The question of finding a merciful God

Understanding Martin Luther’s relation to metaphysics and ontology

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Abstract

“The question of finding a merciful God. Understanding Martin Luther’s relation to metaphysics and ontology”
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This thesis examines arguments and premises for understanding Luther’s relationship to metaphysics and ontology. The main theoretical sources are firstly research that, on the one hand argue that Luther’s doctrine of justification has ontological structures and on the other treat his relation to metaphysics, and secondly sources that treat Luther’s development of theological themes and issues from a history of ideas perspective.

The thesis concludes that the arguments of Finnish Luther scholars Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen are helpful for understanding the relationship between Luther, metaphysics and ontology. Their conclusions display different levels of structures in his doctrine; thematic as well as re-oriented structures of thought, showing that Luther is occupied with metaphysical and ontology and presenting strong arguments for his doctrine of justification as ontological. Luther’s doctrinal development can be understood both as a result of criticism of substance-metaphysics, as well as itself ultimately displaying metaphysical and ontological issues. Such contents in his theology should be viewed in the larger perspective of forming theology, a history of ideas context that broadens the question to one of structures of thought, involving themes, issues, forming of doctrine as processual development. However, their thematic, doctrinal focus risks not giving full account for understanding Luther’s relation to metaphysical and ontological issues. An intricacy of the question is displayed and possible to trace when Luther’s theology is addressed from systematical as well as historical perspectives. The thesis finally argues with the help of a history of ideas perspective that the theologia crucis - specifically with its concept of the hidden God, the deus absconditus – is a resource for further inquiry of Luther and metaphysics, in understanding his theology as describing reality.

Keywords: Luther, metaphysics, ontology, doctrine of justification, Mannermaa, Juntunen, themes, structures of thought, theologia crucis, deus absconditus.
List of abbreviations


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Bibliography
I Introduction.

I:1 Presentation.

“Where can I find a merciful God?” The question is ascribed Luther, although its exact formulation is not his. However, it springs from Luther’s quest to explore the issue of God’s righteousness.¹ This might hold greater depths than has been suggested when understood as the eager, personal, pious quest that led to a reorientation in the understanding of iustitia Dei and the nature of justification of the human being. Does this is any way connect to metaphysics? Was Luther dealing with metaphysics? Is his theology ontological?

The question of what the human being could accomplish in terms of her salvation in relation to the divine was fundamental for theologians in medieval times. Luther worked out a theology with the axiom justication through faith in Christ alone, where salvation must be considered solely God’s work. The formulation of this principle was a considerable part of the Reformation movement in Germany in the late Middle Ages. Luther’s theological ideas are often ascribed a certain radicalness or spoken of in terms of a discovery, particularly what is referred to the forming of the doctrine of justification. Consequently, the doctrine has been a central part of theological conversations and disputes for centuries and continuously been an axis that ecumenical dialogue has centered itself around. It has also given rise to a considerable tradition of academic scholarship concerning its implications for human existence.

Differing apprehensions of human existence in terms of the relation between God’s grace and human efforts for the sake of salvation have thus been a touchstone in the relations between church denominations; obvious between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and Roman Catholic and Protestant/Lutheran scholars. However, there are also immanent rifts in Luther scholarship that concern different views on this article. This centering in doctrinal issues affects the theological climate on all these levels. Luther’s theological enterprise was, however, also deeply connected to epistemological and methodological questions; the making of theology, the relationship between faith/reason and theology/philosophy, and the quest for

¹ WA, 54.185.12-186.21.
knowledge of the divine in relation to theological systems of his times. This urges that the systematic theology that addresses Luther’s theology and its relation to metaphysics and ontology handles and relates to several structural levels as well as doctrinal development.

Traditionally, in modern Luther research (from the period of midst 19th century and onwards), Luther has not been considered dealing with ontology or metaphysics. This is the standpoint of for example different strands of German Luther scholarship, such as for example the Luther renaissance. In the recent forty years, Finnish Luther scholarship, for example Tuomo Mannermaa, have had an impact in the field of research on the doctrine of justification, arguing that the doctrine shows ontological structures even if Luther in particular ways rejects certain metaphysical aspects of scholastic theology and metaphysical speculation as a way to knowledge of the divine. Lately, approaches to Luther and ontology have increased in popularity and researchers attend to his theology as metaphysical as well. (A discussion of the demarcations between these concepts will be presented further in the thesis.) Different strands of Luther scholarship seem to agree that Luther was deeply involved with these issues, but as mentioned, they are at odds concerning if his theology actually is ontological and/or metaphysical. This relation is therefore a challenge for Luther research that implies a certain complexity.

For the Finnish researcher Mannermaa, ecumenism ignited an aim to show how the doctrine of justification correlates to the orthodox teachings of theosis. His reading resulted in an understanding of faith as having ontological structures, in the union of the believer and God. The ecumenical aspiration was to expunge a distinction in Protestant theology between justification and sanctification that in the long run obstructed ecumenical dialogue and reduced an assertiveness of a “Lutheran” identity. Consequently, the research has had an impact on ecumenical dialogue, for example in the processes resulting in the Joint

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2 See also neo-protestant Luther scholarship and existential-relational interpretations of the doctrine of justification. These will be introduced to some extent further in the thesis.


Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, confirmed in 1999. Several recent works that treat Luther and metaphysics do not address or originate from ecumenism. In this thesis though, it is an important motivator, although from an “on the side”-perspective. The main aim is not to thoroughly analyze Luther’s relation to the questions of metaphysics and ontology from an ecumenical angle or to reflect upon ecumenical benefits of it. The clear ecumenical aim of the mentioned Finnish research will, however - though not in the forefront of this study – still be present, since the questions of their research was determined by this factor and their research is chosen as theoretical material. The question of ecumenism is also a backdrop since the focus on the doctrine of justification has been a focal point and challenge for ecumenical conversation. Since the question of metaphysics and ontology is involved in the question of doctrine, it relates to ecumenism as well, within the frame that this thesis treats.

The starting point for this thesis is thus the assumption that there is a connection between Luther, metaphysics and ontology, such that he was deeply involved with these issues. The purpose is to clarify a possible understanding of such a relationship. The study forehand is thus not a substantial analysis of Luther’s theology as ontological/metaphysical or an attempt to write ontologies of his theological group of themes. The task will be pursued through a reading of the Finnish researchers Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen and setting their conclusions in a history of ideas perspective as well.

I:II The aim of the thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to approach the question of Luther’s relation to metaphysics and ontology and examine how it can be understood. This will be performed through a reading of the research of Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen, who have claimed that his doctrine of justification actually shows ontological structures and further by setting their conclusions into a wider history of ideas perspective, in order to expand arguments and conclusions into a widened perspective for a reading of systematical and historical perspectives.

I:III Disposition.

The thesis will mainly consist of four parts with their respective sub-headings. The first part and its presentation of the subject, structure and aim, analytic questions, a research synopsis and a discussion on method is followed by a second theoretical part that presents the themes in the research of Finnish theologians Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen who were among the first to explicitly claim that Luther’s theology of faith and justification shows ontological structures and who treats the question of Luther and metaphysics. It provides a concluding summary of their arguments for understanding the doctrine of justification as ontological.

The third part will to some extent build upon the extracted themes and arguments from the reading of Mannermaa and Juntunen, further aiming to develop a deepened understanding by relating their conclusions to a wider context of history of ideas, including different setting of themes, structures of thought and theological systematics adhering to the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology. This approach will involve a certain reviewing of the philosophical and theological historical context of Luther’s time, his relation to his contemporaries, involving relations to metaphysics and ontology.

The fourth is a deepened analysis of the premises for speaking of Luther, ontology and metaphysics with the assembled arguments, applying also a critical perspective of history of philosophy. It finally falls into a tentative discussion of extended possibilities to investigate such questions and actually develop understandings of Luther as metaphysician.

I:IV Analytic questions

In order to pursue this kind of task, the following questions are posed from the initial assumption that there is a relation between Luther’s theology, ontology and metaphysics:

- What understanding of the relationship between Luther, ontology and metaphysics are presented by the Finnish Luther researchers Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen?
- What are their arguments for claiming that his theology, particularly the doctrine of justification, shows ontological structures?
Can further historical, systematical and history of ideas approaches help determine the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology and open for possibilities to estimate his theology as metaphysics and/or ontology?

I:V The concepts metaphysics and ontology.

Entering a subject such as ontology and metaphysics - not least in relation to the works of Luther who has been so disparately interpreted in these matters - makes conceptual clarifications a challenge. With the words of D.W Hamlyn, it is in general difficult to provide an account of what for instance metaphysics is without a connection to its practitioners, that is, without an explicit description of the nature of the metaphysician’s specific questions.\(^6\) This means that the fluctuations in the history of philosophy cannot be disregarded but hardly fully accounted for in this thesis, since this is a task in itself. The usage of concepts involves an awareness of this, having the shape of references to different works. Clarification thus takes on a pragmatic and functional nature.

Historically, the concepts metaphysics and ontology have undergone changes in understanding of their meanings as well as the relation between them. Speaking of them should involve awareness of their origins. Metaphysics has been claimed to have its roots in ancient Greek philosophy. It is a challenge of anachronism, though, to define the ancient thinkers’ questions as such, since this term appeared later in the history of philosophy. The first thinking in ancient philosophy has in time been considered philosophy in precisely its own capacity of rational thinking on that which is. This thinking of being has thus later been identified as metaphysics.\(^7\) Some point to the Aristotelian heritage of “first philosophy” as historically and/or etymologically decisive for defining metaphysics\(^8\) whilst some would point to the Thomistic theological tradition and its general metaphysics (also considered and called ontology), as the essence of metaphysical enterprise, qualifying being as being rather than


studying its different specificities in different sorts of being. The term metaphysics thus has a longer tradition than ontology.

Others try to define metaphysics by means of substantial exclusion; stating that it is not ethics (the discernment of the morally right or wrong) or not epistemology (concerned with knowledge and justification), thus treating being, different phenomena of it and their properties such as time, personhood, determinism, causation, freedom etc.

In the work beforehand, the terms will appear in differing theoretical outlines. This means that they are mostly reproduced via specific discourses of academic writings that might not provide clear definitions or that do not treat them univocally. Both terms are thus charged with meaning within different contexts, depending on the clarity of each author within the different textual sources. The term metaphysics will for instance frequently occur when Luther’s relation to metaphysics in different strands of scholastic theology is discussed, sometimes particularly referring to Aristotelian substance-metaphysics. Further, the meaning of the term ontology used by for instance German theologian Ebeling that advocates a relational ontology in Luther will not be analogous to the real-ontic orientation of ontology in Finnish theologian Mannermaa’s works.

The concepts will only to some extent appear as theoretical subjects as well in this work’s own analysis, outside the referential passages. They will be applied more specifically understood from within history as a certain enterprise and not as wider terms (for instance as scholars speak of “the ontology of” something in the sense of a general “story” of something. Similarly, metaphysics is sometimes appointed as abstract esoterica.) As conceptual and theoretical subjects (apart from the referential parts), firstly, metaphysics in its core sense here regards the most general and fundamental principles of reality, dealing with questions such as the first cause of things and general principles such as time and space. Secondly, in the most fundamental meaning, ontology can be understood as the teachings of being within metaphysical framings concerning questions of a certain being as such, for instance characteristics of the reality of the human being.

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10 Carroll and Markosian, 2010, p. 3.
It is necessary that this thesis adjusts to the fact that its framework is the research on Luther’s theology. In addition to the challenge of defining metaphysics (due to its fluent character throughout history), a complexity appears when studying the possibilities to speak of this kind of enterprise in a theologian that is by some claimed to be an anti-metaphysician due to his rejection of substance-metaphysics while it most often beyond this is not explicitly pronounced how he is involved more generally in metaphysics or ontology. Further, it is possible to catch sight of rather categorical rejections being made regarding Luther and metaphysics in relation to his teachings on reason and revelation. This complexity is clearly both a premise for the subject of the thesis, while at the same time its aimed target to examine.

However, some main features that frames both concepts in relation to Luther should be taken in consideration. Theologian Dennis Bielfeldt argues that – taking the fluctuations of the meanings of the concepts in consideration – Luther is sometimes apprehended as anti-metaphysical from how the term is defined in a 17th century sense and not so much in relation to understandings of the enterprise of his own times. Further, Bielfeldt sustains that the term ontology occurred much later than metaphysics. Questions of being were understood within the enterprise of metaphysics. It is thus in a way an anachronism to speak of Luther and ontology.

Further - tied to his particular enterprise - the concepts inevitably appear and is treated within a theological domain. From our point of view, the question of Luther and ontology/metaphysics has mainly occurred in relation to research on the doctrine of justification, and thus determined by the relationship between God and human; of the status of the human in the world (coram mundo) and in the presence of God (coram Deo) with a soteriological, Christological and anthropological orientation. This calls for a probing of simultaneous perspectives when exploring apprehensions of Luther and ontology/metaphysics. It holds several dimensions on being and existence, of the reality of human in the world, while inhabiting the presence of the divine reality in the world together with the human being in faith.

I:VI Research synopsis.

The presentation in this paragraph aims to introduce some theoretical outlines to illustrate how the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology has been treated and how the relation has been apprehended.

German Luther research is of great extent and has different main features such as the neo-protestant scholarship of Ritschl and Hermann and a Luther renaissance with advocates like Holl, Vogelsang and Seeberg adheres to this tradition. The strands of German Luther scholarship that advocate a forensic interpretation of the doctrine of justification mainly argue that Luther is rejecting metaphysics, resulting in conclusions that it is only possible to speak of a relational ontology in his doctrine of justification, or of existentialist, personalist understandings of the relationship between God and the human in faith. They see Luther as anti-metaphysical and argue that he uses traditional metaphysical concepts but ascribes altered meanings to them other than traditional substance-metaphysical ones. German theologians Wilfried Joest and Gerhard Ebeling are representatives of the understanding of a relational ontology in Luther. In his Ontologie der Person bei Luther, Joest interprets Luther’s understanding of the person – particularly the Christian person in faith – in an existentialist manner, as a new self-understanding before the Word of God, centered in Christ’s effective actuality in the believer’s life. This position of Joest’s steers by the extrinsic aspects of imputation and points to a life-altering self-understanding of the Christian. Ebeling’s ideas will be presented to some extent in the second chapter, via a rather recent essay that sums up his standpoints. Ebeling’s Luther: An Introduction to his Thought provides a more thorough reading.

It is sometimes spoken of a paradigm shift in Luther research in the recent forty years, initialized by the ecumenical works of Tuomo Mannermaa in the 1980’s, for example in the following works: In ipsa fide Christus adest: Luterilaisen ja ortodoksisen kristinuskonkäsityksen leikkuspiste. This was later translated into German: Der im Glauben

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gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung. Zum ökumenischen Dialog.\textsuperscript{15} These are the forerunners of the English edition Christ present in Faith.\textsuperscript{16} Mannermaa objects to the dominating forensic understandings of justification in Luther that he finds inadequate to describe the reality-altering implications of justification of the human being. Mannermaa claims that such understandings, along with traditionally protestant notions of a separation between justification and sanctification, depend upon certain philosophical premises that deny ontological aspects in justification. Ultimately, this does not do justice to Luther’s theology. As a matter of fact, Luther’s doctrine of justification has an ontological meaning, in his opinion.\textsuperscript{17} In alignment with Mannermaa, Finnish researcher Sammi Juntunen attends to Luther and ontology in his dissertation Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523.\textsuperscript{18} He concludes that Luther’s concept of faith shows structures of being through a reconstructive approach of Luther’s views on being in the essay “Luther and Metaphysics: What Is the Structure of Being according to Luther?”.\textsuperscript{19} The essay summarizes main thoughts from the dissertation and will be presented in the following chapter.

In 2010, Norwegian theologian Joar Haga presented his dissertation Was there a Lutheran Metaphysics?\textsuperscript{20} This was later published as a monography in 2012. Haga discusses the doctrine of communicatio idiomatum as the core of Luther’s soteriology, and emphasizes how the apprehension of the double nature of Christ questions the earlier apprehended relationship of theology and philosophy as harmonic. Haga suggests that Luther’s theological approach of rejecting Aristotelian metaphysics seems to exclude a relationship to metaphysics, but that his faithfulness to Scripture as a matter of fact did not result in a fideism. Instead, it enabled his treatise on the questions of reality. Haga explores how the communicatio idiomatum, metaphysically understood, shows how Christ really is present in the world. It was an

\textsuperscript{15} Mannermaa, Tuomo, Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus. Rechtfertigung und Vergottung. Zum ökumenischen Dialog, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, Neue Folge, Band 8; Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989, 11-93.
\textsuperscript{16} Mannermaa, 2005.
\textsuperscript{17} See Mannermaa, 2005.
\textsuperscript{18} Juntunen, Sammeli, Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523, Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, Helsinki, 1996.
\textsuperscript{20} Haga, 2012.
important concept in the metaphysical understandings of Reformation theology and more widely related to the philosophical question of revelation in relation to the rational world as well. Haga traces how Luther’s Christology and its metaphysical concerns were interpreted in the theological contexts of Reformation and Post-Reformation and how the idea of exchange of properties between the natures of Christ was developed in the 16th and 17th centuries.\(^{21}\)

In the start of the process of the work at hand, a study of the concept *deus absconditus* in Luther was published by Marius Timman Mjaaland: *The Hidden God. Luther, Philosophy and Political Theology*.\(^{22}\) Mjaaland argues that the *deus absconditus* is a metaphysical concept and as such an epistemological *topos* for a hermeneutics of destruction in Luther. It questions certain distinctions between reason and faith, theology and philosophy treating Luther’s view on Scripture, his grammatology and the concept of God, something that ultimately has consequences for political philosophy in various ways. He claims that in English literature of Luther research, the distinction between the hidden and revealed God as question of metaphysics in Luther is not examined thoroughly enough. Is Luther’s criticism against scholasticism and philosophical enterprise as strict as it has been suggested and does it completely make it impossible to speak of Luther as a philosopher? Mjaaland also provides a method of repetition via readings of postmodern philosophers that treats the concept of destruction within hermeneutics as well.\(^{23}\)

Further, some essays as examples of different treatises on the topic of ontology and Luther are worth mentioning. Theologian Robert W Jenson argues in his text “An Ontology of Freedom in the *De Servo Arbitrio*”\(^{24}\) that in spite of it being read as a series of debating points against Erasmus, there is systematics in the understanding of freedom in Luther’s *De Servo Arbitrio* that “constitutes the conceptual structure of Luther’s contrapuntally entitled essay.”\(^{25}\) Jenson aspires to write this ontology of freedom.

