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## One Half Billion Strong They Came: Gray Squirrel Migrations in the American Old Northwest during the 19th Century

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Diana L. Ahmad

“One-Half Billion Strong They Came: Gray Squirrel Migrations in the American Old Northwest during the 19th Century”

Abstract: After the American Revolution ended in the 1780s, the citizens of the new United States moved north of the Ohio River into the Northwest. As they established homes, they saw many gray, furry creatures known scientifically as *sciurus carolinensis*. It took little time for the farmers to discover that the gray squirrels were their new enemy. Instead of being cute little forest dwellers, the squirrels proved to be a danger to the newly transplanted farmers when the animals suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere appeared by the millions. The squirrels ate the freshly planted seeds, as well as the crops ready for harvest. As the animals passed through the Northwest in what became known as “squirrel movements” or “squirrel migrations,” the naturalists of the 18th and 19th centuries pondered the reasons for the mass movements of the creatures. Theories as to why the squirrels migrated ranged from the depletion of food sources to insect infestations of their nests to simple desires for new living spaces. The migrations made little sense to the humans in the Northwest but soon a war between the American farmers and the squirrels began over ownership of the western United States.

#### Biography

Diana L. Ahmad is a Curators’ Distinguished Teaching Professor at the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. She specializes in the history of the American West and has published two books: *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* and *Success Depends on the Animals: Emigrants, Livestock, and Wild Animals on the Overland Trails, 1840-1869*. In addition, Ahmad has numerous articles on smoking-opium, animals on the overland trails, and United States expansion into the Pacific at the turn of the twentieth century. Her conference papers have been presented around the United States, at Oxford and Cambridge, and in Japan. Ahmad has received over thirty teaching awards. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Missouri and her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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Helen Cowie

*Insectivores in Motion: A Tale of Two Anteaters, Madrid 1776 and London 1853*

This paper focuses on responses to the first two living anteaters exhibited in Europe. The first giant anteater arrived in Madrid in 1776 from Buenos Aires and survived six months in the Real Sitio del Buen Retiro. The second was brought to London in 1853 by two German showmen and was initially exhibited at a small shop in Bloomsbury. It was subsequently purchased by the Zoological Society of London and put on display at London Zoo. Drawing on contemporary newspaper reports, scientific treatises and archival records, the paper assesses the reception of both anteaters and charts their movements across cultures, between continents and among institutions. The Madrid anteater, a royal gift, was painted by the artist Rafael Mengs (or, possibly, a young Goya) and described and pictured by Juan Bautista Bru, dissector at the Real Gabinete de Historia Natural. The London anteater, purchased as a commercial speculation, was described by the ZSL as ‘by far the most important addition, in a scientific point of view, which has been made to the collection since its commencement’. It was painted by contemporary animal painter, Joseph Wolf, and visited by the novelist Charles Dickens. Looking at both specimens, I examine the logistics of the exotic animal trade and explore the tensions that emerged between imperial and colonial science.

#### Biography

Helen Cowie is senior lecturer in history at the University of York. Her research focuses on the history of animals and the history of natural history. She is author of *Conquering Nature in Spain and its Empire* (2011), *Exhibiting Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Empathy, Education, Entertainment* (2014) and *Llama* (2017). She is currently working on a project

entitled 'Fashion Victims: Animal Commodities in Nineteenth-Century Britain', funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

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Louisa M. Gould, Karen Thodberg, Margit Aaslyng, Mette S. Herskin

Moving animals from the farm to the slaughterhouse: road transport of sows

When thinking about large numbers of animals in the context of movement, it may be typical to think about migration or swarms of animal gatherings. There are equally large numbers of animals, however, who are moved by humans within and across countries, to be used in the food system. This presentation concerns itself with the journeys animals take to their place of killing – the slaughterhouse. When breeding animals are no longer wanted by the farmer in the production system, the majority of these animals are also transported to slaughterhouses, but as by-products of the meat industry. Despite a worldwide rate of approximately 50% of sows transported to slaughter or killed on farm per year, almost no behavioural data exist on this pre-slaughter period for these animals. A recent study showed that the clinical condition of sows can deteriorate following road transport. This presentation will discuss a current study based in Denmark which is examining the effects of road transport and other pre-slaughter stressors for sows under commercial conditions, from both a behavioural and clinical perspective.

