

## **Acting under the “Guise Of The Bad”?**

### **Practical Rationality and Evil Action**

#### Conference:

May 15 – May 17, 2014

#### Place:

May 15, 2014: Aula Campus, University of Vienna (Altes Akh)

May 16 and May 17, 2014: Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna (Neues Institutsgebäude NIG, HS 2i)

#### Organizers:

Prof. Hans Bernhard Schmid (Dept. of Philosophy, University of Vienna)

Prof. Herlinde Pauer-Studer (ERC-Project “Distortions of Normativity, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Vienna).

It is often claimed that all action is guided by the agent's conception of what is worthwhile pursuing, or "good", however skewed the agent's notion of the good may be. Yet according to many, this view is overly optimistic. It is faced with a moderate and a more radical challenge. The moderate challenge is widely accepted: sometimes, agents perform an action against their own better judgment. The radical challenge claims that it is possible - in principle, at least – that agents act under the guise of the bad rather than under the guise of the good. According to this account (defended among others by Augustine and Kant) evil agents do not act even though they know the action is bad. Rather, they do so because they know that the action is bad. In that case, the agent's belief that the action is bad is part of the reason why it is performed. This conception is more controversial: it raises the question of how bad reasons for action can function as practical reasons.

The conference aims at revisiting the idea of radical evil in the context of the current debate on evil and bad action.

#### Invited Speakers:

Claudia Card (Wisconsin, USA)

Christoph Halbig (Giessen, Germany)

Arto Laitinen (Tampere, Finland)

Fabienne Peter (Warwick, UK)

Joseph Raz (Columbia/Oxford, USA)

Sebastian Rödl (Leipzig, Germany)

Sergio Tenenbaum (Toronto, Canada)

Mark Timmons (Tucson, Arizona, USA)