

## **Högre seminarium**

onsdag 2 mars 2022

kl 15.15-17 (i [Formsal 2](#), Key-huset, med även via Zoom)

### *Higher Seminar*

*Wednesday 2 March 2022*

*3.15 - 5 pm (in [Formsal 2](#), Key Building, but also via Zoom)*

## **Ecomodernism, new conservation and the ‘end of nature’.**

Emile Bellewes Farmer (SKI, SoK)

We live in an era of environmental and ecological crisis, beset by the dual threats of a changing climate and the mass die-off of species. Climate change has overwhelmingly been framed in terms of the need for behavioural change and technical innovation and has thus been advanced as a mere managerial issue concerning our control and manipulation of inert matter. The protection and conservation of biodiversity and wild animals and their habitats, however, suggests the possibility of an ethical component; not merely the politics of the best ways to use inert materials, but rather that of how we live on this planet as a co-evolved species within multispecies communities. Indeed, despite the stranglehold that Cartesian thought has and continues to have on western world perspectives, how we conceptualise our relationships with wild animals has never totally succumbed to the reductionist notion of the utilisation of a mere resource. Unlike their domesticated kin, wild animals have been seen as free from the concept of the artificial and thus have often been viewed as being in need of protection as representatives of wild nature. More recently, conservation biologists and ecologists have stressed the importance of wild animals for their roles in establishing the healthy ecological systems upon which we depend. However, the conservation of wild animals and biodiversity has recently taken a neoliberal turn. While many might argue that the natural capital agenda in environmental protection has brought the concept of our need for healthy ecological systems into the mainstream, others decry its inherent anthropocentrism and tendency to dichotomise ‘useful’ and ‘useless’ nature. This anthropocentric logic has also found its way into ‘new conservation’, the latest incarnation of the field, with wild animals now viewed as mere adjuncts to the real business of maximising human flourishing. All of this highlights the need to analyse, expose and discuss discourses and ideologies that disregard an ethic of care, respect and long-term interspecies flourishing in favour of advancing the control, mastery and prudent use of an ‘inert’ nature as ‘best practice’. To this end, this study employs an interdisciplinary combination of ecofeminist ethics, sociocognitive critical discourse studies, ecolinguistics and hermeneutics for a discourse analytic study of a key policy and strategy report by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency in order to identify and uncover the implicit and explicit ecological politics that are promoted by the organisation.