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The Actualization of the Critical Impulse in Critical Theory: Dialogical Rationality around Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem

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Title: The Actualization of the Critical Impulse in Critical Theory: Dialogical Rationality around Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem

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Abstract:

The Critical Turn in tourism academia has been announced without a thorough understanding of the tradition of Critical Theory. The classical thinkers of Critical Theory need to be understood in order to clarify the significance of this tradition in the present situation. Two main concepts have been introduced in this tradition and are clarified in this paper, Critical and Essence. In the German discussion between Critical Rationalism and Critical Theory during the 60s (the 4th Positivismusstreit), Marcuse introduced the concept of Essence as an answer to his opponents. We discuss this concept after its confrontation with post-modernism and relate this discussion to a revitalisation of the qualification 'Critical,' in Critical Theory. We save this qualification from the post-modernist attacks on the universality of the Critical Theoretical position. In order to be able to do so, we introduce a mode 3 discussion (Kunneman, 2005; Isaac & Platenkamp, 2012), in which the qualification 'Critical' receives a new significance on the 'agora' (Arendt, 1958). Against the background of this revitalised critical theoretical framework, we demonstrate the current position of Critical Theory in the tourism academy. Our position is that the critical impulse in this theory has experienced a serious degree of content inflation so that everyone in tourism academia who uses the word critical has become critical. The qualification 'Critical' receives a more actualised significance if it can be fully elaborated during the process of the argumentation at the 'agora'. Rachel's Tomb is used as a case to illustrate this revitalisation of the qualification 'critical' on the agora.
