Contested Identities: Critical Conceptualisations of the Human

The South African Society for Critical Theory (SASCT) invites abstract submissions of up to 500 words for its 3rd Annual Conference which will take place at the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, from the 22nd to the 23rd of November 2019.

SASCT invites papers which address the vexed notion of the “human” in the contemporary age. As part of such considerations, this conference welcomes papers that consider the possibilities and pitfalls of identity theory in relation to Critical Theory. What analytic and conceptual resources does identity politics offer Critical Theory? What might a critical analysis of identity politics reveal? Do identity politics serve as an instance of a process whereby we come to view our own individuality in terms of pre-constructed cultural categories? What stance should Critical Theory adopt towards identity politics?

This conference also welcomes papers that explore the concept of “the human” and “human nature” from a critical perspective. What, for instance, might we construe as “essential” human characteristics? Is critical reason to be understood as such a characteristic? Is the question of the “human” even meaningful any longer? Would the attempt to define the “human” in its present historico-social conditions enable us to map its future trajectory? Would the attempt to formulate such a definition facilitate liberation or merely serve a repressive ideological function? If the “human” or “human nature” are no longer meaningful categories, then what is it that Critical Theory aims to liberate? Has the technological mediation of existence altered our understanding of humanity? In short, what is the future of the “human”?

The conference welcomes approaches from all aspects of Critical Theory, broadly construed. In particular, the conference welcomes papers that address issues relating to: African Critical Theory, Digital Culture, the intersections between Critical Theory of European origin (Frankfurt School, Foucault, etc.), Black Existentialism, and Africana Critical Theory as well as contributions on any and all aspects of Critical Theory, e.g. the 3 generations of Frankfurt School Critical Theory, Postcolonial Theory, De-colonial Theory, Critical Feminism, Critical Film Studies, Critical Race Theory, Critical Theory of Technology, Critical Legal Studies, Post-structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Critical Hermeneutics, Liberation Theory, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Theology, Critical Anthropology, etc.

The Conference organisers would also appreciate papers that address thinkers whose work lies outside the “canon” of Critical Theory, but whose work can extend current research in Critical Theory or whose work in itself embodies alternative forms of Critical Theory. Whilst the organisers encourage contributions that address the conference theme, the theme itself should be viewed as merely suggestive.

Please submit abstracts to sascrit@gmail.com by the 7th September 2019
Acceptance letters will be sent by the 21st of September at the latest.

Should you have queries regarding any aspect of the conference then please do not hesitate to contact the conference organising committee.