

Animals on Television

Brett Mills

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The Cultural Making of the Non-Human

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Brett Mills
School of Art, Media and American Studies
University of East Anglia
Norwich, UK

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Two things kickstarted the ideas that led to this book. First, teaching about documentary on the master's-level module 'television and reality' at the University of East Anglia led to discovering that my students had completely different views about wildlife documentary from all other genres, and that intrigued me. It was finding material that we could subsequently discuss in that class that made me realise how little is written in my field about animals and animal representations. So thanks to the many students who took that class as they constituted the first place I could try out some of these ideas.

The other thing was the mauling I suffered on various media outlets in 2010 when my article on the ethics of animal documentaries was picked up as a news story. I spent two days fielding ceaseless media requests, and not sleeping much. The nadir was when Gabby Logan, on BBC Radio 5Live, asked me if I got embarrassed watching mice having sex. My media training hadn't, unsurprisingly, prepared me for such a query. That interviewers could simultaneously be so angry and so flippant in their questioning made me realise how troubling thinking about animals is, and that this was therefore worth pursuing. So, in a roundabout way, thanks to Gabby Logan and all the other people who asked me lots of really stupid questions during that time.

For the great Facebook *Peppa Pig* debate of May 2016, I thank Ciara Conlon, Jayne Dinnin, Anna Fry, Cerian Hutchings, Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore, James Leggott, Cerian Price, Helen Wheatley, Ceri

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Many animals have been a part of my family, ever since I was a child. My earliest memory is of being in the alleyway at the side of my childhood home, standing next to Flash the German Shepherd, at that time so much taller than me. So, thanks to him, and to Dolly Mixture, Jack of Diamonds, Jinty, Trudy, Terri, Chilli, Max, Ted, Tash, Eric, Meg and Emmy. And a dog helped me write this book: Bailey, the large-headed Labrador, forever a calming presence.

My companion on these animal adventures—and who spends far too much time being traumatised by *The Supervet*—is Sanna, who has had to put up for years with my ruining every television programme with an animal in it. Thanks to her for enduring that, and for enduring the UK's bewildering and enraging decision to tell her she's not welcome: *Beschissenen Brexit Befürworter*.

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