CONFRONTING DISCRIMINATION

Abstract
Seraphine Appel (Barcelona)
*Discrimination under Politics of Apology*

There is inconsistency between Canada’s politics of colonial apology and its ongoing colonial project. The settler colonial attitude is obscured beneath a national identity of the benevolent state which is expressed as apologetic about colonialism, environmentally conscious, welcoming, and liberal. Yet certain bodies are made to feel comfortable and safe while others are not, and the stage-value of the sustainability aesthetic is exposed through state attitudes towards ongoing protest. The state’s desire for Indigenous disenfranchisement creates illuminating disputes over legal land jurisdiction, and Canada’s adherence to the (colonial) rule of law continues to be powerfully challenged through ongoing resistance to the colonial organisation of legal space.

Australian theorist Patrick Wolfe (2006) argues that settler colonialism works through a ‘logic of elimination’ which aims to destroy in order to replace and Yellowknives Dene political scientist Glen Coulthard (2014) argues that Canadian ‘politics of recognition’ function to obscure and perpetuate ongoing colonialism. Differing from other kinds of enterprise colonialism of which the main function is exploitation of people and resources for export, settler colonial logic is that of replacement of a population for the purpose of settling the land. A genealogical illustration of the ways in which different groups have been racialised serves to illustrate how anti-Indigenous discrimination is crucially distinct under logics of elimination, erasure, and replacement. The Canadian context is illuminating due to its politics of apology wherein hushed violence allows for critique of the more inconspicuous layers of control, many potential transgressions are anaesthetised by institutional support and appropriation, and haunting is manifested in what is comparatively diminished, not made explicit, or intentionally obscured. This paper analyses settler colonial phenomenologies and epistemologies under the Canadian politics of apology and recognition to deconstruct the totalitarian control of space and structures of discrimination.

Flora Löffelmann (Vienna)
*Discrimination at University: Phenomenological Perspectives*

Studies that try to examine the kind of discrimination students encounter at university most commonly rely on quantitative data. This approach often falls short of capturing the lived reality of those within the university context, implicitly showing that the ability to notice and name discrimination significantly depends on how much one is affected by it.
For example, the notion of a European “post-racial society” (Boulila 2019), which is often mirrored in these studies, preemptively classifies incidents of racist discrimination as non-existent, hindering a productive, potentially transformative discourse.


The core of my study is a set of interviews with four students of color who study at Viennese universities. I supplement their observations, which I, from the perspective of standpoint theory, consider expert knowledge, with insights from social epistemology, critical race theory, history, psychoanalysis, and medicine. I thereby show that racist discrimination, which the interview partners describe as phenomenal experiences of stress, discomfort, exhaustion, anger, and sadness, is grounded in societal power relations that work through mechanisms like othering (Kilomba 2019), white ignorance (Mills 2007), and hermeneutical und testimonial injustice (Fricker 2006 & 2007). My conclusion is that experiences of discrimination at university are of a particularly disillusioning nature, because these institutions publicly present themselves as spheres of neutrality and openness. This public image poses a strong contrast to my interview partners’ experiences.

Hannah Voegele / Sarah-Lea Effert (Duisburg/Brighton)
Check your Privilege Check! A Critique of the Privilege Discourse from a Position of Solidarity

Within debates around discrimination and how to confront its many forms, one concept has become particularly pertinent: privilege. While many find it a helpful frame to relate to both structures and experiences of discrimination or oppression, it has also elicited strong criticism and been harshly attacked – mainly by conservative and right-wing forces, but also from the left. This article offers a reparative reading or a critique in solidarity of the discourse on privilege. Giving the practice of privilege checking and its theoretical underpinnings the benefit of the doubt, we analyse where it fails and how it could succeed. Cases such as the public reception of the “storm on the capitol” on the day of the official confirmation of the presidential election victory in the US in January 2021, help us get down to the nitty-gritty of how the concept functions. Especially whiteness and masculinity have been framed in the language of privilege; this is where most of our analysis is
situated but it clearly extends beyond it. While the discourse on privilege rests on important insights about structural oppression and develops political productivity through disruptive elements, it is often misunderstood and misused as a political project in and of itself. By enriching the concept of privilege with an analysis of property relations and its epistemological dimensions, we aim to show pathways for more nuanced political dialogue that takes history and materiality seriously, starts from concrete situations and is oriented towards specific political goals.

