

Institution: University of Roehampton
Unit of Assessment: 24 Anthropology and Development Studies
Title of case study: Anthropological Perspectives on Managing Human-Animal Relations
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study details the impact of Marvin's ethnographic anthropological research into human-animal relations, which places animals in cultural and historical context. This work has been foundational for the establishment of the new field of human-animal studies and has led to impact in three distinct areas. Through publications and direct public engagement, this work has had an impact on public understanding of the wolf, and on a body working for its conservation. The process of research and subsequent dissemination of publications on foxhunting has provoked debate and influenced the understanding of foxhunting groups. Finally, through a collaborative approach, research on the public exhibition of animals by taxidermists and in zoos has enhanced the preservation and creative presentation of cultural heritage.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Marvin is Professor of Human-Animal Studies, and his research is internationally recognised as leading new thinking in this field. Since joining Roehampton in 1996, he has used ethnographic anthropological fieldwork, supplemented by literary and historical research, to explore key questions relating to the interactions between humans and animals in a broad range of contexts. Underpinning this case study is a body of work related to cultural constructions of the wolf; fox hunting; the presentation of animals in zoos; and taxidermy in museums and as hunting trophies.</p> <p>Marvin's wolf research has mainly developed from literary sources, but two fieldwork trips to shepherding communities in Albania and in-depth discussions with wolf experts in Norway and hunters in Spain have been crucial to the development of his approaches to understanding human-wolf conflict. This research has explored how the wolf is culturally constructed in different societies and how the wolf has been responded to in terms of these cultural images. A key argument developed is that those interested in promoting the conservation/reintroduction of wolves must pay attention to the wolf as a creation of culture as much as they pay attention to its ecology and ethology.</p> <p>Marvin's ethnographic fieldwork with English foxhunting communities began ten years ago and continues on a regular basis during the season with Hunts in Surrey and Shropshire. The aim of this research has been to explore the cultural and social complexity of this form of hunting. In particular, Marvin has focussed on the performative and ritual nature of hunting. He has also considered how those who come together for hunting events form a community beyond the actual practice of hunting. Both these aspects – hunting as a ritual drama, and hunting as a key element of socially significant rural communities – have fed into how the hunting world seeks to present itself to the outside world.</p> <p>For his work on how animals are represented in zoos, Marvin originally conducted short research trips to zoos in more than 20 countries. More recently he has developed his research through visits to zoos in Bristol and London. Central to this work is a consideration of how changes in zoo architecture can be interpreted as representing changing attitudes to the natural world, how the exhibition of animals in zoos has responded to concerns about animal welfare and captivity, and how visitor experiences of, and attitudes to, animals in zoos are shaped by popular media representations of animals.</p> <p>Marvin's research interests in the experiences of recreational hunters and the significance of taxidermised hunting trophies have developed in the context of participant observation, accompanying deer and wild boar hunters on dozens of hunts in England and Spain. This research has been supplemented by interviews with hunters and hunt organisers at hunting fairs in Spain, with hunt organisers in South Africa and also by interviews with taxidermists. The central aim of this research is an exploration of hunting as a more encompassing activity or event than the shooting of animals. In terms of the creation of taxidermised trophies, Marvin's interest has been in</p>

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how hunters wish the animals they have killed to be taxidermised and the nature of the art and craft of taxidermists in creating representations of dead animals that transmit a sense of 'lifeliness'. Intimately connected with this is his view that the trophies of the hunters with whom he works do not represent trophies of masculinity but rather are 'sites of memory' that become the focus of hunters' stories about their connections with, and experiences of, the natural world. The related issues of the art and craft of taxidermised animals and the nature of the narratives that are generated by them have reframed discussions about the status of taxidermy collections in museums and other public spaces.

3. References to the research

Marvin, G (2012) *Wolf*, Reaktion Press: London.

Marvin, G (2011) Enlivened through memory: hunters and hunting trophies. Pages 202 – 217, in *The Afterlives of Animals*. ed. Alberti, S. University of Virginia Press: London. REF2.

Marvin, G (2010) Challenging animals: project and process in hunting. Pages 143 – 159, in *Nature and Culture*. Eds. Pilgrim, S & Pretty, J. Earthscan Books: London. REF2.

