

How Bigotry Begins

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3:30-5:00pm

In this talk, I discuss how different groups of humans have been “animalized” as a means to justify their exploitation throughout history, and how being treated “like an animal” to this day is synonymous with the highest level of insult to one’s dignity. The exploitation of humans and non-human animals has often gone hand in hand, enabling the most oppressive legacies of human history, such as colonialism. Then I explain how the same mindset exaggerating differences serves to create arbitrary social categories and hierarchies. Finally, given science's progress in understanding the inner lives of nonhuman animals and rendering obsolete their use for food, clothing, etc., I ask whether a commitment to social justice and equality means extending rights and protections to nonhumans as well.