



20th International
Philosophy Colloquium Evian
July 13-19, 2014

Progress?
Fortschritt?
Progrès?

TOPIC

The idea that there is historical, philosophical, and moral progress was already present in antiquity and became widespread at the latest in the age of Enlightenment. At the same time the critique of the idea of a purposive and linear development from what is bad or deficient to something better in accordance with a definite logic or grand plan has never fallen silent. The catastrophes of the 20th century have not been the only events that cast doubt on whether progress and regression can be so easily separated. This doubt has also raised the suspicion that the idea of progress itself has served as an ideological category that must be rejected in the name of openness and plurality. But what would be the cost of such a rejection?

From Condorcet through Smith to Kant, historical and moral progress has been understood not only as possible but necessary; in the 19th century, Hegel and Marx further developed the idea of progress in prominent ways as a category of the philosophy of history and social theory. By contrast, beginning with Rousseau through Benjamin and Adorno to Foucault, and then with the feminist and postcolonialist approaches in their wake (Spivak, Said, Butler), skeptics have not only questioned the possibility of progress but also cast doubt on the very idea of progress itself: What are the universal and non-arbitrary standards or criteria to which this idea of progress can appeal as support? Doesn't this idea rather universalize a particular pattern of cultural development that fails to hold as universal? And who possesses the epistemological and practical authority to make such judgments? On the other hand, these critics have always been asked the question of whether they themselves, by criticizing the very idea of progress, (must) unwittingly retain and make use of that very idea, hence of whether they only define this idea differently rather than reject it outright. Thus, one can consider whether a discontinuity-model of progress often unfolds against (and thus implicitly in relation to) a continuity-model of progress.

Such questions are also relevant with regard to science in general and philosophy in particular. For instance, a central debate in the philosophy of science in the 20th century, from Kuhn and Popper through Feyerabend to Harding, Daston, and Latour, concerns the possibility and reality of progress in the sciences. Moreover, since Kant is neither the first nor the last philosopher to describe all metaphysics before him as an "unbounded ocean" in which no real progress has ever left any traces, philosophy has always been confronted with the question concerning the possibility of its own progress: What does the idea that there is or can be such progress presuppose? More specifically, does it presuppose: a set of eternal philosophical problems on which philosophers since Plato have worked to solve; a (more) precise definition of the tasks of philosophy; or a (closer) approximation of philosophical methods to scientific ones, as this has been advocated by the logical positivists at the beginning of the emergence of analytic philosophy or by the movement of experimental philosophy today? Philosophers of divergent traditions and literatures from Peirce and Dewey through Rorty and Deleuze to Habermas and Chalmers have contributed to this debate, which we would like to take up and continue further in this year's colloquium. In this spirit, the organizers of the 20th International Philosophy Colloquium Evian invite all interested philosophers to the shores of Lake Geneva to discuss the definition, problems, and possible relevance of the idea of progress.

We appeal to all philosophers who are interested in participating in intensive discussions about this topic in a way that transcends the narrow boundaries of different philosophical movements or schools of thought. These discussions at the Colloquium are conceived as a place where the supposed divide between "continental" and "analytic" philosophy is overcome, or at least as a site where the differences between these philosophical traditions can be rendered productive. **Passive comprehension of all three languages of the colloquium, namely French, German, and English, is a prerequisite for all applicants.**



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INVITATION

The International Philosophy Colloquia Evian provide a locus for enjoying intense philosophical discussion and philosophical company. They follow the goal to create an ongoing, expanding common debate that spans the whole week. To this end the number of participants is restricted to approximately 25.

The Colloquia are internationally orientated. Thematically, they put a stress on (contemporary) French philosophy in particular and continental philosophy in general, which are discussed in the contexts of German as well as English-language philosophy. Given this orientation, the International Philosophy Colloquia Evian are meant to be a place where the divide between continental and analytic philosophy has been overcome.

Participants in the Colloquium may give talks and/or take part in the discussion without contributing work of their own in the strict sense. Talks may be presented in German, English or French and are limited to 25-30 minutes. The scheduling of sessions will depend on the talks and presentations that are selected. There are no prearranged sections. The languages of the Colloquium are German, English and French. In discussions, participants are encouraged to speak whatever of the three language they feel most at home in all the time, regardless of the language of the talk that is being discussed.

Before applying to participate, please note the following requirements:

- **A passive understanding of all three languages is required in order to participate.** Participants do not have to be able to express themselves philosophically in all three languages, but must be able to understand questions and comments addressed to them regardless of which of the three languages these are being phrased in.
- Talks should aim to facilitate discussion by arguing for distinctive theses while being as brief and clear as possible.
- All participants take part in the Colloquium during the whole week. It is not possible to restrict your attendance to selected days of the Colloquium.

Call for papers: We request proposals for presentations (maximum length: one page), along with a short CV (maximum length: two pages), by **April 15, 2014**. Please send these documents via e-mail to the following address: evian@philosophie.fu-berlin.de.

LOCATION, ACCOMMODATION AND COSTS

As in the past years, the Colloquium will take place in a villa on the banks of Lake Geneva. The villa is home to the Centre Jean Foa, which is managed by the French organisation ADAPT. Both single and double rooms are available; each room has a private bathroom. Double rooms cost EUR 360,- per attendee, single rooms are EUR 490,-. This fee covers meals and accommodation for the duration of the colloquium. In some cases of special need, individual arrangements can be made.

More information about the Colloquium can be found at:
<http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/eviancolloquium/>

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