Marvin, G (2010) Wolves in sheep's and other clothing. Pages 59 – 78, in *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*. Ed. Brantz, D. University of Virginia Press: London. REF2.

Marvin, G (2008) L'Animal de zoo: un role entre sauvage et domestique. *Techniques & Culture* 50, 102-119. REF2.

Marvin, G (2007) English foxhunting: a prohibited practice. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 14, 339-360. DOI:10.1017/S0940739107070221

Marvin, G (2006) Wild killing: contesting the animal in hunting. Pages 10-29, in *Killing Animals*. Ed. The Animal Studies Group. University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago.

Marvin, G (2003) A passionate pursuit: foxhunting as performance. *Sociological Review* 52, 46 - 60. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00450.x

Marvin, G (2000) The problem of foxes; legitimate and illegitimate killing in the English countryside. Pages 189-211 in *Natural Enemies: People - Wildlife Conflicts in Anthropological Perspective*. Ed. Knight, J. Routledge: London.

4. Details of the impact

Marvin's anthropological perspectives on human-animal relations have informed his engagement with key research users over a sustained period. Through communication of research insights to these individuals and institutions, he has enhanced socio-cultural understanding of human-animal relations in a variety of contexts and with a broad range of associated impacts.

Increasing public understanding of the wolf

Fieldwork with shepherds in Albania formed the ethnographic basis of Marvin's academic piece 'Wolves in Sheep's and Other Clothing'. This, and other fieldwork, particularly with hunters in Europe, was incorporated in Marvin's more wide-ranging book on humans and wolves, *Wolf* (see below, this section). Research into human-animal interactions through the prism of the wolf has demonstrated that perceptions of the animal were specific to a range of social, cultural and historical factors that have changed over time. In particular, the focus of Marvin's interest is the concern that people express for a dangerous predator that intrudes into human concerns (particularly in terms of livestock predation) and is seen as a potential predator on humans.

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In order to promote this research to as broad an audience as possible, Marvin has since 2009 given a range of public lectures at the UK Wolf Conservation Trust (UKWCT) during their annual Wolf Awareness Weeks, and has written a number of high-profile public-orientated publications. For example, he contributed an article entitled 'Wolves: now at our door' to *The Guardian* (27 July 2011) on this theme, which prompted debate (343 online comments) about the reintroduction of wolves, and animals of prey more broadly, into Britain. In January 2012, Marvin published *Wolf* (London: Reaktion Books), a text based on original research aimed at a wide public audience, exploring scientific understanding and cultural perceptions of this animal. The reach of the book is indicated by sales figures to 31 July 2013 of over 3000. This research has contributed to wider public discourse and understanding around wolves, as evidenced by critical reception in newspapers (*The Guardian*, *Globe and Mail [Toronto]*), specialist magazines (*BBC Wildlife Magazine*, *Wolf Print*) and the blogosphere. In particular, frequent recognition of the socio-cultural contexts in which the wolf is understood attests to the impact of the research, for example: "...it is clear from this exquisitely researched and carefully structured book that our perception of *Canis lupus* is a complex one . . . it probes much deeper and into a fascinating well of ideas, namely how cultural beliefs shape our opinions and emotions when it comes to this particular carnivore" (from *Wolf Print*, magazine of the UKWCT).

Marvin undertook research at the UKWCT for the section of the book exploring themes of re-valuing wolves. Following publication of *Wolf* he was invited by Tsa Palmer (Director of the Trust) to become an Advisor to the UKWCT. In this capacity, he has also donated the library he acquired through the research to the Education Department of the UKWCT. The UKWCT is now able to offer access to this resource to a wide range of school, college and university students, as well as other interested parties.

