Abstract:

This paper focuses on two minor writings authored by Carl Schmitt in 1954-1955, which stemmed from the interrogations he had undergone in Nuremberg – Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber (Dialogue on power and the access to the power-holder) and Gespräch über den neuen Raum (Dialogue on the new space). As they have yet to be published in English, to date they have not received substantial attention by Anglo-American scholars. Therefore, this paper examines Schmitt’s Dialogues to unveil the fascinating perspective that they develop on the co-implication of order and disorder in the aftermath of World War II. The paper consists of four parts: after a contextualization of the two Gespräche within Schmitt’s intellectual trajectory (Part I), the key arguments of Gespräch über die Macht (Part II) and Gespräch über den neuen Raum (Part III) are thoroughly and critically analyzed. Finally (Part IV), their common thread is highlighted: both Gespräche suggest the need to revisit some of the foundational concepts of modern (geo)politics as a basic condition for re-establishing order in a world threatened by new means and forms of disorder.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt, power, space, order, disorder, Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, jus publicum Europaeum
I. **Dialogue on Power and Dialogue on the New Space: Two Sides of the Same Coin**

As recently argued by Carlo Galli, a leading scholar of Schmitt in Italy, the work of Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) can be read as a lifelong deconstruction of modern political thought.\(^1\) The intellectual who liked to imagine himself as the twentieth-century Hobbes repeatedly emphasised the ambiguity of Hobbesian political theory and the Janus-faced role of State sovereignty: on one hand, the promise of order *through* the creation of the Leviathan; on the other, the latent reactivation of disorder *within* the Leviathan. This hermeneutics also applies to the writings that Schmitt authored in the aftermath of World War II, during one of the most complicated periods of his life. Rejected by the Nazi regime which he had supported; forced into academic retirement in post-war Germany due to his refusal to undergo de-nazification; imprisoned twice in 1945 and in 1947, when he was interrogated in Nuremberg on his involvement in the Nazi regime – in the early 1950s, Schmitt felt

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\(^1\) Galli 2010, p. 1.
the urgent need to clarify – and *ex post* justify – the position that he had held within the Third Reich.²

This is why, in 1951, he accepted the invitation from the *Hessischen Rundfunk* (Hessian Radio) to articulate his views on two highly controversial and intimately connected topics: the ambivalence of power and the relation between land and sea in post-war geopolitics.³ In 1954-1955 he thus wrote *Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber* (*Dialogue on power and the access to the power-holder*) and *Gespräch über den neuen Raum* (*Dialogue on the new space*).⁴ These both originated from the re-elaboration of two of the four *memoranda* that Schmitt had personally written during the Nuremberg interrogations⁵: in the first, he defended himself against the charge of providing the theoretical basis for Hitler’s doctrine of

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² For different perspectives on this phase of Schmitt’s personal, political and academic life, see Bendersky 1983, pp. 195-287; Schwab 1989, pp. 101-43; Scheuerman 1991; Mauss 1998, pp. 198-216.
³ As Tommissen 1996 and Giesler 2008 have recalled, the composition history of the two *Gespräche* is quite peculiar. In June 1951 Heinz Friedrich, editor of *Hessischen Rundfunk*, decided to host a conversation between Schmitt and another intellectual (either Raymond Aron, Helmut Schelsky or Arnold Gehlen). For different reasons, Aron, Schelsky and Gehlen declined, and Schmitt decided to write both dialogues by himself. The two writings were then read on radio, by radio speakers, on 22 June 1954 and 12 April 1955 respectively.
⁴ I wish to thank Samuel Garrett Zeitlin of the University of Berkeley for having provided me with some passages of his translation of Schmitt’s Dialogues (manuscript under review by Polity Press; see bibliography for further details). As for the *Dialogue on power*, the German text is quoted from Schmitt 2008; as for the *Dialogue on the new space*, I will refer to Schmitt 1958.
⁵ On which see Bendersky 1987, 2007a, 2007b. The first three interrogations of Schmitt in Nuremberg were published in English in Schmitt 1987a and Schmitt 1987b.
great spaces (Großräume)\(^6\); in the second, he dealt with the organization and distribution of power in Hitler’s regime.\(^7\)

