

# Critique, Protest and Reform

## The Reformation 1517-2017 and its Significance for Philosophy, Politics, and Religion

### Program

**Wednesday 31 May 2017.** Venue: Professorboligen, Garden of the Central University Campus

- 14:00-15:00 Registration and Coffee  
15:00-15:15 Words of Welcome. Dean Aud Tønnesen and Prof. Marius T. Mjaaland  
15:15-16:00 **Philipp Stoellger:** Reformation as Reformatting Religion: The Shift of Perspective and Perception by Faith as Medium  
16:00-16:30 Discussion  
16:30-17:00 Coffee Break  
17:00-19:00 Session 1: The Hidden God and Inter-Religious Sources of Critique. Chair: Sami Pihlström  
**Safet Bektovic:** The Signs of a Hidden God: Dialectics of Veiling and Unveiling God in Islam  
**Marius T. Mjaaland:** Topos of the Hidden One: Secrecy and Ambivalence in Luther's Philosophical Legacy  
19:00 Reception (Tapas and Wine)

**Thursday 1 June 2017.** Venue: Professorboligen

- 09:00-10:00 Session 2: Pragmatism and Critique. Chair: Ulf Zakariasson  
**Sami Pihlström:** Reforming the Pragmatist Protest in Relation to Kant's Critical Philosophy  
10:00-10:30 Coffee Break  
10:30-11:30 Session 3: Short Papers  
11:30-11:45 Coffee Break  
11:45-12:45 Session 4: Short Papers  
12:45-13:30 Lunch  
13:30-14:30 **General Meeting of the NSPR:** Board election and next conference [Coffee is served]  
14:30-16:30 Session 5: Reformation, Idealism, and Transcendence. Chair: Jan-Olav Henriksen  
**Burkhard Nonnenmacher:** Hegel's Philosophy of Religion and Luther  
**Jayne Svenungsson:** Idealist Philosophy and the Jews: Idealism turned against itself  
16:30-17:00 Coffee Break  
17:00-18:00 Session 6: Short papers  
19:30 Conference Dinner at Eik Restaurant, Universitetsgt. 11

**Friday 2 June 2017.** Venue: Professorboligen

- 09:00-10:00 Session 7: Paul, Scripture, and the Philosophers. Chair: Jayne Svenungsson  
**Ward Blanton:** Apostle of the Self-help Entrepreneurs? Self-reliance and Spiritual Exercise in the Philosophical Genealogy of Paulinism  
10:00-10:30 Coffee Break  
10:30-12:00 Session 8: Short Papers  
12:00-12:45 Lunch  
12:45-13:45 Session 9: Short Papers  
13:45-14:00 Coffee Break  
14:00-16:00 Session 10: Form and Reform: Aesthetics and the Perception of Religion. Chair: Stine Holte  
**Dorthe Jørgensen:** Aesthetics and Religion in a Contemporary Key  
**Svein Aage Christoffersen:** A Lutheran Metaphysic? Ethics and Aesthetics in K.E. Løgstrup's Metaphysics of Existence  
16:00 Closing Words and Publication Plans



**SESSION 3A Chair: Svein Aage Christoffersen. Room A. 1 June 10:30-11:30**

**1. Robin Attfield, University of Cardiff**

**Paul, Stoics and Epicureans**

Paul engaged at Athens with Stoics and Epicureans. Stoics were materialists and pantheists, and (like Paul) have been accused by John Passmore of teleological anthropocentrism. In both cases this charge misfires, as key passages of Stoicism and of Paul make clear. Yet both uphold teleology in nature. Here, Stoicism and Christianity have something in common, although the overlap should not be exaggerated.

Such teleology was rejected by Epicureans, who combine their anti-teleology with materialism and evolutionism. But evolutionism is compatible with theism. God could have used natural selection in the course of creation. So is materialism, if applied to the creation rather than the creator. Lucretius' form of anti-teleology rejected divine design; this raises issues of teleology (which I have considered elsewhere). Paul's stance requires some form of theodicy, which seems not to have been discussed on this occasion. Was Epicurean materialism incompatible with the fact of consciousness? Some think so, but theism suggests that God is able to make matter feel and think, rather as materialists claim.

