KEYNOTE LECTURE ABSTRACTS

Dalferth, Ingolf U. (Claremont Graduate University): Religion and the Emergence of Transcendence.

Religion is often linked with the idea of transcendence. I shall look at some attempts to describe the origin of religion in terms of the emergence (discovery or invention) of transcendence, outline some basic features of the grammar of transcendence, and argue that transcendence is not a descriptive concept but a term of orientation. Thus understood, the origin of religion is the emergence of a specific way of orienting human life in this world.

Henriksen, Jan-Olav (Norwegian School of Theology): A new basis for natural religion? Recent explanations of religion and their challenges to contemporary philosophy of religion

Recent scientific research on the natural conditions for the development of religion calls for a reconsideration of the whole concept of natural religion. However, there are also significant limitations when it comes to what such research can say about the concrete experiences that people consider religious. Following Schleiermacher and Hegel, I argue that abstract natural religion (in both the classical and the present version) are empty and needs historical form if we are to understand them. Historical form cannot be understood on the basis of natural conditions alone, but emerges out of the human interaction with its environment in a way that supersedes the mere natural mechanisms of adaptation and fitness, and has to do with perceptions of value, subsequent orientation, and with overcoming some of the limits related to group cohesion and cooperation as conceived by evolutionary theory. Thus, religion must be seen as an articulation of human potential in all the forms of experience that we have access to, be it in the natural, the socio-cultural, the psychological or –the mystical realm.

Knuuttila, Simo (University of Helsinki): The origin of religion

The question of the origin was of primary importance in the formative years of the explanatory paradigm in religious studies more than hundred years ago. This extremely influential approach based on the theory of evolution disappeared almost entirely from academic research agendas in the 1930s, but interestingly returned, in a considerably different form, in the cognitive science of religion in the 1990s. This is one way of addressing the question of origin in dealing with religion, but there are others such as those in sociological and political theories, hermeneutics of existential entanglement and, of course, traditional and contemporary theology. My aim is to describe the varieties of these question horizons of explanation and understanding and analyse the similarities and differences between the conceptual frames associated with them.

Thorgeirsdottir, Sigridur (University of Helsinki; Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies)): The origin of religion in the body

TBA

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Eliasson, Erik (University of Helsinki): Iamblichus on traditional religious ritual, theurgy and virtue

Dodds famously depicted Iamblichus' De Mysteriis as a 'manifesto of irrationalism'. In a 2001 study of the De Mysteriis, Clarke sees the De Mysteriis as a manifesto of the miraculous, and argues against both the old dismissal of it as irrationalism, and the recent attempts to account for its content in purely philosophical terms. Notably, Clarke emphasises the miracle of divine grace as necessary for Man's salvation and that "Iamblichus' assertion of the miraculous is what sets him apart from the magicians and wonder-workers with whom he has too often been associated." In this paper I discuss the relation between philosophy and theurgy within Iamblichus account, focusing on the development of the virtues.

Haaparanta, Leila (University of Tampere): Testimonies of faith and contemporary theories of assertion

This paper is an attempt to understand assertions that are meant to be testimonies of faith, for example, testimonies of how one became a believer, and of how faith has affected one's life. Those assertions will be compared with everyday and scientific assertions, which usually serve as examples in debates on the philosophical theories of assertion. It is argued that although there are similarities between religious and other testimonies, theories of assertion that seem to work well in non-religious contexts are not very strong if we try to understand religious linguistic behavior.

Hellsten, Laura (Åbo Akademi University): Re-imagining the rituals of the Christian inheritage with the help of Dance

This paper will scrutinise foundational work on dance to show how theological reflection has been distorted by the use of the primitive and non-christian cultures relationship to rituals and magic as a key to bring forth the superiority of Jewish and later, Christian use of dance. It will show how the persistency of dividing dance into categories of profane vs sacred or cultural folklore vs holy rituals is problematic for a holistic theological understanding of rituals. With worldview analyses given by Taylor and Wright I suggest how to re-imagine the role of dance in the Christian heritage.

