„Kwartalnik Filmowy" no. 131 (2025)
ISSN: 0452-9502 (Print) ISSN: 2719-2725 (Online)
https://doi.org/10.36744/kf.4495

Original research article; reviewed material

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Layers of Meaning, Layers of Earth: Necro-Eco-Mythical Perspectives and Traces of the Past in Alice Rohrwacher's *La Chimera*

Keywords:
ecology in cinema;
nature in film;
necrohumanities;
Italian cinema

Abstract
The authors analyse the film *La Chimera*, focusing on its numerous vegetal and animal motifs, as well as its representations of soil and graves. They interpret the film as a continuation of Alice Rohrwacher's ecological cinema, placing it within a context of post-anthropocentric and necrohumanist thought. They argue that *La Chimera* displays a distinctive ecological sensibility – one that intertwines mythological and metaphysical references with a critique of exploitation that encompasses both human and non-human realms. The film rejects the traditional idealisation of the Italian landscape and draws upon the legacy of neorealism – not understood as a formal style, but rather as an ethical perspective – to depict the complex relationships between the worlds of the living, the dead, nature, and memory. *La Chimera* constitutes a compelling example of ecological cinema that does not sever ties with the cultural tradition, but instead integrates diverse perspectives and motifs into a chimeric vision: necrologic, mythical, and politically resonant.

Słowa kluczowe:
ekologia w kinie;
natura w filmie;
nekrohumanistyka;
kino włoskie

Abstrakt

Warstwy znaczeń, warstwy ziemi. Perspektywy nekro-eko-mityczne i ślady przeszłości w filmie Alice Rohrwacher *La Chimera*

W artykule autorzy analizują film *La chimera*, zwracając uwagę na liczne roślinne i zwierzęce motywy, jak również obrazowanie gleby i grobów. Interpretują go jako kontynuację ekologicznego kina Alice Rohrwacher i ukazują w szerszym kontekście refleksji postantropocentrycznej i nekrohumanistycznej. Argumentują, że *La Chimera* wykazuje charakterystyczną wrażliwość ekologiczną – łączącą odniesienia mitologiczne i metafizyczne z krytyką eksploatacji obejmującej zarówno sferę ludzką, jak i pozaludzką. Analizują sposób, w jaki film odrzuca tradycyjną idealizację włoskiego pejzażu i czerpie z dziedzictwa neorealizmu (rozumianego nie jako styl formalny, lecz jako perspektywa etyczna), by przedstawić złożone relacje łączące światy żywych, umarłych, przyrody i pamięci. Ich zdaniem *La Chimera* stanowi intrygujący przykład kina ekologicznego, które nie zrywa z tradycją kulturową, lecz łączy różnorodne perspektywy i motywy w chimerycznej wizji: nekrologicznej, mitycznej i politycznie aktualnej.

Article history
Received: 2025.06.02; reviewed: 2025.07.08; accepted: 2025.08.05; published: 2025.09.30

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Alice Rohrwacher's *La Chimera* (2023) explores the human relationship not only with other people but also with the world as a whole – nature, history, and cultural memory. Rohrwacher encourages the viewer to reflect on how all these elements intertwine and function as resources in need of recognition and care. The film's plot revolves around Arthur (Josh O'Connor), a man who reunites with a merry gang of *tombaroli* (tomb raiders) after his release from prison. The story unfolds in the 1980s in the land of Etruria, a historical region covering present-day Tuscany, northern Lazio, and western Umbria, once inhabited by the Etruscans and still rich in traces of their ancient civilization. Arthur possesses a unique gift: the ability to locate ancient burial sites. He also searches for his beloved Beniamina (Yile Vianello), the missing daughter of Flora (Isabella Rossellini). While visiting Flora, Arthur meets Italia (Carol Duarte), who pretends to take singing lessons from her but in fact stays in the palace for other reasons.

The erudition of *La Chimera* evokes a wide range of associations and opens multiple interpretive pathways. Because of the way the past is made present in the story, hauntology can serve as a fruitful approach; however, we focus on the numerous images of non-human beings, which invite an ecological reading. Therefore, in this article, we interpret *La Chimera* as a significant continuation of Rohrwacher's ecological cinema.

According to Laura Di Bianco, *ecocinema places the relationship between humans, nonhumans, and the environment at the centre of film narration. As an earth-centred approach rather than an anthropocentric one, ecocinema is ethically charged and political, offering a bioegalitarian view of the world while denying human moral preeminence*.[1] Without severing ties with humanist traditions or morally engaged narratives, *La Chimera* provides a layered and multifaceted aesthetic and thematic configuration, simultaneously eliciting ecological, mythical, and historical sensibilities. Its groundedness in the earth – both literal and metaphorical – makes it a compelling case for a hybrid, ecologically attuned reading that does not exclude more traditional approaches. To analyse *La Chimera*'s various motifs of death, mourning, burial, the earth, and the relationship between the human and the non-human, we combine ecocritical ideas with reflections on myths, while also introducing a necrohumanist perspective.

Beginning with the film's connections to the tradition of Italian neorealism, we move through its mythological components toward a reading that foregrounds its ecological and necrohumanist dimensions. The title *La Chimera* itself proves deeply meaningful for our analysis: in a sense, the film is a chimera – neither purely realist nor fully metaphysical, but a hybrid form that combines mythology, ecology, and history. Through this lens, Rohrwacher's film blurs the boundaries between the human and the non-human, articulating a relational ontology in which symbolic and material dimensions co-constitute a post-anthropocentric reality.

La Chimera in the Landscape of the Italian Cinematic Tradition

Critical discourse on Rohrwacher's film often positions it within the framework of Italian neorealism. Furthermore, critics frequently juxtapose the director's work with the aesthetic approach of Pier Paolo Pasolini. Undoubtedly, *La Chimera,* viewed *in the light of neorealism*,[2] consciously engages with themes, motifs, and aesthetics characteristic of the enduring (post)neorealist[3] tradition in Italian cinema, meeting all the *external requirements*[4] of neorealism. Rohrwacher blends nonprofessional actors with professionals, shoots on 35mm and 16mm film in authentic locations, and centres her narrative on marginalised workingclass protagonists whose livelihood depends on grave robbing. However, their illicit trade remains mediated by the wealthy elite, who pay a pittance for priceless artefacts – a dynamic of exploitation that echoes the social critique at the heart of neorealism. The film's historical setting – the 1980s, roughly forty years in the past – is equally telling: Rohrwacher revisits a liminal moment in Italian history, poised between lingering rural traditions and the full onset of Americanisation, digitalisation, and global consumer culture. She returns to a postneorealist Italy still marked by local rituals and communal rhythms. This sensibility crystallises in the film's evocation of the Epiphany procession of January 6th, in which men dress as the Befana, a folkloric witch who brings gifts to children. By weaving this carnivalesque, timesuspended ritual into her narrative, Rohrwacher not only invokes an Italy on the cusp of irrevocable change but also affirms her commitment to a cinema that seeks to preserve lived traditions while interrogating the social forces that threaten to erase them.

