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PRIMATES IN FICTION AND NON-FICTION TEXTS**

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Simian Narratives about Shared Worlds: Relationships between Humans and other Primates in Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts¹

Abstract: The essay analyses the relationships between humans and other primates from the perspective of sociocultural anthropology, environmental humanities and primatology in the face of modern-colonial processes. The complexity of these relationships includes evolution, cosmovisions and conceptions of nature and culture, but also themes such as race, gender and environment, among others. However, despite the positive impact of this production, there are large gaps in knowledge about the relationships between humans and other primates in their specific contexts. In this sense, the written and filmic, systemic and anti-systemic narratives stand out, which, in dialogue with other disciplines, can fulfil learning and imagination to reconcile more harmonious ways of sharing the world.

Keywords: Narratives, Modern-colonial, Race, Gender, Environment

Resumo: O ensaio analisa as relações entre humanos e outros primatas a partir da antropologia sociocultural, das humanidades ambientais e da primatologia frente aos processos moderno-coloniais. A complexidade dessas relações inclui evolução, cosmovisões e concepções de natureza e de cultura, mas também temas como raça, gênero e ambiente entre outros. Contudo, apesar do valor dessa produção, há grandes lacunas no conhecimento sobre as relações entre humanos e outros primatas em seus contextos específicos. Nesse sentido, destacam-se as narrativas escritas e fílmicas, sistêmicas e anti-sistêmicas, que, em diálogo com outras disciplinas, podem favorecer o aprendizado e a imaginação para conciliarmos formas mais harmônicas de compartilhar o mundo.

Palavras-chave: narrativas, moderno-colonial, raça, gênero, ambiente.

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Introduction: What we already learned about the relations between humans and other primates and what we can learn from now on?

This essay presents, through my current research trajectory, some of the many reasons why the social sciences, the humanities and the arts should increasingly focus on research topics that bring human beings closer to other living beings, as well as the atmospheres, lands and waters. The analysis presents the first result review about my reflections on possibilities and limits related to what we can learn and how we can produce tools and novel approaches through academic and artistic narratives about relations between humans and other primates. In the next lines, I will explain why I choose specifically the human-other primates' relationships and why the knowledge already produced by anthropologists and primatologists about this subject is very relevant, but it is still limited.

Similar to the ethnocentric reactions of a human culture against another, relations between human and other living beings are marked by a strangeness punctuated by curiosity, attraction and repulsion, identification and differentiation. Art, myths, philosophy and science are living, up-to-date expressions of this (Ingold, 1997; Haraway, 1991). In recent decades, anthropology and primatology have become increasingly sensitive to this and have taken on leading roles as they have contributed to rethink about many layers of human-other living beings' relations which, consequently, has also promoted the redefinition of human (Corbey, 2005; Haraway, 1991; Rapchan, 2019a).

As all the generations that precede us, we are updating our definitions of animals and, consequently, of humans (Ingold, 1994). But, these anthropological and primatological contributions can offer some possibilities to, at least this time, produce definitions less polarised and more fluid than the recurrent imposition of colonial-modern dichotomies (Castro, 2010) because we can manage to glimpse, in some moments, relations between humans and other living beings outside the dominant cultural west. These possibilities bring together the promise that we are a little more capable of respecting the autonomy of peoples, learning from them and imagining alternatives that favour the balance of our own relationships with other living beings.

Contemporary reflections on relationships between humans and other living beings, primates in particular, reveal expected but uncomfortable analogies (Candea, 2010; Ingold, 1994). Among them, it is worth emphasising at least two. One, strongly ethnocentric (Haraway, 2013; Johnson, 2020), resembled tribal and rural populations to our ancestors and to other primates for aesthetic, moral, or behavioural attributes, dominated philosophy, science, and the arts until at least the early twentieth century

(Corbey and Theunissen, 1995; Derrida, 2002; Lestel, 2002; Oliveira, 2017) and reverberates until the present.

The other arose in the second half of the twentieth century and expresses a double otherness, both in the expansion of universal conceptions of humanity; as well as in the attribution or recognition of sociability, intelligence or culture among non-humans (Latour, 2004). Intellectuals have forged a growing tendency to value the plurality of human cultures and their relations with animal diversity (domestic, habituated, wild) since the early-twentieth century until now. Sometimes, this advances in favour of better understanding and maturity. In other cases, this expresses a kind of fragile nominal pan-universalism that still needs to recognize the complexity of these relations and to deal with the conflicts arising from encounters and overlaps between peoples, animals, spaces, objects and rights.

In these contexts, anthropology and philosophy have assumed a prominent role as it analyses both their own relativism, universalism and anthropocentrism (Ingold, 1994) and also revised the Cartesian model of the animal-machine (Despret, 2016; Lestel, 2002, 2019) that suggests the objectification or, at least, the restriction of the animal condition to utility functions and proposes relational models that seem to be able to offer alternatives to the contrasts defined by modern dualisms such as the nature/culture (Descola, 2014) or centre/periphery (Escobar, 2018, 2020) pairs. With this, the limits of Western modern concepts applied to animals, which reinforce human attributes as negations of what is supposed about the animal (non-complex, non-communicative, etc.) are also being analysed in their contradictions. Similar processes have occurred from human relationships with their own bodies (Lock, 2017) and also with microorganisms (Benezra *et al.*, 2012), places (Low, 2009), things (Appadurai, 1986), and technologies (Ingold, 1997).

So, nonhuman primates were chosen for this reflection because of their kinship with humans, their behavioural and cognitive resemblance, and because they inhabit numerous areas of the planet that are at risk or in need of being preserved. Therefore, understanding the relations between humans and other primates, can expand our knowledge, strengthening what is positive for both and also reinforce the possibilities of meeting the urgency of finding viable paths for future life on our planet.

