KIERKEGAARD'S MOMENT
CARL SCHMITT AND HIS RHETORICAL
CONCEPT OF DECISION

Burkhard Conrad

I. Introduction

The "moment" ("Øjeblikket") is an important concept within Kierke-gaard's oeuvre. Kierkegaard's moment encompasses various interwo-ven dimensions. In the following, I shall look at the dimensions of Kierkegaard's moment from a viewpoint relevant for political theory and conceptual history alike. My aim is threefold: firstly, to show the complex structure of the "moment" in Kierkegaard's writing. I claim that the moment is a central category in Kierkegaard's understanding of the individual existence. It is a category that speaks theologically of the crucial link between the individual and "Christ". And it is also a category that speaks philosophically of the individual's existence within the contingent course of history and the necessity of the deci-sion to realise this existence – also within the public sphere. Secondly, I would to like point to the relationship between Kierkegaard's concept of the moment and Carl Schmitt's concept of the decision. Schmitt's concept of the decision may be understood as a politicisation and rhe-torical transformation of Kierkegaard's concept of the moment. I claim that Schmitt makes 'functional' use of the theological concept in the rhetorical situation of a particular political debate. Hence, Schmitt's concept must be understood on the basis of the crisis-situation which marked its appearance and which called for a particular rhetorical

fervour. Schmitt's decision is linked to a particular political and scientific 'programme' which, as we shall see, links him to his Danish predecessor. But whereas Kierkegaard's moment possesses – in the end – a theological nature in connection with a rhetorical sharpness, Schmitt's concept of the decision utilises theology as rhetoric. I claim that Schmitt transfers Kierkegaard's moment from a theological to a political discourse which turns theological concepts into metaphors of political determination. Within the latter discourse, the concept is transformed into a metaphor for the power and the force of (secular) decision-making. The moment is thereby politicised in the shape of the decision. It turns into a rhetorical figure which works towards extreme political ends.

In order to prove my point, I will start with a discussion of Kierkegaard's moment. I will analyse Kierkegaard's notion of the moment in a rather theological manner, focusing on the category of "Christ" as its nucleus and stressing its metaphorical environment of "paradox" and "leap". Subsequently, I will comment on the reception of Kierkegaard in 1920's German theology, philosophy and political theory, a context which is crucial in providing an understanding of Schmitt's concept of the decision. I will then try to underline the metaphorical use of the moment by looking at Schmitt and his rhetorical application of Kierkegaard's moment in his concept of decision. This will be done on the basis of a framework which I derive from the work of both Hans Blumenberg and Quentin Skinner.

II. Kierkegaard's Moment – A Christological Concept

Ultimately, Kierkegaard's moment is "Christ". In claiming that "Christ" is at the core of Kierkegaard's moment, I would not like to exclude other possible interpretations. However, I would like to concentrate on what I regard as the central feature of the "moment" in Kierkegaard's writing. This moment possesses a fourfold structure: Firstly, the "Christ-moment" refers to a historical figure caught up within the contingency of the temporal saeculum. It is the incarnation viewed from below, i.e. something truly temporal and historical that speaks of something beyond time and history. Secondly, the "Christ-moment" is an eternal truth which splits open the continuum of history by its eternal decision. It is the incarnation viewed from above,

i.e. something eternal that becomes paradoxically entangled within the confines of a temporal existence. Thirdly, the "Christ-moment" is eminently present in the life of individual human beings in the form of the phenomenon "faith". Faith is born as a repetition of the incarnation and both constitute an *ex-nihilo* leap. Fourthly, the "Christ-moment" is a metaphor which speaks of the individual human being's rhetorical epiphany in the public domain. It is the individual acting in a "Christ"-like manner within his own social world. This is the moment of decision, namely the moment of Kierkegaard's decision to engage rhetorically with the public of mid-century Denmark.

a)

The "Christ-moment" is the incarnation viewed from below. This dimension of the moment focuses on the figure of Jesus Christ – the "man of the moment" as Kierkegaard calls him[1] – who becomes part of the contingent events of human history. In a way, it is impossible to discuss this "Christ-moment" "from below" in isolation from its "from above" counterpart. They belong together and are co-dependent. For the dimension "from above" ensures that the historical figure is not completely swallowed up by contingency. It will give it shape and bring it to a conclusion without abolishing contingency. The "Philosophical Fragments" contain a central passage regarding this ambiguity of the moment: "And now the moment. A moment such as this is unique. To be sure, it is short and temporal, as the moment is, it is passing, as the moment is, past, as the moment is in the next moment, and yet it is decisive, and yet it is filled with the eternal. A moment such as this must have a special name. Let us call it: *the fullness of time*."[2]

It seems quite clear that with this final phrase, "the fullness of time", Kierkegaard refers to a Christological notion which has its roots in the New Testament. The relevant biblical passages to be quoted here always refer to the appearance of Christ not occurring at the right or optimal time; rather "fullness" points to a time predestined to be the time of a crucial epiphany. It may be Christ speaking about himself as a witness to this special moment as in Mark 1: 15: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.'" (Revised Standard Version) In this context, one may wish to suggest that the moment – as the full-

ness of time – possesses the dual nature of pointing to the truth that is revealed within the Christ and the reaction that is required when confronted with this revelation, namely repentance and faith. "Fullness" here, refers to the completion of a gradual process sometimes referred to as "salvation history" (*Heilsgeschichte*). This completion does not only give a finishing touch to the course of history but also transforms this process qualitatively. Thus, fullness is not simply the sum of all parts. It will not emerge from external circumstances and conditions but will go beyond them.

The biblical base for Kierkegaard's incarnation moment is further supported by a passage from the Pauline letter to the Galatians which might serve as a backdrop to Kierkegaard's Christological understanding of the moment. "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:4; RSV) Here, the moment is not limited to a single and isolated event but also encompasses the reaction of those who are confronted with it. The moment contains elements of both initial action and response, thereby, as Taylor writes, "the moment of incarnation and faith are mirror images of each other."[3] This repetitive structure within the moment will be discussed later.

The incarnational "fullness of time", thus, refers to Christ as a special epiphany that makes sense of history without being confined by rational causations and context variables. The incarnational moment should first be taken literally in a strictly dogmatic sense, but may also be understood in a more metaphorical sense: the "Christ-moment" is the historical and temporal revelation of an eternal and over-whelming truth. It must be temporal in order to be identified as "short", "passing" and "passed", but it also must be eternal in order to make sense of time and be its fullness.

b)

Within the "Philosophical Fragments", Kierkegaard discusses this notion of the incarnational moment in the context of a central motto: "Can an eternal happiness be built on historical knowledge?"[4] Kierkegaard is not so much interested in Christ's incarnation as an historical event but rather in its relation to that which is willed by eternity. Kierkegaard is also not too concerned with the idea of pure and platonic eternity. He focuses on the link within Christ, i.e. the

link between the temporal and the eternal. For within the moment the eternal reveals itself as something temporal.[5] The moment is the decision of eternity,[6] but is such only in that it intermingles with time. There is no moment without time, and there is no moment without eternity. Time and eternity belong to each other within the moment and engage in a dialectic relationship.

