Animal Death Symposium
June 12 and 13th 2012
University of Sydney
Location: Woolley Building

Abstracts
Alphabetical Order (by presenter)

Assoc Professor Michael Adams
School of Earth and Environmental Sciences & Indigenous Studies Unit, Uni of Wollongong
Hunters heart: Social and cultural dimensions of hunting in Australia
Hunting is a controversial activity in Australia, and much debated in international research. Positions range from ‘the first hunters were the first humans’ to the ‘meat is murder’ argument. There is, however, very little research on hunting in Australia, particularly on the social aspects, but also on biological and ecological issues. Few geographers have engaged with research on non-Indigenous hunting in Australia (with the exception of Adrian Franklin). In contrast to a general lack of research on non-Indigenous hunting, there is extensive literature on Indigenous hunting. It is likely that there are as many hunters as there are bushwalkers in Australia. This paper reviews initial research exploring hunting participation and motivation in NSW, as a window into further understanding connections between humans, non-humans and place. I am currently carrying out scoping interviews with hunters and hunter organisations, and I plan to explore the connections between at least three areas of debate as they relate to hunting: conservation/biodiversity; animals rights/welfare; and food/nutrition. My focus is on an analysis of hunting as cultural involvement in nature. Is it a cruel, archaic and redundant practice; or a respectful relationship between and among humans and non-humans which can reorient us to our emerging recombinant ecologies?

Paul Andrew
Curator, Taronga Zoo
Ethics and intuition in zoo population management
Zoos maintain small, fragmented and closed populations of animals over long periods of time. Population health and viability requires careful genetic and demographic management, and, critically, the efficient use of limited zoo spaces and resources. These are sometimes improved by the selective removal of animals, for example, well represented siblings and post reproductive animals that are surplus to the genetic needs of the program. Zoos, however, recognise that each individual animal has an intrinsic value and an instrumental value (for example, in an education or conservation program). Zoos must decide how much resource to invest in the surplus animals that do not, or no longer, contribute to the program. The proposition argued here is that the appropriate investment in such individuals is best indicated by that species’ life history strategy, the reproductive strategy being particularly useful. In this way the species response to finite resources in the wild is mimicked in the zoo program. This life history approach is consistent with three intuitions, firstly that zoo management should to some degree reflect the wild situation, secondly that individuals possessing behavioural identity are worth more than those without, and thirdly, that intrinsic value is greater in species that mourn (or at least notice) the removal of members of a group.
Tarsh Bates and Megan Schlipalius
Symbiotica, University of Western Australia & Janet Holmes a Court Collection
Non-human death in public – exploring life and death through ‘in vitro’
How do we deal with the death of so-called lower order non-humans? How do we deal with this death if we have cared for them? Artist Tarsh Bates explored the notion of interspecies care by living with eight other living model organisms during a residency at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) in 2011. This project, in vitro – exploring an interspecies aesthetic of care was conducted as a durational performance over 70 days. The project was an experiment in the aesthetics of care, which investigates the potential that sustained proximity and care can offer in exploring the relationship between the carer and cared-for. The central focus of in vitro was the relationships that humans can develop when spending time with and caring for non-human bodies that are very different to each other and us. Inevitably death occurred during the performance, while on display or when the organisms were killed soon after project completion. This paper will explore the artist’s and curator’s relationships to the animals cared for, in particular hydra, drosophila and daphnia, and the utility and ‘necessary expendability’ of animals in this biological art project. It will also discuss some preliminary audience research findings, conducted by curator Megan Schlipalius, which involved in depth discussion with audiences who visited the organisms. This project was made possible through SymbioticA, University of Western Australia.

Eva Birch
PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne
Woman/animal Death: anorexia nervosa as a contemporary manifestation of human/animal dualism
In ‘Anorexia Nervosa as the Crystallization of Culture’ Susan Bordo describes anorexia as the ‘crystallization’ of the Western dualism of body and mind, as developed in the works of Plato and St Augustine amongst others. In this paper, I will expand this idea by interrogating anorexia nervosa from the related dualism of human and animal. Tracing the genealogy of impurity – in Judaeo-Christian thought – and the abject – in psychoanalytic thought – as they relate to both women and animals, I will extrapolate on theories of why women stop eating in contemporary Western society. I will argue that anorexia nervosa is a drive towards death and a denial of the human animal body. This indicates the imperative of subversive traditions of thought that abandon ideal notions of the body; in favour of an intricate ecology that identifies the similarities and differences of plants, animals, and humans.

Sally Borrell and Carol Freeman
Mercy Killing: Julia Leigh’s The Hunter as Film
Julia Leigh’s 1999 novel The Hunter has recently been adapted into a film directed by Daniel Nettheim and starring Willem Dafoe. The story follows a man sent to Tasmania to obtain genetic material from the last thylacine (Tasmanian ‘tiger’). Both the book and the film address issues of instrumentalism, identification and the threat of extinction. However, the film presents the thylacine’s death very differently from the novel. Tony Hughes-d’Aeth has argued that Leigh breaks with certain conventions of Australian environmental writing: preservationism, social consensus, ‘being-in-nature’ and individual redemption. However, the film takes a different approach. In particular, whereas the hunter of the book ultimately fulfils his mission, in the film he rebels and the thylacine’s death becomes a mercy killing. In this paper, we suggest that the film of The Hunter reinstates conventions that Hughes-d’Aeth finds absent from the novel. We explore these and other differences, pondering why changes were made and evaluating their implications. Does the film simply pander to the expectations of a popular audience or does it reflect a shift in attitudes? What is the significance of the film in the context of global outrage about the treatment of animals and the radical growth in human-animal studies?
Dr Jill Bough
School of Humanities and Social Science, The University of Newcastle

