

# On the Rich Choreographies of Critical Thought: From Dancing Bodies to Human-Animal Relations in Art, Anthropology, and American Studies

A Conversation with Jane Desmond

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*Jane C. Desmond is an eminent scholar, engaged public intellectual, former choreographer, and specialist in performance studies, human-animal studies, and transnational studies of the United States. A professor of anthropology and gender studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she also heads The Animal Studies Initiative at Illinois and serves as affiliate faculty in veterinary medicine and the Department of Dance. Throughout her career, she has been active in initiating transdisciplinary conversations with scholars and students around the world. She has held faculty appointments at Cornell University, Duke University, the University of Iowa and visiting professorships and fellowships at a number of universities abroad, including Budapest, Beijing, Edinburgh, and currently she is a Fulbright Professor at the University of Göttingen. The idea of this interview is to see how her fascinating career evolved through different stages—from being a dancer to an extremely versatile intellectual and thinker, who has done work in very different, yet related fields: choreography and performance studies, film and video, critical theory and Cultural Studies, American Studies and Anthropology, and, more recently, in the transdisciplinary field of Animal Studies, where, in her writing and teaching, she explores human-animal relationships in the context of veterinary medicine, practices of mourning, in zoos and natural history museums, and “on the margins of death”—in pet cemeteries, as taxidermy and roadkill—as well as diverse forms of nonhuman creativity, communication, and coexistence with human animals.*

**Babette Tischleder:** Our conversation here is a good opportunity to welcome you again in Göttingen. You arrived just a few days ago, and I'm excited that you've come here as Fulbright Professor and that you'll be teaching two courses in our North American Studies program this summer term. After two years of social distancing and conversations on Zoom, we are actually sitting in your apartment together, and I am eager to learn something about your fascinating career. So let's begin with your time as a dancer and how, from there, you became interested in American Studies. It's quite a long way, no?

**Jane Desmond:** Dance was my first life. In some ways I think of it as a totally separate life because it was a profession in itself. In that capacity I freelanced in New York, I taught at Cornell and I was on the faculty at Duke for about ten years in the dance program. Like many professional athletes, in your mid-to-late 30s your body starts to fall apart; so you make a choice of how you continue to be in the field. For me, I had done a lot of work with filmmakers and videographers, and as I couldn't choreograph using my own body with the same degree of freedom as before, I asked myself what could possibly be as interesting as dancing? Dancing takes your mind, it takes your spirit, and it takes your body. I thought that maybe I would move into film, so I took a course on film theory. This was very exciting to me, so I moved on to British Cultural Studies, which I also found very exciting, so I decided to try to find a place in the United States to study this type of theoretical work. The closest I could find was the field of American Studies, which would give me a lot of intellectual elbow room. In a sort of unusual series of events I took unpaid leave from Duke, I did my coursework at Yale and changed what I was teaching from studio work to courses on experimental film and critical theory and the arts. I made up all these courses, and when I finished my dissertation and my degree I moved directly on to American Studies at the University of Iowa.

**BT:** That was a big step indeed. What you say about American Studies corresponds with my experience of studying *Amerikanistik* at the Goethe University in Frankfurt—a big intellectual playground where one would learn about anything from cultural and social history to poetry, from vaudeville and world's fairs to nineteenth-century painting and pop art, from Transcendentalism to Hollywood Aesthetics. And this understanding of the field was further expanded by an academic year that I spent at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1992/93, where I had my first encounter with (British) Cultural Studies as a student

of John Fiske in the Communication Arts Department. It was new and exciting to discern culture no longer just in terms of the established literary canons, fine arts or opera, but as a way of life on the street, in the supermarket, on television and the radio, including popular music and styles, Madonna, rap, and MTV.

**JD** (laughing): I was reading Fiske's work on popular culture and film at just about the same time!

**BT**: Right, this was the moment for Cultural Studies to emerge as a critical approach in the United States in the form of seminal conferences and publications in the early 1990s. In fact, it was a series of lectures that Stuart Hall delivered at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) that first introduced "Cultural Studies" to an American audience in 1983 and challenged the self-concepts of the "cultured" elites and the established hierarchies between high and popular culture. Hall's notion of culture as "experience lived, experience interpreted, experience defined" (Hsu) initiated this whole new thinking about culture and cultural work.

