

A multidisciplinary international workshop

Too cute to kill?

**From the depiction of animals in
children's literature to the framing of
government policy by adults**

21 -22 July 2016

School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Surrey



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The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the University of Surrey hosts small-scale, scientific and scholarly meetings of leading academics from all over the world to discuss specialist topics away from the pressure of everyday work. The events are multidisciplinary, bringing together scholars from different disciplines to share alternative perspectives on common problems.

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» WELCOME

Welcome from the Organising Committee to this Institute of Advanced Studies supported workshop on the depiction of animals in children's literature to the framing of government policy by adults. We hope that you will find the programme interesting, exciting and also challenging. The papers being presented at the workshop will share empirical and theoretical work, as well as use a range of methodological approaches, to explore this topic. We are very pleased to have such a variety of international speakers, from a range of disciplines and we have made room in the programme for some interactive discussion sessions.

We are also delighted to welcome our guest speakers, Mr Alick Simmons: former Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer and Director of Plant and Animal Health for England, Professor Wyn Grant, University of Warwick, Professor Francine Dollins, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Ms Caroline Spence, Queen Mary University of London, and Dr Amy Ratelle, University of Toronto.

We anticipate that the collaborative work initiated in this workshop will continue after it has finished in the form of continuing dialogues about our work, and in the publication of an edited collection – so we will be in touch with all the presenters about these possibilities and opportunities.

We extend our grateful thanks to the Institute of Advanced Studies for sponsoring this event and to all those who have helped with the organisation, in particular Aimee Jones. We do hope you enjoy the intellectual stimulation of the workshop and look forward to meeting you all.

Mark Chambers, Adeline Johns-Putra, Birgitta Gatersleben, Sophie Heywood
University of Surrey and University of Reading



THURSDAY 21 JULY 2016

- 09.00 – 09.30** Welcome & Introduction
Professor Mark Chambers, Vet School, University of Surrey
- Session one:** **Contentious and intractable policies involving animals (Mark Chambers, Chair)**
- 09.30 – 10.40** Invited speakers
It doesn't matter whether it is cute or ugly. It's the evidence, stupid.
Mr Alick Simmons: former Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer and Director of Plant and Animal Health for England
Mythical constructions of the badger and the TB policy debate.
Professor Wyn Grant, Department of Politics and International Studies, Social Sciences Building, University of Warwick
- 10.40 – 11.10** Break and posters
- 11.10 – 12.30** Papers
The Contribution of Animal Welfare Science to the Development of Public Policy.
Ms Stella Chapman, University of Surrey
Bovine Tuberculosis and Badger Culling: Sentimental Framings of Badgers and Cows.
Ms Jess Phoenix, Lancaster University
Where 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' Went Wrong: Narratives about 'pest' species and tree health outbreaks.
Dr Emily Porth, University of Surrey
- 12.30 – 13.30** Lunch and posters
- 13.30 – 14.45** Focus group discussions
- Session two:** **Attitudes to animals (Birgitta Gatersleben, Chair)**
- 14.45 – 15.55** Invited speakers
Illustrating Cuteness: do iconic species help us to assess their true value or the value of an ecosystem for conservation, research and policy?
Professor Francine Dollins, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Attitudes to Animals: are we all guilty of discrimination?
Ms Caroline Spence, Queen Mary University of London
- 15.55 – 16.25** Break and posters
- 16.25 – 17.45** Papers
Using YouTube to study dog bites: Contextual analysis and the perception of risk
Ms Sara Owczarczak-Garstecka, University of Liverpool
The power of words: how people talk about 'cuteness' and 'killing'
Professor Alison Sealey, Lancaster University
"Attachment" to pets – lost in translation?
Dr John Bradshaw, University of Bristol
- 17.45 – 19.00** Focus group discussions
- 19.00** Close and wine reception (Andrew Jeffrey, poetry recital)
- 20.00** Workshop dinner