In "The Concept of Anxiety" Kierkegaard discusses this notion of a syntheses of time and eternity within a human being at some length. Now the moment is very much established as an antagonist to the Hegelian idea of the *Übergang* which Kierkegaard denounces as explaining nothing at all.[7] In a lengthy footnote, he ventures on to deduce his own understanding of the moment from the Platonic discussion on that fraction which lies between the two states of being and not-being in the *Parmenides* dialogue.[8] In Kierkegaard's own understanding, this moment of transformation hinges on individual human existence and is not an abstract idea. Within the moment, time and eternity touch.[9] Yet the moment is not an atom of time but an atom of eternity.[10] This eternity is again equal to "the present" which, within the moment, seems to achieve its highest possible density,[11] namely the individual existence as the synthesis of time and eternity.[12]

The paradoxical structure of the moment and the individual are further stressed within the "Philosophical Fragments", within which the notion of the "paradox" serves the purpose of fending off any attempt of (pseudo) Hegelian mediations in matters of faith and living. "Here again we have the moment around which everything indeed revolves. (…) for in its most abbreviated form the paradox can be called the moment."[13] The paradoxical moment "Christ" is, to cite a traditional formula, "*perfectus deus, perfectus homo*"[14] and thereby a rational conundrum. The clash between the two absolutes of time and eternity results neither in the destruction of one absolute nor are the two mixed into blurry indistinctiveness, but rather they form a paradoxical unity. The paradox makes it impossible for reason to draw near to "the god" in any quantitative and rational approximation or in a grand scheme like the Hegelian systems which Kierkegaard continues to criticise.[15]

At that stage, Kierkegaard refers to the metaphor of the "leap" which ought to be understood as the spatial dimension of the temporal moment. Against rational reasoning, a leap into faith will – at least for a time – overcome the gap of insecurity and uncertainty. It

will add to reason that which is unreasonable. The metaphor of the leap serves Kierkegaard as the "category of decision"[16] and it is the way in which the moment "Christ" enters into the world as Kierkegaard argues in the "Unscientific Postscript".[17] Such a leap-like decision cannot be reduced to rational thought patterns but goes beyond reasonable discourse. Hence, the leap possesses an ex nihilo structure and is a spatial metaphor for that which is supposed to happen in the moment, namely the "decision of eternity".[18] Whereas philosophical tradition had long regarded the "leap" as a nebulous and unsatisfactory concept, Kierkegaard redescribes it as a necessary precondition for the faithful individual existence.[19] In stressing the leap-structure of the decision, Kierkegaard was to set the stage for later discussions on the non-rational dimensions of decision-making.

c)
Although the various dimensions of the moment could easily be identified by referring to just one personal name – "Christ" – such an identification requires additional clarification and I have tried to provide this by pointing to the notions of the paradox and the leap. But Kierkegaard also uses the "moment" beyond the context of his existential "Christology". He also links the "Christ-moment" with its "repetition" in the individual human being of any time. People who were, in a literal sense, contemporaries of the teacher Christ and eyewitnesses of his life did not necessarily have an advantage over those who were and are non-contemporaneous. Contemporaneity does not guarantee direct access to the knowledge and truth of the teacher.[20] True contemporaneity will be achieved not so much by directly listening to and digesting teachings but rather through the more indirect way of gaining faith, i.e. receiving the condition of possibility of faith from "the god".[21] The digestion of the teacher's truth occurs in a non-visible way, it is *unanschaulich*, and within Kierkegaard studies is usually referred to as "indirect communication".[22]

The act of gaining faith is based on an "eternal condition" previously received within the moment.[23] Viewed from a strictly chronological point of view, the moment of faith happens after the moment of incarnation as a response to the same. But systematically, the two moments cannot be separated: they are joined together within the notion of contemporaneity. The moment "Christ incarnate" as well as the moment "faith in Christ" are two sides of the same coin and pos-

sess a similar *ex nihilo* structure. Both moments are characterised by the metaphor of the leap. The repetition of the moment in faith cannot happen if the individual is taught second hand but requires true contemporaneity with the teacher. The repetition leads to a sincerity and earnestness of living.[24] It will lead to a true contemporaneity in an indirect manner, quite contrary to the kind of false contemporaneity which, according to Kierkegaard, is established and forced into being by endless calculation and worldly sagacity.[25] Both moments, the original "Christ-moment" and its repetitive "Faith-moment", encompass notions of *ex nihilo* endlessness and are not open to temporal reasoning and discourse.

d)

The short analysis of Kierkegaard's writings comes to a close with a more in depth glance at Kierkegaard's own movement of politicising the theological moment. This can be done by referring to a passage from the work simply called "The Moment". This passage may serve as a summary of my analysis as it contains all elements of Kierkegaard's moment and transforms it into a kind of public event. I quote this passage in its entirety:

"When is 'the moment'?/ The moment is when the man is there, the right man, the man of the moment./ This is a secret that will forever be hidden from all worldly sagacity, from everything that is only to a certain degree./ Worldly sagacity stares and stares at events and circumstances, calculates and calculates, thinking that it should be able to distil the moment out of the circumstances and then become itself a power with the aid of the moment, this breakthrough of the eternal, and be rejuvenated, something it greatly needs, with the aid of the new./ But it is futile; sagacity does not succeed and will never in all eternity succeed with this substitute, any more than all the arts of the dressing table produce natural beauty./ No, only when the man is there, and when he ventures as it must be ventured (which is exactly what worldly sagacity and mediocrity want to avoid) – then is the moment – and then the circumstances obey the man of the moment. If nothing but worldly sagacity and mediocrity are involved, the moment never arrives. It can continue one hundred thousand and millions of years, continually the same, and it may at times look as if it will come soon, but as long as it is only worldly sagacity and mediocrity and the like, the moment does not come any more than a

sterile person begets children./ But when the right man comes, yes, then is the moment. The moment is precisely this (which is not due to circumstances), the new thing, the woof of eternity – but at the same instant it manages the circumstances to such a degree that it illusively (calculated to make a fool of worldly sagacity and mediocrity) looks as if the moment emerged from the circumstances./ There is nothing for which worldly sagacity is so feverishly eager as the moment; what would it not give to be able to calculate correctly! Yet there is nothing more certain of being excluded from ever seizing the moment than worldly sagacity. The moment is heaven's gift to – as a pagan would say: to the fortunate and the bold – but a Christian says: to a believer. Indeed, to have faith, which is held in such profound contempt by worldly sagacity or at best is a Sunday ceremony all prinked up with borrowed platitudes – to have faith, this and only this relates itself as a possibility to the moment. Worldly sagacity is forever excluded, disdained, and detested, as it is in heaven, more than all vices and crimes, since by nature it of all things belongs to this wretched world, it of all things is furthest removed from having anything to do with heaven and eternity!"[26]

"The Moment" is one of Kierkegaard's later writings and it contains a series of pamphlets in which he attacks the Danish state church, its theological stance and ecclesiastical politics. One could argue that with these pamphlets, Kierkegaard turns political, or at least public, although he had already revealed a strong interest in social affairs with "A Literary Review" and other texts some years earlier. In both "The Moment" and "A Literary Review", Kierkegaard proceeds, in some way or another, to politicise his otherwise very theological understanding of the moment. He uses the "Christ-moment" as a metaphor for his self-image as a public figure. Kierkegaard feels as though he is beginning to act within the moment although he is full of disgust in doing so. And it seems to him that because of his disgust of momentary action, he was chosen to do exactly so.[27] Thus, it is not so much the one who wishes or even yearns to act within the moment, but the one who despises such an action who is the proper "man of the moment". The rationale behind this somewhat negative attitude to public "ministry" lies in the notion that any positive enthusiasm and earnest desire would undermine the integrity of the proper moment and its incarnated epiphany. It would exchange the "eternally hidden" moment for a visible and vulgar substitute.

