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'Gypsies', Natural Monogamy, and Violence Full of Love

Anthropomorphism as a Constitutive Element of the Construction of Non-human Subjectivity in Modern Central European Travel Narratives*

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Abstract. The paper examines modern knowledge about non-human primates in Czech travel narratives concerning Africa and biological journals from the late nineteenth century to the end of the interwar period. Particular attention is given to the way discourse on primates and anthropological discourse mutually influenced each other. Inspired by the intersection of human – animal studies, critical race theory, and gender studies, the paper emphasizes the anthropomorphizing character of biological discourse and popular travel narratives. At the time, presentations of primates created a specific anthropological resource and, in addition, helped to naturalize the dominant racial and gender ideologies. In the context of the Austrian–Hungarian and Czechoslovakian relative inability to obtain colonial possessions in the way western powers did, the representations of anthropomorphized non-human primates can also be interpreted as a specific field where Czech colonial fantasies about dominance were expressed.

Keywords: Human – animal studies; non-human primates; Czech travel writing; colonialism without colonies; race; gender

Introduction

In the last twenty years, significant scholarship has emerged in anthropologically and culturally oriented historiography concerning the problem of alterity in the Central European region. This field of interest has shifted attention to the entanglement of Central European agents in colonial power relations, mostly stressing their previously neglected participation in global power structures. Several recent

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scholars have pointed out the specificity of these alterity discourses and, at the same time, their relationship with hegemonic colonial epistemologies.[1] In this paper, one aspect of these alterity discourses is emphasized in particular: the constitutive role of animality represented by non-human primates in the construction of "othered", allegedly primitive humanity. However, as this study argues, to imagine the production of alterity as a one-way linear transfer from the discourse of animality to the discourse of primitive humanity would be rather simplistic.

The paper analyses popularizing scientific discourse and the discourse of travelogues concerned with non-human primates in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the interwar period. The article emphasizes the mutual interconnectedness of the concepts of humanity and animality. It argues that modern efforts to strictly and categorically separate animals from humans[2] should be approached critically. Rather than a simple and essential fact, this dichotomy should be seen the outcome of multiple violent and complicated exclusions and objectifications, as a product of specific historical conditions and asymmetric power relations.[3] The representations of non-human primates provide an ideal example for this task.

Dona Haraway, in her famous and now classic work, points out the importance of primate species, particularly modern primatology, for the constitution of modern concepts of humanity, animality, race, and gender. Haraway understands the body of the primate as a political discourse which constitutes the political order and organizes differences.[4] From the position of recent natural sciences, Volker Schurig distinguishes between the actual natural science concerned with primates and the anthropomorphizing metaphors produced in the framework of the Darwinist evolutionary paradigm. According to Schurig, these metaphors serve ideological purposes rather than the interpretation of the actual evolution of primate behaviour in terms of modern natural science.[5] However, in the selected period, as this article argues, distinguishing modern natural science from anthropomorphizing metaphors was not always possible because the two domains considerably overlapped.

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1 Baloun, *"Metla našeho venkova"*; Herza, *Imaginace jinakosti*; Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteur, Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus*; Fuchs, "»Bushmen in Hick Town«"; Storchová, "Representing the other."

2 I consider the strict human/animal dichotomy an invention of European modernity, refusing its popular essentialist meaning. For historical genealogy of this binary opposition, see Nübling, "Linguistische Zugänge," 33.

3 Wirth, "Fragmente einer anthropozentrismus-kritischer Herrschaftsanalytik," 60.

4 Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 10; Haraway called this practice "simian orientalism". However, I will not use this term because it seems to push too far the original concept of Orientalism, formulated by Edward Said and by various later critics.

5 Schurig, "Der Begriff des »Affen«," 382.

I consider nature a cultural product, far from the idea of a pure and objective natural science working independently of the dominant culture. Londa Schiebinger has shown the inseparability of modern natural science from dominant social norms, particularly from the gender identities of scientists. According to Schiebinger, dominant gender structures are linguistically encoded at the various levels of scientific knowledge.[6] This article examines the imagined continuity between humans and non-humans, particularly in social behaviour and the constructions of primate subjectivity. However, this continuity is far from unproblematic, reflecting existing inequalities and asymmetric power relations further naturalized and reproduced in the construction of primate subjectivities and behaviour. To follow Schiebinger's emphasis on gender inequalities and further extend it, this article also examines the role of modern racial ideology in natural sciences.

Recent scholarship in the interdisciplinary field of human-animal studies considers the category of race an imagined link between humanity and animality, particularly in nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses.[7] To better understand the complex problems of race, species, nature, and culture, Claire Jean Kim employs the concept of a dynamic, imaginative borderland between animality and humanity. This borderland is highly flexible, situating living beings variously in a state of dependence, subject to existing power relations. Not only racialized (and possibly animalized) social groups but also animals that are "almost human" (such as the primates) can be situated on either side of this border. As Kim points out, both non-human animals and racialized humans have been imagined as "tethered to the body and nature, incapable of civilization and progress, and lacking history."[8] This ambiguous situatedness produced anxieties and other strong emotions based on the fear of possible transgression. Racialized people could become dominated by their alleged 'animal' nature; almost-human animals could behave like humans. As Kim points out, the situatedness in relation to the borderland could produce rights to live autonomously and be protected from violence.[9] Other critical race theorists also understand the connection between the discourse on human rights and the taxonomic order of nature, constituted by the similarities and differences of physical bodies, as being at the core of racial ideology.[10]

The establishment of the evolutionary paradigm and racial thinking connecting animality, humanity, and race occurred within the framework of the colonial

6 Schiebinger, Has Feminism Changed Science, 146–8.

7 Jackson, *Becoming Human*; Rohman, *Stalking the Subject*; Sivasundaran, "Imperial Transgressions"; Zellinger, "Race and Animal-breeding."

