5 Political Theology in Crisis

Orestes Brownson Between Hobbes and Schmitt

In her reading of Obama's response to the 2008 Financial Crisis, Janet Roitman contends that the former president's speech demonstrates that "[s]uch knowledge in the face of uncertainty implies that the historical crisis entails, or perhaps constitutes, a transhistorical journey, being, as he insisted in his closing words, a matter of hope, promise, and grace."[1] Indeed, for Roitman, Obama's rhetoric registers a "secular narrative of human history … conjugated with a Christian narrative of witnessing" (2). In her genealogical and theoretical account of crisis rhetoric, Roitman identifies a knot that binds together the political, the economic, and the theological that emerges in response to a perceived crisis. In this chapter, I will argue that this is a general response in political theory stretching back at least four centuries to Early Modern England, and that the preceding chapters have demonstrated includes the antebellum sectional crisis that culminated in the Civil War along with both its literary and political theoretical archive. Moreover, these crises are not limited to just the aforementioned spheres, but always already signify a crisis of meaning itself: "crisis serves as a transcendental placeholder because it is a means for signifying contingency" (9).

Roitman's exploration of crisis echoes many of the same concerns that have animated this study. Though she does not exactly put it in these terms, she identifies crisis as a fundamental political theological problem, one which bears witness to the relationship between transcendence and immanence as mediated through Christian theology. Her fundamental insight, however, quickly leaves the theological behind in the name of something analogous to performative utterance:

> [T]his book designates anti-crisis: there is not 'crisis' versus 'noncrisis,' both of which can be observed empirically; rather, crisis is a logical observation that generates meaning in a self-referential system, or a non-locus from which to signify contingency and paradox.
>
> (10)

Crisis thus becomes part and parcel of the referential illusion that both Shoshana Felman and antebellum fiction identify at work at the heart of

DOI: 10.4324/9781003334309-6

liberal institutions. Secular liberalism, or in Roitman's own terms modernity, is fundamentally bound up with the self-constituting and self-referential. Put another way, representation is dead and we have killed it. However, while her concept of anti-crisis wants to evacuate the crisis of the theological and representational implications with which she begins, her account of crisis as a transhistorical existential, and experiental condition, Christian theology is not dispensed of all that easily, particularly in its capacity to provide representation that goes beyond any "self-referential system."

In the preceding chapters, we have seen how a wide-ranging selection of antebellum authors critique liberalism with the lever of performative utterance. Across a whole spectrum of performative institutions which serve as common 1850s narrative tropes, antebellum fiction indicts liberalism on the grounds that it stands upon nothing but the self-referential authority of words and their performance. In other words, liberalism requires that the performative be misrecognized as the constative. However, as the narrative tropes exploit again and again to do so is to always run the risk of destabilizing the very institutions upon which the state depends, institutions which cut across every sphere of the liberal subject's life from the political to the domestic. In the wake of this critique, from George Foster to Herman Melville, authors insist that a more definite and stable referent be yoked to the performative, one outside of the "secular" liberal state in Christian theological transcendence. Tokens of this transcendence, like Mary Monson's harp and Ahab's ceremonious pact, establish just such a referent and posit another ground upon which to construct the political. As my examples suggest, however, up to this point my analysis has been heavily synchronic and literary, registering a definite critical tendency but one which, perhaps, appears to be isolated in the mid-nineteenth century cordoned off from both the historical and the theoretical.

In this chapter, as its opening salvo suggests, I shift from this synchronic and literary approach to tackle this tradition's relationship to liberal political theory and its vexed relationship to the theological. To that end, I situate a reading of Orestes Brownson's *oeuvre* within a larger trans-Atlantic tradition of political theology that stretches back at least to Early Modernity with Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza and looks forward to Carl Shmitt's work and more contemporary theorists like Miguel Vatter and Claude Lefort. In so doing, I am not arguing for the primacy of this theoretical tradition over and against the previous chapters. Indeed, in many ways this discussion demonstrates that 1850s fiction, with its iterable tropes and emphasis on the quotidian, exceeds political theory while registering the crux of its critique.[2] Through a careful consideration of Brownson's politics, we see that the literature is not a reflection of them and the tradition of which they partake, but rather how the central narrative tropes that have oriented our study echo and transcend his powerful critique of antebellum liberal secularism. While Brownson may have bemoaned the immorality of

mid-century American fiction, it echoes his concerns, and his solutions more often than not.

This tendency, however, is not uniquely isolated in the antebellum United States. As such, this chapter is organized around three crises in liberalism and political theory's responses to these historical conjunctures. Early Modern England, the antebellum United States, and Weimar Germany each experienced a crisis that was simultaneously economic and political ineluctably tied to a shift in liberal secular capitalism. In each case, the theoretical response hinges upon the political power of representation and its ability to harness the power of Christian theology in service of the liberal state, bestowing upon it an authority it actively works to obfuscate and domesticate as we have already seen in the introduction. Early Modern thinkers like Hobbes and Spinoza employ the example of the miracle for these ends. More (predictably) Catholically, Brownson and Schmitt respond to their respective crises with a call for incarnation—or at the very least a serious and rigorous representation—in politics. In each case, the response to liberalism's crisis is representational and theological. It is worth noting, however, that none of these thinkers quite arrives at the potential linguistic and performative source of the crisis. That is left for the authors studied in this book to supplement.

Miraculous Politics: Hobbes, Spinoza, and Representing the Divine

It is no secret that Early Modern liberal political theory responds to a crisis. The slow erosion of feudalism and its hierarchical and harmonious view of society, the emergence of a nascent capitalism through market transformation and ascendance, and an intense scrutiny of political authority and its origins combined to crisis to which thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and Spinoza responded. In his magisterial *Worlds Apart*, Jean-Christophe Agnew demonstrates that this crisis is at once phenomenological and aesthetic. On the one hand, Early Modern Britain faced a "crisis of representation," in which "the indifferent and impersonal logic of the placeless market" undergirds a fundamental social illegibility where "interests and intentions [could] remain frustratingly indeterminate and unattached."[3] On the other, these frustratingly indeterminate "representation[s]" work in tandem with "the presence of a society surcharged with meanings and intentions,"[4] which, for Agnew, Hobbes famously resolves through a theatrical analogy and contractualism. *Leviathan* thus confronts a confusing world of *theatrum mundi* where representation is overdetermined and nobody can be sure of meanings and intentions given their inherent overdetermination. In a world turned on its head, viewing people as actors and authority as contractual provides a stable basis upon which to construct liberal social, political, and economic relationships. This is a familiar reading of Hobbes, one which draws from the theater's aesthetic tradition and his materialist theory of the human.

