The Reformation of Philosophy

Edited by
MARIUS TIMMANN MJAALAND

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The Philosophical Legacy of the Reformation Reconsidered

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Preface

What is the philosophical legacy of the Reformation? How could we possibly understand its political, religious, cultural and intellectual impact in philosophical terms? These questions were raised by a group of philosophers and theologians attending the 6th Nordic Conference for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Oslo from 30 May to 1 June 2017 under the title "Critique, Protest and Reform: The Reformation 1517–2017 and its Significance for Philosophy, Politics and Religion". A selection of papers was further elaborated for the present volume called *The Reformation of Philosophy*.

The idea running as a golden thread through this volume is that the basic principles of philosophy were re-formed in the period of the Lutheran Reformation, basically redefining the focus of study from 'things' to 'consciousness', 'word' and 'scripture', and that such a critical re-formation has become one of the hallmarks of modern philosophical inquiry. Each contribution raises a philosophical question significant for the development of modern, critical philosophy. In the first section, the three articles venture a contemporary reconsideration of the *modes* of thought characteristic of the Reformation, a re-formatting of key categories in philosophy and theology, and even comparing these modes of thought to philosophers within the Islamic tradition. The second section focuses on the period of German Idealism and the critique thereof by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Jewish philosophy in the 20th century. The third section focuses on contemporary phenomenology, aesthetics and metaphysics, whereas the fourth and final section raises questions within pragmatism and political philosophy on critique, protest and reform.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Norwegian Research Council for generously supporting the conference and this volume. I am equally grateful to the University of Oslo for practical and human support for the conference and for economic support for the forthcoming Open Access edition of this volume, and to all the contributing scholars for their original and novel approaches to a challenging and inspiring topic. This volume identifies a field of study that deserves further inquiry in the years to come. Thanks therefore to the editor of the series, Prof. Ingolf Dalferth, and the excellent and friendly staff at Mohr Siebeck for accepting this book in the prestigious series on *Religion in Philosophy and Theology*, inviting further intellectual dispute and examination of the issue.

As we have argued in this book, the Reformation of Philosophy is not simply an event of the past, but also an event to come. Insofar as such re-formation in-

spires change and critique, let me simply remind the reader of Luther's words, words which may also serve as a motto for this book: *If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write*.

Oslo 24 December 2019 Marius Timmann Mjaaland

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Introduction

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The Reformation, beginning in 1517, was a caesura in the history of Europe, with huge political consequences in the subsequent centuries. The explicit reasons for Luther's protest against the Church were theological, connected to the doctrine of justification by grace alone and the authority of scripture versus tradition. The Reformation, then, was an undoubtedly theological event that has influenced theological discourse and rationality until this day. But was it a *philosophical* event, too, or at least one of the conditions for the major changes in philosophical approach that took place in the period between medieval scholastic philosophy and the modern era, often connected to the Cartesian doubt and the *cogito*?

Martin Heidegger, with his emphasis on German thinkers who dominated the history of modern philosophy, pointed at Martin Luther in order to explain substantial changes in philosophical approach, and in anthropology and epistemology.[1] He even argued that there were still significant philosophical insights to be discovered in Luther's thought that remained unnoticed among theologians. Reiner Schürmann, political philosopher at New School for Social Research and author of a major opus on the history of Western philosophy, went one step further and argued that Luther introduced the new paradigm for philosophical inquiry that later came to dominate the modern hegemony:

> [Luther] is reorienting an entire mode of thinking; he does so by directing the axis of inquiry elsewhere, thus rendering the old problems problematic in a different way; and he is no less explicit about the old orientation, hereafter senseless, than he is about the new, henceforth the only sensible one: to think no longer according to "things," but according to "consciousness."[2]

Generally speaking, Schürmann's point of view is philosophical rather than historical.[3] Historically and politically, Luther belongs to the Late Medieval world,

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[1] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Supplements*, trans. John van Buren (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), 124–26.

[2] Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginal Lilly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 373.