8 Kim, *Dangerous Crossings*, 24–5.

9 Kim, *Dangerous Crossings*, 24.

10 Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 8–9.

exploitation of various subjects.[11] Although the colonial achievements of Austria–Hungary seem marginal in comparison with the colonial empires of the Western powers, such as the United Kingdom, France, or even Germany, recent scholarship has shown that the Central European monarchy was certainly not absent from global colonial power relations.[12] In its methodological relationship with the problem of colonialism, this article draws on the post-structuralist analytic concept of *colonialism without colonies*, as introduced by Barbara Lüthi. This approach stresses the importance of colonial discourse, the imagination of differences, and the production of knowledge by the agents variously entangled in colonial networks.[13] Recent scholars have also pointed to various discursive continuities between Austria–Hungary and one of its successor states, Czechoslovakia, in the matter of colonial imagination.[14] I further stress these continuities in the discourse about primates in the travelogues of Emil Holub, Jiří Baum, and František V. Foit. Holub made his two expeditions in 1872–1879 and 1883–1887, while Baum and Foit set out on their journey in 1931.

For this article, I have analysed both the discourse of travelogues and the discourse of journals for popularization of biology, recognizing the impossibility of clearly dividing the popular and the scientific discourse. Before the establishment of experimental scientific disciplines studying animal behaviour in the first half of the twentieth century, animal behaviour had been positioned at the margins of biology. Most information about primate behaviour came from the accounts of travelers and amateur zoologists.[15] Besides the aforementioned travelogues, this article analyses representations of primates in three Czech popularizing biological journals: *Vesmír* (meaning 'Space'), *Živa* (a Slavic goddess of fertility and life) and *Příroda* (meaning 'Nature'). In particular, *Vesmír* and *Živa* were among the highest regarded and best-known periodicals of the time.

The analysis is divided into four sections: the first discusses the broader evolutionary context of the social behaviour of non-human primates, particularly the Darwinist idea of evolutionary continuity in animals' and humans' emotions and behaviours; the second deals with the baboon species as a model of evolutionary inferiority still directly relatable to humankind, at least its racially inferior parts; the third considers the debates concerning primate sexuality and gender identity, which serve, as this paper argues, to further the naturalization of conservative gender roles

11 Radhakrishna, "Of Apes and Ancestors," 2.

12 Sauer, K.u.K. kolonial; Kolm, Die Ambitionen Österreich-Ungarns im Zaitalter des Hochimperialismus.

13 Lüthi, "Colonialism without Colonies in Europe," 201–12.

14 Lemmen, *Tschechen auf Reisen*.

15 Wuketits, *Entdeckung des Verhaltens*, 39–40.

in European society; and the final section discusses attempts to domesticate concrete non-human primate subjects, as described in the travelogues of Emil Holub, Jiří Baum, and František V. Foit, for through these attempts, non-human subjects were situated even closer to the human side of the imaginary borderland.

Humanity, animality, race

> "The brain of the chimpanzee weighs 350–400 grams, the gorilla's about 425 grams, the weight of the human brain of the lowest races is 900–1000 grams, while of the highest, i.e., Europeans, 1300–1400 grams. The ratio of the cerebral cortex of the orangutan to that of humans of the highest race is 5:24, from which we can make deductions about the psychical distance from the highest apes to humans."[16]

This rather extreme example of an exact mathematical expression of the difference between humans and animals is useful for illustrating the modern imagination of the relationship between non-human primates and humans. The key role is played by the concept of intelligence in its relationship to the physical body, represented by the brain and the skull. This specific configuration of knowledge has produced a scale from animality to humanity, which runs parallel with the scale from the state of the wilderness to civilization. In the late nineteenth century, contemporary Central European anthropology turned its interest to topics connected to prehistory within the evolutionary framework.[17] In the context of searching for the "missing link", this orientation also connected primates and humans and enabled specific forms of imagination about animality, humanity, and their borderland.[18]

In the late nineteenth century, Darwin's idea of evolutionary continuity in behaviour also held sway in Czech biological journals. According to Volker Schurig, Darwin interpreted animal behaviour anthropomorphically, stressing the gradual increase in the complexity of expression. Every living being should possess some form of secondary instinct, such as sympathy, love, and joy, the only difference between humans and other animals being not in the type but in the degree of development of these faculties.[19] Although this portraiture of non-human animals was sometimes mistaken as merely metaphorical, Darwin and his contemporaries believed it to be

16 Boušek, "Mozek ssavců," 178–9.

17 Herza, "Anthropologist and Their Monsters," 72–3; Ranzmair, *Die Anthropologische*, 51.

18 Archaeologists and physical anthropologists placed particular emphasis on anatomical differences (*Živa* 1894, 47–50).

19 Schurig, "Der Begriff des 'Affen'…," 395–6.

the most realistic description of non-human subjectivity.[20] Evolutionary continuity 'in degree, not in kind' provided an essential resource not just in the imagining of the border between humanity and animality but also in contemporary racial discourse, where it proved useful in the production of different levels of complexity in human cultural evolution.

