

Multispecies Heritage

26th and 27th November 2020

Centre for Human Animal Studies

Edge Hill University, UK



Edge Hill University

Organisers

Claire Parkinson

claire.parkinson@edgehill.ac.uk

Brett Mills

millsb@edgehill.ac.uk

Funded by UKRI AHRC as part of the 'Landscape Decisions' Programme



**Arts and
Humanities
Research Council**

Multispecies Heritage

26th and 27th November 2020

Thursday 26 November

'Beginning' 9.00-9.15 (GMT)

Welcome from event organisers, **Claire Parkinson** and **Brett Mills**
Featuring poetry performance by **Gordon Meade**

'Place' 9.15-10.45 (GMT)

Surviving Together: Changing Dynamics of Interspecies Relationships in India
Swatilekha Maity

Multispecies Heritage in Deerubbin / The Hawkesbury Estuary: Following Lines of Oyster-Shells
Nicole Matthews

Senses of Place: More-Than-Human Topographies of Mexican Ecovillages
Olea Morris

'Ethics' 11.15-12.45 (GMT)

Bridging the Gap: Taking Microbes Morally into Account – An Axiological Analysis of Valuing Microbes
Leonie Bossert and Davina Höll

Living with Microbes: Stories of Intimate Relations on an Invisible Register
Maya Hey

Cape Town, Coasts, and Capital: Ethical Monstrosities in More-Than-Human Literature
Megan Pay

'Imaginations' 14.00-15.30 (GMT)

The Call: A More-than-Human Approach to Film Sound
Emilia Czątkowska

Resisting Invisibility: A Virtual Guided Tour from the Perspective of Eight Cows
EvaMarie Lindahl

'Communities' 16.00-17.30 (GMT)

Multispecies Precarity in Upland Ireland
Jodie Asselin

Mexico City's Wildlife: Telling Urban Wildlife's Stories through Photography
Tamara Blazquez Haik

Storying Extinction: Responding to the Loss of North Idaho's Mountain Caribou
Jack Kredell and Christopher Lamb

Featuring poetry performance by **Gordon Meade**

Friday 27 November

'Middle' 9.00-9.15 (GMT)

Welcome from event organisers, **Claire Parkinson** and **Brett Mills**
Featuring poetry performance by **Gordon Meade**

'Entanglements' 9.15-10.45 (GMT)

Why Bees are our Heritage? Tree-Beekeeping in the Context of Environmental Anthropology
Karolina Echaust

More-than-Human Methodologies in Ethnography of Precarity in Delhi
Sneha Gutgutia

Guarding Crops from Monkey Troops: Farmer-Monkey Interaction near a Nature Reserve in Guangxi, China
Wenxiu Li and Erica von Essen

'Storytelling' 11.15-12.45 (GMT)

Songs of Earth and its Inhabitants: Reading Ruskin Bond's Fiction
Rashmi Attri

Interspecies Relatedness and Ethics in Mahadevi Verma's *Mera Parivar* and Nilanjana Ray's *The Wildings*
Aditi Das Khan

Visiting Octopus: Seeing Through Glass Clearly
Ute Hörner and Mathias Antlfinger

'Commodification' 14.00-15.30 (GMT)

Barbecue as Multispecies Heritage: The Semiotics of Restaurant Signs on the American Landscape
Thomas Aiello

Bestly Places: Apprehending and Articulating the Subjective Lives of Commodified Animals
Paula Arcari

How to Become: An Embodied Perspective of Animal Commodification
Jes Hooper and Harrie Liveart

'With' 16.00-17.30 (GMT)

Kinoteuthis Infernalis: Squid Film-Philosophy and Chthulumediality
William Brown and David H. Fleming

Water in Distress
J. Bernardo P. Couto Soares and Amalia Calderón

Becoming Other: The Stories of Cows in Canadian and Japanese Literature
Shoshannah Ganz

'End' 17.30-17.45 (GMT)

Summary and thanks – and what next?

Attendance Information

The conference will take place on Zoom. See information below for links to sessions. Note that sessions are linked into groups of multiple panels, with breaks in-between.

Session 1: Thursday 26th November, morning

Panels: 'Beginning'
'Place'
'Ethics'

<https://zoom.us/j/94562398766?pwd=M2tpUUU3RXJ2R0tkcHo3VHICWWVodz09>

Meeting ID: 945 6239 8766

Passcode: 306289

Session 2: Thursday 26th November, afternoon

Panels: 'Imaginings'
'Communities'

<https://zoom.us/j/95464299680?pwd=TEpiSEVSVWdxY0hOR0hYeWthUVc5UT09>

Meeting ID: 954 6429 9680

Passcode: 962653

Session 3: Friday 27th November, morning

Panels: 'Middle'
'Entanglements'
'Storytelling'

<https://zoom.us/j/97358447439?pwd=RW1sbCs0VmZGWHIjNTNFMmkwUXpVZz09>

Meeting ID: 973 5844 7439

Passcode: 185485

Session 4: Friday 27th November, afternoon

Panels: 'Commodification'
'With'
'End'

<https://zoom.us/j/95103339892?pwd=YnQ1L2xiVXZRUGZVZFM4dHgXM2Radz09>

Meeting ID: 951 0333 9892

Passcode: 814752

Barbecue as Multispecies Heritage: The Semiotics of Restaurant Signs on the American Landscape

Thomas Aiello

Abstract

“The roads of the Southern United States are lined with a succession of grinning pigs,” writes historian Laura Dove, “advertising the availability of barbecue in countless restaurants.” (Dove, 1995: 3) The signs featuring grinning pigs serve not only as symbols of the American dining experience, but also as symbols of the need to obviate the reality of what human diners are doing to the nonhuman animals inside. They are a form of caricature as permission, a making of innocent lives as comedy to excuse the behavior of those who might laugh of any malice toward the affected group. In this way, pig-themed barbecue signs are imitative of the racist kitsch and cartoons of the Jim Crow era, where the imagery of Little Black Sambo and exaggerated minstrelsy belittled black lives and, by extension, gave license to whites to treat them as inherently inferior. The semiotics of difference that play out on barbecue signs give similar license to those who eat barbecue in their behavior toward pigs. This presentation will make a historical comparison of the semiotic use of happy pigs on signs for American barbecue restaurants, representing live caricatured images of the animals whose corpses customers will eat inside the buildings, with the negative use of racial and racist imagery in nineteenth and twentieth century American art and collectibles. As per the call for papers, it will explore the implications of using imagery to obviate a more-than-human heritage that hides in plain sight, always to the detriment of the nonhuman.

