Caring for pet dogs: Negotiating the practice of good care in a social environment
Fiona Slattery

Practices of care for pet dogs range widely from good care through to poor care with its associated problems for dogs and society and include well-intentioned care that fails in some respects. To better understand care practices, this research asks: "What constitutes a ‘good dog carer’?" The theoretical framework for this qualitative study is Social Representations Theory (SRT) which assists in understanding the structure and function of ‘commonsense’ social knowledge. A key part of the research method is based on Haug's Memory Work, in which data is generated and analysed by a small group of research participants. Early findings indicate that an important aspect of being a good dog carer is successfully negotiating care practice within a network of social relationships that includes carers, their pets, their families and friends and their organisational and professional relationships.

Fiona Slattery has attended UWS since 1999, doing a BA (Social Psychology and Social Research) and then a BSocSc (Hons). She is currently working on her PhD with the School of Social Sciences, doing qualitative research about social knowledge and practice in the care of pet dogs. This builds on her interests in animals and in care – as well as being a parent, she has previously been involved in dog rescue as well as having been a volunteer instructor at dog training clubs, and has also worked in the field of horse training and care.

Transformative Travel: The Socially Mobile De/Construction of Reality
Garth Lean

Physical travel has traditionally been viewed as an agent of transformation. The research conducted on this topic, however, is surprisingly narrow in scope. This paper presents the findings of a holistic and interdisciplinary study of transformative travel. It draws upon the experiences and observations of 78 participants (representing a wide-variety of nationalities, ages and experiences), sourced and interviewed over four years using internet-based methods, along with the researcher’s own travels through South-East Asia, West Africa and Europe. It is argued that travel in all its forms continually acts to construct, maintain and transform individual and collective realities. At its broadest, human travel might be defined, not simply as movement from one place to another, but as a shift in conscious attention.

Garth is UWS born and bred. He began his association with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management and Tourism, followed by a Bachelor of Tourism (Honours). He completed his PhD with the Centre for Cultural Research and School of Social Sciences. Outside of academia, Garth has worked in tourism planning and marketing roles with Taronga Zoo, Baulkham Hills Shire Council and Tourism New South Wales. His research interests focus on travel (especially the long-term influences of physical travel upon travellers), tourism, mobilities, imagination, cultural heritage, visual methods and alternative ways of presenting travel and travel research.

Plan to attend this regular series of seminars

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