



Monographic Section

The Solitude of Power. A Reflection on the Political

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Abstract. In 1954 Carl Schmitt writes a dialogue entitled *Dialogue on Power and on Access to the Powerful*, in which he notices and examines the solitude of those who hold and exert power. He describes a twine of power, in which on one hand those who have command are in a state of dependence, and on the other hand those who should only represent the intermediate passage between the vertex (individual or assembly) and the basis (the people) are raised to a decision élite. This twine of power reflects, in a sort of variant, the master/servant dialectics of the Hegelian *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which, at the end of the dialectics, the two extremes of the relationship overturn. This dialectics actually dissolves domination, that is, the power exerted through the relation of master/servant, every time, differently varied. Instead, Schmitt thinks of power only as domination. Hence, we have to distinguish power from domination. Via this crucial distinction it will be possible to aptly think and practice democracy.

Keywords. Power, Domination, Hegel, Schmitt, Frankfurt School.

DIALECTICS OF POWER OR DIALECTICS OF DOMINATION?

In 1954 Carl Schmitt writes a dialogue – that was radio-broadcasted several times – entitled *Dialogue on Power and on Access to the Powerful*, in which, in the third section, he notices and examines the solitude of those who hold and exert power. Schmitt’s perspective on the dynamics of power is unusual: the dynamics are generally analysed focusing on their functions of decision and command. However, Schmitt does not see these functions as such. Rather, he sees them as «the inevitable inner dialectics of power and powerlessness in which any human powerful is involved» (Schmitt 1954: 20).

We will see why Schmitt specifies “human” when he talks about the “powerful”, however first of all we must recall where this text comes from. As is the case in any work, it reflects the historical and political background

in which it was born, the *occasion*. The birth of the *Dialogue* is connected with the interrogations Schmitt was subjected to in Nuremberg, therefore it is somehow also a defensive strategy to avoid the accusation of involvement in National Socialism. However, it contains some elements and reflections that are able to exceed the contingency and to deal with the nature and structure of power on the basis of historical constants. I will focus on the theme of power and its solitude – a theme that spans epochs – aware that this is a text in which Hitler and National Socialism are never mentioned, whereas Stalin and Roosevelt are mentioned as representative figures that exert «tremendous [*ungeheuerliche*] power» (*Ibidem*: 9). We must always keep in mind that that is the climate and the context of *Dialogue* in which – as it is in all of Schmitt's works – it is necessary to read between the lines. Even what is expressed clearly, where it seems that there are no other meanings, it has hidden traits.

In the third section of the *Dialogue*, entitled *Break: The Antechamber and the Problem of Access to the Vertex*, we find the unavoidable origin of the solitude of power, starting precisely from the «inner dialectics of power and powerlessness» quoted above.

Why «powerlessness»? It is given to the fact that «even the most absolute Prince must trust reports and information, and that he is dependent on his counsellors» (*Ibidem*: 20). Hence, this «powerlessness» is more appropriately defined as «dependence» (*Ibidem*: 21): «Then every direct power is immediately submitted to indirect influences» (*Ibidem*: 21). How do these «influences» organise themselves? They merge into the «antechamber of power [*Vorraum der Macht*]» (*Ibidem*: 23): «As a chamber of power assembles itself, in the same measure, contextually, an antechamber of the same power organises itself. Every growth of direct power raises and increases the misty circle of indirect influences» (*Ibidem*: 25-26). But in this way the one who constitutes the «antechamber of power» exerts power over the powerful, «takes part in power» (*Ibidem*: 21). Therefore, even the most “absolute” power is not actually absolute. Rather,

the powerful becomes increasingly more isolated as much as the direct power concentrates in his individual person. The corridor uproots him from the common ground and raises him to a sort of stratosphere in which he keeps in contact only with the ones who indirectly dominate him, while he loses contact with all the other men he exerts power upon, who in turn lose contact with him (*Ibidem*: 26).

This passage is certainly one of Schmitt's defensive cores (he wants to be considered by Americans as an intellectual devoid of “access” to power), but it is also an acute and precise description of how power (or rather, domination) organises itself.