Paul's speech at Athens is notable for his proclamation of the unknown God, hidden deeply in the beliefs of his hearers, and for his pantheism. This is distinct from Stoic pantheism, and very far distinct from Epicurean theology. Arthur Peacocke's recent presentation of pantheism shows it to be defensible. At the same time, Paul's concept of the God of creation and of history spoke to the unrecognised convictions of at least some of his hearers and probably depends on some form of natural theology, as voiced by Paul on other occasions.

Paul's understanding of history embodies directionality (which I have argued for elsewhere). He would reject the Stoic belief in history as a Great Circle, constantly recurring. But his central theme was resurrection, disdained by his opponents but not impossible to God.

**2. Petra Carlsson, THS/Uppsala University**

**Cassian's Performative Epistemology**

French thinker Michel Foucault argues that the Western notion of inner truth and the clarity of thought may be traced back to the initiator of the European monastic tradition—John Cassian (360-435). Before Cassian, Foucault contends, a Christian conception of truth as separated from the material world had not yet fully appeared. The expressions of the body and the expressions of the soul were still deeply intertwined in the Christian logic. In Foucault's view, this changes with Cassian and is later developed through the history of Western theology leading up to modern secular thought. This paper aims to challenge Foucault's established narrative by elucidating a performative epistemology in Cassian and his time. It will suggest a conscious and active notion of knowing by performing—of creating knowledge through actions and things—present in those very movements to which Foucault ascribes the move towards abstraction in Western thought. Early Christian epistemology is, however, unconceivable without its Jewish origin why an analysis of two texts from Qumran will be used to elucidate the performative epistemology found in Cassian.

In our time, religiosity is increasingly visible in media as well as in politics why a better understanding of Christian thinking is vital. Sophisticated tools for analyzing and critiquing Christian truth claims are needed. By rewriting the established narrative of Western thought, the planned project will provide such tools.

**SESSION 3B Chair: Asle Eikrem. Room B. 1 June 10:30-11:30**

**3. Timo Koistinen, Helsinki University**

**The Personal in Philosophy of Religion**

John Cottingham has recently argued that dominant approaches in analytic philosophy of religion include a misleading view of the nature and role of reason in the religious life. Philosophers have typically thought that their aim is an impartial investigation of the truth and rationality of religious beliefs: they think that their personal commitments are irrelevant in evaluating arguments for and against religious beliefs. According to Cottingham, the ideal of detachment, associated with the impersonal (scientific or metaphysical) perspective to religious questions, leaves out essential dimensions of religious beliefs and practices. In place of the intellectualist approach, Cottingham offers a more "human" approach for philosophical study of religion, which connects it more closely with the spiritual, moral, psychological and aesthetic aspects that play a central role in the actual forms of religious life.

Cottingham's model of philosophy of religions has obvious connections with some other currents in philosophy of religion. Late D. Z. Phillips criticised dominant approaches in philosophy of religion in the same way as him. According



to Phillips, religious beliefs should not be treated as pseudo-scientific metaphysical theories. The truth of these beliefs cannot be settled by appealing to some external, non-religious considerations. Religious beliefs are part of the spiritual life of the believer: they are personal confessions of faith. Despite some apparent similarities between Cottingham and Phillips, there are however important differences between their philosophical methods. Although Phillips rejects the Enlightenment conception of rationality, he emphasizes that a certain kind of neutrality is an essential element in philosophical investigation. The perspective of philosophical inquiry is external to a philosopher's personal religious commitments. Cottingham, in turn, adopts a position quite similar to classical theological notion of "fides quaerens intellectum". Unlike Phillips, he does not think that there is a sharp distinction between the interests of confessional theological thought and the interests of philosophical study of religion. Both these approaches raise fundamental questions about the limits of external criticism of religious practices and traditions.

#### 4. Troels Nørager, Aarhus University

##### **Moral Sentiment and the God Within: Emerson's Reformation of 19<sup>th</sup> C. Christendom in New England**

The life and writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) reflect a variety of roles: that of Unitarian minister, public lecturer, philosopher, and poet. Behind them all is an attempt to critique and reform the Christendom of New England and to reformulate core Christian ideas for a new and modern era. This is the basic hypothesis of my recently published book, *Emerson – religion som moralsk livsform* (København: forlaget Eksistensen, 2017).

