

Peter Fenves
1555 N. Dearborn Pkwy. #9A
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 654-9594

CURRENT POSITION

Joan and Sarepta Harrison Professor of Literature
Co-director of the Program in Comparative Literary Studies
Professor of German and Jewish Studies
Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, Political Science, and English
Northwestern University
2-375 Kresge Hall
Evanston, IL 60208
e-mail: p-fenves@northwestern.edu

voice: (847) 491-8245
fax: (847) 491-3877

OTHER POSITIONS

Visiting Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures
Harvard University (Fall 2005)
Visiting Professor of German
Princeton University (Fall 2000)
Visiting Professor of Humanities
The Johns Hopkins University (1995-96)
Associate Professor of German and Comparative Literature
Northwestern University (1991-95)
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature
The University of Massachusetts at Amherst (1988-91)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. The Johns Hopkins University	1989
Freie Universität, Berlin (non-degree)	1986-88
B.A. Wesleyan University	1982

PUBLICATIONS

Books

A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World-History in Kant. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991.

“Chatter”: Language and History in Kierkegaard. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993; chapter 5, “Notifying the Authorities,” reprinted in Søren Kierkegaard: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers, ed. Daniel W. Conway (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 4: 79-122.

Arresting Language: From Leibniz to Benjamin. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001; chapter 7, “Tragedy and Prophecy in Benjamin’s Origin of the German Mourning Play,” reprinted in Benjamin’s Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Theory and Cultural Studies, ed. Gerhard Richter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 237-59.

Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth. London and New York: Routledge, 2003;

chapter 2, “The Sovereign Sentence,” reprinted in Law, Justice, and Power, ed. Sinkwan Cheng (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 97-114; an expanded version of its conclusion will appear under the title “Concession” in Kant and the Concept of Community, ed. Charleton Payne (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming).

The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin, the Appearance of the Rainbow, and the Abstention from Philosophy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); includes translations of two texts by Benjamin.

No One’s Thing: The Idea of “Res Nullius” and the Search for a Critique of Violence (in progress).

Edited books

Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Kant, Transformative Critique by Derrida, ed. Peter Fenves. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. (Paperback reprint, 1998)

“The Spirit of Poesy”: Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Philosophy in Honor of Géza von Molnár, ed. Richard Block and Peter Fenves. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000.

Translations of books

Werner Hamacher, Premises: Literature and Philosophy from Kant to Celan, trans. P. Fenves. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996. (Paperback reprint: Stanford University Press, 1999)

Introductions to books

“The Topicality of Tone,” in Raising the Tone of Philosophy (see above), 1-48.

“From Empiricism to the Experience of Freedom,” in Jean-Luc Nancy, The Experience of Freedom, trans. Bridgit Macdonald. xiii-xxxi. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

“Avoiding the Bible,” in Brian Britt, Walter Benjamin and the Bible. 5-7. 2nd ed. Lewistown, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003.

“Introduction to the New Edition: The Kafka-Werfel-Einstein Effect,” in Marx Brod, Tycho Brahe’s Path to God, intro. Peter Fenves and Stefan Zweig, trans. Felix Warren Cross. vii-lviii. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Chapters in books

