The Lives of Animals in Words and Images

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Edited by

Željko Uvanović and Suzana Marjanić

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> Golež Kaučič, Marjetka. "Pas u filmu. Od tematizacije istinitosti do fikcije i antropomorfizacije." In *Animal: knjiga o ne-ljudima i ljudima. Kulturni bestijarij*. Vol. III. Edited by Antonija Zaradija Kiš, Maja Pasarić, and Suzana Marjanić. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2022, pp. 807-822.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRTEEN CHAPTERS

ŽELJKO UVANOVIĆ

1

Tihomir Živić's chapter, titled "The Animals in the Scriptures' Noachian Narrative and in Darren Aronofsky's Motion-Picture Adaptation," addresses how animals are portrayed in the Bible and the film adaptation in light of intricate theological elucidations in all relevant contexts, including how the adaptation was received and how its new cinematic message partially diverges from the implications of the Bible. It explores how Noah and the story of Noah's Ark are portrayed in the Bible and in Darren Aronofsky's film adaptation. The biblical story of Noah and the Covenant that God made with him are first discussed, emphasizing the moral and emotional depths not covered in the simple scriptural narrative. After that, the study looks at Noah's appearance in different texts, the etymology of his name, and the historical and religious significance of Noah in the Judeo-Christian literature. It also draws a comparison between the scriptural literalization and Aronofsky's dramatic interpretation of the narrative, highlighting the film's portrayal of anthropomorphic feelings and moral implications. The study looks as well into the biblical account of the Vetero-Testamentary Noah, the divine plan for a cataclysmic punishment of humanity's sins, and Noah's moral character and obedience. In addition, the chapter examines a Christian interpretation of Noah and the psychoanalytic critique of him, highlighting similarities between the New Testament's depiction of the Judgment Day and the Genesitic Deluge. Finally, the chapter examines how the animals are portrayed on the Ark, going over the meaning and symbolism of different animal species as well as how computer-generated imagery (CGI) is used in Aronofsky's adaptation to bring the animals and the Ark to life. As a result, the examination also covers the moral handling of animals during the motion picture's development and the special effects employed to produce the pre- and post-Deluge sequences. All of the animals in Aronofsky's Noah were specifically made with computer-generated imagery (CGI), so the adaptation includes a large variety of CGI animals that represent both imaginary and real species (i.e. legendary depictions or stylized animal representa-

tions) to enhance the biblical story. Among the animals that are specifically screened are birds, snakes, and different kinds of mammals (e.g. animals that gather in pairs to board Noah's Ark, including big mammals like elephants and rhinoceroses as well as smaller mammals like deer and rabbits). With the help of these CGI-generated animals, the filmmakers were able to visually capture the biblical scene of the animals boarding the Ark while maintaining the epic and mythical tone of the movie.

2

In the chapter "'Four are among the Tiniest on Earth': Ants, Bees, Moths, Locusts, and Flies in the Hebrew Bible" by Tova Forti, the literary perception of insects in the Hebrew Bible is thoroughly examined. Ants, bees, locusts, moths, and flies are utilized as figurative imagery to convey a wide range of ideas in biblical literature. The text explores how these insects are specifically portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, including how locusts are used as a model of efficient organization and self-discipline, and how ants are praised in the Proverbs as examples of human social conduct. It also talks about how moths are used as metaphors for destruction and transience, and bees are portrayed as fierce enemies. The chapter also looks at how animal behaviors and human social language are combined to teach moral lessons and cultural paradigms through the use of faunal stereotypes in upbringing. The Hebrew Bible's wisdom corpus incorporates both human social vocabulary and insectile habits, as this chapter highlights. It draws attention to the fact that despite their lack of physical strength, ants, locusts, and bees are used as imitation models, showing how faunal stereotypes are utilized to convey didactic instruction and moral lessons. By examining the specific references to ants, bees, locusts, moths, and flies in the biblical text, the chapter provides valuable insights into the cultural, literary, and didactic significance of these diminutive animals in the Hebrew Bible.

3

The chapter "Animal Imagery in the Sapiential Books" by Charlotte Obeid explores the use of animal imagery in the Sapiential Books of the Old Testament. Divided into four parts, the study explores the influence of animal imagery in poetry, its significance in the discourse on human beings, its role in describing social relationships, and its presence in the divine discourse. The study focuses on five wisdom books of the Old Testament: Job, Proverbs, Qoheleth, Sirach, and Wisdom. The animals

