



University of
Nottingham

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Animal Geography Research Workshop

With Professor Hayden Lorimer, University of Glasgow

Wednesday 4 July, 8.45am-6pm

The Hemsley, University Park, University of Nottingham

Free. Booking required.



To book, please email:

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**Animal Geography Research Workshop
University of Nottingham 4th July 2018**

8.45: Introduction (Robert Hearn and Charles Watkins)

9.00: Kieran O'Mahony (Cardiff) *Upturned places- material and temporal change in (re)introduced swinescapes*

The reintroduction of keystone or extirpated species is a common conservation tool and is a key part of debates around rewilding. Such practices, often actively carried out with an ecological or moral imperative in mind, reconfigure old and cultivate new multispecies relations. The significance of these changes can be witnessed in the complex material politics that often surround feral and unsanctioned *wild*-life. Using the case of *feral* wild boar in the British countryside, this paper looks at the ways in which the multiple meanings and practices that co-constitute place can be unsettled by the returning presence of uncanny neighbours. In (re)establishing their own topological understandings of place, wild boar might move between forest and human settlement, challenging spatial and ontological borders between nature-culture. In so doing, their rooting and snuffling bodies leave dramatic material traces and introduce new possibilities of encounter. However, the form and understanding of these depends upon the different bodily capacities, mobilities, and temporalities of forest lives. Paying attention to the material and temporal politics of unofficially *wild*-lives is particularly important at a time when we are re-evaluating more broadly how we should understand human-nonhuman relations.

9.20: Chris Wilbert (Ruskin Anglia) *Trading spaces: habitats, stories and places of concern about nightingales, people, and other animals*

In this paper I outline how the role of nightingales has been foregrounded to stop a housing development in Kent, England. I use this to then enter in to a discussion of 'storied places' suggested by Thom van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose. For them, places are co-constituted in processes of overlapping and entangled "storying" that points to the significance of narrative in the meaning-making that connects the lives of living beings to the worlds they inhabit. As such, they tentatively seek to develop a multispecies approach to story-places. This approach and some of its many difficulties are discussed and other ethno-ethological approaches that invoke multispecies narrative are also put in the mix and their potentials discussed in relation to animals such as these migrating nightingales.

9.40: Ben Garlick (York, St John) *Deceptive landscapes: negotiating proximity between humans and ospreys in twentieth-century Speyside, Scotland*

Scotland, Speyside. July, 1962. A man sits in a small pine hut. Eyes flit between a copy of the bible and a fixed pair of large binoculars. They funnel his gaze towards a pair of ospreys, busy on the nest some 150m away. A few years before, they returned to Scotland after 40 years of breeding absence. In terms of his man's attentions, it remains ambiguous as to which subject is studied with more care.

This paper is about the practices, materials and landscapes of ornithological knowledge in the twentieth century. It draws from a canon of geographical work emphasizing the active materiality of surroundings in matters of perception (Wylie, 2006; Anderson and Wylie, 2009); alongside more speculative, philosophical engagements seeking to expand the agential capacities of nonhumans in the creation of place (Johnson, 2008; Lorimer, 2010; Despret and Meuret, 2016; van Patter and Hovorka, 2017). I focus on the use of the bird hide on Speyside, with a view to guarding and documenting, the lives of ospreys from 1956 onwards. I argue that hides work to produce a *deceptive* version of landscape. Attention to hides offers a means to draw back the conceptual 'curtain' (c.f. Berger & Mohr, 2016: 19) obscuring the lively relations of humans *and* birds dwelling in negotiated proximity. As John Berger notes, we too often forget animals' capacities to observe *us* (1980). I seek to offer a less deceptive account of ornithological

landscapes, attentive to the active negotiations of perception and proximity in more-than-human terms.