However, the critical myopia which reads *Leviathan*'s (comparatively secular) first half at the expense of its second obfuscates the necessary

theological supplement to the Hobbesian liberal state, one which offers a much different and significantly less overdetermined account of aesthetics, representation, and authority. Having offered an account of the liberal security state and its origins and functions in *Leviathan*'s opening half, Hobbes turns his eyes towards the role that religion plays in the state's functioning. Religion, he forcefully argues, presents a powerful socio-political force with which the state must reckon. This is perhaps nowhere more clear than his discussion in Chapter XXXVII "Of Miracles and their Use." Miracles present a problem for the state because they arise outside the natural order and can, thus, be harnessed in the service of false prophets and undermine the sovereign's (and thus for him) the state's authority. While one might suspect that Hobbes would insist that miracles are phenomena of a bygone era or the product of superstitious imaginations, he is not so willing to write off their possibility even in the seventeenth century. This is perhaps an effect of his idiosyncratic religiosity, about which much ink has been spilled, but it nevertheless registers the extent to which the Hobbesian state is as much a religious as a political institution that grapples with both the natural and supernatural orders.

Crucially, miracles for Hobbes are aesthetic phenomena that work to secure obedience which in *Leviathan* is the end of all political authority. As is generally the case for Hobbes, he begins with a rather rigorous definition:

> By Miracles are signified the admirable works of God: and therefore they are also called wonders. And because they are for the most part done for a signification of His commandment in such occasions as without them, men are apt to doubt (following their private natural reasoning) what He hath commandeth.[5]

Partaking of Agnew's *theatrum mundi*, miracles are representations, or "signification[s]," of Divine authority that supplements "private natural reasoning" which tends towards a cacophony of interpretation.[6] What miracles promise is a direct and unambiguous representation of God's will and, thus, an antidote to the "crisis of representation" that Agnew identifies in the seventeenth century. Unambiguous revelation of divine favor serves not just a religious function, indicating God's will and, typically, a people's election, but a political one as well. The miracle demonstrates God's power and authority and simultaneously "procur[es] credit to God's messengers, ministers, and prophets … and thereby [people] be the better inclined to obey them" (271). The miracle serves a political function in so far as it secures obedience, the all-important watchword of the Hobbesian state and, thus, reveals the crucial role that aesthetics plays in maintaining state power and authority. Miracles secure obedience not through "natural reasoning" like the famous social contract, but through divine revelation its aesthetic incarnation.[7]

As I have already alluded to, however, this tendency can always run the other way and secure authority for those opposed to the state. Careful

thinker that he is, Hobbes is keenly aware of this possibility. The claims of false prophets and human tendency for "private natural reasoning" to produce diverse interpretations of aesthetic objects combine to make a significant threat to sovereign authority. Given this inherent ambiguity, in all cases:

> We must have recourse to God's lieutenant to whom in all doubtful cases we have submitted our private judgments. For example, if a man pretend that after certain words spoken over a piece of bread, that presently God hath made it not bread, but a god, or a man, or both, and nevertheless it looketh still as like bread as ever it did, there is no reason for any man to think it really done, nor consequently to fear him till he enquire of God by his vicar or lieutenant whether it be done or not.
>
> (274)

In addition to its obvious shot across the bow of Catholic transubstantiation, Hobbes' example raises the problem of performative utterance for politics. If anybody can "pretend … after certain words" that an action has occurred, how are we to interpret anything definitively? These performative utterances pose to the Hobbesian state a substantial existential threat. Hobbes' predictable answer is recourse to sovereign authority. The ultimate interpretive power resides not with subjects' private judgement but with the "public reason that is the reason of God's supreme lieutenant" (275). Miracles thus fall under the purview of sovereign decision and ensure a definite and fixed meaning to performative acts and utterances which thereby secure obedience to the sovereign. By being powerful representations of God's will, naturally tending towards securing obedience, and ultimately determinable by sovereign authority, miracles present a powerful supplement to the state articulated in *Leviathan*'s first half. Unifying aesthetics, representation, and authority, miracles transcend a narrow focus on self-interest towards a more collectively understood and definitely fixed meaning.

Despite his radically different theological, if not political, perspective, Spinoza, too acknowledges miracles' political utility. In the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, he firmly rejects any notion of transcendence like that for which Hobbes allows in his analysis of miracles, asserting instead that "God's decrees and commands, and thus his providence, are really nothing but the order of nature."[8] Miracles thus cannot be intrusions of the supernatural divine order into the natural order of things because for Spinoza they are one and the same thing. However, this is not to say that the idea of miracles is not potentially useful. While Scriptural accounts of miracles are nothing more than "representations and imaginary things," (58) they serve an important function quite close to the one that Hobbes offers. The Bible is written

> With the wording that will most effectively move people (especially the common people) to devotion. […] because it's trying not to convince

> man's reason but to affect and occupy their imagination. If Scripture related to the destruction of some state in the way that political historians usually do, that wouldn't stir the common people at all.
>
> (57)

While some learned people might be swayed by "political historians" who explain things as they really were in terms of knowable natural causes, the majority of "common people" are unswayed by such reasoning. Thus, the miracle harnesses the power of "representations" and "imagination" in order to bring to "devotion" the vast majority of political subjects. As with Hobbes, Spinoza identifies the political efficacy of miracles in their aesthetic qualities, a necessary, wonder-inducing supplement to the dry register of the "political historians." Though divergent in many ways, Hobbes and Spinoza both agree that against the backdrop of the Early Modern representational crisis, some collectively acknowledged aesthetic dimension is necessary to the state's proper functioning. Political authority is not the sum total of individual self-interest alone, but rather is theologically and aesthetically determined. At its origin, thinking the liberal state must grapple with the theological and aesthetic dimensions that a wholly rational, materialist political theory would like to disavow. Not limited to a turbulent Early Modern Atlantic World, this pattern emerges again two centuries later across the Atlantic amidst another moment of crisis in the antebellum United States.

Catholicizing the State: Antebellum Conversion and Politics in Orestes Brownson

By the 1850s, this book's temporal setting, the forces of market capitalism that Agnew describes set in motion in the Early Modern period had reached a new level of penetration into economic, social, and political life. As one somewhat recent study succinctly (though a bit ethereally) puts it the antebellum period witnessed "capital's transformation into an 'ism'."[9] Market society's ascendance went hand in glove with an intensification of the same kind of representational crisis so central to the Early Modern market and culture, particularly in developing urban centers. In her seminal study of confidence and dissimulation in the period, Karen Halttunen argues in particular that "[t]he city … presented a serious problem: how could one identify strangers without access to biographical information about them, when only immediate visual information was available?"[10] This crisis, however, was not limited to the untethered and increasingly abstract world of commerce, finance, and the middle-class household, but spilled over into politics and theology as well. It is a truism of American religious history that the first half of the nineteenth century saw an overwhelming proliferation of new religious sects, splintering an already polyglot (primarily Protestant) Christian landscape. The cacophony of religious voices profoundly relativizes divine

truth as no one sect could "claim to be *the* heaven-sent solution to the riddle of sectarianism."[11] It was not only religious differences that proved insoluble, but also political ones. Antonio Negri dubs the decades before the Civil War as "the crisis of American constitutionalism."[12] Mark Noll compellingly argues, the political problem of slavery became impossible to square with any authoritative reading of Scripture. Given a dominant logic of *sola scriptura*, "there were no resources within democratic or voluntary procedures to resolve the public division of opinion that was created by voluntary and democratic interpretation of the Bible."[13] We thus find the same set of problems in the antebellum period that plagued the Early Modern one. Unmoored from a prior stability (however imaginary), markets, political authority, aesthetics, and theology became increasingly difficult to represent or tether to any definite, collectively held meaning.

