

Ethopower & Ethography

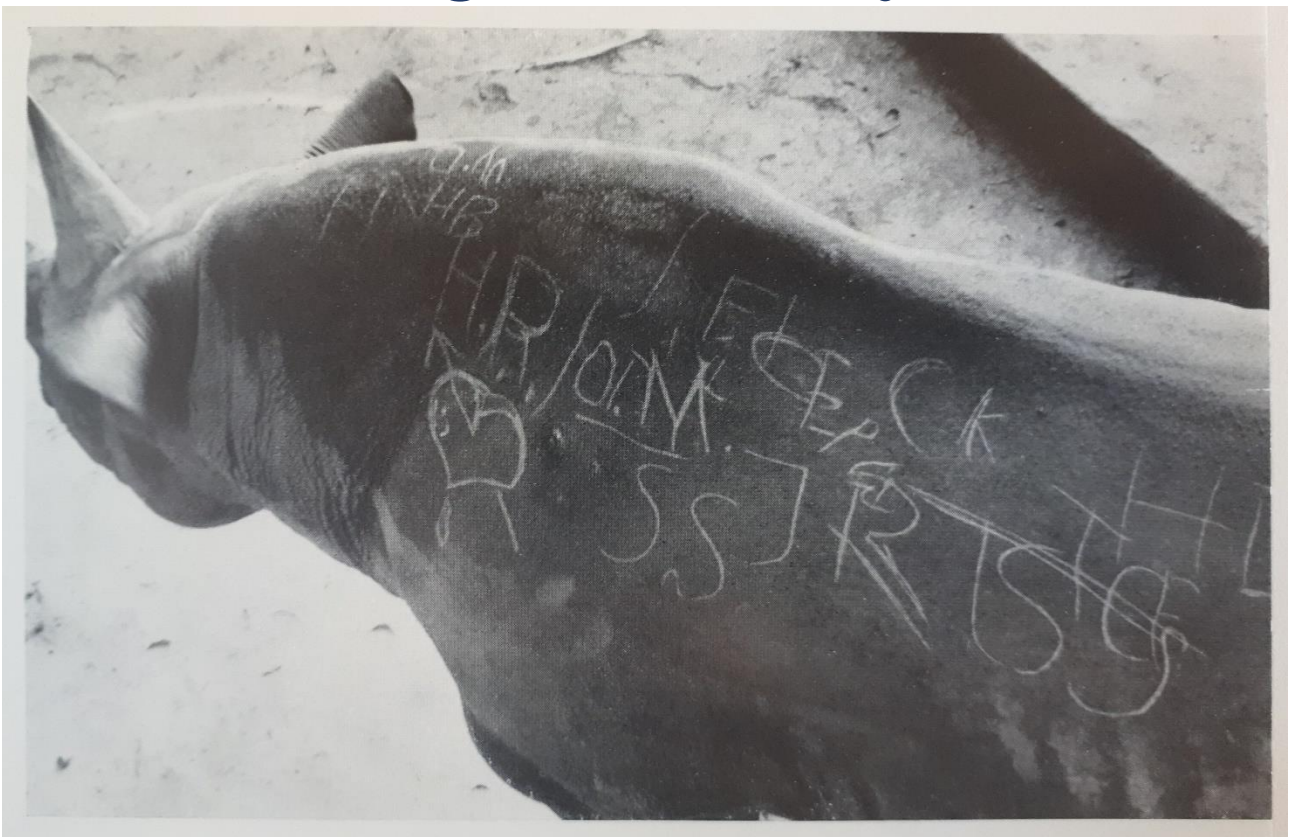
The History, Philosophy and Future of Ethology, IV

Curtin University, St Georges Terrace, Perth

14th – 16th November, 2019

featuring **Brett Buchanan**

Jean Langford and **Cary Wolfe**



Convened by Matthew Chrulew

Centre for Culture and Technology

School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

The environments, which are as diverse as the animals themselves, offer every nature lover new lands of such richness and beauty that a stroll through them will surely be rewarding, even though they are revealed only to our mind's eye and not to our body's.

- Uexküll

By capturing it we utterly destroy the animal's previous world, and put it into a different environment. The animal must construct an entirely fresh subjective world. This means an enormous task, and it is easy to understand that every individual cannot tackle it successfully.

- Hediger

Ethopower & Ethography

Animals are today not only managed as bodies, populations and species; they are also known, controlled, and cared for as individual beings capable of a certain, though circumscribed, degree of behavioural agency. In ethology and related sciences, “behaviour” has become an object of knowledge, power and intervention through which animal activity is delimited and controlled.