Lisa Blasch (Innsbruck)

Between Mortification and Injustice: Revisiting Assemblages of Mediatized Witnessing with Regard to (Supremacist) Self-victimization and (Classist) Discrimination

The topos of mortification has come to play a crucial role within both (a) debating and analyzing right-wing populism and related phenomena of supremacist fundamentalism, as well as within (b) debating and criticizing (specific) activists and practices of “identity politics”:

(ad a) In terms of narcissistic mortification, this topos is not only crucial in the psychologized discourses on the iconic populist figure Trump, but also within discourses on his (alleged) fans, the “Trumpists”: conceived of as driven by “aggrieved entitlement”, as prominently coined by Kimmel for the “angry white men” (Kimmel 2015 [2013]). (ad b) At the same time, the topos of mortification has become a proxy for critical discourses on “identity politics”, prominently mirrored in terms such as “Generation Snowflake” or Fourest’s book title “Génération offensée” (Fourest 2020).

Whereas the term “mortification” also occurs in (law) discourses on discrimination (e.g., Liebscher 2016), the above sketched mediatized, discursive assemblage clearly suggests (experiences of) mortification as something (strictly) different to (experiences of) injustice. While this assemblage draws on multiple (intersections of) social hierarchizations, in this presentation, I want to focus on classism as often insensible and normalized dimension of discrimination in mediatized coverage and debate, not least regarding politics and populism (cf. Schäfer 2019, Cleen et al. 2018).

Drawing on a concept of witnessing as crucial anti-/political (sensu Arendt, and the Arendt readings of Loidolt 2018 and Butler 2018, resp.) mediatized practices in post-digital societies, and with respect to two photo sujets which have become iconic in the coverage of Trumpism (i.e., the siege of Nancy Pelosi’s office at the Capitol; Giuliani’s hair dye trickling down his face during a press conference on “the stolen election”), I want to discuss specific assemblages of visual, mediatized practices of supremacist self-victimization and classist discrimination, respectively.
Fatma Haron / Florian Ohnmacht (Innsbruck)
Two Sides of the Same Coin: The Intertwined Relation Between Racism and Privileges in the Post-Migrant Society

In recent years the “post-migrant perspective” is giving an insightful analysis of the societies in the German-speaking area. Post-migrant societies are understood as “areas of tension” (Espahangizi et al. 2016, 17), which, on the one hand, see themselves as heterogeneous migration societies with a liberal, antiracist, color-blind attitude, but at the same time continue to be shaped by racist and ethnicizing discourses, structures, practices and subjectivations. Our research field is Tyrol in Austria, which we understand as a powerful, discursive space where racism is part of everyday social life. Racism is representing a societal “normality”, which is publicly only made visible partially but is mostly denied and gets actively de-thematized.

Two independently developed dissertation-projects came into dialog for this call and put in relation the experiences with racism of the interviewees. While one dissertation, analyses privileged anti-racist activists, the second is scrutinising the impact of narratives on the subjectification of Turkish migrants’ descendents in rural Tyrol. The dialog of both projects illustrates the relation between racism and privileges. Using Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann’s (2004) biographical interviews with individuals with and without negative experiences of racism, we show how the normality of racism works and affects biographies and subjectivations (see Foucault 2005) in Tyrol. At the same time, we draw attention to resistant self-critical, emancipatory, empowering practices in the processes of idiosyncratic subject formation.

By this we aim to explain the influence of the structural discriminatory frameworks and raise the question of what we can learn from experiences with racism and privileges about the working of racism in the discursive space of Tyrol. Finally, we claim that the simultaneity of the visibility of nonperformative anti-racism (see Ahmed 2006) and invisibility of the normality of racism in the discursive space of Tyrol are the two sides of the same coin of the present racism operating in the post-migrant society.

Torsten Menge (Qatar/Northwestern)
Discrimination at the Border: Telling Genealogies to Disclose the Injustice of Modern Immigration Practices

While the idea of equal treatment may be central to the self-conception of democratic societies, state discrimination against outsiders is an exception. All democratic nation-states claim a right to exclude would-be immigrants from their territories and to treat citizens and non-citizens differently. Many political theorists have argued that this form of “discrimination” is justified as an exercise of collective self-determination and is compatible with commitments to moral
equality, at least under ideal conditions. In practice, however, the immigration policies and practices of many self-avowed liberal-democratic states involve thinly veiled forms of racial and ethnic discrimination. While immigration restrictions may seem to be legitimate expressions of democratic self-determination from “the inside,” from “the outside” they look like unjust forms of discrimination that contribute to global systems of domination and exploitation.

