

Animail: September 2016

Dear AASA Members,

Welcome to the September edition of *Animail*. Apologies for the September edition being a few days late, I'm currently travelling in the USA. The big news this month is the launch of the 'Living Bibliography of Animal studies', an incredible resource for AS scholars:

http://www.lbanimalstudies.org.uk/index.php?title=Main_Page

The idea of the living bibliography is to create a resource for those new to the field of Animal studies, and allows scholars to see what is happening not only in our own fields but in others too: history, geography, politics, renaissance studies, religious studies etc. Each entry can be built on and expanded by readers and contributors. As the field grows, so too will the entries. The Living Bibliography was started by Erica Fudge (University of Strathclyde) and as you'll all know, Erica is the Director of the BASN (British Animal Studies Network). Annie Potts wrote the entry for Cultural Studies (I did the one for Gender Studies).

The Member Profiles section this month features **Gonzalo Villanueva and Jill Bough**. Thanks to Rick for putting these together, and to Annie for her list of new publications in the field.

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] and nik.taylor@flinders.edu.au
- **Conference Calls** –<fionapr@uow.edu.au
- **Membership News** –<R.DeVos@curtin.edu.au>
- **New Book releases** –Annie Potts <annie.potts@canterbury.ac.nz> –
- **Other news/AASA exec news** –Fiona Probyn-Rapsey (fionapr@uow.edu.au).

Apologies again for sending this a couple of days late! Too many conferences!

Cheers, fiona

Member Profiles

Compiled by Rick De Vos

Jill Bough



*Jill with Chocolate
Jill's donkeys*



Marc Bekoff visiting

I have had a lifelong love affair with animals, sharing my life with them since growing up in Cornwall, UK, whether galloping my horse along deserted beaches, taking my dogs for long cliff walks, or sitting glued to animal programs or reading books about them. The rest of life took second place to the joy and wonder and companionship of animals. Since moving to Australia and living on a beautiful property on the Central Coast of NSW, I have been able to indulge my passion further, including keeping horses, donkeys, goats, dogs, cats, geese, chickens, ducks, galahs and cockatiels. These have dwindled in number over the years and now dogs and donkeys and a few feathered friends remain.

Donkeys have featured in my life since I rode donkeys on the beach as a child or watched them being worked on Greek islands while on holiday. The Donkey Sanctuary in Devon, a favourite haunt, was where I learned what wonderful animals they are – and how neglected and abused. It was no surprise, then, that donkeys were the means by which I combined my profession and my passion when I embarked on a PhD (at the age of 60) into the history of the donkey in Australia, *Value to Vermin: the donkey in Australia (2008)*. The attitudes I found in Australia led to my desire to uncover their story, for most Australians I spoke to had little knowledge of or interest in donkeys, were not aware of their role in colonial history or, indeed, of their present fate as wild donkeys being systematically slaughtered. Furthermore, it seemed to me that animals were valued for their extrinsic rather than intrinsic worth. I wanted in some small way to redress that balance.

Therefore, it was my passion for donkeys which introduced me to the exciting world of Animal Studies. It was truly a steep learning experience as I knew little of that interdisciplinary world, of the theories of human and animal relationships or the history or geography of Australia – but it was a journey that I thoroughly enjoyed, whether grappling with theories, researching records in the archives, talking to donkey drivers or negotiating old donkey team tracks in the Outback.

Very early on in this journey, I was fortunate enough to attend the very first Animal Studies conference in Perth where I met a small but dedicated and exciting group of animal scholars and activists. I was greatly inspired by these people, many starting out in their careers. It has been wonderful and heartening to see the discipline expand exponentially and these academics' work recognised. Many of these colleagues have now been promoted to prominent positions that wouldn't even have existed 10 years ago. In 2009, I was co-convenor with Dr Rod Bennison of the third AASA/first Minding Animals Conference in Newcastle. I have presented at each of the AASA conferences since and continue to be inspired by the wonderful work that is being undertaken by the members. I can only hope that their work will ultimately make a difference to the way in which humans perceive and treat the animals with whom we share the world.

