

EXPLORING THE ZOOMORPHIC IMAGERY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN THE MOVIE *THE ANIMAL*

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ABSTRACT

Through the viewpoint of environmental ethics, this study analyzes the zoomorphic images of Luke Greenfield's 2001 film The Animal. A special chance to examine the ethical connections between people and the natural environment is provided by the film's graphic depiction of the protagonist's metamorphosis into an animal. The zoomorphic imagery of The Animal is examined in this study with an emphasis on how it critiques or upholds environmental exploitation, reflects, questions, or supports anthropocentric viewpoints, and illustrates the interdependence of human and non-human entities. This study reveals the implicit and explicit environmental ethics woven into the story and visual language of the movie by utilizing ideas and concepts related to environmental ethics. According to the study's findings, The Animal's zoomorphic imagery provides a sophisticated and comprehensive examination of the relationships between humans and their surroundings, provoking spectators to think about the lines separating humans from animals as well as the moral ramifications of human behavior on the natural world. This study advances the fields of media studies and environmental ethics by emphasizing the role that zoomorphic imagery has in influencing how we perceive the relationship between humans and the environment.

Keywords: Zoomorphism, animalistic traits, environmental ethics, human-animal relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Animals serve a variety of purposes in human culture, and they are used in many different activities. Along with the impulse on the premises, it also provided a variety of artifacts, religious ceremonies and cults, archetypes, and the like. The outside was syncretically related, both natural and divine, natural and artificial, if the initial conception of the outside was syncretic. Religious societies like animism and totemism, which portray the supernatural affinity of humans with specific animals, have reflected this. As a result, many ancient cultures may be seen in which the animal portrayed was the world's creator or the ancestor of particular ethnic groupings. According to Toporov, it occurs in three situations: an incarnated man, an animal spirit being, a zoomorphic god, or an animal ancestor or friend linked to a man (Barrios, 2012).

Zoomorphic hybrid is the representation of humans, and in this way, through the tropes of hybridity, a creative side of humanity's connection with nature and culture is acknowledged (Lai, 2014). The analysis of the manifestation of zoomorphism in culture is capable also to reveal that bestiality in man and in social and cultural processes, which makes it possible to solve such general problems of the modern cognition that the place of man in society and the formation of the world are (Khramova, 2015).

Here, zoomorphism, and coupling between humans and the environment. This theory actually portrays the condition and the link humans hold with the world and the relation amid the humans for the purpose of explaining the Zoomorphism. The major point is the way human is like attributes of animals and just as how they have their selfishness they overuse the natural resources. Violence is created by humans as animals and energy is taken from the nature for the execution of action. Thus, as readers obtain catharsis from aesthetic appreciation of nature, the beautiful entities where literature evident in plants, flowers, rivers, and animals; the larger world as the total wholes that embraces human and non-human beings. Frederick expostulated that, the modern ecological awareness needs to ensure that the equilibrium between people and nature is sustained. An ideal ecology is one where plants, animals, birds, and human beings coexist without subjugating or exterminating each other (Frederick, 2012).

Research Objectives

To examine the ethical behavior of Marvin in environment in the movie *The Animal*.

To explore the human and nonhuman interest in the movie *The Animal*.

Statement of the Research

1. How does Marvin reveals the ethical behavior in environment in the movie *The Animal*
2. What are the nonhuman and human interest in the movie *The Animal*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Accordingly, zoomorphism is not the same as giving humans a process-type seen in nonhuman animals as it is giving them a state-type found in nonhuman animals. A philosophical explanation paradigm that doesn't specify what these mental states are. That which belongs to humans actually exists in nonhuman animals. As for the state of cognitive science and cognitive neuroscience of the animal mind and brain, they can, in fact, expound on these potential mental states with regard to Sect. (Nanay, 2021).

Zoomorphism is the term used to describe the literary usage of animal imagery. In connection with the concept of praise, zoomorphism is also frequently used. Here are the authors of this article from the beginning of 2023. (Kadirova&Gofurova).