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\(^{21}\) Haga, 2012.
\(^{22}\) Mjaaland, 2016.
\(^{23}\) Mjaaland, 2016.
Further, theologian Eberhard Jüngel argues in “The World as Possibility and Actuality. The Ontology of the Doctrine of Justification” that metaphysics has failed to acknowledge the different dimensions of the concept actuality and that an ontological primacy of actuality over potentiality excludes possibility as true being, setting it in a “not yet”-mode, leading to the primacy of the *act* as the ultimate end of actualization. In Jüngel’s opinion, Christian doctrine has traditionally been so deeply bound to an Aristotelian understanding of actuality that it has negatively affected eschatological interpretation. With a Christologically centered argumentation, Jüngel presents an ontology of Luther’s doctrine of justification that dismantles this priority of Aristotle’s first principle and suggests a distinction between the possible and the impossible, offering a different view on justification other than it being a quality of the soul and possible to acquire by good deeds. The doctrine of justification is accentuated as the criterion for making theology. The doctrine depicts the Christian person in another reality, dependent upon God’s creative power, a *creatio ex nihilo*, that is the focal point for understanding the ontological implications of the event of justification. God’s distinguishing between the possible and impossible is the nature of his distinctiveness from the worldly and concerns the question of truth rather than actuality. This in its turn sets the divine and the worldly in a particular relation with particular understandings of the image of God and of the world. Ultimately, it also directs theological enterprise to its proper settings.

Finally, the already mentioned essay *Martin Luther and Ontology* by Dennis Bielfeldt will be mentioned briefly. Bielfeldt’s initial conclusion is that Luther’s work shows ontological and semantic convictions, clearly concerned with the question of Being and that the Finnish Luther research has highlighted such motifs. Bielfeldt’s presentation involves how a history of ideas perspective as well as semantics, are decisive for understanding Luther’s relation to metaphysics and ontology. Through these critical perspectives, Bielfeldt aims to give an account for Luther’s place in the metaphysical tradition.

**I:VII Method.**

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28 Bielfeldt, 2016.
29 Bielfeldt, 2016.
The study forehand is mainly of a thematic, history of ideas and history of philosophy character. It reaches into material that has treated Luther’s theology as prime sources. Some passages will present quotes from Luther’s texts. This puts the thesis in the hermeneutical tension that Gadamer identifies as awareness of the phenomenology of works of history.30

Reading is a movement within history, via the reader identity. In the case of this thesis, the study objects are research on Luther, which means that historical and contemporary factors affect the work in several layers.

Hermeneutically, this holds different interpretative approaches. To be able to talk at all of Luther, metaphysics and ontology, the work must involve awareness of the conceptual development of metaphysics and ontology throughout history. The conceptual clarification and its dynamics regarding origin, demarcation lines and appliance has been developed and will follow through the work through the different theoretical sources. These are expected to be more or less explicit about their own definitions and challenges thus appear through reading, since interpretations of Luther’s relation to the philosophical enterprises and whether he is performing such work differ. The definitions at hand will be taken in consideration in the analytic work, providing a history of philosophy edge.

This interpretive approach also involves awareness of different apprehensions of structural characteristics of Luther’s theology. His works have mostly been understood as non-systematical that originated from certain circumstances. They treated themes and issues that shaped the works. This has mostly generated the opinion that Luther was a polemic and it affects the possibility to speak of him as systematic. Luther scholarship has thus treated themes such as sin, salvation, grace, faith and their interaction and scholars have discussed thought structures in Luther’s works. The doctrine of justification is usually appreciated as such a structure or a hermeneutical principle that a considerable amount of research has centered itself around. Luther research does, in Bernhard Lohse’s opinion, carry an emphasis on a Reformation breakthrough with the doctrine of justification at the center, but he poses the question if that means that other aspects should be sorted in under this systematics or if the doctrine is to be considered ultimately concerned with the theme of salvation as center.31

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classification of these kinds of structural elements affects the task of this thesis, since they are theoretical material for Luther research which is the material for this study.

Different interpretive steps will be undertaken in the thesis. First, a presentation will be made of the arguments of Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen for understanding Luther’s doctrine of justification as ontological and how they perceive Luther’s relation to these questions, taking their definitions of metaphysics and ontology in consideration. Their research focused on the doctrine of justification and themes that Luther treated as part of his own time. Their arguments will be extracted and this implies a descriptive but also selective approach. A summary of constructive aim will be presented in a conclusive paragraph. Further, a widened historical reading will be undertaken, presenting a history of ideas synopsis of the philosophical landscape where Luther’s doctrine is developed from Heiko Augustinus Oberman’s essays “‘IUSTITIA CHRISTI’ AND ‘IUSTITIA DEI’. LUTHER AND THE SCHOLASTIC DOCTRINES OF JUSTIFICATION” and “Luther and the Via Moderna: The Philosophical Backdrop of the Reformation Breakthrough”. This will accomplish an expanded and inverted perspective of how the philosophical and theological landscape girdled Luther’s development of doctrine and its themes, including showing his relationship to metaphysical and ontological issues. Finally, a presentation of how Luther’s theology was thematically and doctrinally developed over time in a history of ideas perspective will be made by reading Alister McGrath’s Luther’s Theology of the Cross. Martin Luther’s Theological Breakthrough, in order to show an extended historical development from the identification of Luther’s theology of the cross. Altogether, these analytic steps incorporate systematical and historical interaction on several levels, in order to trace apprehensions of touchpoints that Luther had with metaphysics and ontology and if and how his theology showed such elements, from several angles.

Luther studies can be structurally divided into systematical and historical-genetic approaches, according to theologian Bernhard Lohse. As he concludes, we should perhaps not readily

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remain in either such distinction, but see that they make distinct structural layers that complement each other in reading.\textsuperscript{35} Luther’s mainly refutative and polemic aims should hold possibilities to view them as coinciding in research approaches, one not excluding the other.

The connection between Luther and ontology is acknowledged by theologian Dennis Bielfeldt. He affirms the relevance of the ontological understanding of Finnish scholarship and a need of an overarching meta-perspective that problematizes the concepts of metaphysics and ontology from a historical perspective (and in his view their interaction with linguistics in Luther’s theology). Bielfeldt acknowledges the relevance of reading the conclusions of ontology from Finnish researchers in “a broader historical context of Luther’s relation to Aristotle and the late medieval tradition.”\textsuperscript{36} The theoretical material is chosen in acknowledgement of this. Their analytic approaches and pre-suppositions will be presented under the paragraph “Choice of sources”.

The thesis will finally be concluded with a critical, constructive analysis and suggestions for further research on the subject.

Hermeneutical awareness is also a question of pre-suppositions and research identity. To start with, the ignition of the question of this thesis is the relevance of the question of Luther, ontology and metaphysics as a historical and systematical question of Christological significance. The relation is connected in his doctrine of justification that inevitably were decisive in the course of the Reformation and an issue that became the topic in a diversity of positions in contemporary scholarly traditions and in an ongoing dialogue between churches. Ecumenical dialogue is at the present time on the table, since this year 2017 is dedicated to pay attention to the 500 years anniversary of the Reformation. Investigating views on Luther’s relationship to metaphysics and ontology is in the long run a way to expand on the possibilities of such conversation.

A certain reflection concerning research identity calls for a brief conceptual remark. Luther research is often part of or handling closely related identities, such as


\textsuperscript{36} Bielfeldt, 2016, p. 3.
Reformation/Reformatory, Protestant and Lutheran theology. The first general and necessary distinction is between these and Luther’s theology in holding motifs of self-identification and through origin and continuation being part of an ideological complexity. It may seem self-evident that Luther’s theology and these different characters of research are, yet the boundaries between their inner lives can be rather fluent, in the long run not avoiding creating Luther.

The following work will mainly concentrate on Luther research and scholarship, in the particular cases referred to as such. This will take the edge off a normative pretense that the epithet Lutheran theology might implicate. The term Protestant scholarship appears in parts of presentations of theory, as it is used by certain Luther scholars themselves.

I:VIII Choice of sources

The assumption that there is a relation between Luther’s theological enterprise, metaphysics and ontology will determine the choice of theoretical sources such that they are expected to show how we can possibly talk of such a relationship and strengthen the approach. A research synopsis of relevant scholarship has been presented to offer a basic orientation of examples that attend to the question from different angles. The chosen theoretical objects for the study explicitly identify Luther’s own theology as directly relating to metaphysical and ontological questions and that argue ontological structures in it. The more recent work of Haga and Mjaaland will thus not be treated as main sources, since Haga offers a wider perspective that includes Reformation and even Post-Reformation theology. Mjaaland’s study claims that Luther’s hidden God is a metaphysical concept, but with a center of gravity in a political-philosophical application and a reading together with a postmodern philosophical genealogy that strays away from Luther’s works as object for research. The focus in this thesis is on research directly attending to Luther’s theology itself.

The chosen theoretical source for entry into the question is the mentioned research of Mannermaa and Juntunen that had a groundbreaking effect during the last four decades, in Luther research in Finland as well as internationally, since they have explicitly claimed that his theology shows ontological structures. This research has a clear ecumenical source of origin. This aspect is not the main issue of analysis although it pertains to the work in the
thesis, since it makes out a starting point and frames a certain approach. Mannermaa concludes that the relation between justification and divinization had not been examined thoroughly but can be apprehended as interrelated in the understanding of the human’s unification with God through God self and divine justification of the human being. Mannermaa argues that these kinds of conclusions can be drawn from what he calls a mainstream Lutheranism, but the focus on the doctrine of justification resulted in a one-sided, forensic understanding as the characteristic of Lutheranism. He further concludes that Luther agreed with the fundamental, Christological formulations of Athanasius and accentuated these. This kind of articulation of Mannermaa provides the groundwork for his appreciation of Luther’s doctrine of justification as ontological and displays the ecumenical approach.

Concerning the sources in the third chapter, Oberman and McGrath, these have different orientation regarding for instance their views on forensic understandings of justification in Luther. The main point is not to argue for or against such understandings, but to identify the larger structures of the history of ideas context and Luther’s points of contact to his contemporaries as well as the processual development of his theology and its relation to metaphysical and ontological issues.
II Understanding ontology in Luther.

In the following section, a presentation of the work of the two chosen researchers that address the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology and claims his theology as having ontological structures will be made. Preceding this is an introduction of Gerhard Ebeling’s understandings of Luther and ontology in order to function as background.

II:1 Ebeling and relational ontology.

The diverging opinions of the relationship between Luther, ontology and metaphysics are mainly divided between two research traditions concerning the doctrine of justification. These are often generalized and in some sense contrasted against each other as “German” and “Finnish” Luther research. The latter have, as we have seen, made more explicit claims of ontological structures in Luther and will therefore be presented more thoroughly in order to clarify themes and arguments. As an example of the former standpoint, a shorter presentation of the standpoint of German theologian Gerhard Ebeling will be made as a background. The excerpt is from the English translation of his “Luther’s Wirklichkeitsverständnis”, originally from Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 90 (1993).37 For this thesis, the essay is considered a relevant source to understand some main features in Ebeling’s apprehension of Luther’s theology as treating ontological problems by making it a theological concern. It is, as he himself declares: “a collection of fruit, which I have harvested from more than sixty years of association with Luther’s theology.”38 It should be mentioned that the essay was produced after the theoretical developments of the Finnish researchers.

Ebeling too points out that the term ontology appears later than the enterprise as such, considered originating in Aristotle’s methodology of “determination of the basic principles of existence abstracted from the individual, considered purely as such, with the question about existence in general.”39 He maintains that Luther is involved in these issues but that he re-orient them and their conceptual statuses towards the theological context. Scripture is his main source for speaking of philosophy and thus exegesis as foundation for making theology

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37 Ebeling, Gerhard, “Luther’s Understanding of Reality”, Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. XXVII, 2013. The reference to the German original article is mentioned in the introduction by Scott Celsor.
38 Ebeling, 2013, p. 72.
39 Ebeling, 2013, p. 57.
(particularly through the character of the Hebrew language). Thus, the ontological problem for Luther, according to Ebeling, is “the question of genuine theology.” The fundamental question is the biblical understanding of reality. This results in a reading of conceptual re-working of inherited terminology. Ebeling points out that Luther not only relates to the ideas of Aristotelian ontology, but clearly uses them, however transforming them to suit another context.

Ebeling presents Luther’s relational ontology through how he reorients some specific issues through the Biblical understanding. The question of substance turns from enduring, natural, inner essence to the external quality of things that their existence relies upon. However, this factor is determined by one’s disposition, that is, towards where the person turns in trust. Faith is the ground that ensures the basis of life. Further, the prominence that intellect is entitled in Aristotle is not formulated as univocal in the Scripture. It is on the one hand in likeness of fides, and on the other sometimes disposed as a counterpart to it. It is thus not static, but determined in relation to where it is directed. The determination of grace contrasts against that of natural intellect. The spiritual intellect is oriented towards the hidden and the person is thus in movement between the different states. Ebeling further argues that there is a linguistics that shifts gravity by implying a state of events, rather than being. A verbal interpretation of substantives, a causative description of God’s being turns divine virtue from forming quality towards focus on the power of act and pronouncements of judgement. There is intimacy between the cognitive and the causative aspect such that certain existence and facts need being recognized to be an event. The significance of the iustitia Dei in Luther is by Ebeling understood as maintained by the idea of judgement, depending on imputation, rather than inner quality. The gift of God’s righteousness contrasts in Luther against the punitive righteousness of philosophy. Ontological treatments of Luther by means of exegesis, turns perspectives from that which is and endures in itself (qualitates and quidditates), turning away from the present state of things. The biblical understanding of reality thus provides the transformational possibility, faith-oriented such that reality is a question of struggle between belief and a ratio of self-justifying unbelief. Luther’s reorientation overall means a turn from constitutional sustaining of the created towards the nature of inner essence as a relational

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40 Ebeling, 2013, p. 62.
41 Ebeling, 2013, pp. 57, 59.
mode, in Ebeling’s opinion. Thus, the key-words for understanding Luther’s ontological shift have to do with external reliance, spiritual information by otherness and hiddenness. The philosophy of metaphysics with its endurance of things in their “present-ness” is altered towards the “sighing expectation” of becoming, in Ebeling’s opinion different from the fundamentals of metaphysics where philosophy’s principles of existence are only limitedly able to consider creation.43

In Ebeling’s opinion, the coram perspective of Luther is the characteristic difference between traditional ontology and Luther’s agenda. It holds a multi-dimensionality of existence that differs from traditional ontology’s inadequacy to include the world, the other, judgement and eschatology that “creates a process of existential awareness”44; in the view of self and others as well as before God. The concept of God thus expands from theoretical nature towards eschatological dimensions of everyday reality, a counterpart of fear, longing and unpredictability. This understanding in Ebeling shows that Luther’s ontological turn inhabits the worldly and eschatological at the same time, as different realities of the word of humanity and the word of God. The ontology of the divine Word originates in the judgement and the language in human terms is not analogous to speech about the Word of God. It is a coinciding of Word and faith, an event that had profoundly affects the situation of the soul. There is thus from Ebeling’s point of view a dissimilarity between human language on reality and the divine Word that is a speech-act of the creator, deeply concerning being. Ontologically, the theology of Luther also displays a stronger emphasis on distinctions than scholasticism. Apart from how the distinctions run differently in Luther (not only logically oriented) - epistemologically and soteriologically in such terms of cognition, eschatology and sustenance that Ebeling’s understanding center around – they are of vital concern for understanding grace, salvation and the unio overall. Ebeling argues that Scholastic distinctions mainly occur as natural-supernatural, human – divine nature, etcetera, but for Luther differentiation runs through existence itself and does not contradict the understanding of unio, these rather presuppose and intensify each other, concretized in a situation of struggle.45

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42 Ebeling, 2013, p. 62.
43 Ebeling, 2013, pp. 60ff, 63f.
44 Ebeling, 2013, p. 64.
45 Ebeling, 2013, pp. 59, 63ff, 66ff, 69.
The turn that this theology provides does not according to Ebeling, let itself be captured by understandings such as real-ontological. This would imply a turn back to traditional understandings of ontological principles for understanding reality. Instead, the radical turn consists in Luther’s definition of *personhood*. The turn is effectuated by his anthropology, yet not equalized to this. It implies a development of the understanding of personhood as *persona* and *conscientia*, thus joining the subject of the word of God together with the apprehension of spirit in the heart. The *persona* in Luther inhabits the idea of primacy of person over work, that is, God’s acceptance of the person and faith’s union of the human and Christ to one person. This differed from the earlier application of *persona* to the doctrine of Trinity and Christology and the *conscientia* (referring to both consciousness and conscience) as the potentialities of the human soul. The ontological shift is argued by Ebeling as a consequence of the relationship of Word and faith and the aspects tied to the *coram* perspective that ultimately places the human outside of self, in what Ebeling frames as an *ontological intention* of Luther’s.⁴⁶

Following this summary of Ebeling’s view on Luther and ontology is a thorough presentation of the Finnish researchers Mannermaa and Juntunen.

**II:II The real-ontic understanding of Finnish Luther scholars Mannermaa and Juntunen.**

In the following, we shall look into the recent Luther research that claims that faith in Luther shows ontological structures. It has provided a real-ontic understanding of Luthers doctrine of justification and thereto a reflection on his relation to metaphysics.

The presentation forehand is referential and of a selective character as well, presenting themes and arguments that the researchers Tuomo Mannermaa and Sammeli Juntunen advocate. These arguments are considered as a tool for understanding the question of Luther, ontology and metaphysics. Their research is a theoretical instrument as well as object. Their conclusions will in that spirit be put to scrutiny as to how they *contribute* to understanding Luther in ontological terms.

⁴⁶ Ebeling, 2013, pp. 69ff, 72.
In the recent forty years, Luther scholarship has been said to make a decisive turn through Finnish research on Luther’s doctrine of justification. Tuomo Mannermaa initiated his research with ecumenical aims in the late 1970’s, to search for notions in Luther that corresponded with the orthodox teachings of *theosis*. Mannermaa and his colleagues reject conclusions of German Luther scholarship that from the definitions of the Formula of Concord mainly had conceived justification in forensic terms, where the believer is forgiven and declared righteous through imputation of the righteousness of Christ. (From this follows the understanding of another status of the believer as free of guilt before God.) Mannermaa argues that justification and sanctification traditionally has been considered as separate such that sanctification is a consequence of justification. This do not adequately address a mystical language of union with God in Luther’s theology. Instead, it makes it difficult to relate his doctrine of justification in particular and Protestant theology in whole, to orthodox teachings.

