**Abstracts and Biographies**

Event 1: Dinesh Wadiwel in conversation - 11.00am-1.00pm GMT on Friday 19 March 2021

**Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel** is Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at The University of Sydney. He has had over 15 years experience working within civil society organisations, including in anti-poverty and disability rights roles. Dinesh has interests in critical animal studies, the politics of violence and disability rights. Dinesh is author of the monograph *The War against Animals* (Brill) co-editor, with Matthew Chrulew of *Foucault and Animals* (Brill) and recently co-editor with Peter Chen of a special issue of the Animal Studies Journal entitled “New Directions in Animal Advocacy.” Dinesh is currently finalising a monograph on animals and capitalism.

**Eva Haifa Giraud** is lecturer in Media, Culture and Creative Practice at Keele University. Her research intersects with critical/cultural theory and feminist science studies. She has explored difficulties encountered in environmental, animal, and food activism, with more recent research focuses on anti-racist politics. In addition, she has a broad interest in non-anthropocentric theoretical work, which explores ways of thinking and acting in the world that move beyond human exceptionalism. These themes together in her monographs *What Comes After Entanglement? Activism, anthropocentrism and an ethics of exclusion* (Duke UP 2019) and Vegan: Politics, theory & practice (forthcoming Bloomsbury Academic). She has also published on these themes in journals such as *Theory, Culture & Society, Social Studies of Science, Convergence, Feminist Review, Open Library of Humanities*and the*Sociological Review*.

Event 2: Farming and Slaughter - 2.00-4.00 BST on Friday 16 April 2021

**Orla Shortall (James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen), ‘Is year-round housing of dairy cows a form of violence?’**

Is confining animals a form of violence? If so under what circumstances? In the words of Netz (2004) “The history of the prevention of movement is a history of force upon bodies: a history of violence and pain.” The housing of dairy cows all year round is an increasingly common practice in the UK, rather than animals grazing in warmer months. It is done to increase yields and facilitate larger herds. This paper will explore key stakeholder and farmer views about whether the year-round housing of dairy cows is significantly different from previous dairy practices: is it a new form of violence? Three key themes emerged from interviews: restriction to animals’ freedom and social behaviour; impacts on their health; and violation of their natural grazing behaviours. Whether year-round housing was a violent practice was contested by interviewees. For some the ‘unnaturalness’ of year-round housing was not only preventing ‘natural’ grazing behaviour but breeding animals unsuitable for grazing. In this view, the violence of confinement is internalised in the animal’s body as well as through different husbandry practices. The interpretation of year-round housing as a violent practice depended on the interpretation and value of ‘naturalness’ in relation to farm animals.

Netz, Reviel (2004) Barbed wire: An ecology of modernity. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown

**Emily Morgan (Iowa State University), ‘“You are Walking Through Blood”: Routine and Rupture in the Packinghouse’**

At any scale, meat production pivots on taking life from a creature who has possessed it. In industrial-scale packinghouses, it pivots on doing so as often, as quickly, and as smoothly as possible. The meat industry depends on a huge labor force, comprised mostly of unskilled or minimally-skilled workers, to accomplish the constant processing of creature into meat; and further it hinges on the routinization of the labor of slaughter. In large-scale meat processing facilities, slaughter is compartmentalized into discrete acts, each performed by a single worker or a group of workers again and again, ad nauseam. The job is not killing, or part of the activity of killing; rather, the job is a cut, a twist, a particular motion with the hands, a specific movement of the body. Through bland language and corporate or mechanistic self-representations, the industry encourages both the public and its own workforces to perceive the packinghouse as a factory like any other, offering jobs like those in any other industrial facility.

But what happens when routines are disrupted? What happens at times of rupture: times of human illness and injury, of machinery malfunction, of change or breakdown in the system? What happens at times of labor unrest, of strikes? And what happens when workers, rather than companies, create their own representations of the meat industry? This paper considers images and other representations of industrial-scale slaughter made by twentieth-century American meat industry workers. The paper finds that at times of rupture, packinghouse workers are more likely to represent their work as a form of violence, evoking the fleshly nature of the raw materials—the animal bodies—that the industry works to process into meat.