In 1886, the *Vesmír* journal cited the Berlin zoologist Hartmann, who claimed that "the intelligence of the apes in nature is much higher than [the intelligence of] any other mammal. […] Their dens, when compared to such other mammals as, rodents, are very crudely arranged. However, we cannot forget that some low-standing human races […] hardly rise in the arrangements of their huts, if it is even appropriate to talk about their dwellings in those terms, above the crudely constructed nests of anthropoid primates."[21] Similarly, in 1893, Bohumil Bauše argued in *Vesmír* that the speech of orangutans differs from human speech only in terms of their lower level of complexity. However, the author also ascribed lower-complexity language to the "Bushmen", whose "sounds are so rudimentary and so imperfect in the articulation of the thoughts of savages that […] they also have to use gestures, and a lack of clarity makes their communication very difficult."[22] In 1924, anthropologist Jindřich Matiegka in the book *Původ a počátky lidstva* (Origin and the Beginnings of Humankind) summarized: "This is revealed in the weight of the brain and in the mental activity of the higher organization of humans; but on the other hand, there is less difference between the lightest human brain and the heaviest monkey brain than between the lightest and heaviest human brains."[23]

At least until the end of the 1920s the configuration of knowledge based on evolutionary continuity in the complexity of behaviour maintained a dominant position in Czech biological discourse, although criticism also appeared in *Živa* claiming intelligence and the weight of the brain to be two aspects completely independent of each other, at least in the context of the human species.[24] However, other articles of the same year stated that "the sharpest difference between human and anthropoid primates depends on the large volume of the skull and the considerable weight of the human brain; Wallace has argues that savages have more brain than they need."[25]

Before the establishment of experimental scientific disciplines studying animal behaviour in the first half of the twentieth century, most information about primate behaviour came from travellers' accounts, oriented more toward a popular audience.

20 Crist, *Images of Animals*, 12.

21 Kafka, "Anthropoidní opice," 263.

22 Bauše, "Řeč opic", 112–3.

23 Matiegka, *Původ a počátky lidstva*, 51.

24 Weigner, "Mozek různých ras lidských," 223–4.

25 Weigner, "Řešení genealogie primátů," 145.

Citing the results of experiments by Robert Yerkes and other early western primatologists, journal articles in the 1930s reorientated the debate toward the problem of the limits of primate intelligence, stressing aspects like the alleged absence of abstract thinking. One article, *Z psychologie opic* [On the Psychology of Monkeys], portrays primates as much dumber than people had previously thought and warns of excessive anthropomorphism in previous discourse.[26] These changes can be interpreted as the outcome of the disintegration of Darwin's paradigm of evolutionary continuity in behaviour and its anthropomorphic imagination. This paradigm of evolutionary continuity in behaviour and emotions was replaced by more experimental approaches, particularly animal psychology and ethology, and later in the twentieth century by scientific primatology.[27]

Baboons—the image of lowness

Of all members of the primate order present in the travelogues and compared with homo sapiens species, baboons were situated at the lowest levels of the evolutionary spectrum within the framework of the human/animal borderland. In the imaginations of travellers and authors, they represented the wildest possible form of humanity, reminding readers of the most animalized human groups. "[Baboons are] the rawest and least enticing group among all the monkeys. […] Outer appearance is in line with their inner value. They are brave, ruthless, rough in their instincts, and the most dangerous in anger," wrote zoologist Jiří Janda in his repeatedly published encyclopaedia of animals.[28] By describing baboons in expressive language, Janda made a connection between physical ugliness and inner moral capacities. Similarly, in an 1878 article about baboons published in *Vesmír*, another author wrote:

> "Of all the dog-shape-headed monkeys, baboons have the most prominent snouts and jaws, which is always a sign of raw passion."[29]

Constructions in which subjectivity and "value" depended on physical appearance, or more precisely on the level of similarity to the European norm of physical beauty, were also a constitutive feature of nineteenth-century racial discourse. In Czech[30] and German travelogues, this kind of relationship between the body and

26 Dichtl, "Z psychologie opic," 120–1.

27 Schurig, "Der Begriff des 'Affen' als eine darwinistische Metapher," 396–7.

28 Janda and Babor, *Velký ilustrovaný přírodopis*, 18.

29 "Paviáni," 202.

30 For example, Holub describes the South African 'Koranna people' as least civilized and physically ugly, particularly in their facial features. 'Koranna' women had 'disfigured' bodies and looked like 'clothed apes'; Holub, *Sedm let v Jižní Africe*, vol. 1, 111–9.

the mind was characteristic of the denotations of indigenous Africans.[31] According to nineteenth-century evolutionary theories, aesthetic and morphological features played a significant role in the context of racial hierarchies, connecting the categories of the low and the ugly.[32]

Emil Holub, a famous Czech traveller and self-trained naturalist, dedicated several pages of his travelogue to general information about baboon species. This general information, I argue, persuasively reflects Holub's colonialist ideas and his imagination of non-human and human hierarchies. Recent scholarship places Holub among the most eager supporters of colonial ideas in Austria-Hungary, particularly in the Czech region. Of the two expeditions he made to South Africa, partially financed by Czech national institutions as well as the Austro-Hungarian government and court, particularly the second one appears to be an example of protocolonialism.[33]

In his book about the Austro-Hungarian colonial debate, Simon Loidl defines protocolonial activities as scientific expeditions with explicitly colonial interests.[34] Besides the explicit connection between colonial science and the planned colonization (which should follow scientific 'discoveries'), there is another important aspect of the popular travelogues which Holub and other travellers published. Holub's travelogues, exhibitions, and popular lectures were highly influential and (re)produced a colonial imagination, as well as providing later Czechoslovakian generations' motivation to travel to Africa.[35] As Mary Luise Pratt points out, travel literature "produced the rest of the world" for readers at home.[36] In the context of non-human primates, this was connected to the formation of anthropological ideas about humans and their relations to non-humans.

