



Animal Studies Journal

Volume 3, Number 1

2014

AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL STUDIES GROUP

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AASG's quarterly *Bulletin* is a quarterly digest of news and events in the field of animal studies within Australia and beyond. It includes information on recent and forthcoming conferences, exhibitions and other events, calls for papers, and information about new books, special issues of journals, and films. The *Bulletin* is available on our website or by email on request.

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Animal Studies Journal is the journal of the Australian Animal Studies Group. It is a fully refereed journal, published twice-yearly, devoted to multidisciplinary scholarship and discussion on animal studies.

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ISSN 2200-9140 (Print)

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Published by the Australian Animal Studies Group.

Animal Studies Journal

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Notes on Contributors

Meera Atkinson is a Sydney-based writer, poet and scholar. Her writing has appeared in many publications, including *Salon.com*, *Best Australian Stories* 2007, *Best Australian Poems* 2010, *Griffith REVIEW*, The 2013 *Voiceless Anthology* and *Southerly*. Meera has a creative PhD on the transgenerational transmission and poetics of trauma from the Writing and Society Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, and is co-editor of *Traumatic Affect* (2013).

Sally Borrell is secretary of the Australian Animal Studies Group and an associate of the New Zealand Centre for Human–Animal Studies. She is on the editorial team of *Society & Animals* and *Animal Studies Journal*. Her own work addresses representations of human–animal relations in literature, with particular attention to questions of postcolonialism and posthumanism. She is based in Melbourne.

Barbara Creed is Professor of Film and Screen Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her areas of research are film, feminism and psychoanalytic theory, animal studies, the cinema of human rights and the impact of Darwinian theory on the cinema. Her publications include *The Monstrous-Feminine: film, feminism, psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 1993), *Phallic Panic: film, horror and the primal uncanny* MUP (2005), and *Darwin's Screens: evolutionary aesthetics, time and sexual display in the cinema* (MUP, 2009). She is Director of the Human Rights and Animal Ethics Research Network (HRAE) in the Arts Faculty at the University of Melbourne.

Rick De Vos is an adjunct research fellow in the School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts at Curtin University in Western Australia. His research focuses on species extinction, its cultural significance, and the way it functions as social and cultural practice. He has had essays published in two edited collections, *Animal Death* and *Knowing Animals*, and is currently preparing a monograph examining constitutive practices and representations of extinction.

Chris Degeling is a veterinarian, social scientist and field philosopher whose interests include the social and cultural dimensions and ethics of human-animal interactions. He is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine at the University of Sydney. His work is inter-disciplinary and appears in public health, social science, philosophy and veterinary journals. Chris is on the Executive team of HARN: Human Animal Research Network at the University of Sydney. See:

<http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/people/academics/profiles/cdegeling.php>

Claire Henry teaches film and literature at the University of Melbourne and Federation University Australia. She holds a PhD in Film Studies from Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge, UK) and a BA(Hons), DipCA, and MA in Screen Studies from The University of Melbourne. Her monograph, *Revisionist Rape-Revenge: Redefining a Film Genre*, is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan (October 2014) and she has previously published in *Studies in European Cinema*, *Cine-Excess*, *Senses of Cinema*, *Best Served Cold*, and *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond*.

Joshua Lobb is a lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong. His stories have appeared in *The Bridport Anthology*, *Best Australian Stories*, *Text and Social Alternatives*. His plays have been performed at The Actor's Centre and Belvoir St Theatre. He is currently completing a massively over-populated novel, *Remission*. Joshua holds a PhD on the novel form from UNSW and has published on Creative Writing pedagogy and narrative theory.

