# 08

University of Graz

Manuela Neuwirth

# Magnanimality: Aristocratic Animals and the Great Chain of Being from Naturalism to Postmodernism

MANUELA NEUWIRTH



# Magnanimality: Aristocratic Animals and the Great Chain of Being from Naturalism to Postmodernism

Even though the lives of nonhuman animals and humans have always been linked, the study of these interactions has only received critical attention in the field of Animal Studies in recent decades. This seems surprising, considering the wealth of animal representations in human culture. The present paper takes this magnitude of animal portrayals literally to mean not only the great number of animal representations in literary and cultural texts, but the scale of these portrayals, presenting an analysis of what I call 'magnanimality', i.e. majestic animal metaphors.

In a New Historicist approach, I trace the philosophical theory of the Great Chain of Being – a concept of medieval Christianity suggesting a strict hierarchy of all life – in American texts ranging from the late 19th up to the late 20th century. Examining animal metaphors linked to aristocracy and nobility, I strive to answer the questions why and to what end a religious, pre-Enlightenment concept that seems at odds with American national narratives is repeatedly employed in contemporary literary and cultural texts. I use texts from different time periods and genres, e.g. E.T. Seton's short story *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw*, Jack London's novella *The Call of the Wild* as well as contemporary movies. I argue that the Great Chain of Being, applied to modern American texts, bridges the human-animal divide by elevating the individual nonrational being and forming a continuity between various species.

KEYWORDS

**Animal Studies, Anthropomorphism, Aristocracy, Great Chain of Being**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The lives of nonhuman animals and humans have always been inextricably linked, yet the study of the interactions between these two categories of animals has only received critical attention in the interdisciplinary field of Animal Studies in recent decades (cf. DeMello 2012). This seems surprising, considering "the *magnitude* of animal representations, symbols, stories, and their actual physical presence in human societies and culture" (DeMello 2012, 5, my emphasis). The present paper takes the above statement and its stress on magnitude literally, to mean not only the sheer wealth of animal representations in literary and cultural texts, but the scale of these portrayals, presenting an analysis of what I call 'majestic animal metaphors'. It takes the ancient philosophical concept of the *scala naturae* (lat. literally "ladder/stairway of nature"), which suggests a strict hierarchy of all matter, as its point of departure. The *scala naturae* was further developed in the Great Chain of Being, a theological theory universally accepted from the Middle Ages to the 18th century. Following the New Historicist approach, my paper traces the Great Chain of Being in American texts produced between the late 19th and the late 20th century. Placing emphasis on the construction of animal metaphors built on notions of aristocracy and nobility, it explores a number of questions. Why is the Great Chain of Being – a religious, pre-Enlightenment concept that seems inherently at odds with American national ideals and narratives – repeatedly utilized in contemporary literary and cultural texts? Can these 'majestic metaphors' be interpreted as a technique of anthropomorphization, i.e. of attributing human features to animals? If so, do these metaphors serve to underline a hierarchical categorization, or do they, in fact, bridge the human-animal gap? If, as Margo DeMello asserts, "animals exist as mirrors for human thought; they allow us to […] classify ourselves and others" (2012, 14), what conclusions may be drawn from the classification of these fictional aristocratic animals, from their destruction or persistence?

The analysis of American texts from different time periods and genres, i.e. E.T. Seton's *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* (1898), Jack London's *The Call of the Wild (*1903), as well as the original *King Kong* movie (1933) and the contemporary Disney film *The Lion King* (1994), strives to provide answers to the above questions. I argue that the Great Chain of Being, applied to modern American texts, may tentatively bridge the human-animal gap by elevating the individual nonrational being and forming a continuity between various species.

## 2. ANIMAL STUDIES AND THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING REVISITED

The notion of arrangement, strict classification and ordering of natural earthly beings goes as far back as the Bible. Randy Malamud shows that the story of Noah's Ark, in its emphasis on God's and Noah's dominion over the animals and its presentation of an arrangement of the animals on the ark by kind, marks "the beginning of a tradition of collecting and organizing that runs through Aristotle, Linnaeus and Buffon" (2012, 15). The concept of organizing nature as a ladder, of a hierarchical order of animals, thus finds its beginnings in religious scriptures as well as in Platonian and Aristotelian thought, which described "the idea of arranging all animals in a single graded *scala naturae* according to their degree of 'perfection'" (Lovejoy 1970, 58). The ancient theory of the *scala naturae* would later form the basis of the Great Chain of Being, a concept universally accepted from the Middle Ages to the 18th century, which Arthur O. Lovejoy explicates thus:

> [T]he conception of the universe as a 'Great Chain of Being,' composed of an immense, or […] infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents […] through 'every possible' grade up to […] the highest possible kind of creature (1970, 59).

