



<http://dx.doi.org/10.15448/1984-7726.2024.1.45698>

DOSSIÊ: IMAGINAÇÕES DO ANTROPOCENO NA LITERATURA

Towards an ethical existence: tales of enchantment

Por uma existência ética: contos de encantamento

Hacia una existencia ética: cuentos de encantamiento

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Recebido: 31 jan. 2024.

Aprovado: 8 abr. 2024.

Publicado: 24 jul. 2024.

Abstract: This study investigates the theme of crossings in literature, whether it involves trespassing boundaries or limitations, or crossings that enable hybridizations. The concept of crossing is linked to its ethical potential in our geo-historical time, the Anthropocene, a period that calls for a reexamination of the foundations of ethics. To achieve this, well-known literary works such as *Os Lusíadas* by Luis de Camões, *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, and *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood are examined. The analysis is based on Jane Bennett's concept of enchantment. Additionally, authors who adhere to the Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) perspective, such as Graham Harman and Timothy Morton, will be brought into the discussion. The primary goal of this paper is to investigate the role literature and art (in general) play in a time when the rational foundation of ethics is being questioned. The Anthropocene is understood here as a new geological epoch that begs for a revisiting of certain concepts and dichotomies that shape modernity. Thus, there is an acknowledgment of the need to reconsider the foundation of ethics given the rupture provoked by the Anthropocene. This paper provides an examination of the complex interplay between literature, ethics, and the Anthropocene, emphasizing enchantment as a conceptual tool to unravel the ethical dimensions presented by the selected literary works. Furthermore, the works of Camões, Milton, and Atwood expose some of the implications of the enchantment/disenchantment dichotomy that characterizes modernity. The study, therefore, aims to contribute to how literature and art can help cultivate affects that aid in navigating contemporary ethical challenges in a world marked by significant climate transformations.

Keywords: enchantment; hybridization; Anthropocene; non-human world

Resumo: Este estudo investiga o tema dos cruzamentos na literatura, seja ultrapassando fronteiras ou limitações, ou cruzamentos que possibilitam hibridizações. A ideia de cruzamento está relacionada ao seu potencial ético em nosso tempo geo-histórico, o Antropoceno, um período que pede uma reavaliação dos fundamentos éticos. Para alcançar isso, obras literárias conhecidas como *Os Lusíadas* de Luis de Camões, *Paradiso Perdido* de John Milton e *Oryx and Crake* de Margaret Atwood são examinadas. A análise é baseada no conceito de encantamento de Jane Bennett. Além disso, autores que aderem à perspectiva da Ontologia Orientada a Objetos (OOO), como Graham Harman e Timothy Morton, serão incorporados à discussão. O principal objetivo deste artigo é investigar o papel que a literatura e a arte (em geral) desempenham em um momento em que os fundamentos racionais da ética estão sendo questionados. O Antropoceno é aqui compreendido como uma nova época geológica que exige uma revisão de certos conceitos e dicotomias que moldam a modernidade. Assim, há o reconhecimento da necessidade de reconsiderar os fundamentos éticos diante da ruptura provocada pelo Antropoceno. Este artigo oferece uma análise da complexa interação entre literatura, ética e o Antropoceno, enfatizando o encantamento como uma ferramenta conceitual para desvendar as dimensões éticas apresentadas pelas obras literárias selecionadas. Além disso, as obras de Camões, Milton e Atwood expõem algumas das implicações da dicotomia encantamento/desencantamento que caracteriza a modernidade. O estudo, portanto, visa contribuir para discussões sobre como a literatura e a arte podem



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ajudar a cultivar afetos que auxiliam navegar os desafios éticos contemporâneos em um mundo marcado por transformações climáticas significativas.

Palavras-chave: encantamento, hibridização, Antropoceno, mundo não-humano.