**JD**: Yes, the UIUC hosted a number of key conferences then that were gathered into two key publications. The Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, founded by Carey Nelson then, is still going strong, and I'm also an affiliated faculty member. They offer a great graduate certificate and a series of themed events. In fact, I went to one of those early UIUC Cultural Studies conferences when I was at Yale and never imagined that years later I would return!

**BT**: It must have been so thrilling to see "Cult Studs" take off in the United States. For me too, it was a whole new way of understanding culture—as everyday practice and lived experience, including the essential role that reception and audiences played in this. Hall's influence was very palpable in Fiske's graduate course in 1993: we read his work and analyzed the television coverage of the L.A. Riots of 1991 in the aftermath of the Rodney King beating and the televised Senate hearings of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas with its complex connection of racist and sexist stereotyping (a paper I wrote on this topic became my first published article). We looked at how questions of gender and feminism are related to questions of race in the depiction of black bodies—the crucial role the amateur video of Rodney King played for documenting how African Americans are treated by the L.A. police and in the United States more generally. Had there been no video there probably wouldn't have been a lawsuit nor the ensuing social uprisings. We real-

ized the cultural significance of that video as evidence (filmed with a handheld camera). There was no Black Lives Matter Movement then, but the case sparked the biggest riots in the country since the Watts riots in the late 1960s. This is one important dimension of how, during that time, the body became relevant as a subject of critical inquiry; the representation of bodies in language, in popular culture, and news media became a particular focus then. Considering your past as a choreographer and interest in performance, what was the cultural significance of bodies and embodiment in your work, also as a physical practice rather than just as object of visual representation and signification, as the body was framed in the wake of poststructuralist theories?

**JD:** For one thing I will just say, back to Rodney King, of course George Floyd's murder and the visual evidence of that has been astoundingly impactful. Thinking back to those moments, the notion of evidence is crucial. Thinking about the body is very interesting for me. I was heavily trained in literary theory, theories of representation, visual representation and spectatorship. For all of these things, which I found very useful back when I taught choreography, I had a new vocabulary. I finally had names for things within the dance field that at that time were not very available, but I also had this struggle with how to talk about everyday practices beyond their representational import, the actual enactment and the way we can understand meaning through the complexity of the historical moment—that was very much a tension for me. I didn't start at Yale thinking that I was going to write about dance, I went there with an open mind, and in the end became interested in questions of embodiment. This became central to my work, but not in the way I had imagined. I did a dissertation prospectus on the downtown dance scene in New York, which I knew and had been a part of, and I had a fellowship which meant that I could spend a year elsewhere. I spent it in Santa Cruz writing, and there I was invited to give a talk on film in Honolulu at the East-West Center. When I was there, I saw a hula performance, and when I came home, I wrote eighty pages about that. Also, I saw some ecotourism sights and I went to Sea World and I radically changed my dissertation, threw out the dance component on the New York scene and worked on what would eventually become my book *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. In the book, the notion of visibility, display, and enactment became the core of this question. I was asking about the lineages of acts of looking at what is perceived to be embodied difference, and how these function in both cultural

tourism and in sites where nonhuman animals are foregrounded. Of course, it was important to consider the history of World's Fairs, such as the 1904 St. Louis Fair, where humans from selected countries, as well as “exotic” animals, were all on exhibit. I wanted to trace these legacies in contemporary tourist practices.

**BT:** It's fascinating to hear that your travels to Hawaii and experience of the culture there had such an impact that you radically changed the focus of your dissertation, even discarding considerable parts.

**JD:** It *gripped me by the neck* in a way; I knew this was so exciting for me to start to think about. In a way, I knew that other [dance] world. This was much more challenging in some ways for me to try and look at, and after I finished my dissertation, I needed to learn how to do several other things: I had some excellent training in social history but I didn't know how to do archival work, and I had no training in fieldwork; at the time, it wasn't part of American Studies training, hardly anywhere and not where I was. So after I finished the dissertation, I threw out the first half, took 150 pages and put them in the waste basket.

