

NSU WINTER SYMPOSIA *Feminism and Hospitality:*

Religious and Critical Perspectives in dialogue with a Secular Age



Åbo Akademi

**POLIN-
INSTITUTET**

Keynotes Open to the Public

Thursday 5 March - Saturday 7 March

Program

Feminism and Hospitality: Religious and Critical Perspectives in dialogue with a Secular Age

Symposium organised by Study Circle 3 of the Nordic Summer University in collaboration with Åbo Akademi, Polin Institute and the Donner Institute for Research in Religion and Culture.

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Program

Thursday 5 March 2020

- 11:00 - 12:00 Lunch (ARKEN)
- 12:00 - 12:30 Welcome, including introduction to NSU & journal issue (Auditorium Aura)
- 12:30 - 13:00 Paper Valgerdur Palmadóttir (Auditorium Aura)
- 13:00 - 13:30 Paper Jacob Signas (Auditorium Aura)
- 13:30 - 14:00 Paper Ylva Perera (Auditorium Aura)
- 14:00 - 14:30 Paper Mercédesz Czimbalmos (Auditorium Aura)
- 14:30 - 15:00 Paper Lucy Benjamin (Auditorium Aura)
- 15:00 - 15:30 FIKA (Break)
- 15:30 - 16:00 Paper Erika Östman (Auditorium Aura)
- 16:00 - 16:30 Transition to Ursinsgatan 15
- 16:30 - 17:00 Check-in at the Monastery
- 17:00 - 18:30 **Keynote** Terhi Utriainen (Sibelius museum, Biskopsgatan 17)
- 19:00 - 22:00 Reception Dinner at Donner Institute/ Humanisticum

Friday 6 March 2020

- 09:00 - 09:30 Paper Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir (Auditorium Aura)
- 09:30 - 10:00 Paper Oda Davanger (Auditorium Aura)
- 10:00 - 10:30 FIKA (Break)
- 10:30 - 11:00 Paper Lucy Benjamin (Auditorium Aura)
- 11:00 - 11:30 Paper Rita Niineste (Auditorium Aura)
- 11:30 - 12:00 Paper Israel Moura Barroso (Auditorium Aura)
- 12:00 - 13:00 Lunch (ARKEN)
- 13:00 - 14:00 **Keynote** Angy Cohen (ARKEN Helikon)
- 14:00 - 14:30 **Workshop** Angy Cohen & Sagy Watemala-Layosh (Auditorium Aura)
- 14:30 - 15:00 Paper Hanna Bäckström (Auditorium Aura)
- 15:00 - 15:30 FIKA (Break)
- 15:30 - 16:00 Paper Ilona Silvola (Auditorium Aura)
- 16:00 - 16:30 Paper Heidi Jokinen (Auditorium Aura)
- 16:30 - 17:00 Paper Miranda Imperial (Auditorium Aura)
- 17:00 - 17:30 Paper Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme (Auditorium Aura)
- 19:00 - 22:00 Dinner at Kuori (Hämeenkatu 8)

Saturday 7 March 2020

- 10:00 - 11:00 Brunch (ARKEN)
- 11:00 - 12:00 **Keynote** Talvikki Ahonen (Helikon)
- 12:00 - 12:45 **Keynote** Kaia S. Rønsdal (Helikon)
- 12:45 - 13:15 Keynote discussion (Helikon)
- 13:30 - 14:00 Paper Ilja Bolsakovs (ARKEN Panorama)

14:00 - 14:30 Paper Graham Lee (ARKEN Panorama)
14:30 - 15:00 Paper Anne Sauka (ARKEN Panorama)
15:00 - 15:30 FIKA (Break)
15:30 - 16:30 **Workshop** Petra (ARKEN Panorama)
16:30 - 17:30 **Workshop** Coco Gagner & Taylor Spratt (ARKEN Panorama)
19:00 - 22:00 Dinner at Hügge (Linnankatu 3)

Sunday 8 March 2020

12:00 Check-out from Monastery
13:00 - 14:00 Nia dance class
16:00 - 17:00 Womens' Day March

Keynotes

Talvikki Ahonen is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Eastern Finland's School of Theology. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the Finnish church asylum movement, and her current research interests lie or: deals with the intersections of religion and politics. In particular she has focused on religious conversion and its impact on asylum procedures. Her talk will be built on the following topic: "Encountering and recognizing the other within the Finnish church asylum movement".