Emerson greatly admired (and to some extent mirrored himself in) religious heroes with the courage to oppose conventionalism and find their own way. As a paradigm of this, Martin Luther's name occurs frequently in Emerson's texts. When it comes to Luther's *theology*, however, Emerson has strong reservations reflecting his own Calvinist tradition. He interprets Luther as propagating faith *in opposition* to good works. For his own part, Emerson emphasizes that Christianity is about faith *and* works, and due to his 'moral perfectionism' he finds 'works' to be a surer sign than 'faith'.

Inspired by (and himself part of) New England Transcendentalism, his core concept, *the moral sentiment*, should be interpreted as mediating between 'outer' and 'inner, i.e. transforming the beauty and moral order of the world into inner experience, - an experience of 'the God within'. As philosopher, Emerson is an idealist-monist pledging his allegiance to the long tradition of (Christian) Platonism. For contemporary philosophy of religion his relevance consists partly in an invitation to reconsider 'the end of metaphysics', partly in reminding us that the purpose of religion is to prescribe a moral life enabling us feel at home in the world.

#### **SESSION 4A Chair: Safet Bektovic. Room A. 1 June 11:45-12:45**

#### 5. Jörg Disse, University of Fulda

##### **Subjective certainty of the ethical. Luther's certainty of salvation universalized**

Luther's certainty of salvation may be considered as the inaugural (theological) reflection on subjective certainty as the basis not so much for knowledge (cf. Descartes) but for a form of life. With reference to Kierkegaard's theory of ethical commitment in "Either-Or" and the cognitive psychology of K.E. Stanovich, I want to show how it can be universalized and explained by our cognitive constitution.

Ethical commitment as a particular form (stage) of life is for Kierkegaard initiated by absolute choice. What we choose is our "reasonable soul" or, which for him is equivalent, the distinction of good and evil as the highest principle of life. The ethical stage therefore amounts to the choice of realizing the good for its own sake. It is described as accompanied by certainty (= the subjective certainty of choosing our true self). On the other hand, Stanovich's "two process model" of cognition distinguishes between a type 1 processing (automatic, quick, domain specific) and a type 2 processing (conscious, slow, domain-overriding). He links this distinction to two kinds of goal structure: type 1 makes us pursue goals that are in the interest of our genes, type 2 goals in the interest of the individual. I add to the type 2 goal structure an "interest of (practical) reason" (Kant) that consists in pursuing the good for its own sake and argue that Kierkegaardian ethical certainty is based on this innate goal structure: We are naturally inclined to perform the good for its own sake as the highest possibility of our acting and it is experiencing this inclination as our highest that may trigger the subjective certainty of it being the right motivation to be embraced. Joined with a belief in the achievability of a highest good, it may become a religious certainty (cf. Luther).

#### 6. Hami Verbin, University of Tel Aviv

##### **Kierkegaard and Weil on Protest, Self-Sacrifice and the Love of God**

The purpose of the paper is to examine the relation between protest, self-sacrifice and the love of God in Kierkegaard and Weil by examining their respective conceptions of love.



I argue that if we maintain, as Kierkegaard does, that "Love's element is infinitude, inexhaustibility, immeasurability" (*Works of Love*: 180), that "The one who truly loves has become richer..." (*Works of Love*: 241), or, in other words, if we maintain that the self-giving of loving entails no loss to the giver, *qua* giver, then both protest and self-sacrifice come to play a peripheral role, if any, within the life of faith. If, however, we assume, as Weil does, that there is a necessary link between love and loss, then protest against God, indicative of the greatness of the loss, comes to play a central role within one's capacity to love Him fully. The desire for self-sacrifice, however, in preserving the lover's sense of self as a desiring self, necessarily limits the scope of the loss to a loss of anything but the self, and thereby seems to defeat itself.

The paper has three parts. I begin with Halbertal's observations concerning the logical differences between "sacrifice" and "gift" and their relation to the divine and human fear of instrumentality, fear of loving or being loved for the sake of love's benefits. I proceed in the second part, with Kierkegaard's explication of love in terms of infinite bounty, which renders confused the fear of instrumentality and the desire for self-sacrifice that it elicits. In the third part, I discuss the Weilian critique of the desire for self-sacrifice and what it entails concerning the role of protest within the life of faith.

**SESSION 4B Chair: Philipp Stoellger. Room B. 1 June 11:45-12:45**

### 7. Panu-Matti Pöykkö, University of Helsinki

#### Levinasian "ethical critique" as prophetic vigilance.

According to some, Levinas's ethics lacks the *critical force* necessary for an intellectual evaluation of the realm of politics and ideologies. In this paper, it is maintained that this view is incorrect and unfounded.