Donkeys and Death: Associations of death and redemption
Donkeys bear both physical and symbolic burdens. The human-like qualities accorded them construct them as commodities as well as companions, in this life and the next. In Ancient Egypt, as is shown by the recent discovery of ten donkey skeletons in the pharaohs’ burial chambers at Abydos, they were esteemed as a source of spirituality, sustenance and companionship into the afterlife. In the modern world, they have come to be regarded as sufferers of hardship and victims of cruelty, associations which have again linked them with human death. Donkeys represent specific symbolic connections, especially the ass in the New Testament, as an allegory of human suffering and for hopes of salvation. As archaeologist Howard Williams suggests, their many qualities and associations ‘renders donkeys as intimately linked with human death and the dead, and, in particular, hopes for their resurrection’ (Howard Williams, 'Ashes to Asses: An Archaeological Perspective on Death and Donkeys,' Journal of Material Culture 16, no. 3 (2011): 219-39.) The link between the donkey as victim and as saviour is nowhere more pronounced than in Australia: This paper considers the celebrated iconic image of ‘the man with the donkey’, a symbolic appropriation of the spirit of Anzac that places the donkey in a special place in the nation’s heart veiling the reality of actual donkeys slaughtered in their thousands.

Melissa Boyde
Research Fellow, Uni of Wollongong, President of AASG

Mining animal death for all its worth
This paper considers the death of animals in the novels and film adaptations of Wake in Fright (1961/1971) and Red Dog (2001/2011). Both texts have several things in common: each is set in an outback Australian mining town – in Wake in Fright it is Bundanyabba, a fictional town with echoes of Broken Hill, NSW and in Red Dog it is Dampier in the Pilbara region of Western Australia; both are populated with (mostly male) misfits and outsiders; and in both the violent death of animals is central to the narrative – in Wake in Fright it is the massacre of kangaroos and in Red Dog it is the death of a dog from strychnine poisoning.

A recent scholarly article suggests that the kangaroo massacre in the film version of Wake in Fright is ‘a surrogate for the actual historical massacres of Australia’s Indigenous peoples’; while in a recent interview the director of Red Dog suggests that his film ‘was about the people and what the dog did to the people’. In both of these accounts the animals’ lives, and their deaths, are obscured. Readings of the novels follow a similar route whereby the animals are studiously metaphorised, elided or avoided. As literary scholar Susan McHugh (in her discussion of Derrida’s work on the animal) points out: ‘nonhuman traces serve as deconstructive elements that betray human attempts at self-representation and ultimately elaborate the logic of substitution through which the animal’s sacrificiality (its real and representational consumption) supports the human’.

My focus on the animals in these texts is not as metaphors or symbols, nor as sacrifices to the hierarchy of the human. Instead, the excavation of their textual deaths brings to the surface matters embedded in these stories: deviation and disappearance, shame and shamelessness, and vested and invested interests. Like the glimmering red cliffs laden with iron-ore spotted from the air long ago by mining magnate Lang Hancock which for him held the promise of untold wealth now realized by his daughter Gina (dubbed the Pilbara Princess), Red Dog (the Pilbara wanderer) shimmers on page and on screen – the question arises who profits from his life and his death?

Rowena Braddock

Creative Denial: Troy Emery and the Fuzzy Fetish of Prosthetic Animal Death
My paper offers a speculative reading of the phenomenon of “fake taxidermy” in contemporary art, with particular emphasis upon the work of Australian artist Troy Emery. In his paper “Animal
Death in Contemporary Art” Steve Baker expresses concern for the “gratuitous killing” of animals in the exhibition space, arguing that this trend signals both a failure of engagement and an aesthetic compromise. Whilst my subject does not concern the express killing of animals and thus falls outside of the specific context of Baker’s critique, I would nevertheless argue that the force and impact of fake taxidermy does turn somewhat ambiguously upon an active and engaging suspension of the affective and ethical trauma of animal death. The “fuzzy fetish” of the feel-good animal is, however, meaningless without its referencing and suspension of animal life. Curiously, animal life is neither wholly erased nor even partially preserved in the installation of this strange tactile relation. In my reading of Emery’s pom-pom taxidermy as plastic animation I will consider the interplay between the psychoanalytic function of the fetish as creative denial and, in Akira Lippit’s terms, the significance of the ‘fantastic crypt’ of imaginary sacrifice.

Dr Sandra Burr  
Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra

**A good way to go: an exploration of cultural attitudes towards the deaths of horses in Australia**

Humans and horses have coexisted for centuries and today many horses kept for recreational purposes are regarded as friends, partners and family members. The wish of all horse owners is for their horses to die a good death – peacefully, naturally and pain free, after living a long, happy and loved life. When euthanasia is the only option, horse owners view their ability to end the suffering of their horse not only as a privilege, but as the ultimate gift of compassion. Although they belong to the same species, horses that are not companion animals, such as racehorses and brumbies, rarely die good deaths. Recent research indicates, for example, that for every 1000 thoroughbred pregnancies in Australia, only 300 of the offspring will become racehorses and a high percentage of the ‘failures’ will be sent to slaughter. Across Australia, Brumbies are subjected to ‘removal’ regimes using shooting, poisoning, trapping and long distance transport to abattoirs and knackerries. Despite the current public outrage over animal abuse in Australia’s live export trade, the conditions under which horses are slaughtered in this country attracts little attention. This paper raises awareness of this issue by exploring differing cultural attitudes towards horses and the status afforded them.

