

ESITIS Parallel Paper Presentations – Groups

Session 3 – ESITIS Conference Wednesday, April 27th, 14.30 – 16.00

Group 3:1 (Room ?)

Chad Hiller (Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, Ontario, Canada)

Muhammad Iqbal's thought

In 1932, the Indian-Muslim poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, known affectionately as the “spiritual father of Pakistan”, published a series of lectures entitled *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. These lectures, presented throughout India, sought to reform the condition of religious thought within Islam and usher it into the modern era. Perceiving a shameful 500 year “intellectual stupor” within Islamic civilization, Iqbal called for its resolution in a particular way. He writes:

The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture (7).

It is with the assimilation of Western knowledge, a descendent of medieval Islamic knowledge, where Islamic civilization will find its intellectual reawakening. With this rationale, Iqbal sought to present a reconstructed system of religious thought that both satisfied the innovations of modern science and the theological heart of Islam. In this vision, Iqbal turned to the ideas of several European philosophers, but in particular he utilized the ideas of Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead as foundation to his reconstruction.

I propose to briefly argue that Iqbal's discussion of Shariah and al-Fiqh, in particular the ideas of *ijtihad* (personal reasoning), *maslaha* (public good) and *maqasid*, follow a natural law formulation that is consistent with a Whiteheadian view of law being teleological but socially and culturally relative. An important example of this reformative vision came in Iqbal's use of the early Turkish Republic's expansion of the caliphate from a single person into a legislative parliamentary body via *ijtihad*.

I believe that the value in looking at Iqbal comes not only in the fact that he is a particular philosopher modeling comparative thought, but that Iqbal's own writings were inspirational to the founders of the state of Pakistan and to the early modernist reformers of the Middle East (e.g. Muhammad 'Abduh, Khurshid Ahmad, Hassan al-Banna, Ismail al-Faruqi, Rachid Ghannoushi, Mawlana Mawdudi, Rashid Rida, etc.). Moreover, Iqbal provides a model of resolving epistemological and social-political crises that also inspires contemporary efforts at reform by European Muslim thinkers (e.g. Tariq Ramadan).

Judith Gruber (Salzburg)

Interculturality - Space of Difference, Space of Absence. Thinking Universality after the Cultural Turn

After the cultural turn, universality has become a suspicious concept. In view of the particularity of cultures and their epistemological relevance, universal claims are accused of violently suppressing differences, of propagating one particular, contingent discourse at the cost of other, equally contingent and valid, but less powerful frames of reference. A turn towards cultures thus seems to imply a call for abandoning the concept of universality. However, for a theological approach to Christianity, a universal claim raised for the Jesus-Christ-event is a *conditio sine qua non*. It is a challenge for theology after the cultural turn to develop a concept of universality which does not abstract from the particularity of the contexts in which it is formulated and which does not suppress the differences among these contexts. The paper draws on Homi Bhabha's "Third Space" as a space of absence in the in-between of cultures to outline a concept of "universality in withdrawal".

Willie van der Merwe (VU University Amsterdam)

The agonistics of intercultural and interreligious dialogue

Intercultural and -religious dialogue may take many forms and serve various purposes. If the aim is to come to an understanding of the other, one of the philosophical questions presenting itself immediately is what *kind* of understanding such an understanding of the other could be. One possibility, the most obvious one, would be the understanding of *translation*, which is of finding or articulating a common language of understanding in and through which fundamental differences in worldviews, beliefs and values, can be interpreted and expressed. The aim of the dialogue – or within academia the aim of intercultural philosophy and comparative philosophy of religion – is thus to foster a *sensus communis* between the partners to the dialogue or between cultural and religious traditions, and in the case of teaching to convey this *sensus communis* to students. However, the question is whether what is “other” about the other, exactly the otherness that is in need of understanding is not compromised in this kind of intercultural or -religious understanding. In my paper I will argue for another kind of understanding of the other, one that may counter or at least challenge the *sensus communis* of a common language of understanding. Following Wittgenstein’s and some contemporary continental philosophers’ understanding of culture and religion as symbolic practices, embedded in forms of life, rather than as sets of beliefs, translatable into a common language of propositional “truths” (the analytical approach), my argument will be that intercultural and -religious understanding and comparison is fundamentally marred from the outset by differences in conceptual schemes, “depth grammar” or symbolic attachments which are not transparent to the participants to the dialogue themselves or to the scholars involved in the comparative exercise. This, I will argue, is even the case in understanding one another within the same cultural and religious tradition, but therefore even more prevalent in intercultural and -religious understanding. I will argue that Lyotard’s notion of a “différend”, a situation where a seemingly common language is used, but no common referent is evoked, where the “other” is silenced without the participants to the conversation being aware of the fact, where the “understanding” achieved is unwittingly a misunderstanding, where the “other” is unintentionally reduced to the “same/self”, is apt in this regard. Accordingly, the kind of understanding of the other in intercultural and -religious dialogue may (or perhaps should) also be a *dissensus communis* - and the aim of the dialogue or comparison would then be a therapeutic one, namely an attempt to uncover the “différend”, not to solve it, i.e. to engage in an agonistic practice through which a “language of conspicuous contrast” (Charles Taylor) is forged ad hoc. In conclusion I will argue that metaphor with its power to abolish existing conceptual schemes and evoke new references on their semantic ruins (Ricoeur) is an indispensable tool in this kind of agonistic and therapeutic enterprise of intercultural and -religious dialogue, both in practice and for research and teaching in the fields of intercultural philosophy and comparative philosophy of religion.

Group 3:2 (Room ?)

Jerôme Ummel (University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland)

The role of the imagination in interpreting texts

I would like to show that imagination has an important place to understand the meaning of the texts but also, by following the works of Paul Ricoeur, that imagination helps us to understand oneself and to understand the others. I think that imagination can be seen like a kind of grace which is very useful to understand each other. I will make links between imagination and the concept of grace and explain how this way of seeing things could be interesting in a work of interreligious understanding.

Ulrich Winkler (Salzburg University, Salzburg)

Theological attitudes towards the state of Israel. An example of doing theology of religions after Auschwitz in post-secular Europe

In the public sphere religions are being perceived again. They haven't dispersed into privacy, as was claimed by the theory of secularisation until the end of the 1990ies. On purpose, I don't say that they are back again because I don't assume that they ever disappeared. They are a factor in the public play of power. But it seems that there are questions that the religions try to avoid and prefer to hide in a shielded area beyond publicity. One of these questions is the attitude of theology towards the state of Israel. I'm speaking here as a Catholic theologian. From the earliest times of Christian theology the church fathers didn't tire of the destruction of the temple by the Romans as a sign of the Jews loosing

their status as God's chosen people, that they are rejected and repudiated, that the church is the new chosen people. Jerusalem's decline was conceived of as God's judgment against Israel.

And 1948? Was the foundation of the state of Israel a judgment of God too? Satisfied with the consideration that the formation of the state is a matter of politics and the injustice against the Palestinians has to be judged by political criteria theology stopped dealing with this question. But for theology it isn't as simple as that.