**Sune Borkfelt (Aarhus University), ‘Staring Your Meal Square in the Eye: The Slaughterhouse as Gothic Space’**

Slaughterhouses are places at once suffused with symbolic meaning and, in the words of Georges Bataille, ‘cursed and quarantined like a plague-ridden ship’. In their inevitable connection to killing and violence, they are places that many may seek to avoid, but which nevertheless seem ever-present, whether physically in eating habits or metaphorically in cultural discourse. As Bataille argued in 1929, a ‘disturbing convergence of the mysteries of myth and the ominous grandeur typical of those places in which blood flows’ clings to modern slaughterhouses, in part through links to temples of bygone eras. As an in reality often hidden space illuminated by literary depictions, the slaughterhouse as setting is replete with unsettling dualities (e.g. seen/unseen, inside/outside, accessible/inaccessible) along with potential renegotiations and blurrings of categories (e.g. human/animal, life/death, man/nature). These carry destabilising potential and expose fears tied to our supposed control of, and separation from, nature, allowing for readings of the slaughterhouse as a gothic space, unseen to most, but both evocative and inescapably tied to violent and uncanny events. With the above in mind, this paper examines selected depictions of slaughterhouses in different genres of contemporary literature, tying the slaughterhouse to our fears of nature as well as, ultimately, of ourselves.

**Sune Borkfelt** is research assistant and lecturer at Aarhus University, Denmark. He is currently in the process of turning his 2018 PhD dissertation on slaughterhouse fictions into a book. His previous work includes articles and book chapters on animals and colonialism, animal otherness, the naming of animals, and the ethics of animal product marketing, among other topics. He is also editor of a special issue of the journal *Otherness: Essays and Studies*, focusing on animal alterity, and co-editor of a forthcoming edited collection on the role of literature in relation to animals and the climate crisis.

**Emily Kathryn Morgan** is Assistant Professor of Art History at Iowa State University.  Her research focuses on circulation and distribution of photographic imagery, particularly images addressing difficult topics including poverty, violence, pornography, and animal slaughter.  She is the author of *Street Life in London: Context and Commentary* (MuseumsEtc. 2014), and she has published articles in *Art Journal* and *History of Photography*, among others.  Her current research project examines the visual culture of the American meat industry.

**Orla Shortall** is an interdisciplinary social scientist working on the normative and cultural aspects of livestock production systems at the James Hutton Institute. Her work draws on agricultural sociology, science and technology studies, and agricultural bioethics. She currently holds a three year British Academy postdoctoral research fellowship called ‘Cows eat grass, don’t they?’ exploring the future of grass based, high input and indoor dairy systems in the UK and Ireland: [www.docowseatgrass.org](http://www.docowseatgrass.org). The fellowship involves surveys, interviews and video ethnography with key stakeholders and farmers on the social and ethical aspects of different production systems. She has carried out public engagement events about the work as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and spoken word performances drawing on interview data and personal experience. She also works in the interdisciplinary Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks (EPIC) on farmers’ disease control practices and the governance of animal disease.

Event 3: Violent Analogies - 2.00-4.00 BST on Friday 23 April 2021

**Jesseka Batteau (Utrecht University), ‘Visibility of Violence and Historical Analogy: Multidirectional memory and the treatment of animals’**