[3] For a detailed discussion of Schürmann's argument and point of view, cf. Marius T. Mjaaland, "Does Modernity Begin with Luther?," *Studia Theologica* 62, no. 1 (2009): 42–66; David Kangas, "Luther and Modernity: Reiner Schürmann's Topology of the Modern in Broken Hegemonies," *Epoché* 14, no. 2 (2010): 431–52.

with the feudal system of patrons and clients and mutual dependence between church and state. Many historians have pointed out that Luther's anthropology, his cosmology and his political ideas have little in common with modern European standards.[4] Frederik Stjernfelt argues that Luther was anti-Semitic (or at least anti-Judaic), anti-democratic and against freedom of expression in the modern sense, and thus sees no reason to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.[5] These discussions have become rather polarized on the occasion of the anniversary and while they are certainly interesting in understanding Luther's historical role and influence, they are not vital for the perspective adopted here. This volume will focus on the *philosophical* influence of the Reformation, and in particular the Lutheran Reformation. The authors have taken the term 're-formation' literally and inquire into the new conditions for philosophical inquiry, but also for anthropology and theology, that follow in the wake of the Lutheran Reformation.

A common objection to the study of Luther and philosophy is Luther's harsh critique of philosophy in general and Aristotle in particular, an example of which is found in his *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* (1517), where thesis 52 runs as follows: "In short, the entire Aristotle relates to theology as darkness to light. Against the Scholastics."[6] However, Luther's critique of philosophy is generally connected to the scholastic attitude of presupposing philosophical conditions from metaphysics, logic and dialectics in theological arguments. The presuppositions thus adopted are often misleading, Luther argues, since the ontology and anthropology of Aristotle at some key points run counter to Christian thinking. He does not reject philosophy or rational reasoning as such, but a particular kind of philosophy. Consequently, Luther is actually involved in philosophical arguments, first of all as a critic of the heritage from medieval scholastic theology, and secondly as a thinker who argues in favour of clearer separation between the disciplines of theology and philosophy. His theology is not bluntly anti-philosophical, as demonstrated by his controversy with Erasmus, in which he blames Erasmus for being a bad philosopher before identifying the standard philosophical questions connected to freedom of will himself.[7] Thus, he paves the way for a new approach to philosophy, by rejecting the old way of thinking and suggesting a new way of perceiving phenomena and analysing the human condition.

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[4] E. g. Heinz Schilling, *Martin Luther: Rebel in an Age of Upheaval*, trans. Rona Johnston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[5] Frederik Stjernfelt, *Syv myter om Martin Luther* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2017).

[6] Martin Luther, *Disputatio contra Scholasticam Theologiam*, WA 1, 226. My translation. Quotations and references to Luther's works refer to the Weimar Edition [WA], followed by volume and page: *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Hermann Böhlau et al. (Weimar, 1883–1929).

[7] Cf. Luther, *De servo arbitrio*, WA 18, 645.

This is the key point in Schürmann's analysis of Luther's role at the transition from medieval to modern thinking: he rejects the thinking that is based on 'nature' and turns towards 'consciousness.' This turn is directly connected to Luther's critique of Aristotle. When theology takes Aristotle for granted, it accepts a particular metaphysical definition of the human being, of the order of things and even of God. Schürmann argues that the topology of justification by faith establishes a new focal point, a new framework, a new understanding of perception and representation. Scripture is referred to in a different way, not only as a source of truth, but also as a way of organising time and space, metaphysics and responsibility – in short, Scripture structures how we may *perceive* and *represent* phenomena in general.[8] I would therefore add, with an oblique glance to Derrida, that this re-presentation is founded in writing, according to a generalised understanding of the principle *sola scriptura* – scripture alone. It pertains to practical philosophy and responsibility, but also to theoretical philosophy and the understanding of human beings, of nature and of God.

Schürmann reads Luther backwards, from the basic principles that occupy philosophers in the centuries after Luther, rather than comparing him to the medieval philosophers such as Ockham, Scotus or Biel.[9] Adopting this perspective, it is not difficult to see that Luther left a number of questions and paradoxes open for posterity. He was not a systematic thinker, like Melanchthon or Calvin; he delved into the issues he found most *questionable* and *problematic*. As a result, there are new problems that break open in his thought, connected to the difference of life and death, activity and passivity, power and weakness, of being as gift (of grace) and being as responsible action and reconstruction of sense. Looking at Luther through the lens of modern philosophy, we discover different problems than the inquirer who seeks to understand his political convictions or his theological ideas in late medieval philosophy. And, simultaneously, we discover some of the deep structures of modern philosophy that are prefigured in Luther, whether we read Kant or Fichte, Hegel or Schelling, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, Heidegger or his Jewish contemporary Rosenzweig – and even if we take into account late-modern philosophers such as Derrida, Waldenfels, Agamben, Badiou, Levinas or Mouffe.