In my paper I want to argue that:

- after the Second Vatican Council, Israel is to be confessed as the people still chosen by God
- in Jewish theology there is a close connection between chosenness and the land and state of Israel
- chosenness isn't an end in itself but an urge towards justice
- the Christian creed in Jesus as Christ and Israel's messiah is bound to the justice of God's kingdom
- Jewish and Christian self-concept and identity clash in this question
- a theology of religions and a comparative theology may indicate how Christian theology must strive at a mutually productive re-evaluation of its attitude towards both the state of Israel and its own claim.

Group 3:3 (Room ?)

Christoph Knoblauch (Freiburg, Tübingen)

Interfaith competence in educational institutions in the UK and Germany

Cultural and religious plurality has deep effects on our personal lives, our today's society and on global politics. The development of respect and sympathy for other ideas and beliefs on a mutual basis are crucial factors for a peaceful coexistence and a respectful cooperation. In this context educational institutions play a decisive role, preparing children of all ages for a life in a global society. Although the interest in the phenomena of religion has increased markedly in our plural society, research examining the prospects of interfaith competence in education has been lacking.

The study I'm going to introduce is the first of its kind to use and compare representative data from two completely different models of Religious Education: The 'multi faith model' of "Religious Studies" in England and the 'single faith model' of "konfessioneller Religionsunterricht" in Germany. The fact that these models have a fundamentally different focus allows a comparison of two antithetic learning concepts and thus gives a profound insight in two modes of Religious Education. "multi-faith model": Students of different religions and with different beliefs learn together about different religions in a multi faith learning environment. "single faith model": Students of the same religion and denomination learn together about their religion and other religions in a single faith learning environment.

The main focus of the research is to analyse the impact of a multi faith learning environment on the development of interfaith competence. In order to accomplish this, the two models of Religious Education are analysed on a conceptual and empirical level: (a) the curricula of both models are analysed and compared. (b) Teachers and students in Germany and England are interviewed about the following themes: *religious Identity / places of worship / Religion and friends / religion and family / religion and school* The results of this studies are analysed and compared, following the methods of qualitative social research.

I would like to present the results of my research and the connected impact on the concepts of Religious Education. Additionally I would like to discuss suggestions for an advanced model of Religious Education that offers both interfaith competence and growth in the individual religion. Finally I would like to point out the importance of the development of interfaith competence in educational institutions and apply this discussion to different stages of life.

A multi faith society is dependent on people who can accept and respect different religions and beliefs. Therefore interfaith competence, as a key to a profound and peaceful understanding of others, should be a balance point in education. I would like to show that the development of interfaith competence should start at a very early age and should be practiced in a thoroughly and accurately designed learning environment.

Rimke van der Veer (INHolland University)

Teaching theology in dialogue: from vision to practice

In this paper, I present the vision and practice of interreligious learning at the department of Theology of the INHolland University. In the past six years, the department of Theology of INHolland University has been a collaborative learning environment for students of Christian, Muslim and Jewish pastoral work. Also in the teacher training courses for religious education Christian and Muslim students study

together for a substantial part of their education. The curriculum is formed in such a way that students are educated both in their own religious tradition, and challenged to engage in a thorough dialogical process, in which they run the risk of being transformed. In doing so, we aim to train the students to be religiously competent in their professional life. This means that they acquire the knowledge, skill and attitude that enables them to function sensibly and meaningfully in the multi-religious and at the same time very secularized environment of present day society. So far we followed a grass root approach, starting out with good intentions and discovering along the way the difficulties and challenges of learning and educating together in a context that is both multi-religious and secular. There have been good experiences of intensive learning in experience-based encounters, but also there has been misunderstanding, frustration and despair. After these initial years, the time has come to translate our experiences in a more comprehensive and methodical approach. We formulated a vision of an interreligious method of educating theology and derived from that practical guidelines and conditions. This process involves professionalism and passion, practical thinking and the courage to be a dreamer, for teachers and managers as well as for students. During this session, I will present the vision and program of the Department of Theology and share with you some dilemmas and discussion points.

Martin Rötting (Freising, Germany)

Processes of Christian-Muslim Interreligious Learning in Germany and Turkey

The paper will present examples of individual processes of Christian-Muslim interreligious learning. Half structured interviews with Muslims and Christians in Germany (Munich areas) and Turkey (Istanbul area) on their religious life, their social setting, religious education and formation and their dialogue-contacts with the other religion focus on linking points of contact (*Anknüpfungspunkte*) and their contribution to the transformation process of learning. The method of this research project is adapted taking my methodic approach on interreligious learning in Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. The paper presentation will present examples of all 4 categories (Germany: Christian and Muslims; Turkey; Muslim and Christian) and analyze them. Focus point will be questions on religious identity, possible links of contact with the other and the involved dynamic of transformation in the learning process. A special attention is done on the impact of dialogue initiatives and their contribution. The presented examples are part of a long-term research in which we will try to interview people before and after their participation in interfaith and dialogue projects. The entire project will be undertaken in three phases: I) Interviews and analysis II) first research paper and results, Cooperation with dialogue-projects III) Interviews and final analysis.

Group 3:4 (Room ?)

Aaron Hollander (University of Chicago, USA)

Moral Minority: Narratives and Performances of Religious Difference in European Islam

At the interface of religious communities that inhabit shared spaces we find questions of *representation*: how do we shape our religious identities for their public expression, and how do we portray the religious others in the presence of whom this self-expression is made? In most European nations, such questions are relevant with regard to 1) Muslim minorities' representations of European social and spiritual characteristics and 2) Muslim *self*-representations within and for the benefit of European communities. These two forms of representation, moreover, are closely linked—the juxtaposition of Islam with other faiths and the depiction of *din al-fitrah* (natural religiosity) against materialism and narcissism *are* recurrent characteristics of Muslim identities as they continue to develop across diverse European contexts. The primary inquiry motivating this paper, therefore, is: To what extent are the perceptions, interpretations, and juxtapositions of Islam in relation to Europe in general and Christianity in particular of value as resources for sustainable co-habitation? In my first section I address Muslim critiques of European materialism, which fall along a spectrum of indictments from naïveté and enthrallment to idolatry and nihilism. In dialogue with Palestinian-American philosopher Ismail al-Faruqi, I aim to demonstrate that in Muslim representations of religious otherness, mutualistic ideals of *da'wah* (the call to a continual purification of human relations—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—with God) frequently mingle with reductive and problematic constructions of a uniform and spiritually bereft “West.”

Da'wah, however, is also a key to Muslim *self*-representation in Europe. Therefore, I proceed by looking ethnographically at the forms of appealing public presence to which various European Muslim communities are aspiring, rooted in morality, fraternity, dignity, and spiritual depth. Olivier Roy and Tariq Ramadan lend support for my suggestion that, as religious minorities under intense public scrutiny, such communities experience self-consciousness and self-depiction as a way of life:

combining the burden of “staging their own selves” (Roy), in an ongoing, improvised justification for existence, with the opportunity to play a mutually-enhancing role in the religious life of 21st century Europe.

I aim to show that modern Muslim portrayals of inter-religious environments are linked to centuries-old (and not uniquely Islamic) polemical narratives of spiritual sickness and healing, and at the same time reflect the contemporary experience of minorities struggling for a positive, public religious identity. Moreover, the development and self-articulation of these uniquely European forms of Islam will be of vital importance in the global effort to dispel misperceptions and pre-critical judgments of Islam and “the West” alike.