In this ethopolitical domain, the bodies and souls of wildlife, domesticated beasts and all those in between are subjected to a barrage of specialised techniques, both reductive and productive, mechanising and subjectifying. From laboratory experiments to zoo and circus performances to conservation interventions, epistemological and managerial practices often stage and elicit the reactivity and reflexivity of animal behaviour in contrast to responsive human conduct. Yet the appearance of this mechanicity is at the same time made volatile in the novel encounters between strange beings that such practices make possible. Paying attention to what animals do, recognising their species-specific ways of being by sharing time and space with them as affective and responsive others, has opened on to many new ways of understanding animal emotion, cognition, culture, subjectivity and sociality.

It has also led to new ways of thinking and writing with and about animals that in turn produce new genres, new affects, and new forms of witness and engagement. Recognising the inherent meaningfulness of animal worlds and the ways they interlace with human forms of expression undermines the exceptionalism of human writing and newly enlivens genres from philosophy and ethnography to fiction and poetry.

This international, interdisciplinary symposium asks about ways of understanding, acting upon, responding to, and inscribing animal behaviour. How have human apparatuses of knowledge and power impacted upon nonhuman worlds? What have been their destructive and damaging effects? What new kinds of hybrid, multispecies community have they made possible? What new forms of scholarship and writing are needed to discern and safeguard the distinctive *ethea* of our animal kin?

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14TH

9:00-9:30	Acknowledgement of Country and Introduction
9:30-11:00	<p><i>Philosophical Ethology</i></p> <p>Brett Buchanan On the Trail of a Philosopher-Ethologist</p> <p>Chair: Matthew Chrulew</p>
11:00-11:30	Morning tea
11:30-1:00	<p><i>Weaving Worlds</i></p> <p>Alexander Beatty The Stone of Werder: Uexküll's Spiderweb Story</p> <p>Matthew Chrulew A Foray into the Worlds of Captive Animals</p> <p>Chair: Dinesh Wadiwel</p>
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-3:30	<p><i>Ethopoetics and Living-With</i></p> <p>John Kinsella No Pets but Surrounded by Animals</p> <p>Danielle Celermajer Reading with Katie</p> <p>Chair: Robert Briggs</p>
3:30-4:00	Afternoon tea
4:00-5:00	<p><i>Zöomusicology</i></p> <p>Hollis Taylor Warning: Prestige Differentials Operating in this Area</p> <p>Chair: Anna-Katharina Laboissière</p>

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 15TH

9:00-10:30	<p><i>Etho-Ethnography</i></p> <p>Jean Langford Creaturely Thanatology: The Repetitious Death of Near-Humans</p> <p>Chair: Hollis Taylor</p>
10:30-11:00	Morning tea
11:00-12:30	<p><i>Conservation Ethographies</i></p> <p>Thom van Dooren Snail Trails: A Foray into Disappearing Worlds, Written in Slime</p> <p>Anna-Katharina Laboissière Confounding Species and Unravelling Kingdoms: When the Endangered Become Unruly</p> <p>Chair: Jacqueline Dalziell</p>
12:30-1:30	Lunch
1:30-3:00	<p><i>Immanent Complexity</i></p> <p>Kalle Jarvinen The Normativity of Autopoiesis: Viruses, Suicide and Sacrifice</p> <p>Stuart Cooke Nonhuman Complexity Poetics: Leaf-cutter Ants and Transcorporeal Composition</p> <p>Chair: Thom van Dooren</p>
3:00-3:30	Afternoon tea
3:30-4:30	<p><i>Ethopower</i></p> <p>Dinesh Wadiwel More or Less Invisible: Fish Visibility and Resistance within Aquaculture Systems</p> <p>Chair: Danielle Celermajer</p>
4:30-6:00	Reception

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 16TH

9:30-11:00	<p><i>Beyond Reductionism</i></p> <p>Cary Wolfe What “The Animal” Can Teach “The Anthropocene”</p> <p>Chair: Michael Lundblad</p>
11:00-11:30	Morning tea
11:30-1:00	<p><i>Beyond Anthropocentrism</i></p> <p>Robert Briggs Specifically Cultural: On the Invention of Animal Culture</p> <p>Jacqueline Dalziell A “Mysticism of Matter”: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism, Entomology</p> <p>Chair: Francis Russell</p>
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-3:00	<p><i>Multispecies Methods</i></p> <p>Michael Lundblad Idiorrhythmy and Its Discontents: Keywords for Multispecies Immersive Cultural Studies (MICS)</p> <p>Chair: Matthew Chrulew</p>
3:00-3:30	Conclusion

