The Centre for Ideas
'In Flesh and Blood: Animals in Art and Philosophy'

Part 2: Key note speaker: Raimond Gaita

TUESDAY 24 APRIL
Time 10.30 – 5 pm
Venue: Federation Hall, VCA 234 St Kilda Road and Grant Street Southbank.
Free event - no booking required

Programme:
Morning:
10.30 – 1.30: Animals, the law and politics
Speakers: Justin Clemens, Cressida Limon, Connal Parsley and Marc Trabsky

- Justin Clemens, 'Man is a swarm animal'
  What is it about 'man' that makes him a candidate for politics and the political? What makes human being-together a properly political question and not just a question of species-activity or genetic determinism? In this presentation, I examine a pun of Jacques Lacan. This is S1, l’essaim; S-one, the swarm. To date, this pun has, at best, been taken as a suggestive metaphor; at worst, as just another meaningless word-game, entirely typical of Lacan. My argument is that — if sometimes a pun is indeed just a pun — this pun is more than that. In fact, it provides a concept that bears centrally upon the relationship between technology, politics, language and psychoanalytic formalisation. At the end we find, indeed, that, for the later Lacan, man is indeed a swarm animal.

- Cressida Limon, 'Animal Inventions: Haraway’s dog, Derrida’s cat and Spidergoats-in-law lives'
  In this presentation I consider the links between the invention of animals in the creation stories of Genesis and the contemporary practices of patenting animal life forms as intellectual property. The question of law’s invention of animals will be addressed via a consideration of other animal inventions: Haraway’s dog and Derrida's cat have something to teach us about intellectual property.

- Connal Parsley, 'Border: law's traditions, cinema's possibilities, and the representation of the animal (and the human)'
  This paper considers aspects of the role that the representation of the animal has had in the formation of the human person in the juridical tradition, aspects which I suggest are reflected in the representation of animals in contemporary film and literature. Through a discussion of the recent film Border (Armenia, 2009), and drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito, this paper asks about cinema’s possibilities for a different use of the representative apparatus and a different approach to the human's knowledge of both itself and animals.

- Marc Trabsky, 'Law in the Slaughterhouse’
  My aim in this paper is to explore how sacrifice becomes in the specificity of a spatial history an activity of place-making and a practice of lawfulness. I maintain that the relationship between law and the animal is inextricable from the human activity of
place-making and moreover critical animal law needs to account for the different
traditions of ordering space. I therefore gesture towards a jurisprudential reading of
the situation of the animal by tracing the sacrificial rituals that guarantee the
lawfulness of the place of the slaughterhouse.

Afternoon:

2.15 – 4.30 pm: **Keynote Lecture by Pr Raymond Gaita** (University of
London and Australian Catholic University) discussing themes raised by his
book *The Philosopher's Dog*.

The first of the themes I would like to discuss develops a claim that Cora Diamond makes in
her seminal paper ‘Eating Meat and Eating People’. She argues that discussion of the
significance of the fact that human beings are animals, and more generally part of nature,
often betrays a misunderstanding of the nature and importance of the ethically inflected ways
we speak of human beings in, as Diamond puts it, “our life with language”. In most
discussions of these matters, philosophers prefer to speak of persons or of rational agents.

Looking especially at the later sections of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, I
develop in *The Philosopher's Dog* what I dubbed a ‘naturalism of surfaces’ — an account of
the importance of the living human body, its many inflexions and demeanours in response to
other human beings and animals, to the development of concepts as basic as sensation and
thought. This kind of naturalism — one that accords great importance, for example, to the
fact that we are creatures of flesh and blood, with faces and eyes — enables us to give the
right account of why we cannot doubt that dogs have sensations and that they do not think
about the problems of philosophy. It also yields a better account than is usually offered in
philosophy and science of what should count as anthropomorphic projection onto animals of
qualities that are distinctively human (at least on this planet).

But the importance of the concept ‘human being’ to understanding ourselves, what we have
on common with other animals and what sets us apart from them, is complex and many
layered. We understand this fully, I suggest, only in a cognitive realm that I have called ‘the
realm of meaning’. It is a realm in which we strive to see things as they are rather than as
they appear, for example, from a sentimental, anthropocentric or anthropomorphic
perspective of ourselves on our relation to nature; it is a form of ‘seeing things as they are’ in
which form and content, thought and feeling cannot be separated. That being so, I argue that
philosophers and scientists should be more appreciative of the importance of art to our
understanding of human beings, other animals and the many forms of their relations to one
another.

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ALL WELCOME. NO REGISTRATION NOR ANY COST.

**Part 3.** Key note speaker: **Andrew Benjamin** “Of Jews and Animals”
Monash University
Date: Friday 11 May

**Exhibition:** Small Room with Animals and Humans
curated by Domenico De Clario
**Opening Thursday 5 April 6.00-8.30pm**
Dates: 10 April – 6 May
MARS gallery, 418 Bay Street, Port Melbourne

Presented by the Centre for Ideas Art & Philosophy project funded by the Myer Foundation.
Convened by Dr Louise Burchill and Dr Elizabeth Presa.