FRIDAY 22 JULY 2016

- Session three:** **Depiction of animals in literature (Adeline Johns-Putra, Chair)**
- 09.10 – 10.25** Invited speakers
Reconceptualizing relationships: Children and other animals
Dr Amy Ratelle, University of Toronto
What we say about animals and what they say about us
Video interview with Holly Webb, best-selling author and former children's book editor, followed by commentary by Dr Sophie Heywood
- 10.25 – 10.55** Break and posters
- 10.55 – 12.15** Papers
Good to love or good to eat? Ethical and ideological implications of the construction of species difference in a selection of American Little Golden Books
Ms Kelly Hübner, Stockholm University
Bugs' Lives: the Representation of Insects in Pixar Films
Mr David Whitley and Zoe Jacques, University of Cambridge
The depiction of animals in children's literature from China
Ms Helen Wang, literary translator
Talking Animals in Children's Fiction
Ms Liz West, University of Reading
- 12.15 – 13.15** Lunch and posters
- 13.15 – 14.30** Focus group discussions
- 14.30 – 15.00** Break
- Session four:** **Feedback by rapporteurs**
- 15.00 – 17.00** *Throughout the workshop people from different disciplines will be organised into focus groups. At the end of the three presentation sessions these groups will break out to discuss the following:*
- *What are the big/unanswered questions?*
 - *What are the priorities for future research?*
 - *What needs to change/be done differently?*
- Each group will appoint a rapporteur who will report back the group's opinions on these three questions during this fourth session.*
- 17.00 – 17.30** Reflections of the organising committee - Meeting close

» GUEST SPEAKERS ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Mr Alick Simmons: former Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer and Director of Plant and Animal Health for England

It doesn't matter whether it is cute or ugly. It's the evidence, stupid

Anthropogenic change can lead to species extirpation but some change advantages certain species. The relative abundance of the species which exploit anthropogenic change tends to increase and can lead to economic loss through disease, damage and predation of domestic animals. Animals deemed to be causing the problem are frequently killed often as part of a cycle of activity. There are implications for survival and the welfare of species involved. Legal protections have been introduced but are limited and subject to exemptions. Much of the killing relies on methods where the welfare is poor or where effects on the population is unknown. Protection is driven by concern about species survival and the means of killing. There has been little formal consideration of the social value of the species affected but for some species (e.g. the badger) there has been lengthy research and consultation. For other species, e.g. rodents, little interest is generated. To avoid inconsistencies and to ensure consideration of the implication for welfare and biodiversity, wildlife in the UK would benefit from an ethical framework similar to that applied to experimental animals. Such an approach would ensure a systematic and robust analysis of proposed lethal interventions. It would take into account, as a minimum:

1. evidence demonstrating the cause of the economic loss, etc.
2. cost-benefit analysis of lethal intervention.
3. cost-benefit analysis of appropriate changes to the business affected.
4. consideration of the species' social value.
5. acceptable welfare standards.

Any activity that requires systematic and sustained killing without an evidence base to would be deemed ethically unacceptable. The default should be to avoid lethal intervention with few exemptions. Proponents of intervention would need to present cost-benefit analysis of alternative interventions which take account of the social value of the species. Adopting an ethical framework would require considerable changes in attitudes and practice and ensuring compliance would require independent oversight. Attitudes would need to change considerably, particularly those not used to scrutiny of their activities and allow a structured and objective consideration of the social value we ascribe species.

Alick Simmons is a veterinarian, naturalist and photographer. After a period in private practice following his first degree, he followed a 35 year career as a Government veterinarian, latterly as the Food Standards Agency's Veterinary Director and the UK Government's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer. Alick has had much involvement in public health and disease control policy and extensive practical experience of BSE, TB, Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Avian Influenza gained in the UK and overseas. He has post graduate qualifications in tropical veterinary medicine and animal welfare. Alick's lifelong passion is wildlife and, since leaving government service in 2015, he has sought to develop and expand this interest. He is volunteering for the RPSB's Crane re-introduction project in Somerset, become a trustee of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare and is a member of Oxford University's Ethical Review Board. He is devoting more time to photography and the outdoors and is keen to increase the rather modest total of his photos that have been published.