Berge Traboulsi (Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon)

Islam in Europe: Acculturation or Incompatibility?

Do Islamic institutions and the EU have homogeneous reading and understanding of ‘purely secular political system’ and ‘human rights’? Is there a place for Islam in a ‘secular’ Europe? Is Muslim integration possible in the current ‘secular’ Europe? Is there indeed a European version of Islam (Euro-Islam)? Is solving the socioeconomic problems, for example poverty and segregation, enough to facilitate Muslims’ cultural integration? Do Muslims intend to use democratic means to replace the ‘secular’ rule of law with laws defined by *Shari’a* and Islamic tradition? When will Europe be Muslim? Are EU governments and media discriminating against Muslims, depriving them of their Islamic religious rights, and treating them on double standards vis-à-vis non-Muslim European nationals? Apparently, the cultural identity of many European countries is now facing fundamental transformations due to several factors: the rapid growth of Islam and the parallel decline of Christianity, Islamophobia and Islamic extremism, influx of immigration and dual national loyalty, demographic decline, unemployment, guest workers, crisis of faith, and many other problems which have had their impact on Europe’s demography and ‘culture’ during the last decades. Several attempts to integrate various Muslim minorities were generally not successful. Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany has lately declared that “*Multiculturalism has utterly failed*”. Integration of Muslims into Western societies has always raised questions and concerns about the duties of those Muslims who are living in countries with non-Muslim majorities. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, an eminent Muslim scholar and religious authority, has listed the following duties: “*The duty to keep one’s Muslim identity, the duty towards one’s family and bring up children according to Islam, the duty of Muslims towards one another, the duty of Muslims towards the society where they reside and to practice and offer da’wah, and the duty to adopt and champion the rights of the Muslim Ummah.*” At last, it is to note that if the adoption of certain aspects of *Shari’a* is unavoidable, as stated by Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, it may be then understood by some that it is a matter of time before Europe’s ‘secular’ identity is transformed.

Kelly Pederson (ISE, Dublin)

The Hermeneutics of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the Figh al-Aqalliyat debate (Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities)

This paper introduces the Figh al-Aqalliyat (Muslim minority jurisprudence) debate in cooperation with John Rawls and political liberalism’s call to endorse on principled grounds the liberal conditions for citizenship and social cooperation in a Western democracy. My research focuses on contemporary Islamic scholarship and how liberalism can address particularly Islamic concerns to Muslim minorities.

Group 3:5 (Room ?)

Frantisek Stech (University of South Bohemia in Ceske Budejovice)

Integrity of Christian tradition based on revelation, faith and community, and its implication for interreligious dialogue in Europe.

This paper is dealing with basic notions of Christian fundamental theology from the perspective of their principal interconnection. By examining Christian concepts of revelation, faith and community, the study comes to conclusion that their relations create what might be called “inner dynamics of Christian life”. In this principle I see the integrity of the broad Christian tradition. The perspective is rather general but special attention will be paid to the European context. To conclude the whole effort of my paper I will try to sketch some possibilities for interreligious dialogue springing from mentioned dynamics of revelation, faith and community. Such conclusion will focus on Christian dialogue with Judaism and Islam in particular.

Huseyin Topaloglu (University of Nottingham, UK)

Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics: the possibility and importance of reproducing the tradition of the relation between Muslims and Christians in the Balkan states in order to have a positive horizon.

After 19th century, the concept of hermeneutic has had a new meaning which is not only the process of understanding the meaning of texts and Scriptures but disclosure the constitution of understanding. With regard to that, the well-known scholar, Hans-Georg Gadamer seeks the answers of the questions of the possibility of understanding and its fundamental elements, in the light of Husserl's doctrine of phenomenology and Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy.

For Gadamer, history plays a great role on understanding because human beings can primarily perceive the meaning of themselves and the world within the environment and the state which they live. Therefore human being is grounded on tradition as long as being himself. Accordingly, to belong to a tradition is the one of the fundamental conditions of hermeneutical process. With regard to tradition, the process is affected by prejudices, even latter has ordinarily negative meaning; because Gadamer states that the reality of human being as being in a tradition is prejudices.

As mentioned above, Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics grounds on Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy. According to Heidegger, understanding individually or communally for mankind is the mode of being; namely, human being can project its life only by understanding itself and its environment. Hence, the relation between Muslims and Christians can be defined as a sort of understanding communally and so it could be said that the relation can only reach its real meaning by apprehending the importance of history and the function of tradition in the light of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics. Indeed, the prejudices and fore-understandings which are predominantly negative historical events such as Devshirme, a system of human taxation under the Ottoman Empire, the holocaust in Bosnia at 90's, are effective on tradition as the ground of the history of the relation. However, tradition exists as being constantly and being espoused as an element of understanding by only the reason of present. Tradition and the reason of present as "relocator" of tradition to now, compose "hermeneutical environment" in which the horizon of history and the horizon of present come into together and wrong or negatively effective prejudices are eliminated through the understanding and tradition are reproduced within the process. Hans-Georg Gadamer uses the concept of game in the light of Husserl's phenomenology in order to demonstrate the possibility of reproducing. A game arouse in past notwithstanding, each performing in different times is the way of becoming for it, in spite of several changes such as performers, audiences and the conditions of present time. The game is called as the game which arouse in past.

The aim of the presentation is to state the importance of history and the necessity of tradition for understanding, to analyze the concept of prejudice in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and accordingly, to indicate the possibility and importance of reproducing the tradition of the relation between Muslims and Christians in the Balkan states in order to have a positive horizon. Indeed, the fundamental value of each side of the relation is to conduce to have a world in peace and the salvation of humanity. Therefore, such approach to the relation can reach positive and real conclusion.

Yahya R. Haidar (Damascus, Syria)

Thinking without Religion: Religion, Essence and Existence

This paper develops a study of universal Religion in light of essence, existence and possibility. To classify the many senses of defining religion in conceptual discourses, definitions are divided, according to their postulation of possibility of essential religion, into: impossible definition, possible, and simple, or possible, but complex definition. Step by step, the extreme possibilities of defining religion suggest a particular type of relation between religion and the concept of perfect knowledge; and eventually explains an affinity between the meanings of doctrine and method in a common priority of knowing-how and instruction. Looking at the Identical-but-Different natures of *sophia* and *gnosis* in theologico-philosophical writings reveals a possible genesis for the invariable equation between essence and existence characteristic of Philosophy of Religion's definition of religion as inherently paradoxical. The argument that is presented in this paper is that defining religion, with the intent to avoid paradoxical conclusions, cannot be divorced from an understanding of possible and impossible knowledge, where in thinking without Religion no hyper-applicable concepts are produced and the question of religion is seen as it is; qua-itself.

Group 3:6 (Room ?)

Fatih Okumus (Islamic University of Rotterdam)

Turkish-Dutch Imam as religious coach

Based on my PhD research in the Netherlands between 2006 and 2010 I would like to understand and analyze changing role and function of local mosque imams from Turkey to the Netherlands as a secular, pluralistic West-European context. Unlike the average imams in Turkey, Turkish imams serving in the Netherlands play more than one role at a time. He is imam at *mihrah* of mosque, preacher (*hatip*) at *minbar*. He is Qurān tutor and teacher of Islam in weekend courses organized by the mosque institution. He visits families, patients, prisoners and he joins dialog activities sometimes. There are also a few female preachers quite invisible and mostly unpaid female Qurān tutors and religion teachers work voluntarily in women organizations of mosque community. In most cases wife of imam assists her husband voluntarily and this ability of the wife is a preference in appointment of imam.