My contribution offers a reflection on the discursive and visual representation of violence against animals in different arena – art/literature, journalism and politics. The visibility of violence is dependent on discursive-visual registers which do or do not construct the practices in question as such. For the animal liberation movement to be successful we need to understand the effects of the different registers of meaning-making involved in the context of violence against animals and how these contribute to the legitimization or refutation of these practices. In my talk I will focus the cultural and political use of historical analogies (slavery, genocide and the Holocaust), in relation to the treatment of animals. The question of the moral legitimacy of these comparisons has been debated at length and led to different positions, but there has as yet not been a thorough discussion of what these comparisons have in fact effectuated in the public sphere: have they made the plight of animals more visible, and if so, what exactly has been made visible? To shed a light on this question I will introduce the concept of ‘multidirectional memory’, a term used by Michael Rothberg to unravel how the memory of the Holocaust came into being in dialogue with other memories of genocide and repression and thus can be seen as a vehicle through which other histories of suffering can be articulated. Since non-human animals cannot partake in the making of shared memories that are accessible to us as humans, is it up to us to take up the task of memory-making for them in the public sphere?

**Thomas Aiello (Valdosta State University in Georgia), ‘Death to Pigs: Animals, Race, and the Semiotics of Material Culture in the United States’**

This paper will engage in a historical comparison of the semiotic use of happy pigs on signs for barbeque restaurants, images of happy cows on dairy products, and cartoon tuna on cans of the corpses of those animals. Such imagery is in many ways a reconstitution of the Sambo character used in the early twentieth century United States to project happy black children while animalizing them and excusing poor treatment against them by white readers and viewers. Unsurprisingly, as these imageries dominated the American landscape, they became inverted in the later Black Power movement as imagery of pigs as retributive and dangerous policemen who served at the pleasure of a white power structure that sought to attack and belittle everything and everyone black. In the first example, animal imagery in material culture was used to hide the real treatment of those animals being tortured and killed for the creation of human food products. In the second, animal imagery in material culture was used to insult oppressors, despite the fact that the representative animals were categorically oppressed. This paper will evaluate the evolution of human-animal relations, oppression, and race in the twentieth-century United States.

**Josh Milburn (University of Sheffield), ‘Should we protect animals from hate speech?’**

In liberal states, animals typically receive legal protection from physical violence, but – unlike humans – receive none from other forms of violence. Protections against hate speech are my case in point: the coercive power of the state is deployed to protect humans, but not animals, against vitriolic written or spoken attacks. Imagine if an academic were to present a paper arguing that non-white people are morally inferior to white people, are not really members of ‘our’ community, and making them suffer – if a problem at all – is relatively inconsequential. If she presented this in a country with laws against hate speech, she could expect to face censure. However, if a different speaker presented a structurally identical paper about non-human animals, she could expect, at most, some disapprobation from animal activists – certainly, we would not expect the law to become involved. Is this discrepancy between anti-human speech and anti-animal speech justified? In this paper, I will canvass reasons for thinking that it might be across three categories: Preliminary defences that can be quickly countered; offence-based defences; and harm-based defences. All are found wanting. If laws censuring one speaker are appropriate, then, in principle, laws censuring the other are, too.

Note: This paper was co-authored with Alasdair Cochrane (University of Sheffield).

**Thomas Aiello** is an associate professor of history and African American studies at Valdosta State University in Georgia, USA. He is the author of *The Grapevine of the Black South: The Scott Newspaper Syndicate in the Generation before the Civil Rights Movement* (Georgia, 2018), among many others. His book *Jim Crow’s Last Stand: Nonunanimous Criminal Jury Verdicts in Louisiana* (LSU, 2015) helped spark a movement that constitutionally overturned the state’s nonunanimous jury law. A second edition appeared in October. Though most of his work to this point has been human-centered, he is now also a doctoral student in anthrozoology at the University of Exeter studying critical animal studies and the history of American speciesism.

