

4 February 2015 ♦ 12:00 pm ♦ German House, 172 College Avenue, Seminar Room

## Romantic Rocks: The Allure of the Inorganic from the Age of Goethe to the Anthropocene

Lunchtime talk by Jason Groves

Rutgers Department of Germanic, Russian & East European Languages and Literatures



Alongside a well-documented spatial turn, the Age of Goethe also exhibits what could be called a "geologic turn" in cultural awareness. Focusing on encounters between humans and mineral objects in Goethe's abandoned *Cosmic Novel* and *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Wandering* (1821/29), this talk will address a polymorphous inclination toward the inorganic that is increasingly evident in contemporary literary, philosophical, and artistic practices. In this way, the novel productively unsettles those conventional divisions between life and non-life that are, once again, rapidly eroding in the Anthropocene epoch.



**Jason Groves** received his Ph.D. in German Studies from Yale University in 2012 and is currently a visiting lecturer at Rutgers University. His essays on literature, translation, theater, and ecological thought have appeared in *The Global South*, *Modern Language Notes*, *Performance Studies*, *Society and Space*, *The Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, and *Theory in the Era of Climate Change*. He is currently completing a monograph, *Mineral Imaginaries: Literature for the Anthropocene*, which articulates the shared minerality of the human and the earth in literature since 1800.

For more information, please contact the German Department at 732-932-7201 or [anna.sandberg@rutgers.edu](mailto:anna.sandberg@rutgers.edu).

Image above: Michael Heizer; *Adjacent, Against, Upon*; 1976. Photo by Spike Mafford Photography.