

Critical Theory in (a Time of) Crisis

A two-day Postgraduate Conference

Organised by the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics & Ethics (University of Brighton) and the Research Centre for Studies in Social and Political Thought (University of Sussex)

5 and 6 November 2019

Day 1 University of Brighton; Day 2 University of Sussex

Keynote speaker: Michael J. Thompson (author of *The Domestication of Critical Theory*)

The idea of 'critical theory' covers a whole gamut of approaches, and has been accepted as an academic 'subject'. Concomitantly, it has withdrawn to the precincts of the universities. But if 'critical theory' becomes merely a topic for grant applications, a repository of questions for doctoral research, and the daily bread of University teaching, it loses its original animus: to bring about social transformation. Yet transformation is what is needed in contemporary societies in crisis. Does Critical Theory have anything to say that addresses the present crisis? And/or is it itself in crisis?

Our intention is to foster discussions around those two central issues sparked off by presentations across intellectual traditions and disciplinary boundaries: we welcome submissions from postgraduate students in Philosophy, Political Theory, Critical Theory, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Psychoanalysis, Social Anthropology, Gender Studies, the Humanities, and related areas.

Specific questions for consideration might include, among others:

- Does critical theory suffer from a political or practical deficit?
- Has critical theory become a form of 'traditional theory'?
- Can earlier forms of critical theory help us understand and respond to the present crises; or is there a need to develop new modes of thought?
- Do contemporary circumstances highlight the limitations of particular thinkers or forms of critical theoretical work? If so, how?
- Is critical theory limited by a restrictive orientation towards its major figures and key influences?
- Is there an anti-colonial, ecological and/or feminist deficit in critical theory? What should be done about it?
- How viable is the notion of 'social pathology'?
- What might 'activist political theory' be?
- What are the relations between intellectual history and the critical theory of society?
- What issues might a critical account of contemporary capitalist social relations need to address?

Submissions for blind review should consist of two separate documents:

1. Title and abstract (maximum 300 words) explaining the topic and how it contributes to the theme(s) of the conference. This document should **not** include your name or institutional affiliation.
2. A separate cover letter that includes: the title of your presentation; your name; institutional affiliation; current academic status; and contact information.
3. Submissions should be sent to Denis Chevrier Bosseau (email: dc90@sussex.ac.uk) no later than **30th August 2019**. (Headed CTPC – abstract)

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 13 September 2019.

Allocated time:Accepted speakers will form part of a panel whose members will each be allocated 20 minutes for their respective presentations. The panel will then be able to engage with each other and the audience in an informal Q&A session of 1 hour.

Sponsored by: The Mind Association (<http://mindassociation.org>)

There is no conference fee, but attendees need to make their own arrangements re. Accommodation, and travel.

For any further inquiries, please contact the organisers

- Denis Bosseau at dc90@sussex.ac.uk
- Tom Bunyard at t.bunyard@brighton.ac.uk