This twine of power, on one hand puts those who have command in a state of dependence, and on the other hand raises those who should only represent the intermediate passage between the vertex (individual or assembly) and the basis (the people) to a decision élite. It reflects, in a sort of variant, the master/servant dialectics of the Hegelian *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which, at the end of the dialectics, the two extremes of the relationship overturn; that is, the master is actually dependent on the servant because this person mediates between him and the object, while the servant, by means of «self-consciousness [*Selbstbewusstsein*]» (Hegel 1807a: 117; Hegel 1807b: 286), gains «independent consciousness [*Selbständigkeit*]» (Hegel 1807a: 117; Hegel 1807b: 286) and becomes master of himself. This dialectic actually dissolves domination, that is, the power exerted through the relation of master/servant, every time, differently varied. Schmitt thinks of power only as domination, and as domination it produces a double overturning. The master depends on the servants and the servants, in the “antechamber of power”, exert power over the master.

Schmitt thinks of power only in terms of domination, and as domination he analyses it and develops its states and movement. Thus, double overturning ensues; the master depends on the servants and the servants, in the “antechamber of power”, exert power over the master. In this mutual dependence – that in itself it is not an evil thing, but that inside domination takes the form of a struggle between two poles that intend to oppress each other – two types of isolation occur too: one affects those who exert domination, and another affects those who are dominated and are external to the mediation, that is the “antechamber”. The latter tends to put pressure on the master and at the same time raises itself over the “common” servants, becoming detached from them. In other words, the “antechamber” becomes an élite.

However, these three sets – vertex, “antechamber”, people – are unavoidable “structures” in any organisation of political reality. Everything depends on the inner relationships they establish with each other. If we have to distinguish – as we have to – between power and domination, these three sets will take on a different setup if applied in times of power or domination. But how can we distinguish between one or the other?¹

DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT: COMPLEXITY OF A READING

The critique – and the critique as a claim – of domination is one of the main axes of the vertiginous structure of Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in which dynamics of domination are traced and showed with sharpness. Beyond all radicalisations (even if they are present in the text), the unmasking of domination is so effective and incisive that, after several exaggerated interpretations in the 1960s and in subsequent years, some scholars tried to contain its critical potential by giving the book the status of a “classic”. In both cases – through an attitude of mere rebellion or through an attempt of normalisation – the result is the neutralisation of the contents². However, both of them are grounded in one of the most problematic themes of the volume; domination is indeed disclosed with great strength and acumen, but it is not aptly distinguished from power. In this way, power – that is different from domination – tends to be subsumed under it.

Power – *posse*, and possibility – is able to break domination, but if it does not have its own autonomy as a category, then there can be a neutralisation of the praxis, which may move pointlessly (as it happens in the mere attitude of rebellion) or may deny every kind of power (even its own) paralysing itself, because of its incapability in differentiating power and domination and fearing to exert the first. Without the critique that ousted itself, the mediation of reality leads to normalisation. But the perspective of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, rather than being directed toward a *political* praxis (*breaking* domination via power), turns toward an *aesthetic* approach to the resolution of the *polis*’ conflict (*dissolving* domination totally).

This is a common approach typical of the first generation of the Frankfurt School. The critique of an «idyllic-aesthetic kind of [...] vision» (Bedeschi 1985: 155) – that Giuseppe Bedeschi addresses to Marcuse – can be extended, even if not entirely, to the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* too.

However, there is another side to point of view. The objective is to end the relationship of domination (*Herrschaft*, mastery) exerted by men on nature, on other men and on themselves. That is a relationship that is based on a movement whose aim is the pure identity of the object with the subject via concept; all this tenseness flowing into a drift towards total reification. To think of the end of domination is to think, as Carlo Galli observes, «a subject [...] that is able to correlate with objectivity without conceptualising it» (Galli 1997: XIX), that is what Adorno intends to think in his *opus magnum*, *Negative Dialectics*. Galli’s conclusion converges with Bedeschi’s, although Galli gives a very different, not fully negative judgement of value; that is, «*Dialectic of Enlightenment* is hedonistic: it wants to save impulses from their sublimation, to restore the material concreteness of pleasure and to struggle against renouncement, against the principle of performance» (*Ibidem*: XIX). To reach this goal, a praxis that is mediated in the present it is not possible: «there is no room at all for the concrete practice to which *Dialectic of Enlightenment* alludes to, in the totality of domination [...]. The only way toward practice – that is, a way that is so fine not to a ‘tread’ but a ‘jump’ – is the patency of the non-necessity of the necessity of domination» (*Ibidem*: XX). And the «jump» evokes a horizon of «messianic redemption, that is not spiritualistic, but on the contrary openly materialistic» (*Ibidem*: XXI), that, we add, it is also an influence of Benjamin’s concepts of history.