- “Søren Kierkegaard,” in The Johns Hopkins Encyclopedia of Literary Theory, ed. Michael Grodin and Martin Kreisworth. 441-43. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- “The Tower of Babel Rebuilt: Some Remarks on ‘The End of History,’” in Francis Fukuyama and his Critics, ed. Timothy Burns. 217-37. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994.
- “The Genesis of Judgment: Spatiality, Analogy, and Metaphor in Benjamin’s ‘On Language as Such and on Human Language,’” in Walter Benjamin: Theoretical Questions, ed. David Ferris. 75-93. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- “Marx, Mourning, Messianicity,” in Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination, ed. Samuel Weber and Hent de Vries. 253-70. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997; translated into Dutch by Ton Groeneweg, Benjamin Journaal 4 (1997): 53-73; translated into Japanese by Takeshi Sawasato in the same volume as “The Paradisal Epochē.”
- “Die Scham der Schönheit: einige Bemerkungen zu Stifter,” in “Geteilte Aufmerksamkeit”: Zur Frage des Lesens, ed. Thomas Schestag. 91-111. New York: Lang, 1997.
- “Alterity and Identity, Postmodern Theories of,” in The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig. 1: 187-92. London and New York: Routledge, 1998; partially reprinted in The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 25.
- “Jean-Luc Nancy,” in The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig. 6: 651-54. London and New York: Routledge, 1998; partially reprinted in The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 610.
- “Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin,” in The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, ed. Michael Kelly. 2: 415-22. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” in Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850, ed. Lawrence Klein and Anthony La Vopa. 117-52. San Marino, Ca.: Huntington Library Press, 1998. (Reprint of the article published in the Huntington Library Quarterly.)
- “Measure for Measure: Hölderlin and the Place of Philosophy,” in The Solid Letter: New Readings of Friedrich Hölderlin, ed. Aris Fioretos. 25-43. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- “Die Unterlassung der Übersetzung,” in Übersetzen: Walter Benjamin, ed. Christiaan L. Hart-Nibbrig. 159-73. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001.

- “Language on a Holy Day: Mendelssohn and the Temporality of Language in Jerusalem,” in Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History, ed. Joseph Marino and Melinda Schlitt. 419-41. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001.
- “Out of the Blue: Secrecy, Radical Evil, and the Crypt of Faith,” in Futures: Of Jacques Derrida, ed. Richard Rand. 99-129. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- “The Revelation of Irony: The Young Kierkegaard Listens to the Old Schelling,” in International Kierkegaard Commentary: “The Concept of Irony,” ed. Robert Perkins. 391-416. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2001.
- “Derrida and History: Some Questions Derrida Pursues in his Early Writings,” in Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader, ed. Tom Cohen. 271-95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- “What is Aufklärung (in Pennsylvania)?” in American Babel: Literatures of the United States from Abnaki to Zuni, ed. Marc Shell. 465-88. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- “Is There an Answer to the Aestheticizing of the Political?” in Actualities of Aura, ed. Erik Steinskog and Dag Petersson. Oslo: Norwegian Summer University Press, 2005; reprinted in Benjamin and Art (= Walter Benjamin Studies, vol. 2), ed. Andrew Benjamin. 60-72. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- “Imagining an Inundation of Australians; or Leibniz on the Principles of Grace and Race,” in Race and Modern Philosophy, ed. Andrew Valls. 88-96. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005; shorter version under the title “What ‘Progresses’ has Race-Theory Made Since the Times of Leibniz and Wolff?” in The German Invention of Race, ed. Mark Larrimore and Sara Eigen. 11-22. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.
- “Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie,” in Benjamin-Handbuch, ed. Burkhardt Lindner. 134-50. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2006.
- “Technica Speciosa: Some Notes on the Ambivalence of Technics in Kant and Weber,” in Experimenting: Essays with Samuel Weber, ed. Simon Wortham and Gary Hall. New York: Fordham University Press (forthcoming).
- “Um Worte Verlegen: Zur Lektüre Hölderlins im Lichte Husserl, Cohen, Cassirer, and Einstein,” in Walter Benjamin und die romantische Moderne, ed. Günter Oesterle and Heinz Brüggemann (forthcoming).

Special editions of journals

“Politics of Friendship,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 32, 2 (winter 1999).

“Aesthetics and the Disciplines,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 35, 3 (spring 2002).

Articles in journals

“Marx’s Doctoral Thesis on Two Greek Atomists and the Post-Kantian Interpretations,” The Journal of the History of Ideas 46 (July-September, 1986): 433-52.