Resumen: Este estudio investiga el tema de las travesías en la literatura, ya sea infringiendo límites o limitaciones, o travesías que permiten hibridaciones. La idea de travesía está relacionada con su potencial ético en nuestro tiempo geo-histórico, el Antropoceno, un período que demanda una revisión de los fundamentos éticos. Para lograr esto, se examinan obras literarias conocidas como *Os Lusíadas* de Luís de Camões, *Paraíso Perdido* de John Milton y *Oryx and Crake* de Margaret Atwood. El análisis se basa en el concepto de encantamiento de Jane Bennett. Además, se incorporarán a la discusión autores que siguen la perspectiva de la Ontología Orientada a Objetos (OOO), como Graham Harman y Timothy Morton. El objetivo principal de este artículo es investigar el papel que la literatura y el arte (en general) desempeñan en un momento en que se cuestiona el fundamento racional de la ética. El Antropoceno se entiende aquí como una nueva época geológica que requiere volver a examinar ciertos conceptos y dicotomías que configuran la modernidad. Por lo tanto, se reconoce la necesidad de reconsiderar el fundamento ético ante la ruptura provocada por el Antropoceno. Este artículo proporciona un examen de la compleja interacción entre literatura, ética y el Antropoceno, enfatizando el encantamiento como una herramienta conceptual para desentrañar las dimensiones éticas presentadas por las obras literarias seleccionadas. Además, las obras de Camões, Milton y Atwood exponen algunas de las implicaciones de la dicotomía encantamiento/desenchantamiento que caracteriza a la modernidad. El estudio, por lo tanto, tiene como objetivo contribuir a cómo la literatura y el arte pueden ayudar a cultivar afectos que facilitan la navegación de los desafíos éticos contemporâneos en un mundo marcado por transformaciones climáticas significativas.

Palabras clave: encantamiento; hibridación; Antropoceno; mundo no humano.

Introduction

This article is about crossings: crossing the line, trespassing boundaries and barriers, crossing limits and limitations. When we, as a species, have crossed all the lines that allowed for an inhabitable planet, pushing forward carbon emissions to the point of no return, to the point that reality as we know it is being constantly shaped, altered, reaching an unrecognizable state; after all, do you remember a hotter November in Rio de Janeiro? Do you remember such fires as the ones in Canada this year? Do you remember people being so worried about weather conditions? When this happens, a question is begged: what to make of

'crossings'? Are they always inherently bad?

To navigate the problem of 'crossings' an assortment of literary texts will come to my aid. These texts will light my crossing, as signposts that lead the way. Poetic and prose texts will guide my thoughts as I trespass the boundaries between ethics and aesthetics to try to make sense of how to live in this new geological era called the Anthropocene.

Paul Crutzen, a chemist and Nobel Prize winner for his work on the ozone layer, announced at the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme conference: "No! We're no longer in the Holocene but in the Anthropocene!" (BONNEUIL & FRESSOZ, 2013, p. 3). Here, not only was a new word born but also a new geological era. Later, after two years, the author argued in a *Nature* article in favor of the need to revise the stratigraphic scale, signaling a new era in which humanity had become a force of telluric magnitude. The Anthropocene would thus be a geological epoch dominated by humans. Human impact on the planet had become as significant as to rival the great forces of nature, altering the functioning of the Earth system. Initially, Crutzen and Stoermer proposed the year 1784 as the beginning of this new epoch. The justification lay in the advent of the steam engine. The coincidence between the emergence of a new era and a technological innovation reveals "a story of the unintended outcomes of human ingenuity" (MENEELY & TAYLOR, 2017, p. 3). Or, considering that if modernity was established in the 17th century with the Reformation and the affirmation of the subject, and gained momentum throughout the 18th century, the proposed marker by Crutzen and Stoermer points to the advances of modernity. In other words, the Anthropocene would be the era of the repercussions of modernity. Interestingly, it is the repercussions that, in a way, end up revealing the modern fractures; or rather, the flaws in its constitution.

However, it is important to note that there are controversies about the beginning of our new geo-historical era. The impact of the Industrial Revolution on the planet cannot be denied, as proposed by Crutzen and Stoermer (2000). On

the other hand, there are geological indications pointing to the second half of the 20th century as the beginning of this era. Geologist Jan Zalasiewicz identifies some clear stratigraphic signs for demarcating the Anthropocene, namely the radionuclides released into the atmosphere when the first atomic bomb exploded in the Nevada desert; the novelty of new petrochemical products and the expansion of the use of synthetic fertilizers. The post-war great acceleration would only reinforce this hypothesis (BONNEUIL & FRESSOZ, 2013). However, my intention is not to discuss the beginning of the Anthropocene but to think about our geo-historical time as something that breaks with the modern foundation of our thinking and being in the world. I seek, therefore, to focus on the ruptures, to understand this era by its disruptive character.