This deliberate engagement with the tropes and social sensibilities of (post) neorealism inevitably raises the question of what "neorealism" itself signifies – a question that has long haunted the historiography of the movement, as Karl Schoonover reminds us.[5] Neorealism remains a contested concept, and recent scholarship demonstrates that almost all of its traditional socio-historical and aesthetic features have been challenged. For instance, Schoonover highlights the influence of the broader international cultural and political context of the 'North Atlantic alliance' during the neorealist shift in Italian cinema. He does not approach neorealism merely as an Italian phenomenon; instead, he reinterprets it in a post-national framework, foregrounding the centrality of the suffering body within what he terms the 'brutal humanism'[6] defining a new postwar sensibility. From this perspective, neorealism emerges less as a national project and more as a global and international movement – albeit one marked by specific political aspirations and subsequent disillusionments. These range from the theoretical reflections of André Bazin, through the specific position of bystanders in neorealist optics,[7] to the eventual failures of post-neorealism's visual mode in later decades.[8]

This problem of definition, articulated in Schoonover's recent, transnational re-reading, already plays a central role in Millicent Marcus's seminal study. While she shares Schoonover's view that neorealism cannot be reduced to a fixed set of stylistic conventions or thematic constants, Marcus emphasises a different aspect: the movement's engagement with the spectator and with questions of cinematic

representation. For Marcus, neorealism's connection to "material" or "objective" reality remains tenuous and fluid; no singular, definitive model exists. Rather, the movement manifests a particular artistic approach – one that investigates the relationship between art and reality and, consequently, the filmmaker's objectives. Neorealism is, and has always been, relational – shaped in dialogue with other dominant cinematic conventions of its time and continually reimagined through distinctive artistic sensibilities and ethical imperatives. Marcus captures this dynamic nature of neorealism as follows: *The inescapable conclusion is that all realism is predicated on illusions – illusions that, however, find their ultimate justification in their service to a higher truth: the revelation of the world order in a way that would otherwise escape our unaided notice*.[9] Ultimately, neorealism functions less as a stylistic framework than as a perspective – one propelled by an *ethical impetus*[10] and *an aspiration to change the world*.[11] As the subsequent analysis will demonstrate, Rohrwacher's *La Chimera* embodies this objective, foregrounding human relationships with other people, non-human beings, and even the remnants of the past. While her "ecologically driven" cinema does not renounce traditional themes and aesthetics, it reconfigures them, subtly shifting emphases and incorporating new elements that position *La Chimera* as a work attuned to emerging ecological sensibilities.

Robert Pirro offers another perspective on neorealism, turning to what might be called the classical sociocultural and literary foundations of the movement. He proposes approaching it as a cinematic form of Greek tragedy, building on the longstanding argument that it emerged from the antifascist impulse within Italian society. In his analysis, *neorealism is treated as a tragic cinema or cinematic form of tragic theater, arising, as Greek tragedy did, in an era of major political rupture, when democracy replaced dictatorship and novel challenges were posed to a newly empowered citizenry*.[12] By showcasing the pervasive use of tragic rhetoric and the presence of elements typical of Greek tragedy, Pirro rearticulates the interdependence of neorealism's aesthetic and political dimensions. This 'tragic' framework also offers a compelling lens for viewing Alice Rohrwacher's *La Chimera*: its Orphic narrative underpinnings, which we will examine in the following section; the choralepic songs accompanying the grave robbers, which operate as a metanarrative; and Arthur's prison trauma and obsessive search for Beniamina. All of these together evoke the structure and sensibility of a modern cinematic tragedy.

Finally, we should reconsider Rohrwacher's professed affinity with the oeuvre of Pier Paolo Pasolini. Many critics and scholars highlight the similarities between the two filmmakers, as exemplified in the following statement: *Apart from her intention to faithfully portray the peasant reality of a recent past, Rohrwacher also develops a strong sense of social criticism. In this respect, her debt to Pier Paolo Pasolini – or at least her dialogue with him – seems evident*.[13] Nevertheless, we argue that the differences between Pasolini and Rohrwacher may be more numerous and profound than they initially appear, perhaps outweighing the commonalities. Notably, Pasolini maintained a critical stance toward neorealism as an artistic movement,[14] seeking instead to cultivate a distinct, "poetic" cinema that emphasised unconventional storytelling techniques and thematic concerns such as the sacredness of existence, a deep-seated fatalism, and his struggle with bourgeois consciousness. Scholarship on Pasolini underscores his deliberate departure from

objective, omniscient narration, favouring arbitrary, unmotivated narrative structures characterised by disorienting techniques:[15] anti-psychological acting, a lack of internal causality, flattened shots, *tableau*-like compositions, multiple focalisation points, etc. According to critics, some of Pasolini's works, such as *Theorem* (*Teorema*, 1968), even function as parodies of novelistic psychological narration.[16] Arguably, *La Chimera* can be interpreted as a psychologically motivated, realistic drama depicting the loss and mourning of the deceased Beniamina. While it contains metaphysical elements, the film generally adheres to conventional narrative cinema, driven by the logic of psychological motivation and causality of events. In this respect, it aligns with the non-Pasolinian tradition within Italian post-neorealist cinema. Pasolini's thematic preoccupations – the proximity of bliss and suffering, transgression through eroticism, and a historiosophy "infected" by cruelty – do not strongly resonate with Rohrwacher's aesthetic and cinematic practice. His approach to cinema – marked by narrative formalism, an anti-naturalistic style, and a fetishistic attachment to cinematic objects – remains far removed from Rohrwacher's filmmaking. Rather than developing her own version of transgressive or poetic cinema, Rohrwacher appears more closely aligned with the tradition of Ermanno Olmi, focusing on rural Italian life, the impact of modernisation on both people and the natural environment, and the evocation of myths and Christian imagery, as exemplified in Olmi's epic masterpiece *The Tree of Wooden Clogs* (*L'albero degli zoccoli*, 1978).[17]

