

The [Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture \(EPTC\)](#)
La société de [théorie et cultures existentialistes et phénoménologiques \(TCEP\)](#)

University of Victoria (British Columbia, Canada) - June 4 to 7, 2013
Panels devoted to animals / Panels consacrés aux animaux

Wednesday June 5 (Clearhue C110)

9:00 – 11:30: Panel « Phenomenological Approaches to Animal Otherness »

→ **Brett Buchanan** (Laurentian University, author of [Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze](#), SUNY, 2008)

Being Towards Extinction

→ **Don Beith** (McGill University)

Merleau-Ponty's Animate Epistemology: Learning to Perceive (as) Animals

14:00 – 16:30: Panel « Animals: Rights, Veganism and Justice »

→ **Valéry Giroux** (Université de Montréal)

Les droits des animaux: Une approche antispéciste

→ **Sue Donaldson** (co-author with Will Kymlicka of [Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights](#), Oxford University Press, 2011)

Unruly Beasts: Humans and Animals Sharing the Demos

Thursday June 6 (Clearhue C108)

9:00 – 12:30: Panel « Veganarchism and Paleoethics: Equality beyond Species »

→ **Cynthia Willet** (Emory University, author of *Irony in the Age of Empire*, 2008), [The Soul of Justice: Social Bonds and Racial Hubris](#) (2001), [Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities](#) (1995)

Interspecies Living (a serious ethics with a comic twist)

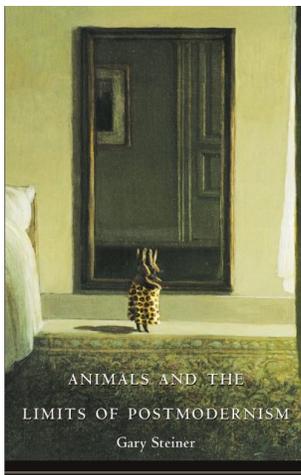
→ **Dinesh Wadiwel** (University of Sidney)

Resisting the War against Animals: Counter-Conduct and Truce

→ **John Sanbonmatsu** (Worcester Polytechnic Institute), [Critical Theory and Animal Liberation](#)

14:00 – 17:30: Book Panel on Gary Steiner's *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*

(Columbia University Press, 2013)



→ **Patrick Llored** (Université de Lyon), [Jacques Derrida, Politique et éthique de l'animalité](#) (Sils Maria, 2013)

→ **Chloë Taylor** (University of Alberta), « Foucault and the Ethics of Eating », (*Foucault Studies*, 2010)

→ **Jan Dutkiewicz** (PhD candidate in the Department of Politics at the New School for Social Research)

→ **Gary Steiner** (Bucknell University), *Animals and the Moral Community* (CUP, 2008), [Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy](#) (2005)

(More info: <http://christianebailey.com/eptc-tcep-2013/>)

Abstracts / Résumés

Wednesday June 5 / Mercredi 5 juin

9:00 – 11:30: Panel « Phenomenological Approaches to Animal Otherness »

Brett Buchanan (Laurentian University, author of [Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze](#), SUNY, 2008), *Being Towards Extinction*

One of the key moments in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) comes early when Sartre describes waiting for his friend Pierre to show up at the café where he is seated. Sartre is in the process of describing an account of “absence,” a subsidiary aspect of his greater inquiry into the problem of nothingness: what it is, what it isn’t, how to account for it, how to give it meaning, and so on. In the hands of Sartre, not to mention Heidegger, the metaphysical problem of nothingness (as well as absence, lack, silence, negation, death,...) takes on a decidedly existential and phenomenological bent. Pierre’s absence is tangible throughout the café, but nowhere particularly evident. What if this approach to absence and nothingness, which is admittedly humanistic and anthropocentric at its origin, is reconceived with respect to our thought about species extinction? In this paper I consider the plights of endangered species and species extinction – plights that are increasingly prevalent, shockingly so, within our Anthropocenic era – from an existential and phenomenological point of view. To do so I draw intermittently from Sartre, Blanchot, Heidegger, and Levinas, in order to begin formulating a condition that sees the shared and entangled lives of human and nonhuman animals, to say nothing of plants as well, as being towards extinction. Rather than the singular and supposedly unique human condition of Heidegger’s being-towards-death, what might have we to learn from a life condition that sees us all as being-towards-extinction?