Living in the age of hyperobjects, as Timothy Morton (2013) points out, or in a new climatic regime, as preferred by Bruno Latour (2017), or even in this new geological era - the Anthropocene, a term coined by Crutzen and Stoermer (2000); calls for the revision of certain concepts established in the so-called modern era. At the heart of modernity are the binaries nature/culture, subject/object, or even human/non-human. According to Bruno Latour, the separations between humans and non-humans, society and nature, or even between subject and object characterize our conception of modernity. The advent of the Anthropocene, therefore, as humanity is conceived as a geological force, reveals the cracks in the modern constitution. Firstly, here, humans are equated with a non-human force. From this concept, humans as a species, not individually, would gain geological agency, meaning human action would be responsible for impacting geological processes. It becomes clear here that the worlds of humans and non-humans are not as easily separable as advocated by modern ideals. Humans show their non-human face. Non-humans also reveal their silenced agency throughout the process of modernization.

Thinking about global warming (which would be just one facet of the Anthropocene) as a phenomenon propelled by humankind, as a species, as a force, is to realize, as Dipesh Chakrabarty points out in the article *Postcolonial Studies and the Challenge of Climate Change* (2012), that humans are part of the natural history of the planet. The wall that separated human stories and natural stories, created at the beginning of modernity and reinforced throughout the 19th century, exposes its cracks, its flaws. Chakrabarty, recognizing the non-human agency of humanity, admits the need for other forms of thinking about the human. A geophysical force would not be a subject, much less an object, isn't that true? Would we, then, be a crossing? Is that it?

Modern dualisms reveal their tensions in the Anthropocene, in our new geological time. Have we crossed all the lines?

Of course, we have, some would say. And many a time, being quite honest. But when does crossing a line carry chain effects and uncontrollable outcomes, such as the ones that characterize our geo-historical time?

Let us go back in time, to the sixteenth century, when one of the masterpieces of the Portuguese language was published. Even though the epic poem was written way before the reality of a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, would become perceptible, or even before the Lisbon earthquake shook Cartesian certainties, influencing Voltaire and Kant, finding a way into philosophy, way before the walls that separate humans and non-humans were clearly established; the poem sets in motion a duality worth investigating, one that still informs our modern dream of boundless freedom.

*The Lusíads*², simply put, is an epic poem that narrates the events which led to the discovery of the sea route to India. My focus here is not to analyze the poem itself, but to bring an episode into discussion. The poem, although majorly epic in nature, brings episodes that stand out due to their lyrical bent. One of them is the Giant Ada-

² Translation by William C. Atkinson published by Penguin Books in 1952.

mastor episode, when Vasco da Gama and the crew reach the Cape of Good Hope, also known as Cape of Storms. Before spotting the Giant, Vasco da Gama states: "Had the philosophers of old, who journeyed through so many lands to learn their secrets, witnessed the wonders that I have witnessed as I sailed hither and thither over the waters, what writings would they not have left us, what revelations concerning the workings of the stars in their courses and the many marvels and properties of nature, and every word the naked, unvarnished truth!" (*The Lusíads*, Canto V). The excerpt underscores how marvels and wonders should be understood: not as events that froze movement and stopped time, even less as phenomena able to heighten the senses and provoke awe and unease; quite the contrary, wonders and marvels were just secrets to be learned, possibilities of unveiling the truth and the naked reality. Vasco da Gama, then, aimed at exploring the seas to lay bare their secrets.