Unearthing Myth: The Past as Living Matter

Drawing on ancient myths and worldviews becomes a significant aspect of *La Chimera*'s narrative, as its characters engage in the search for ancient tombs and the looting of their treasures. The film clearly references the mythical story of Orpheus through Arthur's attempts to reconnect with his deceased loved one, Beniamina. She appears four times throughout the film, always in brief, dreamlike, oneiric scenes. Yet, unlike Eurydice, her visionary presence is far from the underworld or any land of death. On the contrary, in the very first scene, the sun, represented by a small tattoo on her back, serves as her emblem and seemingly the symbol of the realm to which she belongs. A mid-shot then shifts to the sun shining directly through the train window, and the camera returns to Beniamina, who says just before the conductor wakes Arthur: *Have you noticed the sun is following us? It's following us*. As is typical of post-secular cinema and other works by Rohrwacher, the metaphysical element that haunts the narrative introduces an interplay – or even an inversion – of meanings. Here, if we consider Beniamina as a Eurydice figure, the solar aura surrounding her contrasts sharply with both the Greek Hades and Christian traditions, which portray the underworld as a realm of death and darkness. Furthermore, Alice Rohrwacher complicates the interplay between her story and that of Orpheus through the use of music. A recurring soundtrack in several scenes features Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (SV 318), described by the composer as a *favola in musica*, with a libretto by Alessandro Striggio. It remains widely regarded as the first fully developed opera. No-

tably, *L'Orfeo* not only exemplifies an archetypal work about loss and separation from a deceased loved one but also takes place in a bucolic landscape – a world populated by gods, demigods, shepherds, and nymphs, *deeply imbued with such a pastoral background and atmosphere*.[18] Thus, this point of reference becomes especially relevant, as Rohrwacher connects Arthur-Orpheus and Beniamina-Eurydice with solar symbolism within a bucolic tradition.

A musicological analysis of the film would provide valuable insights, as Rohrwacher strategically employs specific fragments from *L'Orfeo*: the Toccata, the Prologue (Ritornello – *Dal mio permesso amato*), Act III (I. *Sinfonia – Scorto da te, mio Nume*), and Act V (II. *Sinfonia*). These musical passages correspond to Arthur's experiences of gaining and then losing the connection with the Etruscan past – whether through the mysterious, ghost-like figures he encounters on the train, the Etruscan paintings in the opening credits, or the artefacts he believes are missing from the cache. In these scenes, Rohrwacher introduces the respective sections of Monteverdi's opera with careful deliberation. As such, *L'Orfeo* functions as a leitmotif of Arthur's fragile yet profound link to the remnants of the past.

While *Happy as Lazzaro* (*Lazzaro felice*, dir. Alice Rohrwacher, 2018) abounds with Christian motifs and references – most notably Lazarus of Bethany and St. Francis of Assisi[19] – *La Chimera* draws primarily on Greek mythology. Besides the myth of Orpheus, the film evokes a few other myths: the story of Demeter and Persephone and the tale of Ariadne. The former manifests in Flora, who waits in a state of mourning for her lost daughter, still holding on to the belief that she will eventually return. The latter appears in the image of Beniamina, who unwinds the red thread from her dress to guide Arthur to her. Another clear reference is the titular Chimera, a mythological creature known for its hybrid, beastly form: lion's body, goat's head, and a snake for a tail. The film adopts the creature's name and redirects the idea of the "chimeric" onto Arthur's uncanny ability to locate ancient burial sites. Despite a significant transformation in his character – particularly after his encounter with Italia, which prompts him to abandon grave robbing – Arthur's chimeric convulsions and visionary states remain closely bound to his Orphic nature, defined by his orientation toward death, or more precisely, toward a state of not-living. Importantly, this motif recurs throughout the story. Thus, although *La Chimera* contains many recognisable mythological motifs, Orphic themes emerge as the most pervasive and dominant in the film.

Unearthing the Etruscan Imagery: Toward Chimeric Ecologies

Besides the previously discussed mythical and artistic features of the director's work, the numerous images of the non-human – other animals, plants, and the earth – clearly suggest the possibility of an alternative, ecocritical reading of the film. In *La Chimera*, the viewer can observe several frames of domesticated animals – a donkey, sheep, dogs – some appearing in especially meaningful moments of their scenes, either at openings or as visual punchlines. By closely examining Rohrwacher's many scenes involving non-human subjects alongside traces of Etruscan history, we aim to show that *La Chimera* offers an ecological per-

Theorem, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini (1968)

spective that coexists with its mythological, metaphysical, and socially grounded dimensions. In introducing material ecocriticism to readers of her work on twenty-first-century film and photography, Justyna Hanna Budzik draws on Kenneth White's concept of 'grounding.' As she explains, *in literary reception, it refers to the connection between the text and an authentic, tangible experience of space, culture, place, and various environmental phenomena. In my research on filmic and photographic imagery, the relationship with the earth is expressed through a material – and often acutely felt – bond between the characters and elements such as dirt, dust, mud, and grime. It is also always a specific piece of land that can be located on a map, carrying with it the weight of both cultural and environmental memory*.[20] We adopt a similar approach, bearing in mind the specificity of the film's setting – Etruria, with its long history and rich culture. The opening credits, with the title set against fragments of Etruscan sepulchral wall paintings, initiate a distinct series of sequences depicting artistic representations of animals. The short shots are static, edited in a photocast-like fashion, which, in this segment, references a toy slide viewer from a preceding scene and can be interpreted as an additional layer of meta-media meanings. Later in the film, similar visual sequences present painted flowers on the walls of Flora's palace, as well as painted birds from both the palace and a vault uncovered by the tomb raiders at the beach near the power plant. The ornaments from the dilapidated estate reveal the ravages of time, while the Etruscan paintings remain untouched – as long as they stay underground. Opening the tomb triggers their irreversible oxidation, which serves as a significant clue for interpreting the film.

Artefacts featuring animalistic ornamentation appear throughout the film. Moreover, the antique dealer Spartaco (Alba Rohrwacher), to whom the gang sells their finds, operates under the guise of a veterinary office. When the relic hunters visit her, they claim to have puppies. In this way, a practice that indicates a predatory approach to the past – and to the amateur explorers – is ironically disguised as an act of legitimate assistance and interspecies care. Even in these finer narrative details, the close entanglement of cultural and animalistic motifs becomes evident once again.