Dr Christina M. Colvin  
Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

**The Killable Animal: Anthropocentric Language and Animal Death in Modern American Literature**

Historically, Western philosophy has excluded the animal from many of the privileges accorded to the human, including agency, subjectivity, and language. Despite recent efforts in the emergent field of animal studies to claim such capabilities for the category of the animal as well, the most profound difference separating human and animal endures: only the human can be murdered, while the animal remains ontologically available for killing. Although philosophers such as Donna Haraway have begun to examine the ethical and political ramifications of making the animal killable, the precise language practices that justify the killing of animals have yet to be fully explored. I contend that modern American literature is uniquely positioned for an examination of the language that produces, legitimates, and finally maintains the killability of the animal. By examining William Faulkner’s 1942 novel Go Down, Moses for its narrative engagement with the discourses that produce both the category of the non-human animal as well as the language that rationalizes the killing of animals, I demonstrate the necessity of interrogating literary representations of animal death and the killing of animals for the ethical possibilities and the human/animal relations they reflect and imagine.
Dr Matthew Chrulew

Distributing Death in the Zoo
Zoological gardens are biopolitical institutions devoted to the production and nurture of life. They protect their animals from natural threats such as starvation, disease and predation. In thus recreating Eden and its ordered harmony, zoos disavow mortality, excluding and hiding it where they can. Yet much to their embarrassment, death is a constitutive part of life, something they produce not only accidentally—in botched transfers and acquisitions, for example—but at the very core of their functioning, in feeding their predators, making space for healthy specimens, and even in facilitating the reproduction and reintroduction of endangered species. Examining interventions in zoo biology since the mid-twentieth century, this paper will explore the ways in which zoos have diminished and distributed death, and the wounds and losses that result.

Dr Rick De Vos

Adjunct Research Fellow, School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts, Curtin University
Huskies and Hunters: living and dying in northwestern Greenland
Relationship between Greenlandic hunters and their huskies in northwestern Greenland are shaped by a history of working together and of mutually surviving. A strong understanding of the roles each plays and their place within the relationship enables both the dogs and the hunters to negotiate the perils of the Greenland ice cap, the unpredictable weather conditions and the threat of predators, while at the same time facilitating the hunting of land and sea mammals for their meat and fur. However, the effects of under-regulated hunting practices and climate change can be seen to have brought about dramatic reductions in land and sea mammal numbers, and a reduced capacity and opportunity to hunt. This in turn has adversely affected the lives of Greenlandic huskies, bringing the question of how these animals are valued into sharper focus. This paper will examine accounts and representations of hunters, huskies, hunting and dogsledding in Greenland, in order to consider this question.

Dr Thom van Dooren

School of History and Philosophy, UNSW
Mourning crows: grief and extinction in a shared world
In 2002, the last free living Hawaiian Crow died. As forest dwelling fruit-specialists, these crows (Corvus hawaiiensis) have been significantly impacted upon by extensive habitat loss, as well as increased predation and introduced diseases. This paper takes as its focus the limited literature on the ways in which crows respond to the deaths of others of their kind. Much of the history of western thought has utilised animals’ understandings and responses to death to construct a dualism between ‘the human’ and ‘the animal’: unlike the human, the animal does not ‘know death’, does not ‘have’ a life, does not fully grieve. This dualistic thinking is at the core of a human exceptionalism that holds us apart from the rest of the world, and as such contributes to our inability to be affected by, and so to mourn, the incredible loss of the period of species extinctions in which we are currently living. In contrast to this tradition, this paper explores some of the ways in which taking mourning crows seriously might, in fact, work to undermine human exceptionalism: in particular, by highlighting both a deep evolutionary continuity between humans and other social animals, and our ecological entanglement in a shared more-than-human world. In this way, telling stories about grieving crows might itself become a process of mourning extinctions. This would be a mode of mourning that does not announce the uniqueness of the human, but rather works to draw us into company with crows and others to grieve with them for the loss of a world that includes us, a shared and disappearing world.
Glenys Eddy  
*The Human-Animal Relationship in the Teachings and Practices of a Contemporary Tibetan Buddhist Organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT)*

This presentation explores the relationship between humans and animals in the doctrines and practices of the worldwide Gelugpa Tibetan Buddhist Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). The FPMT adheres to the traditional Buddhist doctrine of karma and rebirth, and its teachings include an explanation of the effect of an individual’s karma on their rebirth into one of the six realms of the wheel of life (two of which are human and animal), of traditional Buddhist cosmology. Adherents of the FPMT follow the path of the bodhisattva, one who strives to attain enlightenment, not only for oneself, but in order to help all sentient beings attain it in order to end their suffering in Samsara, the phenomenal world. A recent development within the FPMT is the initiation of projects which aim to improve the conditions of animals in this life: the Animal Liberation Sanctuary in Nepal, and *Enlightenment for the Dear Animals*, a project pending affiliation with the FPMT, which supports a number of animal welfare projects. These two projects care for animals in need and also encourage the performance of traditional merit-making practices such as the recitation of blessings and mantras, performed on the animals’ behalf in order to help them attain enlightenment. I discuss this development as an extension of the ethical dimension to practice, itself a reflection of the contemporary Western need for a more this-worldly application of religious practice.

Anne Fawcett (and David Foote, John Baguley)  
*Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney*  
**Euthanasia and morally justifiable killing in a veterinary clinical context**

The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek ‘eu’ – good, and ‘thanatos’ – death. Veterinarians are trained to kill animals humanely (with minimal suffering) and are often called to do so in practice. The term euthanasia is traditionally applied to killing aimed at preventing suffering in animals for which reasonable interventions are either exhausted or not available and where quality of life is poor. But the term “euthanasia” is often applied to animal killing in which the above criteria do not apply, or in which killing is not truly in the animal’s interests. This misappropriation of the term may be a source of moral stress for veterinarians. In this session, a panel of veterinarians will discuss the use of the term “euthanasia” in Australia. We will discuss how euthanasia is currently deemed to be in an animal’s best interests, and whether there is a difference in the way that owned and unowned animal’s interests are assessed. We will discuss whether the killing of an animal which is not in its best interests is ever justified and in what contexts euthanasia or killing of an animal is likely to contribute to moral stress in veterinarians.” Our panel consists of three veterinarians. Dr John Baguley was a companion animal practitioner for over ten years and now lectures in professional practice and veterinary ethics. Dr Anne Fawcett is a full time companion animal practitioner and lectures in veterinary ethics. Dr David Foote was a companion animal veterinarian for over twenty years and now works as a counsellor, assisting both pet owners and veterinarians with issues around stress, bereavement and grief.