Biography

I originally started by studying fine art at University of the Arts London. After deciding a career as an artist might be too difficult, I studied sociology, psychology and neuroscience at the University of Glasgow. As my interest in the non-human world grew, I then studied the Masters in applied animal behaviour and animal welfare at the University of Edinburgh. I have also worked as a student research assistant at the Glasgow University School of Veterinary Medicine and as an intern at the Edward Grey Institute for field ornithology at the University of Oxford. I then worked as a Research Officer in the Food Business team at Compassion in World Farming with a focus on future food and sustainable consumption. I am currently doing my PhD at Aarhus University in Denmark, looking at how transport affects the behaviour and clinical condition of cull sows in the pre-slaughter period. Although I am currently training as a scientist, I am equally interested in arts and humanities, and enjoy thinking about the way seemingly disparate disciplines connect and complement each other; particularly with the issues surrounding the relationship between human and non-human animals.

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Chelsea Harry

Aristotle on Animal Sensation and Affiliated Movements

While Aristotle is often thought to be one of the first figures in the history of philosophy to portray the natural world as inherently anthropocentric and to argue for human exceptionalism, this is at best an overly simplistic view of his position. Rather, his extensive naturalism allows for a parallel position often overlooked; I call this his "non-human exceptionalism". For, Aristotle explains the superior capacities of distant sense perception and affiliated movement found in many non-human animals. In my presentation, I will explore what Aristotle has to say about these superior capacities, suggesting what it could mean both for our current picture of the natural world and for how we treat non-human animals when we acknowledge what it could mean to know non-human animals for their inherent natural capacities, one of which is particular bodily motility.

Biography

Chelsea C. Harry is an Associate Professor in the Philosophy Department at Southern Connecticut State University working in the philosophy of nature with historical emphases in ancient Greek and 18-19th century German thought. She is currently finishing a manuscript on non-human animal function and flourishing in Aristotle and is the author of Chronos in

Aristotle's *Physics: On the Nature of Time* (Springer, 2015) and the co-editor of *The Reception of Presocratic Natural Philosophy in Later Classical Thought* (forthcoming with Brill). In 2014 she was a Visiting Fellow at the International Centre for Aristotle Studies at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece, and is currently a Visiting Scientist with the working group in Integrative Biophilosophie at The University of Kassel in Kassel Germany.

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Katrina Holland

#### Crossing the Border from Commodity to Companion: Transnational Puppy Smuggling Networks in the Twenty-First Century

Pet dogs acquired in the UK are enmeshed in transnational networks of mobility at a growing pace. Since the conditions of the UK's pet movement policy were relaxed in 2012, in harmonisation with the rest of the EU, the movement of dogs into the UK from Europe has increased substantially. Whilst some of this growth is no doubt an indication of people enjoying the relative ease with which they can take their pet dog on holiday, research has identified a rise in the illegal importation of puppies into the UK to be sold on to unsuspecting members of the public. This illegal aspect of the trade, known as puppy smuggling, is concerning for both canine welfare and public health. This paper will discuss these implications and present findings from Dogs Trust research that reveal how various groups of people are involved in this trade in diverse ways. Survey data provides insight into the knowledge, attitudes and experiences of veterinarians and dog owners towards puppy smuggling. Cultural drivers associated with this trade, such as the predominance of the internet and trends in the popularity of certain dog breeds are also highlighted in this paper.

#### Biography

Katrina joined the Research team at canine welfare charity Dogs Trust in August 2018 after completing a PhD in Anthropology at University College London. Her doctoral research focused on the creation of bio-detection dogs; dogs trained to detect the odour of human disease from biological samples (e.g. urine). This research involved 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the UK and USA at two training centres where dogs are trained to detect the odour of diseases including prostate cancer, ovarian cancer and Parkinson's disease. The questions investigated in this work centred on human-dog relationships and knowledge production, exploring how the information offered by a detection dog becomes transformed into scientific evidence. This work was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Katrina's interests in human-dog relationships and human behaviour remain central to her work at Dogs Trust, where she is currently working on a research project exploring dog owners' decision-making during the process of dog acquisition.

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Scott Hunter

#### Televising the Equine Athlete: British Race Horses and the Evolution of the BBC's Outside Broadcast Unit

Although the history of the moving picture and the horse are inextricably linked – with Eadweard Muybridge pioneering film technology to capture the movements of the race horse – the continuing relationship between race horses and the moving picture is largely unexplored.

