

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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Friday, August 22, 2014

8:30 a.m. –
Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 11 a.m.
Session 3.1 @HZ 8
Critical Affectivities
Anu Koivunen (Stockholm)
Affective Legacies: Critical Theory and the Turn to Emotion
Felicity J. Colman (Manchester)
Digital Feminicity, and Materialist Mindfulness
Peter Rehberg (Austin)
“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 Theory: Historical Perspectives
Daniel Mourenza (Leeds)
Walter Benjamin’s Film Aesthetics: From Charlie Chaplin to Mickey Mouse (and Beyond?)
Henriette Reischer (Munich)
“Give Us a Soviet Mickey Mouse!” The Critical Contribution of the Frankfurt School to the Study of Soviet Animation
Hannah Goodwin (Berkeley)
Bending Time: Kracauer’s Backward Glance and Einstein’s Relativity
Inga Pollmann (Chapel Hill)
“From Sea Urchin to God” – Kracauer’s Cinematic Vitalism
Chair: Johannes von Moltke

Session 3.3 @HZ 11
Kluge, or The Continuation of Critical Theory by Cinematic Means
Christian Schulte (Vienna)
Redemptive Critique – Counter-Production – Kairos.
Alexander Kluge’s Contribution to Critical Theory Exemplified by News from Ideological Antiquity
Grégory Cormann, Jeremy Hamers (Liège)
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 (Sydney)
The ‘Anti-Realism of Feelings’: Kluge’s Political Realist Aesthetic
Chair: Rembert Hüser

11:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Plenary Panel 2 @HZ 6
Critical Theory and Gesture as Interruption
Reinhold Görling (Düsseldorf)
Contre-effectuation: on Gesture and Time
Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky (Bochum)
Gesture and the Stream of Life in Benjamin and Lacan
Antonia Birnbaum (Paris)
Guston Forever
Convenor: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll

1:15 – 2:30 p.m.
Lunch Break

In 2010, Alexander Kluge joined forces with Adorno once again. Revisiting 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 have been opened up by the Frankfurt school and their kindred spirits Benjamin and Kracauer.

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).

2:30 – 4:15 p.m.
Session 4.1 @HZ 8
Critical Theory, Feminist Film Theory and the Politics of Desire
Ulrich Plass (Wesleyan University)
Framing the Subject: Film Noir and the Dialectic of Enlightenment
Matthew Garrett (Wesleyan University)
Everything’s Fine: Commitment, Critique, and the Erotics of the Image
Dorothea Walzer (Berlin)
Eingreifen, ineinandergreifen, begreifen: Mediation as Detour in Alexander Kluge’s Work
Chair: Eva Geulen

Session 4.2 @HZ 10
Kracauer and his Non/readers
Maria Tortajada (Lausanne)
Kracauer/Bazin: Two Ontological Realisms Faced with the World and History
Marco Grosoli (Canterbury)
Intersecting the Parallel Lines: André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer
Adrian Martin (Frankfurt)
The Dream Team: Parker Tyler and Siegfried Kracauer, from the 1940s to the 1970s
Chair: Gerd Gemünden

Session 4.3 @HZ 11
Gestural Awareness
Lucia Ruprecht (Cambridge)
Gestural Crisis, Gestural Recovery? An Enquiry into Heightened Gestural Awareness, c. 1924
Eszter Polonyi (New York)
Gesture as Practice of Theory in Balázs and Benjamin
Josh Alvizu (New Haven)
The Soviet Prehistory of Gesture & Montage
Chair: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll

4:30 – 6 p.m.
Plenary Panel 3 @HZ 6
Cultural Industries and the Creative Economy
John Roberts (Wolverhampton)
The Political Economy of the Image
Andreas Reckwitz (Frankfurt/Oder)
The Dispositive of Creativity: Structures and Critique
Convenor: Juliane Rebentisch

7:30 p.m., open end
Conference Dinner @Filmuseum Frankfurt,
Schaumainkai 41, 60594 Frankfurt

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

Saturday, August 23, 2014

8:30 a.m. –
Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 10:45 a.m.
Session 5.1 @HZ 8
Cinema and Experience from Modernity to Digitality
Oliver Gaycken (University of Maryland)
From the Mass Ornament to MASSIVE: Materiality and Contingency in an Era of Digital Technics
Johannes Geng (Mainz)
The Culture Industry and Fabrication of Sensorial Perception(s) in and for Modernity
Christoph Hesse (Berlin)
Shooting-booth and Merry-go-round: Adorno’s Experience of Cinema
Chair: Verena Mund

Session 5.2 @HZ 10
Critical Perspectives on Creative Economies
Jyotsna Kapur (Carbondale)
Free Time: The University in the Eye of the “Creative Economy”
Mathias Kusnierz (Paris)
The Frankfurt School and Theories of Counterculture: Can Hollywood Be Conceptualized as Oppositional Public Space?
Christina Gerhardt (University of Hawaii)
Non-totalized Reality: Critical Theory, Creative Economies and Cinema
Chair: Vinzenz Hediger

Session 5.3 @HZ 11
History, Media, Power
Zachary Furst (Harvard)
Pointing to and Pointing up: Kracauer’s “Photography” beyond Photography
Nicholas Baer (Berkeley)
Film, Critical Theory, and the Crisis of Historicism
Drehli Robnik (Vienna)
Reading/Reclaiming/Recovering Siegfried Kracauer’s Film Thinking of Nonsolutions within Postfoundationalist Political Theory
Chair: Lutz Koepnick

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Plenary Panel 4 @HZ 6
Critical Feminism, Critical Queerness
Jonathan Flatley (Wayne State University)
Reading for Mood
Amy Villarejo (Cornell University)
Eros and Digitalization: On the Futures of Queer Television
Heide Schlüppmann (Frankfurt)
The Unsettled Radicality of Adorno’s “Kulturindustrie”
Convenor: Marc Siegel