The "man of the moment" is thereby not a grand figure of history, as such a figure would be equivalent to worldly sagacity. Although he might leap into action like a wild beast after its prey,[28] he will be more like "Christ" as a suffering servant along the lines of Isaiah 52: 13 – 53: 12, an Old Testament passage which biblical exegesis regularly links to the figure of Christ. According to Kierkegaard, "suffering" is the proper attitude of a person acting in public and in a contemporary world devoid of any passion.[29] The legitimisation of public action will not be achieved through law, charisma or traditional standing but only through this biblical notion of suffering and becoming the least among all others and by "helping indirectly".[30] This notion is one of existential dialectics as it combines the highest public duties and powers with an attitude of political meekness. It is not so much the purification of politics which concerns Kierkegaard[31] but rather the Christian purification of the individual politician. Kierkegaard does not speak of politics but of the attitudes and actions of the individual within the public sphere. The individual's attitudes and motives are to be tested by the Christological notion of "suffering" without which public action cannot be called legitimate.

Notwithstanding this notion of the suffering servant, in his more political writings like "The Moment", Kierkegaard's concept develops a rhetorical edge which is not without its own pitfalls. Although he claims in his pamphlet that "worldly sagacity" has no grasp over the moment however hard it may try, Kierkegaard himself turns himself into a metaphorical "man of the moment" and thereby himself comes close to becoming an incarnation of the much criticised "worldly sagacity". Kierkegaard applies his notion of the "Christ-moment" and the repetitive "faith-moment" to his limited political endeavours in order to grasp for some legitimisation in his public struggle with the church. We could say that Kierkegaard both politicises and temporalises his theological moment in the quoted passage from the "The Moment". This becomes particularly obvious as Kierkegaard's antagonists are recognised. On a rather more intellectual stage, Kierkegaard, as we have seen, battles against (pseudo) Hegelian thought and his work is full of polemical remarks against idealist notions of mediation and *Übergang*. On a more political stage, he campaigned against an age of "levelling" as he calls it in "The Literary Review".[32] The age of "levelling", according to Kierkegaard, aims to get rid of all passionate public action which again is the hallmark of the age of "revolu-

tion". He writes: "Action and decision are just as scarce these days as is the fun of swimming dangerously for those who swim in shallow water."[33] Although Kierkegaard is no friend of political ideologies and their calls for a social revolution, he is also no friend at all of the democratic impulse which in the late 1840s sweeps through Europe demanding political freedom and equality.[34] This multi-sided opposition lead Kodalle to coin the term "conservative revolutionary"[35] to describe Kierkegaard's ambiguous political stand. It aptly characterises the dialectics within Kierkegaard's "programme", although he is certainly far less political than other proponents of the so-called Conservative Revolution.

In the context of opposing political movements, however, Kierkegaard's moment of decision has arrived in the political arena as a polemical outburst and leap[36] into a particular rhetorical situation: it has turned into a political counter-concept to liberal notions of mediation and moderation and advocates an "authentic" style of political action and debate. Such a "critical" reading of his texts must be put forward especially in the light of later developments regarding the functional use of the concept of the moment in the 20th Century. Kierkegaard still retains a strong Christological core at the centre of his own "moment" and conceptualises the political individual as a "suffering servant" rather than an authoritative figure. Nevertheless, when applied to the social and political reality of his time, Kierkegaard's moment acquires an ideological edge. Kierkegaard's rhetorical use of the moment marks the beginning of a process during which the theological concept is transformed into a political concept with strong metaphorical implications. Kierkegaard's moment becomes Schmitt's decision.

III. Schmitt's Decision –
A Rhetorical Redescription Of Kierkegaard's Moment

The relationship between Søren Kierkegaard and Carl Schmitt has – to my knowledge – not yet been the object of any concise research effort. An early text by Karl Löwith mentions the link referring to Schmitt's selective manner of quoting Kierkegaard; some clues may be found in Klaus Kodalle's work on Kierkegaard especially on Kierkegaard's and Schmitt's similar interpretations of their time; Michele Nicoletti focuses on the notion of the "martyr" as a common point of interest

for both writers; Rüdiger Safranski briefly hints at the link between Kierkegaard's moment and Schmitt's decision without going into greater detail; and Rüdiger Kramme presents a somewhat longer examination by pointing towards some analogies including the link between Kierkegaard's and Schmitt's similar emphatic notions of the "decision".[37] There are other texts which very briefly touch upon the link between the two, but none of them attempts a discussion of the conceptual bond which I claim connects the two.[38] This lacuna may be explained by the fact that Kierkegaard's thought serves as "background noise" for Schmitt rather than as a clear-cut source of scientific inspiration. Hence, a brief glance at the intellectual backdrop of Schmitt's time and its attachment to Kierkegaard may be useful.

One aspect of the relation between Kierkegaard and Schmitt emerges when the particular intellectual profile of the German 1920s is recalled, a time which gave birth to concepts such as Carl Schmitt's decision. This profile was very much influenced by a particular kind of theology, philosophy and political theory which all drew from an interpretation of the historical "situation" as being at a point of crisis and thereby decision. The three disciplines were very much influenced by intellectual and ideological battles fought in the 19th Century between more liberal and more conservative thinkers, for sake of a better categorisation, with Kierkegaard being just one figure in this battle. The reception of these ideological struggles before and after the First World War contributed to a similarly polarised atmosphere in the debates during the Weimar Republic which Dolf Sternberger refers to as "unselige Grundstimmung", a rather negative atmosphere indeed.[39] The anti-democratic nature of this atmosphere has widely been recognised as has the importance of the concept of decision in that context.[40]

Within the disciplines of theology, philosophy and political science, Kierkegaard serves as an important source for the intellectual life of 1920s German democracy, with his influence being strongest among theologians, strong within philosophy and rather more subcutaneous in political theorising. The key terminology of both Dialectic Theology and Existential Philosophy is derived from Søren Kierkegaard. In Karl Barth's, Rudolf Bultmann's and Friedrich Gogarten's works, the "moment" and the "decision" feature at a central position within their respective conceptual frameworks. Although the three (protestant[41]) theologians entertain rather different political and theological

views, the "moment of decision" serves them in their struggle against that which is regarded as the deadening influence of liberal theology and historicism.[42] Texts by Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger and other philosophers also reveal a strong, both critical and approving reading of the Danish philosopher, although they sometimes intentionally camouflage Kierkegaard's influence on their writing.[43] And within German political theory in the 1920s a similar focus on the binding decision and the emphatic moment of choice cannot be ignored.[44]

Reading Kierkegaard, whose collected works were first published in German from 1909 onwards, is somewhat akin to an "event" for Schmitt and his theological and philosophical contemporaries.[45] Like many of the German intellectuals from the first half of the 20th Century, Schmitt approaches Kierkegaard in both an academic and personal manner. This overlap of academic and personal intentions results in a first similarity between the two: Schmitt often presents his arguments – like Kierkegaard had done before him – very much in a rhetorical manner that speaks of utter conviction and with a fervour that carries the implicit message that everything is at stake. Karl Barth in *Der Römerbrief* (2nd edition), Martin Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, and their contemporaries were equally influenced by Kierkegaard's passion of delivering bold messages and use a similar strategy in order to convince their readers of the arguments presented. Adorno was to call this style of argumentation somewhat polemically a *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, a jargon of authenticity, which should not be regarded as an argument in an intellectual debate but as an attempt to proselytise one's opponents.[46] This somewhat missionary zeal expressed in a weighty syntax and emphatic semantic marks many of Schmitt's texts and has in the past contributed to the polarised reception of his work.

