Abstracts

**PANEL 1**

Peter Sahlins: ‘Civilizing the Wild: Animals at the Court of Louis XIV’

This paper explores the shifting models of animal spectatorship in the first decade of Louis XIV’s reign (the 1660s). The king’s first iteration of French absolutism, inherited from the Renaissance, involved the staging of combats among wild animals (lions, tigers, bears) and ferocious domesticated ones (mastiffs) in a special amphitheatre built on the grounds of the Vincennes palace.  But when Louis XIV assumed personal rule in 1661, he shifted the model away from the savage and wild (if contained) spectacle of blood sports towards the peaceful display of large aquatic and migratory birds at the menagerie in the gardens of Versailles.   I examine this shift from the “wild” to the “civilized” in the context of Louis XIV’s construction of a new model of political rulership commensurate with the new cultural order of the Classical Age. In this context, I seek to understand and reinterpret the meaning of “the wild” within the “civilizing process,” as described originally by Norbert Elias.  Focusing on the choice, display, and treatment of animals at the court of Louis XIV, I will argue how the civilization of the wild formed part of a broader cultural strategy in the making of absolutism and the classical order.

Adam Pérou Hermans: ‘What is Wild?’

One might encounter a red fox hunting in an alpine meadow, a henhouse, or a city street. Are all these foxes wild? What if the fox shows little fear of humans or is out of its natural range? Just as the loss of wilderness is a critical problem that demands our attention, so too is the loss of the "wildness" of wild animals. My paper addresses a preliminary conceptual issue to addressing this problem, namely, what qualifies as wild? Typically, four characteristics are associated with wildness: autonomy, naturalness, wariness, and distance. None of the four is clearly necessary for being wild, as there are circumstances where an animal loses one of the four and is either still wild or, at the very least, a borderline case of wild. Clearly, then, determining how to preserve wildness requires clarifying what qualifies as wildness in the first place. I suggest that wildness is best thought of as a relationship between a human, an
animal, and an environment.  Where a person encounters an animal, and how much control the person has over the animal and place, jointly determine whether the animal is wild.

**PANEL 2**

Jamie Lorimer and Clemens Driessen: ‘Composing wild cows: Project TaurOs and the practices of back-breeding’

This paper examines the practices of 'back-breeding' and 'de-domestication' in wildlife conservation. These are key techniques in the current enthusiasm for rewilding; create nonhuman forms and processes that approximate valued antecedents. The problematic figure of a singular, objective and pure Nature looms large in this field, and in the prevalent vocabularies that might be deployed for critique. In this paper we avoid these familiar but unhelpful tropes and instead present back-breeding as acts of 'multinatural composition' (Latour, 2010): future-orientated, uncertain and contested entanglements which raise important questions about how we might live well with wildlife, without making recourse to Nature. The case study for this paper is Project TaurOs, a contemporary initiative seeking to back-breed a surrogate for the extinct Aurochs, the wild ancestor of all domestic cattle. This is a multinational, multispecies and multidisciplinary endeavour. It involves collaborations between cattle, geneticists, ethologists, artists, conservationists, butchers, archaeologists, landowners and various publics, to name but a few of the forms of expertise enrolled. This paper interrogates the forms and relations emerging from this project and the generative, deliberative practices through which they proceed. It reflects on the lessons that might be learnt for composing wild ecologies in the Anthropocene.

Clemens Driessen and Jamie Lorimer: ‘In search of the wild cow: the bio- and geo-politics of Nazi back-breeding programmes’

This paper investigates the character and consequences of the animal 'back-breeding' programmes carried out by Lutz and Heinz Heck - two influential German zoologists who ran Berlin and Munich zoos in the run up to WW2. Partly with close connections to and patronage from the National Socialist elite, the Heck brothers sought to resurrect the wild cow (aurochs) and horse (tarpan) by breeding out the degeneration they associated with domestication. These back-bred animals were released to roam the expanding territory of the Third Reich, and figured in propaganda films and newspaper articles legitimating that expansion. Drawing on archive material this paper situates these back-breeding initiatives within the thought and practice of a connected network of contemporaneous scholars seeking or gaining Nazi patronage for research at the interface of geography-zoology-ethology. Concentrating on the bio- and geopolitical dimensions to this endeavour the paper examines fraught and interwoven understandings of wild nature and territories for the wild. Tracing the legacy of these histories in present day back-breeding and rewilding in nature conservation, the paper reflects on persistent and shifting European attitudes towards the wild.

