

# **Facts at the Frontier: Crossing Boundaries Between Natural and Social, Animal and Human**

Workshop  
16-17 April 2007



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

The Leverhulme Trust/Economic and Social Research Council Research Grant  
at the Department of Economic History, London School of Economics.

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## Programme

MONDAY 16 APRIL 2007

Venue: *Vera Anstey Room, Old Building*

**1000-1015** coffee

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**1015-1030** *Introduction:* Mary Morgan

**1030-1130**

Paul Erickson and Gregg Mitman - *When Rabbits became Human (and Humans, Rabbits): Stability, Order, and History in the Study of Populations*

Chair: Mary Morgan

**1130-1230**

Edmund Ramsden – *From Rodent Utopia to Urban Crisis: Experiments in Crowding Pathology*

Chair: Patrick Wallis

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**1230-1345:** lunch

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**1345-1445**

Richard W. Burkhardt, Jr. - *Dilemmas in the Constitution and Exportation (or Importation) of Ethological Facts*

Chair: Norton Wise

**1445-1545**

Karen A. Rader - *From Mice to “Men” and Back Again: A Rodent’s History of the Animal-Human Boundary*

Chair: Rachel Ankeny

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**1545-1615** coffee

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**1615-1730**

*Brainstorm on How Well do ‘Facts’ Travel:* led by Peter Howlett

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**1900** Dinner at Cooper’s Restaurant, Lincolns Inns Fields

TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2007

Venue: *D109 in Clement House (on Aldwych)*

**930-1030**

Abigail Lustig - *The Demise of "Society" as a Fact in Twentieth-century Sociobiology*

Chair: Jon Adams

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**1030-1100** coffee

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**1100-1200**

Françoise Baylis - *On the Path to Regenerative Medicine: Stem Cell Research and Crossing Species Boundaries*

Chair: Erika Mattila

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**1200-1330:** lunch

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**1330-1430**

Erika Milam - *Choice or Ritual? Female Mating Behavior, Zoomorphism, and the Rise of Human Ethology, 1950-1975*

Chair: Simona Valeriani

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**1430-1530**

Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther - *Formal and Compositional Styles of Social Insect Research*

Chair: Sabina Leonelli

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**1530-1600** coffee

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**1600-1700**

Neil Pemberton and Mick Worboys - *Rabies and Hydrophobia in 19thC Britain: One Disease or Two?*

Chair: Martina Merz

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**1700 Discussion:** opened by Thomas Gieryn and Martina Merz

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## **Monday 16 April 2007**

**Paul Erickson and Gregg Mitman** - When Rabbits Became Human (And Humans, Rabbits): Stability, Order, and History in the Study of Populations / "Population" is a significant unit of analysis that mediates between natural and social sciences. Through examining several episodes in its historical epistemology, the presentation will explore the changing nature of facts in the history, biology, and economics of population, paying particular attention to the role of disease.

**Edmund Ramsden** – From Rodent Utopia to Urban Crisis: Experiments in Crowding Pathology / Laboratory studies of crowding among non-human animals are often described as having had a profound influence upon human sciences such as environmental psychology, human ecology and social psychiatry. Focusing on the experiments of John B. Calhoun, the paper explores how social scientists have been eager to draw upon the evidence of crowding pathology that he provided, while carefully reinforcing the boundary between rodents and man.

**Richard W. Burkhardt, Jr.** - Dilemmas in the Constitution and Exportation (or Importation) of Ethological Facts / This paper will explore the problems of constituting, exporting and importing perceived facts about animal behaviour. While both ethologists and comparative psychologists were prone to generalisation, there were significant disagreements over the ways in which species boundaries could be crossed, particular when this crossing involved the behaviour of *Homo sapiens*.

**Karen A. Rader** - From Mice to "Men" and Back Again: A Rodent's History of the Animal-Human Boundary / Historically the laboratory mouse represents the most crucial 'model organism' for enabling animal-human boundary transgressions in twentieth-century biomedicine and public health policy. An early history of attempts to use scientific knowledge obtained from mouse research in radiation genetics and biomedical research, illuminates the importance of shifting political contexts and changing cultural meanings of animals. More recent attempts to question the integrity of the mouse-human boundary, have alternately weakened and fortified its power to police knowledge-making.

## Tuesday 17 April 2007

**Abigail Lustig** - The Demise of "Society" as a Fact in Twentieth-Century Sociobiology / Biologists who studied social organisms and the evolution of sociality from the late nineteenth century until the 1950s took the existence of the "society" as a fact, a natural unit of biological organization in both literal and figurative senses. By 1966, societies were no longer facts; they were epiphenomena, as evolutionary biologists focused on selfish individuals and genes as the agents of evolution.

**Françoise Baylis** - On the Path to Regenerative Medicine: Stem Cell Research and Crossing Species Boundaries / There is considerable controversy among scientists and policy-makers over the benefits and dangers of creating human-nonhuman embryonic chimeras for stem cell research. For some, such research is scientifically and ethically required. For others, it is both unnecessary and misguided. This presentation will explore how and why the putative "facts" to be generated by experiments involving interspecific organisms are valued by some communities while denied by others, and why it is deemed acceptable to cross certain species boundaries while avoiding others.

**Erika Milam** - Choice or Ritual? Female Mating Behavior, Zoomorphism, and the Rise of Human Ethology, 1950-1975 / How does a hen decide if she is in the mood for sex? How does a hen decide who is the best rooster? For some scientists, rational choice was a uniquely human quality, while others have been fascinated by the idea that mating behaviour among animals could serve as an experimental entrée to mate choice in humans. The paper will explore how evidence of animal attraction and mating rituals have been transferred to the study of human love and courtship.

**Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther** - Formal and Compositional Styles of Social Insect Research / The developmental and evolutionary phenomena of social insect colonies have been analysed through a variety of biological research styles. A distinct, compositional, style of research on social insects can be seen in the inventive theories of the Chicago School of Ecology. The main philosophical goal of this paper is to track the reification and abstraction activities of different theories and general styles interpreting the "same" fact.

**Neil Pemberton and Michael Worboys** - Rabies and Hydrophobia in 19thC Britain: One Disease or Two? / Rabies was and is a transgressive disease. It crossed boundaries between animals and man, between body and mind, and between public and private. The paper will explore the changing faces of rabies in Britain in the nineteenth-century, assessing how well knowledge travelled between veterinarians, doctors, state officials, animal welfare activists, dog lovers and the public.