Through a reading of Luther’s lectures on Galatians, Mannermaa concludes that Luther makes no distinction between God’s gift and being in Christ. Justification should therefore be understood as forgiveness and the divine, reality-altering presence of God’s righteousness, in and through faith since Christ is faith’s *forma*. This is the meaning of Luther’s formula *in ipsa fide Christus adest* (in faith itself Christ is present). Justification on these premises has *real-ontic* implications for the human being. In faith, human *participates* in the divine life. Luther’s notion of *inhabitatio Dei* - God’s indwelling in the believer – is thus analogous to the Orthodox teachings of *theosis*, the divinization of human being.\(^\text{47}\)

Mannermaa defines the foundation of the *theosis* as the *divine life* that

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\text{has been revealed in Christ. In the communion of the church, which is the body of Christ, human beings become participants in this divine life. In this way, they become partakers of the “divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). This “nature” that is, this divine life, permeates their essence like leaven, restoring it to its own original state.}\(^\text{48}\)
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In patristic thought, the idea of divinization was depicted via Hellenistic ontology and held notions of both a corporeal, physical relationship with God as well as an ethical within an ontology of *union of being*. German Luther scholars made a separation between

\(^{47}\) See Mannermaa, 2005, in its whole and specifically the introduction, pp. xiii, xvi, 1, 3ff, 7f.
\(^{48}\) Mannermaa, 2005, p. 2
bodily/ontological aspects and ethical/personal in the relation between human and divine, due to assumptions of a necessity to keep them categorically separated. The fullness of participation in the divine life - the divinization, theosis - has therefore according to Mannermaa been misunderstood in the Protestant tradition.⁴⁹

The editor of the English translation of Mannermaa’s work describes his intention as putting such “pre-existing assumptions and categories aside”⁵⁰, since the interpretations consequently had “started from wrong philosophical premises.”⁵¹ Due to Kantian and neo-Kantian influences on German scholarship, the scholars rejected ontological dimensions and notions of being in Luther’s theology. Mannermaa on the other hand argues that Luther’s inhabitatio Dei and its analogy with theosis implied ontological structures. Regarding Luther’s doctrine, this depended on a connection between Christology, justification and faith.⁵²

In addition to this kind of traditional, doctrinal study of justification in Luther, the Finnish researcher Sammeli Juntunen has gone out for a more explicit ontological analysis while lifting the challenges in this. He points out that Luther himself did not deal directly with the question of structures of being. This, together with the mentioned German analytic positions, has according to Juntunen given rise to opinions of Luther’s theology as anti-metaphysical or anti-ontological. Germans Ebeling and Joest interprets Luther’s view on the relationship between God and human in existentialist-relational terms. It is based on external relations as Luther is claimed to have abandoned the Aristotelian substance-metaphysics for a relational ontology, where he re-oriented traditional metaphysical concepts, giving them new meaning in an existentialist tenor. Faith is generally understood as a meeting point of divine and human wills and not something that could be considered as being. Justification thus brings a new self-understanding to human existence, understood as a relation to God that mainly has ethical consequences – what Juntunen calls a personalist understanding. Mannermaa and Juntunen mainly agree that Luther’s theology has an anti-metaphysical character as far as his relation to scholastic theology is concerned, only in a different sense and on other premises. The Finnish scholars acknowledged a different view on the nature of love and the relation

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⁴⁹ Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 1f.
⁵² Mannermaa, 2005, Editor’s Introduction, pp. xiv, 1, 7f, 18.
between faith, love and grace in Luther. They understand this as a criticism that Luther leveled against the scholastic *fides caritate formata* (faith informed by love) schema.\(^53\) We shall return to this further on in the thesis.

*II:III The concepts real-ontic, ontology and metaphysics.*

Sammeli Juntunen does not to a wider extent develop conceptual clarifications of the terms *real-ontic* or *ontology*. In the original edition of Mannermaa’s work, the Finnish term used for describing the understanding of justification is *onttinen*. In the German edition, it is translated into *real-ontisch*. The English translations of this would according to the editor be *real-ontic*, or *ontic*. However, in the process of editing, the term *ontological* is used after consulting Mannermaa. The editor comments that his work does not clarify the relation between *ontic* and *ontological* and that Mannermaa is aware that the latter term is ascribed certain meaning within traditional metaphysics. The term *ontological* in Mannermaa refers to “the reality of things and events.”\(^54\) His work is described as follows:

> The radical nature of Mannermaa’s thesis, as with Luther’s theology itself, has to do most of all with “reality talk”. That is, how do we, and how does Luther, talk about what “really” happens for and to and in believers in the act of justification and in relation to the Divine? Is it a matter of more than “just words” and belief?\(^55\)

This somewhat frugal clarification perhaps more asserts a distinctiveness from the forensic and ethical understandings of justification that Mannermaa rejects than it provides a clear definition as such in his work. It remains an unanswered question how to more specifically understand *real-ontic* in relation to *ontological*.

In his introduction, Mannermaa argues that he assumes a close liaison in Luther’s theology *between the doctrine of the incarnation* (the Christology of the early church), *faith and justification* as a starting point for his research. Luther’s notion of faith is accentuated in the

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\(^{54}\) Mannermaa, 2005, Editor’s foreword, viii.

\(^{55}\) Mannermaa, 2005, Editor’s Introduction, xi.
II:IV The person of Christ.

Mannermaa apprehends Christ in Luther as the Logos who, as the Lamb of God, took on the form of a slave\(^57\) (forma servi) in his human nature. Through unification with all sinners in his humanity, Christ is bearing all sins of human beings. Christ is a “collective” person also described as the greatest person (maxima persona) in whose nature all sins are immersed and vice versa: whose nature is immersed in all sins of humanity. At the same time, Logos is God. This brings a tension and contradiction to Christ’s person, such that a battle takes place as the divine attributes (life, grace, divine power, righteousness and blessing) fight and overcome human sin in Christ’s self. Christ’s divinity grants the victory: “Christ himself is life, righteousness, and blessing, because God is all this ‘by nature and in substance’ (naturaliter et substantialiter)”.\(^58\) His human nature guarantees that it includes and absorbs humanity’s sin, his divine nature that sin is destroyed.\(^59\) Mannermaa’s reading of Luther’s apprehension of the person of Christ thus shows how different aspects come together in a relation of mutuality, while at the same time transcending mutuality in a form that enables that God, in Christ destroys sin and gives life in (him)self.

Mannermaa’s understanding of the person of Christ in Luther’s theology also includes the notion of Christ as gift, God’s giving of self. Justification is not only God’s favor, God’s “attitude” towards human being, or the removal of God’s wrath and forgiveness. Justification is also - in the nature of a gift - the righteousness of faith in and through faith in Christ, that himself is righteousness. The person of Christ is donum – the gift - God’s giving of the divine essence that grants life.\(^60\) Person and act are being.

II:V The nature of faith.

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\(^{56}\) Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 7f.

\(^{57}\) Since Mannermaa uses the term slave, this is the term reproduced, even if it seems reasonable to use the term servant as well.

\(^{58}\) Mannermaa, 2005, p. 17. Mannermaa’s reference to Luther is from the Lectures on Galatians (1535), LW 26:282. WA 40/1:441, 19-20.

\(^{59}\) Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 13ff

\(^{60}\) Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 19ff.
Mannermaa’s understanding of the nature of Christ in Luther points further to how faith in Luther’s texts is understood in an ontological manner by Mannermaa. In his view, Luther considers faith as that which communicates the divine attributes to the human being, because Christ is really present in faith, indeed is the form of faith. Thus faith is described as that which grants human being part in the divine life and includes her in the victory won by Christ. Faith is victory in that it intimately unites the believer with the victorious Christ, the form of faith and the gift. According to Mannermaa, faith not only grants the reception of forgiveness of sins, but furthermore is a real participation in the divine life. Luther’s notion of faith cannot be correctly apprehended if Christ is regarded an object of faith

[---] as any item can be an object of human knowledge. Rather, the object of faith is a person who is present, and therefore he is, in fact, also the “subject”. Luther says that Christ is the object of faith, but not merely the object; rather, “Christ is present in the faith itself” (in ipsa fide Christus adest).61

Mannermaa argues that this subjectivity of the object of faith is the reason for appreciating the real presence of Christ in faith. He further quotes Luther’s Latin text where the notion of objectum fidei is found, that describes this:

Sic ut Christus sit objectum fidei, imo non objectum, sed ut ita dicam, in ipsa fide Christus adest. (Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself.)62

This strengthens Mannermaa’s emphasis on Luther’s apprehension of Christ as the “form’ (actuality; Seinswirklichkeit) of faith”.63

Mannermaa refers to Luther’s idea that faith in the core of the doctrine of incarnation - in the divinity and humanity of Christ - is faith in the overcoming of sin and renewed life. The gift of Christ is realized for the human being in faith such that the believer is no longer in sin and death, but in divine life. This notion of Christ as both God’s favor and gift is articulated by Luther in a sermon in his Church Postil. Mannermaa argues that it connects the removal of

62 Mannermaa, 2005, p. 9. The sentence is found in English in an excerpt later in Mannermaa’s text, in a larger passage on p. 27. The original Latin quote is from Lectures on Galatians, (1535), LW 26:129-30, WA 40/1:228, 27-229, 32.
God’s wrath through favor and grace with the *participation* in the fullness of divine life that God’s indwelling in the believer brings:

[---] das wir auch Goetlicher natur teilhaffig werden sollen und so hoch geadelt, das wir nicht allein durch Christum sollen von Gott geliebet werden, sein gunst und Gnad als das hohest, tewrest Heilighumb haben, sondern jn, den Herrn selbs, gantz in uns wonend haben, [---].64 (My italics.)

The English quote reads

[---] that we are to become participants in the divine nature and be exalted so highly in nobility that we are not only to become loved by God through Christ, and have His favor and grace as the highest and most precious shrine, but also to have Him, the Lord Himself, dwelling in us in His fullness.65

Mannermaa refers to further passages where the nature of faith in Luther is depicted as believing and knowing Christ, extinguishing sin and death:

To the extent that Christ rules by His grace in the hearts of the faithful, there is no sin or death or curse. But where Christ is not known, these things remain. And so all who do not believe lack this blessing and this victory. “For this”, as John says, “is our victory, faith”.66

Therefore a Christian, properly defined, is free of all laws and is subject to nothing, internally or externally. But I purposely said, “to the extent that he is a Christian” (not “to the extent that he is a man or a woman”); that is, to the extent that he has his conscience trained, adorned, and enriched by this faith, this great and inestimable treasure, or, as Paul calls it, “this inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15), which cannot be exalted and praised enough, since it makes [people] sons [and daughters] and heirs of God. Thus a Christian is greater than the entire world. For in [one’s] heart [one] has this seemingly small gift; yet the smallness of this gift and treasure, which [one] holds in faith, is greater than heaven and earth, because Christ, who is this gift, is greater.67 (My italics.)

64 Mannermaa, 2005, p. 99. The quote in German is from Luther’s *Cruciger’s Sommerpostille*, (1544), WA 21:459, 11-22, found in “notes to chapter one”.
65 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 20f.
67 Mannermaa, 2005, p.20. The translation is an excerpt from Luther’s lectures on the Galatians, *LW* 26:134, WA 40/1-.235, 26-236, 16.
This is how Luther’s apprehensions of faith according to Mannermaa instantly relate to the Christology of the early church, since faith and Christ essentially belong together. This means that in Luther’s theology justification and the communication of attributes are two expressions and sides of one and the same event.\(^{68}\) Mannermaa’s depiction of faith’s nature as ontological (the form of Christ) seems interwoven with epistemological and existential connotations whereas a person in faith is a Christian such that what is called conscience is profoundly affected and bears a certain knowledge that leads to liberation.

Accordingly, Mannermaa reads that for Luther it is urgent that the article of justification must be understood such, that justification of the human being takes place only through faith in Christ, not by own action. It is the gift - *donum* - that guarantees the real union between Christ and human being.\(^{69}\) The Christ reality in the nature of a gift guarantees the exclusion of other means for salvation and this realization of being is set over and against other, granting participation in the divine.

The idea of Christ as the *form of faith* is developed further by Luther in his Lectures on Galatians. The following passage is referred by Mannermaa:

> But we substitute that love for faith. And while they say that faith is the “monogram”, mere initial letters, but love is its living colors and completion, we say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and informs faith as color does the wall. Therefore Christian faith is not an idle quality or an empty husk in the heart, which may exist in a state of mortal sin until love comes along to make it alive. But if it is true faith, it is a sure trust and firm acceptance in the heart, which takes hold of Christ. Christ is namely the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our actual “formal righteousness” is not a love that informs faith; but is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, *trust in a thing we do not see, in Christ*, who is present although He cannot be seen at all.

> Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ. But how he is present – this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said. Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present,

\(^{68}\) Mannermaa, 2005, p.22.

\(^{69}\) Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 16ff, 19f.
in that very cloud of faith. This is the actual, formal righteousness on account of which a
man is justified; it is not on account of love, as the sophists say. In short, just as the sophists
say that love forms and fulfills faith, so we say that it is Christ who forms and fulfills faith
or who is the form [actus; Seinswirklichkeit] of faith. Therefore the Christ who is grasped
by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which
God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life. Here there is no work of the Law, no
love; but there is an entirely different kind of righteousness, a new world above and beyond
the Law. For Christ or faith is neither the Law nor the work of the Law.70 (My italics.)

Mannermaa argues that for Luther, the forma of Christ contradicts definitions of faith as a
supposition of the soul, since Christ is fullness of being.71 In this full reality, for human in the
mystery of faith, Christ is present yet invisible. Christ in Luther, as appreciated by
Mannermaa, is impossible to grasp in concrete ways such as by sight of the eyes. What
appears from Mannerma’s reading is a reality of fullness, although present in the limitations
of the human existence and cognition, thus apprehensible in paradoxical ways.

Mannermaa argues that Luther’s view on the law and righteousness of the law clarifies faiths
relation to Christ’s nature further, since the law cannot make a human righteous. On the
contrary, the law produces a weakness in the consciousness of the human being. The law
belongs to the world, the old Adam, the flesh, according to Luther.72 Mannermaa’s
accentuation of this idea in Luther displays a dependence on an aspect of reality that seems to
assert only a false sense of security. When the domain of the law and its reality is set against
the reality of faith in Christ, contrasts appear in the shape of epistemological concretizations
for the human.

Since Christ himself is really present in faith (in ipsa fide Christus adest), salvation according
to Mannermaa’s interpretation of Luther, is thus to be understood as a real participation in
Christ. Luther’s concept of justifying faith and the indwelling of Christ are inseparable.73
Mannermaa’s setting of these doctrines proposes an understanding of being and reality in
Luther with a complex, multifaceted structure of act, person and being; divine and human.

71 Mannermaa, 2005, p. 28.
72 Mannermaa, 2005, p. 33f. In an excerpt from Lectures on the Galatians (1535), LW, 26:404.
73 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 16-22.
Mannermaa on Luther’s doctrines as criticism against his contemporaries.

The thematic analysis of Mannermaa also points further to certain structures in Luther’s teachings of justification that are displayed in a criticism against his contemporaries. This is a substantial part of Mannermaa’s analysis: the conclusion that justification has ontological implications clearly involves the question of Luther’s relation to metaphysics. More specifically, Mannermaa argues that Luther’s doctrines are a critique of certain ideas in scholastic theology. He exemplifies with Luther’s rejection of the fides caritate formata (faith informed by love) structure and his repositioning of the theological issues involved.  

Mannermaa shows that Luther opposes the fides caritate formata and presents an alternative understanding of the relation between faith and love and implies a criticism in Luther against how the scholastic notion of God as the Unmoved Mover, a transcendent and infinite Being in relation to creation, sets human being in an upwards striving movement and position. The power that makes this journey of strife possible is, according to the scholastics, love. Love inspired by grace was the formal cause (forma), the divine reality that informed faith (materia) and graced the motion (gratia infusa) whereby the human being was enabled to achieve the correct relation to God, reaching and rising towards the divine. Faith’s role is to inform the human being about possible objects for love, but faith would be still and lifeless without this elevated love inspired by grace. Mannermaa describes the scholastic view of faith as truth criteria of something beyond rational knowledge and thus included in the domain of the intellect, yet logically uncertain.  

Further, Mannermaa elaborates how the scholastic notion of infused love changes the human love from a corrupt love for the world to love for God, such that “human beings can find the right order of love, and perform works that are free from corrupt love for the worldly and in accordance with love for God. By these works they can be saved, that is, reach God.” The relationship with God is thus realized “with the help of the human being’s tendency (tendentia) – namely, the will, or the e-motio, that is, love.”

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75 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 23 f.
77 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 23f.
Mannermaa argues that Luther strongly opposed the theological anthropological consequences of the *fides caritate formata* position. Firstly, this means that the relation between faith and love in this structure puts the *human love* (even if infused by the reality of grace) as *locus* for salvation. In Mannermaa’s reading, Luther does not deny the form of grace as true righteousness and divine reality intimately connected with the Christian’s being. It is the emphasis on love as the reality of salvation that he opposes, since this elevated love still substantially remains human. The scholastic notion of infused grace regards it a *habitus* or accident attached to the human being’s substance as a quality, such that human love substantially exists in itself. Mannermaa argues that Luther does not regard grace as an inherent quality that reinforces human love to be the axis in a true relationship with God and thus in salvation. Instead, grace is *substance*, divine reality in Christ, divine being in itself. This is in Mannermaa’s opinion a notion in Luther of real righteousness of the Christian in faith, it remains God’s own righteousness with respect to essence, yet at the same time in the human being: “Christ *in nobis* is Christ *extra nos.*”\(^78\) (“Christ in us is Christ outside of us”)

Another consequence of the *fides caritate formata* position that Luther according to Mannermaa rejects is that if human love thus is the fundament for salvation, it is still the domain of the law that regulates the human being’s relationship with God, through the human being’s movement towards God. For Luther, it is Christ that is the righteousness of human beings before God (*coram deo*). In Mannermaa’s opinion, Luther’s alternative, *Christus forma fidei* (Christ is the form of faith) - results in a paradigm shift where Luther rejects the *fides caritate formata* and teaches *fides Christo formata*. Christ’s self is present in faith: *in ipsa fide Christus adest*.\(^79\)

In describing Christ in terms of *forma*, Luther relates to a metaphysical language and Mannermaa carefully commentates this. He accentuates how Luther motivates this kind of philosophical language in his theological developing how the human being becomes a new person as Christ lives in the believer, because it is the proper way to express spiritual relations. With reference to Paul, Luther speaks of the believer as a new person and Mannermaa apprehends an understanding of a new self:

\(^78\) Mannermaa, 2005, p.24f.
\(^79\) Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 25f.
“Not I, but Christ lives in me.” Christ is my “form,” which adorns my faith as color or light adorns a wall. (This fact has to be expounded in this crude way, for there is no spiritual way for us to grasp the idea that Christ clings and dwells in us as closely and intimately as light or whiteness clings to a wall.)