A remarkable concentration of animal imagery emerges with the discovery of a vault on the beach. The film audience – even before the explorers themselves – witnesses a multitude of paintings and votive figurines depicting both wild and domesticated creatures. The most significant find in this unexpected trove is an almost life-sized statue referred to as the "animal goddess" or "Sybil of Etruria": a naked woman with birds in her hair, a fish in her arms, and a lioness at her feet. Encountering her seems like a mystical moment for Arthur, yet the goddess's sudden decapitation brutally and sacrilegiously disrupts it. This striking encounter stands out as a crucial experience in the protagonist's transformation. Later, as Spartaco and the gang argue over possession of the Sybil's head, Arthur perceives the situation as a predatory rivalry, which, in our reading, reminds the viewer of both humanity's kinship with other carnivorous species and the characters' exploitative attitude toward the past and its remains.

The birds constitute the most prominently featured non-human animals in *La Chimera*. The film does not present them only via paintings from earlier eras. Images of birds in flight, as well as strong rays of sunlight – shining, for example,

through tree canopies – are associated with Beniamina. This imagery accompanies scenes depicting her closeness, which possess an ambiguous ontology: subjective, (half-)dreamt, and, perhaps, seen by Arthur after his death. An owl witnesses a night-time tomb robbery, pigeons inhabit the leaky palace, and portraits of a goose and a swan reappear during Arthur's breakdown and separation from the gang. When Arthur, rejected by his former friends but accepted into a commune of women and children led by Italia, undertakes the final tomb search, he appears resigned. The wand seems to fail him, and the sight of a pigeon takes on an oddly inauspicious significance. Might he perceive the bird as an omen?

In these final sequences, Arthur's sensibility appears to draw from Etruscan spirituality – a point worth noting, given post-anthropocentric thought's openness to *local knowledges, situated knowledge*.[21] Birds held a special place in Etruscan culture, where divination from their flight formed a significant aspect of the worldview. As Marco Masseti puts it, *In ancient times, rock doves have been regarded as very interesting birds, probably due to their ability to find their way back home. Possibly for this reason, they were regarded as symbols of fidelity and conjugal and family love. In Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian sources, the image of pigeons represents the theme of sacred communication from the heavenly sphere*.[22]

The symbolic meaning of the bird aligns closely with Beniamina's plot and foreshadows the reunion of the separated lovers. Notably, Masseti points out that in Etruscan culture, *there were even sacred books to help the identification of birds … Ornithomancy was so important that it ended up influencing even toponymy*.[23] *Etruscan art is replete with animal imagery*,[24] as P. Gregory Warden notes. His remarks may prove particularly interesting from an ecocritical perspective: *the animal imagery found in Etruscan painted tombs … has been thought to be primarily decorative. This interpretation results from our own tendency to privilege the human over the animal … While we tend to emphasize the human …, an Etruscan might have considered the animal as important as the human*.[25]

Warden connects funerary imagery to the hypothesis of a *characteristically Etruscan belief*:[26] that *humans could achieve immortality through animal sacrifice, through assuming some aspects of the animal's power*,[27] that *certain ritual sacrifices can transform human souls into gods, and that these gods are called animals as a reminder of their origin*.[28] Furthermore, *the concept of immortality through an animal spirit has been known for some time and has even been linked to Orphism in ancient Italy*,[29] which corresponds with the previously discussed Orphean motifs. Although *La Chimera* does not abandon human characters, affairs, or perspectives, it recalls an alternative worldview and sensibility of a specific local origin. In these terms, the film continues the search Roberto Interdonato identifies in Rohrwacher's previous works: *a search of a transcendental immanence* [which] *often has to do with the animal and vegetal world*,[30] and which results in *inviting viewers to religiously interact with the natural environment*.[31] According to Interdonato, who situates Rohrwacher's work at the intersection of realism and mysticism, the director articulates a new form of spirituality – not rooted in traditional ecclesiastical or cognitive structures but instead emerging immanently from wonder and attunement to the world. As he puts it, *this is a search for a form of spirituality that relates to inner reality, that is, to the deepest dimension of human life and to our relationship with the Earth and nature. It is the*

The Tree of Wooden Clogs, dir. Ermanno Olmi (1978)

re-imagination of a spiritual dimension in a no longer transcendent world, following the logic of "a miraculous or animist materialist and immanent paradigm."[32] Interdonato argues that, through a paschal structure that evokes both suffering and renewal, Rohrwacher imagines the possibility of spiritual reawakening within a damaged world, where wonder, care, and interconnectedness remain vital forces of resistance and hope, as exemplified in *Happy as Lazzaro*. Ultimately, Interdonato interprets the ecology proposed by *The Wonders* (*Le meraviglie*, dir. Alice Rohrwacher, 2014) and *Happy as Lazzaro* as a *form of faith*.[33] In *La Chimera,* certain aspects of nature carry a sense of mysticism and wonder as well. By evoking the Etruscan worldview through animal imagery, the film challenges the anthropocentric hierarchy of beings and invites recognition of the significance of non-human life.

Connection to Dirt, Disconnection from Earth

Another important aspect of Rohrwacher's oeuvre identified in Interdonato's analysis concerns the connection between characters and landscape: *The landscape has a profound influence on Marta, Gelsomina and Lazzaro, the protagonists of the … films. It determines their life conditions, time management, occupations, moods, physical appearances, ways of dressing and their interactions with others. … Despite the inequity and neglect that humans have brought upon them, in these landscapes they experience sacredness*.[34] A comparable observation applies to Arthur.

Although of foreign – English – origin and separated temporarily from the land due to imprisonment, Arthur grounds his lifestyle and means of subsistence in the soil of Etruria. His intuitive or divinatory ability leads him to specific sites in the region – fields, beaches, and forests – where the earth conceals ancient treasures. If Beniamina remains symbolically associated with the sky – through the flight of birds, rays of sunlight, her sun tattoo, and the solar relief on the portico surrounding her in the last scene – then Arthur's elemental affinity lies with the earth. He digs in the ground and falls onto it in moments of revelation. He also carries pieces of it on his skin and clothing. At the film's beginning, the spiteful remark of the perfume vendor that he *stinks* proves telling: he is marked as someone who refuses to mask his proximity to the earth. Others can simply regard Arthur as unclean.[35]

Heather Sullivan's dirt theory draws attention to the fact that not only the landscape bears the mark of human waste;[36] humans and the environment mutually shape one another. Sullivan cautions against a simplistic binary between *pure, clean nature*[37] and anthropogenic dirtiness, a tempting but misleading form of "green thinking." According to her, human susceptibility to dirt reveals the interconnectedness of people and the environment. For the reasons outlined above, this last observation does not, however, pertain to the protagonist of *La Chimera*.

