

= Ultime grida dalla savana =

Ultime grida dalla savana (1975) (English : Final Cry of the Savanna) , also known as La Grande caccia and by its English title Savage Man Savage Beast , is a Mondo documentary directed by Antonio Climati and Mario Morra . Filmed all around the world , its central theme focuses on hunting and the interaction between man and animal . More specifically , the film documents various forms of hunting that can be found in the world and how humans and animals can both become the hunter or prey . Like many Mondo films , the filmmakers claim to document real , bizarre and violent behavior and customs , although some scenes were actually staged . It is narrated by Italian novelist Alberto Moravia .

This was the first film of Climati 's and Morra 's Savage Trilogy , which also includes Savana violenta (This Violent World) and Dolce e selvaggio (Sweet and Savage) . The best known film of the trilogy , Ultime grida dalla savana became influential in exploitation cinema by use of cinematographic techniques that were repeated in numerous subsequent Mondo films . Two scenes in particular , a lion attack on a tourist in Namibia and the murder of an indigenous man by a group of mercenaries in South America , have gained notoriety as genuine footage of human death . The film also sparked a rivalry between the team of Climati and Morra and the brothers Alfredo and Angelo Castiglioni . These two teams became the forerunners of the second generation of Mondo cinema .

= = Synopsis = =

The film is a depiction of various scenes , usually violent or bizarre , that somehow relate to hunting . Each scenario is presented one after the other with little regard for narrative continuity . The opening scene introduces a Patagonian hunter who hunts stags to survive . The opening credits play over as he chases after a stag , which he ultimately shoots , kills , and beheads . Afterwards , one of the numerous scenes of anti @-@ hunting gatherings is shown , this one in Cape Cod . The attention quickly shifts to wildlife hunting , where a monkey is killed by a leopard , and then a squirrel monkey by an anaconda . The theme changes again to the social hunt of wild game in Australia and Africa . Aborigines hunt kangaroos and other large marsupials with spears and giant bats with boomerangs . Indigenous tribes of Africa hunt large game , including antelope , buffalo , and elephants , in the savanna . Religious ceremonies are also shown , where the African hunters proceed to suck fresh blood from the entrails of an antelope , and the Australian aborigines symbolically bury their prey in dust to placate the spirits of the animals . Lastly , two brothers are arrested after partaking in a form of ritual post @-@ mortem cannibalism of three of their relatives to acquire the hunting skills of the dead .

Other hunting traditions then follow , again rooted in religion . The warriors of the Kuru tribe in Africa commit a sacred act in which they copulate with the ground in belief that it will make the Earth fertile and produce animals for the hunt , and a stag hunt in France , rooted in ancient pagan beliefs of the Gauls , is blessed by a mass before the hunt takes place , during which the hunters and dogs chase and ultimately kill a fleeing stag . In a fox hunt , the Wild Fox Association sabotages the hunting efforts by serving wine laced with a laxative to the hunters and distracting the dogs with an Afghan bitch in heat . Their efforts are then connected to species conservation , and to exemplify that hunters are truly concerned in wildlife conservation , Argentine hunters capture an Andean condor to sell to a zoo . A collage of other conservation efforts is shown , including the tagging of white rhinoceroses , grizzly bears and elephants , which are shot with morphine darts . Argentinian deer and elephant seals are physically subdued and marked . Tourists on Africans safaris then come to view the conservation efforts , which the narrator claims to have seemingly negated the animals ' violent instincts . This deception is demonstrated with the mauling of a tourist named Pit Dernitz by lions .

Another anti @-@ hunting demonstration becomes the film 's focus , this time on the Isle of Wight . Nudity and intercourse are practiced freely amongst the demonstrators , and this is contrasted with ancient hunter @-@ gathering groups , who had strict rules concerning nudity . The narrator argues

that once hunting had left this group of people , so did their rules toward nudity . Also highlighted is the contradiction that though this people are against hunting , thousands of farm @-@ raised animals had to die to support them . The focus changes to Humboldt penguins , which cannot hunt because of polluted waters , and thus seem detached and without focus . This effect is compared to modern day Eskimos , who no longer hunt since the discovery of oil in their homeland and have fallen into depression and melancholy . To reverse the process , several groups of men go out and revive their hunting ways . Reflected in this is a montage of gun ownership , which the film relates to feelings of masculinity , followed by shots of illegal elephant poaching from Africa . To offset the dwindling number of game due to poaching , warriors from the Lobi tribe celebrate the " Ceremony of Life " , in which they masturbate with ceremonial rods and pour the product into the river , hoping the animals will drink the semen and multiply . Attention shifts to large electronic probes in the Peruvian savanna used to measure the winds of El Niño for optimal fishing conditions . Fishing birds are also electronically tagged so the prime fishing areas can be located based on the birds ' fishing habits . This fish frenzy in South America is reflected in the salmon run in Alaska , where kodiak bears hunt and fight for prey .