By focusing on the broadcast of horse racing on British television, this animal history and film studies paper seeks to highlight both the importance of the sport to the history of British broadcasting and to situate the horse – and the desire to capture its movements – as a driving force behind the evolution of the BBC's outside broadcast unit.

Early television technology was ill-suited to capturing the movements of the race horse: stationary cameras could not follow the horses 'out in the field' and the low definition of television receivers meant that moving pictures of the races could not match the clarity of still pictures.

This paper will argue that this tension between still and moving pictures of the racehorse was central to the development of the sport of British horse racing in the 20th century and, therefore, the movement of the race horse drastically impacted how the sport was presented to, seen, and consumed by the public and their equine counterparts.

### Biography

Scott Hunter is a doctoral student in history and film studies at King's College London, working in partnership with the National Horseracing Museum. His thesis seeks to present an animal history of British horse racing in the 20th century and to explore how different aspects of the sport, including human-racehorse relationships, evolved with the advent and expansion of broadcasting technology across the century. His research interests centre around the history of the moving picture and associated technology, and how evolutions in moving picture technology have been informed by, and subsequently inform representations of, their subjects.

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### Katla Kjartansdóttir

In current times museums need to tackle urgent collective questions on climate change, biodiversity loss and ecological limits while they engage with the increasingly mobile human condition. The focus of my presentation is on the great auk (the extinct bird) as a mobile museum object and how it can evoke challenging questions regarding climate change, biodiversity and other environmental matters. In my investigation I follow the bird through time, form and space and examine its history and afterlife as a mobile object within diverse museum settings. The thing-power or vibrant materiality (Bennett, 2010) of the object will be examined and the multilayered meanings that it has gained on its travels. Through my investigation on the various traces and trajectories of the object my aim is also to shed light on different forms of movements, relations and cross-cultural entanglements, across time and space. My investigation is influenced by theories on mobility, new materialism, post-humanism and moving materiality and by Cameron (2015) who stated that one of the greatest challenges that museums of the 21st century face is to critically reflect on earlier human/object dualism and to shed light on the continuing interlocking between animal, plant and human life cycles in order to give way for a viable future.

### Biography

Katla Kjartansdóttir is a PhD student in museum studies at the University of Iceland. Currently she is focusing on the great auk as a mobile museum object. In her earlier work she has been focusing on museums, cultural identity, visual culture and tourism. Her publication includes "Puffin Love" (2017) on the Arctic Puffin as a tourist souvenir in Iceland.

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### André Krebber

#### The Wicked Octopus

Octopuses are eerie creatures. Their bodies have a distinctly iconic form. Yet with no rigid structure that would restrain their movements, they seemingly move like fluids, tying themselves into pulsating knots resembling of strangely persisting threads of quicksilver. In recent years, the octopus has become popular as a creature that returns our gaze, staring back at us with a soul of her own, although such descriptions can be found already in Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* (1866). As the Devil Fish, however, Hugo's octopus is the carrier, if of a soul, a wicked one. The objective of this paper is to explore movement as an expression and manifestation of agency and self-will in nonhuman animals at the example of octopuses. Indeed, while it tends to be the octopuses' eyes that are made out to reveal to us her soulfulness, I want to argue by way of their extraordinary ability to move and their movements as well as their cultural history as all-overpowering monsters, that it is movement that first and foremost signals to us a will of one's own, thus becoming a window into the souls of other animals.

## Biography

André Krebber is a critical and cultural theorist working across the environmental humanities, human-animal studies and the history and philosophy of ideas. In his work, he is concerned with concepts and cultural notions of the animal, ecocriticism, epistemology and aesthetics. His current projects explore natural beauty as an empirical category for a non-instrumental study of nature as well as the octopus as a method for socio-ecological critique ([www.okto-lab.org](http://www.okto-lab.org)). He is lecturer in social and cultural history/human-animal studies at the University of Kassel, Germany. In 2017 and 2018 he was Susan Maning Fellow at the University for Edinburgh, UK. He is finishing a monograph *The Forgotten Animal: Adorno and Remembering Nature*, which investigates the animal as an indistinct object of knowledge in the context of the Enlightenment. André is an international associate of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies. In 2018, he published with Mieke Roscher *Animal Biography: Re-framing Animal Lives*, an interdisciplinary selection of papers on the biography as an approach to writing animal individuality. In 2019 he co-hosted the European Summer School *Interspecies Relationality* at the University of Kassel. <https://uni-kassel.academia.edu/AndréKrebber>