Schmitt's encounter with Kierkegaard has left direct traces in several of his publications. These traces never come to form a coherent picture which could serve as an allusion as to how exactly Schmitt integrates Kierkegaard's thoughts within his own. In *Politische Theologie* Schmitt quotes Kierkegaard at some length and I will discuss this treatment of Kierkegaard further below. A footnote in *Politische Romantik* refers to Kierkegaard as an ideal-typical representative of the romantic era with its notion of the "romantic situation" and its "feeling of the concrete second".[47] In addition, one of Schmitt's theological contributions refers to Kierkegaard in a rather applauding manner,

calling him the "*innerlichster aller Christen*" – the most sincere Christian.[48] The later text *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation* strikes a similar note, when Schmitt praises Kierkegaard as a man who shared in the struggle of ideas in the 19th Century and whose criticism of his time was apparently more intensive than that of many others.[49] Those references to Kierkegaard already combine scientific treatment with personal appraisal. The "event"-character of Schmitt's reading of Kierkegaard becomes more than obvious when he testifies to the direct personal relevance of Kierkegaard's thoughts for his own individual existence. The published diaries contain interesting passages which reveal that Schmitt read Kierkegaard for his personal edification and in order to cope with certain difficulties in his own biography. He refers to Kierkegaard in an exalted manner, seeing in him a kind of messenger to save him out of existential anxiety, assuring him of his extra special calling following the premature death of one of his friends.[50]

Because of this twofold reading - academic and personal - Kierkegaard's influence on Schmitt is less obvious and rather more subcutaneous. One should avoid drawing an unbroken causal link between Kierkegaard's and Schmitt's thought patterns, but it may legitimately be claimed that Schmitt reveals striking similarities especially as we turn to his understanding of the "decision". I claim that Kierkegaard's moment can be identified within Schmitt's decision. This is especially true for the metaphor of the *ex nihilo* leap and the concept's rhetorical edge and antagonistic fervour.

a)

A methodological observation reveals a first link between the work of the two intellectuals. In *Politische Theologie* as well as in *Der Begriff des Politischen*, Schmitt uses a methodology of conceptualising which he openly claims to derive from a 19th Century "Protestant theologian" as he calls Kierkegaard.[51] This methodology does not arrive at a concept by way of an inductive summary of its assumed content. In another context, Schmitt denounces this strategy as "terminologische Strohdrescherei" – a useless exercise.[52] Instead, Schmitt advocates a manner of conceptualisation which identifies the fringe of an issue in question as its core. Hence, in *Politische Theologie,* the "Ausnahmezustand", the state of emergency, turns into the phenomenon which, according to Schmitt, identifies sovereignty. For: "Die Entscheidung

über die Ausnahme ist nämlich im eminenten Sinne Entscheidung."[53] So, in a way, the decision, for Schmitt, is an exceptional phenomenon in political life and it is also its constituting element. According to Schmitt, decisions may only be called decisions if they decide about something beyond the normal. Necessarily, this leads him to denounce the somewhat technical and unexceptional decision-making processes within the parliaments of his own times, esp. in his polemic *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. In another context, being *Der Begriff des Politischen*, Schmitt singles out the division of enemy and friend as the political distinction as such, again focusing on an extreme possibility of conceptualising the political and turning it into the de-facto norm.[54] In *Politische Theologie*, the three central concepts of sovereignty, state of emergency and decision are, according to Schmitt, concepts of the outermost sphere.[55] They may belong to the fringe of politics but as they are the fringe, they paradoxically are its core.

Thus runs Schmitt's argument, and in order to verify the trustworthiness of his methodological approach, he quotes an extract from Kierkegaard's "The Repetition" at the end of the first chapter of *Politische Theologie.*[56] This quote sets out to legitimise Schmitt's high view of the exception and its dominance over and above normality but fails to quote those passages of the original source that speak of the exception being woven into the general. The following sentence of Kierkegaard's text in particular does not feature within *Politische Theologie:* "The legitimate exception is reconciled in the general."[57] In Kierkegaard's view, the exception is dialectically bound to the norm, to normality and generality. This follows the pattern which I identified earlier on with the exceptional "Christ-moment" being paradoxically related to continuity and history. In that context, norm and exception form an alliance of 'checks and balances'. In his reading of Kierkegaard, Schmitt chooses to ignore this central dialectic notion and, as a consequence, arrives at a methodological approach that overemphasises the exception for normality and the decision for the juridical norm. This reflects Schmitt's general ignorance as regards complex constructions of balance and plurality which is especially prevalent within his rhetorically "strong" texts, i.e. *Politische Theologie, Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus* and also in *Der Begriff des Politischen*. In earlier texts, such as *Gesetz und Urteil*, Schmitt clearly seems to be able to dialectically balance norm and ex-

ception, continuous discourse and discontinuous decision. Later texts lack any acknowledgement of the dialectic and pluralist dynamics of social and political order.[58]

b)

The metaphorical link between Schmitt's and Kierkegaard's concepts becomes more tangible when looking at Schmitt's understanding of the "decision". In order to establish a conceptual link, I will concentrate my analysis on various passages of *Gesetz und Urteil* (1912) and *Politische Theologie* (1922). In *Gesetz und Urteil* Schmitt discusses various approaches that seek an answer to the question how jurisdictional verdicts attain their validity. He repudiates positivist and idealist notions that regard the jurisdictional verdict as simply the realisation of an abstract norm. He also criticises more psychological designs that hinge on the importance of the judge's personality. Against those approaches Schmitt comes to his central conclusion: "Der als geltend anzunehmende Inhalt des Gesetzes tritt dadurch, daß der Richter ihn anwendet, in eine andere Sphäre."[59] Between the abstract norm and jurisdictional reality of the legal decision Schmitt identifies a "gap"[60] that needs to be overcome with a qualitative leap. By emphasising this discontinuous gap, Schmitt points to an inexplicable and "creative"[61] force behind the legal decision and to a moment of arbitrariness in respect of content,[62] whereas the term "moment" does not carry any temporal connotation in this context. Nevertheless, Schmitt stresses the causal independence of the decision. It refuses to be linked to any higher aim or truth. The decision, thus, possesses an inner structure very similar to Kierkegaard's temporal moment. Schmitt uses that which we identified as the spatial metaphor of Kierkegaard's moment, i.e. the qualitative leap or the gap, in order to salvage the special character of the legal decision out of the muddle of positivist and psychological misunderstandings. These views, according to Schmitt, do not understand the qualitative difference between the legal norm, the psyche of the judge and the actual and real decision. It is interesting to note that in *Gesetz und Urteil* Schmitt stresses the discontinuous nature of the decision *without* setting it against discourse and debate. For Schmitt carries on that the validity of jurisdictional verdicts stems not merely from the voluntative decision made by an individual judge. Only if one may legitimately assume that other judges would have delivered the same or at least a similar verdict, the individual decision

is rightful.[63] A jurisdictional framework of professional expectations serves Schmitt as the criteria for the rightfulness of individual decisions. One may conclude that the qualitative leap of the decision is balanced out by a more or less discursive environment of legal professionalism. *Gesetz und Urteil*, therefore, offers an interesting account of how Schmitt indeed was able to speak of decisions and leaps without pressing them into a decisionist straitjacket.