When confronted with a monstrous being, one who prophesized a glooming future for the Portuguese, the "daring race" who would pay the price for their bold enterprise – crossing forbidden portals, in an attempt to sail on the seas guarded by the giant and reveal the secrets of nature that no other mortal had dared to – Vasco da Gama not bothered by the being's threats, asks it instead: "Who are you," I asked, "for proportions so outrageous take one's breath away?" (*The Lusíads*, Canto V). The Giant, then, tells his tale, how he was once a Titan in love with Tethis and finally punished by the Gods. This refers to one of the lyrical moments of the poem, in which Camões' conception of love becomes central to the narrative. Following his story of unrequited love, and the defeat of the Titans, Adamastor was turned into the Cape.

Vasco da Gama's question: *who are you?* intercepts the creature's prophecies and allows it to become knowable and, therefore, tamed. The Giant is usually read as the personification of the fears, but here, in this reading I propose the following: becoming knowable (after he explains who he is), being under the grip of knowledge,

means that he can be silenced; he remains immutable in his forms.

After Adamastor finishes his story, he suddenly vanishes before their eyes and Gama narrates: 'The radiant chariot of the sun was now once more approaching, and we began to discern the cape into which the giant had been transformed. (*The Lusíads*, Canto V). For the Portuguese, then, crossing the line, going beyond the Cape of Good Hope meant revealing the secrets of nature; in other words, mastering nature, disenchanting it? As the Portuguese sail on, Adamastor remains, as a rocky formation, without a voice, or a tear, just rocks, which no longer threaten the Portuguese.

There was once a time when Nature was purposive, God was active in the detail of human affairs, human and other creatures were defined by a preexisting web of relations, social life was characterized by face to face relations, and political order took the form of organic community. Then, the premodern world gave way to forces of scientific and instrumental rationality, secularism, individualism, and the bureaucratic state—all of which, combined, disenchant the world. (BENNETT, 2001, p. 7)

As the Portuguese sail through, the world left behind is an immutable world, one which lacks agency and a voice, a mere background for human actions. The Portuguese, by daring to cross the limits, mastered the seas and would soon also master other beings. By crossing the limits, then, the Portuguese established others: between man and nature, colonizer and colonized, civilized and uncivilized; the world out there was suddenly knowable, masterable, conquerable, disenchantable.

Were the Portuguese the only ones to cross the lines?

One of the most famous stories revolving around trespassing limits was the fall of men. John Milton wrote his famous epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, based on Adam and Eve's temptation and subsequent expulsion from Eden.

The 17th century, when *Paradise Lost* was first published, marks changes in the very conception of knowledge, in the sense that the old structures of the previous century are broken in an attempt to eliminate traces of mystical or superstitious

beliefs, as nature enters the scientific order. It is the century that gives way to analysis over analogy, where there is a quest for a complete enumeration aimed at certainties, distinctions between identities and differences. The probable decreases in value so that the certain may take its place. Knowledge gains the status of discernment and is no longer synonymous with erudition; discerning becomes the guarantee of sound judgment. As for words, their place is in translating clear and distinct perceptions, where the truth is manifested: "Language withdraws from the midst of beings to enter its era of transparency and neutrality" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 77). In this context of seeking certainties, a moment when the probable is no longer a guarantee, in the era of clear and distinct perceptions, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is situated. While language enters its era of transparency and neutrality, the epic poem that is structured in the indeterminacy of the divine trace responds by the power of ambiguity: "This power derives from the linguistic ambiguity at its root" (MARTIN, 1998, p. 51). While Descartes arrives at the realization of "cogito" (I think, therefore, I am), Satan, in *Paradise Lost*, perverts this realization by apprehending that thinking is to be trapped in one's own Hell, raising questions, therefore, about what thinking is and its relationship with being and existence. Ambiguity is Satan's realm, and angel Raphael comes to the aid of the humans, by warning of the danger that lurks around the corner.

Adam is eager to learn about unreachable realms, Raphael, however, explains: "I have receav'd, to answer thy desire/ Of Knowledge within bounds;" *Paradise Lost* (Book VII, p. 119-20). There is a type of knowledge which can be known, and, according to the angel, that should remain circumscribed by limits. And why is that? Raphael further adds: "But Knowledge is as food, and need no less/ Her Temperance over Appetite, to know/In measure what the mind may well contain,/ Oppresses else with Surfet, and soon turns/Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Winde." *Paradise Lost* (Book VII, p. 116-20).

