship between law and literature, English and "Latin" Catholicism, and the ideological or political underpinnings of all these nouns in the dawn of what would be called the Cold War. Connections will be made with figures such as Barcia Trelles, J.L. Brierly, and Daniel P. Moynihan among others.