10.00: Discussions

10.20-10.40: Coffee Break

10.40: Gemma Edwards (Nottingham) *Muck, Cattle and Pigs: Iconographies of the Farm Animal on the UK Stage*

This paper analyses representations of the English rural on the contemporary UK stage through a focus on the uses of livestock, looking in detail at two recent performance texts - Richard Bean's *Harvest* (2005) and Bea Roberts' *And Then Come the Nightjars* (2014) - where the animal functions as pet, companion and work machine. In order to do so, I transpose insights from animal philosophy (Berger, 1979) and animal geography (Philo and Wilbert, 2000; Holloway and Bear, 2014) into theatre studies to enable the analysis of the animal's changing place in the rural landscapes being represented on stage. Through this blended analytical framework, this paper seeks to recalibrate the existing urban-centric focus on the domestic animal in these disciplines by turning to theatrical representations of the farm animal in rural spaces. By attending to the multiple theatrical functions of farm animals in Bean and Roberts' plays, this paper will argue that the farm animal can be used as an index for reading alternative (often anti-romantic) rural imaginaries into the landscape - which in turn serve to complicate and subvert theatre's dominant representation of the English rural as a timelessly green and pleasant land.

11.00: Lewis Holloway (Hull) *Becoming bovine and human in the histories and spaces of dairy technologies: milking systems and remaking animal and human subjectivities*

This paper explores the recent emergence of automatic milking systems (AMS) in relation to a longer history of milking technologies in the UK and elsewhere. The mechanisation of milking was and is associated with sets of hopes and anxieties which permeated the transition from hand to increasingly automated forms of milking. This transition has affected the relationships between humans and cows on dairy farms, producing different modes of cow and human agency and subjectivity, as well as different micro-geographical on-farm relationships. The paper, drawing on empirical evidence from a research project exploring AMS use in contemporary farms, examines how ongoing debates about the benefits (or otherwise) of AMS relate to longer-term discursive currents surrounding the emergence over many decades of milking technologies and their implications for efficient farming and the human and bovine experience of milk production. It discusses how technological change is in part based on understandings of people and cows, at the same time as bovine and human agency and subjectivity are entrained and reconfigured in relation to emerging milking technologies, so that what it is to be a cow or human becomes different as technologies and farm micro-geographies change. The paper illustrates how this results from, and in, competing ways of understanding cows: as active agents, as contributing to technological design, as 'free', as 'responsible', as requiring surveillance and discipline, and as efficient co-producers, with milking technologies, of milk.

11.20: Richard Helliwell (Nottingham), Carol Morris (Nottingham), Sujatha Raman (Nottingham) *Agricultural decision-making practices over animal life and death: Dairy cows, disease and antimicrobial resistance*

Rising incidences of antimicrobial resistant infections, due to increasing resilience of bacterial life to the curative action of antibiotics, is situated as posing considerable threats to the status quo of human and animal health provision. In the context of agriculture, this threat is expected to challenge the efficacy of antibiotics and thus their ongoing use for treating animal disease. This raises the important question of how antimicrobial resistance (AMR) might be a catalyst for modifying on-farm human-non-human relationalities, presently and in the future.

We draw upon the concept of heterogeneous biosocial collectivities to examine the ways in which intentional human and non-human groupings co-construct animal (ill)health, antibiotic use

and the knowledge-practices of diagnosis, treatment and management. Through our focus on AMR, we aim to advance this concept through shifting the analytical focus from that of examining the role of emerging technologies in modifying existing relations, to that of an emergent biosocial phenomenon.

Our paper is structured as follows. Firstly, we examine the everyday knowledge-practices of dairy cow health and disease management attending to the roles of animal agency, farm infrastructures and antibiotics, to gain insight in how they co-construct certain experiences of disease and AMR infections. In the process we draw attention to the considerable difficulty in making microbes, and specifically resistant microbes, directly visible at the site of diseased animal bodies. Consequently, direct experience of AMR is highly uncertain and currently is limited. However, this is not to say that AMR is absent in modifying on farm animal-human relations. Secondly, we attend to different interventions, resulting from AMR concerns at the national scale and within human healthcare settings that are impacting on farm-level animal-human relations, most notably pressure through supply chains to reduce antibiotic use in absolute quantities, irrespective of animal health needs. In light of these developments and their potential impact on farm-level collectivities, we further, and more speculatively, examine the possible implications for animal-human relations of two other proposed AMR interventions. The use of rapid diagnostic technologies, and possible managerial interventions in agricultural waste streams and environments. Finally, we reflect on the analytical value of applying the concept of heterogeneous biosocial collectivities in the novel context of an emerging biosocial phenomenon as opposed to an already existing technology.

