

## **Feral Biopolitics: Animal Bodies and/as Border Technologies**

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### Abstract:

This lecture explores how technological interventions into animals refigure the borders of political community at the intersections of sexuality, race, nation, and species. Engaging with two sites of trans-species border events in different geopolitical contexts, this lecture examines the biopolitical operations through which animals become border-securing technology but nonetheless retain the potential to overflow the borders they demarcate. For this purpose, I begin with theorizing the feral, the figure haunted by the European colonialist project of civilizing animal/human bodies. Defined as “in a wild state, especially after captivity or domestication,” the term “feral” unsettles the categorical divisions of culture/nature, domestic/wild, and belonging/exclusion. As such, the term evokes liminal, inappropriate, and transgressively abject connotations, marking the need to correct, neuter, or even exterminate ecological and political outcasts. Drawing upon such rich connotations, I approach “feral” less as a category and more as biopolitical concept for addressing the affective force of bodies that cross borders but are also predisposed to being captured.

Then the lecture moves on to two groups of animal bodies that embody border technologies. First, I explore the connection between the exploitation of feral monkeys in Southeast Asia and the increased use of primates from this region for biowarfare experiments in the post-9/11 United States. While these primate bodies literally became a “bioshield” (the formal name of the US anti-biowarfare project) through immunitarian rubrics, I further reflect on the racial and sexual implications of this use of monkeys by analyzing much-ridiculed news articles about the Taliban training monkeys as combatants. Second, I discuss the South Korean film *Howling* (2012), in which a wolf-dog hybrid appears as an evasive serial killer – secretly bred and trained for vengeance against those exploiting schoolgirls as prostitutes, by the father of a victim. I focus on how the wolf-dog’s feral violence, in competition with the institutional violence of the police, both attacks and reiterates the biopolitical control over women’s sexuality. What intrigues me is not a better-than-human canine masculinity (like the werewolf as a pre-figure of the citizen in the western political imaginary) but a queering, trans-species intimacy (between the wolf-dog and the only female police officer) against the militarized notion of citizenship in the Post Cold War South Korea.