» GUEST SPEAKERS ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Wyn Grant, Department of Politics and International Studies, Social Sciences Building, University of Warwick

Mythical constructions of the badger and the TB policy debate

Drawing on extensive analysis of documents in the National Archives and their Scottish counterpart, this paper argues that cultural constructions of the badger treat it as a cherished species endowed with elements of magic and mystery. Many writers have drawn on the badger for inspiration. Visually, the badger has been portrayed as anthropomorphic or 'red in tooth and claw'. However, the policy debate also created a widely believed notion of a rogue badger. This was a bad, deviant or anti-social badger whose actions gave a justification for intervention. Officials recommended 'that it should be shot by an expert marksman when emerging from its sett at dusk.' The idea of a rogue badger was challenged by scientists, but their objections were brushed aside and it became embedded in the policy debate. The badger was described in the policy debate in highly positive terms by stakeholders, while the terminology used to discuss government policy was highly negative. Emotional symbolism surrounding the badger became significant in the policy debate, while constructions of the 'rogue badger' affected how the policy problem was perceived. This made it more difficult to achieve a consensus on policy and to devise feasible and effective approaches to the challenge of bovine TB. It has been the most intractable policy problem encountered in a long career working on public policy.

Professor Wyn Grant is Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Warwick. He is a former chair and president of the UK Political Studies Association. He is a member of the editorial team and board of directors of Political Quarterly. He was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2011. His main area of research work has been comparative public policy with special reference to agricultural and environmental policy. He is author of *The Common Agricultural Policy* (1997) and co-author of *Agriculture in the New Global Economy* (2004) as well as many refereed journal articles and book chapters on agricultural, food and environmental policy. He was deputy principal investigator of the Governance of Livestock Diseases (GoLD) project at the University of Warwick which was funded by the research councils as part of the Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) programme. The project led to a number of publications including refereed journal article and a co-authored book on *The Regulation of Animal Health and Welfare*.

Professor Francine Dollins, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Illustrating Cuteness: do iconic species help us to assess their true value or the value of an ecosystem for conservation, research and policy?

While ringtail lemurs (*Lemur catta catta*) are an iconic species known mostly for their absolute cuteness as depicted in their non-ecologically correct roles in popular commercial animations, the more than 100 species of extant lemurs are, however, almost all currently listed as 'Threatened', 'Vulnerable', 'Endangered', and 'Critically Endangered' (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>). Thus, the overall perception of lemurs as adorable, iconic species representing threatened habitats is juxtaposed with the actual highly negative conservation status of those species and habitats, although not for lack of effort on the part

» GUEST SPEAKERS ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

of conservation NGO's. Given the public's interest in lemurs based on their high cuteness factor, the question is: why? Below the surface of general public attention, there is a lack of global support, interest and knowledge about ensuring that local communities, corporations and countries do not exploit these fragile species and their habitats. To produce immediate monetary gain locally and low cost products globally, habitats are opened up to widespread logging and agriculture (e.g., burning rainforests for palm oil production) that also allows scavengers (human poachers involved in illegal trafficking of wildlife) to enter in the wake of the destruction, leaving wildlife doubly vulnerable. This posits the question: does our perception of a species along the 'continuum of cuteness' focus our attention on saving them and their habitat? In the past, documentaries and other forms of media have worked this angle like pros in advertising. Yet currently, the flurry of positive messages about fauna and flora and their conservation status on "YouTube" and other highly accessible forms of media are negatively mediated by the lack of depth of information on why cuteness is not enough (e.g., ringtail lemurs are commonly sold as exotic pets in the United States). One of the most endangered primates found only in Madagascar, the aye-aye, is deemed to be "not cute" by most people, locally and globally. However, the role that this primate plays in the ecological web is essential and intrinsic to the health of the ecosystem that it inhabits. This presentation will discuss ways in which local and global conservation education projects (e.g., The Ako Project) based on reaching school children and local communities may have an impact on reversing these trends.