In my talk, I will argue that genealogical investigations of immigration control practices and of the idea of national self-determination can help disclose the unjust character of Western democracies’ claimed “right to exclude.” Recent historical studies by Adam Getachew, Nandita Sharma, Radhika Mongia, and others have shown how the idea of national self-determination has been used in the twentieth century to strengthen imperial rule and international racial hierarchy. Moreover, modern conceptions of national identity, territorial sovereignty, and the right to exclude have been significantly shaped by efforts of settler colonial states and former imperial metropoles to restrict the migration of “undesirable” and negatively racialized populations. These accounts suggest that discriminatory practices at the border are not simply abuses of legitimate powers, but are rather anchored in the global structure of a nation-state system which emerged, according to the above-mentioned authors, to perpetuate the social relations that enabled exploitation and domination under colonialism. Telling a counter-history that contrasts with affirmative liberal accounts of the nation-state system, these genealogies draw attention to silenced, marginalized, or forgotten experiences. For those of us on “the inside,” they make explicit norms that we may not have realized structure our basic political institutions.

Ariadni Polychroniou (Athens)

Agentic Potentialities, Coalition Strategies and Collective Mobilizations of Discriminated Refugee Subjektivities

This paper aspires to critically explore the theoretical designation of the socially embedded, asymmetrically allocated and historically mutable phenomenon of discrimination towards liminal social subjectivities via the illustrating paradigm of the homines sacri of modernity, namely the refugee subjects arriving at host European countries of the South and becoming hetero-constituted as the absolute Other within the normative frames of our neoliberal Western socio-cultural temporality. More particularly, the central -epistemological, methodological and political- aporia of this paper focuses on the challenging dialectic between the alienating submission to historicosstructural discrimination and the radical emergence of self-reconstructing, self-narrating and selfdefending empowering acts of refugee individual agency and collective resistance within material, juridical and discursive conditions of extreme precarity and dehumanizing dispossession.
Echoing the Conference’s perplex philosophical endeavour to dialogically develop a nuanced hybrid epistemology of both phenomenological insights and genealogical elements for the rapprochement of discrimination, this paper will attempt to theorize the paradoxical interweaving of discrimination and resistance in the paradigm of refugee-subjects through the comparative juxtaposition of two pivotal feminist frameworks:

a) the quasi-merleau-pontian quasi-beauvoirian feminist phenomenology of Iris Marion Young. More concretely, the construction of the embodied lived experience of the refugee-subject’s discrimination and trauma will be articulated through the systematic theorization of the radical youngean feminist reconstruction of the merleau-pontian perception of corporeality, motility and spatiality in terms of a hybrid phenomenological epistemology of the feminine lived experience. Additionally, resisting coalition strategies and collective protest acts of heterogeneous groups of refugees will be enlightened via the cohesive analysis of the youngean theoretical construction of gender in terms of a passive and extra-subjective sartrean seriality representing politically proactive anti-essentialist reformation of multiple different social collectives.

b) the foucauldian-inspired genealogical conception of gender in the post-structuralist philosophy of Judith Butler. In particular, the non-essentialist construction of the refugee identity will be reexamined as a genealogical chain of discursive formations, performative practices, ideological presumptions and material externalities. Furthermore, the dialectic between discrimination and resistance of refugee subjects will be framed through the butlerian reconception of vulnerability, perceived as a constitutional ontological state of the human condition, precarity, articulated as the politically induced condition of maximized vulnerability and as a mediating site of alliance between heterogeneous categories of the unrecognised Others, and the right to appear encapsulated as a collective and subversive performative exercise claimed by the resisting, yet dispossessed subjects.

In the closing remarks of this presentation, the above phenomenological and genealogical perspectives will be critically compared and the crucial epistemological contribution of feminist theory to both the conductive theorization of discrete forms of discrimination and the illuminating exegesis of the conjunction of discrimination and resistance will be highlighted.

Sheng-Mei Ma (Michigan)
Bipolar America: Anti-Asian versus Minari

In this new millennium, America suffers from the bipolar syndrome toward Asia, hating and loving it at the same time. Goaded by Trumpian populism and nativism, half of America scapegoats Asians, among other peoples of color, on account of the paranoia of scapegoats Asians, among
other peoples of color, on account of the paranoia of white replacement. This fear of dispossession is intensified by the ascent of China in the “Chinese Century,” which challenges American exceptionalism and supremacy in what has been the “American Century,” particularly during the cold war and beyond. With its presumed origin in Wuhan, China, the global pandemic of Covid-19 has only exacerbated the tension. China’s lack of transparency in sharing data and assisting the WHO investigators in locating the source or even the index patient has increased suspicion and resentment against China. The list of patients and the course of their illness should have been published for the sake of humanity in preventing another global outbreak.