mentioned range from wild mammals like lion and bear to domesticated mammals such as ox and donkey, as well as small animals like fish, birds, bees, and ants. The article aims to explore the didactic impact of animal imagery, illustrating the teaching through concrete examples and making it more vivid and incisive for the audience. For example, it examines Sirach 11:2–3's use of the metaphor of the bee and contrasts it with other negative allusions found in the Old Testament. Analyzing the metaphor of the dead lion and living dog in Qoheleth 9:4 reveals a bitter and ironic undertone. The study also explores Wisdom 5:11's use of the bird in the air as imagery, emphasizing how it communicates the fleeting nature of human endeavors. Additionally, the study scrutinizes how animal imagery is used to explain social interactions, human behavior, and the divine discourse, highlighting the didactic effect and concreteness it adds to the lessons. Apart from the methodical examination of particular animal representations, the research emphasizes the connection between animals and people, the community, and the words of God. It explores Ben Sira's use of animal analogies to explain the relationship between the rich and the poor, as well as Proverbs 28:15's depiction of a wicked ruler ruling over the impoverished. Furthermore, the study examines God's discourse in the Book of Job, illustrating the transcendence of God's relationship with animals and the limitations of human understanding in this context. Overall, this essay provides a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted use of animal imagery in the Sapiential books, shedding light on its didactic, concretizing, and vivid impact on the teachings within the Old Testament.

4

Vanda Babić and Denis Vekić examine how filmmaker Ridley Scott used the unicorn motif in his 1982 and 1985 films *Blade Runner* and *Legend* in their chapter "The Unicorn in the Symbolic and Semantic Expression of the Film Director Ridley Scott in the Context of Medieval Bestiaries." The writers investigate the representation of the unicorn as a mythical creature endowed with particular meanings, linking it to medieval bestiaries and delving into the symbolic and semantic significance of the animal in both movies. Analyzing Scott's purposeful use of the unicorn as a motif in both movies illuminates the complex symbolism and interaction between medieval perceptions and (post)modern cinematic expression. The unicorn is a key element in the story and character development of *Blade Runner*, and its portrayal in *Legend*, where it symbolizes innocence and purity. Furthermore, the authors explore the unicorn's totemic significance, its relationship to the main characters, and its portrayal as a mythical creature

with particular symbolic meanings in both films. This in-depth analysis highlights how Scott carefully considers how to bring mythic consciousness into his motion pictures, as demonstrated by the way he purposefully uses the unicorn motif to give viewers multiple interpretations and messages. The writers also look at how purposefully Scott used a variety of animals in *Blade Runner*, including owls, snakes, and pigeons, giving these animals totemic significance and relating them to particular characters and themes. In addition, the chapter explores the Christian symbolism and allegorical elements found in *Legend*, a motion picture that examines the unicorn and the virgin as central motifs.

5

In her chapter "Hello Kitty! An Overview of the Celebration and Vilification of Cats in Animation," Rebecca Rose Stanton explores how cats are portrayed in animated films, concentrating on the offensive roles they play in Walt Disney Animation Studios (WDAS) productions. The chapter is structured into three parts: an examination of animal characters in animation, an exploration of the portrayal of domestic cats as villains, and a discussion of the implications of these portrayals on real-life perceptions of cats. Part 1 discusses the protagonist and antagonist roles in animated narratives, noting that animal villains are less common than human villains in WDAS films. It highlights the characteristics that define animal protagonists and antagonists, such as anthropomorphism, gender, and species. Animal villains are often solitary, male, wild, and less anthropomorphized than their heroic counterparts. Part 2 examines the unique treatment of cats in animation, which are both celebrated and vilified. Cats have a long history of association with villainy in human culture, yet they are also revered in various forms of media. Stanton suggests that the independent nature of cats and their carnivorous instincts may contribute to their villainous portrayal. Despite this, pro-social cats like Hello Kitty are highly celebrated, indicating a complex relationship between humanity and the feline species. Part 3 presents case studies of villainous domestic cats in WDAS films, including Lucifer from *Cinderella*, Felicia from *The Great Mouse Detective*, and Mittens from *Bolt*. These case studies highlight the common topics in the villainization of cats, including their less anthropomorphized traits, their function as henchmen, and their frequently violent outcomes. In closing, the chapter raises concerns about the accuracy of these depictions and how they may affect how real cats are treated. Stanton contends that perceptions of animals in society can be shaped by the media, particularly the WDAS movies. She makes the argument that

more complex depictions of animal characters might be advantageous for both the animals and the artistic output of motion picture studios. In addition to advocating for more nuanced and sympathetic representations that do not reinforce harmful stereotypes, the chapter urges a reevaluation of the one-dimensional portrayal of cats in animation.