Also, narratives about relations between humans and other primates can reveal many faces of the flux of ideas between Western science and art, as well as the foundations of some patriarchal, racist and modern-colonial ideas and their critics. For

example, the first Western contact with many apes was made by hunter-adventurers in Africa (Correa, 2015) and Asia between the second half of the nineteenth century and the decades of 1920-1930. They provided material both for science and for children's literature, but also distorted or covered up the value of the indigenous people's knowledge that was their first-hand source to find the primates. By the other hand, more recent scientific, ethnographic and socio-environmental ideas about the relationships between humans and other primates have impacted filmic and literary narratives since the decade of 1960 resulting in new insights as, for example, reflections on modern-colonial configurations and feminist theory. Besides, Western audiences rarely know or value past and present indigenous histories (Giles-Vernick and Rupp, 2006) and don't notice the Western and local conflicts and contradictions related to conservation and exploration of natural resources.

At same time, the scientific narratives produced by the biosciences (primatology, evolutionary psychology, ethology, etc.) about the relationships between humans and other primates tend to minimise the expressions of subjectivity, emotions and attachment that eventually emerge from research relationships with other primates (Despret, 2011). This is due to restrictions imposed both by the dominant research methods and techniques in the field, as well as by the forms of writing accepted and valued by the majority of the scientific community.

However, and at the same time, readers who assume that scientific discourses are also permeated by values, as for example Pamela Asquith (2011), Donna Haraway (2013) or Vincianne Despret (2011) have already identified in their analysis, for example, the ideals of patriarchal and hierarchical society observed by Strum and Fedigan (2000) and Schiebinger (1993); anarcho-socialist utopias signalled by Gould (1993) or the Victorian social order in Darwin's ideas highlighted by Sarah Blaffer Hrdy (2000). These readers observe how subjective factors can influence the desired and acclaimed "objectivity" applied by observers in data collection and in the definition of concepts about nature and other living beings.

Some initiatives show how the written narratives (myths, short stories, novels, poems, comics, essays etc.) and films (fiction, documentary, animation, etc.) can teach us about other innovative perspectives. Asquith (2011) signs that the idea of "anthropomorphism" reveals many things about bonds and boundaries between humans and other primates. But, Despret (2011) also notes that frontiers do not explain everything. Intelligence and life strategies of non-humans in specific contexts, among

other factors, are also central elements to understanding behaviours and human-other primates' relationships.

Previous analysis of the scientific discourse on the relationships between humans and other primates also often reveal a double insertion of researchers who wish to give expression to their subjective aspects in research relationships (Asquith, 2011; Jahme, 2001; Rapchan, 2010; Rapchan and Neves, 2017) which are manifested in agendas that include science diffusion (De Waal, 2019) or automemorial texts (Goodall and Berman, 1999; McGrew, 2021).

In a similar way, Despret (2016) wrote histories, inspired in scientific works about many different animals, that are narratives which assume the animals' perspective about the world and, particularly, the animals' point of view about their interactions with the researcher. Also, the personal narrative produced by the French ethnographer Nastassja Martin (2021) about her encounter with a bear when making fieldwork on animism among the Even people expresses her deep emotional and physical transformation through dreams, draws, medical surgeries and research. Those experiences inspired her to narrate, from a woman Western researcher's perspective, what is to be half-human, half-bear.

Thus, despite the importance of primatology produced in the last 60 years in the reconfiguration of the conceptions we have about humans and other primates, there are huge gaps related to the difficulties in registering the animal through our texts. Oscillating between anthropomorphization and the denial of bonds, we continue to try to produce texts capable of expressing the complexity of primate behaviours and their relationships with humans.

So, the cartography of the circulation of ideas that is in course with the research project SINAR, and which first sketches I present next, has potential to reveal some important connections and highlights aspects of the advances, limits and challenges posed to the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities in relation to the field of studies of living beings and ecosystems. At the same time, it points to the importance of bringing different knowledge together in favour of the urgent implementation of measures that mitigate and reverse the global socio environmental crisis and its consequences, as shown below.

Next, I present some points of tension observed in anthropological production since the twentieth century, departing from the Classification Systems in relation to the polarities between nature and culture. In sequence, I offer my reflections about how, in the last 60 years, primatological research about behaviour has transformed conceptions about the relations between humans and other primates, inside and outside the discipline.

Thereafter, I formulate some of the controversies of Primatology, arising from the centrality of scientific objectivity, in face of mechanisms to contain the subjectivity that emerges from interspecific intimacy due prolonged fieldwork and human empathy. I return, then, to contemporary Anthropology to reflect about how research about the relations between humans and other living beings has influenced concepts and practices of the discipline. Finally, in the face of open possibilities for Anthropology as well as for Primatology and considering the existing gaps, I suggest the analysis of writing and filmic narratives as a way to expand our knowledge and sensibilities about the relations between humans and other primates, their complexities and conflicts.

About Systems of Classification and the Contributions of Sociocultural Anthropology to Overcoming Antagonisms Between Nature and Culture

Systems of classification are central parameters in the origin of Western scientific thinking and they are also very current in Anthropology. In science, classification systems emerge as tools that equate and classify elements based on similarities and differences. Among hundreds of classification systems, we can take as examples the systems of classification in taxonomy or in the separation between scientific specialised areas which, in addition to serving the purposes of certain areas of knowledge, also express gender conceptions and conceptions of science (Schiebinger, 1993) of the generations that produced them. Western thought considers that its classification systems, as well as prediction, judgement or representation (Holbraad, 2003) can portray any expression of human thought.

For decades researchers have been asking if they are related to the universality or to locality, if they promote action, thought or both, how they organise objects and relations considering socio-cultural and cognitive systems, and the potential of each system for agglutination, superposition or autonomy have produced animated debates through generations of intellectuals. The classification systems have been an anthropological object of reflection since the origin of anthropology as a discipline (Durkheim and Mauss, 1995[1903]) because there is a consensus that peoples of diverse cultures classify in different ways what expresses different forms to think and to act in the world (Keck, 2009). They are at the core of twentieth century's anthropological thought manifested by efforts to try to classify the indigenous peoples' (Correa, 2015; Schiebinger, 1993) ways of thinking and living. The classical anthropological approach

to symbolic, political or kinship classification systems can take on different guises and perspectives.