Against Trump’s America, the other half of this bipolar collective psyche overcompensates by valorizing things Oriental. The progressive, liberal forces, encapsulated by Hollywood, pick this hate-filled moment to bestow praise and awards upon Lee Isaac Chung’s Minari (2021), as though the Korean immigrant family drama counterbalances anti-Asian hate crimes and sentiments. That Minari is a softball of an understated melodrama fits the bill for a feel-good breather to escape from the anti-Asian reality. Which is the real and which the dreamscape? Which is a real/reel dream and which a fake reality? The crimes committed by the Atlanta shooter Robert Aaron Long and the New Yorker Brandon Elliot, just to name the most recent and most atrocious, are the reality both Asians in America and Americans of Asian descent are forced to inhabit, a reality born out of twisted minds and crazed illusions. Asians live and die in accordance with Americans’ sick hallucination. The exact number of these Americans remains yet to be determined.

Luigi Corrias (Amsterdam)
‘No Justice, No Peace’: Black Lives Matter, Institutional Racism and Legal Order

Following the violent death of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter-movement took to the streets to protest against institutional racism and police violence. In order to analyse this phenomenon, this article takes its cue from the slogan ‘No Justice, No Peace’. In particular, this contribution draws on speech act theory and phenomenology to investigate what kind of justice and what type of peace are called upon and how the slogan functions as a claim addressed to the legal order. One reading of the slogan interprets it as a conditional: if and only if those responsible for the death of George Floyd are brought to justice, will peace return to the streets. I argue that the rule of law provides a comprehensive normative framework to evaluate what went wrong during the arrest of George Floyd. The justice that the Black Lives Matter-movement demands may be seen as consisting in a just punishment for those responsible for George Floyd’s death.
However, one may also read the slogan as a passionate utterance in the sense of Stanley Cavell. In this interpretation, the slogan describes the injustice of racism from the first-person perspective of the victim. This phenomenological analysis of the experience of institutional racism reveals that it involves more than legal injustice, only. Racism appears as a form of injustice that damages the being of its victim at the most basic level, for it questions her very equal humanity and belonging to the social world. There is no peaceful coexistence in a shared world, no recognition of a common humanity as long as the injustice of racism continues to exist.

In a third move, I argue that such a claim directly affects the claim to justice made by the legal order. Drawing on a genetic phenomenology of legal order inspired by the work of Bernhard Waldenfels, I argue that the slogan may be understood as a radical claim questioning the legal order, showing its boundaries and contingent origins.

Guy Axtell (Virginia)

How to Erase the 'Enemy in the Mirror'

We arguably have great need today for “new virtues” which help us to better recognize discrimination and to make it more visible. We have a complementary need for naming vices which exacerbate discrimination. A working hypothesis for this paper, in line with the conference, is that the best way to both recognize and advocate for our needed new virtues, and to make more visible forms of injustice which manifest as discrimination, is for scholars to juxtapose phenomenological and genealogical analyses, balance them, and render them complementary.

My study explains how cogent pragmatic genealogies will draw upon impartiality and inductive normativity, improving their cogency as they are able to utilize what Wittgenstein terms “general facts,” including results of studies in the human sciences. I propose to connect my study with Mattieu Queloz’s (2021) The Practical Origin of Ideas: Genealogy as Conceptual Reverse-Engineering, and his critique of people’s pronounced tendencies (found especially in theology and philosophy), “to dehistoricize and denaturalize what they respect” (102). Genealogies are not strictly explanatory, and are shown to often be used for ameliorative purposes. Indeed, Queloz argues for an understanding of genealogy as “conceptual reverse-engineering in the service of ameliorative conceptual engineering” (194). I show how cogent genealogies can draw both upon phenomenologies to gather inductive strength, and indicate the value of both perspective-taking with respect to genealogies of those who experience discrimination, and genealogical ‘reverse engineering’ in respect to discriminatory experiences and practices. These are ways that scholars can acknowledge the contrasting functions of phenomenology and genealogy (and emic and etic methodologies), while coordinating the ample conceptions resources
which each supplies. Bringing these tools to bear on problems of discrimination in more coordinate fashion allows us to take better note of our bias blindspot, and to deal with religious, racial, differences in more prosocial, and less dysfunctional ways. I explain how it allows us to deal with the ‘other’ in a way that erases, rather than constructs, an ‘enemy in the mirror.’

Fahim Amir (Vienna)
Cohabitation. We and Afghanistan

In the opening lecture of the symposium, the philosopher Fahim Amir looks at the ways past and present imperial knowledge economies have constituted Afghanistan as a distinct, violent, failed space in need of intervention. Apologetic rhetorics of distancing are countered by categories of co-constitution, complicity and heterogeneous historicity. These reflections lead to the questioning of cohabitation as a material and relational deconstruction of grammars of difference.