**Jesseka Batteau** is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICON), Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. As a cultural memory scholar, her focus is on language and media in the remembrance of shared pasts, and their dynamic role in processes of social, cultural and political transformation. Her dissertation (*Literature and the Religious Past*, forthcoming, Brill 2020) discussed the iconic role of literary authors in the secularization in the Netherlands. At present, her specific research interest is in the discursive/visual spectrum of the representation of violence against animals, varying from the remembrance of the exploitation and repression of animals in the past to the witnessing of what takes place in factory farms and slaughterhouses in the present. She also focuses on the language and imagery that lead to the invisibility of violence perpetrated against animals, such as the language used by farmers and professionals in the agricultural domain, as well as the discourse deployed by news media and policy makers. The history of violence against animals has yet to be systematically investigated and the interdisciplinary domain of cultural memory studies offers certain tools that can be used in the study (and production) of new commemorative practices that bear witness to the past and include both humans and non-humans as members of a shared mnemonic community.

**Josh Milburn** is a philosopher who is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield. He is working on a research project entitled Food Justice and Animals: Feeding the World Respectfully. His research interests are in applied moral and political philosophy, especially relating to animals, food, and liberalism / libertarianism, as well as in animal and vegan studies more broadly. Josh has a doctorate in philosophy from Queen’s University Belfast (2016), where he wrote a thesis called The Political Turn in Animal Ethics. From 2016-17, he was the Postdoctoral Fellow in Animal Studies at Queen’s University in Canada. Before starting at Sheffield in 2019, he spent two years teaching at the University of York. His research has been published (or is forthcoming) in the *Journal of Applied Philosophy, the Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, *Between the Species, Environmental Values, Res Publica, the Journal of Social Philosophy*, and the *Critical Review for International Social and Political Philosophy*, as well as in volumes from Oxford University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, and Springer. He is a section editor of the journal Politics and Animals and a member of the Vegan Society’s Research Advisory Committee.

Panel 4: Power and Representation - 2.00-4.00 BST on Friday 30 April 2021

**Kathryn Haley-Halinski (University of Cambridge), ‘“Ófleygr ok fjaðrlauss”: Plucked hawks and the personhood of birds of prey in Old Norse-Icelandic literature’**

In the medieval Icelandic text Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar, the title character, Óláfr Tryggvason, attempts to marry off his sister, Ástríðr. When she refuses, Óláfr orders her hawk to be plucked and sent to her. The text does not elaborate on why he chooses to do this, but upon receiving the presumably-dead bird, Ástríðr comments that her brother must be angry. This is a startling moment of interspecies violence in the sagas, a genre primarily concerned with violence between humans. Furthermore, it is one of many events throughout Old Norse literature in which violence is enacted upon hawks as a means of expressing violence or violent intent toward humans. Through an inspection of literary, linguistic, and archaeological sources, as viewed through the framework of metaphorical and metonymical personhood, developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss and modified by Kirsten Hastrup for use in medieval/early modern Icelandic contexts, this paper will use these moments of interspecies violence as a starting point through which to discuss hawks in medieval Scandinavia and Iceland. In doing so, not only will the material relationship of hawks and humans be discussed, but the relationship between birds of prey and personhood.

**David Gould (University of Leeds), ‘Violence Between The Cuts: A Reassessment of the BBFC’s Stance on Animal Abuse in Films’**

The passing of the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937 gave the British Board for Film Censorship (BBFC) legal power to censor any depiction of violence towards animals in film. My paper examines the ways in which the BBFC’s interpretation of the 1937 Act reflect and compound distinctly bourgeois notions of morality, with their priority being the removal of animal violence from the *sight* of the audience. The BBFC may receive a film that contains scenes in which an animal is brutally tortured, but such a film meets the BBFC’s censorship standards so long as cuts are made to prevent the audience from *seeing* the torture. More than this, exploitative and violent practices, such as elephant training, are required to make certain scenes possible. Many scenes that make use of trained elephants would not be possible without sustained acts of violence. But since this violence is off-screen, the BBFC gives such scenes their seal of approval. The priority of the BBFC is not the welfare of animals, but the disposition of the audience. In this paper, I propose a new reading of the 1937 Act that ensures the protection of animals from all violent and exploitative practices in the film industry.

