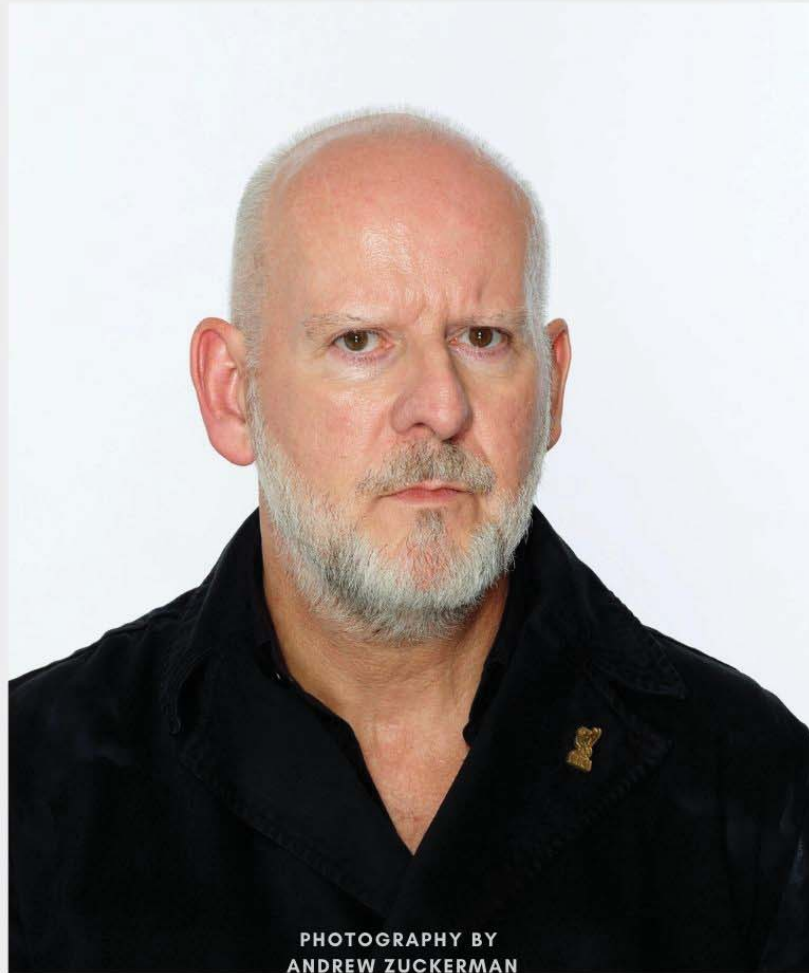




**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
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ANDREW ZUCKERMAN

SIMON CRITCHLEY

**HANS JONAS PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY,
THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH.**

on

PANDEMIC MYSTICISM

16th JULY, 2021,

7:30-8:30 PM IST/ 10:00-11:00 AM EDT

Zoom Meeting ID: 824 6628 3772

Password: lectures

**Youtube Live: Department of English, Jamia
Millia Islamia**

**SIMI MALHOTRA
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CONTACT: sparcjmiwu@gmail.com**

Bionote of Prof. Simon Critchley

Simon Critchley is the Hans Jonas Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research. He is a board member of the Onassis Foundation. His work engages in many areas: continental philosophy, philosophy and literature, psychoanalysis, ethics, and political theory, among others. He has written on topics as diverse as David Bowie, soccer, religion, and suicide. As moderator of The Stone, an opinion series at *The New York Times*, Critchley asks philosophers to weigh in on contemporary issues in art, literature, politics, and popular culture. In February 2021, *Academic Influence* ranked Prof. Critchley as one of the most influential philosophers today.

Simon Critchley's first book was *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. Published in 1992, it became an acclaimed source on deconstruction and was the first book to argue for an ethical dimension to deconstruction. His claim was that Derrida's understanding of ethics has to be understood in relation to his engagement with the work of Levinas and the book attempts to lay out the details of their philosophical confrontation. Critchley's second book, *Very Little... Almost Nothing* (Routledge, 1997) develops in a very different direction and shows his concern with the relation between philosophy and literature and the problem of nihilism. His *On Humour* (Routledge, 2002) continues the meditation on nihilism begun in *Very Little...Almost Nothing*; but he continues it in a very different key, analysing the meaning and importance of humour. Critchley argues that humour is an oblique phenomenology of ordinary bringing about a change of situation that exerts a powerful critical function. *On Humour* has been translated into eleven languages and has exerted considerable influence over debates around the role of humour in contemporary art practice. *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity* (Verso, 1999) is a collection of essays that includes his debate with Richard Rorty, as well as series of essays on Derrida, Levinas, Jacques Lacan, Jean-Luc Nancy.

Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford University Press, 2001), is both an introduction to that tradition of thinking and an essay in meta-philosophy, which lays out the way in which Critchley sees the role of theory and reflection. In the book, Critchley addresses the perennial question of the two major Western philosophical traditions, that of analytical and continental philosophy. Critchley argues that the professional opposition between analytic and Continental philosophy is something that needs to be transcended. *In*

Things Merely Are (Routledge, 2005), Critchley examines the relation between philosophy and poetry through an extended meditation on the poetry of Wallace Stevens. *Infinitely Demanding* (Verso, 2007) is the most systematic overview of Critchley's philosophical position. It combines a meta-ethics based on the concepts of approval and demand with a phenomenology of ethical experience and ethical subjectivity. At the centre of the book is a theory of ethical subjectivity based on the relation to an infinite demand. *On Heidegger's Being and Time* (2008) combines Reiner Schürmann's lectures at the New School for Social Research on Heidegger's *Being and Time* with Critchley's New School lectures on the relation between Heidegger and Husserl and his own interpretation of *Being and Time*. Where Critchley argues that we must see Being and Time as a radicalization of Husserlian phenomenology, Reiner Schürmann's proposal is to read Heidegger 'backward', arguing that Heidegger's later work is the key to unraveling *Being and Time*.

An extended defense of the idea that to philosophise is to learn how to die, *The Book of Dead Philosophers* was published by Granta in the UK (2008), Vintage in the US (2009) and Melbourne University Press in Australia (2008). It has been translated into 17 languages. The Book of Dead Philosophers was widely reviewed and discussed. It was on The New York Times Best-Seller List in March 2009 and was a top ten bestseller in Greece in Summer 2009. The aim of *The Book of Dead Philosophers* is to examine, defend and refine the ideal of the philosophical death in the context of a culture like ours that is defined by a denial of death. However, the deeper intention of the book is to challenge and revise the way we think about the history of philosophy. More specifically, the book tries to conceive of the history of philosophy as a history of philosophers and thereby rethink the way in which approach the relation between the activity of philosophy and an individual life, between conceptuality and biography.

Prof. Critchley's *Der Katechismus des Bürgers* (2008) on the problem of politics and religion in Rousseau was first published in German. *How to Stop Living and Start Worrying* (Polity, 2010), a sort of anti-self-help book, is a series of conversations between Critchley and Carl Cederström from 2009 and 2010, originally based on Swedish television series. *Impossible Objects* (2011) is a collection of interviews with Critchley over the past 10 years, edited by Carl Cederström and Todd Kesselman, published by Polity Press in 2011.

The Faith of the Faithless (2012) explores the paradox of politics and religion in Rousseau to the political stakes of the return to St. Paul in the work of Heidegger, Taubes, Agamben and Badiou, via explorations of politics and original sin in the work of Carl Schmitt and John N. Gray. Critchley examines whether there can be a faith of the faithless, a belief for unbelievers. Expanding on his debate with Slavoj Žižek, Critchley concludes with a meditation on the question of violence and the limits of non-violence. He argues that liberal democracy is the political expression of deism. *Stay Illusion: The Hamlet Doctrine* (2013) was co-authored with Jamieson Webster this text deals with the play in the light of various 'outsider' interpretations, such as those of Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin, Friedrich Schelling, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, and Lacan. *The Anarchist Turn* (2013) was edited by Jacob Blumenfeld, Chiara Bottici and Simon Critchley, and compiles a series of essays from anarchists and theorists who came together at the 2011 conference of the same name at the New School for Social Research.

Some of Prof. Critchley's selected recent works include: *Bald: 35 Philosophical Shortcuts* (2021) with 35 essays originally published in the *Times* on a wide-range of topics; *Having Been Born -Tragedy, the Greeks, and Us* (Penguin Random House, 2019), *What We Think About When We Think About Soccer* (Penguin Random House, 2017), *Suicide* (Thought Catalog, 2015) that burrows beneath the breaking news and factoids of suicide to pull away at veils of congealed prejudice and questionable assumptions that obscure our view of the phenomenon; and *Bowie* (OR Books, 2014), a book on the famous musician David Bowie.

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- (2015) *The Problem with Levinas* (Oxford University Press, Oxford)
- (2015) *ABC of Impossibility* (Univocal Books, Minneapolis)
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- (2019) *Having Been Born – Tragedy, The Greeks and Us* (Pantheon, New York; Profile Books, London)
- (2020) *Applydegger – Heidegger's Thinking in Being and Time Explained* (18 Episodes Onassis Channel, 2020)
- (2020) *Notes on Suicide* (2nd Edition Fitzcarraldo Editions with a new preface; 1st Edition, Fitzcarraldo Editions 2015)

Prof. Critchley has also edited the following book series:

Thinking the Political (Routledge)

Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy (Blackwell)

Thinking in Action (Routledge)

How to Read... (Granta, London, and W.W. Norton, New York)