

A CRITIQUE OF SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY VIA THE
MIRROR STAGE

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ABSTRACT

A CRITIQUE OF SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY VIA THE MIRROR STAGE

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This study argues that the Schmittian neutrality thesis is invalid in the face of the Lacanian mirror stage. The principle of not making a distinction between friend and enemy, which forms the basis of the neutrality thesis, assumes that it is a conscious act to make these distinctions or not. However, considering that the much more archaic form of these distinctions, first the emergence of me [proto-ego] and then you, emerged in the unconscious mirror stage, it can be seen that these distinctions constantly function in the depths of our psyche. Therefore, since the seemingly neutral domains, i.e., culture, economy, and education are based entirely on the distinction between friend and enemy rising above these unconscious archaic divisions, the neutrality thesis loses its validity, revealing the existence of a purely political field.

Keywords: Neutrality, Schmitt, Mirror Stage, Lacan, The Political.

ÖZ

AYNA EVRESİ ÜZERİNDEN SCHMITTYEN TARAFSIZLIK KAVRAMININ BİR ELEŞTİRİSİ

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Bu çalışma, Schmittyen tarafsızlık tezinin Lacancı ayna evresi karşısında geçersiz olduğunu savunmaktadır. Tarafsızlık tezinin temelini oluşturan dost-düşman ayrımı yapmama ilkesi, bu ayrımları yapıp yapmamanın bilinçli bir eylem olduğunu varsayar. Ancak bu ayrımların çok daha arkaik halinin yani önce ben [proto-ego] sonra sen'in ortaya çıkışının bilinçdışı ayna evresinde ortaya çıktığı düşünülürse, bu ayrımların bilişimizin derinliklerinde sürekli olarak işlev gördüğü görülebilir. Dolayısıyla tarafsız görünen alanlar yani kültür, ekonomi ve eğitim tamamen bu bilinçdışı arkaik ayrımların üzerinde yükselen dost-düşman ayrımına dayandığından, tarafsızlık tezi geçerliliğini yitirerek salt siyasal bir alanın varlığını ortaya koyar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tarafsızlık, Schmitt, Ayna Evresi, Lacan, Siyasal.

To My Dear Nothingness



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL AND ITS RELATION TO THE CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY	6
2.1. The Political as Friend-Enemy Distinction	8
2.2. Liberalism as Unpolitical	11
2.2.1. Liberalism's Discourse of Humanity	18
2.3. Neutrality and Its Relation to The Concept of Political.....	20
2.4. Conclusion.....	25
3. MIRROR STAGE AS THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMAGINARY ME AND ENSUING CATEGORIES OF FRIEND AND ENEMY	31
3.1. Freudian Psychical Apparatus.....	31
3.2. Three Orders/Registers.....	37
3.2.1. The Imaginary	37
3.2.2. The Symbolic	41
3.2.3. The Real	49

3.2.4. The Relationship Between the Imaginary, Symbolic, and the Real.....	55
3.3. Mirror Stage	58
3.3.1. Identification and Alienation: Imaginary Me and Symbolic Order	58
3.3.2. Life, Death, and Transition of the Imaginary “You” and “Me” into the Symbolic Realm	64
3.4. Conclusion.....	68
4. RE-READING THE SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY VIA THE LACANIAN MIRROR STAGE	74
4.1. The Critique of Schmittian Neutrality.....	75
4.1.1. Psychology of the Id and Psychology of the Ego.....	76
4.1.2. Butler on Two Conceptualizations of the Subject.....	79
4.1.3. Žižek on the Neighbor qua Pacified Monster [Enemy].....	83
4.1.4. Lacan versus Schmitt	85
4.2. The Traumatic Encounter with the Real	90
4.2.1. The Primordial Role of the Real: Mirror Stage, Cruel Mother, and The Enemy.....	90
4.2.2. Disruption of the Symbolic via the Real: Anomie, Anxiety and Technology.....	93
4.3. Conclusion.....	94
5. CONCLUSION	101
REFERENCES.....	107
APPENDICES.....	110
A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET	110
B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	121

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study argues that the Schmittian neutrality thesis [not making any distinction between friend and enemy] does not hold up in the face of the Lacanian mirror stage. The separation of *you* and *me*, which constitutes the archaic forms of friend and enemy distinctions, constantly operates in the depths of our psyche and reveals the political [making the distinction between friend and enemy] behind all so-called neutral domains. Thus, this study investigates the concepts and theories put forth by prominent scholars such as Carl Schmitt, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Judith Butler, and Slavoj Žižek. Our examination will take us through a tapestry of intellectual frameworks, weaving together the realms of political theory, psychoanalysis, and philosophical inquiry.

At the heart of our inquiry lies Schmittian concept of the political and its interplay with the notion of neutrality. We shall venture into the Schmittian arguments, dissecting his critique of liberalism and its perceived threats to the political integrity of the state. Through this analysis, we aim to comprehend why Schmitt views liberalism, normativity, individualism, and other associated ideals as pejoratively synonymous while considering the positive connotations he attributes to political unity, the friend/enemy distinction, and democracy.

However, our investigation does not end with Schmittian theories alone. We will also delve into the realm of psychoanalysis, drawing upon Freud's psychical apparatus and Lacan's three orders/registers of the psyche. These theoretical frameworks will give us a deeper understanding of the human psyche and its development, particularly about the mirror stage. By examining the emergence of the proto-ego, the dynamics of the *me-you* distinction, and the transition from the imaginary to the

symbolic plane, we shall uncover new insights into the formation of conscious social categorizations and their implications for the friend-enemy distinction.

Along these lines, we shall engage with the works of Butler and Žižek, who offer alternative perspectives that enrich our understanding of the Lacanian subject, the collective psyche, and the interplay between archaic distinctions and Schmittian groupings.

Accordingly, in the first chapter, our primary objective is to examine Schmitt's concept of the political and neutrality and explore the intricate relationship between these conceptualizations. In this particular context, our initial focus will be on scrutinizing Schmitt's employment of the nominalized adjective form of the concept rather than its noun form—commonly referred to as politics. Subsequently, we shall proceed to analyze the distinction inherent in the concept of the political, namely the dichotomy between friend and enemy, and further investigate the three distinct subcategories through which Schmitt delineates the category of the enemy: conventional, real, and absolute. Following a brief examination of these subcategories, we shall touch upon Schmitt's critical evaluation of liberalism's discourse of humanity, highlighting its inherently unpolitical nature, particularly concerning the subject of the absolute enemy.

In our subsequent discussion of the concept of the political, we shall adopt a distinct perspective by examining Schmitt's conceptualization within the framework of his critique of liberalism, thereby establishing a clear opposition between the two. It is crucial to grasp the underlying purpose of this opposition, which revolves around safeguarding the political integrity of the state. Schmitt argues that liberalism poses a significant threat to this integrity, while the concept of the political assumes a vital role in ensuring the security and survival of the state. Furthermore, Schmitt views liberalism, neutrality, normativity, parliamentarism, pluralism, individualism, equality of all humanity, the sanctity of the private domain, and the state as the protector of private property as being pejoratively synonymous. In contrast, he regards the political, political unity, the mere equality of equals, democracy, the friend/enemy distinction, the public sphere, and the state as being positively synonymous, serving as existential decisions concerning defense and survival.

Additionally, we shall analyze how liberalism's principle of equality for all individuals and democracy's principle of equality among equals manifest within this discourse on political integrity. Finally, within the context of the relationship between the principle of equality for all individuals and liberalism's discourse of humanity, we will touch upon the correlation between liberalism and the notion of the absolute enemy. Schmitt argues that by encompassing all individuals under the umbrella of humanity, liberalism creates a particular type of enemy that must be dehumanized and subjected to complete annihilation.

In our final examination, in the first chapter, we will examine the relationship between the concept of neutrality and the political, ultimately establishing their mutual exclusivity as expounded by Schmitt. By scrutinizing Schmitt's conceptualization of neutrality and its relationship with the concept of the political, we aim to understand the motivations behind the search for neutral domains and their subsequent evolution into political entities. Schmitt presents a narrative of five pivotal domains, i.e., theology, metaphysics, morals, economy, and technology, initially perceived as neutral, which have progressively transitioned into the political realm throughout history.

Of particular interest is the contemporary belief that technology represents the epitome of neutrality, being the final domain to undergo this transformation. However, Schmitt contends that technology, as an instrument, is not inherently neutral, despite its autonomous neutrality, precisely because any robust political entity can utilize it. Thus, within this context, we strive to uncover the implications of Schmitt's assertion that technology as an instrument transcends neutrality and marks the culmination of the neutralization process.

Crucial questions arise about acquiring technology as an instrument and its impact on terminating the neutralization process. We inquire why various domains cannot independently sustain the ongoing process of neutralization as technology assumes a trans-neutral, political nature. Additionally, we briefly address the potential sources of anxiety that emerge as the neutralization process concludes, serving as a prelude to the subsequent chapters, where anxiety will be discussed as a central theme.

In the second chapter, we will set the stage for rereading the Schmittian concept of neutrality via the Lacanian mirror stage. In that regard, in the beginning, we shall analyze Lacanian three orders/registers. The Lacanian framework of the three orders/registers of the structure of the human psyche serves as a foundational element for comprehending his comprehensive psychoanalytic theory. However, our focus in this discussion will primarily center on its connection to the mirror stage. To establish this connection, it is crucial to initially analyze Freud's psychical apparatus, which will provide two significant insights. Firstly, it will shed light on the relationship between the Lacanian mirror stage and Freud's distinction of the id, ego, and super-ego. Secondly, it will enable us to transcend the Schmittian caveat regarding psychology in the subsequent chapter by grasping the differentiation between the *psychology of the id* and the *psychology of the ego*, as posited by Freud. Therefore, following the analysis of Freud's psychical apparatus, this chapter will address three key points.

Firstly, a thorough examination of the three orders/registers will be undertaken, emphasizing each realm's distinct yet interconnected nature. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to elucidating these registers' intricacies and interplay.

Secondly, we will discuss the mirror stage, exploring the dynamic processes through which the proto-ego emerges within this stage. Our focus here will be on the experiences of lack, fragmentation, and alienation that precede the formation of the proto-ego, as well as their relationship with the proto-ego itself and the subsequent manifestations of anxiety.

Lastly, we will investigate the transition from the *me-you* distinction, which takes place within the imaginary plane of the mirror stage, to the symbolic plane. We will examine how the unconscious and archaic differentiation between the self and the other forms the basis for the conscious distinction between friend and enemy. This transition will shed light on the intricate interplay between unconscious processes and the development of conscious social categorizations.

In the last chapter, our primary focus will be critically evaluating Schmitt's neutrality thesis. We will begin by scrutinizing the Freudian differentiation between the *psychology of the id* and the *psychology of the ego*, aiming to propose a resolution to

Schmitt's reservations regarding the psychologization of the friend-enemy distinction. Within this context, we will analyze Freud's understanding that the id represents the primal and impulsive aspects of the mind driven by immediate gratification, while the ego acts as a mediator, navigating social norms and employing defense mechanisms. It is worth noting that Schmitt's warnings against psychologization are primarily based on the *psychology of the ego*, thereby implying that an analysis grounded in the *psychology of the id* would be exempt from such concerns. Consequently, we will argue that the unconscious proto-ego, emerging from the mirror stage, is rooted in the *psychology of the id*, unlike the fully structured ego, which is based on the *psychology of the ego*.

Subsequently, since Schmitt's thesis of neutral domains hinges upon the absence of differentiation between friend and enemy, we will meticulously examine how the mirror stage challenges this notion. We will illustrate how the subject, originating from and transcending the archaic *me-you* distinction—a distinction that inherently gives rise to the polarization of friend and enemy—becomes an inseparable and permanent aspect of our psyche. Drawing insights from Butler's conceptualization of the subject, we will explore the individual and collective psyche's similarities and differences. Additionally, Žižek's analysis will enable us to establish a connection between Lacan's archaic *me-you* distinction and Schmitt's categorization of friend and enemy within groups.

Furthermore, we will address two potential questions that may arise from a Schmittian perspective: firstly, whether these analyses and criticisms still bear remnants of liberal thinking, and secondly, whether the mirror stage, despite Schmitt's assertion of the friend-enemy distinction as existential and concrete, remains an abstract construct with its reliance on symbols and metaphors.

Lastly, to further substantiate our argument that Schmitt's thesis of neutrality lacks support within the realm of the *psychology of the id*, specifically within the mirror stage, we will briefly look at the relationship between the real as a traumatic disruption, the mirror stage, and the concept of the cruel mother.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL AND ITS RELATION TO THE CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY

In this chapter, first, we will examine what Schmitt means by the concept of the political and neutrality and the relationship between these conceptualizations. In this context, we will first focus on the question of Schmitt's use of the nominalized adjective form of this concept, especially instead of its noun form, namely politics. Later, we will examine the distinction between friend and enemy that the concept of the political contains and look at the three subcategories, namely, conventional, real, and absolute, in which Schmitt separates the category of enemy. After reviewing each of these subcategories, we will touch partly upon Schmitt's critique of liberalism's discourse of humanity and its unpolitical nature with regard to the subject of the absolute enemy.

Second, to understand the concept of the political from a different angle, we will see how Schmitt conceptualizes it, within the framework of the critique of liberalism, as opposed to liberalism. Accordingly, we will comprehend the purpose of this opposition as the political integrity of the state—why liberalism is a threat to this integrity, while the concept of the political is essential to the security and survival of the state, and why, for him liberalism, neutrality, the idea of normativity, parliamentarism, pluralism, individualism, equality of all humanity, private domain and state as the security of private property are more or less pejoratively synonymous. In contrast, the political, political unity, mere equality of equals, democracy, friend/enemy distinction, public and state as existential decisions about defense and survival are synonymous positively. Likewise, we will examine how liberalism's principle of *equality of all persons* and democracy's principle of *equality of all equals* work out in this discussion of integrity. Lastly, in the context of the

relation of the principle of equality of all persons to the discourse of humanity of liberalism, we will touch upon the connection of liberalism with the absolute enemy, as it places everyone under humanity and leads to a type of enemy that must be dehumanized and subject to total annihilation.

Third and last, we will see that the concept of neutrality and the political are mutually exclusive after examining Schmitt's conceptualization of neutrality and how it relates to the concept of the political. After asking why and with what motive people search for neutral domains, we will examine Schmitt's narrative of five central domains—initially neutral but each time evolving into the political—people have spent so far. Schmitt holds that although, according to contemporary belief, there is no more neutral domain than technology—the last of these domains—technology qua instrument is not neutral, albeit neutral in its own right, precisely as it serves everyone, any strong politics can use it. In that regard, we will endeavor to find answers to the following questions within the framework of Schmitt's claim that technology qua instrument is not only trans-neutral but also ends the process of neutralization: what exactly is the relationship between acquiring technology qua instrument and the termination of the neutralization process? Why are different domains unable to continue the neutralization process all by themselves as technology becomes political[trans-neutral]? Finally, we will make a few notes on the possible sources of anxiety—the theme of the subsequent chapters—emerging at the end of this neutralization process.

Since, throughout this study, neutral and trans-neutral conceptualizations will be discussed in relation to the concept of the political, making a few notes to explain these concepts will be helpful. One of the most important differences between these concepts is that they are mutually exclusive since the concept of the political is based on the separation of friend and enemy, and neutrality rests upon the elimination of this division. Second, therefore, in the Schmittian sense, the concepts of unpolitical and neutrality are interchangeable; so are the concepts of trans-neutral and the political. In this sense, Neutrality is not merely a lack of interference within a political context but rather a proactive stance against the concept of the political and its friend-enemy distinctions. Unpolitical, also, is a concept that seeks to eliminate these distinctions and create a unified environment, unified in the sense of

homogenization.¹ This is why unpolitical is closely associated with the idea of neutrality, as it seeks to promote an environment where everyone is equal, and the concept of the political is no longer relevant. In this sense, the idea of neutrality is closely linked to the idea of unpolitical, as both concepts seek to create an environment of equality and unity.

2.1. The Political as Friend-Enemy Distinction

The concept of the political in Schmitt is characterized by and rests upon making a distinction between friend and enemy. "The heart of the political is not enmity per se but the distinction of friend and enemy; it presupposes both friend and enemy."² Frye explains the possible reason behind Schmitt's preference for the concept of the *political* over *politics* as follows: "the adjective 'political' ... convey the relational and ideal aspects of his concept rather than the substantive aspects of 'politics.'"³ Relational in that it focuses its conceptual framework not just on friends or enemies but on the mutual relations between friend and enemy groupings.

Since the concept of the political is always about the public—not private/individualistic—enemy, this enemy "need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions."⁴ Likewise, "the morally good, aesthetically beautiful, and economically profitable need not necessarily become the friend in the specifically political sense of the word."⁵ As we shall see, such an approach to the enemy and friend becomes impossible in *the absolute*

¹ Both Schmitt and liberalism—liberalism as depicted in Schmitt's critique—favor homogenization: Schmitt advocates it through the principle of equality of equals, while liberalism advocates it through the principle of equality of all persons. We will discuss these principles in detail below.

² Carl Schmitt, *The Theory of the Partisan: A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political*, trans. A. C. Goodson (Chicago: Michigan State University Press, 2004), 65.

³ Charles E. Frye, "Carl Schmitt's Concept of the Political," *The Journal of Politics* 28, no. 4 (1966): 821.

⁴ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 27.

⁵ Ibid.

enemy. In *The Theory of the Partisan*, he divides the category of the enemy into three subcategories: *conventional*, *real*, and *absolute*.

By *conventional*, Schmitt means predominantly but not limited to the contained war of interstate sovereigns. The two main constituents that determine this category of enmity are "being guided by rules of proper conduct"⁶ and the assumption of sovereign states as the main actors of the war.

Unlike the conventional, the real enemy is not born of an enmity between sovereign states but one where the partisan⁷ figure takes the stage as the leading actor. Another critical factor distinguishing this enmity from conventional is that "it transgresses the rules of warfare."⁸ In other words, the *real enemy/partisan* neither rests upon nor needs to abide by the rules of war on which sovereign states are mutually dependent.

Moreover, a partisan needs a friend to move from being a mere criminal *thief* or *pirate* to a politically recognized status. In this sense, a *real enemy*, surrounded only by enemies and not recognized by anyone, will be condemned to be *unpolitical* in the Schmittian sense. "The political world is a pluriverse, not a universe,"⁹ which in this context means that having friends and enemies is the sine qua non of being political. A world surrounded by only universal friends or only universal enemies is *unpolitical*. As such, "the irregular must legitimize itself through the regular, and for this, only two possibilities stand open: recognition by an existing regular, or establishment of a new regularity by its own force."¹⁰ The relative power of the irregular/partisan vis-à-vis the status quo will determine the question of which option

⁶ Adrienne de Ruiter, "The Political Character of Absolute Enmity: On Carl Schmitt's The Concept of the Political and Theory of the Partisan," *ARSP: Archiv Für Rechts- Und Sozialphilosophie / Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy* 98, no. 1 (2012): 54.

⁷ What Schmitt means by partisan is a person or group that adopts the irregular form of warfare, in contrast to the regular form of the modern army and has an intense political commitment. Political commitment is one feature distinguishing a partisan from a pirate or thief. This political commitment means that the partisan is driven by an ideological cause, rather than by the pursuit of personal gain per se. This cause is often linked to a larger political movement, and the partisan is usually willing to risk their life for the success of that movement. In that regard, Schmitt describes the Spanish guerrilla warfare of 1808 as the first irregular partisan warfare against the regular army in the modern sense.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁹ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 57.

¹⁰ Schmitt, *The Theory of the Partisan*, 53.

is preferable. In Schmittian terms, the "existing regular" here refers to two conceptualizations: *disinterested-neutral third party*¹¹ and *interested third party*.¹² The difference between a *disinterested neutral third party* and an *interested third party* is that the former is not personally invested in the outcome of a situation, while the latter has a personal stake in it. A *disinterested, neutral third party* is typically an impartial mediator or arbitrator who helps resolve a conflict or dispute by objectively evaluating the evidence and making a fair and neutral decision. Their goal is to ensure that the parties involved in the dispute reach a resolution that is fair to all sides.

On the other hand, an interested third party is invested in the outcome of a situation and may have a personal stake in it. For example, in a political conflict or war, an *interested third party* may provide material assistance, such as weapons and ammunition, or political recognition to one of the sides involved in the conflict. They aim to advance their interests, whether to gain influence, secure resources, or promote a particular ideology or worldview. For partisans, direct/indirect financial support or mere endorsement of either of these existing regulars—regardless of their neutrality or interests—means avoiding being a mere pirate or a thief, thus politically legitimizing themselves.

Compared to the conventional and real, the *absolute enemy* is not limited to a specific notion of space and time. It is an abstract enmity based on a particular ideology, on an ideology's *us* and *them* distinctions. This means the reduction of the political's pluriverse to the universal due to the universalizing discourses of ideologies.

In a world in which the partners push each other... into the abyss of total devaluation before they annihilate one another physically, new kinds of absolute enmity must come into being. Enmity will be so terrifying that one perhaps mustn't even speak any longer of the enemy or of enmity, and both words will have to be outlawed and damned fully before the work of annihilation can begin. Annihilation thus becomes entirely abstract and

¹¹ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 27.

¹² Schmitt, *The Theory of the Partisan*, 53.

entirely absolute. It is no longer directed against an enemy, but serves only another, ostensibly objective attainment of highest values.¹³

Absolute enmity occurs outside the territories of Schmitt's concept of the political, as it requires the total destruction of the enemy and its dehumanization and is based on an abstract rather than an existential¹⁴ definition, and thus points to an *unpolitical* realm. It is *unpolitical* since, in the political sense, "peace is always possible with an *enemy* once his threat has diminished. It is a form of enmity in which the political enemy is respected and not despised or condemned morally *as in the conventional and real*."¹⁵

2.2. Liberalism as Unpolitical

To grasp the concept of the political, it is necessary to look at how it is constructed in opposition to liberalism. In Schmitt's vocabulary, liberalism, neutrality, the idea of normativity, parliamentarism, pluralism, individualism, equality of all humanity, private domain, and the state as the security of private property are more or less pejoratively synonymous; on the contrary, the political, political unity, mere equality of equals, democracy, friend/enemy distinction, public and state as existential decisions about defense and survival are used positively synonymous.¹⁶ To help us better understand these concepts and their opposites, Kennedy reminds us of Weimar's¹⁷ "dual crises" arising from the problematic intricacy in/between domestic

¹³ Schmitt, *The Theory of the Partisan*, 67.

¹⁴ Schmitt uses the term existential to refer to the concrete, material, and historical aspects of human life, as opposed to the abstract, normative, universal, and theoretical aspects. Existentialism, or "Existenzphilosophie," as known in the late 1920s, emerged in response to the crisis mentality and dire political and economic uncertainties of the Weimar years in Germany. Since traditional Western values have lost their validity, including ideologies' distinction between *humanity* and the rest qua *dehumanized* entities, it emphasizes the brute, unadorned nature of human existence as the only true value.

¹⁵ Ruiter, *The Political Character of Absolute Enmity*, 54. Italics mine.

¹⁶ Ellen Kennedy, "Hostis Not Inimicus Toward a Theory of the Public in the Work of Carl Schmitt," in *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (London: Duke University Press, 1998), 95.

¹⁷ The Weimar Republic was a government established in Germany after World War I, operating from 1919-1933. For Schmitt and other German intellectuals, this government had some constitutional and administrative problems: First, Weimar's parliamentary system was in a weak and fragmented state, which negatively affects stability. Secondly, this instability was exacerbated by the existence of numerous parties of very different ideologies in the Republic and their inability to establish unifying national leadership. Third, another factor affecting the failure to establish a dominant national

and foreign policy in the historical context in which *The Concept of the Political* was written: “in the international arena as a consequence of defeat in World War 1 and the Versailles Treaty; and domestically as the constitutional crisis of a contested regime.”¹⁸ Furthermore, she adds that the concept of the political should be read as a deconstruction of liberalism triumphant over post-war Europe.

In such a turbulent period, Schmitt re-establishes the political sphere as opposed to the liberal one to preserve the state's political integrity. For liberalism legitimizes plural polyphony with the principle of *equality of all persons*, which slows down the decision-making mechanism of the state at a time like a state of exception and prevents it from taking effective actions in the face of sudden threats. Thus, the chief problem with liberal parliamentarism is, for Schmitt, “its inability to protect itself in situations of exceptions, as in Weimar Germany...This problem came from its glorification of discussion and compromise...at the expense of decision.”¹⁹ It is a crippling *inability*, an impotentia in the sense of lack of control—due to the divided structure of power—because among its most basic norms are the distribution and control²⁰ of power by different mechanisms and the endless discussions of

leadership was the rise and pervasiveness of liberal values such as moral relativism. Lastly, for Schmitt, Weimar's constitution based on legal formalism and abstract principles falls short of making effective decisions in concrete situations such as states of exception.

¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

¹⁹ Jacob Als Thomsen, “Carl Schmitt - The Hobbesian of the 20th Century?,” *Social Thought & Research* 20, no. 1/2 (1997): 21.

²⁰ In Schmitt's view, control and political power are closely related but distinct concepts. He is suggesting that there are two different poles of power in liberalism: the intellectual pole and the economic pole. At the intellectual pole, power is exercised through propaganda and mass manipulation, while at the economic pole, power is exercised through control. Schmitt's concept of control is related to his ideas about sovereignty and the state's ability to maintain order within society. Control, in this sense, refers to the state's ability to regulate social and economic forces in order to ensure stability and prevent the emergence of movements that seek to undermine its authority. Power, on the other hand, refers more broadly to the ability to make decisions and exercise authority. It can be exercised through various means, including the use of force, economic coercion, or propaganda. So, in Schmitt's view, control is a specific form of power that is exercised through the regulation of social and economic forces, while power can take many different forms depending on the context in which it is exercised. The two poles of power that Schmitt describes are different ways in which power can be exercised, but they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Schmitt suggests that they are often intertwined, with control and propaganda being used together to maintain the state's authority. The distinction between power and control also indicates the state's ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. In that regard, control implies ordinary circumstances in which the state norms operate, whereas power implies situations in which the norms of the state do not efficiently apply. In other words, control is when the government maintains order and stability through existing laws and regulations; power is when the government must use force and coercion to maintain order, usually in

parliaments, which impede reaching even a simple decision. Thus, this lack of control creates a state of helplessness and frustration, making it difficult to achieve desired outcomes in a timely manner. For Schmitt, the way to transform this *inability* into an ability is the concentration of state powers in the decisionist act of the sovereign. By investing the sovereign with the power to decide, Schmitt believes that the state can regain control over its destiny and provide citizens with the security and unification they need.

Schmitt's conceptualization of decisionism and sovereign also takes place within the framework of the critique of liberalism. He criticizes the principle of the rule of law in liberalism on two main points. Firstly, though liberals disguise their economic interests under the guise of supposedly universal and neutral norms, these norms are neither neutral nor allegedly universal. For “normative principles cannot have an effect on human society unless they are interpreted by particular agents and applied to particular circumstances. Particular perspectives are thus always involved in the implementation.”²¹ Besides the interpretation critique, secondly, “a general norm, as represented by an ordinary legal prescription, can never encompass a total exception, the decision that a real exception exists cannot, therefore, be entirely derived from this norm.”²² “The exception” for Schmitt “is more important than the rule...The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything”²³ in the sense that rule is created only on particular possibilities distilled from experience and projected into the future; exception, on the other hand, not only reveals [proves] the existence and the limits of the rule but also points out how these limits can quasi-exhaustively be extended. Since allegedly impersonal norms cannot utterly exhaust the contingency of concrete events and those who interpret these norms will always be mortal and biased,

extraordinary circumstances such as a crisis or emergency. See for the two poles of power: Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 72.

²¹ Heiner Bielefeldt, “Carl Schmitt’s Critique of Liberalism Systematic Reconstruction and Counter-criticism,” in *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt’s Critique of Liberalism*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (London: Duke University Press, 1998), 25-26.

²² Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 15.

Schmitt recommends the *rule of sovereign* instead of the rule of law for the survival and the unity of the state.