28 October

Marina Martinez Mateo (Frankfurt/Main)
Represent! Confronting Discrimination, Multiplying Representations, Criticizing Identity

It is an insight by Critical Race Theory and Feminist Theory that the seemingly “colorblindness” and neutrality of liberalism and “post-racial” societies produce discrimination by taking a dominant norm as so-called neutrality. To confront this, it seems necessary to highlight differences and to build collectives based on common (particular) experiences of discrimination. However, the structural diversity of forms of oppression and discrimination, the fact of their intersection and the potential contradictions that can arise at these intersections, seem to challenge the formation of collectives – as we know from the Black Feminist intervention into the white woman’s movement in the 1970s. For: Who may speak on behalf of an oppressed collective, who is empowered to assume the speakership for that group, and what internal hierarchies are (re)produced when some become thereby visible and others don’t?

In my paper, I aim to address these questions and argue that we need new forms of representation (in the double sense of visibility and speakership) to form political collectives out of their internal fragmentation - in particular, political collectives that know how to affirm this fragmentation. This is connected to a critique of those identities that are on the ground of an experience of discrimination, and an awareness
of how each subject of experience is necessarily incomplete. To make these ideas more concrete, I will look at Chicana Feminism (especially Chela Sandoval and Gloria Anzaldúa), as I see here an important source for such a critical understanding of identity and representation. What becomes also evident in Chicana Feminism is how political and artistic/aesthetic practices can be brought together as strategies for building multiple collectives to jointly confront discrimination.

Corinne Kaszner (Cologne)

Thinking and Confronting Discrimination: The Perspective of Social Justice and Diversity

Based on an existing approach of discrimination-critical theory and educational practice, the concept of Social Justice & Diversity, the aim of my paper will be to critically reflect on the strengths, but also limits, of a genealogical as well as phenomenological approach to the problem of discrimination. Explicitly starting from insights taken from the discrimination-critical practice of Social Justice & Diversity to analyze discrimination and propose ways to critically confront it, the focus will be on questions of methodology: What exactly do we ‘need’ from each theoretical tradition to analyze and to confront discrimination? What exactly does each tradition enable us to think and do?

I will start by sketching the central (methodological) assumptions of the Social Justice & Diversity approach. First, I focus on the terms ‘structure’ and ‘oppression’, partly drawing on the work of Iris Marion Young. Second, I outline methodological requirements of what I call the ‘mode’ of confronting discrimination, drawing on the terms ‘plurality’, ‘non-positionality’ and ‘allyship’. I will argue that, for an analysis of discrimination, a genealogical thinking of structure and oppression should be radicalized in terms of narrow definitions thereof. Likewise, a certain strand of the phenomenological tradition can serve to found a thinking of plurality and allyship. However, I claim that some aspects of plurality can pose much greater methodological challenges for both, a genealogical approach and phenomenology.

My central argument will be that, in line with the general description of the conference, it is in fact necessary to combine different logics and methodologies to confront discrimination. However, from a perspective of Social Justice & Diversity it might be necessary to extend the given approaches by yet another set of traditions of discrimination critique and plurality to be found, e.g., in feminist traditions of autonomy or the dialogical method of Mahloquet as it is used in Social Justice & Diversity.
Niclas Rautenberg (Essex)
Ta-Nehisi Coates’s ‘Between the World and Me’. A Phenomenology of Racialised Conflict

One of the core tenets of liberal political philosophy is the conception of persons as free and equal citizens. Nowhere does this crystallise more than in John Rawls’s Political Liberalism, in which the rational agent in the original position and, subsequently, the reasonable citizen in the well-ordered society, agree on a set of principles that ends social conflict and fosters a realistic utopia reigned by justice. However, recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the killings of Brianne Taylor and George Floyd, have once more rendered it clear that we are far from equality across social groups.

The thesis underpinning this paper is that Rawls’s ahistorical assumption of the sameness of persons in political matters does not fit the perception of the other in racialised conflict. Starting out from a conflict event in Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Between the World and Me, the paper illuminates the particular structure of the experience of racialised conflict. Contrasting Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Alfred Schutz with Frantz Fanon, Lewis R. Gordon, and George Yancy, I argue that Coates’s conflict experience expresses different modes of being-in contemporary democracies. These include racialised patterns of perception through which the body of the opponent becomes politicised; i.e., features of the body become markers for traits representative of a group regarded as a political opponent. Understood this way, racialised conflict is always political. A Rawlsian approach to conflict is incapable of accounting for this perceptual dimension, as the Rawlsian citizen is disembodied and rid of history. A phenomenological conflict approach that takes its place, does not posit sameness, but acknowledges difference. The solution, then, is not the complete fusion of viewpoints, but a “lateral universal” that we find in the works of philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty or Bernhard Waldenfels.

