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Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

# Animals in the Classroom

28th May 2016

70 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5NH



# Introduction

Care for the environment and for animals, both in 'the wild' and in urban settings, is now, more than ever, an issue at the heart of contemporary reflections on the nature of education. This event will explore different educational approaches to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of animals and the environment, in three parts:

- Reflections on the work of the charity, The Palestinian Animal League (PAL), and the particular challenges they face in formulating and delivering educational programmes that focus on animal advocacy.
- Drawing on the history of the Philosophy of Education, the second session will be devoted to issues in contemporary educational practice.
- The final session will explore key themes in Critical Animal Studies. How might research in this area inform future projects in animal welfare and environmental education?

# Programme

<b>10:00 - 10:30</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>10:30 - 12:30</b>	<b>Session 1: Workshop by the Palestinian Animal League (PAL)</b> Led by Ahmad Safi (Director, Palestinian Animal League) and Liz Tyson (International Director, Palestinian Animal League Solidarity)
<b>12:30 - 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>14:00 - 15:10</b>	<b>Session 2: Philosophy of Education -</b> Led by Dr Keith Crome, Principal Lecturer in Philosophy, Manchester, with Dr Luke Blazejewski, filmmaker and photographer
<b>15:10 - 15:40</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>15:40 - 17:30</b>	<b>Session 3: Human-Animal Studies -</b> Professor Claire Molloy, Film, Television and Media, Edge Hill University. Author of <i>Popular Media and Animals</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)  Dr Richie Nimmo, Lecturer in Sociology, University of Manchester. Author of <i>Milk, Modernity and the Making of the Human: Purifying the Social</i> (Routledge, 2010)  Dr Matthew Cole, Honorary and Associate Lecturer in Sociology, Open University. Author of <i>Our Children and Other Animals: The Cultural Construction of Human-Animal Relations in Childhood</i> (Routledge, 2014)

## Organisers:

### Dr Wahida Khandker, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, MMU

Wahida Khandker is the author of *Philosophy, Animality and the Life Sciences* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), and her research explores the intersections between concepts of life in philosophy, biology and medicine.

### Dr Keith Crome, Principal Lecturer in Philosophy, MMU

Keith Crome's research is concerned with the appropriation and use of Greek philosophy in 20th century French philosophy and with the philosophy of education. He is author of *Liotard and Greek Thought* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

## Session 1:

### Compassion in the Face of Conflict

The Palestinian Animal League (PAL) is a small charity that focuses on combining work in animal protection and advocacy and the development of educational programmes promoting awareness of animal welfare and environmental issues amongst children and young people across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

(PAL) is the only locally-run animal protection organisation operating in the occupied West Bank of Palestine. Founded in 2011, the group works with five universities, dozens of schools and hundreds of students across the region in the innovative "Youth for Change" programme. The programme challenges young people's feelings of powerlessness in Palestinian society; working with them to facilitate the empowerment of young leaders. In turn, the young leaders work with schoolchildren in their local community to identify and seek solutions to pressing animal welfare or environmental problems. The programme helps young people to recognise and embrace their ability to make meaningful change within their own society for themselves, animals and the environment, even when faced with the denial of their own basic human rights.

This workshop will be delivered by some of the young student leaders who have pioneered the Youth for Change programme, along with the PAL team. Participants will engage with the techniques used by the PAL team and, using practical activities, will explore themes of intersections between animal rights and human rights, empowerment of young people and societal engagement.

## Session 2:

### Philosophies of Education

#### Dr Keith Crome

'Education and the Emotions: the Uses of Sympathy in Teaching'

For a long time now, thinking about teaching has focused on the delivery of transferable skills and productive competencies, which are manifested and tested as 'abilities to do'. An alternative to this narrow pragmatism has recently emerged, which reverts to thinking about teaching in terms of the inculcation of virtues, building such character traits as resilience, curiosity, and open-mindedness. One virtue that is central to education is sympathy or fellow feeling. Dr Keith Crome will look at how to explore, develop and use sympathy in teaching through the example of our sympathetic relation to animals.

#### Biography

Dr Keith Crome is principal lecturer in philosophy at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is interested in the philosophy of education and his current research is focused in developing cooperative approaches to teaching and learning.

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#### Dr Luke Blazejewski

'Keep Off the Grass'

The idea of nature is rarely associated with the urban environment, but from the bee orchid to the peregrine falcon our cities are teeming with life. Dr Luke Blazejewski will talk about the relationship between people and nature in cities, and how we can inspire a sense of ownership between communities and their local natural environment. Wildlife is everywhere, we just need to open our eyes to see it.

#### Biography

Dr Luke Blazejewski works as a wildlife photographer and filmmaker in Manchester. His work seeks to challenge people's perceptions of the natural world, encouraging more people to engage with their local green spaces and discover the plants and animals on their doorstep.

