

Nenette

Film theory, animals, and boredom

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There must be times when she can no longer stand this state, her condition. It's the realm of 'doing nothing'. She spends her life doing nothing.

Nicholas Philibert's documentary *Nenette* (2010) sets out to problematise the human/animal boundary and as such it poses several important questions for contemporary film theory. In particular *Nenette* explores the human fascination in looking at animals and current debates about the fragility of the human/animal divide. *Nenette* is a female orangutan who was taken from the jungles of Borneo over 40 years ago to the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes (Paris), one of the world's oldest zoos. At the time of filming *Nenette* was the oldest inhabitant of the Paris zoo. Philibert recorded the conversations of *Nenette*'s numerous visitors – adults and children – as they watch her through the glass. Several local Parisians visit her every day. 'As if coming to see a brother, a sister or a relative in prison', one of the keepers explains.

Described as an 'unknowable celebrity' she is also 'the bane of the zoo' and a 'goddess' who 'loves cameras – paradoxically'. This article will explore *Nenette* primarily in relation to issues of looking, in particular to Jennifer Fay's concept of how we might 'feel ourselves seen' by animals as part of the experience of exchanging looks with non-human animals. The concept of *feeling ourselves seen* by animals deserves a full discussion in contemporary theories of the screen spectator relationship. This article will also examine other areas related to the screen/animal/spectator relationship: the anthropocentric point of view, haptic visuality, the problem of

modernity, the animal, and boredom. Ultimately the question of why we look at animals relates to a wider issue about the human/animal divide – that is, the culturally-enforced divide between the concept of human and animal – as well as the notion of the ‘animal’ within the human.

Nenette is a large ape with a hairless face, two bright eyes, and a soft muzzle; her body is covered in long reddish-brown hair and she has an enormous pouch under her chin (thought to emit the loud cry of the orangutan) that extends to her stomach. Two large breasts hang on either side of the pouch close to her armpits. She frequently looks into the lens and at the spectator as if she were engaged in direct communication. As viewers we look through Nenette’s glass-fronted enclosure (there are no bars) to watch her and her son Tübo along with other orangutans engaged in their daily routines. Throughout the documentary Nenette either stares back at her visitors or goes about her daily activities as if oblivious to their presence. Every so often Nenette responds in such a way that we realise she misses nothing.



Fig. 1: Nenette.

We learn that Nenette was born in Borneo in 1969 and arrived with Toto, a sickly male, at the Jardin des Plantes on 16 June 1972. One of the female keepers talks about the time when Nenette arrived. ‘Holding her as a child... she’s very tender. You never forget that.’ She has had three male partners and four babies, one of whom is Tübo, with whom she still lives. Because it is not known if the orangutan observes the incest taboo Nenette is on the pill, which is given to her daily in her yoghurt. Almost all primates do

have incest taboos or ‘elaborate conventions to guarantee high levels of outbreeding’ – an important restriction central to the formation of animal societies and also shared with humans.¹ One keeper says they have no way of knowing if Nenette has had her menopause because orangutans do not give any physical signs to indicate when they are in heat.

Nenette forged bonds with two of the keepers, but only on her terms. If she wants a keeper to touch her she will hold out her fingers or her mouth. Nenette is now old and the keepers are concerned about her health and comfort. ‘She’s an old lady now’, one remarks. The visitors and keepers refer to her variously as ‘gentle and calm’, ‘dangerous’, ‘tricky’, and ‘tender’. Described as ‘a bit of a ham’, Nenette likes to drape blankets over her head and is particularly fond of tea. Philibert’s style is to depict Nenette in close-up, usually staring ahead, and to intercut shots of her with scenes from the enclosure – straw, ropes, mesh, and the glass viewing wall.