In order to offer a response to this criticism, I will elucidate Emmanuel Levinas's notion of "ethical critique", which should be understood in two distinct but interdependent ways. First, Levinas's philosophy itself is an "ethical critique". Levinas' philosophy is a critical endeavor in a Kantian sense, insofar as it investigates the limits of knowledge and human understanding, and aims at unfolding the ethical as the necessary condition or ground for their possibility. Second, precisely because the ethical provides the ground of sense for all meaningful experience and everyday life, all human endeavors, in turn, must be evaluated and measured against the unconditional ethical standard. In particular, political thought, institutions, and ideologies (secular or religious) must be exposed to "ethical critique". A society which does not promote the protection of the fundamental rights of its members, and, most importantly, does not take the concern for well-being and for charity as its highest guiding principle, is neither good nor legitimate, and must be ethically judged. As much is true of religious and philosophical systems as well.

Surely, Levinasian critique differs significantly from what is usually understood as the critique of ideology and politics in modern Western thought. However, Levinas's thought does not remain silent on and does provide its own ethical response and way of dealing with such issues. Levinas doesn't primarily invite us to engage in a critical investigation of political and ideological realities and the power relations driving those realities, but in a "transcendent" critique which judges them, as it were, from the outside in the manner Biblical prophets. "Ethical critique" is "prophetic vigilance".

### 8. Simon Henriksson, University of Uppsala

#### Michel Henry, Martin Luther: A Phenomenology of the Cross?

In term of "critique", Michel Henry's material phenomenology offers a destructive reading and retrieval of basic problems in the philosophical and theological tradition. And in its specific mode of radicality, material phenomenology turns towards a type of problematic that, for Henry, is more fundamentally motivated than the classical critique of knowledge (including its hermeneutical and deconstructive versions): the problem of the "interior transformation and regeneration" of life in the experience of an "original ontological passivity of suffering".

I think it is therefore motivated to ask in what way Henry's phenomenology of religion also reads as a *radical phenomenology of the cross*? This is a question that does not only invite us to take account of the reference to Luther in Henry's work, but it also calls for an examination of the pneumatological dimension of Henry's philosophy. For Henry, the reality of Spirit must be sought in the immanent dynamism of life in which subjectivity suffers its own "test" (*épreuve*) of the indestructible unity of affecting and affected in the self-affective essence of life; a pathic test of life's "passage from despair to certitude", particularly cultivated in the life of "faith".

The aim of this paper is to examine Henry's philosophical pneumatology in connection with Luther's theology of the cross. Hopefully, such reading will allow me not only to shed some light on Henry's philosophical pneumatology, but also to open up for a reading of Luther's theology of the cross from the position of a material phenomenology.



## 9. Leonora Onarheim Bergsjø, University of Oslo

### Images – a protestant problem?

500 years ago questions related to indulgence split the church, but it was the question of images that split the reformation movement. Today, the split is still visible in the field of theological aesthetics, where one is concerned with the relationship between theological issues and sense knowledge, beauty and the arts. Whereas catholic, orthodox and reformed systematic theologians such as Urs von Balthasar, Rudolf Bohren and David Bentley Hart have comprehensive systematic contributions to the field, there is a lack of similar works within protestant systematic reflection. Over the last decades a growing number of protestant theologians have been interested in theological aesthetics. However, their contributions often reflect a narrow understanding of aesthetics as works of art, and tend to treat the questions in relation to practical theology or religion in education.

In this paper I investigate the relationship between Luther's non-systematic approach to images and his moderate position concerning the question, and the lack of comprehensive contributions from protestant systematic theologians to the field of theological aesthetics. I also discuss how protestant theology might contribute to the field of theological aesthetics with a focus on materiality, and by using perspectives from Philosophical aesthetics and Disability studies. I argue that the questions raised within the field of theological aesthetics are not only interesting but essential for protestant systematic theology.

