

# Animail: May 2016

Dear All,

Welcome to the May edition of *Animail*. Thanks to the Exec team for their work on this edition, and to our members – Marcus Baynes Rock and Tracy Young for contributing to our Member profiles. Rick De Vos is doing a great job putting these together every month.

Speaking of great jobs – Lynn Mowson has taken on the mammoth task of redesigning our tired and a bit sad looking website. We set up a subcommittee to tackle this job (me, Rick, Jennifer and Lynn), and we hope to be able to launch the new website towards the end of September this year. Because the website has been running for so long, there is a lot of untangling to do behind the scenes. We're going for a much simpler, streamlined new look, that should also be easier to use.

We're all looking forward to catching up with as many of you as possible at the next AGM – which will be held at USYD on July 12<sup>th</sup>. It will be occurring in the lunchtime break of *Animaladies*, <http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/harn/conferences/index.shtml>. If you are attending ONLY the AGM, then you do not need to register for the conference. Clare Archer-Lean, AASA Secretary, will be sending out the formal notice and forms for absentees and proxies in the next day or so – thank you Clare!

Finally, something that came up on Facebook which I thought I'd share. A quotation from Rosi Braidotti's recent lecture <http://sites.psu.edu/iahboundaries/rosi-braidotti/>, which describes Animal Studies in a rather interesting way (apart from the 'bank' joke, if only!).

*If there is one cooperation in the humanities that is laughing all the way to the bank it is animal studies. Whatever happened there ... they went from ... a few bizarre people who wrote about animals to a full scale cooperation that is doing fantastic work. They may be the new literature departments of the future. If they resist the metaphorization thing ... they can make it."*

- Rosi Braidotti in her lecture at "The Boundaries of the Human in the Age of the Life Sciences"

A reminder to contact the following Exec members if you'd like to contribute information to be included in *Animail*.

- **Blog:** Nik Taylor and Christine Townend, [[christownend@bigpond.com](mailto:christownend@bigpond.com)] and [nik.taylor@flinders.edu.au](mailto:nik.taylor@flinders.edu.au)
- **Conference Calls** [R.DeVos@curtin.edu.au](mailto:R.DeVos@curtin.edu.au)> Please send your news to Rick for the next month while Jo is away
- **Membership News** –<[R.DeVos@curtin.edu.au](mailto:R.DeVos@curtin.edu.au)> Please send your news to Rick
- **New Book releases** –Annie Potts <[annie.potts@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:annie.potts@canterbury.ac.nz)> - Please send your news to Annie
- **Other news/AASA exec news** –Fiona Probyn-Rapsey ([fiona.probyn-rapsey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:fiona.probyn-rapsey@sydney.edu.au)).

Please enjoy the rest of *Animail* May: Membership News, New Book Releases and Conferences. You'll see AASA members represented in all of these sections.

Cheers, fiona

## Recent Publications

### Recent publications and other news

**Jill Bough**, 2016. 'Our stubborn prejudice about donkeys is shifting as they protect Australia's sheep from wild dogs', *Australian Zoologist*, 38 (1): 17-25. <http://publications.rzsnsr.org.au/toc/azoo/38/1>

**Thom van Dooren**, 2016. 'The Unwelcome Crows: Hospitality in the Anthropocene', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 21 (2): 193-212. <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/uzGvGdeQFr6aThTr2a19/full>

**Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel**, 2016. 'Like One Who is Bringing his Own Hide to Market: Marx, Irigaray, Derrida and Animal Commodification', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 21 (2): 65-82. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0969725X.2016.1182725>

**Gonzalo Villanueva** posted a piece in *The Conversation* on May 25, entitled 'Dairy farmers are being "milked dry", but let's remember the real cost of milk'. It received over 18,000 views and 220 comments in 24 hours, generating much debate on social media: <https://theconversation.com/dairy-farmers-are-being-milked-dry-but-lets-remember-the-real-cost-of-milk-59740>

## AASA Blog

Edited by Christine Townend and Nik Taylor.

