

(Un)common Worlds: Contesting the Limits of Human-Animal Communities

Veranstalter Finnish Society for Human-Animal Studies (YKES)

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First International Human-Animal Studies-Conference in Finland

Humans and other animals share spaces and create communities together. They touch each other in various symbolic and material ways, constantly crossing and redrawing communal, ethical and very practical boundaries. As of late, this multifarious renegotiation of human-animal relations has sparked intense debates both in the public arena and in academia.

For instance, Bruno Latour argues that the anthropocene (marking the massive human impact on ecosystems) creates a new territory in which traditional subject/object separations are no longer useful. What is called for is the transgressing or dissolving of these limits in order to “distribute agency as far and in as differentiated a way as possible” (Latour 2014, 16). Various inclusive, more-than-human notions, such as ‘cosmopolitics’ (Stengers 2010) or ‘common worlds’ (Latour 2004) are brought forward to this end. These discussions highlight what is becoming a core challenge for various disciplines and fields of study: how to live together in complex places, spaces and societies, with intersecting and overlapping borders and traces of cultures, histories and politics. Furthermore, the discussions bring forth the question of how to work against the premises of exclusive human agency and interest in order to explore and imagine multispecies futures.

However, the various conceptualisations of inclusive, common worlds entail a risk of disregarding or devaluing that which is not shared: the aspects of multispecies

lives that cannot be or become common but that nevertheless matter for shared existences. There is also the issue of becoming “common” – of territorialisations and inclusions of some beings to the exclusion of others. What will remain the “uncommon” (i.e. unconventional) in common worlds? Moreover, are common worlds envisaged as free of political struggles and borders? What are the politics of becoming common and remaining uncommon?

With this Call we invite you to discuss and develop ideas about human-animal worlds both common and uncommon. We invite presentations to this interdisciplinary conference from various fields, including but not limited to social sciences, law, arts and humanities, and natural and environmental sciences.

Prospective speakers are invited to submit an abstract (max. 250 words) to [uncommonworlds2018\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:uncommonworlds2018(at)gmail(dot)com) (preferably as a word document or a pdf file). Please include in your submission the title of your presentation, your name, affiliation, and contact information.

In March 2018 we will notify you if your abstract has been accepted. Registration for the conference will open in March 2018.

Further Information ([Link](#))
