

the rational, universal truths that were intended to embrace all Mankind, UNESCO incorporated the intellectual notion of cultural relativism into its guiding principles. Doing so elevated a counter-ideological proposition to the status of international policy; what has emerged from two hundred years of enlightenment is cultural anarchy. It began with the liberal social sciences.

It was Levi-Strauss who was commissioned to write a text on the rising racialism after the War. Levi-Strauss, much like the structuralists of today who see race as a mere mental construct, renounced reality and turned to theory; he denied the explanatory power of the race idea and attributed differences among groups "to the accidents of history, geography and society." His *Race and History* (1951) asserted as fact what cannot be proven in reality, namely, that all peoples everywhere are the same, and the tangibles of culture are due merely to the incidentals of time and place. He emasculated human ontology by denying man's capacity to shape the world and thereby make progress possible. But worse, he argued against ranking cultures hierarchically, which reduces human judgment to a mere consequence of time and place. *Pace* Hegel, but the rational is not the real, it is an accident of one's fate in history.

Finkelkraut's real genius in this little book is to connect this process to the de-

colonialization of Africa and its re-emergent tribalism. The liberation movements of Africa, goaded by a visible Marxist presence, followed the new dialectic of cultural ascendancy and rejected the philosophical propositions of the West, including the tangibles often confused with culture, capitalism and democracy. In a flurry of ethnic chauvinism this meant "binding individuals firmly to the collectivity. It meant securing national unity, the ruthless integration and cohesion of society."

The new political anthropology extruded from post-colonial xenophobia nullified the individual by reincorporating him into a cultural unit that preceded his own experience. This was the first step in the new race-thinking; origins are understood to govern destiny. Culture, formerly understood as an historical phenomenon and containing the potential for natural development, was transformed into a composite mentality, finally banishing individualism and the identity it seeks to convey. This led to an axiom of the new anthropology which denies the very possibility of democracy: no single person should survive as a singular.

Alain Finkelkraut shows us a not too distant mirror of multiculturalism. He shows us how the notion of autonomous cultures begins the process of re-tribalization, and with it the process of re-barbarization.

Comments on Carl Schmitt and Juan Donoso Cortés

Vincent J. McNamara

In the review of Paul Gottfried's excellent work *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory*, in the Spring 1993 issue of *Modern Age*, Lee Congdon states that "Carl Schmitt took his place in the tradition of Catholic counter-revolutionary thought identified

with Joseph de Maistre and Juan Donoso Cortés, who, in the aftermath of the revolutionary eruptions of 1789 and 1848 offered similar critiques of liberalism." "Like Maistre and Juan Cortés, Schmitt believed that man was inherently evil, not, as most

liberals insisted, good." This characterization of the position of Donoso Cortés on the nature of man needs to be clarified.

In *Politics and Theory*, Professor Gottfried refers to the comments made by Schmitt about the pessimism of Donoso on the nature of man. According to Gottfried, Donoso's reflections on man's "natural depravity and vileness stemmed from a view of Original Sin that went well beyond the Catholic doctrine. Donoso portrayed man as not merely tainted but utterly twisted by sin; and he thought of human nature as being ruled by passion and the will to power."¹ But in his review of Gottfried's book, is Professor Congdon not continuing a misconception of Donoso's concept of man, namely, that man is inherently evil?

Professor Gottfried bases his comments on the chapter "On the Counter-revolutionary Philosophy of the State (de Maistre, Bonald, Donoso)" in Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology*.² Schmitt refers to the correspondence of Donoso with Count Raczynski, Prussian ambassador to Spain, and he describes the depravity with which Donoso regards mankind and characterizes Donoso as close to madness.³ The letters are personal and show a degree of intimacy and esteem between two friends, and contain a wealth of genial comments on the political happenings in Germany, France, and Spain. Indeed, Donoso does express a somber attitude on public happenings and in his predictions on the results of government negotiations. However, in a letter on 17 September 1849 from Dresden to Count Raczynski, Donoso expressed his discomfort for having saddened his friend with his annoying predictions, and cautions him not to attribute too much importance to his "*negras profecias*," since he believed that their friendship imposed on him the duty to communicate that he felt set upon by a truly moral infirmity which obscured his view on public mat-

ters.⁴

Carlos Valverde comments on the pessimism of Donoso in the correspondence and claims that one should not judge Donoso's concept of man and mankind by his expressions of pessimism, since Donoso was going through a period of fatigue and ill health. Further, he states that such expressions do not express the conjunction of Donoso's philosophical and theological thought on his profound faith in man and his great values based on a fundamental optimism for the cosmos.⁵

