

GLOBAL FRIDAY PRESENTS

Friday, October 29, 2021

Your Pet's Ancestral Origins': Breed Knowledges, Genetic Tests and Companion Animal Care

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Genetic ancestry tests are not only marketed to people to provide them with knowledge about the geographical and ethnic origins of their ancestors. People can now buy ancestry tests for their dogs. Over the last ten years a parallel commercial application of genomic science has developed which offers people the opportunity to purchase tests that can ascertain the breeds, and their proportions, in the ancestries of their mixed breed dogs. The science underpinning both is largely the same. Both forms of ancestry tests also involve categorizations of difference, even if any suggestion of an association between the concepts of breed and ethnicity is deeply problematic and politically fraught. Extending recent critical engagements with the production of categories of difference and accounts of origins in genetic ancestry tests, and on the making of breeds as categories and living collectives of sub-species animal difference, this talk examines the significance of breed imaginaries in human relationships with non-pedigree companion animals. Focusing on the marketing of these services to the owners of non-pedigree dogs, it explores the way ideas of responsible care and ideal human-dog relationships are figured as dependent upon new forms of knowledge of dog ancestry, models of heredity and conventional accounts of pedigree breed characteristics. In this talk I consider what the impulse to know the breeds in the parentage or extended genealogy of a mixed breed dog, that is played upon in the marketing of these tests, might suggest about the potency and persistence of modern breed imaginaries.



12:00 – 1:30 PM

Online via Zoom Webinar: <https://unbc.zoom.us/j/66846831620?pwd=V2JxZy9wNjc0RINJSDF4eFdKdUUvUT09> Passcode: 605690

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