

International Conference and Graduate Workshops

“Wittgenstein and Feminism: Ordinary Language Philosophy’s Contribution to Feminist Theory and Practice”

Organized by Mickaëlle Provost (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France; Conference), Jasmin Trächtler (Bergen Network for Women in Philosophy, University of Bergen, Norway; Conference, Workshops), Sandra Laugier (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France; Conference), and Carlota Salvador Megias (University of Bergen, Norway; Workshops)

Date: March 26th - 27th, 2021

Location: Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

Keynotes:

Caterina Botti (University of Rome — La Sapienza, Italy)

Alice Crary (New School for Social Research, New York, USA)

Chon Tejedor (University of Valencia, Spain)

Over the past thirty years, we have seen what a rich resource Wittgenstein’s philosophy can be for feminist epistemology and praxis. By emphasizing the myriad ways we use language in different contexts, Wittgenstein’s work encourages its readers to pay attention to the particularities of ordinary, situated uses of language and to the complexities attendant upon our linguistic practices. In fact, Wittgenstein conceived of language itself as a practice, and philosophy’s task as that of describing and making explicit the ways in which language and reality intertwine. Philosophy should not then seek to explain the metaphysical foundations of language, but to clarify the forms of our speech, the functions speech fulfills in different contexts, and the ways in which speech permits people to come together.

For these reasons, Wittgenstein’s philosophy has been a fruitful starting point for a number of developments within feminist thought. Attention to particulars, and an emphasis upon descriptions of ordinary language use, have led to new directions in moral philosophy, among them the ethics of care. (Gilligan, 1982, Baier, 1995; Crary, 2007; Laugier et Paperman, 2006) Wittgenstein’s notions of “forms of life” and “language-games” have been used to reflect upon collective feminist practices, the social construction of subjectivities, and the very fabric of our lived experience. (Shemman et O’Connor, 2002; Das, 2020; Moi 2017). Finally, ordinary language philosophy — a philosophical movement inspired by the later Wittgenstein’s work — has given us the tools to attend to our linguistic practices with an eye to eradicating linguistic sexism, inclusive of inventing new ways of talking about and performing our selfhood. (Gérardin-Laverge, 2018) The utility of Wittgenstein’s work is thus twofold: It helps us, on the one hand, to clarify the particular epistemologies and philosophical methodologies employed by feminist theory; and, on the other, to better grasp political problems tied to our public discourses, discrete acts of speech, and the gendered aspects of our language. It accomplishes this in part by giving us the latitude to be more attentive to lived, embodied experiences of linguistic practice (ex., the tone of voice we use, the rhythm of our speech, our body language, etc.).

The aim of this event is to expand this inquiry while highlighting the Franco-Norwegian exchange on the importance of Wittgenstein’s thought for feminism. In France and Norway, Wittgenstein’s philosophy is used not only to reflect upon feminist methodologies and feminist epistemology, but also to investigate the intersections between language and ideology — their co-construction, as well as language’s subversions, reversals, and refusals of ideology — using a contextualized approach. We will attend to the plurality of feminist readings of Wittgenstein’s later work, their utility to feminist theory and practice, and

the tensions that may arise between these and other post-structuralist (Butler 1990, 1997) or materialist approaches (Greco 2018; Marignier 2020) to discourse.

This is a two-part event.

The conference will focus on the following:

1) **First**, feminist reappropriations of Wittgenstein's work within moral philosophy and feminist ethics; how these might relate to the distinction between ethics and politics; and the importance of Wittgenstein's philosophy as a resource for feminist epistemology.

2) **Second**, the ways in which Wittgenstein's philosophy might help us to clarify the ideological (sexist) dimensions of our language; feminist subversions of such language; and linguistic inventions and interventions that undermine or outright undo the relationship between gender and language. This includes everyday dimensions of linguistic practice such as speaking out or being forced to remain silent; the rhythm and tone of one's voice; the body language attendant upon one's speech, etc.

3) **Third**, points of agreement, tension, and revision between these and other approaches to the philosophy of language, such as linguistic phenomenology, post-structuralism, and materialist analyses of discourse. We ask, *Is a Wittgensteinian attention to linguistic practice compatible with a conception of language as an ideologically-constructed system of discourse?*

Workshops will involve close discussion of pre-circulated papers in small groups, each featuring one of our keynotes. We particularly welcome submissions that touch upon the themes listed for the conference. The Bergen Network for Women in Philosophy has hosted two such workshops in the past — please see [this website](#) for more information.

We invite submissions from women and members of all other marginalized gender identities. To apply for **the conference**, please fill out [this form](#). To apply for **the workshops**, please fill out [this form](#). For the workshops, we ask that you currently be enrolled in a graduate program (masters or doctorate) or have completed a graduate degree within the past year. This is not a requirement for the conference. You may apply to both the conference and the workshops, but if you do so, we ask that you submit two separate, distinct papers. Papers submitted to the workshops may be works in progress. All submissions must be in English. There is no registration fee.

Applications for both the conference and workshops are due by **December 1st, 2020**. All successful applicants to the workshops should be ready to submit full papers by **February 1st, 2021**. There is no such requirement for successful conference applicants. Questions and submissions for the conference should be directed to Mickaëlle Provost (mickaelle.provost@univ-paris1.fr) and Jasmin Trächtler (jasmin.traechtler@uib.no). Questions about the workshops should be directed to Carlota Salvador Megias (cme012@uib.no).