The Call:

a cinematic encounter with nonhuman

animal characters and their worlds

Emilia Czątkowska

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Film Studies

School of Arts

University of Kent

April 2022

Word count: 85,390

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I bring the nonhuman animal character into the discourse of Film Studies, from which they have by and large been excluded. Including the nonhuman animal character helps to expand film theoretical discussions that have normally been restricted to human characters. In order to address this omission, I introduce and conceptualise two notions: the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal.

The nonhuman animal call is an umbrella term for a variety of nonhuman animal expressions. Some of such expressions are based on five basic senses on which humans rely, but the nonhuman animal call also includes senses not present in humans. The division of calls is non-hierarchical. The aim of introducing the nonhuman animal call is to emphasise nonhuman animal performance and expression as intentional, meaningful, and important for the film in which the nonhuman animal appears, and thereby opening up new interpretative possibilities which take the nonhuman animal perspective into consideration.

The cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal denotes film techniques, which, under certain conditions, can provide space for nonhuman animal calls to manifest themselves in the film, or help clarify nonhuman animal calls which the spectator might find unintelligible, or strengthen the nonhuman animal call's affective impact on the spectator. Cinematic calls on behalf of the nonhuman animal character are versatile, that is, they are not limited to a particular genre or tradition of filmmaking. Therefore, the reflection on the conditions which such film techniques must fulfil to be considered as cinematic calls invites a productive dialogue across genres and aesthetic traditions. As a result of such a reflection, this thesis offers some guidelines for film production and film analysis that are, on the one hand, more mindful of the nonhuman animal characters, and on the other hand, take into account diverse types of

spectators, and the ways in which to appeal to them to invite a reflection on the nonhuman animal condition.

The nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal character are, therefore, practical, didactic, and analytic tools that can be applied in order to render the Film Studies discourse as well as film production and reception more animal-oriented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I dedicate this thesis to Ambra, an American Staffordshire Terrier with a heart of gold, who

has changed my life. I will always cherish the moments we shared together.

Introduction: beyond the metaphor

Back in 2016, as I attended Nowe Horyzonty / New Horizons International Film Festival in Wrocław, Poland, I had an opportunity to watch *Wild* (2016)*,* directed by Nicolette Krebitz. It is a story of a young and withdrawn woman, Ania, who holds a corporate job and is regularly harassed by her boss. One day, she spots the wolf in a nearby park and becomes obsessed with the animal to such an extent that she captures the wolf and locks him in one of the rooms in her flat. The closer Ania gets to the wolf, the more she uncovers her own wild side. Several reviewers commented on the film following screenings at multiple festivals, and they all referred to the rebellious, outrageous, and sexually charged emancipation of the female protagonist throughout the film. Many described the process of Ania's self-realisation, triggered by her encounter with the wolf, which leads to her violent rejection of the oppressive and suffocating society in favour of instinct-driven wild existence (MarBelle and Krebitz 2016). Bakchormeeboy's review following a screening at London Film Festival in 2016 accurately sums up these interpretations of the film:

> In a sense then, *Wild* positions itself almost as a feminist film – Ania becomes a ferocious, sexual creature, controlling her boss' desires, she's no more confined to social constructs. It's not the most elegant of films, but it certainly makes a point for breaking the ennui of inner city living and doing what makes you feel something again. (…) *Wild* is a difficult film to enjoy. It's uncomfortable to watch in many instances, and various decisions and events are absolutely bewildering, even with its bewitching cinematography. But perhaps every once in a while, one needs a film to come along and wake us from our urban stupors, and rediscover the wild animals within all of us (2016, n.p.).

The film cues the spectator to perceive the wolf character as a metaphor, an allegory for Ania's own repressed wilderness that slowly takes over and makes her rebel against the oppressive and reductive life she leads. Her encounters with the wolf represent the newly discovered and kindled relationship with an animalistic, wild, sexually emancipated, violent, instinct-driven side she kept repressing as socially unacceptable: 'the most striking aspect of *Wild* is how Ania's relationship with the big bad wolf seems to liberate her from bourgeois convention and

unleashes a hungry sexuality within her' (Hunter 2016, n.p.).The wolf, therefore, functions in the film as a tool, a trigger for Ania's transformation since it all begins with her first fleeting encounter with the wolf that awakens her fascination and obsession with the canid. The wolf plays the role of a mirror in which Ania can see her repressed self. As her rebellion reaches its peak, she releases the wolf from the flat and follows his steps into the wild, leaving society and its constraints behind. From the mirror, which through the wolf's physical imprisonment reflects Ania's social, psychological, and sexual entrapment, the wolf transforms into a guide to the world beyond oppressing conventions. Such interpretations of the film and the role of the wolf exemplify the dominant approach in Film Studies towards nonhuman animals — they function as mirrors in which human characters can look at themselves, as instruments in human characters' process of self-realisation, as symbols of human characters' personalities, or struggles.

This, of course, is not the only way to understand *Wild* and I would like to offer a different reading of the film. What will happen if we resist the temptation of allegorising the wolf and treat him as a character in his own respect? What interpretative possibilities will arise if we ask a very simple question: what about *the wolf*? From his perspective *Wild* is a story of a lone wolf (the reasons for his loneliness are not explained), who is driven into small woods in the midst of a city in attempt to live and survive through massive deforestations, rapid development of human settlements, as well as a slow rise from extinction of his kin (Osterath 2017).[1] The wolf is captured by a woman who has developed a desire to possess him, and he is locked in a room. Frustrated and stressed, he walks in circles and jumps at the walls while the woman observes him through the little hole she drilled in the wall.

---

[1] According to the International Wolf Centre, the population of wolves in Germany in 2020 consisted of between 500 to 1000 individuals (2020, n.p.).

Fig. 1. Ania and the wolf (*Wild,* 2016)

Let us return to some of the reviews and reflect on them while acknowledging the wolf as a character in his own respect and taking his lived experience into consideration. Several pieces refer to *Wild* as a romance, or a love story between the woman and the wolf: 'If *Wild* is a romance then this is love at first sight' (Hunter 2016).

Here is an excerpt from a review by Guy Lodge:

> While walking to walk through a neighbourhood park one morning, Ania locks eyes with a wandering wolf, clearly a long way from home, and is immediately transfixed. Whether this is a one-sided fascination or a case of interspecies love at first sight is for viewers to determine; either way, she can't let sleeping wolves lie, as she eventually lures the beast to her apartment, initiating a more drastic retreat from the outside world (2016).

Lodge wonders whether it is a case of a 'one-sided fascination', or that of an 'interspecies love', which appears troubling given what happens to the wolf following the first encounter. What Lodge refers to as 'luring the beast' is in fact a carefully prepared and carried out ambush of the wolf in his habitat, followed by Ania sedating the wolf with a tranquilliser she blows through

9

a pipe, and dragging the unconscious canid to her apartment, where she locks him in the room and observes him through the hole drilled in the wall. If the film portrayed Ania doing such a deed to a human character, without a doubt nobody would even wonder whether this might be an instance of love, but rather call it a case of serious stalking that results in abduction and holding the victim hostage.

Bakchormeeboy puts it more accurately: 'Girl sees wolf. Girl falls in love with wolf. Girl proceeds to tranquilize and capture wolf, domesticate it, sexualize it, then quits her listless day job and goes completely wild' (2016, n.p.). Although such a summary of the film puts the relationship between Ania and the wolf more crudely, it does not question the idea of Ania's deeds as acts driven by love, and the review does not dwell on the idea of abducting, domesticating, and sexualising a wild animal for one's own pleasure and needs. Furthermore, Bakchormeeboy describes the spectator's alignment with Ania: 'We're aligned with Ania's mission, and cheer internally as she lugs the unconscious wolf back home, locking it in an empty room' (2016). Not only does the review not raise any question on the despicable acts of stalking, kidnapping, and abuse, but it also emphasises how the spectators are invited to root for the abuser. Not a single review I found gives a second thought to the wolf's experience. The wolf's captivation and instrumentalisation is nowhere questioned and is eclipsed by the film's and reviewers' focus on Ania's self-realisation and the awakening of her animal side. Despite the film's focus on finding the wild animal within oneself, the film and its reviewers ignore the wild animal who is right there before their eyes. One can of course give the reviewers the benefit of doubt based on the fact that the pieces have been written shortly after the screening and are only a superficial introduction to the film and its themes. Nevertheless, the readiness of some reviewers to dub *Wild* an interspecies love story and overlook the instrumentalisation of the wolf demonstrates deeply troubling effects anthropocentric framework has on interpretation of *Wild* and its canid character.

> Post-screening discussions — and there will be many, in public and private — can unpick the social ramifications of Ania's walk on the wild side. Are her bestial inclinations a rejoinder to the assumed superiority of the human race, or of the alpha male in particular? Certainly, the pic could be interpreted as a specifically feminist parable, but Krebitz has little interest in direct rhetoric (Lodge 2016).

Lodge suggests that *Wild* might offer a critique of human superiority (male in particular), however, such an observation is not supported by the treatment of the nonhuman animal character in the film. Nobody appears to raise concern about Ania's emancipation taking place at the expense of the wolf — a member of a deeply oppressed group, whose ancestors have been driven to extinction in Germany, where the film is taking place. Her self-realisation has roots in her captivation, domestication, sexualisation, instrumentalisation, and fetishisation of the wolf. She disempowers the vulnerable and already disempowered wolf in order to empower herself and break away from the oppressive society she lives in. Her break from society is driven by a certain conceptualisation of wilderness that is supposedly embodied by the wolf, where one is solely driven by their instincts and is free not to worry about other's judgment of the acts they commit, and which might not be socially acceptable. Such a perception of wilderness is misleading, especially in relation to wolves — social animals who live in tight-knit packs and follow a set of complex rules that regulate their life and maintain social cohesion. What is more, the idea of finding a wild animal within oneself and the fact that it is the wolf Ania sees in herself omits the very basic fact that humans are animals and living within a human society, with its rules and regulations as a part of a human animal experience.

Furthermore, Ania finds her inner wolf by placing the actual wolf into captivity and depriving him of his own freedom, bodily autonomy, and by physically placing him in a suffocating and oppressive environment that mirrors her own condition and feelings. As mentioned before, she turns the wolf, the object of her obsession, into a mirror in which she could take a look at herself, which reinforces the observation made by Brett Mills that the main purpose for nonhuman animal representations is 'typically to say something about humans' (2017, p. 7). If

Wild indeed offers a critical look at human superiority, it does so through Ania's character as she embodies and manifests human superiority at its worst: a sense of entitlement to fetishise nonhuman animal bodies, to possess and instrumentalise nonhuman animals to achieve one's own personal needs, desires, or goals. Rather than an allegory for the woman's wild side taking over in revolt against the stifling and oppressive existence in a modern society, *Wild* becomes a story of human desire for possessing nonhuman animal bodies and putting them on display for their own benefit and pleasure. The woman enslaves the wolf in order to unleash her own animal side and set herself free – only then the wolf himself is freed. The wolf is an object of desire as well as a tool in this transformation. His perspective, his bodily autonomy, and his freedom to roam are disregarded in the face of human interests. Such reading of *Wild* inevitably invites a reflection on the cinema's approach towards animals – about the animal captivity, objectification, and fetishisation to satisfy human needs and pleasures.

It was, after all, the fascination with animal bodies and their motion that was one of several inspirations which led to the invention of proto-cinematic devices and cinema itself. Animals, particularly horses, figured among the first subjects of these new visual media: from Eadweard Muybridge's famous motion studies of a horse gait, or images of a running horse in the zoetrope, to numerous animals featuring in the early films of the pioneers of cinema, for instance in Edison's *Professor Welton's Boxing Cats* (1894), the Lumière brothers' *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895), or Lewin Fitzhamon's *Rescued by Rover* (1905). Animal presence in cinema mirrors complex, often contradictory, human-animal relationships: animal bones constituted an integral part of the film strip, animal abuse and death have been captured on screen from the very dawn of the medium (Edison's *Electrocuting an Elephant* (1903), Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1925), Georges Franju's *Blood of the Beasts* (1949), or Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (1967), to name just a few), while some nonhuman animals reached the status of celebrities, such as Rin Tin-Tin, Lassie, Babe, or Bob the Streetcat.

The twenty-first century has seen an abundance of narrative films featuring nonhuman animal characters: from mainstream films such as *Seabiscuit* (Gary Ross, 2003), *Two Brothers* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2004), *Marley & Me* (David Frankel, 2008), *The Grey* (Joe Carnahan, 2011), *Life of Pi* (Ang Lee, 2012), *Rams* (Grímur Hákonarson, 2016), *A Dog's Purpose* (Lasse Hallström, 2017), *Spoor* (Agnieszka Holland, 2017), *Okja* (Joon-ho Bong, 2017), *The Meg* (John Turteltaub, 2018), *The Call of the Wild* (Chris Sanders, 2020), or *First Cow* (Kelly Reichardt, 2021), to animations such as *Chicken Run* (Nick Park and Peter Lord, 2000), *Finding Nemo* (Andrew Stanton, 2003), *Madagascar* (Tom McGrath and Eric Darnell, 2005), *Happy Feet* (George Miller, 2006), *Bee Movie* (Simon J. Smith and Steve Hickner, 2007), *Kung Fu Panda* (Mark Osborne and John Stevenson, 2008), to *Zootopia* (Byron Howard and Rich Moore, 2016).

Similarly, the documentary genre has seen productions that focus on multispecies relations, for instance in *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (Byambasuren Davaa and Luigi Falorni, 2003), *Cave of the Yellow Dog* (Byambasuren Davaa, 2005), *Sweetgrass* (Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, 2011), *Bestiaire* (Denis Côté, 2012), *Leviathan* (Verena Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, 2013), *Kedi* (Ceyda Torun, 2016), *Honeyland* (Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanow, 2019), *Space Dogs* (Elsa Kremser and Levin Peter, 2019), *Stray* (Elizabeth Lo, 2020), or Netflix production *My Octopus Teacher* (James Reed and Pippa Ehrlich, 2020). Finally, wildlife films and TV series have gained wide popularity with major productions such as *March of the Penguins* (Luc Jacquet, 2005), or variety of series produced and/or narrated by Sir David Attenborough: *Blue Planet* (2001), *The Life of Mammals* (2002), *Life in the Undergrowth* (2005), *Life in Cold Blood* (2008), *Life* (2009), *Rise of Animals. Triumph of the Vertebrates* (2013), *Dynasties* (2018).

As we have seen with *Wild,* the animal presence on screen is not unproblematic and many mainstream narratives, wittingly or not, reinforce the anthropocentric outlook on human-animal relations. It is not uncommon for nonhuman animal characters to be positioned as props whose main function is to reveal something about their human counterpart, often leading to the human protagonist's self-realisation — as is the case in *Wild.* Human characters' attitudes towards nonhuman animal characters often cue the spectator to form positive or negative allegiances with the human character — this is the case in Agnieszka Holland's *Spoor,* where the female protagonist, Janina Duszejko, often speaks on behalf of nonhuman animals and defends their right to live and roam, which leads to a violent conflict with the local hunting community. Duszejko, an eccentric mature woman who lives on her own in a secluded area in the mountains is contrasted with hypocritical, cruel, and sexist men who incarnate the patriarchy: hunters, unfaithful and violent husbands, as well as ultraconservative and corrupted priests. Janina is presented as a much more sympathetic character due to her respectful relationship with the local wildlife and her active refusal to accept the anthropocentric status quo, accurately summed up by the Bible:

> Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth (*Genesis 1* 2016).

Nonhuman animal characters are used as literal props, properties that become a source of dispute between human characters — this is the case in *First Cow,* where the first cow to arrive in Northern America is heavily guarded, yet her bodily integrity is regularly being violated by the protagonists and becomes the source of their financial success as well as the cause that will eventually place them in imminent danger. Similarly, nonhuman animals can also be vehicles for human character's ambitions — although *Seabiscuit* is named after the famous racing horse, the film's focus is predominantly on human characters and how their expectations shape Seabiscuit's fate. The horse's perspective is never taken into account and his experience always

mirrors that of his rider (Tobey Maguire), thus revealing more about the human character than his equine counterpart.

Films from various traditions also resort to animal metaphors, that is, using nonhuman animals as vehicles for abstract meaning. Particularly disturbing examples of such an exploitation are the films which feature an actual animal death and use it as a metaphor — for instance in Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike,* the footage from the slaughterhouse is juxtaposed with a staged massacre of human characters, which highlights the idea that the people were killed like cattle, like animals. While denouncing the excessive brutality of the state against its own citizens, the film inevitably normalises the idea that nonhuman animals are disposable beings who can be killed en masse and in all sorts of ways, their massacre being justified by the very fact that they are not humans and they do not deserve any consideration. Furthermore, some films include the scenes of animal death that have been perpetuated for the sake of the film itself (rather than using the footage from slaughterhouse where animals would be murdered regardless) — and although such practices are becoming less common in Europe and Northern America, thanks to animal welfare regulations, there are still scores of films that exploit nonhuman animals in the most brutal manner.

Another strain of narratives, which position nonhuman animal characters as protagonists, focuses on animal utility — their servitude and dedication to humankind. This is the case for the narratives where nonhuman animals have proven their worth by saving their human counterpart, often sacrificing their own lives. *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* (Lasse Hallström, 2010) is dedicated to Hachi, a dog who has been patiently waiting for his human companion at the same spot in front of the train station despite said companion's unexpected death. His loyalty moved people and gained him world-wide recognition. In *A Cave of Yellow Dog,* the dog only earns

his place in the family of Mongolian nomads after he protects the little son of the nomads from birds of prey.

Many narratives cue the spectator to form allegiance with nonhuman animal individuals, or communities based on their proximity to humankind, their looks, and their usefulness as well as benignness — hence many thrillers and horrors place animals such as spiders, bats, wolves, insects, and wolves as an immediate threat that must be mercilessly eradicated. Wolves are portrayed as blood-thirsty beasts in *The Grey* (Joe Carnahan, 2011), so is the shark in *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975), while spiders are burned alive, much to the spectator's relief, in *Arachnophobia* (Frank Marshall, 1990). It is not surprising that many monster and alien designs are based on insects and arachnids. On the other hand, individuals who belong to more familiar species and have a specific (positive) status in human society, such as pets, are shown in a more sympathetic light and often feature in family films, rom-coms, and comedies: from *Beethoven* (Brian Levant, 1992), to *Marley & Me.*

Although anthropomorphism is widely present in live-action films, it reaches its peak in animations. The majority of nonhuman animal characters are anthropomorphised (both in the design of their bodies as well as their behaviour) to such an extent that they seldom possess any species-specific features and are seen more as humans in animal disguise. This highlights a strong tendency of animation films to use nonhuman animal characters as allegories for human characters, their adventures and struggles as stand-ins for human affairs. An excellent example is *The Lion King* (Rob Minkoff, Roger Allers, 1994), which promotes absolute monarchy (lions are portrayed as unquestionably destined to rule the Savannah) and capitalism, where the strongest exploit those on the bottom of the hierarchy.

Even wildlife films, which are often meant to celebrate the richness and diversity of animal life and provide an educational experience to their audiences are not free from anthropocentric

frameworks. On the one hand, they might present their animal subjects in strongly mechanomorphic terms — celebrate their extraordinary design which makes them, for instance, perfect hunters. Such an approach reinforces the Cartesian idea of animals being organic machines, which are constantly being re-designed by nature in order to optimise their functionality. Other narratives, often used in relation to social animals, frame their interactions in highly anthropomorphic terms, such as presenting the struggles of lions in terms of conflict between and within royal dynasties (which is undoubtedly related to the aforementioned *Lion King*). Such films also cue spectators to form allegiances with specific characters, who often will be individualised, while dismissing others — hence we can be encouraged to root for the hunting lion, who has a name and a backstory. On the other hand, many individuals are simultaneously treated as representatives of an entire species, which ignores differences and distinctness of individuals within the group.

As the 'animal turn' gains momentum in Film Studies and more scholars work at the intersection of Film Studies and Animal Studies, film narratives featuring nonhuman animal characters or figures are deconstructed, shedding light on anthropocentric and anthropomorphic frameworks that dominate movies. What are the implications of such an analytical and critical work? What might be the implications of focusing on animal figures onscreen as characters in their own respect rather than a human property or as human-related symbols? In particular, what can nonhuman animal communication present onscreen reveal about animal performers and the relationships they have with other beings, including humans? The exploration of the animal characters not only invites the audience to reflect on the animal condition but also various challenges that animals encounter in the human-dominated world. The presence of animal characters and the portrayal of their being in the world as well as interacting with it prompts us to look and rethink this relationship by adopting, or at least attempting to adopt, the animal perspective. It can open up a space for a reconsideration of the human-animal relationship.

Animal Studies, Critical Animal Studies, and Film Animal Studies

Human-Animal Studies, also known as Animal Studies, or anthrozoology, is among the newest scholarly disciplines at approximately 50 years. Its inception could be traced back to two works, Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975) and Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) both of which have kindled scholarly interest in animals.[2] Animal Studies examines the multifaceted and complex nature of human-animal interactions, and although it does not take animals as the object of its study per se, it is informed by the sciences that do so. It investigates the place animals occupy within human societies and human-animal interactions, from historical (Fudge 2002; Sleigh 2016), sociological (Peggs 2009; Wrenn *et al.* 2015; Wrenn 2016), psychological (Leite, Dhont and Hodson 2019), religious and philosophical (Aaltola 2010; Despret 2016; Serpell 1996), feminist (Adams and Donovan 1995 ; Haraway 1991) as well as literary (Baker 2019; Ryan 2015) perspectives. This makes Animal Studies both multidisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary, and the majority of scholars working within the field specialise in other disciplines. According to Margo DeMello, Animal Studies is the only discipline besides Critical Animal Studies that explores human-animal relationships, the place of nonhuman animals in human 'social and cultural worlds' (2012, p. 4) The major difference between Animal Studies and Critical Animal Studies is that the former can primarily be descriptive in its practice (explaining the mechanisms at play in a variety of human-animal interactions), while prescriptive practice (for instance, seeking alternative approaches to human-animal relations) and activism (for example, in favour of animal abolitionism) are integral parts of the latter (DeMello 2012, p. 5).

---

[2] It is worth noting, however, that the utilitarianist approach Singer proposes is not without its critics among Human-Animal Studies and Critical Animal Studies scholars (see Milburn 2021; Regan 1983; Torres 2006).

Since this thesis is embedded primarily in the field of Film Studies, it is appropriate to discuss in more depth the scholarship that has been published on the subject of animals in cinema. Although not strictly concerned with film, yet still preoccupied with a wider field of visual culture, John Berger's *Why Look at Animals?* (2009) is often considered as a seminal text that influenced many discussions about animal presence in visual arts and beyond, and is still a much-cited classical source. Berger's main argument is that with the increasing disappearance of animals from human lives and human spaces (be it through extinction or rendering animals invisible by relocating them away from human settlements), animals become highly visible in the form of spectacle — such as images, toys, or zoo exhibitions (2009, p. 26). Yet, as animals are no longer physically present in human lives due to the process of modernisation, urbanisation, and industrialisation, human-animal relationship has undergone a drastic change, or as Berger puts it, it has been severed. As a result of this process, animals have been marginalised and objectified, reinforced by the fact that animal capacity to look back, return the gaze, is largely dismissed and ignored (Berger 2009, p. 27).

Berger's essay has received a detailed critique in Jonathan Burt's article entitled 'John Berger's "Why Look at Animals?" A Close Reading' (2005). While acknowledging the significance of Berger's work, Burt identifies several tensions underpinning the text. According to Burt's close reading, Berger does not attempt to challenge the sacrificial treatment of animals, which underpins the ahistoric pre-rupture times when animals have been both revered (as occupiers of the mythical, magical, symbolic realm) and exploited or killed (2005, p. 208). Burt's suspicion that Berger's conceptualisation of human-animal relations is anthropocentric and works much to the detriment of animals is highlighted especially in the section where Berger makes the case for normalising the use of conjunction *and* when it binds the act of loving, caring, revering and killing (Burt 2005, p. 208). Thus, Berger's pre-industrial version of human-animal relations does not manifest itself as an alternative to the alienation and

disappearance of animals in the industrial era — it is in the industrial era precisely that the necessity of sacrifice and killing has been put to question (Burt 2005, p. 210). This leads Jonathan Burt to demonstrate the paradox of Berger's essay as it seemingly 'fails to see, in the replacement of the symbol by the image, the possibility of the end of relations based on sacrifice' (Burt 2005, p. 211).

Just as I demonstrated in relation to the example of *Wild,* the symbolic approach towards nonhuman animals abstracts the nonhuman animal in question into the realm of symbolic, thus erasing their own condition and lived experience. The wolf is no longer a wolf but an instrument through which human character, Ania, can look at herself and perform the act of self-realisation — all at the expense of the wolf's own experience and lupine condition. Burt sees the shift from symbol to image as a chance to move away from the abstraction of nonhuman animal animals from their own experience, which has been used to sustain and justify their sacrificial treatment as they were simultaneously revered as belonging to the spiritual realm, as carriers of abstract meanings, and exploited as workforce, or killed as a source of food, or an offering in religious rituals. In the replacement of symbol by the image, Burt sees an opportunity to no longer flee from 'the animal' by exiling them into the realm of allegories and symbols, but rather acknowledge their embodiment, vulnerability, and finitude, and reflect on the relations between representational practices that frame nonhuman animals and ethics, as well as politics (Burt 2001, pp. 204—205, 222).

As Burt points out, Berger does not mention that it was in fact in the nineteenth century that Animal Rights and Animal Welfare movements first formed in Britain. Much discussion of animal welfare was in fact centred around the issue of visibility — the visibility of animals and violence against animals, which led to the establishment of animal welfare bills, laws and regulations (Burt 2005, p. 212). Of course, these discussions also led to the visual

marginalisation of places where animals have been exploited, such as laboratories and abattoirs, but according to Burt this does not signal the marginalisation of animals per se, but rather of the animal death (2005, p. 213). For Burt, the proliferation of animals in the form of images and spectacles helps to maintain the relevance of animal-related questions and issues. He points to the fact that animal welfare politics often rely heavily on imagery provided by photographs, illustrations, and films in order to communicate their message and advance change (2005, p. 213). Furthermore, Burt highlights multiple issues concerning chronology of the rupture in human-animal relations. Berger places this dramatic shift in the nineteenth century and ties it to rapid industrialisation. In doing so, Berger omits instances of extreme marginalisation of animals via vivisection in the seventeenth century, or the works of naturalists in the eighteenth century (2005, p. 206).

A growing interest in the place of nonhuman animals in film discourse is reflected through a growing and diverse scholarship from work on wildlife films (Bousé 2000; Chris 2006; Mitman 1999; Weik von Mossner 2014), through the conceptualisations of the film animal through the lens of continental philosophy and film history (Burt 2002; Lawrence and McMahon 2015; Lippit 2000; McMahon 2019; Pick 2011). It is, however, the works of scholars such as Barbara Creed, Stella Hockenhull, and Pete Porter in particular that have offered building blocks and set the direction for this research.

In 'Films, gestures, species' Barbara Creed reflects on the cinema's capacity to communicate ideas and affects nonverbally, thus overcoming the linguistic barrier between human communities (2015). Creed builds on the idea of cinema being considered a universal language, a viewpoint shared by numerous film pioneers, yet she reaches much further that they possibly envisioned — beyond the human — and suggests that the cinematic medium is capable of surmounting the cross-species divide. Although Creed's approach is not free from its tensions

and contradictions (many of which will be also addressed in the context of my own research), her vision of cinema as a medium capable of revealing shared embodiment, the animal condition, and the universality of certain calls and gestures echoes throughout this project.

Stella Hockenhull's article 'Horseplay: Equine performance and creaturely acts in Cinema' makes the case for animal acting — a contentious subject — by emphasising the fact that despite humans working on the film set and creating certain conditions for the nonhuman animal performers to act, it is ultimately up to the nonhuman animal performer and their choice of one response over another that leads to the final outcome (2015). This way, Hockenhull emphasises the role of nonhuman animal agency in multispecies performances and argues that nonhuman animals can indeed be called actors. This inevitably changes the status of nonhuman animals participating in film production and opens up space for more questions regarding human-animal relations on film sets, particularly regarding the politics and ethics of multispecies collaborations.

Pete Porter's 'Engaging the Animal in the Moving Image' brings the 'animal turn' into the cognitivist film framework. Porter intervenes into the discourse on character engagement by questioning and expanding on the 'person schema' —the schema or a set of conditions that once fulfilled, cue the spectator to perceive the character on screen as a person (2006). Porter demonstrates that the schema can be activated by nonhuman animal characters, despite one of its conditions being a possession of a 'discretely human body' — thus making the case for nonhuman personhood. He introduces a continuum of cues for nonhuman personhood, which determines and organises various ways in which filmmakers signal the personhood of nonhuman animal characters. What is more, his model helps to untangle and uncover the complex relationship between animal representation and anthropomorphism.

Before I move on, there are two other scholarly works that deserve mentioning here already. Although these sources did not directly influence my work in this thesis initially, they share some of the aims of my project, yet differ at the theoretical level. First is Anat Pick's chapter 'Vegan Cinema' which provides a framework for a non-anthropocentric and non-violent mode of film-spectating and (by extension) filmmaking (2018). Founded on Simone Weil's allegory between eating and looking, Pick's non-devouring gaze presents an alternative way of seeing, which has always been present and existed in parallel to the mainstream all-consuming mode of looking. Pick's vegan cinema does not agitate on behalf of abstaining from animal products but focuses on 'letting their subjects be' (2018, p. 132). She draws a comparison between two canine performances, one of which is heavily cued and involves training, whereas another allows the dog performer to roam free and does not attempt to forcefully keep them within the frame. In spite of Pick's preference for and celebration of the latter, a view I share, the framework from within which Pick approaches nonhuman animal performance diverges from the one offered in this thesis. The similarities and differences between our methodologies and framework will become more apparent throughout the thesis, particularly in chapter 5, where I will engage with Anat Pick's vegan cinema more carefully.

The second work is Laura McMahon's *Animal Worlds: Film, Philosophy and Animal Life* (2019)*,* a monograph dedicated to animal-centric slow cinema. The main aim of McMahon's monograph is to reintroduce the work of Gilles Deleuze into the discussion of animals on screen. McMahon moves beyond the widely known concept of becoming-animal that Deleuze has theorised together with Félix Guattari and instead makes a connection between Deleuze's works on cinema on the one hand, and animals on the other, two strains of Deleuze's work that he developed largely in separation (p. 2). This way, McMahon expands the scope of Deleuzian concepts (such as time-image, virtuality/actuality, and lines of flight) beyond the human, as well as traces the possibilities and limitations of Deleuze's political thought when it comes to

animal life. My preoccupation with the cinematic call as providing space and time for nonhuman animal calls to manifest themselves, (see chapters 2 and 4 in particular) is akin to McMahon's attention to the slow cinema's use of long take and 'dead cinematic time' (the moments where nothing in particular happens, and which would normally be cut in the editing process). Nevertheless, my approach is influenced more by cognitive film theory and phenomenology, whereas McMahon's research is founded on continental scholars such as Deleuze, Jacques Rancière, and Jacques Derrida. What is more, McMahon's work sits within the realm of philosophy and its aim is to expand the Deleuzian theoretical framework and its application in Film Studies, while the goal of my project appears more pragmatic: I want to develop practical tools and concepts that can be used when engaging with and analysing the moving image that depicts nonhuman animals, as well as as expand the scope of already-existing tools beyond the human.

The scope of the aforementioned works, apart from Laura McMahon's monograph, is limited as the theoretical framework and methodological approaches of these scholars are developed within articles and chapters. This indicates the need for a project that would build on their scholarship and offer a unified piece of a wider scope, which is something that this thesis aspires to achieve. Nevertheless, due to the scarcity of sources which offer a similar methodology, or engage with certain issues, in many cases I will be referring to the scholarly work that is not preoccupied with nonhuman animal characters, or in which they are not the primary subject. In particular, I will be working closely with Murray Smith's structure of sympathy (1995), Carl Plantinga's concepts of scene of empathy (1999) and ethics of engagement (2018), and Barbara Klinger's notion of arresting images (2006), all of which will be introduced and discussed in due course in the thesis.

The Call

The main new concept that I want to offer as a helpful tool when exploring nonhuman animal representation in film is what I will discuss as 'the call'. The call is a concept and a framework that I develop in this thesis, aiming for a reflective, humble, compassionate, and curious way of engaging with nonhuman animal characters. It will not necessarily lead to certainty about, mastery of, and knowledge of nonhuman animal characters dwelling on screen, but rather allow nonhuman animal characters to take centre stage and encourage the spectator to attune oneself to characters in question, with humility and a sense of wonder at the marvellous diversity and multiplicity of nonhuman animal life. Such an approach counters the anthropocentric narrative that leads to the instrumental treatment of nonhuman animals by advocating a thoughtful exploration of a more-than-human perspective, which kindles a sense of wonder in the encounters with nonhuman animals and brings a sense of connection of shared lived experience.

On the one hand, the call is a concept that describes a diverse range of nonhuman (and human) animal expressions and acknowledges them as endowed with intentionality and meaning. This way, it invites close and careful analysis of nonhuman animal performance as a crucial element in exploring the dynamics between human and nonhuman characters, the multispecies entanglements that are being played out on screen and on film set. Paying closer attention to the nonhuman animal expression demands reshaping existing theories by introducing nonhuman animal performance as a crucial factor. For instance, in chapter 3, I will revisit Murray Smith's discussion of moral allegiance in cases where a nonhuman animal is playing a clearly instrumental role, such as if a positive, or negative stance towards human characters is seen as based solely on their behaviour towards this nonhuman animal, while ignoring the nonhuman animal character's expression, therefore, their feedback to human characters'

actions. By placing emphasis on the nonhuman animal character's calls (that is, body language), the mechanism at play becomes more nuanced and complex as it takes interspecies dynamics into consideration.

On the other hand, the call also denotes a set of film practices that bring the spectator's attention to nonhuman animal characters and their nonhuman animal condition. My aim here is thus to identify conditions in which specific film techniques such as cinematography, the use of nondiegetic music, or editing can function on behalf of such nonhuman animal characters, creating conditions for nonhuman animal expression to be acknowledged, strengthening the reach of nonhuman animal calls, making their distinct expression more accessible to human spectator, or inviting the spectator to reflect on the nonhuman animal condition, and human-animal relations as such. This could mean, for example, identifying specific conditions under which nondiegetic film music can function as the call on behalf of nonhuman animal characters, a call for the spectator to pay attention to the experience of the nonhuman animal, as I will demonstrate in chapter 4. Therefore, the project seeks to map the ways in which we can not only look differently at the films that have already been made, but also think about the ways in which we can make new films in a way that benefits, emancipates, and celebrates nonhuman animals, their distinct ways of being and interacting with the world, and interspecies relationships as such.

Applying the call in practice inevitably forces us to rethink the film studies discourse in its entirety and demands crucial changes at its very foundations. It demands revisiting of established theories, especially relating to the process of character construction and character engagement, by introducing nonhuman animal characters into the discussion, which in turn leads to an expansion, entanglement, as well as subverting of theories in their anthropocentric manifestation. Such a Copernican shift holds a promise for the rise of a variety of fascinating

directions film studies and film practice could take, as well as the potential for new interpretative avenues that have not been previously taken as a plethora of nonhuman animal characters have been perceived solely as props, symbols, or allegories. The aim of this thesis is, through the concept of the call, to explore some of such directions and possible implications for film studies and for the perception and conceptualisation of nonhuman animals who dwell on film screens and beyond them.

Paying closer attention to the ways in which nonhuman animal characters are constructed and presented to the spectator matters because it highlights the problem of overlooking and marginalising nonhuman animal presence in film. As said before, nonhuman animals have not only been present, but played a crucial role since the conception of the medium, therefore, their absence (or limited presence) in the film studies discourse needs to be investigated and addressed. Despite the fact that nonhuman animals populate our screens, across film traditions and genres, the majority of film theory is developed within an anthropocentric framework and with a human character in mind. Such a framework more often than not leads to the erasure of the nonhuman animal condition through allegorisation of nonhuman animal characters who are perceived as symbols or stand-ins for human characters, their particular features, or struggles, or their negative anthropomorphisation, which in turn limits our possibilities for complex and challenging reflections on nonhuman animals, human-animal relations, and the ways in which they are and can be represented through film practice.

Case studies and scope

In an interview with Yun-hua Chen for filmint.nu, Viktor Kossakovsky, the director of *Gunda* (2020), revealed that for over 20 years he wanted to direct a film that depicts the everyday life of farm animals in a respectful and compassionate manner, by letting his subjects take the centre stage and deploy film techniques in order to magnify and highlight the qualities that they

already possess. Despite his constant attempts to realise the film, he would not do so until over two decades later, due to the lack of interest and serious consideration of the approach he wanted to adopt (2020, n.p.). As I am writing these words, *Gunda* is making appearances at countless film festivals and is widely celebrated for its thoughtful and touching depiction of nonhuman motherhood and childhood, friendship that knows no species-specific borders, group ostracism, disability — and it does so without shying away from acknowledging complex and often disturbing side of these themes. What has happened in the span of 20 years that made it finally possible to make *Gunda*?

Public awareness of the climate emergency has been growing in the recent years, thanks to the increasing coverage of the subject in the mainstream media: British newspapers such the *The Guardian* and *the Independent* have permanent sections dedicated to the environment and the climate, and groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for the Future regularly draw the attention of other media. Numerous countries around the world became the signatories of the Paris Agreement, which aims to mitigate the effects of global warming. Furthermore, the European Union has set out the goals for achieving climate neutrality which requires each member country to cut its carbon emissions. Many have been conscious of humanity's interconnectedness with the environment and other species, which inevitably creates a feedback loop where human activity that leads to the destruction of the environment begins to have a serious impact on everyone, humans included. Rather than separate from the so-called natural world, humanity has always been, is, and will be an integral part of it. Ground-breaking research into animal cognition makes the once-believed insurmountable abyss between human and animal narrower, gradually challenging every pillar of human exceptionalism — from using tools, theory of mind, to awareness of death and elaborate funerary practices (Masson and McCarthy 1994, pp. 92—94). On May 13, 2021, the United Kingdom government announced the Animal Sentience Bill, which formally recognises vertebrate animals as sentient

in domestic law. The legislation will lead to the establishment of an Animal Sentience Committee, consisting of animal experts from relevant fields of studies, which will 'ensure that animal sentience is taken into account when developing policy across Government' (Department for Environment 2021). Later that year, Spain has adopted a similar legislation, which will ensure that nonhuman animals are treated as legal subjects of the Spanish Civil Code (Hermida and Sánchez 2021).

Anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism, championed for centuries by Christianity and Western philosophy, from Aristotle, through Descartes, to Heidegger, are increasingly being challenged. Vegetarian and vegan diets have become more mainstream in the developed countries, and there is more public criticism and opposition of the cruel practices of factory farming, fur industries, and sport hunting, seen in particular in the forms of protests, petitions, and activist actions. It is inevitable that such changes in perception of human's position in the world relative to other species and the growing disillusionment with the anthropocentric (as well as Western-centric) capitalism, will be also reflected in film. In her chapter, 'What Do Animals Dream Of? Or King Kong As Darwinian Screen Animal' , Barbara Creed captures the shift in representations of King Kong: from aggressive and one-dimensional beast in the 1933 version (directed by Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack), he evolves into a sympathetic character with complex inner life we see in a 2005 remake of the film (directed by Peter Jackson) (2007). The representations of nonhuman animals are being increasingly critically analysed, challenged in the light of growing knowledge about their cognition, sentience, and their distinct practices, and new ways of nonhuman animal cinematic representations arise.

Since the majority of preconceptions and misconceptions about animals in general has been perpetuated and solidified by Christianity and Western philosophy, and many of the changes and discussions I have mentioned above are happening predominantly in Europe and Northern

America, I will focus on a selection of contemporary European films (that is, films produced from 2000s) in order to explore how they have been informed by the context in which they have been created. What is more, I have decided to study contemporary arthouse films due to the scarcity of scholarship on the representations in these films, compared to mainstream productions, animations, or wildlife film, which, relatively speaking, is more substantial. In the films I have chosen nonhuman animals play more prominent roles, and interspecies relations are often central to the narrative and critically examined. Many of these films highlight the issues related to the nonhuman animal condition, explore nonhuman animal points of view and the possibilities of interspecies coexistence, often adopting a more patient and compassionate approach to their filmic subjects.

My selection of case studies might strike the reader as either diverse, or lacking uniformity: ranging from more mainstream-leaning productions, such as *Of Horses and Men* (Benedikt Erlingsson, 2013)*, or *White God* (Kornél Mundruczó, 2014) to those that are representative of the slow cinema movement, such as *Le Quattro Volte* (Michelangelo Frammartino, 2010), *Gunda* (Viktor Kossakovsky, 2020)*, or *A Cow's Life* (Emmanuel Gras, 2012)*, as well as documentaries such as *Cow* (Andrea Arnold, 2021), *Battle of the Queens* (Nicolas Steiner, 2011), and documentary/drama *Border* (Harutyun Khachatryan, 2009), to a more experimental project such as *Heart of a Dog* (Laurie Anderson, 2015)*. The reason behind not focusing solely on slow cinema films (which nevertheless outnumber films that represent other traditions in my selection) is first and foremost pragmatic and will become apparent as we move onto subsequent chapters. Since some chapters are dedicated to opposing concepts (for instance trained performance, acting, and improvisation, or point of view and reaction shots), it is vital to introduce case studies that can provide the best illustration — and this sometimes means engaging with films that offer different (at times opposing) formal and aesthetic styles. Due to

their varying and often eclectic practices, each film offers a compelling case study that illuminates the function of the call and its implications on the film discourse.

The distinction between fiction and non-fiction is undoubtedly important as the categorisation of films as either one or another informs our appreciation — if a fiction film presents the spectator with a world in which nonhuman animals are endowed with human speech, it might be unreasonable to criticise it for its lack of accuracy in representing said nonhuman animal characters in this respect. Although some of the films I analyse here would be un-controversially categorised as works of fiction, while others as documentaries, there is also a number of works whose categorisation is more complex — yet, what they all have in common is that nonhuman animals who appear in these works are meant to represent nonhuman animals and their behaviour. This point is particularly important as the thesis is dedicated to the nonhuman animal call and its often-distinct manifestations across individuals and species. As we will see, many of these films aim to accurately represent nonhuman animal calls and their complexity, and they often do so in order to reveal to the audiences something about their nonhuman animal subjects that the audience might have not known or have not noticed. For this reason, despite the fact that the selected films might sit at different ends of the fiction/non-fiction spectrum, the accuracy of their nonhuman animal representation will be an important element of analysis.

The distinction between fiction and non-fiction has been a subject of a sustained debate for over two decades. While some, such as Kathleen Stock and Manuel García-Carpintero, maintain that the distinction is not only clear, but necessary as fiction and non-fiction have a different relationship with reality and truth, which would be threatened by the dissolution of the distinction, others, such as Stacie Friend and Derek Matravers, challenge the basis on which the difference between the two has been established. Let us briefly discuss the basis on which

the distinction is founded. The popular view among philosophers is that while non-fictions are 'characterised by assertions we are invited to believe, whereas fictions present content we are merely supposed to imagine' (Friend 2021, p. 151). The main problem with such a presentation of the difference between the two is linked to the nature of the film medium. As explained by Derek Matravers (as well as Richard Wollheim and Malcolm Budd), unlike written word, film is an audiovisual medium, therefore, there is not much left to imagine as the viewer is already presented with aural and (more importantly) visual representations (Matravers 2017, p. 149). If imagination is not a necessary component of the viewer's engagement with fiction film, then, the distinction between fiction and non-fiction ought to be founded on different grounds than the one that is widely proposed. Matravers's position also highlights another problem with the fiction/non-fiction debate in philosophy, that is, its reliance on literary case studies (and this can be seen in García-Carpintero, Noël Carroll, and Trevor Ponech), which might not be adapted effectively in the film context.

Stacie Friend, on the other hand, proposes to treat fiction and non-fiction as genres — whose characteristics are by no means essential and whose borders are fuzzy — which aligns better with the acknowledgment of how porous the line between the two is. Friend challenges the difference in approaches towards works of fiction and non-fiction in terms of accuracy — she claims that fiction films that are set to portray the world that corresponds to its actual counterpart in reality should be held to the same standard in terms of accuracy of their representations as the works of non-fiction are (Friend 2021, p. 159). This relates back to the point I made before that although some case studies I engage with are categorised as fiction, while others are non-fiction, they all arguably set out to present nonhuman animals as such, therefore, the criticism of both for the accuracy, or lack of thereof, is justified regardless of their categorisation.

The categorisation itself could also be a subject of another debate: while slow cinema films featuring humans as their protagonists in many cases would be categorised as fiction films, for example, Chantal Ackerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975)*, or Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979), their counterparts starring animals are predominantly categorised as documentaries. This, of course, does not mean that slow cinema films must be, par excellence, works of fiction. Nevertheless, the distinction in categorisation based on the (non)humanity of the film's subjects is undoubtedly an interesting point worthy of a more extensive discussion. This brings me to yet another point, that is, the ambiguity that is introduced by the nonhuman animal presence in fiction films, especially in its more contentious and problematic form.

This ambiguity has been perfectly encapsulated by the disclaimer that usually appears in the fiction film's closing credits and which aims to reassure the audience that the nonhuman animals portrayed on screen have not been harmed in the process of making the film. Akira Mizuta Lippit discusses this in greater detail in his article 'The Death of an Animal', where he states that such a disclaimer 'divides the film's interior and exterior dimensions, distinguishing the worlds within and without the film, fiction from fact' and functions as a parergon, that is, a 'frame that surrounds and defines the film' (Lippit 2002, p. 10). The disclaimer, which is a linguistic intervention into the moving image, clarifies any uncertainties raised by the sound and image of the film, and posits the depicted instances of nonhuman animal violence within the realm of fiction. What is more, as Lippit underlines, the presence of such a disclaimer in fiction film marks the differences in how fiction and non-fiction films approach nonhuman animal death — no such reassurance is expected from wildlife documentaries, which often include scenes of nonhuman animals being harmed and killed (Lippit 2002, p. 11).

The very need for conveying such an information to the viewers underlines the fact that it has been and still is the case that nonhuman animals are being hurt and killed in front of the camera, therefore, audiences of fiction films might not always be certain, unlike in the case of human characters, that nonhuman animals they see on screen are not actually being hurt (it is also a pragmatic measure to prevent potential lawsuits on the grounds of inflicting unnecessary harm on nonhuman animals).[3] This could also be due to the ambiguity of certain nonhuman animal behaviours or human spectator's lack of familiarity with, or knowledge of nonhuman animal expressions — something I will discuss in chapter 2, in relation to *White God.*

The inclusion of footage that depicts actual nonhuman animal violence in fiction film destabilises the ontological status of such a film: for a moment, the fiction film turns into a documentary, thus, prompting change in the viewer's appreciation and engagement with the film. As Vivian Sobchack wrote on her experience of watching Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game* (1939), from the two parallel deaths captured in the film, the death of the rabbit has been by far more distressing and problematic than that of the human character — the difference being that the rabbit died both within the film's diegesis and in real life, while the human actor survived his character's demise unharmed (Sobchack 2004, p. 268). Nonhuman animal violence and killing is undoubtedly an extreme and contested aspect of the discussion, however, this could be extended to less controversial examples. After all, most of the nonhuman animals have not consented to play in the films and in the majority of cases their presence and interactions are not a pretence but rather real experience. Could this mean that the mere onscreen presence of nonhuman animals is an intrusion of the documentary into the realm of fiction? It appears that the experience of those who participate in creating works of

---

[3] Lippit also underlines that the disclaimer demonstrates that film technology has advanced to the point that made 'staging actual violence unnecessary' (Lippit 2002, p. 11).

fiction have not been part of the discussion on the distinction between fiction and non-fiction (as opposed to the film maker's intention). These questions deserve their own extensive research that, unfortunately, I do not have a space to pursue in this project. I decided to highlight these difficulties here to explain why the choice of case studies across fiction vs. nonfiction divide may not be a problem but rather an advantage, as the mere presence of nonhuman animals on sets and in films can be said to complicate the idea that there is such a clear differentiation of films in the first place.

Anthropomorphism, mechanomorphism, and anthropodenial

The inevitable consequence of representing animals as well-rounded characters whose behaviour reflects their consciousness, intentionality, emotions, and thoughts, is the accusation of anthropomorphism, that is, the attribution of the (supposedly) uniquely human features to nonhumans. Especially in sciences, the term has gained a particularly negative reputation and is often applied to discredit any attempts of scholars to shed a more favourable light on nonhuman animals. Extremely conflicting views on animal agency have been present as far as the times of René Descartes and Michel de Montaigne. The former offered a mechanistic vision of animals as machines whose actions are imposed on them by external factors, while the latter, more anthropomorphic in his approach, suggested in his reflections on playing with a cat the mutuality of the activity in which he plays with the cat to the same extent the cat plays with him (Descartes 2007; Montaigne 2007). These two approaches, mechanomorphism and anthropomorphism, are also a vital part of the early ethologist and naturalist writings respectively. Let us then explore the complex nature of anthropomorphism and mechanomorphism.

The act of acknowledging and bringing forth the animal agency might give rise to the accusation of anthropomorphism. For many, granting animals with consciousness,

intentionality, emotions, and thoughts is seen as an erroneous ascription which might lead to an unjustified elevation of their status in relation to humans. However, since the rise of Darwinism and the work of naturalists who paved the way for the growing research within cognitive ethology, many scholars, such as Marc Bekoff or Jane Goddall, acknowledge the evolutionary continuity between human and other animal species (Bekoff 2007). One of the first challenges to anthropomorphism is its very definition: how can we confidently identify those characteristics and abilities that are uniquely human? Many philosophers, from Descartes to Heidegger claimed that what sets humans and animals apart is language. The absence of language among animals became a basis for a conclusion that animals do not have consciousness. Nevertheless, the research into animal behaviour disproves such a proposition by providing numerous examples of animals communicating in highly nuanced and complex ways. Elephants, for instance, stomp on the ground in order to send a message through seismic waves which is then picked up by another elephant far away (Bienvenuti 2016, p. 555). Whales used a specific wave frequency in order to communicate across the vast depth of the ocean (NOAA 2021, n.p.). This suggests that animals use language: although it admittedly is substantially different from human language, nonhuman animal ways of communicating across distances arguably suggest that language is not a uniquely human feature. The problem of language points towards another issue related to anthropomorphism: anthrozoometrism.

Fig. 2. Marek Raczkowski's satirical image of Tomasz Terlikowski (2014). The caption states: It took a famous publicist Tomasz Terlikowski (second from the left) less than half a minute to prove his superiority over animals (my own translation).

Anthrozoometrism denotes the act of measuring other animals' abilities and capacities according to human standards (Howell 2003, p. 186). This places nonhuman animals at a highly disadvantaged position since, as in the case of language, their means of communication might substantially differ from the human language, nevertheless, it will still be measured according to the standard of the human communication. This satirical image from the Polish daily newspaper perfectly encapsulates the essence of anthrozoometrism. The tool used by Terlikowski to assume his domination over nonhuman animals is a wooden (or plastic) puzzle, the task of which is to place differently shaped blocks in appropriate slots. The animals competing with Terlikowski, a monkey, a chicken, and a dog are portrayed as struggling with the task, each of them reaching a different stage of success. The chicken, the most distant human relative, is shown unable to place a single piece in the puzzle, while the dog attempts to place a square block inside a circular hole, suggesting the dog's inability to solve problems,

while the monkey, as the closest to our own species, is captured as analysing how to place a final block and complete the task. The animals are portrayed in stark contrast to Terlikowski, his hands extended up in the air in joy, as he is smiling triumphantly at his success. The cartoon was a response to Terlikowski's claims that animals exist for the sole purpose of serving humans and that humans do not have to show any compassion towards them. His approach represents a hardline Catholic view according to which animals are regarded as objects given to Adam, the first human, by god in order to attend to his needs. This is evident in the Book of Genesis, analysed by Derrida in *The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow),* where Adam is granted by god with power to name, and therefore, subject to an absolute control, all the living things (Derrida 2002, pp. 383—384). What makes the cartoon an effective critique of Terlikowski's view is exactly its emphasis on anthrozoometrism: it depicts a jigsaw as the tool of assessing human superiority, which will always place humans above other animal because it has been created according to human skills and abilities, however, it is also a children's toy which makes Terlikowski's triumphant figure comical.

Anthrozoometrism is an anthropocentric practice, which places humans at the centre, as a point of reference against which all other animals will be assessed. However, if animals excel over humans in certain respects (for instance a leopard's speed, the superior olfactory sense in dogs, etc.), such an evidence is often dismissed by the argument that it is not necessarily animal superiority over humans at all, but rather differences in capabilities across species. Such a double standard which seeks to consolidate human dominance over other animals while ignoring the instances where it is challenged, underlines the contradictory approach of humans towards other animals. In overcoming this conflict, we could adopt a more egalitarian position where capacities and abilities of each species would be acknowledged according to that species' needs, without resorting to any sort of hierarchisation. As Frans de Waal (2016) argues, species might share same features in varying degree, depending on what each species

needed to successfully adapt to their environment. Therefore, some animals might possess excellent problem-solving skills which might not necessarily be as advanced as those of humans or other species, yet they will be sufficient for them to live and survive in their environment and overcome potential challenges.

Let us come back to the question of anthropomorphism. Frans de Waal has identified three types of anthropomorphism: humancentric, animalcentric, and heuristic, however, I will focus on the first two types as the distinction between them is relevant to the discussion of anthropocentrism in the context of this project (De Waal 1999, pp. 266—267). Humancentric anthropomorphism, following de Waal, seeks to impose human-related features onto animals not only when there is no evidence for its presence as such, but also to interpret a similar animal behaviour in human terms, disregarding the variety of meanings associated with the shared behaviour (De Waal 1999, p. 266). James Serpell offers the example of a photograph of a grinning chimpanzee in a space capsule who has just landed after a journey into space. The magazine that published the picture suggested that the chimpanzee's facial expression showed their delight in coming back to the Earth, and it was later on that the scientists working on chimpanzee behaviour clarified that the grin, which we normally associate with joy, is a sign of fear among chimpanzees (Serpell 2003, p. 172). The humancentric type of anthropomorphism ignores the complexity and distinctness of animal behaviour and, often mistakenly, reduces it to an anthropocentric interpretation. Such an act might lead to the representation of animals as humans in animal disguise, rather than affirmation of their complexity and distinctness. The latter tends to be acknowledged to a greater degree in the animalcentric form of anthropomorphism.

Animalcentric anthropomorphism acknowledges shared behaviours and capabilities between human and animal species, while recognising and preserving the distinct nature and behaviour

of each species (De Waal 1999, p. 266). Therefore, while humancentric anthropomorphism is based on humans imagining what it would be like for them to be the nonhuman animal, in a kind of in-their-shoes imagining ('what would it feel for me to be a bat?'), its animalcentric counterprart is based on our knowledge of the animal's sensory mode of being in the world (referred to as *Umwelt*) and behaviour. *Umwelt,* a term introduced by a biologist Jakob von Uexküll, denotes a relationship between an individual and their surroundings, and is based on said individual's sensory and cognitive make-up. Each individual, according to Uexküll, is enclosed in one's own perceptual bubble, which shapes their relation with their immediate surroundings and other beings (Pollmann 2013, pp. 777—778).

 Animalcentric anthropomorphism seeks to interpret animal behaviour on the animal's own terms, by taking into consideration our knowledge of what their sensory relationship with the surroundings are and how specific behaviours might serve them. The challenge of the animalcentric approach is, of course, our limited knowledge and inability of gaining a true insight into the animal experience and the animal perspective due to our own sensory make-up which might drastically differ from that of other species. Nevertheless, we should aim to mobilise our knowledge, no matter how limited it is, in order to interpret animal behaviour in an animalcentric way which takes into account both the similarities across various species as well as varieties that make them distinct in their own respect.

Anthropomorphism is often juxtaposed with mechanomorphism: the view that can be traced back to René Descartes, which states that animals are like machines whose responses are involuntary and dictated by external stimuli (Descartes 2007). Such an approach renders the need for the animal mind redundant, and as a consequence erases the notion of animal agency. Descartes's vision of animals as soulless, mindless machines has not only facilitated human detachment from other species but also justified violence against them. Interestingly, Descartes

maintained that despite his view that human are also machine-like beings, they are still endowed with reason, an immortal part of the soul, which sets them apart from other species. Therefore, Descartes acknowledges some sort of similarity between humans and other animals, however, he singles out a uniquely human feature (soul with reason) to draw a line between humans and nonhumans. Mechanomorphism points toward what Frans de Waal defined as anthropodenial: an act of denying animals certain features shared with humans in spite of the evidence for their existence (de Waal 1997; de Waal 1999, p. 258). This might lead to an underestimation of the animal skills and capabilities as well as overestimation of the human ones, which might lead to a sense of human exceptionalism.