Don Beith (McGill University), *Merleau-Ponty’s Animate Epistemology: Learning to Perceive (as) Animals*

Adjunct professor Bishop’s University, Don Beith completed his thesis “Passivity in the Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty” in 2012 at McGill University (Montréal, Québec).

An account of consciousness poses a twofold explanatory demand: on the one hand consciousness is, like any other form of life, something that becomes itself through growth and development within the natural world. On the other hand, consciousness appears as the very arena in which ideas of a self, a world, and the temporality of development have a constitutive sense. In this paper, I will identify this tension in Merleau-Ponty’s earliest work, *The Structure of Behaviour*, and argue that Merleau-Ponty is already developing conceptual resources to think beyond this philosophical antinomy. Merleau-Ponty radically re-situates consciousness in the growing, developing body, which is conceived as beyond the dichotomy of a world-constituting activity and a passively constituted thing. In order to develop this developmental logic of embodied consciousness, and to situate this developmental form of embodiment outside the logic of a world-constituting consciousness, I draw on Merleau-Ponty’s notion of life as sense instituting which he develops in his lecture courses on *Institution* and *Nature*. Using examples from motor-perceptual development, inter-species communication, and inter-corporeal gesture, I hope to illuminate the way in which consciousness emerges out of inter-bodily, affective, and developmental life. These dynamic and evolving institutions of meaning, I argue, precede and ground conscious awareness, and our very capacities of conceiving of the natural world as an object of reflection and explanation. This study of consciousness as an institution within the domains of life and animality raises questions about the limits of phenomenology, while offering new resources to think of species differences not according to essentialized differences in kind, but according to expressive, developing, and performative forms of embodiment.

Wednesday June 5 / Mercredi 5 juin
14:00 – 16:30: Panel « **Animals: Rights, Veganism and Justice** »

Valéry Giroux (Université de Montréal, CREUM), **Une approche antispéciste des droits des animaux / An Antispeciesist Approach to Fundamental Rights**

Résumé: Partant des grands principes de justice (le principe d'égalité voulant que les cas similaires soient traités de manière similaire; la notion de droit fondamental, qui repose sur celle d'intérêt; puis le principe de l'égalité de considération des intérêts auquel mène le principe d'égalité), je soutiens la nécessité morale d'octroyer aux êtres sensibles nonhumains les droits juridiques les plus fondamentaux : (1) le droit à l'intégrité physique, (2) le droit à la vie et (3) le droit à la liberté. (1) De nombreux animaux nonhumains sont des êtres sensibles et tous les êtres sensibles ont, par définition, intérêt à ne pas souffrir. Pour cette raison, ils devraient jouir du *droit à l'intégrité physique*. (2) Parce qu'ils peuvent jouir des bonnes choses de la vie, les êtres sensibles ont un certain intérêt à persévérer dans leur existence, intérêt qui, peu importe son intensité ou sa nature, doit être protégé par l'égal *droit de vivre*. (3) Suivant l'interprétation républicaine de la liberté comme non domination, nous devons reconnaître que les animaux ont un intérêt à être libres et que cet intérêt doit être protégé par un égal statut juridique. L'octroi des droits les plus fondamentaux à tous les êtres sensibles implique que toutes les formes d'exploitation animale soient abandonnées et que les animaux conscients jouissent du statut égal de personne.