Abstracts

On the Trail of a Philosopher-Ethologist

Brett Buchanan

Laurentian University

Writing at the turn of the 20th century, Canadian artist and naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton developed and helped pioneer a particular form of nature-writing that gave voice and agency to wild animals. His animals were not those that would later come to be associated with Disney and other cute anthropomorphic creatures, but rather were, in the words of Margaret Atwood, tragic stories of failure and animal deaths. Seton was not an uncontroversial figure, however, and he found himself at the heart of what has become known as the “nature fakers” controversy, a public dispute on the legitimacy and validity of animals as agents that cast certain forms of writing about animals as intellectual hoaxes. In this paper I look at how philosophizing about animal agency today re-opens this old debate, and how philosophical ethology can help us create a space for thinking and writing with animals, particularly in our time of environmental crises.

The Stone of Werder: Uexküll’s Spiderweb Story

Alexander Beatty

The Robert B. Silvers Foundation

This paper examines the novel written by Jakob von Uexküll in the last years of his life, *The Stone of Werder*, paying particular attention to the author’s metaphors of the spiderweb and the stone. The spiderweb, I argue, is the site at which changes of narrative level reflect the author’s theory of meaning, allowing it to be “both a warning and a cause,” as the author writes in the first section of the novel, which is titled “Spiderweb Stories.” By contrast, the stone – the monument for which the novel is named, as well as its inscription, “God is my salvation, small is your gain” – also has hermeneutic value, given how the stone functions as a text on which characters project their own meanings. This interpretation both enhances, and is enhanced by, the context of Umweltlehre: *The Stone of Werder* offers new insight into the author’s exploration of the communicability of Umwelts, particularly with reference to Uexküll’s poetics and his correspondence with Rilke. Ultimately, considerations for Uexküll’s life, gleaned from Gudrun von Uexküll’s dotting biography, aim to recreate Uexküll’s own Umwelt and to shed light on what meaning *The Stone of Werder* may have had for its author.

A Foray into the Worlds of Captive Animals

Matthew Chrulew

Curtin University

In 1940, Jakob von Uexküll wrote a short letter to the director of the Leipzig Zoological Garden expounding on and complaining about certain aspects of the presentation of the

animals that occurred to him during a personal tour. Uexküll's vision for the zoo is one in which exhibit design, and training interactions, both suit the animals' capabilities (understood in terms of *Umwelt*) and produce greater freedom in interactions between animals. And while he recognises certain biological limits to the transformations of design and training, he believes that proper understanding of and commitment to the task on the part of zookeepers could lead them to "achieve astonishing success". The work of subsequent zoo designers and directors like Heini Hediger indeed sought to put Uexküll's advice into practice, helping captive animals to construct new *Umwelten* in their artificial environments. This paper will ask how Uexküll's vision of the harmonious web of nature translates to captivity – not only how it is transformed, but equally how readily his analysis of the specific affects making up the subjective world of each animal is operationalised by practices of captive keeping and management.

No Pets but Surrounded by Animals

John Kinsella

Curtin University

A piece on our not keeping pets (so as not to control animals and/or subject them to human needs and uses) and our son growing up surrounded by 'wildlife' and developing non-intrusive respectful interactions with animals/birds/insects etc as a 'consequence'.

Reading with Katie

Danielle Celermajer

University of Sydney

Scholars interested in moving beyond anthropocentric and individualized assumptions about mindedness have begun to draw on a range of philosophical ideas like intra-action (Barad), entanglement (Gruen) and distributed agency (Bennett), to provide resources for recasting the site of experience and value. Simultaneously, the political turn in animal studies calls for new institutional arrangements to provide a political infrastructure for inclusion, recognition, rights and voice for non-human animals. Bringing these two together indicates the need for, and the possibilities of new forms of practice and sense making, based on ontologies that not only refuse classical human-animal hierarchies, but recognize that humans are always already in relationship with animals.

The rub comes when we try to work out how to build out from abstract notions that remain largely utopian, to forms of life/modes of practice that are embedded in our everyday ways of being, knowing and acting. There are, however, philosophical resources, in particular in the work of Maurice Merleau-Pointy and Charles Pierce, that suggest that sense making and acting become normalized and entrenched not through committing ourselves to new ontologies or abstractions, or through reasoned argument, but through every day rituals, often starting with small daily practices. Shifting our material conditions, and altering the contexts in which we move play a critical role in rebuilding worlds and frames of meaning at the more macro level.