Aside from a few erratic mentions\(^8\), these two Dialogues have never been systematically studied by Anglo-American scholarship. Nevertheless, they are worth reading – and hopefully will soon be published in English – for (at least) two reasons: they develop a critical re-reading of modern political theory and its conceptualisation of sovereign power; and they examine how the development of technology has challenged conventional understandings of power and geography in the context of post-war geopolitics. In other words, in both Dialogues Schmitt sheds light upon the fragile premises, and broken promises, of the Hobbesian project: the traditional ideal of building order through State sovereignty and a community of Leviathans recognizing each other as justi hostes and personae morales is contrasted with the new reality of power relations at the domestic and global level. At the twilight of European and Eurocentric modernity, Hobbes’s pursuit of an artificial order over any pre-political chaos becomes purely utopian: unprecedented challenges constantly reactivate disorder and unveil the illusory nature of order, on national and international scales. The advance of technology beyond any human control, together with the opening of unexplored spaces and the emergence of a new geopolitical scenario call into question the foundations of the jus publicum Europaeum and induce Schmitt to revisit the correlation of order and disorder from novel perspectives.

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\(^6\) For two recent and thorough analyses of the concept of Großraumordnung (‘an order predicated on large spaces’) in Schmitt’s international thought, see Jünemann 2008 and Hooker 2009, pp. 126-55.


\(^8\) E.g. Balakrishnan 2000, p. 300 and Müller 2003, p. 104.
Despite their dialogical structure, the two *Gespräche* are no exception in Schmitt’s intellectual production. A common thread unites his systematic and his occasional writings: indeed, between the 1920s and the 1960s he developed a reflection on the legal and political forms of European civilization, which expanded progressively – from parliamentary democracy (early 1920s) and the constitutional state (late 1920s-early 1930s) to the reconfiguration of the global order (1940s and 1950s). The *Gespräch über die Macht* and the *Gespräch über den neuen Raum* belong to the third and final phase of Schmitt’s thought. As such, they should be read and interpreted against the background of the more popular pages of *Land und Meer* (1942) and *Der Nomos der Erde* (1950); yet, they also presuppose the considerations on power and sovereignty developed previously in *Der Begriff des Politischen* (1927) and *Der Verfassungslehre* (1928).

**II. ‘Before Each Chamber of Direct Power, an Antechamber of Influences Develops’: *Gespräch über die Macht***

The *Gespräch über die Macht* is written in the form of a dialogue between a younger character named G. and an older one named

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9 As pointed out by Benhabib 2012, p. 707, n.1, ‘[a] Rezeptionsgeschichte of the Schmitt revival on both sides of the Atlantic would be a book in itself’. The journal *Telos* played a major role in the English translation and publication of articles by/on Carl Schmitt since the late 1980s.

10 The literature has widely explored the philosophical, political and juridical issues addressed by Schmitt in the third phase of his intellectual trajectory: for relevant and diverging perspectives, see Palaver 1996, Hooker 2009, Slomp 2009, Legg 2011. Critical remarks on the historical reliability of Schmitt’s account of the *jus publicum Europaeum* can be found in Koskenniemi 2004 and Scheuerman 2004. For a contemporary reassessment of Schmitt’s international political and legal theory in the context of post-9/11 warfare, see Odysseos–Petito 2007.
C.S. (the alter ego of Carl Schmitt himself). From the first page, the reader is introduced to the philosophical question underpinning their whole conversation: why do human beings give their consent to power? As is well known, such a question had already inspired Max Weber and Hans Kelsen at the beginning of the century and gained new relevance after the Nazi regime had subverted the Weimar Constitution. Yet, while the question raised by C.S./Carl Schmitt relates to the tragic events that occurred in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the answer he provides returns to the basic principle of Hobbesian political and legal theory: it is the *protegio-oboedentia* nexus that grounds the sovereign power’s reason for existence. Those who do not have the power to protect others cannot advance any claim to being obeyed, and vice versa.\(^\text{11}\) However – he specifies – the *protego et obligo* maxim is not enough for framing and explaining these dynamics: consent yields power, but consent is also produced, and induced, by power. Differently put, power possesses its own ‘added value’ (*Mehrwert*), a surplus of political energy that makes it something more than a mere sum of individual consents.\(^\text{12}\)

