the re/turn of the nonhuman (Giessen, 27-28 May 13)

Germany, May 27–28, 2013

Florian Sprenger

ethe re/turn of the nonhuman in the study of culture
concepts – concerns – challenges

emerging concepts for the study of culture @ gcsc #1

27-28 May 2013, Giessen, Germany

More often than not, academic research tries to solve the issues of the 21st century with concepts of the 20th in institutional frameworks of the 19th. The very term 'humanities' can be seen as somewhat problematic today, as it implies an exclusive focus on humans and humanity. There is, however, hardly an issue of cultural or social concern today, which does not involve complex entanglements of human and nonhuman actors.

The conference focus is on matter, networks, affect, objects, animals, and media in order to show how other entities act in and shape our world. Making these nonhuman entities visible helps us better engage with the contemporary moment and problems such as global climate change, the collapse of financial markets, or nonhuman internet traffic. Papers will address such diverse fields as actor-network theory, affect theory, animal studies, assemblage theory, new media theory, new materialism, speculative and object-oriented realism, ecology or systems theory. Turning towards the nonhuman in the study of culture, however, is not just about "contemporary thought"—it's about politics, knowledge, and embodied experience both in the present and throughout history. Thus a "nonhuman turn" in the study of culture might just as well be described as a "re/turn of the nonhuman", as research on the cultural and social relations of human and nonhuman actors can be traced to a variety of different intellectual and theoretical developments moving back through the last decades of the 20th century and well before.

This is the first in a series of conferences at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) designed to identify and discuss emerging topics for the study of culture. Together with the Center for 21st Century Studies (C21)/University of Wisconsin, this first event is meant to explore how the re/turn of the nonhuman might provide a way forward for the contemporary study of culture in light of the difficult challenges of the 21st century.

Programme

27.05.

10-11 Registration

11-11:30 Introduction: Florian Sprenger, Beatrice Michaelis, Richard Grusin

11:30-13 Keynote Ursula Heise: I, Rainforest: Posthumanism and Multispecies Communities in the Anthropocene
Chair: Ansgar Nünning

13-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16 Parallel Panels

Aesthetics of Belonging (in English)
Chair: Jens Kugele

Jörn Ahrens: The Gravity of Infection. 'Contagion' and the Moving Adversary

Julia Bee: Turning Non/Human: Vampires, Monsters, Cyborgs and their Propositions for Posthuman Performativity and Media Entanglements

Erin Obodiac: Wagers of the Apparatus: Transgenic and Robotic Citizenries

Digital Non-Humans (in English)
Chair: Florian Sprenger

Till Heilmann: Digitality and Humanity

Sebastian Gießmann: Law as Code and Code as Law. Is there a media anthropology of the non-human?

Shintaro Miyazaki: The Body as a Media Agencement. Short Circuiting the Non-Human with the Human

16-16:30 Coffee

16:30-18 Keynote Jussi Parikka: Psychogeophysics: Aesthetics for the Non-Organics
Chair: Richard Grusin

18-18:30 Break

18:30: Welcome thoughts about nonhuman performance by Bojana Kunst

19:00: Performance by Swoosh Lieu “Everything but solo”

20:00: Reception

21:00: Screening of Heiner Goebbels’ film “Stifters Dinge”

28.5.

9:30-11 Parallel Panels

The Production of Vitality (in English)

Chair: Michael Basseler

Martin Müller: Biofacts and Homo Faber - The aporia of the (non)human within Synthetic Biology

Maria Temmes: "Finnish mice" and the question of the unnatural

Jordana Greenblatt: Towards a new Constructivism, or How Bodies Matter: Epigenetics and the Bodily Text Room 001

Ecology of Things (in German)
Chair: Philipp Schulte

André Eiermann: Theater, menschenleer: Stifters Dinge von Heiner Goebbels

Christoph Schanze: Vorüberlegungen zu einer historischen Narratologie der Dinge

Laura Moisi: Von Lärm zu Logos? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Politik der Dinge

11-11:30 Coffee

11:30-13 Parallel Panels

Non Sequitur – Animals and Humans (in English)
Chair: Doris Bachmann-Medick

Jessica Lomanowska: Roach LabRedux: Biomedia, OOO, and the "Intra-activity of Becoming"

Oxana Timofeeva: Towards the History of Animals

Greta Olson: Romancing the Non-Human Animal

Calculation and Agency (in German)
Chair: Hubertus Büschel

Caroline Gerlitz: Numbering the social - The performativity of social media actions and metrics (engl.)

Dietmar Wetzel: Finanzwirtschaft und das Nicht-Humane - zur Aktualität einer finanzsoziologischen Konstellation

Florian Lippert: Subjektlose Soziologie. Luhmanns „Autopoiesis“-Konzept und die Frage nach dem Menschen

13-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16 Parallel Panels

Assemblages (in English)
Chair: Martin Zierold

Jason Puskar: Awake at the Switch: Technoagencies of Liberal Choice

Gerko Egert: Nonhuman Choreographies: Mette Ingvartsen's "Artifical Nature Project"

Alexandra Claudia Manta: Serresian (A)biogenesis, or the Inhuman Turbulence of Matter: De-Anthropomorphizing Biology into a Physics of Chaos & Complexity?

Non-Human Images (in German)
Chair: Beatrice Michaelis

Thomas Martin: "Und kein Weib mit dem Tiere…, denn es ist ein Greuel!" Sodomie in der frühneuzeitlichen Kunst

Franziska Uhlig: Tiere und Computer - Max Benses Ränder der Kunstkonzeptionen

Florian Leitner: Von Robotern und Schildkröten. Nicht-anthropomorphe Blicke in Michael Snow's "La région centrale" und auf YouTube

16-16:30 Coffee

16:30-18 Keynote Noortje Marres: From non-humans to issues: felicities of digital culture
Chair: Martin Zierold

End of Conference

There is no participation fee. However, we kindly ask you to register by writing an email to Falk Rößler (Falk.Roessler@ggk.uni-giessen.de)

Reference:

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