Raphael's speech is clear: there is a type of

knowledge specific to humans since the human mind is as regulated as the appetite. Curiously, the angel relates the organ of knowledge—the mind—to the organ of appetite—the stomach. According to Raphael, knowing has an intrinsic relationship with eating. Wanting to know too much, beyond what one can know would be akin to devouring beyond the capacity of the stomach, attempting to overcome a limitation that is merely physical. Man ends up not heeding the angel's recommendations and eats from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. A fruit that causes, at the very least, indigestion. The human stomach was not prepared to digest this type of fruit (no, it was not the right kind of food), just as the knowledge that comes from this act does not fit the human mind. Would it not be prepared to digest this awareness? The awareness of death?

Raphael says, "what the mind may well contain." Knowledge must be the kind that the mind can contain. That fits in the mind or belongs to the mind. But it is not the verb "fit" that Raphael uses, but "contain." That which the mind can contain. That which fits in the volume of the mind. Or still, contain in the sense of control, of preventing it from going beyond. That which the mind can control. The type of healthy knowledge, humanly possible, would be that which is circumscribed to what the mind could master. This was not, however, the knowledge obtained from the fruit of the forbidden tree. The knowledge of good and evil, the awareness of death, was beyond the limits of what the human mind could contain. To extrapolate such a limit, the limitations of the mind, would be to turn "Wisdom to Folly." One step beyond, and wisdom would be nothing more than folly. To surpass the established line would, therefore, be the realization that everything known until then was nothing. Isn't that precisely what the birth of knowledge implies? By eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, man grasps the vulnerability of knowledge. What was once wisdom becomes... folly. Stanley Cavell would say that what Adam and Eve realize is that Eden is not the world. The world known before the fall was a limited world, they realize that they were

living behind a line (CAVELL, 1987, p. 49). By eating from the forbidden tree, that world becomes nothing, folly. The world is no longer Eden. There is something beyond...By surpassing the stipulated; one encounters the vulnerability of knowledge.

But what if going beyond is all that matters?

Crossing the limits would mean, for Adam and Eve, losing touch with a world of commonality, with the divinity, giving up immortality. But who can dismiss the beckoning of unconditioned knowledge? What they knew in Eden was no longer satisfying, no longer enough. Knowledge begs for more and more knowledge, yeah... knowledge is vulnerable and never humanly satisfying. By crossing the line, the first humans are forced to acknowledge the own limitations of knowledge. That the thing-in-itself is always out of reach?

Barão de Teive, one of Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms, provides his own interpretation for the fall of men:

A conduta racional da vida é impossível. A inteligência não dá regra. E então compreendi o que talvez está oculto no mito da Queda: bateu-me no olhar da alma, como um relâmpago batera no do corpo, o terrível e verdadeiro sentido daquela tentação, pela qual Adão comera da Árvore dita da Ciência.

Desde que existe inteligência, toda a vida é impossível.

(PESSOA, 2006, p. 28).³

For the heteronym, as for other heteronyms as well, there was an incompatibility between intelligence and life. The word 'conduct' begs for further investigation. Both in Portuguese and in English, at least two meanings are possible. Conduct as behavior and conduct as guiding something. The rational behavior of life is impossible, as if life could not behave or act rationally. Equally possible would be to state that the rational guidance of life would be impossible, as if life would always resist being rationally controlled. Life and intelligence would, this way, be two competing forces, always misaligned, at least,

since the fall of man. Perhaps Barão de Teive would say that before the fall, Intelligence and Life were two instances that could be combined, harmonized. After caving into temptation, Adam and Eve realize that rationally conducting life was not a possibility. Is that Poe's realization as well? Poe's narrators, although constantly reminding the reader that they are not mad, that there were rational explanations behind their actions, that all was done in the name of and in accordance with Intelligence; are betrayed by the senses, such as an acute hearing; as if questioning the moral foundations of Reason, as if "forgiving philosophy, not without punishing it, for having thought that it could live only in the banishing of literature" (CAVELL, 1994, p. 129).

