

# 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

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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*

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**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](mailto:Ilona.Bode@uni-erfurt.de) .