

Central European University

**INCLUSION BEYOND FACE VALUE**  
**Metaphilosophy of/with Social Justice**

Conference Programme

Organised by

**Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) chapter**

Jay Luong

Maria Fedorova

Ayda Uzel

Frank Hernandez

Stephania Donayre Pimentel

Ivana Kulic

Sun Parker Schuette

Klara Hulikova

With faculty supervision by

Maria Kronfeldner

## **Wednesday October 5**

13:00-13:15

**Commencement speech from organisers**

13:15-14:45

KEYNOTE

**On Two Ways of Ameliorating a Concept**

Esa Díaz León (University of Barcelona)

Chair: Jay Luong

14:45-15:00

*Coffee break*

15:00-16:00

**Conceptual Sovereignty**

Ajinkya Deshmukh (The University of Manchester)

Chair: Klara Hulikova

16:00-16:15

*Coffee break*

16:15-17:15

**Finding Better Meanings:**

**Conceptual Engineering and the Argument from Many Alternatives**

Nadia ben Hassine (University of Cambridge)

Chair: Sun Parker Schuette

17:15-17:30

*Coffee break*

17:30-18:30

**Status-quo Maintenance and the Productivity Gap in Philosophy**

Hugo Ribeiro Mota (University of Oslo)

Chair: Frank Hernandez

18:30-20:00

*Wine & cheese*

## **Thursday October 6**

10:00-11:30

KEYNOTE

### **Ameliorative Metaphysics**

Asya Passinsky (Central European University)

Chair: Ayda Uzel

11:30-11:45

*Coffee break*

11:45-12:45

### **Cultivating Justice: Ambedkar and King**

Vivek Kumar Yadav (Indian Institute of Technology Indore)

Chair: Frank Hernandez

12:45-14:00

*Lunch*

14:00-15:00

### **Phenomenology Towards Structural Justice**

Sofia Porfirieva (Independent Researcher)

Chair: Ito Toshiaki

15:00-15:15

*Coffee break*

15:15-16:45

### **Minority Minds & Epistemic Injustice**

Panel discussion

Martin Huth & Rhona J. Flynn (University of Vienna)

Moderator: Maria Fedorova

16:45-18:45

*1050 (local microbrewery) outing*

## **Friday October 7**

10:00-11:30

KEYNOTE

### **Engineering ideologically defective concepts**

Mari Mikkola (University of Amsterdam)

Chair: Ayda Uzel

11:30-11:45

*Coffee break*

11:45-12:45

### **Socially Engaged Philosophy is Biased But Not in a Bad Way: A Reply to van der Vossen**

Aleksandra Knezevic (University of Belgrade)

Chair: Frank Hernandez

12:45-14:00

*Lunch*

14:00-15:00

### **The Philosopher as a 'Phenomenologically Oriented Sociologist':**

#### **Taking Stock of Things and/as Intellectual Activism**

Paul Giladi (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Chair: Stephania Donayre Pimentel

15:00-15:15

*Coffee break*

15:15-16:15

### **Tailoring Metaphysics to the Needs of Social Movements**

Yorgos Karagiannopoulos (University of Amsterdam)

Chair: Ito Toshiaki

16:15-17:30

*Break*

17:30-18:30

*Meet at Stephansplatz & transit to vineyards*

*In case of inclement weather*

*17:30-19:00*

*Tea tasting (venue TBA)*

18:30-20:00

*Hike & wine tastings in vineyards*

*In case of inclement weather*

*19:00-20:00*

*Meet at tea tasting venue & transit to restaurant*

20:00-22:00

*Dinner at Heuriger Schübel-Auer*

Central European University

**INCLUSION BEYOND FACE VALUE**  
**Metaphilosophy of/with Social Justice**

Abstracts

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Esa Díaz-Léon · Mari Mikkola · Asya Passinsky**

FEATURING PRESENTATIONS BY

**Nadia ben Hassine · Ajinkya Deshmukh · Paul Giladi · Yorgos Karagiannopoulos**

**Aleksandra Knezevic · Vivek Kumar Yadav · Sofia Porfiryeva · Hugo Ribeiro Mota**

A SPECIAL PANEL WITH

**Rhona J. Flynn · Martin Huth**

# Friday October 7

## KEYNOTE

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Mari Mikkola (University of Amsterdam)

### ENGINEERING IDEOLOGICALLY DEFECTIVE CONCEPTS

**Abstract.** One major motivation for conceptual engineering is that some ways in which we think and talk about reality are defective. Mona Simion, however, argues that it is permissible to engineer non-defective concepts too even when they are good enough. Still, Simion holds that there needs to be normative constraints on when this is legitimate: Engineering mustn't come with an epistemic loss. I don't dispute that we can have reasons to engage in continual conceptual maintenance. But some conceptual resources should be fixed because of serious defects involved: ones I term 'ideologically defective concepts.' Contra Simion, it isn't possible to engineer such concepts without an epistemic loss and this is the normative ground to engineer. I am not alone in thinking so. Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky argues for an expanded version of Simion's view precisely since Simion's constraint would make engineering ideologically defective concepts impermissible. Podosky, I contend, is right about ways in which Simion's normative constraint falls short. However, I argue, his expanded version also falls short: Podosky's understanding of how ideological concepts work is not apt to spell out what it means for conceptual defects to hinge on ideology. Here I advance an alternative diagnosis of such defectiveness. My analysis suggests that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to re-engineer ideological concepts. But the engineer can still engage in *de novo* engineering together with conceptual ethics. This makes conceptual engineering of ideological concepts much trickier than Simion and Podosky's views suggest. But ethics is hard and conceptual ethics is no exception.