In this paper, I draw on Stengers' recent recasting of Foucault's notion of problematization as an experiment with the "ontology of ourselves" to discuss some ethopoetic practices I am exploring to normalize entangled epistemologies and politics within my academic practice. The first is the simple, though irreverent act of reading in bodily contact with Katie, a four-year-old rescued pig. The second is the attempt to explore the possibilities and limits of shared decision making in a multi-species community. At the most superficial level, both seem to impede the work of critical philosophy (muddy papers, time away from my computer), but what might they do to the capacity of philosophy to penetrate worlds and transform the experience of bodies?

Warning: Prestige Differentials Operating in this Area

Hollis Taylor

Macquarie University

In asserting that music transcends an exclusively human practice, zoömusicology promotes both heritage and new forms of witness, encounter, engagement, and celebration. While the field takes as its core mission to converse *across* species and academic boundaries, the "prestige differentials" in operation in the academy and broader culture, as reflected in still robust binaries like hard/soft, science/humanities, nature/culture, and human/animal, cannot be ignored. Even within the humanities, potentially fruitful cross-species comparisons are regularly sidelined by the human exceptionalism inherent in received definitions of music. An excessive amount of argumentative weight is (mis)placed on issues of intentionality, consciousness, language, and function vis-à-vis animal music and has been for centuries. Such approaches promote the view that only humans dwell in worlds of meaning, that only humans act mindfully, and that only humans have and thrive by means of culture. This paper welcomes a revised understanding of cognition that takes all animals into account – although not at the expense of lumping them together with algorithms and the abiotic.

Steep prestige differentials likewise manifest in collaborations that would navigate between music (which inclines towards particularities and one-offs) and the natural sciences (which deal with generalities and replication). Barbara Herrnstein Smith (in *Practicing Relativism in the Anthropocene: On Science, Belief, and the Humanities*) advocates that humanities scholars contribute their interpretive and critical tools to the reformation of the mainstream sciences. However, whether zoömusicologists will be able to dismantle or even reduce de facto hierarchies through engagements with or critiques of the natural sciences is uncertain. Therefore, as a corrective to the natural sciences' dominant methods and disproportionate power, I urge a substantial increase in fieldwork by humanities scholars who think and write about animals.

Creaturely Thanatology: The Repetitious Death of Near-Humans

Jean M Langford

University of Minnesota

Scholars and activists have challenged the assumption that the capacity for facing and anticipating one's own death is uniquely human. Other animals, it is argued, actively mourn one another's deaths and relate to their own mortality. But what if this mark of distinction for humans were undermined not by insisting that other animals are the subjects of their death, but by noticing how certain near-humans seem to respond to death as an impossible and maddening non-experience—incoherent, repetitive, and de-individuated? What if furthermore, the anonymous, mass and multiplied deaths that are represented as a scandalous violation of singularity for humans, while frequently accepted as routine for most other animals, were alternatively read as revealing a reduplicated, virtual death that haunts creaturely life. As told by sanctuary personnel, the stories of ex-laboratory chimpanzees who live in terror of an anesthetic “knockdown” they have undergone hundreds of times, have an uncanny resonance with Blanchot's account of a man who faced a firing squad and failed to be killed, yet never ceased dying. The personal histories of these chimps—often raised by humans, kept in isolation, given both names and numbers, and interpellated as both companions and specimens—similarly echo Blanchot's thoughts on a death that does not occur “only once” and is never “distinct” or “individual.” Might these most human of non-human animals—captive chimpanzees—not so much acknowledge an impending death that is appropriable as their own, but rather enact a realization of death as an immanent and repeated depersonalization for which one can never be present?

Snail Trails: A Foray into Disappearing Worlds, Written in Slime

Thom van Dooren

Sydney University

Hawai'i's terrestrial snails are disappearing, and with them the complex lifeworlds of their kind. While the perceptual, social, and behavioural lives of most invertebrates are rarely given much attention by many of us, the slime trails that snails leave behind provide a particularly rich pathway into these places. This paper is an effort to take these silvery remainders seriously. It offers a foray into the lives of snails, paying particular attention to the way in which their social and spatial worlds—their *umwelten* (Uexküll)—are quite literally slimed into being. As Hawai'i's snails face growing challenges to their continued survival, attending to slime may provide some fragile possibilities for ongoing life, opening up new avenues for both conservation and appreciation.