**BT:** Not in a drawer.

**JD:** Not in a drawer! And I was fortunate to have opportunities to spend some time at the East-West Center in Honolulu at the University of Hawaii and to do extensive fieldwork, to study hula there, and to be at the shows, and to interview leading Native Hawaiian performers. So I had to learn other things, my training didn't include ways to answer the questions that I found I wanted to ask. That move to fieldwork then became a very strong commitment to a way of knowing, a form of active respect for not solely looking at the cultural production of people, but at the community of people, what they think about, and their own worldmaking—that was a shift indeed.

**BT:** Listening to you, it seems that was the birth of the anthropologist that you then became. It was another significant turn in your career, and, it seems to me, you didn't just bring your training and expertise to the field, but that being in Hawaii and in touch with the people there, their ways of living and thinking, called

upon you to reconsider your own methods, to realize the limits of the training that you had as a scholar practicing cultural studies back home. In a way you had to learn anew how to study a culture very different from what you had been part of in New York and what you had done as an Americanist at Yale.

**JD:** I was fortunate that I had some training with anthropologists, so at the East-West Center I did a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship with a group of other academics, almost all of whom were anthropologists who were specialists in the Pacific. I had to learn about the Pacific region, so again, being an outsider in that setting allowed me to deepen my understanding under the tutelage of people who were experts in that arena. The dancing bridge brought me back into the studio, so that I was able to study with Noenoelani Zuttermester, one of the leading hula masters at the University of Hawaii. I was able to be in the studio and dancing again. Of course, it is a very different style, so I had to learn to move differently and learn the chants in another language and so on. But having been a dancer, it also felt like coming home, to be in a studio and to be studying again. That also became a bridge to understanding the practice and joining a group of people for whom that practice was important. At the time I was also very active in the development of critical dance studies; so I did a first edited book, *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, one of the first books at the time to bring critical theory into the discussion of dance studies, which before had been largely criticism of performances or auteur studies. This was a very exciting moment in performance studies and dance studies during that period in the nineties; and a few of us who had been dancers were making this type of move, and these books started coming out and creating a locus of conversation that now is a tremendous, hugely vigorous field. I continue to do some writing on those topics, but it was the focus of my publications then. I also edited the first full-length book on queer theory and dance, *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On & Off Stage*. Both of these books are still in print, and it is quite wonderful to see them cited in radically different contexts and that they are still useful for people.

**BT:** So moving from dance to cultural studies and then to fieldwork was not simply a trajectory from one field to another, but one in which your past experience as a dancer served you in unexpected ways as you encountered the hula practices in Hawaii that involved a kind of shared practice. I'm wondering whether

your fieldwork there also helped you challenge certain poststructuralist ideas that were prominent in Cultural Studies, and how it impacted the way you continued your work in American Studies back home, especially since you have also been an initiator of international American Studies?

**JD:** As I look back and forward now, I see that I have a passion for helping to clear spaces for new conversations. You never do this by yourself—this is always a collective endeavor at a certain moment. One of them was in that specific phase in the 1990s, beginning to work to clear that space in Cultural Studies and dance and performance studies, which was just starting to have little bit of infrastructure in the United States, and then doing that in an American Studies program. At the time there were no jobs in Performance Studies within American Studies, but I was fortunate when I got the job at the University of Iowa to have an interdisciplinary appointment directly as a professor of American Studies—not as a professor of English, which I could not be, not as professor of social history, which I could not be, which were the norms at the time in the United States. The Iowa program was quite unique, very strong in film studies, as was Iowa overall. One of my colleagues was working with a sociological approach, and they welcomed this work. I don't want to say it didn't fit or wasn't welcome, but what I was writing about was certainly not normative. The fact that they welcomed that, and asked what I would like to teach—'well, I'd like to teach performance studies'—there were not many places in the country that offered graduate courses in performance studies; I certainly had never taken such a course, I had to make it up. But I'm grateful that they were interested in having me do what I could do.

