ANIMAL STUDIES & JAPAN:

Animal/Media

ARTH 731 — COMS 681 — EAST 685

Fall 2012; Thursday 11:35-14:25; Arts W-5

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*Objectives*: Recent years have seen the emergence of animal studies as a new field of study, simultaneously with new theoretical approaches in feminism, media studies, and science and technology studies, diversely articulated and styled — new materialism, object-oriented ontology, speculative realism, actor network theory, non-human agency. Animal studies and these theoretical approaches are coeval but not coterminus: there are points of contention as well as significant overlaps. This seminar aims to introduce animal studies in the light of such theoretical shifts, with attention to two issues in particular. First, we will consider some ways in which non-human animals have entered into the study of different media and technologies, with an eye to how such concerns about animals may (or may not) transform received paradigms in media and technology studies. Second, we will consider debates about evolutionary theory, to consider how the resulting “new materialisms” affect our understanding of genealogy and writing of history, and to consider their ethical and political challenges.

*Methodology*: Because this is an upper-level seminar, this course will consist largely of discussions of the assigned readings, and so students are expected to read all the materials assigned for class in advance, and to come to class prepared to pose questions and discuss materials. A student (or two students) will serve as facilitator for each class, soliciting questions and concerns and helping the class to prioritize discussion and to include everyone.

*Readings*: A course packet will be available; four books (marked with an \*) will be available at the Concordia Community Solidarity Co-op Bookstore; three of them are available as ebooks through the library website as well.

*Evaluation*: A seminar paper of approximately 20-25 pages, with the proposal (10%) due on October 11. Ideally, the proposal will build on the essays that you’ve already read. The broader outline and bibliography (15%) is due on November 8. The outline should either be in standard extended outline form or a written overview; either is fine provided I can assess how you are presenting and organizing the different parts of your analysis with respect to the course materials. The preliminary draft (25%) is due on November 27, and the final paper (30%) on December 14. The additional 20% is participation. In addition to participating in discussions and serving as a facilitator, students will be asked to make a brief presentation of their research in class (about 10 minutes), simply to receive additional feedback.

**Reading Schedule:**

September 6: Introduction

UNIT 1: MEDIA & ONTOGENY

September 13: Flat Ontology, or Why stop on animals?

—Ian Bogost, ‘Aliens, but not as we know them,’ *New Scientist* (7 April 2012): 30-31.

—Vicki Kirby and Elizabeth Wilson, ‘Feminist Conversations,’ *Feminist Theory* (2011): 227-234.

—Steven Shaviro, ‘The Consequences of Panpsychism.’

—Ted Chiang, ‘Lifecycle of Software Objects’

September 20: Subjectification

—Akira Lippit, ‘Afterthoughts on the Animal World: Heidegger to Nietzsche’ and ‘Animetaphors,’ from *Electric Animal* (2000)

—Temple Grandin, ‘Thinking in Pictures,’ from *Thinking in Pictures*

—Temple Grandin, ‘How Animals Perceive the World,’ from *Animals in Translation*

**Films**: *My Life as a Turkey* and *The Temple Grandin Story*

September 25/27: Domestication and Domestic Labour

—Garry Genosko, ‘Natures and Cultures of Cuteness,’ *Invisible Culture* (2005), 1-19.

—James Serpell, ‘Pets as Panecea’ and ‘Health and Friendship’ from *In the Company of Animals*

—Jody Berland, ‘Animal and/as Medium: Symbolic Work in Communicative Regimes,’ *The Global South* 3:1 (Spring 2009): 42-65.

— Donna Haraway, ‘Value-Added Dogs and Lively Capital,” from *When Species Meet*, 45-67.

See too: http://www.globalanimal.org/2011/09/19/500-dogs-rescued-from-puppy-mill/51499/

**Film**: *The Elephant in the Living Room*

October 4: Animation, Laughter and Cruelty

—Miriam Hansen, ‘Of Mice and Ducks: **Adorno and Benjamin on Disney,” *The South Atalntic Quarterly* 92:1 (Winter 1993): 27-61**

—F. T. C. Moore, “Laughter,” from *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, 66-90.

—J Halberstrom, ‘Animal Sociality beyond the hetero/homo binary,’ *Women & Performance* (2010) 20:3, 321-331.

See too: http://www.kiddiematinee.com/greene.html

**Cartoons**: *Felix the Cat*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Norakuro*

October 11: Insect Media

—Jussi Parikka, *Insect Media* (2010)\*

**Film**: *Microcosmos*

**Proposal due**

UNIT 2: EVOLUTION & INDIVIDUATION: PHYLOGENY

October 18: Darwinism

—Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, *What Darwin Got Wrong*\*

**Film**: *The Rise of the Planet of the Apes*

October 25: Sexuality and Selection

—Elizabeth Grosz, ‘Darwin and feminism: preliminary investigations for a possible alliance,’ in *Material Feminisms* (2008),

—Frans de Waal, ‘The Whole Animal’ and ‘Predicting Mt Fuji’ and ‘Survival of the Kindest,’ from *The Ape and the Sushi Master*

—Hasana Sharp, “Nature, Norms, and Beasts,’ from *Spinoza and the Renaturalization of Politics* (2011), 185-220.

**Film**: *The Lost Film of Diane Fosse* and *Titus, King of Gorillas*

November 1: Ethology

—Tetsurô Matsuzawa and William C. Grew, “Kinji Imanishi and 60 Years of Japanese Primatology,” *Current Biology* (2008).

—Imanishi Kinji, *A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things*

—Donna Haraway, ‘The Bio-politics of a Multicultural Field,’ from *Primate Visions*

**Film**: Lorenz Knauer, *Jane’s Journey* (2010)

Nov. 8: From Evolution to Individuation

—Gilbert Simondon, *Philosophy of the Transindividual*

—Gilbert Simondon, *Two Lessons on Animal and Man*

**Film**: Frederick Wiseman, *Primate* (1974)

**Outline and Bibliography due**

UNIT 3: RELATION & MILIEU

November 15: Environments, Worlds, Milieux

—Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the World of Animals* (2010)\*

—Martin Heidegger, “The Animal is Poor in World,” in *Animal Philosophy*

—Jane Bennett, “Political Ecologies,” from *Vibrant Matter*

**Film**: Philippe Calderon, *La cité interdite* (The Beseiged Fortress, 2006)

November 22: Animal Capital

—Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (2009)\*

**Film**: Hubert Sauper, *Darwin’s Nightmare* (2004)

November 27/29

—Steve Shaviro, *The Universe of Things* (forthcoming)

**Film**: Bill Viola, *I Do Not Know What It is I am Like* (1986)

**Draft due**

December 14

**Final paper due**

McGill University requires these statements on syllabi:

*In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the  
right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*  
*McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the  
meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code  
of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see* [*http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/*](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) *for more information).*  
*In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or  
evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.*