**Danielle Sands (Royal Holloway, University of London), ‘“The Siren Song of Entomology”: Nostalgia, Violence and Sexual Politics in Contemporary Nature Writing’**

Whilst, as Marina Benjamin observes, the entomological collector is now more likely to be viewedas a “neurotic hoarder” than an “intellectual conquistador” (Benjamin, 16) in this paper, I identify a nostalgic trend for collecting within contemporary nature writing. This trend, I argue, obscures the inherent violence of collecting and reinforces human mastery under the guise of benign stewardship. Reading recent texts, including those by Fredrik Sjöberg, Patrick Barkham and Peter Marren, which focus on moths, butterflies and other flying insects, first, I argue that the extension of the metaphor of the ‘book of nature’ to insects revivifies a theological framing of natural history which reinforces human exceptionalism and frames insects as passive texts to be read and deciphered, thus authorising violence towards them. Secondly, drawing upon ecofeminist criticism, I argue that the accounts of insects offered by Sjöberg and others are underpinned by a problematic feminisation of nature which ultimately licenses the objectification of nonhuman life.

Benjamin, Marina (1996), ‘To Have and To Hold,’ in Kate Salway (ed.), *Collectors’ Items*, London: Pale Green Press, pp. 10-31.

**David Gould** is currently studying a PhD at the University of Leeds in the School of Media and Communication. His project examines the role of censorship in shaping how animal death is represented in visual media. He examines the BBFC annual reports, developments in UK legislation, and audience responses to draw out the ethical and epistemic tensions that inform theories of representation and animal rights debates. Prior to studying for the PhD, he received a BA(Hons) from the University of Brighton in 2016 studying Philosophy, Politics, and Ethics. He completed his MA in Cultural and Critical Theory at the University of Leeds in 2017. He is also an associate editor for *parallax*, a peer for the *Journal of Critical Animal Studies*, and a Teaching Assistant at the University of Leeds.

**Kathryn Haley-Halinski** is a current PhD student in the department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic at the University of Cambridge, where they researching the representation of birds and human-bird interactions in medieval Scandinavia and Iceland. They completed a BA in English Literature at King’s College London, and an MA in Viking and Medieval Norse Studies at the University of Iceland and the University of Oslo. While their present focus is on human-animal studies and its applications in the field of medieval studies, they have also worked on cognitive theories of Old Norse poetics, and representations of the medieval past in European and Asian heavy metal music.

**Danielle Sands** is Lecturer in Comparative Literature and Culture at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Fellow at the Forum for Philosophy, LSE. She is the author of *Animal Writing: Storytelling, Selfhood and the Limits of Empathy* (EUP 2019) and the editor of *Philosophy and the Human Paradox: Reason, Truth and Identity* (Routledge 2020) and *Bioethics and the Posthumanities* (forthcoming Routledge 2020). She is the recipient of a British Academy Rising Star Award for her project ‘Posthumanities: Rewriting Humanities for the Fourth Industrial Age,’ and is PI for the TECHNE-funded Conflux ‘“How Like a Leaf”: Art, Nature, World,’ which runs from 2018-20.

Event 5: Science / Fiction / Technology - 2.00-4.00 BST on Friday 7 May 2021

**Justyna Włodarczyk (University of Warsaw), ‘Beyond Bizarre: The Spectacular Failure of B.F. Skinner’s Pigeon-Guided Missiles’**

During World War II and the Cold War the U.S army engaged in multiple projects related to the weaponizing of "unusual" species animals, from bat bombs to disease-infected fleas. However, B.F. Skinner’s wartime “Project Pelican,” which consisted of the development of a pigeon-guided missile, is one of the few projects (with the exception of those involving dogs) that relied not simply on turning the animals into bioweapons but on training them to perform specific behaviors. Not only were Skinner’s pigeons trained to steer the missile, the training was carried out exclusively using positive reinforcement; the pigeons were never coerced or physically corrected for misbehavior. Bluntly put, Skinner was able to train the birds to engage in an activity that ended with self-destruction; the pigeons died when the bomb reached its destination. If it has been read at all (which is not very often), Skinner’s project is usually read through the “military cabinet of curiosities” narrative, which sees it as a “bizarre” form of warfare. This presentation attempts to reflect on Project Pigeon and its media reception (after the project’s declassification in 1959), reading the pigeon bomb scenario as a particularly potent example of the expendability of animal lives in warfare and of the violence that can be carried out through the application of positive reinforcement.