Clearly, the notion of hierarchy from less complex, nonrational, to more sophisticated, rational beings at the heart of the above quote is directly taken over from the Classical *scala naturae*. However, the existence of "immense or infinite" subdivisions and links are German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's significant additions to the theory. According to Laurence Carlin's interpretation (2000), Leibniz, in applying his 'law of continuity' to the Great Chain of Being, suggests that all beings are placed on a single scale of ordering of perfection, establishing a link between them closer than a mere top-to-bottom classification would allow for:

> [I]t is necessary that all the orders of natural beings form but a single chain in which different classes like so many links clasp one another so firmly that it is impossible for the senses or the imagination to fix the exact point where one begins or ends: all the species […] are bound to be ambiguous and endowed with characteristics connected equally well to neighboring species (Leibniz quoted in Carlin 2000, 134).

Superficially seen, this argumentation seems to contradict Leibniz's assertion that rational creatures form a separate class of created beings. However, it is important to keep in mind that Leibniz takes the distinction between rational and nonrational substances down to the individual and is thus able to claim that the "well-trained soul of a beast is either nearly as perfect as, or more perfect than […] the soul of a rational infant" (Carlin 2000, 141). Thus, the capacities for reflection and perception remain the

distinguishing features of humans, but the distinction between rationals and nonrationals lies in individual degree, not in universal kind. This is best understood in repeating the principles of hierarchical ordering:

(a) Every created being has a certain degree of perfection.
(b) With respect to degree of perfection, no two created beings are exactly alike.
(c) The degrees of perfection of created beings form a continuous series (i.e. there is no gap anywhere in the series) ranging from less perfect beings to more perfect beings (Carlin 2000, 131).

Figure 1. Great Chain of Being: Strict hierarchical order from God (top) to inanimates (bottom) and within strata (Wikimedia Commons 2014)

In this way, Leibniz's understanding of the Great Chain of Being allows the interpretation that a nonrational being, depending on its individual degree of perfection, may occupy a place above a rational creature in the chain of being, the two forming a continuous gradation. Thus, the strict hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being (see Figure 1), with its divisions and subdivisions ranging from God over angels, kings, commoners to different kinds of animals and lastly, inanimate entities such as plants and minerals, is mitigated to a certain degree.

Running through these constructions of animals in biblical and philosophical texts are elements of dominion and control that come with the act of classification: "Structuring the natural world meshes with the structure of *imperial* power" (Malamud 2012, 125, my emphasis). The ideological underpinnings of this power are echoed in DeMello's assertion that "animals are assigned to human categories" in "politically-charged classifications" (2012, 10); the power structures at work that have established the human-animal dichotomy in the distant past are upholding it up to this day.

The texts analyzed in the paper at hand are testament to the fact that seemingly outdated concepts, such as the Great Chain of Being, are still at the basis of cultural representations in the late 20th century. Considering Leibniz's expansion of the theory to present a more inclusive picture of human-animal relations and DeMello's supposition that "if we were to grant a continuity among the various species, then the [arbitrary boundary between human and nonhuman animals] would be harder to justify" (2012, 16), the implications of these hierarchical animal representations are not as clear-cut as it might at first appear. The portrayal of animals as majestic figures might be interpreted in opposing ways: on the one hand, seeing as animals are used to mirror human societal structures, this representation could be viewed as perpetuating existing social hierarchies (cf. DeMello 2012). On the other hand, the portrayal of animals as royal characters might be read as a powerful technique of anthropomorphization, which, in fact, posits the animal higher up on the ladder of beings and supplies it with, in Leibniz's terminology, a higher degree of perfection. In this, the animal almost becomes a liminal[1] figure, bridging the gaps between hierarchical strata, until it becomes "impossible for the senses or the imagination to fix the exact point where one begins or ends" (Leibniz quoted in Carlin 2000, 134).