The AASA now provides opportunities for those who wish to air their feelings, their research or their thoughts in accordance with the guidelines at <http://animalstudies.org.au/contribute-to-blog>

## Member Profiles

### Marcus Baynes-Rock



*Marcus with Wili*

When I began my studies I never expected that it would lead me to being slobbered on by a hyena in Ethiopia. I always wanted to be an armchair theorist on human evolution, so I chose my majors accordingly: palaeoanthropology and philosophy. I didn't have a career path in mind; I just wanted to know more. I could worry about the future after graduation. The thing is, when you study human evolution, you start to see hyenas all over the place. These bonecrushing carnivores have tracked human evolution ever since our

ancestors started foraging at ground level and their tooth-marks and digestive juices have left traces on the majority of the bones that make up the human fossil record. So I realised that if I wanted to know more about human evolution, I had to know more about hyenas.

This is how I came to know about Harar in Ethiopia. In a book from the 1970s I found a small mention of the amicable relations between the people and hyenas there, and along with a mention in a travel guide and some online videos, I figured that it was possibly still the case that hyenas were being 'encouraged by the locals.' So when I needed to come up with a doctoral research proposal, my Honours coordinator Marcus Barber said, in an offhand sort of way, 'You should do an ethnography of that hyena/human relationship in Harar.' Nine months later, I was on a plane to Ethiopia with permission to do 12 months research in Harar. In the end I made three visits to Harar for a total of 15 months research, spending hundreds of hours with the hyenas there, and eventually writing about my experiences in my book, *Among the Bone Eaters*.

I've never really drawn a sharp distinction between humans and other animals so in this respect the hyenas in Harar didn't surprise me as much as they confirmed what I already knew. But they have some characteristics that markedly distinguish them from other beings and it was these that both fascinated and altered me. In terms of sensory acuity hyenas are extraordinary. They can distinguish individual people from the sounds of their footsteps and at the same time hear other hyenas from five kilometres away. They can travel 70 kilometres in a single night, determine and find what other hyenas have been eating, and they can see clearly in near darkness. But hyenas have other qualities. Most prominent is the way they are so adept at avoiding violence. They use stares, growls, and head lunges to assert themselves rather than bloodletting and they readily run from yapping dogs who they could otherwise bite in half. So while hyenas' acute senses, problem solving skills, mental mapping, recognition of third party relationships, and ability to demolish thigh bones are impressive, it is their ways of avoiding conflict that defines them in my own mind.

My current research is focused again on hyenas and human evolution. I'm thinking through the way that competition between ancestral humans and large carnivores – especially hyenas - might have created a socio-cognitive arms race through which humans and hyenas evolved their capacities for theory of mind. This would have happened in tandem with the increase in group size that hyenas and humans experienced in resource-rich, open environments creating multispecies socio-cognitive niches. This in turn opens up ideas about domestication and how the adaptive human imagination, which applies theory of mind across species might have fostered the cognitive criteria necessary for bringing animals into the domestic sphere. Unfortunately I once again won't be able to do this from my armchair. I'm taking these ideas to places in Australia and Ethiopia to compare relations between farmers, livestock animals and predators in different cultural contexts. While I'm not looking forward to the long flights and difficult conditions, I can't wait to be with the hyenas again.

## Tracy Young



Kim Stallwood (2014) defines a period in his life in his book *Growl* where the door of the animal rights movement opened. He stepped through this door somewhat unwillingly, transforming from a meat-eating slaughterhouse worker and trainee chef, to a vegan and long-term animal activist and leader. Kim defines key experiences contributing to his awakening, including the many conversations he had with a fellow student Amanda, who convinced him that eating meat was wrong. His Amanda is my older sister Amanda, who also influenced my decision to become a vegetarian when she introduced me to the shifting values that were part of the zeitgeist of growing up in London in the 1970s. I saw this world as a young teen through her experiences, when she would attend marches to free the jailed civil rights activist Angela Davies, as I read the literature she would distribute from the emerging environment movement and her activism against animal

cruelty. I remember one evening when she arrived home with six black hooded rats in a cage that she and a friend had rescued from a science lab. These rats became the legend of many of our family stories and their arrival ignited an idea of what it means to care deeply for another species and the desire to make a difference in their lives. This reflection highlights the importance of the people and experiences that influence and motivate these decisions. In recent years Kim and I have in turn influenced Amanda's decision to make changes in her life, so the circle of influence has come full circle. However, this is not my story to tell and is therefore for another day.

