



Cinematic Canines

Dogs and Their Work in the Fiction Film

Edited by Adrienne L. McLean

DESCRIPTION

Dogs have been part of motion pictures since the movies began. They have been featured onscreen in various capacities, from any number of “man’s best friends” (Rin Tin Tin, Asta, Toto, Lassie, Benji, Uggie, and many, many more) to the psychotic Cujo. The contributors to *Cinematic Canines* take a close look at Hollywood films and beyond in order to show that the popularity of dogs on the screen cannot be separated from their increasing presence in our lives over the past century.

The representation and visualization of dogs in cinema, as of other animals, has influenced our understanding of what dogs “should” do and be, for us and with us. Adrienne L. McLean expertly shepherds these original essays into a coherent look at “real” dogs in live-action narrative films, from the stars and featured players to the character and supporting actors to those pooches that assumed bit parts or performed as extras. Who were those dogs, how were they trained, what were they made to do, how did they participate as characters in a fictional universe? These are a just a few of the many questions that she and the outstanding group of scholars in this book have addressed.

Often dogs are anthropomorphized in movies in ways that enable them to reason, sympathize, understand and even talk; and our shaping of dogs into furry humans has had profound effects on the lives of dogs off the screen. Certain breeds of dog have risen in popularity following their appearance in commercial film, often to the detriment of the dogs themselves, who rarely correspond to their idealized screen versions. In essence, the contributors in *Cinematic Canines* help us think about and understand the meanings of the many canines that appear in the movies and, in turn, we want to know more about those dogs due in no small part to the power of the movies themselves.

Paperback

9780813563558, \$41.95

eBook

9780813571850, \$41.95

PDF

9780813563572, \$41.95

Date: March 2014

Pages: 264



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Glamour in a Golden Age: Movie Stars of the 1930s (Rutgers University Press 2010), *Dying Swans and Madmen: Ballet, the Body and Narrative Cinema* (Rutgers University Press, 2008), and *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom* (Rutgers University Press, 2004).

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