Angy Cohen is a postdoctoral fellow at the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. She was born and raised in Madrid, Spain and moved to Israel in 2014. She has a BA in Psychology and a MA in Philosophy. She received her PhD in 2017 by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Universidad Autónoma of Madrid in a Joint PhD program. Her doctoral dissertation was a comparative ethnographic study of the relation between memory and identity among Spanish-Moroccan Jews that emigrated to Israel and Argentina. She studied the impact the experience of immigration had on the memories the interviewees evoked in the interviews. Angy Cohen has received different fellowships and awards, including the Gaon Prize for research projects about Judeo-Spanish culture and the Rothschild (Hanadiv) doctoral fellowship. Topic of her Keynote is: The reception of the other. Thoughts on hospitality, individualism and feminism through a Jewish lens.

Kaia S. Rønsdal is currently a post-doctoral fellow at The Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, and member of the research group NORDHOST: Nordic Hospitalities in a Context of Migration and Refugee Crisis. Her discipline is professional ethics and Christian social practice, and her main research interests on marginality, borders, and peripheries include spatial theory, urbanity, phenomenology and theological ethics. Her doctoral thesis *Calling Bodies in Lived Spaces: Spatial Explorations on the Concept of Calling in a Public Urban Space* (published with the same title at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), is based on fieldwork from specific areas of central Oslo and the high density of substance abusers in these areas. Her current project and also the theme she will be speaking about in Åbo is,

Magnificent Encounters in Borderland, relates to explorations of the concept of hospitality, starting in Nordic borderlands. The lived practices in civil society is her primary interest.

Terhi Utraiinen is Professor of Study of Religion at the University of Turku. She is a scholar and ethnographer of the dynamics of present-day vernacular religion, spirituality and secular culture. She specialises also in the study of gender, embodiment and ritual theory. Her recent works include for example the co-edited books “Finnish Women Making Religion: Between Ancestors and Angels”; (2014) and “The Relational Dynamics of Enchantment and Sacralization: Changing the Terms of the Religion Versus Secularity Debate” (2016). She is heading the new project “Learning from New Religion and Spirituality” funded by the Academy of Finland. She is also series editor of the Brill Handbook of Contemporary Religion. Her talk will be about “What can the notion of ‘spirituality’ do to the categories of ‘religion’ and ‘secularity’?”

Abstracts [in alphabetical order]

Hanna Bäckström

(Umeå Centre for Gender Studies, Umeå University, Sweden)

Helping others: The aporias of social activism from a feminist perspective

The close affinity between care and control, compassion and paternalism, is a curious problem for a feminist approach to ethics, striving for egalitarian relationships. Is it possible to help and care for the vulnerable other, to give to the other, without at the same time reproducing the distance and power asymmetry between the haves and have-nots? Starting with interviews conducted among volunteers working for the well-being and social rights of others – in this case, begging Roma in Sweden – my research seeks to understand the existential conflicts embedded in the act of helping others. Analysed through the lense of Derrida’s deconstructive ethics, some of these conflicts manifest as aporias, seemingly lacking solutions: the impossibility of the altruistic gift, always imposing a debt on the receiver, the harshness of the demarcations and comparisons necessary for an objective justice, as well as the difficulty of recognising the other’s predicament without any epistemic violence of interpretation. This paper will explore the issue of altruism, self-interest and reciprocity further, using feminist and theological critique of the often-assumed opposition between desire and altruism, eros and agape.

Israel Moura Barroso

(Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy)

The ethics of hospitality

In ancient Greece, *éthos*, from its original meaning of permanent or natural residence, evolved to designate the personal character of an individual, whereas *ethos* designated the habits or costumes associated with a specific community (e.g. the tribe or the clan). The Latin translation of the Greek term fused the two words with their different senses in just one word – *mores*, that generated the concept of “morality”.

Starting from these initial considerations, the presentation aims to offer a reflection about the sense of hospitality in our secular societies, by means of an analysis of the passage of the

Gospel of Luke (passage). In this passage, it is said that Jesus was hosted by Marta, who acted according to the “ethos” of their society by doing what her status of woman asked of her. However, after complaining with Jesus that her sister Maria did not act the same way, she hears from him that Maria had chosen the best part. This is shown as an example that the ethics proposed by Jesus was not morality, being much more identified with *éthos* – a process of individualization and of conscience – rather than with *ethos* – the mere self conformation with the habits of a group. A possible interpretation of this passage is that Maria, through her ethical act, who goes against the morality of her time and place, transmits a message able to deeply question the structures of her society, and is deemed by Jesus as the “real” host. From this interpretation stems a re-conceptualization of the deep sense of hospitality, one that links it to the original meaning of the word “*éthos*” (the natural residence) and to its translation as “ethics”. The act of hosting, when addressing the issues related to the acceptance of the other, specifically the foreigner, becomes an ethical act able to radically contest the way our societies are structured and to re-propose a cross-cultural message of solidarity as an ethical principle able to translate into practical policies.

