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Aims and Scope: Formerly Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text (1997–2005), Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840 is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. Romantic Textualities also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

Chase Pielak’s Memorializing Animals during the Romantic Period explores the disruptive potential of animals in British Romantic literature and the surprising encounters that they induce, both in life and from beyond the grave. For this book, ‘beasts matter because they appear in Romantic literature at points when its authors figure moments of ontological category rupture—when being itself is challenged’ (p. 3). Poetry has a privileged role in such crises, since it ‘is the ideal medium to convey the linguistic disturbances that accompany ontological disturbance’ (p. 3). Memorializing Animals is a philosophically ambitious attempt to juxtapose materials from literary theory and animal studies with Romantic literature. It wants to unearth ‘the beasts that reside within us as well as those buried during the Romantic Period’ and to explore ‘the spaces in which we can encounter [the] animals whose corpses litter our literary landscape’ (p. 12). In the process, Pielak covers a number of well-trodden areas from a fresh perspective and also focusses on some comparatively neglected texts from the period, such as Wordsworth’s The White Doe of Rylstone (1815).

The opening half of Memorializing Animals might be seen as primarily looking at different modes of relation between humans and nonhumans. The first chapter traces literal and figurative animals in Charles Lamb’s writing, attempting to demonstrate an aspiration to sociability in Lamb’s encounters with nonhuman animals. However, since many of these encounters occur at the dining table, Pielak argues that the desire for communion often masks the impossibility of assimilating, processing or remembering individual animals. The second and third chapters argue for more successful connections between human and animal lives in John Clare’s poetry. Nonetheless, these more productive meetings are also accompanied by psychological difficulties: Pielak claims that Clare’s cascading reflections on nature are frequently disturbing and create a sense of melancholia that ‘threatens to do away with the coherent self’ (p. 55).
In its second part, *Memorializing Animals* is more explicitly concerned with death and absence in poetry’s confrontations with the nonhuman. The fourth chapter considers the proximity of death to life in Coleridge’s poetry, tracing ideas of putrefaction and exhumation through ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’, ‘The Raven’, ‘To a Young Ass’ and ‘Christabel’ by placing them alongside a discussion of contemporary burial reform. Pielak then focusses on Byron as pet-keeper via the ubiquitous elegy for Boatswain, before returning to animal consumption in his discussion of scenes of dog-eating and cannibalism in *Don Juan*. Finally, and perhaps most successfully, the book looks at the productive connections between place, memorialisation and animals in Wordsworth’s verse. In particular, Pielak explores how what he calls ‘animemorials’ are also frequently ‘antimemorials’ that frustrate or displace adequate memorialisation (p. 136).

*Memorializing Animals during the Romantic Period* is part of a growing and welcome number of critical works that take seriously the role of animals in Romantic writing and, in the process, offer new ways to think about conceptions of nature in the period and the centrality of the nonhuman to Romanticism’s most philosophic concerns. However, despite rich material and a dynamic range of stimulating interests, the experience of reading this book is often frustrating. There are many references to disparate examples of theory without discussion of a single approach or idea in adequate depth. Many of the chapters depend on complex expression and theoretical jargon, but there are few pointers to help readers understand the broader moves that are being made. Furthermore, Pielak’s arguments occasionally boil down simply to chains of metaphorical association, sometimes expressed in jarringly informal language.

Part of the problem arguably lies in what might have been one of the book’s strengths: its breadth. Alongside questions of the animal, Pielak introduces a wide-ranging conceptual framework, involving—among others—constellating questions of exhumation and memorialisation, diet, community and friendship. These concepts are more or less persuasively deployed in different parts of the book and it is undoubtedly impressive to see such a variety of questions opened up by considering animals in Romantic texts. Nevertheless, I wonder if many of Pielak’s arguments might have been expressed more directly and elegantly if they had been developed with single-minded attention to a more coherent and delimited set of interests.

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Nicola Lloyd is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University. She specializes in fiction of the Romantic period, with a particular focus on the Irish national tale and the interactions between Romanticism and Enlightenment. Her doctoral thesis, which she is currently preparing for publication, considered the influence of Enlightenment discourses of moral philosophy and perception on Romantic-period fiction. Nicky has published articles on the Irish novelist Lady Morgan and is one of the authors of *The Palgrave History Gothic Publishing: The Business of Gothic Fiction, 1764–1835*, due for completion in 2017. She is currently preparing a scholarly edition of Mary Julia Young’s gothic-national tale *Donalda; or, the Witches of Glenshiel* (1805).

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