¹ In my analysis, power is not intended as in its *horizontal* configuration (as Arendt wishes and suggests in Arendt 1963: 215-281) but in its *vertical* configuration. In order to be decision in every sphere of the Political, power has to be a point generated by a concentration. I do not want to nullify the *horizontal* configuration, but I intend to remark that this is a phase of a movement that has to culminate in a *vertical* configuration.

² As concerns this “neutralisation”, see Grimaldi (2012).

So, if on one hand the awareness of the non-«logical necessity» (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 29) of the diversifications of domination, and the perspective (of Marxian ascendancy) of a passage from prehistory to history of the conciliated world are fundamental aspects in order to think beyond what is negative in the present, at the same time – on the other hand – emancipation is deferred beyond any mediation, in an utopia as a *no-where*³. The risk – that does not lose the chance to fulfil – is the losing of sight of the concrete historical processes of the present⁴, which is reduced to becoming a negative state to overcome.

Aware of the interlacing of all these elements, that in our analysis we must keep together, and that entails a complexity of the reading of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we can now proceed through a reflection on one of the most fascinating and revealing interpretations the book contains: the resistance of Odysseus to the Sirens' chant.

DOMINATION AND POWER

The theme of Odysseus occurs in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*'s first section (it being Adorno's first draft) and *Excursus I* (whereas Horkheimer and Adorno worked together on *The Concept of Enlightenment* from the beginning) (Müller-Doohm 2003: 376). Their interpretation of the episode of the Sirens in the *Odyssey* is very rich in contents; in this paper I will focus on the domination exerted by Odysseus over his comrades and over himself. The idea of self-infliction of domination is – as we shall see – a development of themes that the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* inherit from Marx and Engels; it is the idea that domination involves both those who are dominated and the one who dominates. Those who must pass where the Sirens' chant is heard, must face «the allure-ment [...] of losing oneself in the past» (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 25), a «past» that is overtaken through many great sacrifices. What is the «past» that the Sirens call for? It is the return to a stage preceding all the work that was performed to build and fix a self-consciousness separated from nature:

Humanity had to inflict terrible injuries on itself before the self – the identical, purpose-directed, masculine character of human beings – was created, and something of this process is repeated in every childhood. The effort to hold itself together attends the ego at all its stages, and the temptation to be rid of the ego has always gone hand-in-hand with the blind determination to preserve it. [...] The fear [*Die Angst*] of losing the self, and suspending [*aufzuheben*] with it the boundary between oneself and other life, the aversion [*die Scheu*] to death and destruction, is twinned with a promise of joy which has threatened civilization at every moment. The way of civilization has been that of obedience and work, over which fulfillment shines everlastingly as mere illusion, as beauty deprived of power (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 26; Horkheimer, Adorno 1944b: 40).

That «promise of happiness» is not fulfilled «as a barbaric regression into an indistinct condition» of «subject» with «nature» (Galli 1997: XIX), but in the dissolution of domination:

Odysseus is a sacrificial victim, the self which incessantly suppresses its impulses, and thus he lets slip his own life, that he saves only to recall it as a path of error [*Irrfahrt*]. Nevertheless, he is sacrificed, also, for the abolition of sacrifice. His lordly [*herrschaftliche*] renunciation, as a struggle with myth, is representative of a society which no longer needs renunciation and domination [*der Herrschaft*] – which masters itself not in order to do violence to itself and others but for the sake of reconciliation (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 43; Horkheimer, Adorno 1944b: 63).

This is the perspective of emancipated society, that rises from the dissolving of domination. But Odysseus imposes domination on himself and on his comrades, so that he can maintain his Self steady and can avoid losing himself again into the indistinct, immediate pre-awareness condition: «He plugs their ears with wax and orders them to row with all their might. [...] Society has always made sure that this was the case. Workers must look ahead with alert concentration and ignore anything which lies to one side. [...] Thus the workers are made practical» (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 26).

³ For an in-depth analysis of these dynamics, see Grimaldi (2018: 58-60).

⁴ On this basis, Domenico Losurdo develops his critique on Horkheimer and Adorno (Losurdo 2017: 72-84, 87).