Crucial in determining which theory of interpretation to favor is the historical and cultural context of these animal representations. For this reason, the following textual analysis focuses on literary and filmic examples from similar and different time periods. What these texts share is their creation in the common national/cultural framework of the United States. In order to arrive at a starting point for the analysis, the sensitive status of the concept of aristocracy within the American cultural imaginary needs to be examined.

## 3. MAJESTIC METAPHORS AND NATIONAL NARRATIVES

Considering the process of nation-building in the United States and the national ideals of egalitarianism and democracy the country is built on, American society's attitude to notions of class consciousness and nobility can be termed problematic at best. Writing from the beginning of the postmodernist period, Oscar Mandel, in his 1958 controversial article on *Nobility in the United States*, purports that "the want of a feeling for aristocracy […] constitutes the most signal failure of the American spirit" (1958, 197). In light of what he perceives as the failure of democracy and

[1] The Oxford English Dictionary defines liminal as "occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold."

egalitarianism in supporting high art and intellectual endeavors, leading to loss of culture and of "moral and aesthetic leadership" (Mandel 1958, 209), he calls for a re-examination of American egalitarianism and a reframing of the ideas of hierarchy and aristocracy.

In his assertions, Mandel interestingly employs a rhetorical frame that is very similar to the ideas at the basis of American national narratives. For example, he repeatedly claims that "the feeling for aristocracy is above all a hope" (1958, 198) and stresses future-directedness and elements of human possibility and betterment. In this, his understanding of aristocracy can be seen as much closer to, for instance, the American Dream, which is also based on a hope for the future, yet quintessentially egalitarian. Furthermore, Mandel suggests that "the feeling of aristocracy is […] the vision of a fusion of every nobility" (1958, 204), a statement which, in its rhetoric, could be interpreted as having the same origin as the seemingly disconnected notion of the 'melting pot'. Certainly, in Mandel, this fusion, even in its ideal form, creates a class rather than a classless structure. In this, it is opposed to Carlin's interpretation of Leibniz's expansion of the Great Chain of Being, which sees individual distinctness and continuity of beings rather than strict class distinction and fusion on an individual level.

Taking these intersections of such opposing societal structures as aristocracy and democracy built on ideals of egalitarianism and social justice into consideration, the representation of animals as kings in American narratives might seem less paradoxical.

## 4. MAGNANIMALITY – METAPHORICAL AND LITERAL ANIMAL GREATNESS

As we are surrounded by animal representations (DeMello 2012), we are similarly accustomed to (yet mostly unaware of) animals being portrayed as aristocratic. Movies such as *The Aristocats* (1970), *Monkey Kingdom* (2015), *Empire of the Ant*s (1977), *Kingdom of the Spiders* (1977), and *King Cobra* (1999) are only a few examples of metaphorical animal aristocracy. Greatness, metaphorical and/or literal, is commonly used to represent the "monstrous other" in horror movies (Malamud 2012, 75). Likewise, we are generically referring to the 'animal kingdom' to denote the wild that is inhabited by undomesticated animals. Furthermore, we structure animals on an arbitrarily constructed hierarchical scheme that ranks certain species, such as lions and eagles, in superior positions. These animals are not only predators, but are also wild and cannot be domesticated, making for poor pet material. Their status as predators puts them, not only metaphorically, high on the Great Chain of Being, but also literally on top of the food chain. Lions and eagles are exclusively connoted as male, just as the animals

analyzed in the four chosen texts in this paper are all masculine.

The representations of the majestic animals in the texts at hand function on a metaphorical, as well as on a literal level. Literally, Kong from the 1933 King Kong movie is a giant ape; Buck, from London's 1903 novella *The Call of the Wild*, is described as "larger than the largest of the breed" (London 1949, 99) while the eponymous protagonist in E.T. Seton's story *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* is "a giant among wolves" (Seton 1977, 6). Solely Simba's physical appearance in the 1994 Disney film *The Lion King* is not commented on as extraordinary. However, seeing as Simba is surrounded by different, smaller species of animals (such as hornbill Zazu, meerkat Timon, warthog Pumbaa), he still appears as the leader in size.