Schmitt specifically refers to Hobbes’s *De Cive* (Chapter V of Part II, in particular) and to Hobbes’s *Leviathan* to argue that power ‘has an objective, autonomous grandeur with respect to any human individual, who at any given time holds power in his hand’.\(^\text{13}\) What does he mean? He claims that the way power is exercised and brought into existence cannot exceed the limits that inevitably pertain to human nature. Given that the power-holder (*Machthaber*) cannot be everywhere at the same time, he must necessarily rely on

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\(^{12}\) See Schmitt 2008, p. 16.

\(^{13}\) Zeitlin translation; Schmitt 2008, p. 17.
indirect information, i.e. on the subjective and inevitably biased pieces of truth that are brought to him by his advisors through their reports. Therefore, the project of a full exercise of power by the sovereign (à la Hobbes) proves to be utopian: power is an ontological dimension that needs the sovereign body to become visible and perceivable at the phenomenological level, while possessing and preserving an autonomous raison d’être at the ontological level.

C.S. uses a specific image to further clarify his point and to portray the spatial reconfiguration of disorder arising at the twilight of Hobbesian order: ‘around every chamber of direct power an antechamber of indirect influences and powers constructs itself, a path of access to the ear, a corridor to the soul of the holder of power’. In other words, in any experience of human power, the chamber and the antechamber of sovereignty necessarily implicate each other: the former cannot exist without the latter, and the corridor between them is the real locus of antagonism, dis(order) and enmity. Furthermore, C.S./Carl Schmitt emphasizes the pyramidal configuration of power and its impact on the decision-making process: the more power is concentrated at the top in a single man (or group of men), the greater will be the problem of access to the power-holder and the struggle among those wishing to influence his decisions.

According to Schmitt, the unveiling of the fragile foundations of modernity and the acknowledgment of the unpreventable intrusion of disorder in the experience of (human) sovereignty is crucial for developing a more realistic and less naïve understanding of power. In particular, Schmitt underscores the inversely proportional relationship between the concentration of power at the highest levels of the ‘pyramid’ – the antechamber, the corridor, the chamber – and its base. By relying heavily upon the information

brought by his counselors and ministers, the power-holder tends to live in ‘a sort of stratosphere’ that alienates him from those he *directly* affects with his decisions, and makes him closer to those who *indirectly* dominate him with their reports.

Already in 1987 Antonio Caracciolo,\(^\text{15}\) the translator of *Die Verfassungslehre* into Italian, suggested that *Gespräch über die Macht* was probably inspired by the work of Baruch Spinoza. In particular, according to Caracciolo, it is plausible that Schmitt built upon *Tractatus Politicus* VI.5. In that section, the Dutch philosopher had argued that an absolute monarchy is never strictly such, but always, in the best of cases, an aristocracy, in which the group of men – commanders, counselors, friends – closest to the King exercise sovereignty through the influence they can wield over the sovereign himself.\(^\text{16}\)

Against Caracciolo’s claim, though, there is no textual evidence of Spinoza being Schmitt’s source of inspiration for this Dialogue: neither his name nor his work are expressly quoted. Furthermore,

\(^{15}\) See Antonio Caracciolo’s introductory remarks in Schmitt 1987c.