Biography

Thomas Aiello: I am an associate professor of history at Valdosta State University in Georgia, USA, but I am also a doctoral candidate in anthrozoology at the University of Exeter, UK. While much of my previous work has been on the history of the African American population, I have now begun turning my research focus to animal studies.

Contact: ta424@exeter.ac.uk

Beastly Places:

Apprehending and Articulating the Subjective Lives of Commodified Animals

Paula Arcari

Abstract

Incorporating the perspectives of nonhumans, and particularly other animals, in academic research is typically fraught with criticism including accusations of anthropomorphism or ventriloquizing. However, despite the obvious barriers of language, other animals are increasingly seen as teleological centres of their own lives whose interests, preferences, and inherent value need to be acknowledged. There has been somewhat of a 'turn' in multispecies methods in the past five years, encompassing ethnography, ethology, animal cultures, emotions, and the notion (and act) of witnessing. In this paper, I describe how I am drawing on these methods as part of a three-year project titled 'The visual consumption of animals: challenging persistent binaries'. A major component of this project focuses on the animals whose lives and bodies are bound up in the 'beastly spaces' of the zoo and the racetrack (both horses and greyhounds). As well as exploring the material, spatial and temporal arrangements of these sites, I am also tracking individual animals over time. The intention is to foreground the subjective lives of these commodified animals by exploring the routinized and mundane aspects of their everyday experiences as well as their broader circumstances as part of globally interconnected industries and the repeated deconstruction(s) of their 'species being' that requires. I will discuss the process and outcomes of my research efforts to date, which have been curtailed by the pandemic, some of the (other) limitations I have experienced, and future opportunities.

Biography

Paul Arcari is a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow within the Centre for Human Animal Studies at Edge Hill University, UK. Her three-year project 'The Visual Consumption of Animals: Challenging Persistent Binaries' aims to support transformational change in the way humans conceive and interact with nature. Before joining Edge Hill, Paula worked for 10 years at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, on a range of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. She completed her PhD there in 2018, exploring the consumption of 'ethical' meat and animals. Paula's research is focused on understanding how both societal change and stability are constituted, particularly in relation to climate and environmental change, the appropriation of nature, and the exploitation of nonhuman animals.

Contact: arcarip@edgehill.ac.uk

Multispecies Precarity in Upland Ireland

Jodie Asselin

Abstract

This paper explores the meaning of land in an upland farming region of Western Ireland through asking what role non-human agents have in shaping both the land itself, and the expectations that others may have of it. Based on ethnographic research between 2017 and 2019, the multi land-use issues that face this region, including extensive afforestation, raptor conservation, invasive species, and wind turbine expansion, will be re-examined through the lens of the other-than human. In what ways are trees, birds, plants, and soil agents in place-making? How might reframing rural land use struggles to include the non-human adjust our understanding of chronic issues such as depopulation, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation? Building off participant observation and extensive interviews, these questions will be explored through both the stories of upland farmers themselves, and the movements/characteristics of the landscape and its non-human inhabitants. In doing so, I argue the other-than-human are central agents within this so-call marginal landscape and that small scale upland farmers are far more aware of the precarity this cohabitation affords than the land use policies and development schemes allow for.

Biography

Jodie Asselin is an associate professor of anthropology (Department of Anthropology, University of Lethbridge, Canada) with a specialty in environmental anthropology and rural place.

Contact: jodie.asselin@uleth.ca

Songs of Earth and its Inhabitants: Reading Ruskin Bond's Fiction

Rashmi Attri

Abstract

Ruskin Bond's writings can be described as the 'song of multispecies'. Like Bruno the great Italian Romantic writer, Bond believes in 'oneness of all' - that entire reality is one in substance 'in cause, in origin and in God'. This echoes deep ecology and the Indian Vedic concept of the environment which advocates the interconnected web of all the life forms.

Ruskin Bond's fiction expresses this unity of all. His literary world is replete with the fragrance of flowers, the chirping of birds, the clattering of rain drops, the swinging of trees, the gurgling of brooks, the hooting of owls and the roaring of lions. The non-human world is equally significant for him and he has sensitively caught the language of non-humans - their signs, codes and shapes. By giving voice to non-humans Bond has brought them to the centre and made them subjects.

He has portrayed a non dualistic world where humans and non-humans enjoy reciprocal relationships with one another. He knows the world of nature as an insider and shows affinity with nature in all its forms. Even the movement of a squirrel tickles his fancy and he finds joy while feeding sparrows. Nature is a sentient being, a companion to him and at times he finds nature an extension of his own self.

This is multispecies storytelling or 'becoming with each other' as Donna Haraway puts it. Multispecies narratives while claiming that we humans are not categorically isolated beings imply 'getting on together, learning to become with other' as in the case of bacteria.

The paper is a hermeneutic study that explores the fiction of Ruskin Bond, an Anglo-Indian writer of British descent, from the perspectives of multispecies narratives in the context of the anthropogenic. The paper will make passing reference to other Indian writers.

Biography

Rashmi Attri is Associate Professor in English, AMU Aligarh, India. I have been working for the last 20 years. My PhD is from AMU, on W.B. Yeats' plays. I have also completed the Post Graduate Certificate Course in the teaching of English as Second Language, from IFLU, Hyderabad, India. My areas of interest include Indian English Writings, especially Dalit and Tribal literature, specially Dalit life narratives, Afro-American literature, Folklore and Ecocriticism. I have published around 14 papers in reputed national and international journals dealing with different areas of my interests. I have presented papers in seminars/conferences within my own country and USA (Yale, California, Keene University). I teach English literature and ELT at UG and PG level. I have also designed reading material for an MPhil course. I am guiding PhD research on various areas ranging from Indian to Native American Literatures.

Contact: rashmiattri@gmail.com

Mexico City's Wildlife: Telling Urban Wildlife's Stories through Photography

Tamara Blazquez Haik

Abstract

Mexico City is home to approximately 2254 different wildlife species including helminthes, insects and other arthropods, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

However, because this city is one of the biggest and most polluted cities in the world, its citizens tend to believe that nature and wildlife cannot survive and much less thrive amidst so much concrete. That is why, whenever there is any kind of human-animal encounter, people tend to either run away scared or whatever animal they see, or harm them.

Three years ago I found a dead opossum near my house that had been poisoned by one of my neighbours, and I realized that one of the biggest issues in wildlife conservation is the apathy created by the lack of education opportunities and knowledge people possess in regards to nature. As such, as a conservation photographer, I created the project 'Mexico City's Wildlife' (*Fauna de la Ciudad de México*).

By combining photography with science, educational workshops and ludic activities, this project has been helping people to learn and better understand their wild neighbors. I hope to continue this project and bring it to different neighborhoods and schools so that people, especially children, become more empathetic towards nature and are inspired enough to raise their voices and fight for wildlife and nature conservation even in this large city.