Zoomorphism is the process of analyzing nonhuman animals and the endowing them with mental state, that is a methodology. It is claim that zoomorphism is very successful as scientific methodology and it should be also taken seriously as philosophical explanatory paradigm, it should tell the way about human mind. This zoomorphic idea is on the rise in creating the buildings and construction of urban regions that are constructed as animals, for instance, the Elephant Hotel in Coney Island, or the planned construction of the city of Juba in South Sudan that was to be in the form of a rhinoceros (Bailey, 2015) (Ahmed 2022).

This paper is designed to make a clear distinction between zoomorphism as method and zoomorphism as a philosophical explanation and show that zoomorphism has been a thriving and successful piece of scientific method for quite a long time. And this leads to Zoomorphism as the philosophical explanatory paradigm is taken seriously. further, zoomorphism is not an organizational theory of explanation at all and it is more desirable in comparison with other philosophical theories about what human minds are. Last but not the least; It ponder what mental states one can presume about humans if It is ready to embrace zoomorphism as philosophical toolkit (Nanay, 2021).

With regard to the theoretic conception of a literature study, animal studies can be described as an interdisciplinary subject which deals with representations of animals in literature. It also explores relationships between people and between people and nonhuman animals as does animal studies. Since nonhuman animals and humans are subjected to similar evolutionary forces that create the fundamental life issues and objectives, nonhuman animals and humans have comparable moral entitlements and interests in mating, protecting their offspring, and

feeding. Consciousness is present in the animals and evolutionary psychology is one of the fields that have explored this (Pinker 76).

Another perspective that zoomorphism can take is when artists depict people as non-human animals in the given artwork. It can also be described as art where one kind of animal is painted or drawn as another type of animal, or when animals are used as a persisting ornament, and often as what Cezanne termed 'art Zoomorphism is the occurrence in literature where the naming or characterization of humanness is done with attributes of an animal.

This is why post humanism, at last introducing the humanities to technology and life sciences, animal and gender, reveals the human as profoundly unfinishable, thus 'challenging the given dichotomy between human and non-human and refusing to base the analysis on the seemingly essentialised notions of such divisions' (Barad 2007). When declaring a readiness to proceed from to ethico-epistemology. Beyond humanist discourse however the project is not so much the project of dismantling the human but more so the project of dismissing the doctrine of humanism an exceptionalism which is linked to various sorts of domains that seem to involve other subtle practices of mastery over gender, species, and matters. As Serpil Opperman has poignantly pointed out, in post human terms "agency, subjectivity, and intentionality are not sole attributes of human beings. Hence, the most obvious manifestations of post humanism are in movements against the exploitation of women, animals, and the natural environment'(2013). The same time the measures need stronger objectivity. Successfully, the theoretical connection between inter-human empathy, and the empathy towards non-human animals sketches an area for the further empirical expansion of psychology of empathy. Empathy is said to be an inductive affective and cognitively evaluative process that gives to an individual a second-hand experience of feelings of others and thus enriches or modifies a subsequent reaction. Similarity effects might also be found in psychophysiological response where non-human animal stimuli are arranged according to the degree of phylogenetic relatedness to people and then compared with stimuli of human origin. For instance, psychophysiological affective reaction to birds, quadruped mammals, non-human bipeds and human beings should also rise with the degree of similarity if the similarity theory applied to cross species. Exploring the association between empathy towards animals as well as the belief that animal is capable of thinking and feeling to some extent, that is, the belief in animal mind, Hills (1995) observed that it is not the latter that independently affects the former but the empathy towards animal mediates it. The assumption was that the closer the animals were in the phylogenetic tree with humans the higher they were rated on BAM and this was the case when comparing mammals, coldblooded animals and invertebrates as classified by Hills (Hills, 1995).

Species and Psyche finally asks what it may mean to restore the human connectedness to self and others, either human or nonhuman, in unfriendly circumstances. This aspiration resonates with the directions taken by post critical literary scholars, and specialists in the environmental humanities. In putting together these two subfields in this dissertation, I aim to make a case that the reparative function of a particular kind of reading that comes with set ethical objectives can be helpful to practice philosophies concerning the animal and the human-animal on climate change, environmental degradation, and extinction. In this pursuit of the goals just outlined, I explain how literary form may effect changes to the category of anthropomorphism for the purpose of ethical corrections to human anthropocentrism and the production of reparative agencies for both people and things. Such an appreciation of vision as a way of speaking on behalf of the nonhuman animal addresses ideas that are either supportive of or caustic regarding the senses and in particular the suffering of animals and their rights. For instance, to examine the animal voice in the Age of Sensibility, Tobias Menely in *The Animal Claim* argues for understanding sympathy as 'political communication as well, a medium of command and

