

Rethinking Fables in the Age of the Environmental Crisis
University of Kent, Canterbury
May 22-24, 2025

May 22

9:00-9:45 Registration (tea/coffee)

9:45-11:20 Welcome and first panel (hybrid)

- *Sakti Sekhar Dash, Lessons from the Animal Kingdom: Anthropomorphism and Ethical Stewardship in The Panchatantra
- *Insha Qayoom Shah and Izhar ul Haq Wani, Re-evaluating Human-Nonhuman Interaction in Kashmiri Fables: A Psychological Analysis of Gagur Te Gager
- *Nishat Zaidi, From Fiction to Fabulation: Towards Decolonial Narrative Frames

11:30-13:00 Art / Fables (hybrid)

- Naho Matsuda, Tracing the Ocean with your Hands
- *Kaisu Koski and Nick Dunn, Fabular Music for Rodent Rights: Pied Piper Goes Wonderland
- Maisie Tomlinson, What a Mouse Knows: walking the line between fact and fiction in a stage play inspired by research

13:00-13:45 Lunch

13:45-15:15

Science & Species (hybrid)

- *Özgün Emre Can and Şeyda Fikirdeşici Ergen, Wolves: Beast or an Evil Species?
- Ellie Dobbs and Jessica Fisher, Malagasy Fables: Spatial variation in attitudes, beliefs and customary institutions relating to the aye-aye (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) across Madagascar
- Candice Allmark-Kent, Of Facts and Fabular Wolves: Looking for the Real Lobo Within the Legend

15:15-15:45 Tea/coffee

15:45-16:45 Keynote speech: **Professor Susan McHugh** (chair: Robert McKay)

17:00-18:30 **Animal Languages (hybrid)**

- *Valeria Picazo Zamarripa, Animal Voices: A Legal and Ethical Exploration of Intuitive Communication
- *Hector Tapia III, 'Moo'-ving Our Moral Compass: Using 'Animal Language' to Rethink Animal Sentience and Suffering in Neo-Classical Aesop's Fables
- *Mickey Vallee, When Meanings Break: A Biosemiotic Fable of Trauma and Understanding

May 23

9:00-10:30

Decolonisation (hybrid)

- *Remeen Firoz, Beauty and the Beast: Fabulist Bengal Tiger
- *Jamie Ashworth, 'Of Universal Application': Fables and Environmental Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century Aotearoa
- John Bessai, Digital Fables and the Canadian Aporia: The NFBC's Role in Mediating Human-Nature Relations

Panchatantra

- Rosina Pastore, Rethinking non-human animal agency in the Pañcatantra by Viṣṇuśarma (300 CE)
- Rohit Kumar Rajak, Animal fables, caste and the mediations of friendship
- Wendell P. Smith, Predation and Mutualism in the Poetics of the Beast Fable

10:30-10:45 Break

10:00- 12:30

Religion & Ethics (II) (hybrid Chair: Vedran Obučina)

- *Nükhet Okutan Davletov and Timur Davletov, A Shamanistic Interpretation on Human-Animal Relations in Khakas Fables
- *Anchit Jain, From Fables to Praxis: Reflections on Animal Agency, Ethical Concerns, and Pragmatism in Jainism
- *Mustafa Sarı, Classic Turkish Poetry as Fables: Symbolic Teachings for Addressing Environmental Crises

Animal Lessons

- Sarah Henstra, Animal Castaways: Elegy and Counterhuman Subjectivity in Flow
- Terefe Mitiku, An Ecocritical Analysis of Oromo Oral Fable: Lesson for Animal Study and Global Environmental Crisis
- Eri Kato, Sacred Wolves of Bushu Mitake Shrine: Nature Worship in Japan and Its Modern Relevance

12:30-13:15 Lunch

13:15-14:15 Creating Fables (hybrid)

- *Cass Lynch, Nathan Morehouse, Josie Rae, Kaori Nagai, 'How to read a poem to a spider'
- *Sarah Westcott, Poetry and the fable: exploring inter-species transformations and the non-human as fabulist

14:30-16:00

Animal Afterlives (hybrid)

- Isaac Waanzi Hillary and Cherry Leonardi, 'Elephants are stories now': the significance of fables amid the loss of elephants in South Sudan
- Ashley Coutu, Elephant Biomolecules as Fables
- *Jeanne Dubino, Virginia Woolf's Fabulous Taxidermic Fiction

Animal Fabulists

- Ayşe Ece Cavcav, The Lion, the Ass and the Dove: Relative Anthropocentrism and the Fabular in Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene
- Jessica Ullrich, Strategic Anthropomorphism and Storytelling Animals
- Hani Min, The Fabulous Mole

16:00 -16:20 Tea /Coffee

16:20- 17:20 **Fables in performance** (hybrid)

- Robert McKay, Animals, Fables and Political Aesthetics under the Blacklist: The Case of The Brave One (1956)
- *Sam Collier, 'The Fable': Multispecies Dance for Choreographing New Stories

17:30-18:30 **Keynote speech: Professor Vinciane Despret** (chair: Matthew Chrlew)

Conference Dinner (in town, optional)

May 24

9:15-10:45

Water fables (hybrid)

- *Jirajade Wisetdonwail, Phaya Khan Khak's Quest for Water Security: A Fable Against the Mekong Dam Construction Crisis
- Senjo Nakai, Reimagining Human-Nature Relationships Through the Lens of the Januke Fable in Kiso Valley, Japan
- *Debanjali Biswas, Loktak Ethnographies: Water Worlds through Multimodal Perspectives

Fabulation

- Laura Del Vecchio, Buzzing Against Collapse: Response-able Storytelling to Care for a Precarious World
- Gray Black, Untangling Fur-tures: Alter-Human Imprints on Queer Eco-Politics
- Pablo Alonso García, What would octopuses say if we asked them the right questions?

10:45-11:15 Break

11:15-12:45 (in-person) Workshop with Vinciane Despret: Changing Fables

12:45 -13:30 Lunch

13:30 -15:00

Speculative fables (hybrid)

- *Saikat Pradhan, Companion Animal or Monstrous Critter? : Questioning Fable/Fabulation, Non-Human Agency and Environmental Crisis in Anish Deb's "Pashobik"

- Paul March Russell, A Fable for the World That Has Ended: Laura Jean McKay's *The Animals in That Country*
- Chris Danta, Fabulous Devourment in Philip K. Dick

Sensing the World

- Sebastian Seidl, Awakening the Silent Fable: A Phenomenological Approach to Human-Nonhuman Engagement in an Age of Ecological Crisis
- Sarah Allen, Clever Beasts: The Horse and the Human at the End of the World
- Matthew Chrulew, Refabulating the Animal Sciences

15:15-16:45 Final Panel and discussion (hybrid)

- *Büşranur Üzal, Ant Narratives in the Torah and the Qur'an: A Comparative Evaluation in the Context of Ecological and Moral Reflections
- Boria Sax, The Man Who Dreamed He Was a Butterfly: How Events become Stories
- Erica Fudge, A Fable Without Nature: Twelfth Night for example
- *Susan Richardson, The Sack and the Selkie

18:00-20:00 Storytelling event

(at the Gulbenkian Theatre, University of Kent), in person.