The focus of my project is the cinematic representation of the animal perspective, which presupposes the presence of animal agency. Therefore, I choose to embrace the anthropomorphic description of animals, specifically its more animalcentric type, since my aim is to present nonhuman figures in films as agents and as characters in their own respect who, through their very presence and interaction with their surroundings, guide the spectator's attention towards a deeper engagement with the animal condition as well as the animal issues. By adopting the animalcentric anthropomorphism, I want to acknowledge the existence of features shared between human and nonhuman animals, their evolutionary continuity and connection, while keeping in mind the potential variety in meaning of certain shared gestures and behaviours, the species-specific distinctness.

Acknowledging animal agency demands a shift in our understanding of nonhuman beings. Contrary to Descartes, who saw in animals soulless, mindless objects of external physical forces and whose status as objects justifies human exploitation of them, the case studies I have chosen for my project offer animal characters as agents, who perform their actions, and who actively engage and interact with the world through their sensory and cognitive perception that

informs their behaviour. Although their mode of being in the world, or *Umwelt,* might considerably differ from our own, it still comes into contact with ours in the human-animal encounters. The existence of multiple *Umwelten,* which might be similar to others as well as so complex or distant that they are often impossible for us to imagine*,* challenges the idea of a single 'correct' mode of being in the world. Each species exists in and interacts with the world in different ways, neither of which is better nor worse than the other, because they have all evolved in the way that ensures a successful adaptation of the species. By opening ourselves to the animal perspective, even if this process cannot be successfully achieved due to the limitations of our own *Umwelt,* we let ourselves explore territories that remained concealed from us under the veil of anthropocentrism. Acknowledging the animal perspective invites an alternative way of thinking about animals. Therefore, let us start with a critical consideration of the terms used in this thesis to refer to animals in the first place.

Nomenclature

As much as the choice between anthropomorphic and mechanomorphic representation of the animal behaviour impacts whether we perceive animals as agents who actively participate in the world they inhabit, or as mindless objects of external physical forces acting upon them, the choice of word we employ to refer to animals also has an immense impact on their perception. Let us take a look at several terms that are used in relation to animals: *the animal, nonhuman animal, other-than-human/different-from-human animal, animals, living beings,* and *anymal(s)*. The selected phrases denote various positions of humans in relation to animals, from a clearly drawn distinction between the two to the absence of such. The use of each term has a different set of implications on our understanding of, and approaches towards the human-animal relationship, therefore, choosing one phrase over another might reflect on the user's stance towards the issue and their political inclinations (Kemmerer 2006).

An important point is provided by Adorno, who has discussed the problematic utterance 'it is just an animal' in detail. According to Adorno, the perception of animals as nonhumans enables humans to justify violence against them by denying them as the subject of ethics. In the utterance 'it is just an animal' Adorno sees the tool for objectification and dehumanisation (since such a phrase is often used in reference to certain human groups, such as Jews or people of colour), which opens up a possibility of violence free of punishment. However, Adorno also brings forth the instance when such an utterance fails to convince – in the encounter of the animal gaze: 'an animal as such is never a mere animal, its gaze exceeds the "thingness" of a nonhuman being and penetrates the human sphere (...) "it's only an animal" utterance fails to perform the immunity from guilt that the metaphor promises'(Adorno 2005, p. 105). Therefore, the act of naming can set humans and animals apart, and this might in turn affect the ethical treatment of the latter.

Let us start with a widely popular choice, *the animal.* Singular *animal,* preceded by the definite article 'the', erases the richness and variety of immense number of species that are clustered together under this generalising term. In the name *the animal* Derrida sees the act of domination and submission to slaughter of those who are not humans, and he traces its history up to the Book of Genesis, where Adam, the human, is granted by god with the power of naming and subjecting animals to his will. In the singular aspect of the term *the animal* Derrida sees the means of alienating an enormous and diverse group of living beings (Derrida 2002, p. 409). As a result, the animal abstracts animals from their complex, embodied, and grounded experience into the realm of the symbolic. This abstraction leads to the erasure of animals' idiosyncrasy, the multiplicity and diversity of their condition and experience, which is, according to Derrida, an act of violence. The animal, often employed in the opposition to *the human,* keeps human animals outside of its definition, reinforcing the human-animal divide. The animal is, therefore, a theoretical, or conceptual being, whose existence is defined by the negation: it is not a human.

Terms such as *nonhuman animal* and *other-than-human animal* situate humankind among the animal species, however, they still fail to overcome the human-animal distinction. Both phrases have *human* as their point of reference: both terms are, again, defined by the negation – *nonhuman animals'* as well as *other-than-human animals'* condition of not being human. As a result, although humans are acknowledged as being an animal species, their distancing from other animals is preserved since all the animals that do not belong to humankind are conflated to the general term *nonhuman/other-than-human animal*. Furthermore, both terms share a strong anthropocentric feature – human is the norm against which other animals are being measured. The emphasis of both names rests on the assumption that these animals do not qualify as members of the human species, on the negation of them not being humans, rather than underlining their distinctness and affirming their being.

The term *animals* points towards the abundance and complexity of animal species which cannot, or at least should not, be contained within a singular *the animal.* The plural form *animals,* devoid of any surplus prefixes, captures multiplicity and diversity of the animal world. However, especially in the vernacular use, it does not bear any suggestion that humans are also included within its borders. Therefore, although this term is much more affirmative of animals' idiosyncrasy than those previously discussed, it still remains problematic because it does not overtly incorporate humans within its category.

An entirely different term has been proposed by Samantha Hurn who, like many others, noticed the problematic nature of the terms used in reference to animals. She suggests *living beings* as a possible alternative which abolishes the strong human-animal distinction and point towards the most basic shared feature that links all animal species: life (Hurn 2012, pp. 218—219). *Living beings,* however, is an exceptionally broad term, its holistic aspect emphasises the connection between all that is alive, which can easily include plants. What is attractive about

this particular term is its emphasis on the connection of all that lives, it points towards the vivacity and the condition of being alive that we all share. Such an approach appears more compassionate and inclusive, suggesting the animistic perception of all the beings endowed with life, forming the animated whole. However, because my project is primarily concerned with the animal representation and the human-animal relations, the vagueness of the term *living beings* has prompted my decision not to incorporate it into my project.

The final name I would like to analyse is *anymal.* Introduced by Lisa Kemmerer, anymal is a cluster of the two words: 'any' and 'animal' (2006, p. 10). This slight change to an otherwise familiar 'animal' aims to underline the inclusive nature of the term. *Anymal* denotes '*any animal* who does not happen to be the species that I am' (emphasis mine) (Kemmerer, 2006, p. 10). *Anymal(s)* signals the incorporation of the human species into the category of animals, which is biologically correct according to the theory of evolution. More importantly, however, the name *anymal* as well as its definition are more flexible, and plastic compared to its counterparts such as nonhuman animal. The anthropocentric aspect of the latter term is lost and the phrase *anymal* can be equally adopted by any animal species in relation to others. Adopting the name *anymal* offers a more egalitarian and compassionate approach towards human-animal relations, where differences between various species are acknowledged and affirmed, rather than used in order to construct a hierarchy of the species which favours humans and sets them apart from other animal species.

Having considered the alternatives at hand, I decided to adopt the term *nonhuman animal*. Even though *human* remains its point of reference, thus making it an anthropocentric term, this term clearly emphasises the fact that humans are also animals — something that can easily be omitted or dismissed when using the term *animal*. Although nonhuman animal is still problematic in regard to the width of its scope, which covers an entire animal kingdom, thus

clustering together beings that are dramatically different from one another, it nevertheless remains more specific than Samantha Hurn's living beings. I chose *nonhuman animal* over *other-than-human animal* to avoid using a concept that contains two problematic and loaded terms: *animal* and *other*. Similar to many other Animal Studies scholars, I am sympathetic towards Lisa Kemmerer's term *anymal* as it appears to me that its rationale is founded on similar principles as is my notion of the call, that is, the reinsertion of humans into the animal kingdom, perception of humans as animals among other animal species, and human calls as calls among other species' calls. What is more, the term *anymal* is also more egocentric than anthropocentric, since it is not based on the human-animal dualism, but on a flexible distinction between myself and those who are not me. Nonetheless, I adopt the term *nonhuman animal* for pragmatic reasons: it is more widely recognised and used, and its meaning is more readily available to the reader than the constructed term *anymal*. More importantly, since I will be introducing several new concepts throughout the thesis, with varying degrees of complexity, it appears reasonable to limit the introduction of additional new concepts unless no alternative is available.

Last but not least, I will tackle the question of the personal pronoun to be adopted in my writing. Although it is a popular practice to refer to nonhuman animals with a singular neuter pronoun *it,* I decided to use *they,* the epicene singular pronoun. One can argue that *it* can be used in reference to subjects and objects alike, as we might use it in reference to a baby, however, increasingly people abandon the use of this pronoun in such a way as it is often perceived as diminishing babies' subjectivity. For the same reason, I would like to apply the epicene pronoun *they* in relation to nonhuman animals, thus, challenging the objectifying connotations of the pronoun it. Similarly, in the vernacular language it is widely accepted to use words such as *neutralise* and *destroy* rather than *kill* and *murder* when referring to nonhuman animals. This conceals and sanitises the very act of killing nonhuman animals and weakens the sense of guilt

and remorse in the one doing the killing since it portrays nonhuman animals as objects to be disposed of rather than living and sentient beings who are killed. In order to highlight the nonhuman animal agency and subjectivity, I will, therefore, use the term nonhuman animals as well as epicene pronoun *they* when referring to a nonhuman animal whose sex is not known. In case of nonhuman animals whose sex is specified, I will use *she,* or *he.*

Chapters outline

The thesis is divided into three parts, the first two consist of two chapters each, followed by a stand-alone chapter in the final section. The first part is dedicated to the theorisation of the nonhuman animal call and will focus primarily on nonhuman animal performance. The second part introduces and explains the concept of the cinematic call on behalf of nonhuman animals through a close analysis of selected film techniques. The final part focuses on the politics of the call, specifically, its application in both popular and art films, and its function within and beyond the anthropocentric framework.

The first chapter, *Nonhuman Animal Call — Vocal Call,* takes film sounds as its starting point in order to identify a problem with the categorisation of nonhuman animal sounds. I consider the possibilities and limitations of including nonhuman animal sounds in the category of voice, which has been proposed by Don Ihde and Norie Neumark, and introduce the notion of the sonic (specifically vocal) call as an alternative. On the one hand, this chapter demonstrates some of the implications of using the notion of the nonhuman animal call (especially of the vocal call as a type of sound) for film analysis and interpretation. On the other hand, I indicate that the call goes beyond the realm of sound and functions as an umbrella term for a variety of expressions – olfactory, kinaesthetic, and gustatory among them. Taking *Le Quattro Volte* as a case study, I introduce a further division of calls based on their reach and intelligibility — from the powerful call of a lost baby goat, through the gag of cross-species conversations held by

humans, goats, and a particularly vocal border collie, to the cryptic call that traces the limits of multispecies comprehension.

In the second chapter, *Nonhuman Animal Call — Kinaesthetic Call,* I take a closer look at variety of nonhuman animal performances through the exploration of the kinaesthetic subtype of the call (related to facial expressions, bodily postures, and gestures). In order to problematise the discussion on acting and performance, I analyse in depth Michael Kirby's model of the acting – non-acting spectrum and in accordance with Stella Hockenhull, I make a case for the possibility of nonhuman animals to engaging in acting. Furthermore, I juxtapose instances of strictly trained nonhuman animal performances and the moments in which nonhuman animal performers have been given more space to act on their own accord on the other, in order to develop a broader argument about the more productive and collaborative practices that film makers can adopt when engaging nonhuman animal performers. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how animal slow cinema films, with their sustained attention to nonhuman animal calls, offer a contemporary version of the Revelationist tradition, represented by theorists such as Béla Balázs and Siegfried Kracauer. Through Malcolm Turvey's critique of Revelationists, I present a corrected and updated version of their position, illustrated by *A Cow's Life.*

The third chapter, *Cinematic Call — Point of View Shot and Reaction Shot,* introduces and explains in more depth the concept of the cinematic call on behalf of nonhuman animals. I engage with cognitivist film theory concerned with character engagement in order to expand and problematise the discussion of two cinematographic and editing techniques: the point-of-view shot, and reaction shot. I analyse Laurie Anderson's *Heart of a Dog* point of view sequence taken from a dog's perspective to demonstrate how through cinematography one can allude to the presence and dominance of other senses – in this case, the sense of smell that guides our canine heroine — thus inviting the spectator to adopt a different way of being and

interacting with the world. I discuss the role of point of view and reaction shots in Harutyun Khachatryan's *Border* in the process of establishing the buffalo as the protagonist of the film. On the one hand, the point of view and reaction shots provide the spectator with cues regarding needs, desires, and plans of the nonhuman animal character, underlying their agency and activating the person schema (a set of conditions which cue the spectator to perceive the character on screen as a person). On the other hand, I take a closer look at the extended takes of the buffalo and propose that their function is akin to that of Carl Plantinga's scene of empathy. Finally, I discuss Murray Smith's structure of sympathy and problematise each of its components, in particular allegiance, by introducing the nonhuman animal character into the theoretical framework from which they by and large have been excluded.

The fourth chapter, *Cinematic Call — Music and Silence,* is dedicated to identifying the conditions that film music needs to satisfy in order to function as a cinematic call. These conditions are largely founded on two concepts brought to film music discourse by Jeff Smith, namely polarisation and affective congruence. Through a close analysis of interactions between film music and image in selected case studies, I demonstrate how film music can focus the spectator's attention on nonhuman animal characters and their condition on the one hand, and work to obscure such characters and their experiences on the other. Through a close analysis of the closing scenes of the two films *Of Horses and Men* and *Battle of the Queens,* I will demonstrate how the use of nondiegetic music and cinematography marginalises the equine characters in the former, while the juxtaposition of nondiegetic music and silence in the latter strengthens the reach of the bovine's kinaesthetic calls and invites the spectator to reflect on their perspective and experience.

In the final chapter, *The Call and The Politics of Nonhuman Animal Cinematic Representation,* I will discuss how the call as a concept is not limited to a particular tradition of film making, and how it can function within and outside the anthropocentric framework. Through

Plantinga's work on theories of engagement and estrangement, I will analyse Pick's vegan cinema, which I identify as an example of estrangement theory, and discuss possible limitations of such an approach. I will also discuss the potential that lies in theories of engagement, particularly in relation to reaching wider audiences and raising their awareness about nonhuman animals and their lives in the ways that will be meaningful to them and might encourage difficult conversations as well as concrete actions. This contrasting engagement with the two theories is guided by Plantinga's own approach, which neither assumes that avant-garde, or art films are, par excellence, progressive in nature, nor dismisses all so-called mainstream productions as inherently ideologically suspect.

Chapter I: Nonhuman Animal Call — Vocal Call

Sounds in cinema fall into three main categories: music, speech (or voice), and noise, also known as sound effects (Bordwell and Thompson 2017, p. 270). In this chapter I will focus on the two latter categories to explore the problematic aspects of such a categorisation of sounds, and I will offer an alternative category of the vocal call as one possible solution to overcome these issues. However, let us begin with a reflection on the term coined by Michel Chion, namely, *vococentrism* — the tendency to place the voice at the centre of the soundscape, as the sound that presides over other sounds. He has observed that 'the presence of a human voice instantly sets up a hierarchy of perception (in movies for spectators there are not *all the sounds including the human voice*, but *voices and then everything else*)' (Chion's emphasis) (Chion 1999, p. 5).[4] Chion claims that if a human voice appears in the sonic space, then the listener's attention is automatically (or instinctively) directed towards it – in order to identify the voice and the message it carries (1999, p. 5). The reason for such a phenomenon could be the familiarity of the human voice and the spectator's desire to understand the reasons and motivations of the characters as expressed through speech. It becomes clear that the definition of voice does not accommodate voices of nonhuman animals. Furthermore, more often than not, the animal voices are not considered voices at all, but rather, animal sounds, and they are placed within the sound effects category.

---

[4] It is important to underline that a human voice can assume the role of a sound effect, subverting Chion's vococentrism – usually this happens by making the human speech unintelligible, muffled by a plethora of other voices and sounds, placing it in the background of the soundscape, such as in the scenes on the busy street where we can hear people speak but cannot discern the words they are saying, and which are not relevant to the story. In such instances, human voices function to provide further context regarding the location and the social context of the scene. Some films might also purposefully diminish the role of human speech and render it a sound amongst other sounds, and this is the case in Harutyun Khachatryan's *Border:* human speech is used scarcely, and no subtitles are provided, which implies that what is being said is irrelevant, thus, preventing human speech from presiding over other sounds, including those made by nonhuman animals.

Nonhuman animal sounds may be used for contextualisation of the scene, its grounding in time and space, and usually such sounds do not provide this information on their own, but rather work with other audio-visual elements that would be expected in a given context. While screeching and squawking of seagulls will indicate to the viewer that the narrative is taking place by the sea, or not too far from it, the lion's roar will situate the action either at an African savanna, or the zoo where the lion in question is being held captive. Besides geographical location, animal sounds can also further inform the viewer of the time of the day the action is taking place: while the rooster's crowing is typically associated with the start of the day, the hooting of an owl usually suggests the night time.

Nonhuman animal sounds frequently contribute to creating a specific mood of the scene; therefore, it is not uncommon to hear wolves howling in the uncanny scenes depicting gloomy Transylvanian Forest in a horror film, or the chirping of crickets during the night in the countryside. Alternatively, the absence of animal sounds where they are expected is another practice, relevant especially in case of horror films: in John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place* (2018)*,* the absence of bird chirping in the forest adds to the sense of unease and horror at the realisation that monsters, who hunt their prey by sound rather than vision, have killed all the birds.

All the examples above introduce a low-level function of nonhuman animal sounds, that is, that certain sounds are associated with spatio-temporal contexts. Their presence in that context might be taken for granted, which means the spectator might neither notice their presence nor pay much attention to their existence in the soundscape. Since nonhuman animal sounds in this context play the role of an often simple, if not stereotypical marker of location and temporality, their function as means of nonhuman animal expression and communication is rendered irrelevant. This means that one can use a 'generic' nonhuman animal sound sample from the vast library of pre-recorded sounds — as is in fact a common practice.

Inevitably, the reliance and indiscriminate use of sound samples disregards the richness and nuanced nature of nonhuman expression — from a horse's neigh to a dog's barking — and treats it in a reductive manner (Hunt 2019). Such use takes nonhuman animal sounds out of their context, it leads to the abstraction of nonhuman animal sound from the nonhuman animal body that produces it, turns it into a disembodied sound, a mere effect that operates within an anthropocentric framework. Another way in which the use of sound samples reinforces the anthropocentric treatment of nonhuman animal sounds is by overusing the samples, which makes cinematic nonhuman animals more vocal than they otherwise would be in a given context. One possible reason for this could be to compensate for the difficulty of reading body language. In this case, however, we are moving from a low-level feature of nonhuman animal sound as a grounding and contextualising element to nonhuman animal sound as means of communication.

Films in which nonhuman animal characters play more prominent roles acknowledge nonhuman animal communication. Nevertheless, the majority of such works emphasise human-animal communication, in particular, a nonhuman animal character adapting to their human counterpart, rather than the other way round (although there are exceptions to this rule). I identify three main approaches towards nonhuman animal communication in mainstream productions. The first incorporates nonhuman animal character's species-specific communication style and avoids any major alterations. This is something we see in *White God*, where Hagen's interactions with his human counterpart, Lili (Zsófia Psotta), resembles a usual canine-human interaction. The second approach distorts nonhuman animal character's communication style by overemphasising or altering certain elements. One example would be to make nonhuman animals more vocal than they would normally be, which makes human-animal interactions more akin to human conversation, where a human character asks a nonhuman animal character a closed question (a 'yes-or-no' question) and the nonhuman animal

character vocalises in response. We encounter such an example in *Two Brothers* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2004), where the tiger protagonist is having a conversation with the son of the Indochina toppled ruler. The third approach involves even more substantial distortion of the nonhuman animal expression by artificially endowing a nonhuman animal character with human speech and human body language, for instance, making nonhuman animal character nod in agreement while such a gesture is not normally part of their repertoire, or distorting their mouth through CGI to mimic the movements of human a mouth during speech. This happens more often in family films and one such example would be an American film *Show Dogs* (Raja Gosnell, 2018), where the bodies and expressions of dogs have been digitally altered to resemble those of humans, thus, we witness dogs 'voguing' and screaming. David Lynch offers yet another example of such a distortion in his absurdist short film *What Did Jack Do* (2017), where a Capuchin monkey is given human mouth and is endowed with human speech.

In 'Engaging the Animal in the Moving Image' Pete Porter introduces cues for nonhuman personhood. The aim of such cues is to activate the person schema in the spectator, that is, the spectator is guided to perceive the nonhuman animal character as a person (Porter 2006, p. 406). However, Porter highlights that not all such cues lead the spectator to perceive the nonhuman animal character as a nonhuman person. Thus, he proposes three types of cues for personhood: primary cues, secondary external cues, and secondary internal cues. Porter presents them as sitting on a continuum — with primary cues residing on the one end and secondary internal cues on the other. Primary cues encapsulate the range of nonhuman animal performers' own expressions, which cue the spectator to acknowledge them as a nonhuman person. Secondary external cues come from the voiceover of a narrator, or a human character who accompanies the nonhuman animal character.

Fig. 3. Papillon dog 'voguing' (*Show Dogs*, 2018)

Fig. 4. Capuchin monkey with human mouth (*What Did Jack Do,* 2017)

Secondary internal cues are instances in which nonhuman animal characters are endowed with human voice and expression. Secondary internal cues thus cue the spectator to perceive nonhuman animal character as a person, but unlike in the first example, here, the spectator is cued to see them more as a human in animal disguise rather than a nonhuman person (Porter 2006, p. 407). Therefore, while the first approach to nonhuman communication that I have introduced is consistent with Porter's primary cues for personhood, the second approach,

especially in its more extreme forms of distorting nonhuman animal expression, overlaps with Porter's secondary cues, which lead us to perceive nonhuman animal characters more as human persons disguised as nonhuman animals. This would be an instance of negative anthropomorphism, which strips the nonhuman animal from their distinct qualities and instead transforms them into a furry, scaled, or feathered human.

Placing animal sounds solely among sound effects problematises their status as primary cues for nonhuman personhood as such a categorisation evokes Cartesian approach towards animals. René Descartes dismissed animals as mute, therefore incapable of thinking; this led him to disregard their non-verbal expression as meaningless, which, among his other propositions that animals possess neither reason nor soul and are merely organic machines, had a dramatic effect on the wellbeing of numerous animals (Descartes 2007, pp. 60—61). Including animal sounds within the same category as creaking doors thus bears negative connotations regarding the perception of nonhumans as inexpressive, asocial – producing sounds without any meaning besides building up a mood or providing a sonic metaphor. Although Descartes's thoughts on animals might appear as extreme and the majority of contemporary people would not find such claims convincing, the echo of Descartes is uncannily present in the current division of sounds in film. Let us take a brief detour in order to investigate the implications of the supposed animal muteness on Western philosophical perception of nonhuman animals.

Animal silence in Western philosophical thought – but are they truly silent?

The absence of speech in nonhuman animals has been discussed in philosophy predominantly in terms of deprivation and defectiveness. Language has become the demarcation line between human animals, endowed with soul or reason, and the myriad of nonhuman animals who have been deemed soulless, lacking reason, and therefore, inferior. In his letters, Descartes claims that the muteness of nonhuman animals implies their incapacity for reflection and self-

reflection, which prompts him to call other animal species 'dumb' (2007, pp. 60—61). In Descartes's thought, both human and nonhuman animals are natural automata, however, the human creature has been endowed with a soul, which manifests itself in human ability to reason and express oneself in language. Nonhumans, on the other hand, do not think but function like machines, clocks, their activities based solely on instincts (Descartes 2007, p. 61). Cartesian split between humans and nonhumans permeates Western philosophical and religious thinking, echoing in the writing of St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and many others.

In order to differentiate between various beings and their relation to the world, Heidegger employs language as the yardstick and creates a hierarchy, according to which the stone, which has no relation to the world whatsoever, is wordless, while nonhuman animals are 'poor in the world' since although they are able to relate to their environment and others, due to the absence of language, they cannot sustain a relationship that the world-forming humans can (Calarco 2008, pp. 20—21). Heidegger remains suspicious of the idea that the distinction between human and nonhuman animal is a matter of degree as it would imply that the relation nonhumans hold with the world can be compared to those of human animals; instead, he argues that it is an unsurmountable difference in kind (Calarco 2008, p. 22). For numerous Western thinkers, nonhuman animals' muteness signifies their inability to have a reflective connection to the world around them, which reduces their existence to thoughtless, instinctual responses to external stimuli. Such a conflation of human mode of communication and the presence of subjectivity is particularly troubling as it opens up space for exploitation and abuse of those who are incapable of communicating on human terms, and who are in turn denied subjectivity

(Mills 2017, p. 23).[5] Such categorisation of 'non-human as non-speaking' is yet another instance of anthrozoometrism, where human speech functions as a yardstick that separates humans and nonhuman animals, positioning the former as superior, that is, endowed with subjectivity, reason, or soul, while the latter is perceived as deprived of such properties and therefore not worthy of consideration.

Furthermore, Alice Kuzniar in her *Melancholia's dog,* traces the connection between the silence of nonhuman animals and their melancholy. Referring to aforementioned Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin, and Jacques Derrida, she is exploring the seemingly unbridgeable gap between human and animal, thus, the animal that speaks and their silent counterpart (Kuzniar 2006). Kuzniar concludes that the nonhuman animal melancholy is the consequence of being named by the human animal: in the act of naming, the variety of species have been reduced to a singular term that erases their idiosyncrasy (not only across species but also individuals) and risks misrepresentation. The nonhuman animal muteness is the limit to human cognition and an impediment to mutual understanding. However, let us return to the very origin of this line of thought and ask ourselves: are nonhuman animals truly silent?

What links all the aforementioned ideas together is their underlying anthropocentrism. The conflation of language and human communication system (abstract thought expressed in writing and speech) dismisses the diversity and abundance of languages used by other animal species, some of them entirely inaccessible and inconceivable to the human mind. For instance, as mentioned before, elephants stomp on the ground to send seismic waves in order to

---

[5] The problem of linking human speech and subjectivity relates not only to nonhuman animals, but also to humans with disabilities, demonstrating that such a discourse is not only speciesistic, but also ableist. Mills discusses this in relation to the deaf community and the ways in which they came very close to being denied subjectivity and humanity due to their inability to master spoken language, with sign language being perceived as inferior, akin to nonhuman modes of communication (2017, pp. 23—24).

communicate with their peers tens of miles away from them (Bienvenuti 2016, p. 555). Dogs have several different ways of barking, each used in a specific context, while birds and whales communicate through singing (Crist 1999, p. 15). Therefore, the distinction between human and nonhuman animals is based on anthrozoometrism — the practice of measuring nonhuman species' capabilities with a human yardstick, as discussed in the introduction (Howell 2003, p. 186). The categories applied to measure the skills are compatible with the human species, therefore, it either leads to the conclusion that other species are always lacking in comparison with humans, or in the case of other species triumphing over humans, then the logic of 'difference' is being adopted. These double standards illustrate how the complexity of nonhuman animal languages has been dismissed and reduced to silence.

Descartes's argument ignores the fact that some human beings do not possess language or are yet to acquire it, namely, human infants, the mute and illiterate, and people with severe mental disabilities. Does that mean that Descartes would agree to perform vivisections on these human beings, as he allowed and encouraged in the case of cats and dogs? Is there any way to compare a human infant (who might or might not develop language skills as humans normally define them) to often fully-grown nonhuman animals? Descartes himself reveals the motivation behind his conception of nonhuman animals as unfeeling, mindless (and soulless) biological machines as 'indulgent to men – at least to those who are not given to the superstitions of Pythagoras – since it absolves them from the suspicion of crime when they eat or kill animals' (Serpell 1996, pp. 169—170). Therefore, Descartes denial of nonhuman animal sentience, subjectivity, cognition is not empirically grounded, but rather, functions as a plausible justification for animal abuse.

Heidegger asserts that nonhuman animals are incapable of dying — they can only perish — because they lack language, therefore, they lack the conception of death.

> The mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it. Death is the shrine of Nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself (Heidegger 2001, 176).

The connection between language and death is made more explicit in 'The Nature of Language', where Heidegger states: '[M]ortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do so. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between language and death flashes up before us, but remains still unthought' (1971, p. 107) For Heidegger, animals are incapable of properly dying because they lack the capacity for reflection, which relies on having language – the nonhuman animals are merely captivated by the world they live in, but they cannot take a step back and think of themselves as beings. Akira Lippit points out that for Heidegger animals 'cannot experience death, the giving of being, of absolute singularity, to existence. And since they cannot die, conversely, animals cannot experience the death or loss of others' (Lippit 2000, p. 58).

However, many species, among them elephants and chimpanzees, show distress at their family and friends' death, and go through the process of grieving, which demonstrates that they do indeed have a concept and understanding of death (Masson and McCarthy 2007, p. 99). This underlines that, contrary to Heidegger's assertions, some species do, in fact, express behaviours that humans associate with grief and loss. Furthermore, it demonstrates the limitations of our knowledge and understanding of other species. Some species might express a behaviour that will be to some extent be analogous to a human one, however, there is always a possibility that other species might express grief in a way so foreign to our conception of grief that we will fail to perceive it as such.

Death appears as an abstract, disembodied concept that can only be conceived if the subject possesses the capacity for language. Yet, there seems to be something very bodily and sensuous about death – elephants touch skulls and tusks of dead elephants and express great distress at

the sight of the remains of their companions (Masson and McCarthy 2007, p. 94). Many animals, particularly very old or sick, run away and hide in search of solitude when they are close to death. It might be possible that they are indeed aware that they are dying and look for a place where they can be undisturbed by others. Even if animals never acquired language in the form humans did, it should not be the basis for denying them the experience of grief and loss since they might experience and communicate these in an embodied way, or in a manner incomprehensible and inaccessible to humans.

Heidegger makes a linguistic distinction between dying (reserved for world-forming humans) and perishing (for 'poor in world' animals), which introduces a further divide between humans and animals, even in the face of death. By denying animal death and reducing it to mere perishing, Heidegger distances humans from nonhumans by trivialising their death and denying them experience of loss and grief. This might have serious implications on human behaviour in relation to animals. The distinction in nomenclature is present in the vernacular language, where people would not refer to a dog's death in the same way they would in relation to a human. My native language makes a strong and clear distinction: the verb to describe human death is 'umrzeć', whereas the verb which refers to the animal death is 'zdechnąć' or 'paść'. However, many people decide to use the verb 'umrzeć' in relation to their beloved animal companions (or any other nonhumans) in order to honour them and acknowledge the seriousness of their loss, while the verb 'zdechnąć' is frequently used as a grave and denigrating slur when used in reference to another human.

The unbridgeable gap described by Kuzniar disregards the fact that we do communicate with a variety of nonhuman species as well as with our own species through verbal and non-verbal means, such as facial and bodily expression. What is more, research backs the observation that humans can often make good inferences regarding nonhuman intentions based on their body

language and facial expressions (Bekoff 2007, p. 123). The gap does exist and, in many cases, will be unbridgeable due to the absence of any overlaps in respective species' *Umwelten* (for instance, between a human *Umwelt* and that of a blind and deaf tick). However, we do attempt at building bridges by attuning ourselves or other species to each other's expression, if and when the potential for such a possibility arises.

It does not mean, however, that the bridge is not filled with holes. Our communication is full of false friends and misunderstandings, which often result from our anthropocentrism. We assume, for instance, that showing teeth in other apes also implies a friendly smile, whereas, it has been shown that for the chimpanzees a smile is an expression of fear and submission, as pointed out in the introduction (Serpell 1996, p. 172). Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that such issues arise also in our intraspecies communication — we might misunderstand the other person despite communicating in the same language, or we might misread their nonverbal expressions due to cultural differences. The most straightforward example is the gesture of nodding one's head, which in a British context signifies agreement, while in Bulgaria it means the exact opposite. This demonstrates that the meaning of shared gestures and expressions might fluctuate both within and across species.

Kuzniar, referring to Benjamin and Derrida, challenges the idea of lack by attributing the shortcoming to humankind instead. Limited to our own language, we fail to attune ourselves to nonhuman animals' signals, or we fall into melancholy as we desire to grant other species human voice in order to understand their thoughts (Kuzniar 2006, pp. 27—28). Such an approach emphasises humans' loneliness as the only speaking animal in the mute world. Nevertheless, despite its problematic nature, interspecies communication, especially between human animals and any nonhuman species, is possible and can be improved by making humans more attuned to nonhuman animals' means of expression. In the post-industrial societies, where

humans' direct interaction with other species is highly limited, cinema offers the opportunity to accustom its spectator to the nonhuman presence and expression due to its ability to capture and represent it audio-visually. It is thus appropriate at this point to investigate how the film medium depicts the nonhuman animal expression.[6]

Animal voice and nonhuman animal call

In some films animal sounds are foregrounded, and such a choice usually coincides with the introduction of nonhuman animals as characters of similar or equal importance as their human counterparts, thus suggesting that sounds these nonhuman animal characters make are more than mere signifiers of space and mood – they might be an act of (self-)expression of these beings. Such films might suggest the existence of nonhuman voices, which problematises the current division of sounds. However, the question arises whether it would be productive to include nonhuman animal voices alongside human ones in the voice category. Norie Neumark argues that the current definition of voice is too restrictive since it is most of the time interchangeable with speech, which leaves non-verbal vocalisations in a liminal space between voice and sound (Neumark 2017, p. 7).

Despite the discussion of voice being dominated by the focus on the human (specifically on race and gender relations, as well as the posthuman), Neumark has welcomed the exploration of nonhuman voices. In her analysis of Kathy High's video art piece, *Everyday Problems of the Living, a Serial (2000—2005)*, Neumark reflects on an intimate and bodily (if not visceral) connection between the species: she perceives the sounds of a cat vomiting as an embodied manifestation of the anxiety of the cat's human companion regarding her own mortality. For

---

[6] It is worth noting the vision-centrism of English language, where terms such as depict, represent, describe, illustrate all have their origin in the act of looking. Our focus here is the invisible sound, yet I found it difficult to replace 'depict' with a non-visual, or aural-centric alternative.

Neumark, the concern for one's health and life, which has been suppressed by the human subject, has affected the wellbeing of the cat, who releases the tension. Neumark also underlined her own visceral connection with the cat's voice. The sounds of vomiting resulted in her own experience of nausea (Neumark 2017, p. 33). Such an example helps Neumark to construct her argument on the emotional impact of the voice, the expressivity that connects members of various species in a shared embodied experience. The sound of vomiting can provoke in some humans a mirror reaction, which is an instinctual and involuntary defence mechanism against poisoning. Therefore, it would be worth exploring the affective charge of the cat's voice when they are meowing, purring, or shrieking — vocal expressions that, unlike sounds that are a by-product of vomiting, are communicative in nature. Although they might not trigger such a strong and automatic reaction as the sounds of vomiting, they can be affectively powerful to those people who are attuned to feline expression. Should Neumark explore the nonhuman animal voice from this perspective, her account would become more complex and nuanced.

Neumark, in her interest to expand the notion of the voice beyond speech, might welcome Don Ihde's proposition that all matter has a voice (Neumark 2017, p. 3; Ihde 2007, p. 190). Such a statement, however, does not come without problems. If all sounds generated by matter is a voice, then the distinction between voice and sound is obsolete. If all matter is endowed with a voice, then either everyone has a voice, or no one has a voice. Ihde is aware of this issue, therefore, he proposes that the voice of things (or the voice of the world) is different to the voice of language (Ihde 2007, p. 192). Ihde considers the voice of things in a metaphorical sense, unlike the voice of language. Therefore, he still maintains a certain distinction between these sonic phenomena (and one would argue, a hierarchy). Such a division of voice might create confusion and challenge the very move to define all sonic phenomena as voice. In the vernacular language, voice is a sound generated by vocal cords and such a view is supported

by the etymology of the word itself – voice means a sound that comes from *human* mouth. Therefore, by calling a sound made by inanimate objects a voice, Ihde breaks down the distinction between voice and sound, which might render the exploration of sound even murkier. Despite the criticism of Ihde's use of the term voice, I find his main aim — the invitation to become more mindful of sounds that surround us (or come from within our very bodies) and analysing them in more depth — very important as it would enrich our aural and bodily experience. Such a task might not necessarily need renaming of all sounds as voice but simply placing more emphasis on variety of aspects to consider in our listening to sounding objects.

In his distinction Ihde places animal voices somewhere between the voice of things and the voice of language. He observes that animal voices overlap with the voices of things in their expression of material properties: one instantly recognises a sound of a wooden bowl and a voice of a seagull. However, animal voices go even further — they are also expressive, they communicate the relationship with other animals and the environment (Ihde 2007, p. 192). It is crucial to explore this point in more detail. The three examples I have provided in order to illustrate the use of animal vocalisations as sound effects omit the expressive and communicative aspects of the animal sounds, thus limiting our possibilities for analysis of these aural phenomena. And this is exactly what sets animate beings and inanimate objects apart. The sounds of objects might bespeak, to borrow Ihde's word, of their material properties such as physical state, interiors, or location, but animal sounds additionally function to navigate through the environment and negotiate with other beings. Animal sounds communicate intentions, desires, and emotions. They help to maintain a social cohesion within a group, or between individuals. Wolves howl in order to locate one another, communicate the strength of

65

a pack, individual traits of its members, but also to regulate behaviours of group members, especially puppies (Digioia 2016, pp. 294—295).[7]

If considering all sonic phenomena, a voice is not the most productive solution, then should at least animal voices be included within the category of the voice? This question brings us back to the way we understand the voice – a sound generated by vocal cords, coming through the mouth. Animals make sounds, some of them so quiet, or outside of human hearing range that they evade human perception, others generate sounds non-vocally – by pounding their chest (gorillas) or rubbing limbs (crickets). Therefore, including nonhumans sounds within the category of the voice could either complicate the meaning of the term voice, or lead to a hierarchisation of voices – some animals possessing more of a voice than others, some animal voices being more complex than others.

In order to address this issue, I propose a new category to accommodate the nonhuman animal expression, including sounds, namely, the call. Unlike sound, which is a general term for a whole range of aural phenomena (which does not distinguish between animate being and inanimate objects), the call implies intentionality and communicability of the subject who makes it. The call is raised with the intention of attracting other's attention, compelling them to respond – through another call, a gesture, or an action. It enables the subject to negotiate relations among living beings, often of different species and with considerably varying *Umwelten,* and between beings and their environment. The expectation of an answer is tied to the concept of the call, however, while some calls might be directed at, and thus, demand the

---

[7] They could also be, as Digioia argues, considered as metaphors – not only of the uncanny, the fearful, but also of a sense of belonging and strength, thus offering an alternative to the negative perception of wolves in popular culture. In her paper, she analyses the use of wolf howls in horror films and heavy metal music — while in horrors the wolf howls are consistently used to signify fear and approaching threat, in heavy metal wolf howls are used as a metaphor for a sense of unity drawn from the status of an outsider who does not conform to societal rules (Digioia 2016, p. 304).

answer from a specific addressee or no one in particular, other calls can be made for their own sake, or remain unanswered.

Many nonhuman animal species are highly social and communicate in order to maintain the social cohesion of their group and ensure their survival. This is the case for wolves, dogs, goats, sheep, primates, and elephants, to name a few (Briefer, Torre and McElligott 2012; Harrington and Mech 1979; O'Connell-Rodwell 2001). Others still use a variety of expressions to negotiate their relations with other groups or individuals. Some do so to locate members of their own group, guard off the rivals from their territory, show affection, as well as regulate behaviour of their young ones. The introduction of the call destabilises the anthropocentric hierarchy of sounds, or as Michel Chion calls it, vococentrism (Chion 2016, p. 156). I would like to rebrand it as *anthropovococentrism* since it is the human voice that presides over others. My notion of the call replaces the idea of the animal sound as meaningless in itself with an intentional, expressive, and social call.

Moreover, the call includes both verbal and non-verbal vocalisations, as well as other-than-aural expressions, therefore, it can be applied to human and nonhuman species without the risk of creating a hierarchical gradation of calls. Such an inclusivity might appear counterintuitive at first — the call has a strong sound-centric, or even vococentric (to borrow Chion's term) connotation. However, we can expand the call beyond the realm of sound by focusing on its spatial and temporal properties. To call means to either vocalise very loud in order to project the vocalisation across vast space, or to communicate with another (also at a distance) via technology, such as a telephone, or Skype. Therefore, the call is an act of communication that overcomes spatial barriers. Similarly, elephants stomp on the ground in order to send seismic waves across the vast lands and communicate with other elephants – although the stomp itself produces a sound, it is the tactile seismic shock felt through the feet that carries the message.

We could then say that elephant stomping is an example of a tactile or kinaesthetic call. Other calls can cross temporal barriers: dogs communicate through leaving olfactory and gustatory traces in their urine, thus communicating both across distance as well as time. Such calls linger on long after they have been made, unlike sonic calls that quickly disperse in the air, enabling dogs to negotiate their relationships with one another and the territory without coming into a direct contact. Thus, a variety of expressions can fall within the category of the call, and they all exist in a horizontal, equal relation — their value is independent from our ability to recognise and understand them. Certain species will relate to some calls better than others, depending on their *Umwelt*, that is, their relationship to their surroundings, mediated by their sensory make-up. This means that some calls might remain unintelligible for human spectators and frustrate their desire for knowledge and understanding. Such calls offer us, however, a space for reflection on the impossibility of knowing, embracing this limitation. One can either hypothesise on the meaning of the call or accept its mystery and, following Ihde's path, focus on the sensory qualities of the call instead.

Even though the concept of the call contains the multitude and complexity of human and nonhuman animal expression, I will restrict my use of the call in this chapter to its sonic, vocal manifestation. Introducing the call is a first step to overcome the disregard of animal sounds as meaningless or as merely sound effects. It helps to challenge the tradition from which the current division of sounds might stem – the Cartesian divide in which the animal is mute, hence, dumb, unthinking and unfeeling. What is more, the call will help scholars to engage with animal sounds in a more productive manner as it offers space for exploring and thinking about animal sounds in much broader terms, opening up a possibility of adopting the nonhuman animal perspective in the analysis of the call. The call also enables new ways of interpreting animal sounds in relation to mood, location, but also symbolic connection with the plot and their human characters – by providing possibilities that have not been explored before. Finally,

the call offers a more nuanced categorisation of sounds in film; distinguishing between nonhuman animal sounds and sound effects generated by inanimate objects benefits both categories as each can be analysed on their own specific terms.
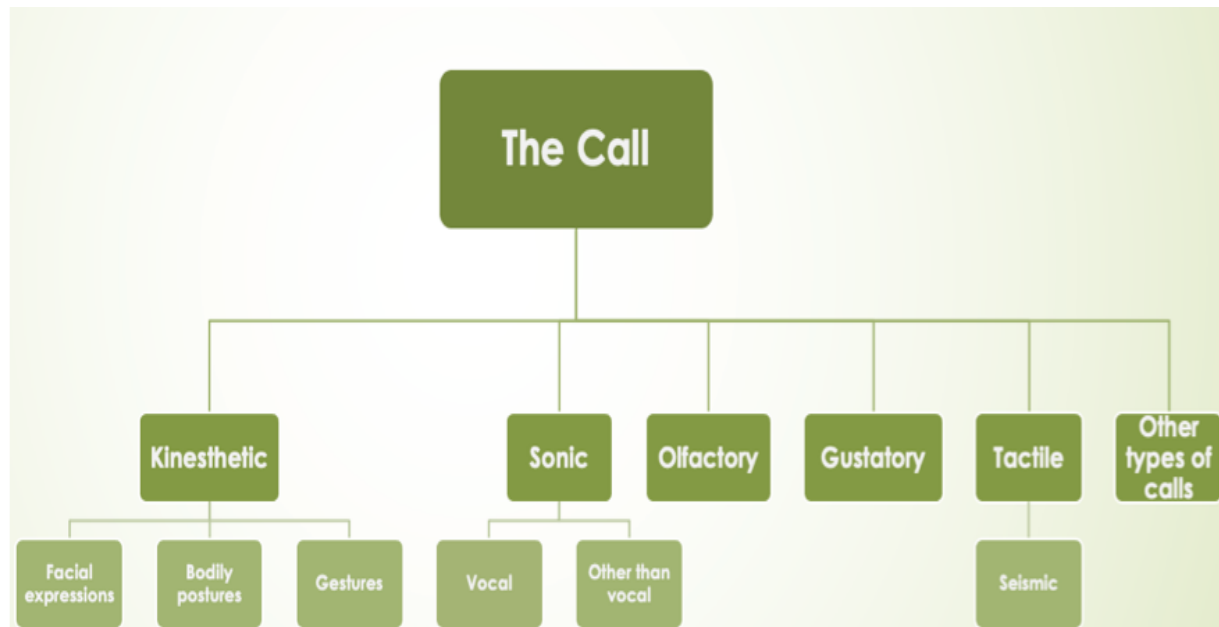
Fig. 5. Division of calls

It is important to highlight that the division of film sounds is by no means fixed and particular sounds might belong to several categories. This is evident in the case of a human singing voice, which belongs both to the voice category and to music. In some instances, the human voice also assumes the role of a sound effect that provides additional context regarding the location and the social context of the scene — unintelligible, muffled speech can enrich the soundscape of a scene shot at the busy street in New York, an elegant cocktail party, or a shady bar on the outskirts of a border town. In a similar fashion, nonhuman animal calls can and often assume the function of sound effects, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. However, the perception of nonhuman animal expression solely in terms of sound effects offers us an incomplete account, which dismisses a possibility to expand the discussion of film sounds by making more complex analyses and discourses of the role nonhuman animal sounds play in film.
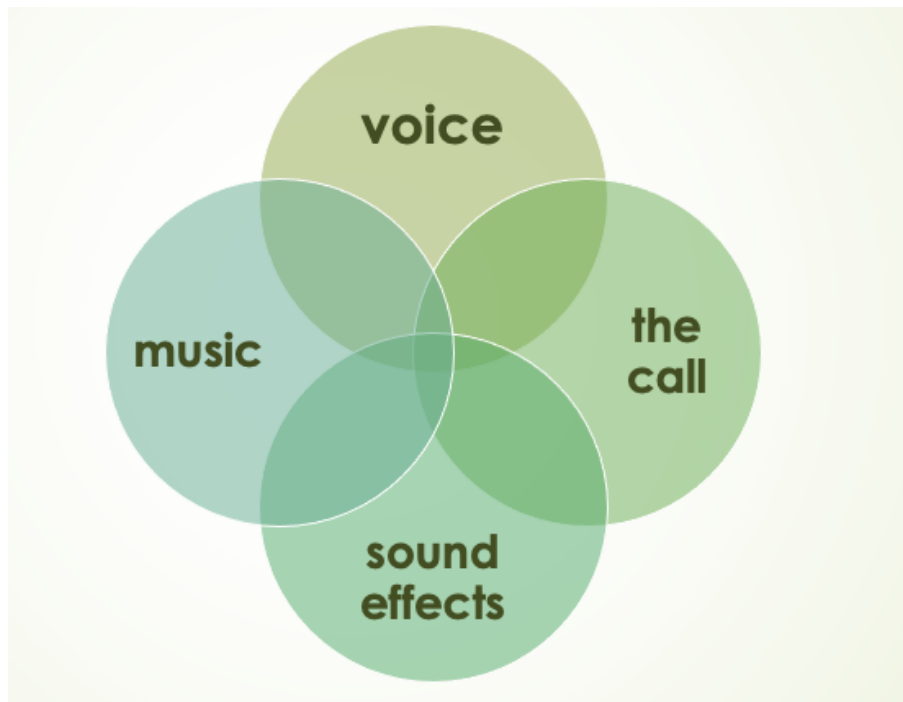
Fig. 6. Categories of film sound

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to the analysis of a specific type of the call, namely, the vocal call. I will analyse vocal calls made by nonhuman characters (goats and a dog) from Michelangelo Frammartino's *Le Quatro Volte* in order to examine how the introduction of this new category might enrich our analysis of sounds made by nonhuman animals as well as explore the limitations of our comprehension. I will focus on three instances of the vocal call, which I name *the powerful call, cross-species conversation,* and *the cryptic call* respectively. These instances are by no means clear-cut categories, rather, they are porous delineations that allow various calls to permeate through several categories at once. What is more, depending on the subject's *Umwelt* as well as familiarity with other expressions, certain calls might change their meaning: while some calls could be cryptic for the human spectator, they would be clear for a member of another species. The call is, therefore, a dynamic category and its instances shift depending not only the spectator's *Umwelt,* but also knowledge of and familiarity with the subject making a call. This means that even though one might belong to a very different species from the caller, yet, if one is more attuned to the caller's expression,

through knowledge and exposure, one might perceive their call differently from other spectators of their kind.

The scenes that will serve as my case studies foreground nonhuman vocal calls; unlike the aforementioned examples of nonhuman animal sound effects, they dominate the soundscape and become the main focus of the spectator's listening experience. Despite this difference, nonhuman animal sounds that serve as sound effects should also be considered calls. Just as in the case of the human voice, which has its own distinct category, which enables the nuances of the voice to be explored, there are instances of a human voice assuming the role of a sound effect — such as background conversations. Although the role of the voice is diminished, these sounds maintain their status as voices, thus, they exist within both categories. By analogy, nonhuman animal vocal calls can also exist as both a call and a sound effect, depending on its position within the soundscape and within the narrative. Like human voices, nonhuman calls can be foregrounded, or placed in the background in order to fulfil various roles in the scene – yet in spite of their shifting importance, they remain calls. Let us move on to the first instance of the call, one that has the power to resonate within many species, hence its name — the powerful call.

The Powerful Call

The powerful call transgresses the cross-species barriers, it is the call whose meaning and valence will be recognised more widely. It is the call that provokes an immediate and powerful reaction, that reverberates inside others and affects them. Distress calls and infant separation calls are among the examples of such powerful calls, which might affect individuals of different species and with varying levels of familiarity (Huang *et al.* 2018; Lehoczki *et al.* 2019; Lehoczki *et al.* 2020; Lingle and Riede 2014;). Such calls do not necessarily require an in-depth knowledge of other species' expression in order to be instantly recognised for what they

are: one does not have to be entirely familiar with canine calls in order to perceive a shriek as a sign of extreme distress — the sound pierces and shocks the listener's body. In this case, the context is deeply embedded in the vocal call itself — in the grain of the voice, as Barthes (1977) would put it — as such calls might have a similar acoustic structure across mammalian species. However, various individuals might be affected by such powerful calls differently. Lehoczki et al. suggest that the reason why dogs might have a decreased response to separation calls of human infants or kittens as opposed to pups is due to their ancestors keeping their young offspring inside dens, which minimised the chances of them getting lost. On the other hand, deer keep their offspring in the open, therefore, the chances of their fawns going missing are higher, hence, their equally strong reactions to separation calls of offspring belonging to different species (Lehoczki et al. 2020, p. 177).

What is more, according to the research conducted by Filippi et al. humans (participants in the research were English, German, or Mandarin native speakers) are able to recognise signs of arousal in numerous species (among those researched were pandas, hourglass tree frog, African bush elephants, pigs, ravens, and Barbary macaques) based on the acoustic properties of their call, which suggests the existence of a universal signalling system (Filippi *et al.* 2017). Even more recently, the team of scientists has analysed over 7,000 calls from 411 pigs throughout their lives and managed to associate emotional states with specific calls (such as grunts and squeals) based on the context of their appearance as well as the properties of sounds (such as length and pitch) (Briefer *et al.* 2022).

The power of some vocal calls stems not from their acoustic quality, but from the context in which they occur, which makes them not only intelligible but relatable. One can draw a connection between the call of another species and one's own species' experience. Before I move on to discuss specific examples, let me introduce the case study. *Le Quattro Volte* is a

slow film that consists of often humorous, banal, as well as touching episodes from the everyday life in rural Italy. Although it does not follow a clear narrative progression, the film has a circular structure: it begins with the depiction of minerals and plants, then nonhuman animals (goats and a dog), and culminates with a short story on human life and death, only to revert its attention to goats, then plants and trees, and conclude with minerals — following the saying 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. Banal events intertwine with the significant ones in the film's contemplation of the cycle of life and the interconnectedness of all organic matter. First, I will analyse the scene where the call of the birthing goat is heard already by the baby goat inside the womb. Then, I will focus on two instances of powerful infant separation calls: the first instance is the call of the new-born goat, and the second is the call of the same (however, a bit older) goat calling for help when they accidentally become separated from the herd and wander alone through the forest. These scenes will be analysed together as they frame a very short life of the little white goat — through their first and final call. Both calls embody the vulnerability of the goat and the fragility of their life: the distress, the shock of the unknown, the need for protection, and for the mother's reassuring call and touch.

The first scene begins with a black screen with muffled goat bleating and a thumping sound resembling a slow heartbeat. The loud bleat coincides with the image of the goat giving birth to a little white goat. The mother makes low grunting calls while tending to her child, the image is juxtaposed with offscreen calls of another young goat and the tinkling of goat bells. The new-born, trying to stand on their own, makes their very first call — it is rather short, high-pitched, yet gentle. The new-born keeps bleating as the mother licks their head. The image cuts to a medium close-up of a group of goats standing outside of the enclosure; they all look around; some raise their heads and listen as the call of the new-born (placed offscreen) echoes through the yard. The film cuts back to the enclosure and presents the new-born who finally

manages to stand up and approaches the mother while making short, low-pitched bleats before they begin to suckle.

The first powerful call in the scene is the one made by the mother goat herself. The black screen and the muffled thumping suggest the point of view of a goat's foetus. Comfortably cushioned in darkness of their mother's womb, they become familiar with their mother's heartbeat and calls — which they can both hear and feel as they reverberate inside the mother's body. The young one, as in the case of many other species, already learns to recognise their mother's call and grow attached to it while still in the womb. The shot, although brief, captures the mother-child relation at its most intimate. This way, the call of the mother, represented from the sonic perspective of the child, poses a challenge to the perception of the goat bleating as a mere sound effect. This call communicates something very powerful, basic, and universal, something familiar to numerous beings irrespective of their species. The call does not simply carry the information about the mother goat's material being and location, it is the very first aural and emotional bond that is being formed between herself and her soon-to-be-born child.

Fig. 7. New-born goat's first calls (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

Fig. 8. The goats listen to the new-born goat's first calls (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

Shortly after, the little white goat is born — confused, possibly distressed, or at least overwhelmed by the abundance of new stimuli (the hardness of the floor on which they fell, the sound of other goats bleating and their bells tinkling, as the sudden appearance of light and smells), they bleat for the very first time. After a long period of just listening, the baby goat is finally able to answer their mother's call. Their aural bond becomes complete as they learn each other's calls. What is more, the first call becomes a sign of life — as mentioned before, the vocal call (just like voice) has its origin in breath, deep inside the body, and is then released and travels through the soundscape, reaching others. The sight of other goats reacting to the new-born's calls underlines its power — in the flow of sounds, some goats pick it up instantly.

Let us move on to the little white goat's last call. The goat herd is being led to the pasture on the hills. They are depicted passing the bridge, then the meadows, and enter the forest. They all jump through a small ditch on their way up the hill. The soundscape is dominated by the chaotic choir of tinkling bells as well as the calls of young goats and the responses of the adult goats, possibly mothers. The white goat (who has grown up to be a curious young goat) is left behind, stuck in a ditch, and makes a series of long and loud calls to attract the attention of

others – all in vain. The call reverberates through the woods as the herd disappears, the sound of bells becoming faint. The call of another young goat can be heard from afar — could they respond to the call of their lost companion? Yet, nobody comes to the rescue. The little white goat makes three calls — two high-pitched and long ones, the last one a bit shorter and finishing on a slightly lower note than the others — could this be a sign of exhaustion and resignation? The hopelessness is reinforced by the very low angle shot depicting tree crowns waving with the wind and rustling loudly as the faint call of the goat comes from offscreen.

The little one finally manages to leave the ditch and wanders around the forest; at first, their calls are quieter, low-pitched, and short, then they become longer and louder again – they definitely call for help and give a hint of their location to the others, however, all the calls fall on deaf ears. The goat manages to climb the top of the hill and their call travels through the landscape – so full of life, yet empty as nobody seems to respond. Finally, the little white goat rests by the roots of a lone tree on top of the hill. The dusk comes and the final goat's calls are met with a choir of crickets. As night comes, the goat falls silent, one can hear only conversing crickets.

Fig. 9. Little white goat left behind in a ditch (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

The film provides the spectator with enough context to understand that the call of the goat is a sign of their distress and a signal for others to come to the rescue. What makes this call particularly powerful is, paradoxically, its powerlessness: although the little white goat's calls are mostly very loud, high-pitched, and long — so they are strong enough to travel through the vast forest – they fail to travel far enough or break through the calls of other goats and the sound of all the tinkling bells, and do not attract anyone's attention. The little white goat calls in order to let others know of their location but also in anticipation of a response and a reaction. Even though another young goat seems to respond to their call, nothing happens. Unlike in the birth scene, the little white goat is left all alone and is unable to find their way to the herd. The little goat and their call could have easily been lost in the crowd of tens of goats walking up the hill.