An examination of a hunting tradition in northern Europe follows , where falcons assist humans in hunting by catching wild game , such as rabbits and pheasants . Further collaboration with man and animal is highlighted , this time with cheetahs . To demonstrate the cheetah 's speed and effectiveness , a chase between a group of cheetahs and ostriches is arranged , in which the birds are hunted down and killed . The next animal collaborators are dogs , which hunt wild boar in Patagonia and a puma which has attacked a herd of sheep and a shepherd . In cities , however , stray dogs are the ones hunted by dog catchers , which the narrator claims demonstrates that the hunt is still active , but the prey has changed . Indios also use dogs to hunt monkeys , but their efforts are compared to mercenaries hunting the Indios themselves to clear them from their native land for development . In one such instance , mercenaries retaliate against a death of a workman by hunting down a group of Indios , one of which they torture , castrate and murder . Various scenes of wildlife are then shown , after which orangutans are hunted to be sold to zoos . The film then ends with the coexistence of man and animal between Erik Zimen , an ecologist , and wolves , the group of animals he wishes to save .

= = Production = =

= = = Direction = = =

As their former cinematographer , Clmati drew influence from the Mondo films of Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi . The cinéma vérité styled camera work used in *Ultime grida dalla savana* was previously used in *Africa addio* in a scene in which the film crew is nearly killed during an uprising in newly independent Ethiopia . The inclusion of lingering Technicolor shots and violence towards animals is also a feature of Jacopetti 's Mondo cane series . Some scenes were also directly lifted from *Africa addio* and reused in *Ultime grida dalla savana* . David Kerekes and David Slater , authors of *Killing for Culture : An Illustrated History of Death Film from Mondo to Snuff* , also note that , " *Savage Man Savage Beast* is a slight return to the more encyclopaedic world view of mondo cinema which was prevalent in the 60s , " demonstrating Clmati 's early roots in Mondo cinema .

= = = Music = = =

The songs and musical score used in the film were composed and written by Carlo Savina and Gilbert Kaplan . The songs were sung by Kaplan and Ann Collin . The music resembles Riz Ortolani 's score from *Africa addio* , as most tracks are of a light and upbeat nature , particularly during the opening and closing credits . The arrangement of music to enhance atmosphere and create comic effect also mimics the compositions in *Africa addio* .

= = Reaction = =

The film was released in Italy on 24 October 1975 , and internationally in 1976 . The film fared well in Asia ; in 1976 , *Ultimo grida dalla savana* was outgrossed in Hong Kong only by *Jaws* . Despite this , reception to the film from mainstream movie critics is almost completely negative , although it is well accepted by critics in exploitation film circles : Mark Goodall calls the film a " remarkable , pseudo @-@ philosophical mondo examination of hunting fixated on the cyclical , the (inter) relationship of the hunter and the hunted " , and Kerekes & Slater also comment that it was , " The success of *Savage Man ... Savage Beast* [that] inaugurated the ' savage ' trilogy . "

= = = Criticism = = =

The content of the film , particularly the graphic violence and human death , has been criticized as too explicit and exploitative . Robert Firsching of Allmovie states :

The reason for the film 's notoriety , however , is a collection of grainy 16 mm images depicting the horrific round @-@ up , mutilation , castration , and slaughter of a group of tribesmen by white mercenaries . As appalling and revolting a sequence as ever depicted in a documentary film , the massacre footage marked something of a turning point in the development of the mondo subgenre , which moved increasingly toward snuff @-@ like collections of death and mutilation .

Time Out Film Guide made similar criticisms of the film 's content , calling it " [a] bloody , blatantly exploitative mess of a movie " , and says it is " just another opportunity to gawp at raw scenes of sex and (more especially) violence " . Due to its graphic content , the film was also used by James Ferman at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts as an example of the need for film censorship .

