Foreword

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In Honoré de Balzac's 1830 novella *Adieu*, "madwoman" Stéphanie is repeatedly characterized as animalistic by being compared to nine animals throughout the story: mouse (19), dog (22, 25, 44, 77), squirrel (22), bird (24, 74, 82, 90), cat (24, 84), doe (26, 72), parrot (28), monkey (79, 84), and fawn (82). These comparisons manifest themselves in various facets of descriptions, including movement, sound, and general appearance. This description of a person as a multitude of animals has the strong implication of a strict "human versus animal" dichotomy. Even though humans in this novella have animalistic characteristics, this does not result in a more nuanced view on humanity and animality as the description of Stéphanie disregards what Cary Wolfe describes as "the specificity of nonhuman animals, their nongeneric nature" (567). Throughout *Adieu*, Stéphanie is described in comparison to "the animal" in a nongeneric manner, precisely because a multitude of different animal characteristics is used. Despite attention to detail, descriptions of Stéphanie only seem to communicate one thing: her inhumanity. It does

not matter which animal she resembles, as long as it is clear she is not behaving as a human.

The actual animals featuring in *Adieu* are figurants to the characters who only see them as instruments. The mare Bichette, for example, is seen by her owner as a way to escape war but is ultimately killed by other soldiers who are starving and regard her as food. It might seem logical to describe the soldiers' behavior, 'acting on their hunger instinct and ignorant to even the owner's instrumental reasoning', as "animalistic." The opposite happens, however. The absence of an animalization of the perspective on the soldiers is reinforced by the report of "cinq hommes amenèrent la jument devant le foyer, et se mirent à la dépecer avec autant d'adresse qu'auraient pu le faire des garçons bouchers de Paris" (Balzac 44).[1] Instead of a barbaric murder, the slaughtering is hereby transformed into a cultural exercise.

Both examples above show, through comparison and description, a reinforcement of humanism, which only an exclusive set of beings can participate in, set against everything else as other, inhuman, animalistic. Animal Studies is an emerging field that investigates the boundaries of humanism as a representational model for the diversity among both humans and animals. Challenging the usefulness of humanism is a complicated objective when considering the significant influence of humanism in many human and animal rights movements. Literary Animal Studies conceptualizes a more distanced perspective on the imaginary relation of the distinctions between "human and animal" when considering the discourse processes involved in this relationship.

We open this issue with Mario Ortiz-Robles' article "The Animal Novel" to place the current fascination with literary animals in a historical perspective of human-animal relations in literature. His exposition of animal representation in literary genres, tropes, and metaphors leads to a reflection on the absence of animals in novel criticism. Ortiz-Robles argues that the novel, even in the face of its lack of animal representation, grants us the opportunity to reflect on animals in the face of irreversible anthropogenic extinction.

[1] "Five men dragged the mare to the fire, and cut her up with the dexterity of a Parisian butcher" (Balzac 2010, 15).

Kári Driscoll then sharpens the broad focus of the relation between animals in literature and literary criticism in his article "Second Glance at the Panther," in which he demonstrates what it means to read zoopoetically. Highlighting the *literary* aspects of literary animals, his in-depth analyses of Rainer Maria Rilke's iconic poem "Der Panther" provide a new manner of considering the role of animals in literature which has the potential to create a world that is shared by human and nonhuman animals alike.

Combining the real-life presence of animals and literary animals, Melissa Yang draws our attention to Charles Dickens' raven. In "Thirteen Ways of Looking at Grip the Raven," she describes the different ways we can approach Grip, Dickens' beloved pet, who was fictionalized in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), and who was taxidermied and eventually found his way on display next to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" manuscript. Yang uses the historical and literary iterations of Grip to draw parallels between biography and taxidermy.

Nicole Shukin then broadens our horizon to argue that the genre of Indigenous Futurisms is a fruitful ground for Animal Studies to imagine multispecies futures. Through analyses of works of indigenous authors, she highlights how ongoing colonial capitalism poses challenges to the future existence of all species and how this can be better understood by a merging of Indigenous Futurisms and Animal Studies. Living with aliens, Shukin claims, can be productively paralleled to living with animals.

From living with aliens, we then move to living with specters. Dawne McCance's "Specters of Animals" considers animal-human relations from the perspective of the uncanny, haunting, and life-death. Revisiting Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, she considers the implications of moving human-animal relationships to the center of inquiry, shedding light on both Derrida's observations as well as our understanding of non-human animals.

In our masterclass section, Alice Lambert analyses Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* in her article "Holding up a Mirror to the Nonhuman Within." As a case study of autobiografiction, she argues that this work encourages readers to reevaluate their human-

ist outlook. Instead of making the fictionalized animals more human, readers learn to recognize the nonhuman within themselves and rewrite the social construct of "humanity." Finally, in our second masterclass article, Vincent Reijnders takes the ethnographic approach of a thick description of Rotterdam Zoo. Close-reading their polar bear exhibit, he analyses the ways in which the zoo shapes the encounter between visitor and animal. Ultimately, he addresses the problems that occur when individualized solutions are promoted as a way to influence global processes, as well as the tension between individual animal welfare and species conservation.

All articles in *Frame 31.1* demonstrate an engaged way of reading both real and literary animals, combining the position of animals as literary tropes with the real-life position of animals and climate change. On behalf of the editorial board, I would like to thank all authors for their striking combination of clear-cut academic methodologies with (non)humane compassion towards nonhuman animals speaking through every description, analysis, and argument.

Works Cited

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—. *Adieu*. 1830. Translated by Katharine Prescott Wormeley, Project Gutenberg, 2010.

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