Rhiannon Galla  
*PhD Candidate, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU*  
**Animal Death and the Emergence of the New**

Animal death has attained a particular significance in the project of transforming human-animal relations, with some suggesting that the death of the animal may generate an encounter that opens us to the responsibility proper to ethics. For Derrida, for example, it represents ‘the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals’ as well as ‘the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life’ (2004: 121). Yet are vulnerability, mortality, or indeed moral responsibility, the values most suited to a transformative ethics? Might it not be that, rather than
exposing us to the ethical task given to us as human beings, the death of the animal may create the conditions for the emergence of the new, an event that, after the work of Deleuze, is tied up with a more immanent sense of ethics? This paper seeks to understand the significance of animal death from the point of view of the forces that possess us in the encounter with death. It considers how the quite literal decomposition of relations of force might expose us, not to a task that presses upon us, but to singular possibilities for new modes of life.

George Ioannides
Flesh, Flight, and Film: Animal Death, Rites of Mourning, and the Religious Cinematics of Sirius Remembered (1959)
This paper aims to explore the under-theorised intersections surrounding non/human animal death, rituals of mourning, and religious cinema. Specifically, it probes the potentialities of dead non-human animals and their achievement of what some human animals deem to be the “spiritual transcendence” that occurs after death. This shall be undertaken through an examination of *Sirius Remembered*, a film by the avant-garde American filmmaker Stan Brakhage. For this twelve-minute silent film made in 1959, Brakhage placed the body of his deceased dog, Sirius, in the woods near his house and filmed the corpse at various stages of decomposition over several seasons. Rather than being the gruesome spectacle that many in modern, sanitised society might expect after such a description, the film creates a beautiful and loving rite of mourning and meaning-making out of death, and the relation to the mutable, fallible non/human animal body. *Sirius Remembered* is essentially a film about death, the material facts of decomposition, and the possibility of spiritual transcendence hidden within it. The dead, unmoving animal body is transposed through the camera of Brakhage, which is then perceived by the cinematic body of the human film viewer; a relation between a human self and a non-human Other enacted within an ethics of visuality. This paper seeks to analyse what exactly such an ethics entails, and how the filmic images of a dead and decomposing animal might further produce a specific kind of religious subjectivity for this animal as well as for the viewing human. Although *Sirius Remembered* honours interspecies bonds, this paper questions whether what is being discussed in an exploration of this film is the animal as a subject of representation, or images of an animal that work primarily, even exclusively, to convey some feature of human complexity rather than any information about the nonhuman being whose images are being employed for human-centred purposes. Overall, it attempts to connect theories of death, of the non/human, the animal, and the religious through the diffractive lens of the cinematic.

Dr Kathie Jenni
University of Redlands, California
Bearing Witness for the Animal Dead
Images of animals’ violent deaths at human hands present moral challenges. Some are so graphic, the treatment they capture so degrading and cruel, that they approach the pornographic. How can we responsibly approach them? Is it more respectful to witness such brutality, or to look away? I explore bearing witness as a manifestation of respect. Why it is important to bear witness to human atrocities such as the Holocaust? Some rationales are forward-looking; we bear witness to stir moral motivation and preventive action. But there are also backward-looking reasons: to show respect for the dead, to express our solidarity and grief, to affirm the moral value of both the lost and the saved. Bearing witness, however, carries moral risks. Witnesses’ “testimony” can find its way not only to compassionate audiences, but to those who are simply voyeurs: the witness can unwillingly become “a pornographer of pain.” Given the motive of paying respect to the animal dead, this is the last outcome that we could desire. In light of such dilemmas, I explore the importance of bearing witness in private and as communal activity, of who attends to animal deaths, and of how and through what media we do so.
Dr Daniel Lunney  
Office of Environment and Heritage New South Wales  
Roadkill: an ecologist’s view of an unresolved issue in wildlife management  
A striking example of how animal and human deaths are conceptualised, diverge, differ and also connect in profound ways is roadkill. The headline on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald of 10 January 2012 read: "Minister under pressure over request to reinstate speed cameras at crash site", reflecting public concern at the horror of road deaths and injuries to people. In contrast, without a mention in the leading papers, wildlife roadkill is a major issue to those interested in the conservation of wildlife, and the welfare of injured animals. We could start by asking whether there is a culture of denial because we have become so used to seeing dead wildlife, and for some species, such as the koala, it accelerates its rate of extinction. We might also ask the tough questions of whether driving in rural areas is a de-facto ritual of wildlife slaughter? The issue sits at an intersection of conservation biology and road design and traffic management, as well as raising questions about how we value wildlife and how we might adapt our behaviour if we could throw a spotlight on the unresolved matter of how to conceptualise wildlife roadkill.

Dr Jennifer Ann McDonell  
Research Fellow: Clare Hall, University of Cambridge  
Inordinate Affection: Animal Death and Emotion in Nineteenth-Century Sentimental Culture  
This paper steps off from the premise that sentimental texts are often atypically self-conscious about their ambition to re-conceive civil relationships and collective obligations by disclosing the voices and interests of marginalised social subjects. I extend this argument to consider ways in which the experience of intense emotion over the loss of a beloved pet disrupts and reinforces the cultural work attributed to sentimental texts. Beginning with a locus classicus of Victorian sentiment – the loyal canine – and drawing on the writings of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Jane Carlyle, Ouida and Michael Field in the period 1843-1914, the paper argues that 1) the expression of inconsolable grief over the death of dogs was perceived by their contemporaries to be not only an aesthetic problem, but also a threat to ‘legitimate’ emotional, ethical, and political attachments; and 2) suggests that attention to case-sensitive, situated accounts of mourning for another species discloses a complex range of feelings as a resource for an ethics of care towards animals. Central to this investigation is the imperative to understand why the structure of feeling that came in the nineteenth-century to be identified as sentimentality was (and still is) used to devalue representational regimes which position animals as communicative agents who possess recognisable interests or evoke sympathetic identification.