Dan Lunney is a scientist with a lifelong interest in wildlife ecology and conservation, particularly forest mammals, with an emphasis on wildlife management, including its ethical dimension. He also has a long-standing interest in the acquisition and management of national parks and nature reserves, and in the ecological history of landscapes and species. He is an Honorary Scientific Fellow with Office of Environment and Heritage NSW, an Adjunct Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney, a council member of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, and a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

Jane Lymer is a Research Fellow in the Philosophy Program at the University of Wollongong and an Academic Program Coordinator at the UOW College. Her published research is situated within the stream of Continental Philosophy which she has applied to articulate the relation between maternal embodiment and foetal cognitive development which she relates to social structures of medical and legal hospitality. Currently she is exploring the possibility of applying this research to develop a philosophy of ecofeminism that examines the links between a hospitality of maternal embodiment and a hospitality of nature.

Sascha Morrell is a Lecturer in English at the University of New England, Australia (UNE). Her current research concerns include the dialectics of race and class identity in American literature; continuities between nineteenth and twentieth-century modernisms; the literary impact of photography; the comparison of literary ‘zombies’ and ‘robots’; and symbolic invocations of Haitian and other Caribbean histories in Anglophone literature. Prior to her appointment at UNE, Dr Morrell was adjunct lecturer at the Centre for Modernism Studies Australia. She is presenting the Short Story Book Club on ABC Radio New England in 2014, and is convenor of the Posthuman Literary and Cultural Studies Research Group in the School of Arts at UNE.

Fiona Probyn-Rapsey is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia. Her research and teaching areas focus on Gender and Cultural studies with particular emphasis on Australian studies, Human Animal studies, Feminist theory and Postcolonial studies. She is the author of *Made to Matter: White Fathers, Stolen Generations* (SUP 2013) and Co-Editor (with Jay Johnston) of *Animal Death* (SUP 2013). Fiona is Vice-Chair of AASG: Australian Animal Studies Group and Convenor of HARN: Human Animal Research Network at the University of Sydney. See:

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Editorial

Guest Editors

Fiona Probyn-Rapsey and Chris Degeling

University of Sydney

The majority of the essays and creative work collected here began life as conference papers delivered at AASG@Sydney: Life in the Anthropocene,¹ co-hosted by AASG and HARN (Human Animal Research Network) at the University of Sydney, in July 2013. With over 200 delegates, six keynotes and three writers in residence, the conference (like the four before it) managed to showcase the diversity embedded in this emergent field of study, a diversity also reflected in this selection of papers in their literary, filmic, historical and zoological formations.

Meera Atkinson's contribution to this edition, 'A Suite of Creatures', is an assembly of poetic interventions and engagements with some of the conference papers delivered over the three days and reading it reminds us of both the fabulous individual presentations and the range of disciplinary voices as a whole. With the generous support of Voiceless: the animal protection institute, we were extremely fortunate to have Meera Atkinson as one of our writers in residence, along with Olga Kotnowska and Liana Christensen. Meera, Olga and Liana made vital and original contributions to the conference, not least through their posts to the Animals + Writing Blog, created as a forum for engagement between the writers in residence, delegates and the public leading up to and during the conference. As well as the blog, there was the wall of Zoo Haiku; delegates were inspired to write (and sometimes, in the coffee

¹ We would like to take this opportunity to thank the rest of the (best) organising committee – in alphabetical order: Celeste Black, Madeleine Boyd, Matthew Chrulew, Agata Mrva-Montoya, Nikki Savvides, Barry Spurr and Dinesh Wadiwel. Thanks also to Natalie Edwards for her work on the Animals + Writing events.

queue, we admit that delegates were gently cajoled into writing) their own haikus which were then sticky-taped on a wall for all to read during the breaks. Creative writing has always played an important role in the development of the field of animal studies, and the work of the writers in residence confirmed this but also extended the effectiveness of literary interventions beyond traditional boundaries. Here, Atkinson's 'A Suite of Creatures' does poetic/critical reconnaissance work, engaging directly with conference presentations. Her work echoes, extends and re-imagines the life worlds of animals who speak back to human preoccupations, such as the silvery gibbons who 'taken as pets, need ethnographic methods' and the Philosopher's cat who 'always has the last word, concluding with a sigh and a philosophical flick of the tail', or who speaks *with* humans 'with/the air/ of shared breath'. Atkinson's work addresses disciplinary methods, modes of address, as well as human and animal (mis)communications and (dis)connections.