Sovereign is about the extraordinary, not the routine and normal: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception."²⁴ Yet, an exception is not necessarily chaos or anarchy; "order in the juristic sense still prevails even if it is not the ordinary kind."²⁵ Situations such as economic and political turbulences, devastating natural disasters, and a sudden terrorist attack define the conceptual limits of the exception. For Schmitt, the issue in these cases is that "the decision *should* free itself from all normative ties and become in the true sense absolute,"²⁶ rather than the pointless indecision of "the purposelessness and banality of parliamentary debate."²⁷ In the state of exception, such decisions, including the suspension of law, made by the state, rest "on the basis of its right of self-preservation."²⁸ Moreover, in the monopolized act of such decision—thus in the exception— lies the true "essence of the state's sovereignty"²⁹ since the nature of the state's authority [or non-authority] is revealed in proportion to this monopoly. As such, it should be noted that this monopoly is solely limited to decision-making and does not embrace "the monopoly to coerce or to rule."³⁰ Although Schmitt argues that such decisionism does not necessarily require a monopoly over coercion and rule, the question of why coercion is not a natural consequence in the case of an exception where a decision, in absolute terms, requires the state's unity and survival remains unanswered. Thomsen's comparison of Schmitt and Hobbes will be helpful to see Schmitt's decisionism, his emphasis on the sovereign, and the nuanced concept of the political from a comparative perspective:

Like Hobbes...Schmitt saw himself as being confronted with political instability and the threat of civil war. And...*both* saw the problem as

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁶ Ibid. Italics mine.

²⁷ Carl Schmitt, *The Crises of Parliamentarism*, trans. Ellen Kennedy (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000), 19.

²⁸ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 16.

²⁹ Ibid., 13.

³⁰ Ibid.

originating in the absence of a single authority and...pointed to the state as the ordering principle...*Both* preoccupied with the fear of chaos and the concern with physical safety and public order...at the expense of individual freedom....*and shared* the anthropological assumption that human nature was fundamentally dangerous.³¹

The common denominator of "dangerousness" is of importance here, as Schmitt's concept of the political is built entirely on this assumption. "All genuine political theories" for him assume "man to be evil, i.e.,...a dangerous and dynamic being."³² Since his theory was written with the motivation of being "genuine" and man's "dynamic" nature is obvious, it should follow that "the necessity of the political is as certain as man's dangerousness."³³ For the concept of the political does not abstractly postulate the problem of man's dynamism and its resulting dangerousness but argues that it is an existential problem and that it leads to groupings of friend and enemy—friend groupings against the uncertainty that arises from enemy's dynamic dangerousness. Nevertheless, as Strauss rightly notes, if man's dangerousness is a conjecture, i.e., if it is "only supposed or believed in, not genuinely known, the opposite, too, can be considered as possible."³⁴ —The opposite is understood as man's undangerous nature. Here, Schmitt leaves a small margin of assumption not because his theory is based on an intangible abstraction but because he is unsure about the feasibility of an apolitical/undangerous nature scenario in the future, where the distinction between friend and enemy disappears. This small margin has two primary sources: First, Schmitt conceives the state of nature as a war of groups against groups. Since he describes war as the peak of the political, i.e., the polarization of enemies and friends, it implies that there is no unifying state but the absolute reign of man's dynamic dangerousness. Second, despite the exit from this state of nature via strong authority to impose order and security on it, his experience in the Weimar Republic led him to conclude that this dangerousness would not soon be converted into undangerousness.

³¹ Thomsen, *Carl Schmitt – The Hobbesian of the 20th Century?*, 10-11. Italics mine.

³² Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 62.

³³ Leo Strauss, "Notes on Carl Schmitt: The Concept of The Political," in *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 104.

³⁴ Ibid.

In the unified world of human beings, where wars and conflicts have come to an end, and all sorts of groupings based on religious, linguistic, and cultural distinctions no longer exist, the distinction between friend and enemy will no longer survive, thus the political: "What remains is neither politics nor state, but culture, civilization, economics, morality, art, law, entertainment, etc. If and when this condition will appear, I do not know. At the moment, this is not the case."³⁵ Suffice it to note that the remaining areas outside politics and the state are those that Schmitt identifies with liberalism. Since the dangerousness of man and the wars and conflicts arising therefrom are inevitable in a sense, all these "means need of dominion."³⁶ Dominion of a sovereign³⁷ who can decide upon the friend-enemy distinction and who can canalize people's negative energy stemming from dynamic dangerousness to the deeds necessary for the unification—thus survival—of his people.

Schmitt supports what he defines as *democracy* as an alternative to liberal parliamentarism since "the equality of all persons as persons is not democracy but a certain kind of liberalism, not a state form but an individualistic-humanitarian ethic and Weltanschauung."³⁸ In democracy, on the other hand, instead of *equality of all persons*, the principle of *equality of equals* operates as a dual exclusive-inclusive mechanism "since foreigners and aliens remain excluded."³⁹ In that sense, liberalism, with its universalizing discourse of *humanity*, eliminated the distinction between friend and enemy, which is indispensable for state qua political unity of people,⁴⁰

³⁵ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 57.

³⁶ Strauss, *Notes on Carl Schmitt: The Concept of The Political*, 106.

³⁷ There should be a clear grasp of what dominion and sovereign means: the dominion is the authority to rule and control. It is the sovereign who oversees this authority. Thus, dominion should be considered as a sovereign's attribute to express its justified power. This authority is absolute and may not be challenged by any other power or institution. The sovereign is the ultimate source of law, and his dominion is the basis for the legitimacy of the state. The sovereign's dominion is ultimately what gives the state the right to rule and exercise power over its citizens. Thus, it is the sovereign's duty to ensure that his dominion is respected and used only for good.

³⁸ Carl Schmitt, *The Crises of Parliamentarism*, 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁰ While Schmitt insistently emphasizes that the friend-enemy distinction is not a private-individualistic issue but that the enemy is a public enemy, he rests upon the state qua political unity of people formula. Only after this formula is fully grasped can it be understood why the enemy is not private. Because for Schmitt, the state of nature is not a war of individuals against individuals as in Hobbes; it is a war of groups against groups. Therefore, when he speaks of state, what is meant is no longer a state qua necessary evil formula by making a distinction between the state and the individual

with the principle of *equality of all persons*, which solely stems from the fact that all people are equal just because they are human beings. However, the Schmittian understanding of democracy compatible with the concept of the political "rests on the principle that not only are equals equal, but unequals will not be treated equally. Democracy requires...first homogeneity and second—if the need arises—elimination or eradication of heterogeneity."⁴¹ While arguing that democracies are not necessarily liberal, he adduces the existence of many historical cases, as in Caesarism, in that they "have tried to create homogeneity and to shape the will of the people with methods uncommon in the liberal tradition of the past century."⁴²

Schmitt's affiliation with Nazism may make it tempting to interpret the emphasis here on "eradication" or "homogeneity" in racial terms. Yet, considering that he wrote these lines in 1923—well before he joined the nazis in 1933—we see that "homogeneity" is used in a much broader sense here: "The question of equality...is about the substance of equality. It can be found in certain physical and moral qualities, for example, in civic virtue, in arete, the classical democracy of vertus."⁴³

Nevertheless, it should be noted that *homogeneity* here, as a logical derivation of the Schmittian understanding of democracy, is not a once and for all situation worldwide; on the contrary, it is the *homogeneity* of people gathered on a particular piece of land. That is why throughout *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt uses the word "people" instead of open-ended alternatives like liberalism's discourse of *humanity*. Moreover, the word *people* is a richer conceptualization that includes the distinction between friend and enemy: *people* qua friend groupings created by friends coming together on a common denominator, and *people* qua other enemy groupings.

How is this homogeneity, not itself an abstract concept? Why are the subjects of equality of all persons not at least as physical and moral concepts or entities as the subjects of equality of equals? Homogeneity is not an abstract concept in that it is not

as in the liberal tradition; on the contrary, the state-individual distinction is abolished, and the state-individual identity is established, that is, the state is now political unity of people.

⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

⁴² Ibid., 16.

⁴³ Ibid.

purely theoretical or divorced from the realities of human life. Instead, it is based on the idea that a democratic community must be composed of individuals who share a common identity and cultural values. While the concept of homogeneity may seem abstract, it is concrete because it refers to the shared characteristics and values that define a particular community. For Schmitt, democracy is not just a system of government but is also a way of life grounded in a community's shared cultural and social practices. In this sense, homogeneity is necessary for democracy as it creates a sense of common purpose and identity among community members. Thus, while the concept of homogeneity may be abstract in that it refers to shared characteristics and values rather than concrete physical objects, it is still grounded in the concrete realities of human life and community.

In liberalism, the subjects of equality of all persons are viewed as ahistorically equal simply because they are humans. I refer to this as *a priori equality* since this understanding of equality is not based on empirical reality. This means that regardless of any real-world factors, such as race, gender, or social class, liberalism argues that all persons should be treated equally. This equality is based on the idea that all humans are inherently equal and that any inequalities in the real world are unjustified. In contrast, equality of equals is *a posteriori equality* since it does not negate social exclusion mechanisms and people's historical backgrounds [their socio-techno-political existence]. This gives it a more concrete meaning than a priori equality of all persons.

2.2.1. Liberalism's Discourse of Humanity

Another problem with liberalism, especially for the Schmittian concept of the political, is the fact that "as a form of the total integration of all social forms into one system," it "presupposes a metaphysics of indifferentiation which serves to legitimate universal, ahistorical institutions, and unconditional warfare as means of bringing about this end. The opponent is denied the status of enemy and criminalized—and *dehumanized*—as outlaw."⁴⁴ At this point, Schmitt proposes the historicity of the concept of the political as opposed to the ahistorical universalism of liberalism's

⁴⁴ Bernhard Radloff, "Heidegger and Carl Schmitt: The Historicity of the Political (Part One)," *Heidegger Studies* 20 (2004): 88-89. Italics mine.

naive, optimistic metaphysics based on indifferently rational and linear progressivism. In that sense, liberalism's discourse of humanity and the concept of the political are mutually exclusive.

The main reason for liberalism's invocation of the discourse of humanity, for Schmitt, is an economic part of the imperial expansion strategy.⁴⁵ In this strategy, the distinction between them and us dissolves, and we all unite under the universalizing label of humanity. However, here *us* and *them* do not meet at a common point, with everyone making certain concessions; on the contrary, one party is compelled to make entirely unilateral concessions. The party that does not have to make concessions is the one that sees itself as the pioneer of progressivism in terms of both economic and intellectual development. So those behind the linear line of progress must join those ahead who are closer to humanity. The cruelly exclusive mechanism behind this warm humanitarian ethic of liberalism that eliminates the friend-enemy distinction comes to light precisely when this progressive assumption is challenged.

Given that there is only one unified humanity, when a challenge occurs against this unity, it means a war not between human and human but between humanity and inhuman. Therefore, the principle of eliminating only existential threats without dehumanizing the enemy as a requirement of the political concept loses its validity here. Instead, liberalism would rather destroy the enemy qua the absolute enemy as inhumanly as possible, leaving the earth again only in the still waters of humanity. In a nutshell, wherever humanity is monopolized and invoked as a humanitarian discourse, there is an intention to hide real [imperial] interests under the guise of a friendly tone and to get around and bypass the rules of the game [of the war].⁴⁶

Here, the relation of liberalism's discourse of humanity to the concept of the absolute enemy will be noticed: liberalism detaches *humanity* from a pluriverse and defines it as a universal subjectivity. In this way, those who deviate from this norm will also be out of *humanity*. In this deviation, they deserve to be the absolute enemy, that is, to be exposed to utter annihilation. Therefore, liberalism opens the door to the *unpolitical* by narrowing the boundaries of the Schmittian political domain, chasing

⁴⁵ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 58.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

an abstract enemy instead of a concrete one, and establishing a totalized system based on the metaphysics of indifferenciation.

2.3. Neutrality and Its Relation to The Concept of Political

Domains such as economy, culture, education, and religion are neutral for Schmitt unless they are strong enough to group human beings according to friend-and-enemy distinction.⁴⁷ A religion that has the capacity to drag its members into war or, at least potentially, to prevent them from going to war is no longer neutral in this sense but something more than that, a political entity.⁴⁸ The concept of neutrality is not limited to making merely a dual distinction. To ascribe specific attributes to an enemy or deprive him of certain characteristics with a discursive act is also a trans-neutral—in the sense of being beyond neutrality—hence a political act. In that regard, the concept of neutrality and the political are mutually exclusive.

For Schmitt, to "find minimum agreement and common premises allowing for the possibility of security, clarity, prudence and peace," which is also the story of the rise of liberalism as depoliticalization, "Europeans sought a neutral domain in which there would be no conflict and they could reach common agreement through debates and exchanges of opinion."⁴⁹ Thus, Schmitt argues that once this neutrality was historically achieved, the controversial concepts of Christian theology were abandoned and replaced by "a 'natural' system of theology, metaphysics, morality, and law."⁵⁰ In other words, culture, education, religion, law, morality, and so on, under the universalizing/depoliticalizing discourse of liberalism, abandoned the distinction between friend and enemy and then transformed into universal neutrality.

To better comprehend the relationship between neutrality and the concept of the political, we need to examine Schmitt's narrative of "successive stages of changing

⁴⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

central domains."⁵¹ In every century, especially beginning from the 16th century, there has always been a central domain for Schmitt. These domains will be successively replaced by a new one in the next century. Strauss briefly summarizes the five domains that Schmitt characterizes as "great, simple *and* secular"⁵² as follows: "in the sixteenth century, theology was authoritative; in the seventeenth metaphysics; in the eighteenth, morals; in the nineteenth, the economy; and in the twentieth, technology."⁵³ Schmitt emphasizes that the "successive"⁵⁴ part in the central domain narrative is not the same as what is meant by the continuous line of progress narrative of liberalism. Neither is it "meant as a theory of cultural and intellectual 'dominance,' not as a historico-philosophical law in the sense of a law of three stages *as in Comte*...I speak not of human culture as a whole, not of the rhythm of world history."⁵⁵ As for liberalism, beginning from an optimistic assumption about the rational nature of humanity, it is claimed that this rationality corresponds to the line of rectilinear progress or backwardness. For Schmitt, however, it is up to the

⁵¹ Carl Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations," in *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 83.

⁵² Ibid. Italics mine.

⁵³ Strauss, *Notes on Carl Schmitt: The Concept of The Political*, 109.

⁵⁴ A Marxist could argue that Schmitt's narrative of successive stages of changing central domains identifies a series of superstructures that retroactively justify real economic inequities. According to Marxist theory, economic relations and class struggle are the fundamental factors that shape society and its institutions, including its culture and philosophy. Marxists argue that the ruling class uses these institutions to justify and maintain their domination over the working class. Schmitt's narrative could be seen as reflecting the ideological superstructures that arise in different historical periods to justify the economic relations and class struggle of that time. For example, in the 19th century, the dominant central domain was the economy, which reflected the rise of capitalism and the increasing power of the bourgeoisie. The philosophy, culture, and political institutions of that time were shaped by the needs and interests of the capitalist class. From a Marxist perspective, this narrative could be seen as an attempt to legitimize the existing economic system by portraying it as the natural and inevitable outcome of historical progress. Marxists would argue that these narratives obscure the contradictions and conflicts inherent in capitalist society, and that it serves to justify the exploitation and oppression of the working class by the ruling class. Despite it is possible to read other Schmittian domains to a certain extent as a reflection of the Marxist notion of the superstructure, this reading does not extend to the last one, namely, technology. For technology is not the sociocultural reflection of the base; instead, it is the means of production itself that constitute the base. Technology is directly related to the means of production in Marxist theory. It is not an ideological reflection of the base but rather a tool to shape the superstructure, in Marxist terms. For instance, advances in industrial technology made possible the mass production of consumer goods, leading to the development of a consumer culture that was reflected in the superstructure of the period. However, what is at issue in terms of technology is not a separation of base and superstructure, but rather a fusion of the two into a single domain, in the Schmittian sense. This fusion of base and superstructure leads to a new understanding of the nature of technology that considers both its ideological and material aspects.

⁵⁵ Carl Schmitt, *The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations*, 84. Italics mine.

interpreter's wish whether these stages mean "upwards or downwards...an ascent or a decline."⁵⁶

The fact that a particular domain is central in a specific century does not mean that other domains completely disappeared at the time: "There is always a plurality of diverse, already spent stages coexisting. People in the same age and the same country, even the same family, live together in different stages."⁵⁷ Instead, since each central domain brings a dominant perspective on philosophical, social, economic, and technical issues, problems in secondary/other domains are approached with questions and an intellectual toolkit arising from this new perspective. Most of the time, let alone the questions and the new toolkit, just the content of concepts took on a new meaning in the new century, although the concepts in circulation were the same:

The concept of progress, i.e., an improvement or completion (in modern jargon, a rationalization) became dominant in the eighteenth century, in an age of humanitarian-moral belief. Accordingly, progress meant above all progress in culture, self-determination, and education: moral perfection. In an age of economic or technical thinking, it is self-evident that progress is economic or technical progress. To the extent that anyone is still interested in humanitarian-moral progress, it appears as a byproduct of economic progress.⁵⁸

Schmitt argues that the main impetus for the shift from one of these domains to the other was that Europeans wanted to escape a conflictual space and sought a calm and neutral space. Nevertheless, each time the newly inhabited domain after a while "has become immediately another arena of struggle [*of friend-enemy grouping*], once again necessitating the search for a new neutral domain."⁵⁹ In this endless quest for neutrality, he speaks of the contemporary belief that technology seems to be "the absolute and ultimate neutral ground."⁶⁰ When we compare technology with other domains, it seems more neutral as it serves everyone, and everyone benefits from it.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 84.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 89. Italics mine.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Moreover, when we compare technological problems with those in other domains, the former has "something refreshingly factual about them. They are easy to solve, and it is easily understandable why there is a tendency to take refuge in technicity from the inextricable problems of all other domains."⁶¹ Easy because technology is not a subject that everyone can master with all its technical details—it is not that the more people can grasp the more it gets controversial—but is based almost solely on the knowledge of expert technicians; non-experts approach technology mostly in terms of the comfort/discomfort it brings to their lives; factual because it has an analytical and mechanical basis consisting of 0s and 1s, and does need not to deal with the existence or non-existence of God as in theological matters. Therefore, the domain in which a conflict like theological controversies can be experienced is as limited as possible in technicity. However, Schmitt goes beyond the assumptions of "seems to be" as opposed to contemporary belief and notes his reservations.

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...every war and peace can use technology as a weapon...The process of continuous neutralization of various domains of cultural life has reached its end because technology is at hand. Technology is no longer neutral ground in the sense of the process of neutralization; every strong politics will make use of it.⁶²

The technology itself may no longer be a neutral domain. Yet, what is the relationship between acquiring technology qua instrument and the termination of the neutralization process? Why are different domains unable to continue the neutralization process all by themselves as technology becomes political[trans-neutral]? Technology qua non-instrument can be neutral, for it does not distinguish between friend and enemy. However, since technology is created by people and is always bound to be an instrument for an explicit or implicit purpose, it is hardly possible to be free from the friend-enemy distinction. Let us consider just two examples: mass media and deadly weapons of mass destruction. Both may appear neutral on their own but are always deployed in the public sphere in the context of a particular friend-enemy distinction. The corresponding area of this distinction may

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 90.

vary according to place and time, but the “strong politics” will not hesitate to use both as an instrument.

The previous domains may have lost their power while being replaced by the new central domain since they only had the cultural capacity to influence and direct people. However, given the gigantic technologies that have the capacity to create not only cultural but also direct physical effects—not just the physical capacity to kill, but also propaganda's recourse to subtle mental techniques via mass media—it seemed not possible in Schmitt's [and all the more in our] time for this central domain to be replaced by another. Therefore, not only has the technology become trans-neutral—thus political—but it has also ended the neutralization process with its impact capacity. No longer is it a matter of seeking a neutral domain without controversies, but instead, of having the technology qua political apparatus to bring any domain to a more dominant and central position and constantly enhancing it against its competitors. The issue here is not just to strive to have the technology for warfare, but on the contrary, and more importantly, to use technology as a deterrent to maintain the status quo of peace—mutually assured deterrence: the conceptualization that is used to describe the delicate balance, especially during the cold war period summarizes this situation fair enough. For Schmitt, the relationship between war, neutrality, and politics is also of importance: "A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a wholly pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy hence a world without politics."⁶³ Thus, it is not a de-facto ontological necessity of war that is the sine qua non of the political; instead, the main issue is the ever “possibility” of friend-enemy grouping and the possibility of war, tension, controversy, and struggle that are not necessarily actual.

At the end of this neutralization process, there is an anxiety that comes from two sources: first, the people who pass through each of the theological, metaphysical, moral, and economic processes and reach the technological domain find itself in a "cultural and social nothingness"⁶⁴ that drags them into a deep and gloomy anxiety.

⁶³ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 35.

⁶⁴ Carl Schmitt, *The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations*, 92.

This nothingness is related to the process called anomie in sociological terms: it expresses the absence or confusion of moral values, nomos, and standards that will guide the individual's behavior. The main reason for this confusion is that none of the domains that should guide social behavior can move to a central position as before, and each of them continues to exist as if swaying in the void. Furthermore, the uncertainty resulting from the absence of these dominant norms is the primary source of anxiety. Since acquiring and enhancing the technology means moving one of the non-central domains to the center, in a sense, this means a way to eliminate the anomic situation and the anxiety it causes by re-establishing and fortifying the certainty of nomos with all its majesty as before. Nevertheless, second, this solution also creates another source of anxiety in return: the anxiety stemming from “the doubt about the ability to control and utilize the marvelous instruments of the new technology.”⁶⁵ Therefore, the problem is not only about acquiring technology and taking it further but also incessantly maintaining the capacity to control it: the disproportion of this need for capacity to control with chronic incapacity of human beings is the consequential source of this form of anxiety.⁶⁶

2.4. Conclusion

Schmitt's concept of the political centers around distinguishing between friends and enemies. Instead of referring to politics as a noun, Schmitt's use of the nominalized adjective "the political" implies that he does not focus exclusively on friend or enemy but rather on their relationship. The concept of the political is always about the enemy that is public, not private or individualistic. Thus, neither a morally good nor a morally bad person is necessarily a friend or an enemy.

In Schmitt's theory, the enemy falls into three categories: *conventional*, *real*, and *absolute*. Schmitt defines the conventional as a war fought primarily between sovereign states but not limited to them. *In contrast to the conventional, the real enemy is born not from the enmity between sovereign states but from partisanship.* A real enemy without any friends and surrounded only by enemies will be unpolitical in

⁶⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁶ In the subsequent sections, we will examine the relationship between incapacity and unconscious anxiety in more detail.

the Schmittian sense: it is necessary to have both a friend and an enemy to be included within the borders of the political. The absolute enemy is not limited by specific notions of space and time; it is an abstract enmity forged by an ideology's *us* versus *them* divisions. Accordingly, absolute enmity, as liberalism's notion of humanity describes it, exists outside Schmitt's concept of the political since it is based on an abstract rather than an existential definition and requires the complete destruction of the enemy and its dehumanization, indicating an unpolitical sphere.

To maintain the integrity of the state, Schmitt restores the political sphere in contrast to the liberal one. Because liberalism legitimizes plural polyphony by affirming the equality of all individuals [discourse of humanity], which hinders the decision-making mechanism of the state in times of exception and prevents it from taking effective action when sudden threats occur; for this inability to be transformed into an ability, state power must be concentrated in the decisionist act of the sovereign.

Likewise, Schmitt's conception of decisionism and sovereignty is interwoven with his critique of liberalism. There are two main points on which he criticizes liberalism's rule of law principle. First, liberals mask their economic interests under the guise of alleged neutral and universal norms; however, these norms are neither neutral nor supposedly universal, as mortal beings interpret them with constantly limited perspectives. Secondly, norms deemed impersonal can only partially accommodate the contingencies arising from concrete events; there will always be an unforeseen exception not covered by the norm. For these reasons, Schmitt recommends the rule of sovereign rather than the rule of law to ensure the state's survival and unity.

Sovereign refers to the extraordinary, i.e., the exception, as opposed to the routine and the ordinary. However, it is important to note that an exception does not necessarily imply chaos or anarchy. Economic and political turmoil, natural disasters, and sudden terrorist attacks define the conceptual limits of the exception. Such exceptions require the implementation of extraordinary powers and exceptional measures, which are usually associated with sovereignty. The sovereign is thus seen as the one who has the right to decide on the exception and take the necessary measures.

When wars and conflicts cease and religious, linguistic, and cultural distinctions are no longer relevant, the distinction between friend and enemy will cease to exist; therefore, politics will end, too. Those areas that Schmitt identifies as liberal lie outside of the political and the state. This means that liberal thought strives for a world without the political, in which the distinction between friend and enemy is no longer relevant. This is the only way to guarantee a harmonious and peaceful society.

Human nature, in the view of Schmitt, combines the qualities of dynamism and dangerousness that make it so unique. Considering humanity's dynamic dangerousness and the inevitable wars and conflicts that arise from it, there is a necessity for dominion: the dominion of someone who can differentiate friend from enemy and channel unending negative energy into the actions necessary for unification and survival.

Schmitt endorses the idea of democracy as an alternative to liberal parliamentarism, which he defines as a system of checks and balances. Democracy is different from liberalism in that rather than having the equal rights of all persons, the principle of equality of equals operates as a dual exclusive-inclusive mechanism in that foreigners are excluded from the regime from the very beginning.

Schmitt stated that the main reason for liberalism's invocation of the discourse of humanity is to facilitate the expansion of imperialism as part of the economic strategy. It is by utilizing this strategy that the distance between *them* and *us* is reduced; by using it, we are all unified under the universalizing label of humanity. The problem is that *us* and *them* are not meeting at a common point with the possibility of making certain concessions; instead, one of the parties is obligated by the other to make wholly unilateral concessions. A party that views itself as a pioneer in economic and intellectual development does not have to make concessions. As soon as this progressive assumption is challenged, the cruelly exclusive mechanism operating behind this warm humanitarian ethic of liberalism becomes evident.

It should be noted that any time humanity is invoked and monopolized as a humanitarian discourse, real [imperial] interests are hidden, and the rules of the game [of war] are circumvented. Here, liberalism's discourse of humanity demonstrates its relationship to the concept of the absolute enemy: liberalism separates humanity

from a pluriverse and defines it as a universal subjectivity. By deviating from the norm, one will also lose humanity. This deviation bestows upon them the status of the absolute enemy, i.e., exposure to utter destruction. By narrowing Schmitt's political domain, liberalism allows the unpolitical in.

For Schmitt, domains like economics, culture, education, and religion are neutral except when they are strong enough to classify human beings according to friend and enemy distinction. The capability of a religion to drag or prevent its members from going to war makes it no longer neutral but a political entity. Moreover, the concept of neutrality extends beyond making only a dual distinction. Even a discursive act that assigns specific attributes or strips an enemy of certain characteristics is also trans-neutral—meaning it goes beyond neutrality—and, therefore, political. For this kind of act requires a level of awareness of the different identities associated with the enemy and how those identities should be treated or respected. It also requires a degree of empathy, as it involves an understanding of the impact of the action on the enemy, which goes beyond a simple neutral stance. In this regard, it can be argued that the concepts of neutrality and the political are mutually exclusive.

People have been seeking a neutral domain for peace and security for centuries by leaving hotly contested and conflictual domains. Schmitt observes that there has always been a central domain, particularly since the 16th century, for every century. Each of these domains—initially neutral and gradually becoming political—is replaced by a new one in the following century: theology, metaphysics, morals, the economy, and technology, respectively. A particular domain's dominance does not necessarily mean that other domains completely disappeared during that era. Instead, since each central domain offers a dominant view of philosophical, social, economic, and technical issues, problems in secondary/other domains are approached with questions and tools that relate to these new perspectives. Rather than seeking a conflictual zone, Schmitt argues that Europeans wanted a calm and neutral space to escape from a conflictual domain.

However, it took only a short time for the newly inhabited domain to become a political arena, and conflict ensued. Schmitt describes the contemporary belief that technology seems to solve this endless quest for neutrality. In comparison with other

domains, technology seems relatively neutral in that it serves everyone and benefits everyone. Since technology does not discriminate between friends and enemies, it can be neutral as a non-instrument. Nevertheless, the fact that people create technology for explicit or implicit purposes makes it hard to escape the friend-enemy distinction.

Due to only having the ability to influence and direct people culturally, the previous domains may have lost their power when the new central domain replaced them. In Schmitt's [and even more in our] time, it appeared impossible for another central domain to replace the last one. Given the gigantic technologies that could generate not only cultural effects but also direct physical effects—not just the ability to kill, but propaganda's use of subtle mental techniques through mass media. Therefore, the technology has become trans-neutral—and thus political—and has also ended the neutralization process. The goal is no longer a neutral domain without controversy, but rather a powerful and dominant position based on technology qua political apparatus, constantly enhanced against potential competitors.