11.40: Discussions

12.00-12.45: Keynote Lecture: Hayden Lorimer (Glasgow) *Resting Places*

In this paper I will consider the place of the dead companion animal, culturally, socially and materially. When a pet dies, there are practical matters to be attend to, the disposal of the animal's body primary among them. There will likely be grief and a period of mourning for its owners. Then there are questions of commemoration to consider, and the public rituals judged appropriate to celebrate a good life lived. There is, of course, a geography to this whole business. It is possible for the dear departed to be laid to rest virtually at an online burial ground. This paper is concerned with the earthly treatment of death at a seaside pet cemetery. Drawing on a local study, I will offer a series of reflections on this land of the afterlife. Death's meanings take shape here through intimate practices and a particular memorial culture. Humans and animals continue to cohabitate. Words are whispered. Silences shared. Vigils kept. Changelings encountered. Coping and unburdening happens. As such, the paper will consider the import of animal death in recalling a symbolic world of thresholds.

13.00-14.30: Lunch Break

14.30: Renelle McGlacken and Pru Hobson-West (Nottingham) *Understanding the UK Animal Research Debate: Publics, Polls and Protests*

The production of medicine and medical knowledge currently relies on the use of non-human animals in laboratory research. Social scientific studies have tended to focus on the intimate entanglements between animal and human bodies in the laboratory. However, our contention is that this domain cannot be fully understand without close attention to the position of *publics*. With public opinion often being evoked as a resource underpinning both support for and resistance to animal research, this paper examines the boundaries of the imagined public and explores whose voices are allowed to participate in the debate. Based on a critical reading of existing literature, we argue for a more nuanced understanding of how publics think about animal research. In doing so, we identify methodological implications for future research on this topic. The paper concludes by outlining a new Wellcome Trust funded project which adopts a more innovative research approach to try and capture the complex sociocultural contexts that inform ethical and techno-scientific judgements involving animals.

14.50: Beth Greenhough (Oxford) and Emma Roe (Southampton) *Caring in cold-blood: Sensing and responding to the needs of aquatic species in the laboratory*

Human capacity to sense and respond to the suffering of non-human animals is key to animal care and welfare. Intuitively these modes of relating seem best suited to interactions between humans and animals who are 'big-like-us', warm-blooded mammals whose moods and faces humans attempt to read as we would those of another human. Jones (2000) and Driessen (2013) have separately considered the challenges of ethical relations to cold-blooded aquatic species, while others caution 'general frameworks for ensuring welfare in other vertebrate animals need to be modified before they can be usefully applied to fish' (Huntingford, Adams et al. 2006, p333).

This paper draws on extracts from interviews with laboratory animal technicians who work with cold-blooded species, describing how they sense and respond to the needs of lobsters, trout, zebrafish and corals, to make three key observations: Firstly, whilst observations of bodies and behaviours predominate in assessments of laboratory mammal welfare, in cold-blooded aquatic species environmental quality serves often as a proxy for species health; secondly regulation for care and use of aquatic and especially invertebrate species is limited; and thirdly, a capacity to learn to be affected, emerging from long periods of co-habitation, seemingly crosses the cold/warm blooded divide (Hayward 2010; Johnston 2015).

15.10: Rich Gorman (Exeter) *Health, Place, and Animals: More-Than-Human Therapeutic Geographies*

Health Geography considers the everyday experiential spatial practices, rhythms, and identities that shape, produce, and affect how, and where, 'health' is known and experienced. Although non-human life is increasingly imbricated in attempts to create 'therapeutic spaces' (Cat Cafés, 'puppy rooms' on campuses, etc.), the health geographies literature has seen little engagement or consideration of the non-human. Animals have instead been subsumed into the broader concept and 'black-box' of 'nature'. In this paper I move to recognise animals as lively and dynamic co-constituents in the co-production of therapeutic geographies.

Drawing on an empirical study of 'Care Farms' and other Animal-Assisted-Therapy practices, I discuss how non-human presence and agency can facilitate a therapeutic engagement with place, and demonstrate how situated encounters and relationships with animals have a generative potential in (re)shaping bodily capacities. However, I am also keen to consider these interactions and relationships from a more-than-human perspective. This involves drawing attention to the often-troubling anthropocentrism in which multispecies therapeutic practices are framed and performed, but also exploring whether such encounters and spaces can be mutually therapeutic.