Lévi-Strauss set a milestone in this process by proposing, in the mid-twentieth century, the pair dual nature and culture, to analyse kinship-based classification systems (Lévi-Strauss, 2002 [1949]). He then devoted himself to gathering and analysing, from this structuralist perspective, the classification systems themselves and, later, myths. His monist intellectual project antagonises the dualism of modern science that separates nature from culture. Lévi-Strauss adopted a perspective on the frontier between them to analyse the rules of kinship by affinity and alliance and, respectively, the norms established by each society regarding the incest taboo.

Despite the contradictions faced by Lévi-Strauss in his ambitious project, which led him to elaborate at least two conceptions of nature, one under the auspices of structuralist theory and the other to face the dilemmas of ethnographic research (Descola, 2009), his approaches offered suggestions that, for different cultures, “natural” and “social” are constructed categories – “Intellectual fictions”, as Latour (1994) would say.

The léviStraussian proposition is so powerful that even hard critics of structuralism do not neutralise the effects resulting from the exercise of constant problematization of the nature/culture pair. Thus, Lévi-Strauss’ thought presents its contemporary relevance to the social sciences through criticism of the dominant and homogenising paradigms of the world and the adoption of relational perspectives in the face of the dualities produced by modern Western thought, such as: nature and culture, human and non-human, internal and external, real and virtual, artificial and natural, body and mind, male and female, active and passive, space and place, agent and instrument, among others.

In dealing with the challenges posed by the analysis of the correlations between classification systems, beliefs, and individual actions, Mary Douglas presents a sociological theory that rests on the plausibility of different world views, ideologies, and religions (Spickard, 1989). Of her particular interest are two themes in *Natural Symbols* (Douglas, 2013 [1970]): on the one hand, the relationship between belief and social life, in particular ritual, which she treats as a condensed form of communication, and on the other, the radical unnaturalness of symbolic uses of the nature of the body in diverse social contexts. This contribution makes Douglas a one more precursor of the perception that classification systems under the auspices of categories nature and culture manifest themselves in more complex forms than the dual antagonism expressed by the formula nature versus culture, which brought Douglas closer to Lévi-Strauss’ ideas.

Edmund Leach defined himself as “idealist-humanist-empiricist” (*apud* Tambiah, 1998), which led him to criticise other structural-functionalists for expressing “the lack of fit between ideal categories and empirical discontinuities” (Leach, 2008 [1973]). It also encouraged Leach to explore the relationships between individual behaviour and “custom”, determined by the classification systems governing descent, marriage, and inheritance. Thus, while criticising Levi-Strauss’ approach to kinship, Leach expressed admiration for the structuralist way of treating the categories of thought, whether indigenous or Western, and the different languages used to express it (Leach, 1973 [1970]).

Although classification systems have been treated by classical anthropology from the perspective of polarisation and dualism (e.g., nature and culture or sacred and profane), complementarity (body and soul, life and death) and even asymmetry (such as male and female), many of this studies already signalled the existence of hybrid zones such as sex and food for Lévi-Strauss (2005 [1967]; 2006 [1968]; 2007 [1964]; 2011 [1971]), the body for Douglas and the forms of thought and linguistic expression about the cycles of life, nature and time for Leach (1978). Lately, Castro (2010) has influenced the field making questions as if some time Anthropology will be able to adopt a perspective that demonstrates that what is more interesting and relevant in the agents, entities, problems and concepts studied by theoretical anthropology come from peoples’ imagination.

From another perspective, Ethnobiology also emerged as a way to produce anthropological knowledge on indigenous classification systems that includes nonhuman animals, plants and also all ecological fields (climate, soil, water etc.) (Frazão-Moreira, 2015). It is a very disseminated way to research, and its history, is a good example of an interdisciplinary field (Ellen, 2006) that adopt anthropological perspectives on other living beings closer to other areas of knowledge to produce joint results by plural theoretical and methodological approaches and, perhaps, this is one of the most successful experiences among interdisciplinary initiatives.

Frazão-Moreira signalises the great theoretical and methodological variations under the research nominate by ethnobiology and that it various from examination of local habits and knowledge about nature from a scientific perspective is that later assumed an ethno-scientific approach that sought to study indigenous cognitive structures and, after the 1980s, began to focus on practices and knowledges (Frazão-Moreira, 2015).

In ethical and political perspectives, ethnobiological research has also emerged, since 1990's, in favour of “conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development”, “indigenous rights” and “intellectual property rights”. There are also ethno-primatologists' initiatives contributing in incorporating elements of anthropology into primatology in field research on human-other primate relations (Fuentes, 2012).

In summary, since end of the 1970s, an expressive set of propositions made by sociocultural anthropologists themselves or influenced by them has suggested ways for a radical revision on the contents and foundations of the relations between human and other living beings, from an optics that criticises the polarisation between the fields of nature and culture that underpins one of the founding principles of modern Western science (Latour and Woolgar, 1986).

Nowadays it aggregates distinct propositions, mutually critical (Ingold, 2008; Latour, 2005) and even radically antagonistic (Descola, 2016; Ingold, 2016a, 2016b) in relation to its pleas. These movements constitute a field of contemporary anthropology that emphasises human and other living beings' relations which both incorporated certain aspects of postmodern critique at same time that proposed themselves as an alternative. Some of them have focused on the importance of both materiality and sociality on the relationships between humans and other living beings for the constitution of lived worlds (Hallam and Ingold, 2016).