Dr Milad Milani  
Centre for the Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies, UWS  
This presentation aims to explore the correlation between religious practice and burial ritual from the point of view of ecology. This concerns the attitude toward both human and animal, and asks the question of whether such religious customs (and ritual provisions) actually represent a conscious religious ecology. The specific details of Islamic burial offer important correlations with the practice of Islam (especially, dietary laws). That is, working backwards from the question of proper disposal of human (and animal) corpse, it would seem that religious practice in Islam appears to be in perfect harmony with the burial ritual, and which appears to consider the environment. This may demonstrate an unconscious and initial ecological concern on the part of the Muslim community or it may simply be an outcome of compliance to revelation alone (without any conscious deliberation for ecological concerns). A problem arises with regard to animal death. The general Islamic view, due to lack of explicit material evidence on the matter (Sharia, etc), is that animals do not possess a soul. Owners of deceased pets are permitted to perform basic funerary rites for sentimental reasons, but it is not incumbent on the Muslim to do
so. Controversially, the status of the dog in Islamic view and whether a dog can or cannot be kept as a pet (since it is considered najis, some traditions even saying that angels do not enter the house of those who keep dogs) raises further concern with regard animal well-fare and death.

Greg Murrie
PhD Candidate, The University of Sydney

The struggle against vivisection in nineteenth-century Britain was fought on at least two fronts, one centred on the spectre of animal survival rather than animal death, and the other based on a questioning of the right imputed by humans to themselves to take any non-human animal life. The first, restrictionist position, hinged on animal survival because it focused on the non-human animal experience of pain in the process of vivisection. It was deemed acceptable, either for the “higher interests” of science, because of the desire to compromise with the medical profession, or due to a lack of faith that vivisection could be abolished completely, for experiments to be performed on live animals, as long as pain could be controlled. In the restrictionist mind the ultimate nightmare that vivisection presented was symbolized in the use by the French physiologist Claude Bernard of curare, a drug which paralyzed the vivisected animal to allow ease of vivisection, yet which had no anaesthetizing properties. The second, abolitionist position, adopted by more radical antivivisectionists, took as its ethical premise the belief that any vivisection, painful or not, was anathema as it violated the right to life or at the very least the bodily integrity of creatures physiologically or even psychologically closely allied to the human. In this view, although the pain of the animal was still considered, it was the existential fact of vivisection itself that was the issue, as it resulted in the death of the experimental animal. In this paper I explore the competing claims of the restrictionist and abolitionist positions, and how they played out in nineteenth-century arguments over, respectively, the right to inflict pain, and the right to take life.

Brikha Nasoraia

The Dove and the Afterlife in Egyptian and Mandaean Ancient Sources

The dove (Mandaic: Yauna) plays an important role in Mandaean Sacred sources. In this tradition, the dove represents the symbol of life after death. It is also the messenger of ‘life’ who delivers the intention of the divine source among the realms. Within the Mandaean Nasoraean secret scrolls the dove is illustrated and discussed in detail with regard to Mandaean cosmology. Therefore, the dove plays an important role in the Mandaean rituals, especially, the Masiqtha (Rising Up). In this ritual, the dove represents the soul that ascends to the Perfect Worlds, Almia d-Nhura (“Words of Light”). In this case, the dove and its meat are called Ba. This term also appears in the ancient Egyptian sources with similar and parallel meanings to its symbolism. This paper aims to investigate the sacralisation of the dove as well as its artistic and textual representation in both Mandaean and Egyptian ancient traditions.

Atilla Orel
PhD Candidate, The University of Sydney

Consuming Violence: The Cultural Afterlives of Fanny Adams

A controversial mid-nineteenth-century murder case, its extensive media coverage, and the bizarre, irreverent and misogynist appropriation of its victim into popular culture provides an opportunity to consider the ways in which behavioural and conceptual articulations of patriarchal culture cohere in and derive from the epistemology of animal consumption. Following her vicious murder, Fanny Adams’ name became synonymous with the introduction of tinned meat as standard rations in the Royal navy. This is the origin of the phrase “Sweet Fanny Adams”, originally the nickname of a nine-year-old murder victim, appropriated as a euphemism for animal food. Ultimately the phrase that has come to designate absence itself, functioning as a substitute for the more profane “Sweet Fuck All”. Drawing on work by Carol J. Adams, Pierre Bourdieu and
Luce Irigaray, I explore this victim history as a process of multiple reiterations of misogynist violence, from the criminal act of murder, to its discursive re-enactment as food consumption, to its final form in the elision of the victim, the annihilation of her subjectivity which becomes the signifier for a vacancy still characterised by a violent, phallic potentiality. I argue that it is indispensable to this process for the human female to be figured and objectified as an incarnation of animal death.

**Teja Brooks Pribac**  
**PhD Candidate, The University of Sydney**  
**Animals Grieving**

With the increasingly more open admission of human-nonnhuman animal mental and emotional comparability, based among other things on shared operating systems in the brain, which include those for dreaming, anticipation, pleasure, anger, grief, love and maternal acceptance, and with literally billions of nonhuman animals dying every day from purposive and indirect human interference, the topic of animal death and indeed the possible perception of such violation by and its impact on the targeted animals and their communities is hardly a dismissible ethical dilemma. Nonhuman animals have been widely observed grieving and performing “burials” of dead conspecifics as well as members of other species. This paper will present selected examples of human and nonhuman animals’ reactions to death and a critical overview of interpretations drawn from these observations as adjuvant or inhibiting factors for the formation of a trans-species model as a seemingly more natural, holistic and indeed logical alternative to the current separatist view.