In the final shots of the scene, the goat keeps bleating at dusk, however, crickets are the only one to respond. The soundscape soon goes back to normal — the goat no longer calls; the cricket choir presides. The absence of the goat's call, which dominated the soundscape of the entire scene, weighs heavily — the last call made by the little goat turns out to be the final one. The closing shot parallels to a certain extent the opening shot of the birth scene – the image in both is either completely black, or very dim, and the call of the young goat is not present. Unlike in the birth scene, however, the call of the mother is also missing. The life cycle of the little white goat is complete — it ends where it begun — in darkness and in the little goat's own silence.

What makes these calls powerful and striking, is that they touch upon universal values: life, mother-child bond, a sense of vulnerability, and death. They have the ability to move the spectator emotionally, or at least provoke a reflection, because they are bound to fundamental experiences of living beings. By focusing on the life and death of a little goat, the film invites

the spectator to think about existence and experience beyond human. The call plays a crucial role in this film: it embodies the anticipation of the world outside, the emotional bond between the mother and her child, the first sign of life, which announces one's arrival, but also a sense of distress, a hopeless call for help.

Fig. 10. Little white goat lost in the dark (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

The film provides space, time, and enough context for the spectator to find all these aspects in the little goat's bleating. Since *Le Quattro Volte* belong to the slow cinema tradition, it comprises of a selection of scenes that depict episodes from the life in rural Italy, most of them could be considered as insignificant and banal, yet rich and thought-provoking upon closer inspection. In the case of the baby goat, the film depicts moments in the goat's life that are the most crucial, one of a kind, and this strengthens and gives saliency to their calls, which in turn, might provoke an emotional response in the viewer. It is difficult not to marvel at the new-born goat bleating, knowing it is the very first time they make a sound. Similarly, the spectator might experience distress and concern for the little goat when hearing their long, loud, high-pitched calls when they are left behind in the ditch. The call is powerful because it is able to touch the spectator in a two-fold manner: on the one hand, it is due to the acoustic quality of the distress

78

and separation calls, which have the power to move with the vulnerability they carry within, on the other hand, it is the universally shared context in which the calls occur, which makes them intelligible and relatable.

The powerful call is an exemplary case for creating a separate category for nonhuman sonic or vocal expression. Unlike a sound effect produced by an object, the powerful call bespeaks not only of the being who makes the call but has an affective charge of a different kind than the sound made by, for instance, the creaking doors. As Don Ihde observed, the sounds of inanimate objects (which he calls *the voice of things*) provide information solely on the physical properties of objects, whereas the sounds made by nonhuman animals (*animal voices*) have an emotional charge as animals are living beings capable of communication (Ihde 2007, pp. 192—193). Although sound effects produced by inanimate objects can have an affective power, which depends on the context in which they are heard — in horror film, a sound of creaking doors can increase a sense of tension or even scare the spectator, the nonhuman call can emotionally move the spectator — by making them scared, concerned, or even amused, but due to the animal's communicability the call also opens up space for reflection on what the nonhuman animal call might mean.

The powerful vocal call touches us — after all, sound is both a sonic and tactile sense. On the one hand, the powerful call dominates the soundscape as soon as it appears, yet, as any other sound, it is elusive and disperses almost as soon as it comes to be. However, due to its tactile component, the call reverberates in the spectator's body and influences them with its affective charge. The powerful call not only carries and speaks of its own bodily origin, but also touches upon something basic, universal, shared among all living beings: the fact of being alive, embodied, entangled in a relation with oneself and everything and everyone around. This complex nature of the nonhuman call makes it different from a sound effect generated by an

object, thus, a new category is needed to distinguish it from other sounds. Nevertheless, not all calls are powerful in such a sense – they might not relate so directly to these basic, universal values shared among living beings. Some of them might function in a form of a rather usual conversation, a way to negotiate one's way through everyday life, which despite its seeming banality, is still tied to the most intimate and fundamental aspects of life.

The Cross-species Conversation

In this section I would like to focus on the call of a very vocal dog, Vuk, a border collie and the herder's companion, and how he is depicted interacting with both humans and goats. Through barking, he communicates with others, bridging the gap between different species, and attempts to regulate their behaviour. The scene takes place during Good Friday and the people from the village take part in staging the Way of the Cross, some of them dressed in clothing stylised for the time period. This procession passes the farm where Vuk lives with the herder and the goats, all of which Vuk is guarding carefully. First, Vuk encounters the truck with Roman soldiers, who ignore his barks, even when he stands in their way. Not long after, Vuk approaches a woman who arrived on the hill. She keeps her arms close to her body and moves away, scared and unsure about the dog's intention. Vuk stands in a non-confrontational way — with his side towards the woman. The offscreen sound of drums and trumpets becomes increasingly louder, and Vuk replies to the solemn and military music with a call as he leaves the woman and stands in front of the road. He and the goats curiously observe the oncoming crowd of dressed people. Vuk approaches the crowd and barks at the Roman soldiers who chase him off to the nearby bushes. As Vuk comes back to the road, he meets a boy who tries to join the procession. The boy, scared by Vuk's barking, tries to distract the dog by throwing pebbles and trying to pass him by. Finally, he manages to run by Vuk's side and joins the group. The dog then walks towards a car and removes the brick placed behind one of the wheels, which

results in the truck rolling down and destroying the fence — goats bleat loudly as the enclosure is destroyed with a loud bang. Vuk tries to catch up with the procession and keeps barking, but people ignore him, so he returns to find all the goats roaming on the road. He tries to herd them by barking at them, however, with no luck — one of the goats even threatens him with their horns.

Fig. 11. Vuk being chased by the man dressed as a Roman soldier during the procession
(*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

Fig. 12. Vuk being challenged by a goat (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

As mentioned before, nonhuman calls can often be territorial, and Vuk spends his days tending to the goat herd. Therefore, his barking at various people passing by the goat enclosure can be seen as a sign of him being protective of the herd. The call is directed at each person and Vuk succeeds in attracting their attention — this enables him to interact with strangers and assess their intentions. Some ignore his call, others react fearfully — unsure of Vuk's own motives. Their cross-species conversation plays out through short verbal commands, Vuk's barks in response, as well as gestures and body postures. The aims of each side are being negotiated: people want to pass by the enclosure, Vuk wants to ensure the safety of his herd. The dog's call reveals that he is both agitated but also peaceful — the call is a relatively high bark, free of growl or any other low and guttural tones. This is reinforced by his posture as he stands mostly with his side towards the people or addresses them from a distance — in a non-confrontational way. Although some are unsure of what Vuk's call might possibly mean, they still manage to negotiate with him their relation to the territory: they manage to pass him by, yet without coming too close to the enclosure and he lets them go once it is certain they do not aim to approach the herd. Cross-species conversations are not free from misunderstandings.

The scene demonstrates the dynamic aspect of the call. Success in understanding Vuk is tied to the characters' (as well as the spectator's) knowledge of and familiarity with dogs. Their communication is filled with misunderstandings because human characters are not certain of the dog's intentions. They neither understand his barking, nor his body language, nor his position as the herder and guardian of the goats. Similarly, initially Vuk might not be aware of the human characters' intentions either. At first, he prevents them from passing by the goat enclosure. However, as the time goes by, he finally lets each one of them pass without attacking anyone. Sometimes it might be down to Vuk's own assessment that the person poses no threat

to the goats, other times, he backs away because he stands no chance in a confrontation (as in the case with the procession where Roman soldiers chase him away).

Therefore, if we treat Vuk's barking as simple sound effects – possibly, a materialising sound index of the village dog – then the scene will present a very vocal dog who keeps bothering human characters and disrupts their procession. However, if we consider Vuk's barking (as well as his bodily expression) as the call and his encounters with human characters as an instance of an interspecies conversation, a different reading of the scene will arise. The reading that then emerges is that the scene shows members of two different species, and of various *Umwelten,* who are trying to negotiate their needs and responsibilities with one another as their paths cross. Their conversation reveals how they attempt to communicate their intentions to one another, and how their familiarity and knowledge of one another enhance, or impede this negotiation. Human characters are scared of Vuk, who forces them to stop, or at least slow down, and Vuk achieves his initial goal since it gives him time to judge whether the characters are benign or not before letting them pass. Thus, in the first encounters, Vuk's calls aim to attract people's attention in order to negotiate their passage in the close proximity of the enclosure. However, this changes when, following a mischievous trick of the dog himself, the truck rolls straight into the enclosure, damaging the fence. Following the accident, Vuk runs swiftly to catch up with the procession and barks at the crowd. Here Vuk's aim seems to be not to guard off the people until it is certain they are not dangerous but to attract their attention and make them follow him to the destroyed enclosure. As people fail to understand his call, Vuk runs back to find entire herd wandering around the road. Unlike in the first part of the scene, Vuk's call is not understood, and he does not manage to influence people's behaviour in the way he intends. He tried to raise the alarm, however, with no success.

Similarly, Vuk's call fails to provoke an anticipated reaction from the unruly goats. As he tries to gather them and herd them back into the enclosure, most of them disregard his calls (too occupied exploring the surroundings and satisfying their curiosity by entering formerly inaccessible places) or chase him off. However, unlike in the previous part of the scene, it is not due to goat's lack of familiarity with Vuk's expression, but rather with their refusal to listen to his calls. Vuk and the goats have a special relationship — the herder and the herded — and he guards the goats when they are within as well as outside of the enclosure, but also, he controls their passage between the enclosure and the pastures, normally making sure no goat is left behind or goes astray. Both parties know each other and are attuned to each other's expression, they work together. Nevertheless, once the goats come on the road, they refuse to follow Vuk's lead and not only do not let him herd them into a one big group, but they also challenge his attempts when they become too forceful — one goat charges straight into Vuk, forcing him to move away and leave the goats be as they roam all over the village. The interspecies conversation between Vuk and the goats highlights these goats have their own intentions and desires, which they communicate to Vuk by refusing to adopt a previous role. They are more than familiar with Vuk's actions as the herder, yet they choose not to conform. On the other hand, Vuk is frantically trying to perform his role as the herder and finally gives up once he gets a warning from the goat.

The scene involving the procession itself can also be analysed in terms of territorial negotiations — Vuk being chased off by the Roman soldiers as he interrupts the procession while protecting the enclosure. However, one can also reflect on the scene as Vuk's attempt to participate in the procession itself. The dog's call pierces through solemn silence of the crowd, punctuated only with the beating of the drum and the sound of the trumpet. Vuk's responding to the sound of the instruments, adding another layer to the soundscape of the Good Friday event. His persistent barking as the procession walks slowly down the road, with one man

dressed as Jesus Christ and carrying a wooden cross, invites to think about the place of nonhumans, specifically dogs, in the story that the crowd re-enacts. The dog's constant and loud barks contrast with the solemn silence of the people, disturbing the contemplative mood and bringing their attention back to the here and now.

Furthermore, Vuk stands right in the way of the procession, disrupting and slightly delaying their passage – could this hint at an encounter that has not been mentioned in the scriptures? According to the Bible, on his way to the mountain, Jesus meets numerous people (these encounters are described in several Stops of the Way of the Cross), why would not he meet a dog, especially at the town's outskirts? Could Vuk participate in the event in order to re-enact this canine-human/divine meeting, the Station absent from the walls of churches and cathedrals? Would the dog sense, or *know*, something important was happening, hence his attempt to communicate with the crowd? Would his call address the Roman soldiers, or the prisoner, or maybe the quiet crowd following them? The dog witnessing the crowd is being chased off by the soldiers, and the procession follows uninterrupted. The dog's call and its real addressee remain a mystery.

The introduction of the call as a distinct category of sounds offers other ways in which one can reflect on the sequences with Vuk's encounters and misadventures. The dog's barking dominates the soundscape and to consider it solely in terms of sound effects would impoverish the ways in which one can look at the sequence. One could focus on the human characters' perception of Vuk as a very vocal and mischievous dog who constantly disrupts their plans and causes trouble. However, if one considers Vuk's barking as an instance of an intentional and communicative call, then the emphasis would shift from human characters to Vuk and one could wonder what he is trying to communicate throughout the sequence. Instead of a loud and troublesome border collie, who bothers human characters for no clear reason, one would see

Vuk as a herder who forces strangers to stop in order to assess whether they pose any threat to the goats he is responsible for.

In all instances, Vuk encounters various characters and attempts to communicate with them, and the scene foregrounds these canine-human and canine-goat interactions. Hence it is worth discussing it in terms of cross-species conversation. This category of the call underlines the interactive character of the sequence, yet all means of vocal (as well as kinaesthetic etc.) communication are emphasised, unlike in a human dialogue, where human speech takes the central role. The sequence is funny because, in addition to Vuk destroying the goat enclosure, and therefore failing his duty as the goat herder and guardian, there is such a big communication gap and attempts to bridge it are often futile. On the one hand, human characters do not clearly understand Vuk's intentions, yet they still do (to a certain extent) what he wants, on the other hand, some of them choose to ignore his calls due to their lack of understanding, or the will to understand, whereas goats, who know Vuk and his expression all too well, wilfully disregard his calls and challenge him if he tries too hard. The sequence, thus, turns the idea of animal muteness, their inability to communicate, on its head, showing that in some instances (and probably more often than not) humans are the clueless ones.

The Cryptic Call

As the previous sequence has shown, some calls might not be as easily understandable for the human spectator due to either their lack of familiarity with particular manifestations of nonhuman expression, too many differences in their respective *Umwelten,* or insufficient cues provided by the film. Therefore, the crypticness of the call will vary from one species to another, or even across individuals within each species. It underlines, again, that the call is a dynamic category that will shift depending on the spectator's *Umwelt,* familiarity, and knowledge. The word 'cryptic' might hold a negative connotation as something that is

purposefully rendered ambiguous – something that will only be accessible to those who know the code, or cipher. However, I would like to abandon this negative resonance and simultaneously challenge humanistic drive for knowledge and mastery: the uncertainty should not be perceived as an impediment but an opportunity to reflect humbly on the limits of human cognition, on the unreachable secret of the other, and embrace the wonder of sharing the same world while living in very different worlds.

Shortly after Vuk's mischievous trick and chaos that follows, the camera cuts from a long shot of goats roaming around the enclosure to the long shot inside the herder's kitchen. The scene inside the kitchen consists of a single uninterrupted take, the centre of the immobile frame is dominated by a goat standing on top of the sturdy kitchen table. Between the goat and the camera – a pot full of snails (caught by the herder), positioned on the edge of the table. The goat initially looks away from the camera, their head facing the entrance which overlooks the main road – from where the herder dog's barking and the tinkling of small bells worn by some of the goats can be heard. The goat bleats loudly and turns towards the camera, notices the pot and nudges it with their nose until it falls on the floor with a loud clang. The goat slightly tilts their head while looking at the pot, then raises their head and bleats as soon as they hear the call of another goat coming from outside. The goat turns towards the entrance once more and keeps bleating, soon they are accompanied by a response from the goats walking on the road.

Due to its shot duration (almost a minute of an uninterrupted take) and fixed frame, the scene invites the spectator to reflect on the goat's call. Pushed to the foreground, the call is hardly a mere sound effect that locates the action in the countryside. The film's attentiveness to the goat's behaviour and expression encourages the spectator to wonder whether the goat made a call to simply let others know of their location? Did the goats exchange the calls in order to

stick together while wandering around, ensuring none go astray as they are free to explore their surroundings?

Fig. 13. Goat on the table (*Le Quattro Volte,* 2010)

Goats, highly sociable and vocal animals, provide through their vocalisations information not only about their location, but also age, sex, and position within the group, as well as positive and negative emotions (Briefer and McElligott 2011). The herd of goats, suddenly released and unsupervised by the herder or his dog, experience freedom for (possibly) the very first time. Although they split into smaller groups and spread around the village, they stay very vocal and none seems to be left behind. Even the goat in the kitchen, although exploring the interiors alone, still keeps in touch with the rest by exchanging calls. Therefore, the kitchen scene might reflect on the sociability of goats, on the sense of nonhuman community that they create and maintain even when they are no longer trapped in the enclosure and have all the freedom to roam.

Another element to consider when reflecting on the call made by the goat is the sturdy kitchen table on top of which they stand. Could the goat's call provide some information on the kitchen

and the table? Could the call also manifest contentment, a sense of comfort and even enjoyment that goat might experience when able to explore previously unavailable places, climb on various tall objects and investigate the world from a different perspective? Goats are among the best climbers in the animal kingdom, it is thus probable that the act of accessing taller piece of furniture, or steep hills gives them a sense of security (since they are less accessible to predators) and satisfies their curiosity. Thus, the goat's call might not only provide information on their location, but also their state — maybe a call for others to come and join them on the table?

Whether any of these possibilities truly reflects on what is behind the goat's call remains unknown, hence my decision to name this call a cryptic one. The spectator might not be provided with enough context in order to make a confident inference on what the goat expresses. This uncertainty might also stem from the spectator's unfamiliarity with goats and their behaviour. Such a scene brings forth the possibilities as well as the limits of exploring the nonhuman call. Even though the spectator cannot be sure what the goat's call carries, this lack of knowledge might not be necessarily understood in negative terms. On the other hand, it might be a humbling experience of reaching the limits of knowledge and letting the cryptic call remain such. Nevertheless, the cryptic call can guide the spectator's attention elsewhere – for instance, following Ihde, to the quality of the sound itself and its bodily origin – and discover that the cryptic call can also be powerful.

The Cryptic Call once more

Let us think about the goat's cryptic call once more, with the goat's undulating belly as the breath that arises in the midst of their body transforms into a bleat. The air which reverberates through and animates the goat's body and leaves it with a shaky call which alters the soundscape. The call, despite human spectator's uncertainty regarding its meaning, does

something important: it announces the goat's presence. This call, which had its origin inside the body full of life, and which could not be made without a life-carrying breath, speaks *I am.* Bringing the goat's call into relief and focusing on its tactile origin – something it carries within and speaks of — empowers the call as the aural manifestation of the goat's embodiment and vitality. It becomes an instance of Chion's 'materialising sound index', which locates the call firmly within the corporeal realm (Chion 1994, p. 114). Goat's cryptic call has the potential to affect the spectator — to 'touch them at a distance', to use Murray Schafer's expression (Schafer 1994, p. 11). The spectator might not understand what the call means for the goat, unlike goats who know it very well, yet it still has the affective power to 'prick', to channel the spectator's attention and transform their perception of the soundscape – enrich their listening of the nonhuman animal call.

The cryptic and powerful call can be an instance of what Barbara Klinger calls an 'arresting image', a scene that slows down, or brings to a halt, the narrative due to its striking, extraordinary, yet narratively obscure audiovisual qualities. Because of the lack of clarity, the spectator is invited to look back into their previous filmic experience in search for analogous instances, in order to make sense of the affective power of such an image (Klinger 2006, pp. 24—25). Klinger limits this previous knowledge to film, but it could be expanded beyond the film to life experience more generally – hence, my focus on the goat's expression of vitality, which is something all living beings share and something that has the potential to strongly reverberate in others.

Furthermore, even though Klinger acknowledges the audiovisual aspect of film, she emphasises the image: the term she coined, 'arresting image', attests to this domination of the visual. The cryptic and powerful call, on the other hand, moves the focus onto sound. However, it does not mean that the image should be entirely dismissed — it is an important component

of the overall scene that helps to render the call both cryptic and powerful. The self-announcement of the goat is reinforced visually — the goat, after all, is standing on top of the table, as if on a pedestal. The goat's bodily and aural presence is emphasised by the audiovisual foregrounding, which also slows down even further the narrative progression of the film. Although the scene does not last more than two minutes, it appears to be much longer both due to its focus on the goat alone as well as the striking and obscure character of the scene.

I, as the spectator, might not know what the goat's call really means, I can only speculate since my knowledge of goat expression is limited. Yet, the call speaks to me and touches me — it brings forth the long history of life-bearing breath, from the Buddhist tradition and Ancient Greeks to contemporary secularised mindfulness exercises, but it also grounds me in my own breathing, reminds that I too am a breathing and calling body. The cryptic aspect of the call might not speak too clearly to me on a reflective level, yet it speaks to me on a pre-reflective one, from which I can draw my reflection. My experience of the powerful and cryptic call echoes Vivian Sobchack's experience of *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1996), the very same film that Klinger discussed when she introduced 'arresting images'(Sobchack 2004).

Conclusion: neither mute nor dumb

Each section of this chapter focused on a different instance of the vocal call: the powerful call rises above the cross-species barriers, the cross-species conversation enables beings with varying *Umwelten* to communicate due to shared familiarity with each other's expression (although it is not free from misunderstandings), while the cryptic call might be only accessible to certain species or individuals. Nevertheless, these categories should not be treated as impermeable – not only they are in constant transformation as various calls will be perceived differently from one individual to another, from one *Umwelt* to another, also, these categories are porous: they bleed into one another, forming a continuum rather than an archipelago of

separate islands. Such an approach makes space for non-hierarchical reflections beyond the human on the nature and the meaning of the call because it acknowledges and accommodates the complexity of both human and nonhuman animal life.

Introducing the vocal call into the discussion of film sound offers an even more nuanced differentiation of sounds and a more productive discussion of nonhuman expression. First of all, the call overcomes the conflation of sounds made by living beings and those produced by inanimate objects by underlying the communicable and meaningful nature of nonhuman animal sounds. This does not mean that some nonhuman animal calls do not assume the function of sound effects, in a similar fashion that a human voice sometimes does. Introducing the call also avoids the hierarchisation which the term 'voice' would inevitably establish, as we have seen in the discussion of Ihde's model. It is worth noting, however, that although in the diagram depicting the division of film sounds the call and the voice are separate but equal categories, in the call diagram the human voice would be a subtype of the vocal call. As I have underlined before, human expression is also categorised as calls, hence my decision to name the calls I discuss here nonhuman animal calls — to maintain and highlight this distinction. Since the majority of films are made with human characters and with human audiences in mind, I acknowledge and do not oppose the existence of the human voice as an equivalent category of sound — after all, I am human and I am most attuned to human speech, therefore it makes sense to dedicate it a separate category. Should the films be made for dogs, it would be a variety of canine expressions that would have been distinguished and nuanced, and the human voice would be yet another subtype of a vocal call. Nevertheless, as I have previously pointed out, there are films, and *Le Quattro Volte* is one of them, which do not single out human voices, but rather acknowledge it as a vocal call among others.

Furthermore, the distinction between the call and sound effects plays an important role in analysing nonhuman animal performance, by positioning nonhuman animal vocalisations in relation to the anthropocentric framework, the dominant framework in film. This way, we can create a more nuanced and complex overview of the ways in which nonhuman animal sounds function in film and whether they reinforce the dominant anthropocentrism or subvert it. By paying closer attention to nonhuman animal calls, we can assess whether they are abstracted from nonhuman animal bodies that produce them or are an intimate and inseparable part of them — communicating nonhuman animal condition and personal experience with each call raised. The call as a notion enables a more complex discussion of the place and meaning of nonhuman animal sounds, where both the meaning for humans and nonhumans can be explored, thus, rendering the analysis more polyphonic and multidimensional. As emphasised during the discussion of the scene starring Vuk, the goats, and humans, when nonhuman animal calls take the centre stage, and when cross-species communication that leaves out humans is included, the calls can encourage a reflection on richness, variety, and mystery of nonhuman animal expression and communication. The call can draw our attention to our own (often self-imposed) limitations and the limits of our comprehension, which invites a sense of humility and encourages humans to attune themselves to nonhuman animal calls.

Finally, acknowledging the existence of the nonhuman animal call and its properties can encourage a shift in nonhuman animal representation, in which nonhuman animal expression will neither be abstracted from its bodily origin, assume the role of a contextualising cue, or an anthropocentric metaphor, nor it will be distorted through negative anthropomorphism. Instead, nonhuman animal calls will be embodied, embedded, communicable, and meaningful — thus, revealing the polyphonic, multi-species world in which we all live but which is so often hidden from us humans.

Chapter II: Nonhuman Animal Call — Kinaesthetic Call

Just as in photography, writes Siegfried Kracauer, early cinema polarised towards two tendencies, realist and formalist, which he associated with the two French pioneers of cinema — Louis Lumière and Georges Méliès respectively (Kracauer 1997, p. 30). While the former explored the photographic capacities of cinema to document the flow of life, small everyday incidents, or 'nature in the making', the latter focused on the creation of fiction and fantasy by using theatrical props and developing (often accidentally) various editing techniques, such as superimposition and double exposure (Kracauer 1997, pp. 31—33). It is worth noting, however, as Kracauer points out, that many films oscillate between both tendencies, therefore, the relation between the two should be perceived as a spectrum (1997, p. 36). As Paul Sheehan observes, the weaning appeal of the realist tendency and the rising popularity of the formalist one had a critical impact on the status of nonhuman animals in cinema. While in the realist tendency, open to surprises and contingencies of life, the nonhuman animals were considered cinematic, with the growing popularity of the formalist tendency in filmmaking, the nonhuman animals came to be seen as anti-cinematic and posed a challenge (if not a threat) to the controllable and manipulative mode of filmmaking (2008, pp. 120—121).

These two approaches have been present since the very dawn of cinema. In Lumière's *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895)*,* the spectator will notice a dog walking among the crowd of people coming through the factory gates, supposedly waiting for their human companion's appearance, the dog leaves and re-enters the frame on their own accord and does not appear to be guided in any way by the filmmakers. On the other hand, Edison's *Professor Welton's Boxing Cats* (1894) offers a starkly contrasting approach to animal performance: the film features two cats wearing boxing gloves, who are engaged in sparring match on a miniature boxing ring, the cats' movements manipulated to a considerable extent by the man

in the background who appears to hold both cats by their harnesses. While the former privileges the spontaneity and contingency of both human and canine movements, the latter suppresses feline behaviour and spontaneous expression by situating the cats within an anthropomorphic spectacle of a boxing fight.

One hundred years on, slow cinema, which often assumes nonhuman animals as its main characters, echoes the realist approach of Lumière's early films. Slow cinema, also known as contemplative cinema, is characterised by the use of long takes, decreased pace of editing, and placing emphasis on creating a certain mood and atmosphere over developing a plot (Elsaesser 2011, p. 117). With its long takes, little to no camera movement, and floating narrative structure, slow cinema offers an alternative to more tightly constructed mainstream productions, which could be seen as contemporary representatives of the formalist tendency, the pinnacle of which would be digital and animation film. Paul Sheehan and Michael Lawrence underline how the digital cinema gave rise to the 'practically infinite manipulability', to borrow Lawrence's term, and in relation to nonhuman animals, a way of taming the contingencies of animal bodies and their behaviour (Sheehan 2008, p. 132; Lawrence 2015). This enabled representations of the nonhuman animal body that would be accurate yet also fully controllable at the same time. On the one hand, digital technology made it possible to stop the use of nonhuman animals on the sets altogether, which was always an ethically questionable practice. On the other hand, by resorting to entirely man-made representation of nonhuman animals as constructs, deprived of the spontaneity and idiosyncrasy of the living beings, it moved cinema further away from the potential of a loyal and fair representation of the nonhuman animals, their living conditions and perspectives.

The kinaesthetic call is directly related to nonhuman animal characters' bodily expression — their gestures, postures, facial expressions, and actions, which are, just like in terms of the vocal

call, both intentional and communicative. In 'Films, gestures, species' Barbara Creed suggests that the universal appeal of film, tied to its ability to represent poses and gestures, which overcome the linguistic barrier, could go even further than connecting various human communities and bridge the gap between human and nonhuman animals by emphasising their shared non-verbal expression (2015, p. 44). Such a potential is undoubtedly prone to misrepresentations: our limited knowledge of nonhuman animal expression means that many such calls will remain cryptic to human audiences, while others risk becoming negatively anthropomorphised, that is, their meaning can be misunderstood by drawing a false analogy with an equivalent human expression. This does not mean, however, that overcoming some of these obstacles is impossible. In *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy — and Why They Matter,* Marc Bekoff demonstrates that nonhumans convey their emotions through a variety of non-verbal channels: from the movement of tails and ears, through the alteration of bodily posture, or facial expression, to the secretion of odours and hormones (2007, pp. 13, 45, 47 — 48). He maintains that as much as nonhumans will remain a mystery to a certain extent, their 'emotional experiences are transparent' (Bekoff 2007, p. 13). Bekoff goes on stating that we are able to establish close connections with other species due to our ability to recognise our pets' needs (2007, p. 19). Finally, he believes that if we attune ourselves to the nonhuman expression, we will be more receptive of the message they communicate (Bekoff 2007, p. 44). Therefore, despite differences, there is a possibility to overcome mutual misunderstanding, at least partly, and make accurate inferences about the other species' expression.

As explored before, animals, including humans, negotiate their relations with one another and their surroundings through non-verbal (and in some cases, verbal) means. Through postures, gestures, expressions and actions, we establish hierarchies, or relations in respective groups, form close bonds, provoke or avoid conflicts. Just as in some instances of the vocal call — the

powerful one — our kinaesthetic call can overcome interspecies barriers and enable us to communicate across various species. However, it can also lead to misunderstandings, such as the opposing tail-language of cats and dogs, where the expression of irritation in the cats can be read by dogs as a sign of enthusiasm and vice-versa. What is more, some instances of kinaesthetic calls can be so subtle that they are almost imperceptible to the human spectator. Such cases will be explored further in the second section of this chapter.

Since cinematography and editing can play a prominent role in the construction of nonhuman animal performance, it is important to reintroduce the concept of the cinematic call, of which these film techniques can be manifestations. The cinematic call functions as an appeal to pay attention to the nonhuman characters and their calls. It can assist nonhuman animal calls – strengthen their impact on the human spectator as well as create space for nonhuman animal calls to occupy. Through its attention to the nonhuman kinaesthetic call, the cinematic call problematises the realist-formalist dichotomy I introduced at the beginning of this chapter: although the two tendencies take different approaches toward the nonhuman animal performers, they both have a potential for making a cinematic call on behalf of the nonhumans.

Despite their more controlling structure, films that gravitate towards the formalist tendency often succeed in creating powerful, memorable, and engaging nonhuman animal characters, which are striking to their audiences and invite them to reflect on human-animal relations. Therefore, such films can make a powerful call that the audiences might understand and respond to. However, this often occurs at the expense of a more loyal and mindful representation of nonhuman animals, and leads to what André Bazin calls negative anthropomorphism — 'removing what is animal about them and obscuring their nature' (cited by Pick 2011, p. 111). This leads to a great paradox: the more open, respectful and loyal to the nonhuman animal our cinema becomes, the higher the risk of the alienation of a vast group of

spectators. Once nonhuman animal characters are freed from 'humanlike' traits, their actual demeanour and behaviour might turn out to be mystifying, cryptic, or simply uninteresting to some human spectators. The following question arises: how can we reconcile these conflicting tendencies and overcome the paradox in favour of the nonhuman animal characters and the nonhuman animals who play them? How can we embrace a less controlling and more open mode of filmmaking, respectful towards nonhuman animals, while enabling the spectator to engage emotionally and intellectually with the nonhuman characters? What could be the role of the call in overcoming this problem?

One possible solution to this conundrum is challenging the current spectatorial experience by inviting different modes of filmmaking and film spectatorship for the spectator to embrace. Such a process would have to occur gradually in order to give enough time to the spectator to attune themselves to what for them might be an unfamiliar mode of filmmaking and film viewing experience. This could be done by offering a blend of the two tendencies as a middle way between negatively anthropomorphic films and animalcentric, yet often alienating, productions. In order to explore such a solution, however, it is important to discuss the nonhuman animal performance since realist and formalist tendencies favour very different approaches to the subject. At the same time, it is worth noting that both tendencies can inform as well as reshape one another in the process of creating the middle ground.

Nonhuman animals assume various roles in films, from protagonists to what some scholars would brand as props. Nevertheless, as pointed out already, even as protagonists, their performances can differ considerably depending on a film leaning either in a realist or a formalist direction. Therefore, it is important to explore in greater detail the connection between the two tendencies and the construction of the nonhuman animal performance, as well as the question of positive and negative anthropomorphism. In other words, I will explore how

these two traditions respond to the nonhuman call — suppress it, or let it emerge — and how they can provide instances of the cinematic call, which channels the spectator's attention towards nonhumans. To do so, I will explore the possibilities and limitations of realist and formalist tendencies, with a special regard to the construction of the nonhuman animal acting and performance.

First, I will analyse Hagen, the abandoned stray-turned-leader of the canine revolution in Kornél Mundruczó's *White God,* which offers an example of a film moving closer to a formalist tendency. *White God* largely uses training as a method of constructing nonhuman performance, but also departs from it, thus exploring more animalcentric avenues, which foreground canine personal expression. The discussion, therefore, will focus on the problematic relation between training nonhuman performers and the nonhuman animal call, which will also lead to the question of acting and the way it is defined.

Then, I will move onto the bovine characters in Emmanuel Gras's *A Cow's* to explore slow cinema's approach towards animals that abandons starification and glamourisation of the nonhuman characters for the sake of a more loyal portrayal of the bovine community. This means that the film do not shy away from making the spectator face the crypticness and opacity of bovine calls, which in turn invites reflections on bovine perception and cognition as well as the bovine conception of time and event, which seems radically different from a human one. This brings me to a discussion of the revelatory potential of cinematic calls: through the patient attentiveness to nonhuman animal calls manifested through editing and cinematography, the film can reveal the complexity and richness of bovine life, which subverts the common misconceptions regarding cows as dumb and mindless (which is embodied in the common slur 'stupid cow').

Finally, I will reflect on the possibility of reconciling the two opposing tendencies in order to, on the one hand, represent nonhuman animal characters more faithfully, and, on the other hand, to create engaging narratives and characters that would invite the spectator to emotionally engage with the nonhuman characters as well as to think about the nonhuman animal condition. The kinaesthetic call is a focal point and a nexus that links both tendencies: while the realist tendency is interested in the prioritisation of the nonhuman animal character's own expression over tightly constructed and trained cue-and-response performance, the formalist one seeks the ways of either productively incorporating nonhuman animal calls into the narrative structure, or constructing narratives based on, or in collaboration with the nonhuman animal character's kinaesthetic calls. Creed acknowledges that the role of nonhuman animal gestures in the film experience has been neglected by theorists even further than the role of human non-verbal communication. In the light of Creed's assertion that film has the 'power to speak – through gesture – to the human spectator about the emotional lives of animals' as well as 'about the animal *in* the human,' this appears to be a serious omission, which needs to be addressed (2015, p. 45, emphasis original). Before we move on to a more detailed discussion of formalist and realist tendencies in film, particularly in relation to nonhuman animal performance, it is important to engage with the question of acting: are nonhuman animals who star in film productions performers or actors?

The question of animal acting

Despite wide discussions on animal stardom and celebration of some nonhuman animals as actors (by offering them the Palme Dog Award in Cannes for their captivating onscreen performances, such as was Vuk, the very vocal dog starring in *Le Quattro Volte,* as well as all the dogs starring in *White God*), most scholars agree that nonhuman animals are incapable of acting. This is the case especially if acting is defined, following Stephen Prince, as 'the

ostensive behaviour that occurs on set to portray characters and story action' (cited by Lawrence 2015, p. 116). A similar view is found in James Naremore's definition of acting, a 'special type of theatrical performance in which the persons held up for show have become agents in a narrative'(1990, p. 23). These definitions are much more specific than the one proposed by Michael Kirby, for whom 'to act means to feign, to simulate, to represent, to impersonate' (1972, p. 1). Despite an ostensibly simple definition, Kirby's idea of what acting is becomes much more nuanced as he introduces a scale of various stages of acting found on a continuum starting from 'not-acting' and ending with 'acting'.

Fig. 14. Kirby's Not-Acting-Acting Scale

Kirby underlines that the difference between each step is quantitative rather than qualitative: what sets not-acting and acting apart is the '***amount*** of acting' they contain (1972, p. 3, emphasis original). Furthermore, Kirby adds that complex acting should not be perceived as inherently superior to other modes: '"simple" acting (…) may be very "good," while complex acting is not necessarily "good" and may, indeed, be quite "bad"' (1972, p. 8). The scale begins with 'non-matrixed performing' that is, the stage at which the performer does 'nothing to feign, simulate, impersonate' and Kirby provides stage attendants as an example (1972, p. 3). The next step is a 'non-matrixed representation' or 'non-matrixed symbolisation', where the performer still does not act but is nevertheless acknowledged as a character due to their characterisation, or costume (Kirby 1972, p. 4). Kirby highlights that at this stage 'the referential elements are applied **to** the performer and are not acted **by** him', and due to the

weakness of these referential elements, the spectator will not perceive the performer as an actor, but a person (1972, p. 5, emphasis original). As these referential elements, the matrices, become more prominent, it becomes increasingly difficult to perceive the performer as a person, even if they do not do anything to feign, or impersonate. For this reason, Kirby named this step 'received acting', which, despite its name, is still not an instance of acting since, as Kirby makes clear, 'we define acting as something that is done by a performer rather than something that is done for or to him' (1972, p. 6). Finally, Kirby arrives at the 'acting' side of the spectrum, with 'simple acting'— 'in which only one element or dimension of acting is used' – be it an emotion or an action (1972, p. 8). The more elements are introduced into the pretense, the more complex the acting becomes: '[E]motion may be generalized and unchanging, or it may be specific, modulating and changing frequently within a given period of time. An action may be performed in a simple or a complex way' (Kirby 1972, p. 8).

Just like Prince and Naremore, Kirby's idea of acting is tied to the intentionality of the performer to impersonate. It leads to the contention that animals cannot act because, in Wittgenstein's words, 'the animal world lacks context in which the theatre is recognised as theatre' (cited by ten Bos 2009, p. 433). Such an approach assumes that nonhuman animals cannot act in the same way humans can because they are not aware of the artifice: when they act, they respond to the real world rather than partaking in a make-believe. Therefore, the definition of theatrical acting has been constructed in such a way that the instances of animals acting (understood as either placing oneself on display as peacocks do, or simulating wrestle play, or sexual encounters among dogs) and feigning (such as opossums who feign their own death in the face of danger) remain outside of its scope.

However, there seems to be another aspect assigned to theatrical acting, which bars animals from being considered as capable of acting. René ten Bos recalls his conversation with a guide

in a nature reserve while observing albatrosses performing spectacular wind glides — he suggests that this could be an instance of a theatrical performance, but the guide rejected such a proposition and claimed that it is merely courtship behaviour. Ten Bos observes that for ethologists 'in nature nothing is without efficiency', that every action has its function and there is no place for actions which do not have a direct positive impact on the species survival (ten Bos 2009, p. 434). The anecdote suggests that theatrical performance is considered afunctional and, therefore, it cannot be applied to the nonhuman animal behaviour. Interestingly enough, such a perception reinforces the nature/culture split by placing human behaviour (theatrical performance) outside of nature due to its supposed lack of function, while denying the possibility of nonhuman animals engaging in activities that do not have any direct and immediate evolutionary benefit. What complicates such an approach, however, is the lack of consensus on the function of an activity in which numerous mammals (including humans) and birds, but also reptiles and fish participate, namely play (Burghardt 2015, p. 9—10). Rikke Schubart sums up how Gordon Burghardt divides play into several types, all of which appear in both human and nonhuman animals:

1. Language play (play with sounds)

2. Construction play (building things)

3. Sensorimotor play (moving oneself)

4. Parallel play (playing alongside one another)

5. Pretend play (pretending a yarn is a mouse)

6. Sociodramatic play (pretend extended into role playing)

7. Play fighting

8. Rule-based play (games)

9. Rituals

    (Schubart 2018, pp. 41—42)

Following Burghardt's categorisation, theatrical performance, as well as film acting, would be instances of a sociodramatic play — pretend play extended into role playing. Although there might not be evidence of nonhuman animals engaging in sociodramatic play that would approach its human version in complexity, many nonhuman animals do engage in pretend play and are capable of acting, understood as feigning and simulating. For instance, dogs often self-handicap in order to let their play partner win, and they take turns to ensure everyone wins (Bekoff and Pierce 2009, pp. 116, 120). Just as humans, nonhuman animals engage in play on their own terms and within their own distinct contexts, therefore, trying to fit their behaviour within the human protocols, through coercion or training, might not be as effective as in the case of human actors. The example of play underlines the risk of drawing clear-cut distinctions between natural and cultural behaviours and demonstrates that one should proceed with caution when writing certain behaviours and activities off as merely serving the purpose of survival, or as distanced from nature.

Although Lisa Jevbratt does not discuss play, she offers the example of bowerbirds' extraordinary ornamented nest-like constructions, musicality in numerous birds, as well as a more problematic case of elephants-painters to counter the perception of aesthetic behaviours as alien to nature, therefore, exclusively human (Jevbratt 2009, pp. 12—13). She points out that language and using tools have also been perceived as distinctively human, however, the evidence from other animals led to the re-evaluation of such claims (Jevbratt 2009, p. 12). Therefore, although human acting might appear as much more complex and intricate than its equivalents in other animals, this might not necessarily mean that acting itself is a human-specific behaviour, but rather that different species might be able to engage in acting, yet they do so in different capacities and within their specific contexts.

Stella Hockenhull and Brenda Austin-Smith offer another way of thinking about nonhuman animal performance and our understanding of acting. Stella Hockenhull claims that despite the nonhuman animal's inability to act in the same capacity as a human actor can, they are still capable of simple acting – due to their 'freedom to "make meaningful choices"', which contributes to the establishment of their memorable performances (Hockenhull 2015, p. 186). Hockenhull, whose argument develops from Brenda Austin-Smith's analysis of the donkey's performance in *Au Hasard Balthazar* (Robert Bresson, 1966), claims that in the case of certain films, such as *The Turin Horse* (Béla Tarr, 2011) and *Of Horses and Men* (Benedikt Erlingsson, 2013), the directors allowed for (or arranged to let happen) moments where nonhuman performers could express themselves through their behaviour, bringing their distinct ways of being to the fore, thus, rendering their appearances and performances on screen memorable and so they 'count for something' (Hockenhull 2015, p. 185; Austin-Smith 2012, pp. 20—21, 31). This way, Hockenhull follows Austin-Smith in challenging the perception of acting based on the intentionality of the performer to impersonate a fictional character, the latter of which is the definition of acting that Kirby, Prince, or Naremore support: '[C]onsidering the performance of the donkey tests the claim that belief in a character's reality depends on an actor's creation and communication of that character's inner world and on the intentional performance of an actor' (Austin-Smith 2012, p. 31). Despite their inability to act just as human actors would in the context of the film diegesis and film narrative, these animal performers were still able to provide a striking performance that potentially left a mark on the spectators in a similar vein that human actors would. What made these performances striking, memorable, and 'count for something' for both Austin-Smith and Hockenhull, is the decision to move away from training in order to create conditions for the nonhuman animal call to emerge and bring it to the fore.

Formalism-leaning tendencies and tensions in Hagen's performance in *White God*

White God departs from the realist tendency by its adoption of a highly fictional narrative about the brutal revolt of mistreated dogs against humans. The first part of the film focuses on violence and the exploitation of dogs which occurs on all levels of society. The second part portrays the canine revolution against their human oppressors, led by Hagen, a mixed-breed dog who has been abandoned by his family due to the oppressive law that requires people to pay a fee for keeping crossbreed dogs, and the father of the family's cruelty in his unwillingness to be responsible and pay for Hagen. Since *White God* presents a highly fictionalised event through a clear, tight, conventional narrative structure, dogs starring in the film are inevitably incorporated into the narrative not on their own terms. This assimilation takes place on many levels: acting, cinematography, and editing.

Hagen is constructed as the protagonist of the film through what Pete Porter labels primary and secondary external cues for nonhuman personhood. As will be remembered from the introduction, according to Porter, who introduced the spectrum of cues for nonhuman personhood, primary cues 'invite the attribution of personhood to a nonhuman character performed by a nonhuman', whereas secondary external cues 'assert nonhuman personhood through a human character or narrator' (2006, p. 406). Therefore, primary cues refer to the performance of the dog who plays Hagen, whereas the external secondary cues come from Hagen's interaction with the characters who acknowledge or reinforce his personhood. Let us begin with the secondary external cues. First of all, in contrast to most of the dogs in the film, Hagen is individualised by the attribution of a personal, human name, he is provided with an identity as a mixed-breed dog and a friend (to a human protagonist, Lili) and his complex and dynamic inner states are emphasised. This final point is especially underlined in the scene when Hagen is closed in the bathroom and keeps barking, so Lili refuses to listen to her oppressive

father and spends the night in the bathroom in order to soothe Hagen, who does not want to be locked in and left alone.

What is more, Hagen is also starified — he is like any other abandoned dog (vulnerable to abuse from humans) but he is also a canine revolutionary hero, the leader of the pack of dogs who bring Budapest to a standstill. His position as the superindividual is reinforced in the final scene of the film, where he faces Lili, with all the dogs right behind him and waiting for his command. Therefore, all these elements lead to the creation of the superindividual, the top level of personification, as described by Emmanuel Gouabault et al. (2011, p. 81). Although they described the process of animal personification and its elements in the context of news coverage, the same system can be applied when discussing the construction of nonhuman animal characters in films. Therefore, the attribution of superindividual status to Hagen strengthens the film's construction of his fictional character as the revolutionary figure who mobilised hundreds of oppressed and abused dogs in order to take revenge on those responsible for their misery.

Another element of the starification process could be tied to typecasting: the twin brothers Luke and Body have been selected to portray Hagen. One of the reasons for their nomination could be the plasticity of their faces, where folds around their muzzles amplify their facial expressions, thus playing an important role in cueing emotions, especially when shown in a close-up. This particular feature becomes evident in the film, which offers a myriad of canine faces, none of which is as expressive, in human terms, as those of Luke and Body. Therefore, the twins occupy a privileged position in the film narrative because their prominent facial

expressions are compatible with the anthropocentrism of the spectator, who can read their faces much more effectively.[8]

Fig. 15. Highly expressive face of Hagen (Luke/Body) (*White God,* 2014)

As Porter observes, there is inevitably a problem with personhood, which is defined in human terms, and nonhuman attributes are rarely perceived as reinforcing one's personhood (2006, p. 408). Thus, external secondary cues enable the construction of the canine superindividual and protagonist. However, many of his canine attributes are lost in the process. One might then ask why *White God* introduced this 'human-in-animal-disguise' guerrilla leader rather than focusing on the entire pack, whose nameless members, without known history, play an equal part in the struggle? One answer to this question is that emotional engagement is much more effective on the level of individual characters rather than the collective – knowing someone's name and history, acknowledging their interiority and intentionality, works some way to abolish the distance between oneself and the other, and facilitates sympathising and empathising. Consequently, Hagen, the star, stands not only for himself but for every single one of two hundred dogs who follow him. The presence of a 'star' protagonist and the focus

---

[8] What is more, Luke and Body are the only canine actors who are named in the credits.

on a fictionalised event of the canine uprising might make the film more engaging for the spectator. However, they risk the erasure of the real canine struggle.

White God is described as a 'stunning allegory of the oppressed few savagely fighting back against their privileged abusers.'[9] It might be possible that the most fictional, or at least improbable element of the film, namely the dogs getting together and staging a canine revolution, invites the spectator to perceive the film as an allegory for the struggle against oppression, as one can safely assume that what is meant in this description is the human struggle. However, by treating the film as an allegory, one risks the erasure of the very oppression and abuse that dogs face on a daily basis, and which the film illustrates in a disturbing way: from laws discriminating against mixed breeds, dogs being abandoned by their human companions, to the overcrowded shelters where dogs are killed, to the ruthless world of dog fights. Once the viewer treats this film solely as a metaphor, they refuse Hagen's call for recognition, for taking up the responsibility for dog neglect and abuse in human societies. The spectator can definitely draw a connection to the struggle of underprivileged people across history, however, they should not lose sight of the conflict that the film depicts in a very literal sense – the dogs are among the underprivileged and *White God* is their story. The fact that the second part of the film contains a highly fictional element of the canine rebellion does not make the dog abuse and exploitation depicted in the first part less real, it emphasises the impossibility of dogs rejecting and shaking up the status quo, and thus compels the viewer to take up their responsibility towards the underprivileged and oppressed whose call is too often unheard or ignored.

---

[9] The description has been taken from the Amazon Prime website in September 2017: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/B0126XPV52/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_7

The primary cues for nonhuman personhood concern the role of the nonhuman animal's performance in creation of the nonhuman animal character. As already established, *White God* gravitates towards the formalist tendency, therefore, the construction of Hagen as the character is dominated by the creative decisions of the filmmaker in cooperation with dog trainers. In order to achieve specific behaviours and reactions, the dogs playing Hagen are provided with verbal and gestural cues by the handler staying off-screen. It is particularly evident in the scene of Hagen wandering lonely around the railway tracks, where he walks upon the corpse of another stray dog. As Hagen enters the frame, he walks towards the left side and as he approaches the body, he stops with hesitation – he tilts his head to the right, yelps quietly, and slightly bows down. He slowly approaches the body and while still yelping quietly, touches the dead dog with his paw, checking whether the dog will react. He moves his paw back and lowers his head, sniffing the body, and upon realisation that the dog is not alive, he backs away. The scene is emotionally disturbing and touching — Hagen, possibly for the first time, is faced with death. The spectator will easily read and relate to the dog's behaviour — the slow and careful steps when approaching the body, the touching and nudging with a paw to check whether the dog is perhaps alive and well, the quiet yelping of distress upon discovering that they are not.

Nevertheless, the more careful observer might notice that most of the time the dog playing Hagen is not looking at the body in front of him, but rather somewhere offscreen, and that the twitching of his ears, his tilting head as well as subsequent gestures and poses are most likely responses to the trainer's cues and commands — the result of the training he had to perform his role. The dog's performance in this scene is a complex arrangement of postures, movements, and gestures, and the spectator is faced with a sum of these little acts rather than the fluid whole. This contributes to a sense of the artifice — the dog as the anti-cinematic. The dog's behaviour has been altered and adapted to fulfil the narrative, which leaves little space to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of his kinaesthetic call, reducing the dog's performance to

the stimulus-response loop. The highly stylised and tightly structured performance of the dog brings back the problem of allegorisation: is Hagen, engaged in an ostensibly anthropomorphic act, still a dog? The scene, I would argue, offers an instance of negative anthropomorphism that manifests itself through the dog's complex performance, which deprives him, or severely limits, his kinaesthetic call, thus, creating the space for Hagen's allegorisation to the detriment of his canine condition.

Furthermore, the visibility of training and cueing, manifested through careful (yet somewhat unconfident) execution of a sequence of postures, movements, and gestures raises another interesting question: can we consider this as acting? More precisely, is the decision that someone is acting founded on their intention to impersonate someone else, to project emotions to achieve a certain reaction, or on the effect it actually produces, which could also lead to the elicitation of a range of emotions and contribute towards the portrayal of the character?

If we apply Michael Kirby's definition of acting as feigning, simulating, representing, or impersonating, the dog playing Hagen is not acting since he does not assume the role ('I am Hagen encountering the dead dog') but simply doing certain movements when cued to do so (Kirby 1972, p. 3). This would be also the response of Sheehan, who draws a line between a performance of a trained animal and a human actor, with the former lacking the capacity to project their 'inner life' and 'occupy this purposive world (of film)' (2008, p. 122). This brings us back to the words of Wittgenstein on the nonhuman animal's inability to perceive the theatre as theatre — the dog playing Hagen probably does not have the awareness that he is impersonating a screen dog named Hagen and that his responses to the world around him serve to create this performance. Be that as it may, Luke and Body could still be perceived as acting in a simple form, for they, just like human actors, receive and follow the cues from offscreen, or are pointed to perform certain tasks by the director/handler and they do so without emotional

investment, and their actions play a part in the narrative. Nevertheless, their amount of acting, the intention to impersonate, would place them on the non-acting end of the scale.

The departure from the realist mode of filmmaking is also reinforced by the dynamic editing structure, with relatively short takes punctuated with cuts, which accelerates some scenes to such an extent that the spectator has very little time to reflect on what they are seeing and focus on the most immediate effect instead. Furthermore, the film frequently adopts tight framing, which channels the spectator's attention towards the action happening in the foreground, leaving no room to focus on what is happening in the background. Through cinematography (particularly camera distance) and editing, as well as the use of sound, the film can manipulate the spectator's perception of the nonhuman animal behaviour. The most prominent example of this is the dog fight scene, where the dogs at play are represented as fighting to the death.

The build-up towards the fight begins with an exchange of shot and reverse shots of dogs barking aggressively at each other while trying to escape their trainers' grip to engage in a fight. First, the camera shows each dog in a long shot, then it switches to close-ups, showing the dogs' bared white and sharp teeth, the handheld camera jerking as dogs bark and push forward. As dogs wrestle each other, the soundscape is dominated by deep guttural growls, occasional barks, piercing whimpers and yelps when dogs are hurt. The disquieting soundtrack is juxtaposed with a tight and dynamic cinematography and editing. Most of shots are captured in a medium close-up with a shaking handheld camera, which closely follows the dogs' duel. The shot duration is very short, which adds dynamism to the scene and evokes a sense of confusion in the spectator, who is too close and has very little time to make sense of the motion on the screen. Thus, the use of sounds that are easily associated with aggression, fear, and pain, and dynamic editing, as well as the proximity of the camera in relation to dog characters, the film presents a highly distressing depiction of the dog fight.

Fig. 16. Hagen's rival before the fight (*White God*, 2014)
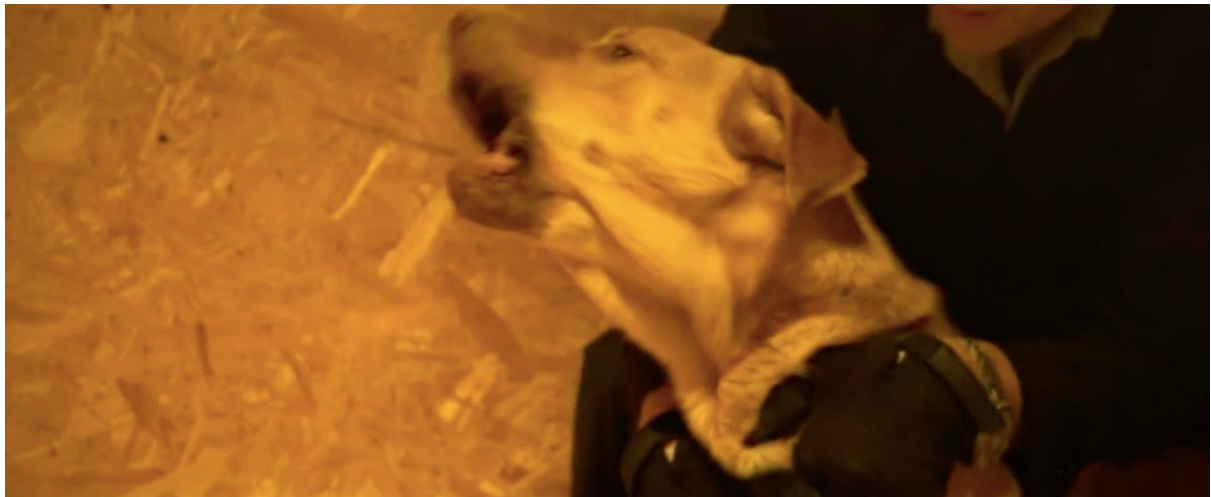
Fig. 17. Hagen before the fight (*White God,* 2014)

Halfway through the scene, the camera gains more distance from the canine characters, depicting their deadly struggle in a long shot. The more observant spectator, especially one who has knowledge and experience with dogs, might notice in this very instance that the dogs are not actually fighting, but in fact, they are engaged in a very intense play. They are wrestling each other and snapping at each other's neck or muzzle, but do not hold them too tight or for too long. This realisation might alleviate the viewer's discomfort, bringing a sense of relief that the scene is not real. This does not necessarily mean that the sequence failed to elicit a desired reaction of discomfort and distress. However, this sense of relief poses an important question — why would the spectator assume that what they are witnessing is indeed an actual dog fight?