## 10. Clara Sjöberg, Lund University

### The Change of Perception: On Imagination in Theological Methodology

In early German Romanticism, as well as in the art and thought of William Blake, the concept of imagination is described as a fundamental condition for all knowledge but also for the understanding of the relation between the Absolute and the perceiving and knowing subject. More precisely, imagination is seen as the transformative motion of the 'in-between'. This view makes imagination central for reason as well as for the sensuous. This paper argues that the Romantic notion of imagination can enrich the contemporary theological methodology by challenging a reductionist understanding of reason, without turning its back on reason itself. The Romantic poet Novalis describes imagination as the floating movement between the mind and the world. In a similar way Blake describes imagination as the link between the human being and eternity. Through imagination the appearance of the transcendent within the realm of the immanent is made visible, which connects the understanding of imagination to the act of perception. A theological methodology rooted in this understanding of imagination must therefore be understood in relation to the human perception and the ability to perceive the appearance of the transcendent in the immanent. This, I argue, is made possible through a shift in our perception.

In order to describe this shift I turn to the Romantic understanding of art in relation to imagination. To perceive an artwork is to look at something in a different way than that in which we often look at the world – categorizing and identifying risks. Inspired by the shift in perspective which takes place in the act of perceiving art, we can also learn to transform the way in which we see the rest of the world – from a fear-driven perception characterized by the will to categorize, to a perception of hope that implies a wider openness towards the transcendent within the realm of the immanent. My paper explores the implications this shift has for theological methodology.

## 11. Stine Holte, University of Oslo

### Critique in the Time of the Image

The paper will go into the notion of critique and the image in a post-secular philosophical discourse, with the aim of clarifying certain premises for discussing recent developments toward a so-called post-fact, medialized reality in which critical thinking is under pressure. Although certain theorist has opted for a post-critical stand, I will argue that a return to the discussions of critical theory may bring important clues to what is at stake also for a proper theological response to the current political situation.

I will go into the dispute between Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno over the status of what Benjamin called "dialectical image" of "dialectics in standstill", notions that Adorno found highly disturbing. The reasons Adorno have for maintaining a more critical, dialectical approach can be seen to reflect a certain metaphysical separation, in which the *schein*-aspect of the image is maintained in a certain iconoclast tendency. This can be exemplified in Adorno's questioning of the use of images in politics, but also in his critique of kitsch aesthetics, with its disregard for the difference between the imaginary and the real.

A certain defense of Benjamin's position, however, is offered by Giorgio Agamben, who finds the notion of the dialectical image valuable precisely in terms of its non-metaphysical tendency to neutralize opposites, in the process Agamben calls profanation (as distinct from secularization). He accuses Adorno for remaining in a secularization paradigm, relying on an imaginative *as if*, whereas he himself offers an alternative paradigm, in which the Pauline "hos



me” – “as if not” – becomes the redemptive principle. This leaves us with two different approaches to critique and imagination which may be seen to reflect different theological or metaphysical concerns regarding the question of dialectics and aesthetics. My aim with this paper is to present premises for a discussion of what kind of post-secular critical thinking is required in our current situation.

**SESSION 6B Chair: Troels Nørager. Room B. 1 June 17:00-18:30**

### 12. Ulf Zackariasson, Uppsala

#### **Religious agency as source and vehicle of critique**

In this paper, I draw on the notion of religious agency as developed in religious studies, and discuss some ways in which religious agency can function as both a vehicle and a source of critique of religious traditions. I develop this idea with the help of examples of practically manifested and grounded feminist critique of religion and argue that pragmatism offers helpful analytical tools to analyze and understand these kinds of critique. I also suggest that in many respects, these kinds of critique transcend any straightforward distinctions between external and internal or immanent forms of critique. Pragmatism holds that real (as opposed to “paper”) doubt arises in concrete situations where established habits of thought, action and judgment fall short in some important respects, and doubt and discontentment are only dissolved when new habits that help us overcome the previous problems are instituted. I propose that in a parallel manner, the feminist critiques manifested and articulated on the basis of religious agency identify habits of thought, action and judgment that fail to fulfill their purpose and go on to call for reconstructions of religious practice.