As a young child I lived in a built-up, congested area in North London. My ecstatic places were not wild, rural or depictions of picture postcard naturescapes; rather they were urban parks and streets with occasional walks in city woods. I was, however, privileged to experience a menagerie of animals in my life. My mother Peggy was a pivotal force in enabling this rich animal experience as she accepted and welcomed our numerous animal companions. She was able to do this while raising four children, caring for our sick father and working to support the family. Across a period of years my three siblings and I shared our lives with the aforementioned rescue rats, four rabbits, two tortoises, many dogs and cats and twenty-three guinea pigs. Peggy eschews a romantic view of animals and I do not recall her being sentimental or anthropomorphising animal lives. Her approach was caring, respectful and utilitarian, but most importantly for me she had an intrinsic belief in the role that animals played in the lives of children.

By the age of sixteen my concern for animal welfare and the exploitation of animals was heightened as I questioned the motivations of humans to commit acts of animal brutality and cruelty. I could not comprehend what fueled this desire that I witnessed in people who took part in, and advocated for the many cruel 'sports' that were and still are part of the cultural landscape of the United Kingdom. I remember arguing with my stepfather about this as he proclaimed the entitlement of rural people to defend their land and livelihood. His nationalistic pride for these 'traditions of the land' interested me as he had never been directly engaged with these traditions, but they had been adopted as part of his cultural landscape and therefore worth defending. I have never understood these acts of animal extermination that are not motivated by hunting for food or the privileging of human habitats and lifestyles, but the thrill of hunting and brutally killing animals for pleasure. These traditions became more transparent when I joined an organisation called *The League against Cruel Sports*, a breakaway advocacy group of the RSPCA, who advocated for greater political action to ban cruel sports; where I learned about fox hunting, dog fights, badger baiting, bullfighting and greyhound and horse racing. For many years after I migrated to Australia, my stepfather would curse the letters and marketing materials from this organisation that would arrive in the post, something we can now laugh about and perhaps question if I was unconsciously trying to keep the circle of influence moving.

My interests in environmental-human-animal studies derives partly from these experiences where I practiced social relatings with other species and are punctuated by encounters that challenge, confront and bring into focus the complexities of human-animal relations. They have provided the navigational orientation for my current PhD research that explores children's connections with animals in family homes and early childhood with a critical posthuman theoretical framework. The effects of these human-animal relatings are often difficult to describe and the families in my research also struggled to articulate what these connections might be or to define their relationships with the animals in their lives. In this research the complex relations with children, animals and the environment provide a space for ethical considerations that critique the positioning of animals in early childhood education settings and the ways in which non-human animals are socially constructed and culturally reproduced. The animal is everywhere, but also absent from education except in a certain way, as representation. The animal is embodied in children's books, on the wall, in their clothing, toys, and sometimes in their hearts, but not as 'animals' or as animal products for human consumption. In human-animal studies the child is often absent or depicted through a romantic animal/child bond. Post-paradigms engage new ways of seeing the world and as we grapple with the influence and possibilities of post perspectives, it is challenging to consider how these are enacted to inform research about human/animal connections.

Although the study of human-animal relationships is gaining continuing relevance in research, there is still an under-representation of this research in the discipline of education, including early childhood and environmental education. I suggest that the nonhuman animal is lacking in environmental education research and the young child is barely considered in human-animal studies. This provides early childhood education, and indeed all areas of education with an opportunity to reposition both the

child and animal as worthy of serious inquiry as we attempt to 'meet' the human and nonhuman (Haraway, 2008; Barad, 2010).

In my work as an early childhood lecturer I have started to incorporate human-animal studies into my teaching and also publications for early childhood teachers. A recent example was an article I wrote with Pam Ahern from Edgars Mission Animal Sanctuary in Victoria urging educators to rethink the practice of egg hatching programs in early childhood education settings. Our hope is that teachers and the early childhood profession become aware of the impact of these programs on chicks, chickens and children, adopt alternative educational approaches and help to shine an ethical light on egg-hatching programs. This is a direction I would like to work with in the future, as early childhood educators understand the importance of the early years of life in forming relationships, secure attachments and the development of healthy humans. We know that animals are sentient, and are affected by their early life experiences, which also have the potential to influence lifelong health and wellbeing. I see an opportunity here in my work to enmesh the disciplines of early childhood education and human-animal studies and I look forward to keeping the circle of influence moving.