This, however, is not true of Schmitt's notion of the political and less jurisdictional decision as propounded in *Politische Theologie*. In a strikingly similar way to Kierkegaard, Schmitt regards the leap within the moment of decision ten years later as an antagonist to notions of mediations, reconciliation, balance and an equilibrium attained through conversational modes. As noted above, the decision is now the unique mode of an exceptional behaviour within Schmitt's methodological framework. In a way it is the paradigmatic realisation of the exception in the political sphere and is somewhat akin to a "miracle" as he states at one point.[64] The order of law and state cannot be established and retained by reference to an ideal norm but they are to be constituted by way of *the* political action per se, i.e. the decision.[65] Compared to his more democratically inclined contemporary, Hermann Heller, who in his *Staatslehre* stresses the close tie between norm and decision,[66] Schmitt relies very much on the decision as the central notion for securing political order and stability. As was the case with Kierkegaard's moment – namely that it was a concept which was part of an intellectual struggle – Schmitt's decision is equally designed to attack specific opponents within a debate. For the decision – Schmitt rarely speaks of decisions in the plural – is surely not part of any social discourse, parliamentary deliberation or "everlasting conversation":[67] an attack on liberal democratic ideas. Equally, the decision is not part of an imagined sphere of ideals, norms and moral sentences or merely their one to one transferral into reality: an attack on legal positivism. Both criticisms are frequently voiced in Schmitt's writings, most vehemently in *Politische Theologie*. In opposition to those views, he famously remarks: "Die Entscheidung ist, normativ betrachtet, aus dem Nichts geboren."[68] The decision will be independent from any normative content but instead, the normative content – e.g. that of the state constitution – will depend on the *ex nihilo* decision. Any thought of balancing the decision with a framework of professional expectations is ruled out. Thus, Schmitt continues this line of antagonist argument

by directly linking the concept of the existential political decision with the concept of the moment: "Die Entscheidung wird im Augenblick unabhängig von der argumentierenden Begründung und erhält einen selbständigen Wert."[69] The decision is substance enough and requires no further content or discursive base for its legitimisation. It leaps as the moment leaps; both leave behind reasoning and rational calculation.

This way of conceptualising the moment of decision is in Schmitt's own words referred to as decisionism. It is the notion that stresses the importance of the voluntative and non-rational elements within decision-making. A decisionist stand also underlines the condensed temporality of the situation of decision-making by referring to its "moment". A decision is not made by a lengthy decision-making process but by a singular, clearly visible and discontinuous act. In the 1933 foreword to the second edition of *Politische Theologie*, Schmitt explicitly speaks of the decisionist as someone who – opposed to the "normativist" – functionalises the moment with the purpose of implementing the right law for the right situation through a personal decision.[70] Again, crucial elements of Kierkegaard's concept of the moment are revealed in the quoted passages: the personal and the existential dimension of decision-making, the non-rational and non-quantitative leap structure of the decision and the condensed temporality of its moment. Thereby political notions of reasoning, duration and discourse are discarded and the emphatic moment of decision is used as a vehicle for conceptualising the nature of political activity in a particular way. Hence – more so than was the case with Kierkegaard's theological moment – Schmitt's concept of the decision must be understood as a politicising move within a political argument.

c)

In an attempt to go beyond *Rezeptionsgeschichte* and semantic analogies, I would like to present an explanation of the underlying process which is at work when Schmitt's decision "repeats" central notions of Kierkegaard's moment. Above, I pointed out the fact that Kierkegaard and Schmitt witnessed a time of tremendous social and political change. It is interesting to note that they arrived at a similar interpretation of the historical situation they found themselves in. Whereas Kierkegaard's social critique spoke of an age of "levelling" in which he lived, Schmitt in the late 1920s characterises his own time as "das

Zeitalter der Neutralisierung und Entpolitisierung", the age of neutralisation and depoliticisation.[71] Schmitt traces ever new attempts of neutralisation in the course of history, but the ultimate age of neutralisation and depoliticisation is certainly modern and technological society as it tries to eliminate all political decidedness and *weltanschauliche* non-ambiguity.[72] The critique of the age of levelling in the late 1840s and the critique of the age of neutralisation in the late 1920s equally yearn for a time of authenticity and decisive action to counter a perceived mediocrity of spirit and action. Schmitt's rather negative diagnosis of his time is mirrored in his conceptual struggle with contemporary parliamentarism and liberalism. Behind the contemporary parliamentarism of the Weimar Republic, he identifies a liberal ideology which only seems able to find solace in endless debates and a system of mediation and compromise – i.e. neutralisation – ever striving to create what he calls "balances". In his view, such a liberal ideology works against political order and definite results which are based on "truth".[73] Schmitt asks for a clear stance and a decision which would turn the seemingly disorganised political system and the confusion of pluralist society into a place of sincerity, authenticity and order.

As part of the intellectual tussle of their times, both Kierkegaard and Schmitt make use of what Karl Löwith calls "polemische Gegenbegriffe",[74] concepts that receive their forceful character by being created or transformed and used as part of an argumentative struggle with real or imagined foes. Thus, Kierkegaard's moment and Schmitt's decision ought to be understood both semantically and pragmatically: They semantically speak not only of *something* - may it be a theological or political issue – but they pragmatically speak also to and against *somebody*, mostly against proponents of "liberal" ideas. This rather trivial observation becomes less trivial when viewed in the light of Hans Blumenberg's notion of the "rhetorical situation".[75] A rhetorical situation, according to Blumenberg, is marked on the one hand by a lack of (factual) evidence. This lack of evidence and argument asks for a particular rhetorical fervour in order to further one's argument rhetorically instead of rationally. Rhetoric builds (political) institutions where evidence is lacking, as Blumenberg remarks.[76] On the other hand, despite the lack of evidence the rhetorical situation is characterised by a compulsion to act. Rhetoric itself turns into an action[77] reminiscent of a similar approach in John L. Austin's speech-act theory. Hence, the rhetorical situation is marked by a gap between the

factual consistency of an argument, being minimal, and the linguistic expression of this argument, being particularly strong. The oratorical zeal which is part of Kierkegaard's and Schmitt's concepts must be understood as the expression of such a rhetorical situation both thinkers find themselves in. Lack of evidence and compulsion to act are underlying features of those concepts. In the case of Kierkegaard, the rhetorical situation results in the concept of the moment with the 'leap' and the 'paradox' as its explicit metaphorical dimensions. In the case of Schmitt, the rhetorical situation produces the concept of the decision with the same if implicit metaphorical dimensions.

Within Schmitt's decision, however, Kierkegaard's "moment of decision" undergoes an additional semantic transformation: The straight-forward theological content of Kierkegaard's concept is functionalised as rhetorical intensity. The rationale behind this transformation becomes apparent as we look at Schmitt's theological understanding. Instead of a reference to traditional Christian notions of orthodoxy or orthopraxy, he entertains a rhetorical conception of theology. For Schmitt, "theology" means, as we can elicit from his discussion of the 19th Century conservative revolutionaries, "auf radikale Fragen eine entscheidende Antwort [geben]", it is to give a decisive answer to radical questions.[78] He writes in *Politische Theologie* that being, thinking and speaking radically is being, thinking and speaking in a theological manner.[79] Following this kind of argument, Schmitt's political theology must be understood as a rhetorical project. It is a special kind of political utterance, an utterance which looks for finality and determination in political activity even if faced with opposing views. Theological metaphors are meant to support political concepts with the aim of securing their success in the argumentative struggle towards finality. The metaphors possess a complementing nature in that they link quite diverse discourses.[80] This is true for the semantic dimensions and it is also true for the amount of linguistic passion which is part of the discussions.

