

Critical Theory, Film and Media:
Where Is Frankfurt Now?

A Conference

August 20–23, 2014 Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

When Theory Becomes Critical

Siegfried Kracauer and the Transformations of Film Studies

Between History and Obstinacy: The Labor of Film and Media

Critical Theory and Media Studies

How Writing Is Written: Criticism and Critical Theory

Film as Critique, Critical Films

Cultural Industries and Critical Temporalities

Disruptions in the Arts

Saving the Law of Images

Critical Affectivities

Critical Theory and Film Theory: Historical Perspectives

Kluge, or The Continuation of Critical Theory by Cinematic Means

Critical Theory and Gesture as Interruption

Critical Theory, Feminist Film Theory and the Politics of Desire

Kracauer and his Non/readers

Gestural Awareness

Cultural Industries and the Creative Economy

Cinema and Experience from Modernity to Digitality

Critical Perspectives on Creative Economies

History, Media, Power

Critical Feminism, Critical Queerness

Critical Theory, Philosophy and Film

Critical Theory and Modes of Spectatorship

The Question of Technology

Negative Dialectics at Prime Time – The Simpsons and the Creative Culture Industries or Much A'D'oh About Nothing

Campus Westend



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In 2010, Alexander Kluge joined forces with Adorno once again. Revising an unfinished joint project on the theme of coldness from 1967 Kluge and 12 more artists, scholars and experts from various disciplinary backgrounds, two of them fictional characters, released a DVD with a media mix of 31 different types of short films and 41 written texts in a booklet. Reading theory has become a collaborative effort, involving various disciplines on different platforms, dealing with unfinished projects. Kluge's project is a sequel to another DVD of his, a follow-up to Eisenstein's attempt to film Marx' *Das Kapital*. Kluge introduces this project the following way:

"The possibility of a revolution in Europe has disappeared, and with it the confidence in a historical process that can be directly shaped by people's consciousness. With this confidence, a certain unrest and urgency have disappeared. ... As if in a quiet garden we can now study strange thoughts from [x] and weird projects from [y], because they are like messages from an ideological antiquity. ... One can see this as a goodbye, or as a beginning." He goes on to say "... The analytical instruments ... are not outdated. ... Sifting through the rubble of history we find useful tools."

Now, in 2014, at a time when the generational project of 1968, the march through the institutions under the assumption that a revolution in Europe is possible, has largely run its course, it seems about time to sift through the rubble of history, collect the tools, pick up on unfinished projects and think about new beginnings on the terrain of film and media studies as a critical discipline that has been opened up by the Frankfurt school and their kindred spirits Benjamin and Kraacauer.

What, then, are the analytical instruments that the Frankfurt school provided that will be useful going forward? How did the Frankfurt School of critical theory shape the course of film and media theory in the 20th century, and how will its tools continue to shape the study and critical analysis of media and culture?

"Critical Theory, Film and Media: Where Is Frankfurt Now?" is a conference organized by the Institut für Sozialforschung and the Institut für Theater-, Film- und Medienwissenschaft in cooperation with the Permanent Seminar on Histories of Film Theories (filmtheories.org).

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

- 4 - 6 p.m. Conference Registration @ Foyer, Casino
- 6 - 6:15 p.m. Conference Opening @ Casino
- 6:15 - 7:45 p.m. **Keynote 1 @ Casino**
Gertrud Koch (Berlin)
When Theory Becomes Critical
- 7:45 p.m. Opening reception

Friday, August 22, 2014

- 8:30 a.m. - Conference registration @ HZ, third floor
- 9 - 11 a.m. **Session 3.1 @ HZ 8**
Critical Theory
Arja Kavanen (Stockholm)
Affective Legacies: Critical Theory and the Turn to Emotion
Felicity J. Colman (Manchester)
Digital Femininity, and Materialist Mindfulness
Peter Rehberg (Köln)
"We Always Try to Make a Connection between Sexuality and for Instance Doing Dishes and Psychotherapy": Affective Sexualities in the Queer Fanzine Butt
Annette Bühler-Dietrich (Stuttgart)
On Failure: Queer Readings of the Frankfurt School
Chair: Jane Gaines
- Session 3.2 @ HZ 10**
Critical Theory and Film: Historical Perspectives
Daniel Mourzena (Leeds)
Water Benjamin's Film Aesthetics: From Charlie Chaplin to Mickey Mouse (and Beyond)
Hennette Reiser (Munich)
"Gone With a Soviet Mickey Mouse!" The Critical Contribution of the Frankfurt School to the Study of Soviet Animation
Hannah Goodwin (Bielefeld)
Bending Time: Kraacauer's Backward Glance and Einstein's Relativity
Inga Fellmann (Chapel Hill)
"From Sea Urchin to God" - Kraacauer's Cinematic Vitalism
Chair: Johannes von Molte
- Session 3.3 @ HZ 11**
Negative Dialectics of Critical Theory by Critical Mass
Christian Schulle (Vienna)
Redemptive Critique - Counter-Production - Kanos
Alexander Kluge's Contribution to Critical Theory Exemplified by News from Ideological Antiquity
Gregory Connors, Jeremy Hamers (Ljube)
Adorno as memory. Inheriting, Resurfacing and Replaying
Confidence in Kluge's Late Work
Nils Plath (Erfurt)
"Writing Events" and the Critique of Actuality: Alexander Kluge's Readings of Stalingrad and 9/11
Tara Forrest (Győr)
The 'Anti-Realism' of Feelings: Kluge's Political Realist Aesthetic
Chair: Rembert Hüser
- 11:15 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. **Plenary Panel 4 @ HZ 6**
Critical Theory and Gesture as Interruption
Reinhold Garing (Düsseldorf)
Conte-effacement: on Gesture and Time
Astrid Dreber-Mankowsky (Bochum)
Gesture and the Stream of Life in Benjamin and Lacan
Antonia Birbaum (Paris)
Guston Ferret
Convenor: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll
- 1:15 - 2:30 p.m. Lunch Break