Greg Garrard: ‘Ferality Tales’

According to biologist E.O. Wilson, ‘The greatest enterprise of the mind has always been and always will be the attempted linkage of the sciences and humanities’ (6), a project he calls ‘consilience’. ‘Ferality Tales’ is inspired by Wilson’s hopes, but seeks to show that the various epistemic frameworks of the disciplines can and should collaborate successfully on more equal terms than he envisages. Ferality, the condition of existing in between domestication and wildness, is an ideal test case for consilient research for three reasons: it is a key point of dispute between environmental ethics and animal rights; it is a subject on which scientific perspectives have changed dramatically in recent years; and it has inspired some superb fictions over the course of the 20th and early 21st centuries. As Derrida’s work has prompted us to question the unitary term ‘animal’, however, the paper chooses to focus on feral dogs specifically. The paper attempts to locate feral dogs by *triangulating* from animal studies and ecocriticism; ethology and evolutionary ecology; and literary fiction, using the insights (and perhaps lacunae) of each to produce a multi-faceted, interdisciplinary projection of feral dogs.

Sara Asu Schroer: ‘On “middling beings” and ‘beings of the middle’

This paper explores the companionship between falcons and non-falcons in the practice of hunting with birds of prey. Once a falcon is flying freely it is *ferae naturae* and only if a strong enough bond has been established will it return to the human being and his/her dwellings. In this relationship the ‘wildness’ of falcons is acknowledged, yet it is not ‘wildness’ that has to be overcome or contested. Rather it is ‘wildness’ that the human practitioners strive to get close to and to understand on its own terms. The falcon – non-falcon companionship can hardly be grasped so long as we conceptualise ‘the wild’ and ‘the tame’ (or ‘the domesticated’) as opposites. Rather the becoming of falcons and falconers through the practice bears moments of transformation of beings that resist familiar categories. Here the place of the falcon has a peculiar affinity with the ‘between’. Hunting birds are neither fully ‘tamed’ nor are they fully ‘wild’. They are in-between and could as such be described as liminal beings. Yet as Crapanzano suggests the liminal should not be thought of as something in-between two categories but be grasped itself as ontologically distinct. The place of a  falconry bird hence needs to be thought of not as mediating between already established categories, but rather on its own terms as a ‘being of the middle’ rather then a ‘middling being’.

Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson: ‘Feral Attraction’

In this paper, which derives from the initial stages of an artwork and the consequent writing of a book chapter for the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies*, we explore a particular incident in which a flock of feral sheep, for 30 years resident on a remote mountain in North West Iceland, were finally and with great difficulty herded up in order to conform to the expectations and legal subordination of farmed animals in the country. At the heart of the story is a prevailing and compelling image of a community of domestic animals, which despite climatic inclemency and the seeming impenetrability of this landscape, survived without human care for three decades and indeed showed every sign that they might have continued to live there in perpetuity. As artists we are interested in the animal itself, its representation and transition from a farmed animal to a feral animal and its survival in the wild. In this socially engaged art project we are exploring through mixed media the relationship between the animals and their environment and the impact of the landscape on their survival in shaping their physiology and longevity. In addition we will examine how the context influenced the reading of this controversial and emotive act, both as it was conveyed to the majority of the population, through the press and by those local people who as a part of their lives tolerated and finally excised the rogue herd. Using interviews we conducted with several individuals involved in the roundup, we examine these perspectives, amongst others, to unpack the tensions, contradictions and opportunities in what reflects a broader reappraisal of the ‘proper order’ of our relationship to animals and to environment.