The position and authority of the new *imam* – not only in Europe but also in own country Turkey – has changed. The classical Ottoman district *imam* (*mahalle imami*) was a very powerful, active and central person in the society. Imam in the Netherlands is more like the district imam of Ottomans more than actual republican Turkish imams. An imam in the Netherlands is more powerful than an *imam* in Ankara for example. Because a mosque in Europe is a Turkish district first, than a religious place secondly and the *imam* is the central figure of this sphere. Imam is unique in his role in the mosque, but issuing a *fatwa* or answering religious questions are mostly shared roles. There are a many alternatives to the *imam* in this area. All practicing Muslims go to a mosque, pray under the leadership of the *imam* of that mosque but they direct their questions to a particular *imam*. We can speak of “family *imams*” in the same way that we have family doctors. Some people prefer to read directly and personally from a book or surf on internet instead of asking to the imam. Still others are content listening to a scholar speaking on TV.

The character of the relation between the questioner (*sāil, mustaftī*) and answer giver (*muftī*) has transformed in the West-European context, from a hierarchical one to the one of the equals like relationship between a client and a professional expert. On the contrary of the traditional model, *muftī* and *mustaftī* (questioner) stands on the same plane and the last decision is on the hands of the questioner.

Roland Müller (Münster)

"Fascination and Refusal". The Perception of Islam in Europe

The presentation will deal with the perception of the Islamic culture and religion in Europe, both formerly and at present. As a background I will illustrate the history of Islamic domination in the Iberian Peninsula and in the Southeast Europe. The historical perception of Islam and the reasons for it will constitute the main focus of the discussion. In addition, I will mention the perception of Islam in European societies today (i.e. problems of Islamophobia). The presentation will conclude on a proposition in favour of a positive view of Islam, motivated by a positive perception of Islam that has previously existed in Europe.

Maibritt Gustrau (Göttingen)

A flying visit to Istanbul 1898- Friedrich Naumann as a juggler of anti-Armenian prejudices, Muslim-Turkish nostalgia and German power politics

Friedrich Naumann (1860-1919) is considered as one of the most pronounced representatives of social liberalist thought in Germany. He is far less well known as a theologian, who contributed to the contemporary discourse regarding the so-called ‘Armenian question’ and Germany’s politics in the Orient. His approach largely affirmed existing prejudices towards Islam, Turkey and the Armenians. The presenter intends to show how the Christian theologian and budding politician Naumann acted in the field of conflict between the East and the West, Christianity and Islam; and which existing notions of the ‘Orient’ influenced his writing. The focus is on the years 1896-1903.

Group 3:7 (Room ?)

Miroslav Kněz (U. of South Bohemia, Budejovice)

Believing (with)in one Region (South Bohemia)

This work tackles the subject of living spirituality in a particular region of South Bohemia. It focuses on Christian believers, but also non-Christians who live nearby. In light of this situation, the question will be asked about how different believers communicate with each other. I will attempt to describe the said dialogue in general, followed by a consideration of the landscape (geography) that influences the building of such dialogue. Can a landscape help us in understanding each other? Is it something capable of connecting us? These are the questions guiding the proposed discussion.

Irina Petre (University Ovidius, Constanta)

Dobrudja country- example of ethnic and religious diversity

Dobrudja is an area of the confluence of religions, customs and traditions- truly a cradle of culture and of many ethnic groups living together in this beautiful space with unique natural landscape. Its past remains preserved in the diversity of customs and traditions. Constanta is the meeting place in which 13 ethnic groups live together: creating a space of ethno-cultural dialogue, of social peace, of work and life- harmony- as each ethnic group lives in comfort and safety, with the sense of being at home.

Relationships are guided by the spirit of communication, cooperation, and coexistence, with each ethnic group contributing a vast array of cultural and religious particularities. One can talk here of an “*animus cohabitandi*”. Thus, minorities in the district have managed to develop civic solidarity through long education and self-education efforts, rendering a kind of cosmopolitan beauty to the city of Constanta.

Tauri Tölpt (Thessaloniki)

Unreligious Estonia in a Changing Europe

Estonia, a small former Soviet country, which is situated on the east coast of the Baltic Sea, tries to be an innovative country in the 21st century. It avails of numerous possibilities offered by information technology: starting from the creation of Skype, to the parliamentary and local elections being carried out via the internet. A country, which according to the Economist magazine was elected “the Country of the Year 2010”, also holds first place among the most unreligious countries in the world. The almost non-existent religious education in the school system, and a problematic history of communism have created in Estonian society a situation of fear and ignorance towards all the religions (especially Islam). What is the situation of religious communities in such a society, and what could be the future of this country in an increasingly globalizing world if the problem remains ignored?

Session 7 – ESITIS Conference Thursday, April 28th, 14.30 – 16.00

Group 7:1 (Room ?)

Yaser Ellethy (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Islam Outside the Text

In the history of religions no single case can be traced where the "scriptural" fundamentals remained as the only source of faith's expression. Interpretations, hermeneutics, clear and allegoric meaning, text and context, are all terms involved in the process of religious evolution. If this was not the case, why should we permanently need preachers, missionaries and religious reformers? How can someone explain the huge mosaic of *alien* practices within a certain religious tradition? But even, in an extraordinary way, mutually between two different religious traditions. What kind of explanation can a Muslim woman give to the fact that she supplicates inside a church may the Madonna help her to beget children? Or a Christian woman visiting the mausoleum of a Muslim *wali* (friend of God) may her chronic sickness be finally healed? Not to mention the many cases of exorcism practiced mutually between both parts. This paper explores the tensions between what is *Religion* and what is *religiosity* in the Islamic context.

Anne Kull (University of Tartu, Estonia)

Can neurosciences help us become better believers?

During the last decades, with the development of cognitive neurosciences thanks to new available technologies (such as fMRI), many fields are exploring their link with the brain. One can mention neuroethics, neuroeconomics, psychohistory, and for our purposes, neurotheology. While still in its nascent stages, this area seems to be growing. Many scholars and the general audiences seem to be interested, and rightfully so.

Newberg, d'Aquili and several other scientists insist that our perceptions of reality and our beliefs are inextricably intertwined. Our sense of reality depends on the subjective vividness of an experience, the continuity and duration of the experience through time and space, and the consensus of others on what is considered real. Our perceptions of time, space, and duration are subjectively structured experiences created by the brain; if we alter the brain's functioning for any reason, a significant perceptual shift will occur in all these dimensions. And vice versa, if an individual is placed in an MRI machine, changes are recorded in their brain while they have a mystical experience. Without the brain and central nervous system, as much as we know, no mystical experience or reception of revelation is possible.

Many religions generally exclude the possibility of other religions being true. If we consider a state of absolute unity with God or ultimate reality, in which all things are one, exclusivity should be impossible. However, this is a rather rare state of mind, and much more common is unity with a particular focus, i.e. a state of less than absolute unity. Neuroscientists would say, that any notion of Christ, Brahman, God, or Allah which results in a total absorption into the sacred object necessarily excludes all other interpretations.