Although Holub claimed that the "life and habits [of the baboons] have not yet been surveyed scientifically in detail", he was also convinced that "they are the most harmful of all the monkeys." Especially in densely "cultivated" areas, they are among the "most harmful of mammals".[37] Holub named them "carnivora" [*šelmy*]: "they behave like the actual carnivora, catching young geese and lambs, ripping their bellies, and sucking milk. They also ravage henhouses and birds' nests." Linking physical features with baboons' subjectivity, Holub emphasized their teeth, which

31 Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteur, Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus*, 59.

32 Richards, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 255.

33 Křížová, "Noble and Ignoble Savages," 147.

34 Loidl, "Europa ist zu eng geworden," 12–3.

35 Crhák, "Rakousko-Uhersko a kolonialismus," 77–81.

36 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 3.

37 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 264.

hinted at their "carnivorous nature".[38] Besides this menace to farm animals, baboons' "thievery" also presented a threat to various crops.[39]

According to Holub, the only areas where baboons deserved to live were unpopulated regions, where they "enliven the tiresome South African landscape scenery" and thus entertain travellers.[40] Holub thought about the future of South Africa and its inhabitants in the context of agricultural development[41] with his representations of baboons heavily influenced by this perspective. Led by a paternalistic European civilizing mission, he considered that Africans should become farm labourers[42], whereas the baboons, standing in the way of progress, should be eradicated. According to Eve-Marie Engels, Darwin's evolutionism disintegrated the classical hierarchy of *Scala naturae* and replaced it with a hierarchical organization of species based on their ability to adapt and thus survive.[43] Holub's thinking about the baboons' future thus implies that they were unable to successfully adapt to the changes that the African continent faced in the context of European colonization.

Emil Holub was neither an anthropologist nor a zoologist with a university degree in these disciplines, but rather a medical doctor and a passionate self-taught traveler.[44] Nevertheless, his description of baboons is very interesting because he distinguished three different groups among the ape species, based on the criteria of their habitat. Although Holub described the whole baboon species as "harmful", their habitat had a further constitutive impact on their more specific behaviour.[45] Holub named these three groups of baboons by referring to Czech domestic society's "others": "regular thief baboon", "gypsy baboon", and "wanderer baboon".[46]

According to Holub, "regular thief baboons" are the most "impudent, malicious, and harmful." Their nests are built in inaccessible places and on rocks, where the monkeys can easily escape to avoid "the punishment and pitfalls of avengers." Holub also noted their distinctive social structure with the special position of the guard, who raises the alarm should they be interrupted during "thievery".[47] In contrast with "regular thieves", "gypsies" and "wanderers" are constantly on the move. Living mostly off the fruits of wild plants, they seldom come to farms

38 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 263.

39 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 263.

40 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 264.

41 Wintr, "Tu šklebily se ohyzdné figury lidské," 56–7.

42 Crhák, "Rakousko-Uhersko a kolonialismus," 86–91.

43 Engels, "Die Darwin-Rezeption in Deutschland," 159.

44 Hamman, "Emil Holub," 166.

45 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 263–5.

46 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 266–7.

47 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 264–5.

and gardens for "more tasty food." Holub thought that because of this means of obtaining food, one area is insufficient to provide for them, thus they are forced to frequently move.[48] "Wanderers" are also tougher, fewer in number, and usually punished immediately after their "theft", which Holub regards as another reason for their constant motion.[49]

In his representations of baboons' distinctive groups, Holub found inspiration in contemporary discourses concerning Czech and Austro–Hungarian "others". Problems with determining the exact difference between "gypsies" and "wanderers" also occurred among nineteenth-century law-enforcement officials in the Czech lands of the AustroHungarian state. Contemporary discourse characterized both groups as professional thieves with a nomadic lifestyle.[50] Another constant feature of the discourse about "gypsies" was their imagined location on the margins of humanity and their almost complete absence of cultural traits.[51] Contemporary Austro-Hungarian anthropology saw "gypsies" as the lowest of all races living in the empire.[52] Holub's naming and description of the three baboon groups thus makes sense in the context of late nineteenth-century Central European anthropological discourse. Holub used available images to construct baboon subjectivities, which are described above all as a threat to domestic society.

Baboon sexuality

One highly influential figure in the field of Central European biology, an early promoter of Darwin's ideas to the wider public, was Alfred Brehm, who worked in various cities in today's Germany.[53] Without a university degree, he made a career as a traveller, collector, writer on animals, and zoo director. Based mostly on a compilation of older travel narratives and his own observations, *Tierleben* (1864-1869) was an extremely popular encyclopaedia, particularly with the middle classes.[54] The book (or rather, the series) was published several times, also in Czech, throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In *Život zvířat*, the first Czech translation of Brehm's monumental work, we read numerous stories about the harmfulness, ugliness, wildness, and lowness of the baboons. According to Brehm, one can

48 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta,* vol. 1, 266–7.

49 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holub Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 267–8.

50 Baloun, "Metla našeho venkova," 43–5.

51 Baloun, "Metla našeho venkova," 82–3.

52 Fuchs, *"Rasse", "Volk", Geschlecht*, 142.

53 Matis, "Zur Darwin-Rezeption in Zentraleuropa," 41–2.

54 Nyhart, *Modern Nature*, 36–7.

find in the baboon "an ape at the lowest possible level. Every noble mental capacity faded out, replaced by the wildness of the most disgusting passions. […] The shape of their heads reminds me more of a big, rough dog than the human head, of which other monkeys partially remind me."[55]

