

Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature

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Before the 2000s the humanities and social sciences paid little attention to the participation of non-human animals in human cultures. The entrenched idea of the human as a unique kind of being nourished a presumption that *Homo sapiens* should be the proper object of study for these fields, to the exclusion of lives beyond the human. Against this background, various academic disciplines can now be found in the process of executing an ‘animal turn’, questioning the ethical and philosophical grounds of human exceptionalism by taking seriously the animal presences that haunt the margins of history, anthropology, philosophy, sociology and literary studies. Instances of such work are grouped under the umbrella term ‘animal studies’, having largely developed in relation to a series of broad, cross-disciplinary questions. How might we rethink and problematise the separation of the human from other animals? What are the ethical and political stakes of our relationships with other species? How might we locate and understand the agency of animals in human cultures? While debates around these themes continue to develop across academic disciplines, this series will publish work that looks, more specifically, at the implications of the ‘animal turn’ for the field of English Studies. Language is often thought of as the key marker of humanity’s difference from other species; animals may have codes, calls or songs, but humans have a mode of communication of a wholly other order. Literature, as the apogee of linguistic expression in its complexity and subtlety, may therefore seem a point at which ‘the human’ seems farthest removed from the world of ‘the animal’. Our primary motivation is to muddy this assumption and to animalise the canons of English Literature by rethinking representations of animals and interspecies encounter. Whereas animals are conventionally read as objects of fable, allegory or metaphor (that is, as signs of specifically human concerns), this series significantly extends the new insights of interdisciplinary animal studies by tracing the engagement of such figuration with the material lives of animals. The series will encourage the examination of textual cultures as variously embodying a debt to or an intimacy with non-human animal and advance understanding of how the aesthetic engagements of literary arts have always done more than simply illustrate natural history. Consequently, we will publish studies of the representation of animals in literary texts across the chronological range of English studies from the Middle Ages to the present and with reference to the discipline’s key thematic concerns, genres and critical methods. This will be the first series to explore animal studies within the context of literary studies; together, the volumes (comprising monographs, edited collections of essays and some shorter studies in the Palgrave Pivot format) will constitute a uniquely rich and thorough scholarly resource on the involvement of animals in literature. The series will focus on literary prose and poetry, while also accommodating related discussion of the full range of materials and texts and contexts (from theatre and film to fine art, journalism, the law, popular writing and other cultural ephemera) with which English studies now engages.

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/14649>

Laurence W. Mazzeno • Ronald D. Morrison
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Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture

Contexts for Criticism

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Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature

ISBN 978-1-137-60218-3

ISBN 978-1-137-60219-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-60219-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016962626

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Cover illustration: © Pete Cairns, Nature Picture Library / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, the editors of *Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* want to thank the volume's contributors for their hard work, patience, and enthusiastic support for this project. It has been a great pleasure to work with each of them.

We also acknowledge the support provided by the editorial and production team at Palgrave for their assistance in getting this volume into print.

Laurence W. Mazzeno extends a note of thanks to the staff of the Frank A. Franco Library at Alvernia University, particularly Sharon Neal, Roberta Rohrbach, and Derek Smith, and to the staff of the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William & Mary for their cheerful (and invaluable) assistance.

Ronald D. Morrison extends his gratitude to Tom Williams, Chair of the Department of English at Morehead State University, and Scott McBride, Dean of the Caudill College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Morehead State University, for negotiating a reduced teaching load during the final stages of this project.

A version of [Chapter 2](#) originally appeared as “*Household Words and the Smithfield Controversy*” in *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature*, Number 127 (Spring 2015): 31–45. Copyright © 2015 *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature*. We are grateful for the permission to reprint this essay.

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