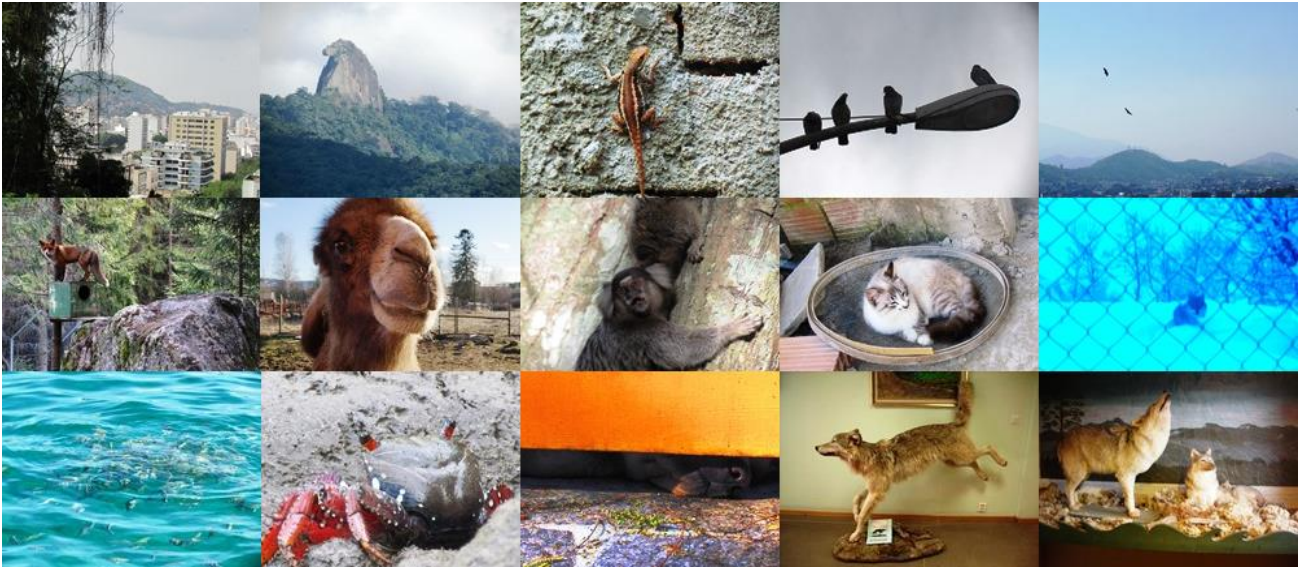


SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS

Animals in the Anthropocene

Human–animal relations in a changing semiosphere

Stavanger, Norway, 17–19 September 2015



Organised by the Norwegian research group of the Norwegian-Estonian research project “Animals in Changing Environments: Cultural Mediation and Semiotic Analysis” (EEA Norway Grants/Norway Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 under project contract no. EMP151). The research project is carried out in cooperation between [University of Stavanger](#) (Norway) and [University of Tartu](#) (Estonia).

Co-organised by [Minding Animals Norway](#).

Venue: Kjell Arholms hus, [University of Stavanger](#) (Ullandhaug campus)

Keynote speakers, with preliminary titles:

- **Almo Farina** (University of Urbino, Italy): “Animals in a noisy world”
- **Gisela Kaplan** (University of New England, Australia): “Don Quixote’s windmills: technology, conservation and animal cognition”
- **Dominique Lestel** (École normale supérieure, Paris, France): “Animality after animality: Challenge of the transpecies”
- **David Rothenberg** (New Jersey Institute of Technology, USA): “Listening for the oldest songs: The origins of music in the sounds of the more-than-human world”
- **Bronislaw Szerszynski** (Lancaster University, UK): “Out of the metazoic? Animals as a transitional form in planetary evolution”
- **Louise Westling** (University of Oregon, USA): “Dangerous intersubjectivities from Dionysos to Kanzi”

Invited speaker: David Abram (philosopher – cultural ecologist – storyteller, USA)

Theme

Environmental change occurs at various levels, from the global to the local. As the environment undergoes change, the living conditions of animals change, and people’s perception of animals change. The dynamics of these processes are

complex – in some cases, environmental change directly influences human–animal relations, in others human cultural mediation of animals contributes to environmental change.

Most but not all of current environmental change is anthropogenic. The term *the Anthropocene* (the era of humankind) is increasingly acknowledged as suitable for our current geological epoch. Some think that the beginning of the Anthropocene coincided with the industrial revolution or the massive ecological changes that have followed it. Others argue that humankind's global impact, and thus eventually the Anthropocene era, started shortly after the advent of agriculture.

At any rate adaptation to environmental change is in our time an important factor in the lives of most animal species, whether they are domesticated or captive, or wild. By establishing a global *colonial organism* of sorts, humankind has in effect installed an ecological empire, hierarchically organised with *Homo sapiens* on top and with crop species, pets and livestock in privileged positions. Thereby we have further provided global *breeding grounds* for other species that might not otherwise have been able to spread at a global scale – from rats and doves to bugs and microbes of various sorts.