**Peter Sands (University of Sheffield), ‘Paranoid entanglements: control, communication and violence in the work of John C. Lilly’**

This paper will draw on the work of John C. Lilly—best known for his development of the sensory deprivation tank and his efforts to establish communication between human and dolphin—to examine the relationship, in American cold war culture, between narratives of technological control and the violence of animal experimentation. While frequently associated with paranoid anxieties of mind control, the mechanisation of human behaviour and the erosion of ‘agency,’ Lilly’s work also self-consciously sought to undermine the prevalent anthropocentrism within scientific attitudes towards human/nonhuman relationships. While interested in modelling a new kind of multispecies future, I want to characterise Lilly’s work—which, during the 1960s was funded by NASA—as concerned more so with a technological project of transcendence, and augmentation, of what it means to be ‘human.’ While rendering his dolphin subjects as bodies to be confined, studied and dissected in pursuit of interspecies knowledge, Lilly simultaneously bolstered a techno-humanist space age mythology closely allied to cold war dreams of absolute war. The undermining of liberal humanist subjectivity posed by the cyborg coupling of human/dolphin—and sometimes mirrored uncannily in contemporary theoretical accounts of ‘entanglement’—here functions as the means by which both interspecies and military violence is enacted.

**Simon Ryle (University of Split), ‘Meat Hands’**

This paper explores the uncanny violence that flesh is subjected to in Jan Švankmajer’s stop-motion animation. Important intertexts are Walter Benjamin’s writing on surrealism, Val Plumwood’s description of her near-death encounter with a salt-water crocodile in Australia’s Kakadu National Park, Timothy Pachirat’s, Dinesh Wadiwel’s and Gail A. Eisnitz’s accounts of the biopolitics of contemporary meat production and the epistemic normalization of violence by industrial slaughter, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological concept of the “flesh of the world.” Following Benjamin’s claim that surrealism politicizes aesthetics, the paper explores Švankmajer’s defamiliarization of the invisible violence of everyday phenomenologies. The paper argues that the simultaneously brutalizing and brutalized hands of industrial meat production lie as biopolitical interrogation behind Švankmajer’s surrealist self-consuming bodies. The paper shows how the surreal *détournement* of the flesh in Švankmajer’s animations interrogates the violent disregard for the flesh that is as normalized as social reality by meat.

**Simon Ryle** is Associate Professor at the University of Split, Croatia, where he teaches literature and ecocriticism. His first book was published by Palgrave. He has published recently or has forthcoming work on Deleuze and Shakespeare, the classical genealogy of Anthropocene waste, uncanny slaughterhouse flesh poetics, Renaissance interfaces, and weird Iranian oil horror.

**Peter Sands** is a third year PhD student in the School of English at the University of Sheffield. His work examines the role of animals in the technological imagination of the cold war, and traces the cultural impact of nuclear technologies, animal behaviour sciences and systems theory. He is a member of the Sheffield Animal Studies Research Centre (ShARC), and his research is funded by the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities (WRoCAH).

**Justyna Włodarczyk** teaches American Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland. She has published on factors that have shaped human-canine relationships in the past two centuries. Her most recent book *Genealogy of Obedience: Reading North American Dog Training Literature, 1850s-2000s* (Brill, 2018) examines changes in dog training methods in the US alongside shifts in dominant discourses of gender, race and class. Her current research project is titled Behaviorism’s Animals and examines the lives of the animals used in behaviorist labs from the 1920s to the 1960s.