Joensuu, Kosti (University of Lapland): Critique of Western Metaphysics and Rationalism in Lars Levi Laestadius' Apology of Pietism

There is a strong emphasis on the significance of pre-reflective and pre-cognitive life of human being in Lars Levi Laestadius' (1800-1861) philosophical theology. This experiential-existential emphasis is theoretically based on physiological medicine of enlightenment and its theological roots are in pietistic religiosity and Luther's anti-philosophy. In this context I will question the nature of Laestadius' critique of metaphysics and rationalism and the way how it paves a way for the later despise of intellectual rationalizations of living fate within northern pietism.

Kivistik, Jaan (University of Tartu): On the ideology of religious studies

There are two contradicting points of view concerning the cognitive study (science) of religion. The optimistic one takes the cognitive study to be fruitful in explaining existence and functioning of religion based on natural reasons only. The opposite point of view is that the study of religion is an ideological activity be-

cause of its ideological subject. Who is right – is a reasonable question. Or – why cannot cognitive scientists of religion falsify charges that their activities are ideological? The questions will be answered.

Kull, Anne (University of Tartu): Relating scientific explanations and religious interpretations

TBA

Launonen, Lari (University of Helsinki): Evolutionary debunking arguments against theism and two defensive strategies

Cognitive science of religion has inspired evolutionary debunking arguments against theism. They claim that the cognitive processes underlying God-beliefs are not reliable, and therefore belief in God is unjustified. The rationality of theism has been defended from two different epistemic viewpoints. The *reliabilist strategy* defends the reliability of the cognitive processes that produce belief in God. The *evidentialist strategy* claims that if we have independent reasons to believe in God, a dubious belief-forming-process poses no threat to our belief. While the latter strategy provides an easier solution, the former is more useful in vindicating our most common reasons to believe.

Leitane, Iveta (German Historical Institute Warsaw): Magic in Jewish philosophy of religion

Though Jewish theology viz. thought is emphatic in legitimizing ritual and commandment and to some extent even myth it is less resounding in welcoming magic, even one called 'legitimate' one. Magic plays a very ambivalent and rather negative role in most approaches to the Jewish religion in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century which extremely contrasts with the magical turn in Jewish thought after WW II. Magic being relegated to the pagan and primitive cultures and qualified as intellectually of lower rank and morally corrupt in the first period begins increasingly dominating in the studies of Jewish religion as practice. My aim is first to explore which of the philosophical systems this turn falls under, second, to reveal the underlying accurate philosophical presumptions of the magical turn in religious studies and – third – to reconstruct the link to some important scholastic conceptualizations of this issue.

Meylahn, Johann-Albrecht (University of Pretoria): Religion without theology … theology without religion

The paper will seek to present the three great monotheisms in conversation with an inescapable metaphysics. It will focus specifically on Christianity and the dis-enclosure of metaphysics (Jean-Luc Nancy) by offering an interpretation of Christ as an alternative to the enclosure of metaphysics, thereby presenting theology as something beyond religion, without religion. Yet, it is exactly that impossible possibility that inspires theology – a theology after God, that tries to avoid the traps of religion and metaphysics. Theology, as a kind of non-religion as well as a non-philosophy – if that is possible?

Mjaaland, Marius (University of Oslo): The grammatical origins of religion revisited

Martin Luther's reading of the term 'iustitia Dei' (Rom 1:17; 3:21 f.) demonstrates a *philosophical* dilemma of his approach: the grammatical construction makes two readings possible, and although he gives preference to passive justice, the duplicity is *constitutive* for the gift of grace. I will discuss the grammatical origin of religion in this repetition of the text, i.e. scripture taken in its most literal and grammatical sense: How may the inquiry into a grammatical construction give space for *freedom* within language, or even redefine the conditions for conceiving of God?

Pacyna, Tony (University of Rostock): The hen and egg principle of religion and theology

There are different approaches, which elucidate the independency of some aspects that are numbered to the basic elements of what we call 'religion'. An example for religion without theology could be the cognitive imperative by Eugene D'Aquili. Religion understood in this way, is the cognitive facility to transcend a human being to explain her environment. Contrarily Ernst Feil shows that there has been no religion without theology. The paper wants to illustrate the interaction between religion and theology by the philosophy of science. It is my aim to elaborate the historical contingence of using words to designate one's perception without the necessity to reduce the perceived to causal determination.