In addition to the defamation of baboons' character and body, Brehm also stresses the monkeys' sexuality, a feature almost completely absent in the Czech sources. According to Brehm, their sexuality is disgusting, and males in particular are driven solely by their own strong sexual passion. Even crossing the species border is not tabu for them: "Males don't crave just their own species' females, but also all the females of larger mammals." According to Brehm's sources, they also kidnap human girls and "torture them loathsomely".[56] Brehm linked baboons' sexuality to their body and bodily behaviour, particularly to their abdomen and style of walking, which he considered "recklessly shameless".[57] "Shamelessly seductive" were, according to the author, also their tails, eyes, and general appearance.[58] According to Brigitte Fuchs, abnormal sexuality was an essential feature of nineteenth-century racial discourse about Africa. In contrast with the alleged modesty of European white middle-class women, indigenous African subjects were considered hypersexual and/or had inclinations towards homosexuality.[59] As in the case of Brehm's baboons, pathological sexuality also manifested itself in Africans' bodies.[60]

As in the case of representing baboons as "harmful others", a dangerous threat to domestic society, their sexuality was also sometimes depicted as similar to that of the lowest humans. Perhaps more research is needed here, but it is noteworthy that this intersection of race and sexuality is almost entirely absent from Czech travelogues and major biological periodicals. From all the analysed sources, only Jiří Janda sketched a short note of baboons' sexuality, claiming that baboons held in captivity disciplined by forced work are "occupied by activities which distract them from their passion." On the other hand, caged baboons "succumb to the antinatural satisfaction of sexual instinct."[61] The only example which considered primate sexuality in Czech biological discourse was the debate upon the possibility of cross-species kidnapping and the rape of human women by non-human primates. There were a few articles in *Živa* around WWI that considered this issue. In connection with contemporary research concerning the similar constitution of the blood of human

55 Brehm and Kotal, *Život zvířat*, 127.

56 Brehm and Kotal, *Život zvířat*, 131.

57 Brehm and Kotal, *Život zvířat*, 128–9.

58 Brehm and Kotal, *Život zvířat*, 129.

59 Fuchs, *"Rasse", "Volk", Geschlecht*, 173.

60 Fuchs, *"Rasse", "Volk", Geschlecht*, 174.

61 Janda and Babor, *Velkýilustrovaný přírodopis*, 18.

and non-human primates (which provided further evidence of human and monkey phylogenetic neighbourhoods), Karel Andrle asked if "sexual connection between human and higher primates would be possible and lead to the creation of bastards."[62] All the articles published in *Živa* and *Příroda* were rather sceptical about non-human primates' purposeful sexually motivated assaults on human women.[63] They all considered the stories from field observations of primate sexuality the highly exaggerated or completely fabricated products of western colonial travellers or indigenous Africans. The theme of cross-species sexual attacks also appeared in Czech travelogues. As in the biological journals, their authors did not take this information as confirmed fact but only as stories heard from locals.[64] After the end of WW II, a book by Bedřich Machulka showed that the stories about the "kidnapping of women by older males are fairy tales, which even the indigenous wonder at, although in their old dwellings they had gorillas around them all the time."[65]

Gendering of non-human primates

As Haraway notes, science cannot be understood as value-neutral, with neither moral nor political implications. Knowledge about primates, imagined as almost-human possessors of precultural essence, served to naturalize various political and moral norms.[66] From this position, the Czech biological debate, although consisting mostly of second-hand reports on Western research and/or travellers' observations, is far from unbiased. The naturalization of gender norms can be seen in the discourse on primate monogamy. In 1894, *Živa* published a critique of L.H. Morgan's theory of prehistoric human promiscuity. Citing various naturalists, the anonymous author, argues for the natural origin of monogamy by referring to supposed structural similarities in societies of the phylogenetically closest animals. According to his interpretation, primates and prehistoric humans lived in small, hetero-monogamously structured groups. Making statements about human nature, the author claims that humans' strongest natural instincts are hunger, marital love and jealousy, and love for children. The monogamous family, then, is seen as the highest natural form of coexistence.[67] This conservative position, which also produced socially desirable gender roles and naturalized patriarchal hierarchies, was

62 Andrle, "Příspěvek k anthropologii praehistorické," 206.

63 Andrle, "Příspěvek k anthropologii praehistorické," 206; Andrle, "Coitus mezi člověkem a opicí," 24–5; "O gorile", 110.

64 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 1, 272.

65 Machulka, *V Africe na stezkách zvěře*, 292.

66 Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 11.

67 "Původ rodiny", 252.

accepted unproblematically not just in the Czech debates about primates but in Central European anthropology generally.[68]

In the book *O původu a vývoji člověka I budoucnosti lidstva* (On the Origin and Evolution of Man and the Future of Mankind), anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička constructed a thought experiment about the problem of becoming human. In his narrative, even before crossing the imagined boundary dividing the animal and the human, the primate subjects of Hrdlička's story had formed a society. Its two distinctive features are a family with strong bonds between its members and the rule of stronger individuals as a natural integrative element.[69] According to Janda's encyclopaedia, even gorillas and chimpanzees live in a monogamous family. The gorilla "lives in monogamy, and the family moves around the forest, depending on food conditions. At night, the mother and child go up the tree, the father dwells leaning by the trunk, hunching up to sleep. Should they stay for longer or when the child is too small, the father builds a shelter."[70] A similar image of the gorilla family idyll id described by palaeontologist J. V. Želízko in *Vesmír* in 1932: "The father dwells nearby, guarding his family against danger. For his night duty, the family must provide him with plenty of tasty food. This must be fast; otherwise, the slaps of an angry father fly around."[71] By these imaginative depictions of gorilla society, the ideal of the patriarchal father as an authority who guards the family and provides for it was naturalized. As we have already seen in other cases, here too middle-class cultural norms had a strong influence on the construction of nature.[72]