### 13. Heikki Koskinen, University of Helsinki

#### **Religious Identities and Struggles for Recognition**

Inspired by the concrete historical process and the abstract intellectual idea of the Reformation, in this paper I present a philosophical articulation of some central structural tensions involved in critique, protest, and reform, arguing that for specified reasons, these tensions become especially acute in religious contexts. The conceptual resources for the analysis and the argument come mainly from contemporary recognition theory, based on the foundational work of Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth. Struggles for recognition and social reform involving any particular identities already inherently set up a philosophical tension between universalism and particularism. Moreover, in the research literature, recognition is standardly assumed to be a good thing, and even a vital human need, motivating various struggles aiming to reform and replace existing hierarchies and recognition-orders. However, the assumed goodness or positivity of recognition is highly dependent on perspective and context, bringing in questions regarding the subjects, objects, and contents of recognition-relations as well as relations of power. All these general structural tensions are acutely intensified when the relevant struggles for recognition are based specifically on religious identities. This is argued to be the case because of the perceived moral and metaphysical depth brought about by religious convictions and the assumed normative statuses of individuals, groups, and institutions. Religious identities also intensify questions of interpretation and authority, raising acute issues regarding the relationship between ontology and epistemology, as religious authorities sometimes resort to speech and action in the name of a supreme divine authority.

### 14. Stian Grøgaard, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

#### **A Short Note on Revelation and Critique of Reason in Schelling's Late Philosophy**

Reason in Schelling's *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1832) is haunted less by "transcendental illusions", the object of Kant's First Critique, than by the illusion of immanence. This illusion represents the adverse side of the enlightened reason's demand for autonomy, and makes reason the old accomplice of mythology. The demand for autonomy expresses both an anxiety of the basis of reason, the "hypokeymenon", and it perpetuates reason's existential impotence. With revelation reason finally lets go of mythology. Revelation was finalized with the event of Christ, since this event exposed the conditions of any possible revelation. While mythology faithfully reported internal changes as facts of a natural consciousness, revelation invents the autonomy of the external, historical fact. The philosophy of revelation equals what Schelling termed "historical philosophy".

**SESSION 8A Chair: Jayne Svenungsson. Room A. 2 June 10:30-12:00**

### 15. Taylor Weaver, University of Kent

#### **Revolution of Passivity: Paul, Luther, Agamben**

Paul's place in the history of reformation and revolution is clear. From recent work in biblical studies emphasising the



counter-imperial tone of the Pauline corpus, through Martin Luther's call to reform from exegetical nuances of the Pauline text, on to current continental philosophical readings of Paul that underscore the messianic, Paul has had a crucial role to play in reformulating possibilities for critical protest. In this essay I seek to ground the importance of *passivity*, in an Agambenian fashion, to point to the ongoing value of Pauline thought for political thinking/action. Paul's political/religious movement was grounded in strategic communal placements which re-imagined communal relations. While Luther laid the groundwork for Pauline action in his particular accounts of passive justice, this only prepares a way toward thinking about a broader Paulinist community. Rather than centred solely on a passive righteousness wherein the work is done by God, Agamben's account of a worklessness and withdrawal that opens up a new re-thinking of community allows for broader political action, despite the often disconnected nature of Agamben's political and strictly philosophical work. This reading of community, one concerned with inoperativity, is connected to the communal orientation of Paul, a socio-political strategy which withdrew from the broader patron-clientage system and subverted normal values. In order to think of ongoing strategies of protest, then, noting the past is not enough; bringing Paul back through Luther, and highlighting how passivity as a political philosophical concept has been used, allows for a renewal and refocus of its importance as a mechanism of both critique and protest.

### 16. Rasmus Nagel, University of Heidelberg

#### Universal singularity. Badiou, Paul and the Reformation

This paper explains the reformatory break from the medieval universe in terms of Alain Badiou's interpretation of Pauline theology, in particular via the concept of universal singularity. The innovation of the reformation can be conceived of as the introduction of a new way of thinking the classic triad of universality, particularity and singularity. The medieval cosmos represents an organic and hierarchic mediation of the universal and the singular via the particular, as illustrated in the logic of the porphyrian tree: God and the believer are mediated by the church. In contrast to this model, the reformation affirms a direct link between God and the believer that consists in the singular event of Jesus Christ, bypassing the mediating particularity of the church (a gesture radicalized in the theology of Søren Kierkegaard). This logical 'shortcut' is well explained in the work of Alain Badiou and his reading of Pauline theology.

The paper reconstructs Badiou's argument, particularly the relationship between revelation as a singular event and responding faith as continuing fidelity to this event. This requires a critical examination of mediality: If the reformation is a critique of the mediating, 'organic' function of the church – what is the precise role of mediality within the logic of universal singularity? What are the theological as well as the political and cultural consequences of thinking the singularity of Christ as the 'Leitmedium', instead of and against the church's embeddedness in a particular tradition and lifeworld? My paper also pays attention to Badiou's critique of Emmanuel Levinas and the theological turn in phenomenology in general.