### FEATURING PRESENTATIONS

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Aleksandra Knezevic (University of Belgrade)

### SOCIALLY ENGAGED PHILOSOPHY IS BIASED BUT NOT IN A BAD WAY: A REPLY TO VAN DER VOSSEN

**Abstract.** van der Vossen argues that political activism (i.e., "being a member of a political party, campaigning during elections" etc.) biases philosophers' thinking, making them worse at seeking the truth. Consequently, he states that the ideal of a socially engaged philosopher introduced by Plato and Marx should be replaced by an ideal of a philosopher as a disinterested seeker of the truth. For this reason, he holds that universities should resemble ivory towers more than they do now.

I understand van der Vossen's argument as follows: if philosophy aims to produce knowledge that benefits society (as the proponents of the ideal of a socially engaged philosopher assume, and it is warranted to suppose that van der Vossen grants this assumption), philosophy should produce unbiased knowledge. Further, if philosophy aims to produce unbiased knowledge, philosophers should be disinterested in their exploration of the truth, and not politically active (for the reason mentioned); thus, hidden in their ivory towers.

Against van der Vossen, I first argue that socially beneficial knowledge does not require disinterestedness and unbiasedness (these are, after all, not human traits) but the ability to distance oneself from one's biases so one can revise them in face of criticism. Consequently, although I admit that political activism

can strengthen one's biases, I argue that it does not follow that politically active philosophers are more likely to produce biased philosophy than those who are not interested in politics. Finally, I claim that a socially engaged philosopher does not need to be a political activist at all. A socially engaged philosopher is one who produces answers to questions that matter to society. However, to get to know what these questions are, a socially engaged philosopher must climb down the ivory tower and engage with the social context of her research but without the need to engage in political activism.

Paul Giladi (Manchester Metropolitan University)

### **THE PHILOSOPHER AS A 'PHENOMENOLOGICALLY ORIENTED SOCIOLOGIST': TAKING STOCK OF THINGS AND/AS INTELLECTUAL ACTIVISM**

**Abstract.** In the ordinary sense of the expression, to 'take stock of things' has connotations of withdrawing from embedded socio-political and cultural-historical contexts for the purpose of isolated philosophical contemplation. However, in the face of the multiple intersecting crises brought about by the Anthropocene and the wave of increasingly reactionary political discourse and *praxes* in recent years, it would seem that any second-order philosophic discourse that construes *reflective thinking* as involving a retreat from the social world amounts to a dereliction of discursive and moral duty that is deeply injurious to two interrelated matters: 1) the effort to "lend a voice to suffering" à la Theodor Adorno; and 2) the capacity of philosophy *itself* to function as socially ameliorative.

In this paper, I aim to 're-signify' (in John Dewey's sense of the term) the idea of *taking stock*, to constructively align this reflective activity with the metaphilosophical contention of Max Horkheimer that the critical social theorist is a *phenomenologically oriented sociologist*. Agency as embodied and socio-historically embedded subjectivity is bound up with the practice of confronting contemporary social reality head-on: one is, by default, baptised as embodied and embedded in various social environments structured by power relations, and norms of material production, gender, race, sexuality, class, and (dis)ability. This means that theory and academic conversations cannot be - let alone afford to be - viewed as 'buttoned-up, white-chokered and clean-shaven', to play on William James's critique of apriorist rationalism.

I offer a technical account of *taking stock*, which avoids any construal of this intellectual activity as contemplative act of noetic topography. To take stock of things, I contend, is to have one's philosophical concepts rooted all-the-way-through and entangled in the experiential realities of multiple social groups subject to forms of material and symbolic oppression.

Yorgos Karagiannopoulos (University of Amsterdam)

### **TAILORING METAPHYSICS TO THE NEEDS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

**Abstract.** Emancipation and social movements are strongly intertwined. The latter fight for the realization of the former while the former needs the latter for its actualization. In the fight for emancipation, social movements must solve an epistemic issue: they must gather the relevant knowledge of the social world and its mechanics so they can learn how to change it. From Lukacs to modern standpoint theorists, the epistemic issue (along with its normative implications) was the main gain philosophy could have from the social movements. Yet, we have still much to learn from them. I argue that, in their struggle for emancipation, social movements track the metaphysical issue of "change through persistence". Consider the radical imaginary of a classless, raceless, genderless and stateless society. Subordinated, gendered and racialized workers do not exist in this utopia. People are emancipated from all the historically constructed structures of domination. Now, notice that the current dystopic society has changed to a utopian one. However, some things remain the same: Humans still work, have a skin color, express mostly