As shown above, baboons were considered low creatures, very far from cultural humans. There is no speculation about the formation of a monogamous family in the analysed sources. In Holub's travelogues, baboons operate as a coherent group. However, in the descriptions of individual encounters with baboons, Holub also recognizes different roles in the monkey group. "Females carried their offspring on their backs, while half-grown-up ones ran in the dense crowd; the more powerful ones, but males only, swung up into some bushes or trees standing in the way [of their escape], looked back at us, and made as much noise as they could."[73] The 1878 *Vesmír* article also describes baboon society: "The males sit majestically in the sun. With their head between their shoulders, they sit still, while females take care of the young, who like cute children romp around constantly."[74] More evaluation is given

68 Fuchs, *"Rasse", "Volk", Geschlecht*, 129.

69 Hrdlička, *O původu a vývoji*, 38.

70 Janda and Babor, *Velký ilustrovaný přírodopis,* 11.

71 Želízko, "Poslední útočiště goril," 154.

72 Kohoutková, "Konstrukce otcovské identity," 175–6.

73 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 262.

74 "Paviáni," 203.

by Janda, claiming for baboons a "deeper and more noble core": "Despite danger, the female threw herself to a certain doom in an attempt to rescue the captured young. The male leader of the endangered pack escapes last while covering with his own body the escape of other members or in a desperate fight with a leopard […]."[75]

Discourses about non-human primates naturalized some gender roles as the most fundamental ones, in particular the female's motherhood[76] and the male's dominance or leadership.[77] Although the image of the male as the leader was constant across the periods studied, it varied from being the father of the family to being the leader of the larger group. According to Haraway, the dominance of the alpha male constituted an important research topic in 1930s US primatology, where monkey society figured as a less complicated model for human society. According to US scientists, authoritative alpha males functioned as an integrative element that guarded social hierarchy and protected society from individualistic and unproductive competition among its members.[78]

There are similar motives in a short *Vesmír* article, "The monkey king is not a travellers' tale: he is actually there in every monkey troop."[79] However, unlike American scientific discourse, the *Vesmír* article interprets the "monkey king" more as a tyrant, without an integrative element.[80] For Zdeněk Němeček, the motive of social integration is more important. In *Dopisy ze Senegambie* (Letters from Senegambia), he describes a "monkey court", a large concentration of baboons "who constituted a real court, meetings, and parliament."[81] Němeček focuses his description upon "a huge male with a mane almost like a lion." He has a "clever, or rather impertinent, face" and performed his authority by hitting some younger males with a stick. The author explicitly mentions the observed hierarchy, which "ended with the young and babies on the periphery of the meeting area." The leader uses "monkey language" to command his society which, according to Němeček, obeys him because "the social life of these animals is subject to a very strict discipline." Another characteristic behaviour of baboon society, he claims, is taking an act of "vengeance against any human who kills one of its members."[82]

In her classic work, Anne McClintock argues for porno-tropics to be considered an important aspect of nineteenth-century popular discourse on Africa. According

75 Janda and Babor, *Velký ilustrovaný přírodopis*, 18.

76 Lenderová, *K hříchu i k modlitbě*, 105.

77 Lenderová, "Genderové stereotypy, 226.

78 Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 17–9.

79 "Opičí král," 151.

80 The article in *Vesmír* refers to research by the Jewish psychologist G. Révész.

81 Němeček, *Dopisy*, 225–6.

82 Němeček, *Dopisy*, 225–6.

to the author, British tradition saw Africa as a zone of sexual anomalies and aberrations, full of proud, lazy, treacherous, and lustful individuals. African women in particular were perceived as sexually excessive, promiscuous beings whose sexuality neared bestiality.[83] The western colonial image of Africa as the land of primitive corporeal lust, where nothing like European moral norms exists, was familiar to the Czech audience in the late nineteenth century.[84] However, only to a limited extent did this trope influence the Central European discourse on primates. The use of porno-tropics can be identified also in Brehm's *Život zvířat* (Life of Animals) in the parts concerning baboons, and in one single hint in Janda's *Velký ilustrovaný přírodopis* (A Large Illustrated Natural History of all Three Kingdoms). The motif of cross-species sexuality in Czech biological journals and travelogues also shows a rejection of sexualized tropes in the context of non-human primates. Other primate species' gender identities are reminiscent, more than porno-tropics, of the conservative anthropological discourse of Viennese ethnology. In defense of Catholic morals against the feared subversion of evolutionism, Austrian Catholic missionaries and ethnologists developed theories of primal monotheism and patriarchal monogamy. These two principles were believed to have been given to people by God at the beginning, and from this perspective, every deviation from the eternal norms could be interpreted as a sign of moral regression.[85] As seen above, notions about monogamous relationships, patriarchally organized families and societies, and traditional gender roles were much more common in the Czech discourse on primates than the use of porno-tropics. By these conservative tropes, primates were constructed as idealized, conservative noble savages.

Domestication of primates in the travelogues

In his tourist travelogue *Na pokraji Sahary* (On the Border of the Sahara), Jiří Guth-Jarkovský reports an encounter with monkeys in the Atlas gorges. "In contrast to monkeys living in our lands […], civilized and on the same page as humans, *simiae varae naturales* near Blida are completely wild, running away from humans, if showing themselves at all. So, I travel seven kilometres from Blida to see what we originally were like before wearing ties or silk hats."[86] Perhaps in a clearer and definitely shorter form than in scientific journals, Guth-Jarkovský cites the European mythology about the origins of humankind, its history connected to domestication, and the possible future of non-human life on the planet. We have so far focused on various efforts to

83 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 22–3.

