



Lecture Series: New Developments in Theory

NOAH'S ARKIVE

Prof. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, George Washington University

14 MARCH 2016, 6–8pm

Kollegienhaus, HS 116

Petersplatz 1, Basel



Noah's Arkive

Here's what your city will look like when the ice sheets melt. So declares the headline of a recent story about maps that illustrate the transformation of urban sprawls into ocean-embraced archipelagoes. London will become Venice and Venice Atlantis. What is at stake in our desire to imagine cities submerged, as if we were a latter day Noah surveying the world from the gated community of the ark? Why do we seldom in the process consider the lives of those likeliest to perish in the rising waters? Who gets admitted to safety, whose story is held in the archive? What would happen if we stopped using the Flood as our unspoken cognitive frame for global warming—or at least if we stopped playing the role of Noah and abandoned hope of salvaging a small community in an ark built against more complicated, more collective, more livable futures? What if we thought with more sympathy about what is lost when we uncritically embrace the apocalypse of flooding waters and its lethal archive of disaster stories?

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen is Professor of English and Director of the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Institute at the George Washington University. He has published widely on medieval studies, posthumanism, materiality, ecotheory and the monstrous. Books include *Of Giants* (University of Minnesota Press 1999); *Medieval Identity Machines* (University of Minnesota Press 2003); *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006); and *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (University of Minnesota Press 2015), as well as the edited collections *Monster Theory* (University of Minnesota Press 1996) and *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory Beyond Green* (University of Minnesota Press 2013). With Lowell Duckert he has edited *Elemental Ecocriticism: Thinking with Earth, Air, Water and Fire* (University of Minnesota Press 2015).