\(^{16}\) Spinoza 1891, ch. VI, sect. 5: ‘And in fact they are much mistaken, who suppose that one man *can* by himself hold the supreme right of a commonwealth. For the only limit of right, as we showed (Chap. II.), is power. But the power of one man is very inadequate to support so great a load. And hence it arises, that the man, whom the multitude has chosen king, looks out for himself generals, or counselors, or friends, to whom he entrusts his own and the common welfare; so that the dominion, which is thought to be a perfect monarchy, is in actual working an aristocracy, not, indeed, an open but a hidden one, and therefore the worst of all. ... those in this case have the supreme authority, who administer the highest business of the dominion, or are near the king’s person ...’. In ch. VI, sect. 8, Spinoza further argued: ‘From all which it follows, that the more absolutely the commonwealth’s right is transferred to the king, the less independent he is, and the more unhappy is the condition of his subjects’.
in *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes* (1938) Schmitt had harshly criticized the intellectual trajectory of ‘liberal Jews’ – from Spinoza to Stahl-Jolson – for having developed Hobbes’s distinction between *auctoritas* and *veritas* and thus encouraged the de-politicization of state sovereignty.\(^\text{17}\) From such a perspective, Caracciolo’s interpretation is as eccentric as it is fascinating: in the aftermath of World War II, Schmitt, a former anti-liberal and anti-Jewish intellectual, bade his definitive farewell to Hobbes through the work of a scholar who was both liberal and Jewish. Whether or not Spinoza inspired *Gespräch über die Macht* and its reconceptualization of power along anti-Hobbesian lines is still an open question, one that would require a broader analysis of Schmitt’s work to decipher Spinozian echoes in the Dialogue.\(^\text{18}\) However, the distinction between the illusion of power-holding and the reality of power’s autonomy is a crucial theme of this writing, as well as the defining feature of the post-*jus publicum Europaeum* era.\(^\text{19}\)

In the age of unbridled progress, power needs barely any human control or consent. As C.S. argues in the final pages:

The power of modern means of annihilation exceeds the force of the human individuals who invent those means and

\(^\text{17}\) Hooker 2009, p. 8.
\(^\text{18}\) As recalled by Galli 2008, p. 115, Schmitt often refers to the work of Spinoza, although rarely in a substantial way. Beyond the widely known pages of *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes* (1938), some references appear also in *Politische Romantik* (1918) and *Die Diktatur* (1921) and, most importantly, in section II, chapter VIII of *Die Verfassungslehre* (1928), where Spinoza’s dichotomy between ‘natura naturans’ and ‘natura naturata’ is translated in political terms via Sieyès and his distinction between ‘pouvoir constituant’ and ‘pouvoir constituë’. On Schmitt’s reading of Spinoza, see Heerich–Lauermann 1991, Walther 1993, Castrucci 1999, Vatter 2004.
\(^\text{19}\) Throughout the concluding pages of *Gespräch über die Macht*, Schmitt significantly draws on arguments he had already developed in *Der Staat als Mechanismus bei Hobbes und Descartes* (1936-37) as well as in *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (1938).
who bring them to be deployed, in the same proportion that the capacities of modern machines and techniques exceed the force of human muscles and brains. In this stratosphere, in this domain of ultrasound, the good or evil human will doesn’t even tag along. *The human arm which holds the atom bomb, the human brain which gives this arm its neural charge is in the decisive moment less an appendage of the individual isolated human than a prosthesis, a part of the technical and social apparatus which produces the atom bomb and deploys it.* The power of the individual holder of power is here only the perspiration from a situation, which results from a system of incalculably enhanced division of labor.\footnote{Zeitlin translation (my emphasis); Schmitt 2008, pp. 41-2.}

However, the utopia of human sovereignty and the illusion of any control over technology and modern means of mass destruction is simply one side of the problem that Schmitt deals with in 1954-1955. The reassessment of contemporary geopolitics along bipolar lines, and the emergence of new spaces to be explored and conquered, pose a substantial challenge to how Europe has imagined itself and shaped world history and geography across the centuries. This topic inspires *Gespräch über den neuen Raum*, which examines the correlation of order and disorder from a global perspective.

