

The Troubles of Critique

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Academics tend to think that the practice of the social sciences and the *Kulturwissenschaften* is inherently critical; that, by making visible what in everyday life remains taken for granted or otherwise unobserved, it continually points to the possibility that things might be different. The experience of academic work shows, however, that there are quite a lot obstacles to realizing this ideal. For instance, the knowledge of those who are most disadvantaged in a given social structure may never, or only with great difficulties, even become part of academic discourse; the very way in which a 'normal' academic practice becomes institutionalized may prevent certain types of critical reflection; and those political or religious organizations to whom critical reflections from the social sciences and the *Kulturwissenschaften* are addressed may simply ignore them even in cases where this might seem unlikely. Our workshop will discuss these troubles of critique; we hope for a lively debate and invite all participants to reflect on their own experiences.