This union - *unio personalis* – centers the ontological dimension of justification, where *participation* in faith enables the transferring of attributes and the overcoming of sin, the *communicatio idiomatum*. Mannermaa argues that Luther’s use of the *unio* is usually found in his polemics against the scholastic notion of justification. It is therefore to be considered of vital meaning in his theology. In Luther’s words, through faith the believer and Christ are completely joined together (even into the flesh). Faith is thus

> no idle quality; but a thing of such magnitude that it obscures and completely removes those foolish dreams of the sophists’ doctrine – the fiction of a “formed faith” and of love, of merits, our worthiness, our quality, etc.

Mannermaa concludes that Luther accentuates the union with Christ in faith to argue a new person, a new reality and life in a new order, apart from the dominion of the law. He argues that the divinization of *unio* in Luther is complete in contrast to the *fides caritate formata* position that only leads to partial and incomplete divinization through upwards human movement towards transcendence and defines faith as accident. It rests upon Greek ontology and its notion of striving love. Mannermaa holds that Luther aspires to show another movement, the divine *agape*-love that *descends* to human being and is present in the human in all its fullness.

Faith makes the *unio* possible and real, faith is God’s presence in Christ, “in faith the human being becomes ‘God’, not in substance but through participation.”

Mannermaa emphasizes that the divergence of Luther’s apprehension of faith as a real participation in Christ offers another view on sin and salvation:

> [---] On the other hand, according to philosophy and reason, sin, death, etc., are not present anywhere except in the world, in the flesh and in sinners. For the theology of the sophists is

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82 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 39ff, 42.
83 Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 43ff.
84 Mannermaa, 2005, p. 42.
unable to consider sin any other way except metaphysically, that is: “A quality clings to a substance or a subject. Therefore just as color clings to a wall, so sin clings to the world, to the flesh, or to the conscience. Therefore, it must be washed away by some opposing motivations, namely by love.” But the true theology teaches that there is no more sin in the world, because Christ, on whom, according to Is. 53:6, the Father has laid the sins of the entire world, has conquered, destroyed, and killed it in His own body. Having died to sin once, He has truly been raised from the dead and will not die anymore (Rom. 6:9). Therefore wherever there is faith in Christ, there sin has in fact been abolished, put to death, and buried. But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains.\textsuperscript{85}

The apparent usage of metaphysical concepts has been touched upon. Mannermaa claims that Luther makes a “translation” of them into spiritual meaning of justification and divinization with a renewed structure: the relationship between faith and works is the same as that between the divine and human nature in Christ: “Christ is the form that informs works, that is, becomes incarnate in them. [---] According to Luther, faith is ‘form’ and works are ‘matter.’”\textsuperscript{86} In Mannermaa’s line of thought, these ontological structures make the relation between justification, sanctification and divinization less apart in Luther. He claims that there are no such distinct differences in Luther’s theology. The human being that unites with Christ through faith is thus described as a divine human being, according to Mannermaa.\textsuperscript{87} In this understanding of Mannermaa, Luther’s argumentation concerns an ambition to conceptually make a shift of center of gravity, from the worldly and the dominion of the law, towards Christ as the centrality of being human.

Mannermaa thus shows a logic in Luther on account of the relationship between faith and works, form and matter as understood within the notion of sanctification. The question of agency concretizes this. Christ is the forgiveness of sins and the agent of good works in the human being. Mannermaa shows how this turn is enabled by the happy exchange of attributes. Christ is for Luther “the true agent of good works in the Christian”.\textsuperscript{88} In faith, the human being lives in the flesh but from Christ which means that human thoughts and deeds originate in Christ. Thus, the life of the human being in faith is a double reality; unified with Christ yet

\textsuperscript{85} Mannermaa, 2005, p. 18, LW 26:285-86, WA 40/1:444, 30-445, 43.
\textsuperscript{86} Mannermaa, 2005, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{87} Mannermaa, 2005, pp. 43, 46, 49.
\textsuperscript{88} Mannermaa, 2005, p. 50.
still remaining in the flesh. This logic does according to Mannermaa involve an understanding in Luther of a difference in ethics between philosophy and theology, since philosophy teaches that human being becomes righteous by performing righteous works and theology holds that the justified are in Christ through faith and as a consequence performs righteous works. The following quote exemplifies Luther’s anthropology of the justified human being:

A theological work is a work done in faith; thus a theological [person] is a [person] of faith. In like manner, a right reason and a good will are a reason and will in faith. Thus faith is universally the divinity in the work, the person, and the members of the body, as the one and only cause of justification; afterwards this is attributed to the matter on account of the form, to the work on account of the faith.  

Mannermaa’s reading of Luther’s centering in a connection between Christ’s person, faith and justification shows an anthropology of a renewed human person, displaying also a new source of action.

He illustrates further Luther’s connection between justification and Christology with the following:

Therefore faith always justifies and makes alive; and yet it does not remain alone, that is, idle. Not that it does not remain alone on its own level and in its own function, for it always justifies alone. But it is incarnate and becomes man; that is, it neither is nor remains idle or without love. Thus, Christ, according to His divinity, is a divine and eternal essence or nature, without a beginning; but His humanity is a nature created in time. These two natures in Christ are not confused or mixed, and the properties of each must be clearly understood. It is characteristic of the humanity to have a beginning in time, but it is characteristic of the divinity to be eternal and without a beginning. Nevertheless, these two are combined, and the divinity without a beginning is incorporated into the humanity with a beginning. Just as I am obliged to distinguish between the humanity and the divinity, and to say: “The humanity is not the divinity, and the man is not God”, so I make a distinction here and say: “The Law is not faith, and yet faith does works. Faith and works are in agreement.

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concretely or compositely, and yet each has and preserves its own nature and proper function.\(^{90}\)

With this quote from Luther, Mannermaa’s view on Luther’s weaving together the incarnate Christ with the human being in metaphysical language of the creeds, an alternate reality is displayed. The realities of the law and Christ are connected in different aspects to faith. The reality of the law is understood not as faith, but faith does works. Mannermaa’s selected Luther texts shows a Christological terminology that is interpreted together with a notion of faith that upheaves the nature of faith as in the *fides caritate formata* structure.

Mannermaa summarizes that a parallelism between Luther’s doctrine of justification and divinization is established in Luther’s view on the analogue constitution of Christ and the believer. Faith becomes incarnate in works, something that Luther calls the *pulchra incarnatio*, the beautiful incarnation. Sanctification in the full meaning - in will and intellect - becomes real and is realized in and through Christ as point of origin.\(^{91}\) From Mannermaa’s reading, Luther’s view on the reality as a divine-human constitution appears as one of close intimacy and reciprocity in faith, although depending on God’s sovereignty.

**II:VII Juntunen on ontology in Luther.**

Beside the theological inquiry of Mannermaa, the Finnish researcher Sammeli Juntunen has contributed to ontological analysis of Luther’s theology in his dissertation *Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523*.\(^{92}\) Some of its main lines are presented in the essay “Luther and metaphysics” in *Union with Christ – The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*.\(^{93}\) The following is a presentation of this.

Like Mannermaa, Juntunen provides a two-way presentation of the question of ontology in Luther. On the one hand, he gives an account of Luther’s approach to metaphysical enterprise

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\(^{90}\) Mannermaa, 2005, p. 53 f. The excerpt is from Luther’s *Lectures on Galatians*, (1535), LW 26: 272-73, WA 40/1:427, 11-24.

\(^{91}\) Mannermaa, 2005, p. 54.


\(^{93}\) Juntunen, 1998. The content of the essay is mainly from the dissertation *Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510-1523*, 1996.
and on the other he presents his understanding of the ontological structures in Luther. However, he accentuates that analytic work on ontology in Luther must take place through reconstruction from Luther’s texts, because of the lack of explicit material on ontological questions in Luther’s writings. It is Juntunen’s understanding that Luther in some respect can be considered anti-metaphysical, however not in the sense of German scholars’ opinions. It is not through a “refusal of the concept of being, but through a certain understanding of love, which is fundamental for his theology.”\(^{94}\)

**II:VIII Juntunen on Luther, metaphysics, theology and philosophy.**

Juntunen offers a brief summary of Luther’s rather complex relation to metaphysics. To begin with, in Juntunen’s opinion, the reason for Luther’s criticism is that the natural human love, the *amor hominis*, is the cause of the metaphysician’s failure to find God, not that God would not be the highest good, the *summum bonum*. He concludes that “Luther does not deny the analogy of being and goodness between God and the world.”\(^{95}\) However, it is a question of what *principle* determines this kind of enterprise. Juntunen finds that Luther considers natural, human love (*amor hominis*) as determinative for the natural man (*homo naturalis*). This love determines the existence and is the motivation for seeking knowledge of the divine. The *amor hominis* creates the reality of the natural human; it is the defining principle of life and act of the worldly person. In that it is also is the hindrance for knowledge of God because of its self-promoting nature. It is a love that seeks and finds what it looks for, out of the needs it aims to fulfill. This makes a quest for knowledge the one of seeking one’s own interests.\(^{96}\) Juntunen’s reading of Luther’s epistemology accentuates how the limitations of human perspective blurs the metaphysicians aim for knowledge of God.

However, in Juntunen’s opinion, Luther could appreciate certain philosophical disciplines without faith as foundation. Some had partly understood the formality of the metaphysical constitution of God and the world, although in the light of the question of fundamental principles, it would in the end be a corrupt way of knowledge. Juntunen however argues that for Luther, the only way to proper knowledge of God is thus through the cross and Christ,


God’s revelation of self. The foundation for this in Luther is the nature of God’s love - *amor dei* - as God’s own essence of purity and self-giving, that is not seeking its own interest but turning to that which is nothing, transforming and renewing its being: “God’s love is creative, it never finds its object as something pre-existent.”  

As such, it is the opposite of human, natural love. Through faith in the loving God, human being’s existence is transformed into a renewed being (*novus homo*) that makes it possible for man to love unselfishly. Juntunen emphasizes that for Luther, a transformation takes place through Christ and the cross, which is God’s revelation of self under conditions and through works that are seemingly contradictory (*opus alienum*) to what usually is apprehended as divine intervention. This breaks up human understandings, destroys the perception and acts of inwardness. Through this work of the divine, God reveals himself in manners that are contradictory to rational, philosophical understandings of the good and gives a new principle of life as a spiritual being through faith in Christ, through the *opus proprium* of divinity. The *amor homini* is destroyed when faith through God’s works is the new principle for the human being.  

This epistemological reading has a centering in the revelation of the cross. Juntunen’s reading of Luther pins it down into a epistemological locus.

As well as Mannermaa, Juntunen acknowledges that Luther was well acquainted with different ontological systems. He considers the importance of philosophical metaphysics as minor and suggests that the question of being for Luther was appropriately understood within a theological context. He argues that Luther was not reluctant to treat the concept of being in theology. Through faith, the human reason was cleansed from the *amor hominis* and it was therefore also important that philosophical concepts were cleansed from their traditional meanings when taken into the service of theological reflection. Juntunen holds that Luther did not “abandon the use of the concept *esse* in the *proprium* of theology.” From this analytic standpoint, Juntunen develops his understanding of Luther’s theological ontology. Besides the fundamental meaning that love has in human existence for Luther (which has implications for the relevance of metaphysics), Juntunen emphasizes that faith – in

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contradiction to German understandings - shows structures of being. This understanding of Luther’s is, as pointed out, mainly theological. The role of metaphysics in Luther is minor even if the Christian can gain some degree of metaphysical understanding when accomplished in faith. Juntunen argues that for Luther it evolves around reason, intellect and knowing through Scripture, when the intellect assumes the divine Word. Juntunen does not therefore speak of Luther and metaphysics, but rather of what structures of being is found in his theology.\(^{101}\)

**II:IX The structures of being in Luther.**

To begin with, Luther makes a distinction between different kinds of being; the *esse naturae* and the *esse gratiae*:

[---]Luther means by *esse naturae* the natural being of a human being in all of its aspects (body, reason, senses, reproduction etc.) *Esse gratiae* is the spiritual being of a Christian in the church. Luther uses the expression “*creatio nova*” to express the birth of this spiritual reality. In *creatio nova* God creates anew the person (who has without this new creation only the *esse naturae*, which is in itself good, but deeply corrupted by sin) and makes this person a part of the “new, spiritual world”, that is, the church.\(^{102}\)

Contrary to the understanding of the German theologian Gerhard Ebeling that considered the *esse naturae* and the *esse gratiae* to be two different modes of self-understanding, Juntunen claims that there is an ontological status to the natural being and the being in grace, who are both dependent on God. For Ebeling, the *coram* perspective meant either a spiritual existence *coram deo* or a carnal, worldly existence *coram mundo*. Juntunen interprets faith in Ebeling not considered as being, but becoming. In Ebeling’s view it is an “‘actualistic’ and external relation, it lacks internal being; that is, it lacks *forma*. A Christian is always on the way to his spiritual *forma*, which is not yet present in him, because he does not receive it until the eschatological fulfillment.”\(^{103}\) Ebeling thus advocates a relational, existential ontology. For

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\(^{103}\) Juntunen, 1998, p. 137.
Juntunen, the existential meaning regards an inner experience tied to a certain philosophical tradition based on self-understanding.\(^\text{104}\)

However, Juntunen argues that Luther has some sense of existential and relational understanding of being, but being has both an extrinsic and an intrinsic aspect. The natural being and the being through grace are relational and extrinsic as well as intrinsic, in their modality of dependence, although not in an analogous way. The dependent being of a person is, according to Juntunen, for Luther defined by a continuous process of creation, creatio continua. It is a creatio ex nihilo, that is, a creation through and by God alone, not only at one moment in time but constantly ongoing and from a nothingness: “Above every created individual [as both esse naturae and esse gratiae] hangs the same nothingness out of which God once created the world and still creates it.”\(^\text{105}\) Juntunen clarifies that this should not be understood as Luther denying that the individual exists, or that the person is nothing. As we have seen, the individual exists in a natural sense. It might however imply that Luther was influenced by Ockham in a rejection of mediating principles in creation. Ockham criticized notions of a natural order and substantial forms as mediators in the process of coming into being. Further, Juntunen argues that this view of the creational process is also the basis for Luther’s critique against the concepts of substantia (substance) and quidditas (essence), that is, that a person has its own principles of existence and a static being in itself.\(^\text{106}\)

The individual is in its existence nothing in and by itself concerning the coming into being, that is, not a static being but dependent on God and God’s gifts, dependent on the divine reality outside the natural being of the human. The principle of human existence is for Luther constituted in reception, according to Juntunen. Contrary to Occam though, Luther does not argue the reality of grace as inherent and accidental in the human substance. The continuing creation is extended into the esse gratiae, and makes the Christian into the likeness of the Son, continuously born of the Father. Similar to this image, human being is always spiritually born again and renewed through sacramental gifts of God. Metaphysically, human existence stands in its dependence opposite to God, whose divine essence is pure, giving and creational love. Juntunen concludes that the foundational principle should be understood as love, since

\(^{105}\) Juntunen, 1998, p. 139.
this is what he understands bears creation for Luther, even though sin has distorted the world.\textsuperscript{107}

As we have seen, Juntunen objects to Ebeling’s opinions of a purely relational ontology that excludes an intrinsic aspect and emphasizes existential understandings on the basis of extrinsic aspects alone. In Juntunen’s opinion, Luther fully embraces apprehensions of relation (even though the implications of Luther’s \textit{relatio} were not thoroughly analyzed by scholars at the time of the essay). Most medieval theologians embraced theories of relation as not only mind-dependent, but owing an extra-mental reality. Relation could be defined as \textit{esse-ad} (“being-toward”) and \textit{esse-in} (“being-in”). For Luther, both the natural being and the being in grace has \textit{esse-ad} and \textit{esse-in} aspects of being, since God always creates, sustains and gives.\textsuperscript{108} Luther’s understanding of relation should therefore not in Juntunen’s opinion be understood as constituted only by an \textit{esse-ad} aspect, that is, in the sense of being in a \textit{towards-orientation}.\textsuperscript{109}

From Juntunen’s understanding, the intrinsic aspect of being as well should be situated within a relational framing. He does not deny such existential, extrinsic aspects of Luther’s theology that Ebeling argues, but sees some distinctions in Luther that are dependent on the ontology of God’s acting in the world. On the one hand, God is the first cause of things and persons therefore only second cause of the works done by them. All acts in creation are thus God’s \textit{acta}, even when produced by creatures. Juntunen understands these \textit{acta Dei} as “actualistic events” for Luther. They are without intrinsic being and have no endurance in themselves. There is an extrinsic dependence of human on God. God is the first cause of what happens in the world. However, persons are the result of God’s \textit{facta}, the creation of \textit{factum}, something that exists and possesses intrinsic being to some degree, although also in that dependent on God. An existing creature is a something and not only an event (as in \textit{causa secundae}).

According to Juntunen, a person in Luther is \textit{factum} both in a natural and spiritual being, not \textit{actus}. A continuing, creational process; an ontological transformation through Christ’s presence in God’s gifts, a creating of something \textit{factum gratiae}, brings forth a new spiritual

\textsuperscript{107} Juntunen, 1998, pp. 138f, 140f.
\textsuperscript{108} Juntunen, 1998, pp. 141, 145 ff,
being, *esse gratiae*. This being in its spiritual relation to God, as well as the natural being, *esse naturae*, (through its relation to God in terms of its *createdness*), for Luther both have their existence dependent on God in the continuing creating process, which in Juntunen’s opinion would mean intrinsic moments in their ontological structure. He understands that it is the nature of *participation* of the *esse gratiae* that particularly clear accentuates how Luther does not regard spiritual reality as something accidental. The spiritual reality is being, a *factura gratiae*.  

Juntunen argues that Luther’s apprehension of the metaphysical idea of *agere sequitur esse* testifies of this; that is, that actions follow being. His understanding of Luther in this respect is that the acts of a transformed, spiritual person through God’s love and faith in Christ will spring from the spiritual existence in its dependence on God. He claims that for Luther, faith is *forma*, a causing of a spiritual being in the believer and not only an existential relation to something outside the believer. In faith, the believer is in a new reality. Faith as *forma* reshapes the entire existence.  