The result of this neutralization process is an anxiety that has two sources: first, the people who have been through theological, metaphysical, moral, and technological processes and have reached the technological domain are plunged into a cultural nothingness [anomie] that causes profound anxiety. It is possible to eliminate the anomic situation and the anxiety it causes by re-establishing and reinforcing the certainty of *nomos* as before by acquiring and enhancing technology and moving a non-central domain to the center. However, this solution also brings about another form of anxiety: the inability to control and utilize new technology. Thus, the issue is not just the acquisition of technology but also the perpetual maintenance of the ability to control it: the imbalance between this need for control and chronic human incapacity is the cause of this anxiety.

The following chapter will discuss how Schmitt's distinction between friend and enemy is formed within the Lacanian mirror stage. The mirror stage is a concept in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory about the ego's formation. It is based on the belief that infants recognize themselves [differentiation of *me* from *you*] in a mirror or other reflective surface before fully recognizing themselves as physical objects.

Forming these distinctions [*me* and *you*] in the mirror stage is the only way to arrive at our central thesis: neutral domains are not neutral but pervasively political from the beginning to the end. This is because Schmitt's distinction between friend and enemy is already present in the formation of the Lacanian mirror stage, albeit in a different form. The distinction between *me* and *you*, formed in the mirror stage, allows us to identify friend and enemy. In this way, Schmitt's concept of friend and enemy is embedded in the very formation of the self. Embedded in the sense that the distinction between *you* and *me* is much more archaic than the distinction between friend and enemy, the latter being derivative of the former. The distinction between friend and enemy on the grouping plane is based on the much more primary and unconscious *you* and *me* distinction. For instance, if *we*, as a totality of grouping, view *you* as an enemy, *we* must first see *you* as someone *we* are distinct from, and thus as a *you* rather than an *us*. Therefore, from the moment we gaze into a mirror, we are already part of the political. The mirror stage also provides a basis for understanding the formation of neutral domains, which are, in fact, political in nature. As such, it is vital to acknowledge that neutral domains are not neutral and that understanding Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction and the mirror stage is essential to recognize the inherently political nature of these domains. We will also examine how anxiety revealed in the neutralization process relates to anxiety in the mirror stage. We will discuss how the conscious negative emotions associated with the fear of the unknown in the neutralization process are linked to the unconscious anxiety experienced during the mirror stage when the infant's sense of self is formed.

CHAPTER 3

MIRROR STAGE AS THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMAGINARY ME AND ENSUING CATEGORIES OF FRIEND AND ENEMY

Although the Lacanian conceptualization of the three orders/registers of the structure of the human psyche is one of the main pillars in understanding his entire psychoanalytic theory, here we will deal with it more in connection with the mirror stage. In that regard, initially analyzing the Freudian psychical apparatus will be crucial in two respects: on the one hand, this analysis will give us a hint at the relationship of Lacanian mirror stage with Freud's id, ego, and super-ego distinction; on the other, grasping the Freudian distinction between the *psychology of the id* and *psychology of the ego* will pave the way for us to transcend Schmittian caveat about the psychology in the next chapter. Thus, after the analysis of Freudian psychical apparatus, this chapter will focus on three points. We will first examine the three orders/registers in depth while also focusing on how each forms separate but interdependent realms. Second, we will analyze the mirror stage and discuss through what kind of dynamics the *proto-ego* emerges in this stage. Here, in the mirror stage, we will focus on the lack, split, and alienation that appear before the proto-ego occurs and discuss their relationship with the *proto-ego* and anxiety. Third, we will examine the transition of the *me-you* distinction in the mirror stage, which takes place on an imaginary plane, to the symbolic plane, and how unconscious and archaic *me* and *you* distinction create and form the basis for the conscious *friend-enemy* distinction.

3.1. Freudian Psychical Apparatus

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the id is the first cognitive structure present at birth. It is one of the most primitive, darkest places in our minds. Its most fundamental impulse

is based on the immediate satisfaction of a desire as soon as it is felt. The id operates entirely on the pleasure principle, meaning it seeks to gratify its impulses immediately without regard for the consequences. Drawing on evolutionary theory and the Darwinian idea of natural selection, Freud theorizes that the id emerged as a survival mechanism that helped early humans to fulfill their most basic biological needs, such as eating, drinking, and mating.⁶⁷ However, as human societies became more complex and organized, the unchecked impulses of the id could often clash with social norms and values, creating a need for more sophisticated psychic mechanisms to regulate behavior. Thus, the incompatibility between the external world and the instinctual world of the id could not be noticed yet, as the id is deeply immersed in the immediacy of impulses. That is, the reality principle has not yet arisen.

The reality principle refers to the psychological mechanism that helps an individual deal with the demands of the real world. It is a part of the psychic apparatus responsible for regulating an individual's pleasure-seeking drives and impulses. For Freud, the reality principle helps individuals delay gratification of their desires and needs to satisfy them in an appropriate manner that is socially acceptable and realistic. It helps the individual to distinguish between what is possible and what is not and to adapt their behavior accordingly. The reality principle plays an essential role in the development of the ego, which is the part of the psychical apparatus that mediates between the demands of the id (the unconscious, pleasure-seeking part of the psyche) and the demands of the external world. On the other hand, at its core, the pleasure principle represents the idea that the human mind is constantly striving to reduce tension, discharge energy, and achieve a state of equilibrium or homeostasis.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Freud, “*Three Essays On The Theory Of Sexuality*”, 2818; “*Instincts And Their Vicissitudes*”, 2962; “*The Ego And The Id*”, 3970; “*The Psychopathology Of Everyday Life*”, 1230.

⁶⁸ In Freud's ultimate theory of instincts, the death instincts emerge as a fundamental category that stands in opposition to the life instincts. Their primary aim is the complete elimination of tensions, driving the living organism back to an inorganic state—the point of absolute equilibrium. Initially, these death instincts are directed inward, leading to self-destructive tendencies. However, they later manifest externally as aggressive or destructive instincts, targeting the outside world. Thus, the death instincts represent a compelling force that pushes for the annihilation of both inner and outer states of existence. Freud introduced the concept of the death instinct as an explanatory framework for phenomena such as repetition and sadism. However, incorporating this concept into the theory of

This tension between the id's impulses and society's constraints lies at the heart of Freud's theory of the psyche. The id is characterized by a relentless pursuit of pleasure and gratification, seeking to fulfill its desires without regard for the consequences. However, as Freud notes, the external world is often unpredictable and harsh, requiring individuals to make rational and adaptive decisions that may conflict with the immediate gratification sought by the id. Although the id may be viewed as an essential and possibly harmful component, Freud recognizes that it is a crucial aspect of human behavior. If individuals lack the impetus the id provides, they may become disinterested, inactive, or unreactive to the outside world's expectations. Therefore, the id embodies the vitality and drive necessary for human existence and advancement.

The ego achieves this balance by employing a variety of defense mechanisms, such as repression, denial, and rationalization, to protect the individual from anxiety or discomfort caused by conflicts between the id and the external world. For example, an individual may repress or deny feelings of sexual desire towards a family member to conform to social norms and avoid punishment.

From a philosophical perspective, the ego represents a vital aspect of the human condition, as it embodies some of the most fundamental questions of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. On an ontological level, the ego raises questions about the nature of the self and its relationship to the external world, including the possibility of a coherent and stable self-identity in the face of constant change and flux.

On an epistemological level, the ego poses questions about the limits of human knowledge and understanding as the individual struggles to make sense of the world around them and gain insight into their own inner lives. This struggle is compounded

neuroses and instinctual conflict presented significant challenges for Freud. Critics have voiced objections regarding the existence and interpretation of the death instinct, resulting in divergent perspectives among psychoanalysts. Consequently, the inclusion and understanding of the death instinct within psychoanalytic theory remain subjects of debate and varying interpretations. The reason why we did include life instinct instead of that of death in this study is the fact that we rely upon the assumption that the Dionysian forces in our life are stronger than that of death. While the pleasure principle [life instinct] seeks immediate gratification and the reduction of tension, the death instincts appear to operate in opposition to it: The death instincts do not prioritize pleasure or the preservation of life. In other words, the former tries to achieve the state of equilibrium by turning to life, while the latter by resorting to death. See Freud, "*Formulations On The Two Principles Of Mental Functioning*", 2555-56; Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988), 97-103.

by the fact that part of the ego's functioning occurs at an unconscious level, beyond the reach of conscious awareness or rational control. While the ego is primarily conscious, it is essential to note that Freud recognized the existence of unconscious mental processes that can influence the ego's functioning. These unconscious processes, such as defense mechanisms and repressed memories, can shape the ego's perceptions, decisions, and behaviors without the individual's conscious awareness.

Finally, on an ethical level, the ego raises questions about the nature of agency and responsibility as individuals face reconciling their desires and impulses with the demands of social norms and values. This tension between individual autonomy and social conformity is at the heart of many ethical debates. The ego plays a crucial role in mediating this tension and enabling individuals to balance their desires and the demands of the external world.

Thus, the ego emerges as a psychic structure designed to mediate between the id and the external world, allowing individuals to navigate complex social and environmental challenges. Later, when the id is confronted with a world irreconcilable with its desires and its resulting dissatisfaction, frustrations, and disappointments, the structure of what Freud calls the ego emerges, which differs from the id and acts as a bridge between the external world's reality principle and the id's pleasure principle.

The ego is responsible for storing up experiences, self-preservation, reality testing, decision-making, and the organization of behavior. It can be said to be a bridge, an intermediary between the superego—the representative of morality, religion, education, and so on—and the id.⁶⁹ Freud believed the ego was a necessary psyche component to promote adaptive behavior and facilitate social functioning. However, he also recognized that the ego could not successfully manage the tensions between the id and the external environment, leading to maladaptive behaviors and psychological disorders.

The relationship between the superego and the reality principle is multifaceted. On the one hand, the superego can serve as a source of conflict for the ego. The strict

⁶⁹ For the concepts of ego and id see Freud, "An Outline of Psychoanalysis," in *Complete Works*, 4957.

moral standards and ideals imposed by the superego can create internal pressures and inhibitions, potentially suppressing the individual's natural instincts and desires. This conflict can manifest as guilt, anxiety, or feelings of inadequacy. On the other hand, the reality principle helps the ego navigate between the demands of the superego and the realities of the external world. The ego seeks to find a balance that allows for the fulfillment of instinctual desires while also considering the constraints and expectations imposed by the external environment. This may involve compromises, adaptations, or sublimations of instinctual urges to align with societal norms and responsibilities. Thus, the interplay between the superego and the reality principle can vary among individuals and contexts. Cultural and societal factors influence the formation of the superego and the external expectations individuals face. Different individuals may have varying degrees of conflict between their superego and instinctual drives, leading to differences in their ability to reconcile personal desires with societal demands.

Moreover, the relationship between the superego and the reality principle is not static but evolves throughout a person's life. As individuals mature and develop a stronger sense of identity, they may negotiate and renegotiate their superego's standards with the realities of the external world. This ongoing process can involve questioning, reevaluating, and adapting one's moral values and goals in light of personal growth and changing social contexts.

In that sense, the ego can be seen as a microcosm of the human condition, embodying many of human existence's fundamental questions and dilemmas. Its emergence and development are shaped by a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors, and its functioning is subject to constant change and adaptation in response to shifting internal and external demands.

As for the super-ego⁷⁰, it assumes the role of an internalized repository that houses the moral and ethical standards meticulously cultivated by individuals through the intricate processes of socialization and the subtle yet potent influence of cultural forces. Its essence lies in its capacity to act as a regulator, maneuvering between the

⁷⁰ For the concept of super-ego see Freud, "*The Ego And The Id*", 3968-3973; "*Totem and Taboo*", 2712-2713; "*On Narcissism: An Introduction*", 2949.

id's impulses and the ego's restless efforts to satiate those urges in a socially acceptable manner. Indeed, it manifests as the embodiment of societal norms, moral values, and the authority of parental figures that become deeply enmeshed within one's developmental odyssey.

Furthermore, the super-ego unfurls its intricate mechanisms through two prevailing modalities: conscience and ego-ideal. The conscience that guardian within emerges as internalized edicts and codes crafted to avert or chastise behaviors deemed aberrant, transgressing the hallowed boundaries of societal norms and moral canons. Employing guilt, shame, and anxiety as formidable sentinels, it stands resolute in its endeavor to dissuade individuals from heedlessly succumbing to the siren song of their primal desires, beckoning them to forge or authenticate a harmony with cultural expectations.

Conversely, the ego ideal casts its shadow upon the human psyche, directing individuals to embrace an idealized projection of their own selves. It assumes the form of an aspirational force, an ever-vigilant guidepost, spurring souls towards moral eminence and evoking within them a yearning to adhere to the "noble" standards set forth by society. When one's actions align with these internalized ideals, the ego ideal bequeaths a trove of pride and self-worth upon them. Otherwise, should one falter and stumble upon the precipice of inadequacy, a tempest of inferiority shall arise, veiling their spirit in a cloak of despondency.

The symbiotic relationship that takes shape amidst the super-ego, id, and ego is a complex tapestry of conflict, negotiation, and compromise. The omnipresence of the super-ego exerts a momentous influence upon the ego's decision-making process, instigating the deflection or sublimation of the id's impulses to align dutifully with the external world's behest. Yet, the super-ego, with its allegiance to the tenets of rigid moral codes and judgments, is not devoid of consequences. Within the recesses of the human psyche, it may sow seeds of inner discord and psychological dissonance for those grappling with the seemingly insurmountable task of reconciling their instinctual desires with the incessant demands and expectations levied upon them by the external realm.

Now, we shall examine the Lacanian account of three orders/registers of psyche in order to see the relationship of the unconscious mirror stage with the Freudian psychical apparatus, namely id, ego and superego. In that way, the dynamics between the mirror stage and the id, the relationship between the former and the emergence of the [proto]ego, and finally the relationship between the mirror stage, ideal-ego and super-ego will become clearer.

3.2. Three Orders/Registers

Lacan speaks of three orders/registers in his psychoanalytic theory: *imaginary*, *symbolic*, and *real*. Examining these orders in depth will not only illuminate the mirror stage, one of the main pillars of our thesis, but also, more importantly, enable us to better understand the foundations of Lacanian theory. Considering that Lacan takes his main departure point from Freudian psychoanalysis and sees himself as the exponent of his theory, the following statement increases the importance of these orders: “Without these three systems to guide ourselves by, it would be impossible to understand anything of the Freudian technique and experience.”⁷¹ As we shall see, these orders, albeit different and distinct in status, can only exist and be meaningful concerning each other in an interdependent manner. Unlike Freud's psychical apparatus, Lacanian orders are not mental forces, i.e., the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*; instead, they primarily deal with mental functioning, i.e., identification, acquisition of language and so on, and endeavor to cover the whole spectrum of psychoanalysis.⁷²

3.2.1. The Imaginary

Imaginary is related to the image, a specular image that an infant encounters in the mirror stage,⁷³ the unconscious process through which lack, split, alienation, and distinction between *imaginary you* and *me* occurs. Given that the mirror stage is

⁷¹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book I. Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–54*, trans. John Forrester (New York: Norton, 1988), 73. Hereafter, *The Seminar I*.

⁷² Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 135.

⁷³ Since the mirror stage will be discussed in more detail below, only its relationship with the imaginary is focused here.

based upon fascination and identification by the image of your body and other's in the mirror, imaginary has some connotations, i.e., phantasy, illusion, and non-real. Also, considering that the place where what I call the proto-ego⁷⁴ emerges and develops is the imaginary mirror stage, it is clear that for Lacan, the ego is a non-realistic, illusionary structuration: it is "founded on the basis of the imaginary relations."⁷⁵

Contrary to bodily disarray caused by the infant's lack of bodily mastery, the image in the mirror that exists in unity causes identification with the image; therefore, the imaginary is also the scene of alienation. Alienation in the sense that identified image signifies not the infant's real but imaginarily anticipated body in the future. This alienation also means a permanent lack and split in the unconscious history of the id: "The split denotes the impossibility of the ideal of a fully present self-consciousness; the subject will never know himself completely, but will always be cut off from his own knowledge."⁷⁶

In the context of the imaginary order, the "past" represents a permanent split and absence of full self-consciousness, namely the domain of the id. It signifies the unconscious history and lack that is inherent within human beings. In this sense, the past refers to the unconscious factors and fragmented aspects of the individual's history that contribute to their sense of alienation and disconnection. However, Lacan argues that this future ideal remains perpetually out of reach. Hence, the "future" in this context is not a literal time-based future but rather a symbolic representation of the imagined state that the infant longs for and tries to embody. Therefore, the concept of "future" is not about a chronological progression but rather about the projected state of the self that the infant envisions and seeks to actualize.

⁷⁴ The "proto-ego" refers to the initial stage of ego development in Lacanian theory, which occurs during the mirror stage. It is the point at which the infant starts to recognize their reflection in the mirror and develops a sense of self-identity. The proto-ego emerges in the imaginary mirror stage, where the infant becomes fascinated with and identifies with the image of their own body and others in the mirror. However, it is important to note that the unconscious proto-ego is not yet the fully structured ego but rather the precursor to its development.

⁷⁵ Lacan, *The Seminar. Book I. Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–54*, 115.

⁷⁶ Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, 195.

On the other hand, the notion of the "future" arises from the infant's perception of their own reflection in the mirror. The mirror image represents an idealized and unified version of the body that the infant aspires to become. It symbolizes a projected state of development and wholeness that lies ahead beyond the present moment. The term "future" is used metaphorically to describe this anticipated state. It signifies the desired outcome, the imagined unity, and the completion of the self that the infant sees in the mirror. It represents a goal or a potentiality that the infant strives to achieve.

The imaginary order also marks the ground from which the ideal ego arises. The specular image has the same meaning as the ideal ego insofar as it refers to the body's anticipated future ideal. In that regard, the ideal ego, the "imaginary other"⁷⁷ is the captivating "trap of the imaginary capture."⁷⁸ We are entrapped because the identification with the ideal specular unity is inescapable.

Regarding the inescapability of the imaginary, Lacan goes so far as to claim that if the imaginary were escapable, "we wouldn't be men...Which doesn't mean that all it takes to be men is to have this imaginary ego."⁷⁹ If we were stuck merely in the imaginary or not included in it at all, we would be "madman" for Lacan. Therefore, being included in the symbolic order after the imaginary is one of the sine qua non of being a "normal man." Lacan contends that the imaginary order, including identification with the self-image, is an inherent and unavoidable aspect of human existence. A complete escape from the imaginary would negate our humanity. While the imaginary initiates development, it is insufficient in isolation.

Several interrelated arguments further support these claims. Firstly, the mirror stage, situated within the imaginary order, is crucial for the formation of the ego and a coherent sense of self. Without progressing to the symbolic order, individuals would

⁷⁷ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–60*, trans. Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 234. Hereafter, *The Seminar VII*.

⁷⁸ Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," in *Écrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2001), 161.

⁷⁹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book II. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–55*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: Norton, 1988), 243. Hereafter, *The Seminar II*.

lack the necessary tools to navigate social complexities, thus being condemned to the id's pleasure principle. Secondly, the symbolic order comprising language, culture, and social systems enables communication, shared meanings, and participation in societal structures. The absence of this order would result in isolation and an inability to function effectively within society. Thirdly, the imaginary order is characterized by an identification with the idealized self-image and a lack of a clear-cut differentiation between the self and the other. Progressing beyond the imaginary and entering the symbolic order is essential for developing a balanced understanding of oneself and others as distinct individuals. Lastly, the symbolic order provides the framework for social norms—the domain of the superego—and reality testing⁸⁰, and failure to access it would hinder conformity to societal expectations and the ability to discern between inner fantasies and external reality. Also, it should be noted that the symbolic "causes" the imaginary by structuring and organizing it, giving it coherence and effability. It allows the chaotic and fragmented images of the imaginary to be shaped into meaningful forms that can be shared and understood within a social context. Without the intervention of the symbolic, the imaginary would remain ineffable and isolated within the individual's subjective experience.

Therefore, inclusion in the symbolic order following the imaginary is indispensable for a "normal" human condition. The argument asserts that human subjectivity necessitates a dialectical relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic. Individuals must progress to the symbolic order to be "normal" and effectively participate in society. For the symbolic order introduces shared meanings, social norms, and language, shaping interpersonal relations and self-perception.

⁸⁰ Reality testing is a psychological process that involves distinguishing between inner subjective experiences and external reality. Through reality testing, individuals can evaluate and validate the correspondence between their perceptions, thoughts, and the objective world. It is a mechanism that allows us to differentiate between what is imagined or fantasized and what is actually happening in the external world. Thus, reality testing can be seen as a way of engaging with[in] the symbolic order to discern the boundaries between subjective experience and the external world. It is a process that involves utilizing symbolic systems, language, and social norms to evaluate and validate our understanding of reality. However, the real always poses a limit to our symbolic understanding, reminding us that there are aspects of reality that escape full comprehension and remain beyond our symbolic systems. The connection between the real and reality testing highlights the inherent limitation of our symbolic frameworks in fully apprehending and representing reality. While reality testing operates within the symbolic order, it is always bounded by the presence of the real, which reminds us of the gaps and inconsistencies in our symbolic understanding of the world.

Transitioning from the imaginary to the symbolic engenders a cohesive and integrated sense of self. That ideal of unity [wholeness] will remain a Sisyphean pursuit that must be attained repeatedly but will never be realized due to our alienated and split psyche.

The distinction between "attaining" and "realizing" lies in their respective implications concerning the ideal of unity or wholeness sought by the individual. "Attaining" pertains to the ongoing striving towards the desired state of unity, encompassing continual efforts to approximate or draw nearer to the idealized conception. It connotes the dynamic engagement in behaviors, identifications, and endeavors to align oneself with the envisioned image or sense of wholeness. On the other hand, "realizing" signifies the comprehensive actualization or fulfillment of the ideal. It denotes the complete and permanent attainment of the desired state of unity, wherein the idealized image or sense of wholeness becomes fully integrated into the individual's subjective experience.

According to Lacan, owing to the intrinsic characteristics of the alienated and fragmented psyche, the realization of the ideal of unity remains elusive and unattainable in its absolute sense. Instead, it becomes an incessant pursuit that necessitates repeated efforts and strives for approximation. Consequently, while individuals may actively engage in "attaining" the ideal of unity through various actions and identifications, they will never achieve its definitive "realization" regarding a lasting and unequivocal state of fulfillment.⁸¹

3.2.2. The Symbolic

Here, we will touch upon the dynamics that prepare the ground for the transformation of the ego into the subject. In that respect, we will examine the

⁸¹ A connection can be made between the concept of "realization," as described here, and Lacan's concept of the "real." As we shall examine in detail, Lacan's concept of the real refers to an aspect of reality that cannot be fully symbolized or grasped by language or representation. Similarly, the realization of the ideal, as described, is portrayed as an elusive and unattainable process. In both cases, there is an acknowledgment of the inherent limitations and impossibilities surrounding the attainment of complete and lasting unity. The realization of the ideal and the encounter with the Lacanian real both involve a recognition that a definitive state of fulfillment or total integration is beyond reach. Instead, they involve ongoing efforts and approximations that can never fully capture the desired state or fully grasp the nature of the real.

relationship between desire, speech, and recognition, which are critical elements of subjectivity. Next, we will turn to the symbolic and embodied aspects of the other, an indispensable constituent in recognition and the subject's desire.

3.2.2.1. Desire, Speech, and Recognition: Key Elements of Lacanian Subjectivity

The symbolic refers to the structural domain of law, language, and culture; the latter “could well be reduced to language.”⁸² To the extent that the language contains, preserves, and transmits the others, symbolic order points to the language, especially speech. In Lacanian theory, language and speech are distinct but interrelated concepts that shape human experience and subjectivity. “Language” refers to the symbolic order, a system of signifiers (words, concepts, and other symbols) that comprise language's normative structures and rules. In that regard, the symbolic order allows for communication and meaning-making between individuals in society. “Speech,” on the other hand, refers to the act of speaking or communicating through language and refers to an individualized language. The individual's use of language can be affected by their personal history, desires, and unconscious motivations. Lacan believed that language structures and shapes our experience of reality and that how we use language can reveal unconscious desires and conflicts. Speech, then, is a way for individuals to express and communicate these unconscious desires and conflicts through language. In other words, speech marks the subject’s position in the language’s symbolic order.⁸³

Within Lacanian theory, the distinction between the self and the subject is multifaceted and demands nuanced comprehension. The self, or ego, constitutes an individual's perception of their own identity and unity. Its formation occurs through identification processes, particularly during the unconscious mirror stage, wherein a child recognizes their reflection as a distinct entity. The self encompasses aspects such as body image, personality traits, and social roles, serving as an illusory construct that imparts a sense of coherence and stability to one's self-perception. In contrast, the subject denotes the individual's position within the symbolic order,

⁸² Lacan, *Écrits*, 113.

⁸³ Lacan, *The Seminar I*, 141.

within the reality principle, the realm governed by language and socio-cultural structures. It emerges due to linguistic and social conditioning, wherein the individual becomes subjected to and subsumed by the prevailing symbolic systems. An individual's subjectivity is fundamentally intertwined with their subordination to the laws, norms, and signifying systems that regulate society. Through this positioning within the symbolic [moral] order, the subject attains a semblance of a coherent self and assumes a role as a social being.

While the self concerns an individual's internalized experiences and perceptions, the subject pertains to their situationality within the broader framework of social and linguistic contexts. The self dwells within the imaginary realm, characterized by personal identity and experiences, whereas the subject emerges from engagement with the symbolic order. It is crucial to acknowledge that the self underscores personal identity, whereas the subject accentuates the subjectivity that arises from one's relationship with language, culture, superego's normativity and social structures. In summary, the self encompasses an individual's self-perception and identity, while the subject encompasses their positioning and subjectivity shaped by their engagement with the symbolic order.

Lacan's perspective on the interrelatedness of desire and speech underscores the capital importance of language in forming and articulating desire. For him, as for Freud, human desire is not simply a basic urge or need but rather a mysterious and multifaceted unconscious phenomenon—the only psychoanalytically crucial desire is always the sexual one—that is inexorably bound up in our social interactions and relationships with the Other.⁸⁴ That desire “finds its meaning in the desire of the

⁸⁴ The differentiation between the lower case “other” and the capital “Other” in Lacanian theory represents a fundamental distinction between the imaginary and symbolic orders. The “other” refers to the other who is not truly other, but rather a reflective projection of the imaginary ego. Yet, this does not mean that other does not point to our fellow beings, it definitely does; it also implies that they have a reflective and specular source. This specular image is wholly inscribed in the imaginary order and is interchangeable with the ego. On the other hand, the “Other” signifies an absolute alterity that transcends the imaginary otherness. This alterity cannot be assimilated through identification and is thus inscribed in the symbolic. Lacan roughly equates the “Other” with language and the law, and it is through this symbolic order that the relationship with the other subject is mediated. The “Other” is primarily considered a locus whereby speech is constituted. The subject may occupy this position and embody the Other [mother qua Other] for another subject [for the child], but it is the symbolic order that truly encapsulates the “Other.” Rather than originating in the ego or the subject, Lacan believes speech and language are generated from the “Other.” See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book III. The Psychoses, 1955–56*, trans. Russell Grigg (London: Routledge, 1993), 274. Hereafter, *The Seminar III*; Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 236.

other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.”⁸⁵ This statement emphasizes the fundamental role of recognition and validation from others in the formation of one's subjectivity and desire.

According to Lacan, during the mirror stage, the infant develops an unconscious sense of self [the proto-ego] and identity through identification with the idealized image reflected in the mirror. This identification is motivated by a desire to be recognized by others as a coherent and unified subject. The infant seeks confirmation and acknowledgment from the other, typically the primary caregiver, as they depend on others for their sense of self-worth and validation. In this context, desire is not simply about individual needs or wants but is intimately linked to the desire for recognition by the other. The desire to be recognized and validated by others becomes a significant driving force in human relationships and the formation of identity.

Lacan's emphasis on the other's recognition as the first object of desire suggests that our desires—stemming from the pleasure principle—are shaped and mediated by social and relational dynamics. Our desires are not solely determined by our individual biological or psychological needs but are deeply influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which we exist. In that sense, the desire for recognition from others is crucial in how we perceive ourselves and construct our identities.