Abstract: Starting from the major principles of justice (the principle of equality, which holds that similar cases are to be treated similarly; the notion of fundamental right, which is based on the concept of interest; and the principle of equal consideration of interests, which follows from the formal principle of equality), I argue for the moral necessity of granting basic legal rights to all nonhuman sentient beings: (1) the right not to be hurt, (2) the right not to be killed, and (3) the right to an equal status. (1) Numerous nonhuman animals are sentient beings and all sentient beings, by definition, have an interest in not suffering. For this reason, they should be entitled the right not to be hurt. (2) Because they can benefit from good things in life, sentient beings have an interest in their continued existence, an interest which, regardless of its intensity or its nature, must be protected by an equal right not to be killed. (3) Following the republican interpretation of liberty as non-domination, we must recognize that animals have not only a negative interest in being free from external constraints, but also an interest in benefiting from an equal moral and legal status. Granting fundamental "human" rights to all sentient beings implies that all forms of animal exploitation be abandoned and that conscious animals enjoy the equal status of a person.

Sue Donaldson [Co-author with Will Kymlicka of [Zoopolis. A Political Theory of Animal Rights](#)], **Unruly Beasts: Humans and Animals Sharing the Demos**

Many commentators – including some animal rights theorists – have argued that non-human animals cannot be seen as members of the demos because they lack the critical capacities for self rule and moral agency which are required for citizenship. However, this worry is based on mistaken ideas about both citizenship, on the one hand, and animals, on the other. Citizenship requires self-restraint and responsiveness to shared norms, but these capacities should not be understood in an unduly intellectualized or idealized way. Recent studies of moral behaviour show that civil relations between citizens are largely grounded, not in rational reflection and assent to moral propositions, but in intuitive, unreflective and habituated behaviours which are themselves rooted in a range of pro-social emotions (empathy, love) and dispositions (cooperation, altruism, reciprocity, conflict-resolution). Fifty years of ethological research have demonstrated that many social animals – particularly domesticated animals – share the sorts of dispositions and capacities underlying everyday civility. Once we broaden our conception of citizenship to include a richer account of the bases of civic relations, it becomes clear that domesticated animals and humans can be co-creators of a shared moral and political world. We have nothing to fear, and much to gain, by welcoming their membership in the demos.

Thursday June 6 / Jeudi 6 juin
9:00 – 12:30: Panel « **Veganarchism and Paleoethics: Equality beyond Species** »

Cynthia Willet (Emory University), ***Interspecies Living (a serious ethics with a comic twist)***

Cynthia Willet is co-Director of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) and the author of many books and articles. [Irony in the Age of Empire](#) (Indiana, 2008), [The Soul of Justice: Social Bonds and Racial Hubris](#) (Cornell, 2001), [Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities](#) (Routledge, 1995), “Ground Zero for a Post-moral Ethics in J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* and Julia Kristeva’s *Melancholic*” in *Continental Philosophy Review* (2012), “[Affect Attunement in the Infant-Caregiver Relationship and Across Species: Expanding the Range of Eros](#),” *philoSOPHIA* 2.2 (Vol. 2, No. 2, 2012, 111-130).

She will present us parts of her forthcoming book *Interspecies Living* (a serious ethics with a comic twist).

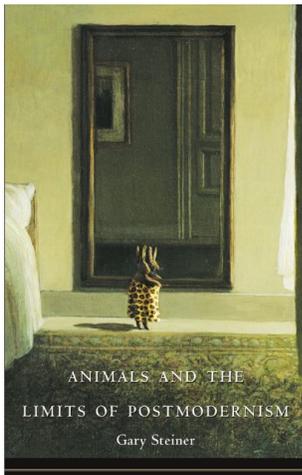
John Sanbonmatsu (Worcester Polytechnic Institute), ***Critical Theory and Animal Liberation***

Passionate advocate for animal liberation and social change, John teaches Critical Animal Studies, Marxism, Feminist Theory and Continental Philosophy and his work includes: [Critical Theory and Animal Liberation](#) (Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); “Blood and Soil: Notes on Lierre Keith, Locavores, and Death Fetishism,” *Upping the Anti*, May 2011; “The Holocaust Sublime: Singularity, Representation, and the Violence of Everyday Life,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 68: 1 (2009) and [The Postmodern Prince](#) (Monthly Review Press, 2004).