Elsa Dorlin (Paris)
The Lived Experience of Domination: Essay on a Phenomenology of Selfdefense

What does it mean to experience domination from a sensor, carnal, perceptual and affective point of view - how does this allow us to complexify the genealogy of domination? It is a question here of understanding not so much how we are subjected but how we are affected by the material and discursive, institutional and bodily devices of domination. In other words, how domination precisely targets our relationship to the world but also the experience of what it means to resist.
Discrimination manifests in innumerable, frequently subtle ways. By bringing Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology into dialogue with recent literature on discrimination from the social sciences, I hope to illuminate some interesting intentional and constitutional structures that undergird the more insidious instantiations of discrimination. Examining Husserl’s claim that normality is a “mode pertaining to constitution”, I argue that discrimination is often the result of our unreflective granting of primacy to Einstimmigkeit (concordance-normality) over optimalität (optimal-normality). Husserl provides a valuable distinction between these two forms of normality that allow us to see how discrimination is symptomatic of life within the naïve living of the natural attitude.

I will argue that discrimination and discriminating practices, particularly those of stereotyping and prejudices, are evidence of a granting of primacy to concordance through the excessive reliance on types and typifications. Phenomenology is able to uncover and illuminate the ways in which discriminatory acts and behaviours are often embodied at a pre-reflective level and are reproduced through our tendency towards that-which-is familiar and habitual. This desire for familiarity overburdens us with a compulsion to form expectations and anticipations passively and actively regarding people and objects we encounter, to such an extent that we often suffer from an ‘epistemic closure’ whereby we respond to discordant or alien encounters through alienation or assimilation. It will be shown how each of these often leads to discrimination, and how the recognition of phenomenology’s emphasis on defamiliarising and denaturalising provides a possible remedial response. If phenomenology is able to assert that discrimination is symptomatic of life in the natural attitude, then phenomenological reflection becomes an interesting resource for confronting discrimination.

Sonja Lauff (Oldenburg)

Naming the Discrimination of the ‘Psyche’: Confronting Psychism with Mad and Deconstructive Perspectives

Recognising and confronting discrimination and oppression can be very difficult even if knowledge regarding the different categorisations of targets, e.g. by race, gender, or age, is available. But what if the categorisation remains invisible? What if there is not even a term to name the oppression? People are discriminated against because of their psychic suffering and/or non-normative perception, feeling, thinking and behavior. They are facing an individualisation of their experiences of oppression without any words at their disposal to name social and systemic injustice. To make this form of oppression recognisable, I have developed the notion of psychism (Lauff 2020).
Psychism encompasses the idea of the existence of a "psyche" and its division into "normal / healthy" and "abnormal / sick", as well as the devaluation and oppression of those suffering, regarded as mentally ill, or not meeting psy-norms in various ways. Thus, "psyche" becomes another mode of categorisation of targets of oppression.

I will present selected aspects of my current project, which aims to theoretically define the conceptualisation of psychism, particularly focusing on which theoretical arguments of different related advocacy groups (such as mad, neurodivergent or mental health advocacy) might support and will be supported by the notion of psychism. To analyse different positions in the new field of inquiry, the in/discipline Mad Studies (LeFrançois et al. 2013; Ingram 2016) and related theoretical approaches, I am using two theoretical perspectives: First, I will draw on the theory of trilemmatic inclusion (Boger 2019) to analyse the ambivalences of politically dealing with psychism. Second, I will work out congruences, as well as incongruences, between psychism and sexism/genderism utilising a Butlerian deconstructive perspective (Butler 1991).

Often, what is seen as a manifestation of the “psyche” can be a direct result of the pain and suffering caused by violence or discrimination in the first place. Thus, discrimination because of “psyche” can be viewed as “secondary discrimination”, and theoretically thinking through psychism will help to broaden the understanding of discriminatory and oppressive mechanisms in general. Just as Butler’s question, whether “the norm, having become psychic, involve[s; S.L.] not only the interiorization of the norm, but the interiorization of the psyche” (Butler 1997: 19), opens ways to critically look onto the “psyche” and its relationship with oppressive norms.