This presentation will relate not just the urban wildlife's stories, but also a little of how this project is helping urban wildlife conservation.

Biography

Tamara Blazquez Haik is an award winning Mexican Conservation photographer and animal rights' activist. National Geographic Travel Photo Contest 2019 Nature First Place Winner. IUCN CEC Member. I studied at the Escuela Activa de Fotografía and Club Fotográfico de México and have been published on several occasions. I was a speaker at TEDxPolanco 2017 in Mexico City where I shared my vision about the importance of nature photography for conservation and sustainable ecotourism. I am also certified for handling wildlife by the International Wildlife Handlers organization and I have extensive experience in raptor rehabilitation and care. Right now, I am working on 'Fauna de la Ciudad de México' a photographic and educational project aimed at raising awareness about wildlife and nature conservation in Mexico City through photography, talks and conferences, and environmental education activities in schools. My ultimate goal is to raise awareness about the importance of protecting and saving nature and wildlife from disappearing from this world and to inspire people, from all backgrounds, to join the fight for life itself. I also work with the organizations: The Great Ape Project Mexico, OneProtest - An Advocacy Organization as International Campaign Manager and Board Member, and with Faunacción as Director of Education.

Contact: tamarablazquezhaik@gmail.com

Bridging the Gap: Taking Microbes Morally into Account – An Axiological Analysis of Valuing Microbes

Leonie Bossert and Davina Höll

Abstract

Neither animals nor plants, but a form of life which supports nearly all other life forms on earth, that's what microbes are. Including this fascinating life form in the multispecies ethics discourse is long overdue. In recent years, a veritable paradigm shift has become apparent both in the sciences and in popular media regarding the conceptualisation of human/animal-microbe relationships. Microbes are no longer seen merely as a pathogenic danger, but as highly important for sustaining most life forms.

While cutting-edge science research around the globe has intensively turned to the complex study of the microbiome, the humanities have so far been rather quiet on this groundbreaking topic. However, the alleged paradigm shift by microbiome thinking urgently requests a multidisciplinary approach inquiring pressing questions such as, how recognizing the dependence on tiny forms of life challenges existing anthropocentric perspectives and the way we value 'our' microbes.

In this paper we address this desideratum by conducting an axiological analysis, examining which values can be found in regard to microbes and which arguments underlie these values. After surveying the relevant values in general, we exemplarily take a deeper look at the aesthetic values ascribed to microbes, since especially works of art and literature function as sensitive seismographs for e.g. social, political and epistemological challenges and contribute ingeniously to the processes of knowledge production.

In doing so we want to bridge the existing gap in Bioethics, where animals, plants and also ecosystems are being discussed intensively in regard to their 'moral status', but microbes as an important part of all of these individuals or entities resp. entireties are not.

Biographies

Leonie Bossert: Holding a Diploma in Landscape Ecology and Nature Conservation from the University of Greifswald, Germany, I am currently finishing my PhD Project 'Common Future for Humans and Animals: A Sentientist Animal-Ethics Perspective on Sustainable Development' at the University of Tübingen, Germany, which was funded by the Heinrich Böll foundation. Since 2013, I am working as a lecturer at various universities and colleges, where I give seminars and lectures on Animal Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Ethics of Sustainable Development and History and Philosophy of Science. Currently, I work on the project 'Orientation Towards the Common Good in the Digital Age – Transformation Narratives between Planetary Boundaries and Artificial Intelligence' at the International Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities, University of Tübingen. My main areas of research are Environmental Ethics, Animal Ethics and Human-Animal Studies (especially how to build just interspecies societies), Ethics of Sustainable Development (with a focus on non-anthropocentric perspectives on SD) and Conservation Ethics.

Contact: leonie.bossert@izew.uni-tuebingen.de

Davina Höll: Holding a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Literary Studies from the University of Marburg, Germany, I currently finished my PhD Project 'Politics and Poetics of Cholera in 19th century Literature' that I was researching as a member of the interdisciplinary DFG Graduate Program 'Life Sciences - Life Writing' at the University of Mainz, Germany. I am now a post-doctoral researcher at the Cluster of Excellence 2124 'Controlling Microbes to Fight Infections' (CMFI) at the University of Tübingen, Germany, where I work on a project that investigates the historical, epistemological and ethical implications of an anticipated paradigm shift concerning human microbes in the wake of the antibiotic resistance crisis. Focusing on but not being limited to the field of Medical Humanities I am very much interested in how textual and extratextual worlds intertwine. I passionately engage in interdisciplinary exchange for example while teaching medical students. I recently presented papers on 'Poetry and Medicine', 'The Nonhuman within the Human', 'The Unspeakability of Cholera' and 'Microbial Aesthetics of the EcoGothic' at international conferences in Germany, Poland, Portugal and the United States.

Contact: davina.hoell@uni-tuebingen.de

**Kinoteuthis Infernalis:
Squid Film-Philosophy and Chthulumedia**

William Brown and **David H. Fleming**

Abstract

In this paper, we shall introduce a cephalopodic mode of thinking, in which we challenge vertebrate thought and ask us ourselves to think from the position of a cephalopod. What is more, we shall argue that cephalopods are not only creatures that appear regularly across films, television shows, music videos and more, but that they also lie at the heart of contemporary digital culture as a result of early research into A.I. and networked computers being based precisely on the body-brain of the octopus. In this way, we wish to suggest not only that understanding cephalopods is key to understanding contemporary digital culture, but that cephalopodic artificial intelligence machines (i.e. digital computers) constitute an emergent, post-human form of life. This is allegorised in various films and television shows (or what, after Vilém Flusser, we call *kinoteuthis infernalis* – the squid cinema from hell). But more provocatively, it is true of the shows themselves. What is more, we shall finally suggest that these post-human ‘chthulumedia’ are not products of human culture, but, in the spirit of Donna J. Haraway, that the human is the product of cephalopodic media culture.

Biographies

William Brown is an Honorary Fellow at the University of Roehampton, London, UK. He is the author of, *inter alia*, *The Squid Cinema from Hell: Kinoteuthis Infernalis and the Emergence of Chthulumedia* (with David H. Fleming, Edinburgh University Press, 2020), *Non-Cinema: Global Digital Filmmaking and the Multitude* (Bloomsbury, 2018), and *Supercinema: Film-Philosophy for the Digital Age* (Berghahn, 2013).