But there is another «possibility» (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 26) to pass unscathed beyond the Sirens; that is,

Odysseus chooses for himself, the landowner, who has others to work for him. He listens, but does so while bound helplessly to the mast, and the stronger the allurements grow the more tightly he has himself bound, just as later the bourgeois denied themselves happiness the closer it drew to them with the increase in their own power (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944a: 26).

In domination, Odysseus isolates himself to exert the possibility of a privilege; moreover, he remains involved in domination itself. On one hand he exerts it on others, and on the other hand – because of domination’s constitution itself – he must exert it on himself. Domination concerns those who are dominated and the one who dominates⁵. Thus, the dissolution of domination is not only liberation/emancipation of those who are dominated but also of those who exert domination.

This is a matrix that Horkheimer and Adorno inherit from Marx and Engels’ historical materialism, even if they develop it with significant differences. Reading the well-known conclusion of the second section of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (the section that analyses and specifies the relationship between *Proletarians and Communists*), we find that «the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy [*die Erämpfung der Demokratie ist*]» (Marx, Engels 1848a: 26; Marx, Engels 1848b: 481). It follows that:

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power [*die öffentliche Gewalt*] will lose its political character [*den politischen Charakter*]. Political power [*Die politische Gewalt*], properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class. In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (Marx, Engels 1848a: 27; Marx, Engels 1848b: 482).

It is not the aim of this paper to delve into Marx and Engels’ political project, instead I intend to underline two elements of the text. One is the universalistic range of emancipation (that shapes *Dialectic of Enlightenment*) as it is thought in *Manifesto*: “the proletariat” does not only free itself but – it does so within its own movement – it frees the entire social and political body (capitalists included) from domination of mankind on mankind. The other is Marx and Engels’ effort to distinguish between two kinds of power (it is also a polemic debate with anarchists). In fact, “public power” and “political power” are not one of the same thing⁶.

That «the public power will lose its political character», means that in the case of “political power” disappearing, the “public” remains; however the latter is left no better defined. We read once again the definition of “political power”: «Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another». If we pay attention to the contents of this definition, we can connect it to the conceptual perspective of domination, namely to a relationship of rigid subordination within social and political structure. In any case, Marx and Engels’ *Manifesto* determines different kinds of power more clearly than the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*; in the latter, the tendency to subsume power under domination risks confusing theory and paralysing praxis.

So, now we can localise and fix two issues that are both correlated and separated. The first hand concerns our knowing – thanks to a conceptual-line that goes from the servant/master dialectics to Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s

⁵ As the case for power, that includes in its structure those who are subjected to it and the one who exerts it. But domination and power are different from one another because if liberation from domination is a necessity, liberation from power is – as we shall see – impossible. Furthermore, it is impossible and senseless; in the absence of power – that is possibility – there is no freedom.

⁶ It is a very important distinction, although it is expressed in a problematical setting that has produced part of the considerable difficulties the socialist management bodies faced in the 20th century. The whole question constitutes the theme of some of the most important and innovative reflections by Antonio Gramsci, see Gramsci (1948-1951/1975); to examine in depth this issue, see Martelli (1996: 131-83) and Losurdo (1997: 181-205).

Odysseus⁷ – of the double dependence of servant/master, that mirrors Schmitt's particular way of seeing the relationship between "the powerful" and the "antechamber of power". The second, concerns how to structure the three sets we identified via Schmitt (vertex, "antechamber", people); we may structure them according to the paradigm of power or to the paradigm of domination. Notably, the distinction between these two paradigms is indeed crucial.

The fact is that both in Schmitt's *Dialogue* and in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the autonomy of the category of power from domination is blurred or, in any case, not clearly defined. That is to say, if power is subsumed under domination, it is not possible to detect that power is the general category, whereas domination is a particular sub-category. Domination is a particular form of exerting power – not the only one, not power in itself. In *Dialectics of Enlightenment* Horkheimer and Adorno subsume power under domination⁸, and in *Dialogue on Power and on Access to the Powerful* Schmitt carries out a linguistically different but conceptually akin operation – he mentions power but speaks of domination; namely, when he thinks power, he thinks of it only as domination. Although these two points of view were antithetical and represent two politically opposed projects (this is a point that we always need to keep in mind), power is depicted as domination. It is in both cases a relationship based on rigid subordination, exerted by different groups at different points in time; it is never a relationship between equals in diversified roles. In Horkheimer and Adorno, equality is beyond power-domination; the latter can figure equality at most as a relationship of mere equivalence, and therefore as levelling and as generalised oppression; instead in Schmitt, the idea of equality is denied from the beginning as *petitio principii*⁹. However, remaining on the *continuum* historical level, domination (as Horkheimer and Adorno teach) does not exist *sub specie aeternitatis*. But, its dissolving cannot be thought only in an utopian-messianic perspective. Indeed, power is what can break domination.