Saturday, August 23, 2014

- 2:30 - 4:15 p.m. **Session 4.1 @ HZ 8**
Critical Theory (Critical Film) Theory and the Politics of Desire
Ulrich Rast (Wiesbaden University)
Framing the Subject: Film Noir and the Dialectic of Enlightenment
Matthew Gornell (Wesleyan University)
Everything's Fine: Commitment, Critique, and the Ethics of the Image
Dorothea Walzer (Berlin)
Ergebnisse, inenandergreifen, befragen: Mediation as Detour in Alexander Kluge's Work
Chair: Eva Geulen
- Session 4.2 @ HZ 10**
Intercultural Film Criticism
Mara Torrada (Luzerne)
Kraacauer/Bazin: Two Ontological Realisms Faced with the World and History
Marco Grosoli (Canterbury)
Interesting the Parallel Lines: André Bazin and Siegfried Kraacauer
Adrian Martin (Frankfurt)
The Dream Team: Parker Tyler and Siegfried Kraacauer, from the 1940s to the 1970s
Chair: Gerd Gemünden
- Session 4.3 @ HZ 11**
Critical Realism
Luca Rupprecht (Cambridge)
Gestural Crisis, Gestural Recovery! An Enquiry into Heightened Gestural Awareness, c. 1924
Esther Polony (New York)
Gesture as Practice of Theory in Balázs and Benjamin
The Soviet Treachery of Gesture & Montage
Chair: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll
- 4:30 - 6 p.m. **Plenary Panel 5 @ HZ 6**
Cultural Industries and the Creative Economy
John Roberts (Wolverhampton)
The Political Economy of the Image
Andreas Reckwitz (Frankfurt/Oder)
The Dispositif of Creativity: Structures and Critique
Convenor: Juliane Reberitsch
- 7:30 p.m. open end **Conference Dinner** @ Filmmuseum Frankfurt, Schaumainkai 41, 60594 Frankfurt

