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Social & Behavioral Sciences \ Political Science \ Political Theory

Marder, Michael. **Groundless existence: the political ontology of Carl Schmitt**. Continuum International Publishers Group, 2010. 190p afp; ISBN [9780826465955](#), \$120.00. Reviewed in 2012jan CHOICE.

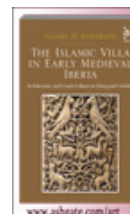
Marder's contribution to postmetaphysical thinking offers a set of studies of Carl Schmitt's ontology written for initiates fluent in the Schmittian vocabulary. Along the way, it also tackles a host of issues in contemporary Continental philosophy. On Marder's reading, Schmitt properly understood is no statist, antimodern or reactionary. Instead, an essentially Heideggerian Schmitt posits politics as a realm of becoming. Schmitt chides those who take the "state" to stand in for politics as such. In fact, Schmitt refuses the metonyms of "state," "law" or "Constitution," and instead reduces those modernist conceits to the event of the decision, the energetics of the contest from which form follows. If one mixes together Husserl's time-consciousness, Heidegger's temporal being as event, and Nietzsche's idea of a doing without a doer, and then stirs vigorously, one produces, according to Marder (philosophy, Univ. of the Basque Country, Spain), a reduction of Schmitt's main concepts into an existential ontology of "constitutive subjectivity" that is neither metaphysical nor totalizing. The sovereign subject creates itself in the doing, in the exercise of power. Where Marder's Schmitt then needs further explication is the constitutive role of history and temporality. Why reduce the decision to "constitutive subjectivity" and not constitutive

intersubjectivity? **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduate, graduate, and research collections. -
- *G. D. Miller, University of Washington, Tacoma*

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