Others, on the other hand, have emphasised the power of multiple ontologies capable of explaining life and the world from different perspectives to scientific, modern and Western ones and some also remind us that modern Western dualism is not evil in itself (Kohn, 2015). Studies on the relationships between humans and other living beings become increasingly voluminous and influential and present themselves through ethnographic or anthropological perspectives on indigenous populations (Frazão-Moreira, 2016; Garcia, 2012; Kohn, 2015; Lima, 1996; Tola, 2016), rural populations (Singh, 2015), gender (Houdart, 2015; Hrdy, 1999, 2000); protected areas (Frazão-Moreira, 2016; Rapchan and Neves, 2019) and cosmopolitan contexts (Parathian, 2019), and also in reflections on the relations between anthropology and other areas of knowledge, such as primatology, for example (Despret, 2011; Haraway, 1989).

This diversity, in turn, is supported by different theoretical propositions represented by approaches such as the Theory-Actor Network (Latour, 2005), Perspectivism (Castro, 1996), the ontological “turning”, “opening” or “spin” (González-Abrisketa and Carro-Ripalda, 2016; Lima, 1999; Sá Júnior, 2015; Tola, 2016; Varela, 2015), the Political

Ecology (Escobar, 2018, 2020), the Relational Anthropology based on the new materialisms and ontogeny (Ingold, 2015), the ecosocial review of the Anthropocene (Haraway, 2016; Bonneuil, 2016), the ecology of the knowledges (Santos, 2018), the Ecofeminism (Adams and Gruen, 2021; Phillips and Rumens, 2016) among others.

On Dualisms and Relational Approaches

The proposition of relational approaches in the social sciences is not new. Pierre Bourdieu proposed the approximation of objective and subjective perspectives in sociological analysis (Bourdieu, 2004: 152-153) inspired, in turn, by Henri Poincaré's proposal for the "Analysis situs" or Topology in 1895. According to Bourdieu, the relational point of view is "an analysis of relative positions and the objective relationships between these positions" (Bourdieu, 2004: 152-153).

The critical confrontation of the dualism associated with the rigidity of the human/animal pair, so rooted in Western science (Castro, 2014; Descola, 2016; Haraway, 1995; Ingold, 1994, 2016a, 2016b; Latour, 1994; Lestel, 2002; among others), has chosen subtly different strategies in the horizon of relationships between humans and other living beings. Among them, we find the historical reflection on what is human and what is animal in comparison to the conceptions of humanity and animality.

Tim Ingold (1994) points out the paradoxes inherent in the definitions that modern sciences have produced about each of these categories. Its starting point is the paradoxes inherent to the disciplinary matrices of anthropology and biology in relation to their different conceptions about the human being. According to this author, from a biological perspective, to define a discipline dedicated to the study of a single species (in this case, humans), it is an unfeasible and unacceptable initiative. Anthropology, in turn, is not only dedicated to the exclusive study of the human species, but often loses sight of the unity of the species and "multiplies indefinitely in the exuberance of human thought and human actions everywhere" (*ibidem*: 14).

On the other hand, according to Ingold, Western conceptions of what an animal is, including for the sciences, were developed from emotional and intellectual prejudices. The animal is defined as deficient in relation to the human. Thought as a being whose definition is constituted from the absence of attributes considered exclusively human, the animal would be the expression of the absence of human attributes. Non-humans lack, as is said in the field of natural and social sciences, moral conscience, intellect, reason and

speech. In this sense, animals would be “closer” to nature – such as women, madmen, homosexuals and others defined in the West as irrational, childish and morally “deviant”.

Thus, according to Ingold (1994), the definition of the human as an animal species promoted by biology is something different from the exercise of anthropology of recording and analysing human life, based on cultural diversity. While the former accentuates our animal condition; the second denies it often. Which means that asking what a human being is radically different from asking what a human being means.

However, as Ingold (*ibidem*) has already observed, when we ask ourselves what “human nature” would be, if it really exists, we are faced with the problem of looking for it exclusively in our animal dimension or only in our cultural dimension. Would the animal condition produce homogeneities and the cultural condition produce differences? And if so, would humanity constitute a universal unity not by its supposed human attributes, but by its natural condition? Ingold suggests that the humanity/animality key offers the possibility of thinking from criteria of belonging and identification. In this case, if instead of thinking about humans and animals from rigid classifications, we think about relationships between humans and animals, perhaps we can learn from indigenous thinking, which proposes to think about oneself and others, animals or humans, in a key of humanity or animality instead of denying, excluding or purifying the countless forms of existence on the planet.

Thus, the discussion about the possibility of establishing consistent and productive dialogues between the humanities and the biosciences does not seem to be linked to the insurmountable dualism proposed by the influence of modernity in the constitution of both. Instead, another possibility may be the construction of new types of knowledge, dialogic and relational, whose principles would be, at least as starting points, inspired by Amerindian ways of thinking (Descola, 2011) – models that accentuate relations of proximity between human and non-human, rather than their respective autonomies.

In this direction, studies on non-humans have, in recent decades, occupied a special niche in anthropology due to the comparative insights they can provide (Asquith, 2011; Perry, 2006; Rodman, 1999; Strier, 2014). In relation to non-human primates, for example, from the first records on hunting and tool use (Goodall, 1990) to more contemporary comparative analyses based on parameters of the existence of local “cultural” traditions, the accumulated knowledge about non-human primates have proposed profound reformulations in defining the boundaries of what is conceived as

specifically human, in relation to other animals (Strier, 2014) and in the relationships between humans and other animals (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980; Lestel, 2002).

Stanford (2001) pointed out that, for example, recent changes in the field of primatology and also changes in representation and relationships that we have established with primates are constituting a new Alterity, a new (non-human) Other, loaded with meanings. For several reasons, praiseworthy or not, the rapprochement between humans and non-human primates in our society seems inexorable and irreversible.

In addition, discussions about the possibilities of producing anthropological theory based on the extension of human agency to other beings and entities (non-human animals, material culture, technology, environmental phenomena) have promoted and provoked a series of movements in the discipline, whether in approximation of other areas of knowledge (such as primatology, genetics, physics), whether in the rearrangement and approximation between classical areas, such as ethnology, urban anthropology, rural anthropology and the anthropology of science, around new keys of reflection or even in the resumption of forgotten authors or second plan research strategies such as value the ethnographic register of relations with animals and plants.