The other key thing that you mentioned was the international American Studies. Like you, I went into American Studies because of its intellectual vibrancy and what I think of as intellectual elbow room. And yet I found its domestic focus constricting, and that sense of "what about the rest of the world?" came to me early on, post-PhD. It was also at a time, again, when a couple of other people were trying to make some of those moves within US-American Studies, and, of course, there were expert Americanists all over the world who had been doing that work for a very long time. It's perhaps an anthropological point of view, that there is a big world, and it's important to have that angle of vision. Within two years of arriving at the University of Iowa, my partner Virginia Dominguez and I were fortunate to get a large grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to found The International Forum for U.S. Studies (IFUSS), which was a way of financing the work of people who are experts on the United States, located outside the United States, and so to bring that expertise into greater visibility in the United States and also

to provide superb access to library resources and other things that can be harder to get elsewhere. That was also transformative for me, the conversations I could have, the presumptions about 'American Studies' that were so implicitly US-bound that when you talk to someone who doesn't have the same presumptions, then your own are thrown into relief. So that was thrilling. Even "how do I read a CV of someone from Russia, from China?"—I remember in the early years the language was so different; the notion of the word *civilization* that would be used in some applications whereas, politically, it would be a red flag in a domestic context. I had to constantly realize that there were other intellectual formations at play, and I wanted to come to understand those better.

**BT:** And, indeed, your experience as an Americanist goes way beyond a US-perspective. So, for instance, you went to Hungary to teach for an entire year. At the moment, with the war in Ukraine, Eastern Europe is very much in our focus, but at the time it probably hadn't been taken very seriously as a place where American Studies is being done. I'm wondering how your time in Hungary impacted your perspective on this field?

**JD:** Yes, Virginia and I did go for a year, and we were fortunate to be able to get leave from the University of Iowa to do that. We jointly held the Otto Salgo Chair in American Studies at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest in 2001—I in the fall, she in the spring. They were just starting a PhD program in American Studies, so it was a time when they were seeking to enlarge their teaching. This was also not that long after the demise of the Iron Curtain. A long time ago now, but what a time to be there. We talked briefly about this moment of realizing this strong strand of Marxist, feminist, poststructuralist, early postcolonial training that was going on, that I had had. I was teaching the opening graduate seminar in theory for their new cohort of students, and we were going to read Althusser, which of course all my students were reading [laughs]. I have never forgotten this, "We don't want to read Althusser, because we've had it with Marxism. We know Marxism, but we are moving on." Whereas this was a powerful analytical tool for understanding class and economics in the United States, with its weak analysis of social class and lack of language for social class, unlike, say, the U.K. It had such an impact on *me*: it wasn't going to do the work that these scholars wanted to do. We had that discussion sitting in a classroom where the desks were still stamped as saying underneath "property of the Communist party." This



is one of those learning experiences that forces you to realize one's own intellectual ethnocentrism, in the sense of particular worlds of knowledge production, and that they are not the same everywhere, nor should they be the same everywhere, nor should we assume there are the same everywhere.

**BT:** To say it with Donna Haraway, knowledges are always situated, and so if we speak about Marxism or class, we mean very different things in different places. As an American Studies scholar, you were founder of IFUSS that you moved from Iowa to Illinois when you were appointed at the UIUC. I happily joined IFUSS at the University of Illinois as a fellow when you invited me in 2019 to do research and present my work: I had the chance to meet two other Italian Americanists and present our book *An Eclectic Bestiary: Encounters in a More-than-Human World* (edited with Birgit Spengler) and discuss it with the Research Group on the Non-human Turn, focusing on "Urban Animals," my photo series as well as ideas on cities as places where humans, pets, and wild animals coexist in ways that are often not recognized. As founder of IFUSS and as a former president of the International Association of American Studies that held conferences at Rio and Beijing during your two terms, you have done important work for American Studies outside the United States, and you continue doing so and bringing people together from all over the world. There would be so much more to say about this, but there's one topic I still want to address, namely your current interest in Nonhuman Animal Studies, your book *Displaying Death and Animating Life*, and teaching in different disciplines at the University of Illinois, mainly in Anthropology but also courses in veterinary medicine. When and how did this field become a focus for you?

