THE PHARMAKON
Concept Figure, Image of Transgression, and Practice

We will reflect on the complex semantics, and narrative and imaginary trajectories of the term „pharmakon“ (in Greek: medicine / poison / philter), and the ways it can be addressed from diverse vantage points. The workshop format is intended to allow for the discussion of associative scenarios in relation to the „pharmakon“, rather than the deployment of a rigid academic discourse. Our reflection may span etymological and genealogical issues, as well as different narratives of reimagination. It may, at the same time, relate to threshold spaces where artistic practice, literary investigation, cultural analysis, and philosophical inquiry meet with anthropological, pharmacological, or neuroscientific concerns, as well as with specific (healing) practices.

Jacques Derrida’s text „La pharmacie de Platon“ is one possible reference point; however, the workshop attempts to set a wider, and heterogeneous framework for reflection. Such perspective may include, prominently, the concept of „Rausch“ (intoxication / ecstasis) and its contradictory status in modern epistemology, literary and art history, and cultural and social practice. It may also address the numerous scenarios – transatlantic and European, local and global, artistic, anthropological and pharmacological – within which psychoactive / mind-altering substances have made up for one of the most ubiquitous phenomena in modern life.

Venue: FRIAS – Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies
Albertstr. 19, 79104 Freiburg
www.frias.uni-freiburg.de/pharmakon

International Workshop
June 13, 2014
FRIAS, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
THE PHARMAKON
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Coordination: Hermann Herlinghaus
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8:45
Opening Words
Bernd Kortmann (Scientific Director, FRIAS)
Hermann Herlinghaus (Universität Freiburg)

9:00 – 9:45
What is a Drug? On the Construction of a Modern Concept
Mike Jay (Writer and Independent Scholar, London)

9:45 – 10:30
Rewriting the ‘Antidrug’: The Ambivalence of the Pharmakon in the Cultural Discourse of Overdose
Nancy Campbell (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York)

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45 – 11:30
„Pharmakon“ in Ancient Greek Traditions: Between Tragedy, Philosophy, and Magic
Martin Treml (Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin)

11:30 – 12:15
From the “Pharmakon” to Affection: The Twofoldness of a Concept
Michaela Ott (Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg)

12:15 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 14:45
Sweet Passion, Bitter Addiction (Trobadors and the Consequences)
Cornelia Wild (Universität München)

14:45 – 15:30
Kosmopharmaka: The Irony of Drugs
Leonhard Fuest (Universität Hamburg)

15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:30
Celebrating Equivocation. From Stable Distinctions to an Ecology of Practices
Katrin Solhdju (Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin)

16:30 – 17:15
Drugs, Between Others
Todd Meyers (Wayne State University, Detroit)

17:15 – 17:30 Coffee Break

Bo Walström (Body Psychotherapist and Teacher of Breathwork, Stockholm)

18:30 Dinner