Now, what will we do, once we know that our perceptions of reality are dependent on our brain, and there are built-in errors or biases in our brain, regarding cognitive, perceptual, and emotional interpretations of our experiences? I will refer to several of these biases and will suggest some ways to avoid these biases, but certainly no-one should imagine that following these suggestions is easy. It takes courage and there are no guarantees but there is no other way for becoming a better believer.

Both phenomenological studies of religions and literary studies of the sacred texts seem to concur with the data from the neurological research.

Mechteld Jansen (Protestant Theological University, Utrecht, The Netherlands)

A theologian's view on obligatory civic integration courses

Being aware that civilization and cultural superiority often went hand in hand in the history of mission, we notice that the concept of civilization is still (or again!) widely used in actual debates on human rights and the main religious traditions, and on decency and the freedom of expression. Here again, the questions of superiority and inferiority may arise, now based on whether or not to accept the only correct secular language. This has prompted our university to launch the idea of studying *God and civilization* from fresh angles. My paper for the ESITIS conference focuses on language and integration courses organized by the government and made mandatory for newcomers in the Dutch society. It attempts to investigate which images, beliefs, hidden and overt ideas about religion and civilization are

presented to immigrants coming from e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. I would like to use the paper presentation for an exchange of insights into the integration courses in various European countries.

Group 7:2 (Room ?)

Paul Hedges (University of Winchester, UK)

Christian Pluralist Theology and Intercultural “Translation” and “Integrity”

The concept and idea of ‘inculturation’ (in various forms and under different terminology) is widely accepted amongst all mainstream churches when, what have been largely, European and American traditions (i.e. Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianities) seek inroads in other geographic/ cultural regions; for instance, in the development of Indian Christian theologies, liturgies and architectures (see e.g. Collins, 2007). However, in an increasingly globalized and multi-cultural world situation, the question arises of whether and how this process should become more relational, with Western Christianity adapting as well. The tradition of Intercultural Theology has challenged what is the dominant ‘norm’ of Western theology which speaks mainly from a tradition of white, Western, male authority figures (the ‘canon’ of much theological education) (see e.g. Wijzen, 2005, Schreiter, 2004). Theologians of religion have also addressed the way that other religious traditions may impact and inform the self-understanding of the Christian tradition (e.g. Schmidt-Leukel, 2009, Knitter, 2009). However, questions arise as to the hermeneutical and theological foundations under which this may occur. This paper will ask questions about whether a broad pluralist model (Hedges, 2010) gives adequate scope for such change, with a focus upon the European context, asking about the way integrity is maintained in such transformation, as well as the sources of religious and cultural authority that may be sought for legitimating the process, and how they may relate to church institutions and belonging.

Sigrid Rettenbacher (Salzburg)

Translating Transcendence: Translation as a challenge in the theoretical framework of theology of religions

This paper reflects on the role of the concept of translation in the theoretical framework of theology of religions. Theology as the effort of grasping the divine reality in the medium of language is from its very beginning based on translation processes – revelation as translation between transcendence and immanence, tradition as the synchronic and diachronic translation of the revealed message. In a simplistic understanding of religious identities these translation processes are often blinded out. Despite internal plurality and changes religious identities, therefore, often appear as static and fixed entities. In the encounter of different religious traditions these fixed religious identities get problematic as they reveal themselves as indissoluble contradictions. There are different efforts of theologically coming to terms with these interreligious contradictions: Comparative theology tries to unmask these oppositions as only seeming ones by going back to their rootedness in different language games. Pluralistic theologies of religions resolve the problem of interreligious contradictions by reformulating classic Christological assertions which, however, sometimes become theologically questionable. This paper offers an alternative perspective. It tries to make the concept of translation fruitful for the theoretical framework of theology of religions by understanding translation as a key theological concept which tackles some of the central questions of a present theology of religions. On the one hand, the concept of translation will be related to ecclesiology. On the other hand, this theological perspective will be met by a discourse analytical perspective which concentrates on the question of the discursive construction of religious identities.

Lucien van Lier (Utrecht University The Netherlands)

Translating Islam into secular ideology: The Dutch case

Since 9/11, but especially since the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, Dutch journalists and (liberal) opinion-makers are having tough times interpreting Islam. After this murder, social unrest resulted into violent accidents and arson attacks on mosques, Islamic schools and some churches, adding religion as object to general social discontent. Islam was heavily debated and Muslims felt themselves marginalized. Islam as a ‘dangerous ideology’ has become one of the spearheads of the popular Party for Freedom (PVV) from neo-liberal politician Geert Wilders. A lawsuit was raised against Wilders in 2010 by some organizations from the political left. Wilders was charged for vilifying Muslims. The

lawsuit however failed and resulted in a counter-attack on Islam as a dangerous, non-western religion. Wilder's lawyer obliged the judge to read texts from Al'Quran and Hadith on jihad and the treatment of Jews.

Discussions raised by public thinkers like Paul Cliteur (Cliteur, 2010), Hans Jansen, Frits Bolkestein and others focus on religion in general, but Islam in particular, as spiritual source of violence. Islam is considered as opposed to free speech and opposed to democracy. As a result, popular discourses indicate free speech as one of the main identity-issues of democracy. However, the Dutch liberal monologue on Islam reveals something that is deeply rooted in secular Dutch and European society: the religious – secular divide (Cavanaugh, 2009). The presence of Muslim immigrants seems to contest this divide. Secular discourses focus almost nervously on identity-values, re-inventing Dutch culture (Buruma, 2006) as rooted in enlightened rationality and so-called Jewish- Christian values. It seems that Islam is teasing and testing the secularity of Dutch society.

This paper will have two foci. First, *discourses on Islam* in Dutch society after 2004 will be analyzed. I will show that these discourses are an attempt to translate Islam into the frame of secular ideology. From a liberal point of view, Islam is teasing and testing the borders of secular society. Secondly, *Muslim responses on these discourses* will be analyzed. Interestingly, most Muslims in The Netherlands are trying very hard to proof their 'good citizenship' in secular society, while other Muslims adopt the fear for Islam to test the freedom of speech. Doing so, I will show (1) how both discourses rotate around a single object: religion in the public space, and (2) how Islam as teasing object of discourse in The Netherlands results in the affirmation of an imagined tradition of free speech, democracy and Jewish- Christian values.

Group 7:3 (Room ?)

Anne Grung (University of Oslo)

Gender justice in Muslim-Christian readings

This paper will present the most significant findings in my PhD-project: *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings. Christian and Muslim Women in Norway Making Meaning of Texts from the Bible, the Koran and the Hadith* (to be defended March 2011 at the University of Oslo). The women taking part in the project have various cultural backgrounds and represent both Lutheran and Catholic Christians, and Sunni and Shia Muslims. The texts selected for reading are the stories of Hagar from the Old Testament and the *Hadith*, and Sura 4: 34 from the Koran and the New Testament text 1 Tim 2: 8-15. The texts were read and discussed in pairs, with two organized meetings focusing on the Hagar texts, and two meetings attending to the other two texts.