The sound track consists of comments made by the zoo visitors and the trainers, whom we never see except as an occasional reflection in the glass wall. They talk to Nenette, discuss her life, her thoughts, and her emotions while some compare Nenette to themselves. The soundtrack is thus made up of musings and questions for Nenette, fantasies about her life, stories about her time at the Jardin des Plantes and her ‘husbands’ and children. The fact that there is a strong connection between human pleasure in looking and fantasy is evident everywhere in *Nenette*. There are also historical accounts of the orangutan including the similarities between human and ape, musings about the nature and morality of captivity, and most importantly discussions of the way humans have ‘drained’ Nenette of her own vitality over the years while submitting her to a life of relentless boredom in the zoo.

The human/animal divide

Much has been written in recent years on the theories and strategies human society has adopted to mark out and maintain a clear divide between humans and other animals. Giorgio Agamben’s *The Open: Man and Animal* proposes the existence of an ‘anthropological machine’ designed to separate human and animal and to construct a man/animal dichotomy.² In *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us To Be Human* Kelly Oliver analyses the continental discourse on animals and the different ways in which philosophers and theorists throughout the centuries have defined humanity in relation to animality – in fact, have relied on the animal completely in order to produce the ‘human’. Oliver refers to Freud, his case histories and zoophilia;

Lacan and his reliance on what she terms his 'double-dealing animals'; and Kristeva with her concept of 'horse-boys' as well as her alignment of abjection, woman, and the animal.³ Theorists have also argued that this boundary between human and animal is not fixed or unchanging. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to follow)* Derrida explores what he sees as the unstable, shifting border between animal species, including the human. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming animal', which challenges Descartes' theory of the 'animal as machine' through its proposal that humans and animals alike can be viewed as a complex network of assemblages, has also exerted an important influence on this new area of study.⁴ From a different but related perspective some theorists adopt a radical posthumanist view that holds

there is no animal-as-such: it is social construction all the way down. Deconstructing animals reveals the permanent blur between the species and the shifting nature of the categories 'animal' and 'human'.⁵

A close analysis of the opening scene in *Nenette* reveals one way in which Philibert diminishes the boundary between human and animal. The film opens with a black screen which gradually lightens to reveal two eyes in extreme close-up. There is no sound. We assume this is *Nenette*, the female orangutan who is the main protagonist. The creature's eyes open wider and look directly at the camera/spectator. The shot is personal and intimate. The eyes look in different directions as if the animal were taking cognizance of its environment. The image is disorientating; the creature is unknown, the location is unknown; the eyes do not seem very different, if at all, from human eyes. However, our point of reference is clearly not human. Philibert cuts to another extreme close-up, this time of the animal's mouth and lips. As the camera gradually moves up her face two large fingers appear besides the mouth, which now opens in a yawn. Next Philibert cuts to a close-up of fingers which are remarkably like human fingers: almond-shaped nails, broken cuticles, skin. As the camera cuts back to her eyes sounds of human voices gradually fill the soundtrack. Philibert then cuts abruptly to a medium shot to reveal the protagonist of the film, *Nenette*, resting her large frame across the top of a cement wall with pieces of straw caught up in her distinctive red hair. Her face is framed by her long hair which falls in a fringe. Next we hear the click of a camera as a child's voice whispers reverently: 'Nenette. How are you?' The camera cuts to a group of orangutan infants playing in the straw. A woman says to her child: '[l]ook at them! Say hello!' 'Hello', the child responds. 'Look at them. Hello.' The voices of the

human family are paired with the visuals of the ape family. 'Orangutan, orangutan...from Borneo...ahh!' Nenette's large frame fills the screen again. The camera clicks. The child reads the plaque. 'Nenette. Nenette. Born in 1969 in Borneo...mother of Tübo.' The visitors at the zoo are excited, while Nenette appears completely bored.