113
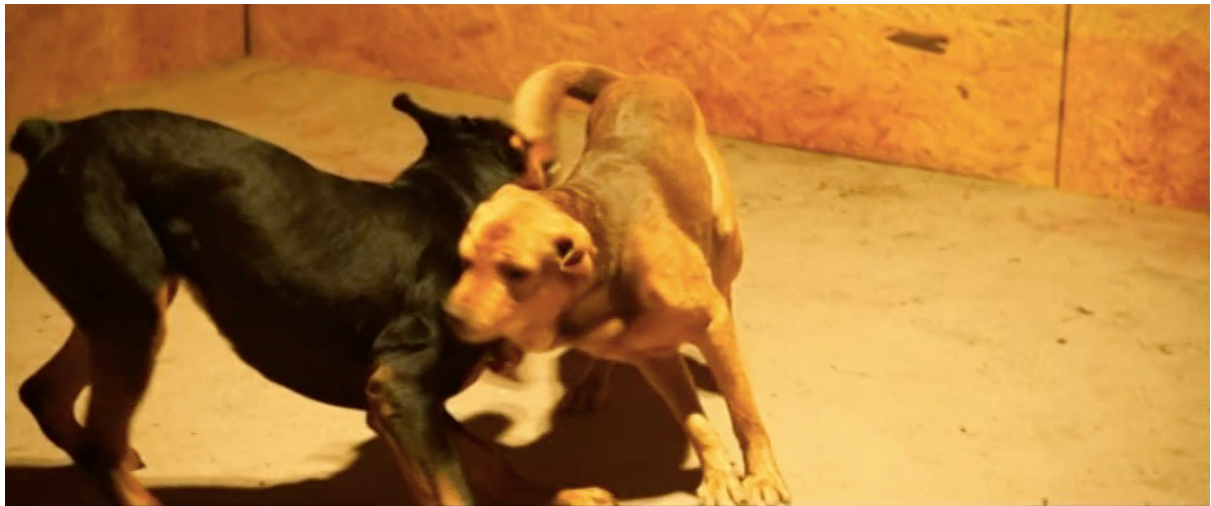
Fig. 18. Dogfight (*White God,* 2014)

Fig. 19. Dogs wrestling (*White God,* 2014)

Unlike in the case of human characters, where the realisation that they are in fact not fighting elicits a sense of disappointment or ridicule, here the spectator experiences relief that dogs are not being harmed. Spectators might not take for granted that animals have not been harmed, therefore, *White God* makes this explicit. Sometimes this is done intentionally, such as through the-behind-the-scenes footage in a special addition of the DVD. Sometimes this may also be done unintentionally, such as in this particular scene, where it may be observed that dogs are engaged in an intense wrestling play rather than the actual fight. However, because of the belief that animals cannot act in the same way humans do, other spectators might believe that the dog fight was not staged, and that the dogs were indeed engaged in a deadly duel.

The dog fight offers another way of constructing the nonhuman animal performance: rather than having an offscreen trainer, the dogs' play is framed as a dog fight through the use of sound added in post-production, the use of appropriate mise-en-scène, the editing as well as the camera movement. However, I would argue that despite the technological intervention, the dogs in the scene were indeed engaged in simple acting.

Hockenhull makes a similar case for the two horses, Brunn and Grána, starring in *Of Horses and Men*. On the one hand, they are perceived as received actors who 'accrue meaning from context' of the film plot, on the other hand, they are active participants who choose their own responses (irrespective of the director's vision), which influence their performance, and which can be understood as an instance of simple acting (Hockenhull 2015, p. 193). Both Hockenhull and Austin-Smith argue that even though nonhuman animals cannot 'simulate or impersonate', they should be considered as simple actors because they have freedom to behave in one way or another, and they possess their own individual expressiveness, which renders their onscreen performance meaningful — it helps to depict nonhuman animals as characters, or agents who are capable of making choices (Austin-Smith 2012, pp. 21—22; Hockenhull 2015, p. 188). While the dogs who are performing the dog fight in *White God* are also electing their own responses and their individual traits help to construct them as film characters, they are, unlike Brunn and Grána, engaged in a simulation, or a pretence. After all, dog play looks very similar to a fight — the dogs snap at each other, bark, growl, jump on one another, chase and topple over — and often it might become intense to the point that dogs have to stop in order to reassure one another that they are still playing rather than fighting. As they play, dogs negotiate which action is permissible and which one is a step too far (Bekoff 1995). It is important to highlight that the dogs at play both engage in a simulated fight, they both pretend, and they understand each other's actions as pretence (unless, as stated before, one of them does something that might be seen as a transgression). Therefore, even though the dogs might not be aware that

115

they are participating in the film production, and they might not necessarily engage in a wrestle play for the sake of producing a convincing depiction of a dog fight, they do engage in a simulation, they act out a dog fight and their personal traits and behaviour make their performance unique and meaningful.

White God plays on the ambiguity between belief and make-believe: to an outsider the two dogs engage in an intense wrestle play, and this might give the impression of them having a fight. The dogs simulating a fight is appropriated and amplified through film technology in order to present it to the audiences as an actual fight and evoke reactions of fear, discomfort, disturbance. Yet, even in the face of an obvious manipulation of the raw material, there is still space for the dogs' idiosyncratic behaviour, for making their own choices as they play. Therefore, despite strong formalist tendencies, which manipulate and often constrain nonhuman animal behaviour that it seeks to depict, the film allows room for the personal expression of its canine actors to emerge and incorporates their play fight into its narrative.

The act of reframing, recontextualising, the dog play into a dog fight enables *White God* to invite the spectators to reflect on the harrowing reality of fighting dogs, the brutality and abuse that many vulnerable dogs are subjected to. At the same time, it does so without resorting to the depiction of an actual fight, therefore, the film manages to raise an important question on animal abuse without abusing animals. What is more, it does so by showing positive and pro-social canine behaviour which imitates fighting and uses the fact that for many people, especially those unfamiliar with dogs and the manner in which they play, it might look like an actual aggressive struggle. Therefore, the film crew created conditions for canine acting within the context of pro-social play to emerge and then transported it into the context of the fiction film on dog abuse through the use of mise-en-scène (especially setting, lighting, and human actors' performance), cinematography, editing, and sound. The dogs might not be capable of

intentionally impersonating the characters they play, yet, their personal expression, their freedom in electing their own actions and the overall effect their actions produce, paired with the editing and other film features, the evidence for their idiosyncratic expression as well as their status as simple actors. They can act and do so within their own canine context, and the recontextualisation of their acting into the human cinematic context is possible, at least to a certain extent. The distinct features that the dogs exhibit through their vocal and kinaesthetic calls contribute to the creation of their canine characters — and the world of filmmaking and film criticism is increasingly acknowledging and appreciating such performances, for instance by creating an aforementioned Palme Dog Award, presented during the Cannes Film Festival.

Another instance when personal expression is favoured, thus, enabling the dogs playing Hagen to contribute to the creation of an authentic character, is the scene with Hagen strolling around the city. In one particular take, the dog walks on the bridge above the Danube, with the camera following him in a tracking shot, and suddenly Hagen is startled by the unexpected sound of a ship horn blowing. Hagen jumps in surprise, stands still while looking towards the ship, then quickly approaches the barriers of the bridge to look closer, his head peering out in between the barriers. Finally, he steps back and trots down the bridge, while looking around. The entire scene is shot in a single take, thus, the dog's performance is not manipulated through editing and his performance is shown in all its distinctness. In contrast to the very first scene described in this section (Hagen encountering the body of a dead dog), the dog's performance is spontaneous and provides the spectator with a more authentic characterisation of Hagen. Even if the entire scene has been arranged and the ship blew its horn in order to achieve such an effect, the reaction of the dog playing Hagen remains his own personal expression, with which he contributes to the creation of the character.

Fig. 20. Hagen's spontaneous reaction on the bridge (*White God*, 2014)

White God implements numerous techniques in order to create its canine protagonist – some of them, however, are more effective than others. In the first analysed scene, the performance might appear as artificial since the gestures are imposed on the dog through training. Although it is possible that the dog would behave in a similar manner upon encountering the body, his obvious looking out for cues from the trainer makes the entire performance seem forced, even anthropomorphic. The scene on the bridge offers the opposite, both in terms of unrestrained and spontaneous animal performance (or rather reaction). Because it has been shot with an uninterrupted take and at a distance from the canine character, the scene gives space for the dog's spontaneous reactions, which contribute to the construction of a character that is more loyal to the nonhuman animal they portray in all their distinctness rather than constraining them with an imposed behavioural pattern.

However, the dog fight scene seems to be the very middle ground I have sought: instead of trying to fit the nonhuman animal into the scene with trained set of gestures, one should aim to treat animal behaviour and expression as the basis on which the scene should be developed. This way the film gives room for its canine actors to play and perform on their own terms, contribute to the creation of the scene and make it memorable as well as meaningful, while the editing, sound, and cinematography work to amplify the affective charge of the act. The scene

might be engaging due to its strong appeal to the spectator's emotions, although it is far from easily digestible as it does not yield pleasure, but rather forces the spectator to face a vast array of unpleasant emotions and reflect on the abuse such fighting dogs endure.

Realism-leaning tendencies and Revelationism in the representation of cows in *A Cow's Life*

'If we wish to understand how an animal, a plant, or a stone can inspire respect, fear, and horror, those three most sacred sentiments, I think we must watch them on the screen, living their mysterious, silent lives, alien to human sensibility.'
Jean Epstein (cited by Turvey 2008, p. 23)

The approach to animal performance in *A Cow's Life* picks up where *White God* left off when it captured Hagen's spontaneous reaction to the ship's horn. The film, embedded in a realist tradition of slow cinema, is dedicated to the portrayal of cows, who have been central to human culture, yet who are often overlooked, misunderstood, and dismissed. In this section I will demonstrate the implications of kinaesthetic calls and cinematic calls in *A Cow's Life,* grounded in the realist tendencies of the film. This realism has important implications for nonhuman animal cinematic representation, and in the case of *A Cow's Life,* on human-bovine collaboration. I will focus on the revelatory power of the kinaesthetic call and its various manifestations: from the exploration of bovine temporality in the moments of idleness and event*lessness* to the humbling and surprising revelations of cows' resourcefulness, curiosity, and sociability. At the same time, I will show how the aesthetic choices related to the film's formal features, in particular cinematography, function as cinematic calls that provide space for kinaesthetic calls to manifest themselves more prominently. Through the discussion of the kinaesthetic call and the cinematic call in the context of animalcentric slow cinema, I will argue that this tradition of filmmaking could be considered a contemporary and post-anthropocentric manifestation of the Revelationist tradition (I will explain what this term means in due course).

A Cow's Life is a slow film that documents lives of Charolais cows, a breed of meat cows who are normally kept in pastures and have very little interaction with humans. The film consists of a series of loosely connected scenes from their everyday lives. In contrast to the practice adopted by many wildlife films, *A Cow's Life* does not shy away from depicting cows at their most uneventful and banal, such as when they are simply grazing and ruminating. The film's overall slow pace and its fixed camera mimic the stupor and slowness of the cows themselves, inviting the spectator to adopt a radically different way of looking, a bovine-centric perspective. Unlike *White God, A Cow's Life* does not offer any instance of nonhuman animal acting on human terms, that is, performance based on training that directly contributes towards the creation of the fictional character and a fictionalised narrative. Instead, the camera documents the everyday life of bovine subjects in all its banalities and contingencies. The spectator is invited to explore their world, filled with maternal love, friendship, simple joys of being, as well as pain, and distress through a variety of kinaesthetic and vocal calls. In the case of *A Cow's Life* the spectator is also invited to experience a flow of 'bovine time' (to borrow Laura McMahon's term) through the cinematic call embodied in the editing structure and cinematography. *A Cow's Life* maintains a certain physical and aesthetic distance from the cows, predominantly shot in long takes, or capturing cows' grazing and chewing mouth in extreme close-ups. Although at times the film depicts scenes that would be intelligible for human and bovine audiences, that is, where powerful kinaesthetic calls are being manifested (such as the scenes of affection towards the new-born calf, or the distress at the separation of the cows from the herd), it not only does not shy away but prioritises the scenes in which bovine calls can appear to the majority of human audiences as cryptic, which might emphasise the distinctness and strangeness of cows.

With the depiction of both powerful and cryptic calls, the film highlights the ways in which various cinematic calls on behalf of the nonhuman animal operate, and what effects they

achieve as a result. This in turn demonstrates the versatility and complexity of the cinematic call — its register can be adapted to the audience it is aimed at, thus, emphasising certain aspects (such as similitude/distinctness between certain nonhuman and human animal species), while downplaying others, depending on the context. *A Cow's Life* aims to pay closer attention and present nonhuman animals who are usually designated as 'farm animals' in such a manner that challenges certain perceptions and misconceptions human audiences might have about them. It does so by giving greater prominence to nonhuman animal calls, particularly kinaesthetic ones, through an extended duration of the shot and adapting camera distance accordingly to provide enough time and space for such an expression.

The majority of *A Cow's Life* focuses on cows grazing and resting, which informs the slow cinema aesthetics by privileging more 'idle' moments. This is further reinforced by the cinematography and editing – the shot duration is extended in comparison with films such as *White God —* thus*,* inviting the spectator to engage with the stillness, stupor, and slowness of cows in a contemplative manner. The editing is not guided by the action and motion on the screen, rather, the overall structure of the film comprises of free-floating episodes from the daily life of cows, occasionally separated by a black screen. Besides privileging bovine calls, through its use of formal features the film invites the spectator to experience a distinct way of being and engaging with the world — more static and quieter, but not deprived of curiosity, joy, and misery. It is the order in which an important event can be almost imperceptible and elusive, with the kinaesthetic calls marking them as being oriented inwards, often cryptic to human sensibilities.

The film provides a series of 'idle' moments, in which the cows rest and ruminate in the field. McMahon underlines that the film's focus on such 'non-spectacular, non-narrative scenes' exposes the contrast between human and bovine temporalities, as well as a non-anthropocentric

instance of Deleuzian time-image, in which the characters are not agents, but rather witnesses and subjects to forces beyond their control (McMahon 2015, p. 165). Nevertheless, these scenes are only ostensibly event*less*. As Francesco De Giorgio and José Schoorl highlight in their work with horses in *The Cognitive Horse. An inspiring journey towards a new co-existence,* such 'nonactive' moments are when important things very often happen; it is in these idle periods when taking in the surroundings and bonding with others by simply sharing that presence and experience occurs (De Giorgio and Schoorl 2014). Therefore, the film not only invites the spectator to experience bovine time but also the bovine concept of events — which might be very different from what human spectator is used to. Therefore, by staying close, resting and ruminating together, cows bond through their kinaesthetic calls — almost imperceptible to the human eye and human understanding – and their co-shared presence and experience is brought to the fore for the human spectator to engage with through the cinematic call that creates time and space for the bonding to become visible. However, before we move onto a more detailed account of the revelations in *A Cow's Life,* it is important to introduce the scholarly tradition in Film Studies, for which such revelatory features of the film medium were central — the Revelationists.[10]

Revelationism. Definition of tradition and its aims

The Revelationism, a term coined by Malcolm Turvey, defines the tradition within classical film theory which emphasised the revelatory capacities of the cinema, that is, the ability to

---

[10] Such seemingly event*less* scenes, paired with the slow editing pace and static cinematography, open space for idiosyncratic responses on the spectator's part. Film's refusal to anthropomorphise the cows (at least in a negative sense), to introduce a clear narrative structure, to provide a voice-over or any sort of commentary to accompany the image, might problematise the emotional engagement with the cows and even alienate audiences who might not be accustomed and open to such radically different representations of nonhuman animals. I will discuss the issue of audience alienation in more detail in chapter 5.

make visible the phenomena which remained unnoticed by human vision, uncovering the 'true nature of reality' (Turvey 2008, pp. 3,9). The Revelationist tradition can be characterised by, on the one hand, the belief that the most important feature of the cinema is its ability to mechanically record and reproduce reality, and a great scepticism in the capacities of the human vision on the other (Turvey 2008, p. 10).

Visual skepticism, as Turvey labels it, leads four early film theorists in particular to claim that the mechanical gaze of the camera is superior to human vision. They agree that human vision is 'too weak to see nuances,' therefore, cannot offer a faithful representation of reality (2008, pp. 4,8). Turvey identifies two distinct ways in which Revelationist explain the roots of visual scepticism: naturalist and culturalist. The Naturalist one, represented by Jean Epstein and Dziga Vertov, claims that the limitations of human vision are innate and unchangeable. Culturalists such as Béla Balázs and Siegfried Kracauer blame various cultural forces (e.g., religious, or scientific ideologies) for restricting the human perception of reality, or some of its aspects (Turvey 2008, p. 8). It is in the inhuman, mechanical feature of the film camera that the Revelationists sought a way of overcoming the weakness and limitations of the human eye. According to Turvey, they identified the antimimetic film techniques, such as slow motion, fast motion, close up, and long shot, as compatible with reproducing reality that one cannot perceive through human vision alone (2008, p. 11). This means that certain aspects of reality escape human senses, but the camera is able to capture and reproduce them in order to make them perceptible to the human subject. I will focus on Balázs and Kracauer due to their culturalist view on visual scepticism, which appears consistent with the idea that anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism distort human perception of nonhuman life and expression, and which can be challenged by the revelatory capacities of cinema, here manifested through the cinematic call. Although neither Balázs nor Kracauer were directly

preoccupied with nonhuman animal representation, their views enable such connections to be drawn.

In *Theory of the Film. Character and Growth of a New Art,* Balázs offers his take on the revelatory capacity of the cinema, namely to re-discover nonverbal expressivity, highly complex and nuanced, which has been lost in the transition from visual culture to the culture of concepts as printing and spoken word took over the position of images and icons (Balázs 2010, pp. 39—42). As words became more central for communication, Balázs claims, people's ability to connect through facial and bodily expression has greatly diminished and became superficial. However, with the introduction of the cinematic close-up, the camera has uncovered the hidden world of the face, its involuntary microexpressions, which revealed the inner states of the person (Balázs 2010, p. 65). This marked a turn towards a new visual culture, where people rediscover and relearn the elusive and highly nuanced nonverbal expression and redevelop their sensibility.

For Balázs, this does not mean that gestures and expressions will replace words — on the contrary, they communicate those states which cannot be captured and confined by words (Balázs 2010, p. 43). Balázs believes that one's emotional, mental and spiritual states present themselves in the slightest gestures or contortions of facial muscles, often unnoticed by the naked eye (Balázs 2010, pp. 63—65, 73—74). With the cinematographic camera and its ability to record and reproduce a face in a close proximity, such nuanced expressions can be revealed to the spectator, who in turn will familiarise themselves with a new mode of communication. In his analysis of the close-up of the face, Balázs acknowledges certain differences in nonverbal expression between people coming from distant culture – he underlines the power of cinema to capture and represent these expressions, therefore, enable people to familiarise themselves with each other's expressions and overcome the differences (2010, p. 81).

Nonetheless, Balázs does not limit this revelatory power of the cinema to people alone. In the close-up, the very face of things becomes visible too, and the variation in angles from which an object is represented might alter the spectator's perception of it, uncovering a dimension previously imperceptible and unknown. Balázs acknowledges that the objects have an inner life of their own, although he underlines the primacy of the human figure in his work; one should render the face of things visible if it serves to reveal the inner world of the human character (2010, pp. 47, 59).

In *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* Siegfried Kracauer claims that various ideologies (religious, political, scientific) have restricted human perception and understanding of the world (1997). He contends that the modern man's spiritual fragmentation is caused by the science-induced 'abstractness' – the tendency to 'abstract' and focus on particular elements of ordinary objects and phenomena, which prevents one from grasping them in their entirety and renders one's relationship with said objects and phenomena superficial (Kracauer 1997, p. 292). This idea is eloquently presented by Alfred North Whitehead, cited by Kracauer:

> When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. There is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality. We want concrete fact with a high light thrown on what is relevant to its preciousness (1997, p. 296)

What Whitehead's words seem to suggest is that a knowledge of the rules and mechanisms behind the occurrence of various phenomena does not necessarily contribute to one's greater sense of connection and appreciation of these phenomena. It is in the direct phenomenological experience that Whitehead sees an opportunity to overcome the sense of abstractness and regain a sense of connection. What is more, as Kracauer underlines, science is 'indifferent to the form of our society and to progress other than technological' (1997, p. 290). This means that the wellbeing and prosperity of mankind is not a foundation of science par excellence, and that scientific progress and development might prove detrimental to humankind (as well as nonhuman animals). The exploitation of nonhuman animals in scientific research could

function as an example of such abstractness at work — numerous studies on depressive disorders involve experiments on mice (who are substitutes, or analogues for human models), which provide humans with an insight about the complexity of mice, yet their findings do not necessarily lead to questioning of the ethics of such practices or establishing a deeper connection with these small yet complex mammals.[11]

Kracauer sees cinema as a medium that makes visible what was hidden from human sight; thus, it enables us to rediscover the world that has been inaccessible to the ideologically restricted perception, to redeem these objects from their state of abstraction (1997, p. 300).[12] What makes the film medium suited for this task is its ability to record the objects before its lens without overwhelming them with artistic vision, as it is the case with other art forms, such as painting (Kracauer 1997, pp. 300—301). As I pointed out previously, Kracauer identifies two main traditions within cinematic representation: realist, represented by the Lumières, and formalist, associated with Georges Méliès (Kracauer 1997, p. 30). As a medium-oriented scholar, Kracauer renders the indexical aspect of the film camera central to his theory, therefore, he concludes that the formalist tradition should serve towards the goal of realism of 'better recording and reproducing reality' (Turvey 2008, p. 44). Kracauer believes that the cinematic reproduction of reality has the potential to restructure the relationship between humans and the physical surroundings as it reveals those qualities of objects which remained inaccessible in the state of abstractness (Kracauer 1997, p. 299; Turvey 2008, p. 44). Kracauer emphasises the rediscovery of the everyday and ordinary, and, quoting Sève, he concludes that this new

---

[11] One such example could be the latest research of Japanese scientists that showed mice are capable of developing depression due to stress caused by witnessing another mouse being mistreated (Yoshioka *et al.* 2022).

[12] Presumably, the revelatory power of the film medium lies in its ability to show us the everyday objects and phenomena in a new light. Rather than experiencing them in our usual context, where they can be easily dismissed and omitted, we come to encounter them in an unusual context of the film screening, where our relationship with them might be reconfigured.

relationship would start at the concrete, sensory level and develop towards a deep, spiritual one (1997, pp. 304, 309).

Before I move on to a closer analysis of *A Cow's Life* to discuss connections between the revelatory aspect of cinema as seen by Balázs and Kracauer, and kinaesthetic and cinematic calls, it is important to bring forward Turvey's critique of Revelationism as presented by the two theorists. Turvey is critical of certain ideas on which Revelationism was founded, however, rather than dismissing the Reveletationist tradition tout court, he emphasises these elements of the theorists' writing, which will remain relevant even when the foundational ideas behind the tradition have been challenged. It is exactly these aspects, or the potential of Revelationism that I seek to highlight with the help of the two case studies. This discussion will in turn highlight the relevance of Revelationism for thinking about and analysing contemporary cinema in general, and animalcentric slow cinema in particular.

Turvey finds the basic tenets of Revelationism — that is, the distrust in human vision and presenting the camera as an apparatus capable of revealing something that human eye physically could not see unaided — problematic. By bringing in Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle's accounts on doubt and certainty, Turvey points out that the theory that is founded on doubting vision is unsustainable in the long run: '[P]ractices that involve doubt — investigations, experiments, calculations — require background certainties that are taken for granted, such as the existence of the apparatus used to conduct an experiment' (Turvey 2008, p. 111). If we doubt vision, then how can we trust the moving images recorded by the camera (and that we see with our fallible eyes) and the camera itself? It is only if we perceive our vision as a reliable point of reference that we can assess the revelatory powers of the film medium. Film might show us something that remains imperceptible to our unaided vision (such as movements of microbes, or the position of horse's legs in gait), but most likely will *extend* our vision rather than surpass it:

127

> Using such technologies, in other words, relies on the fact that our eyes are reliable and that we already can see and know the world around us. If we couldn't, they would be of no help to us, for we would no more be able to see what is the case in our environment with them than without them. Thus, in as much as it is like other visual technologies and does reveal truths about reality that are invisible to human perception, the cinema does not do so by escaping the eye's limitations or developing new perceptual faculties in us, as theorists in the revelationist tradition argue. Rather, it augments our already existing capacity to find out about the environment around us using our eyes (Turvey 2008, p. 113).

Turvey points out that the Revelationists also make a category mistake: although they discuss the cinema's capacity to reveal what a human eye physically cannot see (unless impaired), the examples they provide refer to things that are in fact perceptible to unaided human vision.

For Balázs, cinema is a medium that enables people to relearn the elusive art of body language that has been lost in the transition from visual culture to concept culture dominated by words. However, the assumption that such a loss has in fact occurred is in itself questionable to begin with. Turvey focuses his critique of Balázs on the fact that we do not require film technology to enable us to see other person's emotional states as we can do so with our unaided vision as emotional and affective states occur with characteristic behavioural markers:

> Instead, we can often see the pain in another person's face or hear it in her voice or see from her behavior that she is desperately sad or thinking hard. This is because mental phenomena have characteristic behavioral manifestations that function as criteria (as opposed to symptoms) for their presence. Behavior is not a mere external accompaniment to the real mental state or event, which is somewhere internal, invisible to the naked eye like, say, Broca's area. A woman giving birth to a child is not feeling pain somewhere inside her and, in addition, screaming and writhing in agony. Rather, her pain is manifest in her cries and bodily movements (Turvey 2008, pp. 115—116).

What sets cinema apart from other visual arts, according to Turvey, is that it can represent mental states in a distinct way as it is the only visual art that, thanks to variable framing, can present acts and events unfolding in time:

> Nevertheless, there is an insight about the difference between the cinema and the other visual arts buried in this misleading comparison. For although other visual arts can also reveal cognitive and affective states, films can do so in ways they cannot because, as Noël Carroll has pointed out, they have at their disposal a property that the other visual arts, at least in their customary forms, lack: variable framing (Turvey 2008, p. 117).

One might consider whether such a reformulation of Balázs's take on the cinema challenges the revelatory aspect of the medium. However, if we introduce nonhuman animal subjects into the equation, it becomes apparent that this might not be the case. Unlike with human cinematic subjects, the majority of people in post-industrial societies have very little to no contact with nonhuman beings and their expression. Therefore, by representing their kinaesthetic (and other) calls through the film medium, we create an opportunity to reveal something about their inner lives that has been inaccessible before — due to lack of exposure, physical proximity, and sufficient time to accustom oneself to the nonhuman being's expression. This brings us back to Barbara Creed's 'Film, Gestures, Species' where she emphasises the status of gestures and expressions as the main form of communication among animals, including humans (2015, pp. 43—45). Creed underlines the importance of gestures as a means of human-animal communication, as well as a vital element for the experience of empathy in humans and some nonhumans (2015, p. 50). Similarly, through the introduction of the kinaesthetic (and in previous chapter vocal) call, I seek to rethink nonhuman animal expression as intentional and communicative, therefore, meaningful and worth consideration when engaging with nonhuman animal characters. The cinematic representation of these calls invites the spectator to consider nonhuman animal figures as fully-fledged characters and encourages new ways of reflecting on film narratives that are more mindful and considerate of their nonhuman animal characters.

Although Balázs discusses the possibility of revealing the inner life of nonhumans (be it living beings or objects), he prioritises the human subject in his writing. Nevertheless, despite Balázs's anthropocentrism, his Revelationist outlook has the potential to be extended beyond humans as this chapter demonstrates through its attention to nonhuman kinaesthetic calls, and *A Cow's Life* is one of the examples of such Revelationism in practice. It might not do so by the use of close-ups and extreme close-ups, which is one way of unravelling the nuances of gestures and expressions, but by a sustained attention paid to the bovine subjects: through the

use of long takes and a fixed camera position, the cows are given enough time and space for their distinct ways of being and interacting with the world to manifest themselves. The spectator is invited to slow down, abandon the action-driven mode of perception, and take in the world on screen in a contemplative manner. Therefore, the cinema can provide sufficient time and space for nonhuman animal calls to manifest themselves, which in turn enables human spectators to acknowledge and become more familiar with the foreign and rich language of those who have been deemed 'mute'. Due to variable framing, such nonhuman animal calls are captured and reproduced as dynamic, unfolding in 'real time'. The camera's proximity can reveal subtle nonhuman animal calls that could potentially elude human vision outside film watching context.

To illustrate this, I would like to briefly introduce and focus on an extraordinary scene from Viktor Kossakovsky's *Gunda,* where a very particular set of kinaesthetic calls provide us with an insight into bovine friendships. *Gunda* is a slow film that offers the spectator a glimpse of the intimate lives of farm animals. Shot at the animal sanctuaries and small farms, *Gunda* depicts moments from the everyday life of titular Gunda and her piglets, a one-legged chicken who is abandoned by other chickens and finds comfort among horses, and a group of cows. Attentive to its nonhuman animal subjects, *Gunda* offers the spectator an insight on motherhood, friendship, and acceptance, which not only are by no means restricted to a human animal, but also cross species boundaries. We witness a scene depicting cows staying in pairs, each pair stands side by side, their heads facing the partner's behind. We can see the tail of one cow gently waving around the other cow's face, thus, keeping flies at bay. Yet as the time passes and the static frame invites sustained attention to the pair of cows, more gestures become noticeable. One can see that the cow gently nudges her partner's behind and stomps with her leg, gestures which are followed by the partner's tail swatting the flies of the stomping cow's face. It becomes clear that the gentle nudge with a nose and a foot stomp are kinaesthetic calls

demanding the companion cow to use her tail to guard off the flies. Since cows' faces are vulnerable to flies, such gestures are a manifestation of care. We know that cows form friendships and often have a best friend, therefore, it is not unreasonable to state that the pair of cows who spend time together and help each other to get rid of the relentless flies are friends (Giggs 2019).

Fig. 21. Cows wagging their tails to guard off flies (*Gunda*, 2020)

Fig. 22. Cows stomping and wagging tails to guard off flies (*Gunda,* 2020)

On the one hand, the scene demonstrates the mental states of cows as they are manifested through their gestures (irritation at the intrusive flies and request for help as well as expression of care), but also through sustained attention by way of editing and cinematography, which brings these kinaesthetic calls into the foreground so their importance can be revealed to the spectator.

By expanding Balázs's microphysiognomy beyond humans, we are inadvertently establishing the limits of Balázs's theory and Turvey's critique. Turvey brings an example of a woman giving birth to challenge Balázs and demonstrate that mental states manifest in one's behaviour, underlying that the mental states are not private and inaccessible to others. Yet, this might become more difficult as we cross the species boundaries — such as in the cow's birth depicted in *A Cow's Life*. As McMahon points out, the mother's expression remains opaque throughout the birth, which subverts the anthropomorphic interpretation of the scene as one is not given access to the cow's experience through her kinaesthetic calls. For McMahon the scene underlines the difference in the 'perceptual and sensorial world', which appears incompatible with the human one (2019, p. 167).

Fig. 23. Cow giving birth (*A Cow's Life,* 2012)

Contrary to human births, intense and rich in vocal and kinaesthetic calls, bovine birth is marked by silence and stillness — the movement of the cow's belly and the effort she puts into labour appears more subtle, oriented inwards rather than outwards. The scene, which reveals the difference between the ways a bovine mother experiences birth compared to her human counterpart, poses a challenge to Turvey's critique of Balázs.

Furthermore, this example also marks the limits of the camera's revelatory capacity as outlined by Balázs — rather than simply revealing and laying bare the cow's inner state that in this case has been largely inaccessible to a human audience, the camera confirms and emphasises the alterity of bovine experience and expression in relation to a human one, yet draws the spectator's attention to this bovine experience in its specificity.

Unlike Balázs's history-based take on Revelationism, Siegfried Kracauer claims that the camera reveals physical reality that remained invisible to human vision restricted by various ideologies (from religion, politics to science). He laments the spiritual emptiness of the modern man, caused by the diminished position of religion in the society and a sense of alienation from

the surrounding world, rooted in science-induced 'abstractness' (1997, p. 294). A similar argument is made by Jennifer Fay in 'Seeing/loving Animals: André Bazin's Posthumanism' and Wendy Woodward in 'The Post-Humanist Gaze: Reading Fanie Jason's Photo Essay on Carting Lives': both scholars claim that the cinema as a technology reveals the limitation of human sight, which, in accordance with that of Kracauer, is restricted through culture, namely anthropocentrism (Fay 2008, p. 42; Woodward 2014, pp. 8—9). They claim that due to mankind's separation from nature and self-centred perception of the world, people have lost the ability to see beyond anthropocentrism, acknowledge the distinctness and sovereignty of the nonhuman world, as well as the very intimate connection between human and animal worlds. Fay as well as Woodward see in the camera's mechanical gaze as a potential means of overcoming anthropomorphism since before the camera lens all objects, animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman, are equal. The camera reveals what remained hidden under the veil of human superiority: the world where humans and animals share their corporeality, vulnerability, and mortality, where their worlds are intertwined rather than separate, a potential for a different relationship between humans and animals (Fay 2008, p. 55; Woodward 2014, pp. 9—10).

Kracauer's viewpoint is undoubtedly anthropocentric — in the subsection entitled 'The Family of Man' he speaks of the 'rapprochement between the peoples of the world' and refers to an American moviegoer's experience of Satyajit Ray's *Arapajito* (1956), which although situated in a different geographic and socio-economic context, is preoccupied with a universal (to humans and some nonhuman animals) experience of mother's longing for her child (1997, pp. 310—311). Nevertheless, one can take Kracauer's thoughts one step further – beyond the limits of the human species. If we establish a connection between Kracauer, Fay and Woodward, we could assume that one of the possibilities to overcome the spiritual emptiness of modern man is to abolish anthropocentrism which alienates people from nonhuman animals, culture from

nature. This would offer an opportunity for humans to reconnect to the physical world around us, experience it on a more physical level, which could then lead to a spiritual sense of belonging, an interconnectedness of all beings in our shared embodiment, vulnerability, and mortality.

Nevertheless, Kracauer's theory is not free from its own category mistake, which is related to the concept of invisibility. Turvey argues that Kracauer conflates two distinct ways of understanding the term: that of the object being invisible because the observer is physically incapable of seeing it without aid, and the one where the object is in fact perceptible to the observer but has not been noticed. By misrepresenting the latter as the former, Kracauer presents cinema as a medium that can reveal the ordinary and the unnoticed, which one was incapable of physically seeing due to the abstractness brought by modernity (Turvey 2008, pp. 122—123). This category mistake also appears in Kracauer's description of the cinema's medium-specific capabilities – '[f]ilm renders visible what we did not, or perhaps even could not, see before its advent' (1997, p. 300). Kracauer suggests that certain phenomena eluded human vision and became accessible to human sight only with the arrival of cinema – an assumption that appears mistaken since the camera will not reveal something that has not already been accessible to the spectator's eye. Yet, as Turvey concedes, there is an important aspect of cinema revealed in Kracauer's idea, namely the ability to guide the spectator's attention to that which would otherwise remain unnoticed:

> Indeed, in order to fail to attend to something, it must be capable of being attended to. However, once again there is a genuine insight buried in Kracauer's argument: the cinema is an art with an unparalleled capacity to direct our attention to truths that are in plain sight but that we do not notice or pay attention to, such as familiar environments (Turvey 2008, p. 124).

This point is especially important when we discuss cinematic calls, and it is consistent with the aims behind Emmanuel Gras's *A Cow's Life* — the idea of paying closer attention and looking differently at one of the most underestimated, ordinary and overlooked nonhuman animals,

who at the same time occupies an important place in human society, a cow. Revealing the richness of bovine life through cinematic means was Emmanuel Gras's aim: 'I realised it was a cinematographic question which interested me: […] how should one film something that appears empty to us, and to show in fact— because we move into a different time and space — that it exists, and that it is full of existence' (cited by McMahon 2019, p. 164). Gras is interested in the cinema's potential to reveal the liveliness and richness of bovine life, which eludes human perception due to differences in the human conception of time and event. Many bovine kinaesthetic calls might either appear cryptic or pass unnoticed by the human spectator, which might lead to a superficial and misleading account of cows as unintelligent, unthinking, and empty.

By presenting cows in a manner that diverges from what the spectators are largely familiar with and accustomed to, the film offers a radically different insight into cows' ways of being and interacting with the world. It is also worth noting that although cows remain central to the human world (as nonhuman animals that some people eat, whose milk they modify and consume in various forms, and whose skin they wear), they occupy a rather marginal place in cinema — which is much more interested in the depictions of often exotic wild beings, or familiar and humanised pets, who are deemed much more cinematic. *A Cow's Life* offers an alternative perspective by privileging cows and encouraging spectators to adopt a more bovine-like approach in their film experience. As cows carefully and slowly take in their environment, the spectator is invited to embrace slowness in their taking in of the scenes unfolding (or not) on the screen through static and lingering shots, often taken at a considerable distance.

Turvey underlines that the revelatory potential lies in cinema's ability to bring attention to those objects that passed unnoticed (but which are noticeable):

> Thus arguing, as I have, that human vision is not limited to the extent that film theorists often claim does not mean that the cinema is incapable of revealing truths about reality that are

I would like to bring forward three scenes from *A Cow's Life* to illustrate this point. In the first scene cows are depicted dexteriously wrapping their tongues around tree branches, then holding them with their teeth and shaking to make apples fall to the ground, from where they can be picked up and eaten. For McMahon this moment subverts the idea of cows as being stupid and all their actions being merely automatic, and highlights instead bovine intelligence and resourcefulness (2019, p. 166). Aware of their environment, the cows adapt and overcome the obstacles in order to achieve their aims — in this case, making apples fall so they can be scooped up from the ground and eaten.

Fig. 24. Cow using her tongue to reach a tree branch (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

Fig. 25. Cow shaking a tree branch to make the apples fall (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

In this context their gestures function as kinaesthetic calls for the human audience — the calls presumably do not communicate anything to other cows, but they do signal to human audiences witnessing them that the cows actively engage with their environment and act accordingly to the situation to fulfil their goals.

Cows' curiosity manifests itself in two scenes marked by arrivals. In the first instance, it is the arrival of the new-born calf: the cows approach the young one, carefully sniff at and lick them, thus, offering the calf their first tactile contact with others, providing new stimuli, and forming emotional bonds through affectionate kinaesthetic calls. While sniffing enables an olfactory connection to be established between the adult cows and the calf as they learn each other's scents, the licking is a gustatory-kinaesthetic expression of care, which provides the calf with a sense of security and belonging. In other scenes, pairs of cows sitting close together are seen licking each other's faces, a gesture of affection and trust. On the one hand, these calls demonstrate cows' curiosity regarding the new-born, but also their strong sociability as through their calls they establish a close bond and welcome the calf into the herd — hence, the birth of

a calf is not necessarily a private event for the mother, but a collective one that brings the bovine community together.

Fig. 26. Cow approaches a new-born calf (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

The second arrival that kindles bovine curiosity is radically different, namely when a plastic bag temporarily disrupts the ordinary flow of bovine time. Cows carefully approach an unexpected object, sniff at it and gently nudge it with their noses, yet very soon they lose interest, and the flow of their day returns to normal. Yet this brief disruption again challenges the idea of an automatic and unreflective relationship with the world as McMahon points out (2019, p. 166). The cows are anything but vacuous — their inquisitiveness and attentiveness speaks through their kinaesthetic calls — and they take their time to approach and investigate the unfamiliar object. As the bag proves no longer meaningful to the bovine *Umwelt,* it blends into the background of bovine perception and the cows move onto what they find interesting and worthy of their attention.

Fig. 27. Cows inspecting a plastic bag (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

The perception of cows as slow, empty, and dumb due to the distinct ways in which they engage with the world, has inevitably been used to justify the mistreatment and exploitation of countless bovine individuals. It reinforced the anthropocentric and speciesistic view of the world in which humans, endowed with reason, can use and abuse other species according to their will. As a cinematic exploration of bovine perception of time and events, *A Cow's Life* not only challenges misconceptions about cows — who despite being central to our societies and civilisation, remain often invisible — but also offers a complex and stunning visions of the world. Despite existing in the same space, humans and cows dwell in different temporalities, which at times overlap and run parallel at other times. This insight into bovine temporality and events renders our relationship with the world more complex and nuanced, which reverberates with Kracauer's vision of cinema's revelatory potential. The cinematic rediscovery and manifestation of bovine *Umwelt* enables a new relationship with cows to be formed, the connection that will challenge the limitations of anthropocentrism in favour of a more-than-human, multispecies view.

A Cow's Life bring to the fore these aspects of bovine lives that have been unknown to some humans, and which could inform their perception and treatment of these species. Because a more complex view of such animals has been revealed, the films might enable the spectator to look past and question the underlying and dominant anthropocentric ideology.[13]

Turvey emphasises how Revelationism can offer an alternative way of looking at objects, which might inform and influence our perception and understanding:

> Revealing truths that we do not notice or pay attention to need not only involve what we see. It can also concern the way we see it. Films can make us notice the aesthetic conventions they use to shape the way we view them, as well as facts about perception these aesthetic conventions exploit. We are continuously exposed to these conventions, and the truths about perception they exploit are ones we take for granted (Turvey 2008, p. 124).

This statement is particularly relevant to our case study in this section — *A Cow's Life* belong to a slow cinema tradition of filmmaking, whose conventions diverge from that of its more popular counterparts. Slow cinema's privileging of long takes and a fixed camera position enables nonhuman animal kinaesthetic calls to come forth, and through this sustained attention, the films offer an opportunity to reveal something about nonhuman animal characters that one might not have been known before, or that has passed unnoticed. Their supposed 'event*less*ness', or uneventfulness sets them apart from more popular genres, such as wildlife documentaries, where the majority of screen time is dedicated to action-packed moments of hunting, or social interactions such as grooming, courtship, or mating, while the scenes of rest, or rumination would be considered 'cinematic dead time' and omitted as uninteresting

---

[13] I am aware of the danger of such an approach, which is somewhat akin to speciesism, or at least founded on speciesism since it makes the change of attitude towards nonhuman animals depend on their similarity to humans — after all, a truly ethical approach would be based on the fact that one treats another with dignity and respect despite their alterity, strangeness and differences rather than because of their similarity.

(McMahon 2019, pp. 5—6).[14] *A Cow's Life* prioritises snippets of bovine life that are deemed un-spectacular, ordinary, or banal — yet, which form a large part of cows' lives. By celebrating this 'cinematic dead time', Gras reveals and embraces the slowness and staticness of bovine daily life and invites the spectator to adopt such bovine perception by slowing down the pace of the editing, giving more time to carefully take in each scene in a manner akin to that in which cows explore their environment. Such an invitation challenges expectations that human audiences might have regarding nonhuman animals, and which have been perpetuated by such spectacular and action-filled works and reveal the reality behind the veil of anthropocentrism.

Conclusion: making and letting things happen

'I tried "directing" the cows, pushing them in front of the camera, getting them to graze in the right direction… it never worked!' (Gras 2012).[15] The question whether nonhuman animals are capable of acting on human terms is absent from Emmanuel Gras's *A Cow's Life,* as the above excerpt from an interview with the director demonstrates. The cows had an immense impact on the shape of their own performance – instead of following cues provided by the directors, they insisted, through their resistance to physical pressure on the part of the director, on maintaining their own ways of doing things to which the director had to adapt. This behind-the-scenes anecdote about the film underlines the existence of the clash of interests between Gras and the cows, embodied in their conflicting movements and gestures. This example also illustrates well how the intentionality of nonhuman animals is not enclosed in their mind, and

---

[14] Doane gives the example of Edison's film *Electrocution of an Elephant* as an example of cinematic dead time — the moments of leading and securing Topsy the elephant on the platform where she will be electrocuted are erased from the film through editing as uninteresting, un-spectacular, unnecessary (McMahon 2019, pp. 5—6).

[15] Citation in original : 'J'ai essayé de faire de la "direction de vaches" ! Les pousser dans le champ de la caméra, les faire brouter dans le bon sens… Ça a tout le temps foiré !'

inaccessible to others, but rather manifested in their bodily posture and movements, and their bodily interactions — their kinaesthetic calls. Through exerting physical pressure on one another, the individuals express their intentions and interests, and negotiate with one another the course of their joint action. Therefore, touch is one way for animals, human and nonhuman, to communicate nonverbally.

In order to be true to its realist aims the cinematic vision of the director had to be readjusted through the negotiation with his bovine participants – unlike in *White God,* where canine actors have been trained and were cued by a crew of dog-trainers in order for their performance to fit both their respective roles and the narrative prescribed by the director and script writer. Although one could still argue that the crew working on *White God* also had to adapt their creative vision to the capacities and preferences of canine performers, it was probably so to a lesser extent than in Gras's case — and the differences between the species as well as human's relations to them are among the main factors here. Thus, due to the impossibility of influencing bovine behaviour without subverting the realist direction of the film (by offering an all-too-constructed bovine performance), the cows presented in the film have more autonomy and play a larger role in shaping their onscreen presence, irrespective of their awareness of and intention to perform in the film. Thus, the interaction between the director and the cows is embodied in the kinaesthetic conversation in which each side exerts physical pressure on one another – the former does so in order to influence the latter's behaviour, the latter to resist the impact of the former as well as to maintain and impose their own way of participating in the production of the film.

Among the most memorable scenes from *A Cow's Life* is the cows' encounter with a plastic bag floating through the field to finally rest near the herd, as discussed above. The director recounted in an interview how the crew of ten people worked to make the bag float in the

direction of the cows to catch their attention. This making-of anecdote illustrates how one can create a striking scene they have envisioned not by training nonhuman animal performers, or collaborators to execute an elaborate sequence of gestures, but rather by creating conditions for the event to occur. One could not anticipate the cows' reaction to the bag, and their own distinct responses. In this respect, the scene bears similarity to the dog fight sequence from *White God* as well as the horse mating encounter in *Of Horses and Men* analysed by Hockenhull. The human director and the crew with their artistic vision met the nonhuman animal performers halfway: they made the conditions for events to occur, yet the nonhumans elected their own responses, making their kinaesthetic calls prominent on the screen.

White God welcomed the spontaneity of its canine performers and incorporated their wrestle play into the narrative in order to create striking and memorable scenes that will draw in the spectator and make them reflect on the canine condition, particularly of dog fighters. *A Cow's Life* created conditions for an event to occur without imposing any direction on the bovine performers, but rather letting them be and anticipating their distinct response to the situation. Just as Austin-Smith and Hockenhull contended in their respective works, it is by letting the nonhuman performers elect their own responses, by letting their kinaesthetic calls emerge, that their performances 'count for something' and invite the spectators to feel, reflect, and engage.

A Cow's Life demonstrates two approaches of animal-centric slow cinema tradition: the former emphasises similarities between nonhuman animal performers it depicts and human audiences, while former also explores the alterity and difference between human and bovine cognition and expression. By adopting slow cinema aesthetics, the film provides time and space for the kinaesthetic calls of its nonhuman performers to gain prominence and in turn, reveal something about the performers that could have been missed otherwise. Although I have been tracing a link between slow cinema, cinematic calls and kinaesthetic calls and Revelationism, it is

important to underline that Revelationism is not exclusive to films that exhibit realist-leaning tendencies, and that films such as *White God,* which leans more towards Formalism, can also be revelatory in nature. It is worth noting that another theorist who is considered a Revelationist, Dziga Vertov, relied extensively on montage in order to reveal connections and links regarding social reality (predominantly of the working masses), which might have passed unnoticed, or of which the audiences, the working people, were not aware (Turvey 2008, p. 7). In a similar vein, narrative films such as *White God* can reveal the social reality of human-canine relations, emphasise inequalities, injustices, and discriminations, in order to raise awareness of its audiences, and potentially invite a response, a reaction towards said reality.

By drawing the link between the cinematic and nonhuman kinaesthetic calls and the Revelationist tradition, I want to point out that there is a possibility to expand Revelationism beyond the human social reality, and that by doing so, there is the potential to establish a diverse framework for scholars in Film and Animal Studies to work with. Such a 'call-infused' Revelationism can be explored in relation to formalist-leaning and realist-leaning films, which underlines its versatility and applicability in a variety of contexts. This becomes particularly relevant when we add the spectators into the equation. Through its clear narrative structure and sustained development and engagement with its nonhuman protagonist, *White God* invites the spectator to invest themselves emotionally in Hagen's ordeal, which in turn might encourage discussion on human-canine relations. *A Cow's Life* sets to explore alternative ways of presenting nonhuman animals on screen — letting cows be rather than constructing elaborate performances as in Hagen's case — which might radically differ from what the majority of spectators are accustomed to. *A Cow's Life* not only invites the spectator to imagine bovine ways of living and being in the world, but also to engage in a bovine-centric mode of spectatorship – characterised by a slower pace, preference of observation and presence over

action, lingering on and patiently taking in the world on screen, a static and quiet contemplation.

Chapter III: Cinematic Call — Point of View and Reaction Shot

In the first two chapters I theorised and analysed two manifestations of the nonhuman animal call, that is, the vocal call and the kinaesthetic call. The emphasis was placed on the nonhuman animal performance, with an occasional discussion of formal features, which enabled its representation. The current chapter as well as the chapter that will follow will concentrate primarily on formal features of film, which means that an appropriate connection between these features and the nonhuman animal call need to be outlined. To do so, I will expand on the concept of the cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal (which, for the sake of brevity, I will refer to as a cinematic call). The cinematic call is a set of practices, which aim to foreground the nonhuman animal and their call.

This chapter focuses primarily on cinematography rather than nonhuman animal character's performance, and how its use can enable, foreground, and support the manifestation of the nonhuman animal call and its plea. Since the two chapters focus on the ways in which other formal features of film, namely the camera work, the process of editing, as well as the use of nondiegetic music, foreground the nonhuman animal character's presence and expression (particularly the nonhuman animal call), I will define them as cinematic calls. The distinction between the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call is that while the former is tied to the presence and expression of the nonhuman animal character, the latter is a set of practices, which aim to foreground the former. The cinematic call is a call on behalf of the nonhuman animal characters, it is an act of guiding the spectator's attention towards these characters, creating conditions for their calls to be acknowledged, inviting the spectator to reflect on the lived experience of nonhuman animal characters. In this chapter, I will focus primarily on cinematography and editing in order to demonstrate how in certain circumstances the use of the lone point of view shot, lone reaction shot, as well as the point of view structure (understood

as a combination of point of view and reaction shots) invite the spectators to reflect on the lived experience of the nonhuman animals. What is more, these techniques invite the spectator to take up a more canine-centric and bovine-centric perspectives, in Laurie Anderson's *Heart of a Dog* and Harutyun Khachatryan's *Border* respectively, in seeing the world we share, both being the instances of what Anat Pick would call cinematic *Umwelten* (Pick 2015). Therefore, to be understood as cinematic calls, these film techniques have to make the call on behalf of the nonhuman animal characters they set to represent, towards which they guide the spectator's attention, and whose nonhuman animal calls (in all its multisensory manifestations) they aim to foreground.

Cognitive scholarship on character engagement offers a comprehensive and productive account of how the emotional bond between the spectator and the character is formed. However, the incorporation of the nonhuman animal character complicates the discussion since the nonhuman animal character foregrounds perceptual and cognitive constraints which have not been present with human characters. Nonhuman animals' physical difference, foreign verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as their perception as the ultimate other, often heavily objectified, make nonhuman animals problematic characters. Films like *Heart of a Dog* and *Border* not only acknowledge, address, and attempt to overcome those differences, but also offer the theorists an opportunity to develop an expanded and more complex understanding of character engagement.

In the first part of this chapter, I will analyse the point of view scene in *Heart of a Dog*. The film can be described as an audiovisual reflection of the life and death of Lolabelle, Laurie Anderson's beloved dog. Anderson recalls various events from their life together, which prompts her to contemplate life, love, vulnerability, and passing. I will focus on the point of view sequence, shot from Lolabelle's perspective, to argue that the point of view shot reveals

much more than a perceptual, or optic perspective of the character whose point of view the spectator adopts. Although the point of view shot does not provide the viewer with cues about the character's inner states as effectively as a reaction shot would, it nevertheless might give information about the character's personal traits and interests.

Under certain circumstances, the point of view shot can provide us with an insight into an animal-centric world, where the relationships with objects and beings are often very different from the one the spectator might have. What is more, through the point of view shot, *Heart of a Dog* can guide us towards alternative modes of being in the world, or *Umwelten,* founded on a different sensory hierarchy than our own. This underlines the potential for film as an audiovisual medium to allude to or suggest the presence of other senses.

In the second part, I will concentrate on another case study, *Border,* which depicts the life of a buffalo who has been caught up in the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh. Rescued by humans during the ceasefire, the buffalo is brought to a farm where humans set up a refugee camp. However, the nonhuman animal protagonist of the film is determined to reach and cross the titular border, which invites a reflection on the tragedy of war and displacement, which affects both humans as well as nonhuman animals. I will focus on reaction shots of the buffalo in *Border,* and I will examine their role in prompting character engagement, sympathy and empathy. I will concentrate on Murray Smith's structure of sympathy to investigate how it functions in relation to nonhuman animal characters. I will show how the introduction of a physically different nonhuman animal character, whose verbal and nonverbal expression remains largely foreign to the human spectator, expands and problematises the debate on character engagement. Therefore, I will demonstrate how the film cues the viewer to perceive the buffalo as an emotionally engaging protagonist, especially through the use of lengthy close-up and medium close-up shots of the buffalo, which one can identify as Carl Plantinga's scenes

of empathy. The basis for this is the deictic aspect of the point of view structure, which informs the spectator about the character's object of interest and their relationship toward it. Finally, the construction of the buffalo as not only a character but as a nonhuman person invites a reconsideration of the definition of personhood.

In the final section, I will use the previous discussion of the buffalo as a nonhuman person to engage with Smith's notion of allegiance, understood as a moral evaluation of the character, in order to explore whether the spectator can form an allegiance with nonhuman animal characters despite the widely accepted notion that nonhuman animals cannot be perceived as moral. Furthermore, I will take a look at Carl Plantinga's revision of Smith's terminology to problematise Plantinga's distinction between sympathy and allegiance. I will demonstrate how the spectator's engagement with the buffalo exceeds what Plantinga defines as sympathy, thus, pointing at the possible challenge to applying such a distinction when nonhuman animal protagonists are concerned.

Nonhuman animals have been largely omitted in the cognitivist discussion on character engagement and it is worth introducing them into the discourse. Nonhuman animal characters play a large part in mainstream and arthouse cinema, and therefore, it is vital to study their representation and how the spectator comes to engage with them. Nonhuman animal characters problematise these debates about character engagement by raising numerous questions which do not appear when human counterparts are considered. Bringing nonhuman animals into the discussion will expand the scope of cognitive theories of character engagement and render our understanding of formal aspects of film even more complex. Furthermore, introducing nonhuman animal characters and emphasising their agency provides an opportunity to discuss various issues that have been unfairly restricted to human subjects.

A whole new (olfactory) world: point of view shot in *Heart of a Dog*

Cognitivists and philosophers offer opposing views on which formal aspects of film and what degree of access to information facilitate an empathic response in the spectator more effectively. Some, such as Peter Goldie, agree that a sufficient amount of information provided by the narrative and formal aspects of the film image (such as through point of view structure) enables the spectator to empathise with the character (Choi 2005, p. 17). Following Margrethe Bruun Vaage's distinction between different approaches to empathy, this could be identified as the focalisation view on empathy, which tends to present the point of view structure as the elicitor of empathy (Vaage 2010, p. 160). Others, like Jinhee Choi, are more sympathetic to the claim that the lack of information and a dedramatised structure are more effective in triggering central imagination in the spectator since the viewer has to make hypotheses, inferences, and guesses in order to fill in the missing information, thus, exercising empathic engagement with the character (2005, p. 17). This is defined as the restricted knowledge view on empathy because limited access to a character's internal state functions as a trigger for central imagining (Vaage 2010, p. 162). It is worth underlining that these two approaches are not on the opposite ends of the spectrum – a certain degree of access to information is needed even in the restricted knowledge view on empathy in order to provide sufficient grounds to make inferences about the characters, while in the case of the focalisation view, certain information might be withheld for the purpose of establishing a more complex engagement with the character. Despite the differences regarding the amount of information the spectator should be provided, both sides agree that a lone point of view shot does not provide the spectator with exclusive access to the character's inner life. Adopting the character's perceptual, or optical perspective prevents the spectator from picking up important cues about the character's emotions, thoughts and desires, from the character's facial and bodily expression for example. However, by analysing a point of view sequence in *Heart of a Dog,* I would like to demonstrate that this is not exactly the

case. Although the viewer is prevented from interpreting a character's inner states based on their facial and bodily expression because the scene offers only the character's point of view shot and no reaction shots, they still can learn about the character with the help of low-level features of film present in the sequence.

Low-level features of film are, according to Kaitlin Brunick, James Cutting and Jordan DeLong, 'any physical, quantitative aspect that occurs regardless of the narrative and can include shot structure, shot scale, colour, contrast, and movement' (Brunick, Cutting and DeLong 2013, p. 133). Such elements provide the spectator with a wide range of information which enhance their understanding of the narrative. Brunick, Cutting and DeLong claim that contrary to a popular view, low-level features of film greatly influence how the viewer makes sense of the narrative and without these features, this process would be far more challenging (Brunick, Cutting and DeLong 2013, pp. 134,145). In the case of a lone point of view sequence in *Heart of a Dog,* I will focus particularly on two features, namely, shot duration and visual activity, in order to show how each of them offers the spectator invaluable information about the narrative situation present in the sequence and also invites a reflection on the dog's perceiving and being in the world.