Because of a lack of evidence underlying his concept of decision – for why should a particular political problem be solved by an emphatic decision and not by a collective debate and compromise? – I claim that Schmitt complements it with theological metaphors that call for the utmost. He makes functional use of the theological connotations that are inherent in Kierkegaard's "Christ-moment". The concept of decision is metaphorically linked to a theological discourse by way of

the *ex nihilo* leap for example. Thereby its appeal and its penetrating power within a particular political debate and the rhetorical situation of the Weimar Republic are strengthened. Blumenberg calls this kind of strategy a "Rhetorik der Säkularisierung", a rhetoric of secularisation. With Schmitt in mind he writes in *Legitimität der Neuzeit*: "The phenomena of linguistic secularisation extend all the way from the conceptual function of resolving the problem of an acute lack of means by which to express a novel state of affairs to the rhetorical function of evoking effects along the spectrum between provocation and familiarity by means of an emphatic display of the terminology's marks of derivation."[81] As Blumenberg further comments, Schmitt makes a claim of meaning and finality, both of which seem to be missing after the decrease of theological substance in the course of secularisation.[82] In that context, Kierkegaard's moment is fully politicised in Schmitt's decision. Thus, political decision-making is conceptualised as an all or nothing kind of activity. It is an either-or situation that makes compromises or alternative views impossible. The political decision-making becomes theologically *überhöht*, inflated.

This strategy of semantically transforming a theological concept in order to bolster a political concept which is part of a polarised debate may also be referred to – in the words of Quentin Skinner – as "rhetorical redescription".[83] Skinner points to the possibility that concepts may be presented in the course of a debate in a "new moral light".[84] This moral reevaluation has repercussions on the way people come to judge specific social and political actions. Whereas Skinner applies this term to specific rhetorical moves within real-time debates, I would like to apply his thought to my argument: The metaphorical link between Kierkegaard's concept of the moment and Schmitt's concept of the decision is strengthened by the fact that Schmitt redescribes the decisive theological moment as a political moment of decision. Schmitt's politicising move redescribes Kierkegaard's normative understanding of the moment. The rhetorical persuasiveness is retained within the moment of decision whereas its normative content is rerouted. The Christological dimensions and thereby the theological core of the moment turn into an existentialist pathos of political decisions in a secularised society. Within his analysis of the decision, Schmitt stirs up a memory of theological metaphors derived from Kierkegaard's moment. He aims to make his own concept more convincing in the light of persistent discursive opposition. Considering Kierkegaard's

intellectual battle with his contemporary society and church in works such as "The Moment", Schmitt only follows Kierkegaard's own trail of politicising the moment of decision and brings the rhetorical work of his predecessor to its completion. According to Blumenberg, such semantic redesriptions always occur rhetorically.[85] They are an expression of the prevailing rhetorical situation.

Combining Blumenberg's and Skinner's notions, Schmitt's strategy of redesribing Kierkegaard's concept must be understood as part of a rhetorical situation in two ways: On the one hand the theological metaphors of Kierkegaard's moment are integrated in Schmitt's concept of the political decision in order to cover up any lack of evidence and plausibility within Schmitt's emphatic decisionism. On the other hand, Kierkegaard's moment is redescribed as a secular and political event. The moment of decision becomes a pseudo-theological phenomenon of the political *Ausnahmezustand*. Schmitt both existentialises political decision-making and fully politicises the concept of the "Christ"- moment by building a rhetorical bridge between the theological and the political concept.

IV. Conclusion

Coming back to Kierkegaard's quote in "The Moment", one could critically argue that Schmitt also strives to become a "man of the moment" himself by intervening in the public debate with his emphatic decisionism. At the beginning of chapter three, I have identified similar existentialist "men of the moment" (rarely any women!) as Schmitt's contemporaries. One could equally make out rhetorical moves of redescription within their texts although they would be less politically than rather philosophically. We may thus conclude that Kierkegaard's moment has served as a rhetorical quarry for a range of 20th Century conceptual projects. These projects mostly share Schmitt's enthusiasm for an emphatic display of extreme political concepts. They are not so much concerned with the establishment of a coherent theoretical arrangement, instead their contributions, although very often theoretical in nature, clearly intent to change the course of the wider public debate. This is the case today for example with Giorgio Agamben and his attempts to write another political theology *alias* political rhetoric of the exception.[86] It is here where conceptual history obtains a critical

edge: It may reveal the political strategies that motivate a particular choice of concept.[87] The link between Søren Kierkegaard's moment and Carl Schmitt's decision is just one example. It points to the overall relevance of critical conceptual history in exposing political motivations behind certain conceptual undertakings.

NOTES

1. S. Kierkegaard 1998: *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton, pp. 338f.
2. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 18.
3. M. C. Taylor 1980: Christology, in: N. Thulstrup & M. M. Thulstrup (eds.): *Theological Concepts in Kierkegaard*, Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana Vol. 5, Købehavn, p. 205.
4. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 1.
5. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 58.
7. S. Kierkegaard 1980: *The Concept of Anxiety*, Princeton, p. 81f.
8. Cf. Platon: *Parmenides*, 156a – 157b. Cf. also M. Theunissen 1971: Augenblick, in J. Ritter (Hrsg.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 1, p. 650
9. S. Kierkegaard 1980: *The Concept of Anxiety*, Princeton, p. 89.
10. Ibid., p. 88.
11. Ibid., p. 86.
12. Ibid., p. 85.
13. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 51.
14. Cf. the Quicunque vult.
15. Cf. e.g. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, pp. 45f.
16. S. Kierkegaard 1992: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 99.
17. Ibid., pp. 113ff.
18. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 58.
19. Cf. G. Scholz 1995: Sprung, in: Joachim Ritter (Ed.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 9, Basel, p. 1541-1550.
20. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, pp. 66f.
21. Ibid., p. 69.
22. Cf. R. Poole 1993: *Kierkegaard: the indirect communication*, Charlotteville/VA.
23. S. Kierkegaard 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton, p. 64.
24. S. Kierkegaard 1983: *Fear and Trembling. The Repetition*, Princeton, p. 133.
25. S. Kierkegaard 1998: *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton, pp. 338f.
26. S. Kierkegaard 1998: *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton, pp. 338f.
27. S. Kierkegaard 1998: *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton, pp. 91f.
28. Ipid, p. 93.
29. S. Kierkegaard 1978: *Two Ages. The Age of Revolution and the Present Age. A Literary Review*, Princeton, pp. 109f.

30. Ibid.

31. Cf. M. Nicoletti 1992: Politics and Religion in Kierkegaard's Thought: Secularization and the Martyr, in: G. B. Connell/ C. S. Evans (eds.): *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community*, New Jersey & London, p. 192.

32. S. Kierkegaard 1978: *Two Ages. The Age of Revolution and the Present Age*. A Literary Review, Princeton, p.84.

33. Ibid., p. 71.

34. Cf. J. Garff 2000: *Sören Kierkegaard. Biographie*, München, pp. 561-565.

35. K.M. Kodalle 1988: *Die Eroberung des Nutzlosen. Kritik des Wunschdenkens und der Zweckrationalität im Anschluß an Kierkegaard, Paderborn*, p. 167. Cf. also M. Nicoletti 1992: Politics and Religion in Kierkegaard's Thought. Secularisation and the Martyr, in: G.B. Connell/ C.S. Evans (Eds.): *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community*, New Jersey & London, p. 188.