### III. Man, Child of the Land? *Gespräch über den neuen Raum*

*Gespräch über den neuen Raum* is structured as a conversation between three characters: Mr Neumeyer (N.), Mr Altmann (A.) and
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MacFuture (F.). Each provides a different reading of the geopolitical scenario that emerged after World War II, as well as diverging approaches to the relation between land and sea over the centuries. While N. and A. employ, respectively, a scientific and a historical perspective, and accordingly interpret history as a dichotomy between *Landnahme* and *Seenahme* (i.e. the occupation of the land and that of the sea), F. focuses on ‘future’ challenges. He believes that no clear understanding of global order and disorder can be attained unless the exploration of new spaces such as the oceans and the universe and its impact on human life is taken seriously. Therefore, the Dialogue on the new space can plausibly be read along three different lines: first, together with *Land und Meer* and *Der Nomos der Erde*, it constitutes another piece of Schmitt’s history of modern geopolitics;\(^21\) second, it also represents an appendix to *Der Begriff des Politischen*, exploring new potential *Zentralgebiete* for the display of conflict on a global scale; finally, it offers a thought-provoking account of Schmitt’s philosophy of history and his view about the fate of humanity at the end of (Eurocentric) history.\(^22\)

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\(^21\) On which see Elden 2010. On the risk of interpreting Schmitt’s international thought as a prophecy of contemporary globalization, see Galli 2008, pp. 129-72.

The conversation between Neumeyer and Altmann is structured as a systematic exchange of arguments and counter-arguments: they debate over whether a scientific or a historical approach is best for capturing how the relationship between land and sea has evolved over the centuries. Their initial disagreement arises from the question of whether the Bible should be considered a reliable source for analyzing the primordial distribution of the global space. While N. declares to be ‘a scientifically thinking human’ and does not interpret the Bible as a scientific text, A. holds the opposite perspective. Not only are both the Old and the New Testament imbued with the juxtaposition of land and sea and thus essential to any systematic investigation in ancient geopolitics; but also, most relevantly, they provide consistent arguments for the primacy of terrestrial over maritime existence. In particular, A. refers to the third volume of Karl Barth’s *Dogmatica* (1945) to sustain his point: the Old Testament portrays land as the natural environment of human beings while picturing the ocean as a giant snake or dragon – the Leviathan – located at the margins of the civilized world.

However, such notions have no scientific relevance for N. Beyond its visionary language, the Bible is permeated by a primordial philosophy of nature that has nothing in common with rigorous science. Accordingly, he interprets the Biblical antagonism between Behemoth and Leviathan – that is, land and sea – as the residuum of mythological beliefs. Modern biology has taught that only when creatures share the same environment (*Lebensraum*) do they strive against each other – fish against fish, man against man. This, according to the rational Weltanschauung of N., is

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24 Schmitt 1958, p. 266.
how power relations among living creatures have always been, and always will be, shaped.

On the other hand, A. explains that the relation between land and sea must be interpreted from a different perspective. Rather than two unrelated worlds, they have always been intimately connected dimensions for any people, country, or nation pursuing political hegemony. ‘Whenever enmity between great powers’ – he argues – ‘reaches a high point, the martial confrontation plays itself out simultaneously in both domains, and the war becomes a land- and sea-war on both sides’.\(^{25}\) According to A., this dynamic has also influenced the contemporary scene and originated the ideological juxtaposition between East and West – once again, between the lands of Russia and China, on one side, and the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, on the other.

This interpretation is rejected by N. as a historically determined and obsolete image of the world (‘\(\text{nur Erscheinungsformen eines geschichtlich gebundenen Weltbildes}\)\(^{26}\)). In the present age, the sea has lost its ‘elementary quality’ and has turned into an extension of continents and isles: ships can now be easily reached, no matter how far they are from dry land. Yet, replies A., such a line of thought shows that also a ‘scientifically thinking man’ refers to the logic of history and develops his own ideas within a chronological and evolutionary framework.\(^{27}\)

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\(^{25}\) Zeitlin translation; Schmitt 1958, p. 267 (my emphasis).

\(^{26}\) See Schmitt 1958, p. 269.