The work of Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau represents one particularly famous nineteenth-century response to this problem. Emerson concludes "Nature" in the mode of a modern self-help book, assuring them that:

> line for line and point for point, your dominion is as great as [Adam's or Caesars]…. Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions.[14]

Thoreau ends *Walden* entreating readers to "explore your own higher latitudes" and, echoing Emerson, asserting that "[e]very man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state."[15] Both texts register Transcendentalism's hyper-individualism which grounds both truth and authority in the most private of private reasoning. By employing etymologically linked figures of absolute political power, "Caesar" and "Czar," both texts figure the myopic and relative as the Absolute and thus both authors are able to solve the problems outlined above only by essentially recoiling from them and conceding that there can indeed be no communally held standard of meaning or basis for political and religious authority.

Francis Lieber, the man widely held to be the father of American political science, shares this distaste for religious, political, and epistemological absolutes with Emerson and Thoreau, a distaste from which he theorizes a form of government capable of mediating between individual interests and the liberal state's perpetuation. His most well-known work, *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government* articulates what Christopher Castiglia calls "the most thorough account of institutional life in nineteenth-century America, as well as the strongest assertion of the power of institutions—and only institutions—to maintain the democratic innovation of the Revolution."[16] Lieber's definition of institutions is vast: "A bank, parliament, a court of justice, the bar, the church, the mail, a state, are institutions, as well as the Lord's supper, a university, the Inquisition, all the laws

relating to property, the Sabbath, the feudal system."[17] Encompassing the legal ("a court of justice,"), the economic ("bank[s]" and property law), political (the "state"), and the religious ("the Lord's supper"), Lieber's theory of free society cuts across the domains that this study covers and identifies the overlapping system of institutions that uphold the version of the liberal state that Lieber wishes to theorize and preserve.

Concomitant with his institutional slant on nineteenth-century life is a secularizing gesture that cordons off religion and disarticulates it from the political. Consistent with a modern vein of secular thinking which sees modernity as having relegated religiosity to a matter of personal choice, Lieber, as his list of institutions above suggests, places religion on a level with many other "secular" nineteenth-century institutions. This attempt to disarticulate religion from liberal politics is nowhere more clear and forceful than in the book's final chapter, Lieber's systematic deconstruction of the maxim *Vox Populi Vox Dei*. In secularist fashion, Lieber views history as a withering away of superstition, especially religious ones: "a multitude of gods was always worshipped; ghosts were always believed in; oracles were always believed in; to take interest from the borrower was always declared a crime" (403). Modern liberal political science has no need for bad belief, neither for irrational superstition nor religious intervention in the market economy. Predictably, then, the chapter builds up to his triumphant claim that "[t]he doctrine Vox populi vox Dei is essentially unrepublican" (407). True republicanism does not draw upon religious authority grounded in revealed truth, but rather consists in a not-so-tacitly Protestant "self-government and noble institutions, but no absolutism of any sort" (ibid.).

His analysis reflects the crisis of meaning and authority that we have already observed plagued the 1850s United States. Providing examples from history ranging from Christ's crucifixion to classic nineteenth-century middle-class bugbear Fashion, Lieber identifies moments where the voice of the People cannot be said to cohere with the voice of God. Indeed, the phrase faces a hermeneutic difficulty in each of its terms: "the difficult of fixing the meaning of this saying is not restricted to that of ascertaining what is the voice of God. It is equally difficult to find out what is the voice of the people" (405). The problem is representational and political at one and the same time. Lieber finds the same lacuna that Lefort will a century later at the heart of the liberal state: the voice of the people is essentially indeterminate, incapable of being represented. Moreover, this unrepresentability corresponds with the impossibility of anchoring and representing revealed truth, that is "the voice of God" or identifying an authority, political or theological, sufficient to make that determination. According to Lieber's liberal secularist semiotics, the Latin phrase is essentially empty, a "political heresy" (408) antithetical to the project of secular liberalism. Like the Transcendentalists, Lieber founds political power at the level of the self-interested individual whose freedom shuns revealed truth and collectively held political and theological meaning.[18]

This liberal tendency shows itself perhaps nowhere more clearly than in American separation of church and state and proliferation of religious freedom. Illustrative in this regard is a brief article entitled "The Science of Politics" published in November of 1854. From a broadly liberal and more narrowly Whiggish reformist perspective, the author contends that politics is inherently prone to those bugbears of secular modernity, haunted by "its day-dreams, and its waking visions, its optical illusions and spectral hallucinations."[19] Such irrational delusions give way to a "race of projectors, visionaries, and experimentors" prone to "the seductions of error."[20] In typically secularizing fashion, politics is a science, as the title indicates, that has transcended past superstition (like Hobbesian idolatry and Spinozian miracles) and is now able to properly and rationally manage the era's political problems. Nothing gives the author more hope in this regard than the secularization of the political:

> There was a time, and that not far back, when religious tolerance was deemed a heresy in politics as in religion, and the separation of Church and State, the complete freedom of conscience from legal fetters, is a very modern doctrine, and even now but too partially adopted.[21]

The 1850s bear witness to an incomplete, "too partial[]," decoupling of religion and politics and elevation of self-interested "freedom of conscience" in religious and political matters.