These philosophers are all discussed in the present volume, hence the title points at a re-formation of philosophy in the double sense. First of all, philosophy was re-formed and the conditions for doing philosophy were transformed in the period of the Reformation, although it took centuries to recognise all the consequences. Yet the title betrays another meaning, too: there is not only a reformation of theology but also a re-formation of philosophy that comes to the

[8] Cf. the argument developed in: Mjaaland, *The Hidden God: Luther, Philosophy and Political Theology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 113–24.

[9] E. g. Heiko A. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986); Theodor Dieter, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001).

surface among philosophers of rationalism and Enlightenment, of idealism and existentialism, and even of nihilism, feminism and post-structuralism. Some of them are connected to a rediscovery of Paul the Apostle in contemporary philosophy, whereas others are related to pragmatism and critique of religion. For someone who is well acquainted with the thoughts of the Reformation, it is not difficult to recognise its traces, in the past and in the present. In the following, I will give a short presentation of each chapter and identify some cross-references, points of disagreement and shared perspectives that run throughout the book.

1. Reformation as Reformatting

Philipp Stoellger presents an article on "Reformation as Reformatting of Religion: The Shift of Perspective and Perception by Faith as Medium." He argues that faith is a "medium" of understanding and perception, and thus he suggests that we focus on *mediality* in order to understand the Reformation – not only historically but as a transition of religion and art, politics and perception, materiality and function. He argues that the consequences implied in such a medial turn are threefold: (i) methodological, (ii) a change of perspective, (iii) a clear emphasis on the *forms* of perception and understanding in terms of embodiment and iconicity. In short, a focus on mediality encourages a re-formatting of the form. "If *religion* is a *medium*," he contends, then "*reformation* was a *reformatting* of this medium." And he continues by formulating the challenge: "to explain what it means to be a medium: not just the *media of* religion, but religion *as* a medium, and therefore Reformation as a reformatting of religion." The short answer suggested by Stoellger is that religion is a form of perception, and as such re-formation means re-formatting this form. This is the case when it comes to Christianity during the historical Reformation(s), but in principle this is the case for any re-formatting of religion.

The rather extensive argument presented by Stoellger draws trajectories back to antiquity and medieval theories of iconicity and mediality. He points out that Protestantism has always existed in a culture of pictures and representations. Examples of such medial representations run from the iconic paintings of the Reformation by Lucas Cranach the Elder and up to contemporary social media. Even though Luther and the other Reformers emphasised the Word of God, a phrase that was picked up by Karl Barth and later by hermeneutic theology, Stoellger wants to extend the scope towards the *media* of God, and thus proceeds to the problem of perception and the Reformation as re-formatting perception. Still, he sticks to the Word of God as the *leading* media [*Leitmedium*] of the Reformation, which conveys Christ in the reception of faith, and in turn takes the form of image and embodiment (e. g. in the sacraments) in order to express "justification".

None of these are *immediate*, Stoellger argues, and so the dream of immediacy and the immediate presence of God ought to be rejected. Every presence of the divine, of the other, and even the "self-presence" that secures Descartes's absolute certainty of perception, is a delusion, Stoellger contends. Even when we talk about immediate self-presence, he argues that we basically refer to a *mediated* immediacy. He thus demonstrates the philosophical relevance of a key element of the Reformation that runs counter to theological doctrine (of the immediate presence of Christ) in the centuries after Luther. On the other hand, he sees doctrine as a systematic *reduction* of this insight into the mediated immediacy, and thus as a way of preserving this insight through various paradigms of understanding and perception. The article thus underscores the double meaning of 're-formation' as studied in this volume: the Reformation of the sixteenth century as philosophical challenge and the continuous re-formatting of philosophy in the encounter with the *mediated immediacy* of the Reformation.

2. Hiddenness and Interpretation

Another approach to the question of mediation and immediacy is adopted by *Safet Bektovic* in his article "The Signs of a Hidden God: Dialectics of Veiling and Unveiling of God in Islam." He discusses the relationship between the hidden and the revealed God, a topic that occupied medieval Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and later became a key question in the controversy between Luther and Erasmus. The doctrine of God in medieval Islam was influenced by Neo-Platonism, in particular Plotinus's philosophy of the One as supreme transcendent Being. In the thought of Ibn Arabi (1165–1240), Bektovic finds a philosophical reflection on hiddenness and revelation that distinguishes between ontology and epistemology and thus comes closer to the problems that occupy Luther: God's unity is connected to his being, which remains unavailable for human knowledge. But his manifestations in creation and in scripture are perceived as *'ayat*,' i. e. *signs* of God that reveal *aspects* of God's presence.