In this sense, reflection on the various facets of relationships between humans and non-humans is extremely promising. Similar to the ethnocentric outbursts of one human culture against others, relationships between humans and non-humans are marked by an estrangement punctuated by attraction and repulsion, identification and differentiation (Corbey and Theunissen, 1995; Rapchan and Carniel, 2020, 2021). Science (Latour, 2004; Haraway, 2013 [1989]), art and myths are living and up-to-date expressions of this (Rapchan, 2019a).

In recent decades, anthropology has shown itself to be increasingly sensitive to these factors and has assumed a prominent role as it has become one of the areas of knowledge that has contributed most to the reflection about the relationships between humans and non-humans (Castro, 2010; Descola, 2011; Kohn, 2015; Mullin, 2002; Tsing, 2015; Varela, 2015) and, consequently, with the redefinition of what we understand about the humanity (Corbey, 2005; Despret, 2011; Haraway, 1991, 2013 [1989]; Ingold, 1994; Latour, 1994, 2005; Rapchan and Neves, 2014a, 2014b, 2017) considering its relationship with the world, which includes animals, objects, space, place and landscape.

Anthropological and primatological contributions about these theoretical and empirical collectives also impact the conceptions about relations about humans and other primates (Asquith, 2011; Despret, 2011; Estrada *et al.*, 2022; Fuentes, 2012, 2016;

Haraway, 2013; Perry, 2006; Rodman, 1999) that, in turn, will be thought from a deep relationship with the landscape, taking it not as a background, but as an essential and founding element of relationships. In fact, going further, the landscape itself must be considered as central in the interactions between humans and non-humans, given that the very starting point of this proposition is to dilute the exclusive focus on the human with regard to the construction of society and sociability and treat it as an intrinsic factor in the establishment and dynamics of relationships. This implies removing the space inhabited by humans and animals from the condition of frequent forgetfulness, at least in relation to this type of analysis.

Thus, for Ingold (2000), the landscape is not exclusively a point in space where social relationships and research relationships take place, but as a dimension that modulates and is modulated from these relationships so as not to be a supporting, but a central element. From this point of view, we intend to consider non-humans by problematizing the classifications that, with each intellectual generation, define, for example, animals as those who lack human attributes while recognizing that we would be better if we were more capable of recognize ourselves as animals (Ingold, 1994). Thus, the challenge is to bring out complexities and scales (Leach, 1989), to think about humans, non-humans and landscapes not as radically distinct and apperted elements, but as complementary entities, despite their respective singularities, thus promoting “partial connections” (Strathern, 2005).

These hybrid spaces inhabited by different beings and entities will be seen as places of densification of sociabilities (Ingold, 2015) in the landscape (de Certeau, 1984) where relationships that have both singular and common characteristics are defined, that is, they are places where encounters between humans and other beings occur and that also were transformed in these processes whose intensity and repercussion still need to be comprehended and evaluated.

The following reflections start from the premise that historical processes, narratives and practices should not be taken separately in the analysis of the relationships between humans and other living beings. Thus, inhabiting the world, acting in the world and thinking about the world will be taken here as deeply interconnected forms of existence. It is from this point of view that I will address some aspects of the relationships between humans and other primates, in order to formulate some reflections on the places and meanings of thinking about relationships between humans and other living beings.

Thus, these reflections will be directed to the traps set by the dualisms arising from the ways we think and treat the relationships between humans and other living beings and about how we conceive humanity and animality, since colonial and post-colonial contexts enclose certain portions of humanity in the animality category. Such traps produce the illusion that the proposition of new scientific paradigms promotes the full overcoming of coercive forces, the abandonment of prejudices or the production of a better type of knowledge. But unfortunately, most of the time, we remain limited by the bonds of dualisms. Therefore, this reflection has no answers, but many questions and propositions. Next, I will present the questions that I would like to share with you in order to develop more relational and procedural and less positivist and segmented points of view.

On Our Relationships with Other Primates: Rethinking Primatology

The growing influence of the approaches on human and other living beings' relations in contemporary anthropology indicates the urgency of examining their concepts and developments. For example, it is fundamental to analyse the current conceptions of "almost-human", "nonhuman" or "near-objects" (Houdart, 2015), to think about the foundations that support interspecies relations (Livingston and Puar, 2011), or "multi-species" relations (Van Dooren *et al.*, 2016). It is also central to follow the theoretical revisions on the "domestication" conceptions (Sautchuk, 2016), as well as to analyse how these, and other related classification systems, appear both in the production of anthropological and scientific knowledge in order to reflect how categories like human, nonhuman, technology, environment, history, culture and genre can participate in favour of a greater and better understanding of the phenomena, if they are expressions of collectivities, of minorities, whether they are hegemonic (Sena, 2018) or ideological (Fonseca, 2015). Finally, it is time to think about what is (and how they are) the Otherness related to other living beings and elaborated by anthropological and scientific studies.

There are two aspects of the recent history of the biosciences to be highlighted here because they express important tensions for us to think about the relationships between humans and animals: on the one hand, the initiatives to compare humans with other primates and, on the other hand, the tensions exerted by the factors sex, gender and race in the production of knowledge that points to continuities, conflicts and similarities between humans and other animals.

A certain part of primatology is dedicated to understanding the great primates (bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans) in order to establish comparisons with

humans and obtain some explanations from them. Thus, as Fuentes (2016) points out, although our genetic kinship with bonobos and chimpanzees indicates that we share an evolutionary history, DNA and physiology, understanding how and why our non-human relatives wage wars, exert sexual coercion, express male aggression, produce and use tools or hunt will not serve to explain human behaviour. Despite being a nice starting point, he is wrong.

Humans, bonobos and chimpanzees have existed for millions of years as distinct species and this has produced differences that nullify the meaning of these comparisons, in particular, due to the emergence of symbolic capacities in humans, which have fully and integrally affected our ways of life (Rapchan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Rapchan and Neves, 2014a, 2014b, 2017). So even traits that look similar may not be the same thing because they evolved in different ways. That is, phenotypic similarities may not correspond to shared evolutionary histories. Analog behaviours are not necessarily homologous behaviours.

