



HumAnimUS

Studies in Zooanthropology

Animals and Cinema

Edited by Dario Martinelli and Viktorija Lankauskaitė



biannual journal
II, 2 (2024)

Animals and Cinema

*Edited by Dario Martinelli
and Viktorija Lankauskaitė*

Hum*Anim*US
Studies in Zooanthropology

Biannual journal
2 Animals and Cinema

Directors
Roberto Marchesini, Cosetta Veronese

Editorial Board
Laura Budriesi, Università di Bologna (Italy)
Natan Feltrin, University of North Texas (USA); Centro di
Filosofia Postumanista (Italy)
Peggy Karpouzou, National and Kapodistrian University of
Athens (Greece)
Manuela Macelloni, Centro Studi Filosofia Postumanista (Italy)
Dario Martinelli, Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania)
Sabrina Tonutti, Varianti, Società Cooperativa (Italy); Oxford
Centre for Animal Ethics (UK)
Nikoleta Zampaki, National and Kapodistrian University of
Athens (Greece)

e-ISSN: 3035-1235

@ International Society of Zooanthropology

Publishing
Apeiron Editoria e Comunicazione Srl, Bologna, Italy

Transcending the Anthropocentric Vision: the Non-human Animal as Subject in Contemporary Cinema

Luca Lunardi, Fabiano D'Este

Introduction

The scientific and philosophical interest in non-humans has become central in the current debate, so much so that there is talk of an authentic turning point, the *animal turn* [Ritvo 2007], in redefining the themes of the human animal relationship, otherness, the ontological status of the animal, and the meaning of the human and animality.

As argued by Salzani [2017], this turning point is more generally part of the crisis of traditional humanism at the end of the 20th century. In fact, according to Wolfe [2010], the *animal question* is part of the broader question of posthumanism.

Looking at non-human from a non-anthropocentric perspective calls into question the posthumanist philosophical perspective. In the current philosophical debate [Ferrando 2019], posthumanism is acquiring ever more importance, and here, we refer particularly to ecological posthumanism [Marchesini 2022]. Philosophical posthumanism is emancipated from humanism, from anthropocentrism, and from dualism [Ferrando 2019]; it aims to overcome traditional philosophical thought which, from Descartes to Heidegger, continues a humanistic, anthropocentric and dualistic perspective of non-humans as a subordinate. Instead, posthumanism recognizes, in the wake of philosophers like Derrida [2006], that the human does not dominate the non-human, but is on the same ontological level; not separate, but contiguous. Marchesini says:

«the other species and I belong to the same *way-of-being* even if we express it with different declinations» [Marchesini 2022; p. 65].

However, the dominant vision of non-humans in cinema and other media reflects and reinforces a long-established cultural context: the anthropocentric perspective. The human places itself at the center and subordinates other living beings and the environment to its needs; the impact is there for all to see. There is ample evidence that the spread of zoonoses is linked to the consequences of typical Anthropocene phenomena, from deforestation to biodiversity loss. Destruction of entire habitats has led to the migration of wild species, increasing the spillover to humans of dangerous pathogens, previously relegated to inaccessible natural environments [Liz Paola et al. 2022, Carlson et al. 2022].

The anthropocentric gaze reflects the invasive, destructive, and disrespectful way in which humans regard nature, and which compromises human health. In fact, it is not enough to take care of human health to face future health challenges, such as possible epidemic emergencies, but it is necessary to move to an integrated approach in which humans, non-humans and environmental health are interconnected, i.e., the One Health approach [MacKenzie and Jeggo 2019].¹ Freeing ourselves from our anthropocentric perspective is a necessary step for humans and all forms of life.

This reversal of our gaze on non-humans has important implications concerning animal representations in cinema. Because the dominant, stereotyped representation of non-humans is a consequence of that anthropocentric perspective that has been absolutely dominant since the origins of Hollywood cinema.

Furthermore, this non-human representation is mostly bent to logics of pure entertainment and confirms clichés and

stereotypes of the humanistic-anthropocentric perspective. This applies to international mainstream cinema, especially Hollywood. There, the non-human depiction reaffirms our domination, even on the linguistic level, so the non-human remains an object of vision. One example is the screenplay technique known as *Save the Cat* [Snyder 2005]; this contains a crucial moment in which the human protagonist saves a cat, i.e., performs an action that triggers a sort of emotional blackmail towards the viewer.

The novelty of our contribution lies in offering an alternative view, by identifying some recent films that move away from the logic of pure entertainment and the dominant anthropocentric perspective to attempt a hybridized gaze. These films allow us to reflect on the relationship between cinematic time and non-human animal life [McMahon, 2021]; simultaneously, they have absorbed the lesson on becoming animal [Deleuze and Guattari 2002]. Some examples are attributable to slow cinema [Romney 2010], others are multi-species documentaries [MacDonald 2013].