This leads us to propose two theses. First, this kind of critique that stems from a religious-informed point of view (at least due to the texts it is drawn upon) is able to emerge only if secular societies are not closed to the dialogue with religion as providing the basis for the reasons citizens give in the public arena. On the other hand, it demands from religious citizens to be able of distinguishing between the morality of their religious-informed views and the ethics inside them. Only the second one is able to be free from dogmatisms and to establish a real opened dialogue with those who have different faiths and believes or who do not profess any kind of faith.

The second thesis is more challenging. We want to argue that this perspective is able to identify with perspectives that have historically been radically critical of religiosity and of religious-based traditions, such as those of feminist and gender studies. This is because both of them converge in proposing a modified public praxis, one that follows a rich culture of individuality (not individualism, because aware of the relational nature of human beings), capable of deserting the paths of conformism and mimesis of dominant models.

Lucy Benjamin

(University of London, UK)

Earthly Births: The Messianism of Natality in times of Climate Change

In a world plagued by the crisis of climate change, it seems that finitude has become something of a defining trope: from the end of glaciers, the end of low-lying islands, the apparent end of Nature itself. And yet, with each day new lives begin. In the face of impending finitude, beginning shows itself to stubbornly resist a world that is seemingly bent on its own destruction. For Hannah Arendt, the event of human birth is never merely the arrival of new lives but the declaration of beginning itself. Lending birth a messianic quality resonant of Walter Benjamin, Arendt attributes to birth the human potential to reorient the world and disrupt the linearity of history’s forward movement.

Working against the apparent unimaginability of the climate crisis, what Amitav Ghosh has termed the ‘crisis of imagination’ I argue for a critical revision of natality’s messianic potential. Taking up the demands made by the climate crisis – demands to show solidarity not only to the ‘over there’ of the climate crisis but to pre-empt solidarity with those

generations who will share the earth with us (after all, as Benjamin reminds us, their arrival on earth, like ours, is always expected) – I argue for the ‘re-earthing’ of natality.

Drawing on feminist revisions of natality offer by Peg Birmingham and Adriana Cavarero, my ‘earthly’ reading of natality gestures towards the environmental potential of Arendt’s theological politics. Where Arendt’s great fear following the advent of space travel was that we would forget ourselves as ‘earth-bound creatures’ and that what was produced in the Death Camps were lives “removed from earthly purpose” here I re-frame natality as a means to introduce a dialogue of hope when thinking the politics and implications of the climate crisis.

Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir

(Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Iceland, Iceland)

Evil and relatedness. A feminist liberation theological account of solidarity and social justice.

Now, it seems like an urgent season for neighborliness in our world! Hospitality and mercy – two biblical concepts – point to possibilities and aspirations of including others, caring for them, also those most unlike us. For quite some time, however, we have assumed that we are first and foremost individuals, separate and different from other individuals. Biblical interpretation has it otherwise: We are not self-created but creatures of another. We cannot make it alone. We depend on others and live by the daily call of the neighbor.

In my paper I focus on the work of Brazilian Catholic nun and leading Latin American feminist liberation theologian Ivone Gebara. Poor women’s experiences have inspired Gebara’s theological thinking but feminist liberation theology began to take shape in a postcolonial context and was essentially focused on the struggle of the poor. This paper explores Gebara’s feminist and theological reflection on the concepts of evil, relatedness and social justice – relating it to the concept of solidarity. In her own words, her theological account goes beyond rationalist discourse and tries to avoid the “prison of rigid concepts”. Referring to the moral vision of the New Testament, she seeks to find a wisdom in life that teaches us to share our goods and the goods of the earth, so as not to have any “needy person” among us (Acts:34). Starting from this vision, we may recover an ethical and essential dimension for the life of every being.

Ilja Bolsakovs

(State Police College and Theology, University of Latvia, Latvia)

Quakers’ testimony of equality as the foundation of Spiritual hospitality

The Quaker (Friends) movement originated in 17th century during the civil war in England. They succeeded in implementing one of the main ideas of the Reformation, that is priesthood of all believers. Quakers are more known not for their credo but for their testimonies. One of the Quakers’ testimony is equality testimony. Quakers believe that every human being has something to do with God, "that which is of God in every one." Spiritual equality before God leads to a political-socio-cultural understanding of equality. From the outset, Quakers sought to be an inclusive community despite various difficulties and constraints. The role of women in the movement differs from that of other Christian churches. Spiritual Gender Equality means that there is no gender difference in the spiritual sphere. Further realization of equality was linked to slavery, which existed in various ways in the

Christian world. The Quakers were among the most visible abolitionists of their time. The third visible way of realizing the Equality Testimony has been (and continues to be) the support of the Quaker LGBTQ community. So, the notion of human equality before God invites Quakers to survive by embracing human diversity, their freedom, and supporting their efforts to become more involved in society, because this is the very principle of equality. The practical orientation of the Quaker faith provides an opportunity to talk about spiritual hospitality.