On a metaphorical level, all animal characters are (repeatedly) referred to as kings; in the cases of Kong, Lobo and Simba even so in the very title of the work. Interestingly, the giant gorilla is only once explicitly denoted as king, whereas references to the animal characters' noble status abound in the remaining texts: Buck is called a "sated aristocrat" and "country gentleman" (London 1949, 24); Lobo a "fallen despot" (Seton 1977, 17), "tyrant" (Seton 1977, 18), "kingwolf" (Seton 1977, 19).

## 4.1 ARISTOCRATIC ANIMALS: ANTHROPOMORPHIZATION THROUGH ARISTOCRACY

The use of the king metaphor in *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw, The Call of the Wild, King Kong,* and *The Lion King* establishes the animal characters as protagonists of the respective texts, a role usually reserved for human figures. Specifically, the expositions of Seton's short story and London's novella highlight the extraordinary status of these animals, their positions as kings being a defining feature of their identities. *The Call of the Wild* even shifts the narrative perspective to the animal protagonist, having the reader experience the story from Buck's point of view. In contrast, Seton's narrative is told from the narrator's perspective with Lobo as a focalizer. However, the narrator figure projects feelings onto the king wolf throughout the text and occasionally even gives Lobo a voice: "Lobo took no part in the killing – after having thrown the victim, he seemed to say, 'Now, why could not some of you have done that at once without wasting so much time?'" (London 1949, 8), "'Blanca, Blanca!' he seemed to call." (London 1949, 16).

In contrast, Kong is, in his voicelessness, mostly anthropomorphized through his facial features and gestures. The native islanders treat him as a king, or even as a God, organizing elaborate performances in his honor and providing a ritual offering in the form of a woman. Kong's approach is marked by the beating of a drum, a practice similar to the one in feudal

systems. One defining element of anthropomorphization that both *King Kong* and *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* share is their protagonists' capacity for love. The former even presents a case of interspecies attraction. In both texts, it is the animal figure's love for and loyalty to another creature that sets his downfall in motion. Jopi Nyman points to the underlying racial issues and establishes that Lobo represents a racialized Other, that "by desiring [white] Blanca, [Lobo] transgresses the boundaries of his racialized identity; for a grey [Mexican] wolf to desire whiteness is […] considered inappropriate" (2004, 82). The same statements can be made about Kong and his desire for a white woman. What an effective tool of anthropomorphization human-like love is can be deducted from Dan Whitehead's poignant observation that audiences, despite the unambiguous representation of Kong as a monster, sympathized with the giant gorilla: "We feel for him, the big clumsy lug who can't articulate his feelings for the woman he adores" (2012, 161).

What Kong's likeable clumsiness does to firmly anthropomorphize him in the horror movie is achieved in the Disney film through Simba's childlike perspective: similar to a human child, he is naive and too trustworthy, easily excited and scared and too proud (of his status as future king). His guilt at his father's death and later uncertainty at the idea of becoming king further point to his humanity.

Similar human features can be found in Buck's loyalty to his master and Lobo's loyalty to Blanca. Andrew C. Isenberg even claims that "it is Lobo's humanity that finally dooms him" (2002, 51). Another possible interpretation is that the reason for Lobo's downfall is his liminal status as a 'loup-garou' – a werewolf. His sagacity and cunning that go beyond that of an ordinary animal as well as the mythical aura surrounding him point to his special status. Likewise, Kong being a gorilla may be read as being closer to man, as primates share most of their genes with humans: "That Cooper and his producer Ernest Schoedsack chose a gorilla says a lot about how relatable they wanted their monster to be" (Whitehead 2002, 160). Especially considering Kong's inability to speak, his human-like hands and eyes, his gestures and facial expressions play an important role in his anthropomorphization.

Another way in which these majestic figures transgress borders between human and animal is in their location between civilization and wilderness. Despite their humanlike features, it is their wildness that forms the basis of their autonomy and acts as an indicator of their survival or death, as the next subchapter will show.