6

The essay "From Lewis Carroll to Chris Marker: The Frightening Secret of the Grinning Cat" by Dina Pokrajac delves into the enigmatic nature of the Cheshire Cat, a character from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and its connection to the political and cultural landscape of the 20th century as portrayed in the film essays of the French filmmaker Chris Marker. The Cheshire Cat, known for its elusive grin, serves as a symbol of freedom, rebellion, and the sensuality of curiosity in Marker's work, which often explores the collapse of utopian visions, particularly the communist society, and the political turmoil of the era. Marker, who was fascinated by cats and used them as totems in his films, saw in the Cheshire Cat a representation of the fleeting nature of revolutionary hopes and the ephemeral quality of memory and time. His motion picture *A Grin Without a Cat* documents the rise and fall of the international leftist movement, capturing the essence of political events through the lens of personal reminiscence rather than objective history. Marker's use of cats, particularly his own cat Guillaume, as a recurring motif in his films and multimedia projects reflects his belief in the subversive and anti-authoritarian spirit embodied by these animals. The essay also touches on the various theories about the origin of the Cheshire Cat's grin, including its possible inspiration by lunar phases or the decorative grinning lions in Cheshire County pubs. It further explores the philosophical implications of the Cheshire Cat's grin as discussed by Gilles Deleuze, who saw in it a paradoxical sense that defies depth and embraces the surface, a concept that influenced Marker's approach to filmmaking and his exploration of new media. In his later works, such as the CD-ROM *Immemory* and the movie *The Case of the Grinning Cat*, Marker continued to engage with the theme of memory and revolution, using digital technologies to create a virtual museum of his work and to document the elusive presence of the Cheshire Cat in contemporary culture. Despite the pessimistic tone regarding the failure of revolutionary movements, Marker retained a belief in the enduring spirit of revolution and the role of art in challenging the status quo. In conclusion, the essay presents a rich analysis of the Cheshire Cat's cultural significance and its evolution through the works of Carroll,

Marker, and Deleuze, highlighting the cat's grin as a symbol of resistance and a reminder of the unfulfilled dreams of a more just and humane society.

7

In her chapter on Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, Ljubica Matek presents a Gothic interpretation of the 1963 motion picture, emphasizing how it depicts an avian uprising against humans. The film poses uncomfortable questions about human exploitation and responsibility by implying that the revolt is legitimate. To evoke a feeling of instability and terror, Hitchcock uses Gothic devices like the uncanny, doubling of identity, and the figuration of a monster/protagonist. The film also explores the limits of human knowledge and the human need for control by situating the story in a transitional space where the behavior of the birds is still an ontological and epistemological mystery. Matek starts out by talking about the "horror of the mundane," or the point in the film where the familiar becomes monstrous and the lines separating culture and nature dissolve. The film's use of multiple genres, including the Gothic, to create a distinctive and complex filmic structure is what gives it its hybridity and complexity. *The Birds* draws on old ideas about birds' occult connections and psychological symbolism, but it does not punish the animals for their misdeeds like traditional animal horror films do. Instead, it draws attention to the limitations of ornithological knowledge. The chapter explores the Gothic eerie, a sensation that arises from the inability to categorize what is seen and causes one to feel disoriented and start doubting one's fundamental beliefs about the world. The film's birds, who reject human expectations and the notion of human superiority due to their independent and mysterious nature, personify this unsettling feeling. Matek examines the film's setting, which alternates between the rural Bodega Bay, California, and the urban San Francisco. This contrast serves to define the characters and represent the urban and rural Gothic; the urban one represents contemporary concerns about identity in a crowded landscape, while the rural setting adds to a sense of personal horror. The concept of incomplete or unattainable knowledge is another concern the movie explores, employing it to frighten and scare the audience. It is demonstrated that expert knowledge is insufficient, and the motion picture makes the argument that common sense and intuition might be more reliable than scientific data. The lead actress of the film, Melanie Daniels, plays the part of the Gothic heroine/victim, losing strength and independence as her bond with Mitch Brenner grows. By emphasizing a possible cooperation in the bird attacks, the movie subverts the conventional victim/monster duality by expanding the role of the

pursued. The argument made in the chapter's conclusion is that *The Birds* challenges conventional power structures and dichotomies by using Gothic tropes to frighten the viewers. The film closes with humans being forced to leave, implying an unbalanced world and the birds' supremacy, leaving the audience to wonder what lies ahead in a world where human authority is shattered.

8

Jeremy Strong's chapter, titled "Killing the Pig," provides a detailed analysis of a key scene in Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure*, focusing on the pig-killing episode involving Jude and his first wife, Arabella. The contribution explores various themes, including realism, relationship dynamics, gender representation, animal treatment, and the Victorian Humane Movement. The analysis investigates the contrasting portrayals of Arabella and Jude's subsequent partner, Sue, examining their physical and moral attributes, as well as their association with animals. The scene is positioned as a microcosm of Hardy's satire, combining elements of grim realism and sensational tragedy. It also explores the complexity of Hardy's narrative and his nuanced approach to societal issues, particularly the interplay between class, gender, and animal treatment. The analysis also discusses the historical and social context of pig-killing, drawing parallels with similar practices in other literary works and real-life experiences. It compares the pig-killing episode in *Jude the Obscure* with similar scenes in other literary works, such as John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and examines the representation of the pig-killing episode as a bridge between traditional and modern ways of life. Additionally, it highlights the author's personal experiences and societal influences that shaped his portrayal of the characters and their actions, emphasizing the overarching topics of tragedy, satire, and sensationalism in the narrative. The chapter explores the intersection of humane ideology, class relations, and the author's personal life, accentuating the multifaceted nature of Hardy's narrative and the complexities of societal and moral dilemmas depicted in the novel.