Claire Jean Kim: ‘Imagining “Wild” Species in a Neoliberal Age’

The California Fish and Game Commission has been talking about banning the importation of turtles and frogs for food for more than a decade. Armed with scientific studies, environmental and animal activists have pushed for the ban on the grounds that these animals, who sometimes get released or otherwise find their way into the wild, harm native species of frogs and turtles through predation, competition, and disease. The mostly Chinese merchants who import these animals contest these claims.  Through a textual analysis of public hearings held by the California Fish and Game Commission on this issue from 1996 to 2011, this paper examines the specific discourses through which this official state body understands or imagines the state’s “wild” species. Two discourses are in play.  The first discourse imagines “wild” species as tender “natives” of a pristine, fragile system who must be protected against marauding “invaders.”  The second discourse views “wild” species as “resources” to be managed for shared human use and consumption. Rather than seeing these discourses as representing competing or contradictory impulses, one emphasizing the intrinsic value of “wild” species and the other their instrumental value, this paper argues that they are complementary expressions of neoliberal aspirations and anxieties in an increasingly globalized, marketized world.

Biographies

Clemens Driessen is a philosopher/social scientist researching the lives of animals in a technological culture. He just spent a year at the geography department of King's College London, where he worked together with Jamie Lorimer on a project studying the 'backbreeding' of wild herbivores for use in 'rewilding', a mode of nature conservation which attempts to instil natural processes to (re)produce ecosystems by the introduction of key stone species. Earlier at Wageningen University he researched ethics on the farm and initiated a project with game designers and animal scientists to explore the ambivalent relations between humans and the animals they consume. Together they are attempting to create a playful interactive interface through which intensively farmed pigs can relieve their boredom by playing a computer game with their prospective consumers: [www.playingwithpigs.nl](https://nemo.strath.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=9ed67dda18f944c69173731649bc1202&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.playingwithpigs.nl)  Clemens is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Philosophy Department of Utrecht University, where he works on a project investigating ways to conceive of the moral status and welfare of farmed fish.

Greg Garrard is a National Teaching Fellow, Managing Editor of *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* and Reader in Literature and the Environment at Bath Spa University, where he also directs the Writing and Environment Research Centre. He is the author of *Ecocriticism* (Routledge 2004, 2011) as well as numerous essays on literature and the environment. Having recently edited *Teaching Ecocriticism and Green Cultural Studies* (Palgrave 2011), he is now editing *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, a collection of 32 commissioned essays.

Adam Pérou Hermans is a PhD student in Environmental Studies at the University of Colorado - Boulder. He focuses on Environmental Philosophy and is particularly interested in what makes a wild animal wild. Hermans’ interest in wildness arose from his work as a wildlife filmmaker. He wanted to compose wildlife films with integrity. To Hermans, this meant making films that featured only wild animals. But in filming, Hermans often encountered situations involving borderline wild animals. In fact, these borderline animals were the easiest to film. To address this, Hermans tackled the ‘what is wild’ question both in his filmmaking and in his Masters thesis at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. Hermans’ films span six continents and have been featured in eleven festivals across eight countries. These include: Wild Animals of the Anthropocene series (2011): [http://vimeo.com/album/1715409](https://nemo.strath.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=9ed67dda18f944c69173731649bc1202&URL=http%3a%2f%2fvimeo.com%2falbum%2f1715409)
What is Wild? series (2008): <http://vimeo.com/album/1607948>
A Wedged Tale (2010): [http://vimeo.com/21234260](https://nemo.strath.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=9ed67dda18f944c69173731649bc1202&URL=http%3a%2f%2fvimeo.com%2f21234260)

Claire Jean Kim received her B.A. from Harvard College and her Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University.  She is on the faculty of University of California, Irvine, where she teaches classes on race, social movements, and animal rights in the Departments of Political Science and Asian American Studies.  Her first book, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict* (Yale University Press, 2000), won the Ralph Bunche Award for the best political science work on ethnic and cultural pluralism.  Dr. Kim has been a visiting fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and a residential fellow at the University of California Humanities Research Institute.  She is the recipient of a 2011 grant from the Center for New Racial Studies.  Dr. Kim has written numerous articles on race, multiculturalism, and immigration, as well as recent articles on animal studies.  She is currently finishing a book, *Entanglements of Power: Race, Species, Culture, and Nature in the Age of Neoliberalism,* which examines contemporary controversies over how marginalized human groups (racialized minorities, immigrants of colour, indigenous people) use animals in their traditional practices.  An Associate Editor of *American Quarterly*, Dr. Kim is co-guest editing a future special issue of this journal entitled “Speciesism, Racism, and Sexism.”