This new reality, framed by the notion of *participation*, is described by Luther in certain human metaphors that allegedly cannot fully contain the reality itself. Juntunen thus further calls attention to how Luther, according to his relationship to metaphysics, uses this kind of language (with reference to the Finnish researcher Simo Peura):

Luther’s metaphors concerning what the new spiritual reality in faith is are always partial and describe only a small aspect of it at one time. When the concepts used in these metaphors tell something of this reality, they at the same time connote many other lines of thought that are to be denied. That Christ is the spiritual *forma* of the Christian, e.g., expresses that Christ is present in believers and causes their entire spiritual existence and is not just an accident in them, just as the *forma substantialis* of each being causes its whole existence according to the normal use of the scheme, where the concept of *forma* appears. But at the same time, though expressing what for Luther are essential aspects of spiritual reality, this metaphor connotes many unacceptable lines of thought, such as that Christ becomes a real part of the very essence of the human person. This is, of course, not true for Luther because Christ, as a divine person who (even when being also totally human) has created the believer, cannot be something that is part of that essence. The possibilities of human language can be stretched a little further by making use of another metaphor:

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Believers have two substances, the human substance and that which is united with it
(though not mingled with it) as a substantial reality in it (this latter is my italics), i.e.,
Christ’s substance (Peura 1994, 228, 238-43). But this metaphor fails because it can bring
to mind some sort of schizophrenic reality that is not Luther’s idea.¹¹²

Juntunen’s reference to Peura strengthens and clarifies his argument that metaphysical
language is used by Luther, but it should be considered catching the substantiality of reality
and not as traditionally equipped philosophical concepts.

Regarding the notion of the believer’s participation in divine life as an ontological reality,
Juntunen holds that Luther’s account of how the esse-in aspect of the esse gratiae implicates
how God’s “creative love is ontologically something more than an event, namely a factura.”¹¹³
(It cannot be interpreted as accidental, in the human nature.) Participation implies that esse is
something that does not come from the participator, but from what the person participates in.
At the time of his essay though, Juntunen urges further analysis of the participation aspect in
relation to the natural being in Luther. He himself leaves it an open question and focuses upon
the being in grace as an expression of the participation in divine life, as spiritual life must be
seen as a reality of factura gratiae and not just as accidental.¹¹⁴

In the last section of his essay, Juntunen makes some closing notes regarding the structures of
esse naturae and esse gratiae in Luther. When it comes to the notion of participation, Luther
positions himself differently from both the theological metaphysics of late Middle Ages that
set the contingent, created esse in a limited form of participation in relation to the esse of the
supreme God and the Occamist non-ontological position where no existing ontological
principles could be found behind the individual substances, but all existence of individual
substance depended on God’s absolute will. When comparing Occam and Luther this way,
Juntunen concludes that thus, for Ockham, the principle of participation had no meaning.
Luther, however, acknowledged the implication of participation, based on divine
omnipresence as the foundation for existence such that all created things would speak of its
creator.

As Juntunen interprets Luther, the life of grace does mean a life of full, spiritual participation in the divine through Christ, whereas natural life implies a participation in divine life by its mere createdness. But despite that there is an analogy between them, they are not univocal. The participation of the natural being is not to be understood as one that causes the divine to unite with the created in the way it does in the being in grace. This also has consequences for the kinds of acts that both of these kinds of being would generate, according to Juntunen. Participation determines the agency of the individual. The person’s unification with God through Christ, the fullness of being that it is and the spiritual actions that emerge, gives a smaller role of the person in the acting than in the natural being. This implies that the spiritual life means a fuller co-operation between God and the individual.¹¹⁵

II:X Conclusions.

Mannermaa’s and Juntunen’s arguments can be sorted into understandings of their contents and character. Starting in the late 70s, Tuomo Mannermaa introduces an understanding of ontology in the through history thoroughly examined doctrine of justification in Luther’s theology. Luther’s doctrinal issues and themes is the foundation for Mannermaa’s theory of ontological structures, to a degree elaborated through its touching points with Luther’s contemporaries.

The methodological approaches of Mannermaa and Juntunen are different, though they both have presented arguments for reading Luther’s theology of faith as showing ontological structures. Juntunen’s quest relies upon the research of Mannermaa, who carries out a thematic, doctrinal analysis of Luther’s texts; searching for interrelating motifs such as faith, Christ’s person, righteousness, justification, participation, union with God, God’s indwelling in and thus deification of human being. This analogy between justification and the orthodox teachings of theosis is a particular axis for Mannermaa’s apprehension of ontology in Luther. Juntunen performs a reconstructive ontological analysis, extracting apprehensions of being in terms of participation, dependence, relationality, question of personhood, in extrinsic and intrinsic features in Luther texts. An unclarity concerning the concepts ontology and metaphysics intermingles with a mixed together usage of being and reality in their readings.

Mannermaa initially suggests that justification by faith is talking of reality, where the reality of things and events are Christologically defined. The modes of being traced by Juntunen are translated from what seems a rather classical metaphysical approach. It depicts in Luther - to borrow a term from a quote of his (from p. 40) - substantial reality of dependence and creation, continuously and *ex nihilo*. The *ex nihilo* is found as metaphysical locus in Juntunen’s reading, when rejecting principles such as substances. The works of the Finnish researchers show that the question of Luther, ontology and metaphysics appears in relation to and through his development of doctrine that at the same time attaches to his criticism of contemporary theology on salvation and anthropology as well as it involves theological method and the relation between philosophy and theology.

Mannermaa’s emphasis on the significance of *the incarnation* in Luther’s theology is the main fundament for understanding reality and being in Luther, displayed to, in and by the human in faith. Mannermaa argues that Luther’s rejection of the *fides caritate formata* structure and the re-formulation *Christus forma fidei* is a Christological centering where the idea of union relies on the notion of Christ as the form of faith. This idea is strengthened by Luther in the genitive of Christ as *obiectum fidei*. The reality of faith is thus intimately connected to Christ’s being, person and gift, Christ’s presence in faith, *in ipsa fide Christus adest*. This enables the *unio* and Mannermaa argues that it is a question of being, since Christ is really present in the believer, causing a fundamental change of the life of the Christian, including the status before God but also involving an inner reality. Here appears an understanding of an ontological locus in Luther that builds upon orthodox Christology, however developed further in relation to the contemporary scholastic notions of the relation between love and faith. An ontology of the person of Christ and the natures of Christ stretches into a reality for the human being in faith, since faith grasps a hold of this. Mannermaa apprehends on the one hand a metaphysics of the Logos structure in Luther and on the other a reality of struggle between the divine and human in the incarnated Christ, as principle, metaphysical foundations for his understanding of Luther’s notion of faith as ontological. Christ as gift assures justification of the human being who in faith is unified with the divine such that God dwells in the Christian. Juntunen’s main claim is that Luther treats the concept *esse* in the *proprium* of theology. From this analytic standpoint, Juntunen develops his understanding of Luther’s theological ontology. Beside the
apprehension that Juntunen has of love’s fundamental role in human existence for Luther, Juntunen a well emphasizes that Luther’s notion of faith shows structures of being, due to a theological foundation that lessens the role of metaphysics in Luther’s theological enterprise, if understood as general metaphysics. Juntunen’s argument of ontology in Luther has a theological framing, centered in Scripture, however preserving the concept of esse.

The researchers identify a rejection in Luther of substance-metaphysics as reality’s fundamental principle that they claim does not necessarily mean that his theology is non-ontological. According to Mannermaa and Juntunen, Luther’s view on reality is not adequately understood in static terms of nature and essence, substance, attributes, etc. Christ is the locus, a reality of the subject that holds several dimensions together. Their reading introduces a tension in Luther, who rejects the intrinsity of natural substances and essences but still, in Juntunen’s opinion, at the same time before God confirms intrinsity of being and reality in God, through the participatio implying a reality of the human more directly dependent upon divine sustenance, a creating that is also soteriologically determined. Reality and realization implies human predicaments and vulnerability as well as fullness, or rather an access to divine fullness, in the union of the dependent, worldly human and God. Mannermaa emphasizes how orthodox divinization, theosis, is analogous to union of being in Luther’s inhabitatio Dei, ontologically, existentially, ethically as well as cognitively. In this, Mannermaa’s depiction of the God-human reality of Luther consists in a paradoxical and mutual reality with God ultimately ensuring salvation. Mannermaa appreciates Luther’s notion of faith as having several aspects in its ontology: faith’s communication of attributes, faith as participation and as unification, ultimately a divine gift. It’s being has epistemological, existential and cognitive connotations. There is however a challenge that appears in Mannermaa’s argumentation, that consists in how the orthodox ecclesiological ontological moment is to some extent lost in his reading. It is not clear from Mannermaa how it finds it counterpart in Luther, or, if this isn’t needed: on what grounds.

If we recall the question of Luther’s relation to ontology and metaphysics from a history of philosophy perspective, the standpoints of mainly earlier German Luther research and the presented interpretations of Mannermaa and Juntunen – besides differences in the understandings of the nature of justification - concur and differ through some fundamental
distinctions. Juntunen’s position that Luther’s theology is anti-metaphysical due to the
epistemological determination of love, while showing ontological structures in the notion of
faith diffracts against German understandings that Luther can be considered as anti-
metaphysical in terms of substance-metaphysics and his theology anti-ontological (or taking a
relational-existential character). What this really means as far as definitions is concerned is a
complex issue, since the presented theory holds a certain lack of such, but also in the face of
fluctuations in the history of philosophy. The work of Mannermaa and Juntunen point to that
Luther apparently, from our contemporary point of view, is relating to what we understand as
metaphysical and ontological issues of his times, thus occupied with structures of logic and
metaphysics. Mannermaa’s depiction of structures of being and the reality of faith is
determined by the doctrinal axis. In Juntunen, the reconstructive analysis rests upon similar
understandings of a reality of participation in faith as in Mannermaa, thus determined by the
doctrinal frame of Luther, but his anthropological, ontological perspective is widened to some
extent, coming to include dependence of the human being both in faith and not.

From an overarching systematic point of view, the closeness between Christology, faith and
justification that Luther accentuates according to the Finnish researchers, points further to a
shift in structure of thought. From Mannermaa and Juntunen we are made aware of an
intimate relation between Luther’s doctrinal issues and his epistemological and
methodological criticism of the structures of the soteriological metaphysics of love and faith.
Juntunen emphasizes Luther’s rejection of metaphysical speculation as foundation for
knowledge of God and points to Luther’s theology of the cross as epistemological locus, not
developing Luther’s fundament in conciliar Christology to the degree that Mannermaa does.
Juntunen’s understanding of Luther’s relation to metaphysics thus has its emphasis on the
epistemological aspect of the event of the cross but does not develop the ontological
possibilities from this locus to the same extent. If an alleged turn takes place through
Luther’s methodological and hermeneutical approach to theology, in that case, what is its
nature? Mannermaa and Juntunen argue that Luther’s doctrine of justification is developed as
a direct rejection of Aristotelian metaphysics. The thematic and reconstructive theology of
Mannermaa and Juntunen depicts what is understood by them in Luther’s theology as being,
of a reality that breaches other philosophies of the human person and subject as being in a
certain relationship with God. Hence, the question of where and how Luther could find a merciful God could itself be a question of being and it approaches us as centered in a classical Christology.

The relation between Luther, metaphysics and ontology can be captured twofold from the reading of Mannermaa and Juntunen; thematic interpretation in the reading of doctrine and reconstructive analysis are determined by a necessity of awareness of the overarching history of ideas perspective of his relation to structures of thought in his times. It is a reasonable argumentation for understanding Luther as dealing with metaphysics and treating ontological issues such that his own theology does display them, although in an altered manner. Searching the premises for speaking of this relation is dependent on understanding his theological enterprise as rather intricate from a structural point of view. In the quest to determine this relation, it is well-served to apply a widened history of ideas perspective to the arguments of thematic and reconstructive character as well as a processual perspective. In the following chapter we shall thus deepen the contextual perspective and further look into Luther’s relation to the theological and philosophical systematical climate of his times.
III Luther, metaphysics and ontology in the historical context.

From the thematically and reconstructively oriented analysis of the Finnish scholars, a question of structure of thought has emerged, accompanying the question of metaphysics and ontology in Luther. This was observed from two perspectives. Mannermaa and Juntunen have acknowledged it both in the shape of pre-suppositions that have affected earlier interpretations of the doctrine of justification (particularly in the mentioned lines of German research). This apparently affects how to understand Luther’s relationship to metaphysical and ontological issues. Further, and more importantly, Mannermaa and Juntunen identified a shift inherent in Luther’s hermeneutics and development of the thought of the doctrine of justification itself, particularly clear in the *fides Christo formata* position (the result of Luther’s rejection of *fides caritate formata* structure). It is therefore useful to expand a bit further on the issue of structures of thought and then attend to the historical and history of ideas settings that more thoroughly can help develop understanding Luther in his time and the issues that he treated in their own settings.

*III:1 Themes, issues and structures of thought in Luther.*

Theologian Daphne Hampson advocates in *Christian Contradictions. The Structures of Lutheran and Catholic Thought*, that it is particularly differences in structure of thought between Lutheran and Catholic theology regarding the doctrine of justification that has made ecumenical conversation difficult.¹¹⁶ Hampson mainly argues that Lutheran theology on justification shows a dialectic structure, while Catholic theology on sin and salvation and its anthropology instead has a linear structure in the understanding of the life of the human being as a *via* of transformation, from creation towards salvation.¹¹⁷ In the words of Hampson, these structures imply a “philosophical underpinning which is present (though rarely articulated).”¹¹⁸ Regardless how the relation between theological doctrines and philosophy might be interpreted, this idea of systematics seem to be of vital concern when reading Luther,

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¹¹⁷ Hampson, 2001, p. 83.

since the production of his works took place in relation to such different theological and philosophical systematics, something that in their turn might have affected his theology.

A similar conclusion of the significance of structures of thought has recently been drawn by the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches themselves in the ecumenical conversation preceding the joint celebration in 2017 of the reformation that has resulted in the report *From Conflict to Union – Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017.*\(^{119}\) The councils’ attention to this is due to an awareness of ecumenical challenges. The report describes how Catholic theologians in the 20\(^{th}\) century began investigating Luther’s theology to trace if and how the same theological ideas could be found in different theological systematics, in particular between Luther and Thomas of Aquinas (considered to be the exemplary theologians for Protestantism and Roman Catholicism). The report points out several difficulties in theological positioning as fundamental for the course of events that led to the break in the Western Catholic Church. It also advocates how academic scholarship, with its strict methods and reflections on its own presuppositions, has been a resource to a correct confessional historiography.\(^{120}\) It is fair to conclude that such differences and their consequences touch upon Luther’s relation to metaphysics in scholastic theology. Councils in the Western churches have drawn the conclusions that the question of differing traditions of thought have played a vital role.\(^{121}\) There is thus a reason for academic scholarship on Luther to examine this issue.

Preferably, this should be accomplished through a history of ideas perspective in order to further examine Luther’s thematic and doctrinal treatment in relation to his contemporaries.

To reconnect to the inquiries raised in the presentation; can further historical, systematical and history of ideas approaches help determine the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology, now through an observation of structures of thought and how Luther relates to these?

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120 The Lutheran World Federation / The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 2013, pp. 17, 24, 37.

121 The Lutheran World Federation / The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 2013, pp. 25ff.
More specifically after the reading of Mannermaa and Juntunen; how is Luther’s doctrinal enterprise tied to the metaphysical and ontological quests of his times, specifically regarding structures in the prevailing theologies that he refutes? Can a look into these relations and how they affect his theology, further reinforce an understanding that Luther actually is doing ontology of some kind, as the Finnish researchers have concluded, or even metaphysics? How can we ask this question without the perspective of Luther’s historical place?

The accomplishment of such clarification will be pursued in three approaches. First, a brief historic presentation of the philosophical and theological climate of his times will be made with the help of Heiko Augustinus Oberman. Second, a reading of an essay of Oberman that argues a certain theological turn in the concept of iustitia, in the heart of doctrine, will in a systematical perspective aim to further illuminate the thematic presentation of the Finnish interpretations and how themes adhere to doctrine, metaphysics and ontology. Third and finally, a presentation of the reading of Alister McGrath with the ambition to illuminate a processual character of Luther’s theological enterprise is made. In this deepened approach, the presentation will take a similar character as the presentation of Mannermaa and Juntunen’s research, being both a theoretical summarizing synopsis as well as a selective analysis of relevant ideas. This will help viewing Luther’s systematic ideas in a historical perspective, circumstances that are carriers of the structures of metaphysics and ontological enterprise and that in its turn will shed light on understanding Luther’s relation to these and how they affect his theology.

III:II Luther’s relation to the Via Moderna.

Luther’s time was one of fluctuant withdrawals and renaissances of ideas and theologies. Historian and theologian Heiko A. Oberman aims to show the complexity of Luther’s relation to particularly the Via Moderna and scholastic theology in his essay “Luther and the Via Moderna: The Philosophical Backdrop of the Reformation Breakthrough”. Opinions that Luther overthrew a reign of Thomistic metaphysics with its reconciliation of philosophy and theology are not unusual. This is, however, an oversimplification in Oberman’s opinion. He claims that in the late Middle Ages, Thomism had mainly already been pushed to the

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122 Oberman, 2003 (pp. 641-670).
background and at its most found certain support preserved within the Dominican order.

Luther’s theology should, according to Oberman, be read with such a paradigm shift in the
back of the mind. A transfer had already taken place; from early scholasticism with its
Thomistic ontology of God as supreme Being and an epistemology of faith-reason
relationship as means for knowledge of the divine, to an ontology of God as Person,
stemming from Francis of Assisi, via Bonaventura and Duns Scotus.123

These ontologies mainly represented different views on how God stood in relation to his
creation. The main features of Thomism rested upon Aquinas’s reading of God’s words in
Exodus in the Vulgate version: ego sum qui sum. This understanding of the nature of God the
supreme being as in the I am what I am, by-passed the promise of I shall be who I shall be of
the covenantal, Hebrew God. Oberman traces a genealogy from Thomas, backwards via
Anselm of Canterbury, to Augustine, Neo-Platonism and Dionysian traditions.124 This
resulted in an ontology of hierarchical relation between heaven, church and creation, where
the worldly is part of the structure of Being and there is an “epistemological conduit between
creatures and their Creator, the so-called analogia entis” (the analogy of being), the idea that
Being applies to two entities, for example God and creation, but not equivalently.125

However, Oberman points out that a concept of God of with a different relation to creation
had been postulated by Francis of Assisi: the Lord God, Dominus Deus. The relation between
creator and the created was that of a personal covenant. Academic works of Bonaventura and
Duns Scotus of this Franciscan heritage contributed to shifting the ontology of God the
Supreme Being to the God as Personal Lord and his action as covenantal, such that God
became person in both his inner being and his act. Consequently, this had its implications for
the role of reason and intellect in relation to faith. In the two centuries after Aquinas’s death,
the discovery grew into a tradition of nominalism, eventually institutionalized in academia as
the Via Moderna, that together with the earlier Via Antiqua with its Thomistic dominance
make up the scholastic tradition, in early and late medieval shapes.126 Oberman does not
apprehend these as clear separate lines. Instead, he maintains that particular circumstances

such as for example secular and clerical aspects and certain doctrinal issues joined together groups and individuals in different inter-sections within them.