\(^{27}\) Schmitt, \textit{Gespräch über den neuen Raum, cit.}, p. 269. In his reply, N. attacks the Hegelian idea of a dialectical development of history as a pernicious legacy in the German way of thinking: ‘I am aware where you wish to go with this, honorable Mr. Altmann. You now wish to come at me historically. You are now working with the so-called historical sense and with historical dialectics. That is the notorious sixth sense, which the ingenious bird of ill omen, Hegel, infiltrated into the poor Germans’ (Zeitlin translation).
This is exactly when MacFuture enters the dialogue. A keen apologist for the challenges opened up by new spaces, he is as distant from A.’s historical perspective as from N.’s scientific approach. He exhorts his two interlocutors to overcome the static opposition between land and sea and to focus rather on the nuclear Age that has been framing the life of humanity for over a decade. Technological progress has structurally impacted any previous understanding of our world: ‘[a]ll our notions of space and time, of nature and history are atomically altered’. Philosophe, historians and scientists cannot ignore these transformations. They must formulate new questions and find new answers for better understanding the world that has emerged and the challenges that post-war humanity will soon face. According to F., neither the historical dialectic of A. nor the scientific rationality of N. alone can fulfill this task. A combined perspective is needed to revise old assumptions and to decode the present age. This is the reason why he asks his interlocutors one question: where and when did modernity originate?

For the first time in the Dialogue, N. and A. share the same view: the modern age began in eighteenth-century England, when the island abandoned its terrestrial, European existence and decided to build a maritime empire. This, according to N., is a paradigmatic example of what Arnold Toynbee labeled the ‘historical call’. Against the deterministic conception of world history held by Oswald Spengler in Der Untergang des Abendlandes (1918), he in fact argued that the rise and fall of nations heavily

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28 Zeitlin translation; Schmitt 1958, p. 270.
30 Schmitt explicitly refers to Toynbee’s Civilization on Trial (1948), The world and the West (1953) and the volumes of A Study of History (1934-1961).
relies upon their capacity to make a concrete decision (Entscheidung) about their own destiny. In the eighteenth century, the English people made a decision: they determined to pursue a different path from the European continent and to shape their future along autonomous lines. They successfully answered the ‘historical call’ of that time, abandoned their terrestrial existence and turned into an oceanic (not simply a thalassic) power.31

However, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries another ‘call’ was also launched – that of territorial expansion on the continents. Land and sea thus emerged as diverging, yet complementary, domains that would later ground the juxtaposition of East and West: there where the English dominated the oceans, the Russians initiated a land-based growth. According to A., this different evolution of human orders was not contingent. Rather, it was based on two distinct anthropologies and two opposite understandings of both nature and space. In the words of Herr Altmann:

[the] midpoint and core of a terrestrial existence— with all its concrete orders—is the house. House and property, marriage, family and hereditary right, all that is built upon the foundation of a terrestrial mode of being [eines terranen Daseins], in particular that of the agricultural farm. The farmer, too, as we call him, takes his name not from the work of farming or from tilling the field. The farmer is named after the farm, which is to say the farm house, which belongs to him and to which he belongs. Thus, at the core of a terrestrial existence, stands the house. On the contrary, at the core of a maritime existence, sails the ship, which is already in itself much more, and much more intensely a technological means than the house. The house is rest, the ship is movement. Even the space in which the ship moves is other than the space of the landscape, in which the house stands. In consequence, the ship has another environment and another horizon; the humans on the ship

have a different type of social relations both to one another as well as to their external world. They have an essentially different stance toward nature and above all to animals. The terrestrial human tames and domesticates animals: elephants, camels, horses, hounds, cats, oxen, donkeys and all that is his. Fish, on the contrary, are not tamed but only eaten.  

What is, then, the contemporary ‘call’ that humanity must answer in the context of post-war geopolitics? This question, which had already inspired the last chapter of Land und Meer – ‘the new stage of the global spatial revolution’ – is addressed throughout the final part of Gespräch über den neuen Raum.

After having agreed upon the origins of modernity, the three characters provide three different accounts of its future. For F., extra-terrestrial spaces represent an entirely new world that excites human passion for the unknown and challenges the supposed primacy of humanity over nature. According to A., the capacity to dominate and orient technology constitutes the main task that ‘a new Hercules’ must face. In a passage that echoes the conclusion of Gespräch über die Macht, he claims: ‘The one who manages to restrain the unencumbered technology, to bind it and to lead it into a concrete order has given more of an answer to the contemporary call than the one who, by means of modern technology seeks to land on the moon or on Mars’. Finally, N. believes that the sea once again stands as the locus of unprecedented challenges: the nation who first explores the abysses and takes advantage of their resources will establish its political hegemony over the rest of the world.

