

Department of Languages and Cultures
2017 Research Seminar Series

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Assessing Animals' Subjective States
A Discussion on the Differences between Life-world and Science



Animal welfare science intends to explore good living conditions for animals in animal husbandry. For many scientists this also implies the exploration of the subjective experiences of animals. However, animal welfare scientists had encountered considerable challenges investigating animals' subjective states, due to the lack of a proper method to do so. Since the 1990s the so called *Qualitative Behavior Assessment* has been introduced in the field, with the claim that direct assessment of animals' subjectivity through (everyday) observation is a valid methodology.

With the introduction of such qualitative assessment of subjective experience, a debate has ensued in animal welfare science about how exactly, that is scientifically, one should access subjective experiences, in non-human animals. In short whether qualitative approaches entail a measure of "objectivity". My paper deals with such controversy by considering the epistemological differences between life-worldly and scientific observation in animal welfare science, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, if those observational styles simply exclude each other as different kinds of theorizing the living.

Tuesday: November 7, 2017 12:00pm A3N7 (3rd floor Arts Building)