Oberman argues that Luther was familiar with the Via Moderna, educated via late medieval nominalists such as William Ockham, Gregory of Rimini, Pierre d’Ailly and Gabriel Biel. Thus Oberman claims that for Luther, the question of the personal, covenantal God that acts in history and with his creation, turned into the God who acts in Christ. The already diminished influences of Thomistic ontology meant that the primary meaning of a Reformation breakthrough for Luther in Oberman’s opinion was one of “learning to spell anew the grammar of theology”\(^\text{127}\), that is, a question of epistemology. There was a rejection of Thomistic philosophy of Being by Luther, but to equal this with a rejection of philosophy as such would be a mistake. Luther’s quest should be apprehended as developing a specific relationship between philosophy and theology.\(^\text{128}\)

Oberman points out how Luther eventually read God’s words in Genesis as \textit{Ich werde sein, der Ich sein werde}. He
too clearly and explicitly targets the whole preceding academic tradition, including Duns Scotus and Gabriel Biel.\(^\text{40}\) At once unfolding and redirecting the Franciscan vision, he confronts that philosophical theology which penetrates the being of God by means of concepts of substance and motion.\(^\text{129}\)

Oberman argues that Luther’s attack on the nominalists should be understood within the Franciscan paradigm. Luther’s contribution is the \textit{theologia crucis}, (the theology of the cross), implicating the God who acts in Christ, who escapes systematic search and contradicts reason in his unpredictability. This was channeled in the rejection of the \textit{theologia gloriae} that Luther considered as an epistemology of hierarchical ontology. Thus, the meaning of Luther’s \textit{contra scholasticos} was the critique of a theology of glory that by speculativ reason bypasses the

\(^{127}\) Oberman, 2003, p. 642.

\(^{128}\) Oberman, 2003, pp. 641ff, 645, 647. On page 645 we read: “How readily a Catholic historian can identify Luther’s rejection of the thomistic philosophy of being with a rejection of philosophy as such may appear from a recent work of the philosopher Kurt Flasch. Further, on page 646-647, Oberman further exemplifies how a reduction of nominalism to Occamism and in particular Occam’s doctrine of justification might risk leading to the notion of Luther’s rejection of a nominalism in whole, where Eberhard Jüngel would be an example, who claims that Luther turns away from his nominalistic heritage as such.

\(^{129}\) Oberman, 2003, p. 654.
person of God to penetrate his being. Luther relocated the axis to a God as Person that in Christ acts in the world and in history.\footnote{Oberman, 2003, pp. 54f.}

When read in relation to this paradigmatic shift, Luther’s rejection of Aristotelian metaphysics applied more specifically to the epistemological relation between philosophy and theology, in Oberman’s opinion. This in its turn lead to a change of hermeneutics in Luther that emphasized Scripture as God’s communication, that should not be bypassed in ontological analysis of a supreme being. The foundation for interpretation in the Scriptures is the promise of God, the covenant, the \textit{pactum} that is the fundament of sacraments and outermost, salvation.\footnote{Oberman, 2003, p. 667.} Oberman’s depiction of shifts in ontologies has a similar emphasis on epistemological awareness in Luther as in the Finnish researchers claimed. This change in hermeneutics can be apprehended as channeled through the doctrine of justification, as Mannermaa and Juntunen conclude. Since the mentioned Finnish scholars’ interpretations of Luther, ontology and metaphysics mainly are developed within the study of the doctrine of the justification, it is in its place to again withdraw the perspective and look further into the prevailing ideas of Luther’s time that this doctrinal work supervenes from and is developed in relation to. Its focal point is the concept of God as person, acting in Christ. An additional reading of Oberman where he treats this subject will be made in the following, in order to both deepen and expand perspectives on Luther in the metaphysical and ontological landscapes of the Middle Ages.

\textit{III:III Luther and the scholastic doctrines of justification. On iustitia.}

In his article “‘Iustitia Christi’ and ‘Iustitia Dei’”, Oberman develops Luther’s relation to the scholastic doctrines of justification via the concepts \textit{iustitia Dei} and \textit{iustitia Christi}. Oberman draws a larger picture of a more complex differentiation of concurrence and divergence between Thomist, Scotist and nominalistic doctrines of justification and how Luther related to these. Was Luther mainly criticizing nominalism, or aspects in other strands of thought as defined from a nominalist point of view? And which would the theological issues involved
have been? Against which scholastic theology was his disputation aimed? This historical perspective of Oberman’s sheds further light on Luther’s treatments of contemporary issues.

Oberman argues that the teachings on justification were common between nominalists and Scotists, as far as contents are concerned, but that they were contextually differentiated in relation to the teachings on predestination. This means that Scotists and nominalists represented the same arguments when talking justification, but if the moral behavior of the human was the topic, for the nominalists its expression was defined by the acceptance of God, something that on the other hand would be impossible in the frame of the Scotist teachings of predestination. In Oberman’s opinion, nominalist theology emphasized the Pelagian aspects of Thomism but misinterpreted soteriological aspects of Scotism. Such an understanding should thus affect how to understand Luther’s attendance to them, depending on what stance he took in relation to the Via Moderna. Oberman argues that Luther’s strategy was to confront each separate theological issue treated by a certain author and in that confronting all scholastic traditions. His criticism against the scholastics should not be understood as directed against nominalism only. From Oberman’s point of view, Luther seems to have differentiated between the traditions of Lombard to Scotus and Occam and his followers and disparately refuted different questions that the addressed. Regarding Occam and his followers, it was the teachings of reason’s capability to love God above all that he criticized.

However, Oberman argues that Luther also claimed earlier scholastics to be Pelagians. The issue that he attacked in Biel depended upon the methodological place of prudentia - human reason - as the facere quod in se est (doing what is in oneself), as preparation for infusion of love that takes place in reading, meditation and prayer. Oberman argues that Luther rejected human reason as its determination and rephrased the meaning of facere quod in se est towards meaning insight and illumination from God, through his exegesis on the spirit and the letter. From there, it was however not only the preparation for grace that Luther questioned. Oberman further shows that it was also the conservation, since the question was how the

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132 Oberman, 1966, pp. 1ff, 4. Oberman discusses positions that interpret Luther’s relation to scholastic theology defined as the via moderna and that the “contra scholasticam theologiam” regards Gabriel Biel. Such a standpoint is held by Leif Grane. Further, interpretations that Luther would have been unfamiliar with other traditions than the via moderna may depend upon evaluations of the period as such as theologically shattered, a view held by Werner Detloff.

133 Oberman, 1966, pp. 4ff, 7.
justified lives by faith. This is where the questioning of the whole scholastic tradition rests and should not in Oberman’s opinion be reduced into a personal question of Luther’s psychological status or to which theological school he adheres. From Oberman’s perspective, the question was one of greatest importance for all of scholasticism, since it concerned the living in faith of the justified and the relation between the old and the new law.\footnote{Oberman, 1966, pp. 7, 12ff, 15.}

Oberman argues that in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, there were complex relations between apprehensions of the continuity and renewal between the old law (the work of the hand) and the new law by Christ (as the Holy Spirit written in the heart of the human), the understanding of Christ as the Legislator also the \textit{iustitia Christi} offered in the sacramental gifts and the \textit{iustitia Dei} that would call the works of the human to meet certain requirements, either by ontological elevation of them or by acceptation. Oberman’s claim is that Luther’s conclusion, however, was that the \textit{iustitia Christi} and the \textit{iustitia Dei} coincides. The latter is revealed by the cross as the manifestation of the \textit{iustitia Christi} and it is given to the believer in faith. Oberman’s identifies the turn in Luther from the \textit{fides caritate formata} to \textit{fides Christo formata} just as the Finnish scholars later pointed out. From Oberman’s view, this change of nexus, where the principle “faith living in Christ” replaced “faith active in love” was the difference between Luther and the earlier scholastics, whereas it in the case of differences between Luther and other strands of medieval theology rather was a question of the methodological and epistemological awareness of the role of logics and reason in salvation.\footnote{Oberman, 1966, pp. 15, 18ff.}

Oberman, as well as Mannermaa and Juntunen later did, problematizes Luther’s relation to scholastic, metaphysical concepts such as \textit{habitus} and \textit{forma}, (the \textit{forma inhaerens}). He emphasizes how Luther’s skepticism against Aristotelian anthropology and the degree to which it was integrated in scholastic theology must be set in its right context. In this case, Luther’s criticism was that this anthropology aspired to explain the nature of the human being without the question of origins and goal. Oberman identifies Luther’s emphasis on the \textit{extra nos} as the “connection between the doctrine of justification and theological anthropology”\footnote{Oberman, 1966, p. 21.}
It should in Oberman’s opinion not be interpreted in the forensic sense, with the imputative meaning of the human being justified “outside” herself before God without impartation as consequence. It merely purposed to show that justification is not based on a claim of the human. This argument of Luther’s is strengthened by his differentiation of the concepts proprietas (property) and possession (possession), according to Oberman. Luther put the possessio in direct relation to the extra nos, claiming that the human being is in possession of righteousness. This is assured as it is given through the power of grace that humans do not dispose of and which is thus not within the human’s effect. This setting of possessio in relation to the extra nos further equalizes the iustia Christi with the iustitia Dei, and it is where Luther argues against the fides caritate formata structure, according to Oberman. In the fides caritate formata, the iustitia Dei remains a “finis, the goal, or the ‘Gegenüber’ of the viator who is propelled on his way to the eternal Jerusalem by the iustitia Christi.” However, for Luther, the iustia Christi and iustitia Dei were simultaneous and related to the idea that righteousness is not a property but rather the human being’s possession.

Making further distinctions between relating themes in Luther, Oberman points out that the concept pro nobis usually is where a thought of a specific nature in Luther’s theology in relation to tradition originates. Oberman concludes that the theological idea of pro nobis was generally treated in the times. Earlier scholastic apprehensions of Christ defined Christ’s works into two natures, as Christ the Redemptor and Legislator, that thus worked as mediator for the human being in keeping her in fear and hope on her way to heaven. The iustitia Christi kept her strengthened to fulfill the requirements of the iustitia Dei. However, Luther’s apprehension of the works of Christ pro nobis differed by means of its function.

Oberman’s reading of the pro nobis in Luther accentuates a Christological sense:

[---] we find already in his first Commentary on the Psalms: Christ is the sacramentum not only as the fulfillment of the Old Testament, understood as signum; Christ is also the root sacrament, the mother sacrament, which stands behind the seven ecclesiastical sacraments,

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138 Oberman, 1966, pp. 19ff, 22.
139 Oberman, 1966, pp. 19ff, 22f.
through which in the Spirit, that is to say by faith, everything signified in the Old Testament by way of signs is now granted.\textsuperscript{140}

Oberman concludes that several themes relate in a pattern. Luther revoked a difference between the \textit{iustitia Dei} and the \textit{iustitia Christi}, in the \textit{fides Christo formata} it could be read as \textit{fides Christo pro nobis formata extra nos}. In Oberman’s opinion, the marker of Luther’s doctrine of justification was the integration of the \textit{iustitia Christi} and \textit{iustitia Dei} that justifies the human being \textit{coram Deo}. This was a shift of axis in Oberman’s opinion, as it is the \textit{foundation} and not the uncertain \textit{goal} of the life of sanctification, the life of the Christian.\textsuperscript{141} Oberman accentuates that this core meaning depends upon the distinction between \textit{possessio} and \textit{proprietias}, since it, in the case of Luther’s understanding of grace and justification, ensures an assessment that justification “received in Word and Sacraments, is at once God’s Deed and God’s Word, really granted and really granted.”\textsuperscript{142} In this early article, Oberman thus identifies a re-orientation of structure of thought in Luther’s doctrine of justification. His identification of structural re-orientation coincides rather well with the Finnish researchers’ conclusion of the reorientation from \textit{fides caritate formata} to \textit{Christus forma fidei} and the shift where Luther thus teaches \textit{fides Christo formata}.

In the two Finnish researchers’ readings as well as Oberman’s outline, we see several doctrinal and thematic issues treated by Luther that can be viewed as meeting points of Luther and the metaphysics and ontologies of the times. In this respect, Oberman makes some clarifications as to where Luther directed his criticisms and what their contents were.

Oberman’s reading has some demarcation lines: firstly, he argues that Luther criticized earlier scholastic theology concerning the ontology of Supreme Being of God and how theologians from there adheres to speculation as ground for knowledge of God. Rejecting speculation on transcendence does not, however, in Oberman’s opinion mean that Luther fully rejects philosophical enterprise, it re-phrases the relation between theology and philosophy. Oberman argues that Luther relocates the foundation for interpretation to Scripture and the outermost locus is the promise of God, the covenant, the \textit{pactum}. This change in hermeneutics can be

\textsuperscript{140} Oberman, 1966, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{141} Oberman, 1966, pp. 23ff.
\textsuperscript{142} Oberman, 1966, p. 26.
apprehended as channeled through the doctrine of justification, as Mannermaa and Juntunen conclude.

Oberman claims that Luther’s criticism springs from a paradigm of God as acting person in history, through Christ. Secondly, Luther’s rejection of Aristotelian metaphysics concerned its anthropology in terms of *forma* and its epistemology of the relation between philosophy and theology. Luther’s main re-orientations mainly consisted in the shift of views on God’s person, centered in Christ through his *theologia crucis*. This involved Luther’s views on *iustitia*.

To further deepen the perspectives of structures and their inherent elements, the next paragraph will attend to Luther research that approaches the questions of formation of doctrine while setting it in a history of ideas perspective as well as it provides a processual insight in the working out of Luther’s theology of the cross, the *theologia crucis*.

**III:IV The development of Luther’s theologia crucis.**

British theologian Alister McGrath has studied the development of Luther’s doctrine of justification in the years 1509-19 and the theological reflections on the concept *iustitia Dei* that eventually resulted in Luther’s *theologia crucis*. Those years are in his understanding particularly theologically formative and a good source for understanding Luther’s views on justification of the human being before God, *coram Deo*. Like Oberman, McGrath aspires to show how Luther related to the contemporary theological climate and how it affected the development of his doctrine and theology of the cross. McGrath’s particular purpose is to determine Luther’s relation to diverse philosophical and theological systems to clarify premises for speaking of a reformation breakthrough and certain doctrinal terms. For this study, the reading of McGrath will aim to show a processual perspective in Luther’s theology, thus adding a further perspective to how the contents were developed.

To begin with, McGrath argues a general pre-occupation of the times with the question of *justification* – more specifically, what the human must do for the sake of salvation in the relationship with God. According to him, the question was fundamental in the Middle Ages due to doctrinal unclarity, calls for renewed spirituality as well as reform of the church and further influenced by the particular ideal of the piety of monastic life. These circumstances
thus preceded Luther’s theological breakthrough. McGrath argues that there was a lack of clearly pronounced decisions in the matter of justification since there were mainly decisions from two councils to rely upon; Carthage 418 with vague clarifications after Pelagian controversies and Orange 529, the most important council to treat the doctrine of justification. However, McGrath argues that the decisions from Orange was never really treated or cited and the next following council to treat the doctrine among other issues was Trent in 1545.¹⁴³

McGraths’ first assumption is that Luther represented a traditional late medieval theology and that his work underwent progression over time. His early formulations of the doctrine of justification were determinative for the further development and evolved in relation to humanism, nominalism and the theology of the Augustinian order. McGrath thus finds that Luther’s found its expression in the *theologia crucis*. The metaphysical nominalism of Via Moderna distinguished itself from the metaphysical realism of Via Antiqua. The latter seems to have been predominant in the early years at the University of Wittenberg, later replaced by the Via Moderna with its internal variations. Oberman argues that Luther was highly involved with theological positioning in relation to the logics, epistemology and metaphysics of these systems. The article of justification was under treatment within his Augustinian order, whose orientations in the Via Antiqua, the Via Moderna and the humanist movement provided a setting for Luther’s enterprise. Certain metaphysical and epistemological differences in the Via Antiqua and Via Moderna make out the critical instrument by which McGrath analyses Luther’s relation to these traditions. He mainly concentrates, however, on how Luther related to the Via Moderna and concludes that Luther seems to have followed the teachings of the Moderna epistemologically, posing the question if it influenced him *theologically* as well.¹⁴⁴

McGrath prefers to use the term Via Moderna over nominalism, since the latter is a term coined by opponents to Occam’s followers and the former designates the movement’s theological aims. His historical presentation firstly frames how the intellectual climate of the Via Moderna’s treatise of the doctrine of justification had several purposes, including reflection on the necessity of an infused habit of grace in justification. The aim was to discern


¹⁴⁴ McGrath, 1985, pp. 25f, 28, 30f, 33f, 36, 38ff.
a de facto necessity of such qualifications, while emphasizing its contingent nature. The scholastic notion of justification and the inherence of a created habit of grace as a natural, ontological connection was not acknowledged by Ockham or theologians of the Via Moderna. Their concept of the causality of justification was covenantal. Secondly, McGrath argues that in the Via Moderna, this principle of a covenantal causality of justification had its particular content in the axiom facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam; when doing what is in herself, God does not deny the human being grace. McGrath comments that the Moderna’s dialectics of the two powers of God was not explicitly treated by Luther. Even if it was not a main issue for him, the covenantal causality of the Moderna was challenging to him as this formulation put the general question of human accomplishments for the sake of salvation to the fore. Thirdly, McGrath points out that the positions of the Moderna were however not Christocentric. 145

McGrath distinguishes how the medieval question of the formal cause of justification in its concrete formation concerned the role of a created habit in the soul and the role of uncreated grace. The Via Moderna came to emphasize the latter. In this matter, the standpoints were different over time within the Augustinian order; some had followed Aquinas’s teachings and in time, others came to underscore the role of uncreated grace, to some degree in alignment with perspectives of the Moderna. However, even if they appeared similar, the relations between theologians of the Via Moderna and those of the order were one of conceptual differences, according to McGrath.146

McGrath’s reading shows how Luther’s role in this became a matter of reformation of doctrine, ignited by a question of Pelagianism. It did not so much concern morality and spiritual life, but eventually had such consequences. McGrath emphasizes that for Luther, the article of justification held the gospel; the promise that by God’s grace through the death and resurrection of Christ, human being -although a sinner- could enter a relationship with the divine.147 Understanding Luther as a representative of late medieval theology, McGrath argues that Luther was occupied with the issue of created habits and their role in justification.