A lesser-known response—and one which this book argues is a substantial current in the period's fiction—comes from a thinker who once counted himself among the Transcendentalists, America's most famous Catholic convert and prolific writer on religious, political, and aesthetic matters: Orestes Brownson. Brownson and his oeuvre are representative of what Lincoln A. Mullen has named the mid-century "yearning for 'catholicity,'" among many disillusioned antebellum Protestants.[22] Though David Paul Deavel notes that "we may be seeing a revival of his thought," outside of Catholic publications his work has been more or less ignored for the past half-century.[23] His account of his conversion, *The Convert*, offers both a diagnosis of the period's ills and a microcosmic solution in his conversion to Catholicism as a source of ultimate and transcendent meaning and authority.[24] Largely bereft of biographical detail besides a series of "tryings on" of intellectual systems (indeed, one cannot be sure that this version of Brownson does anything but contemplate grandiose ideologies), *The Convert* descries what Brownson identifies as antebellum phoniness, a symptom of the greater representational crisis. Channeling the middle-class obsession with sincerity and deceit that so preoccupied the polite antebellum middle class and Transcendentalists alike, Brownson diagnoses the same symptom, but turns other solutions on their respective heads: "We live in an age of sham, of illusions; and the saddest thing of all is, that while we have no faith in reality, we believe in shams, we trust illusions, and say, These be thy gods,

O Israel."[25] Contemporary faith in "illusions" and "shams" constitutes a kind of idolatry whereby "reality" comes to be discarded. Like Hobbes' account of true and false miracles, antebellum Americans cannot discern true from false representations, unable to parse "illusions" from the real.

In this way, Brownson anticipates Lefort's thinking about the persistence of the theological–political knot that thinkers like Lieber work so strenuously to deny. In addition to identifying the representational difficulties inherent in a liberal democratic order, Lefort is also keenly aware of the difficulty of extricating the political from the theological:

> [w]e must recognize that … any move toward immanence is also a move toward transcendence; that any attempt to explain the contours of social relations implies an internalization of unity; that any attempt to define objective, impersonal entities implies a personification of those entities. The working of the mechanisms of incarnation ensure the imbrication of religion and politics, even in areas where we thought we were dealing simply with purely religious or purely profane practices or representations.[26]

Both religion and politics require "the mechanisms of incarnation" whereby the "impersonal" is personified. Indeed, "incarnation" presents a stronger tie between signifier and signified than "representations." To put it in Asad's terminology, liberalism's semiotic field denies the model of incarnation in favor of representation; but, as Lefort reminds us, both the religious and the political depend on this very process. Brownson in his denouncement of nineteenth-century representation, that is the detachment of signifier and signified, proposes incarnation as a solution—perhaps the only possible one—to the weaknesses of antebellum secular liberalism.

Central to Brownson's whole *oeuvre* is the tension between individual freedom and submission to political authority. Even as early as 1850, he could write that "[t]he attempt to get a satisfactory solution of this problem is the key to all our writings and sermonizing during that long period … namely, the reconciliation of the so-called rights of the individual mind with legitimate public authority."[27] In this way, the central problematic that underwrites his work is the same as that of Lieber. However, while Lieber wishes to create a system of self-regulating, perpetual, and secular institutions—even his inclusion of the religious under the rubric of institution constitutes a kind of secularism—Brownson reconciles the antimony of liberty and authority through an explicitly theological model. Indeed, for Brownson as for Lefort, there is no explicit separation between the political and the religious domains. Rather, each is an expression of his central problematic and its resolution. The mechanism through which both the religious and the political, in their most legitimate forms, are articulated is incarnation.

In religious polemic, Brownson insists that incarnation transcends mere representation and thus provides a legitimate basis for authority. At a time

when American linguistic philosophy was witnessing "a shift in favor of language as the 'incarnation' [rather than the 'dress'] of thought," the April 1851 issue of *Brownson's Quarterly* includes a characteristically lengthy and thorough-going critique of Horace Bushnell's recently published *God in Christ* which is illustrative of this movement.[28] According to Brownson, Bushnell fundamentally misrecognizes the incarnation as mere representation:

> The Logos, according to him, is not a Divine Hypostasis, but the capacity or faculty of god to express or produce himself outwardly, his generative power of form, his creative imagination, in which, or by aid of which, he can produce himself outwardly, or represent himself in the finite; and the Incarnation is nothing but his representation of himself by virtue of this power in the finite form of man.[29]

Through the Incarnation, God does not merely occupy "the finite form of man" in order to "represent" Himself to humanity. Christ qua representation of God becomes for Brownson a species of idolatry which, at its extreme, reduces Christianity to pantheism. As such, he considers this purely representational notion of the incarnation to be "in fact, the grand heresy of the nineteenth century."[30] Contrarily, Incarnation does not abide by the logic of representation, but rather "God … remains unchanged, unaffected, immutable, in all the fullness, majesty, and glory of his own eternal and incommunicable Divinity."[31] Incarnation in Brownson's theology retains a concrete link to the "fullness, majesty, and glory" of a transcendent God, thus collapsing the distance between representer and represented that Bushnell and nineteenth-century German theologians insist upon.

For Brownson, the antidote to nineteenth-century proliferation of falsehood and idolatry is to be found in the transcendent and unwavering order of the Catholic Church. The appeal of Catholicism is twofold. On the one hand, it provides a supernatural, incarnational model of representation that counters the illusions he continually finds in nineteenth-century Protestantism and social reform. On the other, it provides a model of authority that is unquestionably legitimate, meaningful, and reasonable. Brownson finds in the Church a real representation: "It is then no sham, no illusion, but the real body of Christ, a real living organism, and in some sense a continuation of the Incarnation" (251). What is so appealing about Catholicism, and its stark contrast from the "sham[s]" and "illusion[s]" outside of it, is its model of representation which is more like "Incarnation" than signification. Tethered to a concrete referent, the Church is a "real living organism" that does more than merely signify; it embodies "Christ." Brownson's model of incarnation transcends the oppositions that so preoccupied the nineteenth-century United States between sincerity and deceit. As an aesthetic construction, then, the Church provides a meaningful anchor in the world and a definite link to the supernatural order "higher than natural life" (ibid.).

Beyond its "Incarnation," Catholicism also offers a model of authority that is rational, and indeed freeing, to which one can and ought to submit. For most of *The Convert* Brownson describes intellectual and religious movements—Presbyterianism, Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, Socialism—that he universally finds lacking. His main objection to them all is that they do not have any particular authoritative basis whatsoever, relying solely on fallible human reason. In contrasting terms, he describes his conversion: "It found here the authority I had been so long seeking for; a real, legitimate, not a sham or a usurped authority, to which reason could submit without abnegating itself, or ceasing to be reason" (252). Handed down across centuries through an unchanged divine mandate, Catholicism has "real" and "legitimate" authority. Brownson here echoes Bishop of Philadelphia, Francis Patrick Kenrick's, insistence on "an authority which, independently of local considerations, declares the divine law, and lends moral influence to the support of government and society."[32] Moreover, this authority requires the "obligation of individuals and of all men to submit to her—believe what she teaches and do what she commands" (251–2). What Brownson finds in Catholicism is very much like what Hobbes in *Leviathan* theorizes as the relationship between the supernatural and the state two centuries earlier: an authority that commands obedience rationally and which harnesses the power of the supernatural and aesthetic to these ends. Operating by similar logics, miracles and incarnation underwrite legitimate authority.