Influencing understanding and provoking debate amongst foxhunting groups

Marvin's research on cultural aspects both of foxhunting, and of the hunting of animals more generally, has also had significant impact. Throughout the research process, Marvin has had access to a number of foxhunting communities in the UK. As well as these groups being engaged through research, a number of the resultant book chapters and journal articles have been circulated prior to key strategy and policy meetings, and have provoked and contributed to debate. New research insights into foxhunting as intangible cultural heritage, and the effects of the Hunting Act of 2004 on rural communities, have contributed to these individuals and groups placing their own hunting practices and traditions in a different socio-cultural context. For example, Captain Brian Fanshawe, a senior member of the Council of Hunting Associations, has drawn on Marvin's research, particularly on the "*perception of the living human to animal relationship that exists between huntsman, hound and the quarry and, second, to his vision of the community aspect of hunt followers 'belonging' to their local hunt*" which has changed his own views "*on how foxhunting might be conceived and perceived by others*". As a result, Marvin was invited to discussions on the group's policy strategies, as his analysis of foxhunting as a ritual community event that is openly accountable, and the nature of the relationships that constitute its parts, were viewed to have been particularly pertinent and helpful in explaining hunting to the public, media and politicians.

Stephen Lambert, Chairman of the Masters of Foxhounds Association, the controlling authority of UK foxhunting, has confirmed the broader influence of this work, stating that "...my colleagues have made use of this work in discussions and in their writings". Similarly, James Barrington, a prominent animal welfare consultant in parliament, has drawn extensively on Marvin's research in political briefings and lobbying. Following the circulation of Marvin's research at meetings of the Masters of Foxhounds Association and the Countryside Alliance, his insights were incorporated into campaign material produced by the Countryside Alliance in seeking the repeal of the hunting ban in 2011 (http://www.countryside-alliance.org.uk/ca/file/Case_for_Repeal_2011.pdf).

Preservation and creative presentation of cultural heritage

The third element of Marvin's impact relates to his research into the public exhibition of animals by taxidermists and in zoos; this has led to significant changes in the preservation and creative

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presentation of cultural heritage.

Since 2010, Marvin has acted in an advisory position as a trustee of the Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park in Kent. He has drawn on his research on the cultural status of taxidermised animals to advise on several aspects of the museum's collections, in particular on its anthropological significance and the cultural understanding of taxidermy in different contexts. This has had a direct impact on the management of the collection, as indicated by Karen Botha, the director of the museum: "*his knowledge has influenced my approach to the management of our collection*". It has also "*transformed [the] team's awareness of how taxidermy is perceived in various communities*". Ultimately, this work has influenced the organisation's understanding of the relevance and importance of its collection. This understanding has, in turn, had a significant impact on the museum, and has led to the creation and appointment of two new posts in 2011 - a specialist taxidermist to maintain the collection and a new collections manager.

More recently Marvin's research has been utilised in creative contexts. In April 2013, he was approached by Andy Hall, the producer for the BBC documentary series *Timeshift*. He was aware of Marvin's publications on zoo animals and approached him to contribute to the programme in May 2013. This consultation directly informed the content and form of the documentary in terms of changing perceptions of zoo animals and the cultural significance of zoos. The documentary was broadcast on BBC Four in November 2013.

Similarly, Marvin was approached by Bill Mitchell, the artistic director of the international theatre company WildWorks, to consult on the production of their performance *CHIMERA* in spring 2013. This arose after members of WildWorks had drawn insights from Marvin's *Wolf* on human-animal transformations, in particular that of the werewolf. Following initial consultation, Marvin provided detailed feedback, informed by his own research, to develop and refine the project, and the company's understanding and approach to human-animal interactions more broadly. This also included advice based on Marvin's knowledge of the processes and performance of hunting, which fed directly into the production, and is contributing to the ongoing development of WildWorks' practice beyond July 2013. Significantly, the theatre company is now presenting cultural heritage in a more accurate manner following this consultation, and to a wide public audience.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Wolf

- 1) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jul/27/wolf-at-door-home-counties>
- 2) *BBC Wildlife magazine*
- 3) *Wolf Print* (magazine of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust <http://ukwct.org.uk/wp/issue45.pdf>)

Foxhunting

- 4) Chairman of the Masters of Foxhounds Association.
- 5) Senior Member of Council of Hunting Associations.
- 6) Animal Welfare Consultant, Countryside Alliance.
- 7) http://www.countryside-alliance.org.uk/ca/file/Case_for_Repeal_2011.pdf

Cultural Heritage:

- 8) Director of Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park.
- 9) Artistic Director, WildWorks.
- 10) *A Day at the Zoo*, *Timeshift*, series 13. BBC Four, 20th November 2013.