protest' to stake a claim on 'the dynamics of sympathy, as oriented around questions of communication rather than, say, cognition, phenomenology or epistemology'. To this effect, Menely emphasizes the role of voice and speech in animals advocacy of the time, thus building on the main thread that the vocal is the primary way through which animal rights can be demanded. By contrast, sociologist Lauren Corman argues that the campaign accentuates the value of a voice or speech for animals, noting that 'the animal movements have been remiss in confronting the issues that plague political representation,' especially the 'appropriation of (cultural) voice. Corman's critique of the 'voice metaphor' in animal advocacy stems from the fact that regarding the 'faulty projection' of human experience to animals distorts both the animal.

Zoomorphic imagery symbolizes rulers' violence and retribution and becomes an image of power and of the effects of this violence. This happens in the following ways as the following similes suggest. Of course, the oppressors, whether individuals, authorities or governments, turn others into dogs: this is what happens when people are treated this way, and the outcome is usually tragic. Indeed, it is the case that abuse elicits anger to retaliate, and thus abuse results in agitation that makes human beings aggressive as lions. Such transformation of a human into an animal is also a symbol of moral degradation of the powers that be which turns into an aggressor and resorts to violence in order to dominate. These human beings are so ruthless as if they are animals, the things they do to others are inhuman and thus they are inhuman. Frantz Fanon often employs this kind of language in *The Wretched of the Earth* which he uses to note that even though imperialism might seek to depersonalize the colonized, it is the colonizer who acts like an animal. Abusers turn to animals when they have reduced the value of the vulnerable to that of animals (Gilmour, 2008).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

The qualitative research method, a methodological approach used to examine the components of zoomorphism, is employed to assess the data. characteristics and interactions between humans and animals in the film *The Animal*. Information from the film *The Animal* served as a key source for this research thesis. Secondary data is gathered from other websites as well as from books, essays, and other relevant journals. The researcher employed the well-known Ecocriticism theory as a lens to examine the selected data. Under the unique aim quality of judgment, Ecocriticism focuses on the implications and effects of "Zoomorphism" on the characters, as well as the visual discourse and animal behavior in the film *The Animal*. The movie's characters are an accurate representation of zoomorphism. The behavior shifts from human to animal and animal to human according to the situation and scene in the movie. The themes of this story has similarities in motifs, thematised issues, semiotic and narrated depictions of characters. Also, to explore the culture, the human relations, and other aspects of the nature of images of animals to "*The Animal*," a qualitative research approach will be used. That shall be done by either interviewing or administering questionnaires to receive data on readers' perception of representation of the animals in the movie.

The zoomorphic data has been gathered from different articles and different people's books and reviews concerning the movie *The Animal* and these data are now collected here in different perspective and idea for the better and clear understanding of the zoomorphic point of view.