Pihlström, Sami (University of Helsinki): A pragmatist perspective on the problem of evil

The problem of evil is typically presented as a problem for religion, particularly for traditional forms of theism. The theist is challenged to explain how the co-presence of certain key divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, absolute goodness) is compatible with the empirical fact that there is (unnecessary) evil and (innocent) suffering. However, it could also be argued that religious ways of life are themselves responses to the reality of evil, and that only by taking evil seriously can we make sense of there being (genuinely) religious life-orientations at all. This issue will be discussed in this paper by referring to pragmatist philosophy of religion in particular. William James's notion of the "sick soul", developed in James's major work, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), turns out to be central here. Just as the sick soul finds the problem of evil a key issue in her/his religious life, the Jamesian pragmatist philosopher more generally regards the problem of evil as a frame within which a pragmatically meliorist conception of ethics and religion can (only) be developed, as suggested (I argue) in James's Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (1907).

Rezkalla, Paul (St. John's University): Can cognitive science of religion undermine religious belief?

In this paper, I discuss what Cognitive Science of Religion is and what its implications are for theism and the veracity of religious belief. Findings in CSR, and its counterpart Evolutionary Psychology, aim to explain the origin of religious belief. Some critics of religion, however, brandish the findings of CSR in support of their agenda. Their arguments attempt to either argue against the truth of religion or the justification for religious belief. I will argue that neither of these two kinds of arguments accomplishes its goal. Using CSR to falsify religious belief commits the genetic fallacy. The evolutionary debunking argument for undermining justification for religious belief is a more sophisticated approach, but it fails on account of making too many unjustified assumptions. I outline three brief responses to the challenge of unjustified religious belief.

Serafimova, Silviya (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies): Knud Løgstrup's Theory of Ethical Demand. Are There Any Reasons to Talk about Ontological Ethics within Christian Ethics?

This paper aims to examine the genealogy of the contradictions regarding the concept of ethical demand, as it is introduced by the Danish theologian and philosopher Knud Ejler Løgstrup. One of the main methodological problems concerns the question of what does it mean to define the ethical demand in 'strictly human terms', when the attitude towards the other person is regarded as contained in the proclamation of Jesus. Questioning the ambiguity is grounded in analyzing why Løgstrup's ethics can be defined as ontological ethics, as well as how the latter can contribute to outlining what he coins as 'religiously colored ontology'.

Shabani, Mohsen (The Association of Islamic Mysticism of Iran): The status of theology in religion and spirituality

The paper tries to investigate the status of theology in religion and spirituality. On religion, I regard that religion cannot exist without theology although it has a priority to theology in terms of rank. On the other hand, the history of religion shows that religion and theology are born at the same time. On spirituality, I suggest that the absolute dependence to theology, indeed, is a difference of religion and spirituality. Therefore, religion needs theology, while spirituality can function with or without theology.

Shakhnovich, Marianna: The origin of new forms of "popular religion" and narratives of mass culture

The current state of the mass consciousness demonstrates such new forms of worldviews that cannot be attributed to traditional religious or to scientific ones. Outwardly, they are forms of rationality, but they are essentially variants of religions, the study of which allows making some conclusions about the nature of religious consciousness and about the origin of religion in general. The report will focus on the influence of the mass media upon the formation of modern religiosity, which manifests the creation of new forms of "secular" religion without theology.

Sillfors, Mikko (University of Helsinki): Atheistic spirituality: what is it and what makes it possible?

In the 21st century new movements and guide books of atheistic spirituality have come to the market. Their key message is that one does not need faith in God or supernatural in order to live a moral and spiritually delightful life. I give the overview of atheistic spirituality and offer some hypothesis about the origins of theism, atheism, spirituality, and religion, based on the evolutionary psychology. I also argue that both theism and atheism are equally "natural" positions.

Sinka, Atis (University of Latvia): The archetype of transcendence: Jungian approach to origins of religion

This paper examines the approach to religion which is provided by school founded by Carl Gustav Jung (1875 –1961) - analytical psychology. Showing how Jung's approach of archetypes was an early attempt to lessen the gap between religion and science. This paper also shows how Jung's postulated idea of archetypes can be understood ontologically, especially his view of the ''image of god'' and ''archetype of transcendence.'' This paper focuses on how his ideas could be still useful for scholars of religion today.