Here, we investigate how it is precisely the syntactic and formal aspects of these films that offer a different viewing experience, capable of re-establishing a relationship with the non-human that minimizes the human intervention. Even if they do not openly affirm a posthumanist approach, these films carry the germs of change that might be awoken in the viewer.

As Lanfranchi writes:

to investigate the position of the viewer with respect to the anthropocentric and normative structure of the film, it is necessary to go beyond the exclusively figurative and content analysis of the filmic object [...] Rather, it is a question of relating the textual structure of the film to the corresponding diegetic representation, remembering that the signifier articulates, precedes and provides a pre-understanding of the

meaning. Anthropocentrism in cinema therefore has to do with the linguistic modalities of reproduction, articulation and representation of the image. [Lanfranchi 2021; p. 20]

Films like *Becoming Animal* (2018) and *Nénette* (2010) stimulated new perspectives of the non-human and *infected* the more traditional narratives of mainstream cinema by suggesting that the non-human owns its subjectivity and is not simply represented as an object [Past 2019]. In this cinematic form, the non-human does not *play* a pre-packaged part, is not caged in a forcibly human narrative, but is a narrative disruptor [Pick 2011] bringing spontaneity, unpredictability, and natural action to the screen. As we will see, these attempts are useful to create new perspectives, and to rethink the logic of human domination that subjects all animals, both non-humans and humans.

In our study, the films represent varying degrees of success in demonstrating, both conceptually and in terms of cinematographic technique, how a pathway of dialogue and engagement with non-human otherness is achievable in various ways. Throughout history, humans have enriched their cultural heritage by establishing relationships with non-humans [Marchesini 2003]. Similarly, in cinema, it might be possible to draw inspiration from the non-human world to develop a visual vocabulary and imagine a continuously hybridizing living kingdom.

Beyond the human gaze: the non-human animal as subject of vision in Contemporary cinematic Experiences

If we quickly examine mainstream Hollywood cinema, we find traditional theriomorphic archetypes that highlight the ambiguity of the process of separation from, or continuity with, the non-human. These archetypes can also be understood in the context of the fears and desires of the human psyche that

characterize specific historical periods. In our analysis we have reduced these archetypes to two main dichotomous categories.

The category of the *monster animal* [Gregersdotter et al. 2015, Aaltola 2002] encompasses not only various non-human figures as threats - in this case the human characteristics, particularly those of darkness and evil, are projected onto non-human creatures, as seen in films like *King Kong* (1933) or *Tarantula!* (1955) - but also processes of metamorphosis of the human into a monster as in *The Fly* (1986) or processes of overloading of powers of non-human origin to the human, as seen in characters like *Spider-man* (2002) or *Catwoman* (2004);

In the category of *mirror animal* [Baker 1993, Zipes 1999, Burt 2002, Moscariello 2016] the non-human animal undergoes the projection of purely human characteristics. This category includes portrayals of non-humans as friends of children, as seen in films like *Lassie Come Home* (1943) or *Okja* (2017), as well as companions and partners in adult adventures, exemplified by films such as *Dog* (2022) or *Turner & Hooch* (1989).

Both *monster animal* and *mirror animal* are, in fact, denials of animal referentiality and assertions of full ontological autarchy of the human being.

However, all these processes fall within a broader framework of objectification of the non-human that develops in cinema both narratively and linguistically. Indeed, the dominant anthropocentrism has rarely given due recognition to the referentiality of the non-human, in the name of a presumed innate purity opposed to any form of contamination and asserting the superiority of human moral values over animal values.

For example, in horror cinema the triggering cause of the threat always seems to start from a transgression committed by a non-human animal (or species) that attacks or infects the human and develops by achieving the punishment of the non-human to restore an entirely human order. In this way, the horror

manifests itself as a direct or indirect non-human attack on humans. The established separation confirms that humans have moral (human) principles, but non-humans are without moral principles, implacable predators, incapable of showing mercy. The only way for the former to protect themselves from the latter is to become even more ferocious and kill them [Alaimo 2001].

But the non-human is not a passive being, it opposes our imperialist desire to restrict nature solely for human use and consumption [Armstrong 2002]. Many of these films, such as Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) or Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), also conceal an unconscious sense of rebellion against human domination and belong to a subgenre known as eco-vengeance.

Although these films propose a narrative in which the non-human *object* must be annihilated in order to restore the pre-established human order, these films can also be considered a desperate attempt at a metaphysical revolt of the natural spirit against humans. Eco-vengeance film has reached our days: see the *Planet of the Apes* saga (1960-2017), the *Jurassic Park* series (1993-2022), or *Rampage* (Peyton, 2018), in which the real threat to humans becomes the very presence of non-humans on the planet.