Gail Weiss (Washington DC)
Toward a Critical Phenomenology of Normalcy

What does it mean to say that something or someone is or is not normal? Who determines what counts as “normal”? Most importantly, what can we learn by centering the experiences of those who have been marginalized because their body, sexuality, race and/or gender are viewed as abnormal, unnatural, and even immoral? The perspectives of people who have historically not been viewed as normal, I argue, are indispensable in assessing the impact of the “new normal” that has come to characterize daily life during a global pandemic as well as the nostalgic appeals to return, as quickly as possible, to pre-pandemic life, an “old normal,” which was clearly not as positive an experience for some as for others. I will also address the unexpected opportunities the current pandemic has offered to alter sexist, racist, ageist, and ableist presuppositions about what is normal, what is natural, and what should be the case.
Burkhard Liebsch (Bochum)

_Differenzierung und Diskriminierung - zwischen Verbot und Unvermeidbarkeit_

Untersteht Diskriminierung der sog. "Herrschaft des Rechts"? Oder beweist das Andauern diverser Formen von Diskriminierung das Gegenteil? Wer an dieser Problematik interessiert ist, wird der Frage auf den Grund gehen müssen, wie sich Diskriminierung allererst zeigt (längst bevor sie in systematisierter Form auffällig und rechtlich relevant wird), woher sie rührt, welchen "Sinn" sie in der Perspektive der Diskriminierenden hat und was sie auf Seiten der Diskriminierten anrichtet, denen sie gewaltsam widerfährt – u.U. so, dass die Diskriminierten von heute die Diskriminierer von morgen sind...

Aloisia Moser (Linz)

_How to Discern Discrimination?_

We sit in a streetcar. People get on and off. No one speaks. People choose seats or poles to hang on to. People pass other people or let people pass. People get off at the next stop. Noses are blown, coughs are coughed. Glances are exchanged. Acknowledgements are made in letting people pass to “their” seats or in not moving to the side, not indicating the willingness to move to the side, even if it was needed. We are not acting. We are not thinking. And yet, this is a crime scene and full of discrimination.

In this paper I argue that our focus on the cognitive side of experience in knowledge production hinders us from doing justice to the experiences of those discriminated. I will stress the importance of Judith Butler’s account of the perlocutionary effects in hate speech (Butler, 1997), the way we “judge” other people linguistically and conceptually and how this is done more through perlocutionary effects of language than through constative statements that were intended by the speaker. But this is only one way to account for performative effects. In a second step, I argue we need an account that develops the “perlocutionary” or unintended effects also of the sensible part of experience. I think we need to look deeper towards a different kind of discrimination experience, one that is not communicated in language or in terms of bodily violence or obvious gestures, but rather one that is rooted in everyday interactions that create patterns and atmospheres. These patterns affect the discriminated and are often not at all “taken in” by the perpetrators or by the surrounding people not discriminated against. This bodily and affective discrimination cannot easily be made accessible through cognitive language.
This is why my third step is to propose that in order to do this research into knowledge that comes from the senses we need to look into aesthetics. Aesthetics is not just about art, but generally about knowledge we get from the sensible. I will use Mirjam Schaub's (Schaub, 2010) account of the singular and the exemplar as well as Dieter Mersch's work on the epistemologies of aesthetics (Mersch, 2015) in order to try to explain what is going on in the streetcar. If we take a situation as an example, it is not its logic, but its "materi-ality" that gives it weight, it is more prototypical than logical and that is what we need to learn to read with our senses. Mersch also involves a logic of the "and…and…and" that allows us to render the situation not in terms of logical connections, but in a constellative "showing" instead of saying.

**Kendall Moore** (Santa Clara)
*Anti-Bias VR Technologies: An Ethical Analysis*

In the wake of global protests over anti-Black violence, researchers and activists have attempted to harness the power of anti-biasing technologies as techno-solutions to racism. The emerging availability of immersive virtual reality (VR) technology is seen by many as a powerful tool for reducing bias by increasing the empathic responses of users (e.g., simulations like 1,000 Cut Journey promise to deliver the personal experience of anti-Black racism to users to make them more empathic toward those who experience this form of discrimination). We argue that VR technologies cannot enhance empathy because VR is incapable of giving users the first-person experiences of others. We begin by discussing the history of bias measures and anti-bias interventions to explain why behavioral, non-conscious measures (e.g., galvanic skin conductance) are preferable to more traditional measures like the IAT.

We then explain why VR has emerged as a revolutionary tool for bias reduction and critique empathy enhancing simulations. We argue for an intersectional theory of experience (e.g., that experience is partially constituted by the top-down effects of internalized concepts of race, gender, class, etc.), which suggests that VR simulations cannot accurately capture or transfer experiences in the way empathy enhancing simulations promise. Second, drawing from research on anti-biasing interventions, we argue that empathy-enhancing VR simulations are also unlikely to have long-lasting effects on users’ internalized bias. However, we close the paper by arguing that VR can yet function as a bias reduction tool by designing simulations that enhance sympathy instead of empathy. We provide a framework for the design of anti-biasing sympathy simulations that emphasize counter stereotypic representations of target groups, attune the user to emotional facial expressions, especially of pain, and/or representations that make use of the subject’s moral foundations. Lastly, we respond to potential criticisms of our position.
First, we explore the possibility that even a VR simulation aiming to generate sympathy may be manipulative and thus unethical. Second, we respond to those who may believe that the political and social ends of bias reduction may justify the use of misleading empathy simulations.