The project explores how the participants relate to the texts from their own tradition, as well as to the texts from the other tradition. What are the hermeneutical strategies used by the participants to interpret the texts in the group, and do the Muslim and the Christian participants respectively use related strategies? Are differences regarding cultural background expressed in the interpretative strategies? The narrative texts relating to Hagar from both traditions differ from the two other texts both in form and content. The figure of Hagar is seen as being a central figure in Islamic religious practice, but she does not have a corresponding position in most Christian traditions. How does this influence on the conversations about the Hagar texts? Sura 4:34 and 1 Tim 2:8-15 can be seen as more prescriptive texts about gender roles. The paper will investigate if and how this changes the interpretative strategies of the participants.

The paper will discuss whether the term Gender Justice is a notion that may include the aims of both the Christian and the Muslim women across cultural and religious differences in their interpretative work with the texts, as well as in the shared interpretation of the discussions about the texts and the participants' contexts. Although gender equality is to a large degree accepted among the participants as a value to struggle for in the interpretative work on text and context, the term gender justice is more inclusive and more focused towards practice. 'Gender justice' could for instance embrace a struggle where a Muslim women believer fights not only for her rights as a woman in a Muslim community and the Islamic interpretative tradition, but also for the right to be a Muslim in the Norwegian society. What Gender Justice meant for the Christian women in this project was more diffuse, except for expressions of support of the Muslim participants' articulated challenges. The Christian participant with a Norwegian-African background, however, claimed that for African women, the challenges they face have many similarities with the struggles of Hagar in the Old Testament.

Brigitte Jelen (Bahcesehir University, Istanbul)

Islamic Feminism: Women rights activism within faith communities (the case of Turkey)

As Turkish Feminist scholar Deniz Kandiyoti analyzed more than twenty years ago, the reforms implemented in the early years of the Turkish Republic (such as the replacement of Sharia law by a civil code, universal suffrage, and the promotion of western-style clothing and lifestyles) encouraged the emancipation of Turkish women but did not necessarily liberate them. Patriarchal traditions continued to be dominant throughout society, especially in politics and professional life, and Turkey remains today at the very bottom of the Gender Gap hierarchy (129th place out of 134 countries in 2009). Although the Turkish women's movement developed considerably after the 1980s, it is still strongly divided between secular Western-style feminists who consider the headscarf as a symbol of the oppression of women in Islam, and Islamic women who seek to address the issue of women's rights within the limits of the Muslim faith and their understanding of gender roles and family values. This paper will present an overview of the current debates regarding the nature, development, and impact of Feminist studies and activism for Muslim women, with a specific focus on the case of Turkey. The presentation will be divided into three parts: a global overview of the debates on the compatibility between Islam and Feminism through an analysis of the works of leading international feminist scholars (Riffat Hassan (Pakistan), Margot Badran (Egypt, Middle-East), Valentine Moghadam and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Iran), Amina Wahud (USA), Spahic-Siljak (Bosnia), among others). Then, I will briefly introduce the main international instances representing Islamic Feminism today, in particular the WISE (Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equity) and Sisters in Islam networks. Finally, I will discuss the situation in Turkey in relation to these international debates and civil society structures, through the experiences and writings of Islamic women who fight for women's rights in Turkey without however necessarily identifying themselves as Feminists (Ayşe Böhürler, Kadriye Edermli, Sibel Eraslan, Alev Erkilet, Konca Kuris (†), Ayse Sucu, Hidayet Tuksal, among others).

Urszula Pekala (Krakow University/ Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow)

How to talk about the universality of values in an interreligious context?

The point of departure of my paper is the increasing multiculturalism of Europe. In different countries we can observe growing Muslim minorities. European governments tend to oblige Muslims to abide by the European rules of democracy, law and to accept the fundamental values. But the immigrants often see these obligations as a threat to their religious and cultural identity, which they want to preserve. Are the aims of the immigrants and the Europeans contradictory?

There are two complex problems, which should be considered in this context. The first problem is the universality of values. What does it mean "universal"? We have to find the balance between two extreme approaches; the both have advantages and disadvantages. Religions and cultures claim the values to be universal – it means: true independently of the cultural context; these claims are often founded in the religious doctrines, even though they do not refer directly to the religious traditions. Such an approach assumes the existence of a basis of understanding between different cultures (e.g. one God, one human nature) but the claim of the universalism can be connected with the attitude of arrogance and condescension of the one culture or religion towards another (we can often observe that in the attitude of the European institutions towards the immigrants). There is also an opposite approach possible: the values depend entirely on the context of a concrete culture or religion. E.g. it has to be asked to what extent the human rights are universal if they grew on the basis of Christianity and the Enlightenment. Can we apply them directly to Islam or Asian religions? That is an important question but in consequence it can lead to the relativism (cf. G. Paul). How to find the golden mean between these two extreme approaches? The secularism, which is claimed to be an objective and neutral, because it avoids the religious discourse, cannot be the real solution (cf. J. Habermas, I. Kristol). So, we have to deal somehow with the claims of universalism and diverse religious backgrounds. And the problem of the condescension in the presentation of the values remains still there. This is the second problem we have to consider, when we talk about the universality of values in an interreligious context. It is important not only *what* we say but also *how* we do that. Not only theoretical knowledge matters. From my experience as a lecturer I can say that this is a problem of education and of the forming of personal attitudes. The paper ends with some suggestions, how to avoid arrogance if there is no escape from the claims of universalism.

Group 7:4 (Room ?)

Stanislaw Grodz (Catholic University of Lublin)

Beyond the point of saturation? Teaching and researching religion in Poland

Teaching and researching religion in Poland in the last 60 years was marked by several significant U-turns. From a pariah of the education system and a tool of destruction during the communist period teaching and researching religion became a surplus item with no apparent purpose at present. The interaction between the state, religious communities (or rather their leaders) and university has been a complicated one. First, the state used researching and teaching religion to undermine the influence of religious communities in the society. Then, the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church used it to reinforce their influence in the public domain. With the failure of both, it looks as if the field has been left to the Academia. Can it move the teaching and researching religion beyond the present stalemate which could be described as the “point of saturation”? I intend to present the subject in three sections, starting with a brief historical outline of the ideological struggle between the Marxist state and religious communities over the teaching and researching religion in Poland. Then, pointing out the results of the struggle I will describe the present situation – the “point of saturation”. Finally, I will focus on steps taken by the members of the Academia to move teaching and researching religion into a new reality.

John Robinson (Trinity College Dublin)

The place of religion in the European secular academy: Specimen or subject?

In the context of the advanced secularisation which now pervades Western Europe and the dynamics of which can be seen taking hold in the countries of Eastern Europe, the question of the place and nature of the study of religion in the academy acquires a sharpened relevance. Such is the noetic power of the shared underlying principles of the secular state that to many the methodology espoused in the field of religious studies seems the only proper and reasonable approach to the academic study of religious traditions. Drawing on Habermas’ 2005 speech on ‘Religion in the Public Sphere’ I will argue that such an approach is ‘to over-generalize secularisation’ in a manner in which the character of religious discourse is violated by being made subject to the norms of secular methodology in which faith is not permitted to play any role. As such the voices of the religious traditions being studied are silenced and the polyphony upon which, in Habermas’ view, the health of the public sphere depends, is vitiating. The reality of religious pluralism imposes its own methodological necessities, however, both in terms of the intellectual credibility and vitality of the various religious traditions themselves, and also in terms of the secular character of the majority of modern European universities in which it is seen as highly problematic to allocate resources to the exclusive study of one religion alone. Accordingly, I will seek to tease out the implications of the comparative theology advocated by Francis Clooney S.J. most recently in his book *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders* and will argue that it is this approach, rather than an approach which aspires to an epistemologically impossible methodological neutrality, that respects the integrity of the various religious traditions whilst also meeting the demands of the new context of religious pluralism in which theology must now be done.

