

Negative Modernity: The War of Ideas.

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How did it happen, that modernity as the project of overall emancipation, embedded in Enlightenment, culture and humanism, instead of leading to progress, brought to its opposite – hegemony, power, violence, colonial domination – and as a result generated the movements rejecting modernity in culture and art.

Modernism became one such movement against modernity and enlightenment; it questioned the incompatibility of modernity's ideas of progress with the thriving capitalist production and its forms of subjugation. Given that it had no capacities to fight the alienating aspects of capitalist modernity, modernism chose the negative non-engagement with the alienated reality. However, despite radical dismissal of the culture of classical modernity, modernism often relied on the ironic speculation of such alienation, grounding its practice on the negative appraisal of various forms of its loss. The writing of Benjamin, Adorno, Habermas, Jameson, Groys relates to such an approach to negativity. The post and de-colonial theories and practices come up with the harsh critique of Enlightenment and 'Western' paradigms of culture; however, they, unlike modernism, do so without any deploring of the dismissed vestiges of modernity. Such stance, featured proliferously in contemporary metamodern cultural practice differs, both from modernist and post-structuralist methods of the critique of modernity, and reveals the new post-secular condition of anti-modern global contemporaneity.

Yet another approach to modernity is featured in the post 1917 revolutionary avant-garde and the seminal works of Socialist Marxism between 1920-s and 1970-s (Vygotsky, Arvatov, Ilyenkov).

Thus, the present course explores the epistemic and institutional watershed between modernity, modernism, avant-garde and contemporaneity. This view is indispensable to understand the negative genealogy of contemporary critical theory.

The seminar series is open to all, but it can also be taken as a course by PhD students (5 credits).

1. The End of Sensuous Truth. *Hegel, Kant, Lifshitz, Romanticist shift.*

27.02.24 15.15-17 in [Tage](#) (Key-huset, Valla)

Primary reading:

- Hegel, G.W.F. *Aesthetics*. Introduction. Vol 1. Oxford Un-ty Press, 1975.

https://monoskop.org/images/0/05/Hegel_GWF_Aesthetics_Lectures_on_Fine_Art_Vol_1_1975.pdf
P. 75-82

- Kant. *Critique of Judgment*.

https://monoskop.org/images/7/77/Kant_Immanuel_Critique_of_Judgment_1987.pdf
P.97-114. Chapter 'Analytic of the Sublime'.

Secondary reading and cultural context:

Friedrich Hoelderlin – *Mnemosyne*. https://gedichte.xbib.de/H%F6lderlin_gedicht_240.+Mnemosyne.htm

Kierkegard – *Repetition*

Byron – *Dream* (poem) <http://www.eng-poetry.ru/PoemE.php?PoemId=152>

2. Enlightenment and its Discontents. *Adorno, Freud, Mignolo. Denise Ferreira da Silva.*

12.03.24 15.15-17 in [Tage](#) (Key-huset, Valla)

Primary reading:

- Sigmund Freud. "Civilization and Its Discontents".

<https://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FreudS-CIVILIZATION-AND-ITS-DISCONTENTS-text-final.pdf>

• T. Adorno. M. Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press, 2002.
Chapter 'Odysseus, or Myth and Enlightenment'. P. 35-63.

https://monoskop.org/images/2/27/Horkheimer_Max_Adorno_Theodor_W_Dialectic_of_Enlightenment_Philosophical_Fragments.pdf

Denise Ferreira da Silva. "On Blackness. Matter beyond Equation of Value".

<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/79/94686/1-life-0-blackness-or-on-matter-beyond-the-equation-of-value/>

Secondary Reading and cultural context.

Walter D. Mignolo. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2011. 181-213.

Francois Truffaut . "The Wild Child». (1970).

<https://w126.zona.plus/movies/dikii-maugli>

3. Culture between Spirit and Body. *Vygotsky, Bibler, Deleuze/Guattari, Wynter*. 16.04.24 15.15-17 in [Tage](#) (Key-huset, Valla)

Primary reading.

- Sylvia Wynter. The Ceremony Must be Found. After Humanism.

<https://archive.org/details/wynter-the-ceremony-must-be-found/page/19/mode/2up>

- Lev Vygotsky. *The History of the Development of Higher Mental Functions*. 65-121. The file will be sent.
- Vladimir Bibler. "The Concept of Culture. Culture as a Communication of Cultures." *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 58 (5):378-386 (2021)

<https://philpapers.org/rec/BIBTCO-2>

Secondary reading.

- Deleuze, Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000. P. 1-36.

<https://libcom.org/files/Anti-Oedipus.pdf>

- Felix Guattari. *The Machinic Unconscious*. Semiotext(e), 2011.

<https://hamtramckfreeschool.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/felix-guattari-the-machinic-unconscious-essays-in-schizoanalysis-1.pdf> . 23-55

- Sylvia Wynter. "The Ceremony Found. Towards the Autopoetic Turn".

https://monoskop.org/images/d/dc/Wynter_Sylvia_2015_The_Ceremony_Found_Towards_the_Autopoetic_Turn_Overtun.pdf)

4. From Avant-Gardes to Contemporaneity. *Adorno, Benjamin, Groys, Agamben*. 30.04.24 15.15-17 in [Tage](#) (Key-huset, Valla)

- Theodor Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. Continuum, 1997. C. 6-(22)33., **41, 78-81**, 86-9, 112-14, **139-43**. 194-97. 236-8. **251**. <file:///Users/keti/Downloads/ADORNO%20-%20AESTHETIC%20THEORY.pdf>
- Boris Groys. "Under the Gaze of Theory". E-flux #35

<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/35/68389/under-the-gaze-of-theory/>

- Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer”.

https://monoskop.org/images/9/93/Benjamin_Walter_1934_1999_The_Author_as_Producer.pdf

- Giorgio Agamben. “What is Contemporary?”
<http://arthistoryrome.uniroma2.it/images/Agamben-copia.pdf>