

THE FUTURE(S) OF CRITICAL THEORY

First Graduate Conference in Frankfurt am Main, 19.-21 March 2009

Call for Papers

Whether or not “critical theory” constitutes a well-defined, easily identifiable and self-contained school of thought has been a matter of debate. For the organizers of this conference, given the plurality of theoretical projects that consider themselves in the tradition of the “Frankfurt School,” critical thinking cannot be reduced to one academic ‘camp’ in any meaningful way. Rather than representing one coherent philosophical paradigm, ‘critical theory’ embodies a diverse set of practices of radical questioning exercised in various discourses including that of arts, social and political sciences as well as radical political debate. Moreover critical theory is a highly self-reflexive process. Thus, rather than being a sign of crisis or lack of orientation, the increasing number of publications about the meaning and significance of “critique” and “critical theory” in recent years point to a vibrant and diverse intellectual community constituted around similar theoretical and political commitments. The existence of different theoretical positions and disagreements within that community can be best interpreted as an invitation to reconsider one’s own stance in relation to other ways of critical thinking and to reflect on common grounds.

“The Future(s) of Critical Theory” Graduate Conference in Frankfurt aims to serve as a forum for this ongoing debate. We invite PhD students and postdocs from the humanities and the social sciences to discuss their work in relation to the challenges posed by the current debates on the status of critical theory today. Critical theory proves itself only in relation to its concrete object of investigation. We are therefore equally looking forward to the presentation of empirical research as to theoretical reflections.

Contributions may include – but need not be limited to – the following themes:

What is Critique? What makes critical theories critical? How critical is Critical Theory?

C/critical Theory(ies): 1,2,3...many Generations of critical theory(ies); Critical Theory and Post/structuralism; Critique, Genealogy, Deconstruction; Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche; Postcolonial Studies, Feminism, *queer*.

Methodologies of critique: Theory and Practice; Philosophy and Sociology; Knowledge and Human Interest; Militant Investigation, Collective Theorization.

Critique and the Good Life: Desire, Love, Intimacy, Affect, ‘The Private’ and of course Friendship.

Critical Theory, The Political and Politics: Democracies, Socialisms, Liberalisms; Power and/or Domination; Law, State, Police and Sovereignty.

Theorizing Capitalism: (Ir)rationality, Alienation and Reification; Old and New Spirit of Capitalism; Redistribution or Expropriation; Reform or Revolution.

Cultures of Critique: Sub-, Pop- and Mainstream- Culture (industries); Media and Cultural Studies; Hegemony and Discourse; Narratology, Semiotics and Rhetoric.

Submission Information

Please submit abstracts of a maximum of 300 words to the following e-mail address: info@graduateconferencefrankfurt.de. We accept proposals until the 31. November 2008. Languages of the conference will be German and English, abstracts can be submitted in either language. Papers presented at the conference should not exceed the duration of twenty minutes and will be followed by a brief discussion.

Papers will be selected through a blind review process therefore please do not mark your name or other indications of the author on abstracts and make sure to clearly state the title of your proposal in the email.

Candidates will be informed by January 1st whether their paper has been accepted for presentation.

The publication of a selection of conference papers is intended.

Keynote speakers

Keynote speakers are Bonnie Honig (Chicago), Axel Honneth (Frankfurt) and Emmanuel Renault (Paris/Lyon).

Contact

For further information see www.graduatconferencefrankfurt.de.