Ibn Arabi was a philosopher, theologian and mystic of Arabic origin, who lived and worked in Sevilla in the vibrant cultural, political and religious atmosphere of Al-Andalus. Throughout the late medieval and modern era, he remained an important authority within the various traditions of Islam, both Sunni and Shiite and various Sufi traditions. According to Bektovic, it is not an easy task to give an unambiguous interpretation of Ibn Arabi, since the Andalusian mystic contends that all God's manifestations and the revealed *'ayat'* have a double meaning. On the one hand they unveil God's *presence*; on the other they veil His *essence*. Bektovic thus describes the following dialectic as characteristic of this complex ambiguity: "Everything, including the names of God, and human desire to look behind the veil, is a veil, but because everything dis-closures God's existence, it

appears as a sign of God. This is like a paradox: What conceals God's essence reveals His existence, in a form that is not Him. In other words, God's creatures function as both signs [*ayat*] and veils [*hijab*]."

Ibn Arabi is not a typical Islamic thinker. He criticises the traditional schools from the eighth and ninth centuries but he also accepts and adopts some of their positions. By insisting simultaneously on opposite principles, he destabilises the traditional systems of Islamic theology by introducing a different philosophical perspective. Thus, he is actually re-formatting Islam in terms of a radical reduction of ontological claims, but also re-constructing Islam by emphasising ambiguous signs [*ayat*] and imagination in order to understand God's revelation. Bektovic compares this de-stabilizing approach to Derrida's deconstruction of texts and signs, while insisting on an irreducible difference between the signifier and the signified. However, there are also some key concerns in Ibn Arabi's thinking that point towards Meister Eckhart's mysticism and even Martin Luther's reflections on the hidden God and the masks of God [*larva Dei*], both veiling and unveiling the hidden presence of the divine.

The third article, "On the Path of Destruction: Luther, Kant and Heidegger on Divine Hiddenness and Transcendence," which is my own contribution to this volume, takes up this thread by focusing on Luther's reflections on divine hiddenness and its seminal influence on modern philosophers. The article refers to Martin Heidegger's claim (1922) that Luther's hermeneutics delivered some of the most important premises for Kant and German Idealism, while indicating that there are still "immanent possibilities" in Luther's thought to be discovered by contemporary philosophy. The very term 'destruction,' which Heidegger applies here, is picked up from Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518) in order to describe the process of destructing a theology of glory in favour of a theology of the cross.

The argument runs as follows: when 'God' is understood metaphysically as *ens entium*, as powerful and glorious (*theologia gloriae*), the philosopher or theologian unavoidably interprets him- or herself in the same glorious and powerful image. Consequently, his or her understanding of God ought to be destructed or *de-constructed* by the cross in order to give a true representation of the God/(wo)man relation. The philosopher or theologian cannot withdraw from the process of interpretation, since her self-understanding is part of the rational process of understanding. This description of the problem in Luther corresponds to Heidegger's description of hermeneutics as the path of destruction, upon which "the present needs to encounter itself in its own movements."[10] Luther describes three forms of divine hiddenness, first of all "beyond" being, as in negative theology, secondly the powerful hiddenness of the almighty and thirdly in weakness and *sub contrario* on the cross. He presents the latter as an interpretive

[10] Heidegger, *Supplements*, 124.

key for the former two. The article takes this hermeneutics of destruction three steps further, via (i) early modern philosophy in Descartes and Pascal, to (ii) the philosophical critique of tradition by Immanuel Kant, to (iii) the question of whether we need another destruction of Kant's notion of transcendence today.

Whereas Wilfried Joest, Rudolf Malter, Reiner Schürmann and others have argued for a clear connection between Luther and Kant's practical philosophy, the argument advanced in this article focuses on his theoretical philosophy and, in particular, upon the distinction between *noumena* and *phenomena*. Kant questions the possibility of any rational argument for God's existence, since God cannot be reduced to an entity among others. Consequently, his being can neither be presupposed (as is the case with the *Ding an sich*) nor proved. The notion of God thus remains problematic, as an ultimate difference of possibility and necessity. Kant adopts this notion exactly in its problematic sense in order to discuss the ultimate ends of human existence, as individuals and as community. However, there are also some new problems surfacing with Kant's understanding of God as transcendent and thus delimited [*ausgegrenzt*] *outside* the phenomenal world. Accordingly, the article draws attention to Kant's influential notion of transcendence and the need for a destruction or de-construction of this term in contemporary philosophy, i. e. as another re-formation of philosophy on the path of destruction.