The point of view sequence begins unexpectedly, and it is through the voice-over of Laurie Anderson that the viewer learns that the sequence represents the world from Lolabelle's perspective. The voice-over describes the dog's adaptation to her new neighbourhood, West Village, and introduces numerous characters that the viewer encounters in the sequence. The entire section is shot from the perspective of Lolabelle, a rat terrier, as she walks through her neighbourhood and meets various characters (human and nonhuman) on her way. The camera is positioned close to the ground to reinforce the impression that the adopted point of view belongs to a small dog.

The camera is highly mobile, gliding through space, panning and approaching different objects and characters, which emphasises the mobility, curiosity and interactivity of the character. The camera approaches and raises towards human characters who come closer and lower themselves to greet Lolabelle — suggesting that Lolabelle either raises her head to see them, sits back in front of them, or stands on her hind legs and puts her front paws on her human friends in a greeting manner.

Fig. 28 Lolabelle's encounter with humans (*Heart of a Dog,* 2015)

In another shot, the camera quickly approaches and then moves away from a pair of pigeons walking on the street; although the distance between the camera and the pigeons changes, and Lolabelle seems to be hiding behind the bin, the camera never looks away from the birds, what underlines the dog's interest in other animals as well as her eagerness to chase after them. In the shot from the pet store, the camera moves along the alley with dog toys and approaches several of them, which gives the spectator the impression that Lolabelle becomes interested in toys and comes closer to sniff them.

Fig. 29. Lolabelle's encounter with a bulldog (*Heart of a Dog*, 2015)

A similar movement occurs in the final shot of the scene, where the camera moves down the street but suddenly pans rightwards, gets closer to the line of bin bags left on the pavement, and then moves away without losing sight of them. Such a movement gives an impression that Lolabelle became particularly attracted to bin bags, but has been pulled away from them, probably by Laurie Anderson herself. This last sequence is especially important since it gives the spectator a vital insight into the dog's perception. For this reason, it is not surprising that Laurie Anderson decided to repeat the shot with the addition of a blue lens filter (and a blue lens filter has also been used to represent a dog's point of view in *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*, a mainstream American production). Therefore, it is worth taking a closer look at the camera movement and the introduction of a blue filter to understand what they reveal.

The shot is accompanied with Laurie Anderson's voice-over explaining the peculiarities of a dog's perception; she explains that their vision is blurry, and they see mostly in blue. She also points out that dogs tend to rely on their smell rather than sight. Although film is considered an audiovisual medium, since it combines photographic image and recorded sound, it is still

154

able to point towards, or allude to the presence of other senses that cannot be directly captured on-screen. The camera movement shows how Lolabelle is guided through the world by her nose — picking up the smell of bin bags and approaching them immediately. The fascination with their olfactory richness is emphasised by the camera's refusal to turn away from them, even as it moves further and further away from the bags. This shot shows that the lone point of view shot not only offers the spectator an optical perception of the character, it is also able to capture, or allude to a different sensory hierarchy which mediates the dog's mode of being in, and interacting with the world.

Fig. 30. POV shot of Lolabelle approaching bin bags (*Heart of a Dog,* 2015)

In order to better understand the cinematography and change of lens colour in this particular scene, it is helpful to reintroduce the concept of *Umwelt.* Coined by a German biologist Jakob von Uexküll, *Umwelt,* which can be directly translated as surroundings or environment, designates the relationship between the living being and the external world mediated through that being's senses – it corresponds to what so far has been identified as a mode of being in, experiencing, and interacting with the world (Pollmann 2013, pp. 777—778).

Fig. 31. Representation of Lolabelle's *Umwelt* (*Heart of a Dog*, 2015)

According to Uexküll, our perception of our surroundings is influenced by our sensory make-up. Therefore, although we share the world with other beings, each of us perceives it and, by extension, interacts with it in a different way. Uexküll claims that *Umwelt* not only changes across various species but also from one individual to another, underlining the multiplicity and richness of different *Umwelten,* or modes of being in the world. So not only is a bat's *Umwelt* different from that of a human, but the *Umwelt* of a blind person also varies from that of a person who sees. Uexküll claims each being is enclosed in their *Umwelt* and unable to reach what is beyond it, which overlaps with Thomas Nagel's claim that one cannot know what it is like to be a bat for a bat since one can only perceive and imagine within the constraints of one's own sensory make-up (Nagel 1979; Pollmann 2013, p. 778). Uexküll's scepticism regarding the accessibility of the objective world emphasises the equal validity of *Umwelten:* each being's *Umwelten* is distinct and none takes up a superior position over the others. Although Uexküll's description of a female tick's *Umwelt* might appear as drastically limited to a human reader, it does not appear as such to the tick herself (Pollmann 2013, pp. 793—794).

Furthermore, some species, such as dogs, have developed a much more complex olfactory organs than us, and therefore, in terms of smell, human *Umwelt* might appear as poorer compared to that of a dog.

Inga Pollmann underlines Uexküll's fascination with chronophotography and cinema as scientific instruments facilitating observation as well as their medium-specific features which influenced his own thinking. Film's capacity to manipulate time and space enables a construction of perceptions foreign to human sensibilities. Thus, film might open up human perception by introducing other *Umwelten* into the spectator's human, personal *Umwelt.* Pollmann referred to slowing down and speeding up the projection time in order to incorporate other temporalities and different senses of time within human *Umwelt* (2013, pp. 802—803). Manipulating duration, for Pollmann, opened up space for questioning a singular conception of time by underlining how various living beings who exist simultaneously, perceive the passage of time in different ways. Pollmann introduces the example of snail cinema which would project images four frames a second, as opposed to 24 frames per second for humans) (2013, p. 801).

However, what the spectator witnesses is not exactly a loyal and complete perception of another being, but rather a cinematic perception of it. It is through the manipulation of space and extra-diegetic voiceover that Lolabelle's olfactory fascination with bin bags is evoked. This, of course, underlines Uexküll's and Nagel's scepticism towards the ability to even imagine the dog's perception of the world on canine rather than human terms. The cinema has the potential to expand our perceptual horizons and elicit more understanding and an empathic approach towards others through its use of, among many, low-level features such as camera movement, shot duration, use of colours, sounds, and mise-en-scène. However, it will always remain an image already perceived and mediated by the camera itself. Nevertheless, this ability to at least

allude to other *Umwelten* can be perceived as a strength, and as the potential of film to invite the spectator to reflect on the nonhuman animal perspective.

This brings us back to *Heart of a Dog.* The camera movement as well as the change of lens colour in the aforementioned point of view shot offer us a cinematic representation of a dog's *Umwelt.* It is by no means a complete or loyal representation since, as Inga Pollmann points out, the film medium records and projects its own perception of what has appeared in front of its lens (2013, p. 783). As a result, the spectator is presented with the camera's perception which, through the manipulation of space, alludes to a dog's olfactory, visual, and kinaesthetic senses. Despite the camera's audiovisual sensory make-up, the camera movement, paired with its focus on the bin bags, and supplied with a context in Laurie Anderson's voiceover description of current knowledge of the dog's *Umwelt*, it is possible to evoke the olfactory sense and its strength that attracts and guides Lolabelle's attention. Because dogs possess a superior sense of smell, they rely on it much more heavily than on sight. Therefore, objects that secrete strong and 'rich' smells, and bin bags undoubtedly belong to this category, attract the dogs' attention. Thus, the camera movement depicts the moment when Lolabelle pulls towards the bags in order to sniff at them and refuses to let go until she is pulled away, so she turns around and seeks other interesting stimuli.

The point of view shot in *Heart of a dog* underlines film's capacity to defamiliarise the viewer by offering them a representation of an alternative mode of being which they are invited to adopt through the momentarily locking the camera's perspective with that of Lolabelle. This might encourage some viewers to rethink their own perception and imagine the perception of other beings. This might open up space for exploration and consideration of other *Umwelten,* not only those of nonhuman animals, but also non-normative humans, whose sensory make-up departs from what we have defined as standard and normal. Film's capacity to point towards

other modes of being in and experiencing of the world through its manipulation of both time and space might be considered as revelatory, thus making visible something that remained hidden from the spectator's usual perception, as will be remembered from the previous chapter (Turvey 2008, p. 3). It enables us to imagine those alternative *Umwelten* more effectively by offering us its own perception of them. For instance, it would be difficult for a human spectator to move fast through space while staying at the level of a small rat terrier, but through cinematography the film is able to visualise such an experience. Cinema provides a glimpse into various *Umwelten,* which might broaden our perspective on the abundance of ways of being in the world.

I have shown how camera movement is able to provide a viewer with an abundance of vital information about Lolabelle: beginning with her curiosity and interactiveness, as well as her attention being guided by her superior canine sense of smell. As explained by Brunick, Cutting and DeLong, visual activity in film is divided into camera movement and motion on screen. Due to a lack of reaction shots, it is important to examine how the motion of other characters captured on screen can reveal something about the character whose perspective the spectator has adopted. As mentioned before, some human characters encountered in the sequence bowed down to get closer and greet Lolabelle. This indicates their familiarity with the dog (which is underlined by a voice-over which often offers the name and a profession of a given character) and their positive attitude towards her. As the camera gets closer to them, they do not hold back, which indicates that their encounter is friendly (otherwise, it would suggest that Lolabelle reacted aggressively towards their advances). In other shots the viewer meets other dogs, some of which look from a distance as they walk past, whereas others happily approach the camera to sniff it (which obscures the spectator's view). This strengthens the impression that Lolabelle is an open and friendly dog who successfully interacts with humans and dogs alike. Such motion also suggests that Lolabelle is equally curious since the camera does not move away

from other characters, letting them approach her but also enabling her to approach and inspect them closer.

Another low-level feature which makes it possible to make such inferences about Lolabelle's character is the duration of shots and the whole sequence. Anderson offers a lengthy lone point of view sequence, filled with rich movements and motions, characters and their encounters. The spectator is given enough space to recognize the camera movement as Lolabelle's point of view and familiarise oneself with the character. Since the sequence is long and filled with variety of scenes, which bear a certain similarity to one another, the viewer is given a variety of images to get them through the sequence, but also a pattern of encounters to study and reflect upon. The singularity of the sequence in relation to the rest of the film, invites the spectator to think about the dog's view of and being in, as well as interacting with the world. The duration of the sequence enables the spectator to notice the patterns in interactions with motion captured on screen and camera movements and reflect on their meaning.

In her work on self-reflection and idiosyncratic responses, Margrethe Bruun Vaage proposes three conditions which might facilitate a more personal reaction in the viewer: narrative openness, extended duration of crucial scenes, and complex narrative situation or characters (Vaage 2009, p. 168). She argues that if a sequence lasts longer than necessary for the spectator to pick up vital cues, understand the narrative situation, and make inferences about possible outcomes, then the spectator might start looking for additional meaning within the scene, which might trigger self-reflection and looking for links between the sequence and the spectator's personal experience (Vaage 2009, p. 168).This is what might happen when watching the lone point of view sequence in *Heart of a Dog:* one might reflect on the personal experience of walking a dog in order to understand the sequence better, recall times when one's dog desperately wanted to approach and sniff something unappealing to humans such as bin bags,

and kept looking in their direction until a new, more interesting smell lured their attention elsewhere. Such observations, with a strong personal touch, might encourage the spectator to reflect on the animal perspective and how their own dog experiences the world. Although previous lived experience of dog walking seems helpful in interpreting the sequence, it is not necessary to trigger self-reflection. An opposite sentiment, that of unfamiliarity, might also prove to be an effective elicitor of self-reflection. The camera offers the spectator a perspective that is difficult to imagine, let alone adopt: the camera remains highly mobile while keeping very close to the ground in order to show the world as it is seen by a small rat terrier. Such an unusual position might encourage the spectator to think about the dog's point of view and what the interaction with the world around looks like from their perspective.

Choi is right to point out that the lack of information can trigger central imagining more effectively since the spectator is required to put more effort to find cues elsewhere. In her example from *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles,* Choi focuses on nonverbal expression as well as the pattern (and its breakdown) in character's behaviour. She claims that the abrupt change in Jeanne's behaviour (orderly and careful at the beginning of the film, she becomes more erratic and distracted towards the end) reflects the protagonist's internal breakdown (Choi 2005, p. 24). The lone point of view sequence poses just as much a challenge to interpretation as the dedramatised structure in *Jeanne Dielmann* that Choi discusses. The spectator can learn a lot about the character whose perspective they have adopted, however, this requires a careful observation of filmic techniques such as camera movement, other characters' motion and any changes in colour, for example. The duration of a sequence, a low-level feature itself, gives the viewers the time necessary to familiarise themselves with the peculiarity of a point of view shot and pick up visual as well as aural cues. The presence and importance of the low-level features within the point of view sequence underlines Brunick and colleagues' argument that such features help the spectator understand

the narrative context and characters more effectively (Brunick, Cutting and DeLong 2013, p. 145). Furthermore, I hope I have shown how a lone point of view, in spite of criticism, can still provide us with an abundance of information about the character, even without an accompanying reaction shot which provides nonverbal cues from character's bodily and facial expression. However, such a process requires a substantial work on the part of the spectator: one must carefully observe the scene in order to pick up various cues, but also use imagination or previous experience (in this example, an experience of walking a dog) in order to make successful inferences about what low-level features might communicate. This challenges Choi's criticism of point of view as a structure that does not provide an opportunity for central imagining, however, her argument is most likely to consider the entire point of view structure which comprises of a point of view shot and a reaction shot (2005, p. 17). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the lone point of view shot creates space for a different order of deductive and inferential work regarding the character on the spectator's part than the point of view structure. This is due to the visual absence of the character's facial and bodily expression since the spectator takes clues about the character from cinematography as well as performance and interactions of other characters rather than from a visual feedback provided by the reaction shots of the character whose point of view the spectator adopts. In the context of *Heart of a Dog,* the lone point of view shot functions as a cinematic call because it provides the spectator with cues that invite them to reflect on Lolabelle's interests, likes and dislikes, as well as her personality, especially when interacting with others.

A living portrait of the buffalo: reaction shots in *Border*

There appears to be an agreement that the lone point of view shot does not provide access to a character's subjectivity, and that the reaction shot is much more effective in capturing a character's inner state as well as eliciting an emotional response in the spectator. Yet, I want

to demonstrate how both a lone point of view shot on the one hand, and reaction shot on the other, might encourage the viewer to reflect on the nonhuman animal characters and their inner lives, yet they do so in different ways. In this section I will analyse numerous reaction shots of a buffalo which punctuate Harutyun Khachatryan's film *Border* in order to demonstrate their function in the film as cinematic calls that help to establish the nonhuman animal character as a rounded and fully fledged sympathetic protagonist of the film, whose perspective the spectator is invited to adopt. Such a representation might encourage a discussion of a complex and unresolved topic of nonhuman personhood. Furthermore, I will examine how these lengthy medium close-up and close-up shots facilitate both sympathetic and empathic reactions in the spectator, which might make the spectator reflect on their own attitudes towards animals.

The structure of sympathy, which traces the process of the spectator's sympathetic engagement with the film character, was introduced by Murray Smith in *Engaging Characters. Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (1995). Its first level is recognition, that is, the understanding of the character as a person, which depends on the successful activation of the person schema in the spectator, as discussed in chapter 1. The second level is alignment, which relies on spatio-temporal attachment to a given character, or characters, and access to their subjectivity. The final level is allegiance, where the spectator may come to feel sympathy for some characters and antipathy towards others based on a moral evaluation of the characters (Smith 1995, p. 73).

Compared to other characters, the film focuses most on the figure of the buffalo — their numerous close-ups and medium shots appear throughout the duration of the film, underlining their importance for the narrative. Great attention has been paid to the buffalo and their actions enable the spectator to recognise them as the protagonist of the film. Smith claims that the person schema plays an important role in the process of recognition: when the person schema is triggered, the spectator will most likely perceive a character as a person (Smith 1995, pp.

21—23). Following Pete Porter's observation that the person schema can, and should be, extended to animal characters since most of them fulfil enough conditions to trigger the person schema in the viewer, I will demonstrate how the buffalo figure in Khachatryan's film offers a successful example (Porter 2006, pp. 402—406). However, before doing so, it is important to provide an overview of a discussion on personhood, especially in relation to nonhuman animals.

The discussion of personhood dates back as far as (if not further than) René Descartes and John Locke, who associated the status of being a person with rationality and continuous and persistent psychology respectively (Furberg 2017, p. 281). Debates surrounding the issue of personhood have reappeared and gained strength in the context of animal welfare (for instance, movements for granting personhood to great apes), transhumanism, and medicine (in the context of advanced directives). What makes nonhuman personhood especially problematic is the conflation of terms 'person' and 'human' in the vernacular — the consequence of such an affiliation is reservations against expanding personhood to nonhumans (Chan and Harris 2011, p. 304). Nevertheless, the debates on personhood and what makes a person render this connection between human and person even more complex.

Personhood is widely associated with rationality (self-consciousness, signalled through language, and psychological continuity). However, this would inevitably disqualify human infants, people with severe mental disabilities and advanced dementia from gaining the status of a person (Cushing 2003, p. 559). This obviously would raise concerns since all these groups belong to the human species, and many of us would rightly find it difficult not to perceive them as persons.

Peter Singer offers sentience as an alternative criterion for personhood, linking his stance with that of Michel de Montaigne and Jeremy Bentham (Cushing 2003, p. 560; Serpell 1996, p.

160). The capability of experiencing pain and distress, present among a variety of nonhuman species, seems much more valid in terms of ethical discussions rather than their ability to think rationally. However, if we extended personhood to all sentient beings, our discussion regarding granting rights and freedoms to particular groups would have to accommodate each species' distinct abilities and needs.

The debate on the issue is much bigger and more nuanced than the above outline, but for the purpose of my project, I will follow the expanded view of personhood which incorporates its nonhuman version. One could argue that the term 'agent' would be sufficient in the context of my work since it underlines the active position of characters, both human and nonhuman, in their interactions with their surroundings. However, the term 'person', due to its vernacular use, would imply animal proximity to humans, pointing towards the possibility of them having rich inner lives of their own and their very distinct way of being in the world — *Umwelt.* By working closely with Porter's argument regarding the cinematic construction of nonhuman personhood, I will examine how the representation of the buffalo in *Border* might indeed cue the spectator to perceive them as a person and invite a reflection on the very question of personhood.

Smith offers several criteria for perceiving a character as a person. Among them, a discretely human body that is continuous over time and space, the potential for character traits, emotions and thoughts, as well as intentionality (Smith 1995, p. 21). Although not discreetly human, the buffalo's bodily integrity is kept throughout the film, underlining their individuality and distinctness. The buffalo is more often than not depicted separately from other characters in the film. This emphasises their special position in the film as the protagonist, but also reflects their alienation from others. The latter point is reinforced by the narrative context: the buffalo has been found in a ditch and brought to a farm but keeps running away towards the border

where another group of animals resides. This suggests that the buffalo is a stranger on the farm who did not manage as well, as they did not intend to integrate with adoptive group. Even in the group shots, the buffalo clearly stands out due to their distinct look (longer and dark fur, as opposed to other cows and buffalos who are fair). Thus, the buffalo fulfils the first condition for triggering person schema, namely being an individual who has a discrete body that is continuous in time and space.

The buffalo's repeated escapes from the farm not only suggest the presence of intentional states (the desire to leave and cross the border), the capacity for self-impelled actions (the spectator witnesses the buffalo's escapes numerous times), potential for traits (stubbornness, determination and resilience in their persistent running away) as well as emotions (fear and distress, especially in the scene when the buffalo is stuck in a burning barn and the powerful call they make in order to summon those on the other side of the border), as well as perceptual activity (when stuck at the farm, the buffalo often observes and studies other figures and the surroundings). All these elements comprise the person schema, therefore, the buffalo can be easily recognised and perceived by the spectator as a person. The film not only cues the spectator to recognise the buffalo as the character but also places them in a privileged position of a protagonist whose acts and interactions the spectator witnesses throughout the film.

Interestingly, unlike in the case of human characters whose personhood is not (or is rarely) questioned, and who might easily activate the person schema as soon as they appear on screen, some viewers might experience a sort of reluctance to recognise the nonhuman animal figures as characters in their own respect. Therefore, alignment, which binds the spectator with the nonhuman animal character, and makes them witness the character's actions and interactions, might offer numerous cues to activate the person schema and enable the process of recognition. It is in this second level of structure of sympathy where reaction shots as well as point of view

structures can function as instances of cinematic calls, which invite the spectator to acknowledge the nonhuman personhood of the buffalo character, to enable an emotional attachment to them, and encourage reflection on their animal condition.

Smith divides the second part of the structure of sympathy, alignment, into spatio-temporal attachment on the one hand, and subjective access on the other (1995, p. 83). Since reaction shots of the nonhuman protagonist are used throughout the film in order to align the spectator with the protagonist (both in terms of spatio-temporal attachment and subjective access), which in turn provides the spectator with more insight into the main character's way of being and interacting with the world, I will argue that such shots function in this context as instances of cinematic calls on behalf of the buffalo protagonist. While spatio-temporal attachment is evident in *Border* since the spectator spends most of the screening time watching and following the buffalo and their adventures, the problem might arise when analysing subjective access. The nonhuman animal character possesses a body and uses nonverbal expression that is very different from the human body and body language. This might make the interpretation of internal states more challenging, compared to human characters, whose facial expressions as well as verbal and nonverbal communication are known to the audience. Nevertheless, despite some limitations, the film manages to represent the buffalo as a person with emotions, intentional states, and characteristic traits, therefore, the spectator can either gain partial access to character's subjectivity or make inferences based on narrative context and formal aspects of the film.

To explain how *Border* attempts to overcome difficulties in gaining insight into an animal character's subjectivity, I will focus on Plantinga's notion of scene of empathy and Per Persson's concept of deictic gaze, both of which play important roles in facilitating character engagement and empathic, as well as sympathetic responses in the viewer. Plantinga describes

the scene of empathy as lengthy close-up shots of a character (mainly the protagonist), which usually occur towards the end of the film and have certain moral context around them. Such scenes slow down or halt the narrative, providing the spectator with time to study the character and contemplate their state of mind: the character's internal states become available through focus on facial expressions, the presence of suggestive music, etc. (Plantinga 1999, pp. 239—242). Vaage points to the attraction aspect of Plantinga's scene of empathy: she refers to scenes of empathy as 'small attraction scenes', whose appeal lies in inviting the spectator to empathise with the character (2010, p. 172). In *Border's* case the attraction manifests itself in the encounter with the buffalo protagonist with whom the spectator is invited to engage affectively and cognitively.

Fig. 32. Scene of empathy (*Border,* 2009)

In the case of nonhuman animal characters, scenes of empathy adopt a status of cinematic calls as they enable the nonhuman animal calls to manifest themselves, provide space and time to bring the distinct personal expression of the nonhuman characters to the fore. Although in

168

Plantinga's account the scene of empathy typically occurs towards the end of the film, I would argue that *Border* offers numerous scenes which are reminiscent of scenes of empathy. Throughout *Border*, the spectator has multiple opportunities to carefully observe, familiarise themselves with, as well as simply admire the buffalo. The crucial low-level features of the scene of empathy are the close-up and the duration of the shot. The close-up offers the spectator a very close encounter with the nonhuman animal character, notice certain facial and bodily features such as big gleaming eyes with a curious and attentive gaze, or focus their attention on often discreet gestures, like slight movements of ears as the buffalo picks up interesting sounds. This way the buffalo is constructed as a singular character, with their own quirks, needs, fears, and passions. The extended duration of these scenes gives the spectator enough time to become familiar with the unusual protagonist and their nonverbal expression, and in turn, develop a more compassionate attitude. The combination of animal presence, proximity, and time enables the spectator to get closer to the character and create a bond with the protagonist and the spectator, and thus to acknowledge and respond to their nonhuman animal call.

Persson's analogy between the point of view structure and a deictic gaze echoes the argument made by Noël Carroll that the success of the point of view structure lies in is similarity to human natural mechanisms of observation. When we look at someone and notice they look somewhere else, we follow their gaze in order to discover the source of their attention; then our gaze returns to their face to analyse their facial expression and learn more about their reaction towards the object of their gaze (Persson 2000, pp. 104—106). Vaage makes another important observation on point of view structure, namely, that it signalises an important event, or encounter for the character, which cues the spectator to pay more attention and engage more empathically (2010, p. 161). This way in some instances the point of view structure can function as the cinematic call that gives the spectator an insight into what is important for the

nonhuman character, a peek of the nonhuman character's *Umwelt,* with its distinct relations with beings and objects.

Let us examine a point of view structure that occurs towards the end of the film. The winter has come and everything is covered in snow. The buffalo is seen leaving the enclosure and looking around. The image cuts to a close-up of the buffalo's head, vapour coming through their nostrils. The camera zooms on their face as they make a couple of steps forward. The camera cuts to a point of view shot depicting a wall surrounding the enclosure — the world beyond the farm, a vast snowy landscape at which the buffalo gazes through a big hole in the wall. The camera cuts back to the buffalo, who runs towards the entrance, stands at the gate and looks around. This is followed by a long shot of the buffalo running and leaping through the wintery landscape beyond the wall as the buffalo has made yet another escape. The juxtaposition of the buffalo's close-up with a point of view shot, then followed by another shot of the buffalo enables the spectator to make inferences about the protagonist's interest. This is reinforced by the narrative situation and the narrative structure, where the buffalo's escapes are a recurrent theme, therefore, the viewer understands the character's act of looking at the world beyond the wall as the desire and determination to leave the farm and run towards the border. This means that a point of view structure in the scene functions as a cinematic call that makes it possible for the spectator to better understand the character and their *Umwelt* — and it does so by analysing the object of their gaze, their interest, and the relationship between the two. Reaction shots in this scene creates the conditions necessary to fulfil the second step within the structure of sympathy, a spatio-temporal and subjective alignment with the buffalo protagonist. What is more, the use of scenes of empathy as well as point of view structures (or deictic gaze) in the aforementioned examples are instances of the cinematic call on behalf of the buffalo character as these filmic techniques, on the one hand, enable the manifestation of the buffalo's calls and privilege these calls throughout the film, and, on the other hand, provide cues for the

spectator regarding the buffalo's *Umwelt.* Specifically, the spectator is cued to understand the protagonist's relations with other beings and objects, highlighting what is important to them. The use of point of view structure in the winter escape scene also invites the spectator to make inferences about the buffalo's nonhuman personhood, particularly their cognitive abilities and agency, manifested in carefully observing the surroundings, drawing connections between objects and beings (the open gate, the winter landscape beyond the enclosure, barking dogs behind the fence), and finally acting according to the situation and one's own wants and needs (escaping).

Introducing a nonhuman animal protagonist into the structure of sympathy challenges numerous assumptions present in Smith's account of the processes of recognition and alignment. *Border* demonstrates that a distinct human body is not a necessary element in the process of recognition, as alignment with the buffalo, in which the spectator witnesses the character's actions and interactions give the spectator an insight into their rich inner life, thus leading the spectator to acknowledge the buffalo not only as the character in their own respect but a sympathetic protagonist of the film. There is, however, yet another level of the structure of sympathy, a type of engagement that appears to be much more problematic than recognition and alignment. Allegiance is based on the assumption that the spectator will morally evaluate the character, something that many might resist in the case of nonhuman animal characters. For this reason, it is important to explore the question of nonhuman animal morality.

Fig. 33. Buffalo checking their surroundings (*Border*, 2009)

Fig. 34. Buffalo's point of view (*Border*, 2009)

Fig. 35. Buffalo's reaction shot (*Border*, 2009)

Fig. 36. Buffalo's point of view (*Border*, 2009)

Fig. 37. Buffalo's escape (*Border*, 2009)

Moral allegiance and nonhuman animal characters: what about Tubby?

Smith introduces the third level of character engagement, allegiance, which he defines as a 'moral evaluation of the character by the spectator' (1995, p. 84). It is understood as a strong 'pro' stance, where the spectator is concerned with the well-being of the character and roots for their success (Plantinga 2013, p. 106; Smith 1995, p. 84). Allegiance depends on the viewer's successful access to, and understanding of, the character's inner states, as well as on the character's position within the narrative. Allegiance differs from both recognition and alignment, because it requires comprehension of the character's action in relation to their mentality and the narrative context. Furthermore, allegiance elicits both emotional and cognitive responses, making the process more complex and personal: one can be aligned to a character without developing allegiance (Smith 1995, p. 187). In agreement with Carroll, Smith demonstrates how, among other factors, the interactions of the main characters with minor ones assist in forming the spectator's moral allegiance with the main characters.

To illustrate his point, he chooses a scene from *Daisy Kenyon* (Otto Preminger, 1947), where Peter Lapham (Henry Fonda) pets Daisy's (Joan Crawford) dog, Tubby, to demonstrate that the seemingly ordinary, almost imperceptible gesture of petting the dog provides a valuable cue regarding Lapham's moral stance as it fulfils the 'behaviour towards pets' schema, in which petting is an appropriate reaction to encountering a pet dog. Therefore, it appears that in this particular scene Tubby operates as a moral object towards which Lapham fulfils his responsibility, in contrast to his rival, Dan O'Mara who ignores the dog altogether. Tubby is thus seen as a vehicle through which the moral orientation of the two characters can be established and they can be placed in opposition to one another. However, such an approach turns Tubby into an object, a mirror in which human characters' virtues and vices are reflected. How would we read this interaction if we considered Tubby as a character in his own respect? A character, although minor, yet who is not merely defined by its 'inferiority' and vulnerability in relation to major, human characters? What is Tubby's take on the behaviour of Lapham and O'Mara? How does he react to their touch and lack thereof? What does it mean for him, as well as from the point of view of canine etiquette? Does he want to be petted on the head in the first place? Was he actively ignored by O'Hara, or simply not bothered with his presence? I do not wish to deny the existence of the 'behaviour towards pets' schema at work here, however, it is worthwhile to reflect on these human-canine interactions by adopting both human and canine perspectives. For this reason, I would like to treat this particular example as a starting point for our reflection on the relation between allegiance and nonhuman animal characters.

In Smith's example Tubby is presented as the moral object, that is, something towards which the moral subject has moral obligations. This means that the spectator will not morally evaluate Tubby himself, but the main characters' behaviour towards Tubby will either lead to a positive moral evaluation of the character if they fulfil their obligation towards him (allegiance), or contribute to the spectator's dislike, or antipathy should the character fail to fulfil their

obligations. In such a picture Tubby is placed in a passive position, where his perspective, wants, and needs are not relevant, and Tubby himself functions only as a vehicle that contributes to the establishment of the characters' moral orientation. Nevertheless, the scene invites us to ask questions: how would this example work should Tubby be the main character of the film? How is the moral orientation established if we deal with a nonhuman character occupying the major role? Can moral allegiance be established with such a character?

Since the spectators often find themselves rooting for and feeling joy or pity, for nonhuman characters they are aligned with, then the relationship with such characters appear to fulfil all three levels of the structure of sympathy. This would suggest that the spectator can form a moral allegiance with the nonhuman animal character. Although some might argue that nonhuman animal characters cannot be morally evaluated for their actions as they are not moral agents, nonhuman animal characters are often portrayed as heroes, or as villains. Taking up such a role in a film is more often than not based on the nonhuman animal character's attitudes towards human counterparts. While nonhuman animals who are presented as friends, and helpers, as loyal and perhaps willing sacrifice themselves for human characters, will be evaluated as morally good (such as Hachiko in *Hachi: A Dog's Tale,* or Joey in *War Horse* (Steven Spielberg, 2012)), the myriads of nonhuman animal characters from natural horror films (*Arachnophobia, Birds* (Alfred Hitchcock,1963)*, Jaws,* just to name a few) will be portrayed as blood-thirsty, malicious villains. It is worth noting that the distinction between good and bad nonhuman animal characters is often intimately linked to a non-moral factor, namely, the anthropocentric perception of particular species (do humans consider them cute or scary, useful or pests, similar to humans or not, etc.), as well as negative anthropomorphism (attributing too many features present in humans where there is not enough evidence, which might lead to harmful treatment on the anthropomorphised animal), or anthropodenial (refusal to attribute traits present in humans despite evidence it might be shared with a given species).

Hence, we predominantly encounter insects, lizards, and arachnids as villains and pets, or other companion species as heroic characters (de Waal 1997; Waal 1999, p. 258).

As with human characters, this (anthropocentric) Manichean dualism gives way to a more nuanced and complex portrayal in less mainstream productions, particularly in these cases where nonhuman animals are not strongly humanised, and where human characters are not a central component of the film. One might contend that it is more difficult, if not impossible, to morally evaluate the wolf in *Wild,* or the buffalo in *Border.* Yet at least some spectators will find themselves emotionally attached to nonhuman animal protagonists, expressing concern for their well-being and wishing for them to achieve their goals. Therefore, if we used Smith's terms, such spectators will not be merely aligned with the nonhuman animal characters but will form an allegiance with them.

Nevertheless, such a view might be met with resistance as nonhuman animals are generally perceived as amoral, therefore, they cannot be evaluated in moral terms. Some of them can also be perceived as moral patients, that is, the recipients of moral obligations and responsibilities that moral agents have: unlike moral patients, moral agents are capable of moral behaviour and can be morally judged for their actions. When the spectator witnesses a pack of lions killing an antelope during a wildlife film, one might pity the antelope, but one would not blame lions and perceive them as wicked, evil, or immoral for their acts. The fact that lions are carnivores, and that successful hunting ensures their survival would justify the killing as necessary. One might find it problematic that domestic cats perform the same acts with mice, or small birds — after all, they have an abundance of food provided for them by their human companions and do not need to hunt for survival — yet, one understands that their actions are not a manifestation of the cat's cruelty but rather of their (still strong) predatory instincts.

At the same time, some, like Evelyn Pluhar, David DeGrazia, or Marc Bekoff, might argue that at least certain animal species besides humans can be considered as moral agents — this would mainly apply to primates as well as other social mammals such as elephants and wolves, to name a few (Bekoff and Pierce 2009; Luke and DeGrazia 1996; Pluhar 1995). Social animals require more developed cognitive skills in order for their group to survive and flourish — they need to establish clear rules of conduct in order to encourage pro-social behaviour and punish anti-social behaviours. They have to be more attuned to their family and friends to resolve conflicts than to strangers, they may have to offer support to those in need and reciprocate favours. Such nonhuman animals have some of the building blocks of human morality (Howell 2010, p. 179), and some of them exhibit behaviour some would not hesitate to call moral (Bekoff and Pierce 2009, pp. 8—10).[16]

What is more, one can approach this subject from a slightly different starting point. In his research, Jonathan Haidt has suggested that humans have a propensity to make moral judgments based on nonmoral traits, and then provide a rationalisation for their intuitive judgments (2001). This observation is particularly interesting as it challenges the idea that our moral evaluation is a strictly cognitive process, but rather, at least in some cases, its origin is in moral intuition, a gut feeling about something being good or bad, which is then rationalised and justified. This means that many of our moral evaluations are written (at least to a certain extent) in our genes, with their origins reaching beyond our human past, and can be shared with other, particularly mammalian, species.

The discussion of nonhuman animal morality is beyond the scope of this project; thus, I cannot do justice to its complexities and nuances. Growing research in cognitive ethology provides

[16] Bekoff and Pierce recall the incident in which a boy who fell into a zoo enclosure at the Brookfield Zoo in Illinois and has been taken to safety by a lowland gorilla Binti Jua (2009, p. 1).

often fascinating accounts of nonhuman animals assisting others, even if they might belong to an out-group, and even if they do not benefit from their actions, expressing care and concern for others, grieving the loss of their closest, or sacrificing their own well-being to prevent others from suffering (Bekoff and Pierce 2009, p. 108; Waal 2009, p. 42). Interestingly, such behaviours would be normally understood as moral if the agent was human, yet in the case of nonhuman animals, such ascription would be often met with resistance.

At this point it is important to briefly return to the discussion of anthropomorphism and anthropodenial from the introduction. As mentioned there, anthropomorphism is an inevitable part of human experience – we learn and try to understand the world and its processes through our distinctly human senses and cognition. In many cases, this ability has proved helpful in our discovery of the world and its mechanisms: as hunters, people had to anthropomorphise nonhuman animals in order to learn their habits and increase their chance of success, scientists often anthropomorphise physical forces and processes in order to make them more understandable (for instance when they discuss how atoms 'attract' each other). As Frans de Waal (and many other cognitive ethologists such as Marc Bekoff, Jane Godall, and Barbara Smuts to name a few) has pointed out, anthropomorphism played an important role in their research and enabled them to gain insight into the lives of nonhuman animals they observed and interacted with (de Waal 2016, p. 262). It is, however, vital to make a distinction between negative anthropomorphism and positive anthropomorphism. Negative anthropomorphism (often referred to as Disneyfication or 'bambification') attributes supposedly human traits where there is little to no evidence for their accuracy (which is also problematic due to limited knowledge of particular species). Such an approach disregards any distinctive traits the animal in question has, which might be species-specific. In the Introduction I brought an example of misreading a chimpanzee smile as a sign of benign and friendly attitude, while it is in fact an expression of distress and submission. Positive anthropomorphism takes species similarities

and differences between various species into account and neither attributes too little 'human-specific' features nor too many such similarities, as John Bradshaw shows. For example, the attribution of guilt to dogs can have a highly nefarious effect as punishing supposedly guilty dogs can lead to anxiety as well as deterioration in a dog's behaviour due to stress (Bradshaw 2012, p. 211).

Different sides of the discussion of the (im)possibility of nonhuman animal morality offer often opposing explanations of behaviours that would be described in moral terms if the agent was human. The perceived stark difference between humans and other animals might be biased by anthropodenial, or bad anthropomorphism, leaving the question of animal morality open. Notwithstanding this open question, my brief discussion here is intended to invite a reflection on the nonhuman origins of human morality, the building blocks of empathy and altruism that we share with many other species, as well as the possibility of a species-specific morality. On this note, let us return to the discussion of allegiance in relation to film.

As explained above, in *Engaging Characters,* the structure of sympathy is described as having three levels necessary for a fully-fledged sympathy towards characters to form: recognition, alignment, and allegiance. Plantinga suggests that the concept of allegiance attempts to cover too many various positive approaches towards film characters and proposes a more nuanced scale of positive and negative stances towards them, ranging from objection (the farthest on the 'con' end of the spectrum) to projection (the farthest on the 'pro' end of the spectrum) (Plantinga 2010, pp. 38, 43). This approach expands Smith's structure of sympathy by adding a more nuanced spectrum of the spectator's stance towards film characters, allegiance among them.

In order to relieve the concept of allegiance from carrying too much weight, Plantinga offers a distinction between allegiance and sympathy. While the former is established only after

appropriate character and narrative development (supplying the spectator with enough information about the characters and the narrative context to evaluate their acts morally), and where it is more long-term and less prone to fluctuations, as well as based on the moral evaluation of the character, the latter can be more flexible, more short-term and independent of moral evaluation (Plantinga 2010, p. 41).

Plantinga offers a clarification to distinguish allegiance and its moral component from sympathy by underlying how allegiance is 'cognitive in nature' and unlike sympathy, or liking, it is not prone to fluctuations: the spectator will maintain an allegiance to a specific character despite the temporary loss of sympathy for them (2010, pp. 42, 48). Of course, Plantinga, together with Smith, acknowledges that although cognitive in nature, allegiance is still subject to manipulations and might be guided by the particular use of music, mise-en-scène, cinematography and so on.

Plantinga's model solves the problem regarding sympathy with a character when allegiance, understood as a moral evaluation of the character's traits and acts, does not occur. This might indeed be the case when the spectator roots for nonhuman animal characters. As Plantinga demonstrates in his article, what the spectator might experience in relation to certain nonhuman animal characters could be sympathy, understood as an expression of care and concern for a character one might not approve or disapprove of morally, but who is being treated unjustly and whose well-being is at risk. Sympathy with the buffalo in *Border* is most evident at the dramatic peaks of the film: when the buffalo is found stuck in a ditch, when they are punished for escaping from the farm, when they are stuck in a burning barn and desperately crying for help, and particularly in the final scene, where the protagonist lies on their side in agony, stuck between the barbwire and the border fence, accompanied by a small and confused calf. In these scenes life and health of the buffalo are endangered, which prompts spectators to express

concern for the protagonist's well-being. They might perceive the buffalo as being treated unfairly and violently and feel discomfort. Unquestionably, the spectator can thus be said to be encouraged to sympathise with the buffalo.

Nevertheless, *Border* can be an even more problematic case, at least for some spectators. If we follow Plantinga's distinction between sympathy and allegiance, with all the specific characteristics he ascribes to them, we will arrive at the problematic standpoint where we might feel something stronger than sympathy, namely a long-term emotional attachment with positive feelings as well as wishing the buffalo character well, where such a stance will neither be motivated by our moral evaluation of the character, nor will it be a subject to any sort of fluctuations. As the narrative progresses and the spectator witnesses the buffalo's failed attempts to reach the border, as well as the threats and punishment they receive for disobedience. Through the eyes of the buffalo the spectator observes the everyday lives of human and nonhuman characters caught in the middle of a military conflict. Finally, the film offers numerous scenes of empathy, where the spectator can study the buffalo protagonist very closely and familiarise themselves with the nuances of their personal expression, begin to perceive, acknowledge, and possibly respond to their calls. The spectator's attachment and rooting for the nonhuman protagonist is grounded in the acceptance of the invitation to explore their perspective, the world through their eyes, understanding their struggle and tensions which often arise in their relationships with human characters, and finally in embracing the shared corporeality, vulnerability, and finitude. And although very often a sense of sympathy for nonhuman animal characters is manifested through exposing violence to which they are being subjected, it could also be cultivated in the exploration of their personal idiosyncrasies as well as their ordinary ways of being in the world and interacting with others.

Among the scenes that contribute to the consolidation of the buffalo as a character with a deep inner life, as well as inviting a much stronger and long-lasting relationship with the protagonist than Plantingian sympathy allows, is the powerful call of the buffalo that follows their winter escape. Having reached the border, the buffalo is calling in the dead of the winter, their voice travelling through the vast landscape of the borderlands to finally reach the ears of one of the men. The scene starts with the close-up of the buffalo on their way to the border, the animal seems to have lost their way, which results in them making a loud and long call. The several following long shots depict the landscape that surrounds the buffalo, each shot is accompanied by the buffalo's amplified and seemingly unending call. The scene ends with the close-up of the man sitting with his eyes closed, the call reaches his ears, so he opens his eyes. In the following shot, the buffalo is being chased back to the farm, suggesting their call has been answered. The buffalo's call is captured as a powerful expression — the call is strong and loud enough to travel through the vast landscape, and it not only reaches the human ears but provokes a reaction as the man wakes up from his meditation and another one finds the buffalo and brings them back to the farm. When watching the scene, one quickly realises that the buffalo's call was intended to summon the absent herd from the other side of the border. Unfortunately, no matter how powerful, the buffalo's call either did not manage to reach them or could not be answered. This extraordinary call, amplified both sonically and visually in the editing process, embodies the buffalo's longing for reconnecting with their peers, yet the fact that the call has been heard and answered by the men from the farm the buffalo escaped from makes the scene even more dramatic and disheartening. It is the mixture of nonhuman animal calls and cinematic calls woven into the fabric of the narrative that brings the spectator closer to the buffalo and helps to establish a relationship that is much stronger and deeper than sympathy.

The type of character engagement that *Border* can elicit in some spectators might be identified neither as sympathy nor allegiance in Plantinga's terms. Although Plantinga's model offers a more diverse selection of pro and con stances the spectator might adopt towards film characters, there still might be a need for even more nuance in order to accommodate to complexities of engaging with nonhuman animal characters. There are potentially three solutions available: first, a modified definition of sympathy that would allow more long-term and deeper engagement on the spectator's part; second, another type of pro attitude that would reside either somewhere between sympathy and allegiance on Plantinga's spectrum; third, a type of positive stance that would be placed as an alternative to allegiance that does not require moral evaluation of the sort that allegiance does.

Furthermore, *Border* demonstrates that the discussions about character engagement might tend to overemphasise the cognitive component of the spectator's engagement and downplay the role of empathy, more direct sensations, and 'gut feelings' the spectator might have in their encounter with the characters onscreen. On the one hand, we have already mentioned scenes of empathy that allow the spectator to get familiar with the unusual protagonist – these prolonged shots focus on the buffalo being themselves, allowing the spectator to notice some quirks and distinct features of the character. On the other hand, we have scenes with more dramatic and moral charge, which might prompt the spectator to express concern for the character. Let us look at two such examples.

In the first scene the wedding reception is dramatically disrupted by the fire that engulfs the farm. The medium shot of dancing guests is followed by the close-up of the buffalo's head. The framing is very tight, the camera positioned very close to the protagonist, and the sense of entrapment is emphasised by the darkness of the barn that gives way to the flames, which eventually enter the space within the frame. The buffalo stands in the corner of the barn,

extremely close to the walls, which restrict their movements. They look around, snort through the nose, flap their ears and moo. Their voice permeates the following establishing shot of the burning farm.

Fig. 38. Buffalo stuck in a burning barn (*Border,* 2009)

Fig. 39. Buffalo escaping the fire (*Border,* 2009)

After being pulled out from the enclosure, the buffalo is seen standing in the midst of mayhem — burning buildings, animals, some unable to move, being pulled or even carried by men trying to save them. Finally, the protagonist also moves away from the danger. The tight framing of the buffalo as well as the camera position, which is either at the same level as the buffalo's face or below it, strengthens a sense of entrapment, and increases the tension of the scene. Thus, on the one hand, cinematography in this scene enables for the protagonist's vocal and kinaesthetic calls to manifest themselves by focusing on the buffalo's face and body, and on the other hand, it amplifies the buffalo's distress and sense of entrapment through tight framing and the close, almost oppressive, positioning of the camera. The viewer can feel, and even share, the buffalo's tension and distress, especially as these shots of the lone animal stuck in a burning barn are juxtaposed with several shots of guests celebrating the wedding, still unaware of the tragedy. Loud traditional music can be heard in the buffalo's barn, however,

their own alarming calls cannot reach people's ears, making them simultaneously powerful and disempowered.

Fig. 40. Buffalo observing the aftermath of the fire (*Border,* 2009)

The second scene I would like to discuss, is the scene of punishment. Despite the occurrence of highly dramatic scenes, the film does not adopt a Manichean structure to divide its characters into good and bad. The people who punish the buffalo for their escape are not depicted as pure villains. Both human and animal characters have been directly affected by the conflict and they rely on each other for survival. The film depicts human characters establishing a refugee camp, and the buffalo is introduced to the spectator in the scene when the two men help them to get out of the ditch where they have been probably caught during the crossfire. Furthermore, during the fire scene, where the flames engulfed the whole camp, men have been shown saving animals stuck in barns, or carrying those shocked by the turmoil. The narrative draws a very complex connection between human and animal characters, with no clear opposition. Nevertheless, the spectator is invited to empathise and sympathise with the buffalo — praise their determination to reach the border, or simply admire their curious eyes as they observe and

study their surroundings. The punishment scene (following the protagonist's first escape) might cause the spectator to experience a mixture of discomfort and distress at the buffalo's mistreatment and growing concern for their wellbeing, evoked more directly by the audiovisual representation of the buffalo being chased around the enclosure and being beaten and indirectly by presenting a shot of the girl who is witnessing the scene and whose own unease can influence the spectator through emotional mimicry. In the scene of the beating, the spectator may feel physical unease and discomfort, empathise with the beaten character, as well as a cognitive one, a sense of injustice — the buffalo does not deserve the punishment, and one sympathises with them, for their escape has failed and the incarceration becomes the price to pay for their determination to leave this estranged farm and go towards the border, where it appears they came from. The scene demonstrates how often empathy and sympathy are closely interwoven, and difficult to separate.

What is more, since the buffalo is the central character of the film, the undeserved violence might make the buffalo more morally preferable in the spectator's eyes than the people who beat them, strengthening the spectator's positive attitude towards the nonhuman character. Such a situation can be considered as a sort of inversion of the point made by Noël Carroll and Murray Smith regarding the human protagonists' attitudes towards minor characters: rather than informing the spectator about the protagonist's moral orientation, here, the behaviour of human characters (who can be morally evaluated) towards the buffalo protagonist (who, as a nonhuman, is said to both occupy a vulnerable and minor position in relation to humans, and be amoral, therefore, beyond moral evaluation), might inform the spectator's feelings towards the nonhuman character, and specifically perhaps even make the spectator see them as morally preferable, as the one who does not resort to immoral acts.

The punishment scene is followed by an exchange of gazes between the men who brought the buffalo to the camp and the buffalo standing in the corner of a barn. The encounter is tense, devoid of dialogue and reduced to an exchange of looks, with a great deal of mistrust and mutual misunderstanding. The use of the point of view structure underlines the protagonist's alienation on the farm, already expressed by the juxtaposition of close-up shots of the lone buffalo and the group shots of other animal and human characters. The main character's failure to reach the border and subsequent isolation reinforces the sense of alienation and the spectator's shared desire for the buffalo to escape and achieve their goal, especially since the protagonist is forcefully kept in the camp where they so clearly do not belong.

Fig. 41. Buffalo exchanging looks with the men (*Border*, 2009)

Fig. 42. Men observing the buffalo, buffalo's point of view (*Border,* 2009)

As the narration progresses, the viewer understands the protagonist and their intentions better, which enables them to appreciate the buffalo's stance and root for them to succeed, thus, develop a relation akin to allegiance. What is more, the spectator might perceive the buffalo's punishment as unjust, making the buffalo a morally preferable character. Plantingian scenes of empathy as well as emotionally charged scenes which arouse both empathy for and sympathy with the buffalo contribute to establishing this long-term, affectively and cognitively informed positive stance towards the buffalo. This growing emotional engagement with the buffalo and concern for their goal make the final scene particularly tragic. The main character has reached the border, crossed through the barbwire and collapsed from wounds and exhaustion. A final shot of a small calf standing by the side of a dying protagonist marks the endless circle of tragedy where the displaced can never reach their home, however close it may be.

Through numerous scenes of empathy in the film, the use of deictic gaze in the point of view structure, as well as the presence of dramatic peaks within the narrative, *Border* presents the

buffalo as the protagonist of the film, and cues the spectator to root for them, thus, it activates all three levels of engagement which constitute the structure of sympathy (recognition of the buffalo as a person and the main character, spatio-temporal and partial subjective alignment with the character, and allegiance with the buffalo in evaluation of crucial moments in the narrative) as well as elicits empathetic and sympathetic responses in the viewer. Furthermore, particular use of the point of view structure which informs the spectator about the buffalo's *Umwelt*, prolonged reaction shots akin to Plantinga's scene of empathy which familiarise the spectator with the protagonist, as well as the use of tight framing focused on the buffalo at the dramatic peaks of the film, function as cinematic calls that provide time and space for the buffalo's calls, privilege their distinct perspective, and encourage the spectator to both empathise and sympathise with the bovine protagonist.

Conclusion: in-paws-imagining

In this chapter I have shown how the introduction of the animal characters into the discussion on point of view, reaction shot, and emotional engagement complicates our understanding of these techniques. I have used this opportunity to expand on the concept of the cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal by discussing how particular use of cinematography and editing in *Heart of a Dog* and *Border* foregrounded nonhuman animal perspective. In the case of *Heart of a Dog,* the use of the point of view shot, paired with low-level features such as camera movement and shot duration might not give us a pre-digested insight into Lolabelle's inner life, however, it offers something equally fascinating — a cinematic representation of the dog's *Umwelt,* that is, the dog's relationship with their surroundings mediated by canine sensory make-up. By no means complete or loyal, this filmic depiction of dog's *Umwelt* invites the spectator to question the normative status of their own human, perception by alluding to the presence of multiple, highly distinct ways of being in, experiencing, and interacting with

the world. What is more, the representation of Lolabelle's *Umwelt* goes beyond her optical perception; it offers a peek into a canine-centred world, in which one does not walk next to street pigeons indifferently, one greets friends and strangers with no reservations but with beaming enthusiasm, and where the pungent smell of bin bags is met with curiosity and attraction. This cinematic call – an invitation into the world and heart of a dog — potentially kindles a more sympathetic view towards Lolabelle, as it could do in the case of other nonhuman animals as well as even humans with various sensory 'impairments' since the abundance of *Umwelten,* emphasised by Uexküll, questions the superiority of one mode of perception over others.

Border offers yet another example of the cinematic call on behalf of its buffalo protagonist: instead of inviting the spectator to explore the zoocentric world through an optical point of view, the spectator is provided with time and space to get accustomed to the unlikely main character. The use of scenes of empathy in *Border*, with lengthy close-up shots of the buffalo, as well as a point of view structure (usually the close-up of a buffalo followed by a point of view shot of what they are looking at) facilitate the spectator's process of familiarisation with a protagonist as well as that of the development of empathic and sympathetic engagement with them. The film offers enough cues in order to trigger the person schema in the spectator. Therefore, one perceives the buffalo as the main character of the film, with their own desires, intentions, emotions, and personality traits. Reaction shots tend to reveal a character's inner states through their focus on facial and bodily expression, that is, kinaesthetic calls. The introduction of the buffalo protagonist problematises such a view since their nonverbal expression differs from a more familiar, human one. However, equipped with an understanding of the narrative context, the spectator can make successful inferences regarding the buffalo's inner states.

Both case studies highlight the importance of alignment in the development of emotional engagement with nonhuman characters. Although scholars such as Murray Smith draw a clear distinction between alignment and allegiance, asserting that alignment alone does not necessarily lead to allegiance, I want to suggest that in the case of nonhuman animal characters alignment leads to a greater exposure to and familiarity with these very distinct and often enigmatic characters, which in turn might lead to a more empathic and sympathetic engagement with said characters (1995, p. 187). Alignment allows nonhuman animal calls to be manifested in various forms, opens up the possibility of imagining the world from zoocentric perspectives, where connections between objects and beings might be different from those human spectators are accustomed to. *Border* in particular shows how in the case of nonhuman animal characters, spatio-temporal alignment plays a crucial role in building a sympathetic and empathetic relationship – by simply being close to the nonhuman animal character, getting accustomed to their distinct ways of being, picking up on their personal features and quirks, which turn them from 'a buffalo' into 'the buffalo', the spectator is invited to answer the call made by a living, sensing, cognitive being.

The discussion of the buffalo protagonist in connection to the structure of sympathy also shows that the terms we normally use in relation to human characters can and often are extended to nonhuman animal characters, thus, complicating the ways in which we think about personhood, agency, subjectivity, but also morality. Long-term and complex engagement with the buffalo in *Border* shows that the spectator can engage with the nonhuman animal character in ways that expand beyond mere liking, or Plantingian sympathy — something that has to be acknowledged in the ways in which we typify various attitudes towards film characters. The case of the buffalo demonstrates that the distinction between sympathy and allegiance might not be sufficient, and either a revision of how we define these terms, or an introduction of a

new term is necessary to acknowledge a more complex engagement with amoral nonhuman characters.

What is more, the case of nonhuman animal characters, who often will not be evaluated morally (or rather approved or disapproved), also underlines how we might have a tendency to overemphasise the cognitive, reflective aspect of character engagement and overlook the important role of empathy for another being — whether they are like or unlike us. Although the spectator might refrain from a fully-fledged moral evaluation of the nonhuman animal character, there might be narrative situations in which the behaviour of human counterparts might make the nonhuman characters appear morally preferable nonetheless, therefore, encouraging the spectator to develop a more positive and deeper emotional bond with the nonhuman character rather than the human one.

One can of course think of *Border's* protagonist as an allegory for human victims of military conflict — choosing a nonhuman animal would make the figure much more universal as a being deprived of national identity, for example, and is one reason why the buffalo could be interpreted as an allegory. Yet such an interpretation rejects the powerful call of the sentient, cognitive, and rich individual – in their own way – and with them, a more animalcentric way to engage with the film. After all, the construction of the buffalo as the protagonist and a nonhuman person opens the space for a wider discussion about nonhuman personhood, the fate of animals caught up in military conflicts and the impact of war on animal communities.[17] By turning the buffalo into the protagonist of the film, Khachatryan shows a much wider impact of human military activity, which touches not only human but also animal communities. He

---

[17] Mainstream media have been increasingly covering stories of nonhuman animals affected by human military conflicts. Media coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine focus predominantly on the fate of domestic animals (pets, strays) and exotic animals kept in the zoos (Horton 2022; Taylor 2022; White 2022).

suggests the possibility of animal displacement which can be equally painful to that experienced by human counterparts, as well as the difficulty of adapting to a new environment as a stranger, underlined by a mutual distrust between the buffalo and humans as well as other animals. By introducing the nonhuman animal character, the film invites the spectator to adopt the buffalo's perspective when reflecting on these issues, which are usually regarded as human-exclusive — war, displacement, alienation, and the urge to return to one's homeland. By providing cues for sympathetic and empathic engagement with the buffalo, the viewer is invited to establish an emotional relationship with the protagonist, which might strengthen the need for reflection by bringing the character closer while depicting them as a nonhuman person (an animal performing as an animal) rather than heavily anthropomorphised animal who has lost their animality in the process. In this way, the spectator is encouraged to answer the buffalo's powerful call, so often unheard and rejected by human characters in the film.