Francine Dolins is an Associate Professor of Comparative Psychology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. She has a BSc Honours in Biology (Behavioural Ecology and Evolutionary Theory) from the University of Sussex, England, and Ph.D. in Psychology/Behavioural Primatology from the University of Stirling, Scotland. Her experimental and field research focuses on spatial cognition, primate navigation and goal-directed (foraging) behaviour, and on captive primate welfare. Francine also directs the conservation education, Ako Project, in Detroit, Michigan, and in Madagascar. In addition to peer-reviewed publications, she has published three edited books for Cambridge University Press, including, *Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare* (1999); *Spatial Cognition, Spatial Perception: Mapping the Self and Space* (2010); and *GPS and GIS for Primatologists: A Practical Guide to Spatial Analysis* (2016).

Ms Caroline Spence, Queen Mary University of London

Attitudes to Animals: are we all guilty of discrimination?

Discrimination may be defined as the manifestation of prejudiced or biased beliefs regarding social groups or individuals. An established mechanism in this process is dehumanisation, which typically involves the denial of mind to specific out-groups. Since the possession of mental capacities forms the basis of moral worth, this behaviour aims to absolve the perpetrator of moral responsibility when committing inhumane acts. Previous research has shown these psychological tactics to also be of relevance in our interactions with animals, in particular those we consume. For instance, a person's belief in animal sentience is known to influence subsequent views on the ethical use of farm animals. However, public constructs of animal mind are relatively understudied and there has been

» GUEST SPEAKERS ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

little consideration of the cognitive processes behind the formation of these beliefs. This is significant because, as a proposed correlate of attitudes and behaviour, improved understanding of belief in animal mind represents a potential avenue for human behaviour change. This talk will therefore discuss psychological processes and forms of cognitive bias that are evident in our attitudes to nonhuman animals, both as members of the public and as scientists. The role identified biases play, as a basis/foundation for forms of discrimination, will also be considered alongside identification of belief areas where methods of intervention may present opportunities for attitude change.

Caroline Spence is a PhD candidate in Biological and Experimental Psychology at Queen Mary University of London. Her work examines the role of belief in animal mind in attitudes to animal welfare and aims to identify factors contributing to the disparity between public and stakeholder views on animal mentality and ethical use. The project, titled "Public Attitudes to Animal Sentience and Welfare", is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Queen Mary University of London and is supported by World Animal Protection.

Caroline's general research interests lie in the area of animal welfare and anthrozoology. She has been involved in a range of projects including effects of artificial reef design on colonising species, measurement of stress in laboratory rats and public attitudes to euthanasia in zoos. Prior to her current position, Caroline has undertaken roles for Greenforce, the Medical Research Council and various animal welfare charities, as well as lecturing in animal welfare at HE institutions since 2008. Caroline is a frequent speaker at outreach events and serves as a STEM ambassador.

Dr Amy Ratelle, University of Toronto

Reconceptualizing relationships: Children and other animals

Recent scholarship in the field of children's literature has become increasingly interested in animal/child relations. This fruitful line of inquiry, however, is often still subject to burdening animals with the weight of human symbolism, shaping our views about particular species (often to their detriment). This framework of analysis often ignores both the agency and rights of animals, and also of children themselves. This talk will examine these overlapping and often double-sided rhetorics, addressing children as agents of change, and the role of children's literature in advancing the cause of animal rights. By addressing historically significant as well as contemporary popular texts, Dr. Ratelle reflects on the ways in which texts geared to a child audience work to reconceptualise the relationships between human and animal, and what this means for interdisciplinary research and policy development.