I continue to focus my research on the significance of donkeys to human cultures and the way that societies represent and, ultimately, treat them. My book *Donkey* (2011) was published by Reaktion Books and I have published several chapters in books and academic journal articles, the most recent concerning a new role for donkeys in Australia: "Our stubborn prejudice about donkeys is shifting as they protect Australia's sheep from wild dogs". *Australian Zoologist*: 2016, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 17-25.

Dr Jill Bough is currently a Conjoint Lecturer at the University of Newcastle in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Gonzalo Villanueva



Animals have always been a part of my life. At the age of nine, my parents decided that I should have a cat as a companion and we went to the local shelter where I chose a ginger kitten from a litter, whom I named Cleopatra (her name choice was not inspired by the pharaoh – although as a historian I wish I could claim this – but by a character on Scooby Doo I had seen on TV

that morning). Cleopatra joined our beloved silky terrier, Scruffy. Living in the western suburbs of Sydney, our companion animal family grew: we had several finches, a fluctuating number of rabbits, a gold fish, and for a short time my brother had a mouse. I was also one to bring home stray dogs that we would foster for a short time and I would always be upset whenever they left. Today, a young tabby cat called Phoenix and a middle-aged Chihuahua/Jack Russell named Cleo (no connection to my childhood cat, but a nice coincidence), make up an important part of our household.

I began to consider the politics of the human-animal relationship when I was at university. Before then, I had been a vegetarian for a few years, but mainly for health and environmental reasons; I hadn't seriously considered the ethical issues regarding. This slowly changed when a friend who was actively involved in the university's animal protection society challenged me to consider the animal question. Over a short period of time, I became convinced of the significance of animal rights and the imperative of veganism. These decisions eventually shaped my academic interests.

Having trained in sociology and with a longstanding interest in social movements, I decided to focus my PhD at the University of Melbourne on the Australian animal rights movement. As there was very little written about the history of the movement, I rather quickly, and perhaps ambitiously, began to ask more historically orientated questions: how did the movement originate? How did activists undertake their campaigning (for example, why did activists take up direct action)? How effective were their actions? These became my guiding questions. After my first year, I joined the history department, under the expert tutelage of Sean Scalmer, a scholar with a rich interdisciplinary background. Engaging with diverse approaches to studying social movements, exploring previously unexamined archives, and through interviews with current and former leading activists, my thesis offered the first major historical study of the creation, contention, and consequences of animal activism in modern Australian history.

AASA members might best know my work because of a [Conversation article](#) I wrote earlier this year during the "milk crisis". I had been following the "milk crisis" as it unfolded in the media and it had been a particularly one-sided narrative. Of course, the Facebook forums were quick to criticise this narrative and pointed out that the real victims were being ignored. Indeed, the media outlets persisted, and continue, with this parochial, anthropocentric narrative. Why were no alternative analyses being offered in the media?

My decision to write the article had been influenced by something Peter Singer had said in the preface to *Democracy and Disobedience* (1973): 'Moral and political philosophers must be prepared to give their opinions, with supporting arguments, on the rights and wrongs of complex disputes'. He rejected the passive and insulated culture of academia. Intellectuals (and here I do not use the term exclusively to mean academics, but anyone involved in

“thinking work”) must not only produce meaning, but must articulate and debate solutions to real-world issues.

Although it wasn't my first article, it was certainly my most controversial. Within twenty-four hours, it had received 18,000 views and more than 200 comments. The comments were heavily moderated due to intense personal attacks that were being written (and here I applaud the efforts of the *Conversation* for facilitating this public debate). Commentary was closed within two hours and it looked as though it was going to be a premature end to a passionate debate. However, by midday, it had reopened and remained so until the end of the day. I was satisfied that my article had provided a frame for an animated public debate, if only for a few days.

Having graduated in 2016, I am in the process of publishing a monograph, which is based on my thesis. I am also in the early stages of developing a postdoctoral project that seeks to historically explore the global activism of Sea Shepherd. In the meantime, I am working as part of team on a commissioned history of the Victorian Bar. Within this project, I hope to explore the colonial legal architecture of animal protection. AASA members can follow my work via my [academia profile page](#).