## 4.2 THE NOBLE SAVAGE: WILDNESS, AUTHORITY, AND AUTONOMY

As mentioned earlier, animals appropriated for 'majestic metaphors' are typically undomesticated, male predators. This description fits all animal characters analyzed, save for Buck who is, at least at the beginning of the novella, a domestic dog. However, his atavistic[2] notions actually transform him into a wolf in the course of the story. Isenberg asserts that "Seton and London took the most 'savage' contemporary subjects for their work" (2002, 51). While Buck is thus following the call of the wild, moving from civilization to wilderness, this movement is reversed in *The Lion King, King Kong* and *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw:* Simba grows up in the unknown wild far from his pack, then returns to save his kingdom as an adult, while Lobo and Kong are captured and die in civilization. They become noble savages in a different sense of the word, with 'noble' connoting an aristocratic background. Judging from Buck's persistence and Kong's and Lobo's destruction, the notion of savagery and wildness is at the basis of aristocratic autonomy. Following Jacques Derrida's statement that "authority and autonomy […] are […] attributed to the man […] rather than to the woman, and to the woman rather than the animal" (1991, 114), the autonomy and authority of majestic animals again point to these individual, male animal characters surpassing the established hierarchy, even transcending a being "naturally" more perfect in the understanding of the Great Chain of Being: the female human.

The authority of the characters in question is clearly marked through textual aesthetics: in *The Lion King*, the king and his family live above the other animals and present themselves (similar to royal families on balconies) on the ledge of Pride Rock, overlooking the kingdom and the other animals in the valley below (4:09). The other animals continually refer to Simba's father as "Your Majesty" and present themselves as loyal subjects. The assortment of animal figures present different strata, from the leading lions to the advisor figure Zazu (a hornbill) from whom a lion still would not take orders (10:10), down to the aggressive and inane hyenas. This structuring could be said to present an appropriation of the Great Chain of Being in its basic form, the different strata hardly interlinked; the only individual whose degree of perfection does not match his original level is Simba's corrupt uncle who usurps the throne. He can thus be seen as an example of differentiation within a stratum.

Similar to the animals in the valley bowing down to the lions on Pride Rock in *The Lion King* (4:09), the wolves in *The Call of the Wild* acknowledge Buck's preeminence: "They were awed, so still and large he stood" (London 1949, 106). The novella, then, comes full-circle on the

[2] The Oxford English Dictionary defines atavism as "recurrence of traits of an ancestor in a subsequent generation." In Buck's case, this refers to his wolf instincts, the wolf being the dog's direct ancestor.

notion of leadership/authority: while Buck had already been the "king over all creeping, crawling, flying things […] humans included" (London 1949, 102) at the beginning, at the end of the novella "he may be seen running at the head of the pack through the pale moonlight […], leaping gigantic above his fellows, his great throat a-bellow as he sings a song of the younger world" (London 1949, 108). Therefore, Buck establishes himself as the ultimate royal ruler, having developed from a king in civilization to a king in the wilderness. The following passage illustrates Leibniz's idea on the individual differences in degree of perfection leading to a nonrational being occupying a place above a rational creature: "He had killed man, the *noblest* game of all […] They had died so easily. It was harder to kill a husky dog than them. They were no match at all, were it not for their arrows and spears and clubs" (London 1949, 105, my emphasis). In this manner, elevating the individual nonrational being above the rational becomes an aristocratic enterprise.

## 4.3 THE FATE OF FEUDAL ANIMALS

Whereas Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* as well as Disney's *The Lion King* present majestic animal figures surviving and even thriving in the wilderness, Ernest Thompson Seton's *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* and Cooper and Schoedsack's *King Kong* see the animal protagonists perishing in civilization.

Lobo is not killed by humans, but dies of a broken heart, whereas Kong is shot while climbing New York's Empire State Building. The symbolism here is self-evident – the animal king, after abduction and subjugation at the hands of sensationalist filmmakers, climbs back to powerful status, threatening to make the 'empire' his. Worthy of note is that the sequel *King Kong* (1976) saw Kong climbing the World Trade Center instead of the Empire State Building (Whitehead 2012). These buildings symbolize aristocratic and economic power and are threatened by the invasion of the wild, the gigantic, the animal Other (also see *King Kong* 2005 and *Kong: Skull Island* 2017 for comparison).

Buck's survival and Kong's and Lobo's deaths clearly point to the interpretation that the notions of aristocracy and freedom/autonomy are inextricably linked in the establishment of 'majestic metaphors': an unfree, captured king is, it seems, no king at all. Having established himself as the ultimate king of his natural kingdom by defeating T-Rex, Kong is killed in the human sphere of the city. What can be deducted is that the ordering according to the Great Chain of Being does not transpose into the human sphere without threatening existing human-human societal structures.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present paper has examined the representations of 'majestic animals' in four generically and historically different American texts using the pre-Enlightenment concept of the Great Chain of Being. In one of its interpretations by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, stressing continuity and interlinks between the hierarchical strata, it allows for a tentative bridging of the human-animal gap, at least on an individual level

.