36. S. Kierkegaard 1978: *Two Ages. The Age of Revolution and the Present Age*. A Literary Review, Princeton, p. 71.

37. For hints, cf. K. Löwith 1935: Der okkasionelle Dezisionismus von Carl Schmitt, in: Löwith: *Gesammelte Abhandlungen. Zur Kritik der geschichtlichen Existenz*, Stuttgart 1960; K. M. Kodalle 1988: *Die Eroberung des Nutzlosen. Kritik des Wunschdenkens und der Zweckrationalität im Anschluß and Kierkegaard*, Paderborn et.al. pp. 163f. M. Nicoletti 1990: *Transcendenza e potere. La teologia politica di Carl Schmitt*, Brescia; Rüdiger Safranski 2007: *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*, München, p. 343.; R. Kramme 1989: *Helmuth Plessner und Carl Schmitt*, Berlin, p. 177.

38. For example M. Ojakangas 2004: *A Philosophy of Concrete Life. Carl Schmitt and the Political Thought of Late Modernity*, Jyväskylä, p. 27.

39. D. Sternberger 1961: *Begriff des Politischen*, Frankfurt/ Main, p. 21.

40. Cf. K. Sontheimer 1962: *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933*, München, pp. 327ff.

41. In the first half of the 20th century Kierkegaard's reception within Roman-Catholic theology was limited, cf. A. Darlap 1983: Die Rezeption S. Kierkegaards in der katholischen Theologie, in: H. Anz/ P. Lübcke/ F. Schmöe (Hrsg.): *Die Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie*, Kopenhagen & München, pp. 225-238.

42. Cf. the contemporary critique by H.J. Daerr 1932: *Der Begriff der Entscheidung in der dialektischen Theologie*, Greifswald, pp. 89ff.

43. Cf. R. Poole 1998: The unknown Kierkegaard: Twentieth century receptions, in: A. Hannay/ G.D. Marino (Eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard,* Cambridge, pp. 48-75.

44. Cf. K. Palonen 2006: *The Struggle with Time. A Conceptual History of 'Politics' as Activity*, Münster et.al., pp. 181ff.

45. Cf. H. Anz 1983: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte Kierkegaards in der deutschen Theologie und Philosophie, in: H. Anz/ P. Lübcke/ F. Schmöe (Hrsg.): *Die Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie*, Kopenhagen & München, p. 12.

46. T.W. Adorno 1964: *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit. Zur deutschen Ideologie*, Frankfurt/Main.

47. C. Schmitt 1998: *Politische Romantik*, 8th edition, Berlin, p.76.

48. C. Schmitt 1917: Die Sichtbarkeit der Kirche, in: *Summa,* Vol. 1 No. 2

49. C. Schmitt 1950: *Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation. Vier Aufsätze*, Köln, pp. 102ff.

50. Cf. C. Schmitt 2003: *Tagebücher. Oktober 1912 bis Februar 1915*, edited by Ernst Hüsmert, p. 222.

51. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7th edition, Berlin, p. 21. Cf. also Hasso Hofmann 2002: *Legitimität gegen Legalität. Der Weg der politischen Philosophie Carl Schmitts*, Berlin, pp. 55-62.

52. C. Schmitt 1914: *Der Wert des Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen,* Tübingen, p. 41.

53. My translation: Decisions will only be decisions in the strict sense if they decide about something truly exceptional. Cf. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität,* 7th edition, Berlin, p. 13.

54. C. Schmitt 1933. *Der Begriff des Politischen*, 3rd edition, Hamburg, p. 7

55. Ibid.

56. Cf. ibid., p. 21: "Die Ausnahme erklärt das Allgemeine und sich selbst. Und wenn man das Allgemeine richtig studieren will, braucht man sich nur nach einer wirklichen Ausnahme umzusehen. Sie legt alles viel deutlicher an den Tag als das Allgemeine selbst. Auf die Länge wird man des ewigen Geredes vom Allgemeinen überdrüssig; es gibt Ausnahmen. Kann man sie nicht erklären, so kann man auch das Allgemeine nicht erklären. Gewöhnlich merkt man die Schwierigkeit nicht, weil man das Allgemeine nicht einmal mit Leidenschaft, sondern mit einer bequemen Oberflächlichkeit denkt. Die Ausnahme dagegen denkt das Allgemeine mit energischer Leidenschaft." Cf. also S. Kierkegaard 1983: *Fear and Trembling. The Repetition,* Princeton, pp. 226ff. Schmitt quotes Kierkegaard's text as if it was one coherent passage but, in fact, it is constituted of two separate passages.

57. S. Kierkegaard 1983: *Fear and Trembling. The Repetition,* Princeton, p. 227.

58. Cf. M.Th. Greven 1989: Der substanzhafte und metaphysische Ansatz des politischen Schriftstellers Carl Schmitt bis 1934, in: Rainer Eisfeld/Ingo Müller (Eds.): *Gegen Barbarei. Essays Robert M.W. Kempner zu Ehren,* Frankfurt/Main, pp. 142f.

59. My translation: That which is assumed to be the content of the law will, through its application by the judge, step into another sphere. Cf. C. Schmitt 1912: *Gesetz und Urteil, Eine Untersuchung zum Problem der Rechtspraxis,* Berlin, p. 29.

60. Cf. John Searle 2001: *Rationality in Action*, Cambridge/MA & London, pp. 61ff.

61. C. Schmitt 1912: *Gesetz und Urteil, Eine Untersuchung zum Problem der Rechtspraxis*, Berlin, p. 78.

62. Cf. Ibid., p. 49.

63. Ibid., p. 78.

64. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7th edition, Berlin, p. 43.

65. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7th edition, Berlin, p. 16.

66. Cf. H. Heller 1983: *Staatslehre*, 6th edition, Tübingen, p. 299.

67. C. Schmitt 1998: *Politische Romantik*, 6th edition, Berlin, p. 5.

68. My translation: The decision, when viewed normatively, is born of nothing. Cf. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität,* 7th edition, Berlin, p. 37f.

69. My translation: Within the moment, the decision becomes independent of its argumentative base and receives importance in its own right. Cf. ibid.

70. Ibid., p. 8: "… und der Dezisionist immer in der Gefahr steht, durch die Funktionalisierung des Augenblicks das in jeder großen politischen Bewegung enthaltende

ruhende Sein zu verfehlen, …". Schmitt's reference to a certain danger of the decisionist should not be regarded as a sincere worry, taking in account his wholehearted support of 19th century decisionism in the later sections of *Politische Theologie*.

71. C. Schmitt 1929: Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierung und Entpolitisierung, in: Schmitt: *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar – Genf – Versailles 1923-1939*, Berlin 1988.

72. Cf. ibid., pp. 127f.

73. C. Schmitt 1996a: *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, 8. Auflage, Berlin, pp. 41ff.

74. K. Löwith 1935: Der okkasionelle Dezisionismus von Carl Schmitt, in: Löwith: *Gesammelte Abhandlungen. Zur Kritik der geschichtlichen Existenz*, Stuttgart 1960, p. 93.