Moreover, the poor shed Arthur lives in – one of several signs of architectural evanescence in *La Chimera* – appears built from waste. It can function as waste itself, standing outside the town's wall, excluded and eventually demolished, or simply cleaned up. Both its construction and its untidy appearance define the character's place at the margins of society. The shed, Flora's palace, and the site of the last discovery – an abandoned, unfinished building – form a triad of

symbolic, precarious architecture, which suggests the impermanence of memory and the uncertainty of the present and future. These spaces' qualities contrast with the permanence of the posthumous residences: the still-buried tombs.

Notably, Arthur's most intimate allies somehow connect to vegetation: Flora, by virtue of her name; Italia, consistently dressed in floral motifs; a tree branch serving as a wand; and a dried tree marking an underground treasure cache. Flora's crumbling palace – in which she still resides, because she dwells on the past in hope of Beniamina's return – lets nature creep inside. Both Beniamina and Arthur are symbolically associated with realms traditionally linked to death: she, with its sacred aspect; he, with the material one. Once again, the film enters into an intriguing dialogue with the meanings present in Etruscan funerary paintings. As scholars have noted, trees in burial imagery can function as *an ideal bridge between humans and the divine*,[38] with their root system anchored deeply in the earth and their branches reaching toward the sky. The strength of Rohrwacher's film lies in the subtlety with which it suggests these meanings, avoiding one-dimensionality, literalness, or intrusiveness.

In the context of Arthur's associations with the earth, we should note the unconventional camerawork in two scenes depicting his search for tombs. In the first, the camera begins with a close-up of Arthur's shoes, then tilts downward to the forest floor covered in dry leaves, and executes a circular vertical movement beneath him, returning to his shoes from a different angle. The frame then presents Arthur upside down, so that his fall to the ground appears to take an unexpected direction. In the second scene, a similar circular motion recurs, this time tilting upward: the camera begins at Arthur's face and moves toward forest canopies that let the rays of sunlight through. These unusual movements accentuate both Arthur's inexplicable bond with the earth and flora, as well as the mystical quality of revelatory moments. Paradoxically, although the human remains physically at the centre of these shots, the strangeness and unattainability of the camera's movement invite the viewer to transcend the anthropocentric viewpoint. These frames exemplify Rohrwacher's *turning … gaze to nature*, as Interdonato describes it, which *implies the momentary oblivion of social injustices and inequalities, economic difficulties and familiar incomprehension*.[39] In *La Chimera*, this cinematic gesture underscores the theme of earth and sky. The audience witnesses a peculiar interplay between what lies beneath the surface and what stretches above it: sequences alternate between the extraction of buried treasures and acts of reburial, between descents into the ground and re-emergence – or, in some cases, permanent entombment. The layers of the earth, though solid, never prove impermeable.

Rohrwacher's film encourages viewers to perceive the lands of Etruria as a naturecultural archive. As Georg Toepfer indicates, the metaphor of a natural archive and the idea of reading it can be traced back to the second half of the eighteenth century in the context of geological studies.[40] In recent years, the concept has drawn growing attention from scholars intrigued by the notion that an archive does not necessarily require a technological infrastructure. Certain environments – such as the Arctic[41] – can function as natural archives: spaces that preserve material memory and bear the traces of ancient communities' customs, though in an unorganised and unintentional manner.[42]

The landscape of Etruria, as presented in *La Chimera*, with its dense layering of historical sites – ancient ruins, medieval towns, early modern palaces, and twentieth-century power plants – reveals archival properties and potential. This becomes particularly evident in its earth, rich in traces of past eras. Toepfer argues that soil is *nowadays the most prominent archive in nature; and the soil is seen as an archive both for natural and cultural history: it harbors the remnants of past events in the history of nature and Culture*.[43] He traces the origins of the debate on the *archive of the soil* to the emergence of the postulate that calls for protecting the earth as a natural asset with multiple functions: *cultivable source, … place for buildings, a deposit of resources and waste, a groundwater reservoir, … recreation area*,[44] and – one might add – ground for inhumation. The preservation of ancient traces depends on both human and non-human factors, which proves particularly intriguing in the context of the Etruscan tombs: intentionally built underground and designed to withstand the passage of time. Their furnishings had to endure, meant to serve their owner in the afterlife. Yet, with the aid of the *tombaroli*, these objects acquire a new life beyond the grave in the hands of illegal dealers and collectors.

But Toepfer soberly reminds us: *An archive has to be a store of data, not of carcasses; it is not just a burial ground*.[45] This note underscores the utilitarian dimension of ancient artifacts, related to knowledge and interpretation – quite different from their desirability in the eyes of Arthur's companions. A scene in Spartaco's animal clinic shows the *tombaroli*'s unawareness, or even lack of interest, regarding the actual value of the object they extract. When Spartaco forges stories around an individual piece, she does so to secure a sale. Later, Arthur's conversation with resentful Etruscan spirits reflects his growing sense of guilt and forces him to acknowledge the sacred purpose and private meaning of each tomb's content and earth's belonging. This insight resonates especially deeply, given that his beloved Beniamina seems trapped in a liminal state between life and death, perhaps without a proper burial. The film also highlights the most recent, surface layer of the landscape, littered with waste. The beaches and forests in *La Chimera* are not pristine or free from discarded items and debris. Rohrwacher echoes what the second wave of ecocriticism has established: nature cannot be separated from the anthropogenic impact of the present or the past.[46]

This contamination seems to form an ordinary part of the characters' environment – largely unremarked upon. Only water pollution and its threat to health become subjects of conversation when the gang prepares to swim in the sea near a power plant – presumably coal-fired. When, shortly after this exchange, someone refers to the location as a cemetery, the layered ambiguity becomes evident: it is both an ancient burial site and a polluted, likely lifeless area. While the film generally conveys its ecological consciousness with subtlety, in this moment it does so more directly.