While *The Convert* mainly concerns itself with intellectual and theological—as opposed to strictly political, though this separation is by no means neat in his work—matters, Brownson's other writings, particularly on the hotly contested Fugitive Slave Act, reveal the political corollary to his spiritual biography. In his own periodical, *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, he published numerous articles on the most controversial and urgent political question of the day. It is through these articles that he articulates his peculiar political theology and marks his contribution to the ongoing antebellum crisis of religion, interpretation, and authority. The articles constitute a defense of the Fugitive Slave Act, however a rather unusual one in the context of antebellum slavery debates. While many prior arguments against slavery in general, its expansion into new territories, or the Fugitive Slave Act in particular focus on the relative merits, or lack thereof, of slavery as an institution, Brownson cares little for entering debates about human chattel or plantation cruelty.[33] The opening of "Sumner on Fugitive Slaves" puts it bluntly:

> It is by no means our present purpose to discuss the question of slavery on its merits. We are personally, in feeling and principle, as much opposed to slavery in any and every form as Mr. Sumner and his party, and take as deep an interest as they in the real welfare of the negro race.[34]

In a rhetorical move similar to those in his theological writings, Brownson distances his politics from his own (or anybody else's) "interest" and "principle" and instead moves the question from one of individuals to one of constituted authority and obedience.

Indeed, his political theological defense of the Fugitive Slave Act relies on his conception of the relationship between divine and political authority. Slavery cannot be excised from the body of the Union because to do so, as abolitionists propose, would delink civil and divine laws. For Brownson, the political is ultimately authorized by the theological: "God as universal sovereign ordains civil government, clothes it with authority, within the limits of his law, natural and revealed, to govern, and we must never forget that it is by his authority that it governs."[35] Political authority, and the aesthetic dimension by which it is "clothe[d]," derive from "God as universal sovereign." Moreover, like his account of the Catholic Church, Brownson's government is an expression of both "natural and revealed" truth which combine to establish a legitimate "authority" that commands obedience. On the other side are political radicals, like European socialists and American abolitionists and Free Soilers, who appropriate the Protestant celebration of individual conscience for political ends. According to Brownson the Free Soiler (for example)

> professes to appeal from the civil enactment to the law of God, but in reality appeals only to his own private judgment, and this appeal is not admissible; because it is not an appeal to a higher court, or to a court competent to interpret and declare the will of the higher Lawgiver.[36]

The confusion arises in this appeal to "private judgment" as the sole arbiter of God's will rather than the appropriate interpreter, the "court competent," which for Brownson is the state. Herein lies the affinity between Brownson's theology and his politics. Private judgment is not the basis for either political or religious authority. Legitimate authority, that is authority which properly represents the will of God, is installed in institutions which (not unlike the Hobbesian state) transcend the individual and offer authoritative interpretations of the world and its phenomena. The utility that both Hobbes and Spinoza recognize in the miracle, Brownson articulates no less theologically through a divinely authorized state whose resemblance to the Catholic Church is obvious.[37]

We can now see that it is only institutions of this type that create a meaningful world-in-common over and against privatized nineteenth-century illusions. Both *The Convert* and his political writings take up the question of martyrdom and sacrifice to demonstrate at its limit the relationship between divine and civil institutions. Brownson takes aim at those like Transcendentalist Theodore Parker who liken abolitionists to "early Christian martyrs, who absolutely refused to sacrifice to idols at the command of the emperor."[38] This logic, however, becomes tenuous for the same reason

that he asserts Protestants can never know God's will. How can the "idols" be identified? In this vein Brownson asks: "who is to decide whether a special civil enactment be or be not repugnant to the law of God? Here is a grave and perplexing question for those who have no divinely authorized interpreter of Divine law."[39] Private reason is insufficient to ascertain the relationship between civil and divine law. In the face of both law and God's transcendence, the individual alone cannot bestow meaning upon the world. It is this conviction that Protestants lack which, according to *The Convert*, makes Catholics ideal American citizens. Against the backdrop of rather fierce anti-Catholic sentiment, Brownson counters that "[t]hey are very generally attached to the republican institutions of this country, no class of our citizens more so, and would defend them at the sacrifice of their lives."[40] Because of their inherent obedience to civil government and its authority, Catholics have an "attach[ment]" to "institutions" that people like Theodore Parker lack. They are more capable of martyrdom's "sacrifice," and thus represent for Brownson a more meaningful relation to institutions both civil and divine. It is this very meaning that the fiction I read attempts to resurrect, one like the Early Modern miracle grounded in legitimate authority that transcends the individual.

Cutting Through the Chatter: Schmitt Against Liberalism's Signs

More recently, the same notions of sacrifice and political meaning have arisen in response to twentieth- and twenty-first-century liberalism. One such account is Paul W. Kahn's *Putting Liberalism in Its Place*. According to Kahn, the history of liberal thought has been far too narrow in its account of the political. While most liberal theorists focus on what Kahn calls the "dialectic of reason and interest" which asserts the primacy of an enlightened, possessive, individual political subject who relates to the state through the classic Enlightenment ideals of right reason and self-interest.[41] This dialectic has haunted liberal political theory since at least Hobbes, as we have seen. What this dialectic misses is the affective dimension of one's attachment to a particular political community, best exemplified on the one hand by Christian love and grace exemplified in Brownson's conversion and on the other by conscription and sacrifice akin to Brownson's idea of martyrdom. At bottom, every political community depends upon a potential "call to the individual citizen to realize his or her deepest meaning in giving over of the embodied self wholly to the maintenance of the sacred meaning of the state."[42] Faced with the very same problem that preoccupied Hobbes, Spinoza, and Brownson before him, that is, that the private reason of individuals is an insufficient basis for political community, Kahn contends that the "ultimate meaning" lies in the potential of being scarified for the state's continuity.[43] Common to all of these accounts is to identify liberalism with a dearth of meaning that needs to be supplemented through some theological mechanism.

These notions and the urgency of their thought surface a third time again against the backdrop of a crisis. The seventeenth-century English breakup of feudalism and rise of capitalism, the nineteenth-century American market revolution and contest over slavery, and now the early-twentieth-century German response to the First World War all raise urgent questions about authority and political constitution. According to Arthur J. Jacobson and Bernhard Schlink, Weimar Germany faced a tripartite crisis at once on their terrains of "foreign and … domestic policy," "cultur[e]," and the "econom [y]."[44] From the end of World War I in 1919 to the Nazi rise to power in 1933, Weimar Germany produced an enormous amount of legal theory bent on stabilizing the political role of the monarch, the bourgeoisie, and an increasingly active socialist working class and articulating what had always been a vexed relationship between the constitution and the state. As Jacobson and Schlink point out, the crisis-ridden Weimar state has parallels in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century American state.[45] The American crisis occasioned a response grounded in representative authority and rational obedience in Brownson. The earlier English one gave rise to a theology of miracles as an aesthetic and representational supplement to institutionalized state power. The Weimer thought of Carl Schmitt combines these two tendencies to offer new theories of both political authority and representation through Catholic theology.