Contact: wjrcbrown@gmail.com

David H. Fleming is Senior Lecturer in Film & Media at the University of Stirling, Scotland. His interdisciplinary research often engages the outsides and intersectionalities of images, technology, events and philosophy. He is co-author of *The Squid Cinema from Hell: Kinoteuthis Infernalis and the Emergence of Chthulhumedia* (with William Brown, Edinburgh University Press, 2020), and *Chinese Urban Shi-nema: Cinematicity, Society and Millennial China* (with Simon Harrison, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). He is also the author of *Unbecoming Cinema: Unsettling encounters with ethical event films* (Intellect, 2017).

Contact: dr.dhfleming@gmail.com

The Call:

A More-than-Human Approach to Film Sound

Emilia Czatkowska

Abstract

It is a general consensus within Film Studies that film sounds fall into three main categories: speech (or human voice), music, and sound effects (also called noise) (Bordwell and Thompson, 1997). Such distinction raises an important question: where do we place sounds made by nonhuman animal characters? Since the category of voice is reserved for humans, animal sounds would be situated in the noise category, yet such approach dismisses the communicative and intentional potential of animal vocal (and non-vocal) expression. On the other hand, moves to include animal sounds within the category of the voice (such as in Neumark, 2017) would ignore multiple species who use sound to communicate but do not vocalise.

I propose a new category of sounds – the call – in order to offer a multispecies approach to film sound, which will be more mindful of the richness and variety of nonhuman animal expression and intraspecies as well as interspecies communication. ‘The call’ is made with the aim of being answered, it is an invitation into a relation, a way to negotiate one’s existence amongst other beings. In this paper I will focus specifically on the vocal call to address the problem of categorising nonhuman animal vocal expression in film.

Using *Le Quattro Volte* (Michelangelo Frammartino, 2010) as my case study, I will demonstrate how ‘the call’ enables an alternative, non-anthropocentric understanding of the film, an approach that is more attuned to its nonhuman animal characters, and which invites the spectators to adopt a more-than-human and more compassionate perspective.

Biography

Emilia Czatkowska is a CHASE-funded PhD candidate in Film Studies at the University of Kent, UK, where she is in the process of writing a thesis on the cinematic representation of the nonhuman animal perspective.

Contact: ec476@kent.ac.uk

Interspecies Relatedness and Ethics in Mahadevi Verma's *Mera Parivar* and Nilanjana Ray's *The Wildings*

Aditi Das Khan

Abstract

This paper will explore interspecies relatedness in two texts – Mahadevi Verma's *Mera Parivar* (My Family) and Nilanjana Ray's *The Wildings*. Verma's *Mera Parivar* is a memoir-cum-biography of her pets. The paper will investigate the problems of writing animal biographies (or zoographies). The process of writing about a life involves an inevitable selection of a creature from countless others. This process of selection might reflect, that our ethical treatment of animals too is limited to select creatures. Ray's *The Wildings* is about a clowder of cats in Nizamuddin, Old Delhi. The book offers an insight into the complex relationships within animal communities. The history of the clowder and collective values are crucial to the plot of the novel. Almost as a retort to the common assumption, that animals are ahistorical beings, the oldest cat traces the history of the clowder in a chapter. Verma too acquaints her readers with the history of the pets she adopts. Finally, both these books help us interrogate the category of the 'good animal'. We see the Verma struggling with hostile pets who threaten the lives of other pets. In Ray's novel a fierce scuffle breaks out between the Wildings and another clowder called the feral cats. *The Wildings* see the feral cats as blood thirsty cats, who kill for fun. Such binaries of wild or tame, good or bad are easy pitfalls for animal lovers too. These are the major concerns that this paper plans to engage with.

Biography

Aditi Das Khan is a PhD student at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. She is working towards a thesis on interspecies relatedness as depicted in Indian literary texts. Her other areas of interest include Diaspora Studies, Shakespeare Studies and Bengal Renaissance.

Contact: daskhanaditi@gmail.com

Why Bees are our Heritage?

Tree-Beekeeping in the Context of the Environmental Anthropology

Karolina Echaust

Abstract

The environment is more than just what we see. It is an ecosystem within which people coexist on a daily basis, next to the often-overlooked non-human being - animals, plants, and fungi. One of them is the world of insects - so far ignored in the discourse of the humanities, and so important in the Anthropocene epoch, when inter-species relations and dependencies co-create this world. My research project aims to understand the multispecies relationships occurring on the human and bees. Insects are theories that have recently appeared in the discourse of human-animal studies. The problem of insects in the discourse of 'multispecies ethnography' is open to research and socio-cultural interpretations. Until now, the privileged place was occupied by mammals (cats, dogs, horses, wolves) and reptiles (snakes). The discourse of environmental anthropology lacks research in the field of 'ethnography of global connections' in the context of 'connections between humans and nonhumans', especially insects. My research project is the answer to this research gap. Recognizing bees as good to live with actors, I will try to develop a model that shows the future of cultural heritage - tree-beekeeping in the context of environmental anthropology and the relationship between humans and bees. Tree-beekeeping has strong connections with the environment, therefore it should not be considered in isolation from it. Bees are one of the many patches of this environmental reality.

Biography

Shoshannah Ganz is an anthropologist and an ethnologist. Ph.D. Candidate at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. I prepare a doctorate thesis about 'People and bees. Protection of cultural heritage and multispecies relations in terms of anthropological research on tree-beekeeping'. My research interest is about environmental anthropology in especially multispecies relations, ethnography of global connections, more than human approach, human-animal studies, tree-beekeeping, beekeeping in the cultural anthropology context. I'm also interested in cultural Tangible, Intangible, and Natural Heritage. Tree-beekeeping and beekeeping traditions, crafts, beliefs and values, folk crafts, folk-art. In urban anthropology, I'm interested in urban beekeepers and their bees as a form of protection of the Urban Natural Heritage.

Contact: karolina.e84@gmail.com

Becoming Other: The Stories of Cows in Canadian and Japanese Literature

Shoshannah Ganz

Abstract

This paper takes a multicultural and comparative approach to the topic of multispecies storytelling focussing particularly on Canadian and Japanese literary works. The paper is critically informed by the work of Carol J. Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990; 2015 edition) and Jean O'Malley Halley's *The Parallel Lives of Women and Cows: Meat Markets* (2012) extending their arguments to suggest that feminist eco-critical approaches fall short of seeing, hearing, and telling the unique stories and suffering of cows in part by still upholding the human/animal binary by way of comparison. While women may identify and be identified across specie borders as cows or cattle and share a perspective that includes the experience of oppression and suffering, this vision must move beyond the human experience of identification to embrace a possibility of becoming other. I will suggest how two authors, one male and Canadian and one female and Japanese, attempt to pass through the permeable species border through acts that include activism, humour, a philosophy of the absurd, and madness. The exploration of violence through the slaughterhouse and through the slaughter of cattle in Japan after 9/11 is a moment of rupture through which it is possible to build a trans-specie ethic of personhood. Robert Moore's *Figuring Ground* (2009) and Kimura Yūsuke's *Sacred Cesium Ground* (2016; translated 2019) are a Canadian work and a Japanese work, respectively, that allow for the movement from the historical capitalist preoccupation with cattle as commodity to an understanding of cows as part of a trans-specie community.

