

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION AND PAPERS FOR PHD CANDIDATES AND POSTDOCS

Workshop: Empathy, Animals, Film

With Prof. Lori Gruen (Wesleyan University)

International workshop at the University of Basel, June 20, 2017

Guest: Lori Gruen (Convenors: Markus Wild, Friederike Zenker, Livia Boscardin)

Registration Deadline: April 30, 2017

20/21–24 June 2017, the annual conference of the SLSAeu will be held in Basel on the topic of “Empathies” (<http://www.empathies2017.com>). In this context, the workshop provides a forum to explore concepts of empathy with regard to animals and especially animals on film.

Empathy is a key concept in contemporary studies focussing on animals e.g. in Animal Ethics or research on Animal Minds. Humans and other animals engage with each other by means of empathy. The understanding thereby ranges from a cognitive ability to put oneself into the shoes of the other to more basic forms of immediate affective resonance. In our workshop, we are particularly keen to discuss Lori Gruen’s idea of ‘Entangled Empathy’. The aim is to bring together the thinking about entangled empathy and cinematic images of animals. In which ways do films contribute to empathetic engagement, respectively might refuse to do so? In a critique of traditional ethic theory, Gruen emphasizes how important the idea of particular animals, cases and contexts is for an alternative model of ethics. Accordingly, we would like to explore the transformative power of particular animals that become visible on film, as well as possible limits of the filmic medium.

We would like to address questions such as: 1) What is specific about empathy towards animals? How do animals engage empathically with humans? 2) What, if any, are the moral values of empathy? What is the moral value of specific concepts of empathy, e.g. entangled empathy? 3) How can we relate concepts of empathy to experiences with animals on film? How does the medium of film – particular films, scenes, cinematic narratives etc. – contribute to the empathic engagement of viewers?

PhD candidates and early postdocs from fields including, but not limited to, philosophy, anthropology, human-animal-studies, cultural studies, film studies and media studies are encouraged to participate. To apply for participation, please submit both a short CV and a short letter of motivation.

Participants who wish to discuss their own work are encouraged to submit a short abstract of their presentation (1 page). Be prepared to give a 15-min presentation. We invite submissions concerning the work of Lori Gruen (e.g. discussions of the concept of entangled empathy and related topics) and/or the topic of animals in visual media. The conference language is English.

Please hand in all documents electronically to Friederike Zenker: The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2017. Notice of acceptance or rejection will be announced on May 12, 2017. For questions or further information please contact Friederike Zenker

Contact

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