Dr. Amy Ratelle is the author of *Animality and Children's Literature and Film* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015). She received her PhD in Communication and Culture, a joint programme between Ryerson University and York University, and degrees in Film Studies from Ryerson University (BFA), and Carleton University (MA). Her research areas include children's literature and culture, animality studies, animation studies, and critical media studies. She is currently a Postdoctoral administrator (research coordinator) for the Semaphore Research Cluster on Mobile and Pervasive Computing, at the University of Toronto.

Ms Stella Chapman, University of Surrey

The Contribution of Animal Welfare Science to the Development of Public Policy

It is important that animal welfare researchers are engaged in ethical debate, policy formation, regulatory mechanisms and their enforcement. Before the concept of welfare was developed in the UK, much of the legislation surrounding the treatment of animals was based on cruelty and the notion of 'unnecessary suffering' i.e. Protection of Animals Act (1911) and Abandonment of Animals Act (1960). Whilst the prevention of cruelty remains at the heart of the protection of animals, it is the use of the term 'quality of life' or 'a life worth living' that empowers the concept of animal welfare. In 1926 Charles Hume formed an organisation called the University of London Animal Welfare Society (nowadays known as the Universities Federation of Animal Welfare (UFAW) thus introducing the term 'welfare' some forty years before being adopted by public policy makers. Ruth Harrison's book *Animal Machines* (1964) both informed and horrified the general public on the state of intensive farming in the UK and the Brambell Committee (1965) was established largely as a result of the public's reaction to the book. The Committee recognised that the term 'welfare' not only encompassed the physical wellbeing (health) of animals, but also their mental wellbeing. A direct consequence of the Brambell report was that the term 'welfare' was embodied for the first time in animal protection legislation in the UK and the Agricultural (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (1968) was the first legislation to incorporate welfare into the law. It can thus be argued that animal science has, and continues to have, a major impact on public policy and thereby on legal regulation. However, some take the view that animal welfare science has reached a point in terms of commercial realities where there will be increasing opposition to the introduction of further regulation.

Ms Jess Phoenix, Lancaster University

Bovine Tuberculosis and Badger Culling: Sentimental Framings of Badgers and Cows

"We find it a real conundrum to understand why a black and white badger is so fundamentally protected compared to a black and white cow. Badgers are vermin and cows are our livelihood!" Two badger culls were implemented in South West England in summer 2013 to test the safety, humaneness and effectiveness of using the mechanism to control the spread of bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) in the British cattle industry. In summer 2013 I conducted 17 interviews with farmers, vets, charities and wildlife activists in the Gloucestershire cull zone. In this paper I use the interview material to discuss the material-semiotic assemblages underpinning the framing of badgers by two prominent stakeholders, and the implication of these framings upon the development of badger culling policy and the 'on-the-ground' practice of culling. I compare the National Farmers Union's and farmers' framing of badgers as a disease host and vermin, with activist group Stop the Cull's framing of badgers as a scapegoat for an agricultural problem. The National Farmers Union's and Stop the Cull's opposing stances go beyond the interpretation of science relating to bTB and badger culling, to be somewhat based in the sentiment attached to cattle and badgers. Both groups use emotive arguments to publicise their pro-cull and anti-cull stance. I examine the interview material within local, regional and European assemblages of badgers as a protected species and cattle as a food resource so as to analyse the foundations of the sentimental framings, and the consequent implications for policy.

Dr Emily Porth, University of Surrey

Where 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' Went Wrong: Narratives about 'pest' species and tree health outbreaks

Beyond caterpillars and butterflies, it is common for people to express a deep fear of insects and other arthropods from childhood. Stories about insects in the media do little to dispel such anxieties, and insects that have a detrimental impact on trees have become an increasing concern for the public, and for environmental policy leaders. Most situations involving an insect that is perceived to threaten a forested area or a particular species of tree will result in a clear policy directive: kill the offending organism as quickly as possible to prevent the advance of an outbreak. Much of the time, this approach involves cutting down and incinerating a large number of affected trees, treating the environment with insecticides, or releasing a predator to hunt and eat the felonious species. However, there are also rare cases where tree health outbreaks are framed by policy leaders as 'natural events', and where no management action is taken. This paper explores how insects are perceived in each of these scenarios, and asks how widespread attitudes towards insects, as opposed to other 'pest' animals in our society, may impact public perceptions of, and attitudes toward, forest management strategies.