Even the stereotype of the theriomorphic child is inherently ambiguous, often portrayed as a pure being living in harmony with nature and capable of forming a special bond with human children due to a shared sense of original innocence. However, the symbolic use of this stereotype may actually conceal a paternalistic attitude of humans towards non-humans [Marchesini 2003].

If the *monster animal* embodies qualities that humans perceive as degrading and inhuman, the *mirror animal* reflects only feelings and emotions considered exclusive to the human experience. In this depiction, the non-human experiences

emotions from a purely anthropocentric perspective, lacking autonomous subjectivity.

Moreover, we must not forget that cinema is influenced both by symbolic imagery and by economic output. If entertainment cinema originates with a purely commercial logic, the non-human is also part of this logic and becomes itself an object of consumption. Consider, for example, the merchandising strategies typically associated with Disney production.

To facilitate the marketability of a product like this, the cinematic language must conform to this logic. The technique of invisible editing in classical Hollywood cinema as well as contemporary cinema represents the best tool for conveying the dominant ideology: the camera continues to follow the characters according to the anthropocentric point of view, allowing the viewer to follow the progression of the narrative.²

In this way, however, dominant ideologies and cultural legacies also end up influencing the narratives. Consider, for example, gender relations, racial discourse, and the representation of concepts such as good and evil. This logic more or less coincides with the same development, whether in the case of the *monster animal* triumphing over the non-human monster or achieving a goal, such as the alliance between non-human and human.

But is it possible to liberate the non-human from this perspective that confines it to a role assigned for the needs and desires of humans? Is it possible to restore a relationship with the non-human without imposing a pre-established narrative and, at the same time, utilize a cinematic language capable of valorizing this relationship?

To break free from the cage of the anthropocentric perspective, it will be necessary to reattribute an anthropopoietic meaning to the non-human in cinema, recognizing it as a partner of knowledge and therefore of vision.

«Because while the human eye exerts dominance, the animal eye reveals the partiality of the human eye dominance; zoopoietic hybridization constructs an expanded domain bridging these two realms, allowing for a redefinition of visual performances» [Marchesini-Andersen 2003; pp. 124-125]. The human/non-human combination must become an indivisible reality again, in continuous evolution and transformation, being able to trigger processes of cultural hybridization.

For this purpose, in our analysis we will focus on audiovisual experiences that depart from traditional cinema and break away from the anthropocentric framework. These works, keeping in mind the posthumanist lesson, try to adopt a perspective worthy of the non-human by necessarily relying on hybrid formats, halfway between fiction and documentary, within the field of experimental cinema. In the films we will analyze, human centrality is reduced to a minimum, to stimulate a change in the spectators' approach towards non-humans.

We can use an analogy to define this paradigm shift: just as harmful manifestations of anthropocentric logic, such as deforestation, urbanization, or the exploitation of natural resources, alter the environment, new sustainable practices could improve life on the planet. Similarly, the purely anthropocentric representation (the monster animal and the mirror animal) distorts the identity of the non-human, but new visual and linguistic experiences could offer a more respectful approach to acknowledging the subjectivity of non-humans.

Nonetheless, if we try to break away from an anthropocentric point of view, we immediately find ourselves facing the impasse mentioned by Malamud [2010]: «We want to be in two types of relationships that are mutually exclusive: close to nature and separate from it at the same time».

In the last phase of Godard's cinema, the film *Adieu au Langage* (2014) stands out as perhaps his most extreme attempt

to transcend the limits of language and audio-visual techniques. Here, the image is reduced to fragments, embodying pure visuality as theorized by Derrida [2006].

In fact, the film seems to follow the philosopher's lesson; it is no coincidence that the true protagonist of the film is a dog, a symbol of resistance to the trivialization of the link between reality and image and, therefore, a symbol of cinema.

Instead, the *monster animal* and the *mirror animal* portray a non-human subjected to human observation, constrained within a traditional time/space framework, thus emphasizing a preference for the human perspective, exemplified by techniques such as montage and shot/reverse shot.

A fundamental step out of this human perspective is found in the thinking of Bazin [1999], who shows that the montage does not allow respect for the ambiguity of the real, because it does not leave the viewer to decide what to look at or where to look inside the frame. Slow cinema is linked to this historical reflection by Bazin and is more than a school; it is an approach that unites even very different films that share the intention of going beyond traditional non-human representations (and not only these films). Since the beginning of the new millennium, slow cinema has stood out as a counter-trend in contemporary cinema: its aim is to elude the bombardment of images that characterizes the current digital cinematic age and comply with the need to slow down viewing time [James 2010, Romney 2010].