Biography

Shoshannah Ganz is an associate professor of Canadian literature at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University, in Newfoundland, Canada. In 2008 she co-edited a collection of essays with University of Ottawa Press on the poet Al Purdy. In 2017 she published *Eastern Encounters: Canadian Women's Writing about the East, 1867-1929* with National Taiwan University Press. Shoshannah just completed a manuscript entitled *Now I Am Become Death: Industry and Disease in Canadian and Japanese Literature*. This book is currently under review with Temple University Press.

Contact: shganz@grenfell.mun.ca

More-Than-Human Methodologies in Ethnography of Precarity in Delhi

Sneha Gutgutia

Abstract

The urban is inextricably woven in human-nonhuman animal relations (Hovorka, 2008). In developing economies, non-human animals, especially livestock, play a fundamental role as sources of food, as assets, by providing income and employment security, for recreation and are elemental in fulfilment of sociocultural values (Hovorka, 2008). However, more-than-human actors remain largely invisible in academic scholarships in urban studies, and partly so because their inclusion in the truest sense is rather difficult given the ethical and methodological complexities.

This paper will look into some of such methodologies employed as well as the ethical dilemmas faced in researching with the more-than-human in an ethnographic study on precarity in informal settlements in urban India. The study is based on work done in informal settlements in Delhi, where non-human animals, such as pigs, goats and chicken, ubiquitously co-exist alongside the human.

What was methodologically important and integral to the study, was that most of the data collection took place at the informal settlements itself while accompanying the rearers as they fed their livestock on the streets, near jhuggis or huts, open drains, on wastelands, garbage mounds and other dumping or derelict sites. During these interactions, the researcher would engage in in-depth interviews by way of informal conversations, interact with non-human animals and observe their activity via written field notes, photography and videography. As a participant observer as well, the researcher became a part of porcine, caprine and avian lifeworlds unfolding in these settlements that are often made obscure in humanist narratives.

Biography

Sneha Gutgutia is a PhD scholar at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, India. As a member of the ERC Horizon 2020 Urban Ecologies project, her research rethinks urban marginality through human-animal relations in informal settlements in Indian cities.

Contact: gsneha04@gmail.com

Living with Microbes: Stories of Intimate Relations on an Invisible Register

Maya Hey

Abstract

What does it mean to be a human-animal and be constituted by non-human others? While embodying other species can pose salient concerns about more-than-human ethics (Singer, 1975), I gesture towards microorganisms because they are ubiquitous and permeate our everyday lives. Microbes – like bacteria, moulds, and yeasts – line the surfaces of bodies, tools, and terrains, affecting a diverse range of sectors and policies. Our relationship to microbes has been one of historical dependency, ‘discovered’ in the context of disease and decay (Latour, 1988), which perpetuated a narrative of control and instrumentalization (Dupuis, 2016). Today, we continue to use their life cycles as a form of labour that remains deliberately hidden or invisible due to their microscopic size, (e.g. microbial derivatives exist in everyday consumer products like shampoos or common medications like insulin). We tend to characterize microbes as helpful or harmful, probiotic or pathogenic, with us or against us, but, as others have noted, microbes connect us in intimate ways even when humans may not regularly think on this fact (Fishel, 2016; Tsing, 2015; Heldke, 2018). In other words, microbes make us-humans an already entangled case of interspecies coexistence which, if probed further, could point to a way of thinking through other entanglements with other species. I call upon a combination of perspectives – STS, feminist thought, and multispecies studies – to challenge anthropocentric narratives about the human-microbe relationship. I argue that we must approach the human-microbe relationship as a form of spacemaking for one another, decentring normative loci of power to share spaces and cultivate places worth living.

Biography

Maya Hey is a Vanier Scholar (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Government of Canada) and PhD Candidate (ABD) in the Department of Communication Studies at Concordia University, Canada.

Contact: maya.hey@mail.concordia.ca

How To Become: An Embodied Perspective Of Animal Commodification

Jes Hooper and Harrie Liveart

Abstract

By presenting a poorly known mammal, the civet (family Viverridae), as the protagonist of this performance-video, we explore the shared heritage held between humans and animals within global commodity chains. Specifically we investigate Kopi Luwak, the world's most expensive coffee, traditionally produced from the excrement of civets. With the rise of capitalism, civets' relationships to humans have been transformed from one of fleeting local encounters to being an exploited other, as commodifiable goods and cultural symbols. Increasingly confined for industrialized kopi luwak production and tourism, civets find themselves ensnared within a politically and economically driven world of human-civet domination.

As an interdisciplinary collaboration between anthrozoologists and visual artists, we seek to problematize the commodification of wild animals and their 'products'. This thought provoking video-performance explores the concept of 'becoming with' another species by instrumentalizing our own human bodies. As we experience the process of faecal commodification we attempt to create a new form of storytelling where the animals' perspectives are observed through our shared biological processes. On the one hand, explicitly addressing these concerns brings possibilities of positive social change for multi-species coexistence. On the other, our chosen method of multispecies storytelling brings about the need for further ethical consideration. As we strive to understand animal agency, we must also address the possibilities for the unintended emergence of new forms of exploitation and bodily control.

Biographies

Jes Hooper is an Anthrozoology PhD student at the University of Exeter, UK and a member of the Exeter Anthrozoology as Symbiotic Ethics (EASE) research group. Jes' research interests include animal biographies, multi-species storytelling, human-wildlife conflict and animal ethics. Jes' PhD project *Civets in Society: What Can the Civet Teach us about Trans-Species Relationships in the Anthropocene?* (working title) is a multi-species ethnography of kopi luwak consumerism and tourism, civet pet keeping and zoo management. Residing in Lewes, East Sussex, Jes lectures on the Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare and Applied Animal Behaviour and Conservation BSc programs at Plumpton College, UK.

Contact: jh1220@exeter.ac.uk

The duo **Harrie Liveart** is a long term collaboration between the visual artists Saija Kassinen and Meri Linna. Their work utilizes several aspects from multiple areas of the visual arts such as video, sound, installations, sculpture and performance art. Both duo members hold a master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Arts Helsinki, Academy of Fine Arts. They reside in Helsinki and in the town of Tammisaari, Finland. Currently their artistic research is supported both through a three year working grant by the KONE foundation and a three year residency grant from Pro Artibus Foundation in Finland. The artistic research *Collective Perversion – Proposal for Revaluation* investigates the usage of freshwater and its societal implications through the perspective of the toilet bowl. Their projects branch from local perspectives to global implications. Raising questions regarding prevailing attitudes towards bodily processes, historical and cultural behavior and the importance of multi-species entanglements within our bodies and ecosystems as a whole.