Ecocriticism

Over the past three decades, ecocriticism—a recently formed critical approach—has joined a new "worldwide emergent movement." Scholars are still working to better develop its nature and scope. William Rueckert originally used the term ecocriticism in his critical work "Literature and Ecology." The 1978 publication "An Experiment in Ecocriticism" also makes use of it. "Eco" comes from "oikos," which means "household" or "earth," and "logy" from "logos," which means "rational discourse." When taken as a whole, they refer to literary criticism of the home and surroundings. According to Rueckert, ecocriticism means employing ecology or some aspect of ecological theory in the evaluation of literature. Lawrence Buell, in his book, *The Environment Imagination*, defines ecocriticism as "literary criticism done in the light of what the environmentalist practitioner concludes to be true, good, and right." But what exactly ecocriticism implies, in literary terms, has not purely resided in nature watching or description of nature; further, as a literary practice, ecocriticism has had to distance itself from traditional nature writing first in terms of its ethics and its method of confronting the non-human second, in making connections between human and non-human worlds. Ecocriticism promotes this awareness in man. In the eyes of ecocriticism, thus the concept of a 'world' is amplified with the expansive referent of the ecosphere. Another name for ecocriticism is the ecology-centered technique of critiquing literature. Literary scholars ask questions of value, meaning, tradition, point of view, tradition, and language, and it is within these areas that a far more serious advance is being made in environmental thinking. Since the third decade of the twentieth century, it has emerged as a branch of literary criticism that concerns representations of nature or environment within literary works as the space, which, perhaps, determines how human culture negotiates nonculture or the natural world. Today, owing to the postmodern developments and comparable social expansion of the so-called ecocritical studies, there can in fact be no clear line between human nature and non-human nature. Therefore, when literature is put through ecocriticism, every period's works and methods of every historical and geographical period are not only nature, ecology, or environmentalists' poetic works or nature writing but are studied about place, setting, and environment (Vathana, 2015). In ecocritical theory, the above postulate will play a key role in the balance of the ecosystem by implying the rights of organisms. Ecocriticism therefore accords more attention to this 'eco-consciousness' that erases the 'ego-consciousness man'. The present environmental crisis is a biproduct of human culture. It cannot be claimed to be due to how the ecosystem exists, but rather, how our ethical system exists, how we relate to the environment, etc. Ecocriticism promotes this awareness in man. In the eyes of ecocriticism, thus the concept of a 'world' is amplified with the expansive referent of the ecosphere. Another name for ecocriticism is the ecology-centered technique of critiquing literature. Literary scholars ask questions of value, meaning, tradition, point of view, tradition, and language, and it is within these areas that a far more serious advance is being made in environmental thinking. Since the third decade of the twentieth century, it has emerged as a branch of literary criticism that concerns representations of nature or environment within literary works as the space, which, perhaps, determines how human culture negotiates nonculture or the natural world. Today, owing to the postmodern developments and comparable social expansion of the so-called ecocritical studies, there can in fact be no clear line between human nature and non-human nature. Therefore, when literature is put through ecocriticism, every period's works and methods of every historical and geographical period are not only nature, ecology, or environmentalists' poetic works or nature writing but are studied about place, setting, and environment (Vathana, 2015).

The environmental responsibility emphasizes the importance and consideration of environmental implications of human actions and cultural production. The interest seems to be at the scientific level as well as forms of literary excellence. Humans in general have an

inherent desire to seek their „origins“, to feel that they are an integral part of nature. Still, they have been equally guilty of exhausting natural resources and utilizing nature in the most optimal and often excessive ways (Geeta, 2014).

The interdependence of humans and the environment has emerged as a popular focus of academics in major studies with reference to ecocritical theory. Ecocriticism as a theory of literature and culture concerns itself with environmental themes in literary productions. This approach not only involves understanding literary works concerning the depiction of the natural world but also regards the representations of these works from the viewpoint of how they are serving to both shape and mirror cultural attitudes toward the natural world. This has become especially important as the environmental problems, including climate change, deforestation, pollution, and loss of ecosystems and animal species, multiply, and scholars have begun asking how literature can be used in the battle against environmental degradation. Environmental criticism appeared at the end of the twentieth century as a branch of the environmental movement, with roots in ecological science and environmental philosophy and culture studies being one of the most significant advantages of this relatively comprehensive approach to the interrelation between literature and ecology.

DATA ANALYSIS

By depicting the main character, Marvin, as a human-animal hybrid, the film *The Animal* uses zoomorphic imagery to examine environmental issues. This metamorphosis challenges anthropocentric beliefs that place humans above animals by symbolizing the interconnection of all living things. The biological and ecological interconnectedness of species is highlighted by Marvin's dependency on animal organs for survival and the ensuing mixing of human reason with animal impulses. Additionally, the film critiques the exploitation of animals, subtly questioning humanity's moral responsibility toward non-human life forms. By blurring the boundaries between humans and animals, *The Animal* invites viewers to empathize with non-human beings and to reconsider ethical perspectives on coexistence and environmental stewardship. Although presented as a comedy, the film's narrative aligns with key principles of environmental ethics, emphasizing the need for mutual respect and sustainable relationships with the natural world (Singer, 1993; Leopold, 1949).