Confounding Species and Unravelling Kingdoms: When the Endangered Become Unruly

Anna-Katharina Laboissière

Curtin University and École Normale Supérieure

Ernst Mayr once called biology an “autonomous science”, in an attempt at writing against previous philosophers of science and providing a conceptual basis for future ones; contrary to experimental sciences, it is based on concepts rather than laws, deals in historical narratives, and any attempt to think about it philosophically must contend with the “peculiar characteristics of the living world”. The discipline itself seems to be in constant confrontation with subjects that are categorially slippery, and who oppose definitional resistance—in particular when it comes to the science of saving them from human-induced climate change and ecosystemic collapse, attempts to which they respond in sometimes unpredictable and defiant ways.

Conservation biology is a science of crisis, but even within that mandate there are gradations of urgency. And wherever that urgency reaches an apex—coral reef conservation, extreme botany, endangered populations necessitating genetic intervention and rescue—categorical slippage seems to follow. Plants start behaving like animals, corals and their symbionts move between kingdoms, and conservation regimes undergo lateral transfers, from zoology to botany, and back again. At the limits of biology and conservation sciences, the question of what a species or a kingdom is seems to become relevant again. John Hartigan, in his book *Care of the Species*, asks what the infrastructures of botanical knowledge do to how maize landraces are valued and managed in order to produce data; a question that is highly transposable to shifting regimes of species-being in wild life-forms, and their significance in the context of conservationist urgency.

The Normativity of Autopoiesis: Viruses, Suicide and Sacrifice

Kalle Jarvinen

Murdoch University

Maturana and Varela’s theory of autopoiesis has found widespread purchase in the post-humanities as a non-anthropocentric way of conceptualising the purportedly self-producing and adaptive capacity that constitutes the essential definition of the living as such. In this paper, I problematise autopoiesis as an already-normative conception of the living oriented towards organic stability. I begin with a brief account of autopoiesis, focusing on Maturana and Varela’s critiques of ‘Darwinism’ and their contention that autopoiesis “implies an ethics we cannot evade.” Following this, I argue that the theory of autopoiesis compartmentalises the potentialities of life towards a teleology of homeostatic ends. Autopoiesis demarcates life in such a way that non-homeostatic capacities of life are rendered as pathological or accidental ‘errors’ of life. To conclude, I discuss three phenomena in relation to autopoiesis: viruses, suicide, and sacrifice. Each of these phenomena challenge us to think life not only in terms of its self-maintaining and adaptive capacities, but also life’s more monstrous, destructive and ‘inorganic’ capacities. Yet, these inorganic capacities gesture towards the possibility of thinking life—and any supposed

'ethics of life', if such a thing is possible – in less straightforwardly normative terms, and to acknowledge the ethical ambivalence of life's inorganic potentialities.

Nonhuman Complexity Poetics: Leaf-cutter Ants and Transcorporeal Composition

Stuart Cooke

Griffith University

In this presentation I will examine some of the species of leaf-cutter ants (genera *Atta* and *Acromyrmex*), and particularly their nest architecture, in terms of a poetics of complexity. I argue that thinking about leaf-cutter architecture is an opportunity to engage with a radically alternative aesthetics. I'll begin by briefly contrasting human and insect ontologies, before focusing on ant ontologies in particular, and some of the more unusual characteristics of leaf-cutter societies. I will then turn to analyse the significance of leaf-cutter architecture for understandings of complexity and collaborative composition. Leaf-cutter nest architecture is not based on architectural models or predetermined plans, but on a poetics of immanence, or a process of making that is entangled with the living conditions of an environmental field.

More or Less Invisible: Fish Visibility and Resistance within Aquaculture Systems

Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel

University of Sydney

One of the massive changes that has occurred in fish production over the last four decades has been the arrival of industrial scale aquaculture or "fish farms." Aquaculture relies on the use of expansive sea pens in waterways where sea animals on mass are contained, and intensively managed, in order to transform these living animals into food for consumption by humans. The progress in the expansion of fish farms globally has been breathtaking. In 2014 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation notified the world that for the first time, more than half of the fish consumed by humans were derived from aquaculture. We should not underestimate the full significance of the achievement of this milestone in terms of human, or at least Anthropocene history. Where domestication of land-based animals took millennia to achieve, recent humans have managed to apply domestication to fish on a mass scale in a matter of decades.