9

Robert Geal's chapter "Becoming Animal and/or Shooting Animal: Visual Regimes in Ostensibly Zoomorphic Nature Documentaries" analyzes the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic perspectives in nature documentaries. It focuses on the BBC series *Spy in the Wild*, which uses animatronic spy

cameras to film nonhuman animals. The essay delves into the potential of these techniques to challenge anthropomorphism and convey a zoomorphic perspective. However, it highlights how the series' zoomorphic potential is limited by the predominance of human-operated cameras and the perpetuation of anthropocentric techniques that subsume the nonhuman perspective. Additionally, the paper discusses the influence of Cartesian dualism and realist film conventions, emphasizing how they reinforce an illusory anthropocentric perception and subjectivity. It argues that the series' attempts to convey a "becoming animal" perspective are overshadowed by the genre's focus on "shooting animal," perpetuating Cartesian dualism and anthropocentrism. Despite the use of animatronic spy cameras, the predominance of human-operated cameras and the perpetuation of anthropocentric techniques restrict the series' ability to offer a meaningful expression of nonhuman alterity. Overall, the chapter offers a critical examination of the visual regimes used in nature documentaries, posing questions about anthropocentrism in filmmaking and illuminating the difficulties involved in portraying nonhuman animals.

10

Suzana Marjanić's chapter discusses the representation of evil in documentary films on animal rights, focusing on works by Shaun Monson and Georges Franju, as well as on J. M. Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). It explores the ethical implications of depicting the suffering of animals and the problem of evil in general. The author examines the films *Blood of the Beasts* (1949) by Georges Franju and *Earthlings* (2005) by Shaun Monson, alongside Coetzee's reflections on evil. The documentaries present the suffering of animals in a way that challenges viewers to confront the reality of industrialized animal exploitation and consider the ethical and philosophical implications of such representations. The analysis delves into the ethical statements made by the film directors, emphasizing the need to acknowledge and confront the evil of industrialized animal exploitation. It also discusses the double ontological optics through which animals are portrayed in these documentaries – as subjects of the reality being depicted and as objects within that reality. Furthermore, the chapter provides insights into the political and activist dimensions of the films, highlighting the use of hidden cameras and the impact of visual representations of animal suffering on viewers. It also touches on the distinction between activist and aestheticist paradigms in documentary filmmaking on animal rights. The study explores the concept of the "obscene" in relation to the representation of evil, drawing connections between literature and film in addressing the

problem of evil. Additionally, it explores the existential and ethical implications of representing evil, drawing on literary and philosophical perspectives. Marjanić also discusses the symbolic significance of animals in the context of evil and suffering, addressing the larger societal and ethical questions surrounding human-animal relationships. She also examines the role of literature and rationality in understanding and responding to evil, particularly in Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello*. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the representation of evil in documentary films on animal rights, shedding light on the ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic dimensions of these works.

11

Marjetka Golež Kaučič's chapter titled "The Dog in Film. From Reality into Fiction," explores, on the basis of theoretical discourses on critical animal studies, anthropology, philosophy and theory of speciesism, the depiction of dogs in film, focusing on the anthropomorphization of non-human subjectivity and the ethical implications of using dogs in film production. The analysis is supported by the examination of two motion pictures, *Balto – The Miracle Dog from Alaska* and *The Plague Dogs*, each depicting the canine protagonists in distinct contexts. The discussion delves into the exploitation of dogs, the portrayal of domestication, and the ethical implications of their use in the film industry. The text also explores the relationship between humans and dogs, highlighting the ambivalence in the human perspective towards dogs, as reflected in linguistic expressions and cultural connotations. The first movie, *Balto – The Miracle Dog from Alaska*, portrays the real-life story of Balto, a sled dog who gained fame for delivering a diphtheria antitoxin serum to Nome in 1925. Ultimately raising ethical concerns about the treatment of animals in the film industry, the movie illuminates the human fascination with heroism and the Hollywood stardom that followed Balto's ascent to fame. The second film, *The Plague Dogs*, deals with the traumatic experiences of two dogs used in animal testing and their subsequent escape, addressing the ethical controversies surrounding vivisection and the anthropomorphization of animals in motion pictures. Additionally, the chapter explores the anthropocentric perspective of humans towards animals, as evidenced through linguistic expressions and cultural representations. It delves into the critical examination of speciesism, the moral implications of domestication, and the portrayal of animals in film as allegorical or applicative anthropomorphism. The films provide a platform for viewers to engage with alternative perspectives, thereby challenging the prevalent anthropo-