1. Understanding Zoomorphic Imagery

Zoomorphism refers to attributing animal characteristics to humans, deities, or objects. In *The Animal*, Rob Schneider's character Marvin becomes part animal after a medical procedure that saves his life using animal organs. This transformation symbolizes a fusion of human and animal identities, which becomes a focal point for analyzing environmental ethics.

2. Connection to Environmental Ethics

Environmental ethics is concerned with the moral relationship between humans and the natural world. The zoomorphic transformation in *The Animal* explores themes such as:

- **Interconnectedness of Species:** Marvin's reliance on animal organs underscores the biological and ecological interdependence of all living beings. His enhanced senses, agility, and instincts demonstrate how animal traits are not only vital for survival but also suggest a deeper unity with nature.

- **Human Superiority Challenged:** As Marvin struggles to balance human rationality with animal instinct, the movie questions anthropocentric views that humans are inherently superior to animals.
- **Respect for Animal Life:** The film can be read as a critique of how humans exploit animals for their benefit without considering the ethical implications.

3. Satirical Approach to Environmental Issues

While the film is primarily a comedy, its use of humor highlights serious environmental concerns:

- **Human Impact on Animals:** Marvin's transformation indirectly highlights humanity's encroachment on animal habitats and commodification of animal bodies.
- **Blurring Boundaries:** By portraying Marvin as both man and beast, the movie satirically blurs the boundaries between human and animal, challenging viewers to reconsider their moral obligations to non-human species.

4. Critique of Human-Animal Dichotomy

The zoomorphic imagery dismantles the rigid division between humans and animals, prompting ethical reflection:

- **Animal Instincts vs. Human Rationality:** Marvin's animalistic traits sometimes outshine his human abilities, suggesting that instinct and nature hold wisdom often dismissed in human-centered ethics.
- **Empathy for Non-Human Beings:** The portrayal fosters empathy, encouraging viewers to value animals as sentient beings rather than mere resources.

5. Reflection on Modern Environmentalism

The movie also indirectly critiques modern society's disconnection from nature:

- **Urbanization and Isolation from Nature:** Marvin's struggles are heightened by the urban setting, emphasizing how modern environments alienate humans from the natural world.
- **Need for Coexistence:** By becoming part animal, Marvin embodies the necessity of coexistence and mutual respect for a sustainable future.

- **Marvin: "Rrrraahhhr! I'm a wild animal! _growls and snarls_"**

Interpretation: In this scene Marvin turns into an animal which represents inner conflict on should he continue to suppress the beast in him or let out. The animated conversation also reveals his anti-cokonship attitude in the beginning, his refusal to become a 'morning/morning person. At the end of the transformation, he gives in to his animal instincts and becomes a wild beast. The animals' presence is another fun, but poignant satire of human's desire to be both civilised and animalistic, how Marvin transforms into a rooster and his acceptance of his nature is symbolic of people accepting themselves as they are.

Marvin: "I'm a wild animal! I can smell the fear!"

Interpretation:

In this piece of work, Marvin has provided a statement that underlines his developing link with his basic feelings and thus can rely on them. The transformation that is depicted here is the 'All Grown Up' transformation; it symbolises the fact that he has grown in confidence and in the ability to handle difficult situations. In this dialogue, Marvin has depicted the animalistic behaviour because of his transformation in his body. He was not zoomorphic but was also not so much not zoomorphic facing a task of overcoming the zoomorphic behavior.

I'm not an animal, I'm a human being! Marvin

It is part of the movie script of the movie titled *The Animal* released in 2001. Here's an explained analysis of this scene: Returning back to Marvin and his surrealistic transformation, which turns him into an animal-like creature played by Rob Schneider, he has been exposed to a curious substance. During this sequences, Marvin starts to lose his humanity and his identity. As when he bursts out, 'I ain't no animal, I am a human being!' Marvin is struggling against the physical metamorphosis that he is undergoing as well as the manner, in which he is being treated. They who are trapped in such a state are eager to prove these facts and to concentrate on the fact that they are still influenced by the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of an ordinary human being. From this dialogue, the major themes through which we interpret are the following.

Marvin: "Rrrraahhh! I need raw meat!"