A distinctive trait of this approach is the sequence shot, which denotes the need to abandon times, rhythms of observation and spaces attributable to the human gaze, and to attempt a different type of gaze. The static shot and the long take permit not to interrupt the flow of time, which in the standard cinematic approach is usually achieved by eliminating all so-called "dead time" via montage. Slow cinema utilizes as few cuts as possible, producing a wider segment of reality. This means

that there are moments in which, even though nothing seems to happen in the frame, different or unexpected movements perfectly suitable for non-humans can be recorded. The non-human is in the foreground, it is the subject of view, but is not a mere object of vision or symbolization by the human [De Luca 2016, McMahon 2021].

Numerous recent films used this approach to investigate non-human gaze. In many cases, these are hybrid films that elude any real categorization. In other cases, these are fictional films that blend into documentary, such as *The Tourin Horse* (2011) and *The Four Times* (2010), or the multi-species documentary genre [Eben Kirksey and Helmreich 2010], with films like *Bovines* (2011), *Cow* (2021), *Leviathan* (2012) and *Nénette* (2010). Uniting them is the presence of non-humans that slows down/stops the traditional narrative rhythm, to go beyond the needs of the typical human observation rhythm. The most emblematic case is the horse protagonist of *The Tourin Horse*, in which the horse, always a symbol of movement, is a figure of death and immobility. Time dilation allows for a cinematic experience that is different from traditional editing. Manipulation of the images is minimal due to sequence shots. In *Bovines*, the observation of the daily ruminating cows was defined [Deleuze 1985] as image-time or a direct representation of time, and it is detached from narrative cause/effect, distant from anthropocentric image-movement. In this perspective, the human is peripheral. Similarly, in *The Four Times*, humans and non-humans, plants and minerals are not arranged on a hierarchical pyramid but on «a horizontal, fluid, sequence plan that transmigrates from one body to another, as souls are sometimes believed to do» [Filippi and Maggio, 2014; p. 122]. The same thing happens at the auditory level; the soundscape has no hierarchy, silence opens up a horizontal acoustic space, so the acoustic space is filled with sonic details that carry equal weight [Past 2019].

In slow cinema, therefore, the gaze follows the time of rituality, and of the cyclicity of the seasons. This different conception of time leads to a repositioning of the human in the frame. Maggio and Filippi [2014] suggest, referring to Agamben [2002], that if the viewing time is no longer that of the human, but of Zoé, or of bare life, then the non-humans' positions in the world also change. The human returns to be just one among many other animals, with the same vulnerability and submission to nature. The film's point of view is no longer anthropomorphized, but there are multiple points of view, one for each creature. This approach (call it a perspective reversal) is necessarily accompanied by a change of gaze in the cinematographic technique. If cinematographic techniques are formalized in the rigidly codified shots that always refer to an ideal human figure (close-up; American shot; full shot, etc.), in slow cinema and multispecies documentaries, the shots are reformulated on the basis of a non-anthropocentric *multiper-ceptive* gaze.

Frammartino's film tries to free the viewer's gaze, inducing him to find the connection that animates everything that surrounds us. It is an approach that can be considered *derridean*, in which it is not us who look at the non-humans, but rather, we feel watched by them.

The problem of which point of view to adopt reveals a fundamental ambiguity that is central in an exemplary film like *Nénette* (2010). Despite its good intentions, the film actually leaves an ambiguity in the viewer's gaze - especially in the cinematographic technique used. Because on the one hand it suggests an approach that respects the subjectivity of the non-human but at the same time confirms its objectification. But the question of feeling seen by non-humans is necessarily linked to other issues such as the role of the cinematographic medium and the spectator's relationship with the screen.

Barbara Creed [2013] identifies how the film tries to overcome, by exploiting the language of cinema, the anthropocentric point of view: for the entire duration of the film *Nénette*, the orangutan who is the protagonist, is in the foreground inside of the fence, between the straw and the glass wall. The presence of the human is only given by the audio: the comments of the visitors and zookeepers. We never see the human except as an occasional reflection on the glass wall.

The documentary not only seeks to represent a symmetrical relationship between human and non-human but also reveals the possibility of establishing a more fluid and dynamic relationship between species. Precisely because he prefers long and static shots on the body, gestures and movements of the protagonist, Philibert wants to bring out *Nénette*'s identity through a tactile visualization, as Barbara Creed calls it. This stands in opposition to language as a human prerogative.

But at the same time this cinematographic technique still seems to lead back to an anthropocentric perspective if we focus on the condition of *mediality* of the non-human that emerges from the documentary: according to Laura McMahon and Michel Lawrence [2015] the non-human present at the cinema and at the zoo is not simply *the animal*, but it is part of a hierarchical order that makes it the object of human observation.