Dinesh Wadiwel (Sidney), ***Resisting the War against Animals: Counter-Conduct and Truce***

In this paper, I explore how we might respond to violence against animals that operates at intersubjective, institutional and epistemic levels. In his 1 March 1978 lecture at the Collège de France, Michel Foucault turns attention to the question of resistance in the context of governmental power, exploring the idea of *counter-conduct*. I will discuss the potential for framing resistance to violence against animals through forms of counter-conduct, drawing attention in particular to the opportunity to rupture the epistemic violence of human domination of animals. I will then turn to examine the concept of “truce.” My interest is the idea of a suspension in armed hostilities that might create a space for renegotiating human and animal relationships. I will draw attention to a speech delivered by Andrea Dworkin in 1983, where she had appealed to her largely male audience: “Even in wars, there are days of truce. Go and organize a truce. Stop your side for one day. I want a twenty-four-hour truce during which there is no rape.” I will discuss truce in this context, its relationship to sovereignty and war, and the possibility for creating, in Dworkin’s words a beginning “to the real practice of equality.”

Thursday June 6 / Jeudi 6 juin
14:00 – 17:30: **Book Panel on Gary Steiner's [Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism](#)**
(Columbia University Press, 2013)



While postmodern approaches to politics and ethics have offered some intriguing and influential insights in philosophy and theory, Gary Steiner illuminates the fundamental inability of these approaches to arrive at viable ethical and political principles. Ethics requires notions of self, agency, and value that are not available to postmodernists. Therefore much of what is published under the rubric of theory lacks a proper basis for a systematic engagement with ethics. Steiner presents his provocative critique of postmodernist approaches to the moral status of animals against the background of a broader indictment of postmodern thought and its inability to establish clear principles for action. He revisits the work of Derrida, Foucault, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, together with recent work by their American interpreters, and shows that the basic terms of postmodern thought are incompatible with any definitive claims about the moral status or rights of animals—and humans. Steiner acknowledges the failures of liberal humanist thought regarding the moral status of animals; but instead of following postmodern

thinkers who reject humanist thought outright, Steiner argues for the need to rethink humanist notions in a way that avoids the anthropocentric limitations of traditional humanist thought. Drawing on the achievements of the Stoics and Kant, Steiner builds on his earlier volumes, developing his ideas of cosmic holism and non-anthropocentric cosmopolitanism in order to arrive at a more concrete foundation for animal rights.

Patrick Llored (Université de Lyon), [Jacques Derrida, Politique et éthique de l'animalité](#)

Patrick Llored est spécialiste de la pensée derridienne, principalement sur la question de nos rapports avec les autres animaux. Il a récemment publié un magnifique petit ouvrage d'introduction intitulé [Jacques Derrida, Politique et éthique de l'animalité](#) aux Éditions Sils Maria (2013). Il rédige présentement un deuxième ouvrage, une introduction à la philosophie du vivant animal chez Derrida, qui devrait paraître en 2014.

Chloë Taylor (University of Alberta), « Foucault and the Ethics of Eating », (*Foucault Studies*, 2010)

Chloë Taylor is the author of « [Foucault and the Ethics of Eating](#) » (*Foucault Studies*, 2010); “[The Precarious Lives of Animals: Butler, Coetzee, and Animal Ethics](#)” (*Philosophy Today*, 2008) and [The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: A Genealogy of the ‘Confessing Animal’](#) (Routledge, 2008)

Jan Dutkiewicz (PhD candidate, New School for Social Research)

Jan Dutkiewicz’s research focuses on the political economy of human-nonhuman interaction, as well as on the rationalities, behaviors, and discourses engendered by different forms of economic and political governance.

Respondent: **Gary Steiner** (Bucknell University)

Gary Steiner is John Howard Harris Professor of Philosophy at Bucknell University. He is the author of [Descartes as a Moral Thinker: Christianity, Technology, Nihilism](#) (Humanity Books, 2004); [Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy](#) (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005); and [Animals and the Moral Community: Mental Life, Moral Status, and Kinship](#) (Columbia University Press, 2008).

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