84 Herza, *Imaginace jinakosti*, 162–3.

85 Fuchs, *"Rasse", "Volk", Geschlecht*, 210–3.

86 Guth-Jarkovský, *Na pokraji Sahary*, 100–1.

describe primates living freely in the wild. The rest of the paper is dedicated to the conscious efforts of Czech travellers to domesticate individual monkey subjects. In addition to the previous focus on discursive anthropomorphization, domestication constitutes a qualitatively different kind of anthropomorphism.

With a few exceptions, reports on encounters with African primates in Czech travelogues are marginal. The exceptions include attempts by Emil Holub, František Foit, and Jiří Baum to domesticate selected non-human individuals as their travel companions. McClintock argues that the verb *domesticate* had, until the 1960s, the same meaning as the verb *civilize*. According to the author, the extent of possible and practical domestication involved both human and non-human subjects. To domesticate meant to extract the object of domestication from the state of nature and situate them in a hierarchical relationship with the white European male.[87] Although performed to a much smaller extent than the colonial projects of Western powers, the Czech travellers sharing their travel with non-human companions is telling about their own identities and the imagined value of the non-human subject. It also reveals much about admissible methods of domestication.

Pit

In his second travelogue, Emil Holub repeatedly informs his audience about Pit, a baboon taken as a non-human expedition member. According to him, Pit "was endowed with an almost human reason," which Holub also ascribes to his other non-human companion, a grey mouse lemur named Tomi.[88] Several of Pit's character traits and emotions are described. First of all, an emotional bond between Pit and his master developed as a result of domestication. This is particularly evident in the story where Pit got lost. On his return to Holub, he showed "enormous joy, and ran up to me [Holub] immediately."[89] In correspondence with Darwinist ideas of animal subjectivity and emotions, Pit's joy expresses itself through various physical manifestations. Besides the baboon's rush to his human master, Holub also tells us that Pit clicked his teeth and hugged Holub's knees as soon as he returned.[90]

In his general description of baboons, Holub asserts that domesticated baboons were sometimes able to figure as the lead-drivers of a large ox-cart caravan. Holub links this ability to a baboon's intelligence and docility, which were often even greater than the intelligence and docility of dogs or other domesticated animals.[91] To test

87 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 35.

88 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 565.

89 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 2, 52–3.

90 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 2, 52–3.

91 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 264.

this general claim, Holub tried to examine Pit's ability to ride a horse. Probably to avoid Pit's premature escape from this experiment, Holub roped him to the saddle. Holub admits that the experiment was not very successful. "Pit held on to his place as long as he could; but unfortunately, because he started screaming loud in mortal anxiety, he angered the horse, which bolted to dense bushes and threw off poor Pit through several jumps." Because of the rope, Pit then "was bouncing like a ball all around the horse."[92]

The asymmetric power relations between Holub, Pit, and indigenous Africans is seen in other stories as well. In line with Holub's general ideas about the harmfulness of baboons, he centres most of the Pit stories on Pit's teasing other human and non-human beings. According to his own sense of superiority over indigenous Africans, Holub sometimes deems Pit's actions appropriate, but when he does not, he does not hesitate to use a physical constraint to prevent Pit's interaction with anyone.[93]

According to Hamman's understanding of Holub, his sense of superiority over indigenous Africans was unshakeable. He did not see African cultures as valuable and interacted with African subjects in a strongly paternalistic manner, considering them to be mere children.[94] His cultural stereotypes and prejudices produced these attitudes towards indigenous Africans and also towards Pit's actions, which he considered worth describing and morally evaluating in the travelogue. In this context, most of Pit's teasing of various indigenous Africans is interpreted only as anecdotal, harmless pranks, without even considering the positions of indigenous subjects. In specific situations, Holub's attitudes are more complex, possessing the ability to differentiate and thence to make strategic allies. Among the indigenous members of his expedition, Holub had his favourite and less-favoured groups and individuals. He believed that Pit shared his master's values. In contrast to "longer-term servants", who loved Pit, Pit "in competition with me hated from the heart everything that could be called a porter."[95]

Koko

Jiří Baum and František V. Foit travelled from Prague to Cape Town in 1931, about fifty years after Holub's journeys. Although they followed the contemporary trend and made the journey by car[96], in many respects their expedition resem-

92 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 1, 342–3.

93 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 2, 90.

94 Hamman, "Emil Holub," 181–2.

95 Holub, *Dra. Emila Holuba Druhá cesta*, vol. 2, 139.

96 Jůnová Macková and Jůn, "František V. Foit a Jiří Baum," 127.

bled Holub's. The travellers described their motivation for undertaking the journey as scientific. As a biologist working closely with the Czech National Museum and Charles University in Prague, Baum intended to observe and collect various African fauna.[97] Besides his orientation toward the decorative arts, Foit considered himself a naturalist, or rather an anthropologist. Working with Jindřich Matiegka, both Foit and Baum provided data for contemporary anthropology, particularly by measuring and modelling indigenous Africans in the Ituri region of today's Democratic Republic of Congo.[98] According to Josef Kandert, Foit's perspective was highly Eurocentric, as he knew almost nothing about African cultures.[99] Besides their scientific motivation, similarly to Holub's, this journey was also commercially oriented with the goal of promoting various Czech industrial products.[100] In the introduction to his travelogue, Foit explicitly stated the colonial ambitions of the journey, urging Czech government institutions to be more active in this matter.[101] It is evident that the travellers saw themselves as protocolonists, producing the scientific knowledge required for actual colonization.