None of this is the answer Schmitt provides to his readers (and radio listeners). Through Altmann – ‘the old man’ and the

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32 Zeitlin translation (my emphasis); Schmitt 1958, pp. 276-77.
33 Zeitlin translation (my emphasis); Schmitt 1958, p. 281.
character who represents the seventy-year-old jurist – he suggests an alternative path. Beside the titanic developments of technology and the exploration of both the universe and the oceans, human beings are, and will always be, chthonic creatures. They are meant to be children of the terrestrial world – a world they shape and to which they belong, regardless of the ‘historical calls’ that periodically arise. What the American and the Russian cosmonauts have achieved will never dismiss a basic truth: the fate of humanity cannot be dissociated from that of the Muttererde. He who will re-dignify the role of land for contemporary nations and preserve its relevance for future generations will stand as the ‘new Hercules’ of the present age. Therefore, a common thread unites Gespräch über die Macht and the later Theorie des Partisanen (1963): the partisan is precisely the last ‘guardian’ of the telluric world, a creature whose identity and activity are dramatically affected by the developments of technology and the emergence of new forms of warfare. Accordingly, the precarious condition of the partisan epitomizes the situation of humanity in the contemporary ‘nuclear age’ and its potential self-destruction in the context of the Cold War.

IV. An Antidote to the ‘Chronic Fear of Disorder’

Having recalled the key arguments of both Gespräch über die Macht and Gespräch über den neuen Raum, the final Part of this paper provides some concluding remarks on the perspective developed by post-war Schmitt on the co-implication of order and disorder at the twilight of the jus publicum Europaeum.

As we have seen, these fascinating pages originate from a personal, sometimes cryptic, re-reading of Hobbesian modernity and its conceptualisation of politics at both domestic and global levels. Pursuing a realistic, Machiavellian approach, Schmitt sheds light on the ambiguous nature of power. On one hand, indeed, power is the Cartesian-Hobbesian attempt to rationalise the
anarchy of passions and bring order into a world dominated by disorder; on the other, however, it maintains an inextinguishable residue of political energy. In other words, *Macht* is characterized by an ontological surplus that makes it superabundant *vis-à-vis* those who hold it. Furthermore, he unveils the Leviathan’s broken promise: the original state of nature inevitably re-emerges in the ‘antechamber’ of the sovereign, where a perpetual clash of interests, influences and claims unfurls on a daily basis. For Schmitt, this is a scar that disfigures the façade of State sovereignty and a reality that dismantles any project of human control over chaos and conflict.

At the same time, he reminds Europe, whose geopolitical primacy has been significantly re-dimensioned, that power is necessarily a matter of both *Ordnung* and *Ortung*, order and localisation. For this reason, the relevance of the land and the terrestrial world is crucial, beyond any further exploration or conquest. From this perspective, the two Dialogues confirm what Joseph Bendersky argued thirty years ago: Schmitt’s entire work is imbued with an ‘almost chronic fear of disorder’.³⁴ In the early 1950s, he mostly feared a global landscape de-politicized by both American cosmo-liberalism and the unrestrained use of technology for the purpose of ideological hegemony. The agony of State-based politics *vis-à-vis* the rise of universalistic aspirations and the dichotomy between East and West represents, in his understanding, the most horrific nightmare for the de-Eurocentralised world that has emerged after World War II.

As recently claimed by William Hooker, Schmitt’s account of the trajectory of the *jus publicum Europaeum* across the centuries is ‘a

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history of orders punctuated by moments of radical change’. The development of nuclear technology and the emergence of unexplored spaces are definitely one of these moments, which urge a radical revision of the foundational categories of modern (geo)politics. As the two Gespräche argue, this is a basic precondition for establishing order in a world potentially threatened by new forms of disorder, and eventually preserving humanity from the illusion of omnipotence and the risk of self-destruction.

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