Member News



Janine Burke has guest curated an exhibition opening on 20 November at McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery. Entitled *Human/Animal/Artist: Art Inspired by Animals*, the exhibition explores how the exquisite, elaborate and sophisticated works of animals can have a direct, fecund and illuminating relationship with contemporary art. It includes international and local sculptors, painters, photographers, video, installation and performance artists, and musicians: Lauren Berkowitz, Catherine Chalmers (USA), Catherine Clover, Joe Japanangka James, Nicholas Mangan, Vera Möller, Greg

Mosquito, Samuel Namunjdja, Sean Peoples, Elizabeth Presa, David Rothenberg (USA), Sandra Selig, Tai Snaith, Jason deCaires Taylor (UK), Esme Timbery, Watarru Collaborative, Louise Weaver, Shona Wilson, and John Wolseley. The exhibition will run until 19 February 2017.

Jane Mummery and Debbie Rodan have guest edited the current issue of *Ctrl-Z: New Media Philosophy*, which explores the question of 'New Media Animals'. Featuring contributions from Audrey Appudurai, Adam Brown, Angela Campbell, Shaun P. Collin, Mike Danaher, Vinciane Despret (trans. Brett Buchanan), Yvette Granata, Claire Henry, Hörner/Antlfinger, Celeste Lawson, Dominique Lestel (trans. Matthew Chrulew), Jane Mummery, Marnie Nolton, Debbie Rodan, John Ryan, Thomas Sutherland, Deb Waterhouse-Watson, and Ionat Zurr, the special issue offers new insights into the questions of animality and new media.

<http://www.ctrl-z.net.au//journal?slug=issue-6>

Recent Publications

Teya Brooks Pribac, 'Crazy Animaladies', *Mascara Literary Review* no.19 *Only Animals*, September 2016: <http://mascarareview.com/teya-brooks-pribac/>

Laura Jean McKay, 'Crossing the Threshold: Domestic Territory and Nonhuman Otherness in Colin McAdam's *A Beautiful Truth*', *Otherness: Essays and Studies*, 5 (2) September 2016.

http://www.otherness.dk/fileadmin/www.othernessandthearts.org/Publications/Journal_Otherness/Otherness_Essays_and_Studies_5.2/7_Laura_Jean_McKay_-_Crossing_The_Threshold.pdf

Jane Mummery, Debbie Rodan & Marnie Nolton, 'Making Change: Digital Activism and Public Pressure Regarding Livestock Welfare', *Ctrl-Z: New Media Philosophy* #6, 2016.

<http://www.ctrl-z.net.au/articles/issue-6/mummery-rodan-nolton-making-change/>

Susan Pyke, 'Divine Wings: Literary Flights between the Cyclic Avian in Emily Brontë's Poems and Oblivia's Swan Song in Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book*', *Otherness: Essays and Studies*, 5 (2) September 2016.

http://www.otherness.dk/fileadmin/www.othernessandthearts.org/Publications/Journal_Otherness/Otherness_Essays_and_Studies_5.2/8_Susan_Pyke_-_Divine_Wings.pdf

Gonzalo Villanueva, "'The Bible' of the Animal Movement: Peter Singer and Animal Liberation, 1970-1976", *History Australia* 13, no. 3 (2016): 399–414.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14490854.2016.1202372?journalCode=raha20>

Animal Rights in Sydney (ARiS) Convenors: [Siobhan O'Sullivan](#), [John Hadley](#), [Dinesh Wadiwel](#)



Animal Rights in Sydney (ARiS) aims to bring together scholars, practitioners and activists to engage with animal rights theory and explore new directions for pro animal change. ARiS is creating a regular space to engage with both classic animal rights theory and new emerging perspectives. ARiS will host national and international visitors and will initiate discussion and reading groups that allow participants to engage with key debates and develop connections between scholars, practitioners and activists. Keep an eye out for future events - we are hoping this will become a regular fixture.

NEW BOOK RELEASES

Compiled by Annie Potts

New Book Releases September 2016

This month we're celebrating the publication of two books by AASA members!