Mercédesz Czimbalmos

(Comparative Religion, Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

‘Everyone does Jewish in their own way.’ Solidarity between spouses in Jewish intermarriages

The high rate of intermarriages has for the past decades been one of the key defining characteristics of Finnish Jewry, and have thus come to affect and define many of the congregational practices. The term intermarriage refers to officially registered marital unions, in which the spouses belong(ed) to different religious communities, or in which only one of the them belonged to a religious community of any sort. Due to the former Finnish legislative processes and to the small size of the marriage market, Finnish Jewish congregations have gradually become more hospitable towards the non-Jewish spouses of their congregants, who often have contributed to keeping up a Jewish household, agreed on providing Jewish upbringing to their children, and left their own (religious) traditions behind in order to pass on Jewish identities and lifestyles to the upcoming generations. This attitude gradually created an atmosphere in the Jewish communities, where non-Jewish spouses were encouraged to convert to Judaism. As a result, mainly female spouses, who earlier merely expressed their solidarity towards the Jewish practices, decided to convert to Judaism themselves. Focusing on women’s experiences, this paper will focus on the everyday lives of intermarried families among Finnish Jewry, by analysing semi-structured ethnographic interviews conducted with members of the Finnish Jewish congregations in 2019.

Oda Davanger

(Norway)

Hospitality, feminist ideology and philosophy

Jacques Derrida argued that hospitality necessarily contains some hostility, because it requires an ‘other’, ‘foreigner’ ‘outsider’ or ‘guest’, which makes any offer of inclusion to ‘Others’ into feminism a priori tainted. Immanent criticisms of feminism from black and post-colonial feminists echo this sentiment, namely that an inclusion in feminism is insincere. Black and post-colonial feminist philosophers (Hill-Collins, hooks, Narayan, Mohanty) contest the idea that all women will be liberated by the destruction of gender discrimination, and oppose isolating gender from other forms of oppression. Indeed, wrote Derrida, hospitality is always on the terms of the ‘host’. Intersectionality, and by extension an implied solidarity with ‘the Other’ have been seen as answers to feminist issues of ethnocentricity or ‘whiteness.’ If feminists, often mainstream white middle-class feminists, would take ‘the Other’ into consideration, the idea is that feminism would be more inclusive, and feminism would have more women supporting its movement. Like the problem of hospitality, intersectionality has been criticized for its failure to bring about sincere inclusion, because it re-Others the Other

and re-centers whiteness (Butler, Puar). So how does feminism achieve solidarity and inclusivity in a non-Othering way? I argue that the difficulty in answering these questions is that feminist philosophy is borne from the same metaphysical-epistemological roots as what bell hooks calls the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. In other words, feminism doesn't simply have a hospitality problem or an Othering-problem, it has a categorical identity problem. Feminism cannot be reliant on Othered identities in emancipatory resistance.

Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme

(Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway)

Reading as refusal and rebellion: Why Biblical models of hospitality don't work

This presentation offers a discussion of hospitality and gender from the point of view of biblical studies and Hebrew Bible studies in particular. In the Hebrew Bible, ideals of reciprocity conform to a Mediterranean-society-type anthropological model with a heavy emphasis on reciprocity and patriarchal privilege. Within this model, women are, as a rule, exempt from offering and receiving hospitality in their own right, because the practice of hospitality and the right to be a host and a guest is reserved for male heads of households. This gender bias alone should warn us against promoting biblical hospitality ideals if not in a secular then at least in a modern age.

There is an additional reason, however, for refusing a biblical or Mediterranean-type model of hospitality and this is the aspect of solidarity with the other. As the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers has described, Mediterranean-type hospitality temporarily postpones and deflects hostility between strangers and it makes it possible to transform the stranger into a guest and ally. The problem is that this is exactly a temporary transformation that ends with either assimilation or departure. This means that guests should never overstay their welcome according to this model, and therefore hospitality-language in the traditional (biblical) sense can do more damage than good when applied to for instance current debates on immigration.

Hospitality in the biblical tradition is far less inclusive and solidary than we often assume and therefore we should use a critical intersectional reading of biblical hospitality accounts to refuse a biblical model of hospitality and use this rebellion against the biblical model to reformulate a new and contemporary humanist model of hospitality.

Miranda Imperial

(University of Cambridge, UK)

Hospitality and the Ethico-Political: Experiences in Welcoming Others, a view from the South

In this paper, from a feminist philosophically grounded perspective, I will argue that the ethical stance toward the Other (human) involves attentiveness and care. To achieve this in the context of hospitality, the host should permanently entertain openness toward the guest and full recognition of its humanity, thus considering the latter on equal terms to herself.