Claire Henry's essay interrogates an ongoing fascination with the work and life of Temple Grandin. Grandin rose to prominence for her design of more humane livestock handling processes in the US cattle industry, and for her books and public speaking on autism. Henry's essay unpacks the ways that screen representations of Grandin (including 'Stairway to Heaven' (Errol Morris, 2001), the BBC's *Horizon* episode 'The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow' (Emma Sutton, 2006), and the HBO Films biopic *Temple Grandin* (Mick Jackson, 2010), suggest that the model of empathy on offer to viewers is circumscribed by Grandin's approaches to animal welfare. Henry finds that these screen depictions of Grandin constitute an 'ambiguous use of Grandin as an access point for understanding and responding ethically to cattle's needs and interests' and she goes on to identify and contextualise how the films introduce specific 'mitigating factors and techniques which put the spectator at ethical ease with the existence and operations of factory farms'. Henry's discussion of the Grandin effect highlights the ambiguous role that empathy can play in human-animal relations; once empathy is mobilized it can also be steered away from touchy subjects, towards more palatable, less demanding concerns.

Rick De Vos' essay 'Stripes Faded, Barking Silenced: Remembering Quagga' traces the extinction of the quagga in the nineteenth century and various attempts to 'erase and redeem their extinction' in the form of the 'Quagga Project'; the selective 're-breeding' of quaggas (or quagga-like zebras) from Plains zebras. De Vos contextualizes this contemporary project to 'reverse extinction' as part of the colonial traditions which hastened their demise in the first place: 'Plains zebras that look like quaggas function collectively as a living cabinet, attempting to both act as reference and redeem an act of wrongdoing'. Breeding 'quaggas' back into the landscape of the Karoo is, for De Vos, intimately complicit with the need to *not see* or face the violence of extinction in the first place.

Donning his weathered zoologist's hat, Dan Lunney surveys the scope of living beings in evidence at the conference and provides a gentle critique of the implicit classifications that currently define the field of inquiry. In revealing the preference of Animal Studies scholars for large iconic mammals he points to the diversity of life that remains beyond the boundaries of the humanities-based studies of animals, and ponders what the implications of this yawning absence are for the broader aims and practices of wildlife management. In a personal reflection he describes why the extension into Animal Studies of the cultural invisibility of small, silent or even 'ugly' animals, and the lack of zoological specificity amongst its practitioners, should trouble those amongst who seek to engage with, and have a beneficial impact upon, different disciplinary audiences. Acknowledging that any system of naming and classification is inherently political, his point is that Animal Studies can make a better contribution to protecting and maintaining biodiversity if we are mindful of the means by which science and culture interact in shaping our attention to the plight of *other* species. For Lunney, there is always a question of *which* others and why *those* others that Animal Studies needs to attend to.

Joshua Lobb's two-fold narrative 'The Flight of Birds' offers a poignant reflection on the roles of animals in story. In Lobb's almost cinematic creative work the birds are at once traditional mirrors of human concerns and characters in their own right; their own avian freedom is resituated at the heart of a narrative where, ultimately, death meets life.

The edition also includes scholarly reviews of several recent publications: Barbara Creed reviews *Animal Death*, edited by Jay Johnston and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey; Sascha Morrell writes on *Among Animals: The Lives of Animals and Humans in Contemporary Short Fiction* edited by John Yunker; Jane Lymer reviews *The Eye of the Crocodile*, a posthumous collection of essays by Val Plumwood edited by Lorraine Shannon, and Sally Borrell reviews *A New Zealand Book of Beasts: Animals in Our Culture, History and Everyday Life*, by Annie Potts, Philip Armstrong and Deidre Brown.

The works that follow, drawn both from conference proceedings and external contributions, contain varied and insightful reflections on species relations in the time of the Anthropocene.