Fighting Nature: Travelling Menageries, Animal Acts and War Shows

By Peta Tait, published by Sydney University Press in its **Animal Publics Series**.

ISBN: 9781743324301

Throughout the 19th century animals were integrated into staged scenarios of confrontation, ranging from lion acts in small cages to large-scale re-enactments of war. Initially presenting a handful of exotic animals, travelling menageries grew to contain multiple species in their thousands. These 19th-century menageries entrenched beliefs about the human right to exploit nature through war-like practices against other animal species. Animal shows became a stimulus for antisocial behaviour as locals taunted animals, caused fights, and even turned into violent mobs. Human societal problems were difficult to separate from issues of cruelty to animals.

Apart from reflecting human capacity for fighting and aggression, and the belief in human dominance over nature, these animal performances also echoed cultural fascination with conflict, war and colonial expansion, as the grand spectacles of imperial power reinforced state authority and enhanced public displays of nationhood and nationalistic evocations of colonial empires.

Fighting Nature is an insightful analysis of the historical legacy of 19th-century colonialism, war, animal acquisition and transportation. This legacy of entrenched beliefs about the human right to exploit other animal species is yet to be defeated.

About the Author: Peta Tait FAHA is Professor of Theatre and Drama at La Trobe University and Visiting Professor at the University of Wollongong, and author of *Wild and Dangerous Performances* (2012).

Digital editions of *Fighting Nature* are also now available for Google Play and the iBookstore.

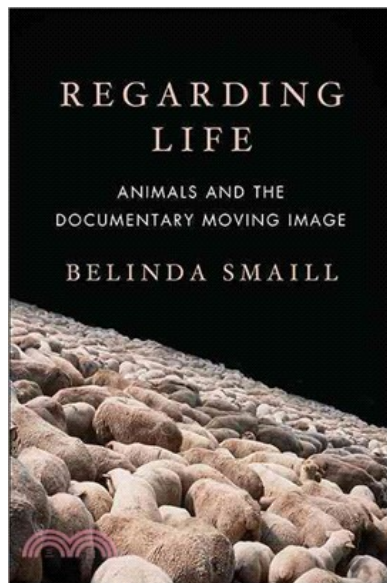
For more info see: <http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/sup/9781743324301>

Regarding Life: Animals and the Documentary Moving Image

By Rebecca Smaill, published by SUNY Press in the Horizons of Cinema Series.

Regarding Life contends that the narrative and aesthetic qualities of the documentary genre enable new understandings of animals and animal/human relationships.

As indicated by the success of such films as *March of the Penguins* and *Food, Inc.*, the documentary has become the preeminent format for rendering animals and nature onscreen. In *Regarding Life*, Belinda Smaill brings together examples from a broad array of moving image contexts, including wildlife film and television, advocacy documentary, avant-garde nonfiction, and new media to identify a new documentary terrain in which the



representation of animals in the wild and in industrial settings is becoming markedly more complex and increasingly more involved with pivotal ecological debates over species loss, food production, and science.

While attending to some of the most discussed documentaries of the last two decades, including *Grizzly Man*; *Food, Inc.*; *Sweetgrass*; *Our Daily Bread*; and *Darwin's Nightmare*, the book also draws on lesser-known film examples, and is one of the first to bring film studies understandings to new media such as YouTube. The result is a study that melds film studies and animal studies to explore how documentary films render both humans and animals, and to what political ends.

“A brilliant, cogent, and timely look at the intersection of animals, the environment, food, and the people who enjoy and consume them. This is the most solid book on film I have read in quite a while, and it will be taken up with much enthusiasm by documentary scholars, animal-rights activists, eco-warriors, and a broad public that is interested in one or another—or all—of the subjects covered here.” — David Desser, author of *American Jewish Filmmakers, Second Edition*

About the Author: Belinda Smaill is Associate Professor in Film and Screen Studies at Monash University in Australia. She is the author of *The Documentary: Politics, Emotion, Culture* and the coauthor (with Olivia Khoo and Audrey Yue) of *Transnational Australian*

Cinema: Ethics in the Asian Diasporas.

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- For more info see: <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6290-regarding-life.aspx>

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Call for Papers – Yamini Narayanan, Simon Springer, Ophelie Veron

AAG 2017, Boston.