In Luce Irigaray's view, hospitality occurs in a mutual space, and if humans were able to return to "a universal natural identity" where interdependency was the norm, they would contemplate an original feminine culture which laid the basis for a harmonious (sisterly and brotherly) coexistence. Back in history, when this feminine social organization was replaced

with a masculine culture, hospitality became “a sort of charity” (43). Judith Butler concurs with Irigaray and on her recent thinking on assembly, she argues that interdependency is a principle which marks that we share a world. In her view, the ethical and the political are not realities apart, so “the obligation to extend equality beyond our limited national and linguistic field” is a must.

Drawing from the aforementioned, in my paper, I will focus on a unique popular movement dating back to 2017 in Barcelona when protesters urged the Spanish government to take in more refugees. The slogan “Volem Acollir” (“We want to welcome them”) and the marches and demonstrations in the city denounced that Spain had fallen short of meeting the target of the EU agreed upon quota of 16000 asylum seekers in 2015 as a response to the large migration crisis due mostly to the war in Syria.

My invitation to discuss this initiative will also address ideas coming from a recent conversation held in June 2019 between Catalan feminist philosopher Marina Garcés and Senegalese social scientist Felwine Sarr respectively. I argue that this intercultural encounter gives us an excellent vantage point from which to further discuss on hospitality questioning the sharp distinction between host and guest, and finally, between us and them.

Heidi Jokinen

(Theological Ethics and Philosophy of Religion, Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

Extending hospitality to the enemy: Feminist account of victim offender mediation in domestic violence cases

Domestic violence against women is a major problem globally. Restorative justice has been portrayed as a fruitful alternative to the adversarial judicial conflict resolution when dealing with the aftermath of domestic violence. It suggests a hospitable approach of the two parties, the victim and the offender, to one another. In a dialogical process they can identify and address harms, needs and restitutions. An innovative model as it may be, there is a fierce feminist critique against the use of restorative justice in domestic violence cases. Because of her subordinate role, chances of any hospitality between the battered woman and her abusive partner are strictly denied.

This paper takes a step back and approaches restorative justice in domestic violence cases, and the critique, from a new angle. I insist on the moral value of catering for an amicable rather than a confrontational conflict resolution, and on a positive potential of the feminist perspective in formulating that. In the end, a major feminist endeavor is about questioning existing systems of power that organize societies into complex webs of relationships based on an assumption of male supremacy. Restorative justice, too, claims that relationships between the victim and the offender can be organized differently. I will claim that rather than dismissing the feminist critique, restorative advocates should harness it when re-developing processes that will safeguard the female victims of domestic violence.

In a spirit of restorative justice, the paper presentation will invite participants of the session to join in a debate for the feminist critique, for restorative justice and for the use of restorative justice in domestic violence cases.

Graham Lee

(USA)

Dining With the Enemy: Some Theological Observations Regarding Hospitality Towards One's Enemy

In Psalm 23, the psalmist writes, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" (Ps. 23:5). In Proverbs 25, although it says in verse 17, "Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house, otherwise the neighbor will become weary of you and hate you," it later says in verses 21-22, "If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads, and the LORD will reward you" (Pr. 25:17, 21-22). Clearly, then, there is a precedent in the Old Testament for dining with one's enemies, however complex the circumstances.

In this paper I survey and comment on Old and New Testament passages involving hospitality – between believers in God, strangers, and enemies. Particular attention is given to the third kind of hospitality, seen in Jesus' relationship with Judas Iscariot, Rahab's interaction with the people of Israel, and the fraught interaction between David and Saul in the first "half" of their relationship, leading up to the slaughter of the priests and the citizens of Nob. In contrast, though not in opposition, to the takeaways regarding the first two cases, the mentioned chapter of David and Saul's relationship would commend distancing oneself from one's enemy when that enemy is a threat to one's life.

Rita Niineste

(Tallinn University, Institute of Humanities, Philosophy/Cultural Studies, Estonia)

Sisterhood of Letters: Reflections on Solidarity and Feminist Philosophy

The topic of female solidarity has been a thorny one within the feminist thought. In the 1960s, global solidarity between women of different cultural and social backgrounds was too hastily assumed, triggering a powerful backlash from Black feminism that pointed to the deficiencies and limitations of taking similar interests of all women for granted. Sharp divisions of opinion formed also during the so-called feminist sex wars. Theoretical debates arising from deconstructionism since 1990s have led to the practical perplexity of how to set feminist political goals if the category of woman is no longer available. These and other similar debates have frequently set feminist theorists against each other, calling into question the possibility of feminist solidarity.

