

pressures again tempt us right back into Schmittian and Heideggerian action ('only a totalitarian state can address climate change' is no longer odd to hear). So to defend deliberation, pluralist societies and respect for human beings in all their frailties, we must humanize action, thought and decision. And for this, we must engage with Schmitt and Heidegger. To see the unforgivable in them is to recognize it in us, too. And that even Heidegger might deem a thought worth thinking.

Yours sincerely,

Freddy Sourgens
Professor of Law,

Washburn University, USA

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Cancelling Schmitt

Dear Editors,

Citations and textual engagement are political acts. They convey to scholars and students who we value in public discourse, even in our disagreements. As such, Joseph Weiler's question in a recent Editorial [vol. 32:2] about whether to 'cancel' Carl Schmitt (<https://www.ejil-talk.org/cancelling-carl-schmitt/>) is one of our individual and communal values.

Schmitt does not raise serious concerns about whether we are toeing a line of undue cancellations. Weiler acknowledges this. Yet, Weiler does what many others do when they wish to utilize Schmitt but are uncomfortable with who he was. He condemns Schmitt's explicit support for genocide by pointing to some key critical texts while arguing some of

Schmitt's other work – some of Schmitt – should be valued despite this. Weiler's approach rests on parsing Schmitt's intellectual contributions so as to deem only some of his work unacceptable. But, Schmitt did not wake up on 1 May 1933 and become a white supremacist. His identity was built on and into years of intellectual development. It exists in framing, linguistic and other scholarly choices that predate his Nazi identity and that do not explicitly justify Nazi ideology. His core beliefs were written into his scholarship and his scholarship carried a purpose. Any attempt to engage Schmitt is a choice to forgive these sins and find value in him.

Should we offer Schmitt such salvation?

I think not.

Had Schmitt looked differently or been based in a different place, he and his scholarship would have long been written out of our discourse. 'Cancelling' is a term generally reserved for white, (culturally) European men. For anyone else, 'cancelling' is what regularly happens to our scholarship when our work and ideas are usurped and regurgitated without acknowledgment, or when we are conveniently forgotten on course syllabi, in journal articles, conference panels and books. Almost every woman, person of colour and Global South scholar I know has had this happen to them. Just like 'cancelling', the practice of 'forgetting' is the result of intentional choices. It is intentional when scholars limit their literature reviews to certain Western journals, when they consider TWAIL and CRT to sit 'beyond the scope' of their research and when they fail (or refuse) to ensure a diversity of authorship in their citations. Those are intentional acts, but they are

private endeavours. The difference between 'forgetting' and 'cancelling' is in the *public acknowledgment* of intentional choices. Had Schmitt not been a white, German man, he would have long ago been replaced with references to other scholars. His contributions attributed to those who wrote in response or who built upon his work. He would have been forgotten.

For once, let us 'forget' a scholar for what he did rather than for his immutable characteristics. Schmitt was a genocidal, antisemitic, white supremacist. He is not needed as

an intellectual lodestar, much less for minor support. We can identify and cite those who took similar intellectual paths but came to a different conclusion on the fundamental question of whether we should exterminate people because they are unlike us.

Sincere regards,

Tara Van Ho 

*School of Law and Human Rights Centre,
University of Essex, United Kingdom*
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