In the "Counter Revolutionaries..." Schmitt attempts to draw from the position of Donoso a description of liberalism which reinforces his own position, that the bourgeoisie is a "*clasa discutidora*." Schmitt leaves perhaps a certain ambiguity from which, unfortunately, Gottfried has drawn a distorted interpretation of Donoso. However, the will to power attributed to Donoso by Gottfried is a characteristic of Bonald's position according to Schmitt who considers that for Donoso man has a weak will.⁶

An ambiguity stems from certain metaphors taken by Schmitt from the *Ensayo*⁷ which seem to show Donoso's utter disdain for mankind. Schmitt refers to the image of the turbulent behavior of the sailors in the aimless ship who eventually are silenced by the wrath of God. Yet, Schmitt mentions that Donoso is criticizing Proudhon's notion of the naturally good man which stems from Rousseau's later novels. Further, the image of the serpent to be crushed underneath his foot is in reference to the revelation of the nobility of man by Christ. "If man had not received by revelation that he was noble, then man would not know it." Donoso considers that man is indeterminate good and attributes the evildoing of humanity to free will in that the creature can rebel against the Creator.⁸ The understanding of mankind's perfectibil-

ity and nobility comes from the revelation of Christ.⁹ This latter notion echoes the dictum that “*dignitas venit ex fine*,” and the imagery illustrates the “*retórico calido*” of Donoso.

Another example given by Schmitt to show Donoso’s depreciation of mankind is the labyrinth which characterizes man in history. This similitude comes from Donoso’s reply to Cardinal Fornari, former Papal Nuncio in Paris, who requested brief comments from certain prominent people in the Catholic European field of culture and theology on certain errors at that time in philosophy and theology. In his reply Donoso discusses the supernatural assistance of God without which it would be necessary to see how man wanders lost and blind in this labyrinth of history which human generations construct without anyone able to say what is the structure, where is the entrance, or which is the exit.¹⁰ In all, these are impressive similitudes and are cited by Schmitt as examples of atrocity and horror. The metaphors express an attitude and attempt to explain the Catholic Faith, but they are inadequate to define the doctrinal position of Donoso on the nature of man.¹¹

In the *Ensayo* Donoso sometimes resembles one of the prophets of the Old Testament fulminating against the errant behavior of the Chosen People. The imagery seems exaggerated in English, but Donoso admits that the Spaniards are given to exaggeration.¹² It seems important to remark that a similitude has a certain ambiguity and a meditative quality, and should not be considered in terms of true or false, but rather as appealing, or suitable, or horrific. However, Donoso in his literal expression of Faith in the *Ensayo* and in his letter to Cardinal Fornari remains within Catholic orthodoxy.¹³

The publication of the *Ensayo* did create a controversy in Spain and was attacked in France by l’Abbe Gaduel, Vicar General of the Diocese of Orleans. Schmitt

wisely did not wish to get immersed in the Spanish controversy. However, Schmitt states that the Tridentine definition of original sin is neither simple nor radical. It differs from the Lutheran position, and does not consider man as worthless but as weak, and allows the possibility of goodness in mankind. However, Schmitt states that l’Abbe Gaduel who, insofar as he criticized Donoso Cortés from a dogmatic stand point, is right when he raises dogmatic reservations about the overemphasis of natural wickedness and worthlessness of mankind. Nevertheless, for Schmitt it was not right to overlook that Donoso made a religious and political decision of enormous actuality and not a formulation of dogma; it was polemical refutation of atheistic anarchism and its axiom of the naturally good man. Schmitt explains that Donoso intended the *Ensayo* as a work of apologetics (*agonicos*) and not of dogmatic theology (*dogmaticos*).¹⁴

Schmitt deepened his understanding of Donoso from the time of the essay “On Counter-revolutionaries...” in 1922 to 1940 when he had delivered in proxy a discourse in Spanish in Madrid on the “European Interpretation of Juan Donoso Cortés.” This latter discourse was published in German in Cologne in 1950 with three essays on Donoso with the title *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation*. The four essays written in 1922, 1927, 1929, and 1940 for different publications show together a more balanced and appreciative portrait of Donoso than in Schmitt’s first essay in the “Counter-revolutionaries...” and this is shown in his introduction to the edition of 1950. Schmitt perceived, as few did, the actuality and force of Donoso’s political philosophy.