**Assoc Professor Annie Potts**  
**Centre for Human Animal Studies, University of Canterbury, NZ**  
**From Electromancy to McNuggets: An Illustrated Cultural History of the Chicken**

No creature has been subjected to such extremes of reverence and exploitation as the chicken. Hens have been venerated as cosmic creators and roosters as solar divinities. Many cultures have found the mysteries of birth, healing, death and resurrection encapsulated in the hen’s egg. Yet today, most people have nothing to do with chickens as living beings, although billions are consumed around the world every year. In contemporary Western culture chickens are predominantly assumed to be unintelligent, dim-witted, bland birds: merely ‘meat’ even while still alive.

This presentation explores the unique world of *Gallus gallus*, tracing the evolution of jungle fowl to the commercial breeding of today’s domesticated chickens farmed for meat and eggs. It will be argued that, prior to twentieth century industrialization and the proliferation of factory farms, chickens were held in high regard across a number of cultures. The term ‘chicken’, for example, was not used to refer to ‘cowardice’ – quite the opposite, for roosters were admired for their fortitude and bravery, while hens were viewed as devoted protectors of their families. The prominent negative reputation of chickens in 21st century discourse can be explained with reference to the increasing invisibilization of these birds through modern farming practices over the past one hundred years.

Importantly, however, the denigration of chickens in contemporary western societies does not go unchallenged: activist artists are producing provocative works which graphically draw attention to and disrupt the disparagement and abuse of chickens. Similarly, new findings by avian ethologists on the perceptual, cognitive, emotional and social capacities of chickens profoundly disturb our assumptions and prejudices about these birds. And, in popular culture, motifs of ‘heroic’ and ‘avenging’ chickens have emerged to counter the prevalent trivialization of hens and roosters.

This presentation will make vibrant use of chicken imagery in its examination of the competing discourses that shape past, present and future representations (and treatment) of chickens.
Venetia Robertson
PhD Candidate, The University of Sydney
Animal Rites: Grieving for Pets in a Postmodern World
This paper will address rites of grieving for pets who have passed and how this has been
constructed in accordance with spiritual beliefs, particularly the Christian faith. By looking at the
development of the industry and culture of pet loss (such as pet cemeteries, pet memorials, art
made from cremation ashes, commemorative poetry and so forth) and the concurrent religious
climate of the Western world, we can attempt to assess how the two have influenced one
another. I will propose that Christians have expanded their biblical and their personal
understanding of eschatology and salvation in order to accommodate a notion of immortality for
their companion animals. From the annual ‘Blessing of the Pets’ ceremony held in many churches
to post-rapture Pet Care, an increasingly creative approach has been taken by religious
institutions and religious individuals alike to finding a place for animals in the afterlife. Taking into
account the exegesis of biblical scholars, pronouncements by church officials, and the concerns
of the Christian laity, this discussion should highlight some of the tensions and transformations
that both the Kingdom of God and the Animal Kingdom are facing in the postmodern world.

Professor Deborah Bird Rose
Macquarie University
In the Shadow of All This Death
Deathzone (n): a place where the living and the dying encounter each other in the presence of
that which cannot be averted. This intimate and ultimate place is not, as some have imagined, a
purely human domain. Animals too have their moment here, and when we humans deprive
ourselves of participation with them we lose something of our kinship within earthly
communities of life as well as death.

My purpose is first to explore some parameters of multispecies death zones, and then to
consider our place as participants in multispecies communities in this era of anthropogenic
extinctions. The contemporary violence inflicted on animal others goes beyond the face-to-face
deathzone, casting an appalling shadow over all our communities, those of life as well as death.
As our world becomes ever more ghostly, we are called ever more urgently. Inside this isolating
shadow we glimpse but cannot grasp: splintered chords, patchy narratives of blood, doubled
sorrows, and haunted, reverberating silence.

Dr Rowan Savage
UTS
'They butchered a cow in the courtyard': Discourse and animal death in Partition violence
This paper examines the employment of rhetoric around the death of animals and humans during
Partition violence in India. Victims of mass violence have often been 'animalised' by perpetrators
in order to render their deaths acceptable; the paper firstly enquires whether, in Vedic (Hindu)
traditions in which vegetarianism and compassion for animals (particularly cows) has been
relatively more prominent than in Western history, a discourse of the 'animalisation' of non-
Hindu victims arose. Secondly, the question is asked as to whether and how Muslim practices of
non-vegetarianism and Halal slaughter were used as discursive weapons in inciting violence
against Muslim communities; and, conversely, whether Hindu sensibilities around meat and
slaughter were also used as tools of conflict. A multidisciplinary approach focusing on discourse
is used to contrast the way in which traditions around the death of animals can provide
possibilities both of restraint and provocation of communal violence. In doing so, the strategic
use of different human conceptions of the moral and cultural meaning of animal death is
demonstrated.
Nikki Savvides
PhD Candidate, The University of Sydney

_P(u/t) T(o) S(leep): Animal rescue and euthanasia in India and Thailand_

The acronym, PTS, meaning “Put To Sleep”, euphemistically describes the process of humanely killing an animal in order to alleviate its perceived suffering. The decision to PTS, made by the animal’s carers, relies upon both human empathy and a capacity for emotional detachment. In this paper I examine the reasons why certain animals are PTS, including the (cross-)cultural, religious, and economic factors that influence decision-making processes in Thai and Indian animal rescue organisations. Using examples from my own experiences working with these organisations, I investigate the tension between the oft-held Western view of animal euthanasia as a “necessary evil”, and the view held by practitioners of Buddhism and Hinduism, for whom PTS represents the transgressive practice of killing another living being. I consider the ways in which Westerners working with or managing these organisations are influenced by Thai and Indian ideas about death. I also examine how each organisation differs in terms of its approach to PTS, and how this is reflective of a certain philosophy or ‘ideal’ for animal welfare. To conclude, I examine how the process of putting such ideals into practice is often hindered by financial factors, primarily related to funding, which require human empathy and animal suffering to be rationalised, often against the desires of animal rescuers and carers.

