

# HUMANIMALIA

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*Humanimalia* is a biannual journal devoted to the study of human–animal relations. It is interdisciplinary, open-access, and peer-reviewed, publishing original articles from a wide range of cultural, historical, philosophical, political, and aesthetic perspectives.

*Humanimalia* has three aims: to explore and advance the vast range of scholarship on human–animal relations, to encourage exchange among scholars working from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and to promote dialogue between the academic community and those working closely with animals in non-academic fields.

We invite innovative works that situate these topics within contemporary culture via a variety of critical approaches. Ideally, we seek papers that combine approaches, or at the very least draw upon research in other disciplines to contextualize their arguments.

As much as possible, we seek papers that acknowledge and seek to advance a more-than-human conception of aesthetics, culture, and society.

<https://humanimalia.org>

Cover: Bart van der Leck, *De kat*, 1914  
Casein on cement board  
(asbestos), Kröller-Müller  
Museum, Netherlands

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**W**e are pleased to share with you the latest issue of *Humanimalia*. It's a bumper issue, weighing in at 450+ pages and featuring no fewer than ten research articles and eight book reviews on a broad range of topics relating to the complex cultural, historical, political, and technological dimensions of the human–animal relationship.

This is not a special issue, and the articles are all very different in approach and subject matter, but there are nevertheless some overarching themes running through the contributions. One of these is the question of gender and its intersections with the discourse on species. Jesse Arseneault and Rosemary-Claire Collard, for instance, revisit the history of animal and witch trials in mediaeval and early modern Europe, arguing that, far from being a historical aberration, these trials testify to the emergence of a new reproductive order that still holds sway under global capitalism. As such, the historical prosecution of these “crimes against reproduction” highlights to the role of animality in the construction of gendered reproductive norms, and may, perhaps, in turn point towards alternative modes of relating to animal life. The intersections of gender and the biopolitical governance of human and nonhuman bodies is central to another contribution to this issue, namely “Wild Horse Round-ups and Removals” by Jennifer L. Britton, Abigail Del Grosso, Cassidy Ellis, and Christian Hunold. The authors examine the contentious and often violent altercations (physical and online) between wild horse advocates and the Bureau of Land Management in the Western United States, tracing how the disparate discourses and “ways of knowing and relating to wild horses” lead to exclusion and violence in these situations, but sometimes also to empathy and care across species lines.

The issue of interspecies care and conservation is another recurring theme in the issue. Architect and anthropologist Ariane d’Hoop explores the impact of urban renewal on swifts (*Apus apus*) and the people who care for them in Brussels. The Belgian capital has long been host to a large population of these migratory birds, thanks in part to the distinctive putlog holes in the city’s historic buildings,

which are ideal nesting sites, but these are gradually disappearing as a result of renovation and redevelopment. In her essay, d’Hoop details the ethics of care and practices of attentiveness that unfold in the more-than-human city. Interspecies care is also central to Charlotte Kroløkke and Mervi Honkatukia’s ethnographic study of a prison farm in central Finland, which, until recently, served as a “living gene bank” for an endangered breed of Lapland cows. The authors investigate how the precarious, parallel lives of the human inmates and the nonhuman animals in their care are folded together in and through the complex entanglements of biopolitics, gender, conservation, incarceration, and national identity that permeate this “space of exception”.

Another space of exception featured in this issue is the Porton Down Defence Science and Technology Laboratory in the UK, which, at the beginning of the Cold War was the site of top-secret biological weapons testing involving experiments on countless animals, ranging from guinea pigs and mice to rabbits, cats, and monkeys. In her investigation into this site, Catherine Duxbury focuses on the role of wilful ignorance and what she calls the “strategic effacement” of nonhuman animals in the production of scientific objectivity. Laura Gelfand’s contribution, “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing”, also deals with the theme of (in)visibility and agency and how these are produced and withheld within scientific institutions and discourses, although the institution in question is apparently quite different: nineteenth-century European art and the discipline of art history. In her essay, she revisits J.M. Whistler’s *White Girl* (1862). The painting and the central figure have been scrutinized by generations of critics and art historians, but, as Gelfand notes, the striking animal presence hiding in plain sight at the bottom of the image — a wolf’s head mounted on a sheepskin rug — has gone largely unnoticed: another example of the paradoxical invisibility of animals in traditional humanities scholarship. Moving through a series of interpretations of this chimerical figure, Gelfand shows how critical attention to the material and semiotic presence of nonhumans in cultural artefacts can shed new light on their and our history.