In this article, I will look back at some of the issues that have divided feminists over the years and argue that in spite of the apparent lack of solidarity or even outright hostility that these divisions seem to indicate, the multiplicity of viewpoints and subject positions that different feminist theories collectively entail is not only a constructive and much needed development within the global intellectual history, but also a necessary vehicle for creating more solidarity between women in and outside the academia in the contemporary world. Thus, developing the conceptual networks that would adequately reflect the heterogeneity and multiplicity of contemporary women is a theoretical effort but at the same time a practical necessity. I invoke the metaphor of Sisterhood of Letters to reflect on the value of shared intellectual endeavour in building solidarities between women of different social, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Erika Östman

(Sweden)

Moral indication of gender

Christian morality, with shared gender values, Bible roots from Jewish culture, words of texture, used as the force of tool, there Marion pregnant by God, with Jesus, as his son, is the central female figure for maternity; the norm of living, transformer of patterns in moral femininity. Western culture lean on knowledge from the Christian Bible; Marion show the way to morality in, for example; family, church, educational institutions, law, economics. Cristian morals of kindness, not prevented from physical fury in violence acts. Gender is formed. Foucault, M 1990, [1985]) structure modern philosophy with ancient Greek history. Europe before Christianity; male in dominance generate penetration of women and boys as common use of property, before the law forbid penetration of boys, because of the humiliation; to be passive like a woman, seems to be the object even in time. Violence, harassment in public places, domestic, weaken women in passivity as victims with no chances to decide of own. Beauvoir, S (2002, [1949]) woman is not born in shape of woman, instead formed by the daily climate, life gives to be in. West World approach support of, in major part, on male as subject in power, makes woman passive with no rights; mind, thought and flesh in one's own body. Anderson, P (Ed) (p. 99, 2004) "Divine makes female enable cultivate intellectual virtues for human..."

How can religion in culture give gender chances to be; human with body of one's own as the source for equality? Women shaped by the culture climate of religion are forced to be the object. Despite moral path religion gives, gender equality is not achieved.

Valgerdur Palmadottir

(University of Iceland and Uppsala University, Sweden)

Thinking together: Worldly truths and embodied uniqueness in Feminist Philosophy seminar

In the proposed talk, we would like to present some thoughts concerning the role of uniqueness, plurality, hospitality and solidarity in the 'feminist philosophy seminar'. We will analyze our experience of the feminist philosophy seminars at NSU in recent years, as well as experiences of teaching feminist philosophy courses, in light of the works of Hannah Arendt and Adriana Cavarero. They have both emphasized how uniqueness and the plurality of perspectives affect the ways in which we perceive thinking, knowledge and truth. In the writings of Cavarero one finds a particular feminist interpretation of Arendt's thoughts. Cavarero thus develops the Arendtian ideas concerning embodied uniqueness and traditional philosophy's disregard for the fleeting, changing knowledge this world, for the sake of 'other worldly truths' i.e. the immobile, the abstract and the eternal, in her philosophy of the voice as the primary sign of uniqueness, reciprocity and relationality. The philosophies of Arendt and Cavarero could be described as secular, concerned first and foremost with this world, our embodied lives on earth. However, as can be felt in the feminist philosophy seminar, the feminist philosophical practice is certainly not without enchantment.

Ylva Perera

(Comparative Literature, Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

'From the animal's point of view, the human is the Nazi' – The Antifascist Potential in Mirjam Tuominens Animal Writings

At this Winter Symposium I would like to participate with a presentation of my ongoing PhD-research about antifascist practices in the writings of the Finland-Swedish author Mirjam Tuominen (1913-1967). My presentation will be based on an article that I have written in Swedish for the peer review-magazine HLS (Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier) and on my research project as a whole.

Animals are a recurring motif in Mirjam Tuominen's early prose, both as characters and as thought models. I argue that this is not a separate phenomenon from her outspoken antifascist political views. Rather, Tuominen's way of writing about animals is deeply connected to her ethics. This is shown for example in the short story "Bara en hund" ("Just a Dog", 1939), where a dog by the name of Varg ("Wolf") is the narrator, and in the essayistic novel Besk brygd ("Bitter Brew", 1947), where Tuominen compares the way human beings treat animals with the Nazis treatment of Jews during the Holocaust. She also writes about the importance of spending time with non-speaking beings like flies, cats and new-born children, in order not to cultivate fascist tendencies. Using Donna Haraway's writings on "companion species" and Jacques Derrida's essay "The Animal that Therefore I Am (More to Follow)" as my main reading tools, I aim to show how Tuominen's writings on animal opens up for a shared vulnerability, which can be the start of antifascist resistance. Rather than humanizing animals, Tuominen challenges the hegemonic idea of "humanity" as something good, and shows how "humanising" practices in fact are related to fascism. During my presentation, I intend to develop these thoughts, using examples from Tuominen and from relevant philosophical scholars.