Ms Sara Owczarczak-Garstecka, University of Liverpool

Using YouTube to study dog bites: Contextual analysis and the perception of risk

As dog bites are often studied quantitatively, it is hard to gain insight into individuals' perceptions of risk. This project investigated what YouTube video comments elucidate about how viewers perceive risk in videos of dog bites. Eighty-nine videos were identified using relevant search terms. A selection of comments underneath 10 videos were chosen and were analysed using thematic analysis. Most bites occurred in the context of routine interactions with the dog, with the largest proportion during play (24%). Demographically, 72% of bite victims were male and 24% of bites were inflicted by mongrels. Qualitative analysis identified characteristics of victim, the dog owner and dogs that were sources of risk. For dogs, risk was attributed to the purpose of training (e.g. police dogs), their perceived lack of training and dogs' natural instincts. However, dogs were rarely blamed for the bite, unless they were of specific breed or type (e.g. pit bull). Instead, the dog handler or victim were frequently blamed. The consequences of bites occurring during play were often downplayed and treated as normal. Analysis of publicly available videos can help identify attitudes and perceptions of risk around dogs that could aid bite prevention interventions and policies.

Professor Alison Sealey, Lancaster University

The power of words: how people talk about 'cuteness' and 'killing'

This presentation draws on data collected for the 3-year project, 'People', 'Products', 'Pests' and 'Pets': The Discursive Representation of Animals, funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Our large (9 million words) electronically stored 'corpus' of language about animals comprises texts from a range of genres,

including newspaper reports, legislation and transcripts of the commentaries accompanying wildlife broadcasts – as well as interviews and focus groups in which professional communicators and members of the public were asked to reflect on the language they use about animals. The presentation will report on how the words denoting the two topics with which the workshop is concerned – namely ‘cute’ and ‘kill’ – feature in the language used and discussed in our data. Using specialist computer software to analyse patterns in the discourse, I demonstrate how these patterns reflect norms and assumptions about various kinds of animal, and people’s orientations towards them.

Dr John Bradshaw, University of Bristol

“Attachment” to pets – lost in translation?

The affection that many people feel for their animal companions is not only self-evident, but is also linked to positive attitudes towards animals and their welfare in general. However, attempts to assimilate such relationships into psychological frameworks developed for human-human bonds have not been entirely successful. In this paper, I will suggest why this may be the case, and suggest a simple solution. The concept of “attachment” began with Bowlby’s formulation of infant-to-mother relationships, subsequently adapted to cover affectionate relationships between adults and also mother-to-infant: relationships with companion animals may encompass elements of all three, in varying proportions. People differ in the way they approach relationships with other people – their “attachment style” – and these differences have been compared with the way in which individuals vary in their attitudes towards animals. Although some similarities have emerged, these do not correlate with the attachment styles that the same people express towards people, and therefore most likely have different developmental origins. Many of the anomalies can be resolved if the concept of emotional attachment to animals is regarded as a modern phenomenon and is replaced as the default by the utilitarian attitude that has prevailed throughout much of human history.