Aquaculture generates new problems in how to manage the lives of animals within the fish farm, with new problems related to visibility. On one hand, while aquaculture holds the promise for a whole of life biopolitical control to be exerted over the lives of animals, at the same time the lives of these animals within confinement systems elude knowledge. As John Law has noted with respect to salmon farms, despite the intensity of the farming methods, fish defy systems of control and detection: "The salmon in the pen are more or less invisible. Sometimes you can see what's going on, but most of the time you can't. Instead, all that you can see is a few dozen salmon out of 50,000. This is the paradox" (2012).

This paper will examine the capture, evasions, controls and resistances of fish relevant to aquaculture environments. I will focus on management techniques to deal with congregation behaviour within sea pens and the use of braille nets and fish pumps to

transport fish. I will argue that these technical interventions must deal with not only problems of visibility, but also the resistance of fish as reality within the production system.

What “The Animal” Can Teach “The Anthropocene”

Cary Wolfe

Rice University

In retrospect, “the question of the animal” seems to have been left in the dust—all too predictably—by the economy of planned obsolescence in academic knowledge production and theory. As Niklas Luhmann pointed out long ago, the autopoiesis of the disciplines depends upon the ceaseless production of novelty. “The Animal” needed to be replaced, as quickly as possible, by Plants, then Plants by Stones, then Stones by the Object more generally, and finally a more general “materialism” and “realism.” Most recently, under the spur of rapid global warming, the discourse of the Anthropocene has become the site upon which all of these elements are assembled, as it were, but the problem (or one of the problems) with the the discourse of the Anthropocene is its odd combination of an obvious humanism coupled with a desire to be the latest Flat Ontology. We’ll engage Bruno Latour's *Facing Gaia* in this context, with its admirable desire to assert the “outlaw” character of Gaia as a stay against both holism and humanism. But what the site of “the Animal” shows is flat ontologies (and finally Latour’s own scheme) evacuate the radical discontinuity between qualitatively different orders of causation that obtain in living versus physical systems--different orders that are fundamental, of course, to the evolution of the biosphere and the planet. It’s a simple necessary versus sufficient distinction: physics is not biology. The most familiar way of asserting this qualitative difference is probably the philosophical discourse of “world” and its derivation from what Stuart Kauffman calls “Kantian wholes” (autopoietic organisms)—and, more generally, the concomitant methodological insistence that philosophical statements cannot be derived from empirical ones. We’ll revisit these philosophical positions briefly, but as we will see, the discourse of phenomenology is in fact not fundamental to the broader argument, which can be made (and has to be made) from the vantage point of the centrality of recursivity and contingency in theoretical biology, which itself foregrounds the fundamental theoretical problems of paradox and the negativity of temporality, for which Latour’s Actor Network Theory has an “outlaw” desire but actually no theory.

Specifically Cultural: On the Invention of Animal Culture

Robert Briggs

Curtin University

As a key value and instrument not just in post-Renaissance humanism and its civilising mission but also in the modern discipline of anthropology, the category of ‘culture’ continues to function in many intellectual and social spaces as the very mark of hominisation. It’s not surprising, therefore, to see researchers in animal studies insisting on the existence, even prevalence of animal cultures as evidence that the principle of human exceptionalism is less metaphysical truth than ideological prejudice—in a word, a cultural

convention. But if the cultural or conventional nature of the principle of human exceptionalism serves as the grounds for dismissing that principle's truth value, this move inevitably calls into question the historical and philosophical grounds of the concept of culture itself. What exactly does it mean, in that context, to characterize specific forms of animal behavior or activity as cultural? What is at stake, both conceptually and politically, in the search for "culture in animals"? And to what extent does the search for literally specific forms of culture – culture of or relating to a species – avoid the normative power of this conventionally anthropocentric concept?

A "Mysticism of Matter": Psychoanalysis, Surrealism, Entomology

Jacqueline Dalziell

University of New South Wales

The conceptual refrains enlisted in order to ground the notion of anthropomorphism inspire myriad questions. Questions such as what, fundamentally, it means to be in the shape and form of the human; or what the nature of human behaviour is, such that something different to the human might nonetheless be like it? And yet these refrains assume, in what appears to be something of a repetition – with the certitude characteristic of a red herring – that the nature of *anthropos* does not itself constitute a question. That is, the human serves as the given referent against which other things are measured: a self-contained and self-defined unit whose boundaries and placement is straightforward. This paper contends that a new language for how to articulate human/animal comparisons is necessary: a conceptual lexicon that does not turn on the terms – human and animal – that are most familiar. It is in the scholarship of Roger Caillois, a thinker whose work develops and extends border crossings into the entomological, phytological, and even geological realms, that we can encounter such an intervention. Caillois dedicated much of his oeuvre to a critical examination of the nonhuman world, and rather than affirm or reject anthropomorphism, his wild ecological expressions suggest something more akin to a generalised anthropomorphism, where the phenomenon of cross-species similarity lacks an origin, centre, and temporal-causal logic altogether. Here, I employ Caillois' writings on insect mimicry in order to consider how rethinking the structural conditions of anthropomorphism might reorient our thinking about the nature of the human.