### 17. Patrick Ebert, University of Heidelberg

#### A phenomenological inquiry about transcendence as radical alterity

This paper will exam Luther's notion of transcendence in the revelation from a phenomenological point of view. God's concealment/transcendence is one of the fundamental motives in Luther's theological thought and his critique of scholasticism – whether regarding the doctrine of election, *sola gratia and sola fide* or the critique of reason. It is essential for Luther's understanding of revelation, as we can see in the *Heidelberger Disputation*. However, his remarks on the *deus absconditus* in *de servo arbitrio* can become problematic: as Barth and Jüngel rightly pointed out, the talk of the *deus absconditus* could raise the problem of a *contradiction of God versus God*. However, this can't simply lead to giving up the transcendence in favour of an *utterly present revelation* and merging it in an *absolute immanence*. This raises the question of a differentiated determination of the relation of the *deus absconditus* and the *revelatus*, of *revelation and transcendence*. How to think of such a relation without falling back into a dualistic concept of a hidden metaphysical god?

Within the phenomenological tradition transcendence is considered to be a 'basic concept'. From Husserl to Heidegger and right up to Derrida and Levinas the question of the relation of transcendence and immanence is essential for the respective phenomenological conceptions. Three different phenomenological approaches will be presented and evaluated regarding their theological value. Heidegger's thoughts on the *transcendence of Being and the event*, the reflections of Henry on the *immanence of self-giveness* as the *essence of transcendence*, and the approaches of Levinas, Derrida und Waldenfels, which determine transcendence in the sense of *radical alterity*. The latter will prove to be particularly helpful for thinking *revelation without dismissing transcendence*.



## 18. Ragnar Mogård Bergem, University of Cambridge

### Genealogy and Critique

There is a persistence of genealogical discourse in certain strands of contemporary theology. This preference for the genealogical has shaped theological discourse in questionable ways. In this paper I will discuss how genealogical discourse was appropriated by theology as response to the failure of critique, and then uncover its implicit assumptions and tendencies. Analysing some encounters between theological genealogies and various Hegelian thinkers, I draw a contrast between Nietzschean genealogy and Hegelian ‘phenomenology’. This comparison brings to light some fundamental ways in which the genealogical might distort theological writing and practice.

## 19. Sven Thore Kloster, University of Oslo

### Tradition, critique, and radical democracy in Kathryn Tanner’s theology

The paper aims at exploring Kathryn Tanner’s concept of “community of argument”, as developed in her book *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (1997). Tanner draws on the protestant tradition of argument as *confessio*, as well as Chantal Mouffe’s agonistic pluralism. Although Tanner criticizes ideals of consensus, she all the same suggests communal “rules” for dialogue. The paper explores how this shapes her conception of tradition and asks whether her “community of argument” ideationally in fact is closer to Habermas than to Mouffe.

## 20. Øystein Brekke, Oslo and Akershus University College

### Critique of reason, critique of religion. Criticising religion in the classroom

With Martin Luther’s determined critique of religion by way of the Pauline dismantling of the Law, criticism of religion is fundamentally cast as also a more general critique of human reason. In my presentation I will reflect upon the relationship between critique of religion and critique of reason in the tradition following the Reformation, with emphasis on key thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, and Ebeling. Towards the end of my paper, I will discuss the relevance of such reflection for the topic of critique of religion in Norwegian classrooms today.

## SESSION 9A Chair: Timo Koistinen. Room A. 2 June 12:45-13:45

## 21. Atle Ottesen Søvik, Norwegian School of Theology

### Free Will and Salvation

What is said about free will in the Augsburg Confession (AC) and the Formula of Concord (FC) seems inconsistent at several points: God alone creates faith (AC5) and wants all to be saved (Solid Declaration (SD) 2.49), and yet many people do not have faith and are themselves to be blamed (SD2.57-61). God has only elected people for salvation (SD11.5), but how can that be true without the rest having been selected for damnation? Humans have some free will in inter-human relations but not in relation to God (AC18), but how can one have free will in relation to humans but not in relation to God?