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## Alex Lockwood

Hopping, crawling, hiding: creatural movements on the pathway to climate emergency

Many of the best works of recent creative prose to engage with the climate emergency do so by telling the stories of human lives woven together with the lives of animals. Why is this? Building on my eco-critical research into the practice of 'creatural writing' I explore movements along 'creatural paths' taken by animals in the ficto-criticism of Joshua Lobb's *The Flight of Birds*, the ways in which animals and writing 'hide' inside Nicholas Royle's *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, and follow the elusive path of a Woolly Rat around the apocalyptic ark narrative of Abi Curtis's *Water and Glass*. I argue that these movements are responses to the corporeal nature of the threat we face as a species from climate disaster, a reckoning with our bodily alienation from the nonhuman world. In moving along 'creatural paths' that are (or imagine) embodied encounters with nonhuman others, these works offer appropriate responses to the emergencies we face; and, focusing on the production as well as the reception of the text, I argue such practices nurture embodied engagements with other animals that help us admit we, too, are vulnerable bodies dependent on our environment.

## Biography

Dr Alex Lockwood is Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Sunderland, where he teaches and researches across the practices of journalism, creative and media professional writing. *The Chernobyl Privileges*, his debut novel exploring the human drama of environmental disaster, is shortlisted for the Rubery Book Award 2019 for books with independent publishers, and was also shortlisted for the Impress Prize for New Writing. His nonfiction *The Pig In Thin Air* was published in 2016 by Lantern Books, New York, and investigates the relationship between animals, climate change and the food we eat. He works in the field of Critical Animal Studies, Vegan Studies and Creative Writing practice, and has published scholarship in *Animal Studies Journal*, *Environmental Communication*, and the collections *Doing Vegan Studies* and *Beyond the Human-Animal Divide*. He has written for *The Guardian*, *The Millions*, *EarthLines*, and appears in the national media, including on Radio 4's *Front Row* and BBC Five Live. He is a regular speaker at national and international festivals and conferences on writing, food practices, veganism, environmental issues, and climate change, and is a member of the Vegan Society's Research Advisory Committee.

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## Sesa Ma

## Lives On the Move in a Border Zone: Attending to Himalayan Stray Dogs' Personal Choices in Langtang, Nepal

Different from stray dogs inhabiting metropolitan areas, mountain dogs in the Nepal Himalayas have neither pack structures nor territory. They live either alone or in groups of two to three. For food, they hunt sheep or smaller animals. They stay active and wander about the villages and mountains during day and night. Their seemingly unrestricted mobility is what contrasts them with most stray dogs in the cities and villages.

By attending to individual dogs and the ways they conduct their daily lives in Langtang, Nepal, and using both ethological and ethnographic methods, this research explores issues of individual decision-making as well as interrogates the taken-for-granted emphasis on territory and range in animal behavior studies. Under what historical context was the concept of "range" embraced? To what extent can animal-centered perspectives help to question 'counterpart' discourses applying to humans, discourses such as the "geo-body" of the nation? How does it shape the way 'natural' spaces, especially national parks and trekking routes, are constructed and imagined? This research examines the ways in which discourses of boundary enable (national) border-making and infrastructure construction, namely roads and hydro-dams, and the ways in which individual dog navigate boundary under human surveillance and choose a life on the move.

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Rebecca Machin

Finding Mok: tracing the journey of a young gorilla.

Mok, a Western Lowland Gorilla, was hugely popular during his six years in captivity at London Zoo. Newspapers from around the country and across the globe reported Mok's arrival at the zoo, his exploits, illnesses and demise. After his early death from Bright's disease, his remains became part of the collections at Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG), in the form of both a taxidermy mount of his skin, and his articulated skeleton. While the archives of the Zoological Society of London and LMG tell us about the latter part of Mok's life, tracing his life and journey before entering Europe has proved more difficult. However, contemporary accounts of life in former French Congo can be helpful in exploring attitudes towards gorillas of both colonising and colonised humans. Colonial archives held at l'Archive Nationale d'Outre Mer give tantalising glimpses of the life of his previous owner, allowing us to piece together the long journey that Mok made from a Congolese forest to a museum in Leeds, as well as raising questions about the illegal activities of colons, and the changing relationships between humans and gorillas over time.