And the satisfaction of the desire to be recognized is actualized “through the agreement of speech or through the struggle for prestige, in the symbol.”⁸⁶ While actualization [making something happen] focuses on satisfying desire through social recognition and linguistic interactions, realization [making something real] in Lacanian theory goes beyond this. It encompasses a more profound, subjective transformation where the idealized image or sense of unity fully integrates into the individual's psyche. Realization fundamentally reorganizes the subject's relationship to desire and the symbolic order. It entails a shift in the individual's subjective experience and the formation of a new understanding of the self and the world. It is

⁸⁵ Lacan, *Écrits*, 43.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

not solely about attaining recognition or social validation but realizing the idealized image. In a nutshell, while actualization is attainable, realization is unattainable—unattainable qua the impossibility of the continual efforts to approximate the idealized unity: The complexity lies in the tension between the desire for realization and the recognition of its inherent unattainability, prompting individuals to pursue approximation without ever achieving definitive fulfillment.

3.2.2.2. Symbolic and Embodied Aspects of the Other in Subject's Desire

Since the satisfaction of the aforementioned desire depends on the other, “man’s desire is the desire of the Other... at the level of the desire of the Other that the subject’s desire is constituted.”⁸⁷ Here, insofar as the other contains and represent symbolic Other [other qua embodied Other], both can be read interchangeably. The Other can be understood as the symbolic Other, which represents the broader social and cultural context, and the embodied Other, referring to specific individuals who serve as objects of desire.

The connection between the symbolic and the embodied lies in their interchangeability and mutual influence. The symbolic Other encompasses the shared meanings, norms, and social structures that shape our desires and provide a framework for recognition. It represents the collective symbolic/moral order that guides our interactions and grants significance to our desires. Simultaneously, the embodied Other, such as specific individuals or authority figures, embodies and represents the symbolic Other in our everyday experiences. They become the objects of desire and validation, as their recognition carries symbolic weight and reflects the broader social dynamics.

This Lacanian statement can be grasped in at least three distinct but interrelated ways: first, in the context of the other qua fellow beings, it means that the desire of all others is the shared desire to be recognized by other fellows [desire as common ontological denominator]. Second, regarding the law and language qua Other, it amounts to saying that the desire of man is not his desire; it is the exteriority [not the

⁸⁷ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book XI. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 1964, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 235. Hereafter, *The Seminar XI*.

interiority] of the desire stemming from the symbolic order that constitutes the form and the content of his desire: “the unconscious *desire* is structured as a function of the symbolic.”⁸⁸ Third, It means that desire is the desire to be satisfied by satisfying other’s desire [desire as the function of distribution, circulation, and maintenance of sexual categories, i.e., being a man, woman, or gay].

While speech and language offer a powerful medium for recognizing and expressing our desires, Lacan highlights the inherent challenges and limitations of articulating desire's elusive and ever-changing nature in linguistic terms. This “incompatibility between desire and speech”⁸⁹ stems from the fact that desire resists complete understanding and expression, as it is a complex and dynamic force that is always in flux. Within Lacanian theory, desire, particularly in relation to the function of distributing, circulating, and maintaining sexual categories (such as being a man, woman, or gay), is characterized by its constant flux and fluidity. This dynamism arises from the influence of the symbolic order, encompassing language, culture, and social structures, which shape our subjective experience. As societal norms and discourses evolve, traditional understandings of gender and sexuality are challenged, allowing alternative expressions of desire and identity to emerge.

Moreover, desire itself is a dynamic force influenced by personal experiences, cultural contexts, and individual subjectivities. This fluidity suggests that desire and sexual categories are not fixed but continuously redefined and reconfigured. The notion of desire as a function of distributing and maintaining sexual categories underscores its inherent complexity and the ongoing negotiation and transformation of these categories within a broader socio-cultural framework.

Despite these challenges, Lacan stresses language's importance in naming and recognizing our desires. Through this process of naming the desire, we can gain a greater degree of control and insight into our unconscious motivations. In fact, psychoanalytic treatment centers around the articulation and recognition of desire in speech as a means of helping individuals recognize the [partial] truth about their desires.

⁸⁸ Lacan, *The Seminar VII*, 12. Italics mine.

⁸⁹ Lacan, *Écrits*, 209.

3.2.2.3. Navigating the Imaginary and the Symbolic: Subject and Ego in Lacan

While the imaginary is the scene where the unconscious *proto-ego* emerges, the symbolic order is where the distinction between *subject* and *ego* crystallizes. Only when the subject is subordinated to symbolic relations does he start being constituted as a subject.⁹⁰ Subject means being subject[ed] to the symbolic/moral order; before that, it is just an imaginary ego. However, this does not mean children have no relations to the symbolic order yet: “There is,” for the child, “the symbolic and the real, contrary to what might think.” But she is “more captive of the imaginary than of the rest...The imaginary is there. But it is completely inaccessible to us.”⁹¹ To a certain extent, the symbolic can exist for the child. Yet, until a certain age, she would remain in the territory of the imaginary, that is, roughly of the id unless it is placed in the symbolic and occupy a subjective position there.

What makes the imaginary accessible [conscious] is to enter the symbolic field, where one assumes the subject's position and utilizes speech to reveal and convey the previously unreachable aspects of the imaginary, and to unfold and communicate the inaccessible imaginary via speech. This process involves the subject's active engagement with[in] the symbolic order, which provides the framework and means for expressing and comprehending the complexities of the imaginary realm. In essence, the subject's ability to articulate and communicate their experiences within the symbolic field allows for exploring and unveiling the inaccessible dimensions of the imaginary. Thus, the imaginary is merely understood via retrospective contemplation. It is an inherent aspect of the subject's psychic structure, operating alongside the symbolic and contributing to their understanding of themselves and the world.

Although subjects contribute to a certain extent to the symbolic and participate in its creation and alteration, this contribution is not substantive: Subjects are “included in it and submit to it, much more than they constitute it. They are much more its supports than its agents.”⁹² The dynamic between the subject and both the imaginary

⁹⁰ Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 160.

⁹¹ Lacan, *The Seminar I*, 219.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 177.

and the symbolic involves a sense of participation and submission to these orders, recognizing that the subject's influence is not substantive or fully constitutive. They navigate and engage with[in] these orders, but their agency is constrained by the pre-existing structures and patterns that shape their experiences within the imaginary and the symbolic realms.

Aside from always applicable symbols, it is impossible to speculate on what was before them.⁹³ What came before is an enigma, yet it has no bearing on the timelessness of these symbols. The in-between status of the symbolic allows symbols to serve as bridges between the imaginary and the real. That is why these symbols are a timeless reminder of our connection with the ages past and the ages to come. They represent something that is beyond our understanding, and yet, they remain ever-present in our lives. They are a source of both mystery and comfort.

One crucial point that distinguishes the symbolic order from the imaginary and maintains their relationship is the distinction between the ego-ideal and the ideal-ego. The ideal-ego is closely related to Lacan's concept of the imaginary order, which is the unconscious realm of pre-symbolic and pre-linguistic experiences, where the subject experiences themselves as a unified and coherent self. The ideal-ego can be seen as a form of narcissism, where the infant identifies with an idealized self-image, often based on physical appearance and bodily sensations. In contrast, the ego-ideal is closely related to Lacan's concept of the symbolic order, which is the realm of language and culture, where social and cultural norms inscribe the subject: "The ego-ideal is a symbolic introjection [*of father figure qua law*], whereas the ideal ego is the source of an imaginary projection."⁹⁴ On the other hand, the ego-ideal can be seen as a form of social conformity, where the subject identifies with the idealized standards and values of the culture and society they live in: it "governs the interplay of relations on which all relations with others depend."⁹⁵

⁹³ Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 5.

⁹⁴ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book VIII. Transference, 1960–61*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 356. Italics mine. Hereafter, *The Seminar VIII*.

⁹⁵ Lacan, *The Seminar I*, 141.

While the ideal-ego and ego-ideal concepts are distinct in Lacanian theory, they are also interrelated. The ideal-ego provides the basis for the formation of the ego, which is necessary for the subject to function as a social and linguistic being. The ego-ideal, in turn, provides the subject with a sense of purpose and direction, which can help to stabilize the ego and give a sense of meaning in life.

3.2.3. The Real

As we shall see, the concept of the real defies symbolization and resists comprehension. It exists beyond language and the symbolic order, making it an elusive and traumatic entity. Nevertheless, bridging the gap between the symbolic and the real is made possible through [partial] engagement with the real via moral action. However, the real's resistance to symbolization challenges our understanding, prompting us to question the limitations of language and our comprehension systems. This exploration invites us to confront the ungraspable aspects of existence and strive for a more profound and authentic sense of self within the real.

3.2.3.1. The Real and Its Traumatic Quality: Beyond Symbolization

The real is that which eludes symbolization, resisting attempts at conceptualization and rendering such endeavors futile.⁹⁶ The real is thus an unfathomable and ineffable entity beyond the purview of language and the symbolic order. It is the realm of pure presence devoid of any representation or signification: “There is no absence in the real,”⁹⁷ What makes it the real is “the lack of the lack”⁹⁸ in its constitution. The real is not simply the opposite of the imaginary but is beyond the symbolic, as it is ontologically absolute and undifferentiated. The real is resistant to symbolization and is thus impossible to attain in any way.

Also, concepts, i.e., the external and the internal—since the imaginary and the symbolic rest upon the dualities of subject-object and you-me distinctions—we encountered in the imaginary and the symbolic “make no sense at all” and do not

⁹⁶ Ibid., 66.

⁹⁷ Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 313.

⁹⁸ Lacan, *The Seminar XI*, ix.

apply to the real as "the real is without fissure." The real is without fissure, meaning it is not susceptible to fragmentation or division into discrete parts. It does not conform to the boundaries and distinctions we create through language and concepts. The symbolic fails because demonstration and articulation of the real are impossible.⁹⁹

This quality of impossibility and resistance to symbolization gives the real its traumatic quality. The imperviousness of the real's pure presence to symbolization and representation arises from a confluence of interrelated factors.

Firstly, the real resides beyond the bounds of linguistic or symbolic structures, residing outside the purview of language and its accompanying symbolic systems that enable the organization and comprehension of our experiences. Language and symbols rely on abstraction and simplification, whereas the real remains resolutely enigmatic and resistant to capture in its intricate entirety. The real remains enigmatic and resistant since it exceeds the capacities of abstraction and simplification: Abstraction and simplification, inherent to language and symbolic systems, involve reducing complex experiences into generalized and simplified representations. They involve generalizing and categorizing experiences, thoughts, and perceptions. It allows us to create conceptual frameworks and make sense of the world by grouping similar elements together under common labels or categories. As such, they will enable us to communicate and comprehend the world, while they also entail a loss of the richness and intricacy of the real.

Secondly, the real aligns itself with traumatic or disconcerting encounters that disrupt the established symbolic order. It encompasses facets of reality that defy facile assimilation or integration within our existing symbolic frameworks. Traumatic occurrences, such as extreme acts of violence or profound loss, rupture our illusions and lay bare the disconcerting aspects of existence that elude facile symbolization or representation. When confronted with trauma, the failures of abstraction and simplification become evident. The enormity and complexity of the traumatic event exceed the capacity of language and symbols to capture and convey its impact fully.

⁹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book XVII. The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, 1969–70*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 123. Hereafter *The Seminar XVII*.

The traumatic experience resists fitting neatly into pre-existing frameworks and defies straightforward interpretation. It exposes the limits of language and symbolic systems to fully express traumatic events' complexity, ambiguity, and raw intensity. Thus, the ungraspable nature of trauma challenges the assumptions and structures that abstraction and simplification rely upon.

Furthermore, the real intertwines with the concept of the impossible, embodying facets of reality that surpass our cognitive capacity for comprehension and representation. The real confronts us with the limitations inherent in our symbolic systems, underscoring the lacunae and incongruities present in our endeavors to fully encapsulate and represent the world, thereby unraveling the limitations of our systems of abstraction and simplification.

Lastly, the resistance of the real to symbolization and representation emerges from its role as a disruptive force. It disrupts the realms of the imaginary and symbolic, unsettling our illusions and revealing our symbolic constructions' underlying fragility and contingency. One way the real unsettles our illusions [of the symbolic] is by exposing the limitations and contingency of our symbolic constructions. The other is that the imaginary is shaped by our fantasies, dreams, and desires, often influenced by unconscious processes. It is a realm of subjective and often idealized images that may not align with objective reality. The real's unsettling effect arises from its disruption of these idealized constructs, forcing us to confront the contingency and instability of our imaginary formations. In retrospect—just as the unconscious imaginary is merely understood via retrospective contemplation—we may gain insight into the gulf between our idealized illusions [of the imaginary] and the complexities of the real world. Thus, the real unveils the inherent instability and uncertainty embedded within our imaginary and symbolic systems by challenging our attempts to impose order and meaning onto reality.

Trauma can be apprehended as an ontological rupture that shatters the ontic fabric of an individual's existence. This event undermines the very foundations of the subject's sense of self and its relation to the world. While trauma can manifest in a multiplicity of forms, ranging from physical violence to emotional abuse and social ostracism, its impact is not reducible to the objective severity of the event per se but rather hinges

on the subject's subjective experience of it. Lacan theorizes trauma as a radical break within the symbolic order that governs the subject's construction of their reality. The symbolic order designates a set of linguistic and cultural systems that afford the subject a means of articulating their experience of the world in a coherent and meaningful manner. By piercing the symbolic order, trauma renders the subject devoid of a stable framework within which to comprehend their experience. This can result in many symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, and profound disorientation.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, the imaginary can be profoundly affected, too. Traumatic experiences can rupture the imaginary fabric that underlies the subject's self-image and perception of others. The traumatic event shatters the stability and coherence of the subject's imaginary identifications and idealized constructs. It disrupts the subject's ability to create a consistent and coherent narrative about themselves and their relation to the world. The impact of trauma on the imaginary can manifest in various ways. For example, the subject may experience a fragmentation of their self-image, feeling as if different parts of themselves no longer fit together. They may struggle to recognize themselves or to maintain a consistent sense of identity. The traumatic event can also give rise to intrusive and distressing images or fantasies, further disrupting the subject's inner world.

3.2.3.2. Bridging the Gap: Moral Action and Partial Engagement with the Real

The real is crucial to Lacanian psychoanalysis, as it serves as the point of departure for the subject's encounter with their own being. In other words, it is the site where the subject confronts their own essence—if there is such an essence—stripped of all illusion and, to a certain extent, of the imaginary. This confrontation with the real is a fundamental aspect of the psychoanalytic process, as it enables the subject to attain a more profound and authentic sense of self. However, this encounter is always a missed one, as explained in connection with the symbolic: “The function of the...

¹⁰⁰ See Lacan, *The Seminar I*, 194, 197, 283; *The Seminar VIII*, 320-321; *The Seminar XI*, 55, 60, 251.

real as encounter... in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter ... the real should have presented itself in the form of that which is unassimilable in it.”¹⁰¹

Moreover, the real is also closely linked to the moral law [super-ego], which constitutes the framework within which the subject's partial engagement—since full engagement is impossible—with the real occurs: “the moral law, the moral command, the presence of the moral agency in our activity, in so far as it is structured by the symbolic, is that through which the real is actualized...the weight of the real.”¹⁰² It is crucial to note that actualizing the real through moral law is not without tensions and contradictions; nevertheless, it is possible. By its very nature, the real resists easy integration into symbolic frameworks. While the moral law provides a path toward engaging with the real, it does not imply a complete and exhaustive understanding or mastery of the real. The subject's engagement with the real through the moral law is partial and limited, as it consistently exceeds our attempts to fully comprehend and capture it. In other words, as noted above, the actualization of the real is possible through moral law, whereas the realization of the real is impossible.

The moral law is the guiding force that directs the subject towards moral action, and it is how the subject can actualize their presence [the real of their being] in the world: “Moral action is, in effect, grafted on to the real. It introduces something new into the real and thereby opens a path in which the point of our presence is legitimized.”¹⁰³ This “something new” can be seen as a transformative potential that emerges through ethical engagement. Moral action involves making choices and decisions based on ethical principles. When the subject engages in moral action, they introduce a dimension of ethical significance and responsibility into the real. Thus, by grafting moral action onto the real, we can bridge the gap between the symbolic and the real and open up a path towards a more authentic and meaningful—albeit partial and limited—engagement with the real. This process requires us to navigate the tensions and contradictions between the symbolic and the real and constantly

¹⁰¹ Lacan, *The Seminar XI*, 55.

¹⁰² Lacan, *The Seminar VII*, 20.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 21.

strive toward a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us: “What is this real, if not a subject fulfilled in his identity to himself? ...The subject is...called the Selbstbewusstsein, the being conscious of self, the fully conscious self.”¹⁰⁴ In a word, by adhering to the moral law, the subject is able to navigate the real and gain a foothold in the face of its overwhelming opacity.

3.2.3.3. Inherent Logic of the Real: Beyond Symbolic Comprehension

Notably, the real is not static or fixed but rather dynamic, as in desire. It is dynamic in that it remains fundamentally elusive and resistant to human comprehension: The real is “something one always finds in the same place, whether or not one has been there. This real may have moved, but if it has moved, one looks for it elsewhere, one looks for why it has been disturbed.”¹⁰⁵ The real cannot be known, but it is rational and amenable to calculation and logic: “The real is rational, the rational is real.”¹⁰⁶

The reference to calculation and logic in relation to the real does not directly imply the probability of trauma. Instead, it emphasizes that the real can be approached and engaged rationally and logically, even though it cannot be fully known or symbolically represented. Therefore, while calculation and logic can help us navigate and engage with the real to a certain extent, the concept of probability and the probability of trauma primarily reside within the symbolic realm rather than the inherently enigmatic nature of the real since the trauma is merely traumatic to the symbolic order. Lacan's statement that "the real is rational, the rational is real" suggests that the real possesses its own inherent logic and order, separate from the symbolic constructs we use to understand the world. It implies that the real is not a chaotic or random realm but instead operates according to its own rationality, which may not be fully accessible or comprehensible to us. This fluidity of the real is reflected in the constant evolution of scientific and philosophical thought throughout history as successive generations of philosophers' grapple with the enigma of the real.

¹⁰⁴ Lacan, *Écrits*, 226.

¹⁰⁵ Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 297.

¹⁰⁶ Lacan, *The Seminar VII*, 180.

3.2.4. The Relationship Between the Imaginary, Symbolic, and the Real

The relationship between the three orders is complex and dynamic, partly due to the ever-elusive and unfathomable nature of both the real and desire. As noted above, these orders function interdependently; the transition to the symbolic does not mean the imaginary is wholly excluded from the process. Conversely, although the infant is not included in the symbolic yet, the symbolic exists independently of her and always dominates and structures the imaginary. Even after the infant enters the symbolic order, the imaginary remains the primary source of subsequent secondary identifications.

The symbolic order is the primary mode of mediation between the real and the imaginary: “All the density of the real... is interposed for the subject between... the imaginary jouissance of his image and the alienation of speech.”¹⁰⁷ Yet this interposition is always incomplete and subject to rupture since the real can never be fully integrated into the symbolic order, and the imaginary can never be fully reconciled with the real. Instead, these three registers are in constant tension and negotiation, producing the unstable and dynamic nature of subjective experience.

Another problematic relation between the symbolic and the real is thus:

From the point of view of the real, on each occasion there are as many chances of winning as of losing. The very notion of probability and chance presupposes the introduction of a symbol into the real. It's a symbol you're addressing, and your chances bear only on the symbol: In the real, at each go, you have as many chances of winning or of losing as on the preceding go. There is no reason why, by a pure fluke, you might not win ten times in a row.¹⁰⁸

Lacan's philosophical inquiry into the concept of probability and chance reveals the symbolic nature of these constructs as tools that we employ to make sense of the world. While probability and chance are commonly used to predict outcomes and make decisions, they do not necessarily reflect the reality of any given situation. Lacan argues that each event is unique and independent of previous events, and therefore there is no inherent reason why any particular outcome should be more

¹⁰⁷ Lacan, *Écrits*, 162. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁸ Lacan, *The Seminar II*, 182.

likely than another. In this sense, the notion of equal chances of winning or losing on each occasion reflects reality more accurately than the symbolic constructs of probability and chance, which rely on past experiences and statistical patterns. However, Lacan also highlights the paradoxical nature of introducing symbols into the real, as it enables us to make meaning of the world and creates a gulf between our symbolic representations and the reality they attempt to represent. Therefore, the philosophical implications of Lacan's inquiry into the nature of probability and chance extend far beyond a simple reflection on the mechanics of gambling, revealing the complex relationship between the symbolic and the real.

The law of probability and the moral law share some similarities in their relation to the symbolic and their role in navigating the complexities of the real. Both are liminal modes of actualizing or engaging with what cannot be fully realized. The law of probability operates within the symbolic realm, providing a framework for understanding and predicting uncertain outcomes. It utilizes calculation and logic to assess the likelihood of events or scenarios based on available information. In this way, probability allows us to make informed decisions and navigate uncertain situations by assigning numerical values to the likelihood of different outcomes.

Similarly, the moral law, rooted in the symbolic order, provides a framework for ethical decision-making and guides our actions and behavior. It represents a set of norms and principles shaping our engagement with the world and others. In that regard, the moral law, like the law of probability, serves as a liminal mode of actualizing our ethical principles within the symbolic realm.

Both the law of probability and the moral law provide ways of engaging with the real, albeit in a limited and partial manner. They allow us to approach and navigate the uncertainties and complexities of reality, drawing upon symbolic systems and rationality. However, it is essential to note that while probability and the moral law enable us to engage with the real, they do not fully capture or encompass its entirety. As an inherently enigmatic and unassimilable dimension, the real exceeds the reach of probability and the moral law. It represents facets of reality that resist easy symbolization and defy complete comprehension. While the law of probability and

the moral law offer tools for engagement, they are still mediated by symbolic systems and are subject to their inherent limitations.

Accordingly, the symbolic order provides the framework within which the subject engages with the real, shaping their desires, identity, and social interactions. At the same time, the real disrupts the symbolic order, exposing its limitations and challenging our constructed realities. The encounter with the real through traumatic experiences or encounters that defy easy assimilation disrupts the symbolic structures and forces us to confront the contingency and instability of our imaginary formations. While the symbolic allows for the actualization of the real, it also highlights the inherent unattainability of its full realization. The symbolic order provides a language and system of meaning that helps us navigate and engage with reality. However, being beyond the bounds of linguistic or symbolic structures, the real resists easy integration. It eludes complete mastery and exceeds our attempts to fully comprehend and capture it. The real's enigmatic nature and resistance to symbolization emphasize the limits of language and symbolic systems in fully expressing its complexity, ambiguity, and intensity.

The relationship between the symbolic and the real has significant implications for subjective experience. The symbolic order provides a sense of identity and coherence, shaping our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. It offers a framework for recognition, guiding our interactions and granting significance to our desires. On the other hand, the encounter with the real through traumatic or disconcerting events disrupts our idealized illusions and exposes the contingency of our symbolic constructions. This confrontation with the real allows for a more profound and authentic sense of self to emerge, as it challenges us to question and reevaluate our existing beliefs and structures. The tension between the symbolic and the real opens spaces for transformation and exploration. The disruption of the symbolic order by the real presents an opportunity for personal growth and the formation of new understandings. Thus, the encounter with the real prompts individuals to question their assumptions, desires, and the social structures that shape their lives. It invites them to engage with the complexities of reality beyond the confines of symbolic representations and seek a deeper understanding of themselves and the world.

3.3. Mirror Stage

Lacan's seminal concept of the mirror stage¹⁰⁹ presents a nuanced analysis of the onto-epistemological foundations of our chronic anxiety and aggressivity and, to a certain extent, of the formation of the enemy category as a manifestation of these states. Drawing from psychoanalytic and philosophical insights, Lacan posits that the human subject's sense of self is constructed through a complex interplay between its embodied experiences [the imaginary scene] and language and culture's symbolic order.

3.3.1. Identification and Alienation: Imaginary Me and Symbolic Order

According to the conceptualization of the mirror stage, as members of the human species, we all spend our first years on earth utterly dependent on a mother. The infant sees the mother's body as an extension of herself, primarily until weaning. Not yet having drawn boundaries between *you* and *me*, the infant expresses her every need by crying and realizes that all her needs are met. Her every need is satisfied because they are simply hunger and discomfort from urination or defecation. Then the infant is weaned and comes to the first primal awareness of the physical and imaginary [not symbolic yet] separation between *you* and *me*, that she is no longer part of a whole—the unity of infant and mother—but a separate being.

This moment marks the emergence of the image of the cruel mother¹¹⁰ and more or less corresponds to when, imaginarily or physically, the infant sees herself in the mirror.¹¹¹ Her organs, which were previously in bits and pieces and an “unorganized

¹⁰⁹ See Lacan, *Écrits*, 1-5.

¹¹⁰ The concept of the "cruel mother" refers to the infant's transition from the pre-mirror stage, where the mother is experienced as an extension of the child, to the mirror stage, where the child perceives themselves as a separate and independent entity. This separation signifies an imaginary scenario in which the infant recognizes their own image in the mirror as a distinct physical body, leading to a sense of cruelty inflicted by the mother's perceived detachment from their complete [unfragmented] being. We will see in detail below that the main reason the infant perceives this situation as negative is the aggressivity and anxiety that occur in the mirror stage.

¹¹¹ For Lacan, this process takes place between the ages of 6-18 months. Considering the age of 6 months, it refers to a period long before speech abilities begin to form, thus long before the deployment of the symbolic.

jumble of sensations and impulses”¹¹² acted independently of her and did not appear to be connected to any central organ, are engraved in her memory as an image of integrity, a specular image, in the mirror. What is meant here is not only the infant standing in front of a real mirror in the mother's lap. More importantly, each parent functions as a mirror in a symbolic sense: the infant learns facial expressions and their meanings by looking at the parents as a mirror. In that regard, the mirror stage highlights the significance of the visual register in forming the *proto-ego* or *imaginary me* as a coherent, albeit illusory, entity.

That *proto-ego* emerges “as a crystallization or sedimentation of ideal images, tantamount to a fixed, reified object with which a child learns to identify.”¹¹³ By identifying with her mirror image, the infant assumes a semblance of unity and mastery¹¹⁴ over her body and the external world. At the same time, she becomes

¹¹² Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 36.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹⁴ We need to open a long parenthesis here as mastery [*instinct for mastery* in Freudian terms] directly relates to the symbolic and the imaginary orders. At the core of Freud's psychoanalytic theory lies the concept of instincts or drives, which he posited as the primary motivating forces of human behavior. Freud's emphasis on the role of sexual and aggressive drives in shaping personality development and determining the course of human life was predicated on the idea that these drives are essential and inherent aspects of the human psyche. In particular, Freud drew attention to the instinct for mastery, which he saw as a fundamental and ubiquitous aspect of human behavior, playing a crucial role in shaping masculine sexual activity. This instinct is inextricably linked to the desire for control and domination, which Freud regarded as a fundamental element of the human personality. Cruelty, another aspect of human behavior, was also linked to the instinct for mastery, as Freud saw children's propensity towards cruelty as a result of their lack of empathy and compassion, which develops later in life. It is the instinct for mastery that drives cruelty and dominates a pregenital phase of sexual development, during which children are focused on satisfying their own desires without regard for the well-being of others. In addition, the instinct for knowledge, while not exclusively a component of sexuality, is another aspect of human behavior that Freud saw as linked to the instinct for mastery. The impulse for knowledge corresponds to a sublimated form of mastery that utilizes the energy of scopophilia (the desire to look and be looked at). The repudiation of the impulse for knowledge in the form of doubt plays a significant role in the development of obsessional neurosis. Freud also noted the development of the opposition between two currents in the pregenital sadistic-anal organization, which later becomes firmly attached to the antithesis between the sexes. The instinct for mastery supplies the activity via the agency of the somatic musculature, while the part of

alienated from her own corporeal reality by seeing herself as an object and subject to the gaze of others, that is, the symbolic order. This duality of identification and alienation sets the stage for a lifelong struggle to reconcile the imaginary *proto-ego/me* with the symbolic norms that regulate it.

This image is misleading because it creates the illusion of wholeness, completeness, and an imaginary existence over which absolute mastery can be established. This idealized totality of the image is a *me-connaissance* (self-knowledge), albeit a *méconnaissance* (misrecognition), because it shows an ideal image of a body that has not yet been controlled and dominated. The encounter with the real can disrupt this illusory image by puncturing its idealized totality and revealing the underlying truth of its insubstantial nature. The real confronts the individual with the limitations and gulf in their self-knowledge, highlighting the discrepancy between the idealized self-image and the complex.

