The Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts presents

ILA Dialogues:

DREAD

APRIL 22-23, 2010 • CALLAWAY S423

Co-sponsors:
Nat C. Robertson Science & Society Endowment, The Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts,
American Studies Program, Religion Department, Visual Arts Department

Organizing Committee:
Angelika Bammer • Arri Eisen • Shlomit Finkelstein • Megan Friddle
Anna Grimshaw • Mary Horton • Fang Yi Liu • Matt Miller • Peter Wakefield

dread, n.

1. Deep awe or reverence
2. Apprehension as to future events
3. Risk of the thing proving otherwise
4. Among Rastafarians: fear of the Lord; also, a deep-rooted sense of alienation felt towards contemporary society
5. A sudden take-off and flight of a flock of gulls or other birds

[Translatable as: ὀξνος (oknos.) (Gr.); אוֹר (o-Ra), אימא (ei-MA), פחד (PA-khad) (Heb.); 非常害怕 (fē chāng hài pà) (Chin.); l’épouvante (Fr.); Grauen (Ger.), etc.]

- Oxford English Dictionary

Is dread the operative notion of our times? Words connoting or evoking dread abound in today’s popular media: terror, crisis, instability, uncertainty, anxiety, suspicion, worry. Such words come laden with military, economic, and psychological significance. But, as the dictionary informs us, dread also holds deep religious and philosophical meaning, invoking awe and reverence. How do these radically different meanings come together in a single term? Who profits—where are the dread mongers? Does dread accompany any moment of creative activity, artistic or otherwise? Does dialogue diminish dread and by what process?

THE DIALOGUES

This series of events, organized by Emory’s Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts (ILA), brings together scholars and practitioners in various fields for conversations about the concept and experience of dread. The Dialogues will explore dread as a psychological, economic and military phenomenon and as a factor which shapes emotions, identity, social institutions, religious and cultural practices, and humanistic and artistic work.

The Dialogues series is a collaborative effort of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students in the ILA. The purpose of these dialogues is to address issues of broad resonance to people in today’s world and of intellectual significance to scholars in a wide variety of fields. Each dialogue is focused around a key concept that evokes a range of different meanings and associations across the humanities and social sciences, as well as the arts and natural sciences. The inaugural Dialogues took place in 2006
on the theme of “Reproduction.” The 2007 theme was “Death.” The event is open to all members of the Emory community as well as the general public.

The ILA is one of the oldest interdisciplinary graduate programs in the country. Interdisciplinary and comparative in method and cross-cultural in scope, work in the ILA has consistently crossed the conventional boundaries among the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences to create intellectual spaces in which to ask new kinds of questions and explore answers in new ways.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**THURSDAY APRIL 22**

**WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

6:00 – 8:00 pm
Kevin Corrigan (ILA Director) and Angelika Bammer (Dialogues Coordinator)

Film screening:
Decalogue #1 (Krzysztof Kieslowski, dir.: Poland, 1987; 60 min.)

**Participants:**
David Blumenthal (Jay and Leslie Cohen Professor of Judaic Studies, Department of Religion)
Jason Francisco (Photographer and Book Artist; Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Visual Arts)
Mark Risjord (Associate Professor of Philosophy and Associate Dean, Laney Graduate School)

**Moderator:** Anna Grimshaw

*Dessert Reception to follow*

**FRIDAY APRIL 23**

*Coffee, tea and light pastries* (8:30 – 9:00)

**DIALOGUE I: The Power of Dread**

9:15 – 10:30 am
How and why are we at once drawn to and repelled by things that inspire dread and how do we deal with this conflicting impulse?

**Participants:**
Kerry Ressler (Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute; Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences)
Anna Leo (Associate Professor and Director, Emory Dance Program, Department of Theater and Dance)
Laura Otis (Professor of English, former neuroscientist, aspiring novelist)

**Moderator:** Mary Horton

*Break*

**DIALOGUE II: The Metrics of Dread**

10:45 am – 12:15 pm
What happens when we try to manage things as inchoate as “dread”—or explain them scientifically—and what happens when we fail to do so?
Participants:
Gregory Berns (Distinguished Chair of Neuroeconomics, Director of the Center for Neuropolicy, Professor of Psychiatry and Economics)
Barbara Schroeder (Executive Associate Dean for Fiscal Affairs and Chief Financial Officer, School of Medicine)
Jim Grimsley (Playwright and novelist, Senior Resident Fellow in Creative Writing and Director, Creative Writing Program)

Moderator: Arri Eisen

Break

A dread-full interlude - Kimberly Lorch, oboist

DIALOGUE III: The Work of Dread
1:30 – 2:45 pm
How do cultural representations, customs and rituals help us make sense of, respond to, and cope with dread and the things that inspire such feelings?

Participants:
Edna Bay (Professor of African History, The Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts)
Eddy von Mueller (Lecturer, Department of Film Studies)
Joyce Flueckiger (Professor of Indian Religions, Department of Religion)

Moderator: Peter Wakefield

DREAD DIALOGUES REDUX
2:45 – 3:00 pm
The audience and our collective imaginations respond to Dread with music, a haunted house, and a Dread-full chorus.

Orchestrated by Vincent Murphy (Professor of Theater Studies and Resident Artist, Theater Emory)

All involved in Dread Dialogues:
After each session, please write or draw a very brief response on the large post-it notes that line the walls. These notes will be used for the final event.