Barão de Teive touches upon a particularly important issue: that Intelligence itself does not morally regulate our behavior towards life: it provides no rules. It has little to say about an ethical life. After all, how to explain Adam's and Eve's behavior? They transgressed in the name of knowledge, what they knew was no longer humanly satisfying. Wanting to know more for them propelled crossing a line.

There is more to ethics than rationality and doctrine.

Jane Bennett would probably agree with Pessoa's heteronym. In the book *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, Bennett seeks to challenge the narrative of modern disenchantment. Not only does she bring together diverse thinkers such as Deleuze and Kant (to name just a few) to develop her theory, searching for spaces of enchantment in modern life and thought, but she also believes that enchantment or a sense of wonder is essential for recognizing the vitality and agency of the non-human world. At the core of Bennett's thought is the relationship between enchantment and ethics, as she argues that cultivating a sense of enchantment, especially with the non-human world, would lead to a more ethical relationship

³ The rational conduct of life is impossible. Intelligence provides no rules. And then I understood what may be hidden in the myth of the Fall: it struck me in the eye of the soul, as a lightning bolt had struck in that of the body, the terrible and true meaning of that temptation, by which Adam had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. Since there is intelligence, all life is impossible.

between humans and non-humans. In this way, Bennett understands the affective force of enchantment that could potentially lead to ethical generosity. But why is Intelligence not enough?

According to Bennett, even if the narrative of disenchantment prevails in the modern world, enchantment did not disappear altogether, it did not vanish into thin air, as even the modern world provides for experiences of enchantment. In a sense, Bennett's thinking follows in Latour's footsteps in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993). Just as Latour shows that hybridization occurs in the modern world, despite modernity's attempt to separate the human and the non-human world; Bennett aims to discuss sites of enchantment in the modern world. Modernization was then not through and through? What's more, enchantment can and should be cultivated. By enchantment, the author understands those types of experience in which time stops, in which movement is frozen, experiences which heighten the senses and provoke wonder and unease: "enchantment as mood requires a cultivated form of perception, a discerning and meticulous attentiveness to the singular specificity of things" (BENNETT, 2001, p. 43). Can crossing the line provide the mood for enchantment? When are crossings ethically charged?

By conversing with these epic poems, we get that crossing lines, transgressing barriers and limitations, leaves behind what was once known. After Adamastor becomes knowable and the Portuguese go beyond the Cape of Good Hope, Adamastor is turned into a lifeless rock formation. After eating from the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve leave behind a world of harmony, commonality and immortality and are introduced into a world of decaying matter. Death becomes suddenly part of life. Death regulates the limits for all beings, human or not. Not only do they have to acknowledge their mortality, but also that of all around. Matter decays. And knowledge is also susceptible to death. To know is to be susceptible to death. To be known also. Is there a problem in that?

Because my hunch is that the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption. It does so by preventing us from detecting (seeing, hearing, smelling, lasting, feeling) a fuller range of the nonhuman powers circulating around and within human bodies. These material powers, which can aid or destroy, enrich or disable, ennoble or degrade us, in any case call for our attentiveness, or even "respect" (provided that the term be stretched beyond its Kantian sense). The figure of an intrinsically inanimate matter may be one of the impediments to the emergence of more ecological and more materially sustainable modes of production and consumption. (BENNETT, 2010, p. ix)

The problem resides in treating everything as lifeless matter. When that happens, when humans and non-humans are at knowledge's disposal, ready to be dissected, to be described by their qualities (what they are) and their effects (what they do), treated as mere resources, then a great danger imposes itself, the danger of the unconditioned, or limitless freedom. If everything is at knowledge's disposal, when does it stop? And should it?

The climate catastrophe in course shows that it should. Dreams of infinite worlds and possibilities, of unlimited resources and an always-regenerable planet resulted in the Anthropocene. Now we have to face the irony that searching for the unconditional freedom brought us to the need to acknowledge that we, as a species, are circumscribed by a limited and reactive planet. Freedom led to restriction. Crossing all the lines led to the acknowledgment of our mortality, and that humans are more entwined with non-humans that previously thought.

Clive Hamilton, in the book *Defiant Earth* (2017), warns that post-Kantian ethics are not equipped to grapple with the Anthropocene, when the concept of nature, conceived throughout modernity, collapses. Kant had silenced nature so that our humanity could be preserved. The Kantian sublime was based on the necessity of separation between humans and nature. Without this separation, our fundamental weakness would be exposed, and our humanity diminished.