The inclusion of several staged or scripted scenes has made the film a target for critical condemnation . Numerous scenes have been proven fake , including the anti @-@ fox hunting campaign involving the fictional " Wild Fox Association " and the murder of the indigenous men by mercenaries . During another wildlife rally , the fabrication of the scene is apparent with the presence of Italian porn star Ilona Staller . The lion attack on Pit Dornitz is also suspected of being a fabrication by film historians .

Although staged footage has been included since the early history of Mondo cinema , these scenes are nonetheless targets for critical abashment . Kerekes and Slater call the anti @-@ fox hunt sequence " self @-@ parody " , and Goodall labels the same scene as " ludicrous " . The staged scenes of human death have also been criticized for being more exploitative than educational . Aside from his criticism of the film 's staged footage , Goodall also points out the reuse of sequences of African tribal hunting and poaching from Africa addio as a flaw of the film .

= = Controversy = =

Due to its graphic content , *Ultimo grida dalla savana* has encountered censorship issues with certain countries ' film boards . In Australia , the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) banned both an uncut and cut version of the film in 1976 . An appeal filed later that year was denied . Ten years later , the home video distributor Palace Video brought the same cut print before the film board and it received an R18 + rating . The cuts include segments from the lion attack , the torture and murder of the indigenous man by mercenaries , the death of a fox by a pack of hounds , and the death of a stag by a hunter in the opening scene .

The film faced similar censorship problems for its theatrical release in the United Kingdom , where it was released as *Zumbalah* . In 1976 , nearly 10 minutes were cut before it was passed with an X @-@ rating by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) . Various scenes of animal cruelty , a race between cheetahs and ostriches , the lion attack , and the mercenaries ' hunt of Amazonian natives were all cut from the British release . The scenes of animal cruelty were targeted by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to be cut from the film , specifically

the hunt and disembowelment of a puma . Also in 1976 , the Valtion elokuvatarkastamo , the Finnish film classification board , banned the film in Finland in its entirety for the inclusion of scenes of genuine human death .

= = Influence = =

The release of *Ultimo grida dalla savana* initiated a rivalry between Climati and Morra and two other Italian Mondo film makers , Angelo and Alfredo Castiglioni . These two filmmaking teams became the frontrunners of the Mondo genre in the late seventies and early eighties . The Castiglioni's had made two previous Mondo films , *Africa segreta* and *Africa ama* , before the release of *Ultimo grida dalla savana* . They later released three additional films : *Magia nuda* in 1975 , *Addio ultimo uomo* in 1978 , *Africa dolce e selvaggio* in 1982 . Climati and Morra made two follow @-@ up films to *Ultimo grida dalla savana* . The first followup , *Savana violenta* , also known as *Savage Man Savage Beast no . 2* , was released in 1976 . *Savana violenta* was slightly less graphic in its depiction of violence . The last film , *Dolce e selvaggio* , was released in 1983 and consisted partly of outtakes and recycled footage from Climati and Morra 's two previous films . Each subsequent release by the two parties would attempt to outperform the previous films with more explicit and shocking content .

The scenes of human death , which were shot in a manner that resembled an observational documentary , became influential in exploitation cinema , as several subsequent films would use similar filming techniques to lend certain scenes a sense of increased realism . The Mondo film *Addio ultimo uomo* , directed by the brothers Angelo and Alfredo Castiglioni , includes a scene of " amateur footage " that mimics the scene in which mercenaries hunt natives in *Ultimo grida dalla savana* . This scene , in which an African bushman is captured , tortured , and castrated by a rival tribe , has also been proven staged . Again in 1978 , the death film *Faces of Death* included fabricated " amateur footage " that is a reenactment of the death of Pit Dornitz , replacing lions with a bear . Firsching and Goodall also note that *Ultimo grida dalla savana* was a transitional film within the genre , as it , " provided a vital link between the ' classic ' shockumentaries of the early @-@ mid 1960s and the much crueller mondos of the mid 1970s and beyond . "

Director Ruggero Deodato also used this camera style prolifically in his film *Cannibal Holocaust* , in which a group of filmmakers goes missing after they head into the South American rain forest to make a documentary on local cannibal tribes . In the film , only the team 's footage is recovered , which is all shot in the cinéma vérité style that resembles the " amateur footage " in *Ultimo grida dalla savana* . The footage from *Cannibal Holocaust* proved so realistic that Deodato was arrested for making a snuff film . Charges were ultimately dropped when he produced the supposedly slain actors for the courts .