

Critical Theory Now: Repurposing Adorno's Rich Annoyance

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Call for Papers

Date:

March 10, 2022 to March 13, 2022

Location:

Maryland, United States

Subject Fields:

German History / Studies, Literature, Popular Culture Studies, Philosophy, Black History / Studies

"The complex relation between the private, the individual and loneliness is unique and necessary to Adorno's work, despite the rich annoyance of his particular mode of provocation." (Fred Moten, "The Phonographic mise-en-scene" 2004)

Fred Moten echoes here a familiar tension present in approaching Theodor Adorno's work. But there is much that is productive in this tension. What about Adorno's work is provocative to this day and how do we unpack its "rich annoyance"? How does what is unique and necessary about Adorno's work retain relevance to current developments in literary and cultural critique, specifically, to considerations of class, gender, and race that yield productive critiques of whiteness, neoliberalism, and the distinction between "highbrow" and popular culture?

Do we still care about Critical Theory? And if we do, then what are the contours of this caring within "the complex relation between the private, the individual and loneliness" that characterizes our current situation?

In this roundtable we will discuss the many ways we can potentially repurpose or 'refunction' (umfunktionieren) Adorno's Critical Theory for our current needs.

One way to go about this would be to use one of Adorno's shorter texts as a springboard for this broader discussion. For example, we find his essay "On Popular Music," (1941) fitting because its critical architecture is simultaneously insightful of its moment and ideologically entrenched in the bourgeois interiority that marks Adorno's difficult affinities with modernism and modernity.

We invite participants to share their thoughts on these tensions present in Adorno's work. We welcome discussions on any short text by Adorno or any aspect of his work that relates to our current situation. 5-10 minute informal presentations will be followed by discussion and debate.

Please submit 300 word abstracts via the NeMLA portal at (<https://www.cfplist.com/nemla/Home/Login>) by September 30, 2021. (NeMLA membership not required to submit abstracts)

Information about NeMLA and the conference can be found here:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention.html>

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