Gender, Nature, Culture Week 14 Questions

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2) What is “biocultural hope” according to Kirksey et al? How is this informed by Derrida’s distinction between apocalyptic and messianic thinking? Does this hope arise through practices such as caring for other beings? (pp. 35, 54-57). How do you understand the figure that hope ‘move[s] like oil in water’ (39)? Does “biocultural hope” challenge the dominant nature-culture divide in political action? If yes, in what way?

This chapter addresses and proffers “biocultural hope” by reflecting the flood of oil (the Deepwater Horizon oil spill) in the Gulf of Mexico. “Hope” can be seen as “forms of collective desire” (p. 30) generated in multiple sponenous actions like art, science and political activism against injustice of global capitalism. This is informed by Derrida’s definition of messianicity that he suggests is not attached to Christian messiah, rather it is universal and incorporeal. (p. 35).

But for Kirksey and colleagues , biocultural s “hope” does nott arise from specific forms as Derrida says, on the contrast Jacqueline Bishop found hope in practices to care for another species. (p. 38)

The oil spill catastrophe evoked people into multiple actions and awareness and spread gradually as collective desire and response as if oil in water. (p. 39)

I believe “biocultural hope” has possibilities to rethink the political division of nature and culture. Although it started with a (naturalculural) disaster caused by human, if more people realize how we humans’ acts affect and are entangled with nature and non-human animals and eventually it will be connected to reactions to our bodies and future environment, it might change our notion to perceive nature as just resource to nature as a part of ourselves. Nice point

4) What alternative conceptions of ‘sex’ and sexual environmental politics are offered by Ah-King and Hayward to challenge the discourse of “sex panic” that arose in the wake of sex transformations in animals induced by endocrine disruptors?

Endocrine disruption presents a challenge to how we conceptualize sex as bounded and unchanging. Some details here on the ‘sex panic’ and the idea of purity poltics

Ah-King and Hayward propose to consider sex as reactive and responsive to the environment and as having “open potentials”. Sex can be changeable by environmental and social influences, and all animal life share an evolutionary past and hormonal vulnerabilities through being exposed to human material culture. (p. 6) The alternative conceptions caused by endocrine disruption proffer that humans have potentials of change their sex to become ‘feminized’ (or masculinized) as the other non-human species like frogs or fish do, and it challenges heteronormativity and political boundary between nature and culture by presenting effects of chemicals in and on our bodies and non-human species and our co-presence.