The thought of Schmitt is subtle and brilliant, but so is the argumentation of Donoso. Professor Frederick Wilhelmsen states that no one can speak of Donoso without using the metaphor of fireworks,

and describes him as a comet blazing through the first half of the last century.¹⁵ In the *Ensayo* some prefer that Donoso would have used a more literal and a less metaphoric style, but the style does not diminish the genius of Donoso. Schmitt himself admits that it is necessary to get used to the writing of Donoso.¹⁶

In conclusion, the statement by Congdon that Donoso held that man was inherently evil, and the comment by Gottfried that Donoso's view of original sin went well beyond Catholic doctrine, are misrepresentations of the thought of Donoso, and further, the misrepresentation can hardly be attributed to a thinker of the subtlety of a Carl Schmitt who returned to his publications on Juan Donoso Cortés in 1950.¹⁷

1. Paul Edward Gottfried, *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory*, (Westport, Conn., 1990), 19. In his notes, 125, Professor Gottfried refers to the introduction of Arnaud Imatz to the edition *Donoso Cortés, Essai sur le catholicisme, le libéralisme et le socialisme*, (Paris, 1986). In the introduction Imatz makes no comment that, for Donoso, man is inherently evil; on the contrary, he states, "Donoso est parvenu à cette conviction après une réelle compréhension du dogme catholique du péché originel: la nature humaine n'est ni bonne ni perverse, mais seulement déçue," 15. Gottfried's reference to "Discurso sobre la dictadura" is unreliable; 187 is not to the edition of Valverde, *Obras completas de Juan Donoso Cortés*, (Madrid, 1970) but to the edition of Hans Juretschke, *Obras Completas de Juan Donoso Cortés*, (Madrid, 1946). 2. *Carl Schmitt, Political Theology, Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, translated by George Schwab, (Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, second printing, 1988). 3. Carl Schmitt, *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation*, (Cologne, 1950), 29. 4. Juan Donoso Cortés, *Obras completas de Juan Donoso Cortés*, edited Carlos Valverde, S.J., (Madrid, 1970, 2 vols.) 5. Valverde, *Obras de Donoso Cortés*, vol. I, 95-98. 6.

Schmitt, *Donoso Cortés*, 29. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 57-58. 7. Schmitt gives two references to Donoso in *Donoso Cortés*, 30: Obras IV, 102 (the metaphor of the sailors on the ship), and Obras V, 192 (the metaphor of the labyrinth). The references are apparently to the edition of Don Gabino Tejada, (Madrid, 1854-56, 5 vols.). The reference for the "reptile to be crushed" is not given. References to Donoso in a more accessible edition: Valverde, *Obras completas de Juan Donoso Cortés*: "the sailors," "Ensayo," vol. II, Bk. II, Chap. III, 560; "The reptile," "Ensayo," vol. II, Bk. III, 683; "The labyrinth," "Carta al cardinal Fornari," vol. II, 749. 8. Valverde, *Obras de Donoso Cortés*, vol. II, 550. 9. Valverde, *Obras de Donoso Cortés*, vol. II, 683. 10. Valverde, *Obras de Donoso Cortés*, "Carta al cardinal Fornari," vol. II, 749. 11. The use of metaphor has its place in theological discourse, and perhaps Donoso exaggerates his similitudes. See Aquinas, S.T., Ia, Q.1, Art. 10, especially Reply Obj. 3. 12. Valverde, *Donoso Cortés*, "Correspondencia con el conde Raczynski," vol. II, 935. Donoso comments that the historical character of the Spaniards is the exaggeration of everything: perseverance for seven centuries in the fight against the Moors; the animosity against races just to the expulsion of the Jews; the exaggeration of religious sentiment to the invention of the Inquisition; the only thing remaining is socialism, but certainly it will be exaggerated. 13. Donoso wrote the "Ensayo" in four months. Louis Veuillot had the text of the "Ensayo" translated into French and on the advice of Cardinal Fornari had a Benedictine theologian, Melchior du Lac of Solesme, examine it. Du Lac found many expressions lacking in precision and wrote Donoso indicating, point by point, the necessary corrections. Donoso accepted everything and modified his text. Valverde, *Obras de Donoso Cortés*, vol. I, 65. For the historical background of the "Ensayo," see John T. Graham, *Donoso Cortés*, (Columbia, Missouri, 1974), 266-301. 14. Schmitt, *Donoso Cortés*, 28. 15. Frederick Wilhelmsen, Introduction to Donoso's *Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism, & Socialism*, (Albany, 1989). translation by Madeleine Goddard of the *Ensayo sobre el catolicismo, el liberalismo y el socialismo*, VII. 16. Schmitt, *Donoso Cortés*, 109. Schmitt discusses the literary style of Donoso. 17. A translation into English of *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation* by Dr. Gerhart von Kap-herr will be forthcoming.