Just as Philibert orchestrates the opening images of Nenette, the close-up shots of her eyes and lips blurring the boundary between human and animal, he uses the sound track for the same purpose. We do not actually see the zoo visitors unless they cast a hazy reflection in the glass. Their comments cover an amazing range of topics which ultimately reveal more about themselves than the object of their curiosity. This unusual juxtaposing of image and sound serves to provide an ironic statement on the human spectator. Many of the comments from Nenette's visitors indicate that they themselves pay scant attention to a strict concept of the human/animal divide. In the opening scene the mother and child immediately begin to draw connections between themselves and Nenette. The mother says: '[s] he's 40. Imagine that. The same age as your daddy.' The child disagrees and they argue. 'Daddy's 40 and a half', the child insists. We listen to a range of remarks, some more curious than others.

Think she can see us...Yes, she can see us...I know she can see me...If we come back tomorrow or two or three times she would spot us...She's just bored right?...That long hair of hers...Her hair is a bit red...In Egypt they used to kill redheads before birth...Is that true?...Because of the devil...Fire and the devil...Look at that one...He looks just like...you!

The visitors' comments reveal how they project their own emotions and desires onto the animals. They do not see Nenette as essentially different from themselves. In one sequence Nenette is lying down, staring out into space. One woman says:

I think she's depressed, totally depressed. Maybe her husband is already dead. Aren't there other apes? I mean a girl and a man? I mean a girl for him. And another man for his mother. It would be more fun than a mother with her son. That's no fun.

She makes animal sounds trying to talk to Tübo. Tübo moves his lips as if communicating with her. The woman giggles, uttering more animal sounds. 'Is he married yet? No, he isn't married yet.' Cut to Tübo in close-up staring at the camera. A woman says:

I'd like to show you something. He doesn't know I'm an ape like him. I understand ape language. And I can climb like her too. And I'd be as sad as she is if I were alone with my son because you need someone, even at her age. Look she's utterly sad. At last, look!

Tübo appears.

Come on Tübo. Will you talk to me. You're a handsome boy. Go on. You're not married yet?

The female visitor is projecting her own familial and sexual narrative onto Nenette and Tübo. In doing this the woman also expresses a yearning to join Nenette and Tübo. She says she is also an ape and makes various animal noises to offer proof of her animal identity. The ape is also a mimic with a sense of humour. An art teacher tells his companion:

They're really so close to us! Some students came here recently, young girls with red hair. They really attracted the attention of one orangutan who blew kisses through the glass. When a brunette turned up, it would send her away. With a wave. Amazing!

Anthropocentric POV

Philibert's film challenges a dominant anthropocentric point of view – that is, the traditional humanist position that regards human beings as the central and most significant species or entity on Earth. Cary Wolfe sees the discourse of speciesism as fundamental to the way in which we relate to other animals as well as some human beings:

[t]o the formation of Western subjectivity and sociality as such, an institution that relies on the tacit agreement that the full transcendence of the 'human' requires the sacrifice of the 'animal' and the animalistic, which in turn makes possible a symbolic economy in which we can engage in what Derrida will call a 'noncriminal putting to death' of other *humans* as well by marking *them* as animal.⁶

The fact that Nenette and her companions are captive for their entire lives for the education, entertainment, and emotional yearning of the

human spectator clearly reinforces the anthropocentric imperative. Does an anthropocentric viewpoint dominate? Randy Malamud has extended Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze to that of an animal gaze. He has argued that the animal is objectified by the 'human gaze' in ways which are similar to the manner in which woman is objectified. He argues that in some instances the only way to disrupt or undermine the human gaze is to *not look*.⁷ In one sense Philibert has attempted to undermine the human gaze. He never shows the human visitors; they have no physical presence in the film – only their voices are heard. The camera looks but its gaze is not aligned with the gaze of the zoo visitors. Instead the camera focuses directly on Nenette, who sometimes looks back and at other times appears to ignore the camera altogether.