centric understanding of animals and influencing a shift towards ecocentrism. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the potential of film to convey ethical, ecological, and social messages, prompting viewers to re-evaluate their attitudes towards non-human subjectivity and fostering a connection with the suffering of animals. In conclusion, the article offers a critical analysis of the portrayal of dogs in film, addressing themes of exploitation, ethical treatment, and the human-animal relationship. It investigates the potential of movies to challenge anthropocentrism, influence viewers' perspectives, and convey ethical and ecological messages. The analysis sheds light on the complex dynamics between humans and animals, urging for a re-evaluation of the ethical treatment of animals in the film industry.

12

The chapter by Boris Bakota, titled "Legal Position of Animals Participating in Film," examines the legal position of animals in the film industry and the broader legal system. Historically, animals have been used in film since the early days of the industry, transitioning from documentary appearances to supporting roles. Legal regulation of animal use in filmmaking was non-existent until the adoption of the *Special Regulations on Cruelty to Animals* in 1940, which applied to US films only. This period saw the American Humane Association (AHA) gaining access to film sets to monitor animal treatment. However, from 1968 to 1980, there was a regulatory gap, and since 1980, animal protection laws have governed the treatment of animals in movies. In legal terms, animals are considered objects rather than subjects of law, akin to property, but with higher protection status. Owners have limitations on their power over animals, and there are regulations on animal slaughter and euthanasia. Some countries have laws that recognize animal sentience and provide special protections. Despite these regulations, animal abuse in the film industry has been documented, with varying degrees of enforcement and monitoring. The film industry's treatment of animals has been scrutinized, with notable cases of animal cruelty and death during film productions. The AHA's monitoring and certification process has been criticized for being non-binding and for having unclear film rating criteria. The AHA's authority is limited to the US, and other countries have their own regulations or lack thereof. Technological advancements, such as CGI, have provided alternatives to using live animals in film, reducing the need for their exploitation. The chapter concludes that the use of animals in movies is largely anthropocentric and that modern technology offers viable substitutes, questioning the ethical justification for animal use in filmmaking.

The author also references the work of various scholars and organizations, highlighting the complexities of animal rights law and the ongoing debate on the legal and ethical treatment of animals in the film industry.

13

Koraljka Meštrović's contribution "Animals Anonymous: The Exploitation of Animals for Human Entertainment" examines the topic of animal exploitation through the analysis of three media examples involving animals addicted to cocaine: the motion picture *Cocaine Bear*, the comic *The She-Wolf from Dubrava*, and the internet article "Cocaine Cat." These cases are explored from psychoanalytical and totemic/shamanic perspectives, considering the roles of spirit animals in human life and the varying degrees of submission and exploitation in canine species such as domestic dogs, wolves, and coyotes. The paper initially began as a Jungian analysis of *The She-Wolf from Dubrava* but evolved to include the other two stories after Meštrović recognized a pattern of animal exploitation for entertainment across different media. The exploration of these cases delves into the connections between psychoanalysis, film, and comics, highlighting the symbolic significance of the animals and the substances they are exposed to. Meštrović discusses the ethical implications of exploiting animals for entertainment and the fine line between art and exploitation. She argues that while some art forms may aim to critique exploitation, the act of creating such art can itself be seen as exploitative. She acknowledges the complexity of the issue, emphasizing the importance of empathy and compassion in the human-animal relationship. The analysis of the "Cocaine Cat" case highlights the cat's resilience and independence, suggesting that drugs were used to control an inherently uncontrollable animal. *The Cocaine Bear* case is examined in relation to indigenous healing traditions and the symbolic meaning of the bear as a totemic animal. *The She-Wolf from Dubrava* is the most complex case, involving a shapeshifting character that blurs the lines between human and animal, exploiter and the exploited. The paper also touches on the historical exploitation of bears in entertainment, the rehabilitation of the wolf's reputation in popular culture, and the different levels of submission and domestication seen in canine species. Meštrović concludes by reflecting on the exploitation of circus animals and shares a personal anecdote that underscores the desire for animals to be recognized and respected for their true natures. Overall, Meštrović's paper serves as a critical examination of the human tendency to exploit animals for entertainment, using a multidisciplinary approach to explore the psychological, spiritual, and cultural dimensions of this complex issue.

INTRODUCTION 2

ZOO INTRODUCTION OR WHY TO WATCH, LOOK AND READ, AND THINK ABOUT ANIMALS?