While most are familiar with and much ink has been spilled about his theory of the state based on the friend–enemy distinction and decisions, much less is said about his theory of representation.[46] However, it is there that his thought's aesthetic dimensions and its account of political meaning emerge perhaps most clearly like Brownson and Kenrick before him. Schmitt's main bogeyman throughout his writing is the bourgeois liberal state which fails to foster a meaningful or efficacious political life. The thrust of his critique is two-fold. First, liberalism and its Enlightenment ideals celebrate political debate (in parliament and otherwise) among largely bourgeois political actors. Channeling the Spanish counter-revolutionary thinker Donoso Cortes, Schmitt contends that:

> it was characteristic of bourgeois liberalism not to decide in this battle but instead to begin a discussion. […] A Class that shifts all political activity onto the plane of conversation in the press and in parliament is no match for social conflict.[47]

Identified here is something very much like Hobbes' and Brownson's respective critiques of private judgment: the endless liberal conversation, too, offers no definitive resolution on its own terms. Mere words cannot constitute the basis of civil authority or an efficacious politics. Thus, bourgeois liberalism partakes of this conversation that shirks any authoritative decision that might effectively regulate "social conflict" like that experienced in the Weimar crisis. That liberalism evades the decision and its concreteness is a fairly standard point in

nearly all writing on Schmitt. However, to leave it at this is to miss his aesthetic complaint outside of *Political Theology* and *The Concept of the Political*.

Second, and more importantly for our purposes, liberalism does not employ any concrete notion of representation—political or otherwise—that would elevate and make meaningful political life. According to "Roman Catholicism and Political Form," published the year after *Political Theology* at the height of the Weimar crisis, both liberalism and its supposed antithesis partake of a crude materialism: "it is curious that the capitalist entrepreneur and the socialist proletarian are of one accord in considering the political's assumption a presumption and, from the standpoint of their economic thinking, regarding the dominance of politicians as 'immaterial'."[48] Politics has been degraded and reduced to a mere accounting of techno-economic thinking, fights about the distribution of material resources and little else. This, in turn, leads to an impoverished political aesthetics which has all but evacuated the idea of representation. Myopically focused on the material world and its givenness rather than any potential meaning(s) it contains, bourgeois and socialist politics cannot be represented.[49] The Soviet Union is instructive in this regard:

> The modern factory, lacking representation and imagery, takes its symbols from another age because the machine has no tradition. It is so little capable of creating an image that even the Russian Soviet Republic found no other symbol for its badge of rule than the hammer and sickle. (22)

Without "tradition," there is no proper political "imagery" or "representation" of the modern state, reducing both itself and its people to objects of a purely rational and technical economism and materialism.

Like Hobbes (whom the German jurist greatly admired) and Brownson before him, Schmitt insists that this purely rational and individualist account must be supplemented. Again, the answer is found in theology. As with Brownson, it is the Catholic Church, not the liberal state towards which it stands in an agonistic relationship that understands representation: "The formal character of Roman Catholicism is based on the strict realization of the principle of representation, the particularity of which is most evident in its antithesis to the economic-technical thinking dominant today" (8).[50] While machines and the abstract tenets of both capitalism and socialism foreclose representation and the political efficacy therein, "Catholicism goes further because it represents something other and more than secular jurisprudence—not only the idea of justice but also the person of Christ—that substantiates its claim to a unique power and authority" (30). Like Brownson, Schmitt identifies "unique power and authority" in the Catholic Church. However, whereas Brownson's argument is that the Church's authority derives from history, Schmitt (while he would not disagree) contends that the authority is primarily in its aesthetics. It is the concreteness of representation—akin to incarnation in "the person of Christ"—that gives

Catholicism its political power. The end result is a more meaningful and dignified model of the political, for in Catholicism

> [r]epresentation invests the representative person with a special dignity, because the representative of a noble value cannot be without value. Not only do the representative and the person represented require a value, so also does the third party whom they address.
>
> (21)[51]

Against liberalism, its boundless words and purely economic thinking, the Catholic Church offers a model of political authority derived from a stricter and more real model of representation whose ultimate outcome is a tripartite "special dignity." This dignity is premised on a concrete link that Catholic representation provides between the supernatural and the natural, the model being Incarnation.

Recently, Miguel Vatter has described Christian political theology as "the permanent struggle against Gnosticism in Western political thought."[52] In three centuries we see three distinct crises, emergences this Gnostic impulse expressed as liberal public opinion, capitalist market relations, and (tacitly) Protestant individualism, that prompt Christian political theological solutions from quite diverse thinkers. Against the seventeenth-century crisis that prompted the English Civil War, Hobbes and Spinoza propose the miracle as an effective supplement to sovereign authority. Despite disagreeing fundamentally on their reality, each identifies in the miracle an aesthetic dimension that fosters obedience to civil authority by way of representing the supernatural. Amidst the antebellum crisis over slavery, authority, and the market revolution, Orestes Brownson finds in the Catholic Church a model for political institutions and the proper relationship between the Divine and civil laws. The Church's capacity to represent—more so to embody—this transhistorical authority undergirds Brownson's theological and political writings. Finally, Schmitt's response to the Weimar crisis and critique of liberalism *tout court* is not only one of purely political decisionism, but also an aesthetic one. Like Brownson, it is grounded in Catholic notions of incarnation and insists that legitimate and effective political power relies upon a stricter model of representation than liberal economic and technical thinking permit. The common elements of all these crisis responses are reference to the aesthetic and the theological vis-a-vis civil government. The answer to these crises is the possibility of representing the divine order in an unambiguous fashion that transcends private reason. Thus, religion supplements secular political authority by opening up avenues for meaningful representations and offering legitimizing ground for that authority. Furthermore, it reinstitutes the distance between concrete signifier and transcendent signified that performative utterance collapses and secular liberalism misrecognizes. Antebellum authors recognize this complex interplay between politics, theology, and performative utterance, inserting themselves via some of the period's most popular literary tropes into the very struggle against

Gnosticism that Vatter identifies and which continues, perhaps even more urgently, to this day.