However, upon the realization that the self's establishment was predicated upon a premature presumption of attaining full maturity, the profound revelation emerges that the very foundation upon which the self is constructed is inherently insubstantial—a truth that shatters the illusions of solidity and authenticity, exposing

the body that signifies passive sexuality is the erotogenic mucous membrane of the anus. The attitude of love toward the object is difficult to differentiate at this stage from that of hatred, taking on the form of an urge for mastery; striving for the object seems indifferent to any injury or destruction it may suffer. As soon as the genital organs are established, love becomes the opposite of hatred. Finally, Freud saw repetition as a key mechanism for mastering powerful impressions and experiences. Children repeat unpleasant experiences because when they actively engage, they can master them far more effectively than passively experiencing them. Each repetition strengthens the mastery they seek, which is closely linked to the instinct for mastery and the desire for control and domination that underlie much of human behavior. Within the realm of instinctual mastery, Freud also identifies several perversions that can arise; they exhibit intricate dynamics, particularly observed in sadomasochism and scopophilia, each embodying an active (sadism, voyeurism) and a passive (masochism, exhibitionism) mode of expression. See Freud, “*Three Essays On The Theory Of Sexuality*”, 1508, 1512, 1513, 1516; “*The Disposition To Obsessional Neurosis*”, 2628, 2630; “*Totem And Taboo*”, 2721; “*Instincts And Their Vicissitudes*”, 2973; “*Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis*”, 3395; “*Beyond The Pleasure Principle*”, 3721, 3738, 3741, 3755; “*The Economic Problem Of Masochism*”, 4075; “*Civilization And Its Discontents*”, 4508, 4513; “*Why War?*”, 4798; “*Analysis Terminable And Interminable*”, 5025.

the hollow grounds upon which the self stands.¹¹⁵ That is a hollowness in two different but interrelated senses: a false self in the sense of resting on an imaginary image and the absence of a solid inner ground upon which the self rests—the hollowness in the sense of oscillating in space. Therefore, it is not just a *hollow proto-ego* whose boundaries are beginning to emerge but also the contour of the imaginary body or bodily ego that is emerging.

This spectacularly illusionary image “jubilantly”¹¹⁶ gives a kind of peace and security, as it reminds the infant of the feeling of wholeness before separation from the mother. Yet, the first separation has occurred; it is an onto-epistemological wound or incompleteness that can never be repaired due to the irredeemable gulf between the imaginary, the real and the symbolic. The infant will try to fill this ontological deficiency for a lifetime, a series of unsuccessful searches for binary and/or non-binary lovers as substitutes for the time of integration with the mother—a search for the wholeness without fissure, i.e., the real—recourses to religious beliefs as expressions of integrating with the universe, being ecstatic in it, and to the so-called “sublime” idea that requires subjects to sacrifice their lives in the name of martyrdom [death would be the radical solution to destroy that gulf forever, as we shall see below] and so on. They provide a background narrative for our chronic anxiety or periodic states of anxiety after a series of short moments of non-anxiety.

The baby sees its own image as whole...and the synthesis of this image produces a sense of contrast with the uncoordination of the body, which is experienced as a fragmented body; this contrast is first felt by the infant as a rivalry with its own image...the mirror stage thereby gives rise to *anxiety and* an aggressive tension between the subject and the image... In order to resolve this aggressive tension, the subject identifies with the image.¹¹⁷

The contrast and distance between the infant's present existence and the specular image [*imaginary proto-ego/me/ideal-ego*] qua future image seen in the mirror lead to an intermingled situation: on the one hand, the contrast causes aggression in the sense that it indicates an insufficiency on the part of the infant and a present

¹¹⁵ Jane Gallop, “Lacan’s ‘Mirror Stage’: Where to Begin,” *SubStance* 11/12 (1982): 122.

¹¹⁶ Lacan, *Écrits*, 2.

¹¹⁷ Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, 118. Italics mine.

fragmentation of her body. On the other, that aggression transforms into anxiety¹¹⁸ in the sense of not having enough power or ability to change the status quo. As such, “the very essence of Anxiety” lies in the fact that the *imaginary me*, “in which a human being is always looking forward to self-mastery, entails a constant danger of sliding back again into the chaos from which he started.”¹¹⁹

Here, it is crucial to acknowledge the intricate connection between the instinct for cruelty and the image of the cruel mother. As previously indicated, the instinct for cruelty originates from the instinct for dominance. The infant, enduring an eternal sentence of self-mastery because of the separation, finds the mother the perpetrator of this verdict. In that sense, one can reasonably argue that the infant, upon encountering the idealized image following separation and propelled by the impetus for self-mastery, transforms these states into internalized self-inflicted cruelty [*alienated/inimical/divided me*], replete with aggression and anxiety. Consequently, the cruel mother manifests as the externalized manifestation of this internalization, serving as an embodiment of the infant's profound inner turmoil.

From the moment we are included in the field of language and culture, that is the field of the symbolic, this onto-epistemological deficiency [alienation/split] is included in the grammatical structure like a virus and penetrates the very capillaries of the linguistic field. It should be noted that it is due to the symbolic register that “the internalization of the mirror and other images”¹²⁰ is possible. Also, the tentative

¹¹⁸ Here, we should briefly look at how the anxiety revealed in the neutralization process, as mentioned in the previous chapter, relates to anxiety in the mirror stage. The link between the two forms of anxiety lies in the contrast between the present state of the individual or infant and a future ideal. In the neutralization process, individuals experience anxiety because they are confronted with the unknown and the possibility of losing control over technology. In the mirror stage, the infant experiences anxiety because it sees a future ideal in the image but feels a present insufficiency and fragmentation. Both forms of anxiety are rooted in the tension between the present and the future, between the actual and the ideal, and between the self and the other. The conscious negative emotions associated with the fear of the unknown in the neutralization process are linked to the unconscious anxiety experienced during the mirror stage when the infant's sense of self is formed. This is because both forms of anxiety arise from the same fundamental dynamic of contrast and the tension between the present and the future. The conscious fear of losing control over technology is linked to the unconscious anxiety of being unable to achieve the ideal self represented in the mirror image. Both forms of anxiety are also linked to the need for mastery and control, which is a fundamental human drive that emerges in the mirror stage and is reinforced in the neutralization process.

¹¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, “Some Reflections on the Ego,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 34 (1953): 15.

¹²⁰ Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, 36.

compensation for that split lies in attaining linguistic proficiency and the auspicious prospect of becoming an intricately interconnected and interdependent social being [becoming a *subject*, a *symbolic/post-verbal me*], thereby engendering a comprehensive and multifaceted navigation of various identity positions.

Not only the specular image [*imaginary me*] but "the body *also* can be sustained in its phantasmatic integrity only through submitting to language... *It* only becomes whole...by *being* positioned within the Symbolic."¹²¹ In a way that supports Lacan, Butler asserts that language is an essential component of the body's integration, such that the body cannot exist as a unified and complete entity without the intercession of language. She/they¹²² employs the term "phantasmatic integrity" to illustrate the idea that the body is a figment of our imagination [the specular image from the imaginary pre-verbal phase], which is constantly being reconstructed through the medium of language. This means that the body is not a static and firm entity but a dynamic and fluid construct—as in desire and the real—that is molded and shaped by the deployment of language.

Consequently, the body's coherence and stability are contingent upon the fluidity and adaptability of language to allow for the constant re-creation of the body as an integrated entity. Therefore, the relationship between language and the body is not merely causal but constitutive in that language shapes and re-creates the body's ontology. Regarding the body's connection to the symbolic order, it does not mean that the body is exclusively of the symbolic order. In that regard, the body can exist within the interplay of the symbolic, imaginary, and real orders. While language and the symbolic order play a significant role in shaping the body, there are limits to their efficacy in capturing the fullness and complexity of lived bodily experiences: The real dimension of the body refers to the somatic and sensory aspects that go beyond linguistic representation; the imaginary dimension refers to the realm of images, representations, and fantasies. As elucidated above, the body is also a figment of our imagination, particularly during the imaginary pre-verbal phase.

¹²¹ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41. Italics mine.

¹²² Her/their preference not to use a certain fixed pronoun and playing with the transitivity of the pronouns are in harmony with the idea that the body is not static, and its integrity is constantly re-established through language.

3.3.2. Life, Death, and Transition of the Imaginary “You” and “Me” into the Symbolic Realm

In the subject-predicate sequence—the transformation of the imaginary distinctions between *you* and *me* into the symbolic—each predicate necessitates a subject. The subject is based on that distinction between *you* and *me*. That is where *you* qua *not-me*, the categories of stranger and other, begin to materialize.

Of course, not every *you* is an enemy, at least not actively. Yet, it is necessary to reconsider the distinction between *you* and *me* here. I am not just a *physical me* [a mere bodily ego]. In love, the boundaries of *me* are redrawn and expanded to include others, namely *you*. That is why, when someone we love dies, we find ourselves mourning, as if a piece of us is missing.¹²³ The experience of loss triggers a mourning process, revealing that transformative change is an inherent outcome. This change transcends predictable outcomes, evading precise mapping or deliberate planning. In this transformative state, the boundaries of the subject undergo a reconfiguration, assimilating the presence of the other and their influence on personal identity. Thus, *you* has become a new part of the transformed *me* within the boundaries of the I. Within this intricate tapestry of existence, our relational orientation extends beyond individuality, entwined within the complex fabric of cultural norms and power dynamics that predate and surpass our own existence, fundamentally shaping and conditioning our being.¹²⁴ So, *me* is a broad category that includes the *particular/physical me* and *you* that is an *assimilated you*. By *assimilated you*, I mean not only other particular individuals of our species but also inanimate objects and non-human animals: A child's toy is not so different from a living being. She plays with it, talks to it, and so on.

Here it is worth noting the relationship between assimilated *you* and fetishism: Fetishism refers to the process by which an individual's desire for an object, or a specific aspect of an object, becomes detached from the object itself and instead becomes attached to a symbol of the object, such as a fetish object. This symbol

¹²³ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in *Freud-Complete Works* (2010), 3042. https://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud_Complete_Works.pdf.

¹²⁴ Butler takes up this issue on these terms in Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), 27, 45.

serves to fill in a perceived lack or absence in the individual's psyche. For Lacan, the fetish and, to a certain extent, assimilated you serve as a way for the individual to deal with the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the lack or absence—the lack created in the mirror stage—by providing a sense of security and stability. The cruel mother plays a significant role in this dynamic. The perceived act of cruelty or separation attributed to the mother becomes intertwined with the infant's pursuit of mastery over their own body and identity. The infant seeks to assert control over the perceived lack caused by the separation from the mother, striving for a sense of autonomy and completeness.

Thus, the concept of the cruel mother connects to the notion of mastery, as the infant's attempts to overcome the initial lack and establish a coherent sense of self are influenced by the perceived cruelty of the mother's separation. The fetish and the assimilated "you" can be seen as strategies the individual employs to navigate and mitigate the anxieties arising from this complex interplay of separation, lack, and the pursuit of mastery.

When we consider this complex background of the *you-me* distinction, we may assume that it is a necessary constituent for the survival of our species as a living organism. *You* is the stranger, someone who should stay away from us, who is always likely to have the potential to harm us. That stranger is not essentially a friend but has to repeatedly prove to us with consistent behavior that he is not an enemy. It is important to note that a stranger's need to repeatedly prove themselves is not solely driven by the desire for affirmation. It is rooted in the complex interplay between survival instincts, social dynamics, and the establishment of trust; trust is not automatically granted but is built over time through consistent behavior and the demonstration of reliability. Still, *you* is a valuable benchmark that shows who we are and through whom we define ourselves. To a large extent, it allows *me* to exist as a coherent whole via its body as a mirror.

Let us consider the distinction between *you* and *me* regarding the dead body of a relative, someone we know closely. We have witnessed that person's excitement, fear, and aggression while she was alive. We know all her facial expressions and gestures. However, when we think of the corpse now lying before us, there is no

longer a gesture or anything else about that person's hostility or friendship. Just nothingness. What lies before us is infinite *neutrality*, an egoless body, a body without psyche. Even if she did us the worst, it does not matter anymore since she is no longer a *you*, an enemy, or a friend: "Death is the eventual triumph of the real."¹²⁵ The proposition that death epitomizes the ultimate engagement with the real, given that it constitutes the irreducible limit of human existence that eludes any endeavor to symbolize or represent it exhaustively, entails the claim that death represents the exact point at which the subject's being encounters the radical alterity and substantiality of the real, thereby engendering a moment of sheer negativity and deprivation that evades any effort to incorporate or assimilate it within the realm of any symbolic system.

Moreover, the notion of triumph in this context does not denote a sanguine or celebratory import. Instead, it intimates that death signifies the ultimate miscarriage of the symbolic order to provide a comprehensive account of the real. Thus, it underscores the intrinsic limitations and deficiencies of language and meaning in the face of the radical alterity of existence.

Here, the connection between death, mourning, and melancholy becomes evident. In response to the loss of a loved one, mourning reflects the subject's encounter with the finality and irrevocable absence brought about by death. It represents a process through which the subject grapples with the fundamental rupture caused by death, engaging in a complex negotiation between the longing for what has been lost and the necessity to adapt to a transformed reality. In this sense, Mourning becomes an expression of the subject's confrontation with the limitations of the symbolic order and the existential impact of death.

On the other hand, Melancholy emerges as a response to the unassimilable loss and the subsequent inability to fully mourn and integrate the absence within the symbolic realm. It manifests as a prolonged state of mourning characterized by a deep sense of melancholic longing and a persistent attachment to the lost object that defies resolution. In that regard, melancholy embodies the enduring encounter with the void left by death, evoking a profound sense of emptiness and the haunting presence of

¹²⁵ Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 100.

absence. It reflects the subject's struggle to come to terms with the inescapable limitations of language and meaning in the face of the ultimate encounter with the real. In a nutshell, death is the final encounter that forever closes us off from the onto-epistemic gulf between the real and the symbolic. As such, death, as the finality of human existence, represents the ultimate confrontation with the fundamental disparity between the realm of reality and the realm of symbolic representation. It is an encounter that permanently seals off any possibility of reconciling the profound divide that exists between these two domains.

Life, in its essence, embodies an intrinsic and unalterable separation between the symbolic order and the raw, unfiltered reality of existence. This ontological gulf remains intact and impassable throughout the entirety of human life, underscoring the inherent limitations and inadequacies of symbolic systems in fully capturing or comprehending the true nature of reality.

Thus, death stands as the ultimate testament to the insurmountable distinction between the real and the symbolic, highlighting the finality and permanence of this division. Using a radical move, the gulf is traversed via the other's death. In contrast, life itself perpetuates and perpetuates this irrevocable gulf, emphasizing its enduring presence and the inherent boundaries it imposes on our understanding and engagement with the world.

Hence, the life [qua irrevocable gulf between the symbolic and the real] makes *you* and also *me* a potential harmer and transgressor since both *you* and *me* can hurt and kill each other; life qua onto-epistemic gulf creates and needs the friend-enemy distinction: it satisfies this need—and gets its power—by applying to the symbolic and imaginary polarizations. It can be argued that insofar as life qua the gulf is inescapable [as in the inescapability of the ideal ego], so does the distinction between *you* and *me* [thus the friend-enemy polarization]. In this sense, life forms the intersection of what Schmitt calls *existential*, and Butler calls *common human vulnerability*: This vulnerability “emerges with life itself...we cannot recover the source of this vulnerability: it precedes the formation of ‘I.’ This is a condition, a condition of being laid bare from the start.”¹²⁶ What is life but the unconscious art of

¹²⁶ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 31.

protecting the boundaries of *you* and *me* in favor of *me*? Unconscious in the sense that this whole imaginary process and its relation to the symbolic function unconsciously. We can only make sense of this process retrospectively. Everyone might be aware of the circulation of friend-enemy distinction and its relation to the survival of beings, to a certain extent, insofar as the unconscious resurfaces through the symbolic; yet the unconscious aspects are only the product of retrospective speculation, not of a synchronic one, i.e., while observing a deceased body in the present [synchronic part], contemplating death qua the permanent annihilation of an irreducible abyss, delving into the realm of retrospection and pondering the genesis of this profound chasm. Here, life itself may point to the potential to overcome the finite abyss with concepts such as bridging or filling, but death condemns not only these bridging efforts but the abyss itself to total destruction; In this sense, death itself becomes a dark, bottomless and infinite abyss.—The finite abyss qua the work of the life to bridge any kinds of abyss one way or another and the infinite abyss qua the work of death that destroys everything.

Bringing this discussion on the distinction between *you* and *me*, back to the mirror stage, we can see that the encounter with the other is inherent in the formation of self-identity. The other, whether as a specific individual, an inanimate object, or a non-human animal, serves as a mirror that contributes to the construction of our sense of self. The boundaries of the self extend to include the other as we assimilate aspects of the other's presence, influence, and characteristics into our own imaginary identity.

3.4. Conclusion

Freudian psychical apparatus and Lacan's three orders of the psyche offer complementary perspectives on the structure and functioning of the human mind. Freud's psychical apparatus, consisting of the id, ego, and superego, explores the interplay between unconscious drives, rationality, and internalized moral standards. Lacanian three orders of the psyche, namely the imaginary, symbolic, and real, delve into the formation of self-identity, the role of language and culture, and the encounter with the enigmatic and unrepresentable aspects of existence. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of human

psychology and the intricate dynamics between the conscious and unconscious realms.

Within Lacan's psychoanalysis, the three orders or registers hold significant implications for the structure of the human psyche. The imaginary, intricately linked to the realm of images and spectacles, is often characterized by phantasmagorical illusions and non-realities. Moreover, the fact that the imaginary mirror stage serves as the locus of the *proto-ego*'s emergence and development underscores the ego's fundamentally non-realistic nature in Lacanian theory. Contrasting the bodily confusion and disarray caused by the infant's lack of mastery over their physical self, the specular image present in the mirror acts as a unifying force that fosters identification with the image. Consequently, the imaginary order serves as a breeding ground for alienation, further exacerbated by a perpetual sense of lack and fragmentation that pervades the depths of our unconscious history. Additionally, it is crucial to note that the imaginary register also forms the foundation from which the ideal ego emerges.

Lacan's conceptualization of the symbolic register as the structural domain of law, language, and culture is an inherently complex and multifaceted construct, particularly in its emphasis on language's profound impact on forming and expressing our subjective experiences of reality. The symbolic order is inexorably intertwined with language, particularly speech, as it serves as a medium for preserving, transmitting, and containing the various cultural and linguistic codes underpinning our social and communicative interactions. Lacan contends that language plays a fundamental role in shaping and organizing our psychic lives and that how we utilize language provides a revealing window into the unconscious desires and conflicts that inform our subjective experiences. Thus, speech represents a critical tool through which individuals can express and communicate their most deeply held unconscious desires and conflicts within the framework of the symbolic order. However, Lacan also acknowledges the profound challenges and limitations inherent in articulating the ineffable and ever-evolving nature of desire through linguistic channels, underscoring the complex and dynamic structure of the human psyche as it exists within the symbolic order.

The symbolic register plays a pivotal role in forming and delineating the subject [symbolic ego], serving as the critical space in which the distinction between [now symbolic] *you* and *me* crystallizes. While the imaginary realm represents the site at which the proto-ego [imaginary me] initially emerges, it is only through the subject's subordination to the intricate web of symbolic relations that the process of the subjective constitution can truly begin to take shape. The symbolic order serves as a critical mechanism through which the seemingly inaccessible and elusive nature of the imaginary can be rendered accessible, enabling individuals to express and articulate the otherwise ineffable aspects of the self through speech. While the subject can contribute to some extent to the construction and modification of the symbolic order, it is crucial to note that this contribution remains largely inconsequential in substantive terms, as the symbolic operates through a complex and intricate system of linguistic and cultural codes that transcend any individual's particular contributions.

As for the real, it occupies a unique and ineffable space beyond the grasp of any attempts at symbolic representation or conceptualization, rendering all such endeavors ultimately futile. The real constitutes an unfathomable entity, transcending the confines of language and the symbolic order, a realm of pure and unadulterated presence, bereft of any representational or signifying structures. The symbolic order serves as the primary conduit through which the imaginary and the real can be mediated. Yet, this interposition is always incomplete and subject to rupture, as the real remains forever elusive and unassailable, resisting any efforts to integrate it into the symbolic order fully. Furthermore, the imaginary, with its own illusions, can never be fully reconciled with the real, giving rise to a triadic relationship between the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic that remains in a state of perpetual tension and negotiation. The real thus represents the site where the subject is compelled to confront the very essence of their being stripped of all illusory constructs. This experience remains beyond the reach of symbolic representation or language, which can only be apprehended through a direct, unmediated encounter with the real.

The encounter with the real represents a moment of profound rupture and disruption in the subject's experience, as the symbolic order proves inadequate in providing a coherent and meaningful framework for comprehending this elusive and ineffable

phenomenon. The failure of the symbolic to adequately address the real stems from the fact that the real transcends the limits of demonstration and articulation, rendering it impervious to symbolic representation and conceptualization. In other words, the real lies beyond the realm of language and the symbolic order, making all attempts to comprehend it through symbolic means ultimately futile.

Moreover, the real is inextricably linked to the moral law. This fundamental guiding force directs the subject towards moral action and provides a means by which the subject can actualize their presence in the world. Through the moral law, we are able to forge a tenuous bridge between the symbolic and the real, creating a pathway towards a more authentic and meaningful, albeit partial and limited, engagement with the real. By adhering to the moral law, the subject can navigate the treacherous waters of the symbolic order and confront the real in all its uncanny and disconcerting glory, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of their place in the world. In this sense, the moral law represents a crucial means by which the subject can come to terms with the elusive nature of the real while simultaneously affirming their own ethical and existential worth.

Lacan's concept of the mirror stage comprises an analysis of the fundamental onto-epistemological underpinnings of our chronic anxiety and aggressivity, as well as the formation of the enemy category. We are entirely reliant upon our mother during our initial years of existence. The infant initially perceives the mother's body as an extension of oneself until weaning, without clear boundaries demarcating *me* from the other. However, upon weaning, the infant becomes cognizant of the physical and imaginary separation between *me* and the other, wherein the mother is no longer a constituent part of a unified whole but rather an independent entity. This moment of realization marks the emergence of the image of the cruel mother and, in conjunction with the infant's perception of their reflection in the mirror, signifies the pivotal significance of the visual register in the formation of the proto-ego or imaginary *me* as a coherent, albeit illusory, entity.

The infant's identification with the specular image in the mirror lays the foundation for the subject's continuous confrontation with the conflictual dynamic of recognition and misrecognition as she is introduced into the symbolic order, where she is

subjected to the scrutiny and judgment of others and detached from her corporeal reality. The ensuing tension between identification and alienation constitutes a perennial challenge to integrate the imaginary proto-ego/me with the symbolic norms that govern it, thereby configuring the subject's identity formation process.

The deceptive image presents a fictitious sense of completeness and mastery, masking the inherent incompleteness stemming from the initial separation from the mother. This ontological wound remains irreparable due to the unbridgeable gap between the real and the symbolic. The individual's lifelong pursuit to fill this void involves futile searches for romantic partners, religious beliefs, and even the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom.

The infant's confrontation with the present fragmentation of her body and the idealized future image reflected in the mirror engenders a paradoxical state wherein the initial aggression gives way to anxiety, stemming from the realization of the powerlessness to alter the prevailing situation.

Once we enter the realm of the symbolic, the inherent onto-epistemological deficiency becomes entrenched in the grammatical structure, compelling the body to conform to linguistic constructs to sustain its illusory completeness. The interdependent relationship between language and the body is constitutive, whereby language continuously shapes and redefines the body's ontology, especially concerning gender positions. The dichotomy between self and other emerges through the subject-predicate sequence, manifesting the categories of stranger and alien.

Although not all *you/the other* necessarily denotes hostility, the dichotomy between self and other warrants a reassessment. The self [symbolic me] extends beyond a mere corporeal ego, as in the context of love, boundaries are renegotiated, and the other [symbolic you] is incorporated within it. Thus, we are inherently shaped by cultural norms and a power dynamic that precedes and transcends us, constituting our identity and positioning us towards the other/the symbolic you.

The dichotomy between *you* and *me* serves as a necessary constituent for the survival of our species, allowing us to distinguish between friend and enemy and to define ourselves. *You* signifies the mirror stage's primordial mother who shatters the *pre-mirror me*'s sense of wholeness, catapulting it into the uncertainty of the external

world. Thus, *you* unconsciously conjures the image of the cruel mother, while *me* represents the specular image/ideal-ego, i.e., the unity.

Furthermore, the onto-epistemic gulf between the symbolic and the real necessitates the distinction between friend and enemy, as life itself becomes a potential source of harm and transgression. This distinction, which derives its power from the symbolic and imaginary polarizations, is inherent to the inescapable nature of the onto-epistemic gulf and, thus, the distinction between *you* and *me*. For, preserving the you-me boundary, privileging the latter, is an instinctual and unconscious drive that operates in tandem with the interplay between the imaginary and symbolic realms. While the circulation of the friend-enemy dichotomy and its role in preserving life is recognized partially on a conscious level, its unconscious aspects remain elusive and can only be comprehended retrospectively.

In the next and the last chapter, despite Schmitt's caveat that the friend-enemy distinction should not be understood in individual and psychological terms, we will argue that what he meant was a distinction made on a conscious level whereby conceptualizations like private, individual emotions and so on pervade; and that the unconscious distinctions between *you* and *me* are the archaic form of the conscious friend-enemy split. And we will see that this form paves the way for the friend-enemy distinction and is constantly working unconsciously in the background of our psyche.

CHAPTER 4

RE-READING THE SCHMITTIAN CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY VIA THE LACANIAN MIRROR STAGE

In this chapter, first, we will begin with the critique of Schmittian neutrality thesis. Accordingly, we will examine the Freudian distinction between the *psychology of the id* and the *psychology of the ego* to develop a solution to the impasse of Schmitt's caveats against psychologizing the friend-enemy distinction. In that regard, we will see that Freud's id represents the primal and impulsive aspect of the mind driven by immediate gratification, while the ego acts as a mediator between the id and the external world, navigating social norms and employing defense mechanisms. Also, we will discuss that Schmitt constructs his psychologizing warnings based on the *psychology of the ego*, so analysis on the basis of the *psychology of the id* will be exempt from these warnings. The unconscious proto-ego that emerged in the mirror stage will accordingly be based on the *psychology of the id*, unlike the fully structured ego based on the *psychology of the ego*.

Second, since Schmitt's neutral domain thesis is based on non-discrimination between friend and enemy, we will examine in detail how the mirror stage challenges this thesis, as the subject stems from and rises above the archaic *me-you* distinction—leading to the friend-enemy polarization—and as these distinctions are permanent and inseparable parts of our psyche. In that regard, while Butler will help us to read the similarities and differences between the individual and the group psyche via the conceptualization of the *subject*, Žižek will enable us to establish the connection between the Lacanian archaic *me-you* distinction and the Schmittian groupings of friend and enemy.

Third, we will endeavor to find answers to two possible questions that might come from a Schmittian position: first, whether all these analyses and criticisms are still

too much leftovers of liberalism; the other is whether the mirror stage is abstract with all its symbols and metaphors, despite the friend-enemy distinction Schmitt calls existential and concrete.

Fourth, to further support the argument that the Schmittian neutrality thesis does not hold up within the boundaries of the *psychology of the id* [of the mirror stage], we will briefly examine the relationship between the real qua traumatic disruption, mirror stage, cruel mother, anxiety and technology.

4.1. The Critique of Schmittian Neutrality

Schmitt's caveat serves as a cautionary reminder against the inclination to reify the enemy as a mere figment of imagination or an abstract construct, emphasizing the imperative to resist the tendency towards psychologizing these conceptualizations:

The friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense, not as metaphors or symbols, not mixed and weakened by economic, moral, and other conceptions, least of all in a private individualistic sense as a psychological expression of private emotions and tendencies.¹²⁷

In navigating the apparent impasse stemming from Schmitt's explicit caution against interpreting the concept of the political through individualistic and psychological lenses, a potential avenue for resolution emerges by invoking the nuanced Freudian differentiation between the *psychology of the ego* and the *psychology of the id*.¹²⁸

In the following subsections, to support our argument, namely, neutral domains, i.e., economic, aesthetic, and ethical—which assume a lack of differentiation between friends and enemies, resulting in an unpolitical landscape—are not neutral, hence political, we will refer to Freud, Butler, and Žižek, respectively. First, Freud's distinction between the *psychology of the id* and the *psychology of the ego* will be very useful for us to argue that the Lacanian mirror stage points to the former, and the latter is what Schmitt means when he explicitly excludes psychological approaches. Therefore, determining that what Schmitt means by psychology is that of

¹²⁷ Ibid., 27-28.