Interpretation:

Marvin is torn between his human and animalistic nature, and this outburst is perfectly exhibits this. raw flesh in the presently represents his animal instincts and the properly civilized english gentlemen is struggling to come out from deep within. Having animalistic urge and want where it is impossible to contain himself for his basic wants or lust. When Marvin meets Rianna he also drool over her sexually because of his animal like nature and that he cannot contain himself for any kind of want just like he wants a meat or any other thing.

- Marvin: "I'm not a pet, I'm a wild animal! Respect my boundaries!"

In this dialogue, Marvin wants people to accept him as new creature, closer to a wild animal and to keep him alone. The declaration here is his struggle to come to terms and be accepted while in the process of establishing his humane and animalistic side. He is animalistic by his organs and nature he tries to mimic himself as animal but he exhibit animal nature. For his behaviour of the animal Marvin understood that he is not a pet animal but he is wild because he has his natural organs of an animal. For his wild like behaviour during his deposition he portrays the wild animal in the movie. The organs of dog, goat, monkey, deer, all these animals affect him and lure him by the zoomorphic attribute.

CONCLUSION

The elements of Zoomorphism in research thesis are summed up with regard to the semiotics of the movie *The Animal* (2001). For this research, the how the concept of zoomorphism is depicted in the 2001 comedy film entitled "The Animal" directed by Luke Greenfield and starred by Rob Schneider is the main focus of the study. In this critical ecological approach, the study investigates the cultural-situated aspect of zoomorphism, the characters with zoomorphic features, or/and the role of zoomorphism in ecological justice and environmental ethics of human in zoomorphic area. In overall, it would be possible to conclude that the technique of zoomorphisms as a method of pictorial image is one of the traditions of creating artwork from the earliest epochs. This depends with the methodology and the specifics of the work of art, as in the reproduction of human characters and their attributes through figures and images of animals in fiction enhances the aesthetic value of the art work and boosts the efficiency of the piece. Zoomorphisms are founded on the decent analogues of humans with animals in same environment. This article concludes the role of human and animal and their

environmental ethics in the movie *The Animal*, where they live and examine themselves in the same environment their traits and ethics are explored. Zoomorphism in “*The Animal*” portray the culture since it brings out how human beings are disconnected from the animal kingdom and the instincts and how they relate to them, Marvin in the movie transforms into an animal like creature with human like organs but portrays animal like behavior after the transformation of his organs

In conclusion, *The Animal* employs zoomorphic imagery to provoke reflection on humanity’s relationship with the natural world and the ethical implications of human dominance over animals. Through Marvin's transformation into a hybrid being, the film dismantles traditional boundaries between humans and animals, encouraging viewers to recognize the interconnectedness of all life forms. By satirically addressing issues such as exploitation, urbanization, and disconnection from nature, the movie subtly advocates for empathy, coexistence, and environmental responsibility. While lighthearted in its approach, *The Animal* effectively underscores the importance of rethinking human roles within ecological systems, promoting values aligned with sustainability and environmental ethics (Naess, 1989; Regan, 1983).

In conclusion, *The Animal* uses its comedic narrative and zoomorphic imagery to engage with profound questions about humanity's relationship with nature and animals. Marvin’s hybrid identity challenges the anthropocentric mindset by showing how human survival and behavior are intrinsically linked to the natural world. His newfound instincts and physical traits derived from animals emphasize the interconnectedness of species and the value of traits often dismissed in human-centered ideologies. The film’s humorous depiction of these themes serves as an accessible entry point for audiences to consider the ethical implications of human actions on the environment and non-human life forms, fostering a dialogue about respect and coexistence (Singer, 1993; Leopold, 1949).

Furthermore, *The Animal* critiques modern society's disconnection from the natural world, especially in urbanized settings where Marvin’s struggle is most evident. By blurring the lines between human and animal identities, the movie challenges viewers to rethink their moral obligations toward the environment and its inhabitants. The narrative suggests that fostering empathy and promoting sustainable practices are vital for preserving ecological balance. Ultimately, while *The Animal* is framed as lighthearted entertainment, it carries an underlying message that resonates with environmental ethics, urging a shift toward a more harmonious relationship between humans and nature (Naess, 1989; Regan, 1983).

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