Anna Krzywoszynska and Greta Marchesi note that *the degradation of soil ecosystems everywhere through pollution with chemicals and plastics, salination, sealing, creeping erosion, and loss of organic matter illustrates a very real breakdown of the crucial relation between humans and soils*.[47] Building on the aforementioned scene from *La Chimera*, one can argue that the above applies also to the fundamental human relation with water. As Krzywoszynska and Marchesi remind us, *Our relation to land*

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is deep; our roots are deep in the soil, simultaneously culturally and materially. Caring for and about soils is thus not external. Caring for soils is about caring for particular ways of being human.[48] Although these issues do not stand at the centre of the plot, the landscape of *La Chimera* evokes a similar reflection.

Necroecologies: Earth, Remains, and the Disruption of the Human Gaze

In this part of the article, we focus on the practice of grave robbing and on Beniamina's ambiguous status as not-quite-dead. To this end, we turn to the work of Ewa Domańska, who has developed her research in the fields of posthumanities and necrohumanities for many years. In her 2006 essay "The Material Presence of the Past," Domańska discusses the renewed interest in material objects within the humanities and the shifting ontological status of the past in contemporary historical studies. She argues that we should reconsider the ontology of the relics of the past *regarding the agency of things, accentuating the fact that things not only exist but also act and have performative potential*.[49] For Domańska, human remains have long functioned as a liminal case that challenges entrenched dichotomies such as subject/object and present/past. In a particularly relevant example, she analyses the case of the disappeared persons (*desaparecidos*) in Argentina, whose fate – dead or alive – remains uncertain. As she notes, *the ambivalent and "uncanny" status of the dead human body in its various forms (bones, ashes) often resists the dichotomous classification of present versus absent*.[50] Domańska claims that the body of the disappeared person can be understood as *a paradigm of the past itself*, focusing *on the idea of being both continuous with the present and discontinuous from it, simultaneously being and not being*.[51]

In *La Chimera*, Beniamina appears as a ghostly, "disappeared" figure whose ontological status remains unresolved. Subtle suggestions hint that she may have been the victim of homicide – implied through Flora's and Arthur's grief, as well as the furtive grave-robbing practices that shape the film's world – yet the film never provides conclusive evidence of her death. *La Chimera* refuses to follow the conventions of crime or detective narratives; Arthur is the only person actively searching for Beniamina, and Flora, her mother, places her faith solely in him to uncover the truth of her daughter's fate. The final "chimera" that haunts Arthur as he departs the train station – leaving behind Italia, the woman who loves him, and the children gathered around her – emerges at an unfinished construction site. In a puddle of rainwater, a digger uncovers what looks like the entrance to a subterranean chamber, resembling a burial site. Arthur enters, as if returning to the earth to which he has always seemed bound. The ground seals behind him, yet he lights a candle and moves forward. After a few steps, he notices a bright spot upward, marked by a red thread – a visual echo of the mythological Ariadne's thread, or perhaps the life-thread of the Moirai. The boundary between these symbolic references remains fluid. The thread leads him toward Beniamina's resting place, but it breaks at the very moment he needs it most. What follows is a sudden and dreamlike transition: in the next shot, Arthur finds himself face to face with Beniamina, holding her hands and gazing at her smiling face.

This moment defies narrative logic and realistic continuity. Instead of offering closure or confirming death, the scene opens a space of ambiguity, where memory, desire, and material presence converge in a haunting, affective vision. This vision disrupts any coherent ontological framework. The grave, expected to contain a body and testify to loss, instead yields a living figure, resisting both naturalistic and metaphysical categories. What we encounter is not resurrection but interruption: a rupture, a material and symbolic discontinuity that refuses closure. Thus, the final scene enacts what Ewa Domańska might term a necro-perspective: a mode of thought that shifts focus from human mourning to the performative and affective agency of (living) matter itself. Here, death is perhaps transcended and reconfigured through the physical landscape, which becomes a site of haunting and potentiality. The earth is not passive; it acts, reveals, and absorbs. The grave does not contain the past – it is the past, animated and returned through the rupture of linear time.

This brings us to the final element of the film's interpretation, inspired by Ewa Domańska's work in what she terms 'necrohumanities.' Her approach moves beyond traditional, anthropocentric conceptions of life and death by adopting a materialist perspective to rethink the status and role of dead bodies. As she explains, *I am trying to lift the dead body studies out of the burden of an all-encompassing reflection on death – often associated with stillness, inertia, stagnation, and passivity – and redirect it toward the life sciences and Earth studies*.[52] For Domańska, death represents merely *a radical change* in the condition of biological existence and should not be seen as devoid of potency or agency. She emphasises the ecological dimension – or even ecological effect – of human remains, arguing for the right of the dead to be buried and to decompose naturally, without human interference. She writes: *Taking into account the findings of research conducted from this perspective, I advocate for the right to the natural decomposition of the body, for respect toward burial sites, and for their protection – even at the cost of their neglect or cultural forgetting. Often, in fact, such forgetting becomes a condition for the peace of the dead (in this case: the natural decomposition of their remains). From this standpoint, care for the earth and a soil ethics become an important context for reflecting on the ethics of handling buried human remains*.[53] Therefore, although formulated from a posthuman perspective, Domańska's view shares a fundamental respect for burial grounds found in many anthropocentric belief systems, particularly those rooted in Abrahamic traditions, but also others.

In *La Chimera*, Arthur and his companions rob Etruscan graves across the Tuscan countryside. Although the practice is illegal, the impoverished men loot ancient tombs with little hesitation, stealing Etruscan artefacts for profit. Arthur's attitude begins to shift after a failed excavation at a shrine filled with votive offerings. The group momentarily falls under the spell of the site – its frescoes and sacred objects – but this awe does not stop them from desecrating it. *The Etruscans left these here for us*, one of the *tombaroli* claims, justifying the theft. However, Italia reacts with horror. In protest, she returns the gift Arthur gave her, declaring that these objects *aren't made for human eyes*. Deeply affected by her reaction and the growing greed of his companions – and of Spartaco – Arthur eventually throws the head of the animal goddess into the sea, a symbolic gesture of renunciation and the return of a treasure to the depths. Interestingly, the audience sees the mo-

ment of its descent from the goddess's point of view – and this, we argue, is not the only instance in which the film transcends a purely human perspective.[54] The group, losing patience with Arthur's dissent, brands him a traitor and casts him out. Rohrwacher depicts grave robbing both as a crime and as a violent act of human entitlement – a usurpation of what belongs to the earth and to the dead. The looting of tombs in the film serves as a powerful reminder of exploitative relationships not only among humans but also toward the environment, echoing practices of pollution, ecological degradation, and the marginalisation of the non-human.