SUZANA MARJANIĆ

Nowadays, in the global Capitalocene, when animals (non-human), like all of nature, are reduced to mere resources, the essay collection *The Lives of Animals in Words and Images* seeks to awaken an ethic of care for animals – our closest Others – through the analysis of their representation in selected films and literary works. The book is framed initially by the role of life in biblical representations (chapter "Noachian Narrative in the Scriptures and in Darren Aronofsky's Motion Picture Adaptation" by Tihomir Živić) and concludes with an examination of exploitation, illustrated through three examples: Elisabeth Banks' film *Cocaine Bear*, Krešimir Biuk's comic *She-Wolf from Dubrava*, and the internet article *Cocaine Cat*. All three cases, interpreted by Koraljka Meštrović, are based on true stories about animals addicted to cocaine.

It is an edited book dedicated to the academic novel *The Lives of Animals* (1999) by John Maxwell Coetzee, through the hermeneutic link between image and word – presentation and representation of animals (non-humans). The collection can also be seen as a tribute to Nikola Visković's book *Animal and Man: A Contribution to Cultural Zoology* (1996), which, among other things, was the first academic presentation of animals in film in Croatia and the first work on zooethics within that community.[1]

In the chapter "Film Zoo", Nikola Visković points out, among other things, that since the beginning of cinematography, animals have been treated in a manner very similar to how they are treated in reality. They are mostly present in films as an OBJECT (the artist uses the animal's body and behavior as a means of self-expression) + SUBJECT (the animal together with the artist realizes the specific existential situations of two different beings) + SYMBOL (the animal points to historical archetypal

meanings, not to itself as a living being. Visković shows that animals, when they become protagonists or important episodic characters, are given emphasized anthropomorphic features (Visković 245).[2]

In the introduction to the aforementioned chapter on film animals, Visković quotes Larousse's *Dictionnaire des Films* (1990), which states: "First extras, then almost human, animals in cinematography gradually became what they are in life – a being that shares a community of destiny with man, because it exists on the same endangered planet."

Visković concludes the chapter "Film Zoo" by discussing films concerned with ecology and ethology, marked by ethical pathos, and mentions, among others, the film *Animal Mundi* by Godfrey Reggio, produced by WWF (also known as *The Soul of the World*, 1992), which he describes as an orchestration of documentary footage into a montage symphony inspired by eco-philosophy. In this context, he notes that in December 1995, the event *Animalia Cinematographica* was held at the Center Georges Pompidou in Paris, featuring the screening of 90 animalistic films from both past and contemporary productions.

Nikola Visković is credited with initiating the theory of animal studies and animal rights in Croatia in the early 1990s. At that time, he was a university professor of law at the Faculty of Law in Split and also served as a member of parliament. In the mid-1990s, he introduced the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary concept of cultural zoology – or cultural animal studies (his adaptation in the Croatian language *kulturna animalistika/ zoologija*), as he later renamed it – into the Croatian scientific and cultural, albeit divided, community. This concept was further elaborated in the collection of papers *Cultural Animal Studies* from a scientific meeting held in Split in 1997.

All of Visković's books, which address the fundamental right to life, demonstrate that speciesism is the root of all forms of discrimination. As a philosophy professor, John Sanbonmatsu states in the introduction to *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, if speciesism is not itself a form of fascism, it is certainly its paradigmatic and primordial form (Sanbonmatsu 10). In the same collection, Sanbonmatsu attempts to establish a solid framework connecting human oppression toward other animals (or as Shaun Monson would say, toward *Other Earthlings*) with leftist political thought, which has remained largely indifferent to the issue of speciesism (Sanbonmatsu 4). He highlights how, despite the significant influence of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno) in addressing speciesism, the political left, with only a few exceptions, has remained almost entirely indifferent to this form of oppression (Sanbonmatsu 13). In *Gloomy Years*, Visković observes that by obsessively focusing on daily politics and

political elites, "we actually lose our distance from them, that world mentally entraps us, and we risk becoming some kind of secondary jerks" (Visković 92).

Nikola Visković (1996, 2009) systematized the various ways humans experience and relate to animals (non-humans), ranging from indifference to affective connections, from economic (utilitarian or instrumental) relationships to fantasizing, where different psychological, ethical, and aesthetic meanings are attached to both real and imagined animals. Finally, he outlined a progression from a scientific relationship, where animals become objects of analysis, to an ethical and ecological relationship in which all or some animals are recognized and protected as beings that are inherently valuable and endangered.[3]

When we think about the Anthropocene/Capitalocene as an era of human domination, we are referring to the entire paradigm of neoliberal capitalism that undermines and destroys the foundations of all life on Earth. In this paradigm, the issue of the "sanctity of life" is an ambivalent process that penetrates the deepest layers of the humanities within European culture. It involves the concept of non-life and the legal power to separate "political" beings (citizens) from "bare life" (bodies)—a distinction that has persisted from antiquity to modernity, from Aristotle's authentic description of the "nature of possibility" to the bare bodies of *nomos*, and through to the pandemic years of 2020–2021. Based on his works *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) and *State of Exception* (2003), Giorgio Agamben warned of the danger posed by the rapid restriction of human freedoms. What began under the pretext of fighting terrorism (the so-called "war on terror") has been extended during the coronavirus pandemic (a topic of research and multidisciplinary ethnography) and continues to expand further.