The zoo thus becomes a visual backdrop that frames the non-human, and the cinema offers the viewer a perspective of the non-human that aligns with that experienced by visitors to the zoo. The use of long times allows us to question ourselves about the imprisonment and suffering of the non-human, but also about the very gaze to which the non-human is exposed.

As we have seen, the question of the non-human animal gaze is very complex and the two interpretations proposed by *Nénette* certainly make it an emblematic case study. *Nénette*'s fixed gaze certainly undermines human cinematic structures based on the

hierarchization of the gaze and voyeurism. But in *Nénette* there is an immersive look into the non-human environment that could help restore subjectivity to non-humans and stimulate us to reconsider the role of partnership with the non-human.

Indeed, this immersive look proposes a different way of experiencing cinematography, requiring the spectator to undergo a «visual/auditory training to appreciate the experience of immersion in natural processes» [MacDonald 2017; p. 16], transcending the logic of mere entertainment.

Recently, more films have used both traditional viewing techniques (nature documentaries like *Microcosmos* (1996) or *Winged Migration* (2001) and more experimental ones (mini cameras like GoPros, underwater cameras, camera traps) to evoke greater immersion in the viewer and to approach non-humans with more respect. However, not all new technologies or cinematic developments produce significant or transformative changes. In the context of ecocriticism [Rust et al. 2022], the new possibilities offered by cinematic technologies do not automatically mean that ecological issues or underlying power dynamics have been addressed.

We will now discuss three films/attempts that, while demonstrating greater attention to immersion and a sincere desire to meet non-humans at eye level, reveal some ambiguities that betray an anthropocentric perspective. A desire for immersion characterizes the documentary *Becoming Animal* (2018). In the film, the more than human world within Grand Teton National Park, US, is interconnected so everything is alive and expressive; humans, non-humans and landscapes are inextricably interdependent. In a conversation with Peter Mettler, Roberto Marchesini [2018] argues that in this film every entity that moves becomes an epiphany: the entity that expresses itself, not only manifests itself as a phenomenon but announces the epiphany of a widespread feeling.

The sensory experience of sharing the world and overcoming inter-species barriers is technically rendered not only by relying on typical characteristics of slow cinema, long shots, and fixed shots, but also by amplifying the audio-visual impact of nature. The beginning is a long sequence shot dedicated to two moose roaming in an autumn landscape, the next sequence is a low-quality night shot with audio recording of their mating rituals. The change of scenery is also a change of technique and leads to great sensory immersion in the natural world. Even though the filmmaker wished to elicit empathy with nature, the film excessively follows the philosophical thinking of David Abram: nature is excessively manipulated, which makes the film too human-centric. The most extreme case of intrusion into nature occurs when, to share the gaze of a flying non-human, the film uses aerial images taken from a camera attached to a bird.

Is this immersive capacity really able to free the viewer from the anthropocentric prison? According to Schultz-Figueroa (2022), films like *Gunda* (2020) or *Cow* (2021) are less interesting as attempts at immersive experiences than as proposals for political imaginaries that highlight the absurd logics of the non-human industry and suggest different political visions. Despite using immersive techniques (Steadicam, long takes, fixed shots, only ambient sound) to add empathy and get closer to the daily life of a sow, in *Gunda* «the most promising aspects of the film are connected to its status as a speculative work of fiction rather than immersive reality» [Schultz-Figueroa 2022; p. 52].

Cow, which also leverages formal techniques to elicit as much authenticity as possible - think of the continuous reactions of the cow, Luma, to the intrusiveness of the handheld camera - treats the non-human as a pretext to express ideological thought. On one hand, Luma lives her daily life always hidden due to zootechnical practices; on the other hand, Luma is a symbol-object referring to social issues of gender, reproduction, and

injustice in industrial farming production systems. In other words, Cow opens «a space for allegorical readings of livestock as political subjects of an inexplicable oppressive regime» [Schultz-Figueroa 2022; p. 56].

As suggested by our analysis, it is difficult to completely get away from anthropocentric perspectives even when resorting to immersion. Still, these experiments offer representations of the lives of farm animals that could motivate the public to consider the question in more depth and to develop greater awareness of the industrial production system and the exploitation of non-humans for food.

We conclude our study by analyzing two films that appear to push the boundaries of immersive research, as already highlighted in the films previously analyzed: *Leviathan* (2012) and *Animal Cinema* (2017).