In 'Why Look at Animals?' John Berger discusses what he sees as a crucial change in the look between animal and man. In this changed world Berger argues that the 'look between animal and man, which may have played a crucial role in the development of human society...has been extinguished'.⁸ Berger argues that when humans and animals look at each other they look across 'a similar, but not identical, abyss of non-comprehension'.⁹ He says that the animal look seems 'familiar' but in reality the animal is always 'distinct'. This is because the animal's 'lack of a common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctness, its exclusion, from and of man'.¹⁰ Berger points to the changing relationship between human and animal with the advent of modernity and capitalism, arguing that animal imagery stands in for a lost relationship with animals that was once direct and unmediated. In Berger's argument this imagery, which now mediates our relationship with animals, includes representations in children's books, Walt Disney films, and photographs. He also argues that pets and animals in zoos fulfill a similar function.

Zoos, realistic animal toys and the widespread commercial diffusion of animal imagery, all began as animals started to be withdrawn from daily life.... The reproduction of animals in images – as their biological reproduction in birth becomes a rarer and rarer sight – was competitively forced to make animals ever more exotic and remote.¹¹

Is it possible to represent animal subjectivity and the animal's gaze in film? In *Beasts of the Modern Imagination* Margot Norris argues for a biocentric tradition in relation to the animal texts of Friedrich Nietzsche, Franz Kafka, and Max Ernst. She argues that the Darwinian revolution in ideas led to

[a] subversive interrogation of the anthropocentric premises of western philosophy and art, and the invention of artistic and philosophical strategies that would allow the animal, the unconscious, the instincts, the body, to speak again in their work.¹²

This in turn led writers and artists to create with their own animality. By rendering the human spectator at the zoo invisible to the eye and allowing only Nenette to exercise the gaze, Philibert creates a space in which Nenette becomes the subject of the film's narrative trajectory. The film spectator watches Nenette; her face, eyes, expressions, activities, and bodily movements. She absorbs our complete attention. In some scenes she appears to stare directly at the camera/us but in fact she is most likely staring elsewhere. Still, her stare makes us aware of being looked at. One way in which Nenette communicates is through her movements, gestures, and looks. In his discussion of gesture Agamben argues that 'cinema has its center in the gesture and not in the image'. He writes that

[c]inema leads images back to the homeland of gesture...it is the dream of a gesture. The duty of the director is to introduce into this dream the element of awakening.¹³

Agamben uses gesture in cinema to help define human beings as 'medial' beings.

The gesture is, in this sense, communication of a communicability. It has precisely nothing to say because what it shows is the being-in-language of human beings as pure mediality. However because being-in-language is not something that could be said in sentences the gesture is essentially always a gesture of not being able to figure something out in language.¹⁴

Although Agamben does not discuss gesture in relation to animals the latter cannot be excluded. In fact, for Nenette gesture is not an alternative mode of expression, not a sign of 'not being able to figure something out in language' – Nenette's gestures along with her bodily movements and expressions *are* her language. As we watch Nenette and her complex repertoire of gestures and looks we interpret them as a form of communication, as actions that we endow with meaning and sense. In the opening sequence we see Nenette resting her body across the top of a cement wall, her large chin and hands draped over the top, pieces of straw caught up in her long red hair. She stares out at the camera from beneath her fringe. Everything

about her pose suggests she is tired, bored even. The keepers later discuss her boredom at length. The important point is that as spectators, positioned in an intimate relationship with her image, our natural response is to interpret her behaviour through her body language. The keepers also describe Nenette's gestures. If she wants a keeper to touch her she will hold out her fingers or mouth. When Nenette appears to want privacy without retreating inside she drapes a blanket across her head. Nenette is also a mimic. One of the keepers explains:

[w]hat Nenette does is watch the public.... If she could write. Loving couples would be standing outside the cage. Kissing, and then we would find Nenette and Toto trying to smooch and stuff like that.... One day I kept my handbag with me. I had some lipstick in it that didn't suit me. She snatched the bag from me and took out the lipstick and, pretending she had a mirror, got it everywhere. They spend their time watching as they would in the wild.