¹²⁸ We will take up this distinction again below with regard to the critique of Schmittian neutrality. See Freud, "A Short Account of Psychoanalysis," in *Complete Works*, 4118.

ego, not the *psychology of the id*, will pave the way for us to criticize his neutral domain thesis via the mirror stage. Second, since the *psychology of the id* is in the field of the individual psyche, Butler's conceptualization of the *subject* will form a nexus so that we can connect with the collective psyche, which Schmitt calls groupings of friends and enemies [public enemy], and analyze the similarities and differences between the two. Lastly, Žižek will be the final step necessary to establish the connection between Lacan and Schmitt. Žižek will enable us to argue that even our neighbor, which is a component of that collectivity Schmitt calls grouping of friends, is not actually a friend but an enemy; it seems like a friend only by means of the symbolic order. Therefore friend is actually a monstrous enemy. As such, the Schmittian neutrality thesis based on non-discrimination between friend and enemy is challenged by the unconscious *me-you* distinction from the Lacanian mirror stage and by Žižek's elaboration on symbolic order.

4.1.1. Psychology of the Id and Psychology of the Ego

What Schmitt means by psychology, in his reading of the concepts "private" and "individualistic" along the same lines, actually implies Freud's *psychology of the ego*. Concepts such as individuality, private and non-private refer to the structural features of a full-fledged ego. The reality principle shapes that mature ego by integrating those concepts of individuality, private, and non-private. It guides individuals in navigating the real world with social acceptability. Individuals balance personal thoughts, feelings, and desires with external norms, acknowledging their unique identity. Similarly, the reality principle delimits privacy and public behavior, guiding appropriate expression of needs in diverse contexts. The reality principle fosters a well-functioning ego by adapting behavior to social demands while satisfying desires realistically. In a word, it harmonizes individuality with the demands of reality, enabling the pursuit of desires within socially accepted and realistic boundaries.

In the realm of the id, however, these concepts make no sense: All it desires is the gratification of sudden impulsive desires. When we approach Schmitt's distinction between friend and enemy with a more nuanced discipline of psychology, that of the id, the Schmittian concept of the political, and hence of neutrality, take on a very

different meaning since the mirror stage marks just before the moment when the ego exists. That is, it corresponds to the *psychology of the id*.

During the mirror stage, a proto-ego begins to emerge and differentiate under the powerful influence of the unconscious id. This indicates that the mirror stage is a crucial phase in the development of the ego, but it is still under the intense control of the id, supporting the notion that it corresponds to the *psychology of the id*. The identification with a specular image during the mirror stage provides a sense of self and triggers the emergence of an unconscious proto-ego. This also suggests that the psychological processes involved in the mirror stage are still within the domain of the id, as the ego is not yet fully structured.

For Schmitt,

The enemy is not merely any competitor or just any partner of a conflict in general. He is also not the private adversary whom one hates. An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity. The enemy is solely the public enemy, because everything that has a relationship to such a collectivity of men, particularly to a whole nation, becomes public by virtue of such a relationship.¹²⁹

He makes a sharp distinction between the public and the private enemy. He emphasizes what he means when he says the enemy is a public enemy, not a personal one, nor, in the terminology discussed above, an enemy originating from the *psychology of the ego*. Schmitt rightfully characterizes the private enemy as embodying individualistic-psychological tendencies rooted in the ego. This category encompasses individuals we consciously harbor hatred towards, predominantly due to personal experiences and grievances. The private enemy represents a manifestation of subjective animosity borne out of specific interactions and deeply ingrained resentments. While the id may contribute to the initial emergence of resentments, the ego, and superego play significant roles in shaping and modulating these emotions. The ego, as the rational and reality-oriented part of the mind, can help regulate and navigate the expression of aggressive or vengeful impulses arising from the id. And the superego, representing internalized moral standards, can influence the individual's moral judgments and evaluations of their resentments.

¹²⁹ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 28.

On the other hand, a public enemy is the onto-epistemologically alien stranger whom we do not personally dislike since it is one with whom we do not personally have a shared past experience, who is not necessarily morally evil, and with whom we can even trade. The public enemy can potentially disrupt and dismantle the collective body [specular image/ideal ego], much like the fragmented and dismembered state preceding the mirror stage. Their existence poses a fundamental challenge to the cohesion and stability of the collective entity. The public enemy thus represents an external force capable of jeopardizing the imagined unity of the collective body; it is now all a *you* [radical alterity], a *not-me* [neither symbolic nor imaginary me], and not an *assimilated you* [partly internalized otherness] either. It is partly the cruel mother or another figure in that role in the post-mirror stage, an ambivalent figure who destroyed the whole environment of trust and peace and can never be trusted anymore.

In the previous chapter, we expounded upon the infantile condition of being separated from the maternal figure, which compels the infant to employ a repertoire of substitutions to rectify the onto-epistemological lack that pervades her existence. Within this framework, one can interpret the formation of the Schmittian groupings of friends and enemies as one such substitutive mechanism. Confronted with the disquieting semblance encountered in the specular image, the infant, ensnared in a maelstrom of aggression and later anxiety, seeks solace through identification with this image. As elucidated by Lacan, the specular image that crystallizes during the mirror stage also heralds the dawn of the ideal ego—an image that demands ardent emulation and fidelity to attain a state of completeness, warding off the specter of anxiety and achieving a pinnacle of the idealized form.

In a psychoanalytic sense, groupings of friends—nations being a conspicuous exemplar of this phenomenon—serve a dual role. On the one hand, they proffer a profound sense of belonging, acting as a consolation to soothe the existential loneliness that besets the proto-ego consequent to the alienated separation. By evoking reminiscences of primordial unity with the maternal figure, these social collectivities furnish an antidote to the anguish of solitude and alienation inherent in our vulnerable existence. On the other, the endeavor towards self-mastery, in its relentless pursuit of the idealized image that assumes ascendancy during the mirror

stage, can be more efficaciously accomplished within groupings that embody attributes transcending the realm of a *hollow/imaginary ego*. Consequently, these groupings of friends afford a social milieu that facilitates and enhances the individual's endeavor to synchronize with the specular exemplar enshrined within the idealized image. On the contrary, groupings of the enemy [public enemy] refers in a sense to an encounter with the real qua traumatic event through cruel mother, which has the potential to shatter this primordial unity.

4.1.2. Butler on Two Conceptualizations of the Subject

To further deepen Schmitt's distinction between public and private enemy, as well as for a nuanced analysis of the *subjects* underlying these distinctions and to avoid falling into the fallacy of composition¹³⁰, we must briefly analyze Butler's caveat. In this way, we will take a closer look at the similarities and differences between the individual psyche [private enemy] that Schmitt opposes and the groupings of friends/enemies [public enemy] that he affirms.

Butler's warning on the question of the transitive relation between the individual and the group psyche is as follows:

Nations are not the same as individual psyches, but both can be described as "subjects," albeit of different orders. When a *group/nation* acts, it establishes a conception of what it means to act as *a group/nation*, establishes a norm by which that subject might be known...a subject...at the national level, a sovereign and extra-legal subject, a violent and self-centered subject; its actions constitute the building of a subject that seeks to restore and maintain its mastery through the systematic destruction of its multi-lateral relations, its ties to the international community. It shores itself up, seeks to reconstitute its imagined wholeness, but only at the price of denying its own vulnerability, its dependency, its exposure, where it exploits those very features in others, thereby making those features "other to" itself.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Assuming that what is true for the parts must also be true for the whole is the fallacy of composition. In other words, it involves mistakenly inferring that the characteristics or properties of individual elements within a group or system automatically apply to the group or system as a whole. This assumption overlooks the possibility of emergent properties or interactions that may arise when the parts are combined. In essence, the fallacy of composition arises when we incorrectly generalize from the properties of the parts to the properties of the whole without considering the complex interactions and dynamics that may exist. It reminds us to be cautious in assuming that what is true at an individual level will always hold true when those individuals are combined as part of a larger system.

¹³¹ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 41. Italics mine.

Considering Lacan's distinction between the self/ego [occurring through identification processes, i.e., the unconscious mirror stage] and the subject [denoting the position within the symbolic/moral order, within the reality principle] on the level of the individual psyche, It should be noted that these distinctions can also be applied to groups via Butler's take on the conceptualization of the Lacanian subject. Butler's analysis draws upon Lacanian concepts such as self/ego and subject, which have been traditionally used to understand the individual psyche. By extending these concepts to the group or state level, Butler suggests that similar identification, self-perception, and symbolic positioning dynamics operate within collective formations [groupings of friend and enemy]. This conceptualization allows us to analyze the complex interplay of identity, power, and ideology that characterizes groups and nations.

Butler's statement suggests that nations and individual psyches share similarities as "subjects" but operate at different levels of complexity. When a group or nation acts, it constructs its own understanding of collective action and establishes norms that define its identity and behavior. At the national level, a nation is seen as a sovereign entity, surpassing legal boundaries and often exhibiting characteristics of violence [of aggressivity] and self-centeredness. A nation's actions aim to assert and maintain its dominance by undermining [not destroying altogether as in absolute enemy] its relationships with other nations and international communities. In this pursuit, the nation seeks to preserve its perceived integrity [ideal image] by denying its own vulnerabilities [its fragmented existence], dependencies, and exposure. Paradoxically, the nation [groupings of friends] exploits these very features in others [groupings of enemies], treating them as "other" [as public enemy] and using them to its advantage.

From this, we can deduce a series of similarities and dissimilarities with regard to individual and group psyches. On the similarity part: First, collective and individual psyches conceptualize their own essence and elucidate the modus operandi of functioning as a coherent entity [fiction of wholeness]. They forge standards and discernible behavioral patterns that distinctly epitomize their intrinsic nature. Second, motivated by their inherent self-interests, both ardently pursue preserving their own boundaries and cultivating an aura of self-significance, i.e., pride, self-esteem, and

recognition. Third, both group and individual psyches strive to assert their control and mastery over their environment. They seek to establish dominance and may resort to violence or other means to achieve their goals. Fourth, both often deny their own vulnerability and dependency on others. They may ignore or downplay their own weaknesses and instead exploit the vulnerabilities of others to maintain their own power or achieve their objectives. Lastly, both seek to reconstitute their imagined wholeness as a means of self-preservation. Especially the individual psyche strives to create a sense of completeness or coherence within themselves, often through the suppression or denial of conflicting aspects of their identity.

Besides these similarities, there are several differences between the individual psyche and the groupings of friend and enemy. First, the individual psyche pertains to the inner world of a single person, encompassing their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It operates on a personal and introspective level, focusing on the individual's unique psychological makeup and subjective reality. In contrast, the nation or group subject operates on a larger scale, representing a community's collective identity, aspirations, and actions. It extends beyond individual boundaries, involving diverse individuals with varied perspectives, interests, and social dynamics.

Second, power dynamics differ between the individual psyche and the nation or group subject. At the individual level, power dynamics are primarily internal, involving the interplay of desires, conflicts, and the negotiation of personal identity. In contrast, the nation or group subject operates internally and externally within a complex web of power relations. It seeks to assert its interests, maintain its sovereignty, and secure its position among other nations or groups. Power struggles, political negotiations, and conflicts arise as various actors vie for influence and dominance within the larger social and geopolitical context.

Third, the subject's identity is formed through personal experiences, relationships, and self-perception. It develops a sense of self based on individual characteristics, values, and interactions with others. In contrast, the nation or group subject forges its identity through shared history, culture, language, and collective experiences. It establishes a collective memory and narrative that reinforces a sense of belonging and common purpose among its members. The nation or group subject also engages

in relationships with other nations or groups, which can involve cooperation, competition, conflict, or negotiation.

Lastly, the individual psyche, to a certain extent, acknowledges and confronts its vulnerabilities, dependencies, and existential uncertainties. It recognizes its own limitations and interconnectedness with others. In contrast, the nation or group subject may tend to downplay or deny vulnerabilities and dependencies, seeking to project strength and maintain control. It may view certain features or characteristics in others as "other to" itself, emphasizing differences and exploiting them for its own benefit. This process of othering can create divisions and perpetuate power imbalances between nations or groups.

Building upon the aforementioned similarities and differences between the individual psyche and group dynamics, it is crucial to acknowledge that the distinction between groups of friends and groups of enemies arises as a consequence of collective identification and the subsequent formation of social groups. By designating an enemy, the boundaries and identity of a friend group are reinforced, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among its members. This understanding sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the role and significance of enemies within social dynamics. As such, it is imperative to recognize that groupings of friends are inextricably entwined with their complementary counterparts—groupings of enemies. To a certain extent, the demarcation between friend and enemy groupings emerges as a corollary of collective identification and the concomitant formation of social groups. For the designation of an enemy consolidates the friend group's boundaries and identity, thus fortifying the sense of unity and shared purpose that pervades within its ranks: "The enemy is not something to be eliminated out of a particular reason, something to be annihilated as worthless. The enemy stands on my plane. For this reason I must contend with him in battle, in order to assure my own standard...my own limits, my own *Gestalt*."¹³²

If the enemy were considered an *absolute enemy* and completely annihilated, we would have shifted to an unpolitical plane, as it necessitates the total annihilation of the enemy— instead of making and maintaining the distinction between the friend and the enemy—and its dehumanization. Nevertheless, for Schmitt, the enemy [the

¹³² Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 61.

radical alterity] assumes the role of a mirror through which we can assure our existence—especially the specular image/ideal-ego qua *Gestalt*¹³³—and determine our own limits. Therefore, we need a public enemy, not as a worthless figure but to ensure our own way of life. At the same time, this enemy evokes aggressivity and anxiety in us, as a kind of threat to our ideally totalized image of unity [groupings of friends], as a reminder of the fragmented past.

4.1.3. Žižek on the Neighbor qua Pacified Monster [Enemy]

It is crucial to refer to Žižek here, as he has the potential to bring Lacan and Schmitt together, endorsing our main argument, i.e., so-called neutral domains are not neutral. Even a friend is nothing but an enemy: What Schmitt calls groupings of friends and their components are actually monsters [radical alterity] that come together through the Lacanian symbolic order, and the fact that under the mask that looks like a friend, there is actually nothing but a monstrous enemy—an *alienated/inimical/divided me*. That axiom is one of the strongest justifications for our use of the *psychology of the id* [of the mirror stage] and its application to the Schmittian groupings. Thus, the potential for the fallacy of composition is rendered ineffective due to the inherent entanglement of political considerations, i.e., neutral domains being based on the unconscious friend-enemy [archaic *me-you*] division within the very process of group composition.

We should bear in mind that, let alone the groupings of fellow citizens qua nation we do not know and never meet in person, even our neighbors whom we at least know and with whose physical presence we encounter, to a certain extent, are not neutral or

¹³³ Gestalt, in a broader sense, encapsulates the notion of apprehending or experiencing an entity in its entirety rather than as an assemblage of discrete constituents. Its genesis can be traced back to the realm of psychology, specifically Gestalt psychology, which arose during the early 20th century. Gestalt psychology proffers the assertion that the human mind tends to perceive objects, patterns, or phenomena holistically, placing emphasis on the organization and integration of constituent elements into a cohesive whole. From this perspective, the cognitive process of perception is not solely predicated upon an object's individual attributes or qualities, but rather upon the configuration and harmonization of said attributes into a unified entity. The term "gestalt" finds its etymological origins in the German language, connoting "shape," "form," or "pattern." It denotes the overall configuration or structural arrangement arising from constituent parts' amalgamation. The fundamental tenet of gestalt psychology posits that the composite whole possesses qualities and characteristics distinct from the mere summation of its individual constituents. In essence, the perception of an object or experience is not solely contingent upon its isolated components but also contingent upon the interrelationships and interplay between said components.

unpolitical, for us. In Žižek's terms, "The neighbor as the Thing means that, beneath the neighbor as my semblant, my mirror image, there always lurks the unfathomable abyss of radical otherness, of a monstrous Thing that cannot be 'gentrified.'"¹³⁴ He adds that what turns this monster into a fellow human being is "the symbolic order qua third, the pacifying mediator."¹³⁵—As in the symbolic/moral order's injunction "love your neighbor." Here it can be seen that the monster is pacified with the seemingly amiable sign "neighbor." As for the "gentrified," it refers to a quasi-permanent and direct transformation, while "pacified" points to a situation that is more indirect and temporary, and it contains the possibility of relapse into the former state at any moment. — For the pacified monster beneath the sign "neighbor" can come up any time. Thus, Žižek posits that, subsumed beneath the neighbor's projected semblant, a tenuous mirroring of selfhood exists as an impenetrable abyss teeming with radical otherness—an unfathomable profundity. This allusion implies that beneath the surface-level correspondences perceptible in our interactions with neighbors, an enigmatic and fundamentally alien aspect subsists, impervious to conventional/symbolic modes of apprehension.

By invoking the epithet "monstrous Thing," Žižek accentuates this radical otherness's formidable and invincible quality. It manifests as a daunting entity that eludes our endeavors to domesticate or incorporate it, persistently evading assimilation into the socio-cultural matrix—it is the real qua "monstrous Thing." In doing so, it resolutely upholds its own distinctive and inviolable identity, thwarting any attempts at gentrification.

Within this intricately woven fabric, Žižek beckons us to acknowledge and embrace the enigmatic aspect and multi-faceted intricacy intrinsic to every human being. He leads us to transcend judgments rooted in superficial appearances, directing our attention to the unfathomable depths lurking beneath the external facade and cultivating a genuine reverence for the irreducible singularity of each person. In that regard, individuals within a group or nation still possess their own individual

¹³⁴ Slavoj Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters: A Plea for Ethical Violence," in *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, ed. Mark C. Taylor and Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 135.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

psyches—especially with the archaic *you* and *me* distinction—with thoughts, desires, and conflicts. These psychological aspects [that of the id] influence their behaviors, decision-making processes, and interactions within the group. By analyzing the *psychology of the id* within a group qua subject and comprehending the pervasive political concerns—due to the archaic *you* and *me*—we can rightly argue that Schmittian neutral domains are condemned to be trans-neutral, and since political concerns are already part of the process of composition, the fallacy of composition once again does not hold up.

Thus, Žižek's articulation of the neighbor as the Thing compels us to confront the ineffable essence of alterity, compelling us to embrace the radical otherness as an essential and immutable facet of their existence. This summons us to transcend facile taxonomies, recognizing the abysmal profundities hidden beneath the surface, thereby nurturing an authentic celebration of the irreducible uniqueness characterizing each sentient being.

Hence, in connection with our critique, even if groupings of friends [friends qua the *pacified*, not the *gentrified*] are possible to a certain extent in the Schmittian sense through symbolic order, the ontology of the category of the friend has an unconscious/imaginary axiom that the friend is always the enemy. Let us not forget that even *me* is nothing but an *alienated/inimical/divided me*, that is, a *pacified*, not *gentrified me*.

4.1.4. Lacan versus Schmitt

The psychological approaches, disapproved by Schmitt due to their individualistic expression of emotions, can be understood in relation to the Freudian *psychology of the ego*. The *psychology of the id* is not included in the Schmittian conceptualization. Were it had, it would invalidate the neutral domain thesis; excluding *the psychology of the id* preserves the integrity of the neutral domain thesis, as this thesis asserts a lack of distinction between friend and enemy, leading to an unpolitical/trans-neutral situation. However, as we see, the distinction between friend and enemy qua archaic Gestalt stemming from the Lacanian mirror stage is a constant primitive image in the functioning of our psychic apparatus. This primary Gestalt, originating from the

mirror stage and persisting through the post-mirror unconscious proto-ego, functions consistently within our psyche. Here, first, we will briefly dwell on where the conceptualization of emotion fits in the Freudian corpus, the relationship of emotion with conscious and unconscious processes, and why emotion, which Schmitt excluded, resides in the domain of *psychology of the ego*. Second, we will try to answer two potential questions arising from a Schmittian perspective: Are the analyses and criticisms mentioned still influenced by liberalism? Is the mirror stage, despite its symbolic nature, too abstract in comparison to Schmitt's concrete existential friend-enemy distinction?

4.1.4.1. Transcending Schmittian Critique of Emotions and Individualism

Emotions [influenced by conscious factors] and individualism, subjects of Schmitt's disapproval, find their foundation in a well-structured ego that emerges well after the unconscious proto-ego/imaginary me. In Freudian psychoanalysis, emotions are multifaceted psychological phenomena that hold deep significance in the human experience. They are intimately intertwined with the functioning of the psychical apparatus, which is essentially the model Freud proposed to understand the structure and dynamics of the mind. Emotions do not arise in isolation but rather from a complex interplay within the psychical apparatus. This apparatus encompasses various regions of the mind, including the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious realms, as well as the three fundamental components of personality: the id, ego, and superego.

The occurrence of emotion involves a series of interconnected processes. External or internal stimuli serve as triggers that activate certain psychological mechanisms within the individual. The perception and interpretation of these stimuli greatly influence the emotional response—furthermore, emotions are not solely influenced by conscious factors but also by unconscious elements. Deep-seated desires, repressed memories, and unresolved conflicts in the unconscious mind play a significant role in shaping emotional experiences.

Moreover, emotions often arise from conflicts and tensions between different psychic structures. The id, driven by primal instincts and desires, may clash with the

superego, which represents societal norms and moral values. The ego, positioned as the mediator between these opposing forces, strives to maintain a balance. However, this delicate equilibrium is often disrupted, leading to the emergence of intense emotions. To cope with these overwhelming emotions, the ego employs defense mechanisms. These mechanisms, such as repression, denial, or projection, act as psychological shields, protecting the individual from anxiety and emotional distress. They help manage and regulate the intensity of emotions, albeit unconsciously.¹³⁶

Schmitt's critique specifically targets the emotions and individualistic tendencies associated with the utterly developed ego [*symbolic me*], reflecting personal desires and self-identification. Accordingly, all so-called neutral domains, purportedly devoid of friend-enemy distinctions, are fundamentally influenced by the post-mirror stage and the dual distinction stemming from the Lacanian unconscious proto-ego. Our argument posits that, despite claims of neutrality, the unconscious friend-enemy division within the *psychology of the id* permeates every aspect of these domains. Consequently, these domains' neutrality is challenged, highlighting their inherent susceptibility to the underlying psychological [that of id] dynamic.

In summary, the inimical attitude Schmitt criticizes, characterized by individualistic expression of emotions, aligns with Freudian *psychology of the ego*. The exclusion of the id in Schmitt's conceptualization upholds the integrity of the neutral domain thesis. The constant and primal image of the friend-enemy distinction, originating from the Lacanian mirror stage [imaginary me/you] and persisting through the post-mirror stage [*symbolic me/you*], plays a fundamental role in our psychological functioning. In Žižek's terms, the distinction to be made here—in terms of the *psychology of the id*—should not be between friend and enemy as in Schmitt, but between enemy and friend qua pacified [not gentrified] monstrous Thing.

¹³⁶ For the discussion of emotions see Freud, "Obsessions And Phobias", 317, 323; "The Interpretation Of Dreams", 563, 743, 897, 991, 1007; "Fragment Of An Analysis Of A Case Of Hysteria", 1400, 1445; "Three Essays On The Theory Of Sexuality", 1489; "On Psychotherapy", 1571; "Civilized Sexual Morality And Modern Nervous Illness", 1961; "Analysis Of A Phobia In A Five-Year-Old Boy", 2097; "Totem And Taboo", 2663, 2704, 2708; "The Unconscious", 3000-3001; "Group Psychology And The Analysis Of The Ego", 3773-3774; "An Outline Of Psychoanalysis", 5004.

As such, Schmitt's disapproval targets emotions and individualism stemming from an utterly-structured ego [*symbolic you and me*], not *the psychology of the id*, i.e., the unconscious proto-ego. Ultimately, so-called neutral domains are not genuinely neutral whatsoever, as the unconscious friend-enemy [archaic *me-you* distinction] division pervades them, challenging their claimed impartiality.

4.1.4.2. Departing from the [Psychology of] Ego: A Position Beyond Liberalism

So, could Schmitt not argue that the very critiques and analyses presented here reinforce his thesis on the neutrality of the domains and that all of these are still liberalism's leftovers? —The criticism that all of these analyzes is about the individual and private sphere, which Schmitt has rejected from the very beginning; that is, it still cannot go beyond liberal arguments. As discussed in the first chapter, liberalism's core principles revolve around the autonomy and rights of individuals, the protection of private property, and the pursuit of rationality. These principles predominantly pertain to the *psychology of the ego*, which is centered on the personal-individualistic realm. Consequently, any analysis based on these principles inherently falls within the framework of the ego and, by extension, within the liberal paradigm.

Our study, on the other hand, points to a position beyond liberalism, as it is based entirely on the *psychology of the id* [mirror stage], that is, an irrational field prior to an utterly structured individuation. The mirror stage, as discussed, describes a phase in child development where the child recognizes themselves as a distinct entity separate from others. The id represents the irrational and instinctual aspects of human psychology. By emphasizing the *psychology of the id* and its relevance to the study, our research suggests a departure from the liberal paradigm, which primarily focuses on the ego and its rational individualism. In this sense, this study aims to explore a position beyond liberalism, as has been done in the previous chapter, by examining the irrational field prior to structured individuation, as proposed by the id. Hence, we seek to go beyond the liberal framework by investigating psychological aspects that lie outside the domain of rationality and individualism, providing an alternative perspective that challenges the liberal paradigm.

Lastly, within the framework of our analysis, a possible Schmittian perspective might offer a counterargument that merits further discussion: “The friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense, not as metaphors or symbols;” however, the notions of the mirror stage, cruel mother, and similar constructs appear to manifest as symbolic and metaphorical elements, thereby disassociating them from a concrete and existential domain.

To address the counterargument comprehensively, it is necessary to approach it from two distinct but interrelated angles. Firstly, the domains of symbol and metaphor can be understood within the context of the *psychology of the ego*, as they pertain to elements within the symbolic order that emerge way after the mirror stage. While Schmitt's critique remains internally coherent, particularly about his postulate of a fully structured ego [*symbolic you-me*], which forms the foundation of his arguments, our analysis operates within the framework of the id [*imaginary you-me*] and thus remains impervious to this specific criticism. In other words, the *symbolic you-me* distinction with the *imaginary you-me* distinction does not superimpose on each other. However, imaginary distinctions can be transformed into symbolic distinctions, as in the transformation of Žižek's monstrous Thing into the symbolic neighbor.

Secondly, it is essential to acknowledge that although our analysis is conducted retrospectively, our psyche is profoundly shaped by the mirror stage's palpable reality and existential structure. This stage should not be misconstrued as an abstract construct; rather, it represents a profound existentiality that permeates our entire existence and persists within our unconscious. By recognizing the mirror stage as an integral aspect of our psychological development, we can appreciate its tangible and enduring influence on our subjective experiences and mental processes. By approaching the counterargument from these logical perspectives, we can better apprehend the interplay between the symbolism of ego-related constructs and the concrete existentiality inherent in the mirror stage.

4.2. The Traumatic Encounter with the Real

While our analysis predominantly traverses the terrain of the ego, the real emerges as an ontological dimension that also transcends the mere purview of symbolic and metaphorical constructs. Signifying an elusive stratum anterior to structured individuation, the real elicits intrigue by its resistance to facile symbolization and linguistic apprehension. Anxiety arises precisely because of the technology qua encounter with the real and its resistance to symbolization.

4.2.1. The Primordial Role of the Real: Mirror Stage, Cruel Mother, and The Enemy

At first glance, the emphasis on the id's psychology, steeped in irrationality and pre-structured realms, may appear disengaged from the real. However, one must discern that the real, albeit often aligned with traumatic disruptions of existence, simultaneously assumes a primordial role within the fabric of our psychic constitution. Considering that separation of the infant from the mother is traumatic, we can assume that this moment is one of the first encounters with the real qua disruption. In that regard, the cruel mother qua mirror stage figure would have been the primary perpetrator of this first encounter, i.e., the symbol of the traumatic confrontation with the real. Self-mastery or mastery in general—considering that Schmittian groupings of friend is also a variant of this mastery—in that respect, can be seen as an endeavor to overcome the negativity that emerges after the infant's encounter with the real.