Leviathan, created by two anthropologists from Harvard University's Sensory Ethnography Lab, offers the viewer a *multiperspective* experience aboard a fishing boat. Despite being along the coast of New Bedford where Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, the focus is not on the challenge between human and non-human. *Leviathan* goes further by presenting itself as a sort of floating film capable of eliciting continuous sensory stimuli through navigation on the open sea. This sensation is achieved through the use of numerous GoPros scattered throughout the fishing boat. Thus, there is not a single point of view, but rather a plurality of perspectives, ranging from details at the water's surface to close-up images of fish and fishermen, all seemingly carrying the same ontological weight. The sources of observation multiply, and the film seems to almost create itself, offering an unpredictable vision free from the constraints of a predefined authorial point of view.

The next step in this kind of *immersive* filmmaking could be an audiovisual experiment like Emilio Vavarella's *Animal Cinema*.

Here, the technological eye is not directed by the human but by the non-human. It is an even more extreme attempt at non-human perception than the films previously analyzed, a utopian fantasy in which, to investigate the gaze of the non-human close up, human technology is used, but which radically breaks the rules of cinematic language. It is a short film edited by the author using numerous videos uploaded on YouTube, in which the protagonists are non-human that have accidentally found themselves interacting with a camera. Arcagni [2018] claims that *Animal Cinema* proposes a gaze disintegrated in its normal functions, a visual environment where the medium is no longer conditioned by any author's (or operator's) strategy, as could happen, for example, in *Leviathan*, and which becomes biological art. Viewers witness movements of bodies, claws, tentacles, fangs, claws and paws that replace any directorial premeditation. The result is certainly extreme, but it constitutes an attempt to arouse in the viewer an observation decentralized from the human, more similar to a vortex of forms and ways of being in constant evolution: an assemblage of humans, non-humans and technologies of which all are part.

Conclusion

In mainstream Hollywood cinema, the non-human remains trapped in anthropocentric gaze; this is both from an ontological point of view, because it reaffirms a hierarchical order of living with humans on top and non-humans below, and from a linguistic point of view, because the human conception of cinematic space/time and scene setting subject the non-human to the classic rules of editing and scenic requirements. Instead, the cinematographic approach involving experimentation and research goes beyond the limits of mainstream perspectives [Casetti 2005] by making choices that are more radical.

In the films we have discussed, we can observe a direct confrontation with the non-human, as they focus is on a concept of hybridized perspective of time and space shared with the non-human.

In films like *The Tourin Horse*, long shots and close-ups of humans and non-humans create an inclusive space for both. Additionally, shot durations define viewing times closer to natural action times. The repetitiveness of actions, that both humans and non-humans share, puts both on the same level and ontological plane. Direct sound allows the viewer to listen to the non-human without an interfering musical score (these lead to risky musical underlines). *Becoming Animal*, *The Four Times* and some multi-species documentaries abandon some formal aspects of classical cinema, exploring new perspectives.

These films, in their more or less successful results, demonstrate the complexity of this topic, as they follow two contrasting perspectives that also distinguish recent studies on ecocinema [Rust et al. 2022]. On one hand, a utopian vision considers cinema as a tool to reconcile/interconnect with nature. On the other hand, a more critical and political cinematic approach emphasizes the urgency of addressing environmental damage in order to raise awareness and denunciate the current predicament.

Nowadays, it is crucial to spread new cinematographic experiences that seek to overturn traditional logic, wherein the perspectives of domination and exploitation prevail. The proposed approaches should serve as the basis not only for future cinematographic visions but also to advocate for more sustainable practices that respect the subjectivity of non-humans and their environments

Notes

¹ One Health, a holistic healthcare model, based on different integrated disciplines, that recognizes human, non-human and ecosystem health are interconnected, is officially sanctioned by the EU and international organizations [<https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/index.html>].

² Several authors have investigated the relationship between cinema and capitalist ideological logic. We can mention Jonathan Beller, who explored how editing and other visual techniques have been used to capture and direct the viewer's attention for commercial and ideological purposes, and Laura Mulvey, who also examined editing in Hollywood cinema through a gender lens, highlighting how this technique can be employed to reinforce certain patriarchal and capitalist-commercial perspectives in mainstream film production.

References

- Aaltola, E. (2002), "Animal monsters and the fear of the wild", *M/C Journal: A Journal of Media and Culture*, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0203/animals.php> [accessed 9/05/2024].
- Adams, C. J. (1990), *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, London Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Agamben, G. (2002), *L'aperto. L'uomo e l'animale*, Torino Bollati Boringhieri.
- Alaimo, S. (2001), "Discomforting creatures: Monstrous natures in recent films", in K. Armbruster and K. R. Wallace (ed.), *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, Charlottesville, UP of Virginia, p. 280.
- Arcagni, S. (2018), "Animal Cinema", *Nòva - Il Sole 24ore*, <https://simonearcagni.nova100.ilsole24ore.com/2018/07/27/animal-cinema/> [accessed 9/05/2024]
- Armstrong, P. (2002), "The postcolonial animal", *Society & Animals*, 10, 4, p. 415.
- Arnold, A. (2021), *Cow*, UK, BBC Films, Doc Society, Halcyon Pictures.
- Arnold, J. (1955), *Tarantula!*, USA, Universal Pictures.
- Ballard, C. (1979), *Black Stallion*, USA, Omni Zoetrope, American Zoetrope.