Notes

1 *Anti-Crisis*, Duke UP (Durham: 2013), p. 2 hereinafter cited parenthetically.
2 In this way, literature does what David Kazanjian reads out of the historical archive in *The Brink of Freedom: Improvising Life in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*, Duke UP (Durham: 2016), esp. pp. 1–34. Kazanjian's work demonstrates the potential theoretical and historical power in examining a singular moment in time, in particular for him the late 1840s.
3 *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*, Cambridge UP (Cambridge: 1986), p. 73.
4 Ibid., p. 99.
5 *Leviathan*, Rod Hay (Ed.), McMaster University of the History of Economic Thought, p. 269, hereinafter cited parenthetically.
6 For a similar account in the 1850s United States, see the heady and wide-ranging review of everything from David Hume and Spinoza to Emerson and Henry James Sr., "CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURALISM: Notes on the Miracles of our Lord," *The Christian Review (1836–1863)*, July 1, 1853 (73), p. 321ff. *American Periodicals Series*.
7 Hobbes identifies a similar tendency in his discussion of idolatry and so-called civil worship in which man-made representations can signify human and divine power and secure sovereign authority. See *Leviathan* p. 405ff.
8 Baruch Spinoza, *Treatise on Theology and Politics*, Jonathan Bennett (Ed.) (2007), p.56, hereinafter cited parenthetically.
9 Michael Zakim & Gary J. Kornblith, "Introduction: An American Revolutionary Tradition," in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, Michael Zakim & Gary J. Kornblith (Eds.), U of Chicago P (Chicago: 2012), p.1. See also, John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*, Cambridge UP (Cambridge: 2009).
10 *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830*-1870, Yale UP (New Haven: 1982), p. 36.
11 Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Yale UP (New Haven: 1991), p. 231.
12 *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, U of Minnesota P (Minneapolis: 2009), p. 182.
13 *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, U of North Carolina P (Chapel Hill: 2006), p. 8.
14 "Nature," in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Brooks Atkinson (Ed.), The Modern Library (New York: 1950), pp.3–42, p. 42.
15 *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Ticknor & Fields (Boston: 1854), p. 343.
16 *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States*, Duke UP (Durham: 2008), p. 77.
17 *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government*, J.P. Lippincott & Co. (Philadelphia: 1891), p. 301, hereinafter cited parenthetically.
18 Lieber, too, at least at the level of metaphor understands the performative foundation of the state: "Governments frequently rule nations as some of the French theatres are ruled. Paid applauders, called claquers, force many a piece through a long series of performances; and it is these very governments of claquers that resort most frequently to the Vox populi vox Dei" (405).
19 *The United States Review (1853–1856)*, Nov 1854; *American Periodicals Series*.

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 "The Contours of Conversion to Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 32.2 (2014), pp. 1–27, p. 4.
23 "America, the Church, and Orestes Brownson," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 23.4 (2020), pp. 5–20, p. 11. For a good, brief overview of Brownson's life and thought, see Eric J. Scheske, "Orestes Brownson: His Life, His Catholicism," *Logos*, 7.2 (2004), pp. 137–64.
24 For a more historical account of Brownson's conversion, see Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*, U of California P (Berkeley: 1994), pp. 337–49, and James Emmett Ryan, *Faithful Passages: American Catholicism in Literary Culture, 1844–1931*, U of Wisconsin P (2013), pp. 21–44 in which he argues that Brownson's thorough-going and moralistic critique of sensational literary culture hinges upon his inherent fear of the culture's feminization. As we have seen, however, sensation fiction like that of George Foster and H.M. Rulison shares more in common with Brownson's political vision than he would like to admit.
25 *The Convert, or Leaves from My Experience*, D. &J. Sadlier & Co. (New York: 1889), p. 75, hereinafter cited parenthetically.
26 "The Permanence of the Theologico-political?" Trans. David Macey in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, Fordham UP (New York: 2006), Hent de Vries & Lawrence E. Sullivan (Eds.), pp. 148–87, p. 187.
27 "The Mercersburg Theology," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. III, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1883), pp. 51–116, p.53. This places Brownson in opposition to fellow conservative Catholic Bishop Kenrick who insists the Church's divine authority is above politics: "I shall take no pains to claim for the Church a republican character, because she is a Divine institution, deriving her authority from above, and directed to lead men to eternal happiness. We are not at liberty to model her according to our political predilections, or to suit the popular fancy" Francis Patrick Kenrick, *A Vindication of The Catholic Church*, John Murphy & Co. (Baltimore: 1855), p. 331.
28 Jack Kligerman, "'Dress' or 'Incarnation' of Thought: Nineteenth-Century American Attitudes towards Language and Style," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 117.1 (1973), pp. 51–58, p. 51.
29 "Art. I.—*God in Christ*" *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 5.2 (April 1851), pp. 137–64, p.137–8.
30 Ibid., p. 140.
31 Ibid., p. 144.
32 Qtd. in Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *Earnestly Contending: Religious Freedom and Pluralism in Antebellum America*, U of Virginia P (2014), p. 84.
33 He will later, in 1857, make a more classic states–rights argument vis-à-vis slavery in the United States, but will still hold up the moral yardstick of Catholicism in his analysis of Dred Scott. See "The Slavery Question Once More," *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII, Henry F. Brownson (Ed.), Thorndike Norse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 77–94.
34 "Sumner on Fugitive Slaves," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 39–53, p. 39.
35 "The Fugitive Slave Law," *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 17–39, p. 33. He will expand upon this position asserting that "Civil government exists and governs by divine appointment and therefore the presumption is always that its acts are in accordance with the divine will, till the contrary is shown" (ibid.).
36 Ibid., p. 34.

37 Here Brownson approaches a theorization of the church–state relation not unlike that of Jean-Luc Nancy, see "Church, State, Resistance," Trans. Veronique Voruz, *Journal of Law and Society* 34.1 (2007), pp. 3–13.
38 "Sumner," p. 34.
39 "The Higher Law," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson: Politics*, Vol. XVII, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 1–17, p. 8.
40 *The Convert*, p. 323.
41 *Putting Liberalism in Its Place*, Princeton UP (Princeton: 2004), p. 159.
42 Ibid. p. 163.
43 This argument is in some ways an inversion of Giorgio Agamben's more famous account of biopolitics and sacrifice in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford UP (Stanford: 1998).
44 "Introduction: Constitutional Crisis, The German and American Experience," in *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, Arthur J. Jacobson & Bernhard Schlink (Eds.), U of California P (Berkeley: 2001), pp. 1–39, pp. 19–20.
45 Ibid. p. 21.
46 For a good summary see, Volker Neumann, "Carl Schmitt: Introduction," in *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, Arthur Jacobson & Bernhard Schlink (Eds.), U of California P (Berkeley: 2001), pp. 280–90.
47 *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Trans. George Schwab, U of Chicago P (Chicago: 2005), p. 59. Interestingly, Donoso Cortes was not unfamiliar to Orestes Brownson. For instance, Brownson's April 1, 1855 *Review* contains a review of Cortes' *Ensayo sobre el Catholicismo, el Liberalismo, y el Socialismo*. References to Donoso Cortes appear in twelve issues of the *Review* across the 1850s. For example, the Catholic mouthpiece in Brownson's dialogue "Uncle Jack and his Nephew; or Conversations of an Old Fogie with a 'Young American'," *Quarterly Review*, Jul 1854, 2.3, *American Periodicals Series* praises "the late brilliant and lamented Donoso Cortes."
48 *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, Trans. G.L. Ulmen, Greenwood P (Westport: 1996), p. 17, hereinafter cited parenthetically.
49 This diagnosis is not unlike that of the radical orthodoxy movement. See John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock, "Suspending the Material: The Turn of Radical Orthodoxy," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, & Graham Ward (eds.), Routledge (London: 1999), pp. 1–20.
50 For other accounts on Schmitt vis-à-vis representation and meaning see Duncan Kelly, "Carl Schmitt's Political Theory of Representation," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65.1 (2004), pp. 113–34 and Sarah Pourciau, "Bodily Negation: Carl Schmitt on the Meaning of Meaning," *MLN* 120.5 (2005), pp. 1066–1090. While these offer interesting and rigorous accounts of Schmitt's idea of representation, I am more interested in it as a particular response to crisis than as a philosophically legitimate concept.
51 Brownson, too, senses this in his polemic with Bushnell insisting that in incarnation: "The human nature is raised to the dignity of the Divine person, not the Divine nature lowered to the abjectness of the human person" p. 148.
52 *Divine Democracy: Political Theology after Carl Schmitt*, Oxford UP (Oxford: 2021), p. 19.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford UP (Stanford: 1998).