Contact: ms.liveart@gmail.com

Visiting Octopus: Seeing Through Glass Clearly

Ute Hörner and **Mathias Antlfinger**

Abstract

'Why look at Animals?' John Berger asked in his famous essay from 1977, in which he analysed the estrangement of humans and animals in the culture of capitalism. His criticism of the zoo as a place in which non-human animals are reduced to exhibition objects is still read and shared today. Interestingly, aquariums were, for a long time, exempt from this criticism. Even the early aquarists criticised zoos as prisons, but were at the same time convinced that the aquarium was something completely different – namely a part of the sea.

Glass and its illusionistic characteristics play a central role in the power of this narrative: "In that the glassy medium presents a sectional cut through the water space, in stead of a view from above, it created an an 'eye-to-eye' perspective, 'where a human observer sees marine life from within – that is, as if he were underwater with the creatures depicted, and therefore watching them at their own level'."

In our work 'Visiting Octopus' we enter into contact with individual octopuses that live in strange and often very limited environments. In the sense of a multispecies ethnography we chronicle two interwoven narratives. Firstly, our own perception of the situation: the different actors, such as, for example, the glass mentioned before, the architecture, the behaviour of the visitors. Secondly we attempt a change of perspective, by seeing the world through the eyes of the octopus. For this we experiment with methods of obtaining insight that create a connectedness; in particular we work with mental techniques of empathy such as those used by animal communicators and shamans.

Biographies

Ute Hörner and **Mathias Antlfinger** have been Professors of 'Transmedial Spaces/Media Art' at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Germany, since 2009. Their installations, videos and sculptures deal with the relationship between humans, animals and machines and provide both: critical perspectives on changeable social constructs as well as utopian visions of fair terms of interaction between these parties. Together with the grey parrots Clara and Karl they have carried out the interspecies collaboration CMUK since 2014. Their works have been shown at international exhibitions and festivals including, CCA Tbilisi, ZKM Karlsruhe, Shedhalle Zuerich, NMFA Taiwan, Ars Electronica Linz, Werkleitz Biennale Halle, Museum Ludwig Cologne, KAC Istanbul, Transmediale Berlin. They have presentend at numerous conferences and symposia on both human-animal studies and art. Since 2016 they are members of the Minding Animals Network.

Contact: info@hoernerantlfinger.de

Storying Extinction: Responding to the Loss of North Idaho's Mountain Caribou

Jack Kredell and Christopher Lamb

Abstract

Storying Extinction is an ethnographic response to the recent extirpation of Idaho mountain caribou. This project will compose a spatial narrative, via an interactive deep-map, with the intent of exposing what Thom Van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose refer to as “the countless interwoven ēthea [styles or ways of life] that together comprise the foundation of our [shared] world” (2017: 263). It is grounded in a shared conviction with Van Dooren and Rose that storytelling is an ethical practice and that the “stories we tell are powerful contributors to the becoming of our shared world” (264). And it takes the moment of extirpation as a point of departure, as a ‘fissure’, or a ‘gesture’ from the world that calls on our response-ability. Our deep map will represent the interaction of human and more than human communities through geo-located oral histories of encounters with caribou in the wild, game camera footage of species currently inhabiting former caribou habitat, and historical documents about caribou existence in the southern Selkirks. Beyond a postmortem analysis of the causes of extinction, this project is an investigation into the ways in which caribou extinction is storied or narrated by local human communities, and an exploration of what these stories reveal, explicitly and implicitly, about the relationships and attitudes between human communities and caribou (non)existence in the inland northwest.

Biographies

Jack Kredell and **Christopher Lamb** are MA students in English at the University of Idaho, USA, where they focus on studies of literature and the environment, environmental humanities, and spatial humanities. They are Fellows at the University of Idaho's Center for Digital Inquiry and Learning and partners with the University of Idaho's Confluence Lab—an interdisciplinary environmental research lab.

Contact: jkredell@uidaho.edu
clamb@uidaho.edu

Guarding Crops from Monkey Troops: Farmer-Monkey Interaction near a Nature Reserve in Guangxi, China.

Wenxiu Li and Erica von Essen

Abstract

Crop damage by wildlife can cause significant economic loss and non-human primates can be a particular nuisance to farmers following their ingenuity in crop-raiding strategies. There is an emerging research interest on interspecies interaction in human-wildlife conflicts, following the growing field of merging human-animal barrier, at least analytically. We collected qualitative data from two villages experiencing macaque crop damage near a national nature reserve in Guangxi, China, in order to understand how human and macaques interact in a crop damage scenario and how the interaction evolves in time. We find the mutually interactive processes taken place between farmers and monkeys as they try to learn and adjust to the counterparts' daily activities and raiding/guarding strategies. Their interaction is also mediated by materiality: the crops, the topography of the landscapes and managerial tools. In recent years, socioecological changes such as afforestation, hunting bans and out migration have enabled macaques to grow their population and more boldly pursue for their preference of crops. Our finding reveals the role of non-human animal agency, conservation and other social processes in shaping human-wildlife relations, as well as the potential of using more-than-human perspective and ethnographic methods in understanding human-wildlife relations. It further implies the need of enhancing farmers' knowing & adjustment, as well as encouraging human-wildlife cohabitation.

Biographies

Wenxiu Li is a master student from the Rural Development and Natural Resource Management program at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden, with an interest in wildlife management.

Contact: wuli0001@stud.slu.se

Erica von Essen is a researcher with the Environmental Communication division at the Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden. She conducts empirical and theoretical research on human-animal relations.

Contact: erica.von.essen@slu.se

Resisting Invisibility: A Virtual Guided Tour from the Perspective of Eight Cows

EvaMarie Lindahl

Abstract

For this conference, I would like to suggest a presentation in the form of a virtual guided museum tour. The purpose of my proposal is to bring eight of the portrayed cows at Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK) in Copenhagen, Denmark into focus, as well as pushing them into the archives through letter writing, trying to make sure of their position in art history and importance for the Danish landscape and the painter Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818-1848).

The landscapes of Lundbye are often inhabited by cows. He paints romantic landscapes of his childhood area where cows roam the grassy hills under blue skies. In his sketchbooks his fascination for and experience of cows can be seen, they are individuals, with temper and traits. In the exhibition Danish and Nordic Art 1750-1900 at SMK the painting 'Zealand Landscape. Open Country in North Zealand' holds a prominent place on one of the walls. The painting inhabits eight cows and even though they are fully visible in the museum they are simultaneously made invisible since none of them are mentioned in the digital archives of the museum.

