Critical Theory and New Materialisms

International Conference, November 23-24, 2017

University of Erfurt
Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien
Steinplatz 2, room 805

Organizers:
Prof. Hartmut Rosa, Director of the Max Weber Kolleg
Dr. Arthur Bueno, Max Weber Kolleg Erfurt/ Paris
Dr. Joris Anja Gregor, Friedrich Schiller University Jena
Dr. Christoph Henning, Max Weber Kolleg Erfurt

Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the state of Thuringia (OdB)
Born out of the spirit of ‘old’ historical materialism, Critical Theory has often – and paradoxically – been viewed as taking an excessive distance towards the materiality of the world. By understanding itself as a post-metaphysical continuation of the incomplete project of enlightened modernity, it has largely anchored its emancipatory horizon in intersubjective practices of rational communication, recognition and justification. Yet this view is being challenged today. Via the foregrounding of concepts such as resonance, affect, life and force, questions of materiality and ontology have regained prominence. Traditional conceptions of human and non-human nature have been rethought, with significant implications for political practice and critique. But Critical Theory is not alone in this. A similar shift towards ontologies of nature, matter, life, and affect has taken place in recent post-structuralist debates. In a parallel move, ‘new materialist’ theories have argued against restrictive and hierarchical dualisms which largely shaped modern thought: matter versus life, biological versus symbolic life, or affectivity versus rationality. Acknowledging their similarities as well as their differences, this conference aims at establishing a dialogue between these intellectual currents which so far have developed in a safe distance from one another, exploring their implications for ecological, political, aesthetic and gender issues.

Programm – Thursday, Nov 23

9:30 - 10:00: Welcome & Opening Speech (the organizers: Rosa, Bueno, Gregor, Henning)

10:00 – 10:30: Hartmut Rosa (Erfurt/Jena): The Theory of Resonance as a Critical Theory
10:30 – 11:00: Lenny Moss (Exeter): Natural Detachment, Normativity and the Anthropology of Resonance
11:00 – 11:45: Discussion

(Lunch)

13:00 – 13:30: Rick Dolphijn (Utrecht): What Keeps on Mattering
13:30 – 14:00: Kai Merten (Erfurt): Diffraction: Reading after Barad
14:00 – 14:45: Discussion

(15 min. break)

15:00 – 15:30: Claire Blencowe (Warwick): Ecological Attunement in a Theological Key: Adventures in Antifascist Aesthetics
15:30- 16:00: Arne Johan Vetlesen (Oslo): The Nature deficit in Critical Theory. Causes and consequences
16:00 - 16:45: Discussion

(15 min break)

17:00 – 17:30: Jocelyn Maclure (Montreal): Renewed Rationalism and the Discipline of Reason. Contributions to the Debate Between the Rationalist and Romantic Strands of Critical Theory
17:30 – 17:50: Discussion

18:00 – 19:00: Charles Taylor (Montreal): Agency, Patience and Critical Theory
- room 606 -
Friday, Nov 24

09:00 – 09:30: Martin Saar (Leipzig): Power, Affect, Matter, Spinoza and contemporary Theory
09:30 – 10:00: Frederic Lordon (Paris): Affects, institutions and crises. A Spinozist view on historical change
10:00 – 10:45: Discussion

(15 min. break)

11:00 – 11:30: Heike Delitz (Bamberg): Life as subject of society: Critical vitalism as critical social theory
11:30 – 12:00: Arthur Bueno (Erfurt/Paris): After Apathy: Political Affects and the Struggle for Resonance
12:00 – 12:45: Discussion

(Lunch)

14:00 – 14:30: Marie-Luise Angerer (Potsdam): Intra-action, contingent encounters, and the question of difference
14:30- 15:00: Ute Tellmann (Erfurt): Critical Matters: New Materialism and Economy
15:00 - 15:45: Discussion

(15 min break)

16:00 – 16:30: Christoph Henning (Erfurt): Against Latour’s ‘New Monism’: Defending the Nature-Culture Distinction with Nicolai Hartmann
16:30 – 17:00: Elmar Flatschart (Wien): New Materialism, Critical Realism and Negative Dialectics. A Critical Comparison
17:00 – 17:45: Final Discussion

If you are interested, please register with Ilona.Bode@uni-erfurt.de.