Idiorrhythmy and Its Discontents: Keywords for Multispecies Immersive Cultural Studies (MICS)

Michael Lundblad

University of Oslo

In a late lecture series at the Collège de France, published posthumously as *How to Live Together: Novelistic Simulations of Some Everyday Spaces* (2013), Roland Barthes explores the intriguing possibility of what he identifies as "idiorrhythmy," which is "something like solitude with regular interruptions: the paradox, the contradiction, the aporia of bringing distances together..." (6). The key problem for Barthes is how to "regulate interindividual distance" when "what's most precious, our ultimate possession is space." But there is also

a desire for “a distance that won’t destroy affect,” where there is a “relation that’s in no way oppressive but at the same time where there’s a real warmth of feeling” (132). Tracking the “domestic fiction” of groups living together harmoniously, Barthes opens up what he calls “dossiers” on literary texts in dialog with other fields such as history, ethnography, and sociology. More generally, Barthes aims to theorize the key elements or “traits” that are necessary if we want individuals to be able to live together without having their own rhythms disrupted by the oppressive power or desire of others. Literary texts can suggest ideal forms of living together, or else illustrate the forces that can tear them apart. This presentation explores the potential of idiorrhymy for framing a new form of literary and cultural studies more broadly, in relation to both human and nonhuman animal cultures. Barthes sees animals mostly as metaphors for human group dynamics, unfortunately, since animals are assumed to lack language and therefore subjectivity. But Barthes’ approach can be expanded to take into account recent work in ethology, human-animal studies, animality studies, and posthumanist theory, focusing on not only multispecies relations but also group dynamics within other species themselves. As a result, idiorrhymy and its various “traits” can suggest keywords for new forms of cultural studies more easily cutting across species lines. Rather than adding “species” to race, class, gender, and sexuality, for example, or assuming that human identity categories can easily find their analogues in nonhuman species, I argue that new keywords have greater potential for analyzing both human and nonhuman cultures. While animal cultures are often presumed to be the province of natural history more than cultural history, philosophy, or literary studies, I follow Barthes’ literary inclination to suggest how writers as diverse as Daniel Defoe, Herman Melville, Linda Hogan, and Ursula Le Guin can help us to theorize better relations between and among various species. Through what I call *multi-species immersive cultural studies* (MICS), we can analyze cultures of animality in literary and cultural texts in relation to the various forms of idiorrhymy they open up, play with, or shut down.

Biographies

Alex Beatty is a writer, translator, and fellow at The Robert B. Silvers Foundation in New York. He holds a dual degree in Written Arts and German Studies from Bard College. His translation of *The Stone of Werder* by Jakob von Uexküll will be published in 2020.

Robert Briggs is Senior Lecturer in the School of Media, Creative Arts & Social Inquiry at Curtin University (Australia), and has published extensively on poststructuralist thought (particularly Derrida and Foucault) in relation to questions of ethics, culture and technology. His current project seeks to articulate the conceptual possibility of 'the animal-to-come', reading Derrida's engagement of 'the animal question' in the context of his work on writing and the future-to-come as a precursor to exploring the potential for inherited concepts of power, politics and culture to enable novel images of 'zoopolitics'.

Brett Buchanan is Director of the School of the Environment and Professor of Philosophy at Laurentian University. Among his writings, he has authored *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze* (SUNY, 2008), translated Vinciane Despret's *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), and co-edited three *Angelaki* issues on the philosophical ethology of Dominique Lestel (19:3 [2014]), Vinciane Despret (20:2 [2015]), and Roberto Marchesini (21:1 [2016]). These three *Angelaki* issues appeared as books with Routledge Press in 2018.

Danielle Celermajer is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Sydney. She received a 1.5 million euro grant from the European Union to establish the Masters of Human Rights and Democratization (Asia Pacific) as part of the Global Campus on Human Rights. In 2011, she received a 1.5 million euro grant to create and direct a multi-country project on the prevention of torture, focusing on everyday violence in the security sector. She is currently lead of the Multispecies Justice Project at the University of Sydney. Her publications include *Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apology* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and *The Prevention of Torture: An Ecological Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), (with Richard Sherwin) *A Cultural History of Law* (Bloomsbury, 2019), and (with Alexandre Levebvre), *The Subject of Human Rights* (Stanford 2020).