Thursday, August 21, 2014

- 8:30 a.m. - Conference registration @ HZ, third floor
- 9 - 10:45 a.m. **Session 1.1 @ HZ 8**
Reading Kraacauer and the Transformations of Film Studies
Nathaniel Brennan (New York)
From Critical Theory to Process Research: Siegfried Kraacauer's Initial Studies of Propaganda Film at the Museum of Modern Art, 1941-1943
Johannes von Molte (Ann Arbor)
Siegfried Kraacauer and the Invention of Film Studies
Roy Grundmann (Bremen)
One Shot, Two Mediums, Three Centuries: Reading Kraacauer through Lumière and Fanole
Chair: Johannes von Molte
- Session 1.2 @ HZ 10**
Contemporary Philosophy: The Labor of Film and Media
Richard Langston (Chapel Hill)
The Re-Mediation of Historical Experience as Catastrophe
Matthew D. Miller (Colgate University)
Egemonism and Political Imaginaries: On Christian Petzold's Barbra
Christopher Paus (Vancouver)
Geschichte und Egemonism and a Theory of the Labor in Film
Chair: Richard Langston
- Session 1.3 @ HZ 11**
Critical Theory and Media Studies
André Weidner (Worms)
Adorno's Materialism and Media (studies)
Nils Peter (Heidelberg/Frankfurt)
Kara Revisted: A Revisiting of Walter Benjamin's Concept in Reflection of Contemporary Mixed Reality Artwork Practices
Ben Gook (Welsburn)
Nicht mitmachen: Thomas Heise's Material and Adorno's Aesthetic, Kluge's Construction Sites and Benjamin's Allegorist
Chair: Marc Siegel
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. **Plenary Panel 1 @ HZ 6**
Media Theory, Critical Theories and Critical Theory
Ute Höl (Basel)
Kluge and Heise, Moses and Aron
John Mowatt (Leeds)
On Trying: the Music Essay
Volker Pantenburg (Worms)
Essays and its Discontents
Convenor: Rembert Hüser
- 1 - 2:30 p.m. Lunch break
- 2 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. **Session 5.1 @ HZ 8**
Critical Theory and Modes of Spectatorship
Lara Koppen (Leipzig)
Alter Nature and Mediation? Critical Theory and Mobile Spectatorship
Tobi
Jihoon Kim (Seoul)
The Post-cinematic: Dialectics of Innovation: Walter Benjamin, Harun Farocki's Installations on 'Operational Images' and a Political Art
Chair: Roy Grundmann
- Session 6.2 @ HZ 10**
Technical Critique
Christiane Kretzler (Baltimore)
Futurist Technopolies?
Jani Mäkelä (Basel)
Digital Cinema, Neoliberalism, and Adorno's Concept of "Technic"
Cyril Misch (Basel)
The Threat of Technological Reproducibility
Chair: Florian Hoff
- Session 6.3 @ HZ 11**
Negative Dialectics of Prime Time - The Simpsons and the Creative Culture Industries of Much A'Doin' About Nothing
Thomas Kern (Hamburg/Hanro)
The Simpsons in the Context of Media Industry Studies
Andreas Rauscher (Mainz)
Shark Jumping or the Dialectics of Postmodern Enlightenment
Henry Keazor (Heidelberg)
"The carrying out of contradictions": Art in The Simpsons' Imagination
Chair: Henry Keazor
- 4 - 6 p.m. **Plenary Panel 5 @ HZ 6**
Critical Theory, Philosophy and Film
Martin Lee (Leipzig)
On the Potentials of Film and Other Media
Sudeep Dasgupta (Amsterdam)
The Aesthetics of Moving Culture in Adorno and Rancière
Thomas Eiseasser (New York)
Between Autonomy and Social Fact: Cinema as Thought Experiment
Convenor: Vinzenz Hediger
- 6 - 6:15 p.m. **Reading Remarks**
- 9 p.m. open end **Conference Party** @ Orange Peel, Kaiserstraße 9, 60329 Frankfurt

- 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. **Session 2.1 @ HZ 8**
Reading Kraacauer and the Transformations of Film Studies
Gisela Kirsten (Berlin/Wien)
Film as Critique
Chris. Reisselmann (Berlin)
"Organizing Passivism?" Films as New Aesthetic Counter-Publics
Suriel Soel (Changigarth)
Emergence of the Paradigm of Aural/Visual/Oral: Multimedia Essay as a Transgressive Thought Process
Martin Brady (London)
Von heute auf morgen: Straub-Hulstet, Serialism and the Philosophy of New Cinema
Chair: Adrian Martin
- Session 2.2 @ HZ 10**
Historical and Critical Topographical
Sülig Le (Berlin)
Death in Reflexion and Repetition in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema
Pengyi Lai (Tape)
Boredom and the Endless Running Games: The Perception Economy of Temple Run
Seung-hoon Jeong (New York/Abu Dhabi)
Cinematic Agents of Divine Violence: Benjamin, Revelation or Catastrophe
Catherine Liu (Yriue)
"Unfaded" Adorno's "From the Stars Down to Earth" or What the 1950s Los Angeles Times Astrology Column Might Have to Tell Us About Social Media
Chair: Robert Michel
- Session 2.3 @ HZ 11**
Disruptions in the Arts
Moritz Heller (Ludwig)
Critical and Anti-critical Theories of Art: Adorno, Marcuse and Luhmann
Lars Koch (Dresden)
"To Disturb the Existing Image ...": Strategies of Aesthetic Disruption in Post-dramatic Theatre
Anna Schürmer (Dresden)
Interferences - Critical Perspectives on Early Loudspeaker Music
Tobias Nanz (Dresden)
Cold War Movies and the Collapse of Reason
Christoph Kirschner (Frankfurt)
Perturbing the Reader: Adorno's "Ratselcharakter" of Art and the Dialectical Impact of Contemporary Literature
Chair: Lars Koch
- 4:45 - 6:15 p.m. **Plenary Panel 4 @ HZ 6**
Film and the World of Images
Svenja Eickhoff (Leipzig)
- 7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m. **Evening program @ HZ 5**
- Michaela Melan
"The Sounds of Frankfurt School:
Kluge, Reitz and Reel at the 1965 International Transport Fair"
Film screening
Impuls unserer Zeit, D 1959, Otto Martin