Strandberg, Hugo (Åbo Akademi University): Religious belief and self-deception

In order to study the origin of a human practice, the self-understanding of the practitioners is decisive as regards the identification of the practice. There is one difficulty, however: is the self-understanding homogeneous? To the extent religious belief is related to questions we have problems with, first and foremost moral and existential issues, to that extent religious belief will be involved in self-deception. To that extent the self-understanding is consequently not homogeneous but constituted, in ways that remain to be investigated, by those tensions. What consequences has the possibility of self-deception for the study and understanding of religious belief?

Titans, Normunds (University of Latvia, Riga): Theology after sociobiological explanations of religion: the case of LeRon Shults

The paper outlines sociobiological – i.e. cognitive/coalitional agent detection/in-group protection – theories of religion as originating in shared engagement with supernatural agents resulting from evolutionary-cognitive mechanisms for detecting natural agents and continuing as socially-coalitional mechanisms for cohesion of groups formed around such supernatural agents already institutionalised. Then subsequent prospects for theology will be considered, particularly concentrating on the approach of LeRon Shults, who embraces these explanations without remainder, dropping any kind of belief in supernatural agents and coming up with the most radical atheistic, naturalistic theology, just retaining some iconoclastic, axiological and apophatic thinking. Is this move in theology legitimate?

Tuominen, Miira (University of Jyväskylä): On the origins of sacrifice: Porphyry's ethics of piety

In book 2 of *On abstinence from Injuring Animals* Porphyry argues that reverence for gods does not require sacrificing animals but rather forbids it. He quotes extensively from Theophrastus' *On piety* arguing that animal sacrifice arose from injustices (famines and wars) and should thus not be maintained. Further, it cannot be pious: taking the life of a living being is unjust, being analogous to stealing but an even greater crime because the soul is a much higher good than anything external can ever be. Theophrastus only allows modest offerings of harvested products. I shall argue that Porphyry introduces a radical redefinition of the concept of sacrifice. For Porphyry, any destruction is excluded from genuine reverence for highest divinities. We should devote to the supreme divinities pure silence, pure thoughts, and the contemplation of reality none of which is diminished in the process.

Vainio, Olli-Pekka (University of Helsinki): What has theology to do with religion? Dual-process theory, cognitive science of religion and a curious blind spot in contemporary theorization

The current state of cognitive science of religion (CSR) reveals a major weakness in how religious belief-formation is analysed. For the time being, the image that a casual reader gets from the CSR literature is still that religion is almost purely a matter of System 1 cognition, and System 2 cognition (theology and philosophy) is post hoc rationalization of fundamentally irrational folk beliefs. But if we scratch the surface, we see immediately how odd and ad hoc this claim is. The same dialectic also pertains to scientific theories and philosophical arguments as they supervene on folk beliefs and try to control them. Why should we think that religion is a special case?

Visala, Aku (Unversity of Helsinki): Homo religiosus and theological anthropology: three theological interpretations of the origins of religion

In the last decade or so, we have seen an explosion of research into the biological and cognitive origins of religion. Only very recently have theologians taken upon themselves to discuss these new scientific developments. In his book, *Alone in the World* (2006) J. Wentzel van Huyssteen presents a comprehensive theological interpretation of our cognitive and religious evolution. Wesley Wildman offers an alternative to van Huyssteen's model in his *Science and Religious Anthropology* (2009). Wildman also takes Homo sapiens to be Homo religiosus but he further argues (unlike van Huyssteen) that a non-supernaturalist framework is the best one for interpreting the current data. Wildman nevertheless finds religion an indispensable way of engaging with the natural world of value and goals. Finally, F. LeRon Shults' new book *Theology after the Birth of God* (2014) uses biological and cognitive theories of religion to argue for atheism and warns against

the dangers of organised religion. My paper will examine these three theological interpretations of the scientific accounts and assess them critically.

Zackariasson, Ulf (Uppsala University): Pragmatism, conceptual relativity and the origins of religion

Pragmatists argue, on the one hand, that questions about the *origins* of religion are irrelevant for normative discussions of the virtues and vices of religious practices. On the other hand, they reject analytic philosophy's tendency to approach religious beliefs like existence-claims logically on a par with any other existence-claims. I will discuss (i) how these stances can be related through the pragmatic notion of *conceptual relativity*, according to which different conceptualizations have been developed and are used for different human purposes, and (ii) what this implies for the question of the philosophical relevance of scientific accounts of the origins of religion such as those offered by cognitive science of religion.