75. H. Blumenberg 2001: Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik, in: H. Blumenberg: *Ästhetische und metaphorische Schriften*, Frankfurt/Main, pp. 414ff.

76. Cf. ibid., p. 411.

77. Cf. ibid, p. 416.

78. C. Schmitt 1996a: *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, 8. Auflage, Berlin, p. 82.

79. C. Schmitt 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7th edition, Berlin, p. 50.

80. Cf. H. Blumenberg 2007: *Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit*, Frankfurt/ Main, p. 88.

81. H. Blumenberg 1996: *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit, erneuerte Ausgabe*, Frankfurt/ Main, p. 115; Cf. for the English translation: Hans Blumenberg 1985: *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age,* Cambridge/MA.

82. Cf. ibid., p.119.

83. Q. Skinner 1999: Rhetoric and Conceptual Change, in: F*innish Yearbook of Political Thought*, Vol. 3, pp. 60-73.

84. Q. Skinner 1996: *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge, p. 141.

85. H. Blumenberg 2001: Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik, in: H. Blumenberg: *Ästhetische und metaphorische Schriften,* Frankfurt/Main, p. 420.

86. Cf. G. Agamben 2005: State of Exception, Chicago; G. Agamben 2005: *The Time That Remains. A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, Stanford.

87. Cf. K. Palonen 2002: Begriffsgeschichte und/als Politikwissenschaft, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, Vol. 44, p. 221-234.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, Theodor W. 1964: *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit. Zur deutschen Ideologie,* Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
Agamben, Giorgio 2005: *State of Exception*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Agamben, Giorgio 2005: T*he Time That Remains. A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Anz, Heinrich 1983: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte Kierkegaards in der deutschen Theologie und Philosophie, in: H. Anz/ P. Lübcke/ F. Schmöe (Hrsg.): *Die Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie*, Kopenhagen & München: Text & Kontext, 11-29.
Blumenberg, Hans 1996: *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*, erneuerte Ausgabe, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
Blumenberg, Hans 2001: Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik, in: H. Blumenberg: *Ästhetische und metaphorische Schriften*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
Blumenberg, Hans 2007: *Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
Daerr, Hans J. 1932: *Der Begriff der Entscheidung in der dialektischen Theologie*, Greifswald: Adler.
Darlap, Adolf 1983: Die Rezeption S. Kierkegaards in der katholischen Theologie, in: H. Anz/ P. Lübcke/ F. Schmöe (Hrsg.): *Die Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie*, Kopenhagen & München: Text & Kontex, 225-238.
Garff, Joakim 2000: *Sören Kierkegaard. Biographie*, München: Hanser.
Greven, Michael Th. 1989: Der substanzhafte und metaphysische Ansatz des politischen Schriftstellers Carl Schmitt bis 1934, in: Rainer Eisfeld/Ingo Müller (Eds.): *Gegen Barbarei. Essays Robert M.W. Kempner zu Ehren,* Frankfurt/Main: Athenäum Verlag, 131-152.
Heller, Hermann 1983: *Staatslehre*, 6th edition, Tübingen: Mohr.
Hofmann, Hasso 2002: *Legitimität gegen Legalität. Der Weg der politischen Philosophie Carl Schmitts*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.
Kierkegaard, Søren 1978: *Two Ages. The Age of Revolution and the Present Age*. A Literary Review, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kierkegaard; Søren 1980: *The Concept of Anxiety,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kierkegaard, Søren 1983: *Fear and Trembling. The Repetition,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kierkegaard, Søren 1998: *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kierkegaard; Søren 1985: *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kierkegaard, Søren 1992: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kodalle, Klaus M. 1988: *Die Eroberung des Nutzlosen. Kritik des Wunschdenkens und der Zweckrationalität im Anschluß an Kierkegaard*, Paderborn: Schönigh.
Kramme, Rüdiger 1989: *Helmuth Plessner und Carl Schmitt,* Berlin:Duncker & Humblot.
Löwith, Karl 1935: Der okkasionelle Dezisionismus von Carl Schmitt, in: Löwith: *Gesammelte Abhandlungen. Zur Kritik der geschichtlichen Existenz,* Stuttgart 1960; Kohlhammer, 93-126.
Nicoletti, Michele 1990: *Transcendenza e potere. La teologia politica di Carl Schmitt*,

Brescia: Morcelliana.

Nicoletti, Michele 1992: Politics and Religion in Kierkegaard's Thought: Secularization and the Martyr, in: G. B. Connell/ C. S. Evans (eds.): *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community*, New Jersey & London: Humanities Press International, 183-195.

Ojakangas, Mika 2004: *A Philosophy of Concrete Life. Carl Schmitt and the Political Thought of Late Modernity*, Jyväskylä: SoPhi.

Palonen, Kari 2002: Begriffsgeschichte und/als Politikwissenschaft, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, Vol. 44, 221-234.

Palonen, Kari 2006: *The Struggle with Time. A Conceptual History of 'Politics' as Activity*, Münster et.al.: LIT Verlag.

Platon 1991: *Parmenides*, Frankfurt/Main & Leipzig: Insel.

Poole, Roger 1993: *Kierkegaard: the Indirect Communication*, Charlotteville/VA: University Press of Virginia

Poole, Roger 1998: The unknown Kierkegaard: Twentieth century receptions, in: A. Hannay/ G.D. Marino (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 48-75.

Safranski, Rüdiger 2007: *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*, München: Hanser.

Schmitt, Carl 1912: *Gesetz und Urteil, Eine Untersuchung zum Problem der Rechtspraxis*, Berlin: Liebmann.

Schmitt, Carl 1914: *Der Wert des Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen*, Tübingen: Mohr.

Schmitt, Carl 1917: Die Sichtbarkeit der Kirche, in: *Summa*, Vol. 1 No. 2, 71-80.

Schmitt, Carl 1929: Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierung und Entpolitisierung, in: C. Schmitt: *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar – Genf – Versailles 1923-1939,* Berlin 1988: Duncker & Humblot, 120-132.

Schmitt, Carl 1933. *Der Begriff des Politischen*, 3rd edition, Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt.

Schmitt, Carl 1950: Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation. Vier Aufsätze, Köln: Greven.

Schmitt, Carl 1996: *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, 8th edition, Berlin: Duncker & Humbolt.

Schmitt, Carl 1998: *Politische Romantik*, 8th edition, Berlin:Duncker & Humbolt.

Schmitt, Carl 1996: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7th edition, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Schmitt, Carl 2003: *Tagebücher. Oktober 1912 bis Februar 1915*, edited by Ernst Hüsmert, Berlin: Akademic Verlag.

Scholz, Gunter 1995: Sprung, in: Joachim Ritter (Ed.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 9, Basel: Schwabe, 1541-1550.

Searle, John 2001: *Rationality in Action*, Cambridge/MA & London: MIT Press.

Skinner, Quentin 1999: Rhetoric and Conceptual Change, in: *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, Vol. 3, 60-73.

Skinner, Quentin 1996: *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge.

Sontheimer, Kurt 1962: *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933*, München.

Sternberger, Dolf 1961: *Begriff des Politischen*, Frankfurt/Main: Insel.

Taylor, Mark C. 1980: Christology, in: N. Thulstrup & M. M. Thulstrup (eds.): *Theological Concepts in Kierkegaard,* Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana Vol. 5, København: Reitzel, 167-206.

Theunissen, Michael 1971: Augenblick, in: J. Ritter (Hrsg.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 1, Basel: Schwabe650.