Biography

Rebecca Machin is curator of natural sciences at Leeds Museums and Galleries. In her previous role at the Manchester Museum, she developed her work on gender representation in museum natural science displays, exposing the misrepresentation of female animals, including humans, in public galleries and stored collections. Despite the focus on dead animals in her career, Rebecca really prefers living things, and has spent time studying them in Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa. Rebecca has also worked with captive animals, as a zoo keeper at Bristol Zoo Gardens, and volunteering with gibbons confiscated from the illegal pet trade in Thailand.

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Nayanika Mathur

Big Cats in the Indian City: Out-of-place beasts in the Anthropocene

This paper studies the presence of leopards in densely populated urban centres of India. It undertakes a comparative ethnographic analysis of the sighting, travels, and habitation of leopards in three cities: Mumbai, Shimla, and Dehradun. There is an assumption that the entry of animals, especially predators, immediately leads to conflict. Furthermore, predatory animals are believed to be limited to rural or peri-urban spaces. In this talk, I challenge both

these taken-for granted assumptions by following the arrival and movements of big cats in three cities of India – Dehradun, Shimla, and Mumbai – and studying the particular responses they have evinced. As we will see, instead of a generic response, each city and, in fact, every individual big cat, provokes its own responses. Most critically, conflict is not necessarily the outcome and narratives of conflict can be shifted through human (and, concomitantly, feline) interventions. I argue that there remains the possibility and hope of co-existence between humans and nonhuman animals in the Anthropocene.

### Biography

Nayanika Mathur is Associate Professor in the Anthropologist of South Asia at the University of Oxford with wide-ranging research and teaching interests in the anthropology of politics, development, environment, law, human-animal studies, and research methods. I was educated at the Universities of Delhi (B.A. and M.A.) and Cambridge (MPhil and PhD). I have held postdoctoral research fellowships awarded by the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy at Cambridge's Centre for the Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). Among a number of projects, she is currently writing a book centered upon human-big cat conflict in South Asia, tentatively entitled *Crooked Cats: Human-Big Cat Entanglements in the Anthropocene* that is expected to be published in 2020. *Crooked Cats* works through fieldwork conducted with victims of attacks by big cats, hunters, conservationists, wildlife biologists, animal rights activists, and photographers as well as archival work in India. It describes how humans share space with big cats that might - but also might not - be predatory.

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### Julia Myatt

#### Collaboration, Coordination and Compliance: Studying locomotion in animals

Locomotion is a fundamental physical behaviour required to find food, mates, avoid predators and thus survive. The study of animal movement in biology is vast, from the study of a single muscle fibre to the dynamics of huge collectives; all aspects must be considered to understand how an animal is adapted to its environment. Here I will focus on two broad aspects (and two species) to understand how an animal's physical and social environment impacts on their behaviour. The ability of orangutans to move around their highly complex forest environment that flexes and bends beneath their weight is a combination of both physical and behavioural adaptations. Their understanding of the properties of trees is key to energetically efficient locomotion. Jumping to African wild dogs, their social structure and pack dynamics have a huge impact on their hunting behaviour. Are they truly cooperative as they are often portrayed to be? By studying how critically endangered species such as these are adapted to move around their environment, we can begin to ask questions about their ability to cope if they continue to come into conflict with humans. Is behavioural plasticity enough, or will it only get them so far?

### Biography

Julia is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Biosciences and also the Director for Natural Sciences for Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences. Her research interests include the morphology-behaviour-habitat interface in non-human great apes and the collective behaviour of group-living animals, including free-ranging sheep and African wild dogs. She has worked on the dynamics of hunting in various African carnivores and the locomotor abilities of dogs to out-manoeuvre their prey. Julia is an experienced field biologist, working in the forests of Sumatra, Indonesia, the Okavango Delta, Botswana and the wilds of Norfolk!