1 – 2 p.m.
Lunch Break

Thursday, August 21, 2014

8:30 a.m. –
Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 10:45 a.m.
Session 1.1 @HZ 8
Siegfried Kracauer and the Transformations of Film Studies
Nathaniel Brennan (New York)
From Critical Theory to Process Research: Siegfried Kracauer’s Initial Studies of Propaganda Film at the Museum of Modern Art, 1941–1943
Johannes von Moltke (Ann Arbor)
Siegfried Kracauer and the Invention of Film Studies
Roy Grundmann (Boston)
One Shot, Two Mediums, Three Centuries: Reading Kracauer through Lumière and Farrowki
Chair: Johannes von Moltke

Session 1.2 @HZ 10
Between History and Obstinacy: The Labor of Film and Media
Richard Langston (Chapel Hill)
The Re/Mediation of Historical Experience as Catastrophe
Matthew D. Miller (Colgate University)
Eigensinn and Political Imaginaries: On Christian Petzold’s Barbara
Christopher Pavsek (Vancouver)
Geschichte und Eigensinn and a Theory of the Labor in Film
Chair: Richard Langston

Session 1.3 @HZ 11
Critical Theory and Media Studies
André Wendler (Weimar)
Adorno’s Materialism and Media (studies)
Nils Peiler (Heidelberg/Frankfurt)
‘Aura Revisited’: A Rereading of Walter Benjamin’s Concept in Reflection of Contemporary Mixed Reality Artwork Practices
Ben Gook (Melbourne)
Nicht mitmachen: Thomas Heise’s Material and Adorno’s Aesthetics, Kluge’s Construction Sites and Benjamin’s Allegorist
Chair: Marc Siegel

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Plenary Panel 1 @HZ 6
How Writing Is Written: Criticism and Critical Theory
Ute Holl (Basel)
Teddie and Hanns, Moses and Aron
John Mowitz (Leeds)
On Trying: the Music Essay
Volker Pantenburg (Weimar)
Essayism and its Discontents
Convenor: Rembert Hüser

1 – 2:30 p.m.
Lunch break

2 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Session 6.1 @HZ 8
Critical Theory and Modes of Spectatorship
Lutz Koepnick (Nashville)
After Nature and Mediation? Critical Theory and Mobile Spectatorship Today
Jihoon Kim (Seoul)
The Post-cinematic Dialectics of Innervation: Walter Benjamin, Harun Farocki’s Installations on ‘Operational Images’, and a Political Art
Chair: Roy Grundmann

Session 6.2 @HZ 10
The Question of Technology
Christiane Ketteler (Baltimore)
Futurist Technohippies?
Cyrill Miksch (Basel)
Digital Cinema, Neoliberalism, and Adorno’s Concept of “Technik”
Jane Gaines (New York)
The Threat of Technological Reproducibility
Chair: Florian Hoof

Session 6.3 @HZ 11
Negative Dialectics at Prime Time – The Simpsons and the Creative Culture Industries or Much A’D’oh About Nothing
Thomas Klein (Hamburg/Mainz)
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 Seel (Frankfurt)
On the Potentials of Film and Other Media
Sudeep Dasgupta (Amsterdam)
The Aesthetics of Moving Culture in Adorno and Rancière
Thomas Elsaesser (New York)
Between Autonomy and Social Fact: Cinema as Thought Experiment
Convenor: Vinzenz Hediger

6 – 6:15 p.m.
Closing 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
Film as Critique, Critical Films
Guido Kirsten (Berlin/Wien)
Film as Critique
Chris Tedjasukmana (Berlin)
“Organizing Pessimism:” Films as New Aesthetic Counter-Publics
Surbhi Goel (Chandigarh)
Emergence of the Paradigm of Aural/Visual/Oral: Multimedia Essay as a Transgressive Thought Process
Martin Brady (London)
Von heute auf morgen: Straub-Huillet, Serialism and the Philosophy of New Cinema
Chair: Adrian Martin

Session 2.2 @HZ 10
Cultural Industries and Critical Temporalities
Sulgi Lie (Berlin)
Death Driven. Reification and Repetition in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema
Peng-yi Tai (Taipei)
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, Revolution or Catastrophe
Catherine Liu (Irvine)
‘Unfriend’: 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: Kalani Michell

Session 2.3 @HZ 11
Disruptions in the Arts
Moritz Mutter (Dresden)
Critical and Anti-critical Theories of Art: Adorno, Marcuse and Luhmann
Lars Koch (Dresden)
“To Disturb the Existing Image ...”. Strategies of Aesthetical 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 Kleinschmidt (Frankfurt)
Perturbing the Reader. Adornos “Rätselcharakter” of Art and the Dialectical Impact of Contemporary Literature
Chair: Lars Koch

4:45 – 6:15 p.m.
Keynote Lecture @HZ 6
Fabian Steinhauer (Frankfurt)
Saving the Law of Images

7:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Evening program @HZ 5

Michaela Melian
“The Sounds of Frankfurt School:
Kluge, Reitz and Riedl at the 1965 International Transport Fair”
+ Film screening:
Impuls unserer Zeit, D 1959, Otto Martini

Contact:

Conference administrator: hepp@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de
Conference organization: hediger@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de

Participants wishing to attend the conference without presenting should register before August 15 via e-mail at this address: hepp@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de

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The conference is free of charge.

Conference locations:

– Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main,
Campus Westend, Grüneburgplatz 1,
Casino and Hörsaalzentrum (HZ) Auditoriums 8–11

– Filmmuseum Frankfurt, Schaumainkai 41
– “Orange Peel”, Kaiserstraße 9