Ms Kelly Hübben, Stockholm University

Good to love or good to eat? Ethical and ideological implications of the construction of species difference in a selection of American Little Golden Books

This paper discusses the ethical and ideological implications of anthropomorphic animals that (attempt to) eat other animals in a selection of American Little Golden Books, a commercial picture book series marketed for a young readership. In a day and age where access to real animals is often limited or, if not limited, then highly regulated, fictional animals inform the ideas entertained by young readers about possible human-animal relationships. They can infer them from the images even before they can read the words, and in this way, picture book animals inform the reader’s socialization process. In picture books, meaning emerges in and through the interaction of text and images. I consider picture book animals as meeting places for ideas and assumptions about childhood, humanity and animality; the animal form lies at the intersection of conceptions about species, age and gender. This becomes all the more interesting when we look at how the two semiotic fields of text and image contribute to the

reader’s interpretation of animals as a food source for other, anthropomorphized animals. In this case, the hybridity of the animal form causes conflicts of interest that are not always resolved. In a discussion of a variety of possible inter- and intra-species relationships, mediated through acts of eating, I will analyse how ideological and ethical content emerges in the act of reading, and how this may influence the reader’s attitude towards real animals.

Mr David Whitley and Dr Zoe Jacques, University of Cambridge

Bugs’ Lives: the Representation of Insects in Pixar Films

Although children’s literature – and film in particular – is often conceived as focusing primarily on animals that can be seen as ‘cute’, there is also long history of classic narratives (from The Butterfly Ball, through the Alice books, to Charlotte’s Web and The Very Hungry Caterpillar) of children’s stories focussing on various kinds of insects too. The primarily anthropomorphic orientation of such stories is mixed with varying degrees of realism and natural history. More recently, the enhanced capacity of CGI assisted animated films to achieve a high level of realism has shifted the balance between fantasy and naturalism within this medium, with potential effects on the child viewer that have yet to be evaluated. This paper examines the particular case of Pixar films, asking what the inclusion of frequently despised creatures, such as cockroaches, ants and beetles, within the repertoire of major protagonists has to tell us about the extension – and limitations – of an ecological consciousness within contemporary childhood. Joint paper presented by Zoe Jaques and David Whitley (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge), whose publications include Children’s Literature and the Posthuman (2015) and The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation (2012).

Ms Helen Wang, literary translator

The depiction of animals in children’s literature from China

There has been a drive to develop children’s literature in China in the 21st century. This includes development of authors and illustrators, as well as importing foreign titles and exporting Chinese titles. I have translated a number of children’s books from Chinese into English, many of which have feature animals – both wild and domesticated. The depiction of animals can be strikingly different from that seen in UK children’s books, sometimes quite shocking in its matter-of-factness and anthropomorphism, and sometimes very loving. In this paper I will: (1) give an overview of the bestselling children’s books in China, to give an idea of the presence and type of animal stories; (2) discuss the depiction of wild animals in the children’s novel “Jackal and Wolf” by SHEN Shixi; (3) discuss the depiction of domesticated animals in the children’s novel “Bronze and Sunflower” by CAO Wenxuan Both of these authors have written bestselling books in China, and Cao Wenxuan has been shortlisted for the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award (winner to be announced on 4 April). The two novels I will discuss are available in English (in my translation): “Jackal and Wolf”, Egmont UK, 2012; “Bronze and Sunflower”, Walker Books, 2015.

Ms Liz West, University of Reading

Talking Animals in Children's Fiction

The talking animal is a construct that crosses genres and age divides. It can offer an insight into both animal and human nature, but it is dependent on the reader's interpretation to unlock its meaning. In his paper, *Children and other Talking Animals*, John Morgenstern asks the question: 'How would one tell the difference between a person who looks like an animal and an animal that talks like a person?' Whether we read these stories as a way of understanding an animal's way of life, or as narratives in which animal characters are in effect humans in disguise depends very much on our own perspective: the difference is not in the animal but in the point of view. By endowing animals with particular personality traits, the line between human and animal nature inevitably becomes blurred, and the child reader is encouraged to empathise with these fictional animals because of their recognisably human characteristics. Regardless of how authentic to an animal's essence the narrative attempts to be, is not the power of speech the most human characteristic of all? By giving animals our voice we irrevocably humanise them, and this has implications for the way in which children build their cultural and sentimental responses to animals beyond the pages of their story books.

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