“The Exiling of the Encyclopedia: The Individual in George Eliot’s ‘Janet’s Repentance,’” Nineteenth-Century Literature 41 (March, 1987): 419-44.

Critical discussion of Alexander Nehemas’s Nietzsche: Life as Literature in Philosophy and Literature 11 (April, 1987): 163-70.

“Autopsies of Faith in Kierkegaard’s Philosophiske Smuler,” Modern Language Notes 102 (December, 1987): 162-89.

“Antonomasia: Leibniz and the Baroque,” Modern Language Notes 105 (April, 1990): 432-52.

“Testing Right—Lying in View of Justice,” Cardoza Law Review 13 (December, 1991): 1081-1113.

“Image and Chatter: Adorno’s Construction of Kierkegaard,” Diacritics 22 (spring, 1992): 100-114.

“From Empiricism to the Experience of Freedom,” Paragraph 16 (1993): 158-79.

“Measure for Measure: Hölderlin and the Place of Philosophy,” Philosophy Today 37 (winter, 1993): 369-82.

“Taking Stock of the Kantian Sublime,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 28 (fall, 1994): 65-82.

“Under the Sign of Failure: Kant’s ‘Toward Eternal Peace,’” Idealistic Studies 26 (spring, 1996): 135-51.

“‘Out of the Order of Number’: Benjamin and Irigaray Toward the Politics of Pure Means,” Diacritics 28 (spring, 1998): 43-58.

“Politics of Friendship—Once Again,” Eighteenth Century Studies 32 (winter, 1998-99): 133-55.

“The Scale of Enthusiasm,” Huntington Library Quarterly 60 (1998-1999): 117-52.

“Continuing the Fiction: From Leibniz’ ‘petite fable’ to Kafka’s In der Strafkolonie,” Modern Language Notes 116 (April, 2001): 502-20.

“An Introduction to ‘Aesthetics and the Disciplines,’” Eighteenth-Century Studies 35 (spring, 2002): 339-41.

“A Critical Relation: On the Goethe Scholarship of Géza von Molnár,” Goethe Yearbook 11 (2002): 27-31.

“Of Philosophical Style—From Leibniz to Benjamin,” Boundary 2 30 (spring, 2003): 67-87.

“Between the Ridiculous and the Sublime: Kant’s Theory of Marital, Maritime, and Martial Law,” Diacritics, forthcoming.

Translations of essays

Immanuel Kant, “On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy” (and several related texts), in Raising the Tone of Philosophy (see above).

Werner Hamacher, “The Word Wolke—If It is One,” Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature 11 (fall, 1986): 133-62; reprinted in Benjamin’s Ground, ed. Rainer Nägele. 147-76. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.

Werner Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure Through Celan’s Poetry,” in Word Traces, ed. Aris Fioretos. 214-63. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Walter Benjamin, “The Rainbow: Dialogue on Fantasy” and “The Rainbow or the Art of Paradise,” in The Messianic Reduction (forthcoming).

Book Reviews

Jean-Luc Nancy, L’Impératif catégorique, in Modern Language Notes 100 (Dec., 1985): 1136-39.

Kathleen Higgins, Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, in Philosophy and Literature 13 (April, 1989): 215-16.

Gerhard van den Berg, Adornos philosophisches Deuten von Dichtung, in International Journal in Philosophy 23,4 (1992): 123-24.

Timothy Bahti, Allegories of History, in Modern Language Notes 108 (April, 1993): 597-600.

Reiner Ansen, "Bewegtheit": Zur Genesis einer kinetischen Ontologie bei Heidegger, in International Studies in Philosophy 25,3 (1994): 99-100.

Roger Poole, Kierkegaard: The Indirect Communication, in Journal of English and Germanic Philology 94 (1995): 299-301.

Richard Eldridge, Beyond Representation: Philosophy and Poetic Imagination in The Review of Metaphysics 51 (1998): 927-29.