**JD:** When I wrote *Staging Tourism* (1999) [a book that compares practices of cultural tourism with "animal tourism"—the displays of animals in zoos and maritime parks such as Sea World], there were only a few people that were really doing Animal Studies or sociocultural histories focused on animals (Harriet Ritvo's work, for example), and there were just starting to be some of these conversations outside, let's say, biology or ecology or ethology. Even though it was a real challenge to combine the two parts of *Staging Tourism* in one intellectual frame, I wanted to put the questions of embodiment and looking relations and politics and value together. After that book, I gave myself the permission, if I wanted to, to just write about animals. At the same time, there were a few key conferences that were developing, and I began to find some other colleagues; a couple of them were in American Studies, but most of them were not. So, after so many years of going to

American Studies conferences, I began going to these other conferences. I guess it's part of that process of helping to build conversations that are national and international on an emergent focus. That's a lot of what I'm doing now. At the University of Illinois, I'm directing The Animal Studies Initiative at the Center for Advanced Study, where we are trying to build some infrastructure for interdisciplinary Human-Animal Studies. There's a tremendous amount of work going on in several countries; in Germany of course, also in the United States, in Australia, in the U.K., some work in India, for example, but there's not a lot of infrastructure. There aren't regular conferences—there's one biennial, one that has been interrupted by Covid and moves from country to country—but there aren't majors and PhDs and these types of academic infrastructure. So we're trying to begin to build some of that at these interdisciplinary conversations, because it has to be interdisciplinary and that, just like American Studies, is something I really like.

**BT:** We have seen that you are a dyed-in-the-wool multidisciplinary scholar, and animal studies itself is a rich field in the sense that it is concerned with many different dimensions of human-animal relations. In *Displaying Death and Animating Life*, you bring together such different arenas of animal life as pets that are loved and cattle that are raised to end up on the dinner table, beloved nonhuman characters in children's books, taxidermy displays, and living animals exhibited in zoos. Hence your book is about the intersections of science, medicine, visual culture, and narrative, and you are interested not just in these institutions, but also in the individual lives of animals and their place in our contemporary naturecultures (to use another concept by Haraway). Can you say something about the ambivalences and seeming contractions of how people relate to other animals, depending on whether they prefer to consider them as family members, food, prey, resource, or vermin?

**JD:** As I hear you talking, I realize, you know, there are strands that go very far back and it's like a pattern in knitting: Sometimes the red thread comes all the way through and then sometimes you pick up the blue and you bring it back in. In *Displaying Death and Animating Life*, a lot of that work on museums and looking relations and the display of then dead bodies—dead humans and dead animals—are writings about the von Hagens *Body Worlds* exhibits, for example, and comparing the protocols for public display of humans and nonhumans after death; all those things go back to my early visual training and passions for understanding visuality. And then the middle part, which is about mourning and

pet cemeteries and the writing of obituaries as a literary genre, what happens when the being is an animal, sort of pulls back to both literary theory and visual culture again. But then I was interested in what people do, not just what they make. How do they mourn for an animal when we don't have the same set protocols that we might have through various religious traditions, for example, for how to mourn for a human. In most of these places there is a body present. Sometimes the body is dead, sometimes the body is human, but there often is a body present, even if it's under the ground, or there are embodied practices. And when it comes to the last part of the book on art by animals and the transnational market for products that are called art that are made by nonhumans, I was interested in the historical categorization of something that gets called art by certain groups of people. So, in some ways, that also goes directly back to earlier concerns and training, and that gave me a vocabulary to talk about those things.

After I finished that book, I decided I wanted to spend time at the College of Veterinary Medicine. There are only about thirty-three of them in the United States, and we have one of them on my campus, so I was fortunate to be able to arrange to spend a lot of time in clinics and in classrooms, in the anatomy lab and so forth, because of the generosity of my colleagues there. Again, bodies are very present. They're present in the clinic, they're dead and dissected in the anatomy lab and so forth. I realized the question I was trying to ask myself was what is the status of the animal in veterinary medicine? Of course, there is no *one* animal, there are multiple typologies, multiple species, multiple sets of relations to humans that determine the type of care they will get or won't get. So I became interested in how that profession organizes itself, and what medicine for animals means in comparison with health for humans.

**BT:** So you have a lot of questions to ask about veterinary medicine as a discipline. How would your perspectives as an Americanist and anthropologist challenge the disciplinary thinking in this field, for instance in an ethical regard?

