Core 1: Weekly Response Week #

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Due in hard copy and/or on turnitin.com the first discussion section class following lecture.

Name: Majok Ring Date:2/15/15

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Lecturer: Tom Hothem & Anne Zanzucchi

Lecture Title: “The Literature of Natural History and the Idea of Evolution”

Lecture’s Central Argument: Tom focused his argument around questioning our methods of naming/classification. There were philosophical themes that were centered around the concept that standard naming conventions were irrelevant to function and drove others away due to its lack of fantasy/creativity. By this he is mentioning names such as Kepler-22b, CoRoT-7b, and 14 Her b.

Lecture’s Supporting Evidence/Examples: Tom mentioned the beginnings of classification and stated why these naming methods arose and their benefits. He states that Darwin used classification as a means of providing difference to two birds which might be indistinguishable to the naked eye, but are genetically similar. By giving it a different name, you are casting it essentially as a different being/species which puts gives names meaning as great as function/form. He also stated that we use Latin for our naming as it was the least likely to have changed and would avoid having arguments over meaning in the future.

Three questions you have with respect to this lecture:

* Will those opposed to the current naming standards ever have a real possibility of changing those standards, even with the numerous benefits they might have?
* How are certain individuals able to pass generalizations as fact in today’s time, where facts can be researched and proven wrong immediately?
* Is it acceptable to place one group to put so much pressure on the naming standards?

Other Core 1 subjects to which the lecture might be related:

Within this week’s lecture, “The Literature of Natural History and the Idea of Evolution” by Tom Hothem, we focused our efforts around discussing the benefits/cons of classification and how this might affect our views on certain research ethics. In many cases, we may run into problems with these standards as although it can be easier for documentation and filing, it can seem to be too intricate and technical for real life application. Take for example this statement by Foucault within “The Order of Things”, “When we establish a considered classification, when we say that a cat and a dog resemble each other less than two greyhounds do, even if both are tame or embalmed, even if both are frenzied, even if both have just broken the water pitcher, what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty? On what “table,” according to what grid of identities, similitudes, analogies, have we become accustomed to sort out so many different and similar things?” (Foucault 3). Here he explains how this extreme focus on identification can cause us to diverge from the larger scale of things and become stuck on the details which may be irrelevant to what we are trying explore. We also get into issues with generalizations in classification as Tom mentions Louis as he states his ‘observations’ that European were the most sophisticated of the common peoples and showed traits which were beneficial, but not backed by any evidence. We also come to terms with actual evidence shaping our classification systems as Buffon states that species are named after their ability to breed and change over time.

Narrative Response (½ single-spaced page): Examine some aspects of the lecture in relation to the weeks’ readings and to other course subjects (lectures or readings) of interest to you. (Generic prompt)

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Weekly Responses are graded according to the following rubric (on a scale of 0 to 5):

“5” Response: Specifies the focus of lecture/readings. Engages thoughtfully and accurately with the particulars of the lecture/readings. Fills the page with insightful observations that demonstrate inventive, connective processing of ideas.

“3” Response: Sketches the focus of lecture/readings. Engages lecture/readings, although may do so incompletely or partially. Fills much of the page with useful observations suggestive of emergent ideas.

“1” Response: Vaguely addresses the focus of the lecture/readings. Includes insufficient or inaccurate particulars of the lecture/readings. Fills little of the page, exhibiting thoughts that suggest incomplete processing of ideas.

“0” Response: no submission