3. Re-Formation of Philosophy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

In the second section, three articles focus on German Idealism and its relation to Protestantism in general and Martin Luther in particular, whereas two articles discuss the Lutheran legacy by the post-Hegelian philosophers Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. First, *Burkhard Nonnenmacher* discusses Hegel's philosophy of the absolute in his article "Hegel's Philosophy of Religion and Luther." He argues that Luther and Hegel share a concern for God's omnipotence and omnipresence. In Luther, this concern is connected to the hidden God. Yet, in contrast to Luther, Hegel draws the question of the Absolute into an extensive speculative consideration on transcendence and immanence, and argues against Kant that the Absolute ought to be accessible by human consciousness, i. e. as Spirit. Thus, when philosophers are active in reflecting upon God and recognise him as the Absolute, Hegel sees this as an expression of God's self-consciousness. Nonnenmacher therefore concludes that philosophy and faith are intertwined in Hegel's philosophy of religion, before he returns to the critical question of whether Hegel was a truly Lutheran philosopher. There is little doubt that Luther had a significant impact upon Hegel's ways of thinking, not only in relation to his philosophy of religion, but his entire philosophical enterprise. There is, then,

a definite connection between the two thinkers, but the question of the extent to which the two can be said to share ideas is, nevertheless, difficult to answer, and Nonnenmacher leaves it for the reader to decide.

Schelling's philosophy of revelation is the topic of *Stian Grøgaard's* article, "A Note on Revelation and the Critique of Reason in Schelling's Late Philosophy." He argues that Schelling and Kierkegaard are the last two great defenders of Protestantism in the history of philosophy, and they both combined this defence with sharp criticism of modernity and of the rationality advanced by Enlightenment philosophers. In contrast to Kant's negative philosophy, Schelling sets out from the presupposition that God is, and is *outside* of reason, as he argues in his *Philosophy of Revelation*. Grøgaard points out that he must therefore reject both Kant's scepticism and Hegel's speculative philosophy of spirit. Schelling insists on God's freedom in a way similar to Luther, prior to the schemes of reason in transcendental philosophy and idealism. The logic of revelation emphasised by the late Schelling appeals to an "a priori" empiricism that allows the logic of experience to "permeate pure thought," Grøgaard argues. Schelling's rejection of Aristotelian, Kantian and Hegelian logic thus represents a repetition of a key point in Luther: the critique of philosophy is itself philosophical and gives space for a theology or philosophy of revelation.

Jayne Svenungsson takes a more critical approach to German Idealism and discusses its relationship to Judaism and Jewish philosophy in her article "Idealism Turned against Itself: From Hegel to Rosenzweig." As is well known, Luther wrote some aggressively anti-Judaic texts in his later years, and Svenungsson discusses whether these stereotypes of Jews and Judaism were inherited and transmitted by the philosophers. She points out that such stereotypes are not exceptional for Luther; they dominate Christian thinking from the earliest centuries of Christianity, when it began to distance itself from its Jewish origins. In an early work, Hegel is critical of the Jewish people as an embodiment of heteronomy, but later he becomes less dismissive and more interested in the positive contributions of Judaism to the history and philosophy of religion. According to Svenungsson, Schelling allows Judaism to become even more important in his *Philosophy of Revelation*, based on a series of lectures from 1841. The Jews play a key role in his political vision of a kingdom of God.

According to Svenungsson, German Idealism was significant for Jewish philosophers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but they adopted an ambiguous attitude to its representation of Jews and Judaic thinking. Svenungsson argues that when Franz Rosenzweig develops his history of philosophy in *The Star of Redemption*, he takes Schelling's idea of the kingdom of God one step further; it is still a historical vision of peace and harmony among the peoples, but it becomes a *Messianic* vision, which is effectively turned against the idea of Christianity as superior to other religions, and the nationalist idea of one people – be it Jewish or German – as superior to all others. Rosenzweig sees

the special task, indeed the *calling* of the Jewish people in rejecting this national exclusivism, even the rejection he finds in political Zionism. As Svenungsson points out, Rosenzweig thereby adopts the vision of universal history from Hegel and Schelling, but gives it an ethical twist that remains a challenge of interrupting, deconstructing and thus re-defining such historical lines of division (Christians against Jews, Protestants against Catholics, etc.) that have dominated the history of philosophy since the Reformation.