The presentation will therefore be an imagined resistance where the landscapes of Lundbye will be described from the perspective of the cows. After the conference a letter with the text of the performance will be sent to the museum, and since SMK is a state museum, the letter, and the cows, will be archived.

Biography

EvaMarie Lindahl is a Swedish artist and PhD student. Her research project 'Re-Framing the Non-Human Animal in Art Production' is practice based within the field of Critical Animal Studies and part of the Centre for Human Animal Studies at Edge Hill University, UK. Lindahl works with extensive drawing projects as well as with written and performed text. Her works focus on the position and use of animals within the system of art. In 2008 Lindahl earned her Master of Fine Arts at Malmö Art Academy, Sweden.

Lindahl was born 1976 in Viken, Sweden. She is represented by Stene Projects Gallery in Stockholm, Sweden. Recent selected solo shows and projects include: 'Isaac van Amburgh and his Animals', at Stene Projects Gallery, 'How do You See?' at Malmö Museum, 'About the Blank Pages' together with Ditte Ejlerskov. Recent group exhibitions include: Lunds Konsthall, Bonniers Konsthall, Kristianstad Konsthall, Bora's Museum of Modern Art. Lindahl is represented by several private and public collections, and is also frequently engaged as an educator.

For more information please visit www.evamarielindahl.com

Contact: evamarie@evamarielindahl.com

Surviving Together: Changing Dynamics of Interspecies Relationships in India

Swatilekha Maity

Abstract

Multi-species relationships in contemporary urban life have been nuanced with a plethora of varied emotional and cultural reactions, ranging from compassion to disgust. In the history of medical science and cultural narratives, pandemics shared a crucial part in human-animal relationships. In my paper, I would like to analyse how interspecies relationships have been shaped amidst the recent outbreaks of COVID, entangling a web of interrelated issues like class dynamics, abruptly declared announcements and human-animal bond. COVID and its consequences play an important part in a diverse way in human-animal bonding. From re-emphasizing the irrational fear in human minds towards the 'other' to rekindling the camaraderie of human beings, the face of urban India in the times of COVID pandemic, has been a potent medium, which effectively articulates the complex relationship between us and our fellow companion beings. The months long lockdown in India has thrown into the relief a range of critical factors in animal-human relationship, the notion of ownership, the compassion as well as indifference or cruelty towards street animals and the question of surviving together. Based on the apparently separate incidents as depicted in recent news media, and the experiences of care takers of community animals, feeders, I would like to explore, why these incidents function as a crucial pointer in the discourse of critical animal studies, as in a way, by exercising the notion of 'crossing-over' across species, they contribute to the history of interspecies dialogue in socio-cultural dynamics of Indian subcontinent.

Biography

Swatilekha Maity has done her B.A and M.A in English from the University of Calcutta, India and completed her M.Phil. in English from Jadavpur University, India. Currently she is a PhD candidate in the Department of English, Jadavpur University, India. Her areas of interest include travel writing, Nineteenth Century, the practice of ethics in animal rights, human-animal coexistence in urban landscape and the expressions of human violence in cultural life.

Contact: maityswatilekha@gmail.com

Multispecies Heritage in Deerubbin / The Hawkesbury Estuary: Following Lines of Oyster-Shells

Nicole Matthews

Abstract

This paper traces some of the ways that multispecies heritage emerges and dissolves in interactions between Sydney rock and Pacific oysters, their viruses, parasites and predators, the settler colonists and the Dharug, Darkinjung and Guringai peoples on Deerubbin/the Hawkesbury River on the northern fringes of Sydney. It will follow the movement of oysters and oyster shells from valued commodity to waste and back again. It considers the movement and moorings of oysters, their spat, shells and lime within and beyond the estuarine environments of Deerubbin, including their presence and celebration in museums and tourist destinations. How might the meaning of oyster heritage shift when, under pressure from globe-circling viruses, aquaculture involves lab-grown sterile triploid oysters floating in baskets above the near-forgotten ruins of pre-colonial oyster-reefs?

Drawing on O’Gorman and Gaynor’s recent work on more-than-human histories, the paper will consider as multispecies heritage objects the valuable, ruined, abandoned and repurposed infrastructures of oyster culture. Its argument will be made, in part, through photographs of Deerubbin, taken from water-level. These pictures will both document and enact some of the ways that communities of humans, molluscs and water-birds have visited, used and valued landscapes shaped by these multispecies encounters.

Biography

Nicole Matthews teaches and researches at Macquarie University in Sydney, in Dharug country. For the past seven years she has written and illustrated a photoblog and multispecies ethnography of Deerubbin, berowrabackyard.com. In 2014 she co-edited a special issue of *Australian Humanities Review* on the theme ‘Nature Strikes Back’ and she in 2020 she published, with Dr Jane Simon, ‘The Wilderness Diary: Sentimental Attachments, Gender, and the Domestication of Environmental Politics in Australian Landscape Photography of the 1980s and 1990s’ in *Feminist Media Histories*. She also publishes within around disability, auto/biography and education.

Contact: nicole.matthews@mq.edu.au

**Zoospeak:
A Poetry Reading**

Gordon Meade

Abstract

I shall read from my most recent collection of poems, *Zoospeak*, a collaboration between myself and the Canadian photographer and animal activist, Jo-Anne McArthur, which uses poetry and photography to examine the experiences of animals in captivity throughout the world in zoos, aquariums, fur farms, and breeding facilities.

Biography

Gordon Meade is a Scottish poet based in the East Neuk of Fife. He has published ten collections of poems including, *Les Animots : A Human Bestiary* (2015) and *Zoospeak* (2020). In the past, he has been the Creative Writing Fellow at the Duncan of Jordanstone School of Art, and the Royal Literary Fellow at the University of Dundee. He has read from his work throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg.

Contact: egordonmeade1@btinternet.com

Senses of Place:

More-Than-Human Topographies of Mexican Ecovillages

Olea Morris

Abstract

Multispecies approaches help attune us to the complex ways that humans, and human plans, are entangled in relationships with other-than-human beings and their social worlds. A key question of multispecies research has been how to develop an etic perspective of nonhuman life, in order to better understand how interspecies relationships are formed, maintained, and dissolved. However, rejecting anthropocentric framings of nonhuman lives has proved challenging, in that our means to understand nonhuman forms of expression and behaviour is limited. Narrating these entanglements makes it necessary to adopt new forms of storytelling; specifically, modes of representation that capture the emergent, relational dynamic that comprises human-nonhuman communities.