15.30: Discussions

15.50-16.10: Tea Break

16.10: Jamie Arathoon (Glasgow): *Doing non-visual geographies: the human-assistance-dog relationship*

The human-animal relationship has become an important geographical inquiry since Wolch and Emel (1995) called to bring the animals back into geography, however, there is a large gap in current literature on assistance or working animals, such as assistance dogs. With currently over 360,000 partially sighted and blind people living in the UK, and over 4,800 working guide-dog partnerships (Guide Dogs, 2018) this is of importance to many people. Situated within visual impairment, animal, and non-representational geographies, this project aims to explore the human-assistance-dog relationship within everyday practices, understanding the co-evolution of different bodies, and how assistance-dogs act-in-the-world for human navigation through space. The interspecies intra-actions between human and assistance-dog shows a two-way reciprocal becoming together (Haraway, 2008); a hybrid becoming, a co-mingling of bodies (Thrift, 2008;

Macpherson, 2009). This is explored through an ethnographic approach incorporating interviews, walking interviews, observation and audio-diaries which aim to capture the lively, intimate relations between assistance-dog and human, understanding both human and nonhuman as social agents. This research is currently ongoing and will present initial findings around the human-animal relationship and the co-mingling and co-habitation of human-nonhuman bodies.

16.30: Jacob Bull (Uppsala) *Breeding Varroa Resistance: Cultural Geographies of Honeybee Health*

Media reports and scientific concern have recently engaged with the health of pollinating insects focussing on the western honeybee and so-called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). More recently, however, scientific studies have suggested that pollinator declines are less of a widespread phenomenon and instead are understood as increasingly local, with the specific causes likely to be a combination of many factors and that this complexity is as much 'social' as it is 'biological'. In this paper I contribute to the growing body of work that situates honeybee health in social and cultural contexts, extending this to foreground that the spatially differentiated processes by which the parasite *Varroa destructor* emerges as a threat to honeybees.

16.50: Kate Whiston (Nottingham) *Pigeon Geographies: Aesthetics, Organisation, and Athleticism in British Pigeon Fancying, c.1850-1939*

This paper promotes new ways of thinking about human-bird encounters under domestication, providing the first substantive geographical study of 'pigeon geographies'. It will explore the spaces, practices, and human-pigeon relationships involved in pigeon showing and long-distance pigeon racing in Britain, from the institutionalisation of the two pastimes, in the late-nineteenth century, up until World War Two. Through the exhibition of fancy pigeons, fanciers debated and defined aesthetics, formulating breeding standards and questioning the ways in which pigeons were manipulated – sometimes contentiously – to produce the 'ideal'. Long-distance pigeon racers, on the other hand, sought to understand and hone their birds' athletic abilities, becoming entangled in scientific debate about homing, as well as geographical questions about the conduct and regulation of their sport. Racers were also drawn into *aesthetic* debates, exhibiting their racing birds during the off-season, the show pen becoming a fascinating frontier between showing and racing. This paper will explore how, through the organisation of the spaces and practices that made up the fabric of these pastimes, pigeon showing and long-distance racing reconfigured both humans and their birds, the two becoming closely intertwined through collaborative encounters.

17.10: Matthew Johnson (Nottingham) *The Power of Biology in River Environments*

Organisms living in rivers have adapted to survive, utilise and modify fluvial environments. Invertebrate animals in particular have been shown to disturb the structure of sediment on river beds, stick sediment together with silk and mucous and, to burrow extensively into river banks, all having implications for geomorphological processes. The significance of these biological impacts relative to the work performed by the flow of water are hard to assess. Here, it is argued that framing the interaction of organisms and the environment as *energy transfers* may be an informative way of integrating bio-geomorphological processes into more established knowledge frameworks and assessing the relative significance of animals in comparison to purely physical processes. A proof-of-concept example of the energy expenditure of Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) moving river gravels, tentatively indicates that the role of life in controlling river processes is highly significant and, for much of the year, biological power could be the dominant driving force in shaping river channels.

17.30: Concluding Discussions

18.00: Drinks