Assoc Professor Katrina Schunke and Dr Elaine Kelly
University of Technology, Sydney

_The Hospitality of the (Dead) Animal_

The nightmare of hospitality is the consumption of the host by the stranger/guest – the literal ‘eating out of house and home’. And yet in Australia the eating of kangaroo is considered by many to be good ethical practice and environmentally sound – partly perhaps because the kangaroo was never seen as host. Packaged as part of the economy of organic meats, the kangaroo is now exported across the world; caught up in global networks of displacement and digestion. At home, the commercial harvesting of this specie is part and parcel of an environmentally sustainable future compatible with “promoting ecologically sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity” (Commercial Kangaroo Harvesting Fact Sheet 2011).

Hospitality and/in death and hospitality on the side of life are themes explored by Derrida not as antithetical but as simultaneous. Yet, Derrida privileged the human in his elaborations on the theme of hospitality, and only really gestured toward the possibility of its more-than-human potential. This gave rise to the provocative question, ‘Can a plant or animal offer hospitality?’ (Derrida 2001). But perhaps even more radically we can ask: can a dead kangaroo offer hospitality? Can animal death enter into our dialogue on host and guest, and human and animal, relationships?

In his reflections on ‘animal’ Derrida writes about how the intimate relationship between being and following where to be, is always to be in response to something, to follow something, including (perhaps especially) the ‘mute’ animal. If we ‘follow’ the kangaroo into our mouths might we arrive at a different idea of what it is to ‘be’ postcolonial? To live ‘as’ climate changers? To experience ‘animal’ hospitality?
Professor Peta Tait  
LaTrobe University  
**Dead Animals in Live Performance.**

How do spectators respond to animal carcasses in performance? In this paper, I will be considering how spectators might view animal bodies or body parts within the liveness of performance. There are practical, political and philosophical implications arising from artistic practices that implicitly stage human bodies and identity as ‘live’, that is, as alive, but stage animals as dead bodies. Regardless of whether an interpretation of meaning ranges from delivering sensationalist effects to an evocation of the politics of speciesism, the dead animal demands sensory attention. Yet there seems to be a bodily difference between a spectator’s perception of an actual carcass and a replica of a dead body. I am haunted by the sensory impact of the bloodied bones and pieces of flesh, the remnants of dead animal carcasses in Jill Orr’s, ‘The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya’ (2003). But does abject animal flesh continue to objectified even in performance? As Steve Baker (2000) has lucidly analysed in relation to postmodern visual art, there is a renewed effort by artists to make animals visible or at least evoke animal presence. In exploring a phenomenology of animal and human bodies in shared spaces in his concept of “bodiment”, Ralph Acampora argues that the “intersomatic domain”, can manifest “our bodily participation as animals ourselves operating on a zoomorphic register” to challenge our species dominant values and behaviour (2006: 30 130-1). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s (1995) ideas, this paper explores ideas of a fleshted body phenomenology of visceral and emotional responses to the dead animal in performance.


Assistant Professor Chloe Taylor  
Women’s Studies Program and Philosophy Department, University of Alberta  
**An Ethics of Respect for the Dead**

J. M. Coetzee’s novel, *Disgrace*, includes the remarkable scene of the protagonist—previously indifferent to nonhuman animals and condescending towards animal welfarists—taking upon himself the task of incinerating the corpses of dogs who have been euthanized at the local animal shelter. Although he observes that there are more “productive ways of giving oneself to the world,” such as “persuad[ing] the children at the dump not to fill their bodies with poisons,” he perseveres in his task in order to spare the bodies of the dogs the indignity of being treated like garbage by the dump employees, or “For his idea of the world, a world in which men do not use shovels to beat corpses into a more convenient shape for processing.” (J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin, 1990: 146.) In the literature on Coetzee’s novel, the ethical motivation behind this scene has been described as “unfathomable” and “ridiculous” (see, for instance, Cynthia Willet, “Ground Zero for a post-moral ethics in J. M. Coetzee’s Disgrace and Julia Kristeva’s melancholic,” in *Continental Philosophy Review*, December 2011.), and yet our attempts to give dignity to the corpses of humans are not considered inexplicable or absurd. Respectful ritualization of the disposal of human bodies is the norm, while those who give funerals to nonhuman animals are all but pathologized.¹ The fact that we have an ethics of respect for the dead for humans, but not for other animals, means that the instrumentalization of a killed nonhuman animal’s body (for food, clothing, etc.) makes the killing more ethical, while similar uses of a killed human’s body after death make the murder more heinous.² We are, in short, deontologists with respect to humans—including dead humans—and utilitarians with respect to
other animals—including the corpses of other animals. This paper explores and puts into question this distinction, arguing for an ethics of respect for the nonhuman animal dead.

**Dominique Thiriet**  
**School of Law, James Cook University**  
**To be or not to be – wildlife care dilemmas**  
Wildlife carers play a valuable role in rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing injured and orphaned wildlife. Whilst most undertake these activities because of their love of animals, they are faced with death on a regular basis: animals may be already dead or dying at time of rescue, may die later despite care, or may need to be euthanised if their injuries are untreatable, their suffering too great, and/or if they cannot be released back into the wild. This paper will explore the part that animal death plays in the life of wildlife carers. It will consider the factors that carers take into consideration when required to make decisions about euthanasia of wildlife and the challenge of balancing them. It will examine how the law and codes of practice fail to treat individuals as worthy of life and merely consider the species as a whole.