The history of art plays an important role in Hanneke Ronnes and Harry Reddick's sociocultural history of the Dutch cat. As the authors show, based on their forays through the rich digital archive of literary texts, letters, pamphlets, and newspaper articles, the reputation and social position of the humble housecat has changed fundamentally over the past several centuries—from a dirty mouser and witches' familiar, to the pampered puss of the bourgeoisie, but also the emblem of avantgarde aloofness, and the apotheosis of "pettability"—a trajectory that dovetails with the political, cultural, and economic transformations of Dutch society. This analysis sheds light on the current international debate on the negative ecological impact of free-roaming cats on urban bird populations, and the specific, historically determined contours of that debate in the Netherlands.

Moving from Europe to Southeast Asia, Agathe Lemaitre's essay presents an ethnographic investigation a different type of cat, the Formosan clouded leopard and its spectral and material afterlives among the Indigenous Paiwan people of Taiwan. The species has been officially extinct in Taiwan for the past half-century but continues to occupy a privileged position within traditional Paiwan society, both as a near-mythical creature and in the form of material objects, ritual garments, and other artefacts made from clouded leopard skin. Drawing on the concept of *survivance* as theorized by Georges Didi-Huberman and others, Lemaitre examines how the ambiguous afterlife of the clouded leopard relates to the resilience of traditional Paiwan culture in the face of globalization and environmental change. The material afterlives and ambiguous presences of taxidermied animals also play an important role in another institution that comes under scrutiny in this issue: the natural history museum. In "Pachyderm Matriarchy", Mark Alvey revisits Donna Haraway's seminal essay "Teddy Bear Patriarchy", and specifically her discussion of the role of taxidermist Carl Akeley's wife Delia in the creation of the African Hall at the American Museum of Natural History. Drawing on a wealth of historical and archival materials, Alvey sets out "to deepen, and correct" the story of Delia Akeley's involvement and thus to recuperate her authorship and agency. In the process, he also sheds light on the material and discursive practices that go into creating the literal

elephants in the room. The Natural History Museum is also the site of Anastasiya Andrianova's intervention, entitled "A Dino Fix", in which she investigates the subversive potential of a vegan picturebook about a vegetarian *T. rex* named Linus for teaching young children about evolution, extinction, and the Anthropocene, all while challenging the hegemony of carno-phallogocentrism in a cutesy anthropomorphic way. Along the way, the question of gender, care, and the production of knowledge come into renewed focus.

The issue concludes with reviews of eight recent books, ranging from literary studies (Maren Tova Linett's *Literary Bioethics*; Sundhya Walther's *Multispecies Modernity*; and Saskia McCracken and Alexy Goody's edited collection *Beastly Modernisms*), to history (Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange's *Pet Revolution* and Éric Baratay's *Animal Biographies*), to multispecies ethnography and science and technology studies (Irus Braverman's *Settling Nature*; Lisa Jean Moore's *Our Transgenic Future*; and Heather Paxson's edited volume, *Eating beside Ourselves*).

It has been a busy year at *Humanimalia* since the journal was relaunched in October of last year. Thanks to the tireless support of the good people at Openjournals.nl, we are now officially listed and indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). *Humanimalia* has been firmly committed to open access scholarship and publishing since before it was cool, and this is an important acknowledgement of that fact. Thanks as always go to my co-editors, to the peer reviewers, copyeditors, and to the authors. Special thanks also to our intern, Imogen Grigorovich, for helping to prepare the full-text (html) versions of the articles in this issue. Imogen has been busy retrofitting the entire *Humanimalia* back catalogue, and we will be gradually rolling out the full text versions of all published articles in the coming months. Watch this space.

On behalf of the editorial team,

Kári Driscoll

Utrecht, October 2023