Moreover, given that the *imaginary you* and *me* distinction is the result of this traumatic encounter with the real via cruel mother, and these distinctions are transferred to the *symbolic you* and *me* and become crystallized there as friend and enemy qua the projection of the *alienated/inimical/divided me*, it can be seen that the real qua traumatic disruption, the archaic, cruel mother, the Thing, and the monster—all operating within the domain of the unconscious *psychology of the id*—are constantly operating within the Schmittian category of friend, crushing all Schmittian unpolitical neutrality claims, i.e., claims that do not make any distinction between friend and enemy.

Although The real qua traumatic separation through a cruel mother is the main cause of the split, alienation, and lack that the infant will try to compensate for the rest of her life, the real also seems to be a cure to this negativity. Considering that only a partial engagement with the real is possible, and this is through moral action and probability, the real, in that sense, becomes the leading actor of the transition from an inimical, separated self to an authentic one—authentic, not in the sense that transition to a whole [unfractured] self as it is impossible. Still, it is a self trying to find specific and partial ways of engagement with the real, since the total engagement is beyond reach.

Thus, while our study's focal point on the mirror stage and its corollary constructs does not negate the significance of the real, it accentuates the profound imprint left by the mirror stage upon our subjective encounters and psychological maturation. Indeed, the real stands as an intricate backdrop against which the dynamics of the mirror stage and ego-related constructions can be comprehended.

In this sense, *you* is the sine qua non of the ontological unity of both *symbolic* and *imaginary me*. It also symbolizes the primordial mother who throws the *pre-mirror me* out of all its peace and security—via confrontation with the real—into the uncertainty of the external world. So, *you* always unconsciously refers to the image of the cruel mother [and *me* refers to the specular image/ideal-ego] in the mirror stage, which traps the child in an endless sense of lack.¹³⁷ “We are trapped in both lack and desire at all times because we are trapped in language.”¹³⁸ We are inherently alienated, and our entry into the symbolic order of language perpetuates this alienation and maintains the imaginary *you-me* distinctions by transforming them into the *symbolic you* and *me*. This symbolic order imposes a series of linguistic categories and signifiers that mediate and determine our experiences, desires, and

¹³⁷ It might be claimed that a child does not have such a negative view towards his parents. Otherwise, sincere feelings and affection in the family environment would not emerge. This is not a counterargument that weakens our argument. The child establishes a relationship with his family, always carrying ambivalent feelings of love and hate. What appears to be love displayed towards his family is the emotion that the family's interest and concern for the child in compensating for the mirror stage evoke in the child. Often, the child wishes the parents dead if they do not satisfy what s/he wants.

¹³⁸ Caroline Ruddell, *The Besieged Ego: Doppelgangers and Split Identity Onscreen* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 51.

sense of the self. As such, language becomes a trap that perpetuates a fundamental lack or incompleteness in our being, which fuels our constant desires and attempts to fill this lack.

Thus, the distinction between *you* and *me* roughly forms the basis of the relationship between friend and enemy. I do not mean a superficial argument where you correspond to the enemy and *me* to the friend. I mean that the category of the enemy qua *not-me* [radical alterity/ the (m)Other] is a much more fundamental and predominant category: even *me*, to get rid of the aggressive tension and anxiety vis-à-vis ideal-ego, becomes an *alienated/inimical/divided me* since it is identified with the spectacularly totalized image. The *alienated/inimical/divided me* becomes friendly as long as it gets closer to the specular image [ideal ego] on the way to self-mastery—the moment of pure self-tranquility; and, as soon as it starts to move away, it becomes a *hostile you* as in the case of self-hate—the moment of abyssal darkness.

Yet, it should be noted that self-mastery is an impossible task: Self-mastery or understanding the self “would be to realize its falsity, and therefore the impossibility of coinciding with one’s self.”¹³⁹ It can be inferred that our hostility towards enemies is indeed a manifestation of hostility directed towards ourselves. The very notion of the enemy embodies an externalization of our own inner conflicts and contradictions, projecting them onto the “other.” Thus, the enemy becomes a reflection of the disavowed aspects of our own selves, embodying the rejected and repressed elements we struggle to confront within our own being. Hence, it can be argued that desire for affirmation fundamentally means that we first and foremost need to affirm our *alienated/inimical/divided me* for and within ourselves; a stranger’s need for repeated proof is a derivation of this primary endeavor and is of secondary importance. Hence, while our analysis may chiefly navigate the nuances of the mirror stage, one must not overlook the latent but dominant presence of the real and its profound sway over the subjective human experience, particularly when scrutinizing the psychological development and the interplay between symbolism and existentiality.

¹³⁹ Gallop, *Lacan’s ‘Mirror Stage’: Where to Begin*, 123.

4.2.2. Disruption of the Symbolic via the Real: Anomie, Anxiety and Technology

In Lacanian terminology, the issues surrounding anxiety and technology can be understood through the lens of the subject's encounter with the real. The advent of technology represents a significant shift in the Symbolic order, disrupting established norms [idealized image] and values that once guided social behavior. This disruption leads to a sense of cultural and social nothingness, an anomie that leaves individuals adrift in a sea of uncertainty. Anxiety arises from this dislocation between the old order and the emerging technological domain. The absence of dominant norms and the confusion of moral values generate a profound sense of unease as individuals struggle to find a stable ground upon which to base their actions. This state of anxiety is rooted in the loss of certainties and the subsequent questioning of one's identity and place in the world.

Furthermore, the anxiety associated with technology extends beyond the existential crisis of meaning. It also encompasses fear of the unknown, particularly concerning the ability to control and utilize these new marvels. The rapid advancement of technology creates a power differential, where human beings find themselves chronically incapable of fully comprehending and managing the complex systems they have created. The fear of losing control and being overwhelmed by these technological instruments becomes a constant source of anxiety.

Thus, anxiety can be seen as a response to the encounter with the real, the ungraspable and unknowable aspects of existence. Technology amplifies this encounter by pushing the boundaries of what is familiar and predictable. The Symbolic order, once a source of stability, becomes disrupted, and individuals are confronted with their own limitations in the face of technological progress. In that regard, anxiety emerges from the tension between the desire for certainty, grounded in the Symbolic, and the destabilizing effects of the real, embodied by the unpredictable nature of technology.

To address the issues of anxiety and technology, a Lacanian perspective would emphasize the need to navigate the inherent contradictions and complexities of this relationship. It involves acknowledging the disruptive power of technology while seeking to establish new frameworks that can provide a sense of meaning and

stability. This might involve reimagining the Symbolic order and its relation to technology, fostering a dynamic interplay between human agency and the technological domain. By recognizing and embracing the anxieties inherent in this encounter, individuals can strive to find a balance between the desire for control [instinct for mastery] and the acceptance of the uncertainties brought forth by technological advancements.

4.3. Conclusion

Schmitt's caveat serves as an admonition against the proclivity to categorize the enmity as a mere figment of imagination or an abstract construction, thereby underscoring the necessity to resist the inclination to psychologize these conceptualizations. Considering Freud's distinction between the *psychology of the ego* and the *psychology of the id* leads us to a potential resolution.

As the primordial cognitive structure, the id manifests itself at birth, constituting one of our psyche's most archaic and enigmatic recesses. It harbors the most basic impulse, driven by the immediate gratification of desires as they arise. Operative solely upon the pleasure principle, the id relentlessly seeks the swift fulfillment of its impulses, heedless of any ensuing consequences. Unrestrained, these impulsive tendencies of the id often clash with prevailing social norms and values, necessitating the development of more sophisticated psychic mechanisms to regulate behavior. Hence, the emergence of the ego and superego as psychic structures elegantly poised to mediate between the id and the complex challenges posed by the external world.

When the id confronts a reality irreconcilable with its desires, a landscape fraught with dissatisfaction, frustration, and disappointment, the structure known as the ego materializes, heralding a departure from the id's *modus operandi* and assuming the role of a veritable conduit between the reality principle governing the external world and the pleasure principle that characterizes the id.

Schmitt's explication of psychology, as applied to the concepts of "private" and "individualistic," converges with Freud's cogitations on the *psychology of the ego*. In this context, the ideas of individuality, privacy, and non-privacy take on profound significance as they embody the inherent characteristics of a fully actualized ego.

Nevertheless, when we venture into the domain of the id, these concepts lose their cogency, for the id, driven solely by impulsive desires, lacks the capacity to comprehend them. By engaging with Schmitt's dichotomy between friend and enemy through the prism of the *psychology of the id*, we unravel an alternative understanding of the Schmittian concept of the political and, consequently, neutrality. It is crucial to note that the mirror stage, a pivotal juncture preceding the establishment of the ego, denotes the emergence and differentiation of a proto-ego under the formidable influence of the unconscious id. This affirms the mirror stage's status as a critical phase in ego development, albeit one that remains subject to the dominant sway of the id, thereby substantiating its correspondence with the psychology of the id.

Schmitt draws a sharp demarcation between the public and private enemy, elucidating the essence of the public enemy as one that transcends personal animosity and the realm of ego-driven psychology. Indeed, he characterizes the private enemy as a manifestation of individualistic-psychological inclinations rooted in the ego. This category encompasses individuals we consciously harbor enmity, primarily due to personal encounters and grievances.

Conversely, the public enemy assumes the form of an onto-epistemologically alien stranger, devoid of personal aversion, for they lack shared historical experiences with us. The public enemy, by no means inherently morally corrupt, possesses the potential to disrupt and dismantle the collective entity, much akin to the fragmented and dismembered state that precedes the transformative mirror stage.

The intricate dynamics inherent in the formation of collective affiliations, exemplified by the configuration of friendships within nations, engender a multifaceted interplay that extends beyond mere social bonds. Such groupings assume a dual function of profound significance, orchestrating a symphony of belonging and self-actualization. Delving into their depths, we unravel a tapestry of existential complexities intertwined with the ceaseless pursuit of onto-epistemological purpose. In that regard, through Butler's conceptualization of the *subject*, we are able to read similarities and differences between human and group psyche. Butler's position asserts that nations and individual psyches share

commonalities as "subjects," albeit operating at different levels of complexity. When a collective entity such as a group or nation engages in action, it constructs its own comprehension of collective agency and establishes norms that delineate its identity and conduct. At the national level, a nation is perceived as a sovereign entity that transcends legal boundaries and frequently exhibits characteristics of aggression and self-interest. The nation's actions are directed towards asserting and preserving its dominance by undermining its relationships with other nations and international communities, without necessarily obliterating them entirely, as would be the case with an absolute enemy. In this pursuit, the nation endeavors to safeguard its perceived integrity and its idealized image, but paradoxically achieves this by negating its own vulnerabilities, fragmented existence, dependencies, and exposure. The nation, represented by its groups of friends, capitalizes on these very attributes in others, the groupings of enemies, treating them as "other" and exploiting them to its advantage.

Primarily, these group alliances provide a sanctuary from the abyss of existential solitude that plagues the nascent ego, an entity acutely aware of its fragmented state resulting from alienated separation. Drawing upon the primordial echoes of unity experienced with the archetypal maternal figure, these social collectives emerge as healing salves, alleviating the pangs of isolation and estrangement that afflict our human condition. Within their embrace, a profound solace arises, offering respite from the desolation of individual existence by cultivating a shared identity and a deep sense of communal belonging.

Yet, beyond the soothing embrace of belonging, the quest for self-mastery surges forth, fueled by an indomitable yearning to synchronize with the idealized image that ascends during the transformative mirror stage. The individual's odyssey toward self-realization finds its apotheosis within these intricate assemblages of companionship, characterized by attributes that transcend superficiality. These enclaves of kinship serve as fertile breeding grounds, nurturing the individual's pursuit of harmonization with the profound reflection of excellence enshrined within the ethereal contours of the idealized image.

Moreover, the tapestry of human relationships weaves groupings of friends and their interwoven counterparts—groupings of enemies—into a dense fabric of interdependency. The demarcation between amity and enmity emerges as an inevitable corollary of collective identification and the intricate web of social groups. Paradoxically, the designation of an enemy, seemingly antithetical to the spirit of camaraderie, serves as a crucible for consolidating the friend group's boundaries and identity. By delineating the contours of the "other," the enemy, the collective experiences a reinforcement of unity and shared purpose fortified through the adversarial encounters that define its relational landscape.

In the intricate realm of Schmittian thought, we are confronted with the complex of groupings, where the allure of amicable relationships, known as friends (not to be conflated with the gentrified variant), emerges with a semblance of possibility. However, beneath the surface lies an ontological foundation that rests upon an unconscious/imaginary axiom, interweaving the essence of friendship with the very essence of enmity. This axiom, deeply embedded within our psyche, compels us to recognize that even our own self, in all its intricacies, represents an existence of alienation, antagonism, and internal division—a self that has been pacified rather than gentrified.

Turning our gaze towards psychological approaches, Schmitt staunchly disapproves of those veering towards individualistic emotional expressions. Notably, Schmitt's conceptual framework neglects the incorporation of the id, safeguarding the integrity of the neutral domain thesis, which posits a lack of differentiation between friend and enemy, thereby cultivating a landscape of unpolitical. Yet, upon delving into the depths of our cognitive realms, we discern the persistent presence of a dichotomy that springs forth from the archaic Gestalt, intricately rooted in the Lacanian transformative mirror stage, and ceaselessly molding our perceptions and probing the very boundaries that define the domain of the political. This primordial Gestalt, originating from the depths of our unconscious and etching itself onto the post-mirror unconscious proto-ego, weaves an unyielding tapestry that pervades the intricate workings of our psyche.

In Schmittian discourse, emotions and individualism stand as prime targets of critique and find their roots entwined within the realm of a well-structured ego—an entity that materializes only after the fleeting emergence of the unconscious proto-ego and its ephemeral semblance, the imaginary me. Schmitt's critical gaze is specifically directed towards the emotional impulses and individualistic tendencies that permeate the fully developed ego, reflecting personal desires and the intricate fabric of self-identification.

Our analysis primarily focuses on the ego, but we must also acknowledge the existence of the real as an ontological dimension that surpasses symbolic and metaphorical constructs. The real represents an elusive and pre-individuation stratum—the attribute of the real itself being absolved of and independent from any individuation process—anterior to any structured frameworks.

While the id's psychology emphasizes irrationality and unstructured realms, it is not detached from the real. In fact, the real plays a primordial role in shaping our psychic constitution, often associated with traumatic disruptions of existence. The separation of the infant from the mother serves as an early encounter with the real, a moment of profound disruption. The cruel mother, symbolizing this traumatic confrontation, becomes the primary catalyst for this initial encounter. Accordingly, the real's connection with anxiety and technology becomes apparent. In Lacanian terms, anxiety stemming from technology arises due to the disruption of entrenched norms and values within the Symbolic order, yielding a profound sense of cultural void and indeterminacy. This anxiety is born from the loss of certainties, the existential interrogations of identity, and the trepidation accompanying technological progress's enigmatic and uncontrollable dimensions. It emerges as a response to the encounter with the ineffable facets of existence, accentuated by the capricious nature of technological advancements. Addressing this anxiety necessitates navigating the interplay between these forces, reconceptualizing the Symbolic order, and attaining a delicate equilibrium between the impulse for control and embracing technological uncertainties.

Here, self-mastery [control], including the mastery in general found within Schmittian groupings of friends, can be viewed as an attempt to overcome the

negativity stemming from the infant's encounter with the real. It strives to transcend the aftermath of this traumatic disruption.

Furthermore, the distinction between the imaginary *you* and *me* arises from the encounter with the real through the figure of the cruel mother. These distinctions manifest in the symbolic realm as the projected friend and enemy, representing the alienated, antagonistic, and divided aspects of the self. The real, operating within the unconscious *psychology of the id* as the archaic, cruel mother, the Thing, and the monstrous, consistently influences the Schmittian concept of the friend, undermining claims of unpolitical neutrality that aim not to differentiate between friend and enemy. In essence, with its traumatic disruptions, the real constantly shapes the dynamics of friend and enemy within the Schmittian framework, refuting any claims of neutrality.

Hence, in the realm of purportedly neutral domains, where the absence of friend-enemy distinctions is proclaimed, a closer examination reveals that these domains are profoundly influenced by the post-mirror stage and the dualistic differentiation stemming from the depths of the Lacanian unconscious proto-ego. Our argument asserts that, despite claims of neutrality, the pervasive division between friend and enemy, rooted in the unconscious realms, pervades every facet of these seemingly neutral domains. Thus, the notion of their neutrality stands challenged, exposing their inherent susceptibility to the underlying psychological dynamics, specifically the enigmatic interplay of the id.

The bedrock tenets of liberalism orbit around the sanctity of individual autonomy and rights, safeguarding private property, and pursuing rationality. These bedrock principles, in their essence, are firmly rooted within the intricate *psychology of the ego*, which occupies a central position within the personal-individualistic realm. Thus, any meticulous analysis anchored in these very principles inherently unfolds within the expansive confines of the ego and, by extension, within the overarching liberal paradigm.

In stark contrast, our analysis unveils a profound epistemological trajectory that transcends the established boundaries of liberalism, for it is predicated upon an unyielding allegiance to the *psychology of the id* stemming from the transformative

mirror stage—a stage indubitably characterized by an incipient and untamed irrationality, antecedent to a meticulously structured process of individuation.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Carl Schmitt's concept of the political presents an analysis of the distinction between friend and enemy, emphasizing the necessity of this distinction for the existence of the political realm. Schmitt's critique of liberalism stems from its inclination towards a universalizing discourse of humanity, which he argues obscures real interests and circumvents the rules of engagement in the game of power. He contends that the state's integrity and effective decision-making in times of exception require the concentration of power in the sovereign, promoting a decisionist approach over the rule of law.

Schmitt's notion of sovereignty entails the exceptional and extraordinary, where the sovereign possesses the authority to determine and act upon the exception. However, it is important to note that the exception does not imply chaos but rather signifies the implementation of extraordinary measures in response to unforeseen threats or crises. The dynamism and dangerousness inherent in human nature necessitate the dominion of a sovereign who can distinguish between friend and enemy, thereby channeling negative energy towards unification and survival.

While Schmitt supports democracy as an alternative to liberal parliamentarism, he emphasizes that democracy operates on the principle of the equality of equals, excluding foreigners from the regime from the outset. Moreover, domains such as economics, culture, education, and religion are deemed neutral until they possess the power to classify individuals based on the friend-enemy distinction, rendering them political entities. Schmitt argues that neutrality and the political are fundamentally incompatible, as any act that goes beyond neutrality by even assigning attributes or stripping the enemy of certain characteristics becomes political in nature.

Schmitt's analysis also encompasses the concept of central domains throughout history, where each dominant domain eventually transitions from neutrality to becoming a political arena. Technology as one of these domains, often considered relatively neutral due to its broad applicability, does not escape the friend-enemy distinction as its purposeful creation by individuals imbues it with political implications. The neutralization process, once sought after as a quest for peace and security, culminates in anxiety stemming from cultural nothingness and the inability to control and harness new technologies effectively. Here, the interplay between the real, anxiety, and technology becomes discernible within the framework of Lacanian theory. From this perspective, the anxiety that arises in relation to technology can be comprehended as an outcome of the disruption of deeply ingrained norms and values that once underpinned the Symbolic order, thereby precipitating a profound sense of cultural void and ontological uncertainty. This existential anxiety finds its roots in the disquieting absence of certainties, engendering a pervasive questioning of one's very identity and provoking apprehension in the face of the elusive dimensions inherent to the unfolding realm of technological progress. Significantly, anxiety emerges as a subjective response to the encounter with the incomprehensible aspects of existence, a response that is intensified and accentuated by the inherently volatile nature of technological advancements. Effectively addressing this multifaceted anxiety entails navigating the intricate dynamics and complex entanglements between these forces, necessitating a profound reconceptualization and reconfiguration of the Symbolic order itself. This endeavor demands the cultivation of a delicate and nuanced equilibrium, wherein the yearning for control and mastery converges with an enlightened embrace of the uncertainties and contingencies intrinsic to the technologically mediated human experience.

In light of Schmittian analysis, we can discern a pressing need to grapple with the intricate dynamics between the political, neutrality, and dominant domains that shape our societal fabric. As we navigate an ever-evolving landscape, understanding the tensions between the friend-enemy distinction, the concentration of power, and the role of technology becomes paramount in our [qua human being] pursuit of harmonious coexistence and preserving a stable and cohesive state. To discuss Schmittian neutrality thesis and the concept of the political from a different angle,

approaching them through the Freudian psychical apparatus and Lacanian mirror stage is crucial.

The Freudian psychical apparatus and Lacan's three orders of the psyche provide complementary perspectives on the structure and functioning of the human mind. Freud's id, ego, and superego explore the interplay between unconscious drives, rationality, and internalized moral standards, while Lacan's imaginary, symbolic, and the real investigate the formation of self-identity, the role of language and culture and the encounter with enigmatic aspects of existence.

Within Lacanian psychoanalysis, the imaginary order emerges as a realm of phantasmagorical illusions and non-realities, where the mirror stage plays a pivotal role in the emergence of the proto-ego. However, the imaginary order also engenders alienation and fragmentation, perpetuating a sense of lack. Intimately connected with language and culture, the symbolic register shapes and organizes our psychic lives. Language serves as a medium for expressing unconscious desires and conflicts, though it is inherently limited in capturing the ineffable nature of desire. The symbolic register also forms the foundation for the formation of the subject, distinguishing the self from the other.

The real, existing beyond symbolic representation, eludes conceptualization and language. It represents an ineffable realm of pure presence, resisting integration into the symbolic order. The encounter with the real disrupts the subject's experience and reveals the limitations of the symbolic. Nevertheless, by adhering to the moral law and the probability, individuals can navigate the symbolic and establish a tenuous connection with the real, affirming their existential worth.

Lacan's mirror stage analysis elucidates the formation of the *imaginary me*, characterized by an imaginary sense of completeness and mastery. The infant's confrontation with the separation from the mother and the discrepancy between the fragmented body and the idealized image engenders anxiety. The symbolic order reinforces this ontological deficiency and shapes the body's ontology through language, particularly in relation to gender positions. The dichotomy between self and the other emerges, constituting identity and positioning individuals toward the other.

As for the Schmittian dichotomy between friend and enemy, deeply rooted in the symbolic and imaginary polarizations, it serves as a necessary distinction for survival and self-definition. Preserving you-*me* boundary is an instinctual and unconscious drive influenced by the interplay between the imaginary and symbolic realms. While the conscious recognition of the friend-enemy distinction is possible, its unconscious aspects remain elusive.

In this web of ideas, the Freudian and Lacanian frameworks provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities of human psychology, emphasizing the interplay between conscious and unconscious realms, the role of language and culture in subjective experiences, and the perpetual negotiation between the symbolic, imaginary, and real orders. Engaging with these theories can deepen our comprehension of the human mind and the dynamics that shape our identities and relationships with ourselves and others.

The interplay between Schmittian concept of friend and enemy, Freudian *psychology of the ego* and *id*, and Butler's understanding of collective agency qua subject and Žižek's neighbor qua a monstrous Other concealed beneath the surface of amiable interactions [an axiom that even a friend is nothing but an enemy] reveal a complex and nuanced understanding of the dynamics within the realm of the political and the psyche. By exploring the id's primal impulses and the emergence of the ego as a mediator between the id and the external world, we recognize the profound impact of psychological inclinations and the inherent tensions between personal desires and social norms.

Schmitt's delineation between the private and public enemy sheds light on the distinct nature of enmity. While individual grievances and animosities influence the private enemy, the public enemy represents an onto-epistemologically alien stranger with the potential to disrupt collective entities. The formation of collective affiliations, exemplified by friendships within nations, provides solace from existential solitude and cultivates a shared identity. However, paradoxically, the demarcation of an enemy strengthens the boundaries and identity of the friend group, perpetuating the dynamics of unity and shared purpose through adversarial encounters.

Examining our cognitive realms reveals a persistent dichotomy rooted in the archaic Gestalt, molded by the transformative mirror stage and continuously shaping our perceptions. This primordial Gestalt, originating from the unconscious, etches itself onto the proto-ego, permeating the intricate workings of our psyche. Although Schmitt's framework aims to uphold a neutral domain devoid of friend-enemy distinctions, our examination reveals that these domains are influenced by the unconscious realms, challenging the notion of neutrality and exposing their susceptibility to underlying psychological dynamics.

Moreover, the id's role [*psychology of the id*], deeply embedded within our psyche, challenges the emphasis placed on individualistic emotional expressions [*psychology of the ego*] within Schmittian discourse.

Acknowledging the existence of the real as an ontological dimension that surpasses symbolic constructs, we recognize its influence on our psychic constitution, mainly through traumatic disruptions of existence. Self-mastery and the pursuit of mastery within groupings of friends can be seen as attempts to overcome the negativity stemming from early encounters with the real, striving to transcend the aftermath of such disruptions.

As for the intricate dynamics between the ego, id, and the real, they complicate the liberal paradigm's bedrock principles, which emphasize individual autonomy, rationality, and private property. Our analysis delves beyond these established boundaries, unveiling an epistemological trajectory anchored in the untamed irrationality of the id and the transformative mirror stage. By acknowledging the profound influence of the id and the unconscious realms, we challenge the limitations of the liberal paradigm—and Schmittian neutral domain thesis—and present a more complex understanding of the interplay between psychology, politics, and collective agency. This more complex understanding encompasses the recognition that the political realm is deeply intertwined with the realms of psychology and the unconscious. It acknowledges the influence of primal drives and desires, the formation of collective identities, and the impact of traumatic encounters with the real on our perceptions and actions. By introducing the intricate dynamics between

the ego, id, and the real into the Schmittian concept of the political, we challenge less nuanced notions of neutrality and individualistic paradigms.

In essence, this analysis of Schmittian conceptual framework, Freudian *psychology of the ego* and *id*, Butler's understanding of the *subject*, and Žižek's neighbor qua monstrous Thing unravel the multifaceted nature of the human psyche and its manifestations within the political realm. They highlight the inherent tensions between personal desires and collective identities, the complex dynamics of friendship and enmity, and the indelible influence of unconscious realms on our perceptions and actions. By examining these complexities, we try to transcend our limited understanding of the complex relationship that weaves together psychology, politics, and the human condition.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Schmitt'in siyasal kavramı, dost ve dřman arasında ayırım yapma etrafında dner. Siyaset'e bir isim olarak atıfta bulunmak yerine, Schmitt'in nominalleřtirilmiř "siyasal" sıfatını kullanması, onun yalnızca dost ve dřman arasındaki ayırma deęil, onlar arasındaki iliřkilere de odaklandığını ima eder. Siyasal kavramı, zel veya bireysel deęil, her zaman kamusal dřmanla ilgilidir. Bu nedenle, ahlaki aıdan iyi bir insan mutlaka bir dost deęildir; tıpkı ahlaki aıdan kt bir kiřinin mutlaka bir dřman olmaması gibi.

Schmitt'in teorisinde dřman  kategoriye ayrılır: konvansiyonel, gerek ve mutlak. Schmitt, konvansiyonel olanı, ncelikle egemen devletler arasında yapılan, ancak onlarla sınırlı olmayan bir savař olarak tanımlar. Konvansiyonel'in aksine, gerek dřman, egemen devletler arasındaki husumetten deęil partizanlıktan doęar. Dostsuz ve etrafı yalnızca dřmanlarla evrili gerek bir dřman, Schmitt'i anlamda apolitik olacaktır: nk politik olanın sınırları iine dahil olmak iin hem bir dost hem de bir dřmana sahip olmak gerekir. Mutlak dřman, belirli uzay ve zaman kavramlarıyla sınırlı deęildir; bir ideolojinin biz-onlar ayırımının yarattığı soyut bir dřmanlıktır. Buna gre mutlak dřmanlık, liberalizmin insanlık mefhumunun tanımladığı řekliyle, Schmitt'in politik kavramının dıřındadır; nk varoluřu bir tanımdan ziyade soyut bir tanıma dayanmaktadır ve dřmanın tamamen yok edilmesini ve dehumanize edilmesini gerektirerek politik olmayan bir alana iřaret etmektedir.

Devletin btnlęn korumak iin Schmitt, "liberal" alanın aksine siyasal alanı yeniden kurmaya alıřır. nk liberalizm, Schmitt'e gre, istisnai durumlarda devletin karar alma mekanizmasını engelleyip, tm bireylerin eřitlięini [insanlık

söylemini] onaylamak suretiyle çoksesliliği meşrulaştırır, yani devletin hareket alanını kısıtlar. Bu kısıtlanma ve yetersizlik halinin, pozitif bir imkana dönüşebilmesi için devlet gücünün, egemenin karar verici eyleminde yoğunlaşması gerekir.

