ARRESTING THE FLOW
Graduate Conference 2006

The terms flow, flux and fluid are ubiquitous in the history of Western thought—and its polemics. From Heraclitus to Plotinus, Augustine to Leibniz and Kant, Hölderlin to Heidegger, Benjamin to Deleuze and Derrida, flow has been variously defined: “fluid” have been the borders between self and other, “fluctuating” the “influences” of the uncontrollable and uncreated on organized space and time, “flowing” the conditions—and metaphors—of exchange and transmission, knowledge and self-consciousness, circulation and infection.

One thing, though, has remained constant: that flow incorporates a concern for the overflowing of certain limits of being and experience, whether those be placed between man and God, place and journey.

And yet, “flow” seems to demand its own, conceptual arrest.

Fields as diverse as psychoanalysis, film and media studies, philosophy, theatre, religion, the history of science, geography, urban studies, law, political science, economics, literary studies, architecture and art history continue to be marked by the effects of flow. This conference is an attempt to provide an interdisciplinary, comparative platform for the formulation of a cohesive understanding of a term that, last but not least, names the practice of interdisciplinarity and comparison itself.

Program in Comparative Literary Studies
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Program

Friday April 14

11:00-12:00  Check-in
12:00  Opening Remarks
12:15  Panel I  Dissolving the Subject: History and Philosophy of Flow
Moderator: Paul North
- Flux and Becoming: Deleuze’s Return to Heraclitus
  Ella Brians, Philosophy, New School University
- Rationalism’s Containment of the Mesmeric Fluid: Kant, Fichte and Scholarly Discourse
  Sean Franzel, Germanic Studies, Cornell University
- Surface in Flow: The Cutaneous and the Canvas in Francis Bacon’s Work
  Marcel Finke, Art History, University of Leipzig
2:30  Panel II  Containers: Spatial Restraint, Tension, Vibrations
Moderator: Joel Morris
- verstahrs, verse-vase
  Ena Jung, German, Princeton University
- The Slow Object of Contemporary Art: Matthew Barney’s Filmic Installation
  Jessica Santone, Art History, McGill University
- A Cinema Without Organs: Musical Values and Fields of Vibrations in Horror Film
  Kelly Kirshtner, Visual Studies, University of California (Irvine)
4:00  Keynote Address
Bernhard Siegert
History and Theory of Cultural Technologies, Bauhaus University Weimar
Floating Signifiers on the Mississippi: Herman Melville’s Confidence Man
Response
Peter Fenves
Comparative Literature/German, Northwestern University
6:00  Wine & Cheese Reception

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Saturday April 15

9:30  Breakfast (catered)
10:00  Panel III  Bodies and Circulation: The Economy of Flow
Moderator: Dan Nolan
- From Goethe’s ‘Pflanze’ to Ford’s ‘Plant’: The Comparison of Two Cultural Symbols
  Christian Weber, German and History & Philosophy of Science, Indiana University
- Liquid Agencies in Thomas Heywood’s ‘Fair Maid of the West’
  Hillary Eklund, English, Duke University
- The Life Aquatic in the Bourgeois Interior
  Isabel Kranz, Media of History-History of Media Graduiertenkolleg, Bauhaus University Weimar
- Counter-Flow: Censorship and Digital Media Appropriations
  Abigail Derecho, Comparative Literary Studies, Northwestern University
12:00  Lunch (catered)
1:30  Keynote Address
Jules Law
English, Northwestern
Transparency, Congelation, Arrest: Some Thoughts on Knowledge and Action in George Eliot.
Roundtable Discussion
Together with Peter Fenves and Bernhard Siegert
3:00  Panel IV  The Rhythm and Regulation of Flow
Moderator: Julia Ng
- The Flow of Traffic: Adorno on Poetic Language in Late Capitalism
  Heather Fielding, English, Brown University
- Time/Frame: Flows of Duration in Hiroshi Sugimoto’s Theaters Series
  Stamatina Gregory, Art History, The Graduate Center (CUNY)
- The Melody and Rhythm of Flow: Husserl and Benveniste
  Robert G. Ryder, Comparative Literary Studies, Northwestern University
6:00  Wine & Cheese Reception

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Panel V  The Pandemic: Fluid Communities
Moderator: Holly Zindulis
- The Pen and the Syringe: Autoimmunity and the (Un)readability of Flowing Blood
  Neal DeRoo, Philosophy, Boston College
  Nick Muntean, Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas-Austin
- Data/Cloud/Swarm. Swarm Dynamics and Flexible Topologies
  Sebastian Vehlken, Media of History-History of Media Graduiertenkolleg, Bauhaus University Weimar
6:00  Close of Conference

Evening  Informal event hosted by CLS graduate students
All conference participants and attendees are cordially invited to a catered dinner and party at the home of:
Brenna Stuart
1309 W. Winnemac Ave, #3
Chicago
Directions:
By Car
From Broadway, turn west on Winnemac (one block N of Argyle, three blocks S of Foster).
By ‘El’
From the ‘Argyle’ stop on the Red line, walk W to Broadway, cross the street, turn right (N) and then make the first left (W) on Winnemac.