

## Call for Abstracts

Workshop

### **Analyzing Social Wrongs Social Criticism in Analytic Philosophy**

14–16th May 2015, Vienna

*Deadline for Submissions: January 14, 2015*

How can we use philosophical analysis to criticize society or its structures? At first sight, it may not be clear whether the family of philosophical traditions commonly referred to as “analytic” philosophy is up to that task, given that, for example, the method of cases is supposed to achieve a reflective equilibrium of our theoretical commitments and our intuitions, whether of ‘the’ folk or experts. However, the very task of *critical* theory, as coined by Max Horkheimer, is to question what we accept as ‘given’, and our intuitions about the social world would seem to be a case in point. Yet, Horkheimer also argues that critical theory must live up to the academic standards of its time, which are—for better or worse—currently set by analytic philosophy, given its current hegemony within professional philosophy in the Western world. With these tentative observations in mind, it remains yet an open question how exactly to relate the methodological canon handed down by the different strands within analytic philosophy to the project of social critique.

In the last thirty years however, an increasing number of philosophers associated with different traditions of analytic philosophy—be it amongst analytic Marxists, feminists or philosophers of race—has devoted their work to addressing issues more commonly associated with “critical” theory, broadly speaking. Among such issues are the nature of oppression, the impact and relevance of social structures, the explanation of ideology and its critique, to name a few. These developments present a challenge of the widely held assumption that philosophical analysis and social criticism are, if at all, merely accidentally related to each other. What is more, in claiming that some members of the Vienna Circle, out of whose work much of contemporary analytic philosophy developed, took their way of doing philosophy to be a means for bringing about social change, some scholars of the history of analytic philosophy have suggested that this philosophical tradition was in fact first devised as a “critical” project. We are sympathetic towards this view and, in this workshop, wish to explore the ways in which philosophical analysis could—and should—be used to this very end.

### **Keynote Speakers**

- Sally Haslanger (MIT)
- Kristie Dotson (Michigan State/Columbia)
- Nathaniel Adam Tobias Geleman (University College London)

### **Panels**

The relation between analytic philosophy and social criticism raises a lot of questions which we want to discuss in four panels and a concluding round table, with ample room for discussion. Panels consist of an introductory talk by the panel chair, two presentations as well as a response to both presentations. The panels will be devoted to the following topics:

**Panel 1: Philosophical Methodology and Social Criticism**

**Chair:** Katharine Jenkins (University of Sheffield)

- How can methods of analytic philosophy be used for social criticism?
- Which question of social criticism can be addressed by these methods?
- Which methods, besides traditional conceptual analysis, can be used?
- What are the limits of these methods?
- How can analytic philosophy question the 'given'?

**Panel 2: Metaphysics and Epistemology**

**Chair:** Joseph Kisolo-Ssonko (Manchester University/University of Sheffield)

- Does a "critical" stance in social philosophy necessarily commit to a particular position in the individualism/holism debate?
- Does social criticism require "non-ideal" theory and which take on the "non-ideal" should we favor?

**Panel 3: Advocacy and Objectivity**

**Chair:** TBA

- Do we need to be partial to particular causes/social movements and, if so, in which sense?
- How can we justify such a commitment to being partial?
- How can we reconcile such advocacy with an objective epistemology?
- In which sense can we be objective?

**Panel 4: Social Philosophy and the Social Sciences**

**Chair:** Al Prescott-Couch (Harvard University)

- What is social philosophy for?
- How should the social sciences and social philosophy interact?
- What would (methodological) Naturalism concerning the social world commit us to with regard to the relation between social philosophy and the social sciences?
- Can the Vienna Circle teach us something about how the social sciences and social philosophy should relate to each other?

**Submission**

We invite abstracts of not more than 3,300 characters (about 500 words), in English, for each panel. Abstracts may address one (or more) of the questions above as well as further ideas. Please prepare your abstract for anonymous review and submit it by the 14th of January, 2015, via *EasyChair* at: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=asw2014>

If you do not have one already, you will need to create an *EasyChair* account (which is free).

We are happy to receive submissions by researchers in all career stages as well as colleagues working in the social sciences.

## **Accommodation and Travel Expenses**

We will help you to arrange for affordable accommodation in Vienna and will try to cover or contribute to the payment of expenses incurred by accepted speakers. However, we cannot guarantee any coverage or contribution at this time and reserve full discretion in awarding these payments. If our funds do not suffice to cover all expenses for everybody, we will prioritise early career researchers and researchers with no institutional affiliation. We will not be able to fully cover overseas flights.

## **Further Information and Contact**

You can find further information about our workshop online at:

<http://analyzingsocialwrongs.phl.univie.ac.at>

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email us at:

[analyzingsocialwrongs.philosophie@univie.ac.at](mailto:analyzingsocialwrongs.philosophie@univie.ac.at)