Ruth Ilman (Åbo Akademi University)

Dialogue, Reciprocity and Power

Within dialogue philosophy, there are several ways of portraying the relationship between persons who meet in interreligious or intercultural dialogue. This paper examines the views of interpersonal relationships presented by three philosophers: Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Knud E. Løgstrup. Their diverging claims are analysed against the background of contemporary critical dialogue research, which focuses on issues of power, presents challenging views of representation and promotes post-secular re-evaluations of identity, agency and meaning. A current chain of events in Finland – the sabotage carried out against a local Buddhist temple and the consequent proclamations of solidarity by other religious minorities in the Finnish society – is used as an empirical example of contemporary fields and forms of dialogue that challenge conventional apprehensions of power and reciprocity in this context.

In Martin Buber’s understanding, ethics begins in the realm of the “between”: the space of reciprocity and openness created in the meeting of I and Thou. Emmanuel Levinas, on the other hand, is sceptical towards the possibility of unreserved reciprocity and takes his starting point in the observation that the “face” of the other calls me from a height. For Levinas, hence, the encounter inevitably takes place on an uneven ground where the Other dominates me and “counts more than myself.” In a similar vein, Løgstrup claims that the dimension of power implicated in all dialogues gives rise to an ethical demand

to carry responsibility for the other regardless of how he or she chooses to respond to one's call. Even so, this asymmetry must be understood against the background of shared symmetry: for Løgstrup, the dimensions of power and vulnerability coincide in the interpersonal encounter as both are equally available to the self and to the other. Therefore, Løgstrup's understanding of otherness can be defined as a middle position, between the radical alterity proposed by Levinas and the discourse of reciprocity and mutuality applied by Buber.

The following questions, among others, arise from this analysis and will be dealt with in the paper: Is reciprocity a necessary condition for dialogue, or does it rather represent naïve ignorance of the power relations that always set the ground for concrete and contextualised dialogues? Does reciprocity necessarily imply similarity and acceptance, or can it be reframed as a notion acknowledging difference and asymmetry while still creating a shared space of interpersonal understanding?

Group 7:5 (Room ?)

Janneke Stegeman (VU University Amsterdam)

Palestinian-Christian responses to Jeremiah 32: Palestinian contextual theology as a minority reaction to the dominant narrative of Zionism.

This paper discusses Palestinian Christian appropriations of Jeremiah 32. The relation of Palestinian Christians to this text is complex: it is part of the body of texts holy to them as Christians, and it functions in the Zionist meta-narrative. Jeremiah 32, as part of Tenach/ Old Testament, is a text constitutive to both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians. It can best be understood as a complex web of narratives witnessing to processes of identity formation processes in the context of conflicts between different Judean groups under Babylonian dominion, that now plays a role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among non-religious Zionists the Tenach functions in a nationalistic framework as the history book of the Jews, on the basis of which a claim to the land is made. Among religious Jews the foundation of the state of Israel is sometimes seen as the fulfilment of prophetic texts. The identity of Palestinian Christians is connected to these books in several ways. First, many places where the narratives of the Old Testament take place are part of today's Palestinian territories, and their culture and history are related to these stories. Second, as Christians the Old Testament is part of their Holy Scripture. However, since in 1948 the state of Israel was founded and many Palestinians lost their land, the concept of Israel in the Old Testament became problematic, especially since texts from this corpus played a role in Israeli claims to their land. Palestinian Christians began to formulate a contextual theology to reclaim their connection with the Old Testament and with the land. The challenge in this contextual theology is for Palestinians to identify themselves as heirs to this story and its larger corpus, while countering the claims of the dominant Israeli narrative. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be described as a conflict between two national identities claiming the same land. Social groups express their origins, history, and in- and out-group stereotypes in narratives that constitute their identity, which together form their collective memory. The narratives begin with commemorations of beginnings, emphasizing 'a "great divide" between in- and out-group', which is 'used to dispel any denial of the group's legitimacy', justifying 'the group's claim as a distinct unit, often by demonstrating that its roots go back to a distant past'. These narratives are always ambiguous and open to different interpretations. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel is the dominant, more powerful group, and the Palestinians are sub-ordinate. The Israeli narrative then expresses Israeli hegemony, which is challenged in Palestinian counter narratives. Such counter narratives make use of the rights and duties explained in the dominant narrative and the ambiguity and tensions it contains.

The paper discusses how and whether Palestinian Christians succeed to appropriate Jeremiah 32 in such a way that it counters the Israeli narrative and contributes to their contextual theology. I analyze the interpretations and appropriations of Palestinian Christian groups from the West Bank with whom I met between February 2008 and March 2009 to study Jeremiah 32.

Xavier Gravend-Tirole (Universités de Montréal & Lausanne University)

Christian Yoga: New Christian Spirituality in Dialogue or Scam?

A recent discussion initiated by the evangelical Albert Mohler last fall on Yoga, sparked up a new controversy in the USA. The theologian expressed his concerns about Christians practicing yoga, arguing that both are incompatible together. In this paper, I want to re-open this much discussed topic and reflect more specifically on two issues related to this conference, *viz.* integrity and *intrareligious* dialogue. By integrity, I want to explore how a so-called "Christian yoga" is possible or not, how they maybe *compatible*, under what conditions and/or at what cost – of course, we also need to distinguish between different kinds of yoga practices here. For Mohler, Christians who engage with yoga and

legitimate it “are replacing biblical Christianity with a religion of their own invention.” To what extent could he be right? How is this practice (a) threatening the *integrity* of Christian tradition, (b) showing some kind of new *translation* or (c) is leading Christianity to a serious *transformation*, rather than (d) shows an utterly new religious tradition? In this section, at last, we cannot bypass the deconstructionist critique, where the very notion of *integrity* is put back into question: what does it mean nowadays to hold as “authentic” or “classical” a certain religious tradition? On what conditions can we argue for the *integrity* of a tradition when the latter is always – also – *in evolution*, so to speak?

According to Mohler himself, the number of Christians practicing yoga is increasing. Besides, the different kinds of responses he got shows quite clearly the new turn of current spirituality that he critiques: “it makes people feel better, it helps spirituality, it is a better way to know God, etc.” This approach to religious traditions, much more personalized (individualized?) is pointing, in my view, to a different kind of interreligious dialogue where dialogue becomes more inter-*spiritual* in fact – and connects more to interfaith dialogue, but I would still differentiate the latter two. To what extent does it relate to Panikkar’s *intrareligious* dialogue is a question that I want to examine here. A last set of questions deals with the very notion of “religion”: what does it mean to use that term and how does it already frame the “interreligious dialogue” discussion in a certain institutional way? How do other terms, such as *spirituality*, touch important fields of human experience and (could) overpass religious traditions *per se* here? Surely, the “spiritual” category, although not very well appreciated in the academic world, does put back into question the very notion of integrity, or set it up in a different structure. How religious bodies could only be one point of reference among others – such as spiritual life – when thinking about current religious issues? This is why, in this paper, I want to show how the personal, inward integration of two religious traditions is inevitably linked to an inward dialogue *as well*. This current appetite for new ways to enhance one’s spiritual life, very prominent in Western countries, might oblige us to rethink interreligious studies as well as the notion of *integrity* of religious traditions.