**JD:** Veterinarians certainly are intensely aware of their ethical challenges. What an American Studies, Cultural Studies or anthropological background can provide is a different set of frameworks for them to engage those questions with. There is intense scrutiny within the profession right now about the whiteness of the profession compared to other medical professions, and there are multiple contributing factors of this, including social class, where people encounter animals; who is exposed to veterinary medicine?—all sorts of things like that. But it is a conversation within the field now. Of course, both American Studies and Anthropology

have worked to understand social formations for a very long time, and the unequal distribution of access to goods and power and opportunities. When I'm teaching contemporary issues in veterinary medicine I'm teaching about social formations, and hopefully providing a conceptual vocabulary that their own training doesn't provide them because, in a sense, why should it? That's not what they're studying. So, in that way, it's been really exciting to be able to contribute that, even alongside some things like narrative analysis. How do we understand all the TV shows about veterinarians now, you know? What's the narrative? Is it a sort of hero narrative?

**BT:** Yes, indeed, and how could the intersection between veterinary medicine and cultural inquiry be made productive in our current time, during a pandemic that has much to do with the mingling and mixing of human and nonhuman bodies and so-called zoonotic diseases. Covid is understood to have sprung from a virus that was originally carried by bats, but it's members of the human species that encroach more and more on the last remaining "wild places," usually wildlife refuges managed by people rather than left alone. There was this short moment around March 2020, when people withdrew from streets and stayed at home during lockdowns in many countries and when traffic slowed down everywhere: dolphins appeared in Venice's canals, mountain goats walked through empty Scottish towns, coyotes were spotted in downtown Chicago, and I myself saw a number of foxes on streets in Berlin in broad daylight. What I mean to say is that we live in multispecies cities, in a more-than-human world, and that health is not a matter where we can draw a clear line between human and veterinary medicine, or can we?

**JD:** There is a movement, I guess we could call it—and I'm guessing about the duration, certainly at least ten years—called One Health. And this is veterinarians wanting to work with MDs—human medical doctors—to recognize, in fact, that health moves across species, and we need to look at health in a multispecies way. So far, a lot of the desire for those conversations had come more from the veterinary side, but possibly post-Covid or in Covid times we'll see a greater recognition of that, certainly in the public health dimension. But also more broadly, in academia, where these types of incidences are something that we can understand as maybe a reclaiming of territory, or making us look at the way that human expansion into, let's say, Brazil—cutting down a lot of the forest in order to grow soy beans—has had an impact on where nonhuman animals can

live; and when things change they have taken over, come back, in a way that they are, quote, 'out of place'. If we can look at that connection as always ongoing, as opposed to only visible when it erupts in a global pandemic, then I think we will have made a good move forward.

**BT:** I so agree with you. That any living being—human, animal, plant, or fungi—could be out of place is a strange human concept; if we are interested in the survival not just of our own species, we will have to find ways to share the planet more equally with our fellow earth dwellers. I guess we could continue this conversation much longer, but let me, as a last question, ask you about the courses you are teaching this semester here in Göttingen?

**JD:** One of those courses is a version of something I developed two years ago for the first time for PhD students across a variety of different disciplines called "Ethnographies of the More-than-Human." The challenge there is how do you articulate the lives of nonhuman animals given our necessarily anthropocentric modes of apprehending their way of being in the world. I'm adapting that for an upper-level course here, I'm excited about that. And I do bring in some performance studies teaching there, because we will try to do some different exercises to look at the limitations of knowledge to sort of confront that and say: Well, if your dog Lucca, sitting next to you, knows the world through her nose, how could we map this apartment we're in by the scents that are in it? How can we use a sense of radical creative imagination to both embrace that fundamental limitation and yet make some effort to perceive otherwise? So that's one of the goals of that course. And the other course is something you've asked me to teach that I've never taught, although it's areas I research, and that is "Visual Arts and Animals." For that, I'm interested not only in notions of pet portraiture—for example, "How does the practice of portraiture change when the subject is nonhuman?"—but also the more popular-culture media, those endless TikTok videos of cats and, you know, why are those so popular? So back to the Cultural Studies questions: What is the cultural work that these media products are doing? And in there, of course, I'll invite the students to produce some of their own, after they've analyzed some of these visual genres.

**BT:** These are both courses I'd love to attend myself. I thank you for taking the time to speak with me about these shared concerns, and I look forward to further conversations on our more-than-human world that I hope students will come to understand a bit better through your multi-faceted lens and untiring intellectual engagement.

The participants would like to acknowledge the help of Susanna Fitzsimmons and Sarah Vincent who were instrumental in producing the manuscript version of this conversation.

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