

Call for Papers

Animals and Appalachia: Introducing Critical Appalachian Animal Studies

Appalachia as an economic region and cultural enclave has been well examined with regard to its class politics (Caudill 1963, Eller 2008, Fisher 1993), and, increasingly, scholars are attending to the salience of race (Inscoc 2020, Pudup et al. 1995, Scott 2009), gender (Barry 2012, Dunaway 2008, Moody 2014 [1973], Seitz 1995), and sexuality (Scott et al. 2022) to the persistence of hardship in America's eastern mountains. Scholars of Appalachian studies and social movements are also beginning to acknowledge these



Source: Wiki Commons

intersections of class, race, and gender in the context of environmental injustice (Fisher and Smith 2012), a rather predictable combination given that environmental degradation has been foundational to the inequality in the mountains. What is apparently less obvious, however, is the relationship between marginalized humans and *other animals* who cohabit the hills. A considerable gap remains in the academic understanding of Nonhuman Animals experiences across Appalachia's troubled history and, more broadly, the construction of animality there.

The larger field of Appalachian studies would benefit from widening its parameters to include social constructions of species as well as the material conditions of other animals. The Appalachian Studies Association notes that the mission of the discipline is to “foster quality of life, democratic participation and appreciation of Appalachian experiences regionally, nationally and internationally” (2022). Historically, these aims have been intended for humans only. The importance of place and the centrality of environmental exploitation to the Appalachian experience has necessitated a disciplinary engagement with the natural world, and yet Nonhuman Animals remain predominantly invisible in both scholarly and activist spaces. This is problematic for a number of reasons. In terms of suffering and injustice, the violence inflicted on Nonhuman Animals in Appalachia is of critical moral importance. For the academic discipline and adjacent activist movement, anthropocentrism is institutionalized such that perhaps a more convincing case can be made for the entangled nature of human and nonhuman inequality in Appalachia. Appalachian peoples of all races and ethnic origins have been animalized for the purposes of rationalizing or even justifying their oppression. The rampant environmental degradation that persists in America's eastern



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range, at least, has been identified as a major detriment to the health of the human population. It is this sort of intersectional consciousness that will need to be expanded to achieve the full expression of the theory. What might we glean from inquiries that take seriously the role of Nonhuman Animals in Appalachian life?

With the encouragement of its editor, I am compiling a proposal for an interdisciplinary special issue on Critical Animal Studies (CAS) in Appalachia for the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*. I welcome submissions that center

Nonhuman Animal experiences, analyze intersectional relationships between humans and other animals, interrogate speciesism, or otherwise speak to the core principles of CAS in the context of Appalachian studies. Dr. Vasile Stănescu summarizes CAS and distinguishes it from other fields in the Animals & Society Institute's *Defining Human-Animal Studies* series: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5w073Pv5po>

CAS recognizes that animality and animal oppression characteristically interlock with other social identities and systems of inequality. Submissions that also examine Indigenous, Latinx, Black and African, or other non-white groups in Appalachia are especially welcome. I also encourage submissions that center the experiences of women, trans folk, gender non-conforming persons, queer, disabled, and other marginalized groups that are often overlooked in Appalachian studies. Submissions that critically examine the experiences of Nonhuman Animals themselves (the most understudied group of all) will be granted priority as consistent with the special issue theme.

Suggested Topics

- Animalization of Appalachian humans
- Animal industries in Appalachia (i.e. “fur” trade, “hunting,” “livestock” production)
- Speciesist and/or anti-speciesist/vegan foodways in Appalachia
- Appalachian animal lore and mythology
- Appalachian religious traditions and animals
- Animals used in Appalachian entertainment (i.e. music, fairs, trade shows, “fishing,” “pet”-keeping)
- Space and place for animals in Appalachia
- Extinction, endangerment, reintroduction, and wildlife management politics in Appalachia
- Animal rights protest or conservation in Appalachia
- Animal welfare interventions in Appalachia
- The role of animals or animal symbolism in Appalachian social justice efforts
- Media analyses of representations of animals, humans, or wild spaces in Appalachia
- Global, postcolonial, or diasporic analyses of Appalachian animality
- Future-oriented or utopian analyses of Appalachian animality

In addition to full-length articles, this proposal will consider research notes, teaching notes, community notes, book reviews (fictional and non-fictional), and media reviews.

Submissions are subject to peer review and are not guaranteed acceptance. As consistent with CAS publication standards, bias-free language is expected. Objectifying (i.e. “it”) or euphemistic language (i.e. “hunting”) should be avoided or flagged using italics or quotation marks. Author information for submissions to the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* can be found here: <https://www.appalachianstudies.org/journal-of-appalachian-studies>

The *Journal of Appalachian Studies* is published by the Appalachian Studies Association and the University of Illinois Press.

Please submit a title and abstract (or brief description of topic area) to myself (c.l.wrenn@kent.ac.uk) no later than April 16th, 2023.

Guest Editor

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