**Gerald Posselt** (Vienna)
*Discrimination, Speech and Neoliberal Rationality*

Language and speech play a crucial role in most cases of social discrimination. As a means of designation and naming, language is used to make distinctions, to ascribe stereotypical characteristics or to deny basic political rights. Furthermore, language itself can become the object of discrimination, for example when speaking or teaching a language is devalued or prohibited. Finally, language is not only a means and object of discrimination, but also an essential resource for countering discrimination through critical reflection and argumentation. This critical potential is lost, however, when language is reduced to an instrumental means and subjected to rational ends.

In order to illustrate the complex interplay between language and discrimination, I will not engage in the broad debates about hate speech and inflammatory speech. Rather, I will take a reverse approach and ask whether and to what extent hate and hate crime can be understood as a form of speech. This is based on the more general assumption that it is possible neither to gain an adequate understanding of speech and language without considering their violent force nor to arrive at an adequate account of interpersonal violence without considering its linguistic dimension. In this way, I hope to develop a conception of language that consistently accounts for the discriminatory power of speech and language, while at the same time maintaining speech as a fundamental resource of articulation and counter-speech.

**Hamid Malekzade / Mahmoud Moghaddam Shad** (Tehran)
*Equality, Ressentiment, and Empathic Perception of Other*

We are living in a world in which the experience of discrimination and its concomitant negative feelings are prevailing. There is no surprise, however, after almost everyone is encouraged to believe in equality de jure, that de facto unequal relations in almost every society slap them hardly in the face. This belief is both too convincing and desirable that rarely anyone would dare to question its fundamental basis and apodictic truth.

Generally, equality is understood based on a possible comparison between individuals and/or communities which are somehow put on the same scales. This comparison, however, can be a threshold to an unwanted place, as Nietzsche and Scheler has shown us before by their description of “the man of ressentiment”. Furthermore, it must be based
on a system of values, which is historically biased and cannot once and for all be the ideal criteria for moral judgment for every society and generation. Nevertheless, there is another way to understand the relation between individuals beyond this poisonous comparison, as we suggest. According to intersubjective understanding of Ego in Husserlian phenomenology, we have no isolated individual ontologically and therefore it is meaningless to compare the individuals as separated entities. In other words, we cannot separate My/Our Good from the Her/Their Good in the first place, while every Good is always common in this sense.

If we, following Nietzsche and Scheler, take the danger of egalitarian movements in democratic societies seriously, we should be looking for a cure for the ressentiment and an alternative to equality at the same time. In this respect, we will obtain the Husserlian concept of empathy as an exceptional way of perceiving Others. Ressentiment comes along with an initial comparison, and then an experience of discrimination or disenfranchising. Therefore, if we can eliminate the distance between I and the Other, and replace equality with empathic unity, we can move forward to a new kind of community free from both ressentiment and inequality.

Evelyn Eckart / Julia Schratz (Innsbruck)
Confronting Discrimination of Woman and Children who are Threatened by Homelessness, Poverty and Violence

Research of children’s and women’s lifeworlds and experiences (Husserl) in marginalized social situations is scarce. The present research investigated women’s and children’s lived experiences characterized by homelessness and being accommodated by the women’s association DOWAS für Frauen in Innsbruck. It is located at the interface of phenomenological poverty, childhood, family, and educational research. By attributing social problems to cultural issues of the lower class, sociostructural conditions are neglected. The public discourse is characterized by assigning guilt and failure to parents concerning social inequality as poverty, homelessness and unsuccessful educational careers (Andresen 2008). Especially during the pandemic, stress factors for single mothers and children are becoming more visible.

The paper will present the results of a pilot study started in March 2021 on behalf of DOWAS für Frauen in Innsbruck. It examined the following research questions: How do women and children experience homelessness and how are gender roles and social class related to the experience of becoming homeless (during the pandemic)? How are the children’s lifeworlds taken into account by pedagogical institutions? How is social inequality during childhood related to gender roles, social class and integration at school? Which discrimination mechanisms are visible at this interface of institutions regarding educational careers? Multiple experiences of discrimination are in the focus of this study based
on phenomenological methods like participating experience, dialogs with the affected women, children, and caregivers, expressed in vignettes and anecdotes (Eckart 2015). By submitting discrimination to (educational) phenomenological analyses, they can be adequately and sensitively reflected on and discussed, for instance as a basis of resource-oriented pedagogy. From a gender perspective, the question is in which ways multiple experiences of discrimination mutually influence and reinforce each other, and how they could be made institutionally visible and nameable.