The examined literary and cinematic texts provided these individual cases that proved that the representation of animals as kings on a literal and metaphorical level may be seen as elevating the animal above rational creatures and providing continuity within strata.

These 'majestic metaphors' can thus not only be seen as an efficient means of anthropomorphization; they provide insight into not only human-animal, but human-human power structures as well. Although the power inequalities at the basis of all classifying cannot be completely neglected, due to its limited scope, this paper abstains from wider ideological interpretations unmasking human-human power relations. However, as Leibniz's expansion of the original concept of the Great Chain of Being under consideration of American national narratives and concepts of nobility and aristocracy has shown, a modification of long-established dichotomies seems possible.

## REFERENCE LIST

Carlin, Laurence. 2000. "Leibniz's Great Chain of Being." *Studia Leibnitiana* 32(2): 131–150. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40694364.

DeMello, Margo. 2012. *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies.* New York, NY et al.: Columbia University Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1991. "'Eating Well' or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." In *Who Comes after the Subject?,* edited by Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy, 96–119. New York: Routledge.

Isenberg, Andrew C. 2002. "The Moral Ecology of Wildlife." In *Representing Animals,* edited by Nigel Rothfels, 48–64. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

London, Jack. 1949 [1903]. *The Call of the Wild*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. 1970. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Malamud, Randy. 2012. *An Introduction to Animals and Visual Culture*. Houndmills, Basingstoke et al.: Palgrave Macmillan

.

Mandel, Oscar. 1958. "Nobility and the United States." *The American Scholar* 27(2): 197–212. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41208391.

Nyman, Jopi, ed. 2004. *Animal Magic: Essays on Animals in the American Imagination.* Joensuu: Joensuun Yliopisto, Humanistinen Tiedekunta.

Oxford Living Dictionaries. "Atavism." Accessed 20 April 2019. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/atavism

Oxford Living Dictionaries. "Liminal." Accessed 19 April 2019. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/liminal

Seton, Ernest Thompson. 1977 [1898]. "Lobo, the King of Currumpaw." In *Wild Animals I Have Known*, by Ernest Thompson Seton, 6–19. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Whitehead, Dan. 2012. Tooth and Claw: *A Field Guide to 'Nature Run Amok' Horror Movies.* Sine locum: Create Space.

Wikimedia Commons. 2014. *Great Chain of Being*, by Diego de Valadés. Available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Great_Chain_of_Being_(1579).jpg.

**VISUAL MEDIA**

*The Aristocats.* 1970. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Performances by Phil Harris (voice), Eva Gabor (voice), Sterling Holloway (voice). Disney.

*Empire of the Ants.* 1977. Directed by Bert I. Gordon. Performances by Joan Collins, Robert Lansing, John David Carson. American International Pictures.

*Kingdom of the Spiders*. 1977. Directed by William Girdler. Performances by William Shatner, Tiffany Bolling, Woody Strode. Dimension Pictures.

*King Cobra.* 1999. Directed by David Hillenbrand, Scott Hillenbrand. Performances by Pat Morita, Scott Hillenbrand, Casey Fallo. United Artists.

*King Kong.* 1933. Directed by Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack. Performances by Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, Bruce Cabot. Radio Pictures.

*King Kong.* 1976. Directed by John Guillermin. Performances by Jeff Bridges, Charles Grodin, Jessica Lange. Paramount Pictures.

*King Kong.* 2005. Directed by Peter Jackson. Performances by Naomi Watts, Adrien Brody, Jack Black. Universal Pictures.

*Kong: Skull Island.* 2017. Directed by Jordan Vogt-Roberts. Performances by Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson, Brie Larson. Warner Brothers.

*The Lion King.* 1994. Directed by Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff. Performances by Matthew Broderick (voice), Jonathan Taylor Thomas (voice), James Earl Jones (voice). Disney.

*Monkey Kingdom.* 2015. Directed by Mark Linfield, Alastair Fothergill. Performance by Tina Fey (voice). Disney.