Chapter IV: Cinematic Call — Music and Silence

Music plays an important role in films — from building up the overall mood of the scene, hinting at the emotional states of the character, locating the narrative in time and geographical space, ensuring formal and rhythmic continuity between shots, or scenes (Gorbman 1987; Kalinak 2002; Kassabian 2000b; Smith 1999). This chapter will focus on one question specifically: can nondiegetic music function as a cinematic call on behalf of the nonhuman animal characters? That is, can nondiegetic music evoke the emotional states of the nonhuman animal characters, and put their lived experience into relief? If that is the case, what conditions would such a musical piece need to fulfil to support the nonhuman animal call and the nonhuman animal character's experience without eclipsing it? In order to discuss this question, I will operate with two concepts introduced into the discussion of film music by Jeff Smith to explain the relationship between film music and film image: polarisation and affective congruence. Polarisation is an effect in which the affective charge of the musical piece, which may differ significantly from that expressed by the image, influences the perception of the film image: the music 'colours' the lenses through which the spectator makes sense of the scene in question. Affective congruence, on the other hand, is a relationship in which both film music and the film image are expressive of a similar (congruent) emotion, hence they are affectively congruent, and the music leads to the intensification of the affective charge already expressed in the scene (Smith 1999, p. 148). These concepts offer a valuable tool in understanding not only the relationship between film music and image, but also how film music can strengthen, or weaken the nonhuman animal call.

Whether one can identify the relationship between film music and the image representing the nonhuman animal call as an instance of either affective congruence or polarisation depends on the intelligibility of the call. Affective congruence would occur in the instances of music being

expressive of the same (or similar) emotional quality as the powerful (or understandable) call captured on screen. Contrarily, polarisation would occur in a situation where the affective character of the powerful nonhuman animal call and the film music appear incongruous, or even conflicting. Another, more complex example of polarisation would occur in a scene where the music is paired with a cryptic call and guides the spectator towards an appraisal of the narrative situation and the nonhuman animal character's state influenced by the music's affective charge.

What complicates the mapping of powerful and cryptic calls, on the one hand, and polarisation and affective congruence on the other, is that these subtypes of the call are fluid — individuals of different species might situate themselves at different points along the powerful — cryptic spectrum of the calls. For instance, a person who is familiar with canine body language might interpret certain canine calls differently than a person who has not spent much time around dogs. The knowledge of and familiarity with canine expressions would then inform any spectator's experience of watching a film scene starring a dog: film music may be experienced as an instance of polarisation or affective congruence depending on whether the spectator picks up on the affective charge of the scene for the dog. A theory about spectatorship in relation to nonhuman animals must thus allow for diverse and idiosyncratic reactions on the spectator's part, and polyphonic interpretations of the scene. Even though this could be perceived as a caveat, there also lies a possibility to employ this complication in the service of multispecies attunement.

Furthermore, nondiegetic music has the potential to expand our schemata related to a nonhuman animal character's expressions: for instance, using an unnerving and tense musical tune in conjunction with the close-up of a smiling chimpanzee could be considered as an instance of polarisation, where the affective charge of the music cues the spectator towards a

specific appraisal of the scene that might cause a sense of conflict or incongruence since the image of a smiling chimpanzee could be seen as a positive expression. One might begin wondering why such music would be used in conjunction with the image and maybe it would lead to the spectator learning that unlike among humans, the chimpanzee smile is an expression of fear, distress, and submission. What was initially experienced as an instance of polarisation would in fact be an instance of affective congruence, however, such a view would be based on going beyond the anthropocentric perception of the nonhuman animal character's expression. Therefore, nondiegetic music could help to introduce other-than-human ways of expression and aid the interpretation of said expressions by clarifying the affective charge of some cryptic, or 'false friend' calls. By the same token, nondiegetic music can end up negatively anthropomorphising the nonhuman animal characters, for example, by creating a human-centred affective congruence. The same image of a smiling chimpanzee could be accompanied by an upbeat music, which would render the chimpanzee expression congruent with the human way of understanding it. In this instance, however, the music would eclipse the chimpanzee's call and dismiss their lived experience, manifested through their expression.

Although this process is further complicated by our still limited knowledge of other species and the way they express themselves and communicate with others, we do possess some knowledge of some of the species. Therefore, this knowledge should inform their cinematic representation and encourage the spectator to at least occasionally take off their anthropocentric lenses and adorn more-than-human ones to see the world. Even with limited knowledge, the filmmaker can at least allude to these other *Umwelten*, and engage in an exercise of leaving one's own shoes behind and imagine the other's experience — even though it will be inevitably tainted by our own.

In this chapter I will focus on two case studies: Nicolas Steiner's *Battle of the Queens* and Benedikt Erlingsson's *Of Horses and Men. Battle of the Queens* documents a traditional cow fighting event that takes place in the Swiss canton of Valais. It offers a detailed depiction of the tournament by following a story of three human participants and their cows as they progress all the way to the final round. *Of Horses and Men* is a fiction film about the small horse-herding community in rural Iceland. Human interpersonal relations mirror and at times intertwine with equine ones, offering an amusing but also critical look at human shortcomings, seen through horses' eyes. First, I will analyse the culminating scene of *Battle of the Queens*, in which the nondiegetic music, although often evoking positive feelings, has a distancing effect. I will discuss how creating a sense of awe, a positive aesthetic experience, risks leading to the objectification of the bovine characters by reducing their experience to a striking spectacle. This will lead me to reflection on the ways in which nondiegetic music can be used as a cinematic call and counter such detaching depictions.

In the following section, I will compare the concluding scenes from both case studies. I will demonstrate how the affective congruence of film music and image (therefore, the interaction between sound, editing, and cinematography) in the final scene of *Of Horses and Men* leads to an audiovisual marginalisation of nonhuman animal characters and their perspective, and how the affective congruence between the music and image becomes destabilised once the spectator focuses on the nonhuman animal characters. I will contrast this closing scene with its equivalent in *Battle of the Queens,* where the similar upbeat music of a happy ending and the affective congruence of music and image gets disrupted by the introduction of silence.

Although it might appear as counterintuitive at first, it is definitely an interesting way in which nondiegetic music, although affectively incongruent with the image of the nonhuman animals and their calls, might still function as an instance of a cinematic call. To be more precise, I

199

would like to talk about how nondiegetic music frames moments of potent and poignant silence in which nonhuman animal characters and their calls are foregrounded and contrasted with the 'musical' images.

It might appear peculiar that the music chapter will end up as essentially dedicated to the study of the *absence* of music rather than the illuminating non-anthropocentric potential of nondiegetic music. I am sympathetic towards the use of nondiegetic music in order to emphasise the nonhuman animal character's experience, but this approach bears several issues. Firstly, our knowledge of other species and their expressions are largely limited. Although there are numerous cognitive ethologists who have been working in the field and studying the habits and interactions of some nonhuman animal species in the past (Jane Goodall and chimpanzees, Marc Bekoff and canids, Barbara Smuts and baboons, to name a few), such long-term field work often require more substantial budget, making the study of nonhuman animals in the laboratory setting a preferred option. As a result, only some species have been studied through careful and discrete observation in their natural habitat, where their natural and spontaneous expressions and interactions would occur.

Secondly, since various sounds that appear in the soundscape are often found competing for a prominent place in a hierarchy of sounds, the use of nondiegetic music risks taking a more prominent role over the sound of the nonhuman animal call, thus potentially leading to an instance of polarisation in which the nonhuman animal expression is not supported but eclipsed by the music. Leading from this problem, we arrive at the third caveat: the use of nondiegetic music might lead to a form of musical anthropomorphism, which can be positive (the attribution of certain states to the nonhuman animal character through a musical cue might be on reasonable grounds), but also negative and potentially harmful to the nonhuman animal representation, as in the example of a smiling chimpanzee accompanied by upbeat music.

Nonhuman animals are and will remain unknowable to the human spectator in some senses, as we might never know what exactly is happening in their hearts and minds. Therefore, it seems appropriate to let them express it themselves without adding a suggestive and potentially false tune. Due to the knowledge gap in relation to nonhuman animal calls, the relationship between film music and the representation of the nonhuman animal call will always carry a risk of misleading the spectator and misrepresenting the nonhuman animal character and their call. The unstable status of the nonhuman animal calls also causes the relationship between film music and film representation to oscillate between affective congruence and polarisation, constantly open to shifts in either direction.

Despite the potentially problematic status of film music, I would like to focus on its unlikely, yet potent function, namely, to create silence. By creating contrast between music and the absence of music, between an expression of certain emotions and the abrupt absence of such musical cues, nondiegetic music can enable powerful and striking moments of silence to come forth in order to invite the spectator to a more reflective, self-conscious and idiosyncratic film experience. More importantly, silence provides space for the nonhuman animal calls to manifest themselves without being overridden by music, overcoming the risk associated with the use of a musical soundtrack.

Battle of the Queens: detachment and the sense of awe

In this section I would like to compare two fighting scenes: I will introduce and focus primarily on the cow fight scene from *Battle of the Queens but* will also refer to the dog fight scene from *White God,* which has been discussed in more detail in the second chapter. I will juxtapose these two scenes in order to discuss the effects of using nondiegetic music and diegetic nonhuman animal calls respectively have on the appraisal of the narrative situation, but also on the spectator's perception and attitudes towards nonhuman animal characters. To achieve this,

I need to introduce Michel Chion's concept of materialising sound indices — that is, components of sound (music, speech, call, etc.) that point towards the sound's material source (Chion 1994, pp. 114—117; Chion 2016, p. 159).

Chion discusses materialising sound indices by comparing musical practices of Western classical music and classical music of the East — while in the former, the material source of the musical sounds is concealed, in the non-Western traditions, one can encounter a breadth of materialising sounds indices in the form of sounds of the musician's breath as they play their wind instruments, or the sound of fingers touching strings (1994, p. 114). According to Chion, the more such materialising sounds indices are present in the soundscape of a film scene, the more grounding effect such sounds have on the listener. He refers to the use of sound with abundance of materialising sound indices in the films of Robert Bresson and Andrei Tarkovsky to underline the materiality and tangibility of the experience they create. He contrasts this with the cinema of Jacques Tati, where the materialising sound indices are scarce (and the play between the visible source of sound and the actual source is common), creating a more abstract and ethereal effect (Chion 1994, pp. 114—115).

Although Chion brings various comparisons of film music, and the use of voice and sound effects, to demonstrate the effects of abundance, or scarcity of materialising sound indices, he does not discuss the relationship between film sounds from different categories, for instance, the relation between nondiegetic music and diegetic sound. This omission could be caused by the fact that they belong to different categories of sound, and have different functions and properties, which might make their comparison difficult. Another reason could be that sound effects, in particular diegetic sounds, might *par excellence* have more materialising sound indices than others (although one could disagree and provide an example where diegetic sounds have a limited amount of materialising sound indices, while music that accompanies the scene

contains a high amount). Yet since sounds from various categories occupy the cinematic soundscape and often form a variety of relationships (often marked by a hierarchy between them), it is worth looking at the interactions between them and their impact on the perception of the scene. I would like to borrow Chion's concept of materialising sound indices and apply it to film sound in order to discuss the relationship between the image and film music on the one hand, and the image and nonhuman animal calls (sonic, vocal ones in particular) on the other. To do so, I will focus on the materialising sound indices within each type of sound and compare their 'grounding' functions.

The distancing effect of music on the appraisal of the narrative situation can be observed in the ultimate cow fight scene in *Battle of the Queens.* The use of nondiegetic music and the varying pace of the editing (oscillating between regular speed and moments presented in slow motion) contribute to a sense of wonder, or awe in the spectator witnessing the fight. Nondiegetic music present in the scene slowly builds up a sense of excitement, which is congruent with the emotions of the human characters, the cow handlers, whose reactions are interwoven into the fighting scene. Nondiegetic music is also occasionally punctuated with diegetic sounds — the reactions of cow handlers, the cheering of the crowd, or a specific member of the crowd, such as the man with a trumpet who blows a highly popular and known-tune associated with Spanish corrida. The decision to include this particular shot within the depiction of the final fight draws a clear connection between the Swiss cow fight event and its more bloody and deadly Spanish counterpart. Based on these observations one can identify two ways the sound is used in these sequences to distance the spectator from the bovine characters.

Fig. 43. Cow's tail captured in slow motion (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

Fig. 44. Cow kicking the ground, captured in slow motion (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

Fig. 45. Man with a trumpet (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

First, the use of nondiegetic music alongside with the editing techniques, as well as sonically privileging human characters' reactions over music, places the spectator in a position to perceive the fight from the human point of view. Second, while the nondiegetic music gives way to diegetic sounds occasionally, particularly to human calls (both speech and other sorts of vocal and non-vocal reactions), such a shift in the soundscape hierarchy does not occur when the camera is focused on the cows locked in their battle. Therefore, the nondiegetic music makes the bovine calls as well as sounds of the struggle inaudible to the spectator, which works to distance the spectator from the cows' experience of the fight and instead perceive it as an aesthetic spectacle. The scene can be undoubtedly awe-inspiring: one might feel wonder in the face of the immense force with which the cows ram (sic) into each other, the strength and struggle as their horns lock, or be in awe as the spit flies out of the cow's mouth, her eye's white clearly visible. This scene is awe-inspiring in its brutality, with a hint of grotesque. It highlights cows' strength, speed, agility (especially when one of them jumps over the fence towards the struck audience, followed by cheering and applause), yet it presents it more as a

poetic descriptive passage rather than a close look at the cow fighters' experience and what is at stake for them, what they sense, and how they feel.

Fig. 46. A cow leaping through the fence into the crowd (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

The overall register of this scene differs dramatically from the fight scene in *White God,* which has been discussed already, or an even more harrowing and disturbing dog fight scene in Turkish film *Sivas* (Kaan Müjdeci, 2014). In both films nondiegetic music is absent and the soundscape is dominated by the barks, growls, yelps, the sounds of teeth cutting through skin, with occasional sounds of humans cheering, swearing, or conversing. The spectator's attention is sonically focalised on canine interactions, on their carnality and bodily experience. Emphasising the diegetic sounds, specifically canine calls, brings the spectator much closer to the unbearable, raw, and disturbing experience of the dog fight as well as its participants. No other sound competes with dogs' expressions of pain, distress, aggression, and submission; thus, their experience is highlighted. The final fight in *Battle of the Queens* takes the opposite approach: the vocal and other sonic calls of the cows in their interactions as well as the sounds

of the impact as they charge into each other, or lock horns are rendered absent, blanketed by the quirky, exciting, and dynamic musical piece.

Fig. 47. Dog fight (*Sivas*, 2014)

The comparison of the two fighting scenes demonstrates that music can lead to a distancing effect from nonhuman animal characters engaged in the duel (*Battle of the Queens*) and represent their struggle as an aesthetically pleasing, awe-inspiring, but also grotesque at times, demonstration of strength, and the portrayal of the pugnacious nature of the cows. This stands in high contrast to the depiction of cows as benign and often submissive that we have witnessed in *A Cow's Life*. However, through the representation of the cow fight in this manner – with the frequent use of slow motion to accentuate certain movements, or gestures, as well as the use of a specific type of exciting music — the spectator is moved away from the cows' lived reality of being placed in highly artificial conditions in which their territorial nature is exploited for the sake of entertainment. This way, the scene focuses on the extraordinary spectacle of the cow fight, but it does not explore what is at stake for the cows. The focus is on the reactions of tense and agitated human handlers and the audience, nervously awaiting the outcome of the final fight. The reason why music in *Battle of the Queens* has such a distancing effect in relation to bovine characters is that the music is not compatible with the experience of the cows involved in the fight. With its awe-inspiring yet distancing effect, the music possibly converges

207

with the experience of a human spectator who came to watch the spectacle that makes the region and its community distinct and is part of its cultural heritage.

Fig. 48. Cow fight (*Battle of the Queens*, 2011)

The film could have represented the experience of an onlooker who finds such an event problematic, and in this hypothetical case the musical composition would have been very different. The spectator would then be cued through film music to adopt a more compassionate attitude towards the cows, possibly at the expense of the sense of awe.

This observation is further supported by the oscillation between nondiegetic music and occasional intrusion of diegetic sounds — mainly of the crowd cheering, applauding, gasping in surprise and awe, but also of the human participants' nervous sighing, yelling, cursing, and cheering the cows they brought to the fight. These moments of respite between intense and awe-inspiring musical scores of the fighting cows focus exclusively on the reactions of human participants to what is happening in the ring. It is their perspective as people directly involved in the cow fighting event as either competitors, or the audience that is sonically privileged in the fighting scene. The nondiegetic music, expressive of rising tension, and then of intrigue,

excitement, upbeat, with some ecstatic outbursts, appears congruent with emotions experienced by particular participants and the crowd. Yet their experience is detached from that of the cows on the ring — the audience witnesses an intense spectacle of a traditional cow fight, the competitors closely observe the duels, knowing their titles, hence their position within the cow fighting community and their region, are at stake. Yet, none of these perspectives explore what is at stake for those who are right at the heart of this event — the cows, who have been brought to a different place in trucks, weighed on a scale, assigned a number that would be painted on their sides, and then led to the ring where they would encounter other, unfamiliar cows with whom they would inevitably lock horns in a futile duel where even if one of the cows would come victorious, she would not keep the territory over which they rammed into each other, much to the overwhelming cheers of the human crowd surrounding them.

One might wonder what leads to such a disparity in representation of the nonhuman animal fight. Is it the fact that in the cow fight certain precautions are taken in order to prevent cow's death (such as filing the horns, the presence of human attendants who ensure the cows are separated if their struggle gets too aggressive), while dog fighters carry on until there is only one dog standing? Is it connected to the fact that while the Swiss cow fight is not only a legal, popular, and prestigious event, the dog fights are predominantly illegal and undertaken by the people from the margins of society? Could it be linked to the different approaches to dogs and cows in Western culture, where the dog is a pet and not meant to engage in fights (which are illegal), while cows are farm animals and might provoke less consideration? Could this be linked to the ways in which cows and dogs are being trained, with the latter possibly being much more damaging physically and mentally (dogs trained for illegal dog fighting may be beaten, kept in a small cage, starved, etc.)? Despite some differences, which might make some spectators feel more at ease when watching the cow fight as compared to the dog fight, both of these fight sequences exploit animals by putting them in situations in which they feel threatened

and engage in a conflict with others as a form of entertainment. Finally, could this disparity stem from the act of normalisation of cow fighting by the power of tradition with its national, cultural, social, and financial ties? All of these reasons are plausible, and there may be many more I have not yet explored. What is worth underlining is that it is the discussion of music in terms of its potential function as the cinematic call, or on the contrary, as a mechanism that distances the spectator from the nonhuman animal calls that ultimately led to the discussion of this inequality in its multifacetedness.

As the above examples have demonstrated, the use of film music might prove problematic in relation to the cinematic representation of nonhuman animal characters. Just like in *Battle of the Queens,* which prompts the spectator to perceive the bovine characters on screen as an aesthetically complex spectacle, film music can create a distancing effect that pushes emotional engagement with nonhuman animal characters into the background. Therefore, there is a risk that the affective charge of film music might override the affective charge of the nonhuman animal call, eclipsing and marginalising nonhuman animal distinct expressions.

In some cases, the use of film music might lead to an exaggerated, cartoonish representation. This is the case of *Microcosmos* (Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou, 1997)*,* where the depiction of the struggle of a dung beetle whose ball of dung has been stuck on a thorn is accompanied by an orchestral piece that is reminiscent of how film music functions in animated films. At times it creates the effect that Chion brands 'Mickey Mousing', or synchresis (that is, the synchronisation and synthesis of film music and motion on screen). This means that the acoustic features of music, such as volume, timbre, and pace, mirror the features of motion on screen (Chion 2016, p. 154). The use of often pathetic, heroic, and at other times comical musical pieces, which often mirrors the motion on screen alongside the depiction of the beetle's attempts to overcome obstacles leads to a condescending, belittling, or ironic representation of

the beetle's struggle. Should such music be used with a human character, its comical effect would be indisputable.

Due to the limited knowledge of nonhuman animal calls, the use of film music as an indicator of the emotional states of the character might lead to a misrepresentation, or negative anthropomorphism. This way, film music could reinforce the already-dominant anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism of cinematic nonhuman animal representations, thus, erasing nonhuman animal experience and leading to potentially harmful representations. This might lead us to the conclusion that the use of film music should only be used as an underscore or filmmakers should abstain from its use altogether, as these might be preferable options because they would let nonhuman animal calls take the centre stage. Furthermore, such an approach might avoid the danger of projection and misrepresentation. Despite all these reservations I have regarding the use of film music, I would like to consider which conditions film music would need to satisfy in order to function as a cinematic, or rather, a musical call on behalf of nonhuman animals. I would like to do so for pragmatic reasons — film music has been, is, and will be used when constructing cinematic representation of nonhuman animal characters, therefore, it is important to conceptualise the ways in which it can be used to their benefit and not at their expense.

Before I move on to do so, it is worth briefly addressing the criticism that my reliance on the concepts of affective congruence and polarisation, introduced to Film Studies discourse by Jeff Smith, might attract. Gerald Sim expresses his reservations about Smith's cognitivist approach towards the relationship between film music and emotions, suggesting his approach tends to oversimplify and reduce the range of affects and emotions communicated by the film medium (Sim 2013, pp. 309—310). Sim criticises Jeff Smith's description and analysis of the scene depicting Merrick's suicide in *The Elephant Man* (Lynch, 1980) as overly reductive and

dismissive of a whole array of complex emotions at play (2013, pp. 311—312). Sim concludes that cognitivists are not equipped to account for the nuanced and entangled nature of emotional states, for their current models explore solely basic emotions (2013, p. 317). While I agree that emotional states are complex and might consist of multiple components, which at times might be elusive and difficult to pinpoint due to their subtle and nuanced nature, I agree with Carl Plantinga that ultimately emotions are 'structured states with particular eliciting conditions and associated action tendencies' rather than being wholly subjective and idiosyncratic' (Plantinga 2010, p. 100). I do believe that these limitations are acknowledged by the cognitivist scholars. What is more, cognitive theories of film music have been developed relatively recently and they are yet to address all the nuances and complexities of the subject matter. I think that the cognitivist approach offers a helpful basis for thinking about emotions elicited by film music and film image, and the relationship between the two components of the audiovisual medium.

The first condition is based on Smith's concept of affective congruence: nondiegetic music can function as a cinematic call if it is expressive of emotions congruent with the experience of the nonhuman animal character. As Smith underlines, the affective congruence between film music and film image leads to the intensification of the affective charge of the scene (1999, p. 162). Such a practice is more easily achievable when nonhuman animal calls are powerful, therefore, more prominent examples would be expressions of distress and fear, for example, such as the dog baring their teeth, or cats arching their backs and hissing. Due to our limited knowledge of nonhuman animal calls as well as potentially diverse meanings of the nonhuman animal calls, examples of films relying on this first condition for film music to be a cinematic call might be scarce.

In less transparent examples, the affective congruence of film music and film image will depend on the narrative context that provides a sufficient amount of information to make

212

inferences about emotional states. Let us briefly return to one of my previous case study, *Border.* To provide some context, the scene in question depicts the fire that engulfed the farm where the buffalo was kept. Initially, the buffalo is stuck in a burning barn during the wedding ceremony, then once people become aware of the danger, the spectator sees men herding, dragging, or carrying out shocked animals, predominantly goats; finally, the spectator sees the buffalo standing near the ruins of the farm at dawn. The scene I mentioned provides enough narrative clues to make sense of the buffalo's experience that fateful night. The fear of being stuck in a burning barn, nervous commotion, fear, and shock of other animals (human and not), a sleepless and intense night, the smell of burned wood and flesh (as not everyone could be saved) that one can vividly imagine being stuck in the buffalo's nostrils, provide enough context for the spectator to imagine what the buffalo might be experiencing in that moment. In this case, a subtle, yet unsettling, humming, almost imperceptible nondiegetic music that creeps up on the spectator, would be affectively congruent with the buffalo's inner state of fatigue, distress, and confusion. Such inferences can be susceptible to egocentric (and inevitably, anthropocentric) projection — that is, assigning certain states of mind based on an assumption regarding what one would experience in this context. While it is not unreasonable to exercise caution when assigning certain emotions to nonhuman animals (especially if it would result in the deterioration of their wellbeing), it is also important to avoid anthropodenialism — refusal to recognise traits that nonhuman animals share with humankind.

The aforementioned scene offers us a second condition, namely, that film music should not override the soundscape. It should not make nonhuman animal calls imperceptible, especially if said calls are more subtle. The volume and intensity of film music should be adjusted to match or give precedence to that of nonhuman animal calls. In the scene, the music is almost imperceptible, it functions more as an underscore, its menacing presence on the verge of silence, and this is what makes it even more expressive of anxiety and uncertainty. This way

film music mirrors very subtle (at least to human perception) calls of the buffalo that indicate their sense of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. This makes the relationship between film music and image affectively congruent. Additionally, since film music is not foregrounded, it does not risk overriding the kinaesthetic calls of the buffalo and leading to a polarisation, but rather, it acknowledges and embraces the subtlety of the buffalo calls.

The third condition, closely related to the first one, is founded on the concept of affective congruence. However, in this case the affective charge of the film music is congruent with that of a human proxy, that is, a human who is sympathetic towards the nonhuman animal character in question. Using a human proxy might facilitate emotional engagement with a nonhuman animal character with whom such engagement would otherwise prove difficult to establish. By establishing an affective congruence between film music and the emotional state of a human character who is sympathetic towards their nonhuman animal counterpart, attuned to their calls and sensitive to their distinct condition, the spectator might be more readily able to adopt a similar stance towards the nonhuman animal character. One such example might be a Netflix production, *My Octopus Teacher* (James Reed and Pippa Ehrlich, 2020), which explores an intimate relationship between a human and an octopus — spanning across most of the octopus's life. The use of music in the film is consistent with the human character's account of their encounters, the emotions that he experienced when witnessing the octopus's life and sharing some moments of closeness. It could have been difficult for some spectators to adopt a more sympathetic attitude towards a being so radically different from us, therefore, the human character, his account and his clear affection for the octopus, functions as a medium between the spectator and the octopus. The use of nondiegetic music that is affectively congruent with the image, and voice-over recounting human-octopus encounters, offers a possibility for the spectator to adopt a more compassionate attitude towards this nonhuman animal characters.

This condition remains the most problematic as it carries a threat of marginalising the nonhuman animal character's distinct experience, which might be overshadowed by a more readily available and accessible experience of a human proxy. It is the human character who becomes the focal point of the spectator's emotional engagement — and as such the representation would be prone to projections of the human character's own human perspective, which might make it potentially misleading, so anthropomorphic in the negative sense of the term. Nonetheless, the use of a human proxy might prove helpful and instrumental in inviting the spectator to adopt a more compassionate approach towards some nonhuman animal characters who might not be as easily relatable as others. A compassionate attitude towards nonhuman animal characters who might not evoke any positive associations, with whom it is difficult to find any commonalities, would arguably be the manifestation of a truly ethical stance, as humans inevitably tend to be more compassionate towards these beings with whom they can relate more easily, or who possess attractive and positive features. Therefore, one has to work along with the limitations and imperfections of human nature. Such divagations, however, are beyond the scope of this project.

The fourth condition is based on the concept of polarisation: film music can function as a cinematic call if it seeks to clarify, thus, widen the reach of cryptic nonhuman animal calls. This condition is exemplified by my imaginary scene depicting the close-up of a grinning chimpanzee paired with film music expressive of tension and fear. As mentioned before, such a scene would be initially considered as incongruent, or 'contrapuntal' — however, the polarisation occurs here only from an anthropocentric perspective, which for many spectators will be the default position. Through the use of film music that appears incongruent in relation to the image, the spectator's appraisal of the scene becomes conflicted, the affective charge of the film music will guide the spectator towards its own affective pole, challenging the anthropocentric perception of the chimpanzee grin. This might lead to a reflection on the source

of conflict and clarification of meaning behind the chimpanzee's grin — and abandoning of the false analogy between human and chimpanzee smiles. As such, the relationship between film music and film imagery would shift from anthropocentric polarisation to chimpanzee-centric affective congruence. This would be consistent with Carl Plantinga's thoughts on affective counterpoint, or affective incongruence, which he claims is designed to 'offer the spectator an experience of rumination and questioning' — an invitation to reflection that is founded on a sense of contrast, incongruity between the affective charge of film music and film image (Plantinga 2010, p. 93)

Such use of polarisation, or affective counterpoint can widen and deepen the reach of cryptic nonhuman animal calls by clarifying their meaning and moving the spectator away from the anthropocentric spectatorship towards its non-anthropocentric, multispecies alternative. Nonetheless, the success of this condition does not rest only on the knowledge of the nonhuman animal character and their expression, which would enable the filmmakers to make such a clarification, but also on the spectator's personal attitude, their openness and willingness to explore and adopt a multi-species perspective. Should the spectator not manifest such predispositions, the affective counterpoint might lead to an unresolved sense of confusion and conflict.

The fifth condition is also founded on polarisation between film music and film imagery but refers to what Michel Chion calls anempathetic music. According to Chion, anempathetic music is music whose affective charge stands in conflict to what is unfolding on screen and creates a sense of the world's indifference to the events depicted (1994, p. 221). The use of anempathetic music, in Chion's account, leads to the heightening and intensification of emotions rather than their dampening, which might appear as counterintuitive. It appears that the heightening of emotions would be based on the sense of conflict and disturbance between

film music and film imagery, and the sense of injury and injustice it might create. This condition places nonhuman animal characters in a position of extreme vulnerability and disempowerment, a negative space which they do often occupy due to human expansion and exploitation, and which needs to be acknowledged alongside the approach based on affirmation and celebration of distinct and wonderful nature of diverse animal life.

Could this use of film music, however, risk normalising nonhuman animal suffering, rather than provoking emotional engagement based on a sense of injustice and care for the vulnerable? One might wonder whether the use of film music in the cow fight scene in *Battle of the Queens* is an example of anempathetic music. If so, this would challenge Chion's idea that anempathetic music heightens emotions as it leads to distancing from the bovine characters. I do not think, however, that this case study would be an example of anempathetic music, but rather it is the case of music that is affectively congruent with human spectators who are invested in a cow fight as a spectacle, which they admire with a sense of awe. This idea is reinforced by the occasional use of sound effects and human voices as the audience cheers and applauds during the more surprising and extraordinary moments of the battle. The use of film music in this scene does not function as the cinematic call on behalf of the cows since it distances the spectator from the bovine perspective and aligns them with that of an enthusiastic human audience, or cow handlers, which contributes to the normalisation and justification of the cow fighting phenomenon.

Since some of these conditions are based on the concepts of affective congruence and polarisation, whose effects might not be compatible, these conditions can be fulfilled individually, therefore, fulfilling one condition might suffice for film music in a particular case to function as a call. Although the list of conditions for film music to function as the cinematic call is by no means exhaustive (and open to revision), it can be employed both in the context

217

of film spectatorship as well as film production. In the case of the former, these conditions offer a tool that helps to critically analyse the role music plays in relation to the cinematic representation of nonhuman animal characters. In the case of the latter, such conditions can be used as a guideline for film directors and music composers who aim to focus on and emphasise the nonhuman animal perspective.

Two 'happy' endings: marginalisation and the power of silence

Let us take a closer look at the two concluding scenes from *Battle of the Queens* and another case study, *Of Horses and Men*, to discuss the contrasting approaches they have taken in their use of music and its effect on the perception of the nonhuman animal characters in each film. While the use of nondiegetic music in the final scene of *Of Horses and Men,* paired with cinematography, distances the spectator from horses by overriding their experience with an emphasis on the happy resolution for the human part of the community, the closing scene in *Battle of the Queens,* through the juxtaposition of nondiegetic music and silence, invites more idiosyncratic responses on the part of spectators and encourages them to reflect on the bovine experience through the juxtaposition of nondiegetic music and silence. I will explore how the absence of nondiegetic music in the scenes focusing on nonhuman animal characters enable their call to manifest itself more prominently, thus, inviting the spectator to think about what is at stake for the cows.

The closing scene in *Of Horses and Men,* in which human characters herd a group of horses living in the wild and bring them into the village, focuses on the resolution of numerous narrative arcs. There are close-up and medium close-up shots of the main human characters who not only have successfully developed a romantic relationship but also got a new white mare, a Swedish horse trainer who has been accepted into the community and shows a romantic interest in the Spanish tourist – an interest which turns out to be reciprocal. There are also more

distanced shots of those characters who have not got what they wanted are weaved into the general fabric consisting of medium and long shots of a human-equine crowd in commotion. In the final shot of the film, the camera moves upwards, capturing not only the establishing shot of the enclosure compound where humans and equine characters mingle, but also a sign above the entrance saying 'The End' as a way to close the film. The entire scene is accompanied with a quirky and upbeat musical piece, which together with the visual emphasis on the main characters and their happy endings, marks the positive resolution of the main narrative arc as well as some minor arcs. Interestingly, the very last sound to be heard before the screen goes dark is a horse's neigh — underlying the central position of horses, not only for the local community in general, but also for numerous characters and their romantic, social, as well as economic goals in particular. Since a horse got the last word of the film, so to say, let us think about this final scene while keeping the equine characters in mind.

Fig. 49. The End/Endir (*Of Horses and Men,* 2013)

As mentioned before, the scene of herding the horses to the human settlement is the most important event for the community and marks a happy resolution for various individuals and the community as a whole. Yet, what does it mean for the horses in question? The herd of horses has spent several months on its own, with little to no human intervention. As social animals, they build strong relationships with each other and have their own specific rules of

conduct for peaceful coexistence. As some of the horses are young, one could assume that they have been born in the wild and have grown up in an equine community, away from humans. For such an equine community to be rounded up by a group of humans shouting and vividly gesticulating, then being directed towards a narrow passage leading to an open-air enclosure, which rapidly becomes crowded and chaotic, to finally be separated from their peers and closed in a smaller enclosure, which marks their passage from being an independent horse to a property, must be, without a doubt, a stressful and confusing experience.

Most of the close-up and medium close-up shots privilege human characters, their expressions and actions, with equine characters occasionally appearing in the background. On the one hand, it is a way of underlying the centrality of the horse for the community — they are omnipresent, and they tie everything and everyone together. On the other hand, pushing them into the background during the final scene of the film leads to their marginalisation as the emphasis on human experience trumps the equine one. The horses, although omnipresent, are rendered visually (through cinematography and editing) and sonically (through the use of music) almost imperceptible. The horses are effectively pushed to the margins, and so is their lived experience. Although horses rest in the background and the film clearly focuses on the positive outcomes for central human characters as well as their community at large, the scene also has moments of tension, which might encourage the spectator to reflect on the perspective of horses.

In one of the medium shots of the newly formed couple, Solveig (Charlotte Bøving) forces a white mare towards her and her new partner's enclosure: she slaps and pushes her bottom and makes loud calls to usher the horse, who clearly resists entering through the gates. From the couple's perspective, taking the white mare marks a new beginning for them and offers a sense of consolation – at the beginning of the film, Solveig's partner, Kolbeinn (Ingvar Sigurdsson),

shot his white mare, the source of his pride and respect. Therefore, acquiring a new white mare could be understood as the restoration of his lost sense of pride. The act of replacing one white mare with another points towards a tendency to treat nonhuman animals as symbols, which abstracts them from their own very being and distinct condition — both mares, the dead and the living, are treated here as an embodiment of a conceptual *white mare* rather than beings in their own respect.

Fig. 50. Kolbeinn embraces the new white mare (*Of Horses and Men,* 2013)

Fig. 51. Solveig and Kolbeinn pushing the new white mare into their enclosure (*Of Horses and Men,* 2013)

From the white mare's perspective, she has undergone a distressing experience of being herded away from the meadows where she stayed with the rest of her equine community for several

months, and has been forcefully separated from them, becoming a property of the couple. Given the fate of the previous mare (shot dead by Kolbeinn) as well as many other horses whose stories are tightly tied in with those of humans (either temporarily, or permanently) that the spectator has witnessed throughout the film, one realises that the horses who have been living according to their own established rules, in their community, have quickly become fully dependent on the caprices, desires, and humours of human characters who took them away. Yet, the mare's experience is side-lined by the camera's focus on the human character's, their excitement and happiness, which are congruent with the positive and uplifting musical piece heard throughout the scene.

In the final shot, as the camera looms above the enclosure, one can see two men who are pulling the horse, while the horse grapples with them, stands on hind legs and shakes their head. This physical resistance on the part of horses adds to the tension in the film's representation of the final scene as a happy ending. Music might contribute and be congruent with the overall mood of the scene, as seen from the human perspective, yet it stands in opposition to the equine experience. There is a clear disjunction between the affective charge of film music and that of the equine kinaesthetic calls — calls of resistance, struggle, disagreement, confusion. As a result, the use of nondiegetic music in the final moments of *Of Horses and Men* distances the spectator from the equine characters, pushing them into the background – horses are simultaneously at the very heart of the film's world (and its human inhabitants) and yet also marginalised, pushed to the edges. Horses in *Of Horses and Men* occupy a contradictory position that is simultaneously central and marginal — they are omnipresent and intimately tied to human lives and adventures, yet their own condition and interests matter very little. The disembodied, acousmatic call of the horse as the film ends works almost as a reminder of the central position horses occupy and stands in contrast to their visual marginalisation that unfolds on screen.

Fig. 52. Two men wrestling with a horse (*Of Horses and Men,* 2013)

In a similar vein, *Battle of the Queens* also introduces upbeat music as it shows human characters celebrating their triumph at the annual cow fight event. Yet, the music stops as the camera rests its lens on one of the cows who participated in and won the event. The cow is facing the camera, standing tall and calm, and although this moment is brief, it gives enough time to encourage the spectator to reflect on the nature of this encounter, on the cow's experience of the event. Even though the upbeat music comes back at the very last moment before the screen goes dark, which could be understood as a suggestion that the cow in question shares the positive and victorious mood of her human counterparts, the moment of silence is still enough to foreground a reflection on the cows themselves.

As the witnessing of cheerful human characters stops abruptly in order for the spectator to come 'face-to-face' with the silent cow, the spectator might wonder what was at stake for this particular cow and other cows they have witnessed being brought, weighted, led to the ring, then engaging in the battle – some losing, some standing the ground, triumphantly.

Fig. 53. Winner of the Battle of the Queens (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

Fig. 54. Second winner of the Battle of the Queens (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

Fig. 55. Third winner of the Battle of the Queens (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)
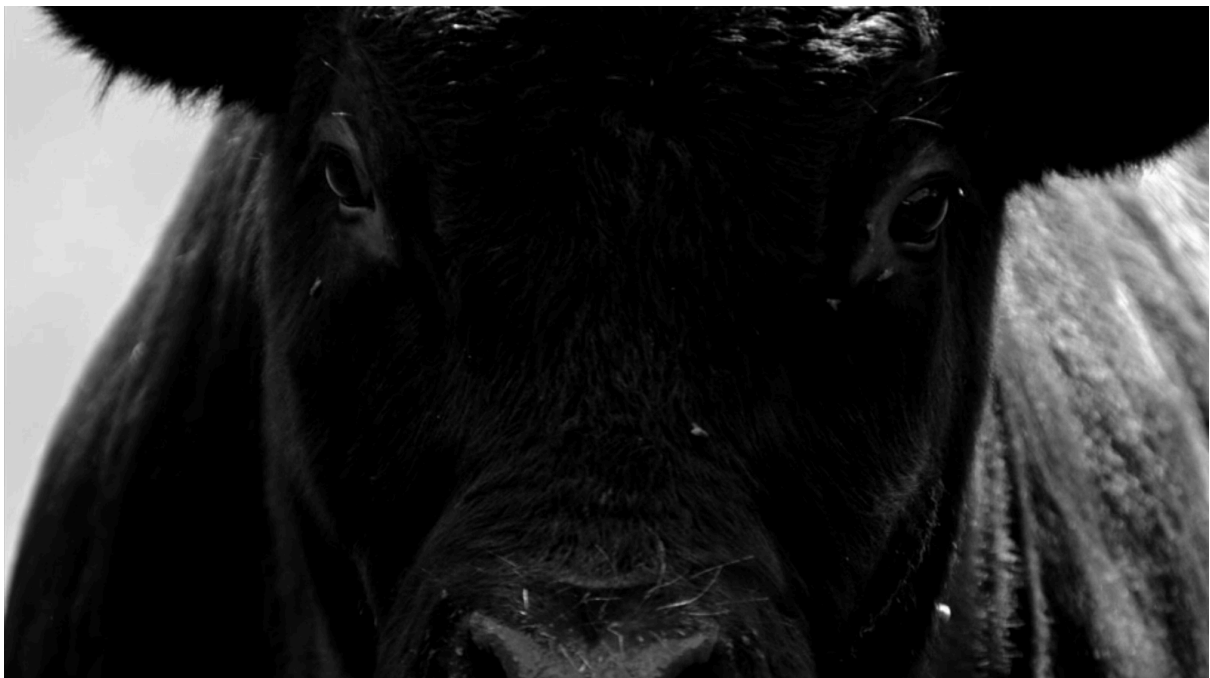

Fig. 56. The closing shot of the film: one of the winning cows (*Battle of the Queens* 2011)

After all, humans get champion neck belts and cowbells, with which they will adorn their cows, they get the recognition of their community and personal satisfaction at winning the annual competition. What, however, is there for the cows? Not only have they been brought into an

unfamiliar, crowded and loud place, but also, they have been made to engage in a fight over the territory and position, the fight which for them turns out to be in vain – if one cow stands her ground, she has to face yet another opponent, and once she manages to chase them all off, she is taken away.

The final shot in *Battle of the Queens* bears resemblance to Barbara Klinger's concept of arresting image. As mentioned previously, arresting images, according to Klinger, are the inherent part of the art film genre, although they are not exclusive to a singular genre. Due to its skilfully composed and aesthetically complex imagery, the arresting images temporarily halt the narrative in order to focus the spectator's attention on the evocative, often uncanny audiovisual spectacle they provide. Arresting images often escape the film's temporality and appear as being outside of time, of a dream-like quality. What is more, due to their obscure and ambiguous meaning but affective charge, they might resist straightforward interpretations and encourage the idiosyncratic spectatorial experience, where one makes sense of the arresting images by reflecting on one's emotions evoked by said images and the associations it arouses in one's memory (Klinger 2006, p. 24). One can notice that the description and effects of arresting images are to a large extent consistent with Plantinga's scene of empathy, which also slows down the narrative and often abstracts the spectator from the film's diegetic temporality for the sake of an emotional reflection of the character's face and vast array of kinaesthetic calls it might manifest (facial expressions, gestures, involuntary or voluntary movements across the face) as well as cinematic calls provided by both cinematography and music (Plantinga 1999, p. 239). However, what sets these two concepts apart is that unlike the scene of empathy, which cues the spectator to empathise with the character and express congruent emotions, the meaning and emotional charge of the arresting images remains cryptic and elusive. Therefore, we can draw a connection between arresting images and cryptic calls on the one hand, and scenes of empathy and powerful calls on the other.

226

Following the reflection and analysis of the scene as well as instances of cryptic calls from previous case studies (particularly the cryptic call of the goat standing on top of the table in *Le Quattro Volte*), I am inclined to argue that some cinematic depictions of nonhuman animal calls function as arresting images. They are both ambiguous and striking in nature — the spectator is faced with the limits of intelligibility of the calls as well as that of the human knowledge of other beings and their inner lives. These depictions often slow down the progression of the narrative, inviting the spectator to simply witness and reflect on the cryptic aspect of the call. They are also characterised by the aesthetically appealing visual composition — either by the camera's proximity to the nonhuman animal character, or their unusual placing within the frame — which often adds to the cryptic nature of the call and the scene in question. This is undoubtedly the case of the final scene of *Battle of the Queens:* the scene disrupts the narrative progression; it brings the overall mood of enthusiasm and happiness to a halt. It is physically separated from the rest of the film through the silent black strip that establishes a boundary between what was before and what comes after. It sets an entirely different tone through contrast: from mobile to fixed camera, from film music to silence, and from visual and aural centrality of human characters and marginalisation of the bovine ones, to rendering the cow the only locus of the spectator's attention. The cow's cryptic expression, her physical proximity, and the absence of musical cues open space for reflection and association.

An important element that made this particular scene striking is the abrupt disappearance of music. The spectator's experience, cued by the upbeat melody and the medium close-ups so far, or medium shots of triumphant human participants, is suddenly disrupted by the absence of any sound and a static shot of the cow standing very close and facing the camera. Due to its stillness, the image appears fixed at times and only a fly passing near the cow's face in slow-motion indicates otherwise. On the surface, the image is clear — it is a portrait of one of the cows who fought in the tournament. Yet, as the spectator is faced with the cow for a slightly

extended period of time, one realises that the cow's expression is cryptic (at least to a generic human spectator). It is, on the one hand, the length of the shot that invites the idiosyncratic and reflective response on the spectator's part: the cow's face is the focal point of the viewer's gaze. On the other hand, the absence of music that could provide any cue on how to react, how to interpret the shot opens a multitude of interpretative possibilities.

One can reflect on the juxtaposition of the music and its absence — this contrast could suggest that the sense of triumph, joy, and relief experienced by numerous human characters is not shared by the cow. What emotions then arise in the cow's heart? Unlike in the cow fight scene, the spectator is no longer aesthetically, visually, and musically distanced from the cow. The cow is right in front of the spectator's eyes and offers no hasty interpretations. The image encourages reflection on the cow's experience of the fight, of the victory, of what comes next. This striking moment, the final moment of the film ends with a brief re-introduction of the triumphant musical theme right before the image turns black. The tune frames the poignant and somewhat intense silence, but also risks dismissing all the ambiguity and the problematic questions that might arise from reflections on the scene. The tune appears while the cow is still visible on screen, so is a subtle suggestion that probably, deep inside, the cow is satisfied with her triumph that day, that her territorial nature has been fulfilled. This inevitably problematises the representation of the cow by suggesting that coercion, exploitation, and violence inflicted upon the cows in order to maintain the traditional cow fighting event can be justified by demonstrating that participation in such an activity can be rewarding for the cow.

The final scene brings us to one final condition that film music can fulfil to function as an instance of a cinematic call on behalf of a nonhuman animal character (which I now want to add to the conditions offered in this chapter so far), namely, when such music creates and frames moments of poignant silence. The absence of film music when a nonhuman animal

character is central avoids the risk of projection and negative anthropomorphism as there is no film music to provide the spectator with cues regarding the emotional state of the nonhuman animal character. Furthermore, the absence of film music also minimises the risk of distancing the spectator from the nonhuman animal character, just as we have seen in the case of the final battle of the cows. Instead, silence in a scene that focuses on the nonhuman animal character enables nonhuman animal calls to emerge — both in their powerful as well as cryptic manifestations. Unlike in the fighting scene, where film music, together with cinematography and editing, distances the spectator from the cows and their condition for the sake of presenting them as an extraordinary awe-inspiring, and grotesque spectacle, the final scene does the opposite — it brings the spectator closer to the cow, creates space for a human-bovine encounter, and invites reflection on the bovine condition.

Establishing a contrast between film music and silence brings nonhuman animal calls to prominence, creates a space for them to affect the spectator. Such a contrast might appear particularly striking and disrupt the spectatorial immersion in the diegesis for the sake of a heightened sense of the spectator's self-awareness in the spectator of the idiosyncrasy of their reaction in the face of the nonhuman animal. This condition might mainly apply to art films rather than mainstream productions. This is undoubtedly the case of *Battle of the Queens* — as the shots of triumphant humans and the upbeat music that reinforces their sense of relief and happiness give way to the silent shot of the cow's face in a close-up, the tone of the final scene changes drastically. This contrast, the deafening silence and centrality of the cow's face staring straight at the camera demand reflection on the part of the spectator about the cow and her perspective. It puts the previous happy ending shot into perspective, reminding us of the paradoxically marginalised bovine perspective in a tradition to which cows are so central.

Since the moments of silence do not provide any cues regarding the emotional state of the nonhuman animal character, the spectator might be faced with an impenetrable, cryptic call — the spectator's lack of familiarity with the nonhuman animal expression might lead to a sense of curiosity, but also confusion, and ultimately, alienation, which might distance the spectator from the character in question. One may keep wondering what is happening inside the cow's heart and mind, what she makes out of the entire battle of the queens, yet one can never be sure of the cow's actual feelings. It is important to challenge a perception of the encounter with the cryptic call as negative, where the impenetrability of the nonhuman animal's expression is conflated with their apparent stupidity, the absence of thought, emptiness. The elusive nature of bovine expression in this case could be a humbling reminder of our own cognitive limitations, of the mysterious inner lives that cows lead and which rest outside the boundaries of our knowledge. An encounter with a cryptic call should be seen as an invitation to acknowledge and respect the nuanced, complex, and rich world of nonhuman animals, the world to which we have limited, if any access. Such an encounter could be seen as an invitation to change our approach towards nonhuman animals and pay greater attention to their calls — an attunement that can be both humbling and enriching.

The arresting image of the cow, understood in relation to the entire film, demonstrates another crucial point regarding both nonhuman animal calls and cinematic calls on behalf of nonhuman animal characters. Their presence is not exclusive to films that have nonhuman animals' wellbeing in mind, or that want to explore the nonhuman animal perspective. Yet, they can appear in such films and destabilise its overall approach towards nonhuman animal representation, they can nudge the spectator towards critical reflection and sow doubt in their minds as they gaze at the nonhuman animal characters on screen. Just as in the case of Hagen, the protagonist of *White God,* whose spontaneous reaction was captured on screen and included within the film among numerous scenes where his performance is meticulously constructed via

editing, or training, these moments can metaphorically pull the rug from under the spectator's feet and lead to questions. Although the majority of case studies I introduced in my thesis belong to art cinema genre, often flirting with sensory ethnographic films, or documentaries, such calls can manifest themselves in any film starring nonhuman animal characters and provoke questions.

Of Horses and Men also offers us an earlier scene where music and silence are juxtaposed in a very organic interplay. Nevertheless, this example shows that even when playing with silence one needs to proceed with caution. This example starts with a highly humiliating, yet humorous accident: Kolbeinn sits on the white mare and prepares to leave Solveig's farm that he has paid visit to, yet the mare refuses to move and allows Solveig's stallion to mount her. Thus, Kolbeinn finds himself sandwiched between the horses having a sexual intercourse, much to Solveig's horror as she is watching helplessly. Kolbeinn finally returns home, leaves the mare outside, finds and loads the shotgun, walks out of the house and shoots the mare dead. From the moment he enters the house to the moment preceding the lethal shot, the scene is accompanied by a nondiegetic choral music. The choir falls silent the moment the shot is fired, and this moment of silence is punctured by the ticking of a wall clock inside the house from where the entire scene is shot.

The intense silence in the scene drastically disrupts the quirky Icelandic humour of the film, heightening the sense of discomfort and disturbance the spectator might (and probably does) experience. Although the spectator might be pushed to reflection on the tragic fate of the white mare, through the interplay of music, silence, and the image, the scene is much more focused on Kolbeinn's experience. The choral piece evokes a sense of 'righteous indignation' that Kolbeinn must have felt at his humiliation witnessed not only by Solveig and her family, but also an entire community peeking through their binoculars at neighbouring farms. Nondiegetic

music here might be a more satirical commentary on the sense of virtuousness and superiority that humans might feel over other animal species, especially since Kolbeinn fell victim to his own pride. What adds insult to injury is the reason for his visit to Solveig's place was an element of a romantic courtship game between the two — their horses, in the (literal) heat of the moment, did what the two human characters have been obviously meaning to do for a long time (not to mention Kolbeinn's position on the 'passive side' of the intercourse as he was sat on the white mare).

Fig. 57. Kolbeinn approaches the white mare with a shotgun (*Of Horse and Men* 2013)

Fig. 58. Kolbeinn shoots the white mare (*Of Horses and Men* 2013)

Fig. 59. Kolbeinn realises what he has done (*Of Horses and Men* 2013)

The silence does not necessarily bring the spectator's attention towards the white mare and her experience — she is not only dead at this point, but also remains invisible, her body obstructed by the house's interior (the spectator watches through the window how Kolbeinn takes a shot). The silence is juxtaposed with the image of Kolbeinn's reaction immediately after he kills the mare and the moment the realisation of what he has done *hits* him. Silence adds to the discomfort of the scene, it refuses pathos to Kolbeinn's now clear suffering once he comes back to his senses. The 'righteous indignation' gives way to despair. Yet none of these have anything directly to do with the mare and her experience. With the fact that she acted against the man's will, she followed her instinct, and was ultimately punished for it by death at the hands of the man who kept her, controlled her entire life, fetishised her, and attached his fragile sense of pride to her being and conduct.

Conclusion: a musical fine line

Film music has been intimately tied to nonhuman animal bodies and motion, whether live or animated — from 'Mickey Mousing' in cartoons, to the instantly recognisable tune accompanying the shark's impending attack in *Jaws.* This has also been the case in *Battle of the Queens* and *Of Horses and Men,* where enchanting, at times beautiful, and melancholic

music accompanied shots of cows locking horns, or horses running through the vast Icelandic landscape, turning nonhuman animals and their movements into an awe-inspiring spectacle.

The use of film music as a musical call on behalf of nonhuman animals proved to be a more difficult task that requires careful negotiation between strengthening, revealing, or clarifying of the nonhuman animal call, and misrepresentation, cartoonisation, or alienation of said character. Especially in the case of *Microcosmos,* it appears that the line between emotional engagement and distancing condescension can be fine, and one needs to tread carefully. Despite all the problems and risks that may arise when incorporating film music into a cinematic representation of a nonhuman animal character, I introduced six conditions under which film music could function as a cinematic call. Some of these conditions appear straightforward and intuitive, yet they might have some limitations, mainly tied to our knowledge of nonhuman animal calls. Other conditions are more complex, or problematic — such as the introduction of the human proxy, which might reinforce the dominant anthropocentrism, or the use of anempathic music, which can heighten the sense of injustice and injury tied to the nonhuman animal condition in the human-dominated world but can also treat anthropocentrism at the expense of nonhuman animals as normative.

Furthermore, I demonstrated how nondiegetic music that does not function as a cinematic call in itself can nevertheless play a part in the creation of a cinematic call under certain conditions — by creating moments of silence, by introducing a contrast between itself and its absence. Such scenes, deprived of musical cues expressive of certain emotions, or moods, can be cryptic in nature, making them akin to Klinger's arresting images, which prompt the spectator to seek connections to their film viewing experience in their past experiences. What is more, the often obscure meaning of these scenes invites a more idiosyncratic response on the spectator's part (Vaage 2009, p. 169). Leaving the scene ambiguous and open to many interpretations without

a doubt bears risk of alienation — it ultimately depends on the spectator's willingness to be open to more-than-human world, and humility in the face of cryptic calls.

The problem and potential of film music is its partially abstract nature. Unlike music, which has no direct referent, film music is linked to both the film image and narrative and is predominantly composed with these in mind (Kassabian 2000a, pp. 15—16). According to A.J. Cohen, film music attaches itself to the visual focus of attention, or implied topic of the narrative, that is, the spectator draws a link between film music and film image as they emerge simultaneously (Cohen 2010, p. 881). It is thus important that film music composers who create musical pieces which will accompany the images of nonhuman animal characters reflect on their position vis-à-vis nonhuman animal characters. Are they coming from an anthropocentric standpoint? Are they aiming to build an emotional engagement with the nonhuman animal character, to emphasise their perspective? If the latter is their goal, then it is crucial to gain knowledge of the nonhuman animal character in question, to attune oneself to their calls, reflect on their position and condition. As I have demonstrated before, this is by no means a simple task and for some the decision to abandon film music altogether might be the preferred choice.

I dedicated part of this chapter to the exploration of silence — at times heavy and unbearable, at other times poignant and striking — yet I am aware that such a practice might be adopted in art films rather than mainstream productions. It can have a distancing effect, in a Brechtian manner it 'nudges' the spectator out of the comforts of engaging and immersive representations and easily identifiable moods and emotions. These instances of silence can bring complexity, reflection, doubts, and awareness of limits. However, this does not mean that the juxtaposition of nondiegetic music and silence cannot or should not be introduced into more common film

practices, as in the case of arresting images: even though they might be characteristic for the art film genre, they are not exclusive to it.

There is yet another way in which film music can function as a cinematic call — rather than indicating the inner states of the nonhuman animal character, it can provide a commentary on their animal condition. Chionian anempathetic music might be one way of achieving such an effect, yet film music can also provide a critical, or satirical commentary — revealing and challenging the anthropocentric framework within which many films operate. The main question, however, remains: how to achieve such an effect without unwillingly reinforcing anthropocentrism? This question brings me to the final chapter of my thesis, where I will discuss other potentials and limitations of both the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call.