**Professor Helen Tiffin**  
**Adjunct Professor, University of New England**  
**Who Dies? The rhetoric and practice of human domination**  
Conflict between animal advocates and wildlife environmentalists are increasing. The killing of so-called 'pest animals' in order to preserve habitat and prevent or retard the extinction of endangered species has become routine practice for Western governments acting through their parks and wildlife departments. Such instrumental decisions can seem obvious but they raise important questions about our responsibilities towards, and relationship to, animals generally; our wildly contradictory attitudes to animals; and the elision of our own place as a plague species in the biosphere. Drawing on documentary sources and fiction the paper will consider our rhetoric and practices in relation to feral animal deaths.

**Catherine Tiplady,1 Shan Lloyd1 and John Morton2,3**  
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2School of Veterinary Science, Uni of Queensland, St Lucia Campus, Queensland 4072, Australia;  
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**Veterinary Science Student Preferences for the Source of Dog Cadavers Used in Anatomy Teaching**  
Use of live animals and cadavers is integral to veterinary education. In the year this survey was undertaken (2008) dog cadavers obtained by euthanasia of healthy pound-dogs and ex-racing greyhounds were dissected by veterinary students in their anatomy classes at the University of Queensland School of Veterinary Science although some students have ethical concerns about this. An alternative approach is to use 'donated dog cadavers' – ‘pet’ dogs which died of natural causes or were euthanased due to illness and donated by their owners for veterinary education. Veterinary students at the UQ Veterinary School were surveyed to determine their preferences for the source of dog cadaver used. Data from over 400 questionnaires were analysed. Students in higher years were more likely than first-year students to prefer pound-dog/greyhound cadavers over donated cadavers for anatomy dissection ($p \leq 0.002$). Findings are consistent with the hypothesis that veterinary students may become more accepting of euthanasia of unwanted healthy animals for education as they progress in their veterinary training, in contexts such as the current study. This could occur due to increased acceptance of the euthanasia of healthy animals, desensitisation, decline in moral development and/or belief that healthy animal cadavers offer a superior learning experience.
Dr Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel  
The University of Sydney  
“Thus, I give up the spear!” Derrida and Melville on Walten, Sovereignty and Death  
Jacques Derrida’s The Beast & the Sovereign lectures provide a timely reflection on the relationship between sovereignty and the relation between human and non human animal life. In an analysis of Martin Heidegger’s metaphysics lectures, Derrida observes that the distinction between human and animal is marked by the human claim to an intelligible, controlled violence, that grasps and takes hold of the violence inherent in all life and utilizes it as a form of domination: “all of this does not depend on a Vermögen, on a power, on a faculty that man has at his disposal, but consists in taming and joining (Bändig en und Fügen) forces or violence (Gewalten) that come to grip man and thanks to which beings are discovered as such” (Derrida, Beast and Sovereign, Vol.2). In this paper I read Derrida’s Beast and Sovereign in context with Herman Melville’s Moby Dick, with a specific aim to explore the sovereign relationship between Captain Ahab and the White Whale. I argue that the finale of Moby Dick opens up a number of possibilities for shifting away from relations with animals that are characterised primarily through violence and death. In particular, I argue that sovereignty recognition, through the space of truce, offers one way to reconceptualise and reformulate relations between human and non human animals.

Yvette Watt  
Assoc. Lecturer in Fine Art, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania  
Animal Factories: a visual investigation into the hidden lives of animals in industrial agriculture.  
This paper will present the process and some results of a visual arts research project, funded under the University of Tasmania’s New Appointees Research Grants Scheme.  
The Animal Factories project pursues and ongoing interest in the role of art in communicating issues surrounding the ethics of human-animal relationships in regards to ‘farm’ animals. The works in this series consist of large-scale documentary photographs taken of the outside of large-scale factory farms of the type that intensively house chickens and pigs. The images aim to capture the ‘concentration camp’ style layout of these industrial farms, with the total absence of animals in the imagery serving to highlight the hidden and secretive nature of the unnatural and restricted environment endured by the animals housed inside the windowless sheds. Through being presented with external views only, the viewer is placed be in a position whereby they must imagine what might be seen inside the sheds were they be able to view the conditions endured by the animals housed inside. The multiple images of farms from around the nation depict the superficial variation from farm to farm, while highlighting the homogeneity of these industrial complexes.

Siaw-Yean Woon  
The University of Sydney, President Animal Welfare Society  
Ethical Dilemmas of Dog Cadaver Sources in Veterinary Education  
Greyhounds and shelter/council pound dogs constitute the predominant source of cadavers used in dissection practicals at veterinary schools across Australia. However, ethical concerns may arise due to such cadavers being regarded as by-products of industries and practices non-conducive to animal welfare, and thus potentially associated with harmful animal use. It is therefore argued that ethically sourced cadavers* be preferentially considered to support humane learning objectives. Is it ethically justifiable to continue accepting conventional sources, provided the dogs have been humanely euthanised and supplied independently of student usage? Moreover, if these available sources purportedly serve a greater, educationally-beneficial purpose? In 2011, I conducted a pilot survey on cadaver preferences of University of Sydney veterinary students. The results obtained overwhelmingly illustrated the utilitarian attitudes held by the majority of students regarding cadaver sources. Accordingly, this presentation will
examine the repercussions of the differing nature of these dogs’ deaths in regards to student attitudes, moral implications, and potential influence upon compassionate regard for the plight of these exploited animals. Ethical considerations of terminal surgeries carried out by veterinary students will also contribute to the discussion.