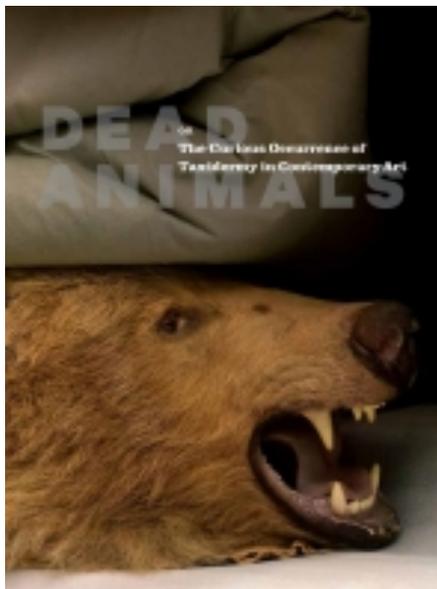
Stallwood, K. (2014). *Growl. Life lessons, hard truths and bold strategies from an animal advocate*. New York: Lantern Books.

Young, T. (2015). Shining an ethical light on egg-hatching programs, *Every Child*, 21(3): 38-39.

## NEW BOOK RELEASES

Compiled by Annie Potts

### New Book Releases May 2016 (in alphabetical order of author/editor):



#### ***Catalogue: Dead Animals or The Curious Occurrence of Taxidermy in Contemporary Art***

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition of the same name is excitingly rich in both content and visual imagery. It features essays by the curator Jo-Ann Conklin [*Dead Animals*] as well as Steve Baker [*Beyond Botched Taxidermy*], Rachel Poliquin [*Taxidermy and the Poetics of Strangeness*], Mark Dion & Robert Marbury [*Some Notes Towards a Manifesto for Artists Working with and About Taxidermy Animals*, 2016].

In *Beyond Botched Taxidermy* Steve Baker revisits and critically evaluates his term 'botched taxidermy' noting how the changes in recent years created by the growth of animal studies, amongst other critical engagements, have revealed the "breadth of artists' engagement with questions of animal life". Baker states "what's happening now is something quieter and more complex" which creates a "critical framework for thinking about animals".

The exhibition was held at the David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, January 23, 2016 - March 27, 2016 featuring taxidermy in the work of 18 artists: Maurizio Cattelan, Kate Clark, Mark Dion, Nicholas Galanin, Thomas Grünfeld, Damien Hirst, Karen Knorr, Annette Messenger, Polly Morgan, Deborah Sengl, Angela Singer, Bryndis Snæbjörnsdóttir/Mark Wilson, Richard Barnes, Jules Greenberg, Sarah Cusimano Miles, Richard Ross, and Hiroshi Sugimoto.

The Catalogue is available internationally by contacting the gallery. <https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/arts/bell-gallery/publications/present>



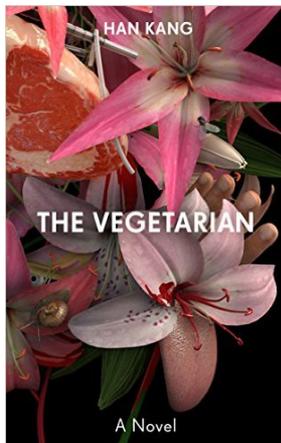
***Beetle* by Adam Dodd, published by Reaktion, June 2016**

From ancient Egyptian deities to German automobiles, beetles have left an indelible mark on human cultures around the world. Comprising more than 350,000 species, beetles are among the most prolific animals on Earth, even if we rarely give them a second thought. In this book Adam Dodd explores the world of the beetle and its sometimes astounding and bizarre intersections with the world of the human being.

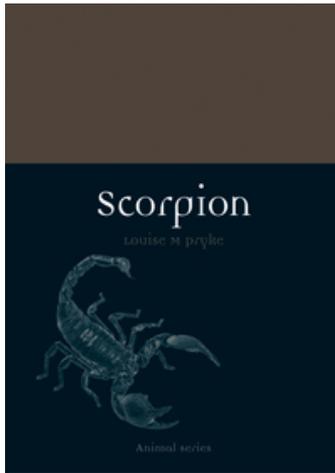
*Beetle* relates this resilient insect's emergence from the 'Great Dying' extinction event some 250 million years ago, showing how it became a permanent fixture in the natural world, thriving in the inhabitation of niches. Inspiring early occult beliefs and religious myths, the beetle also finds its way into art, folklore, literature and science. Dodd uncovers the beetle's ongoing place in the aesthetic appreciation of nature, and shows how knowledge of beetle anatomy is assisting the development of cutting-edge cybernetics, blurring the boundary between science and fiction.