DEMOCRACY AND POWER

Unless, in order to prevent any distinction and to propose a radical solution, you consider the elimination of power a necessity. But, this radicality is impossible. Indeed, abolishing power should take a force (once again, a power) stronger than the power that it should abolish. Once this force has exerted this supreme act, it should suppress itself, and thus dissolves. The accomplishment of this act should exert power once again, precisely because it *has-the-power-to* dissolve itself, meaning that we were far away from a dissolution of power. The supreme act of power is not to abolish its own power (it would be a nihilistic act of indiscriminate power – that is power once again – therefore the cycle does not stop), but to exert it to the *limit* that it gives itself. So, the solution is not the (impossible) elimination of power, rather its sharing, and therefore the elimination of domination. Domination is different from power because it is based on the difference between master (*dominus*) and servant, that is to say on a relationship based on radical *inequality*.

⁷ In their reading of Odysseus' figure, Horkheimer and Adorno make several references to *Phenomenology of Spirit* and to servant/master dialectics.

⁸ Horkheimer's approach in 1962 is rather different. In *Power and conscience* he implicitly distinguishes between power and domination and he proposes – starting from Kant's themes – a positive interaction between the conscience of those who are governed and the power of those who govern (Horkheimer 1962: 134). Although he does not think that these dynamics is our society's *desiderata*, it is a relevant change of approach because it is mainly attentive to the concrete historical context. In part, his different point of view is due to a different attitude toward liberal democracy that he develops during his exile in the USA. In any case, Horkheimer's proposal, albeit it is more oriented toward specific and concrete forms of power, moves on an excessively abstract level and is more akin to moral reflection than to political thought.

⁹ Schmitt deactivates the universalistic range of Christianity via a negation of equality that is based on historical concreteness: «the general quality of being human [*die allgemeine Eigenschaft, Mensch zu sein*] need not [*noch nicht*] level out the social, legal, and political distinctions [*die sozialen, rechtlichen und politischen Unterscheidungen zu nivellieren*] developed in the course of human history» (Schmitt 1950a: 105; Schmitt 1950b: 73). This conceptual move allows him to theorise and justify different legal *statuses* that also depend on different territorialities, that is to say the different *statuses* motherland/colonies; his rejection of liberation movements carried out by the people that live under colonial domination derives from this. As Losurdo notices: «Schmitt [...] refused any legitimacy to anti-colonial liberation movements in the post-war [after WWII] period» (Losurdo 1996: 107).

Which political regime finds itself on the antithetical premise of domination, namely starting from the *equality* of its members that acknowledge each other as *peers*? This regime, historically theorised on levels of increasing universalism, is democracy. In democracy, there are no longer master and servants, but everyone is master of himself and servant of all others, and at the service of others. Being both master and servant is the way to break the relationship of subservience servant/master, to dissolve domination resolving *in ourselves* the dialectics master/servant¹⁰.

In this way the two types of isolation created by domination (the isolation of the vertex from the basis and vice versa) are broken at the very moment when radical inequality is broken; that is, the inequality that generates the abyss between those who dominate and those who are dominated. The acknowledgement of equality generates a common ground in which there are no sacred spaces of power – that are almost inaccessible – and “antechamber[s]” reserved for a restricted élite. So, we return to Schmitt, against Schmitt, to structure the three sets: vertex, “antechamber”, people.

A decisive problem is «access to the vertex»: «The more the power is concentrated in a specific point, in a specific man or specific group of men, such as in a vertex, the more the problem of corridor and the question of access to the vertex intensify» (Schmitt 1954: 25).

