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**Nordic Summer University**

**Ad hoc-symposium 2017: What is critique?**

**Call for papers**

**Background**

When the humanities and the social sciences are pressed with demands as to the purpose of their fields of study, criticism is often the answer. Be it social criticism, critique of texts, or even critique as counter culture and practice, criticism has become a mayor buzzword everywhere from research councils to university boards. The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) writes for example in their overview of the state of the humanities and social sciences: “In the multicultural society of today, in a global economy where reality is invariably changing and in a world full of flows of information, research is needed that helps us to see wholes and to think critically.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Likewise, there are new master programmes in critical thinking in several universities in Europe, including the Nordic countries, (for example at Gothenburg University, at Goldsmiths University London and at Central Saint Martins London), as well as a large academic network gathering universities that define themselves as critical universities.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Themes and purpose**

Criticism has become one important self-definition of the humanities and the social sciences. But what does critique mean when put together with such different things as critical thinking, literary criticism, critical theory and critical social practices? The Nordic and Baltic countries have, due to their different histories, different traditions of critique. What are these differences and how large are they? The purpose of the symposium is two-fold. 1) It will gather researchers and practitioners from different fields of the criticism spectre in order to discuss what criticism is, can and should be. 2) On the basis of that discussion the symposium will lead to an application for a new study circle within Nordic Summer University and a network with the working name ‘Practices and theory of Critique.’

The symposium will gather participants from four different critical fields of study:

* Literary criticism
* Critical theory (defined broadly from the Frankfurt school to postcolonial studies)
* Critical potential of new media and technique
* Social criticism and critical practices.

The aim of the symposium is to get a broad range of views on what academic criticism as well as critical social practices could be, particularly in the Nordic and Baltic countries, and how they fit together.

**Application**

We invite practitioners, scholars, artists as well as students interested in the topic to propose papers on any aspect of the concept of critique and criticism. You are welcome to apply with an abstract of about 350 words, to be submitted to [karolina.enquist.kallgren@lir.gu.se](mailto:karolina.enquist.kallgren@lir.gu.se).. **Deadline for abstracts** **is** **20/11-2016**. Please cite name and affiliation in the e-mail. A selection of the papers will be published in the peer-review journal *Lychnos.*

It is also possible to attend without presenting a paper. If you wish to do so, please write to [karolina.enquist.kallgren@lir.gu.se](mailto:karolina.enquist.kallgren@lir.gu.se) by 10/2 2017.

**Keynotes**

Invited guests are Magnus William-Olsson, poet, essayist and leader of Kritiklabbet, and Rasmus Willig, a sociologist who has written extensively on the concept of critique, as well as studied it empirically in relation to the work-market. Both will hold keynote lectures during the workshop.

**Location**

The symposium will take place in Gothenburg at Gothenburg University, Department of Literature, History of Ideas and Religion the 23 - 24th of February 2017. It will be arranged by Nordic Summer University, in collaboration with Nordiska Sociologförbundet and the Swedish peer review journal *Lychnos.*

**Accommodation and fees**

Each participant is expected to pay a fee of 300 Skr. Once you receive confirmation that you’re proposal has been accepted you will be given more information on how to pay the fee.

A small aid will be given to each participant to help reduce travelling and accommodation costs. All participants will be invited for lunch both days.

**Organisers**

Peter Aagaard, Associate professor, Department of Social Sciences and Business, University of Roskilde

Karolina Enquist Källgren, Associate professor, Department of Literature, History of Ideas and Religion, and Co-Director of Studies, Centre for European Studies, University of Gothenburg.

Anders Ramsay, Ph.D. in sociology

1. Vetenskapsrådet, *Forskningens framtid! Ämnesöversikt 2014 Humaniora och samhällsvetenskap,* Vetenskapsrådets rapporter, Stockholm, 2015, p. 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See: Critical Edge Alliance (<http://criticaledgealliance.com>). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)