Julia's research has often been interdisciplinary, working with computer scientists, engineers and vets and this interest has led her to develop a key role as part of the Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences programme here at Birmingham, in particular, leading on the Natural Sciences. Her interests span the huge breadth offered at Birmingham and she is currently working with staff from English and Human Geography to develop further teaching and research opportunities linked to animal behaviour. She is also interested in

interdisciplinary teaching and how we can better equip the modern student with the flexible and dynamic skills required by the modern workplace

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Lucy Neat

'A Natural Tale': *Le Peuple Migrateur* (Winged Migration) and Affective Responses to the Representation of Avian Migration

Recent decades have witnessed a considerable growth in films depicting nonhuman animals. Among them is Jacques Perrin's critically acclaimed feature film on migratory birds: *Le Peuple Migrateur* (2001). Representations of animals within these films often inform how a non-specialist public understands nonhuman life. They show us the increasing dangers faced by migratory species, including through the impact of human activities. Such films therefore require close scrutiny of how filmmakers represent animals, especially concerning the authenticity of the accounts of animal life they present. This paper will explore these questions through the representation of avian migrations in *Le Peuple Migrateur*. Through considering the production methods used – including the use of imprinted birds and storyboarding – it will examine how the film combines authentic and fictionalised accounts of avian migration, leading its producer to describe it as 'a natural tale'. It will further consider how this impacts on us as viewers, and on how we relate to the animals encountered on screen. In so doing, it will argue that the power of *Le Peuple Migrateur* lies less in the authenticity of its account than in the affective responses its narratives evoke towards the lives of – and challenges faced by – migratory birds.

Biography

Lucy Neat-Ward is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in French Studies at the University of Manchester. She is currently in the process of writing a thesis on the concept of care in relation to nonhuman animals in early modern France. Among her research interests are animal studies, moral philosophy, the ethics of care and early modern France.

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Jonathon Turnbull

Tracking Mutant Wolves in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone: digital/bodily presence/absence

The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone has emerged as one of Europe's largest truly wild sanctuaries at 1,600 square miles. In a recent study, researchers tracked the movement of a pack of 13 European Grey Wolves (*Canis Lupis*) within the area (Byrne et al., 2018). One particular finding from the study received significant media attention. A young male wolf, outfitted with a GPS-tracker that simultaneously acted as a dosimeter to measure its radiation exposure, travelled around 369 kilometres, moving across Belarus, Ukraine and into Russia. After being tracked for several months, the GPS signal from the collar was lost – leading to the wolf going off the digital grid. The media reacted with sharp alarm, as reports of 'radioactive mutant wolves' spreading 'mutant genes' across Europe proliferated through the latter half of 2018. In the wake of this story, this paper investigates the triangulation of animal(s) mobilities/movements, digital traces, and spectrality. It aims to unpack the dynamic of visibility and invisibility inaugurated by the disappearance of the corporeal body of the wolf, and the hyper-presence of the wolf as digital trace. It considers the shifting ontological status of the animal whose primary figuration is through movement as recorded by GPS technologies.

Biography

Jonathon Turnbull is a PhD candidate in geography at the University of Cambridge. His work focuses on the human-animal relationships that are emerging in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, and he is particularly interested in the dogs and wolves that reside there. Theoretically, he draws from more-than-human geographies, new and historical materialisms, and posthumanism(s) to understand how practices of care are situated in the context of

contaminated ecologies. He has previously worked on, and continues to work on, the bovine geographies of India's sacred cattle.

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Sundhya Walther

#### Multispecies Migrations: Refugee Bonds and the Holding of Space

In 2015, the story of one Iraqi refugee, Aya Abdullah, was so affecting that over a million people signed a petition addressed to then-President Barack Obama, asking that she and her family be allowed to remain in the United States. Abdullah had been featured by photographer Brandon Stanton on his blog Humans of New York, and one of the reasons that she touched Stanton's audience so profoundly, it seemed, was that she was accompanied by a much beloved mixed breed dog named George; this "refugee dog," as she called him, had been with her throughout her journey.

This paper considers such bonds among migrants who travel together or alongside one another in the context of the increasing precarity that attends movement across the world. I will examine the way that migrants such as refugees and so-called illegal immigrants, whose claims to space are rendered radically unstable by state power, situate themselves in and through multispecies relationships. In contexts of complete disenfranchisement, migrants such as Aya and George hold space for one another across species borders. Alongside their case, I will consider the representation of multispecies refugees in Jesmyn Ward's 2011 novel *Salvage the Bones* and Mohsin Hamid's 2017 novel *Exit West*.

#### Biography

Sundhya Walther is a Presidential Academic Fellow in the Division of English, American Studies and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. Her work focuses on multispecies living in contemporary South Asia and the South Asian diaspora, and has been published in *Modern Fiction Studies*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, and *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*.

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