If the human is a 'being-in-language' then Nenette is a being-in-her-body.

The animal gaze/animals as subject

In Derrida's view philosophy has always refused to take into account the topic of animal subjectivity. He argues that the animal is 'the absolute other' in human history.¹⁵ The question of the animal has also been taken up by philosophers, some of whom have exerted a significant influence on film theorists. All living creatures, human and animal, have the capacity to suffer, yet for centuries we have created our own well-being on the basis of animal subjugation and suffering. He argues that the 'the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals' is to divest ourselves of our power over them and show compassion by acknowledging the vulnerability of the animal.¹⁶ We should instead share 'the possibility of this nonpower'.¹⁷ This is the only radical way to think. For man to continue to separate the human from the animal confirms 'not only the animality that he is disavowing but his complicit, continued and organized involvement in a veritable war of the species'.¹⁸ This war on the animal, this denial of animal subjectivity, only serves to rob us of compassion and an understanding of our own mortality. In *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species and Posthumanist Theory* Cary Wolfe asks what would follow if philosophers and theorists were asked again, abandoning all preconceptions, the crucial question: are non-human animals also subjects?

In *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* Anat Pick adopts a 'creaturely approach' to the representation of the animal. In her discussion of Robert Bresson's *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) she concludes that the concept of subjectivity is not as important as that of the creaturely.

[A] creaturely ethics, on the other hand, does not depend on fulfilling any preliminary criteria of subjectivity and personhood. Its source lies in the recognition of the materiality and vulnerability of all living bodies, whether human or not, and in the absolute primacy of obligations over rights.¹⁹

Philibert asks us to think ourselves into Nenette's life, into her body and its vulnerability, subjected as she is to living her life in captivity and far from her home. In deciding not to film the visitors at the zoo but only to record their voices he creates a direct and unmediated line of identification between the spectator and Nenette. Nenette's communication can be read through what Laura U. Marks describes as 'haptic visuality'.

Film and the sensorium – haptic visuality

Post-structuralist theories of the screen/spectator relationship and the way in which meanings are constructed do not offer a satisfactory model for understanding why and how humans look at animals; they focus too much on the visual, theorising the relationship in terms of the cinema as window, the cinema as mirror, and the cinema as look or gaze. Inspired by phenomenological theories, Vivian Sobchack was the first to challenge the dominance of the visual paradigm.²⁰ Drawing on Sobchack's approach, in her book *The Skin of the Film* Marks extends traditional theories of the screen-spectator relationship by arguing that touch, smell, and bodily presence can offer crucial memories of and connection to home for people living in a diasporic culture far from their place of origin. Those filmmakers who seek to represent their native cultures on film have adopted new forms of cinematic expression which she describes as 'haptic visuality'.²¹ Arguing that intercultural cinema has the power to represent 'embodied experience' in a postcolonial world, Marks' thesis offered a new way of thinking about cinema, invoking the idea of cinema as skin – material and tactile. As with all important theories Mark's theory of the 'skin of the film' resonates well beyond its original object of inquiry (intercultural cinema).

The concept of cinema as skin is directly applicable to the way in which we respond to films that represent the animal. The human protagonists

want to 'touch' Nenette, to feel her materiality, her skin and hair. However, animal skin and fur is much more than a simple covering for the animal body. Through its colour, texture, and length animal fur marks the animal as both similar and dissimilar. The power of a haptic sensibility is particularly strong in films about the animal, from *Au Hasard Balthazar* and *Grizzly Man* to *Project Nim* and *Nenette*. Some visitors to the zoo reach out to Nenette with their comments as if she did awaken in them memories of a lost past, a past associated with family and the maternal body. These comments invoke the senses of sight and touch – particularly touch. The sight of Nenette also invokes various memories primarily associated with the maternal body: homeland, a whale, birth, the mother.