Matthew Chrulew is Senior Research Fellow in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University, where he leads the Posthumanism-Animality-Technology research program in the Centre for Culture and Technology. His essays have appeared in the journals such as *Angelaki*, *SubStance*, *New Formations*, *Foucault Studies* and *Humanimalia*, and in books such as *Animal Biography* and *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies*. He was a founding associate editor of the journal *Environmental Humanities*. He has co-edited special issues of the journals *SubStance* (43:2, 2014), *Angelaki* (19:3, 2014; 20:2, 2015; 21:2, 2016), *Environmental Humanities* (8:1, 2016), *Parallax* (24:4, 2018) and *Cultural Studies Review* (25:1, 2019). He edited the books *Animals in the Anthropocene: Critical Perspectives on*

Non-Human Futures (Sydney UP, 2015) with the HARN editorial collective, *Foucault and Animals* (Brill, 2016) with Dinesh Wadiwel, and *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations* (Columbia UP, 2017) with Deborah Bird Rose and Thom van Dooren. He is the editor of the new series *Animalities* at Edinburgh University Press.

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Hollis Taylor, violinist/composer, zoömusicologist, and ethologist, is an Honorary Research Fellow at Macquarie University. She previously held research fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin, the Museum of Natural History in Paris, and the University of Technology Sydney. Taylor has an abiding interest in animal aesthetics, and her work confronts and revises the study of birdsong, adding the novel reference point of a musician’s trained ear. She spends 3-4 months annually in the field. Taylor performs her (re)compositions of avian songs on violin along with her field recordings, and she also rethinks pied butcherbird repertoire for other human instruments and voices. Central to her compositional ethos is to celebrate avian achievements rather than adding human “improvements.” Supported by a major grant from the Australia Council for the Arts, her concerto for recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey premiered with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 2017 and was performed by the London Sinfonia in 2019. Her double CD, *Absolute Bird*, and her monograph, *Is Birdsong Music?*, were both released in 2017. Taylor’s practice also takes in sound and radiophonic arts. She is author of *Post Impressions: A Travel Book for Tragic Intellectuals*, in which she documented (in text, audio, and video) Jon Rose and herself bowing fences throughout Australia. For more information, see www.hollistaylor.com, www.zoömusicology.com, and www.piedbutcherbird.net.

Thom van Dooren is Associate Professor and Australian Research Council Future Fellow (2017-2021) in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies and the Sydney Environment Institute at the University of Sydney. His research and writing focus on some of the many philosophical, ethical, cultural, and political issues that arise in the context of species extinctions and human entanglements with threatened species and places. He is the author of *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (2014), *The Wake of Crows: Living and Dying in Shared Worlds* (2019), and co-editor of *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations* (2017), all published by Columbia University Press. www.thomvandooren.org

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Cary Wolfe's most recent projects are *Ecological Poetics, or, Wallace Stevens's Birds* (Chicago, forthcoming 2020) and a special issue of the journal *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, on "Ontogenesis Beyond Complexity" (forthcoming 2020), focused on the work of the multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional Ontogenetics Process Group. His books and edited collections include *Animal Rites: American Culture, The Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago, 2003), the edited collections *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal* (Minnesota, 2003) *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minnesota, 2010), and *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame* (Chicago, 2012). He is founding editor of the series *Posthumanities* at the University of Minnesota Press, which has published over fifty volumes to date by noted authors such as Donna Haraway, Roberto Esposito, Isabelle Stengers, Michel Serres, Vilem Flusser, Jacques Derrida, and others. He currently holds the Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Chair in English at Rice University, where he is Founding Director of 3CT: The Center for Critical and Cultural Theory.

Posthumanism-Animality-Technology

Centre for Culture and Technology, Curtin University

What is the status of the human in today's changing world of new technologies, knowledge and risks? How can and should we compose new relations with various others – animals, machines, things? Scientific knowledge of animal culture, mind and behaviour has challenged human uniqueness. New media, robots and other technologies have transformed our sociality, producing new ways of communicating and living with nonhuman others and new modes of persistence after death. We have become increasingly aware of our embeddedness in a wider environment subject to entangled processes of construction, destruction and extinction. This research program explores these questions and problems by drawing on concepts and methods from critical theory, communication theory, posthumanism, science and technology studies, animal studies, the environmental humanities, and science fiction.