This, however, does not invalidate these works because the expansion of knowledge about each of these species is, in itself, very important and also because these studies have the merit of remembering that humans are animals, which puts us back in the natural world and puts ethical issues related to exploitation and destruction of other forms of life. At the same time, it allows criticism of the conceptions that the human condition is totally autonomous in relation to other forms of life and reconnects humans to their primate lineage, bringing our lives and our bodies closer to nature while offering subsidies to combat ideas that are not only wrong, they are also ethically and politically dangerous.

At the same time, revisiting the history of science, in terms of the relationship between humans and animals, has revealed, among the many discoveries, that race, sex and gender are key elements that emerge with force, associating women and ethnicities with nature or animals. These forms of organisation and expression have affected and shaped Western scientific thinking since its emergence as modern science until at least the first decades of the twentieth century.

In 1893, the Dutch physician, anatomist and palaeontologist Eugene Dubois announced the discovery of the so-called “missing link”. The “missing link” would be a fossil of an ancestor that would rank between great apes and full humans (Corbey and Theunissen, 1995). The ambiguities expressed by this being, supposedly animalistic, ancestral, natural, African, overflow the borders of the fossil and project meanings that articulate contemporary African humans to human ancestors, while at the same time

bringing women closer to nature, the great apes and the sphere of the human being. primitive. Hence the racism and sexism present in the associations between great primates, women and African ethnicities can be perceived both in traditional Islam and in Western science (Kruk, 1995) or even in fairy tales, Shakespearean literature and pop culture (Warner, 1995). That is, in many ways, through the involvement between female characters and beasts, from Caliban and King Kong, such perceptions are still present.

So, among other living beings, primates stand out in these approaches. The primatology devoted to the study of behaviour has, over the past five decades, promoted a profound revolution in knowledge about nonhuman primates (De Waal, 2007, 2017; Gibson e Ingold, 2004; Goodall, 1990; McGrew, 1992; Strier, 2014; Strum and Fedigan, 2000). In a broad theoretical-epistemological sense, contemporary primatology exerts significant influences on the process of redefinition of human and animal and faces, like anthropology and paleoanthropology, the pressures arising from the dynamics of the process. Difficulties in redefining the human (Rutherford, 2019), creating distinctive typologies between males and females (Fedigan, 1999), or defining the concept of dominance among nonhuman primates are some expressions of this.

This is justified in that the consensus building around recognizing the existence of social complexity and broad cognitive capacities in nonhuman primates raises new questions about the definite conceptions of the relationship between nature and culture in their classical patterns. That is, it opens gaps for rigorous revisions of biological and cultural determinisms, as well as revisits once unthinkable possibilities for reflection on the place and role of physical and non-physical aspects of evolution in relation to primates, particularly in our species. At the same time, the results of primatological research suggest the existence of new otherness for anthropology, indicating the possibility of extending the person-to-nonhuman condition (Lestel, 2002) and require debate on the theoretical, philosophical, political (Cavanagh, 2014) and ethical (Oliveira, 2017) repositioning about other living beings and their relations with humans.

On Our Relationships with Other Living Beings: Rethinking Anthropology

In recent decades, anthropology has also been impacted by the need to address the relationships between humans and other animals. Such relationships were not absent from ethnographies produced in rural or indigenous contexts, nor from anthropological theories produced from these ethnographies, but never before have animals been so often focused as active participants in any social context. Some call this movement an “ontological turn”

(González-Abrisketa and Carro-Ripalda, 2016; Tola, 2016; Varela, 2015). Others prefer other denominations, or refuse them. In common, they are initiatives that criticise the positivist parameters of modern sciences, the segmentation of knowledge and the hierarchy of beings.

To face these challenges, anthropology practitioners have proposed some paths. Bruno Latour (1994) criticises the classic bases of Relativism proposed by culturalist anthropology, according to which each culture would produce its own and exclusive nature, in the same way that he criticises the conceptions of social anthropology based on a universal nature populated by different cultures. Latour suggests that there are particular relationships between each culture and the world that, in turn, produce relationships between natures-cultures.

Tim Ingold (2015) proposes that the construction of life, from the anthropological perspective, be thought from the deep integration between a place and all the beings that inhabit it, including humans, from a long and fully shared history.

The perspectivism proposed by Tânia Stolze Lima (1999) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2002) suggests that ethnography is capable of reproducing the context and the meanings that animals, other beings and beings have in human contexts.

Arturo Escobar (2018, 2020) suggests the substitution of the conception of “ontological turn” to “ontological pluriverse” as a way to surpass the isolation among cultures, worlds and natures and to find a way to promote ontological politics that includes relations between Global South and Global North, even considering their inequalities, conflicts and resources. In other words, “pluriverse” is a motion to drive the “ontological spin” in direction to “universalism” in favour of the expression and existence of the multiplicity of possible universes, real and imagined.

When thinking about what is a living being, Anna Tsing (2015) reflects about the beings that are disgusting, invisible or not even considered living beings departing from the mushrooms, despite that many have vital importance. That drives her to think about what kind of life is important to Western cultures and why. Tsing (*ibidem*) suggests that it is urgent to construct bridges between the universalist Global North perspective and the plurality of worlds: the invisible, forgotten, feared or hated. According to her, the Western desire to control nature generated a kind of “civilizational monoculture” and the older generations were forced to subsidise the rigid biopolitical frontiers between nature and culture. This has to be overcome.

This list of ideas and authors does not intend to account for the many proposals that have emerged in anthropology to try to equate the multiple relationships between humans and other animals. Its role here is only to provoke a reflection on the ability of anthropology to overcome the absences of animals in our works without reproducing other dualisms. It also serves to call attention to the dualisms that we reproduce even when we activate our categories of analysis and thought. We talk about humans and non-humans, humans and non-human primates, humans and animals, humans and other animals and what do we communicate with that?