Thoroughly illustrated, bursting with historical detail and accessibly written, this cultural and natural history of the beetle is sure to change the way readers think about their relationship with these ancient, enduringly captivating animals.

**(Man Booker Winner 2016) *The Vegetarian: A Novel*, by Han Kang, translated by Deborah Smith**



Yeong-hye and her husband are ordinary people. He is an office worker with moderate ambitions and mild manners; she is an uninspired but dutiful wife. The acceptable flatline of their marriage is interrupted when Yeong-hye, seeking a more 'plant-like' existence, decides to become a vegetarian, prompted by grotesque recurring nightmares. In South Korea, where vegetarianism is almost unheard-of and societal mores are strictly obeyed, Yeong-hye's decision is a shocking act of subversion. Her passive rebellion manifests in ever more bizarre and frightening forms, leading her bland husband to self-justified acts of sexual sadism. His cruelties drive her towards attempted suicide and hospitalisation. She unknowingly captivates her sister's husband, a video artist. She becomes the focus of his increasingly erotic and unhinged artworks, while spiralling further and further into her fantasies of abandoning her fleshly prison and becoming - impossibly, ecstatically - a tree. Fraught, disturbing and beautiful, *The Vegetarian* is a novel about modern day South Korea, but also a novel about shame, desire and our faltering attempts to understand others, from one imprisoned body to another.



**Scorpion** by Louise M. Pryke, published by Reaktion, June 2016.

From the dawn of civilization, scorpions have captured the human imagination. Yet the scorpion is a misunderstood animal with a bad reputation that overshadows its many exceptional qualities. Older than dinosaurs, these small arthropods have survived for hundreds of millions of years with very few changes to their form, populating every continent – with the exception of Antarctica. Although humans and scorpions have coexisted for thousands of years, the image of the scorpion retains a sense of danger and mystery. This book explores the diverse cultural symbolism of scorpions, from prehistoric times until today.

## Conference Calls and Notices

Compiled by Jo Sneddon

Dr Andrew Knight <[drandrewknight40@gmail.com](mailto:drandrewknight40@gmail.com)>

**Join us for the launch of the Centre for Animal Welfare**

Dear friends and colleagues, Join us for the launch of Winchester's new [Centre for Animal Welfare](#).

Saturday 21 May 2016 18.00-20.00

University of Winchester, West Downs Centre, Hampshire, SO22 5HT

Guest speakers include [Peter Egan](#) and [Heather Mills](#)



## Critical Animal Studies: Liberation theory, education and practice.

As exploitation across the globe escalates, analysis of liberation theory, education and practice is of crucial importance. For the 4<sup>th</sup> annual ICAS Oceania conference we aim to focus on various liberation theories, education and practice to foster new discussions on how to facilitate change. The conference in general aims to increase awareness of CAS in the Australia-Pacific region to further develop critical discussion and action for liberation of human and nonhuman animals. Held at the University of Canberra, this conference will contribute to the solidification of CAS theory and practice in Oceania, interdisciplinary scholarship and linkages with other movements.

### Open call for papers

The Institute for Critical Animals Studies (ICAS) Oceania conference organising collective are seeking panels, proposals, workshops and papers providing comparative engagement across countries and regions. Intersectional and transdisciplinary panels, visual art pieces and installations, and bilingual panels are encouraged. Non-academic and activist papers that explore grassroots movements are also sought.

### Topics may include but are not limited to:

Theory and practice behind activism and organising  
 Intersectionality in theory and practice  
 The debates between welfarism and liberation theories and practice  
 Global and local resistance  
 Learning communities and pedagogy  
 Gender, sexuality and veganism  
 Class, race and CAS  
 The criminalisation and prosecution of dissent  
 Cinematic, literary, and art representations of nonhuman animals  
 Nonhuman animals and the law  
 Re-imagining the Anthropocene

In the first instance, submit a 250-300 word abstract and short bio to [icasoceania@gmail.com](mailto:icasoceania@gmail.com) with 'ICAS Oceania 2016' in the subject line, by August 31. Visit our website to see what we are about: <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/oceania-conference/>

**Friday Sep 30 - Sat Oct 1 (2016)**  
**University of Canberra, Australia**

Following the conference, the **Living Green Festival** will be held on **Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sunday)** at the Albert Hall. Please visit their website for more information about this **amazing vegan festival**: <http://www.lgf.org.au/>