In order to address these methodological challenges, I bring a multispecies perspective to examining practices of 'place-making' in communities that endeavour to live more 'sustainably', asking how understandings of place become rooted in and hinge on nonhuman lives and networks of relationships. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in 'ecovillage' communities in Mexico, I examine how each community envisioned harmonious socioecological systems through key multispecies relationships. In particular, I discuss the results of two 'multi-species map-making workshops' and subsequent focus groups, highlighting the diverse ways that human ecovillage residents conceptualize community landscapes through the lives of more-than-human actors. After exploring the ways that these mapped understandings correspond, overlap, and diverge from one another, I conclude by discussing the methodological and narrative implications of collaborative 'multispecies topographies,' asking how they might reveal underlying assumptions about nonhuman lives.

Biography

Olea Morris is a PhD candidate in the department of Environmental Sciences and Policy at Central European University. Her current dissertation research, focusing on ecovillage communities and regenerative agriculture in Mexico, is based in environmental anthropology and multispecies ethnographic approaches. Olea is currently based in Berlin.

Contact: Morris_Olea@phd.ceu.edu

Cape Town, Coasts, and Capital: Ethical Monstrosities in More-Than-Human Literature?

Megan Pay

Abstract

I show how Mike Nicols and Joanne Hichens' crime fiction novel *Cape Greed* evinces my critical concept of *folkloric monstrosity* to destabilise deep-set and shallowly critiqued perceptions of morality and ethics about the illicit abalone trade between South Africa and China. Danielle Sands writes about the monstrosity of more-than-human literature, observing that, "This inhuman cannot be conceptualised or domesticated; it forces the texts to remain open and invites us to refigure the human relationship with its own strangeness and with the needs and desires of nonhuman strangers" (2019: 59). I contend that through an ethical analysis of both human and more-than-human relationships in texts it is possible to develop a framework of ethical monstrosity, three dimensions of which I highlight as *extra-human*, *tentacular* and *folkloric monstrosity*.

What I call the folkloric dimension of ethical monstrosity is the theoretical component that connects conceptual and imaginative understandings of more-than-human ethics (as monstrous) to actual everyday processes of ethical reasoning and, thus, to real-life decision-making. This familiar feature of storytelling is recognisable to people, whether in the form of books, ghost stories, films, or games etc. *Folkloric ethics* typically contain within them a cautionary tale, warning, or moral lesson that is delivered through the presence of monstrosity in relatable guises. This concept evolves David McNally's *witchcraft stories* for multispecies ethics in the context of liminal coastal literatures in South Africa (see *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, 2011). *Cape Greed* uses the *noir* genre and a triumvirate of characters for whom abalone are monstrous connective tissue. I argue that the novel provides a lens through which one can read the impacts of globalising capitalism on multispecies ethics and spatiality in ways that disturb received anthropocentric conventions.

Biography

Megan Pay is a second-year PhD student at the University of East Anglia, UK. Her research focuses primarily on more-than-human phenomenology and ethics in Southern African literatures through critical lenses of monstrosity.

Contact: m.pay@uea.ac.uk

Water in Distress

J. Bernardo P. Couto Soares and Amalia Calderón

Abstract

The Capitalocene (Haraway, 2016) shapes the interdependent relations between human beings and other species, where global capitalism is translated within Eurocentric networks of biocapital. These material relocations and reshaping of ecosystems can be described as blasted landscapes (Tsing, 2015) and ecologies that have been violently disturbed, sometimes into states of ruin but also defiance, as the matsutake mushrooms growth in Hiroshima after WWII (Tsing, 2015). The precedent of the Te Awa Tupua river (Hutchison, 2014), as a successful case of legal emancipation of a body of water from human governance, ratifies the validity of water as their own subject. It also emphasizes the simultaneous interdependence and lack of understanding between species as a point of conflict but also of potentiality.

Our research's methodology develops a relation with water that is based on the bodily imaginary of communality (as beings of 80% water), and an acknowledgement of the subjectivity of the North Sea as a multispecies landscape instead of an object for capitalization (Neimanis, 2017: 28). We consider language as a multisensory and multimodal semiotic practice that includes a dynamic relation with objects/subjects and space (Pennycook, 2018). Through water sounds recordings, drawings and a poetic use of phonetics and language, we create "speculative water poems" (Beautrais, 2017). Water voices become long silences, mellow lullabies, and cacophonies that preclude the distress of endangered ecosystems.

The >>*waterlanguage* project works as a medium to transgress our human-consciousness limitations in both listening and interacting with the rich underwater soundscape. Here, storytelling (Haraway, 2016) becomes a political method with which to consider different realities; a generative space of material engagement; and effort into a proximity to another being, with the prospect of developing a relationship of care (Puig de la Bellacasa: 2012) and critical embassy functions. We aim to explore the interdependency of hidden waterscape worlds, in order to reshape the meaning of their materiality. The emancipation of the North Sea is not only a valid claim within posthuman rights, but an empirical need in times of planetary crisis, in which the water must also become a storyteller to their own agency.

Biographies

J. Bernardo P. Couto Soares is a veterinary doctor graduate and medical anthropology graduate student at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In the previous year, he followed the MSc in Sociology (Gender, Sexuality and Culture track) in the same institution, in which he developed a research project on speculative ethics of care in the relation between pet animals, owners, and veterinary doctors. Within the master's in medical anthropology, he will explore psycho-pathologisation and medicalization of anxiety in humans and dogs.

Additionally, he is a board member of LOVA (Dutch Feminist Anthropology Network) and has co-designed the University of Amsterdam bachelor course 'Posthumans in the Anthropocene' and is co-organising the 'Posthuman Futures: Art & Literature' 2-days symposium, in a collaboration between the Netherlands Institute of Cultural Analysis and the Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies.

His research focuses on ecofeminism, animal studies, science studies, and feminist new materialism, from which topics of research include speculative ethics of care, posthuman linguistics, biomedical knowledge production and biopolitics.

Contact: JBernardoSoares@gmail.com

Amalia Calderón is a poet, artistic researcher and archivist. She graduated Law & Sociology, studied a MSc Sociology at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and is currently a research masters student for Artistic Research at the same institution. Calderón has co-designed the University of Amsterdam bachelor course 'Posthumans in the Anthropocene', for which she is also student assistant. She is the creator and co-organizer of the 2021 symposium 'Posthuman Futures: Art & Literature', co-sponsored by NICA and OSL. Calderón currently works at the If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution archives. Her research focuses on feminist/non-human epistemologies, sex and mental health narratives, archival silence and the spatial justice.

Contact: amaliamorcalderon@gmail.com