



Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Graduate School

TRANSPOSITIONS WORKSHOP

Alterity Revisited

Keynote Speeches by

Thomas Claviez, University of Bern

Christine Abbt, University of Lucerne



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 2.15/6.15 P.M.
UNIVERSITY OF LUCERNE, ROOM 3.A05

Keynote Speech Prof. Dr. Thomas Claviez (University of Bern):
Alterity, Contingency, and the Difference of it All

Friday, December 7th, 2.15 p.m., room 3.A05



Forms of «othering» often rely on strategies that turn differences into alterity, opposition, or even antagonism, and thus follow a dialectical schema. To review alterity in the framework of the larger concept of contingency might offer a way out of this dilemma. The talk will read Emmanuel Levinas' «ethics as first philosophy» in light of its radicalized dialectics, and try to assess what the concept of contingency can add as regards alternative notions of community.

Thomas Claviez is Professor for Literary Theory and Co-Director of the Center for Global Studies (CGS) at the University of Bern, where he is responsible for the MA-program «World Literature.» Among numerous publications, he is the author of *Aesthetics & Ethics: Moral Imagination from Aristotle to Levinas and from Uncle Tom's Cabin to House Made of Dawn* (Winter, 2008), the co-author of *Zur Aktualität von Jacques Rancière* (VS, 2016) and the editor of the collections *The Conditions of Hospitality: Ethics, Aesthetics and Politics at the Threshold of the Possible* (Fordham, 2014) and *The Common Growl: Toward a Poetics of Precarious Community* (Fordham, 2016). Currently he is working on the monograph *A Metonymic Community? Towards a New Poetics of Contingency*, and on two editions of essays: *Throwing the Moral Dice: Ethics and/of Contingency* (Fordham 2019) and *A Critique of Authenticity* (Vernon, 2019).

Keynote Speech Prof. Dr. Christine Abbt (University of Lucerne):
Enlightenment, Democratic Rights and Alterity

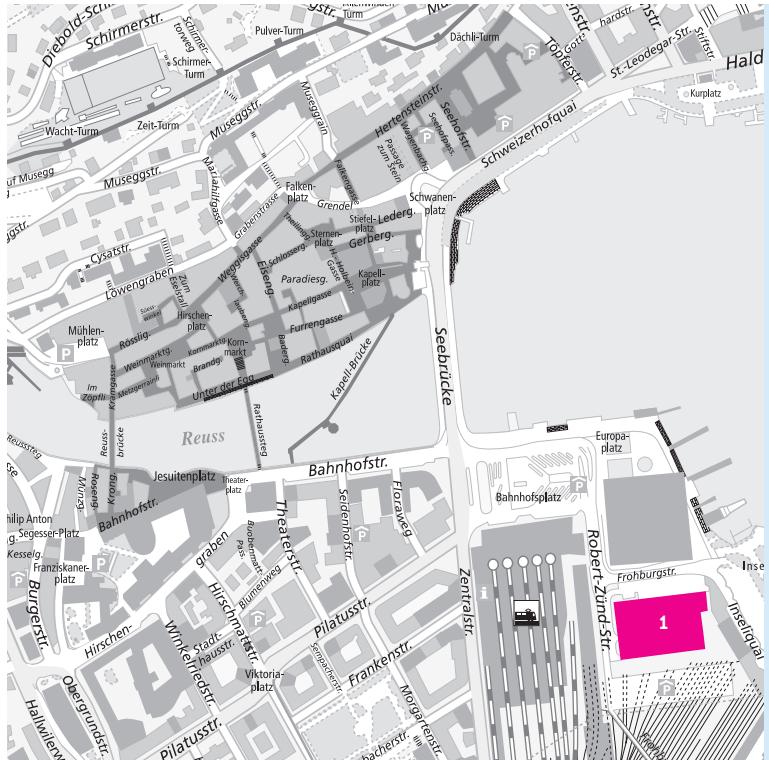
Friday, December 7th, 6.15 p.m., room 3.A05



Enlightenment is the way out of a person's self-inflicted immaturity, Kant says. To this day, this definition has been a guiding principle. It is an invitation to emancipation and autonomy and at the same time an expression of sovereignty impregnated against all forms of irritation. In this lecture, Prof. Abbt will explore both understandings of enlightenment and discuss the democratic meanings of alterity understood as categorical unavailability.

Christine Abbt holds a SNSF Professorship of Philosophy at the University of Lucerne, where she co-directs also the *Centre for Enlightenment, Critical Thinking, and Plurality*. Her key research areas are: political philosophy, aesthetics, and epistemology. She is the author of *Der wortlose Suizid. Die literarische Gestaltung der Sprachverlassenheit als Herausforderung für die Ethik [Suicide without Words: Literary Renderings of Missing Language as a Challenge to Ethics]* (Fink, 2007), *Ich vergesse. Über die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Denkens aus philosophischer Perspektive [I am Forgetting: On the Possibilities and Limitations of Thought Seen from a Philosophical Perspective]* (Campus, 2016), and the co-editor of *Schauspiel, Politik, Philosophie. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Denis Diderots «Paradoxe sur le comédien»* (Schwabe, 2018). Currently she is writing a monograph on the relation between democracy and forms of non-identity during the Antiquity, the Enlightenment, and the Present.

The keynote speeches are part of the workshop «Alterity Revisited – A Closer Look at Transpositions of a Traveling Concept in the Humanities», which takes place at the University of Lucerne on December 7th/8th. The workshop itself is the third event organized by the consortium TransPositions. This is an international network formed by three partner institutions in the field of graduate education with the Graduate School of the Humanities at the University of Bern as lead institution and the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Lucerne and the Department of History and Art History at Utrecht University as partners. TransPositions' main goals are to encourage interdisciplinary academic exchange and to establish an international network of doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Each event within the network focuses on specific aspects of the overall theme of *TransPositions: Objects, images, persons, cultural formations, and disciplinary positions in motion*.



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1 Venue:

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