## Session 3:

### Human-Animal Studies

#### Professor Claire Molloy

##### 'What Do We Do About Anthropomorphism?'

More than a century after Charles Darwin was criticised for his anthropomorphic descriptions of the natural world, why do debates over the legitimacy of anthropomorphic practice still continue? Academics within the scientific community have 'blamed' popular culture for the prevalence of anthropomorphism, yet there has been no sustained response to these criticisms from scholars of popular culture. Previous arguments against anthropomorphism have regarded it as an innate form of 'primitive' animism and suggested that anthropomorphic practices have little place outside of the imagined worlds of popular cultural fictions and children's stories. The same discourses have asserted that only non-anthropomorphic scientific narratives should be regarded as the authorised truths about nonhuman animal life and that anthropomorphism within popular culture has little, if any, credibility or worth. More recently, academics have attempted to validate or censure, what have been identified as, different forms of anthropomorphism (for example, situational, dispositional, categorical anthropomorphism and so forth). Despite the varying academic attitudes towards it, anthropomorphism has continued to pervade cultural practices and texts. This would suggest that, despite any criticisms to the contrary, anthropomorphic practices have remained a crucial aspect of our everyday cultural interactions with nonhuman animals. This paper considers some intersections between anthropomorphism, recent work on animal sentience and the rise of animal studies and Critical Animal Studies to position a necessary re-evaluation of anthropomorphism and humanising practices, their consequences and ethical implications.

#### Biography

Claire Molloy is Professor of Film, Television and Digital Media at Edge Hill University. She is Director of the Centre for Human-Animal Studies at Edge Hill, and her recent publications include the books *Memento* (2010), *Popular Media and Animals* (2011), *Beyond Human: From Animality to Transhumanism* (2012) and *American Independent Cinema: indie, indiewood and beyond* (2013).

## **Dr Richie Nimmo**

### 'Animals and Austerity: Reflections on Human-Animal Studies, Neoliberalism and Class'

In this presentation I will argue that human-animal studies as a field needs a more developed consciousness of social class and class inequality, and a more sophisticated conception of capitalism, particularly as it shapes citizenship and public policy. At present HAS and Critical Animal Studies tend to mobilise an overly reified conception of capitalism and class which mitigates against a more fine-grained understanding of how neoliberalism and 'austerity' policies impact upon human-animal relations at the same time as they magnify class inequalities. Central to this is a narrow economic view of capitalism as a system of production and consumption, leading to a focus upon how nonhuman animals are exploited, objectified and oppressed by these twin processes, whether as exploited unpaid workers in animal farming or as objectified products of the meat industry. But capitalism is also a social and political mode of governance, which impacts everyday lives through its shaping of the nature and extent of the state, civil society, public services, and the relationship between the public and private domains. I argue that this dimension of capitalism should not be overlooked by HAS, because it is here that the social impacts of the contemporary resurgence of aggressively neoliberal political agendas are most evident, and because these impacts encompass human-animal relations in myriad ways that raise questions of human and animal welfare simultaneously. Making this case with reference to several current examples, I conclude by suggesting that HAS needs a broader conception of animal politics which does not conceptually separate human-animal relations from the politics of class and social inequality.

## **Biography**

Richie Nimmo is Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Manchester. His publications include *Milk, Modernity and the Making of the Human: Purifying the Social* (2010) and *Actor-Network Theory Research* (2016).

## Dr Matthew Cole

### 'Cultural Lessons in Compassion and Denial: How Children are Distracted from Human Violence Against Other Animals'

This talk explores a few of the many ways in which children are subtly and insidiously taught compassion for a minority of other animals at the same time as being taught to ignore the exploitation and suffering of the majority that come into contact with human beings. This socialization process enables children to grow into adults with a positive self-image as caring individuals, even as 'animal lovers', at the same time as being enmeshed, as consumers, in ongoing human violence towards other animals on a massive scale. Drawing on the recent book *Our Children and Other Animals: The Cultural Construction of Human-Animal Relations in Childhood*, the talk highlights how this process unfolds in popular cultural representations of nonhuman animals (for instance in children's films and online games). This sociological analysis therefore uncovers some of the reasons behind the perplexing juxtaposition of care and affection with the denial of violence, which runs through human relationships with other animals. Through deepening our understanding of this pernicious socialisation process, it is hoped that we can be better equipped to restore children's potential to express and practice compassion towards all other animals.

## Biography

Matthew Cole is Associate Lecturer and Honorary Associate at The Open University, and his research centres on Critical Animal Studies and the sociology of human-nonhuman animal relations, especially childhood socialization, cultural reproduction and intersections between intra-human and inter-species relations.

## Further reading

Cole, M. & Stewart, K. (2014) *Our Children and Other Animals: The Cultural Construction of Human-Animal Interaction in Childhood*, Ashgate.

Stewart, K. & Cole, M. (2009) 'The conceptual separation of food and animals in childhood', *Food, Culture and Society*, 12 (4): 457-476.

Date	Event	Location
20 April	The Great British Breadwinner	No 70
22 April	Cervantes Meets Shakespeare	No 70
25 April	The Battle of Chile	No 70
26 April	The Battle of Chile	No 70
27 April	Austerity: Local and Global	No 70
7 May	Beyond Babel Film Festival	No 70
13 May	Global Girls	No 70
19 May	Dolly Birds and Swinging Cities	No 70
28 May	Animals in the Classroom	No 70
7 June	Faith in The World	Manchester Cathedral
11 June	Digital Re-enchantment	Nightingale Centre
11 June	Longbarrow Press Poetry event	Old Hall Hotel
25 June	Inspired by Ruskin	No 70

### Front cover illustration

Animal Rights and Education by Naomi Morris  
(watercolour and pen 29.7x 42cm)

This event is part of Humanities in Public's  
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