Towards Vegan Geographies: Ethics Beyond Violence

Outline

Veganism as an ethics and a practice has a recorded history dating back to Antiquity. Yet, it is only recently that researchers have begun the process of formalising the study of veganism. Scholars who examine this theory and action are usually situated in sociology, history, philosophy, cultural studies or critical animal studies. The centrality and contested nature of place in the actions and discourse of animal rights activists however suggest an inherently spatial praxis. Slaughterhouses are deliberately closed and placed out of the sight; our familiar urban environment is filled with references to eating meat and exploiting animals, although normalised and rendered invisible. On the other hand, activists take to the street to defend animal rights and invite individuals to change their perception on everyday places and practices of animal violence. Animal liberation and veganism therefore embody an inherently spatial praxis – the desire to live without places of violence (White, 2015). As underlined by Harper (2010:5-6), 'veganism is not just about the abstinence of animal consumption; it is about the ongoing struggle to produce socio-spatial

epistemologies of consumption that lead to cultural and spatial change'. While an interest in domination over non-human animals has gained momentum within critical geography circles in the last two decades (Wolch and Emel, 1995; Philo and Wilbert, 2000; Emel et al., 2002, Gillespie and Collards, 2015; White, 2015), the scarcity of available literature highlights the need for geographers to further reflect on vegan activism and practice. As scholars-activists identifying with veganism, we seek to underscore what geographers can contribute to our understanding of critical veganism and vegan praxis.

We therefore would like to invite research presentations addressing themes including but not limited to:

- Veganism and critical animal geographies
- Vegan, post-colonial and feminist geographies
- Speciesism and imagined geographies
- Total liberation and emancipatory politics
- Veganism as a spatial praxis
- Veganism and positionality
- Vegan movements and activism
- Vegan cultures and subcultures
- Indigenous and Black veganism
- Intersectionality
- Anthroprivilege and anthroparchy
- Veganism and anarchist geographies
- Veganism, capitalism and the animal industrial complex
- Veganism and critical pedagogies
- Veganism and environmentalism
- Vegan futures

We also welcome presentations in non-traditional and participatory formats. Please send abstracts of no more than 250 words to y.narayanan@deakin.edu.au, springer@uvic.ca, ophelie.ei.veron@gmail.com and richard.white@shu.ac.uk by 21 October 2016.

The session will be followed by an open discussion. If you would like to participate (e.g. discussant) then please feel free to contact us as well.

References

Emel, J., Wilbert, C. and Wolch, J. (2002) *Animal Geographies, Society and Animals*, 10(4), p. 407-412.

Gillespie, K., & Collard, R. C. (eds.)(2015)*Critical Animal Geographies: Politics, Intersections and Hierarchies in a Multispecies World*. Routledge.: London& New York.

Harper, A. B. (2010). Race as a 'Feeble Matter'in *Veganism: Interrogating Whiteness, Geopolitical Privilege, and Consumption Philosophy of 'Cruelty-Free'Products*. *Journal for critical animal studies*, 8(3), p. 5-27.

Philo, C. and Wilbert, C.(eds.), *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations*, Routledge, London and New York.

White, R. J. (2015) *Animal geographies, anarchist praxis, and critical animal studies*. In:Kathryn Gillespie and Rosemary-Claire Collard (eds.), *Critical Animal Geographies: Politics, Intersections and Hierarchies in a Multispecies World*. Routledge: London& New York, p.19-35.

White, R. J. (2015) *Following in the Footsteps of Elisée Reclus: Disturbing Places of Inter-Species Violence that are Hidden in Plain Sight*. In: Anthony J. Nocella II, Richard J. White and Erika Cudworth (eds.), *Anarchism and Animal Liberation. Essays on Complementary Elements of Total Liberation*, Jefferson: Mc Farland & Company, p. 212-230.

Wolch, J. and Emel, J. (1995) *Bringing the Animals Back In*. In: Jennifer Wolch and Jacque Emel (eds.) *Special Issue: Bringing the Animals Back In*. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13.6, p. 632–636.