145 McGrath, 1985, pp. 55ff, 58ff, 61.
146 McGrath, 1985, pp. 56f, 59f, 66ff.
147 McGrath, 1985, pp. 19ff.
The question of how God could be said to reside in the souls of the human had risen in the 11th and 12th centuries. The challenge was to resolve the union between God and human being without making it a hypostatic union. McGrath holds that Luther adhered to the Augustinian understanding of the priority of caritas in this matter. Peter Lombard had interpreted caritas as the infused person of the Holy Spirit in human being in justification, but Thomas Aquinas found this union of the uncreated Spirit and the created being not possible without making the ontological distinction between them clear. The ontological element of created habits in the soul thus functioned as the mediator of divine presence in the souls, while securing that it was not essentially equivalent with it. This causality of justification depended on how “a created habit of grace was necessary in justification by the very nature of things (ex natura rei).”

This was questioned by Duns Scotus. Eventually, according to McGrath, the authority of the role of created habits was diminished and the positions were moved from the principle of the nature of things to a covenantal causality. This turn did not absolutely deny the necessity of created habits, but transferred causality into one of God’s personal act, no created intermediates ex natura rei needed. McGrath shows how theologians of the Via Moderna thus logically dismissed the necessity of created, natural habits for justification while Augustinian theology moved the causal emphasis of justification from a concept of created grace towards an uncreated grace, thus from the concept of habit towards the Holy Spirit once again.

McGrath finds that Luther rejected the notion of habits as formal cause and adjusted to the connection between caritas and Spirit. Luther’s treatise of the concept of habitus (disposition, tendency) should in his opinion be viewed from an Augustinian understanding as a bond in love rather than as created intermediary. In McGraths opinion, Luther was in accordance with earlier medieval understandings that justification of the human being meant a direct and personal encounter between God and the human being, mainly situated within the understanding of pactum.

The notion of pactum is also where McGrath finds the origin for Luther’s development of the doctrine of justification and ultimately the theologia crucis. It held the question of the causality of justification and further the matter of human being’s responsibility and action for the sake of salvation. McGrath points to the notion of facere quod in se est – the doing what is

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148 McGrath, 1985, p. 82.
149 McGrath, 1985, pp. 81ff, 84f.
in oneself - as central issue of the challenge of the human being’s obligations towards God. McGrath argues that the early Dominican and Franciscan schools, as well as the later Franciscan and Via Moderna traditions thus framed the reflection on what grounds or merits upon which God granted justifying grace. For the Via Moderna, the formulation also held the idea of God’s obligations. McGrath holds that for Luther, the pactum was the source for grace and faith, not essential natures of the created. He thus worked with the covenantal causality of justification.

[---] God gives grace without fail to the man who does what lies within him (hominis facienti quod in se est Deus infallibiliter dat gratiam), and though he could not prepare himself for grace in a manner which is meritorious de condigno, he may do so in a manner which is meritorious de congruo on account of this promise of God and the covenant of mercy (pactum misericordiae).150

This form of causality in its turn raised the challenge what requirements were expected from the human being. In McGrath’s opinion, Luther’s understanding of the quod in se est was a basic condition of the human being, more specifically the person’s recognition of full need of God’s grace, namely humility. This apprehension of humility as the quod in se est, characterized Luther’s theology in justification for some time, until he began treating the concept of iustitia Dei.151

McGrath’s understanding is that the attention on the iustitia Dei led to a development in Luther’s theology where he eventually strayed from traditional medieval theology, particularly the Via Moderna. He maintains that Luther’s doctrine of justification was rather fully developed by the time of 1514. The reorientation of understanding the iustitia Dei acquired a reworking of Luther’s theology, eventually leading to the theologia crucis, with iustitia conceptually formulated in 1518. The covenantal causality of salvation of the Moderna held that God - due to faithfulness of the pactum established by God self - accorded value to the efforts of the human being, thereby overbridging human’s natural state and the state of grace. God thus awarded quod in se est with grace. The theology of Gabriel Biel defined divine iustitia as giving to the human being her due under the terms of the pactum.

150 McGrath, 1985, p. 89.
151 McGrath, 1985, p.87ff, 90, 92.
The dichotomy between the moral and the meritorious realms was overcome through means within the *pactum* in terms of divine statutes and human disposition. However, McGrath argues that there was a Christological void in the theology of the Via Moderna. Christ was viewed as assisting the human being in externally oriented terms, for instance serving as an example. According to McGrath, Luther objected to the understanding of divine rendering of value to human effort as grounded in Aristotelian ethics, Cicero and canonic law and instead equalized the *iustitia Dei* with faith in Christ as righteousness, *iustitia fidei*. Luther considered Christ as Salvator rather than Legislator. Via biblical exegesis, Luther moved the apprehension of *iustitia* more clearly into a theological context. From McGrath’s point of view, the concept had three meanings: being a *gift* from God rather than a righteousness belonging to God, being valid before God (*coram Deo*) but not in the eyes of human beings (*coram hominibus*) and finally being a righteousness which itself is faith in Christ, *fides Christi*. The *fides Christi* was understood by Luther as *facere in quod se est*, initially as human *humilitas* and as such the human disposition towards grace, *iustitia fidei*. Over time, Luther’s view on *facere quod in se est* moved towards the understanding that it was fully dependent on God’s gift and initiative. From McGrath’s point of view, this understanding of the *iustitia Dei* - that the preparation of the human for grace was itself a work of grace - meant a break with the Via Moderna. By the time of his *Disputation against the scholastics*, Luther had departed from the theology of Gabriel Biel and the Via Moderna, since he emphasized the dependence on grace as the human activity in justification. He thus questioned the influence of understandings of the *facere quod in se est* on the church’s teachings on salvation.152

McGrath’s work shows how Luther’s development of the *iustitia Dei* led to his *theologia crucis*, to expound how the righteous God would reveal himself, act with humanity and what the nature of the response in the human was in relation to this. McGrath shows how the causality of salvation was a determining cause for forming of doctrine as well as the *theologia crucis*: how the “[---] transition from the moral to the meritorious, from the realm of the nature to that of grace, might be effected.”153 He emphasizes that Luther’s appreciation of the *iustitia Dei* as the *fides Christi* - justifying faith - established how it was effectuated. The *fides Christi* was eventually understood as the *quod in se est*, as a gift from God or the work of God

153 McGrath, 1985, p. 126.
within the human being, rather than a human response to God. McGrath argues that for Luther, the righteousness of Christ meant clothing the sinner in an extrinsic manner, while the human being intrinsically remained a sinner. The effort to keep a distinction between human and divine righteousness purposed to keep humanly moral aspects from the causality of justification. For McGrath, this included the question of Luther’s view on reason, set within a soteriological frame and in relation to the notion of *iustitia Dei*. Via Moderna’s treatment of reason had its source in Aristotle’s *Ethics* and medieval canonists and jurists. Luther objected to how civil justice and reason could be let to define the scriptural meaning of righteousness, since reason should necessarily collapse before the mystery of the justification. The progression of *theologia crucis* held a new concept of God, the crucified and hidden God that deals with the human; the *Deus crucifexus et absconditus*.154

McGrath further argues that the concept of God developed by Luther in the *theologia crucis* relied upon what can be perceived of God and how. In the crucified Christ, God reveals self as apprehensible in the *posteriors Dei*, that is, revealed yet at the same time hidden as only possible to apprehend “from the rear”.155 The concept of the hidden God, the *deus absconditus* permeated the theology of the cross such that it explained God’s nature in two ways; as a full hiddenness from behind creation and as the hiddenness under opposites of revelation, equivalent with the *deus revelatus*. McGrath thus points out a distinction in Luther between the God who is fully unknown and the God who is known through paradoxical self-revelation. He argues that Luther made a distinction that is more of noetic nature rather than ontic. It concerned the perception of things rather than the things in themselves. Divine being whose mercy is revealed on the cross coincides with a hiddenness in which divine will might possibly be fully opposite.156

The paradoxical nature of Luther’s *theologia crucis* embraced God’s *work* as well. The revelation of divine self and glory in suffering and the cross was understood in the dialectic of God’s *opus alienum* and *opus proprium*. God’s nature and work coincides such that a work that seems alien to God’s nature, results in something that is in accordance with it. Human

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154 McGrath, 1985, pp. 131f, 134, 137ff, 140, 147.
155 McGrath, 1985, p. 149.
156 McGrath, 1985, pp. 164ff.
reason does not qualify to fully apprehend this action and is thus destroyed in order to bring
the sinner to trust in God for salvation. God’s works are thus hidden under their opposites,
abscondita sub contrariis and the destruction of the human perception as well as
understandings of righteousness is necessary to guarantee divine righteousness.\(^{157}\)

McGrath thus shows that Luther’s theologia crucis as a locus for knowledge of God’s nature
emphasized an epistemological theology of revelation separated from speculation. Its
paradoxical nature appointed faith as the only way to apprehend presence and content, apart
from speculation of the natural, created order. From McGrath’s point of view, this does not
mean that Luther fully rejected the human’s natural knowledge of God. However, the aid of
divine revelation was necessary to eliminate the risk of idolatry. Natural insights in God’s
esse are possible, but limited for a fuller understanding of God’s acting with humanity.
Furthermore, McGrath argues how the concept of the hidden God relates to Luther’s view on
faith. Since reason and perception are incapable of fully apprehending the divine presence in
revelation, faith is what par excellence leads the human passed the visible towards a true
verification. It stands in a contradictory relation to sense-perception. McGrath points out how
faith was intimately connected to Christology for Luther. Faith discerns the inner and
invisible meanings in Christ. Thus, McGrath argues that faith for Luther

\[\text{[---] does not concern a hidden metaphysical realm concealed under that of the senses, but} \]
\[\text{concerns the manner in which God is at work in his world, which is crystallised,} \]
\[\text{concentrated, and focused on the death of Christ on the cross.}^{158}\]

Luther’s theology of the cross is thus a theology of faith and its intimate correlation with
Christ who joins the Christian to himself in a spiritual marriage. Faith discerns the
significance of the cross as well as the power of the cross is appropriated through it, since
faith recognizes the divine presence in it.\(^{159}\)

From McGrath it is possible to read that the doctrinal assertion of the article of justification
for the authority of the church culminated in Luther’s theology of the cross, the theologia
 crucis. This formal development contains expressions from the contemporary philosophical

\(^{157}\) McGrath, 1985, pp. 148f, 151f, 155f.
\(^{158}\) McGrath, 1985, p. 168.
\(^{159}\) McGrath, 1985, p. 149, 161, 168f, 173f.
and theological climate of Luther, particularly determined by how he related to the surrounding metaphysical and/or ontological systems. McGrath shows how Luther’s view on the necessity and authority of doctrine was formulated over time and intimately related to the identity of the church. Luther emphasized the importance of doctrine such that it should ensure teaching in its purity, since when the Word remains pure, life in its turn is affected. He considered forming of doctrine his calling: “Sed doctrina non reformata frustra fit reformatio morum.” (When the teaching is not reformed, it is in vain to reform ceremony and life) 160 This reading of McGrath lifts the importance of doctrine in Luther in a way that we are confronted with how the doctrine as the articular stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae is usually associated with him. However, this expression rather appeared around the 17th century, while Luther can be considered a precursor with the phrasing “… quia isto articulo stante stat Ecclesia, ruente ruit Ecclesia”161, “because if this article [of justification] stands, the Church stands, if it falls, the Church falls.) In the Table talks, a source whose value is often regarded having a complementary function in relation to earlier sources, Luther further expounded on the relevance of doctrine:

Doctrina et vita sunt distinguenda. Vita est mala apud nos sicut apud papistas; non igitur dimicamus et damnamus eos. Hoc nesciverunt Winkleff et Hus, qui vitam impugnarunt.162 (Doctrine and life must be distinguished. Life is bad among us, as it is among the papists, but we don’t fight about life and condemn the papists on that account. Wycliffe and Hus didn’t know this and attacked [the papacy] for its life.

McGrath thus presents an understanding of centrality of doctrine that eventually results in the theologia crucis and its specific concept of the hidden God in Luther.

III:V Conclusions

A broadened reading from the interpretations of how Luther’s doctrine of justification can be apprehended as having ontological structures towards how historical inquiry shows forming

160 McGrath, 1985, p. 20. This quote is from the same footnote in McGrath refers to Luther’s Table Talks, WATr 4.4338. The translation is approximate. Approximate in German: “Aber wenn die Lehre nicht reformiret wird, so ists vergeben, das man sich unterstehet, die Ceremonien und das Leben zu reformiren.”

161 McGrath, 1985, p. 23. McGrath refers to WA 40III.352.3.

162 McGrath, 1985, p. 20. The quote is from a footnote in McGrath and it refers to Luther’s Table Talks, WATr 1.624. The Table talks are generally considered as valid source as reinforcing earlier works. The English translation of the quote is from LW 54.624.
of contents in Luther’s theology, mainly centered in doctrinal development and its place in a wider theological process not only enables further possibilities to understand premises for speaking of Luther, ontology and metaphysics. It is a necessary procedure, since this relation thus can be understood as consisting in different levels, requiring different tools for explication. The question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology read in this way gradually exhibits parameters that consists in complex relations of thematic nature as well as processual, conceptual as well as contextual. The systematic presentation of the Finnish scholars pointed towards the need for examination of the relations between Luther and his contemporaries. There is interplay between theological themes, working out doctrine and metaphysics and ontology in Luther that becomes visible in the intimacy between thematic-systematic and historic studies of Luther and that is necessary for addressing and understanding the relation between Luther and these issues.

From the historical reading in this chapter, we see that understanding the relation depends upon apprehensions of the polemic nature of his theological enterprise, while acknowledging a systematic nature through the processual development. The methodological approach of expansive reading helps show this kind of interplay. The expansive approach also holds mirroring perspectives in the different stages; thematic studies point to urgency of historical, contextual readings of the theological climate. The widening of perspective to a history of ideas context further makes visible the intricate connections between themes treated by Luther. Finally, the reading of McGrath contributes with a processual perspective that ties these together and shows how structural moments such as themes, principles and doctrine fall together. McGraths presentation shows how the contextual terms is a question of forming doctrine but that it leads to the theologia crucis as a densified theological locus that ties all aspects together. Mainly, it involves metaphysical questions of causality of salvation; involving the human responsibility with its epistemological connotations, as well as the question of God’s acting. This kind of mirroring reading helps understand that the intricate question of the relation between Luther, metaphysics and ontology should be questions that acknowledges development of contents in their settings, as well as how they fall together with method. The importance of doctrine and understanding the nature of doctrine should necessarily be divested into. More particularly, the reading of McGrath - regardless of his
own specific interpretation of how Luther’s definition of the concept of *iustitia Dei / Christi* can be understood - identifying this concept as locus in Luther’s theology - it appears as a nave in Luther’s relation to metaphysics and ontology. For McGrath, it also seems to affect the formulating of a particular theological core by Luther, the *theologia crucis*, where appears a concept of God that McGrath appoints as having central meaning in Luther, situated in revelation. Luther’s apprehensions of a God that acts, formulated in relation to the metaphysical and epistemological context of the times, should with McGrath’s offered perspective be considered as having a peculiarity if nature that differs through its Christological centering with epistemological orientations. From the studied research, it seems that in the case of Luther, the questions of metaphysics and ontology ignite the movements of his theological enterprise as well as these issues are inherent in his works in re-worked shapes, as also The Finnish researchers have claimed. In the next and final chapter, some final conclusions shall be developed.
IV Concluding analysis

IV:1 Luther, ontology and metaphysics.

The theoretical presentations in the previous chapters have a descriptive character with analytic moments of selection with following analytic conclusive parts. This means that the first and second analytic questions have been treated and partly answered through the presentation of extracted arguments of the Finnish researchers Mannermaa and Juntunen, more specifically in the second chapter. The third question is mainly treated in the third chapter that expands the question of themes and issues in their history of ideas context and in a processual perspective. The fourth in a sense runs through the work and runs up in this final part. In the following, I will expand further on the results more critically, with a constructive aim, returning to the initial questions, was Luther dealing with metaphysics? Is his theology ontological and/ or metaphysics?

From the thematic and reconstructive analysis of Mannermaa and Juntunen as well as the historical readings (keeping the unclarity of definitions of ontology and metaphysics in mind) it is most reasonable to concur that Luther was clearly dealing with metaphysical and ontological questions. However, this conclusion rests upon the particular understandings of the concepts of each scholar as well as their understanding of the degree to which such contents is present in his theology and their nature. Their own pre-suppositions matter in this case. From the reading of the Finnish researchers including the backdrop of shorter introduction of examples of German research such as Ebeling, it seems clear that Luther handles such concerns on several levels; in thematical, doctrinal attention with polemic and refutational aims as well as constructively, within reworking of doctrine. Their emphasis on Luther’s rejection of *fides caritate formata* into *fides Christo formata* offers an entrance into ontological reflection while it points to differences in thought structures. Mainly, they appreciate Luther’s theology as ontology, while more hesitant to talk of metaphysics. The work of the Finnish scholars point to the challenge of understanding Luther and metaphysical and ontological issues in a three-fold manner, centered by polemics, epistemology and soteriology, particularly Christologically centered. I find that Mannermaa’s apprehension of
the strong connection between orthodox Christology, salvation and faith is the systematic source of understanding Luther and the question of metaphysics and ontology.

These issues particularly concern justification and *iustitia*, eventually coming to form doctrine as the historical perspective shows. Their participation in the processual formation of the *theologia crucis* is suggested by McGrath. I would like to argue that from the studied research objects, an intricate weave of levels concur and interact, which is exactly the manner in which we possibly can attend to the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology as one of a question of structures of thought. Such premises come to the fore as vital for Luther’s enterprise, but viewed as far as possible from the terms of his times that appear through historical reading, the degree to which he can be understood as evolving in relation to metaphysical and theological issues that he finds challenging is very clear. I also find that it is plausible to apprehend the structural level together with thematic contents as ontological when affirming an ontology of the human in faith.

