

This conference devotes its reflection to ecocritical anthropological thoughts on the relations between non-human animals and humans in India. Historical, iconographical and ethnographic examples will be discussed and examined within local and indigenous contexts of India.

India has a unique history of religious philosophies, aesthetic expressions, religious practices and worldviews which explicitly deal with the relatedness between humans and animals. This conference will discuss neglected and marginalised indigenous ontologies, ritual and societal practices and aesthetics. It will contribute not only to South Asian studies, but also to Western Animal Studies and related disciplines.

Environmental perspectives and criticism is a rapidly emerging field of transdisciplinary reflection comprising literary studies, anthropology and cultural studies, where the relationship that humans have to the environment, to the animals and to the biosphere is imagined, performed and ritually enacted.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ANIMAL STUDIES AND ECOCRITICISM IN INDIA

28th & 29th March 2025, Ca' Foscari, Venice
TESA 1 Zattere – CFZ /Aula Azzurra Ca' Bernardo

Hosted by:

Department of Asian and North African Studies,
Ca' Foscari University of Venice
THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental
Humanities (NICHE)

Organisers:

Prof Stefano Beggiora (University Ca' Foscari of
Venice) & Dr hab Lidia Guzy (University College
Cork, Ireland & NICHE)

I Session

Friday 28th March 10-13:00

TESA 1 CFZ Zattere

(Chair: **Stefano Beggiora**)

10.00-10.30

Welcome & Introduction

by **Francesca Tarocco**, Director of THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental Humanities (NICHE) & **Laura De Giorgi**, Director of the Department of Asian and North African Studies (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

10.30 -11.00

Davide Torri (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Of Goats and Fairies. Continuities and Discontinuities in Pastoralists' Folklore from the Hindu Kush to the Central Himalayas

11.00-11.30

Deborah Nadal (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Where Dog Bites are Sent by God: Rabies, Hadkai Mata and Devipujak in Gujarat

11.30-12.00

Chiara Policardi (Università degli Studi di Milano)

More than Human: Hypothesis of Animal Masks in Śaiva Tantric Traditions of Yoginīs

12.30 -13.00

Lidia Guzy (University College Cork)

Therianthropy in Vernacular Tribal and Tantric Yogini and Goddesses Worship in Western Odisha, India - Examples from Ranipur Jharial, Bolangir.

II Session

Friday 28th March 15.30-18:30

Aula Azzurra Ca' Bernardo

(Chair: **Lidia Guzy**)

15.30 - 16.00

Amber Elisabeth Peters (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Monsters in the Indian Ocean: Real and Unreal Animals in Urdu and Persian Illustrated Manuscripts

16.00-16.30

Francesco Brighenti (PhD Utkal University/Independent researcher)

Tiger-Spirits, Tiger Shamans and Tiger Shapeshifters in Oral and Ritual Traditions of Austroasiatic-speaking Ethnic Groups

16.30-17.00

Margaret Lyngdoh (University of Tartu)

Human-animal Transformation Traditions; Other-than-humans; and the Swirl of Worlds in Northeast Indian Indigenous Worldviews

17.00-17.30

Tara Douglas (Adivasi Arts Trust, London and New Delhi)

The Stories of our Ancestors: Animism and Animation in a More than Human World

17.30-18.00

Tara Douglas

Film screening

The End of Story (2023) (25:05 min);

Abotani (5 min) – in Apatani language with English subtitles;

Man Tiger Spirit (6 min) – in Tenydie language with English subtitles

18.00

Discussion

III Session

Saturday 29th March 10:00-13:00

TESA 1 CFZ Zattere

(Chair: **Andrea Drocco**)

10.00 – 10.30

Deepika Gupta (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Animals in Adivasi Life: An Epistemological Category

10.30 -11.00

Jishnu Shankar (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia e)

Shiva as the Rutting King of Elephants Says...

11.00-11.30

Rafał Beszterda (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)

Postcolonial Traces in the Indian Himalayas. Apis mellifera contra Apis cerana Honey Bees

11.30-12.00

Stefano Beggiora (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia e)

The Riddle of the Crane. Vanguard in the Environmental Humanities Discourse in India

12.00-12.30

Bryan De Notariis (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Utopian Ahimsā and the Violence Inherent in Food in Early Buddhism

12.30 -13.00

Closing Discussion