The first two pairs (humans and non-humans; humans and non-human primates) are formed by negations, which brings us to the categories formed by absences: animals or primates do not have the attributes that humans have. The third pair refers to a dualism that also presupposes that humans and animals are distinct, disregarding that humans are also animals (Ingold, 1994; Rapchan and Neves, 2014b). The last pair signals the recognition of an otherness, but what exactly does that mean? Is it recognizing some kind of identity in animals that puts them in relationship with us? Or is it to pasteurise animal collectives as we did with humans, as Baudrillard (1992) accuses?

I still wonder, for example, if in our research practices, the effort to contemplate the presence and perspective of animals does not lead us to lose sight of humans, or to treat them as mere supporting actors, thus producing a new dual imbalance. Or, on the other hand, if the emphasis on the relationships between humans and animals cannot lead us to subtract history and, thus, stop dealing with social inequalities, conflicts and lacks as factors that are also constitutive of those contexts.

Faced with these questions, motivated by reading the works of Tola (2016), Varela (2015), González-Abrisketa and Carro-Ripalda (2016), I return my attention to Africa and to chimpanzees and humans, my own research topic for so many years, facing concerns about conflicts in regions where primatological research is developed and the repercussions of the knowledge produced, not exclusively as ethical dilemmas, but also as constitutive factors of the knowledge that I am capable of producing.

Narratives to Understand Shared Worlds

The anthropology of relationships between humans and other living beings and the environmental humanities have made efforts to find forms of narrative expression that fill the gaps left by the silencing of other living beings in the textual production of the social and human sciences and continue to seek methodological tools and conceptual concepts

that can best serve this purpose (Descola, 2014; Galvin, 2019; Houdart, 2015; Ingold, 1994; Latour, 2004; Mullin, 2002).

At the same time, indigenous environmental activists, landless people, quilombolas, ecofeminists and ecosocialists have shared with the academic community and society, through publications and participation in dissemination events, social networks and digital platforms, their ways of thinking and their cosmovisions. These expressions narrate and reveal different forms of existence from those adopted by the Global North and its regions of influence and point to the resilience of other ways of life, while indicating alternatives for possible futures (Crosby, 2004; Davis, 2022; Fan, 2007; Lafuente, 2007).

Meanwhile, we realise how much the reach of academic and scientific narratives is still limited, which is observed, for example, when mass phenomena such as scientific denialism that circulates in social digital networks (Cook, 2017; Guimarães, 2022; Hoffman *et al.*, 2019; Silva, 2021) or the connections between racism/colonialism/animals (Davis, 2022; Jackson, 2021; Johnson, 2020; Montford and Taylor, 2020), for example, or the unexpected reaction of humans attacking capuchin monkeys in Brazilian urban areas where, apparently, environmental education would have formed an awareness of care and protection of living beings (Rapchan, 2019b).

These factors stand as a buffer against urgencies related to the need to raise awareness and mobilise all communities in relation to two combined and extremely serious problems: environmental degradation and the disappearance of countless species. Both manifest themselves in their worst versions in the regions with the highest concentration of poverty on the globe. In other words, social tragedies and colonialism are strongly linked to the announced and ongoing environmental collapse (Davis, 2022), since the knowledge and ways of life of the populations that live in these regions are as threatened as the environment and the ways of life.

And one of the challenges in dealing with such complexity includes being able to narrate and, through narratives, connect humans, living beings, place, technology and ways of life around the world. Derrida (2002) draws attention to the difficulties that Western scientific-philosophical thinking has to face in order to produce narratives in which the animal is not just an object. Maciel (2011) observes that Derrida distinguishes two types of knowledge about animals: the one that assumes an abyss between humanity and animality and concludes that the animal has no logos, it is inert. And another, which

refuses the exclusively rational approach and apprehends through the senses and through the heart, the task of poetry.

The challenge is to overcome the fact that fictional narratives, as well as scientific and ethnographic narratives produced by the West, reveal more about humans than about non-humans.

Narratives can be a way to resort both to Global North thought and Global South thought to comprehend how human cultural productions about relations between humans and other primates lend a voice to non-human living beings. Narratives with a standpoint on contexts that combine cultural or scientific conceptions about the natural world with ethnic, racial, social or gender differences can enrich and amplify our perspectives. These narratives can also reveal themselves as one of the many social markers that organise both the hegemonic imaginary in the modern-colonial world and the possibility of delineating and producing other worlds.

The aim is to understand the symbolic place attributed to different human populations and other primates in order to identify expressions of how they share the world to offer subsidies that contribute to reflection and action in the face of the urgency of socio-environmental challenges directly or indirectly associated with these social and interspecific relationships. Environmental impacts resulting from the negative effects of the environmental crisis have their worst expression on disadvantaged groups and populations, which include women, queer people, black people, indigenous people and peasants, among others that live in the Global South. They frequently also have their own narratives about relations between humans and other primates that dispute visibility and legitimacy with Western hegemonic narratives.

Faced with these findings, the question remains: Would the West be able to think (and know) more about the animal, in order to go beyond the exclusive, and restrictive, human point of view?

We have at our disposal some elements that can contribute immensely in the search for answers to this question. First, anthropological and ecocritical perspectives can contribute to understanding the ambiguities expressed by similitudes among humans and other primates through narratives. Also, to consider Corbey's reflections on the "metaphysics of apes" (2005), that is, the importance of the metaphysical senses: moral, aesthetic, religious and symbolic of our relationships with other primates can expand our possibilities of comprehension.

If narratives that portray animality express not only the identity of certain animals different from us but also express multiple possibilities of interaction between species and different social groups so we need to find ways to analyse these narratives from transversal perspectives and, thus, contribute to promoting North-South dialogues and knowledge exchanges. This can contribute to finding alternatives to mitigate the socio-economic-environmental effects of destructive relationships between humans and other primates to find and offer alternative solutions and options to imagine and put into practice better possibilities of sharing the world.