Free-will-theories come in three main camps: compatibilism, event-causal libertarianism and non-event-causal libertarianism. There are good reasons for seeing event-causal libertarianism as the best approach to the problem of free will. Event-causal libertarianism also fits well with AC and FC since they reject determinism (SD2.74), which is the best reason for defending compatibilism, and also that humans have a sovereign free will (SD2.75), which is the best reason for defending non-event-causal libertarianism.

My paper shows how an event-causal libertarian theory of free will can solve the apparent inconsistencies on free will in the AC and FC. If free will is about the self causing actions, God may well be the cause of faith and human selves the cause of non-belief, without any contradiction since different events have different causes. The problem of election only for salvation reduces to the same problem: it is just another way of saying that God alone creates faith without saying anything about those who do not have faith. The problem of free will in relation to humans but not to God is solved by seeing that humans have thoughts, feelings and desires that are changeable or non-changeable to different degrees.

## 22. Ryszard Bobrowicz, Copenhagen University

### Challenging Structures: The Constitutive Theory of Law and the Reformation of Orthodoxy

One of the inherent conflicts in Luther’s theology comes from the fact that it is impossible to “preach the gospel without the challenging structures ... of a time essentially different from that of the first church” (Wriedt 2003: 113). Increasing



interest in the study of these surrounding structures was subject to scrutiny since the publication of Walter Bauer's "Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im Alttestamenten Christentum" in 1934. The so called "Bauer Thesis" contested the primary character of what was later considered as "orthodoxy" and, while criticised for stretching the evidence (see Turner 1954; Roberts 1979; Robinson 1988; Pearson 1990), it started a debate on the influence of power on the consolidation (e.g. Pagels 1979), formation and enforcement of orthodoxy from the "top" (see Noethlichs 2006). Simultaneously, however, it reinforced the attitude of suspicion towards the "public religion".

By using the example of the Theodosian Code, the earliest official Roman codification of imperial legislation from the time of Constantine, this paper aims to show that first, law indeed does not only reflect the theological options, but is itself a powerful formator of orthodoxy, and second, that this is not necessarily a purposeful manipulation, but rather a part of the formation of social consciousness and the processes of religious transmission. To do that the paper employs the constitutive theory of law in its philosophical (Simon & Sarat 2001; Berman 2001), cultural (Geertz 1983; Gordon 1989) and cognitive (Mitnick 2007, Whitehouse 2002) guises, as well as Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's theories of four phases of speech (1970) and the development of social experience (1993). Finally, it proposes some other possible applications, i.a. the notion of sin in the contemporary Catholicism or the new multi-faith paradigm in Europe.

### SESSION 9B Chair: Espen Dahl. Room B. 2 June 12:45-13:45

#### 23. Roe Fremstedal, University of Tromsø

##### **Religion reduced to Ethics: Kant, Fichte, and the Standard Reading of Kierkegaard Revisited**

This paper argues that it is Kierkegaard, and not Kant, who identifies ethics and religion by denying that religion is anything beyond or above ethics. The paper thus criticizes the widespread assumption that Kierkegaard reacted against Kant's (alleged) reduction of religion to ethics by introducing a teleological suspension of ethics. However, ethics in Kierkegaard should be taken not just in the narrow sense of moral duties, but also in a wide sense encompassing authentic selfhood, the proper use of freedom, and how to live well in a meaningful and valuable manner. Moreover, we need to distinguish between the first and second ethics and between immanent and transcendent religiousness. The second ethics and transcendent religiousness represent specifically Christian ideals based on divine revelation, whereas the first ethics and immanent religiousness rely on natural ideals that are independent of Christian revelation. Kierkegaard suggests that the second ethics partially replaces the first ethics, but he does not offer a religious suspension of ethics in general. Instead, he accepts the overridingness of morality, seeing what we ought to do all-things-considered as a specifically ethical question.

#### 24. Jan-Olav Henriksen, Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo

##### **The Reformer in the Eyes of a Critic: Nietzsche's perception of and presentation of Luther**

Nietzsche's comments and references to Luther is spread out across his whole *oeuvre*. This paper examines this material, and asks to what extent we can get a coherent idea about Nietzsche's understanding of Luther from them - or not. more specifically, does Nietzsche have any idea about the specific contributions of Luther to Western culture, or is he (Luther) just one among several of those figures that Nietzsche uses as parts of his projection-wall when he makes critical remarks about religion and Christianity? If at all, can this material tell us something about them both - about both Nietzsche and Luther?