Jamie Lorimer is a lecturer in the Department of Geography at King's College London. He did his PhD at the University of Bristol and has worked as a post-doc at the University of Oxford. His research develops new approaches to animal and environmental geographies that do not need to make resource to modern understandings of Nature - as a pure, stable set of objects governed solely by science and markets. He is currently completing an ESRC-funded project exploring the history, politics and practices of rewilding in European nature conservation.

Peter Sahlins, Professor of Early Modern European History at the University of California, Berkeley since 1989, received his B.A. at Harvard and his Ph.D at Princeton University.  He is the author of numerous articles and four books:  *Boundaries: the Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (1989); *Forest Rites: the War of the Demoiselles in Nineteenth-Century France* (1994); *Et si on faisait payer les étrangers? Louis XIV, les immigrés et quelques autres* (1999);  and *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After* (2004).  Until recently, his work has focused on immigration, nationality, and citizenship in early modern France.  He is currently writing a book entitled *The Symbolic Lives of Animals and the Making of French Modernity*. The work explores the representation and uses of animals in the construction of absolute monarchy, the problem of mechanism and motion, and the constitution of a distinctly French idea of the human in the early reign of Louis XIV. His article on ‘The Menageries of Louis XIV and the Civilizing Process Revisited’ will appear in *French Historical Studies* 35, 2 (2012).

Sara Asu Schroer completed her undergraduate studies in anthropology and political science at the University of Muenster Germany. Following one year of studies at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, she started her PhD research on the practice of falconry, as yet entitled: ‘Between humans and birds: an anthropological approach to the practice of falconry’. Having used a multi-sited fieldwork approach she conducted fieldwork in Britain, Germany and Sicily. By focussing on the creative and performative aspects of falconry practice she is especially interested in exploring ways of thinking about human–non-human relationships that engage with processes of becoming. Currently she is based at the Department of Anthropology in Aberdeen where she is working on the finalization of her thesis which is supervised by Andrew Whitehouse and Tim Ingold.

Snæbjörnsdóttir/Wilson: Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir graduated with an MFA from Glasgow School of Art (1995) and completed a practice based PhD from Valand School of Art in Gothenburg in 2009. Mark Wilson studied at University of Sunderland and will complete a PhD by published work at University of Lancaster in 2012. Bryndís & Mark are a collaborative artist team, whose art practice is research based and socially-engaged, exploring issues of history, culture and environment in relation to both humans and non-human animals. Their artworks have been exhibited internationally and they have delivered papers at key conferences in animal studies worldwide. One of their art projects, *nanoq: flat out and bluesome,* an artist survey of stuffed polar bears in the UK has been touring Europe since 2006. *Uncertainty in the City*, an art project exploring the conception of ‘pest’ in the human psyche was exhibited in Lancaster, in England in 2010 and a publication with the same name was published by Green Box, Berlin in June 2011. Their work *Vanishing Point: Where Species Meet* is part of the Gothenburg Biennial 2011 and their work *between you and me* was exhibited at Interactive Futures '11: Animal Influence, in Vancouver, B.C. Canada in November 2011. Their work is installation based, using text, sound, photographic and video-based media. For more information on their work see: [www.snaebjornsdottirwilson.com](https://nemo.strath.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=9ed67dda18f944c69173731649bc1202&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.snaebjornsdottirwilson.com) and [www.radioanimal.org](https://nemo.strath.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=9ed67dda18f944c69173731649bc1202&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.radioanimal.org)