Howard Caygill, Walter Benjamin: The Experience of Colour, in The Review of Metaphysics 53 (2000): 920-923.

Marc Fremont-Meurice, That Is To Say: Heidegger's Poetics, in The Review of Metaphysics 54 (2000): 136-39.

Julian Young, Heidegger's Philosophy of Art, in Dialogue 41 (2002): 598-601.

LECTURES

"The Revival of Metaphor in George Eliot's 'Lifted Veil'" (English Department, UCLA, January, 1990; Comparative Literature Department, SUNY Buffalo, February 1990)

"Metacritique—From Hamann to Today" (Philosophy Department, UCLA, January, 1990)

"Adorno's Image of Kierkegaard" (Program in Comparative Literature, Vanderbilt University, January 1990)

"The Sign of the Political in the Vision of Carl Schmitt" (Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University, February 1990)

"Image and Chatter: Adorno on Kierkegaard" (MLA Conference, Chicago, December 1989; Vanderbilt University, January, 1990)

"From Heroic Boredom to Holy Mourning: Heidegger, 1929-1934" (Northeastern Division Conference of the American Political Science Association, April 1990)

"Testing Right—Lying in View of Justice" (Conference on "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice," Cardoza Law School, October 1990)

"The Dawn of Judgment: On Benjamin's 'On Language as Such and on Human Language'" (Conference on "Benjamin and Literary Criticism," Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, October 1991)

- “Mendelssohn’s Historicism” (Franz Rosenzweig Center, Hebrew University; March 1992)
- “Die Scham der Schönheit: einige Bemerkungen zu Stifter, Kafka und Benjamin” (Department of German, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, March 1992)
- “Benjamin’s Negative Theology” (Midwestern Theological Studies Conference, Garret Theological Institute, March 1993)
- “The Omission of Translation” (Conference on “Benjamin: Übersetzen,” Centre de traduction littéraire de Lausanne, Switzerland, June 1993)
- “Benjamin Bound” (Conference on “Unveiling Mimesis,” Loyola University, Chicago, March, 1994)
- “Marx, Mourning, Messianicity” (Conference on “Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination,” University of Amsterdam, July, 1994; further discussion at la Bretesche, France, July, 1994; revised version, the Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins University, November 1995)
- “Out of the Blue” (Conference on “Futures—For Jacques Derrida,” University of Alabama, September 1995)
- “‘Accepta, non Data’: On the End of Kant’s Sublime” (MLA, Chicago, December 1995)
- “The Scale of Enthusiasm” (International Workshop on “Enthusiasm and Modernity in Europe, 1650-1850,” Clark Memorial Library, May 1996)
- “Prophetic Language in Benjamin’s Writing” (German Department, University of Michigan, October 1996)
- “What is Aufklärung (in Philadelphia)?” (ACLA Conference, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, April 1997)
- “On Dissemblance: Kant, Hebel, and Kleist” (Department of German, NYU, May 1998)
- “‘All Gratification is Animal’: Kant, Critique, and the Revival of Epicurus” (Keynote Address for the American Romanticism Conference, November 1999)
- “Tragedy and Prophecy in Benjamin’s Origin of the German Mourning-Play” (Rhetoric Department, University of California at Berkeley, March 2000)
- “The Seeming Right to Semblance: Schiller, Hebel, and Kleist” (Department of German, Harvard University, April 2000)