Maybe she misses the country she comes from...I miss mine too...She's huge...What is it?...A whale...They're born wrinkled...She's almost as big as mum...I'd like to touch her.

As well as comments of endearment there is also a joking reference to Nenette's alignment with the human female – she has 'husbands' and she is like a 'hairy woman' with very big 'titties'. Historically women have been associated with the animal in relation to their procreative functions. 'From Plato through Hegel, Freud and beyond, women have been associated with Nature and instincts to procreate, which place them in the vicinity of the animal realm.'²² Other visitors offer up animal cries in their attempt to communicate. Most invoke some knowledge about their evolutionary origins, about the past once shared by human and ape alike. In this context we could argue that Philibert's film draws on Mark's concept of haptic visuality as well as creating a form of interspecies cinema in which film engages shape, touch, and memory for the viewer in order to create a form of human/animal communication. However, this comes at a terrible cost – not for the zoo visitor, but for the animal captive in the zoo.

'Ourselves seen by animals'

Through representations of Nenette alone, as herself, Philibert asks: to what extent do we actually 'see' the animal apart from our own projections and fantasies? To what extent do films with animal protagonists create a space in which the animal looks back at us? Drawing on Walter Benjamin's concept of the aura and Derrida's plea that we should not simply look at animals but also experience ourselves as seen by them, Jennifer Fay writes:

[i]f auratic perception, like aura itself, may be reincorporated into experience via the optical unconscious, then we may invest in animals their capacity to return the gaze (even if only by looking at reproduced images of them) and thus feel ourselves seen.²³

In a sequence towards the end we particularly ‘feel ourselves seen’. The head keeper says:

Everyone drains her. She is drained by curiosity. People drain her, see. And she displays something, something very limited. She has seen it all. She has seen all of us already. And we all merge.

Nenette lies in her bed of straw seemingly asleep, but then we notice her eyes are open. She is bored. In relation to Agamben’s concept of the gesture, Nenette’s life is one long gesture. ‘What characterizes gesture is that in it nothing is being produced or acted, but rather something is being endured and supported.’²⁴ The keeper explains that Nenette is essentially like an actor in a film to which there is no end.

And then the quality of her idleness makes me think of an exercise in an acting class. The space is yours, just be there... In general, that’s a very difficult exercise, for someone put in that situation and watched by others. But she does it with astounding virtuosity. You can follow her inch by inch in her acts that are all linked to each other by idleness and inaction. She is not going to do anything to amaze us. She won’t do anything to cast off that idleness. She is fully there, that’s all.

At this moment Philibert depicts Nenette lying in her straw as if contemplating the keeper’s words. Certainly she is embodying the ‘inaction’ of which he speaks. ‘She is fully there, that’s all’, he says. At this moment Nenette raises her eyebrows and looks into the space before her. She looks out and past our gaze. What else can she do – she is ‘fully there’ but she is also a captive. At this particular moment I feel myself being seen as I look at Nenette from my privileged place of freedom in the cinema. I am made fully aware by Nenette’s recorded glance that she has endured a tortured existence. Nenette is not playing a part. She cannot leave at the end of the show.

In his essay *The Animal That Therefore I Am* Derrida discusses his embarrassment at being caught naked by the gaze of the animal, such as his cat. He is referring literally and symbolically to his nakedness. His unease is due to his failure to recognise himself as an animal.

Crossing borders or the ends of man I come or surrender to the animal – to the animal in itself, to the animal in me and the animal at unease with itself, to the man about which Nietzsche said...something to the effect that it was an as yet undetermined animal, an animal lacking in itself.²⁵

He sees the gaze of the animal in various modes – ‘insistent’, ‘a benevolent or pitiless gaze, surprised or cognizant’.²⁶ He is ashamed because he is naked, just as the animal is naked. The difference is that in the view of philosophy ‘the property unique to animals and what in the final analysis distinguishes them from man, is their being naked without knowing it, in short without consciousness of good and evil’.²⁷ Derrida asks what happens when he feels himself seen by ‘the eyes of the other’.