Anne Sauka

(University of Latvia, Latvia)

A Lack of Meaning? Solidarity and Reactive Nihilism

The article addresses the supposed lack of meaning of secular age, arguing against scientific reductivism of the lifeworld and proposing instead an embodied and embedded processual naturalism, as fertile grounds for an affirmative ethics as an art of living in the world permeated by reactive nihilism.

Attempting to refrain from moralizing and ideological philosophical practice, the article first examines ontological grounds and the compatibility of science and a meaningful lived experience, basing this position in the works of the philosopher of biology, John Dupré. The stance of processual ontology is then repositioned in an ethical setting, by assessing Erich Fromm's "being" and "having" in a posthumanist context via Rosi Braidotti and considering a cancerous pathologization of the "having" directionality as the culprit of a lack in meaning in contemporary world.

In the light of the orientations of "being" and "having", the article then critically addresses the pervasive scientific discourse and capitalist environment, and their role in increasing societal alienation and hostility, whilst also evaluating the possible positive impact of digital media and capitalist economies in creating spaces where hospitality and solidarity might occur.

Finally, the article explores the practical applicability of a posthumanist affirmative ethics. In a world on the brink of climate crisis, facing massive environmental problems, in a society that is allegedly experiencing alienation and loss of self-understanding, we are bound to ask: to what extent do individual measures for alleviation of these problems work? By creating such a philosophical link between the social, ethical and scientific domains, it seems

plausible to build a platform for spirituality outside the ideological, but can we imagine such spirituality outside the domain of the individual and private, by building communities of a larger scale?

Jacob Signas

(Lund University Centre for Theology and Religion, Sweden)

The other: Someone or Something?

Where is the border between being someone or being something and how do we define the other? Might the other which so drastically contrast the I, be so radical as to being non-human. Does our relationship with the animal define how we encounter otherness as such?

Using posthumanistic theory as a stepping stone I will discuss how the other can be perceived and conceptualised. Posthumanistic theory has criticised the exceptionalistic anthropocentrism and androcentrism that in their view dominated western understanding. This exceptionalism has created the idea of an autonomous and rational Human Subject, which stands in dichotomy to the objectified animal/nature – which in turn has led to some people becoming dehumanised. Instead posthumanism argues for a materialistic understanding of the world with embodied creatures, where animals and nature are given agency and equal subjectivity as. Something that poses as a challenge towards a religious worldview where humans are seen as the crown of creation. Also earth as it stands tends to be seen as less and less hospitable due to climate change due to human intervention. Fewer areas become habitable at the same time as borders close. Humans as well as animals and nature are being exploited in an advanced biopolitical, capitalistic system.

With this as the basis of my discussion and with the help of Hans Jonas's ethics of responsibility, in which humans carry a special responsibility to facilitate the survival of our own species, as well as others and nature's continued existence, because of their tendency towards destruction. Moreover, the religious language lay grounds for possibility with its correlation to what is sometimes called the "radical other" – God. A relation where one doesn't fully understand the other, much like in relation between humans and the non-human. Alas, if all life is seen as created, would it not be created equal? But if all is equal, who carries responsibility?

Ilona Silvola

(Systematic Theology, Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

Credibility assessment of religious conversion in the Finnish asylum process

In 2015, more than 32 000 asylum seekers arrived in Finland. Even though this was only a fraction of all the 1.2 million asylum seekers arriving in Europe that year, it was still a major rise compared to the previous years and more than the public authorities were prepared for.

The local churches were and have been ever since active in showing hospitality towards asylum seekers in different ways, and thus many of the asylum seekers have attended actively to the life of the churches. Since 2015, there has been a growing phenomenon of asylum seekers converting to Christianity. As persecution based on religion is one of the grounds of asylum, the Migration office (Migri) is bound to examine whether the religious conversion poses a threat to the asylum seeker in their country of origin. To achieve this,

they are also assessing the credibility of the conversion. Many churches have been criticizing Migri of having unachievable criteria for a credible conversion.

In my proposed presentation, I will present my research on the credibility assessment of the religious conversion in the Finnish asylum process. The aim of the research is to analyze what kind of understanding of religion and religious conversion does Migri have. Based on this analysis, the study will discuss what kind of ethical issues are raised from Migri's understanding of religion when applied in the credibility assessment of religious conversion. There seems to be a discrepancy between the religious communities' own self-understanding and the one applied by Migri. The research method is content analysis of 50 asylum decisions made by Migri between 2017 and 2019. In my presentation, I will provide some outcomes of the analysis. I plan to have a ready article draft by the time of the winter symposium and I hope to receive comments to improve it further.