Chapter V: the Call and the Politics of Nonhuman Animal Cinematic Representation

Over the course of previous four chapters I have conceptualised the notions of the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call. Although the selection of films that served as case studies is eclectic, several of them belong to the slow cinema tradition of filmmaking. As Laura McMahon demonstrates in her monograph *Animal Worlds: Film, Philosophy and Time*, even though the tradition of slow cinema is not free from fetishising and commodifying the nonhuman animal life it depicts, its aesthetic approach of prioritising long takes and fixed camera positions, abstaining from using a narrator, or voiceover, and favouring perception over action, encourages reflection on the potential of creating nonhuman animal representations that are mindful and respectful of nonhuman animal life and worlds, in their richness and complexity (2019). We both appreciate how slow cinema's approach to cinematography and editing in particular provides space and time that enable nonhuman animals to manifest their ways of being in and interacting with the world — although we reach this point from different positions, myself from reflecting on the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call, while McMahon from her reflections (predominantly) on the Deleuzian concept of the time-image (and I will return to her approach later). Nevertheless, in this chapter I would like to reflect on how the call as a concept is not necessarily bound to one tradition of filmmaking and how its manifestations can be found in a variety of works, some of which are situated beyond, while others fall within the anthropocentric framework that dominates cinema as such. The idea of the call's versatility brings up certain questions: can the call be effective in its plea on behalf of nonhuman animal characters if it works within an anthropocentric framework? Is the cinematic call inevitably anthropocentric by design? If so, how does this affect nonhuman animal representations? Since film as a medium is anthropocentric, as it is made by humans, for humans, starring largely humans, and produced with human audiences in mind, should we

challenge it and seek non-anthropocentric modes of filmmaking, or should we, as a matter of pragmatism, work within the constraints of anthropocentrism?

I will critically engage with Anat Pick's concept of vegan cinema within a conceptual framework offered by Carl Plantinga's notion of estrangement theory to discuss potential problems and limitations of such theoretical approaches. As explained by Plantinga, estrangement theory and its cinematic manifestations express distrust in the ways the majority of spectators engage with moving images and favour methods that estrange or alienate the spectator, thus, offering an alternative that challenges the dominant mode of spectatorship based on emotional investment in the film story, world, and its characters. I align myself with the alternative offered by Plantinga, which he labels an ethics of engagement, that deals with both popular and avant-garde films in equal manner and treats them with the same degree of scrutiny, taking into account both form and content, as well as treating each case study on an individual basis. Unlike estrangement theories, ethics of engagement does not share the inherent distrust in and suspicion of emotional engagement, but rather acknowledges that engagement is the 'most familiar mode of viewing' and as such needs more serious consideration (Plantinga 2018, p. 108). Plantinga points out that emotional investment in (screen) stories and its characters is not a sign of the spectator's passivity – on the contrary, he maintains that emotional engagement is a 'vital element of ethical thought and response to screen stories' (2018, p.108). Since emotion is an inseparable element of human cognition (Plantinga 2018, p. 112), emotional engagement plays an important role in the spectator's process of making sense of screen stories and drawing their own conclusions or judgments.

Plantinga's approach is particularly important with regard to films featuring nonhuman animal characters as it does not dismiss any tradition of filmmaking and takes into account various ways in which people come to engage with moving images. While the approaches of scholars

238

such as Pick and McMahon offer fascinating and stimulating accounts of nonhuman animal representations and alternative ways of looking at and thinking about cinematic nonhuman animals, the scope of their inquiry is concentrated on rather specific traditions of filmmaking and might not prove sustainable when applied to other contexts. I would like to suggest that the call as a framework has the potential to achieve a considerable degree of versatility in this respect.

The Call — within or beyond anthropocentrism?

One can ask whether the call as a framework, despite its aims, can be anthropocentric. The answer is yes, it can be so due to the introduction of the cinematic call on behalf of nonhuman animals. Ultimately, the function of cinematic calls is to engage with, appeal to, and inform the human spectator. As I stated before, the cinematic call's function is to make the nonhuman animal call, that would otherwise be cryptic or imperceptible, available to the human spectator. Its form is intimately tied to the human sensibilities, our *Umwelten*. The reason for introducing an element that is anthropocentric at the heart of this framework is mainly pragmatic: films are human-made cultural artefacts made for largely human audiences and with said human audiences in mind (not to mention that they mostly represent other humans). The reason for introducing two separate concepts, that is, the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call on behalf of nonhuman animals enables more flexibility in working within the framework of the call. This distinction enables for work *within* and *beyond* the anthropocentric system of film production and cinematic representation.

On the one hand, one can privilege nonhuman animal calls in order to produce films that de-centre the human, destabilise the human-centric film experience and instead offer an animal-centric alternative. Such films might withhold the conventional pleasures of film viewing and understanding, and they might challenge the spectator and their ways of seeing. They might

belong to a tradition of films that Anat Pick calls vegan cinema, or the cinema of 'letting be' (2018, pp. 133—135). In the chapter entitled 'Vegan Cinema', Pick draws an analogy between looking and eating, describing the film industry as akin to the food industry, both of which produce highly processed products fit for mass consumption. In this model the camera and the spectator are both active and complicit in the propagation of the dominant system — while the camera frames and transforms the raw material of the world in front of its lens into an easily-digestible consumable, the spectator plays an active role of a devourer whose hunger cannot be satiated. This means that such a spectator desires to 'possess in full the' object of their gaze—hence, the object must be readily available, accessible, and easily-graspable to the spectator (Pick 2018, pp. 126). Following Simone Weil, philosopher and mystic, Pick brands the process of eating as a destructive and violent act, where the consumed is ingested and digested into non-existence, their trace being erased from the world. This brings Pick to the reflection that there is an alternative way of looking, one that does not involve destruction of the object of one's gaze, which she names a non-devouring gaze.

For Pick, to look but not eat means to 'accept the existence of things beyond our own satiation'; Pick states that some objects resist the all-devouring gaze by being impenetrable, opaque, therefore, they possess a quality which makes them impossible to be fully grasped, comprehended (2018, pp. 127). She traces these two modes of looking/eating back to the cinema's dawn: in *Le Repas de Bébé* by Louis Lumière (1895), the act of feeding the baby, which happens in the foreground, is an instance of the consumable product, readily-available to the spectator, while the movements of the leaves in the background — contingent, independent from human activity and will — is an example of vegan cinema, that is, the mode that engages the non-devouring gaze. What might appear as surprising is that Pick's vegan cinema is not linked to vegan activist films. It is rather a mode that privileges non-consumption,

disinterest in and detachment from the objects of the world. It is the cinema of 'letting be', that allows its objects to remain independent from human desire (2018, pp. 128—131).

To illustrate this further, Pick contrasts two performances from canine performers, Uggie, a Jack Russell Terrier in *The Artist* (Michel Haznavicius, 2011) with Lucy in *Wendy and Lucy* (Kelly Reichardt, 2009). Uggie, with his impeccable execution of a variety of tricks, enchants and entertains the audience with his craftsmanship (or rather craftsdogship). At the same time his performance demonstrates an example of a being who has been transformed into an easily consumable object: Uggie's appeal is based on his training, careful following of human orders to act according to human desires. Therefore, his agency is severely limited, and his being is reduced to a talented performer of tricks — in other words, he has been denied his nonhuman animal call. Lucy, on the other hand, is neither trained nor restricted in her behaviour: she moves as she pleases, often casually leaving and re-entering the frame, which does not restrict her movements and does not strive to keep her within its frame. Her onscreen presence is not based on and restricted by spectatorial desires, rather, the spectator is encouraged to let Lucy be as she is, and accept her agency and independence (Pick 2018, p. 135). This comparison resembles my discussion of Hagen's trained performance and spontaneous acts in the second chapter of this thesis, dedicated to the kinaesthetic call.

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to draw a connection between Pick's vegan cinema and the nonhuman animal call. Both privilege the agency and self-determination of the nonhuman animal character, their distinct and unrestricted expression (Pick 2018, p. 133). Both vegan cinema and the nonhuman animal call encourage, or even demand, a different type of spectatorship — one that is open to the independence of the character on screen, one that does not seek to control and mould being and expression of the animal character according to one's own perceptions and desires, but rather remain humble in the presence of an often radically

different being.[18] In spite of these similarities between our respective approaches, some aspects of the theory behind the concepts of vegan cinema and non-devouring gaze appear problematic and need unpacking.

First of all, I would like to address the analogy between eating and looking that is a foundation of Pick's vegan cinema. Pick makes a connection between the film industry and the food industry as systems which turn raw materials into a highly processed product to be consumed on a mass scale. One can see some similarities between the two industries, but there is a substantial difference between the act of eating and that of looking. While the former involves the ingestion of a foreign object in order to absorb nutrients to sustain one's life, the latter is based on the absorption of light that is reflected from an object of one's sight, which goes through the pupil and reaches one's retina, where the light is translated into an electric information that is sent to the brain and is subsequently turned into an image. The object of one's gaze in itself remains unchanged, it is its presentation and representation that are influenced by the looker's *Umwelt*, while the consumed object is transformed through the process of ingestion and digestion. Once the difference between the two acts is emphasised, the concept of non-devouring gaze becomes more difficult to conceptualise.

Even if one accepts the eating/looking analogy, one needs to address the problem of how eating is conceptualised by Simone Weil and subsequently by Pick. Following Weil, Pick describes the act of eating as an imminent destruction of the consumed object, the erasure of any trace of their existence (2018, p. 127). Representing eating in negative and violent terms is problematic as it obscures the fact that eating is not only one of the most fundamental physiological

---

[18] Having said that, I did explore an example of collaboration which involves working with nonhuman animal calls in a productive way — that is, presenting animal play-fight as an actual fight, therefore, creating conditions for the nonhuman animal call to emerge and work with it to achieve a desired effect.

processes of most living beings, but also an act of nourishment. The consumed object provides the consumer with nutrients and is transformed into energy; the remains that cannot be absorbed by the consumer can be turned into a source of nourishment for other consumers, further down the cycle of consumption. Therefore, the consumed object, rather than ingested and digested into non-existence, is transformed beyond recognition and transforms those who consume it. The transformative power of eating is, however, ignored in Pick's and Weil's account, which helps to maintain the distinction between the violent all-devouring gaze and non-devouring gaze that lets its objects be. However, if one decides to acknowledge the nourishing aspect of eating, while maintaining the eating/looking analogy, then a non-devouring gaze appears not only as ascetic (as opposed to the gluttonous all-devouring gaze), but also deprived of nutrition, and evoking starvation since it implies looking without eating. This, in turn, brings us to the question whether if one maintains that eating/looking analogy, is looking without consuming even a possibility? In Pick's comparison of the two canine performances, are they not representatives of the two ways of serving the raw material, two different products that the spectator consumes? Rather than not eating at all, is it not an example of eating *differently?*

This point brings me to Pick's decision to name the type of cinema that privileges the non-devouring gaze as vegan cinema. Despite its name, Pick draws a line between her conception of vegan cinema and films associated with vegan activism (the majority of which would not make the cut as examples of Pick's vegan cinema) (2018, p. 128). Pick's focus rests on the act of non-consuming, non-eating, but these are not synonymous with veganism, which is a way of eating *differently,* that is, consuming products that do not involve animal exploitation and suffering. Therefore, Pick uses the term 'vegan' not in a vernacular sense of the word, but rather as a metaphor. Arguably, this decision makes the concept confusing, especially if it excludes films that are associated with vegan activism.

243

What is more, despite cinema being an audio-visual medium, sound has largely been absent from Pick's reflections. Her focus on the gaze appears to reinforce the occularcentrism of Film Studies as a field, which has been addressed by some scholars in other contexts (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004). Since it is not uncommon to privilege vision over other senses among humans, and there are many nonhuman animals who do not rely predominantly on vision in their interactions with the world, then emphasising other senses, especially sound in the context of film could be one way of decentring humans, placing them *among* other living beings, and exploring different ways of representing nonhuman animals — the ways which might take their respective *Umwelten* into account. This is what sets the concept of the call apart from Pick's vegan cinema and non-devouring gaze. The call, as the name suggests, alludes to the senses other than vision, and I demonstrate in chapter 3 how the call can be manifested through a variety of senses, such as smell. The call as a concept also points towards a plethora of ways in which human and nonhuman animals express themselves and demonstrate their intentionality — some of which will be accessible to humans, while others remain beyond their grasp. The impenetrability and cryptic nature of some of the calls vis à vis a human spectator is conceptualised in positive terms — rather than an act of resistance to the threat of being devoured, it is an opportunity for a deeply humbling experience, a chance to marvel at the diversity and complexity of beings with whom we share our corporeality, mortality, and vulnerability. Acknowledging and responding to the call is an opportunity to see the world differently, in a more multispecies manner.

Vegan cinema as positioned by Pick is an alternative to the dominant cinema, the latter of which appeals to the all-devouring gaze of the ever-hungry audience. In her description of the food/film analogy, one can feel a sense of disgust and disdain with the dominant film industry, offering satisfaction linked to a predictable structure and following general social schemas, while films that withhold such a sense of satisfaction are favoured. In *Screen Stories: Emotion*

and the Ethics of Engagement, Plantinga explores the rhetorical power of screen stories, the origins of their potential, and challenges the distrust in mainstream screen stories that (although to a lesser extent yet still) dominates mainstream Film Studies (2018). In a chapter entitled 'Engagement and Estrangement' he identifies two positions ethical critics might adopt in response to the idea that screen stories are influential: estrangement theory and an ethics of engagement (Plantinga 2018, p. 100). According to Plantinga, ethical theories that would fall into the estrangement theories category promote avant-garde cinema over mainstream productions, aesthetic distance over emotional engagement and immersion, works that are self-reflexive, formally challenging and disruptive over 'seamlessness' of the Classical Hollywood style, and 'critical spectatorship with focus on ideological context and constructedness of the film' rather than attention to the content of the storyworld (2018, pp. 104—105).

Alternatively, the ethics of engagement pays equal attention to mainstream and avant-garde films — and assumes neither that the former is ethically questionable by default nor that the latter is par excellence ethically laudable. Emotional engagement is not dismissed as mystifying and harmful, but rather closely examined, with beneficial and harmful emotions being distinguished. It also rejects the idea that engagement is passive, and although certain films might require less mental activity on the spectator's part, it does not necessarily imply that they cannot be ethically valuable in other respects (Plantinga 2018, pp. 108—109). Finally, ethics of engagement does not ignore the content of screen stories but rather sees it as ethically important as formal and aesthetic aspects of the work — as Plantinga points out, 'form without content is empty' (2018, p. 109). To underline this point, he refers to Jean-Luc Godard's film *Contempt* (1963)*,* which features a shot of naked Brigitte Bardot. Plantinga asks: 'Does the film become a subversive and critical investigation of the objectification of women simply because Godard uses reflexive techniques such as color filters? ' (2018, p. 109).

Estrangement theories see mainstream productions as ideologically suspect (as propagating and reproducing capitalist and patriarchal order), and their investment in the narrative and building emotional engagement between spectators and film characters as a means of creating sentimental, uncritical, and non-questioning subjects. They privilege the use of techniques which alienate the spectators, withhold pleasure, and challenge existing conventions, in order to encourage spectator's critical approach towards the film, which, according to Plantinga, can be beneficial in producing 'critical viewing habits in spectators', but also tend to overlook other positive features of screen stories that might not be tied to self-reflexivity and estrangement techniques (2018, p. 107).

Plantinga sees Bertolt Brecht as one of the main modern influences of estrangement theories (2018, p. 102). Brecht conceptualised epic theatre as a medium which could employ a vast range of estrangement techniques in order to create a critical spectator. In his view, dramatic theatre, which follows a linear progression of the narrative and simply promotes emotional engagement with a character prevents spectators from becoming critical subjects. While a linear narrative supposedly obfuscates possibilities for conceptualising a different course of events, empathy for characters obscures the spectator's perspective on the social conflicts — the foundation of the narrative. As Murray Smith points out in his 'The Logic and Legacy of Brechtianism', Brecht's model rests on several problematic assumptions (1996). The idea that empathy for the character incapacitates the spectator's rational thought is founded on the emotion-reason dualism, which is strongly embedded in Western thought. However, as Smith demonstrates, such a binary opposition (or juxtaposition) is not compatible with the findings of contemporary cognitive science: emotions are an integral part of cognition, perception, and attention (1996, p. 133). To illustrate this point, Smith provides an example of fear and joy — the former involves judgment that something is threatening to the subject, at the same time, fear cannot be conceptualised in simply cognitive terms as it is always manifested with a

246

distinct somatic response (1996, p. 133). Therefore, emotional engagement with a character does not obscure the spectator's rational faculties, but rather work together with cognition. Plantinga makes a similar point: 'In the context of viewing, our anticipations, hypothesis-making, and, more broadly, our thinking all occur within the context of an experience that is suffused with affect. Cognition itself, considered as "making sense of" the world, is thus suffused with affect' (Plantinga 2018, p. 114).

Secondly, all encounters with representations in the aesthetic context rely on distancing and are 'by definition defamiliarised', so rather than mistaking the represented actions for real ones, spectators engage in a make-believe, and their reactions to represented events will differ from those in a real-life situation (Smith 1996, p. 132). For this reason, spectators do not call for help when the characters on screen are in danger, and do not try to escape in terror at the sight of an image of an oncoming train, as the popular anecdote has it. This means that even in the context of dramatic theatre, the spectators apply critical distance from the representations and are aware that they are engaging in the work of fiction. There is no doubt that some aesthetic experiences will be more defamiliarising than others, yet the difference here is only in degree.

Should we grant the point that distancing is not a matter of degree but rather of kind, the privileging of experience of estrangement in film spectatorship renders estrangement theories 'largely irrelevant to mainstream culture' as they ignore that the most familiar and popular way of 'interacting with screen stories is through engagement' (Plantinga 2018, p. 108). Suspicion of both the film apparatus and the ordinary mode of spectatorship might make it challenging for estrangement theories to productively engage with mainstream screen stories and ordinary spectatorial engagement. This point can be pushed even further — as Steven Prince discusses in 'Psychoanalytic Film Theory and the Problem of the Missing Spectator', Film Studies have not engaged with existing research into how viewers actually engage with movies, let alone

introduced their own empirical study of the subject. Therefore, the issues of spectatorship are often analysed and discussed with an abstract 'spectator' in mind, an approach that might not reflect on how the process of film viewing actually unfolds (1996). Prince's argument and the empirical research into spectatorship might not be free from limitations and problems, however, this discussion is well beyond the scope of this chapter.

The idea that linear narrative progression denies the spectator the possibility to think of alternative courses of events is based on the concept of a passive spectator. However, as Smith points out, spectators play a more active role in the act of viewing than assumed in Brechtian-inspired theories: the spectator routinely makes assumptions and inferences to fill in the gaps in the narrative as well as make predictions and form expectations regarding the course of events (1996, p. 138). What is more, the idea that estrangement techniques need to be employed in order for the spectator to develop critical faculties implies that the spectator is not only passive but highly susceptible to influences, which further denies their agency and autonomy. For this reason, Smith asks: 'how critical is the spectator who can only be constructed as critical by an estranging text?' (1996, p. 138).

To discuss this further, let me introduce two concepts from Susan Feagin: elicitor and conditioner. Elicitor is a particular element of a text that provokes a response in its reader, while conditioners influence one's response to the given elicitor — conditioners are all the elements that the reader, or spectator brings into their reading/viewing experience, that is, memories, their state of mind, condition, beliefs, and background knowledge (Feagin 1996, p. 25). This means that various viewers might have different responses to the same work — each sees the work through a slightly different lens. Rather than passively gliding through the tunnel vision of a linear narrative of the film, the spectator brings their own distinct set of knowledge, experiences, and expectations, which influence their reception of the film.

The majority of films I have discussed so far belong to the slow cinema genre, which is an alternative to mainstream films — both in its approach to aesthetics and narrative. In this context mainstream film is a category of films that have a clear narrative structure, offer an emotionally engaging protagonist, employ cinematography and editing techniques associated with classical cinema, and are meant to appeal to a wider range of audiences, often with the aim of bringing substantial box office revenue. On the other hand, slow cinema often abstains from offering a clear narrative, which is often reduced to as a set of loosely connected, fleeting scenes. Additionally, slow cinema, as the name implies, privileges the use of long takes and slow editing pace, as well as moments of stillness and inaction, which invite reflection and contemplation.

The techniques employed in slow cinema films will prove effective in provoking reflection and critical engagement in those spectators who do possess certain background knowledge of the genre, its aims and characteristics, and those who are open to diverse viewing experiences, some of which might not be rewarding, or the reward will be temporarily withheld. There is a possibility that the same techniques will not encourage critical reflection on the spectator's part, and in some cases might inevitably lead to said spectator's alienation, especially in a situation in which the spectator in question is accustomed to a different tradition of filmmaking and has a specific (at times rigid) set of expectations prior to watching the film.

Let us take *A Cow's Life* as a case study once more, with its long takes and fixed camera position, focus on the overall mood and impressions rather than the narrative progression, and absence of the voice-over, the film's aesthetics that is consistent with slow cinema genre. Additionally, the film privileges and embraces audio-visual depictions of bovine cryptic calls and through its cinematography and editing pace represents bovine temporality, marked by slowness and repetition. Thus, this film challenges the dominant approach of fast-paced and

action-packed, and narration-driven mainstream films. Some spectators might be more receptive of the bovine way of being in and interacting with the world, answer the bovine call and remain open and humble in the face of the cows' impenetrability and their distinct perception of temporality and event. Many, however, will be left alienated by the film's refusal to present a conventional narrative and its privileging of bovine-centric representations of cows, to the extent in which they will cease to engage with the film altogether. *A Cow's Life* might inevitably frustrate their expectations of a film experience. The director's aim to present cows differently and challenge their overall perception might not appear as clear to some viewers. The line between alienation that provokes critical reflection and alienation that disconnects appears thin.

Furthermore, McMahon links bovine representation to a larger trend of slow films that depict nonhuman animals, suggesting that such productions are yet another form of 'branding serving to circulate capital', which inscribes the movements into the larger history of art films that exploit nonhuman animals. Some films do it more explicitly, such as Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Weekend* (1967)*,* Michael Haneke's *Benny's Video* (1992) and *Seventh Continent* (1989), Béla Tarr's *Sátántangó* (1994) and *The Turin Horse* (2011)*,* or Ildikó Enyedi's *On Body and Soul* (2017) to name just a few. In the case of *A Cow's Life,* it is the context of production, such as the director's words of gratitude to farmers who own Charolais cows and the suggestion that without their work the film would not be possible, that implies that the celebration of bovine temporality and perspective, central to *A Cow's Life,* is founded on the existence of bovine commodification, exploitation, and inevitable slaughter (McMahon 2019, p. 171). Such tensions are not uncommon in films depicting nonhuman animals, and it is important to acknowledge them. However, I would argue that in spite of this undoubtedly problematic aspect, *A Cow's Life* still offers a meaningful approach towards nonhuman animal representation through its sustained interest in bovine temporality and perception of event.

250

Alternatively, *White God* is in many respects an example of mainstream filmmaking, with its fast-paced editing, the spectator being aligned predominantly with the two leading characters (Lili and Hagen), and the fictional event of dogs revolting against humans. Yet it does not shy away from depicting various instances of canine exploitation, which might encourage the wider range of spectators to think critically about the position and the lived experience of dogs in human society. The film does not employ estranging techniques, but instead aims to establish and sustain an emotional bond with both canine and human protagonists. The spectator is aligned with Hagen for a large part of the film and follows his journey from a happy family pet through to being an abandoned stray, then trafficked and tortured fighting dog, shelter dog threatened with the prospect of euthanasia, to a leader of a canine rebellion. *White God* shows the brutal reality of many stray dogs and encourages questions about how certain societies perceive and deal with dogs leading parallel lives to those of humans (as strays in packs), the problem of overcrowded shelters and killing perfectly fit and healthy dogs, the ruthless world of dog trafficking and dog fighting business. The film's emotional engagement with Hagen not only does not obscure the spectator's critical faculties regarding injustices experienced by canine characters, but further encourages critical discussion of canine experiences because the film not only depicts brutal and unjust treatment of dogs, but also aligns and builds an emotional bond between the spectator and a particular canine character who is put through almost all the forms of violence a dog can encounter from human hands. A powerful emotional response, as Plantinga points out, may encourage reflection on the spectator's part following the viewing (2018, p. 77).

Therefore, a strong sense of disturbance and distress when witnessing Hagen's ordeal can provoke a discussion on his and other dogs' experience after the screening is over. On the one hand, there is a risk that Hagen's experience will eclipse that of other dogs (such as his

opponent during the dog fight), on the other hand, it could lead to the conclusion that no dog should go through what Hagen has.

White God shows that one can employ cinematic calls alongside nonhuman animal calls and work from within the anthropocentric framework in order to raise awareness, sensitise, and educate the spectator about a nonhuman animal character's condition, perspective, and experience. It might not provide the highly disruptive and subversive experience of animal-centric films, but it nonetheless can nudge the spectator, 'pull the rug from under their feet', subtly enough not to make them fall, but strongly enough to make them notice and possibly make them wonder and ask questions. Therefore, the call as a framework is open to an entire spectrum of approaches towards nonhuman animal representations and spectator positioning, making it possible to work from within the anthropocentric framework as well as outside of and in opposition to it. For this reason, it is important, in the spirit of Plantinga's ethics of engagement, to examine each film on an individual basis — that is, do not a priori dismiss a mainstream production with a conventional narrative as ethically problematic, but also abstain from assuming that works that are challenging and complex on the formal level offer an ethically superior alternative by default. What is more, it is no less important to pay close attention to spectatorial engagement with screen stories in order to understand how this most familiar mode of spectatorship operates, but also how we can make it more animal-oriented, or animal-centric. After all, mainstream screen stories reach wide audiences and some of them can be highly influential.

Claire Parkinson has written about the impact of Netflix production *Okja* (Joon-ho Bong, 2017) on people's attitudes towards factory farming and meat consumption, which resulted in people becoming more critical and vocal about the meat industry, and switching to a plant-based diet (Parkinson 2019). *Okja* is to a certain degree embedded in the mainstream tradition of

filmmaking. Its titular character is a computer-generated super-pig, whose looks make her more similar to an overgrown dog-hippo hybrid rather than a pig, and who behaves like a canine puppy, all of which are features that make Okja undeniably cute, appealing, and sympathetic (Parkinson 2018). Human characters represent different factions in the animal welfare debate, which introduces the audience to several dominant voices within the discourse, yet whose reductive and caricatural portrayal offers only a superficial treatment of the subject. The film is, without a doubt, a highly-processed product to be consumed on mass-scale — a problematic case study for Critical Animal Studies due to its many tensions and shortcomings. Nevertheless, despite these problematic features, or rather, *because of them*, the film proved effective at changing attitudes towards factory farming and meat-based diets, which has had a tangible effect on the lives of farm animals. Therefore, there is a possibility for mainstream productions, the majority of which are strongly embedded in an anthropocentric framework to remain animal-oriented and create space for discussion on animal wellbeing and exploitation, as well as a change in attitudes and actions, such as making people abstain from meat consumption and joining animal activism groups. By creating compelling narratives and sustaining strong emotional bonds with nonhuman animal protagonists, this film succeeded in appealing to a wide and diverse audience, encouraging critical reflection on human-nonhuman animal relations.

I am confident that the majority of film productions starring nonhuman animals do reproduce an anthropocentric vision of the world (which could be defined as an ideology that privileges humankind over other species) and various forms of nonhuman animal exploitation, violence, and suffering not only go unquestioned but are routinely being normalised. The above examples demonstrate that films — whether mainstream, art, or avant-garde — are complex constructs and often not free from tensions, or even contradictions. But films that belong to the so-called mainstream, despite them being embedded in an anthropocentric framework, can and

do sometimes offer a pro-animal orientation and encourage critical discussion on human-animal relations. At the same time, films that work outside of mainstream and privilege estrangement over engagement might not necessarily challenge nonhuman animal exploitation and violence, or they might do so in a way that will not be accessible to wider audiences.

The aim of Anat Pick's vegan cinema is to take the 'animal for granted as a fully-fledged cinematic subject whose existence cinematically matters' (2018, p. 133), and, as pointed out already, it is not dissimilar from the aim of the call. What differentiates our approaches, besides the theory behind them, is also the question of pragmatism. The call as a concept embodies a wide range of nonhuman (and human) expressions as well as film techniques (as far as the cinematic call is concerned), which work to strengthen the reach of the nonhuman animal in relation to the film audiences — the diverse manifestations of both the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call in a variety of films demonstrate the versatility of the concept. The cinematic call can be employed in a manner that will make it akin to Pick's vegan cinema — it will have an estranging effect insofar as it will offer an alternative way of depicting and representing nonhuman animal characters, which might appeal to some and become a sort of revelation that will provoke some spectators to rethink their ways of perceiving nonhuman animals, yet it may confuse and distance others. It can also bring some nonhuman animal characters and their cryptic (from the spectator's perspective) calls closer, assist in bridging the gap, which might not result in a clear understanding of the nonhuman animal character and their perspective, but invite the spectator to adopt a position of an open, compassionate, curious, and humble human animal amongst other animals. Some such calls, although made on behalf of nonhuman animal characters, might appeal to humans and their sensibilities, which stems from pragmatism — after all, the majority of films are made by humans and for predominantly human spectators. This might mean that to reach wider range of spectators, we

might need to work from within the anthropocentric framework, and with every little gesture, every subtle nudge, invite spectators to question and destabilise it.

It is appropriate to underline that despite some reservations about Pick's approach and my concerns regarding estrangement theories, I do acknowledge that they appeal and prove enriching and stimulating to specific types of spectators (that I consider myself part of). At the same time, I am strongly aware that the majority of film spectators might disengage from such works and an alternative approach is necessary to invite them to reflect on the nonhuman animal life and perspective — a method that is based on engagement rather than estrangement. Since the nonhuman animal call is related to nonhuman animal performers' own expression and cinematic calls comprise of film techniques, which in a specific context serve to help these nonhuman calls to manifest themselves, strengthen and amplify their reach, the call framework functions both within mainstream and art, or avant-garde films, as well as within estrangement and engagement theories. What is, therefore, of utmost importance is to, on the one hand, investigate which film techniques and within which context function as cinematic calls, and on the other hand, identify and explain how in other cases certain techniques, although appearing to serve as cinematic calls, in fact do not do so.

A tale of two cow films

I would like to dedicate this section to the two films that took cows as their protagonists, or subject of interest in order to expand on the discussion of theories of estrangement and ethics of engagement in the context of animal-centric films. One of them is *A Cow's Life,* already discussed in chapter 2*,* the other Andrea Arnold's *Cow* (2021). While the former is an exemplary of an estranging film, the latter employs various engagement techniques. Categorised as a documentary, *Cow* takes a close look at the life of Luma, a cow living at a dairy farm. The spectator is invited to follow Luma throughout her life — from regular milking,

insemination, births, and subsequent losses of her calves when they are taken away from her, until her untimely death — and gain insight into the very secretive world of the dairy industry (or rather, protective of its secrets).[19] I would like to compare the ways in which the two films depict their bovine protagonists and the mechanisms of the biopolitics in which they are all deeply embedded. Since I have engaged with *A Cow's Life* in more detail in chapter 2, my account of the film will be brief, while more space will be given to *Cow*.

In my juxtaposition of the two films, I would like to highlight different regimes of representing bovine exploitation on the one hand and engaging with bovine performers on the other. *A Cow's Life* is an example of an estranging film experience, which invites the human spectator to get a glimpse of a bovine way of being in the world. In doing so, it offers a relatively balanced representation of cows, on the one hand highlighting similarities between humans and bovines while at the same time not losing sight of bovine alterity in relation to human sensibilities. In the process, the film dispels misconceptions about cows, in particular those regarding their cognitive capacities. The film, however, seldom draws attention to the exploitation of the cows and their status as a commodity, and when it does so, it is predominantly in a subtle manner. *Cow*, on the other hand, seeks to engage the spectator with one cow, Luma, and her lived experience at the dairy farm – the aim of the film is to depict the extent of dairy cows' exploitation and the control exercised over their bodies and lives in the most minute details. Similarly, to *A Cow's Life, Cow* also employs its cinematic features (in particular

---

[19] At the time I am writing this, the UK public has been shocked by yet more scandalous undercover footage from a dairy farm, where cows have been repeatedly beaten and mistreated (Webster 2022). Those involved have subsequently left the farm and the only person who has not done so has been dismissed by the farm's owner. It is uncertain, however, whether these people will still be allowed to work around nonhuman animals. Furthermore, the incident raises important (and recurring) questions regarding the (in)visibility of nonhuman animals in the meat and dairy industry complex, the need for a higher transparency of the industry regarding nonhuman animal welfare, and the civic/social duty performed by those who produce and publish undercover footages in order to inform the public, and the repercussions that they face when found out.

cinematography) to evoke the phenomenology of Luma's lived experience, however, it emphasises engagement over estrangement: rather than reflecting on the strangeness of Luma and other cows, the film focuses on the potentially shared experiences of feeling constricted and overwhelmed, of love and grief, to bring the spectator closer to Luma and thus respond to her plight.

It has already been mentioned that the depiction of cows in *A Cow's Life* is predominantly pastoral in nature — dominated by extended shots of the cows in the seemingly unbounded fields and showing little to no action (at least in our human understanding of the term, as discussed in chapter 2). The overall pace of the film is slow, almost static. The film is almost entirely devoid of human presence, save for a handful of instances, so human-bovine interactions are depicted as minimal (this is further confirmed by Emmanuel Gras himself). Long shots dominate throughout the screening, with an occasional medium long shot, or a close-up of a bovine mouth grazing through the blades of grass. The cinematography serves as a cinematic call as it mirrors the open space of the grazing land, providing the cows with sufficient space and time for their ways of interacting with the world and each other to manifest themselves at their own pace. The film's overall structure consists of loosely connected episodes from the cows' lives, without any underlying logic or order. While the particular use of cinematography and editing in *A Cow's Life* invites an alternative, more bovine-like, mode of spectatorship, it is worth noting that such an approach considerably differs from the conventional spectatorial experience. As a result, the film might prove more challenging to some spectators, especially those who might not be familiar with such a mode of filmmaking and film spectatorship. This means that the film might be appealing to a particular type of spectators, who are accustomed to slow film tradition and its aesthetics but evoke a sense of disconnect or alienation in others, thus, undermining the film's aim of changing people's perception of cows.

In contrast, the most powerful cinematic calls in *Cow* emphasise the extent of bovine incarceration and constriction. The handheld camera closely follows Luma through the narrow passages that lead her from the enclosure to the place where she will be milked. The close-ups focus on the variety of railings that constrict Luma's movements when she is being milked by the milking machine, or when she is being fed. If the space allows Luma to exert agency and make a decision regarding the direction which she can take, human workers, through their own kinaesthetic and vocal calls — such as whistling, speaking loudly, gesturing with hands, and blocking out other paths with their own bodies — will limit Luma's space and possibilities to act in order to guide her into the area where she is designated to be.

Fig. 60. Luma walking through the narrow passages at the farm (*Cow* 2021)

By placing the spectator very close to Luma while she walks through the tight passages or is being rushed by the human workers, the spectator is invited to take up the perspective of a fellow cow and experience a similar sense of entrapment that Luma undoubtedly feels. This can provoke discomfort and uneasiness in the spectator, a range of difficult emotions which have the potential to spark a conversation on Luma's (and other dairy cows') lived experience. This example again illustrates Plantinga's argument that strong emotions can encourage

discussion, demonstrating that emotional engagement is not at odds with critical reflection (2018, p. 77).

This restriction of the body's movement and agency is at its most extreme in the short scene depicting one of the human workers tending to the cow's hooves: the extreme close-up of the hooves being cleaned is juxtaposed with a long-shot of the cow being tightly held by a machine attached to a truck. The cow is held up in the air and lying sideways to allow easy access to her hooves without the risk of the worker being kicked in the process. Once the machine slowly places the cow on her feet and its tight grip begins to loosen, the cow begins to wriggle — it is obvious that she wants to escape the mechanical claws that forced her to stay completely still.

Fig. 61. Restrained cow (*Cow*, 2021)

What is more, the exercise of control over the cows goes deeper than restricting their living space and organising their days. Arnold makes the spectators witness a variety of ways in which cows' bodily integrity is compromised, such as through regular check-ups where the veterinarian puts his arm inside cows' anuses and vaginas in order to inspect their overall health and readiness to become pregnant.

All the aforementioned instances are contrasted with long shots and extreme long shots that usually depict birds either briefly stopping at the enclosures before flying away, or flocks of birds flying up in the sky. The stark difference between birds' unrestrained movement in the open skies and the highly restricted and controlled movements of the cows as well as the physical limitations of their dwelling space further underlines the extent of the dairy cows' incarceration.
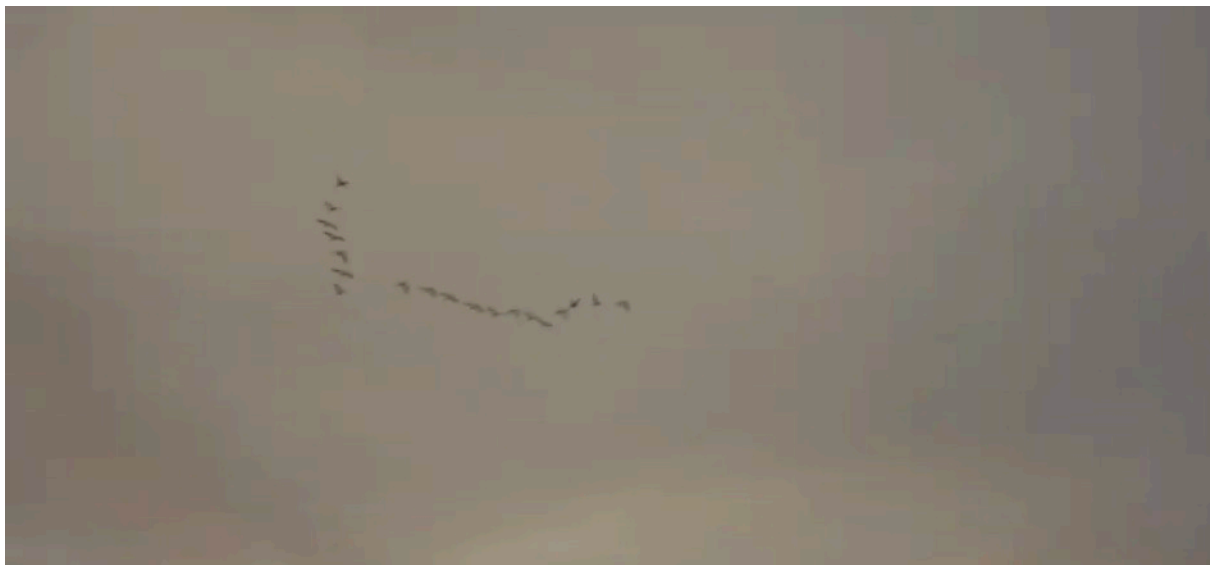

Fig. 62. Birds flying above the farm (*Cow*, 2021)

Luma's and other cows' lives are reduced to several specific itineraries that they take every day at a designated time: as the scenes depicting them being ushered towards the 'milking station', or the 'feeding station', recur throughout the film, it becomes clear that the cows' lives are heavily regulated, with very little space for any detour. Through the juxtaposition of these highly contrasting scenes, Arnold produces a striking effect on the spectator and further emphasises the oppressive conditions in which Luma and other cows live their entire lives.

A Cow's Life, through its investment in the extended shot duration that depicts cows, who from the anthropocentric perspective might appear as very static, fixed, or idle, offers a subversion of 'capitalism's time-motion ideologies of speed, spectacle, and efficiency' , the aim of which

is akin to that of Pick's vegan cinema (McMahon 2015, p. 172). It is an example of a film that challenges the spectator's engagement, demanding an alternative approach towards its bovine subjects, but that does not question the exploitation and violence inflicted upon the cows, who are central characters of the film. This is the point made by McMahon too, who argues that by not displaying the act of slaughter, which is an inevitable part of a dairy cow's life, the film does neither investigate nor question the biopolitics of human-bovine relations (2015, p. 174). The film conceals the underlying biopolitics which organise the meat cows' lives from birth to death and seldom makes subtle allusions to the fact that these cows are commodities, beings reared for human consumption. The film appears to disconnect its appeal to perceive cows differently, to acknowledge their distinctness and complexity, with what seems to be the next logical step, that is, questioning of brutal and instrumental ways in which humans treat cows.

The film invites the spectator to attune themselves to the bovine temporality and ways of being in the world, which, as I discussed before, challenges misconceptions about cows as vacuous, lacking intelligence and inner life. Rather than relying on a clear narrative structure, the film is an amalgam of floating scenes, snippets from bovine life, some of which recur throughout the duration of the film. McMahon sees this as a manifestation of the Deleuzian time-image in this film. As she explains, the time-image was crucial in post-war Italian Neorealism, which favoured characters who witness, rather than act, who both lack agency and political alternatives. However, such a comparison might prove problematic in the case of bovine characters. While the film aims to change spectatorial attitudes towards the cows, which could potentially have far-reaching political, social, and ecological consequences, it does not challenge the system that exploits and inflicts suffering on the cows. Since the Deleuzian time-image privileges perception that does not extend into action, the cows 'are presented as "seers" rather than "agents"' (McMahon 2015, p. 174). For McMahon, this signals the limits of Deleuze and Guattari's thought when it comes to questioning 'regimes of exploitation, particularly in

the domain of animals' (2015, p. 176). This point is exemplified during the herding scene, where bovine-centric temporality and slowness is quickly overwhelmed and replaced with the fast-paced, anthropocentric agricapital: the cows become passive and marginal beings as they are being rushed by the farmers, people's calls and gestures suggesting urgency and impatience. The scene depicts the 'rigid power asymmetry' of human-bovine relations, in which cows are positioned as subservient and passive — unlike in the emerging accounts of cross-species collaborations that grant agency to nonhumans (McMahon 2015, p. 169).

Cow offers a striking counterexample to McMahon's point about the cows' political paralysis, their passivity. The film provides space for Luma's and other cows' calls to be manifested, and many of them are striking and powerful in their nature, challenging the idea of bovine submission even in the situation where the control over their lives is at its most extreme. Although Luma has been born into the post-industrial system of dairy farming and the life she leads is the only one she has ever known, there are instances in which she voices and demonstrates her disagreement and resistance to the existence that has been imposed on her and other cows. Following the birth and separation from her calf, Luma is depicted mooing loudly and persistently — calling after her child without stop. Cows are highly social and become very attached to their calves, therefore, Luma's distress at her loss is unsurprising (Gillespie 2016, p. 581). Shortly after, Luma is depicted amongst other cows at the 'feeding station', and while other cows are munching their food, Luma is shown staring blankly into space and refusing to eat. Luma's rejection of food is on the one hand a sign of deep distress; it is not unreasonable to assume that Luma's refusal to eat is a manifestation of grief that Luma is seen to be going through following the abduction of her calf. Luma's actions are, therefore, a manifestation of her psychological and emotional complexity. The inclusion of such scenes

in the film encourages the spectator to reflect on the similarities between human and bovine experiences and question their perception of both dairy cows and the dairy industry.[20]

On the other hand, Luma's refusal to eat can also be understood in the similar way in which McMahon discusses similar action (or rather lack of thereof) taken up by Ricsi, the mare from Béla Tarr's *The Turin Horse*. McMahon sees Ricsi's inaction as an act of resistance that 'interrupts the cycle of labour and cruelty to which she is subjected' (2019, p. 115).

Fig. 63. Luma calling her abducted calf (*Cow* 2021)

Likewise, Luma's refusal to eat could be seen as an act of rebellion — by not eating, Luma refuses to participate in the highly-regulated daily activities and assumes (however limited) control over her body. Just like in Ricsi's case, the resistance is destructive in nature, since by

---

[20] Such an approach is not without its problems since ethical consideration of nonhuman animals should not be based on their similarity to humans but in spite of what makes them different. Nevertheless, making an appeal to the commonalities between various species can be a pragmatic way to rethink their treatment by humans.

not getting nutrition, Luma will not be able to recover after the birth and ensure that she is in good health to be inseminated once again in the future.

Fig. 64. Luma refusing to eat (*Cow* 2021)

This second point deserves more attention — as unlike in Ricsi's case, Luma's labour might not be easily understood as such.[21] In order to produce milk, cows need to be either pregnant, or in a post-partum period. They are impregnated as quickly as possible to maintain continuity in milk production, which means that often the period between a birth and conception is shorter than it would be if the cows had been left to their own devices, all of which ultimately affect the cow's overall health and life expectancy.[22] Like in Ricsi's case, Luma's labour is tied both to her body's strength and health, but more importantly, it is intimately linked to her fertility. By refusing food, Luma slows down her recovery from birth and delays her readiness to be inseminated again. The resistance is passive, Luma chooses inaction over action, which

---

[21] Although as McMahon shows, this has also been up to a debate (2019, pp. 104—105).

[22] The average life expectancy of a dairy cow ranges between four to seven years, although they can live up to 20 years. During this time, they have three to five calves and are impregnated for the first time at the age of 15 months, as opposed to 20-30 months, which is more in line with their development (*Life of a Dairy Cow* 2019).

disrupts the imposed routine and her role within the dairy industry, emphasising her agency. Unlike in Ricsi's case, who almost methodically strengthens her opposition to labour by refusing to eat or drink, and finally to leave the stable, Luma's disruption of the routine comes in occasional outbursts. I will discuss some other instances of bovine resistance to labour, understood as uninterrupted participation in the daily routine established by the dairy farm workers, in due course.

Following the second birth, Luma's kinaesthetic calls directed at the human workers who are trying to feed her new-born calf with formula suggest her wariness of human presence and protectiveness of her child — not only is she mooing loudly at the people, but she also tries to stand between them and her calf, preventing them from approaching the calf. Once blocked by human workers from interfering, Luma is carefully overlooking the workers and her calf to ensure her child's safety. Compared to the first birth the audience sees, Luma is much more alarmed by the human presence the second time around, which suggests that the memory of the loss of her first calf remains strong and distressing.

What is more, one of the scenes depicts another cow being separated from her calf, and Luma reacts in a similar manner as she did when her own calves were taken away. Her loud and persistent vocal calls communicate a sense of connection with the other cow, sharing her distress and the painful experience she has lived through herself. Some could raise questions on whether I overestimate the power of Luma's call — whether my interpretation of her calls is anthropomorphic. I am open for discussion, and welcome careful scrutiny of these sequences in the film and discussion of possible interpretations of Luma's calls and what they might mean in these contexts.

Fig. 65. Luma preventing people from approaching her calf (*Cow* 2021)

As mentioned before, cows' movements are highly restricted, yet despite all the limitations, the audience sees instances in which cows resist and challenge the imposed daily structure. On many occasions, the spectators will see cows refusing to move in the intended direction, averting their gaze from human workers gesturing to usher them through the corridors. In a striking scene where female workers come towards a calf enclosure in order to transfer the calves into another place, the calves immediately retreat inside the small pen and face the wall to avoid the sight of the human workers. They resist human workers' calls for some time before they slowly give in and are reluctantly guided towards a truck that will transport them to another part of the farm. However short-lived and futile their resistance, the cows demonstrate throughout the film that they have their wishes and desires, their preferences — which are constantly being negotiated against those of human workers. Through their vocal and kinaesthetic calls, the bovine agency manifests itself — even in the context of total objectification and subjugation. Just like in *A Cow's Life,* the dairy cows like Luma do not have any political alternatives available at hand; their lives have been marginalised and overtaken by humans to their most intimate aspects. Even though the cows ultimately submit and follow

the narrow and constricting paths imposed on them by humans and the dehumanising system of the dairy industry, they are shown expressing their disagreements, displeasures, and distress. Despite the futility of their actions, the cows are by no means silent.

McMahon criticises *A Cow's Life* for not questioning the biopolitics of human-bovine relations, by not showing the complete image of the cows' life — after all, the value of meat cows is only realised in their death, when their bodies are transformed into consumable products. The film exemplifies the pathological approach of the cinema towards nonhuman animals, as Nicole Shukin would call it, which 'actively render unconscious their material contingency on slaughter' (Shukin 2009, p. 104). What Shukin means by this is that on the one hand the cinema is framed as a medium that animates and assembles static images into a moving picture, which can have a conservatory aspect (preserving the traces of animals that once have been), but at the same time, however, its material existence is based on literal animal disassembly since gelatin, which is a vital component of the film strip, is made of the by-product of animal slaughter (2009, p. 91). Cinema exemplifies the double entendre of the term 'rendering', which is crucial to Shukin's book. Rendering, Shukin writes, 'signifies both the mimetic act of making a copy, that is, reproducing or interpreting an object in linguistic, painterly, musical, filmic, or other media (…), *and* the industrial boiling down and recycling of animal remains' (Shukin 2009, p. 20). Therefore, cinema encapsulates the conflicted relation to animal life, with 'extradiegetic domination' on the one hand, and 'diegetic celebration' on the other (McMahon 2019, p. 19). When it comes to *A Cow's Life,* this double entendre is played out by a diegetic celebration of the bovine way of life, an invitation to adopt a different perspective, temporality, and perception of an event, yet the existence of the film and its affirmation to cows is based on the system of exploitation in which the cows are ultimately seen as the raw material and as commodities. The absence of the scene of slaughter and the overall pastoral depiction of the cows' life can be seen as a refusal to acknowledge this problematic relationship; the cows

depicted on screen are meat cows, their freedom and isolation are deceptive — the cows are still deeply embedded into the mechanisms of the biopower, their lives and deaths controlled by humans and their interests.

This is played out differently in Arnold's film. Throughout the duration of the film Luma gives birth to two calves and once her body cannot bear anymore, her udders are swollen and make it difficult for her to keep her balance and walk, and her teats have ruptured, Luma is led by a male worker, who is often depicted ushering her around the farm, to a separate enclosure where she is given food and then promptly shot point blank in the head. Luma's demise encapsulates the perception of the dairy cow as the capital whose value rests on her ability to be pregnant and produce milk — once Luma's body is unable to deliver, her existence is no longer profitable, therefore, she needs to be disposed of, preferably in a low-cost manner. It is important, therefore, to remember that despite human workers calling her by her name, referring to her and other cows as 'girls', and spending hours upon hours in her company, seeing the distinct features of her personality (as viewers see them during the movie), Luma is ultimately reduced to an object whose financial potential has to be fully exploited — her calls, however powerful, are systematically being ignored.

Cow, through its often-stifling cinematography and editing, emphasises the extent to which Luma is controlled and objectified, her being reduced to a status of an object capable of producing milk, which must be fully manipulated and exploited for highest profits, and discarded once it becomes unprofitable. The reality of dairy cows the film shows opens up space for difficult conversations about how humans treat nonhuman animals, the physical and psychological impact of dairy farming on cows, the hidden cost of milk and dairy products many buy and consume on a daily basis, complex relationship between human and nonhuman animal labourers (in particular the distancing mechanisms at play that enable human workers

to spend a considerable amount of time in Luma's company, get to know her peculiarities, call her by her name, and yet kill her without hesitation when the time comes), as well as the role of the film in bearing witness to Luma's ordeal, its ethical and political responsibilities towards Luma and other cows.

Although the two films featuring cows demonstrate a different relationship towards the film medium's contradictory approach towards animal life, and none of them is not unproblematic in its representation (Arnold's film features a scene of Luma being inseminated by a nameless bull, which has been framed as a somewhat romantic encounter), both make cows visible and invite the spectator to reflect on and rethink their perception of bovines. Through their skilful employment of cinematic calls, *A Cow's Life and Cow* invite the spectator to assume a bovine perspective — while the former focuses on the phenomenological experience of bovine temporality and eventhood, marked by stupor and slowness, with its often-estranging effects, the latter establishes an emotional connection between the spectator and Luma, thus, provoking reflection and discussion through character (or rather subject) engagement. The overall appeal of *A Cow's Life* appears more localised – its aesthetic approach, based on estrangement, will prove more productive to spectators who have a prior knowledge of the slow cinema tradition or are sufficiently open to alternative spectatorial experiences. On the other hand, *Cow* often appeals to the spectator's emotions, thus, provoking strong reactions, which might in turn encourage reflection. Through its work on evoking a sense of constriction and entrapment in the spectator, and often positioning them amongst the cows, besides Luma, *Cow* might have a much wider reach than *A Cow's Life.* At the same time, it is worth noting that *Cow* will also attract a particular type of spectator due to its subject matter, which some people might choose to avoid because of its distressing nature.

Conclusions matter – unhappy endings

Before I move on to the final chapter, I would like to discuss two scenes of separation, one that I have briefly mentioned already — from *A Cow's Life* — and another from Viktor Kossakovsky's *Gunda*. Both films have the potential to reveal something about the nonhuman animals they depict that human audiences might have neither known nor expected. And they do so by providing enough time and space for nonhuman animal calls to emerge — vocal calls, subtle and much more sweeping gestures, meaningful presence. Both also portray human arrival as a disturbing and violent intrusion into the nonhuman animal lives. I will focus on the ways the scenes of separation and their direct aftermath have been played out in each film in order to discuss the varying impressions they might leave on the spectator.

Towards the end of *A Cow's Life*, we witness a dramatic separation of the calves from the herd — they are being rushed into the trailer as their companions push at the barbed wire that separates them and call after the calves. These are undoubtedly powerful calls of distress. The calves are ushered through the narrow gates, one can see their faces pressing against the metal bars as they push on one another. A man approaches the gates and bangs a metal pipe to rush the confused calves, while other cows keep calling them, to no avail. The separation of the herd is an undoubtedly disturbing part of bovine life as cows are highly social and build strong emotional bonds with one another. The scene concludes with the cows slowly moving away from the barbed wire fence and walking away into pastures, then the screen turns black. The separation scene is followed by two long takes, the first one focuses on a cow's eye and ear with a yellow tag, while the second one (and the final shot of the film) depicts the cow's chewing mouth in extreme close-up. The overall cryptic expression of the cow makes it difficult for the spectator to assess what is happening within the cow's heart and mind, therefore making the scene somewhat ambiguous. What is more, it remains unclear how much time

passed between the separation scene and the final scene of the film. Does the cow feel upset about the separation she witnessed? Has enough time passed for this distressing event she experienced to fade in her memory and for her life to return to normal?

Fig. 66. A cow calling in distress as the calves are being taken away (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

Fig. 67. Calves being rushed onto a trailer (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

Fig. 68. A man hitting the gates with a metal bar to rush the calves onto the trailer (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

Fig. 69. Adult cows approaching the fence and calling the calves in distress (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

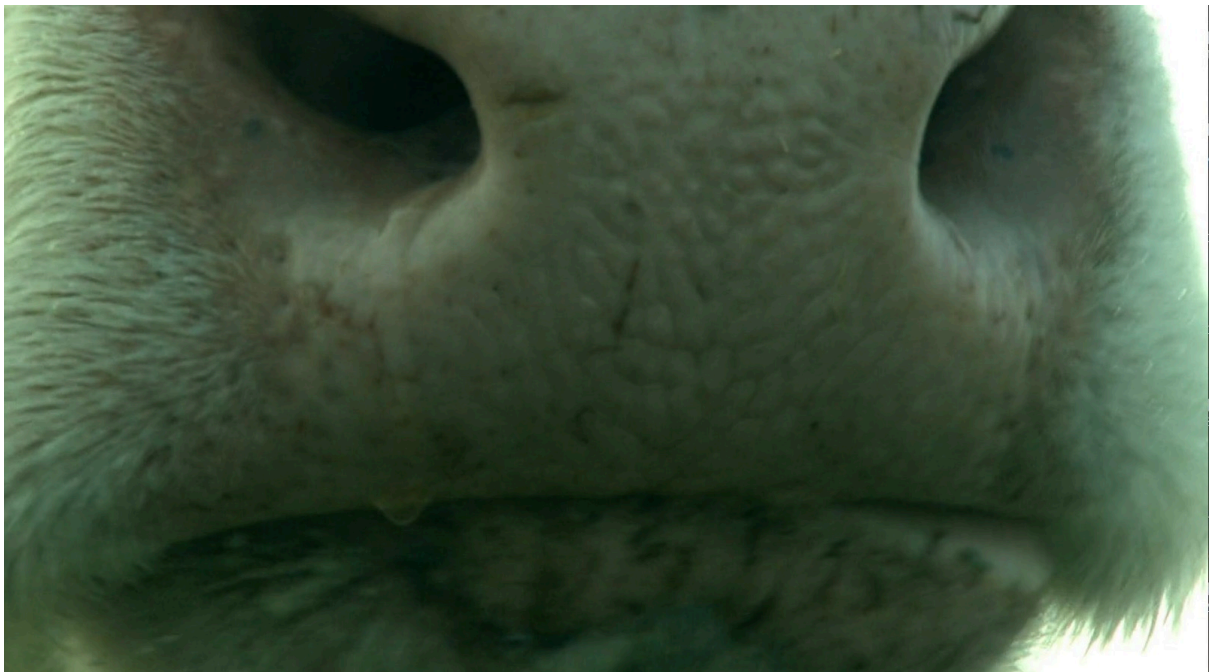Fig. 70. A close-up of a cow's eye (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

Fig. 71. A close-up of a cow's nose (*A Cow's Life* 2012)

On the one hand, the cinematic call that allows the spectator to linger on the cow's cryptic expression invites the spectator to wonder about the cow's experience, but also reflect on the limits of the spectator's cognition in the face of the cow's impenetrable gaze and expression.