From the expanded readings, we find a soteriological framing of treatment of epistemology, metaphysical and ontological systems, particularly densified through Christology, incarnation theology and revelation. With the help of Lohse’s definition to attend to Luther studies in a twofold manner, I find that particularly the question of Luther, metaphysics and ontology requires such widened, complementary approaches to avoid reduction into particularities. From a more critical perspective, I must however conclude that the way we possibly can view the relation of Luther, metaphysics and ontology depends on awareness of how, on the one hand, we understand these enterprises conceptually and contextually from our contemporary perspective together with an openness to the fact that the terms themselves are constructed continuously throughout history. This phenomenology obviously has affected the conclusions of Luther research regarding his relation to these issues in this or that direction, depending on the philosophical agenda of the time. This helps separating the results of different research more clearly and can help formulating our questions. I concur with Bielfeldt’s conclusion that speaking of Luther and ontology to some sense is an anacronism. After the threefold analysis of this, it is my conclusion that even though the scholars develop different understandings of certain themes they identify as crucial for Luther, they all point to his addressing of metaphysics as it appeared in different shapes of his times. The Finnish researchers have an
emphasis on a stronger formulated ontology than the relational ontology that maintains understanding of the human faith as renewed, existential understanding. The question of personhood appears. There is thus a strong relevance in those arguments of Mannermaa and Juntunen that point out the weight that the philosophical pre-suppositions of earlier research for apprehending Luther’s relation to metaphysical and ontological issues has carried. This is clearly manifested in their discernment of how Luther’s relation to substance-metaphysics has been and can be understood, resulting in his re-positioning of love and faith in relation to Christ.

In the next step follows the question if it is possible to speak of Luther as a metaphysician and/or making ontology. From my reading, I concur that this must be a question determined by his more or less explicit intentions on that part. It might not be possible to fully find such meta-positioning by Luther himself, but the systematic and historical readings have shown that it should be considered resting upon his theological identity through his formulation of specific, contemporary questions. Luther’s own affirmation of doctrine and the importance of developing the teachings of justification as such should not be contested as a theological locus here, but taken as a question for inquiry. Mannermaa and Juntunen who argue that his doctrine in itself can be understood as a critique against substance-metaphysics, underscores this. Ebeling affirms that Luther has ontological intentions, but that this is rather a question of biblical understanding of reality and theology as answer to the ontological problem. Luther’s rejection of metaphysical speculation is a factor in the forming of doctrine. Doctrine thus serves as a good instrumental and methodological starting point to divest into the different relations of metaphysical and ontological issues that Luther’s theology attaches to and might display. From these understandings, together with the processual perspective that McGrath offers, I find it likely to assume that Luther’s doctrine and the theologia crucis can be viewed as displaying themes and principles that were parts of larger metaphysical systems and that he sets them into alternative structures. The rejection of metaphysical speculation that the scholars emphasize, should be appreciated as part of a formulating of metaphysics. It is then possible to understand forming of doctrine as a result of critique of certain metaphysics as well as it is a tool for criticism itself, while it also displays such themes.
Since method and theological production is so tightly connected to contents in the form of themes, issues, systematical and processual aspects, the thematic point of view of contents that this thesis has treated thoroughly, is an indicator of what kind of ontology or metaphysics that Luther’s theology might display. The substantial contents inevitably relate to, interplay with and hold the structural levels together in the case of Luther. Ebeling argues that there is a theological, biblical answer that transforms metaphysical issues into a wider ontological concept; the relational and existential ontology where faith, the coram perspective, eschatology and cognitive dimension determine human existence in terms of struggle and becoming. The main arguments of Mannermaa and Juntunen are soteriological and centered round the relation between faith, Christology and justification. The apprehension of Christ as the form of faith, a direct and joint reality of God and human that holds rejecting mediating principles in creation itself as the substantiality of creating is a strong argument of the Finnish scholars. If faith is interpreted as being in Christ, a subsistence of mere worldliness for the human is eradicated and replaced by a possibility to explore a metaphysics in Luther that holds fullness that not only in its own totality comes to the human being to share self, but also paradoxically allows a simultaneous “un-fullness “of being human in the world. The notion of unio is the focal point where participation is the ontological expression. There is mutuality in faith’s nature, which at the same time is paradoxical. Their work implies a Luther that speaks of a mystery of faith, inseparable from Christ’s forma. Setting this in relation to their understanding of Luther’s rejection of the systematics of the fides charitate formata and its apprehension of faith as quality of the soul, offers a possible metaphysical logic of inseparability and from the human being’s view, dependence and thus access in the creational act of reality.

I suggest that the similar conclusions of Mannermaa, Juntunen and Ebeling of another form of structure in Luther’s doctrine of justification than the Aristotelian, does not thus necessarily imply absolute rejection of Luther as a metaphysician. Again, with the critical eye of historical perspective and awareness of distinctions, it seems reasonable to conclude that he in certain ways rejects Aristotelian metaphysics, but at the same time might let theology transform certain contents of it into another structure. Conclusions of a Luther who rejects metaphysics on the whole or is not dealing with it at all does not seem likely. In accordance
with what Bielfeldt concludes, these kinds of claims may rather depend upon the own definition of the nature of metaphysics.

The question is therefore if and what kind of metaphysics he presents? In the likeness of how metaphysical enterprise mainly is determined by its proponent, I conclude that Luther too is establishing the parameters for his enterprise as such, attending to biblical hermeneutics as a starting point, concretized in the altered thought systematics. This obviously raises the question of divergence and convergence between theology and philosophy in terms of primacy. Through the Finnish researchers’ attendance to the shift from *fides caritate formata* to *fides Christo formata*, I find it reasonable that Luther’s metaphysical attendance is one of change in thought systematics. The understanding of a scriptural, theological-philosophical hermeneutics that on the one hand emphasizes spirit as encompassing intellect and on the other re-orient faith, love and grace in their inherent relations seems to argue for another form, structured differently. With the help of Oberman’s argument of Luther reading a structural difference between *iustitia Dei* in the *fides caritate formata* together with the *iustitia Christi*, as well as Luther’s *iustitia Christi* and *iustitia Dei* as simultaneous in relation to the idea that righteousness is not a property but rather the human being’s possession, another structure comes to the fore. Even if their conclusions of meaning of concepts differ, the different reading point to the concept of God acting in Christ as a locus that puts *incarnation theology* in the fore when it comes to understanding Luther, metaphysics and ontology. Adding to that is the question of the significance of Luther’s theology of the cross and thus the relation between God the Person that acts in history and Luther’s view on the Logos that incarnates fully divine and human, further revealing himself on the cross. I find that Oberman points to the *extra nos* and *possessio* as qualifiers in Luther’s anthropology. These and how they interact, as well as the *possessio* and *proprietas* in relation to *iustitia Dei/Christi* can be of considerable significance when exploring ontology and metaphysics in Luther. From Mannermaa’s point of view, Luther adheres to classical Christology and that should be considered a framing, in my opinion.

However, I perceive of some limitations in the Finnish researchers’ conclusions. I will elaborate on this in the following, since I believe that their arguments struggle with this as their aim is to argue ontological structures in Luther’s theology. Firstly, there is an obvious
challenge that the terms **ontological** and **real-ontic** are not fully accounted for. Further, Mannermaa’s exclusive centering on the doctrine of justification as shape for ontological implications might diminish the possibility to apprehend Luther’s theology as a metaphysical enterprise. On the one hand, doctrine does point in that direction, but on the other, doctrinal research risk narrowing the perspective if “closed in”, since it does not take processual development in account and merely attend to themes that risk becoming jammed as Lutheran and set in opposition to other theologies. This is now a paradox, since the aim of for instance Mannermaa was clearly ecumenical and he attends to doctrine. Juntunen’s reconstructive aim opens up the question, as well as expands beyond faith as center. One should therefore take in consideration clarifying the principle of doctrine, yet aim to look further, in my opinion. Other challenges do however arise. In both cases, the central notions in the ontological understanding are participation, *unio* and *inhabitatio Dei*. The concrete ontological expression is in many ways attributed to how the believer participates in divine life in faith and this holds structures of being. Juntunen argues that there is a sort of participation in the divine in the *homo naturalis* as well, since both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the natural being are dependent on God. This orientation is certainly constructive and necessary in my opinion, not least to expand argumentation into more general contexts. However, Juntunen’s argumentation risks diminishing the ontological perspectives into a strong anthropology that to some extent brings a slight heaviness. The heaviness might for example implicate a one-sided centering in the human being, even in terms of activity, while not elaborating or discerning the nature of activity. This kind of argument is anthropologically oriented. However, arguments of metaphysical and/or ontological counterparts are not also taken in account.

The arguments of Mannermaa and Juntunen that concern Luther’s critique on substances and quiddities as rejection of intermediary principles in the God-human relation point to a strong mutuality. It is partly a question of translation, since –as we have seen – Luther’s term is the German *Teilhabe* that might inhabit other understandings. This is the term used by Mannermaa in his original work in German. This linguistic aspect should be mentioned even though it is not the main challenge at hand. It is possible to steer clear of it through understanding the term as *being part of*. In my opinion, the participating aspect shows a great
deal of possibilities in understanding Luther’s theology as ontological in the sense that it points to a closeness and directness in his apprehension of the divine and human relationship. I turn to Oberman’s conclusion that it is a particular ontology of God that Luther presents in relation to his own times, to support this critique of the participation as ontological locus. It has to my understanding in a promising manner re-interpreted Luther’s theology as ontological, by-passing judgements of a total anti-metaphysical character, maintaining apprehensions of ontological structures while affirming an intrinsic moment beyond the substance-oriented sustenance that Luther rejected, but the question of ontology can be elaborated further. They have pointed to an ontology of faith in Luther’s theology as a matter of a lived reality in the being of faith, in the relationship of God and human, or to put it in terms of theologian Alister McGrath, human beings’ “fellowship with God” (my italics). However, I find that the Finnish researchers’ argumentation does not give full, systematical account of how this lived reality of the human being is to be understood more concretely. I believe that the intrinsic aspect that the two Finnish researchers successfully have pointed out, steering by notions of natural, inner sustenance of substance-metaphysics, must be developed further in order to successfully be able to speak of a more fully accounted ontology in Luther. In my opinion, this involves keeping the coram perspective as well as a sense of mutuality, developing a sense of co-existence. The historical and systematical readings have already shown that metaphysical concepts of God attache closely to incarnation of the Christ in Luther, as well as how this has epistemological connotations for the human being. The arguments of Ebeling that point to the coram position strengthens the urge for deepened metaphysical inquiry of the concept of God in Luther. We have seen the changes in positions regarding the iustitia of this God of Luther, in Christ as locus.

What is more urgent to be able to speak of Luther, metaphysics and ontology is thus the question: where is God in the unio? What kind of reality might Luther be speaking of, in terms of divine presence and human being? The Finnish scholars present a Luther who offers characteristics of the being and person of Christ that the believer unites with in faith, but what kind of structures does this really mean in a fuller perspective, as a metaphysical question? I find that they do not affirm metaphysics in Luther, but strongly advocate ontology, however

vaguely defined. A metaphysical treatise of concepts of God in Luther could strengthen their argumentation. Thus, arguments for ontology is strong in their presentation, but one can pose the question why possibilities of metaphysics is not explored.

However, I find that both Mannermaa and Juntunen occasionally points further to hints of a reality of paradoxes in faith in Luther, most clearly visible in the mentioned *mystery of faith*. One understanding of it is *knowledge of the presence of the hidden*, with concrete human expressions such as acceptance, trust and confidence. The actuality, the *Seinswirklichkeit* of faith in Christ thus have direct epistemological connotations, whereas a person is a Christian in faith such that his conscience is affected profoundly. The paradoxical condition of faith’s presence in the heart of the believer – the gift – is described such that the gift is described as put there as small, yet holding the greatness beyond creation since Christ is greater. It relates to the notions of seemingly *contradictory self-revelation and works of God*. To once again return to Oberman’s treatment of the idea of how Luther came to regard the *iustitia Dei* and *iustitia Christi* as coinciding, where the *fides Christi* is justifying faith, I find reason to argue a lack of criticality that treats revelation, simultaneity, distinctions and faith more fully. The paradoxical reality as a lived reality is not fully accounted for by the notion of participation and thus not thoroughly elaborated upon as ontological and/or metaphysical structures, in my opinion. They are barely able to trace in Mannermaa’s arguments. By Juntunen, they are mainly given an emphasis as epistemological aspects within Luther’s methodological critique against metaphysical speculation. This is challenging, since it risks making all too strong distinctions between on the one hand the epistemologically oriented ontology of faith of the existence of the human being *in general* and on the other, the epistemological method and metaphysical speculation *as part or not of theological enterprise*. I believe that this distinction should be upheld but that the arguments concerning the ontology of faith needs to be further developed in terms of concrete existential implications for the human in the close alliance with God, that is in any case what the notion of participation has pointed towards, to my understanding. As a resource in studies on Luther, metaphysics and ontology, my conclusion is that Mannermaa’s and Juntunen’s apprehensions of this relation to some extent offers, but not fully develops Luther’s view of God’s essence in the revealed as strongly holding epistemologically existential orientation for the human. The historical and history of ideas
theoretical sources in the thesis have contributed with clarification of prevailing
differentiation of ontologies and metaphysical structures of Luther’s times. This points further
to the need for further clarification of metaphysics of divine essence. This applies both in the
case of being in faith and actually determining not being in faith as well, a fuller perspective
that Juntunen should be appreciated for. The principle that determines these different beings is
still one of ontology, however epistemologically determined, as it seems. I am not here
speaking of an existentially-relational ontology of Ebeling’s kind, since the Finnish
researchers in my opinion have shown that there are good reasons for understanding Luther’s
theology as ontological from an intrinsic as well extrinsic manner. From their understandings,
I trace possibilities to expand further on Luther and these issues, however framed by the
question of revelation as the ontological center, since it holds together both divine essence,
human existence and epistemology. The deus revelatus as the deus absconditus is where God
reveals himself in manners that are contradictory to human, rational understandings of the
good and divine, that frames the divine and human paradox, the Christological principle, that
Mannermaa and Juntunen introduces. Springing from Mannermaa’s and Juntunen’s
conclusions, the question thus arises: What does the participation really express in terms of
the present and revealed God? If we want to speak of ontology in Luther’s theology, their
understanding of participation offers a starting point, but metaphysically, God is actually at
risk becoming lost to the human beyond Christ, if diminished into the coram notion. When
not taking metaphysics seriously while reading Luther, what would Luther then at all be
considered exploring regarding where and how to find a merciful God to exist by, in and
with?

These last questions should be considered open, critical reflections and extended critical
objections on a concrete level of contents. The conclusion is that the readings show that there
is more to be investigated about the relation between Luther, metaphysics and ontology,
preferably in the shape of investigating his theology as metaphysical. Does Luther’s call for
where to find a merciful God connect to metaphysics? I believe that it does and it offers a rich
area for investigation. Is his theology ontological? I find that there are strong reasons for such
a conclusion, but it should to my opinion be explored further, through stronger definitions of
the concepts. Is his theology metaphysics/metaphysical? This question offers the potential for
further investigation, since, due to a lack of metaphysical reflection in the chosen research, particularly the question of metaphysics comes to the fore as promising when it comes to Luther’s theological enterprise.

**IV:II Further possibilities for research.**

I conclude that it is reasonable to apprehend Luther as dealing with metaphysics and ontology and that his theology most reasonably shows ontological structures, but that this should be further explored and suggest further that taking a firm hold of the idea of participation, paradox and God’s contradictory self-revelation as varying representations of reality. This points further towards the notion of the hidden God, the *deus absconditus* as possible object for further studies of metaphysics and ontology in Luther. The reading of Oberman’s exposition of the concurrence of *iustitia Dei* and *iustita Christi* as locus for understanding a discovery in Luther, points thematically in this direction, as well as the processual perspective of McGrath that draws out the development of *theologia crucis*, where this image of God is the locus. The coinciding of this is tied up in the concept of divine being and revelation that holds together several levels, the *deus absconditus*. We stand before a possibility of metaphysical inquiry of Luther’s theology through a concept of God that can expand on his theology as understandings of reality. In Juntunen’s presentation of the ontology of Luther it is present although the concept is never mentioned. Mannermaa’s presentation neither explicitly mentions it, but the concept is present as well in the excerpts from Luther’s text as we have seen. The reality of the order of the law in Luther as understood by Mannermaa also seem to hold a paradoxical nature. These utterances of existence might successfully be explored through the paradox of the hidden God. A metaphysics of *how the righteous God would reveal himself, act with humanity and the nature of the response in the human in relation to this* appears if understanding the *theologia crucis* as holding a new concept of God, the crucified and hidden God that deals with the human; the *Deus crucifixus et absconditus*, as McGrath argues. The notion of the hidden God is by no means only Luther’s, but McGrath’s account of it proves a valuable resource, involving the seemingly contradictory divine essence and works of God in Christ that in Mannermaa and Juntunen are touched upon as God’s salvational being and works for the sake of human reality. The *theologia crucis* thus offers a possible epi-center, a structurally identified *topos* for fully developing Luther’s
relation to metaphysics or the metaphysics of Luther’s theology. If conceptually spelled out as *deus (sub contrario) absconditus*, it subsumes the simultaneousness of the *iustitia Dei* and *iustitia Christi* that Oberman points out as the particularity of Luther’s theology in relation to scholastic metaphysics and displays the hidden revelation, revealed hiddenness, divine hiddenness and hidden divinity. The strong emphasis on its epistemological implications might tie descriptions of reality and existence together with methodology that in the long perspective also can serve as a resource for developing theological theory.

Further inquiry such as this holds methodological challenges. The arguments of Luther bringing ontology into the frame of biblical scholarship and exegesis coincides with systematical analysis. There should thus be good opportunities for hermeneutical interaction while exploring such a concept as that of the *deus (sub contrario) absconditus* of Luther’s. A thorough methodological reflection is required and vice versa can a study of the metaphysics of Luther on that account expand on further development of theological method. Once again being aware of the paradoxical moment that Christology holds.\(^\text{164}\)

The close relation between Christology, incarnation theology and faith as Mannermaa argues, is once again a fruitful entrance. Set in relation to the *deus (sub contrario) absconditus*, it offers systematical orientation as well as Scripture and creeds, a relation that can be hermeneutically explored.

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