- Ballard, C. (1996), *Fly Away Home*, USA, Sandollar.
- Baker, S. (2001), *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana-Chicago.
- Bass, S. (1974), *Phase IV*, USA: Paramount Pictures.
- Bazin, A. (1999), *Che cosa è il cinema? Il film come opera d'arte e come mito nella riflessione di un maestro della critica*, Garzanti, Milano.
- Berger, J. (2016), *Perché guardiamo gli animali?*, Il Saggiatore, Milano.
- Best, S. (2001), *The Politics of Total Liberation: Revolution for the 21st Century*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bliss, G.E. (2019), “Redefining the Anthropomorphic Animal in Animation”, Loughborough University, thesis, <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/27423> [accessed 9/05/2024].
- Burt, J. (2002), *Animals in Film*, Reaktion Books, London.
- Castaing-Taylor, L. and Paravel, V. (2012), *Leviathan*, FR, Arrête ton Cinéma.
- Carlson, C. J., Albery, G. F., Merow, C. et al. (2022), “Climate change increases cross-species viral transmission risk”, *Nature*, 607, pp. 555-562.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04788-w> [accessed 9/05/2024]
- Casetti, F. (2005), *L'occhio del Novecento*, Milano, Bompiani, p. 15.
- Cooper, Merian C. and Schoedsack, Ernest B. (1933), USA, *King Kong*, RKO.
- Davie, E. and Mettler, P. (2018), *Becoming Animal*, CH, Maximage and SDI Productions Ltd.
- De Luca, T. (2016), *Slow Cinema*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2003), *Mille piani*, Roma: Cooper-Castelvecchi, p. 360.
- Deleuze, G. (1989), *L'Imagine-Tempo. Cinema 2*, Milano, Ubulibri.
- Derrida, J. (2006), *L'animale che dunque sono*, Milano, Jaca Book.
- Douglas, G. (1954), *Them!*, USA, Warner Bros.
- Liz Paola, N.Z., Torgerson, P.R. and Hartnack, S. [2022], “Alternative paradigms in animal health decisions: A framework for treating animals not only as commodities”, *Animals*, 12, 1845, p. 2.
- Ferrando, F. (2014), “Philosophical posthumanism”, in Baioni E., Cuadrado Payeras L.M., and Macelloni E. (eds), *Abbecedario del postumanismo*, Milano - Udine, Mimesis, p. 23-27.

- Ferrando, F. (2019), *Philosophical Posthumanism*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London.
- Filippi, M. and Maggio, E. (2014), *Penne e Pellicole Gli animali, la letteratura e il cinema*, Milano - Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, p. 122.
- Frammartino, M. (2010), *The Four Times (Le quattro volte)*, IT, Invisible Film, Vivo film.
- Gras, E. (2011), *Bovines*, FR, Bathysphère Productions.
- Gregersdotter, K., Höglund, J. and Hållén, N. (2015), *Animal Horror Cinema*, Palgrave MacMillan, London.
- Godard, J-L (2014), *Adieu au Langage*, FR, Canal+, Wild Bunch.
- Hitchcock, A. (1963), *The Birds*, USA, Universal Studios.
- Howard, B. and Moore, R. (2016), *Zootopia*, USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios.
- Kazan, E. (1950), *Panic in the Streets*, USA, 20th Century Fox.
- Kenton, E.C. (1932), *Island of Lost Souls*, USA, Paramount Productions.
- Kossakovsky, V. (2021), *Gunda*, USA, Sant & Unsant, Louverture Films.
- Eben K.S. and Helmreich, S. (2010), "The emergence of multispecies ethnography", *Cultural Anthropology*, 25, 4, pp. 545-576.
- Kojève, A. (1969), *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, New York, Cornell University Press.
- Juran, N. (1957), *The Deadly Mantis*, USA, Universal-International.
- Girdler, W. (1976), *Grizzly*, USA, Harlequin Pictures.
- Lanfranchi, A. (2021), "Linee di fuga su cinema, antropocentrismo e antispecismo", *Liberazioni rivista di critica antispecista*, Vicenza, 11, 41, p. 20.
- MacDonald, S. (2013), "The Ecocinema Experience", in S. Rust, S. Monani, S. Cubbit, (eds), *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, Routledge, New York, pp. 17-42.
- MacKenzie, J.S. and Jeggo, M. (2019), "The One Health approach - Why is it so important?", *Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease*, 4, 2, 88.
- McEvoy, E. (1950), *The Killer That Stalked New York*, USA, Robert Cohn Productions.
- Maggio, E., (2011) "Considerazioni sul cinema inumano di Michelangelo Frammartino", *Liberazioni rivista di critica antispecista*, 4, p.79.