Therefore, the crux of the matter is the *concentration* of «power [...] in a specific point». What is the solution to avoid this concentration? Once again, it is the *limitation* of power. How can power be contained? *Dividing it* and then creating different channels of mediation between the vertex and the basis is a strategy. Of course, it is not a mere multiplication of powers, but a division of the competencies preventing the concentration of power. This division avoids a slide toward domination; the latter desires maximum isolation between parts to realise maximum inequality, that is, its own essence. This is the basis of a political realism that – starting from a current concrete situation – works for breaking and dissolving domination.

But neither democracy (conceived as the political regime where members acknowledge each other as *equal*), nor the separation of powers (that loosens the tendency to the concentration of power that characterises domination) escape the main problem of power: the *decision*, that necessarily implies a vertex. Once again: solitude.

As is known, Schmitt does not sympathise with democracy, and he never was really concerned with the separation of powers (except rather late, after the catastrophe of the Third Reich). His conception of power hides a background you can attempt to access only through an interpretation that is able to catch elements beyond the explicit meaning of the text¹¹. Therefore, in order to proceed, texts must be read with a fine lens.

In Schmitt’s reconstruction of a history of ideas, until God «lives», power is considered as «always good» (Schmitt 1954: 34). When «God is dead», then contextually power is «evil» (*Ibidem*: 38):

starting exactly from the age in which it seems the humanisation of power is fulfilling – that is, from the French Revolution – it irresistibly spreads the certainty that power is evil in itself. The saying ‘God is dead’ and the other saying ‘Power is evil in itself’ were born at the same time and in the same context. And, fundamentally they both mean the same thing (*Ibidem*: 38).

When we read these passages we must not forget that Schmitt is a man of (Catholic) faith and that his aversion to the French Revolution is one of the cornerstones of his critique of modernity; a critique that is not so naïve as characterised by mere nostalgia of the *Ancien Régime* (a nostalgia that, however, is not absent), but instead that intends to surpass modernity, thanks to new forms that are capable of renewing pre-modern principles.

So, how can we interpret the conclusion of the fifth section of the *Dialogue*? We read: «power [...] I say only that is an autonomous reality [*eigenständige Wirklichkeit*] towards anyone, towards the powerful too, that power involves in its own dialectics. Power is stronger than any will of power, stronger than any human goodness and, luckily, stronger than any human malice» (Schmitt 1954: 46).

¹⁰ This is a possibility of the Hegelian servant/master dialectics; when it arrives to the servant’s “independent consciousness”, it “stops” – somehow it *suspends* itself. This “independent consciousness” becomes a guide-idea for emancipation.

¹¹ An excellent guide to approach this kind of reading is Volpi (2002); the author delineates a very useful framework to interpret Schmitt’s statement of Gnosticism.

In fact, in the first pages of *Dialogue* there is nostalgia for the times when, with God as guarantor, power was “good”. But Schmitt does not ignore God’s death, and he certainly does not sympathise with the notion of the power of the man for man, as it could explicitly seem in *Dialogue*. If this is the case, then why, close to the conclusion, does Schmitt, with such certainty, describe power as a superhuman element, beyond good and evil as conceived by humans? Is then power the proper force of a God *beyond* human good and evil, not on an *only superior* level but on a *completely-different* level?

In this way, God and power are subtracted from *logos*¹². But why should they be? Why should they be put beyond the level of understanding? Why should they be unintelligible? Is not God *Logos*¹³? Is not *Logos* the Word?

If *logos* is developed and comprehended as a *concept*, it resends to word, to inner conversation and dialogue between men, and between *peers* because they are endowed with *logos*. This dialogue sets us essentially outside isolation, in fact outside domination. Democracy, whose *dia-logical* character is essential to itself, sets dialogue as a means for decision, as political act where violence does not feature. Violence is mute in itself, even if sometimes it wants to conceal itself in colloquial justification. However, the true content of violence is not reasoning, rather it is *factum brutum* of action and gesture.

Instead, *logos* – that (inner and intersubjective) conversation – “saves” every vertex from its impulse of domination, makes every leader and every management body master of themselves and renders them at the service of others. That power vertex is necessary (if it is separated, power produces various *spaces*) as it is necessary that solitude (that is not the same as isolation), that is always listening, always conversing with itself and mindful of dialogue with others. Through that vertex of power and through that solitude, the decision that is able to break domination should be taken, thus fulfilling the highest act of the Political.

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¹² Schmitt shows a certain aversion toward *logos*; see Schmitt (1959: 578).

¹³ John 1:1.

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