Ecology Beyond the Text

Although many films tackle ecological themes, not all of them are produced in a way that aligns with their messages or demonstrates consideration for the creative industry's impact on the environment. However, Alice Rohrwacher actively embodies pro-ecological principles in the very process of filmmaking. This aspect of the director's cinema has drawn attention in ecocritical studies, notably by scholars such as Laura Di Bianco[55] and Lucia Della Fontana.[56]

Laura Di Bianco examines Rohrwacher's work through the lens of production studies and the EcoMuvi initiative – a green filmmaking protocol developed by producers Carlo Cresto-Dina and Francesca Andreoli of Tempesta Film. As Di Bianco notes, EcoMuvi represents Europe's first certified protocol for sustainable filmmaking, recognised by ICEA (Italy's Environmental and Ethical Certification Institute).[57] EcoMuvi promotes environmentally responsible film production practices, including waste management (e.g., use of compostable flatware and personal water bottles), emissions reduction (e.g., optimised crew transportation and accommodation), and energy efficiency (e.g., prioritising natural lighting).[58] Rohrwacher's *The Wonders* became the first film produced under this protocol, followed by *Happy as Lazzaro*.

Rohrwacher also realized *La Chimera* in cooperation with the EcoMuvi team.[59] The film received the international Ecoprod Award, established by the French non-profit organisation Ecoprod, which has actively promoted sustainable filmmaking since 2009. According to the Green Film Shooting website, *La Chimera* earned recognition for several environmentally conscious measures: installing over 20 temporary connections to the electric grid – rather than relying on diesel generators – to supply energy to remote film locations, which reduced the energy-related carbon footprint by 45%; renting costumes or purchasing them second-hand and donating them to charity or other film crews after production; and sourcing catering from a local company using seasonal and regional ingredients.[60]

Lucia Della Fontana, in turn, highlights the political and ethical significance of Rohrwacher's choice to work with analogue film. As she argues, this decision goes beyond mere nostalgia; it constitutes a deliberate material and ideological stance: *The materiality of film reflects the contradictions and fragility of contemporary Italy, in particular social precariousness and environmental degradation*.[61] In this sense, analogue becomes a means of engaging with the present through a tactile, imperfect, and time-marked medium – one that resists the smoothness and disposability of digital imagery.[62] Drawing on thinkers such as Donna Haraway and Vinciane

Despret, Della Fontana treats Rohrwacher's earlier films as a critique of anthropocentric worldviews and dominant models of subjectivity. Through what Della Fontana terms a 'ghostly ontology' – populated by spectral figures, unstable identities, and non-human agencies – Rohrwacher disrupts human-centred narratives and opens space for alternative forms of relationality and co-existence.

Conclusion

Our article has explored how Alice Rohrwacher's *La Chimera* articulates the continuity of human relationships – with other people, with the natural world, and with the past. Across all these dimensions, the film reveals a distinctive ecological sensitivity that extends beyond an anthropocentric perspective. Yet, *La Chimera* remains deeply rooted in cultural traditions, drawing on mythological references – notably Orphic motifs – as well as the legacy of Italian neorealism. It thus serves as a compelling example of ecological cinema that does not break with tradition but instead weaves together diverse interpretive perspectives, creating a rich, multidimensional reflection on the human condition and its entanglement with nature, the material traces of history, and the memory of the past.

We have described this hybridity through the term "NecroEcoMythical," capturing the film's layered storytelling. Ecology occupies a central place in Rohrwacher's cinema, which proves visible in her approach to filmmaking and in the film's critique of the exploitation of humans, nonhumans, the earth, and the past. *La Chimera* emphasises the interconnectedness of different forms of life and the need for their protection. Thanks to Rohrwacher's distinctive ecomythical storytelling and aesthetics, the film avoids the pitfalls of being patronizing, doctrinaire, or sentimental – flaws that sometimes burden ecocinema. Instead, it creates a space for a genuinely hybrid, truly chimeric reading – necroecomythical and uncompromising – a cinema that refuses easy answers, resists reduction, and insists on the inseparability of life, death, myth, and the earth itself.

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[1] L. Di Bianco, "Ecocinema Ars et Praxis: Alice Rohrwacher's *Lazzaro felice*", *The Italianist* 2020, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 152.

[2] M. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986.

[3] See: L. Barattoni, *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2012. Barattoni emphasises the continuity between neorealism and modernism, tracing the trajectory of neorealist cinema into the late 1960s while carefully depicting the shifting socio-cultural and economic circumstances of postwar Italy.

[4] M. Marcus, op. cit., p. 211.

[5] As the author observes, *the problem of definition has, of course, always haunted the historiography on neorealism. As others have noted, the term neorealism itself is almost radically overt in its a posteriori ontology. Neorealism did not originate as a conscious movement; it only became a recognizable aesthetic project after the fact*. K. Schoonover, *Brutal Vision: The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2012, p. XXII.

[6] According to Schoonover, *this means that we only have access to our common humanity in moments of seeing the suffering of others. Only through gestures of humanitarian caring are we able to define and experience our humanism*. Ibidem, p. XX.

[7] As the author puts it, *the bystander embodies the broadened view. In fact, the bystander is nothing more than a discursive position in a visual field whose perspective matches the scale of the expanded parameters of the North Atlantic community. … The bystander occupies the*

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paradoxical space of secondary eye-witnessing, a kind of surrogate seeing in which one can always be on the scene, but never of it or trapped in it. As such, the bystander is the name that I am giving to the subjective affinities of liberal humanism. Ibidem, p. 73.

[8] Embodied, for example, in the works of Pier Paolo Pasolini, who attempts to *rewrite neorealist corporeality by resacrilizing the realist image of injury and death*. Ibidem, p. 203.

[9] M. Marcus, op. cit., p. 6.

[10] Ibidem.

[11] Ibidem, pp. 27-28.

[12] R. Pirro, "Cinematic Traces of Participatory Democracy in Early Postwar Italy: Italian Neorealism in the Light of Greek Tragedy", *Italica* 2009, vol. 86, no. 3, pp. 408-429.

[13] R. Interdonato, "A Different Spirituality: On Lazzaro's Symbolic Potency in Alice Rohrwacher's *Happy as Lazzaro*", *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies* 2023, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 148.