Similarly to Holub, during the journey, the travellers obtained a non-human companion, a Cercopithecus named Koko. I would argue that the description of Koko's actions, covered to a significant extent in both authors' travelogues, can and should be seen in the context of their anthropological orientation. Both travelers presented Koko as almost human, a true travel companion, "a member of the family".[102] From a contemporary evolutionary/colonial perspective, hierarchically, the authors situate Koko somewhere near the white European child. Baum used the explicit category of the 'child' to point out Koko's undesirable characteristics, which both authors tried to eliminate through the process of domestication.[103] On the other hand, the category of childhood implies a strong emotional relationship and close kinship. In one episode, in which Koko gets lost, Foit notes the emotions connected with the monkey's return: "We welcomed him [the monkey] as a lost son."[104]

When writing, "our Koko felt more human than an ape, so he went to the hotel, instead of staying in the tree",[105] Baum situates his companion closer to the human side of the imagined border. In other episodes, Baum feels the need to present Koko's

97 Jůnová Macková and Jůn, "František V. Foit a Jiří Baum," 138-143.

98 Jůnová Macková and Jůn, "František V. Foit a Jiří Baum," 144.

99 Kandert, "František V. Foit a jeho Africké pobyty," 47.

100 Křížová, *Noble and Ignoble Savages*, 145–6.

101 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 1, xi.

102 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 78–9.

103 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 197.

104 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 1, 207.

105 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 102.

otherness from the white upper-middle-class European male norm.[106] Particularly in the part of the travelogue where the travellers find themselves in relatively modern South African cities, Koko is compared to a rural person. "In the city, it sometimes seems that he is a villager who has not yet adapted to life in the city".[107] To further domesticate Koko and enable him to rise up within the evolutionary scale, Baum and Foit bought him a suit. "Koko looks very funny in the suit, and he probably needs more time to get used to it",[108] commented Foit. Relatively lower and higher positions at the same time had also been emphasized by Baum, in the situation of an encounter with wild monkeys. Baum watched Koko's emotions and interpreted his behaviour to indicate that Koko felt insulted by the whole situation: "He makes an impression of a man who is angry because he is reminded of his humble origins".[109]

To represent Koko's childishness and, at the same time, relative humanity, the authors employ categories of European moral and hygienic norms. According to Storchová, good manners, cleanliness, and order represented in Baum's travelogue the basic features of Western bourgeois social standards.[110] The same standards figured as the desirable goal of Koko's domestication. Foit repeatedly points out hygienic deficiencies in Koko's behaviour. When Koko defecates on the mat, Foit's brief comment is that nothing has been dirtied.[111] In another situation, the defecation hits Foit directly, which he considers a reason to use physical violence toward Koko.

The authors regard corporal punishment as a legitimate and useful instrument of domestication, as we can see in other situations. When Koko takes Foit's toothbrush and casts it in the pond, he is beaten.[112] In other situations, physical violence is connected to closely unspecified acts of naughtiness.[113] Here, the beating is presented as an act of love, for which Koko should probably be grateful because it should improve him: "In the evening before going to sleep, we had to whip him with all our love because he had misbehaved."[114] Besides hygiene, Foit also interprets as a problem Koko's lack of understanding of the higher aims of domestication.[115]

The representation and evaluation of Koko's behaviour reflect the European norms and values of his masters. Baum, for example, comments on Koko's behaviour

106 Storchová, "Representing the Other," 314.

107 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 127.

108 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 2, 525.

109 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 129.

110 Storchová, "Representing the Other," 319.

111 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 1, 192.

112 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 2, 455.

113 In Czech *zlobení* is a term used also for human children's misbehaviour.

114 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 2, 416.

115 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 2, 386.

during the journey as appropriately decent: "After that, he behaved decently for a while, as is appropriate for the adult traveller."[116] Through this statement, Koko is situated somewhere near the travellers' own identities. The resulting product of Baum's and Foit's domestication should resemble European middle-class males as much as possible. Neither Baum nor Foit made any attempt to stress Koko's African origins. The travellers consider indigenous Africans to be low and primitive, merely interesting objects of their scientific research. As is evident from many episodes, the presence of indigenous Africans is rather bothersome. This feeling of racial superiority among white Europeans provides a resource for the construction of Koko's subjectivity. "He [Koko] liked playing with children, but with the blacks, as the inferior race, he was very strict," Baum reports.[117] In another situation, Foit states that Koko "doesn't like blacks and refuses to rest in their arms."[118] This and other episodes present a non-human as at least partially capable of understanding European norms, which implies that European culture must be the highest possible in nature. At the same time, these episodes naturalize indigenous Africans as racially lower beings, over whom even the properly domesticated monkey is of higher value.

Conclusions

As seen above, in modern Central European travel narratives, the gap between non-human primates and humans was not considered unbridgeable, at least not completely. On the contrary, non-human primates served as an anthropological referential point *sui generis*. In line with contemporary evolutionism, both Czech travelogues and biological journals of the late nineteenth century placed baboons at the lowest level of a hierarchical scale, rising by gradations to Europeans at the top. This image is only partially present in more recent discourses. While the debates in Czech biological journals warned readers against excessive tendencies to anthropomorphize non-human primates, the travel literature continued to capitalize on the popular images of almost-human animals. Even the biologist Jiří Baum used the popular motif of low but improvable subjects, which was better known in the context of the indigenous inhabitants of the colonies. Another aspect of anthropomorphism can be seen in the gendering of non-human primates according to the dominant European ideologies. In contrast to the imagined lowness of some primate species, the debate stressed instead the idealized gender characteristics of the animal subjects, projecting the most fundamental and desirable gender roles onto them. In particular, this represented gorillas and chimpanzees as wild yet noble savages.

116 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 162.

117 Baum, *Africkou divočinou*, 197.

118 Foit, *Autem napříč Afrikou*, vol. 1, 202.

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