

[http://somatosphere.net/2010/cfp-french-theory-in-circulation-aaa\\_trashed.html/](http://somatosphere.net/2010/cfp-french-theory-in-circulation-aaa_trashed.html/)

## CfP: 'French Theory' in circulation, AAA 2010 -- deadline (28 Feb)

2010-02-24 17:19:00

By Stephanie Lloyd

### **Foucault et al. from Paris to California and Back Again: The Creolisation of "French Theory"**

In this call for papers for the 2010 AAA meetings in New Orleans (17-21 November) we seek contributions from individuals who not only draw on French theorists, but who examine the ways in which "French Theory" travels, circulates and is re-imagined. Further, we particularly welcome papers that challenge the concept of "French Theory" itself.

This panel will examine the "circulation" of what is often referred to as "French Theory" as it moved from France, to North America and Britain, then back to France. Our aim will be to analyze the movement and "creolisation" of this body of literature as well as to question the existence of "French Theory". We will trace the circulation of the contributions of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida as they coalesced into intellectual movements such as the so-called postmodern and post-structuralist turn of the 1970s, but also explore how they differ from the trajectories of other French social theorists such as Georges Canguilhem, Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour. Our objective is not to debate the "purity" of interpretations of the oeuvres of French theorists, but to trace the nourishment and transformations of these ideas as they move between locales, national and (sub-) disciplinary intellectual traditions and historical moments, and further, to question the very existence of "French theory" as an intellectual movement. New Orleans, a city of French and American origins that has repeatedly throughout its tumultuous history had to imaginatively remake itself, is a fitting location to immerse ourselves in inquiries about the travel and translation of (Americanized) French social theory.

We are interested in multiple forms of intellectual circulation. For example, Foucault's work has been most substantially moved back and forth across the Atlantic by social scientists. Foucault's ideas deeply influenced French academic and political life throughout the tumultuous 1960s and 70s. Subsequently, he was partially put aside in France while his work concomitantly became immensely influential in North American and British

social sciences. Recently, Foucauldian theory has “returned” to France via “American” and “British” interpretations of his work. In contrast, Canguilhem’s work has circulated differently. One of the most influential philosophers of medicine and science among French social scientists, he seems to have only recently caught interest in the English-language world, after remaining largely unknown for forty years. Finally, the case of Bruno Latour represents a contribution to French intellectual theory that has been based in international dialogues since its origins. Against the myth of a unified French Theory, we are interested in all these variations of circulation.

How do theories and authors take on different meanings and become integrated in multiple intellectual traditions through exchanges over the course of time? How do these theories and authors “circulate” and how are they re-created and re-imagined in this process? Using this opportunity to investigate the diffusion of intellectual traditions, we will examine what “French Theory” and theories from France in their many forms tell us about the circulation of theories and methodologies in anthropology.

Please submit abstracts of 250 words to Stephanie Lloyd ([stephanie.lloyd@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:stephanie.lloyd@mail.mcgill.ca)) by 28 February 2010.

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#### **AMA citation**

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