[14] C. Orr, "Pasolini's *Accattone*, or Naturalism and Its Discontents", *Film Criticism* 1995, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 54-66. Commenting on Pasolini's debut film, Orr argues: *Pasolini expresses his fetishistic love for the "things" of the world by isolating them from each other. Yet I would argue that Pasolini's film does not lack a narrative system but instead that this system is based on a different relationship between the cinematic narrator and the diegetic world of the film than one finds in the Hollywood or neorealist paradigms*. Ibidem, p. 58.

[15] See: C. Orr, op. cit.; M. Marcus, op. cit.

[16] B. Testa, "To Film a Gospel… and the Advent of the Theoretical Stranger", in: *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. P. Rumble, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1994, pp. 139-155.

[17] P. A. Sitney, *Vital Crises in Italian Cinema: Iconography, Stylistics, Politics*, University of Texas Press, Austin 1995.

[18] J. Steinheuer, "*Orfeo* (1607)", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, eds. J. Whenham, R. Wistreich, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 104-118.

[19] L. Di Bianco, op. cit., p. 159.

[20] J. H. Budzik, *Polski film i fotografia nowego wieku na tle kultury wizualnej. Widma, antropocenie, sztandary*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2023, p. 132.

[21] M. Sugiera, "Archiwa antropocenu", in: *Performatyka. Poza kanonem*, vol. 1: *Resztki, ruiny, pozostałości, szczątki, piksele – archiwa możliwych przeszłości i przyszłości*, ed. Ł. Iwanczewska, Wiele Kropek, Kraków 2021, p. 71.

[22] M. Masseti, "Representations of Birds in Etruscan Art (6th – late 4th century BC)", *Quaternary International* 2022, vol. 626-627, pp. 87-94.

[23] Ibidem, p. 87.

[24] P. G. Warden, "The Blood of Animals: Predation and Transformation in Etruscan Funerary Representations", in: *New Perspectives of Etruria and Early Rome*, eds. S. Bell, H. Nagy, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 2009, p. 198.

[25] Ibidem, pp. 210-211.

[26] Ibidem, p. 213.

[27] Ibidem.

[28] Ibidem, p. 205.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] R. Interdonato, op. cit., p. 150.

[31] Ibidem.

[32] Ibidem, p. 152.

[33] Ibidem, p. 153.

[34] Ibidem, p. 149.

[35] *La Chimera* features a scene in which Arthur cleans himself before meeting Italia. For the viewer, this moment might seem like a signal of a turn in his life – but it is a misleading one.

[36] H. Sullivan, "Dirt Theory and Material Ecocriticism", *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 2012, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 515-531. See: J. H. Budzik, op. cit., pp. 124-126.

[37] H. Sullivan, op. cit., p. 515.

[38] G. Caneva, G. Zangari, A. Lazzara, L. D'Amato, D. F. Maras, "Trees and the Significance of Sacred Grove Imagery in Etruscan Funerary Paintings at Tarquinia (Italy)", *Rendiconti Lincei. Scienze Fisiche e Naturali* 2024, no. 5, p. 651.

[39] R. Interdonato, op. cit., p. 150.

[40] G. Toepfer, "On Similarities and Differences between Cultural and Natural Archives", *Arctic Archives: Ice, Memory and Entropy*, eds. S. K. Frank, K. A. Jakobsen, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2019, p. 22.

[41] J. Spieker, "Memory in the Anthropocene: Notes on Slow Archives and Melting Glaciers", *Arctic Archives…* op. cit., pp. 93-103.

[42] However, Toepfer considers postmodern criticism of the archive, which exposes it as a form of authority manifested in specific procedures of data selection and classification (see: J. Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. E. Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, Chicago – London 1998). In doing so, he refers to Wolfgang Ernst, who argues that humans always co-produce the natural archive through the extraction and interpretation of the finds and the use of

information. Nevertheless, Toepfer emphasises that both *cultural and natural archives have consistent criteria of inclusion and exclusion of objects. In the case of cultural archives these criteria are intentionally chosen and may have to do with authoritative power; in the case of natural archives the criteria are given by natural laws, general laws of nature and specific laws having to do with the specificities of the place and medium of the archive's location* (G. Toepfer, op. cit., p. 32). As an anonymous German author metaphorically put it in 1799, in this way, the nature conveys *what she herself has recorded of her history* (cit. per ibidem, p. 25).

[43] G. Toepfer, op. cit., p. 21.

[44] Ibidem, p. 26.

[45] Ibidem, p. 29.

[46] J. Tabaszewska, "Ekokrytyczna (samo)świadomość", *Teksty Drugie* 2018, no. 2, p. 11.

[47] A. Krzywoszynska, G. Marchesi, "Toward a Relational Materiality of Soils: Introduction", *Environmental Humanities* 2020, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 191.

[48] Ibidem, p. 201.

[49] E. Domańska, "The Material Presence of the Past", *History and Theory* 2006, vol. 45, no. 3, p. 339.

[50] Ibidem, p. 345.

[51] Ibidem, p. 341.

[52] E. Domańska, "Nekrohumanistyka", *Konteksty. Polska Sztuka Ludowa* 2018, vol. 72, no. 4, p. 321.

[53] Ibidem, p. 326.

[54] The gang is seen from the interior of a tomb at least once. This perspective does not sharply break the realistic convention of filming, but it encourages the attentive viewer to consider an additional, transcendent point of view.

[55] L. Di Bianco, op. cit., pp. 151-164.

[56] L. Della Fontana, "Analogue Film, Ghostly Ontologies and the Fairy-Tale in *Bella e perduta and Lazzaro felice*", *Between* 2022, vol. 12, no. 24, pp. 203-223.

[57] L. Di Bianco, op. cit., pp. 154-155.

[58] Moreover, *Happy as Lazzaro* underwent *a much slower (and therefore longer) pre-production than a film company would normally allow* (ibidem, p. 156). Preparation of the location involved finding an authentic abandoned farmhouse and cleaning it thoroughly, as well as cultivating tobacco properly. See: ibidem.

[59] See: "La Chimera", EcoMuvi, https://www.ecomuvi.eu/progetti/la-chimera (accessed: 3.08.2025).

[60] "Ecoprod awards green productions in Cannes", Green Film Shooting, 23.05.2023, https://greenfilmshooting.net/blog/en/2023/05/23/ecoprod-awards-green-productions-at-cannes (accessed: 3.08.2025).

[61] L. Della Fontana, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

[62] Ibidem.

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