- “The Revelation of Irony: The Young Kierkegaard Overhears the Old Schelling”
(Kierkegaard Centre, Copenhagen, May 2000)
- “Johann Peter Hebel’s *Largesse*” (Conference on the “Minor Forms,” University of
Copenhagen, May 2000)
- “The Sublimity of ‘Authentic Interpretation’ in Kant” (Institut for Litteraturvidenskab,
University of Copenhagen, May 2000)
- “The Pleasure of Failure: Some Remarks Around the Last Remarks of Kant’s ‘Analytic
of Aesthetic Judgment’” (Institut for Litteraturhistorie, University of Aarhus,
May 2000)
- “Allegories of Interpretation in Kant and Kleist” (Deutsches Haus, Columbia University,
November, 2000)
- “Wondering about History: Derrida on Husserl and Foucault” (Department of German,
Princeton University, December 2000)
- “Philosophical Stylistics” (Conference on “Style,” University of Pennsylvania, March
2000)
- “A Commentary on Three Entries in *Convolute N*” (Conference on “Benjamin Now,”
Brown University, April 2001)
- “What ‘Progresses’ Have Race-Theory Made in Germany since the Times of Leibniz and
Wolff?” (Conference on “The German Invention of Race,” Harvard University,
May 2001)
- “Anecdote and Authority: Toward Kleist’s Last Language” (Department of German, Yale
University, November 2001)
- “On Philosophical Style—From Leibniz to Benjamin” (Department of German, Princeton
University, February 2002)
- “Is There an Answer to the Aestheticization of the Political?” (Conference on “The
Future of the Aesthetic,” Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, April
2002)
- “Taking Steps: On Benjamin’s ‘Artwork in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility’”
(USC, Comparative Literature Department, October 2003)
- “‘When Christianity is Finally Over’: Messianic Tourism in Heine and Benjamin” (MLA
Conference, San Diego, December 2003; delivered by proxy; expanded for a
lecture at Harvard University, December 2005)

“Political Space” (American Political Science Conference, Chicago, 2004)

“The Kafka-Einstein Effect: Max Brod’s Tycho Brahes Weg zu Gott” (German Department, University of Pennsylvania, February 2006)

“No One’s Thing: The Idea of ‘Res Nullius’ and the Search for a Critique of Violence” (Christian Gauss Seminar in Criticism, Princeton University: “The Idea of ‘Res Nullius’ (Kant),” “The Search for a Critique of Violence (Benjamin),” and “Workforce without Possessions’ (Kafka),” November-December, 2006)

ADVISORY AND EDITORIAL WORK

Interim editor of Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2001-2002; member of editorial board of Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2002-2005; member of the Gottschalk Prize Committee in Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2004-07.

Member of the review committee for the Department of Germanic Literatures and Languages at Cornell University, April-May 2002; College of Reviewers for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada, 2002-2005. Member of the editorial board for the Encyclopedia of German Literature, ed. Matthias Konzett (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000).

Reader of proposals for NEH. Reader of manuscripts for Eighteenth Century Studies, Political Theory, MLN, International Journal of Philosophical Studies, The History of Political Thought, Mosaic, Dialogue, The German Quarterly; Seminar, Renascence, Modern Language Studies; Harvard University Press, Stanford University Press, Columbia University Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, The University of Chicago Press, The University of Minnesota Press, Cambridge University Press, Northwestern University Press, The University of Pennsylvania Press, State University of New York Press, Wayne State University Press, University of Illinois Press, Fordham University Press, Aztec Publishing House.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Phi Beta Kappa, 1982

University Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University, 1982-86

Dissertation Year Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University, 1986-87

DAAD, Research Grant, 1987-88

University of Massachusetts Research Grant, 1990

Herman and Beulah Pearce-Miller Research Professorship in Literature, 1994-96

Northwestern Research Grant, 1997

Faculty-Administrator Honor Roll, 2002-2003, 2005-2006

Christian Gauss Lectures, Princeton University, 2006

MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS (at Northwestern University)

Director of the Program in Comparative Literary Studies, 1993-97, 2005-08

Director of Graduate Studies in German, 1993-95, 1997-2004

Avalon Chair Search Committee, 1993-94

Program in Comparative Literary Studies, Steering Committee, 1991-93

Committee on Committees, 1996-99

University Scholars Program, 1993-94

Promotion Committee, 2000-2003

Dean's Search Committee, 2001