As with every bottomless gaze, as with the eyes of the other, the gaze called animal offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man, that is to say the bordercrossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself thereby calling himself by the name that he believes he gives himself.²⁸

In the moment when Nenette is shown staring into the camera/eyes of the viewer from her place in the zoo enclosure where she endures unimaginable boredom she addresses ‘the abyssal limit of the human’, the liminal space or bordercrossing at which point the human has attempted to define itself as completely different from the animal. The human animal could not endure such boredom; all other animals must endure – they have no choice. Nenette’s gaze reflects Derrida’s ‘abyssal limit’, the refusal to fully recognise the animal within the human.

In this moment the film’s exploration of Nenette’s life, her history, physicality, emotions and bodily presence, all come together to form a tangible impression; a memory to take away which is too strong to forget. The keeper continues:

[a]nd there are marks too on the wall, of scratches of annoyance or in any case, of a surge of energy. There must be times when she can no longer stand this state, her condition. It’s the realm of ‘doing nothing’. She spends her life doing nothing.

Another keeper remarks that

[a]ll of us working in zoos share an inner sense of deep-seated guilt.... She hasn’t had it easy. She’s an old lady now.... She’s always had her doleful side.

Yet another explains:

Nenette is a victim of her rarity. Can we avoid imagining for her what she is imagining. We do it all the time. I keep telling myself that she could be saying, 'Can't they give me a break?' 'When are they going to leave me alone?'

Scholars such as Walter Benjamin, Jean-Paul Satre, and Susan Sontag have written on boredom (*ennui*, or *malaise* as it came to be known in the mid-19th century) as a condition of modernity in relation to the human. Very little has been said by film theorists about the boredom of captive animals in modernity, imprisoned in public zoos (also a construct of modernity). How does the animal endure? Should film theorists also seriously consider the topic of human/animal/screen spectatorship, or is film theory too deeply entangled in its anthropocentric roots? One important approach is Anat's Pick's concept of 'cine-zoos' in which she explores the way in which film 'defies dominant humanist watching habits'.²⁹

Clearly the keepers who have looked after Nenette through her long years of captivity feel themselves caught in her gaze. They are aware of her long hours of idleness, her attempts at amusing herself, her ventures into parody, her humour and fondness for tea. Philibert sets out to capture the everyday reality of Nenette's life as well as the toll this enacts on her. He depicts Nenette's quiet moments, her seeming boredom, and the repetitious nature of her daily activities. Sometimes Nenette sits with a blue quilt pulled around her head and shoulders. We watch her listening to the sounds of visitors talking, laughing – the human noises that echo in the air around her. We become aware that she must have listened to these same sounds for almost all of her life and that she has sat there staring out at the glass for over 40 years. Through film's power to capture everyday reality and the director's desire to present these moments to the viewer we feel ourselves seen by the animal. These moments of communication between species make us aware that we too are animals and that all species – not just the human – deserve more than a bare existence.

Notes

1. Sagan & Druyan 1992, p. 373.
2. Agamben 2004.
3. Oliver 2009.
4. Deleuze & Guattari 2004.
5. Shapiro & DeMello 2010.

6. Wolfe 2003, p. 6.
7. Malamud 2012, p. 88.
8. Berger 1984, p. 26.
9. Ibid., p. 3.
10. Ibid., p. 4.
11. Ibid., p.10.
12. Norris 1985, p. 5.
13. Agamben 2000, p. 56.
14. Ibid., p. 59.
15. Derrida 2002.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Pick 2011, p. 193.
20. Sobchack 1992.
21. Marks 2000, pp.162-171.
22. Oliver 2009, p. 131.
23. Fay 2008.
24. Agamben 2000, p. 57.
25. Derrida 2002.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Pick 2011, p. 19.

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