Claude Lévi-Strauss observed that the separation of humans from their natural environment, to which they morally and physically belong, forces them to live in an artificial environment imposed by modern forms of urban life, posing a significant threat to the mental health of the species. Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss critically notes how this perversion of urban civilization, resulting from industrialization, has found expression on an ideological level in philosophy and morality, reaching the point where "in the name of humanism, they exalt this separation of man from other forms of life, leaving man with only self-love as the principle of thought and action" (Lévi-Strauss 261). Although Claude Lévi-Strauss already warned anthropologists in his 1962 book *Totemism Today* that animals provide essential conceptual sources for us, emphasizing in the concept of explaining totemism how animals are *good* for thinking because they, like the

plant world, offer a method of thinking, in 1998 Jhan Hochman, in his book *Green Cultural Studies*, had to reiterate how the humanities were still not *green*, or how even in the 1990s, the humanities continued to focus (solely) on race, gender, sex, and class, still neglecting the question of species. Or as Kari Weil in her book *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* (2012), within the framework of the animal turn, often cites Derrida's statement: "An animal looks at us and we are naked before it (her/him). Thinking, perhaps, begins there" (cf. Weil xv).

In the essay "Why Look at Animals?" (1977/2007), John Berger identifies the turning point in our all-too-human relationship with animals – what Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz sympathetically referred to as our "animal brothers" – in the 19th century. This is somewhat later than the period suggested by Horkheimer and Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). Berger argues that the 19th century marked a key shift that drastically, and unfortunately irreversibly, altered the human relationship with animals. This change began during the Industrial Revolution when animals started to disappear from everyday life due to commercial exploitation. The process, disastrous for the lives of animals, was completed in the corporate capitalism of the 20th century, when animals were transformed from machines into raw materials.

While animals once formed the first circle around humans, sharing the center of their world, today, as Berger further observes, animals remain visible in modern urban life in only two ways: they are either domesticated as pets or included in the world of spectacles, like animals in zoos. Meanwhile, the fate of animals in the slaughterhouses of post-industrial societies remains completely invisible, their existence reduced to mere raw material for slaughter – effectively, to *nothing*.

Berger focuses primarily on the gaze of one animal, specifically the gaze of a captive animal, as emphasized by Kari Weil in her article "Killing Them Softly: Animal Death, Linguistic Disability, and the Struggle for Ethics" (2006). The gaze that Berger argues we lost in the 19th century can equally be the gaze of the animal we kill, whether in the context of slaughter for food or slaughter in the name of art (see *Animal. Knjiga o neljudima i ljudima: Kulturni bestijarij III. dio*, 2022; *Mačkozbornik: od Bastet do Catwoman* 2022). This gaze of the animal at the moment of its slaughter also appears in the works of J. M. Coetzee.

It is worth noting the cynical paradox – also highlighted in Visković's book *Animal and Man: A Contribution to Cultural Zoology* (1996), the first zooethical book in Croatia, which holds a cult status among both theoretical and activist animalists. In today's world, when animals, like all of nature, are reduced to mere exploitable objects in what animalists call

the "contemporary holocaust", their symbolic value has, surprisingly, not disappeared. This observation leads to a transition into Visković's work on cultural botany. In *Animal and Man*, within the chapter "Animal Rights", Visković warned that all our beliefs about values, moral reasoning, and respect for the animal world should also extend to the plant world. As he begins the second chapter of his book *Tree and Man* (2001), he states: "Plants and animals are the basic forms of life on Earth" – a fundamental truth forgotten by all holy books of world religions.

Pete Porter, in his study *Teaching Animal Movies*, which is part of the *Human-Animal Studies* book series, *Film Studies* (2010), discusses his experience teaching film and media representations of nonhumans. He also provides an overview of key books on the subject, such as Burt's *Animals in Film* (2002), Chris's *Watching Wildlife* (2006), Cubitt's *Eco Media* (2005), Lippit's *Electric Animal* (2000), Ingram's *Green Screen* (2000), and Mitman's *Reel Nature* (1999). Considering that the book was published in 2010, it is understandable that not all the books on animal film studies available in the Anglo-American market were included. However, as far as Croatia is concerned, we only have Visković's chapter from his book *Animal and Man* (1996) for now. No other review-format works have been written on this subject. As the histories of animals and humans intertwine, unfortunately, this has been marked by a speciesist dominance over animals. As Alexander Bard and Jan Söderqvist, authors of *Netocracy: The New Power Elite and Life After Capitalism* (2003), assert, we must not overlook the anthropocentric worldview as the defining feature of totalistic thinking. The closer something resembles humans, the greater its perceived value and usefulness in fulfilling human desires and ambitions (cf. Bard and Söderqvist 105).