Last, but not least, it's important to pay attention to Ingold's alert about what we can expect of the narratives (Ingold, 2017). The author's suggestion is not to search in the narratives codified information about collective systems of values and knowledge but, instead, we need to understand that the meanings of the histories have to be found by the listeners who establish correspondences with other histories of their lives. So, the narratives overlap and each one connects with the others.

Alterities, Humanities and Animalities in Postcolonial Contexts

The accelerated modification or disappearance of ecosystems in the last century, induced by human action (Ceballos *et al.*, 2020), is strongly related to climate change and has a great influence on the life of millions of living beings (Galvin, 2019). Our choices about how we conduct our relations with other living beings can dramatically increase our options for solutions or make our problems unsolvable. Relationships between humans and other primates make part of this and they are complex and multifaceted.

According to Estrada *et al.* (2022), the quality of relationships between humans and other primates is strongly associated with healthier and more sustainable ecosystems. At the same time, 68% of primates worldwide are threatened by the extractive industry and agribusiness.

A recent review of the scientific literature associated with a spatial analysis carried out by Estrada *et al.* (*ibidem*) demonstrated the central and global role of indigenous peoples' territories, languages, and cultures in protecting critically threatened primate biodiversity. In these contexts, human-primate relationships also represent significant aspects of figurations of Otherness in postcolonial modernity (Khair, 2009) and serve to reflect on how certain ambiguities, prejudices and inequalities ended up being constructed and imagined through humans living close to wild animals.

Since the decade of 1960 until the present, a series of historical, scientific and intellectual processes provide the tensioning of the relationships between humans and other primates. Among them, the extinction of the last European colonies in the Global South and its consequences (Porter, 2016) and the emergence of analyses of the biological (Crosby, 2004), political-economic, scientific and sociocultural (Fan, 2007) impacts of the colonial period.

Also, the expansion and intensification of the presence of scientifically inspired discourses in fictional narratives, as well as the collisions between their ambivalent meanings about modernity, imperialism and globalisation (Bud *et al.*, 2018), the emergence of public scientific discourses on pollution (Mosley, 2014), environmental destruction (Bonneuil, 2016), the climate crisis (Bodansky, 2001) and its multiple consequences and the unprecedented expansion of scientific knowledge about other primates.

Particularly, research on great primates *in situ* begins to follow patterns of continuity and regularity (Whiten *et al.*, 1999). This both favoured the unprecedented accumulation of data on the behaviour of chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas in their own habitats. It also revealed both the invisibility of the role of local populations in the production of Western scientific and literary knowledge, as noted by Correa (2015) in relation to African gorillas, and the contradictions inherent in the intense and intimate coexistence between complex beings, a theme already well known by practitioners of ethnography, but which has only begun to be effectively discussed by anthropology from the 1970s onwards (Rabinow, 1986; Yudice, 2003).

This period also coincides with the urgent need (Moore, 2015) to realise that environmental catastrophes are not the product of the sum between nature and a generic humanity and to understand that misaligned narratives about the relationships between humans and other living beings teach us about our deep history and about the present (Haraway, 2016). Last but not least, the expansion of collective, public and political expressions of feminist (Haraway, 2013) and anti-racist discourses, as well as the intersections between feminist theory and the studies of the relationships between humans and other animals, race and posthumanism (Åsberg e Braidotti, 2018; Birke *et al.*, 2004).

Sub-Saharan Africa (Kwashirai, 2012) and Latin America (Carruthers, 2008) share a colonial and slave-holding past, as well as a present in which tensions and postcolonial legacies are expressed through the intertwining of environmental, racial, ethnic, gender and poverty issues. Many species of primates live in these regions (Estrada *et al.*, 2022).

The great African primates (bonobos, chimpanzees and gorillas) and the African and Latin America's various species of monkeys establish many kinds of contact with humans, and the constant tension between Western thought and local cultures has deep socio-environmental implications.

Human-other primates' interactions teach us that we are also animals (Rapchan, 2019a) and that human agency is just one more element in the conflicting and harmonious production of life. This multiplies perspectives of the natural world and the consequences of our actions: the exploitation, the commodification (Wallace, 2016) and the destruction of beings and environments (Tsing, 2015) that puts all at risk (Stengers, 2009). The history of human-other primates' relationships also reveals classifications and hierarchies based on the dichotomy between humanity and animality (Rapchan, 2012) – such as race (Anderson and Perrin, 2018), gender (Herzfeld, 2017) and coloniality (Rapchan and Carniel, 2020) as key elements of modern colonial projects. This is the central premise that will guide the project SINAR.

At least two aspects apply to the relationships between humans and the charismatic primates, considering anthropological “animal turn”, environmental humanities and animal studies. On the one hand, there are reflections on the differences and similarities between humans and other primates and their influence on contemporary Western thought. On the other, there are works that analyse the entanglement of humans with other primates in complex and asymmetrical structures marked by multiple layers. The anthropological perspective can broaden the understanding of these complex scenarios since presented proposals for the radical revision of the contents and foundations of human-other living being relationships, criticising the nature-culture polarisation that underpin one of the founding principles of modern Western science.

The environmental humanities offer subsidies for the analysis of narratives, reinforce interdisciplinarity and the possibilities of transcending the rigid and hierarchical perspectives of modernity based on the nature-culture binomial. The twentieth-century academic interest in narrative and its reconceptualisation show its “processual nature” and its central role to produce “the unity of a life” through “dialogue, intentionality, consciousness, knowledge, culture, community, reality construction, and, ultimately, personal identity”. Narratives offer textures and nuanced glimpses suggesting layers and fringes under the supposedly autonomous polarities of the nature-culture binomial. Thus, these narratives signal both the temporal depth and the contextual diversity in the Global South and the West. Symbolic human-animal boundaries can associate certain people or

gender and nature, leading to dehumanisation that intertwines them in regimes of social relegation. Such tension crosses borders and favours displacements, putting anthropocentric and biological determinists' conceptions in check.

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