While the powerful calls that appear in the separation scene have a strong emotional impact on the spectator who can clearly make sense of the narrative situation and sympathise with the cows at such an upsetting moment of their lives, the scene that follows once again distances the spectator from the cows, emphasising the species-specific differences in their kinaesthetic calls.

The scene of separation and its aftermath are played out differently in *Gunda*. Unlike in *A Cow's Life,* the trailer obstructs the spectator's vision, therefore, concealing the abduction of the piglets. The trailer visually dominates the scene, so the spectator has to rely solely on vocal calls of scared, confused, and distressed piglets to understand what is happening. The privileging of vocal calls over kinaesthetic ones can have a striking effect on the spectator: the powerful calls of the piglets, paired with the refusal to show them, cues the spectator to wonder and to imagine what they cannot see. What exactly is happening to the piglets? Are they being hurt as people rush them into the van? Do they try to resist and escape back into their enclosure, hoping to hide inside a pile of hay? Are they calling their mother Gunda? The film ends with the image of Gunda frantically looking for her children, pacing in circles around the area, entering the coop multiple times, as if she was hoping to find the piglets safe inside. *Gunda* leaves spectators with the image of a distraught mother, it offers no reassurance, no justifications, but rather encourages the spectator to share the pain and distress of the titular character. Contrary to the cow in the final scene of *A Cow's Life,* Gunda's final vocal and kinaesthetic calls are powerful and unambiguous to the spectator. The separation and its aftermath are not temporarily separated, one directly follows the other, there is no temporal or emotional distancing at play. Finally, by leaving the spectator with such disturbing and difficult emotions, *Gunda* invites a reflection on and discussion of the lives of farm animals, their tragic fate, as well as the spectator's role in the process. Even though *Gunda,* just like *A Cow's Life,* does not depict the scenes of slaughter, the choice of the final scene has inevitably set the tone

for the overall reception of the film and conversations that will possibly begin shortly after the viewing.

Fig. 72. Tractor with a trailer approaching the pig enclosure (*Gunda* 2020)

Fig. 73. The abduction of Gunda's piglets – view obstructed by the trailer (*Gunda,* 2020)

Fig. 74. Gunda looking for her piglets (*Gunda,* 2020)

Fig. 75. Gunda looking for her piglets (*Gunda* 2020)

In his book on happy endings concerning the formation of a romantic couple in Hollywood films, James MacDowell engages with the widely held stance that film endings can play an important part in reaffirming, propagating, or challenging the ideology put forth by the film as they bring the narrative to a closure and have 'the last word' (MacDowell 2013, p. 151).

276

According to MacDowell, the proponents of the 'subject-position' theory, that is, the view that the spectator, is 'positioned' by the film, which means that they accept unquestioningly the ideological views present in the film (2013, p. 136), distinguish two main types of endings: closed and open. While closed endings is understood to reinforce and reaffirm the conservative ideology that underpins the film narrative, the open ending has the potential to subvert it (MacDowell 2013, p. 151). MacDowell demonstrates how Hollywood movies that could not present progressive views in an overt manner find ways to subvert the dominant ideology through various techniques and approaches, such as the use of irony, an implausible happy ending, introducing a happy ending that challenges the apparent monolithic structure of the ideology (for instance by introducing the interracial couple), or undermining the coherence of the narrative (as in the case of Douglas Sirk's films) (2013, pp. 153—154). Thus, MacDowell challenges the idea that Hollywood happy endings reinforce conservative ideology par excellence.

Of course, our case studies are neither Hollywood films nor their endings are shown as happy. However, the idea that the film endings set the tone for the overall reception of the film is crucial for these two films. *A Cow's Life* is predominantly a pastoral depiction of Charolais cows, at times bringing the spectator closer to the cows, at other times establishing a distance between the spectator and bovine performers. *Gunda* offers a poetic, intimate, and touching portrayal of the farm animals, its aim is to emphasise similarities between humans and nonhuman animals, as well as their personal relations and experiences. In both films the overall sentimental mood is disrupted by the scene of separation that breaks apart tightly-knit relations — always announced by an intrusion of the human. The separation scenes function as reminders of the underlying relations of power in which humans and nonhuman animals are deeply embedded. They remind the spectator that despite rich inner lives these nonhuman animals lead, despite many features they share with us humans, they are still being considered

as commodities and objects to be exploited for human convenience. And it is with this very message that both films decide to conclude. While the concluding scene of *A Cow's Life* invites the spectator to reflect on the cow experience of separation and its aftermath through its sustained attention to a cryptic expression of the cow, who might possibly be temporarily (and possibly emotionally) removed from the distressing events, *Gunda* emphasises the powerful kinaesthetic and vocal calls of the titular pig in direct response to the separation. While the former might potentially problematise the spectator's reflection on the bovine experience and memory, the latter does not leave any space for ambiguity. The two scenes of separation and their aftermath, and the ways in which Emmanuel Gras and Viktor Kossakovsky approached their depiction not only invite a reflection on film endings and their ability to set the tone for the discussion that might occur after the screening, but also on the problem of the depiction itself.

On the importance of being seen

The experience of making *Cow* made Arnold reflect on the importance of being seen. In the interview for the Guardian she says: 'I kept saying involuntarily during the edit: "I'm seeing you, Luma. Don't worry Luma, we see you." I'm not sure any farm animal really feels seen. And I wondered what that meant in terms of her existence' (Arnold 2022). The question of visibility, of seeing and not-seeing, and what should and should not be seen, is crucial in the context of nonhuman animal representation, and is raised by each of the case studies presented in this chapter. As Brett Mills writes in his book *Animals on Television: The Cultural Making of the Non-human*, 'all acts of animal representation by humans are things that need to be thought through and reflected on, in a manner similar to that currently in place for representations of the human. If not seeing is as normal as seeing, then every act of seeing has to be justified, its inclusion requiring legitimacy' (2017, p. 220). This point is especially

relevant in relation to *The Turin Horse*, which I have briefly discussed in comparison with *Cow*. As stated earlier, what these two films have in common is their depiction of nonhuman animal labour, however, what sets them apart is the context of that labour.

While Luma's labour as the dairy cow is primarily for the fairy industry, and is only documented by Andrea Arnold, Ricsi's labour is done strictly for the production of the film. Ricsi is put in situations that cause discomfort for the sake of presenting her unease and distrust in people on screen, to create convincing representations that will appeal to the spectator's emotions and encourage reflection. Ricsi's case exemplifies what Shukin defines as rendering and demonstrates a schizophrenic approach that cinema exhibits towards nonhuman animals (2009, p. 20). This inevitably raises questions on the ethics of such nonhuman animal representations and whether their presence can be justified. Ricsi's case invites a reflection on the ways in which we can represent nonhuman animals' discomfort and suffering while ensuring that the wellbeing of nonhuman animal performers is respected.

Let us briefly return to our previous case studies, that is, *A Cow's Life* and *Gunda*. The former has not shied away from presenting the moments of separation, the confusion and fear of the calves rushed by the man banging a pipe against the metal gates, and the distress of the adult cows watching helplessly as the young ones are being loaded onto an overcrowded trailer. The mood of the scene is unsettling and upsetting: it strikes the spectator and shatters the idyllic and pastoral representation that has dominated the film overall. *Gunda* approaches the depiction of abduction differently: the trailer onto which the piglets are being loaded visually obstructs the spectator's view, therefore, the spectator can only rely on the vocal calls of the piglets, their high pitched and alarming shrieks, powerful distress calls. This way, the spectator is invited to imagine what is happening behind the thick metal walls of the trailer and fill in the visual gaps through relying on aural cues. Since humans are predominantly visual creatures,

the sole reliance on hearing introduces an element of uncertainty, which might amplify the emotional charge of the vocal calls of the piglets, thus, the entire scene. Although *Gunda* would not be categorised as a fiction film, its manner of depicting a distressing scene offers us one possible solution to the problem of showing violence against nonhuman animals without actually inflicting it, especially relevant in the context of fiction films.

Another way to approach this problem is offered by *Of Horses and Men.* As discussed in the previous chapter, in the scene of Kolbeinn killing the white mare the spectator can see Kolbeinn aiming at the mare and firing the fatal shot, but the mare herself remains offscreen. Therefore, the killing of the mare is not fully depicted on screen, but the spectator is provided with enough sonic and visual cues to conclude that the mare has indeed been shot dead. Furthermore, let us not forget the dog fight sequence in *White God,* where the canine wrestle play has been recontextualised into a deathly duel with the use of suggestive vocal calls and other sound effects produced by foley artists as well as appropriate mise-en-scène. The skilful employment of nonhuman animal calls and cinematic calls can help us communicate the difficult aspects of the nonhuman animal condition to the spectator without inflicting violence on and causing distress in the nonhuman animal performers.

Luma's case raises another set of questions, and these are concerned with the most marginalised group of nonhuman animals: farm animals and animals used in scientific research. Can we represent violence and exploitation of nonhuman animals in an ethical manner? What justifies such representations? These nonhuman animals rarely appear on cinema screens, and '[d]epictions of animal experimentation are instead overwhelmingly the preserve of animal liberation or right campaigners, who use it as part of the material to make their case' (Mills 2017, p. 33). *Cow* is a striking exception to this rule, offering the spectator an insight into the work of the dairy farm and the lived experience of dairy cows, including its most brutal and

shocking aspects, which can in turn inform and influence the spectator's decisions regarding

consumption of dairy products. This way, *Cow* plays a similar function to that of undercover

footage provided by animal rights and animal liberation activists, that is, informing the public

about the conditions in which nonhuman animals are being kept, and the animal products they

consume are produced.[23] Such a representation might be seen as justified since its aim is to

raise awareness of the public about the conditions in which billions of nonhuman animals live

and die, and it might lead many people to question and change their consumption habits, and

campaign to improve said conditions, or challenge the industry altogether. However, as Shukin

and O'Brien conclude in their analysis of *Strike* (Eisenstein, 1925) *The Cove* (Psihoyos, 2009)*,*

'neither [of these] excited the social change they aspired to through the force of their cinematic

affect' (2015, p. 200—201).[24] They add:

> *Strike* and *The Cove* inadvertently show that the relay between image, affect and action is far
> from assured, and that shadowing political cinema's ideal of their immediacy there is always the
> possibility of a disconnect, a failure (Shukin and O'Brien 2015, p. 201).

Just as in the case of the undercover footage and the depiction of slaughter, many spectators

will choose to disengage, and avert their gaze. It is, therefore, important to reflect on various

ways in which one can address the problem of nonhuman animal exploitation, both from within

and beyond the anthropocentric framework in which the spectator operates. While some of

them will rely on the estranging effects, others will prove more effective by focusing on

character engagement; some will choose to strike the spectator to depict violence and

exploitation, while others will seek to appeal to the spectator through other means. Whatever

---

[23] However, unlike the undercover footage provided and disseminated by the animal activists, *Cow* was made with the permission of the owner of the farm, which undoubtedly raises questions about what has been potentially concealed from Arnold.

[24] See: Shukin, N. and O'Brien, S. (2015). Being Struck: On the Force of Slaughter and Cinematic Affect. In: Lawrence, M. and McMahon, L. (eds). *Animal Life and the Moving Image.* London: BFI Palgrave, pp. 187—202.

their focus might be, the nonhuman animal call and the cinematic call that I have introduced

and discussed throughout this thesis will prove useful in conceptualising such alternative ways.

Epilogue

Throughout the past five chapters, I have been conceptualising the notion of the call, and applying it to the analysis of a variety of case studies. My goal has been, on the one hand, to discuss the ways in which we can bring nonhuman animal characters and performers into relief, present them as fully-fledged characters rather than properties or symbols, and on the other hand, add to and expand our use and understanding of tools and concepts within Film Studies, particularly when it comes to understanding character engagement beyond human characters. This process has come with numerous caveats and complications, the root cause of which often is the fact that the very term I have been using throughout (and any other term available for that matter), namely nonhuman animal, contains an unimaginable multitude of beings who can be radically different from one another, which might in turn make the category itself obsolete.[25] In spite of the limitations and problems that arise from such a categorisation, the potential of the concept of the call is to expand the more we get to know those who are contained, yet who cannot be contained. I would like to dedicate these final pages to a reflection on what the call is, and what its possible implications of the theoretical framework I have developed in this thesis might be for theories on film spectatorship and for filmmaking.

The Call as a concept

Fundamentally, the call is an umbrella term for a wide range of expressions exhibited among (nonhuman and human) animal species. Its aim is to highlight the intentional and communicative (although not always social) nature of animal individuals as well as the diversity and richness of their lives, often manifested through calls. I introduced the concept of the call in order to fill in the gap created by the almost exclusive focus on human characters

---

[25] This point has often been underlined by Brett Mills, my second supervisor, in our discussions.

when it comes to theorising and analysing character performance, character representation, and the process of character engagement. As a result, the main implication of introducing the call is that it expands and problematises the current discourse by foregrounding film characters who can be similar to, but who may also be radically different from human characters. This means that a focus on nonhuman animal characters reveals challenges and limits of current theories and by doing so, such a focus pushes the theory towards non-anthropocentric approaches, in particular regarding the discourse on character representation and character engagement.

The first step in this direction was the introduction of the sonic call in the first chapter, which became a fourth category of film sounds alongside music, speech, and sound effects. The sonic call addressed the problem of categorising nonhuman animal sounds, which not only have often been treated in a reductive manner, but also in many instances would be disconnected from the nonhuman animal bodies that produced them. As a result, the introduction of the call, particularly its sonic and vocal subtypes, offers new interpretative possibilities which keep nonhuman animal characters and their expression at its heart.

What is more, by introducing the call, I seek to complicate the perception of human expression as separate from that of other animal species. Even though I mainly use the term 'call' on its own, its intended meaning is that of the nonhuman animal call. This inevitably implies the existence of a human call, and the inclusion of human verbal and non-verbal expressions into the call model is signalled in the first chapter. This might appear as a subtle alteration (especially as I do not seek to abolish the category of the human voice/speech altogether), yet it has serious implications on the discussion of performance. These implications were explored in the second chapter, devoted to acting and performance. By highlighting that human calls are just calls among others (albeit they can be more powerful to the human audience than some

other calls), I open up space for reflecting on connections and continuities between the calls, and the possibilities of centring nonhuman animal calls while de-centring human ones.

It is without a doubt that such a theory about nonhuman animal calls will be problematic, chaotic, and largely incomplete — after all, it aims to include a stunning variety of nonhuman animals and their expressions, which often will remain cryptic, if not imperceptible to our human sensibilities. I believe that this is the beauty of it; it forces us to face the limits of our cognition and imagination, and the limits of the Humanist, Modernist and Imperialist dreams of establishing clear order and hierarchy. Instead, we are engaging in a highly complex web of connections that are in constant flux and development. The call as a model is flexible and adapts to each individual and their *Umwelt.* It does not cease to transform, as we are transformed and transform others in our various inter-species encounters. When I initially tried to illustrate the division of calls, I created a very clear top-down graph to do so.
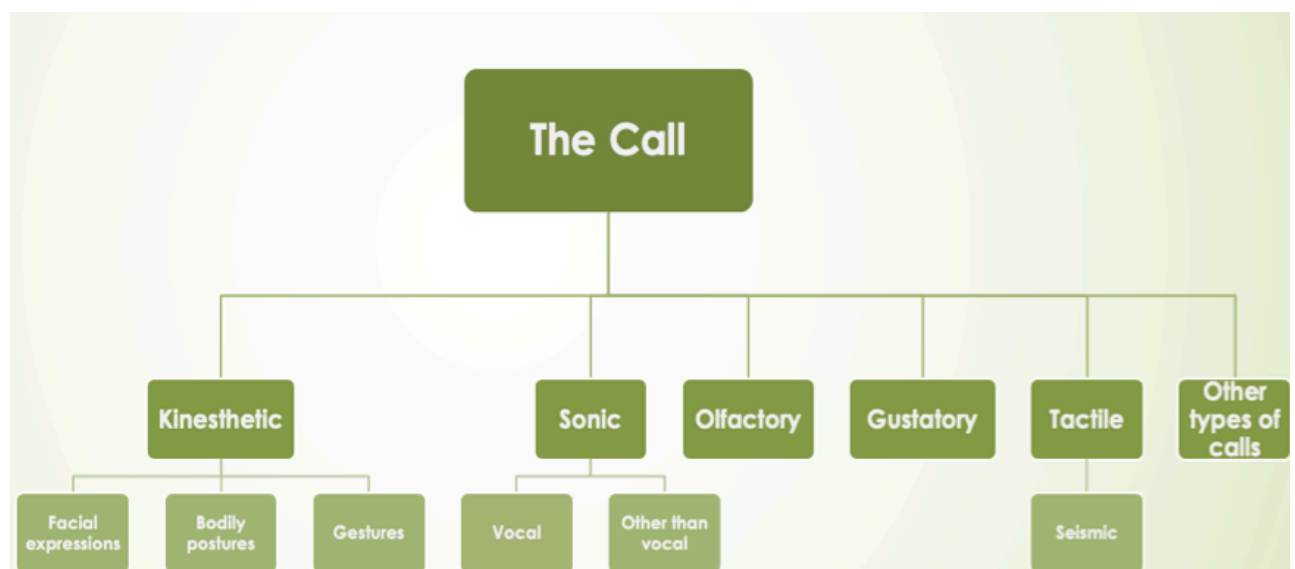

Fig. 76. the Call diagram

One can immediately notice that such a taxonomy of calls appeals to our human sensibilities (and is indeed based on my own *Umwelt,* thus making the diagram not only anthropocentric, but also egocentric). Although my idea of what this diagram should in fact look like has evolved

(and is constantly evolving), I decided to leave it in its original form for the sake of pragmatism – after all, the aim is to appeal to a human reader and their sensory make-up, which most likely will not drastically differ from my own.

The Call as a practical tool

The call is not only a theoretical concept but also a practical tool with a specific prescriptive function. As I discussed in the second chapter, on the kinaesthetic call and its relation to acting and performance, the call privileges the nonhuman animal character's own expression over tightly constructed performances based on cue-and-response training. In order to foreground the nonhuman animal character's distinct way of being in and interacting with the world, the filmmakers must adapt their approach accordingly. In line with the call, the filmmaker should attune to the needs and feelings of nonhuman animal performers, create conditions in which they can act on their own will instead of performing a set of trained mechanical gestures. This might mean a substantial change of artistic vision and rewriting the script in order to accommodate to the nonhuman animal performer. The relationship between human filmmaker, human actors, and nonhuman animal performers is fraught with unequal power relations and I do not intend to dismiss this fact. Nevertheless, I do believe that those who choose to work with nonhuman animal performers can and should be sensitive and responsive as well as responsible to the call, making their practice more collaborative in nature. Such an approach might mean that certain scenes, or narratives might no longer be possible with live nonhuman animal performers/actors due to their negative impact on the life, health, and wellbeing of these nonhuman animals, yet other ways of representing nonhuman animals might become more prominent instead. New possibilities of engaging with and getting to know nonhuman animal characters arise when we allow nonhuman animal performers and actors to surprise us, to show how they engage with the world and what matters to them.

The prescriptive function is a vital element of the cinematic call on behalf of nonhuman animals. As explained in chapters 3 and 4, the cinematic call aims to strengthen the nonhuman animal call, primarily to make it available to the spectator for whom such a call would otherwise remain cryptic. Cinematic calls create conditions for the spectator to respond to the nonhuman animal call by adapting formal features of film towards this goal. If the use of cinematography, music, or mise-en-scène distances the spectator from the nonhuman animal, or even, erases the presence and lived experience of the nonhuman animal character, then it does not function as the cinematic call.

Furthermore, besides increasing perceptibility and legibility of nonhuman animal calls, the cinematic call can serve as a didactic tool. As in the case presented in the chapter 4, the filmmaker and music composer can construct nondiegetic music that serves as a cinematic call that gives the spectator insight into the nonhuman animal character's *Umwelt,* and expression. It can assist the spectator in abandoning an anthropocentric approach as much as possible in favour of a more multi-species viewpoint, turning the spectator's attention towards nonhuman animal characters by clarifying the nuances of their expression and uncovering 'false friends' that often lead to cases of negative anthropomorphism. It is appropriate at this point to discuss the relationship between nonhuman animal calls and cinematic calls, and de/centring of the human.

The Call as an analytic tool

The call functions also as an analytical tool, which offers an alternative form of spectatorship that is more attuned to nonhuman animal characters and their perspectives. This function makes it particularly potent when working from within the humanist framework — one can detect discrepancies, or tensions in the way the film combines the filmmaker's artistic vision, the narrative, and the nonhuman animal performance. An interesting and slightly comical example

would be the Italian Neorealist classic *Umberto D* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952). If one focused solely on the perspective and the calls of Flike, the canine companion of the protagonist, one could rename the film *Flike: a dog who does not want to play fetch, but everyone insists he loves it and they make him do it.* On several occasions throughout the film, Flike is being described by human characters as a dog who enjoys playing fetch, however, whenever the ball is thrown and Flike is encouraged to catch it, he does so with visible reluctance rather than enthusiasm. This opens the doors to the discussion on how Neorealism, an aesthetic and political tradition of filmmaking privileging contingency, amateur (non-)acting, focusing on the oppressed and vulnerable, does not do justice to its nonhuman characters. Compare the case of Flike with a widely celebrated scene from another classic, *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)*,* where the little boy feels a sudden urge to urinate, and the filmmaker decides to capture this unexpected and unscripted moment. One can reimagine *Umberto D* as a film with a cinematic call, drawing the spectator's attention to Flike's unscripted experience in various ways, allowing this to interrupt the narrative progression, just as De Sica takes the time to capture the little boy's natural needs in *Bicycle Thieves.* This shows that the call enables us to engage in discussions which might have been omitted previously and find new approaches to widely known and analysed films — such as the discussion of film sound in the first chapter.

The aim of nonhuman animal calls and cinematic calls on behalf of nonhuman animals is to increase the visibility of nonhuman animal characters, make the spectators more sensitive to nonhuman animal expressions and what they might convey, become more in tune with other modes of being in and making sense of the world. By doing so, the spectators might become more attuned to the nonhuman animal condition, and to non-anthropocentric narratives, which in turn might open up conversations about interspecies relations, humans' place among other animal species, the limits of human knowledge understood both as a limit to knowing, but also

knowledge as limiting, and the complexity as well as beauty of multispecies interconnectedness.

FILMOGRAPHY

Anderson, L. (2015). *Heart of a Dog.* [Film]. Dogwoof.

Ackerman, C. (1975). *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles.* [Film]. Criterion.

Annaud, J. (2004). *Two Brothers.* [Film]. Pathé.

Arnold, A. (2021). *Cow.* [Film]. MUBI.

Attenborough, D. (2001). *Blue Planet.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

——— . (2002). *The Life of Mammals.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

——— . (2005). *Life in the Undergrowth.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

——— . (2008). *Life in Cold Blood.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

——— . (2009). *Life.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

——— . (2013). *David Attenborough's Rise of Animals: Triumph of the Vertebrates.* [Film]. BBC.

——— . (2018). *Dynasties.* [TV Series]. BBC One.

Barbash, I. and Castaing-Taylor, L. (2011). *Sweetgrass.* [Film]. Cinema Guild.

Bong, J. (2017). *Okja.* [Film]. Netflix.

Bresson, R. (1966). *Au Hasard Balthazar.* [Film]. Criterion.

Campion, J. (1996). *The Piano.* [Film]. Miramax Pictures.

Carnahan, J. (2011). *The Grey.* [Film]. Entertainment Film Distributors.

Cooper, M.C. and Schoedsack, E.B. (1933). *King Kong.* [Film]. RKO Radio Pictures.

Côté, D. (2012). *Bestiaire.* [Film]. Metafilms.

Davaa, B. and Falorni, L. (2003). *The Story of the Weeping Camel.* [Film]. ThinkFilm.

Davaa, B. (2005). *Cave of the Yellow Dog.* [Film]. Netflix.

Edison, T.E. (1894). *Professor Welton's Boxing Cats.* [Film]. Edison Manufacturing Company.

——— . (1903). *Electrocuting an Elephant.* [Film]. Edison Manufacturing Company.

Eisenstein, S. (1925). *Strike.* [Film]. Goskino.

Enyedi, I. (2017). *On Body and Soul.* [Film]. Netflix.

Erlingsson, B. (2013). *Of Horses and Men.* [Film]. Film Europe.

Fitzhamon, L. (1905). *Rescued by Rover.* [Film]. American Mutoscope and Biograph Co.

Frammartino, M. (2010). *Le Quattro Volte.* [Film]. Cinecittà Luce.

Franju, G. (1949). *Blood of the Beasts.* [Film]. Criterion.

Frankel, D. (2008). *Marley & Me.* [Film]. 20th Century Fox.

Godard, J. (1967). *Weekend.* [Film]. Athos Films.

Gosnell, R. (2018). *Show Dogs.* [Film]. Global Road Entertainment.

Gras, E. (2012). *A Cow's Life.* [Film]. Batysphere Productions.

Hallström, L. (2010). *Hachi: A Dog's Tale.* [Film]. Sony Pictures Entertainment.

——— . (2017). *A Dog's Purpose.* [Film]. Universal Pictures.

Haneke, M. (1989). *Seventh Continent.* [Film]. Wega Film.

——— . (1992). *Benny's Video.* [Film]. Wega Film.

Haznavicius, M. (2011). *The Artist.* [Film]. Warner Brothers France.

Hitchcock, A. (1963). *Birds.* [Film]. Universal-International Pictures.

Holland, A. (2017). *Spoor.* [Film]. Studio Filmowe Tor.

Howard, B. and Moore, R. (2016). *Zootopia.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Jackson, P. (2005). *King Kong.* [Film]. Universal Pictures.

Jacquet, L. (2005). *March of the Penguins.* [Film]. Buena Vista International France.

Khachatryan, H. (2009). *Border.* [Film]. Golden Apricot IFF.

Kossakovsky, V. (2020). *Gunda.* [Film]. Neon.

Kotevska, T. and Stefanow, L. (2019). *Honeyland.* [Film]. Trice Films.

Krasinski, J. (2018). *A Quiet Place.* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.

Krebitz, N. (2016). *Wild*. [Film]. Heimatfilm.

Kremser, E. and Peter, L. (2019). *Space Dogs.* [Film]. Deckert Distribution.

Lee, A. (2012). *Life of Pi.* [Film]. 20th Century Fox.

Levant, B. (1992). *Beethoven.* [Film]. Universal Pictures.

Lo, E. (2020). *Stray*. [Film]. Magnolia Pictures.

Lumière, A. and Lumière, L. (1895). *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon*. [Film]. Lumière.

———. (1895). Le Repas de Bébé. [Film]. Lumière.

Lynch, D. (1980). *The Elephant Man*. [Film]. Paramount Pictures.

———. (2017). *What Did Jack Do*. [Film]. Netflix.

Marshall, F. (1990). *Arachnophobia.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

McGrath, T. and Darnell, E. (2005). *Madagascar.* [Film]. DreamWorks Pictures.

Miller, G. (2006). *Happy Feet.* [Film]. Warner Brothers Pictures.

Minkoff, R. and Allers, R. (1994). *The Lion King.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Müjdeci, K. (2014). *Sivas.* [Film]. M3 Film (PL).

Mundruczó, K. (2014). *White God.* [Film]. InterCom Zrt.

Nuridsany, C. and Pérennou, M. (1997). *Microcosmos.* [Film]. Guild Pathé Cinema.

Osborne, M. and Stevenson, J. (2008). *Kung Fu Panda.* [Film]. DreamWorks Animation.

Paravel, V. and Castaing-Taylor, L. (2013). *Leviathan.* [Film]. The Cinema Guild.

Park, N. and Lord, P. (2000). *Chicken Run.* [Film]. DreamWorks Pictures.

Preminger, O. (1947). *Daisy Kenyon.* [Film]. 20th Century Fox.

Psihoyos, L. (2009). *The Cove.* [Film]. Lionsgate.

Ray, S. (1956). *Arapajito.* [Film]. Merchant Ivory Productions.

Reed, J. and Ehrlich, P. (2020). *My Octopus Teacher.* [Film]. Netflix.

Reichardt, K. (2009). *Wendy and Lucy.* [Film]. Oscilloscope Pictures.

———. (2021). *First Cow.* [Film]. A24.

Ross, G. (2003). *Seabiscuit.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Sanders, C. (2020). *The Call of the Wild.* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Smith, S.J. and Hickner, S. (2007). *Bee Movie.* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.

Spielberg, S. (1975). *Jaws.* [Film]. Universal Pictures.

———. (2012). *War Horse.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Stanton, A. (2003). *Finding Nemo.* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Steiner, N. (2011). *Battle of the Queens.* [Film]. Cineworx GMBH.

Tarkovsky, A. (1979). *Stalker.* [Film]. Criterion.

Tarr, B. (1994). *Sátántangó*. [Film]. Curzon Artificial Eye.

———. (2011). *The Turin Horse.* [Film]. Stowarzyszenie Nowe Horyzonty (PL)

Torun, C. (2016). *Kedi*. [Film]. Oscilloscope Laboratories.

Turteltaub, J. (2018). *The Meg.* [Film]. Warner Brothers Pictures.

Yaemes. (2007). *Worst Fight Scene Ever.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 February 2018]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1eFdUSnaQM

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aaltola, E. (2010). The anthropocentric paradigm and the possibility of animal ethics. *Ethics & the Environment* [Online], 15(1), 27—50. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/ete.2010.15.1.27 [Accessed on 15 September 2018].

Adams, C. J. and Donovan, J. (eds.). (1995). *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Adorno, T. (2005). *Minima Moralia Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Trans. Jephcott, E.F.N. London: Verso.

Animal Place (2019). *Life of a Dairy Cow* [Online]. Available from: https://animalplace.org/life-dairy-cow/ [Accessed: 2 February 2022].

Arnold, A. (2022). 'I kept saying – don't worry Luma, we see you': Andrea Arnold on her four years filming a cow. Interviewed by Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian* [Online], 6 January 2022. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jan/06/i-kept-saying-dont-worry-luma-we-see-you-andrea-arnold-on-her-four-years-filming-a-cow [Accessed 6 January 2022].

Austin-Smith, B. (2012). Acting Matters: Noting Performance in Three Films. In: Taylor, A. ed. *Theorizing Film Acting*. New York; London: Routledge, pp. 19—33.

Bakchormeeboy (2016). London Film Festival 2016: Wild Dir. Nicolette Krebitz. 3 October 2016. *Bakchormeeboy* [Online]. Available from: https://bakchormeeboy.com/2016/10/03/lff-2016-wild-dir-nicolette-krebitz/ [Accessed: 15 January 2020].

Baker, T. C. (2019). Writing Animals: Language, Suffering, and Animality in Twenty-First-Century Fiction. London: Palgrave.

Balázs, B. (2010). *Béla Baláz: Early Film Theory: Visible Man and The Spirit of Film*. Carter, E. ed. Trans. Livingstone R. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Barthes, R. (1977). The Grain of the Voice. In: *Image Music Text.* Trans. Heath, S. Glasgow: Collins, pp. 179—189.

Bekoff, M. (1995). Play Signals as Punctuation: The Structure of Social Play in Canids. *Behaviour* [Online], 132(5/6), 419—429. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4535273 [Accessed 20 January 2021].

——— . (2007). *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy - and Why They Matter*. Novato, California: New World Library.

Bekoff, M. and Pierce, J. (2009a). Empathy. In: *Wild Justice the Moral Lives of Animals*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 85—109.

——— . (2009b). Justice Honor and Fair Play among Beasts. In: *Wild Justice the Moral Lives of Animals*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 110—135.

——— . (2009c). Morality in Animal Societies. In: *Wild Justice the Moral Lives of Animals*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1—23.

Berger, J. (2009). Why Look at Animals? Great Ideas, 80. London: Penguin.

Bienvenuti, A. (2016). Personhood, animalism, and advanced directives: The intersubjective and affective heart of the matter. *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health* [Online], 2(4), 550—558. Available from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352552516301177 [Accessed 18 November 2017].

Bordwell, D. and Thompson, K. (2017). *Film Art: An Introduction*. 11th edn. New York: The McGraw-Hill Education.

ten Bos, R. (2009). Touched by genius: on animals madmamen. *South African Journal of Philosophy* [Online], 28(4), 433—446. Accessed from: https://doi.org/10.4314/sajpem.v28i4.52976 [Accessed 20 October 2017]

Bousé, D. (2000). *Wildlife Films*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bradshaw, J. (2012). Emotional (un)sophistication. In: *In Defence of Dogs*. London: Penguin Books, pp. 210—223.

Briefer, E. and McElligott, A.G. (2011). Indicators of age, body size and sex in goat kid calls revealed using the source–filter theory. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* [Online], 133(3), 175—185. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2011.05.012 [Accessed 17 November 2019]

Briefer, E.F., Torre, M.P. de la and McElligott, A.G. (2012). Mother goats do not forget their kids' calls. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* [Online], 279(1743), 3749–3755. Available from: https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rspb.2012.0986 [Accessed 14 February 2021]

Briefer, E.F. *et al.* (2022). Classification of pig calls produced from birth to slaughter according to their emotional valence and context of production. *Scientific Reports* [Online], 12, 3409, 1—10. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-07174-8 [Accessed 20 March 2022].

Brunick, K.L., Cutting, J.E. and DeLong, J.E. (2013). Low-level Features of Film: What They Are and Why We Would Be Lost Without Them. In: Shimamura, A. P. ed. *Psychocinematics : Exploring Cognition at the Movies*. Oxfrod: Oxford University Press, pp. 133—148.

Burghardt, G.M. (2015). Play in fishes, frogs and reptiles. *Current Biology* [Online], 25(1), R9—R10. Available from: https://www.cell.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0960-9822%2814%2901333-5 [Accessed 16 February 2021].

Burt, J. (2001). The Illumination of the Animal Kingdom: The Role of Light and Electricity in Animal Representation. *Society and Animals* [Online], 9(3), 203—228. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1163/156853001753644381 [Accessed 13 March 2015]

———— . (2002). *Animals in film.* London: Reaktion.

———— . (2005). John Berger's "Why Look at Animals?": A close reading. *Worldviews* [Online], 9(2), 203—218. Available from: https://brill.com/view/journals/wo/9/2/article-p203_4.xml [Accessed 15 March 2019]

Calarco, M. (2008). *Zoographies: the question of the animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. New York : Columbia University Press.

Chan, S. and Harris, J. (2011). Human Animals and Nonhuman Persons. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*. Beauchamp, T.L. and Frey, R.G. eds. [Online]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 304—331. Available from: https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195371963.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195371963 [Accessed 13 November 2017]

Chion, M. (1994). *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen.* New York: Columbia University Press.

———— . (1999). *The Voice in Cinema.* New York: Columbia University Press.

———— . (2016). *Sound. An Acoulogical Treatise*. Durham: Duke University.

Choi, J. (2005). Leaving it up to the imagination: POV shots and imagining from the inside. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* [Online], 63(1), 17—25. Available from: https://academic.oup.com/jaac/article/63/1/17/5957325 [Accessed 20 October 2017]

Chris, C. (2006). *Watching Wildlife*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Cohen, A.J. (2010). Music as a source of emotion in film. In: Juslin, P. N. and Sloboda, J. A. eds. *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 879—908.

Creed, B. (2007). What Do Animals Dream Of? Or King Kong As Darwinian Screen Animal. In: Simmons, L. and Armstrong, P. eds. *Knowing Animals.* Human-Animal Studies Series 4. [Online]. Brill, pp. 57—78. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004157736.i-296.29 [Accessed 14 November 2015]

———. (2015). Films, gestures, species. *Journal for Cultural Research* [Online], 19(1), 43—55. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2014.920182 [Accessed 20 January 2016].

Crist, E. (1999). *Images of animals: anthropomorphism and animal mind.* Animals, culture, and society. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cushing, S. (2003). Against 'Humanism': Speciesism, Personhood, and Preference. *Journal of Social Philosophy* [Online] 34(4), 556—571. Available from: https://philpapers.org/archive/CUSAHS.pdf [Accessed 17 October 2017]

DeMello, M. (2012). *Animals & Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and The Rt Hon Goldsmith (2021). *Animals to be formally recognised as sentient beings in domestic law.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/animals-to-be-formally-recognised-as-sentient-beings-in-domestic-law [Accessed 20 March 2022]

Derrida, J. (2002). The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow). *Critical Inquiry* [Online], 28(2), 369—418. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344276 [Accessed 15 November 2015].

Descartes, R. (2007). From the Letters of 1646 and 1649. In: Kalof, L. and Fitzgerald, A. J. eds. *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 59—62.

Despret, V. (2016). *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?* Posthumanities, 38. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Digioia, A. (2016). A cry in the dark: The howls of wolves in horror and heavy metal music. *Horror Studies* [Online], 7(2), 293—306. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1386/host.7.2.293_1 [Accessed June 2018].

Elsaesser, T. (2011). Stop/Motion. In: Rossaak, E. ed. *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 109—122.

Fay, J. (2008). Seeing/loving animals: André Bazin's posthumanism. *Journal of Visual Culture* [Online], 7(1), 41—64. Available from: https://journals-sagepub-com.chain.kent.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1177/1470412907088175 [Accessed 30 September 2017].

Feagin, S.L. (1996). Abilities. In: *Reading with feeling: the aesthetics of appreciation*. Ithaca, N.Y., London: Cornell University Press, pp. 23—41.

Filippi, P. *et al.* (2017). Humans recognize emotional arousal in vocalizations across all classes of terrestrial vertebrates: Evidence for acoustic universals. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* [Online], 284(1859),1—9. Available from: https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2017.0990 [Accessed 20 March 2020].

Friend, S. (2021). Falsehoods in film: documentary vs fiction. *Studies in Documentary Film* [Online], 15(2),151—162. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2021.1923145 [Accessed 20 January 2022].

Fudge, E. (2002). *Animal*. London: Reaktion.

Furberg, E. (2017). Are we persons or animals? Exposing an anthropocentric bias and suggesting a hybrid view. *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health* [Online], 3(2), 279—287.

Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jemep.2017.05.004 [Accessed 20 January 2019].

Genesis 1 (2016). [Online]. The ESV Bible. Available from: https://biblehub.com/esv/genesis/1.htm [Accessed 15 January 2022].

Giggs, R. (2019). Cows Need Friends to Be Happy. But modern farms deprive them of meaningful companionship. *Atlantic* [Online], (Science), November 2019. Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/11/bovine-friends-forever/598417/ [Accessed 15 February 2021].

Gillespie, K. (2016). Witnessing Animal Others: Bearing Witness, Grief, and the Political Function of Emotion. *Hypatia* [Online], 31(3), 572—588. Available from: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/hypa.12261 [Accessed 15 January 2019].

De Giorgio, F. and Schoorl, J. (2014). *The Cognitive Horse. An Inspiring Journey towards a New Co-Existence*. Learning Animals – Institute for Zooanthropology.

Gorbman, C. (1987). Narratological Perspectives on Film Music. In: *Unheard Melodies. Narrative Film Music*. Indiana University Press, pp. 11—30.

Gouabault, E., Dubied, A. and Burton-Jeangros, C. (2011). Genuine Zoocentrism or Dogged Anthropocentrism? On the Personification of Animal Figures in the News. *HUMaNIMALIA* [Online], 3(1), 77—100. Available from: https://humanimalia.org/article/view/10059 [Accessed 09 November 2017].

Haidt, J. (2001). The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment. *Psychological Review* [Online], 108(4), 814—815. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.108.4.814 [Accessed 06 January 2021].

Haraway, D.J. (2008). *When Species Meet.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Harrington, F.H. and Mech, D.L. (1979). Wolf howling and its role in territory maintenance. *Behaviour* [Online], 68(3/4), 207—249. Available from: https://www-jstor-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/stable/4533952 [Accessed 26 November 2017].

Heidegger, M. (1971). The Nature of Language. In: *On the Way to Language*. Trans. Hertz, P.D. New York: Harper & Row, pp. 57—110.

Heidegger, M. and Hofstadter, A. (2001). The Thing. In: *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, pp. 161—184.

Hermida, X. and Sánchez, E. (2021). Spain approves new law recognizing animals as 'sentient beings'. *EL PAÍS* [Online], (Society) 3 December 2021. Available from: https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-12-03/spain-approves-new-law-recognizing-animals-as-sentient-beings.html.

Hockenhull, S. (2015). Horseplay: Equine performance and creaturely acts in cinema. *NECSUS : European journal of media studies* [Online], 4(1), 181—198. Available from: https://necsus-ejms.org/horseplay-equine-performance-and-creaturely-acts-in-cinema/ [Accessed 18 January 2018].

Horton, B. A. (2022). 'Hundreds died, suffering': Cats and dogs left without food and water in Ukraine, says charity. *Euronews* [Online], (Nature) 06 April 2022. Available from: https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/04/05/meet-the-volunteers-saving-ukraine-s-animals-from-the-horrors-of-war [Accessed 10 April 2022].

Howell, Nancy R. (2003). The importance of being chimpanzee. *Theology and Science* [Online], 1(2), 179—191. Available from: https://www-tandfonline-com.chain.kent.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.1080/1474670032000124586 [Accessed 30 September 2017].

Huang, X. *et al.* (2018). Acoustic similarity elicits responses to heterospecific distress calls in bats (Mammalia: Chiroptera). *Animal Behaviour* [Online], 146, 143—154. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2018.10.018 [Accessed 20 March 2019].

Hunt, E. (2019). Where There's a Horse, There's a Neigh: Why Must We Hear Animals on Screen. *The Guardian* [Online], (Television & Radio) 4 January 2019. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/shortcuts/2019/jan/04/where-theres-a-horse-theres-a-neigh-why-must-we-hear-animals-on-screen [Accessed: 5 January 2019].

Hunter, A. (2016). 'Wild': Sundance Review. *Screen Daily* [Online], 25 January 2016. Available from: https://www.screendaily.com/reviews/wild-sundance-review/5099007.article [Accessed: 16 January 2020].

Hurn, S. (2012). *Humans and other animals: cross-cultural perspectives on human-animal interactions*. Anthropology, culture, and society 1351—5403. London: Pluto Press.

Ihde, D. (2007). *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*. 2nd edn. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press; Bristol: University Presses Marketing.

International Wolf Centre (2020). *Germany at a Glance* [Online]. Available from: https://wolf.org/wow/europe/germany/ [Accessed: 20 October 2020].

Jevbratt, L. (2009). Interspecies Collaboration – Making Art Together with Nonhuman Animals. Available from: http://jevbratt.com/writing/jevbratt_interspecies_collaboration.pdf [Accessed: 19 July 2019].

Kalinak, K. (2002). The Language of Music: A Brief Analysis of Vertigo. In: Dickson, K. ed. *Movie Music The Film Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 15—24.

Kassabian, A. (2000a). How Film Music Works. In: *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*. New York: Routledge, pp. 15—36.

——— . (2000b). How Music Works in Film. In: *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*. New York: Routledge, pp. 37—60.

Kemmerer, L.A. (2006). Verbal Activism: 'Anymal'. *Society & Animals* [Online], 14(1),9—14. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1163/156853006776137186 [Accessed 30 October 2017].

Kirby, M. (1972). On Acting and Not-Acting. *The Drama Review: TDR* [Online], 16(1), 3—15. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1144724 [Accessed 25 January2018].

Klinger, B. (2006). The art film, affect and the female viewer: *The Piano* revisited. *Screen* [Online], 47(1), 19—41. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjl002 [Accessed 20 March 2020].

Kossakovsky, V. (2020). Down to the Earth: An Interview with Victor Kossakovsky on Gunda. Interviewed by Yun-hua Chen, *Film International* [Online], 11 June 2020. Available at: https://filmint.nu/chen-interview-with-victor-kossakovsky-on-gunda/ [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Kracauer, S. (1997). *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Princeton University Press.

Krebitz, N. (2016). Interviewed by MarBelle, *Directors Notes* [Online]. Available at: https://directorsnotes.com/2016/10/12/nicolette-krebitz-wild/ [Accessed on 20 January 2018].

Kuzniar, A.M. (2006). Muteness. In: *Melancholia's Dog. Reflections on Our Animal Kinship*. The University of Chicago Press, pp. 25—66.

Lawrence, M. (2015). 'Practically infinite manipulability': domestic dogs, canine performance and digital cinema. *Screen* [Online], 56(1), 115—120. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjv009 [Accessed 20 February 2018]

Lawrence, M. and McMahon, L. eds. (2015). *Animal Life and the Moving Image*. London: BFI Palgrave.

Lehoczki, F. *et al.* (2019). Dogs' sensitivity to strange pup separation calls: pitch instability increases attention regardless of sex and experience. *Animal Behaviour* [Online], 153,

115—129. Available from: https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1016/j.anbehav.2019.05.010 [Accessed 20 July 2021].

Lehoczki, F. *et al.* (2020). Cross-species effect of separation calls: family dogs' reactions to pup, baby, kitten and artificial sounds. *Animal Behaviour* [Online], 168, 169—185. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2020.08.015 [Accessed 20 July 2021].

Leite, A.C., Dhont, K. and Hodson, G. (2019). Longitudinal effects of human supremacy beliefs and vegetarianism threat on moral exclusion (vs. inclusion) of animals. *European Journal of Social Psychology* [Online], 49(1), 179—189. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2497 [Accessed 13 February 2022].

Lingle, S. and Riede, T. (2014). Deer mothers are sensitive to infant distress vocalizations of diverse mammalian species. *American Naturalist* [Online], 184(4), 510—522. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1086/677677 [Accessed 14 February 2021]

Lippit, A.M. (2000). *Electric animal: toward a rhetoric of wildlife*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.

——— . (2002). The death of an animal. *Film Quarterly* [Online], 56(1), 9—22. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2002.56.1.9 [Accessed 30 November 2015].

Lodge, G. (2016). Film Review: 'Wild'. *Variety* [Online]. (Film Reviews) 11 February 2016. Available from: https://variety.com/2016/film/reviews/wild-review-1201703153/ [Accessed: 15 January 2020].

Luke, B. and DeGrazia, D. (1996). *Taking Animals Seriously: Mental Life and Moral Status.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

MacDowell, J. (2013). Happy endings and ideology. In: *Happy Endings in Hollywood Cinema: Cliché, Convention and the Final Couple*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 133—187.

Marks, L.U. (2000). *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Masson, J.M. (Jeffrey M. and McCarthy, S. (1994). *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Matravers, D. (2017). Coda: Film. In: *Fiction and Narrative*. Croydon; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 146—158.

McMahon, L. (2015). Cinematic slowness, political paralysis? Animal life in 'Bovines', with Deleuze and Guattari. *NECSUS: European journal of media studies* [Online], 4(1), 163—180. Available from: https://necsus-ejms.org/cinematic-slowness-political-paralysis-animal-life-in-bovines-with-deleuze-and-guattari/ [Accessed 15 April 2018].

——— . (2019). *Animal Worlds: Film, Philosophy and Time*. Edinburgh University Press.

Milburn, J. (2021). The analytic philosophers: Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* and Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights.* In: Wright, L. ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies.* New York: Routledge, pp. 39—49.

Mills, B. (2017). Animals on television: the cultural making of the non-human. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mitman, G. (1999). *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film*. Weyerhaeus. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

de Montaigne, M. (2007). An Apology for Raymond Sebond. In: Kalof, L. and Fitzgerald, A. J. eds. *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 57—58.

Nagel, T. (1979). What is like to be a bat? In: *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 165—180.

Naremore, J. (1990). Protocols. In: *Acting in the Cinema*. Berkeley; London: California University Press, pp. 9—33.

National Ocean Service: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce (2021). Why do whales make sounds? [Online]. Available from: https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/whalesounds.html [Accessed June 19 2021]

Neumark, N. (2017). Animal Tracks: Affect, Aesthetics, Ethics. In: V*oicetracks: Attuning to Voice in Media and the Arts*. [Online]. MIT Press, pp. 31—61. Available from: https://ieeexplore-ieee-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/servlet/opac?bknumber=7982998 [Accessed 12 January 2018].

O'Connell-Rodwell, C.E. et al. (2001). Exploring the potential use of seismic waves as a communication channel by elephants and other large mammals. *American Zoologist* [Online], 41(5), 1157—1170. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3884561 [Accessed 20 October 2017].

Odicino, G. and Gras, E. (2012). *A Cow's Life*: Three Scenes Commented by Emmanuel Gras, the Director ["Bovines": Trois Extraits Commentés Par Emmanuel Gras, Réalisateur]. *Télérama* [Online]. 22 February 2012. Available from: https://www.telerama.fr/cinema/trois-extraits-commentes-de-bovines-par-emmanuel-gras,78310.php [Accessed: 12 October 2018].

Osterath, B. (2017). Germans Divided over Return of the Wolves. *Deutsche Welle* [Online]. (Environment) 31 August 2017. Available from: https://www.dw.com/en/germans-divided-over-return-of-the-wolves/a-39538431 [Accessed: 5 September 2018].

Parkinson, C. (2018). Animal bodies and embodied visuality. *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, 46, 51—64.

Parkinson, C. (2019). Introduction to Okja. Presentation at: *European Summer School Interspecies Relationality*, 31 July 2019, Kassel, Germany.

Peggs, K. (2009). The social constructionist challenge to primacy identity and the emancipation of oppressed groups: Human primacy identity politics and the human/animal dualism. *Sociological Research Online,* 14(1)3. Available from: https://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/1/3.html [Accessed 13 January 2019].

Persson, P. (2000). Understanding POV Editing. In: *Understanding Cinema: Constructivism and Spectator Psychology*. Stokholm: Department of Cinema Studies, Stokholm University, pp. 85—140.

Pick, A. (2011). *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film*. New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press.

Pick, A. (2018). Vegan Cinema. In: Quinn, E. and Westwood, B. eds. *Thinking Veganism in Literature and Culture: Towards a Vegan Theory*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 125—146.

Plantinga, C. (1999). The Scene of Empathy and the Human Face on Film. In: Plantinga, C. and Smith, G. eds. *Passionate Views. Film, Cognition, and Emotion*. Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 239—256.

———— . (2010a). Affective Incongruity and The Thin Red Line. *Projections* [Online], 4(2), 86—103. Available from: https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/projections/4/2/proj040206.xml [Accessed 20 June 2020].

———— . (2010b). 'I Followed the Rules, and They All Loved You More': Moral Judgment and Attitudes toward Fictional Characters in Film. *Midwest Studies In Philosophy* [Online], 34(1), 34—52. Available from: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1475-4975.2010.00204.x [Accessed 23 June 2020].

———— . (2013). The Affective Power of Movies. In: Shimamura, A. P. ed. *Psychocinematics : Exploring Cognition at the Movies*. Oxfrod: Oxford University Press, pp. 94—112.

———— . (2018). *Screen Stories: Emotion and the Ethics of Engagement.* [Online]. New York: Oxford University Press. Available from: https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/10.1093/oso/9780190867133.001.0001/oso-9780190867133 [Accessed 10 January 2019].

Pluhar, E.B. (1995). *Beyond Prejudice: The Moral Significance of Human and Nonhuman Animals.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Pollmann, I. (2013). Invisible Worlds, Visible: Uexküll's Umwelt, Film, and Film Theory. *Critical Inquiry* [Online], 39(4)**,** 777—816. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/671356 [Accessed 13 January 2018].

Porter, P. (2006). Engaging the Animal in the Moving Image. *Society & Animals* [Online], 14(4), 399—416. Available from: https://www.animalsandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/porter.pdf [Accessed 20 October 2017].

Prince, S. (1996). Psychoanalytic Film Theory and the Problem of the Missing Spectator. In: Bordwell, D. and Carroll, N. eds. *Post-Theory Reconstructing Film Studies.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 71—86.

Raczkowski, M. (2014). 'Marek Raczkowski for Gazeta.pl' [Marek Raczkowski dla Gazeta.pl] [Cartoon]. *Gazeta.pl,* 29 December. Available at: https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/raczkowski/rysunki/16 [Accessed 20 October 2017]

Regan, T. (1983). *The Case for Animal Rights.* Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ryan, D. (2015). *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction.* Edinburgh:University of Edinburgh Press.

Schafer, R.M. (1994). The soundscape: our sonic environment and the tuning of the world. [Online]. Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books. Available from: http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0644/93006392-d.html [Accessed 25 June 2019].

Schubart, R. (2018). Play. In: *Mastering Fear: Women, Emotions, and Contemporary Horror.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 40—56.

Serpell, J. (1996). *In the Company of Animals: A Study of Human-Animal Relationships.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sheehan, P. (2008). Against the Image: Herzog and the Troubling Politics of the Screen Animal. *SubStance* [Online], 37(3), 117—136. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25195188 [Accessed 17 March 2019].

Shukin, N. (2009a). Automobility: The Anima Capital of Cars, Films, and Abattoirs. In: *Animal Capital Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times.* Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 87—130.

———— . (2009b). New Life Forms and Functions of Animal Fetishism. In: *Animal Capital Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times.* Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1—48.

Sim, G. (2013). The Other Person in the Bathroom: Mixed Emotions about Cognitivist Film Music Theory. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* [Online], 30(4), 309—322. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2012.660439 [Accessed 27 October 2020].

Singer, P. (1995). *Animal Liberation.* 2nd ed. London: Pimlico.

Sleigh, C. (2016). *The Paper Zoo:500 Years of Animals in Art.* London: The British Library.

Smith, J. (1999). Movies Music and Moving Music: Emotion, Cognition, and the Film Score. In: Plantinga, C. and Smith, G. M. eds. *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion.* Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 146—167.

Smith, M. (1995). *Engaging Characters. Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema.* Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press.

———. (1996). The Logic and Legacy of Brechtianism. In: Bordwell, D. and Carroll, N. eds. *Post-Theory Reconstructing Film Studies*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 130—148.

Sobchack, V.C. (2004). *Carnal thoughts embodiment and moving image culture.* Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press.

Taylor, A. (2022). Animals Can Be Refugees Too. *The Atlantic* [Online], (In Focus) 15 March 2022. Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2022/03/ukraine-animal-refugees/627067/ [Accessed 15 March 2022].

Torres, B. (2007). *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights.* [EBOOK]. Edinburgh: AK Press. Available from: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kentuk/detail.action?docID=625191 [Accessed 1 March 2022].

Turvey, M. (2008). *Doubting Vision Film and the Revelationist Tradition*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Vaage, M.B. (2009). Self-reflection beyond conventional fiction film engagement. *Nordicom Review* [Online], 30(2), 159—198. Available from: https://www.sciendo.com/article/10.1515/nor-2017-0157 [Accessed 30 September 2017].

———. (2010). Fiction Film and the Varieties of Empathic Engagement. *Midwest Studies In Philosophy* [Online], 34(1), 158—179. Available from: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1475-4975.2010.00200.x [Accessed 30 September 2017].

de Waal, F. (1997). Are we in anthropodenial? *Discover* [Online], (Planet Earth) 19 January 1997. Available from: https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/are-we-in-anthropodenial [Accessed 3 October 2017].

———. (1999). *Anthropomorphism and Anthropodenial: Consistency in Our Thinking about Humans and Other Animals* [Online], 27(1), 255—280. Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43154308 [Accessed 1 October 2017].

———. (2010). *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society*. London: Souvenir.

Webster, B. (2022). Dairy cows filmed being hit with spade on Madox Farm in Carmarthenshire. *The Times* [Online]. 21 February 2022. Available from: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dairy-cows-filmed-being-hit-with-spade-on-madox-farm-in-carmarthenshire-0q9h908wc [Accessed 21 February 2022].

Weik von Mossner, A. ed. (2014). *Moving Environments Affect, Emotion, Ecology, and Film.* Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

White, R. (2022). Ukraine Zoo Animals Evacuated to Poland After Getting Surrounded by Russian Tanks. *Newsweek* [Online], (World) 1 March 2022. Available from: https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-zoo-animals-evacuated-1683672 [Accessed 3 March 2022].

Woodward, W. (2014). The Posthumanist Gaze: Reading Fanie Jason's Photo Essay on Carting Lives. *Journal of Literary Studies* [Online], 30(4), 6—24. Available from: https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1080/02564718.2014.976454 [Accessed 16 October 2017].

Wrenn, C.L. *et al.* (2015). The medicalization of Nonhuman Animal rights: frame contestation and the exploitation of disability. *Disability and Society* [Online], 30(9), 1307—1327. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2015.1099518 [Accessed 29 October 2021].

Wrenn, C.L. (2016). *A Rational Approach to Animal Rights. Extensions in Abolitionist Theory.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yoshioka, T. *et al.* (2022). Chronic vicarious social defeat stress attenuates new-born neuronal cell survival in mouse hippocampus. *Behavioural Brain Research* [Online], 416, 113536, 1—7. Available from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166432821004241 [Accessed 13 April 2022].