Cinematography also bears witness to the coexistence of humans and animals, as the first film footage ever recorded was of animal movements. Eadweard Muybridge's zoopraxiscope,[4] which captured a series of photographs of horse locomotion, is an example. Shortly thereafter, the first filmed documentary of an animal's death was recorded: Topsy the elephant, an utterly forgotten victim of speciesism today, like so many other animal sacrifices under the totalistic reign of *anthropos*. Truly, something seems to be deeply rotten in the state of humanity.

Notes

[1] Five years later, in 2001, Croatia saw the establishment of its first animal rights association, Friends of Animals. In his book *Gloomy Years: Nationalism, Bioethics, Globalization*, Visković notes that his books *Animal and Man: A Contribution to Cultural Zoology* (1996) and *Tree and Man: A Contribution to Cultural Botany* (2001) were written between two of his political works: *Political Experiments* (1990), published in Split just before the war, and *Gloomy Years* (2003). He adds, with irony, that "I will not add any comments about this account of my political and scientific obligations in one gloomy decade – leaving that task to the critical reception of the readers" (Visković 5).

[2] He cites exceptions to the aforementioned anthropomorphization, and among the first, Visković highlights the documentaries of Robert J. Flaherty, a pioneer of film documentaries in the 1920s, sometimes called "the father of the motion-picture documentary". Visković specifically mentions Flaherty's films *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Moana* (1926), set in the South Seas. In the frame of European cinematography, Visković cites Jan Painlevé, a French photographer and filmmaker who specialized in underwater fauna, with around 200 films, and Gérard Vienne as the first representatives of film documentary *animalistics.* He also highlights the director Petar Lalović for his contributions to Yugoslav cinematography at that animal point of view (Visković 248). However, Neda Radulović points out that the film *The World That Disappears* (*Svijet koji nestaje,* 1987) is a Yugoslav production, and together with the author Petar Lalović and the narrator Petar Kralj, it holds a significant place in the collective memory of both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav generations. She notes that "interspecies love, which defies the cruelty of the animal world, plays a significant role in the construction of the Yugoslav narrative, specifically the myth of nature. This narrative is deeply rooted in the anthropomorphization of characters and does not shy away from misogyny and androcentrism in the portrayal of characters and situations. The film effectively builds a myth of a cruel nature, while subtly implying a social order, specifically the institution of the family, which is touchingly portrayed as being free from biological and essentialist prejudices and as a source of salvation, protection, and comfort in the face of nature's unpredictable, chaotic, and unscrupulous violence. Gile Baksuz – the thirteenth pig – is so heavily anthropomorphized that it exists almost exclusively in absence, functioning as an androcentric construct and mythical figure, rather than as a real animal." (Radulović 837)

[3] Based on Nikola Visković's concepts of cultural animal studies, a scientific research project was launched in 2008 at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, led by researchers Lidija Bajuk, Suzana Marjanić, Maja Pasarić, and Antonija Zaradija Kiš. The Center for Integrative Bioethics, a part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Split, is also a scientific unit within the network of the Scientific Center of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics. Its members are particularly concerned with issues of animal ethics, explored within the broader framework of cultural zoology (or cultural animal studies), a field introduced in Croatia by Nikola Visković, one of the country's bioethical pioneers. In this context, the Center's main activity in recent years has

been the organization of the scientific and cultural event *Days of Cultural Animal Studies* (organized by Josip Gućˇ, Bruno Ćurko, Hrvoje Jurić, Anita Lunić, Simon John Ryle, and others). I also mention the project within the framework of which the *Dictionary of Croatian Animalistic Phrases* was published (authors: Ivana Vidović Bolt, Branka Barčot, Željka Fink-Arsovski, Barbara Kovačević, Neda Pintarić, Ana Vasung, 2017). This project relates to Visković's accomplishments in zoolinguistics, zoophraseology, and zooethics, particularly in reference to his 1996 book *Animal and Man*.

[4] "Beginning with the protocinematic sequencing of animal motion by Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey in the nineteenth century, the ontologies and histories of animal life and the moving image are deeply interlocked: indeed, Julian Murphet has recently asserted that "[the] origins of the [cinematic] apparatus in the rational analysis of animal movement are too well known to need repeating" (McMahon and Lawrence 9).

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