Agnew, Jean-Cristophe. *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*, Cambridge UP (Cambridge: 1986).

"Art. I.—God in Christ", *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 5. 2 (April1851), pp. 137–164.

Brownson, Orestes. "Sumner on Fugitive Slaves," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 39–53.

Brownson, Orestes. *The Convert, or Leaves from My Experience*, D. & J. Sadlier & Co. (New York: 1889).

Brownson, Orestes. "The Fugitive Slave Law," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 17–39.

Brownson, Orestes. "The Higher Law," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson: Politics*, Vol. XVII, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 1–17, p. 8.

Brownson, Orestes. "The Mercersburg Theology," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. III, Thorndike Nourse (Detroit: 1883), pp. 51–116.

Brownson, Orestes. "The Slavery Question Once More," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, Vol. XVII, Henry F. Brownson (Ed.), Thorndike Norse (Detroit: 1885), pp. 77–94.

Bruce, Jr., Dickson D. *Earnestly Contending: Religious Freedom and Pluralism in Antebellum America*, U of Virginia P (Charlottesville: 2014).

Castiglia, Christopher. *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States*, Duke UP (Durham: 2008).

Deavel, David Paul. "America, the Church, and Orestes Brownson," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 23. 4 (2020), pp. 5–20.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Nature," in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Brooks Atkinson (Ed.), The Modern Library (New York: 1950), pp. 3–42.

Franchot, Jenny. *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*, U of California P (Berkeley: 1994).

Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*, Yale UP (New Haven: 1982).

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Yale UP (New Haven: 1991).

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*, Rod Hay (Ed.), McMaster University of the History of Economic Thought.

Jacobson, Arthur J. & Bernhard Schlink. "Introduction: Constitutional Crisis, The German and American Experience," in *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, Arthur J. Jacobson & Bernhard Schlink (Eds.), U of California P (Berkeley: 2001), pp. 1–39.

James Sr., Henry. "CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURALISM: Notes on the Miracles of our Lord," *The Christian Review (1836–1863)*, July 1, 1853 (73), p. 321ff, American Periodicals Series.

Kahn, Paul. *Putting Liberalism in Its Place*, Princeton UP (Princeton: 2004).

Kazanjian, David. *The Brink of Freedom: Improvising Life in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*, Duke UP (Durham: 2016).

Kelly, Duncan. "Carl Schmitt's Political Theory of Representation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65. 1 (2004), pp. 113–134.

Kenrick, Francis Patrick. *A Vindication of The Catholic Church*, John Murphy & Co. (Baltimore: 1855).

Kligerman, Jack. "'Dress' or 'Incarnation' of Thought: Nineteenth-Century American Attitudes towards Language and Style," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 117. 1 (1973), pp. 51–58.

Larson, John Lauritz. *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*, Cambridge UP (Cambridge: 2009).

Lefort, Claude. "The Permanence of the Theologico-political?" Trans. David Macey in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, Fordham UP (New York: 2006), Hent de Vries & Lawrence E. Sullivan (Eds.), pp.148–187.

Lieber, Francis. *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government*, J.P. Lippincott & Co. (Philadelphia: 1891).

Milbank, John, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock, "Suspending the Material: The Turn of Radical Orthodoxy," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, & Graham Ward (Eds.), Routledge (London: 1999), pp. 1–20.

Mullen, Lincoln A. "The Contours of Conversion to Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 32. 2 (2014), pp. 1–27.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. "Church, State, Resistance," Trans. Veronique Voruz, *Journal of Law and Society* 34. 1 (2007), pp. 3–13.

Negri, Antonio. *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, U of Minnesota P (Minneapolis: 2009).

Neumann, Volker. "Carl Schmitt: Introduction," in *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*, Arthur Jacobson & Bernhard Schlink (Eds.), U of California P (Berkeley: 2001), pp. 280–290.

Noll, Mark. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, U of North Carolina P (Chapel Hill: 2006).

Pourciau, Sarah. "Bodily Negation: Carl Schmitt on the Meaning of Meaning," *MLN* 120. 5 (2005), pp. 1066–1090.

Roitman, Janet. *Anti-Crisis*, Duke UP (Durham: 2013).

Ryan, James Emmett. *Faithful Passages: American Catholicism in Literary Culture, 1844–1931*, U of Wisconsin P (Madison: 2013).

Scheske, Eric J. "Orestes Brownson: His Life, His Catholicism," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 7. 2 (2004), pp. 137–164.

Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Trans. George Schwab, U of Chicago P (Chicago: 2005).

Schmitt, Carl. *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, Trans. G. L. Ulmen, Greenwood P (Westport: 1996).

Spinoza, Baruch. *Treatise on Theology and Politics*, Early Modern Texts. Jonathan Bennett (Ed.) (2007).

"The Science of Politics." *The United States Review (1853–1856)*, Nov 1854, American Periodicals Series. Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Ticknor & Fields (Boston: 1854).

"Uncle Jack and his Nephew; or Conversations of an Old Fogie with a 'Young American'," *Quarterly Review* 2. 3, Jul 1854, American Periodicals Series.

Vatter, Miguel. *Divine Democracy: Political Theology after Carl Schmitt*, Oxford UP (Oxford: 2021).

Zakim, Michael & Gary J. Kornblith, "Introduction: An American Revolutionary Tradition," in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, Michael Zakim & Gary J. Kornblith (Eds.), U of Chicago P (Chicago: 2012).