

Experiencing Animal Minds: An Anthology of Human-Animal Encounters (Critical Perspectives on Animals)



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In these multidisciplinary essays, academic scholars and animal experts explore the nature of animal minds and the methods humans conventionally and unconventionally use to understand them. The collection features chapters by scholars working in psychology, sociology, history, philosophy, literary studies, and art as well as chapters by or about people who live or work with animals, including the founder of a sanctuary for chickens, a fur trapper, a popular canine psychologist, a horse trainer, and an art photographer who captures everyday contact between humans and their animal companions.

Divided into five sections, the collection first considers the ways that humans live with animals and the influence of cohabitation on their perceptions of animals' minds. It follows with an examination of anthropomorphism as both a guide and hindrance to mapping animal consciousness. Chapters in the next section examine the effects of embodiment on animals' minds and the role of animal-human interembodiment on humans' understandings of animals' minds. Final sections identify historical representations of difference between human and animal consciousness and their relevance to pre-established cultural attitudes, as well as the ways that representations of animals' minds target particular audiences and sometimes produce problematic outcomes. The editors conclude with a discussion of the relationship between the book's chapters and two pressing themes: the relationship of human beliefs about animals' minds on human ethical behavior and the challenges and conditions for knowing the minds of animals. By inviting readers to compare and contrast multiple, uncommon points of view, this collection offers a unique encounter with the diverse minds and theories now shaping animal studies.

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