Studying the nature of the relations between animals, environmental change, and human cultural mediation has pivotal importance for understanding ecological and ethical conflicts involving animals. Such studies furthermore have the potential of helping to induce better practices of species protection and wildlife management, husbandry practices, and environmental communication. A useful tool for these studies is semiotics, including semiotics of nature, where Juri Lotman's notion of the 'semiosphere', originally meant for cultural semiotics, has been expanded to denote the space, or sphere, of signs in a biosemiotic sense. All animals relate to signs and make use of signs – they live in worlds of signs (i.e., *Umwelten*, in Jakob von Uexküll's terminology), and their perception and action is always mediated by signs. The global semiosphere therefore coincides with the biosphere.

We welcome submissions with paleontological, archaeological, historical, contemporary and future-oriented perspectives. Submissions may present local or global case studies, or consist of theoretical/methodological contributions. Relevant fields of study include in particular:

- human-animal studies/anthrozoology, critical animal studies
- semiotics of nature (biosemiotics, ecosemiotics, zoosemiotics), cognitive semiotics
- environmental humanities, ecocriticism, ecolinguistics, posthumanism
- paleontology, archaeology, environmental history

The following fields of study are also potentially relevant:

- anthropology, environmental sociology, green criminology, political science, ecological economics
- biology (ethology, comparative psychology, conservation biology, ecology, veterinary medicine)
- geology, earth science, climate research
- philosophy (philosophy of biology, philosophical anthropology, eco-phenomenology, animal ethics, environmental ethics)

Theme sessions

The following theme sessions have been accepted:

- ***“Animals mediating the real and the imaginary in the past”*** (chairs: Siv Kristoffersen & Kristin Armstrong Oma, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, Norway)
- ***“Animal representations in popular culture and new media”*** (chairs: Kjersti Vik & Lene Bøe, University of Stavanger, Norway)
- ***“Animals, semiotics, and Actor-Network-Theory”*** (chairs: Silver Rattasepp & Timo Maran, University of Tartu, Estonia)
- ***“Global species”*** (chair: Morten Tønnessen, University of Stavanger, Norway)
- ***“Humans and other animals, between anthropology and phenomenologies”*** (chair: Annabelle Dufourcq, Charles University, Czech Republic)
- ***“Understanding the meaning of animals”*** (chairs: Forrest Clingerman, Ohio Northern University, USA & Martin Drenthen, Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands)
- ***“Wild animals in the era of humankind”*** (chair: Morten Tønnessen, University of Stavanger, Norway)

For description of theme sessions, see the [conference website](#). Concerning abstract submission, see below.

Abstracts

Abstracts (oral presentations) should describe a relevant topic, how the prospective presenter(s) approaches it, and results/conclusions. Length: 200-400 words. Abstracts may be submitted at any time from the first call for papers appears and until the abstract deadline. Please include your full name(s) and affiliation(s). You may also indicate a theme session that is appropriate for your abstract, if applicable.

Extended deadline for submission of abstracts (oral presentations): March 15th 2015.

Notification of acceptance of abstracts (oral presentations) will be given by April 30th 2015.

Please submit your abstract to anthropoceneanimals@uis.no.

Registration

Registration for the conference will open in May 2015. The conference registration fee will cover lunch (vegetarian) and coffee breaks for three days, and a program booklet. Registration for conference dinner and a guided tour is optional.

Publication

We have received strong interest from the editor of the book series "Ecocritical Theory and Practice", published by [Lexington Books](#) (an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield), in publishing a book on the conference theme (see also [previous titles in the series](#)). We aim to have an edited collection (editors: Silver Rattasepp, Morten Tønnessen & Kristin Armstrong Oma), work-titled *Animals in the Anthropocene*, published in April 2016, based on selected papers from the conference. Selected scholars will be invited to contribute to this book on the basis of abstract submission (see below).

We expect to compose a book proposal in March. For those invited to contribute, deadline for a full draft will be June 30th and (following peer review and editorial feedback) final deadline for revised chapter manuscripts will be October 15th.

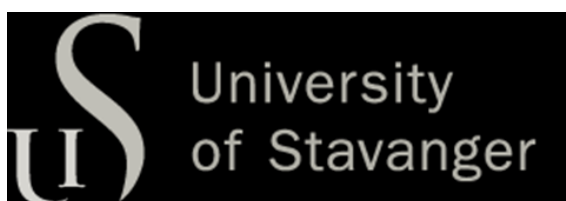
Conference organisation

Local Organising Committee: Morten Tønnessen (Chair), Laura Kiiroja (Communication officer), Kristin Armstrong Oma, Paul Thibault.

Scientific Advisory Committee: Frode Bakke Bjerkevik, Prithwiraj Jha, Laura Kiiroja, Timo Maran, Nelly Mäekivi, Kristin Armstrong Oma, Silver Rattasepp, Paul Thibault, Kadri Tüür, Morten Tønnessen.

More information on the [conference website](#).

See also the [homepage of the Norwegian research group](#) and the [homepage of our Estonian partner](#).



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