Night-Rule: Empires of the Nonhuman in Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Descartes

Descartes’s Discourse on Method celebrated human reason, while Montaigne in his essays questioned it, saying “When I play with my cat, who knows whether she is not amusing herself with me more than I am with her?” This lecture considers the debate between Montaigne and Descartes on the claims of animals in order to show how Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream questions, rather than celebrates, human authority over animals.

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