"Immediate Certainty and the Morally Good: Luther, Kierkegaard and Cognitive Psychology" is the title of *Jörg Disse's* article on Luther and Kierkegaard. He takes Luther's certainty of salvation as a point of departure, and argues that such certainty is not the result of a cognitive process but a feeling of being touched by God's promise and God's spirit. Moreover, it is not merely an interior feeling but a certainty that comes from the outside, *extra nos*. Disse labels such certainty an *immediate* certainty, thus contradicting Stoellger's argument that there cannot be any such immediacy that is not mediated by the Word of God or some other medium. Moreover, Disse compares it with Descartes's *cogito*, which is also an immediate certainty, but one that conveys intuitive knowledge. With reference to Wittgenstein, Disse argues that Luther's certainty is characteristic because it becomes the ground for a particular *way of life*. He then proceeds to Kierkegaard's *Either-Or* and argues that the choice of the ethical analysed there implies the universalisation of Luther's certainty. Finally, Disse delves into modern cognitive psychology in order to analyse the different forms of cognitive processing that characterise these certainties. He finds that both Luther and Kierkegaard appeal to universal goodness for its own sake. Although admitting the lack of empirical evidence, he suggests that it may be plausible to understand the certainty of faith as a "feeling of conformity with our highest conative and cognitive possibilities."

Finally, *Jan-Olav Henriksen* focuses on the tension between affirmation and criticism in Nietzsche's comments on Luther in "The Reformer in the Eyes of a Critic. Nietzsche's Perception and Presentation of Luther." According to Henriksen, Nietzsche is generally sympathetic to Luther's anti-moralism and his contributions to the German language. More surprising, perhaps, is his quotation of the last verse of Luther's *Ein feste Burg* as an example of the will to power. This is also an example of the ambiguity of Nietzsche vis-à-vis Luther: the context gives the last verse a rather different sense than it had as a hymn in the sixteenth century. However, when it comes to key topics of the Reformation, such as truth, faith and grace, Nietzsche is highly critical. Finally, Henriksen points out that Nietzsche saw the Reformation basically as an epoch in the history of ideas, and as such he offers a relatively nuanced picture of Luther as reformer, despite some fierce criticism.

4. Phenomenology, Reformation and Revolution

The third section covers more recent and contemporary contributions to a philosophical understanding of Luther and the Reformation. The five articles represent continental philosophy or phenomenology in the broad sense of the term, but the focus varies from the problem of subjectivity via transcendence and hiddenness to aesthetics and metaphysics.

Rasmus Nagel introduces his article, "Continuing the Discontinuity: Luther, Badiou and the Reformation," with a discussion of the term 'Reformation.' He emphasises the discontinuity expressed by the notion, and yet he finds much continuity in the 're' of the Reformation: it represents a radical break while standing in continuity with the previous tradition. Nagel argues that the paradigm shift that took place during the Reformation can be philosophically understood as a change from "the universal-particular paradigm to the paradigm of universal singularity." The definition is compatible with Stoellger's understanding of the Reformation as re-formatting, but it specifies the question of form in philosophical terms. Moreover, this definition represents an interesting supplement to Schürmann's argument on Luther and modernity.

For the understanding of singularity referred to here, Nagel draws on Alain Badiou and the 'universal singularity' presented in Badiou's book on Paul the Apostle. According to Nagel, the subjectivity analysed as 'the singular' cannot be subsumed by the universal, as Kierkegaard uncompromisingly argues in *Fear and Trembling* and *Postscript*. For Nagel, the Re-*formation* in this qualified sense is all about how to "formalize the content of faith – universally instead of particularly." He challenges common understandings of 'faith' and 'church' before Luther by contrasting them to Luther's definition of faith as 'truth event' (a term adopted from Badiou), an event that universalises the singular. Despite Nagel's emphasis on discontinuity, this notion is able to explain the continuity of Christian thought from late medieval to early Reformation thought, but it also gives renewed emphasis on the breaks and ruptures, in an event that "reconstitutes and reorients Christian existence."

Patrick Ebert returns to the philosophical relevance of divine hiddenness, *deus absconditus*, already discussed by Bektovic and Mjaaland. Ebert wants to differentiate between the hidden and the revealed God by analysing the implied notion of transcendence. In "A Phenomenological Inquiry about Transcendence as Radical Alterity," he discusses the possibility of understanding this notion of the hidden God as an expression of radical alterity or radical strangeness. Ebert sets out from a problem discussed by Karl Barth and Eberhard Jüngel concerning whether there is any possibility at all of relating to the God who is hidden in majesty. According to Jüngel, this notion as presented by Luther causes an unacceptable dualism in the very notion of God. Both theologians solve the problem by referring to the logic of the Heidelberg Disputation,

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