Aynı şekilde, Schmitt'in kararcılık ve egemenlik anlayışı, onun liberalizm eleştirisiyle iç içe geçmiştir. Onun, liberalizmden kaynağını alan hukukun üstünlüğü ilkesini eleştirdiği iki temel nokta vardır. Birincisi, liberaller, sözde tarafsız ve evrensel normlar kisvesi altında ekonomik çıkarlarını maskeleymeye çalışır; ancak, Schmitt'e göre, bu normlar ne tarafsız ne de varsayıldığı gibi evrenseldir; çünkü ölümlü varlıklar onları sürekli sınırlı bakış açılarıyla yorumlamaktadır. İkinci olarak, kişisel olmadığı kabul edilen normlar, somut olaylardan kaynaklanan olumsuzlukları yalnızca kısmen kapsayabilir; her zaman norm tarafından kapsanmayan, öngörülemeyen bir istisna olacaktır. Bu nedenlerle Schmitt, devletin bekası ve birliğini sağlamak için hukukun üstünlüğünden çok egemenin üstünlüğü ilkesi taraftarıdır.

Schmitt, bir kontrol ve denge sistemi olarak tanımladığı liberal parlamentarizme bir alternatif olarak demokrasi fikrini onaylar. Ona göre, demokrasinin liberalizmden farkı, herkesin eşit haklara sahip olması yerine, eşitlerin eşitliği ilkesinin, yani yabancıları baştan beri rejimden dışlayan ikili bir dışlayıcı-kapsayıcı mekanizma olarak işleridir.

Schmitt, liberalizmin insanlık söylemine başvurmasının temel nedeninin, ekonomik stratejinin bir parçası olarak, emperyalizmin yayılmasını kolaylaştırmak olduğunu belirtir. Bu stratejiyi kullanarak biz ve onlar arasındaki mesafe azalır; bu söylemle, hepimiz insanlığın evrenselleştirici etiketi altında birleşiriz. Sorun şu ki, biz ve onlar belli tavizler vererek ortak bir noktada buluşmayız; bunun yerine, taraflardan biri diğeri tarafından tamamen tek taraflı tavizler vermekle yükümlüdür. Kendisini ekonomik ve fikri gelişmede öncü olarak gören taraf, taviz vermek zorunda değildir. Bu ilerici varsayıma meydan okunduğu anda, liberalizmin bu kapsayıcı insancıl etiğinin ardında acımasızca işleyen dışlayıcı mekanizma ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Schmitt'e göre ekonomi, kültür, eğitim ve din gibi alanlar, insanları dost ve düşman ayrımına göre sınıflandıracak kadar güçlü olmadıkça tarafsızdır. Bir dinin, mensuplarını savaşa sürüklenme ya da engelleme yeteneği, onu artık tarafsız değil,

siyasal bir varlık haline getirir. Üstelik tarafsızlık kavramı sadece ikili bir ayrım yapmanın ötesine geçmektedir. Belirli nitelikler atayan veya bir düşmanı belirli özelliklerden arındıran söylemsel bir eylem bile trans-nötrdür—yani tarafsızlığın ötesine geçer—ve dolayısıyla siyasaldır. Çünkü bu tür bir eylem, düşmanla ilişkilendirilen farklı kimlikler ve bu kimliklere nasıl davranılması veya saygı gösterilmesi gerektiği konusunda bir farkındalık düzeyi gerektirir. Bu bağlamda, tarafsızlık ve siyasal kavramlarının birbirini dışladığı söylenebilir.

İnsanlar yüzyıllardır hararetli ve çatışmalı alanları terk ederek barış ve güvenlik için tarafsız bir alan aramaktadırlar. Schmitt, her yüzyıl için, özellikle 16. yüzyıldan beri her zaman merkezi bir alan olduğunu gözlemler. Başlangıçta tarafsız olan ve tedricen siyasal hale gelen bu alanların her biri, sonraki yüzyılda yenisiyle değiştirilir: bu alanlar sırasıyla teoloji, metafizik, ahlak, ekonomi ve teknolojidir. Belirli bir alanın hakimiyeti, o dönemde diğer alanların tamamen ortadan kalktığı anlamına gelmez. Bunun yerine, her bir merkezi alan felsefi, sosyal, ekonomik ve teknik konulara ilişkin baskın bir görüş sunduğundan, ikincil/diğer alanlardaki sorunlara bu yeni bakış açılarıyla ilgili sorular ve araçlarla yaklaşılır.

Ancak, yeni yerleşilen alanın siyasal bir arenaya dönüşmesi çok uzun sürmez ve çatışma çıkar. Schmitt, teknolojinin bu sonsuz tarafsızlık arayışını çözdüğüne dair çağdaş inançtan bahseder. Diğer alanlarla karşılaştırıldığında teknoloji, herkese hizmet etmesi ve herkesin yararına olması bakımından nispeten tarafsızmış gibi görünür. Yine de insanların teknolojiyi açık ya da örtük amaçlarla yaratması, dost-düşman ayrımından kurtulmayı zorlaştırır.

Sadece kültürel olarak insanları etkileme ve yönlendirme kapasitesine sahip eski merkezi alanlar, yeni merkezi alan olarak teknoloji onların yerini aldığı anda, güçlerini kaybetmiş olabilir. Schmitt'in zamanında, bir başka merkezi alanın teknolojinin yerini alması imkansız görünüyordu. Sadece kültürel etkiler değil, aynı zamanda doğrudan fiziksel etkiler de yaratabilen devasa teknolojiler—sadece öldürme yeteneği değil, kitle iletişim araçları aracılığıyla propagandanın ince zihinsel teknikleri kullanması—genel olarak teknolojiyi trans-nötr ve dolayısıyla politik hale getirip nötralizasyon sürecini de sona erdirdi.

Bu nötralizasyon sürecinin sonucu, iki kaynaktan gelen bir kaygıdır: Birincisi, teolojik, metafiziksel, ahlaki ve teknolojik süreçlerden geçerek teknolojik alana ulaşan insanlar, derin bir kaygıya neden olan kültürel bir hiçliğe [anomiye] sürüklenirler. Teknolojinin elde edilip geliştirilmesi ve merkezi olmayan bir alanın merkeze taşınması ile nomos'un kesinliğinin eskisi gibi yeniden tesis edilmesi ve pekiştirilmesi ile anomik durumu ve neden olduğu kaygıyı ortadan kaldırmak mümkündür. Ancak bu çözüm başka bir kaygı biçimini de beraberinde getirir: yeni teknolojiyi kontrol edememe ve kullanamama kaygısı.

Freudcu bilişsel aygıt ve Lacan'ın bilişin üç düzeni, insan zihninin yapısı ve işleyişi hakkında tamamlayıcı bakış açıları sunar. Freud'un id, ego ve süper-egodan oluşan bilişsel aygıtı, bilinçdışı dürtüler, akılcılık ve içselleştirilmiş ahlaki standartlar arasındaki etkileşimi araştırır. Lacancı bilişin üç düzeni, yani imgesel, simgesel ve gerçek, öz kimliğin oluşumunu, dilin ve kültürün rolünü ve varoluşun esrarengiz ve temsil edilemez yönleriyle karşılaşmayı araştırır. Birlikte, bu çerçeveler, insan psikolojisinin karmaşıklığının, bilinçli ve bilinçdışı dünyalar arasındaki girift dinamiklerin kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını sağlar.

Lacancı psikanalizde, üç düzen, insan ruhunun yapısı için önemli içerimler taşır. İmgeler alemine girift bir şekilde bağlı olan imgesel, genellikle fantazmagorik yanılsamalarla ve gerçek dışılıklarla karakterize edilir. Dahası, imgesel ayna aşamasının, proto-egonun ortaya çıkışının ve gelişiminin yeri olarak hizmet ettiği gerçeği, Lacancı teoride egonun temelde gerçekçi olmayan doğasının altını çizer. Bebeğin fiziksel benliği üzerinde hakimiyet eksikliğinin neden olduğu bedensel karışıklık ve kargaşanın aksine, aynadaki görüntü, görüntüyle özdeşleşmeyi hızlandıran birleştirici bir güç görevi görür. Sonuç olarak, imgesel düzen, bilinçdışı tarihimizin derinliklerine nüfuz eden sürekli bir eksiklik ve parçalanma duygusuyla daha da şiddetlenen yabancılaşma için bir üreme alanı görevi görür.

Lacan'ın simgesel düzeni hukuk, dil ve kültürün yapısal alanı olarak kavramsallaştırması, özellikle dilin öznel gerçeklik deneyimlerimizi biçimlendirme ve ifade etme üzerindeki derin etkisine yaptığı vurgu bakımından, doğası gereği karmaşık ve çok yönlü bir yapıdır. Sembolik düzen, sosyal ve iletişimsel etkileşimlerimizin temelini oluşturan çeşitli kültürel ve dilbilimsel kodları korumak,

iletmek ve içermek için bir araç görevi gördüğü için dille, özellikle de konuşmayla amansız bir şekilde iç içe geçmiştir. Lacan, dilin bilişsel yaşamlarımızı şekillendirmede ve organize etmede temel bir rol oynadığını ve dili nasıl kullandığımızın, öznel deneyimlerimizi yönlendiren bilinçdışı arzulara ve çatışmalara açılan bir pencere sağladığını iddia eder. Dolayısıyla konuşma, bireylerin sembolik düzen çerçevesinde en derin bilinçdışı arzularını ve çatışmalarını ifade edip iletebilecekleri kritik bir aracı temsil eder. Bununla birlikte Lacan, simgesel düzen içinde var olan insan ruhunun karmaşık ve dinamik yapısının altını çizerek, dilsel kanallar aracılığıyla arzunun tarif edilemez ve sürekli gelişen doğasını dile getirmenin doğasında var olan derin zorlukları ve sınırlamaları da kabul eder.

Sembolik düzen, [artık sembolik olan] *sen* ve *ben* arasındaki ayrımın billurlaştığı kritik alan olarak hizmet ederek, öznenin [sembolik ego] oluşturulmasında ve tanımlanmasında çok önemli bir rol oynar. İmgesel dünya, proto-egonun [imgesel *ben*] ortaya çıktığı yeri temsil etse de öznel kuruluş süreci, öznenin ancak girift sembolik ilişkiler ağına boyun eğmesi yoluyla gerçekten şekillenmeye başlayabilir. Sembolik düzen, imgesel olanın görünüşte erişilemez ve ele geçmez doğasının erişilebilir kılınabileceği eleştirel bir mekanizma olarak hizmet eder ve bireylerin benliğin başka türlü tarif edilemez olan yönlerini konuşma yoluyla ifade edebilmelerini sağlar. Özne, sembolik düzenin inşasına ve değiştirilmesine bir dereceye kadar katkıda bulunabilse de sembolik, herhangi bir bireyin belirli katkılarını aşan karmaşık ve girift bir dilbilimsel ve kültürel kodlar sistemi aracılığıyla işlediğinden, bu katkının büyük ölçüde önemsiz kaldığını not etmek gerekir.

Gerçeğe gelince, simgesel temsil ya da kavramsallaştırmaya yönelik herhangi bir girişimin kavrayışının ötesinde benzersiz ve tarifsiz bir alanı kaplar ve bu tür tüm çabaları nihayetinde beyhude kılar. Sembolik düzen, imgesel ve gerçeğin aracılık edilebileceği birincil kanal olarak hizmet eder. Yine de bu müdahale her zaman eksiktir ve kopabilir, çünkü gerçek, onu simgesel düzene tamamen entegre etmeye yönelik her türlü çabaya direnerek sonsuza dek ele geçirilemez kalır. Dahası, kendi yanılsamalarıyla birlikte imgesel düzen, gerçekle asla tam olarak uzlaşamaz ve gerçek, imgesel ve simgesel arasında sürekli bir gerilim ve müzakere halinde kalan

üçlü bir ilişkiye yol açar. Böylece gerçek, öznenin tüm yanılsamalı yapılardan sıyrılmalarının özüyle yüzleşmek zorunda kaldığı yeri temsil eder.

Gerçekle karşılaşma, öznenin deneyiminde derin bir kırılma ve parçalanma anını temsil eder, çünkü sembolik düzen, bu anlaşılması zor ve tarifsiz fenomeni kavramak için tutarlı ve anlamlı bir çerçeve sağlamada yetersiz kalır. Simgeselin gerçeği yeterince ele almadaki başarısızlığı, gerçeğin gösterme ve ifade sınırlarını aşmasından kaynaklanır.

Lacan'ın ayna evresi kavramsallaştırması, düşman kategorisinin oluşumunun yanı sıra kronik kaygı ve saldırganlığımızın onto-epistemolojik temellerinin bir analizini içerir. Varlığımızın ilk yıllarında tamamen annemize bağ[ım]lıyızdır. Bebek başlangıçta annesinin vücudunu, beni diğerinden ayıran net sınırlar olmaksızın, sütten kesilene kadar kendisinin bir uzantısı olarak algılar. Bununla birlikte, sütten kesildikten sonra bebek benle öteki arasındaki fiziksel ve imgesel ayrılığın farkına varır, burada anne artık birleşik bir bütünün parçası değil, bağımsız bir varlıktır. Bu farkındalık anı, zalim anne imajının ortaya çıkışına işaret eder ve bebeğin aynadaki yansımalarını algılamasıyla bağlantılı olarak, görsel proto-ego'nun veya yanıltıcı da olsa tutarlı bir varlık olarak imgesel ben'in oluşumundaki temel önemine işaret eder.

Bebeğin aynadaki görüntüsüyle özdeşleşmesi ve öznenin, başkalarının incelemesine ve yargısına tabi tutulup, bedensel gerçekliğinden koptuğu sembolik düzene tabi tutulduğu anlar, tanıma ve yanlış tanımanın çelişkili dinamiğiyle sürekli yüzleşmesinin temelini oluşturur. Özdeşleşme ve yabancılaşma arasında devam eden gerilim, imgesel proto-ego/ben'i onu yöneten simgesel normlarla bütünleştirmek ve böylece öznenin kimlik oluşturma sürecini yapılandırmak için sürekli bir meydan okuma oluşturur.

Aldatıcı görüntü, imgesel bir bütünlük ve ustalık duygusu sunar ve anneden ilk ayrılıktan kaynaklanan doğuştan gelen eksikliği maskeler. Bu ontolojik yara, gerçek ile simgesel arasındaki kapatılamaz uçurum nedeniyle asla onarılamaz.

Simgesel alana dahil olduğumuzda, içsel epistemolojik eksiklik dil bilgisel yapıya yerleşir ve bedeni, imgesel bütünlüğünü sürdürmek için dilsel yapılara uymaya zorlar. Dil ve beden arasındaki karşılıklı bağımlı ilişki kurucudur, bu sayede dil sürekli olarak bedenin ontolojisini, özellikle cinsiyet konumları ile ilgili olarak

şekillendirir ve yeniden tanımlar. Ben ve öteki arasındaki ikilik, özne-yüklem dizisi aracılığıyla ortaya çıkar yabancı kategorisini ortaya koyar.

Sen ve ben arasındaki ikilem, türümüzün hayatta kalması için gerekli bir unsur olarak hizmet edip, dost ve düşman arasında ayırım yapmamıza ve kendimizi tanımlamamıza izin veriyor görünür. *Sen*, ayna öncesi *ben*'in bütünlük duygusunu paramparça eden, onu dış dünyanın belirsizliğine fırlatan ayna aşamasının ilkel annesini simgeler. Böylece bilinçsizce zalim anne imajını çağrıştırır, *ben* ise aynasal imgeyi/ideal-egoyu, yani birliği temsil eder.

Dahası, sembolik ile gerçek arasındaki onto-epistemik uçurum, hayatın kendisi potansiyel bir zarar ve ihlal kaynağı haline geldiğinden, dost ve düşman arasındaki ayırımı zorunlu kılar. Gücünü simgesel ve imgesel kutuplaşmalardan alan bu ayırım, onto-epistemik uçurumun kaçınılmaz doğasına ve dolayısıyla *sen* ve *ben* ayırımına içkindir. Çünkü *sen-ben* sınırını korumak, ikincisine ayrıcalık tanımak, imgesel ve simgesel düzenler arasındaki etkileşimle birlikte işleyen içgüdüsel ve bilinçsiz bir dürtüdür.

Schmitt'in uyarısı, düşmanlığı yalnızca bir hayal ürünü ya da soyut bir kurgu olarak kategorize etme eğilimine karşı bir uyarı görevi görür ve böylece bu kavramsallaştırmaları psikolojikleştirme eğilimine direnmenin gerekliliğinin altını çizer. Freud'un ego psikolojisi ile id psikolojisi arasındaki ayırımını dikkate almak, bu noktada, bizi olası bir çözüme götürür.

İlkel bilişsel yapı olarak id, ruhumuzun en arkaik ve esrarengiz girintilerinden birini oluşturarak doğumdan itibaren kendini gösterir. Arzuların ortaya çıktıkça anında tatmin edilmesiyle yönlendirilen en temel dürtüyü barındırır. Yalnızca haz ilkesine göre çalışan id, ortaya çıkacak sonuçlara aldırış etmeden, amansızca dürtülerinin hızlı bir şekilde tatmin edilmesini arar.

İd, arzularıyla uzlaşmaz bir gerçeklikle, tatminsizlik, hüsrana ve hayal kırıklığıyla dolu bir manzarayla karşılaştığında, ego olarak bilinen yapı, id'in çalışma tarzından bir ayrılışın habercisi olarak ve dış dünyayı yöneten gerçeklik ilkesi ile id'i karakterize eden haz ilkesi arasında gerçek bir kanal rolü üstlenerek somutlaşır.

Schmitt'in "özel" ve "bireysel" kavramlarıyla özdeşleştirilen psikoloji açıklaması, Freud'un ego psikolojisi üzerine düşünceleriyle örtüşür. Bu bağlamda, bireysellik, mahremiyet ve mahremiyetsizlik fikirleri, tamamen yapılaşmış bir egonun içsel özelliklerini somutlaştırdıkları için derin bir önem kazanır. Bununla birlikte, id'in alanına girdiğimizde, bu kavramlar anlamını yitirir, çünkü yalnızca dürtüsel arzularla yönlendirilen id, bunları kavrama kapasitesinden yoksundur. Bu çalışma, id psikolojisinin prizmasından Schmitt'in dost ve düşman arasındaki ikilemini ele alarak, Schmitt'in siyasal ve dolayısıyla tarafsızlık kavramına dair alternatif bir anlayışı hedeflemektedir. Egonun oluşumundan önceki çok önemli bir kavşak olan ayna aşamasının, bilinçdışı id'in yoğun etkisi altında bir proto-egonun ortaya çıkışını ve farklılaşmasını ifade ettiğini not etmek çok önemlidir. Bu, her ne kadar bilinçdışının baskın etkisine tabi kalsa da id'in psikolojisiyle örtüştüğünü doğrulayan ayna aşamasının ego gelişiminde kritik bir aşama olduğunu onaylar.

Schmitt, kamu düşmanı ile bireysel düşman arasına keskin bir sınır çizerek, kişisel düşmanlığı ve ego güdümlü psikoloji alanını aşan kamu düşmanının özünü açıklar. Bireysel düşmanı, egoda kök salmış bireyci-psikolojik eğilimlerin bir tezahürü olarak nitelendirir. Bu kategori, öncelikle bireysel karşılaşmalar nedeniyle bilinçli olarak düşmanlık beslediğimiz kişileri kapsar.

Tersine, kamusal düşman, bizimle paylaştıkları bireysel deneyimlerden yoksun oldukları için, kişisel nefretten yoksun, onto-epistemolojik olarak yabancı bir yabancı biçimini alır. Hiçbir şekilde doğası gereği ahlaki açıdan yozlaşmış olmayan kamusal düşman, dönüştürücü ayna aşamasından önce gelen parçalanmış duruma çok benzeyen, kolektif bütünlüğü bozma ve parçalama potansiyeline sahiptir.

Ulus-içi dostlukların yapılandırılmasıyla örneklenen kolektif bağlılıkların oluşumunda var olan karmaşık dinamikler, yalnızca sosyal bağların ötesine uzanan çok yönlü bir etkileşime yol açar. Bu tür gruplaşmalar, bir aidiyet ve kendini gerçekleştirme senfonisini orkestra ederek derin öneme sahip ikili bir işlev üstlenirler. Bu bağlamda, Butler'in özneyi kavramsallaştırması aracılığıyla, insan ve grup bilşi arasındaki benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları okuyabiliriz. Butler'in konumu, farklı karmaşıklık düzeylerinde faaliyet gösterecek de, ulusların ve bireysel bilşilerin "öznel" olarak ortak noktaları paylaştığını iddia eder.

Öncelikle, bu grup ittifakları, yabancılaşmış ayrılıktan kaynaklanan parçalanmış durumunun şiddetle farkında olan proto-egonun başına bela varoluşsal yalnızlığa karşı bir sığınak sağlar. Arketipik anne figürüyle deneyimlenen ilkel birlik yankılarından yararlanan bu toplumsal kolektifler, insanlık durumumuzu etkileyen izolasyon ve yabancılaşma sancılarını hafifleten araçlar olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Onların kucaklaşmasında, ortak bir kimlik ve derin bir toplumsal aidiyet duygusu geliştirilerek bireysel varoluşun ıssızlığından bir soluklanma sunan derin bir teselli doğar.

Yine de aidiyetin yatıştırıcı kucaklamasının ötesinde, dönüştürücü ayna aşamasında yükselen idealize edilmiş görüntüyle senkronize olmaya yönelik bir özlemle beslenen, kendi kendine hakim olma arayışı da öne çıkar.

Dahası, insan ilişkilerinin kendine özgü dokusu, dost gruplaşmalarını ve onların iç içe geçmiş muadillerini—düşman gruplarını—yoğun bir karşılıklı bağımlılık halinde kurar. Dostluk ve düşmanlık arasındaki sınır, kolektif özdeşleşmenin ve sosyal grupların karmaşık ağının kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkar. Paradoksal bir şekilde, yoldaşlık ruhuna aykırı görünen bir düşman tanımı, arkadaş grubunun sınırlarını ve kimliğini pekiştirmek için bir pota işlevi görür. Kolektivite, "öteki"nin, yani düşmanın dış hatlarını çizerek, kendi ilişkisel manzarasını tanımlayan düşmanca karşılaşmalarla güçlendirilmiş bir birlik ve ortak amacın pekiştirilmesini deneyimler.

Bununla birlikte, bu birlik ve dostluk yüzeyinin ardında, dostluğun özünü düşmanlığın özüyle iç içe geçiren, bilinçdışı/imgesel bir aksiyoma dayanan ontolojik bir varsayım yatmaktadır. Ruhumuzun derinlerine işlemiş olan bu aksiyom, bizi kendi benliğimizin bile, tüm incelikleriyle, bir yabancılaşma, antagonizm ve iç bölünmenin varlığını temsil ettiğini, yani pasifize edilmiş bir benliği temsil ettiğini kabul etmeye zorlar.

Bakışlarımızı psikolojik yaklaşımlara çeviren Schmitt, bireyci duygusal ifadelere yaklaşımları kesinlikle onaylamaz. Özellikle, Schmitt'in kavramsal çerçevesi, dost ve düşman arasında ayrım olmadığını öne süren ve böylece siyasal olmayan bir manzara çizen tarafsız alan tezinin bütünlüğünü koruyarak, id psikolojisinin analize dahil edilmesini ihmal eder. Yine de bilişsel alanlarımızın derinliklerine indiğimizde, arkaik Gestalt'tan fıskıran, karmaşık bir şekilde Lacancı dönüştürücü ayna

aşamasından kaynaklanan ve durmaksızın algılarımızı şekillendiren ve siyasal'ın alanını tanımlayan bir ikiliğin ısrarlı varlığını fark ederiz. Bilinçaltımızın derinliklerinden kaynaklanan ve kendisini ayna sonrası bilinçdışı proto-egoya kazıyan bu ilkel Gestalt, ruhumuzun karmaşık işleyişine yayılan bir yapı arz eder.

Schmittyen söylemde, duygular ve bireycilik, eleştirinin birincil hedefleri olarak durur ve köklerini, yapılandırılmış bir egonun—ancak bilinçdışı proto-egonun ve onun geçici görünümü olan imgesel ben'in kısacık ortaya çıkışından sonra somutlaşan bir varlık—alanında iç içe bulur. Schmitt'in eleştirel bakışı, kişisel arzuları ve kendini tanımlamanın karmaşık dokusunu yansıtan, tamamen gelişmiş egoya nüfuz eden duygusal dürtülere ve bireyci eğilimlere yöneliktir.

Analizimiz ise öncelikle egoya odaklanır, ancak aynı zamanda sembolik ve metaforik yapıları aşan ontolojik bir boyut olarak gerçeğin varlığını da kabul eder. Gerçek, anlaşılması zor ve bireyleşme öncesi bir tabakayı temsil eder—gerçeğin kendisinin özelliği, herhangi bir bireyselleşme sürecinden bağımsız ve bağımsızdır—herhangi bir yapılandırılmış çerçeveden önce gelir.

İd'in psikolojisi, irrasyonelliği ve yapılandırılmamış alanları vurgulasa da gerçekten kopuk değildir. Aslında gerçek, bilişsel yapıyı şekillendirmede ilkel bir rol oynar ve genellikle varoluşun travmatik kesintileriyle ilişkilendirilir. Bebeğin anneden ayrılması, gerçekle erken bir karşılaşma, derin bir kırılma anı olarak hizmet eder. Bu travmatik yüzleşmeyi simgeleyen zalim anne figürü, bu ilk karşılaşmanın birincil katalizörü olur. Buna bağlı olarak gerçeğin kaygı ve teknoloji ile bağlantısı belirginleşir. Lacancı terimlerle ifade edecek olursak, teknolojiden kaynaklanan kaygı, sembolik düzen içindeki yerleşik norm ve değerlerin bozulması nedeniyle ortaya çıkar ve derin bir kültürel boşluk ve belirsizlik duygusu doğurur. Bu kaygı, kesinliklerin kaybından, kimliğin varoluşsal sorgulamalarından ve teknolojik ilerlemenin esrarengiz ve kontrol edilemez boyutlarına eşlik eden korkudan doğar; teknolojik gelişmelerin doğası tarafından vurgulanan, varoluşun tarif edilemez yönleriyle karşılaşmaya bir yanıt olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Bu kaygıyı ele almak, bu güçler arasındaki etkileşimde yön bulmayı, sembolik düzeni yeniden kavramsallaştırmayı ve kontrol dürtüsü ile teknolojik belirsizlikleri kucaklama arasında hassas bir dengeye ulaşmayı gerektirir.

Burada, genel olarak Schmittyen dost gruplaşmalarında görülen kendi kendine hakim olma [kontrol güdüsü], bebeğin gerçekte karşılaşmasından kaynaklanan olumsuzluğun üstesinden gelme girişimi olarak da görülebilir: Bu travmatik kırılmanın/kopuşun sonrasını aşmaya çalışır.

Ayrıca imgesel *sen* ve *ben* ayrımı, zalim anne figürü aracılığıyla gerçekte karşılaşmamızdan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu ayrımlar, simgesel alanda, benliğin yabancılaşmış, uzlaşmaz ve bölünmüş yönlerini temsil eden, yansıtılan dost ve düşman olarak tezahür eder. Arkaik, zalim anne figürü, Žižekci şey ve canavar gibi id'in bilinçdışı psikolojisi içinde işleyen gerçek, sürekli olarak Schmitt'in dost kavramını etkiler ve dost ile düşman arasında ayrım yapmamayı amaçlayan siyasal olmayan tarafsızlık iddialarının altını oyar. Özünde, travmatik kesintileriyle gerçek, her türlü tarafsızlık iddiasını çürüterek, Schmittçi çerçeve içinde sürekli olarak dost ve düşman dinamiklerini şekillendirir.

Dolayısıyla, dost-düşman ayrımının bulunmadığının ileri sürüldüğü sözde tarafsız alanlar, daha yakından incelendiğinde, bu alanların ayna sonrası aşamadan ve Lacancı bilinçdışı proto-egonun derinliklerinden kaynaklanan düalist farklılaşmadan derinden etkilendiğini ortaya çıkarır. Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı, tarafsızlık iddialarına rağmen, bilinçdışı alanlarda kök salmış dost ve düşman arasındaki yaygın ayrımın, görünüşte tarafsız olan bu alanların her yönüne nüfuz ettiğini iddia ediyor.

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