Vebjorn Horsfjord (University of Oslo)

The Other in the A Common Word dialogue process

The document “A Common Word Between Us and You”, signed by 138 Muslim religious leaders and scholars in October 2007, became the starting point for dialogues between Muslim and Christian leaders on the core teachings on love for God and love for neighbour in the two religious traditions. Issues of peaceful coexistence, conflict and reconciliation, and human rights have been brought into the discussions. The paper will study the Muslim letter together with some of the most substantial responses from Christian leaders, including the Yale response (“Loving God and Neighbor together”) and Archbishop Rowan Williams’ response (“A Common Word for the Common Good”). While a central concern in the dialogue is to establish/confirm common ground between the two religions, there are also clear statements highlighting differences between the two traditions. Using i.e. theories on “othering” and “saming” the paper will study how Muslim and Christian identities are constructed in the texts. How is common ground established, and what space is there for irreducible difference? In addition to the construction of the dialogue partners (Muslims and Christians) as “others”, the paper will explore how other others (those not belonging to either religious tradition) are implicitly (rarely explicitly) constructed.

Group 7:6 (Room ?)

Narges Sadat (K.U.Leuven)

Immigrants’ Second Generation and Islam

The world of migrants has changed severely during the recent decades. They are scattered around the world by globalization, and at the same time their communication and ties to the homeland have become more accessible and affordable through facilities like international airfare, cell phones, and the Internet. Studies on transnationalism describe it as the “process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders” (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994, 6). Although lives of the migrants’ second generation are less linked to homeland in comparison with the first generation, their transnational involvement will be an issue for discussion. Based on the case study of Iranian Muslim second generation migrants in Brussels, religion takes on different significance when it is taken

out of its original surroundings and relocated in the minority context of the immigrant. While their experience has changed as a result of international migration at a time of globalization, second generations are not able to reproduce the religion of their parents and have to create a new version of it; thus Islam is re-evaluated in a new socio-cultural context. The present paper discusses then the construction of identity among Iranian Muslim second generation youth in Brussels and their manner of using Islam as transnational identity.

Lenneke Tichelaar (K.U. Leuven)

Imams in Europe: An Analysis of their Positions with case studies of Bosnia, Holland and Belgium

In this paper we focus on the societal position and functional roles of imams in Europe. First, we look at the original position and function of Imams in the Islamic world, and then compare this to their largely altered function in Western European societies. Due to the modifications of the Islamic life in immigrant communities in Western Europe, the European imams have been placed in the role of a religious servant, religious teacher, and moral authority. These are functions which have not always been the core tasks of imams in the Islamic world. Second, the general overview is followed by a focus on case studies concerning the position of imams in the different institutional contexts of Bosnia, Holland and Belgium. These differing positions are moulded by the differing regulations governments use for the imams in their countries. The central issues in this regard are the idea of church-state separation and the way governments want imams to play a pivotal role in matters of integration and society building.

Judith Stander (Münster)

Islamic Religious education in German schools: background, problems, and opportunities

In my paper I will present and discuss different points of view of the Islamic religious education in German schools. Initially, it will be important to explain the definition of Islamic religious education and the corresponding legal requirements in Germany. In addition to this, the various statements of each federal land in Germany, as well as the current political discussion of the issue will be shown. Finally, problems and opportunities pertinent to the topic will be pointed out.

Group 7:7 (Room ?)

Lourens Minnema (VU University, Amsterdam)

Religious Teaching Models And Their Corresponding Cultural Communication Styles

This paper argues that historical changes in the teaching of religion in higher educational institutions reflect historical changes in the conceptualization of culture, in the prioritizing of values, and in the appropriation of corresponding communication styles. The triad 'monoreligious teaching model', 'multireligious teaching model' and 'interreligious teaching model' reflects historical changes which are related to shifts from 'traditional culture' to 'modern culture' to 'postmodern culture' respectively. This relationship is explained in detail. Traditional ways of transmitting certain values correspond to a traditional communication style which cultivates the monoreligious teaching model. Modern ways of presenting specific values correspond to a modern communication style which propagates the multireligious teaching model. Postmodern ways of offering a variety of chosen values favour the interreligious teaching model. Both in theory and in practice, however, even if postmodern values are preferred, traditional and modern values have not disappeared in educational institutions which try to put the interreligious model of teaching religion into practice.

Sabine Pemsal-Maier (Karlsruhe Institut für Philosophie und Theologie)

Confessional & inter-religious teaching and learning in university teaching methods

Both the ecumenical developments in Christian confessions and inter-religious dialogue pose a challenge to the teaching methods at universities: team-teaching will have a role to play in future, as will the creation of so-called "specialist groups" for exchange and presentations; homogeneous, confessional study-groups will alternate with ecumenical groups. This paper attempts to give an overview of the various teaching and learning methods and demonstrates the opportunities they offer.

Marcell Sass (Muenster University, Germany)

Children's Views on Multi-Religious School Assemblies

In my paper I'd like to show (as a German scholar) that since the least 25 years we are facing some new challenges in Religious Education caused by a growing number of multi-religious ways to celebrate the first day at a public school. Until the time in the 1980s starting school has normally been flanked by an optional protestant or catholic worship in a local church. After these various forms of worship the children and their families went to the public school where a specific kind of secular school assembly has been organized to celebrate this important day of everybody's biography. But time has changed! Not only in the urban areas of Western Germany (for example in the so called Ruhr-Area) there is a growing number of various non-Christian religions, especially the number of Muslim pupils is growing. These challenges caused a new thinking about suitable forms to celebrate the first day at school – together. Teachers and representatives of the diverse religions come together to establish multi-religious school assemblies, sometimes also called multi-religious worship, either celebrated in local churches or (more often) in the rooms of the public schools. In dialogue with a so called Theology of Religions we can find a number of publications on a theoretical level as well as publications that try to inspire the concrete forms of multi-religious school assemblies. But we do not know anything about children's views on this new kind of worship.

This gap between normative work in scholarship and empirical insights inspired me to start a study within my second thesis (Habilitation) about starting school in the perspective of Religious Education. After a multi-religious school assembly in a large German city (Dortmund, Ruhr-Area) and after a worship celebrated for Christians and Muslims in a Catholic church not far away from there, I asked about 30 children in group discussions about their views and feelings. I analyzed the data based on the Grounded Theory and established 10 categories to describe the children's thoughts about multi-religious way to celebrate starting school. In my paper I am aiming to showing that these children familiar with different religious or even non-religious traditions are really presenting us a way of interreligious dialogue and learning while celebrating together. Their views may revise traditional theological normative thinking, lead us to new paradigms of interreligious learning and make sure that various forms of celebrations and (religious) rituals are the very ground on which interreligious dialogue could grow – in a moment every child in Germany joins, in a way that respects children's own identity and in a form, that is far away from the often limited views on worship the Christian Religion in Germany shows.