- Malamud, R., *Animals on film: The ethics of the human gaze*, Spring 2010, p. 14.
- Marchesini, R. (2022), *Etologia filosofica. Alla ricerca della soggettività animale*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis, p. 65.
- Marchesini, R., Andersen K. (2003), *Animal Appeal Uno studio sul teriomorfismo*, Bologna, Hybris
- Marchesini R. (1996), *Il concetto di soglia*, Roma-Napoli, Theoria, p. 18.
- McMahon, L. (2021), *Animal Worlds Film, Philosophy and Time*. UK, Edinburgh University Press.
- Moscariello, A., (2016), “Gli animali nel cinema: umani come noi”, *Cabiria magazine*, <https://www.cabiriamagazine.it/gli-animali-nel-cinema-umani/> [accessed 09/05/2024]
- Nunes, T., Criatura (2020), *Monstro, animal, carne ou carnica: a notável perpetuação dos arquétipos femininos da cultura misógina*, Porto Alegre, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul [UFRGS].
- Past, E. (2019), *Italian Ecocinema Beyond the Human*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 132-133.
- Peyton, B. (2018), *Rampage*, USA, New Line Cinema.
- Perennou, Jean-Marc and Nuridsany, Claude (1996), *Microcosmos*, CH: Canal+, France 2, RTS, Miramax.
- Perrin, J. (2001), *Le peuple migrateur [Winged migration]*, FR, Galatee Films, Bac Films, Wanda Visión.
- Petersen, W. (1995), *Outbreak*, USA, Warner Bros., Kopelson Entertainment
- Philibert, N. (2010), *Nénette*, FR, Les Films d’Ici.
- Pick, A. (2011), *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film*, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 106.
- Porter, E.S. (1903), *Electrocuting an Elephant*, Edison studios.
- Rogell, A.S. (1941), *The Black Cat*, U.S.A., Burt Kelly Universal.
- Rust, S., Monani S. and Cubitt S. (2022), *Ecocinema Theory and Practice* 2, New York, Routledge, pp. 2-3, 8-9.
- Sarmiento, M. (2007), *Heavy Petting*, USA, SarcoFilms, LaSalleHolland, Anchor Bay Entertainment.
- Schultz-Figueroa, B. (2022), “Death by the Numbers: The Aesthetics of Suffering and Scale in Cow and Gunda”, *Film Quarterly*, 9, Summer, pp. 47-57.

- Schaffner, F.J. (1968), *Planet of the Apes*, USA, 20th Century Fox
- Soderbergh, S. (2011), *Contagion*, USA, Double Feature Films, Participant Media, Warner Bros. Pictures, Imagenation Abu Dhabi.
- Spiegel, M. (1996), *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, New York, Mirror Books.
- Spielberg, S. (1975), *Jaws*, USA, Universal Pictures.
- Spielberg, S. (1993), *Jurassic Park*, USA, Universal Studios.
- Spottiswoode, R. (1989), *Turner & Hooch*, USA, Silver Screen Partners IV, Touchstone Pictures.
- Tatum, C. and Carolin, R. (2022), *Dog*, USA, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- Tarkovskij, A. (1972), *Soljari*, URSS, Mosfil'm.
- Tarr, B. and Hranitzky, Á. (2011), *The Tourin Horse [A Torinói ló]*, H, T.T. Filmműhely, MPM Film, Vega Film, Zero Fiction, Werc Werk Works.
- Tomes, N. (2000), "The making of a germ panic, then and now", *American Journal of Public Health*, 90, 2, pp.191-198.
- Vavarella, E., [2017], *Animal Cinema*, IT.
- Wilcox, F. M. [1943], *Lassie Come Home*, USA, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- Wincer, S. (1993), *Free Willy*, USA, Warner Bros., Regency Enterprises, The Donners' Company, Alcor Films.
- Yarborough, Jean (1940), *The Devil Bat*, USA, Producers Releasing Corporation.
- Zhaoli Song, Z., Fergnani, A. (2022), "How pandemic films help us understand outbreaks: Implications for futures and foresight", *World Futures Review*, 14, 1, pp. 9-28, p.15.
- Zipes, J. (1999), "Breaking the Disney spell", in M. Tatar (ed.), *The Classic Fairy Tales*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, pp. 332-352.