Workshops

Angy Cohen & Sagy Watemala-Layosh

(Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, Concordia University of Montreal, Canada; Legal Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Israel)

Invitation to Arevot women's house of study

Hospitality, as a practice, an institution and moral value, is part of communitarianism in the sense that it is an extension of the imperative of mutual responsibility. Derrida claims that one become "hostage" in this responsibility towards the other, placing the "host" in a position of both strength and vulnerability. An individualist approach, centered on self-reliance and autonomy, would be more inclined to conceive the reception of the other, the practice of hospitality, as an altruistic act derived from hierarchies – a benevolence imparted by the powerful unto the indebted powerless.

In their historical experience, women have been proponents of hospitality – fulfilling the roles of care and provision in the private home and in the community. Though they have been held in these positions as part of the social gender construction, their active practice of hospitality constitutes a moral contribution of unmediated acceptance of the "other", an ethic of relations of vulnerability rather than relations of power. The models of women that each society has is in dialogue with the model of the society itself. In Middle Eastern and North-African (MENA) societies hospitality is a central social value present in the customs and in the legal philosophy and practice, there women have been the main active providers of hospitality.

This workshop is an invitation to the women of the NSU symposium into our House of Study "Arevot". We will explore together the teachings about hospitality and the traditions and ethics of MENA Jewish women differing from those of Western, secular feminism. "Arevot" reconsiders the teachings of MENA Jewish Sages in light of our own positions as MENA women in Israeli society, dominated by a patriarchal and Eurocentric approach to Judaism. We develop a "Traditional Feminism" by engaging in traditional Jewish study while voicing the teachings of female scholars, and by using these studies for the advancement of values of moderateness, inclusion and social justice.

The workshop:

- 1) Learning the Book of Esther as a medium for exploring the interactions of hospitality and gender in the religious text.
- 2) Shared discussion from MENA Jewish feminist writings on the insights from the Book of Esther.
- 3) Watching snippets of interviews of “Arevot” women regarding their own experiences, views, and identity politics as traditional MENA Jewish women in the secular and Western feminist discourse and Israeli society. We will explore their “different voice” through and for which they have created this initiative of “Arevot”.

Petra Lundberg

(Sweden)

Hospitality and democratic pedagogy

Democratic teaching is a concept that is always present in the Swedish school curriculum, and I explore and criticise this in practice with my students regularly, looking for critical points where for example an intended inclusion suddenly turns to exclusion.

Here I would like to explore the concepts of hospitality and solidarity, but also what role faith plays when leading seminars from this perspective.

Coco Gagnet & Taylor Spratt

(Troy, New York, USA; Florida International University, Miami, FL, USA)

From desire to grace: feminist hospitality as utopian practice

This presentation- part experiment, part interactive dialogue- will explore the dimensions Grace and the Erotic in feminist hospitality as a precondition to forming collective visions for a liberated future.

Defying xenophobic white-hetero patriarchy’s logic of domination, our conception of feminist hospitality is informed by embodied care, reciprocity, play , and acknowledgment of our shared (María Lugones, “Playfulness, World-Travelling, and Loving Perception,” 1987) precarity in the face of social and political distance . In holding space for one another, a feminist (Maurice Hamington, “Towards a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 2010) hospitality invokes what we share and what we can create together. Against identity-based reduction, hospitable practices create possibilities for earnest encounters between subjectivities. A true Levinasian witnessing, feminist hospitality as unconditional is seeing the divine unknowable in the other, and extending friendship towards. (John O’Donohue, *Anam Cara*, 1996)

Hospitality- and we hope our presentation-allows for an exploration of Desire and Grace as internal, relational, and collective processes of transformation. The recognition of our human precarity seeks the “reunion of life with life, the reconciliation of the self with the self.”(Ruth Levitas, *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstruction of Society*, 2013) Occurring in spite of separation or estrangement, hospitality invites us into experiencing Grace: contemplative empathy and utopian imagination. Reconciling Grace between the religious and secular can serve as a critical function in radicalizing our social relationship to race, class, and gender. Imagining ourselves as expanding into the fullest possibility of being, without the oppressive forces of domination, is the dream of a Feminist Hospitality. Striving for celebration of life in the face of the quotidian and systematic erasure of suffering is the essence of Grace.

How can feminist hospitality embolden collective action toward radical social change in our daily lives? From our different positions as academics, artists, practitioners of various disciplines, how can we embody these philosophies? We seek to cocreate a prefigurative utopia whereby transformative erotic pedagogies can be practiced. We create the World as we want it, by performing it in the present.

Further Participants

Malena Björkgren (Finland)

Laura Brännkärr-Väänänen (Finland)

Jenny Grimbeck (Sweden)

Anne Haglind (Sweden)

Laura Hellsten (Finland)

Elina Kössi (Finland)

Milka Njoroge (Finland)

Katrín Pálmadóttir (Iceland)

Emilia Plichta (Finland)

Lena Weyers (Germany/Finland)