With Kant, our entry into the moral sphere resulted in the silencing of nature: "To become moral in the modern way, it is necessary to take shelter from the world and to observe nature as a spectacle 'all the more attractive for its fearfulness'" (HACHE & LATOUR, 2010, p. 317).

Furthermore, Kant's categorical imperative and its reformulations were based on the relationship between rational humans. The relationships between humans and non-humans were not contemplated by the imperative, as, as mentioned earlier, non-humans were inherently excluded from the moral sphere.

Kantian thought, like modern thought in general, is based on a bifurcation. Kant distinguishes two realms: the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity. The laws of freedom are related to human conduct, being the concept of autonomy prominent. On the other hand, nature is relegated to the realm of necessity. The natural world, given its lack of agency, autonomy, volition, is said to be outside the moral sphere. It should not be expected, therefore, that in the natural world, moral agents would act in such a way that it is possible to wish that their action should become a universal law. Moreover, in the second formulation of the categorical imperative, there is the following addition: that action be directed to humanity. (BORGES *et al.*, 2003) Kant's formulations, therefore, concern the relationship between humans and do not conceive that, in reality, humans and non-humans are more involved, entangled, than previously thought.

Kant's moral thought was developed in a distinct geological reality in which the perception of the stability of the climate predominated. Climate did not seem to meddle into human affairs. Nature was perceived as moderate. This was a period in which a relatively stable climate ensured the expansion of humanity—in number, territory, and dominion. If Kant could separate humans and non-humans and conceive of a nature "out there," as a backdrop to human actions, a nature that would not interfere with "human affairs," much is owed to the perception of climatic stability. However, this same stability that allowed for human progress and gave rise to the modern

dream of creating infinite worlds (by humans); this same vision of a free, rationally free man, not conditioned by the realm of necessity, now leads us to surpassing the tipping points that will drastically alter the planet as a whole. What is at stake in the Anthropocene is the modern view of an external nature, the separation between the realms of necessity and freedom, as well as the pursuit of the unlimited.

Kant established a line and in doing so safeguarded our humanity. Kant separated metaphysics from physics and circumscribed metaphysics to questions of the mind and its transcendental needs:

but he did not give up on magic in doing so. Instead, he shifted its principal locale. Kantian magic occurs only fleetingly and ambiguously in nature itself - nature does offer tantalizing threads of connection to the supersensible, but they are fragile and thin. The primary venue of enchantment has become interior to the self, in an imperious "reason" and the "subjective necessities" it spawns. (BENNETT, 2001, p. 46)

Kant does hear the call of nature, but endows human interiority with enchantment instead. There is something enchanted about human thinking, about an imperial Reason, about the complexities and intricacies of human thought that infinitely reflects upon itself. There is, indeed, enchantment in thinking. But is it enough to trigger ethical behaviors towards the non-human world?

Graham Harman is clear about Kant's fault. Even though his theory, object-oriented-ontology, or OOO, is based on a Kantian premise, that the thing-in-itself is always out of reach, it contradicts Kant's claim that human and non-human realms are clearly separated, that only humans are endowed with moral agency, volition and the like: "Kantian ethics is an ethical purification that separates humans from the world" (HARMAN, 2017, p. 95). Ethical purification, Harman says, as if humans were morally living behind a line.

A question, nonetheless, still remains.

Modern thought attempted to safeguard humans, to prevent human and non-human realms to entangle, by guaranteeing a safe hierarchical spot for human Reason. As rational beings we are

morally-endowed and able to rise above lifeless matter. But what if crossings emerge? What if, by any chance, modern processes of purification fail?

The Anthropocene shows that purification and mediation were nothing but fallacies. Human and non-human realms are more enmeshed, entangled than modern thought claimed. We had been living behind a line. But as the planetary limits are crossed, we enter a new world, where our knowledge about it is shattered. Wisdom has been turned to folly. The free, autonomous, and rational man born in modernity finds himself in the Anthropocene, subjected to forces hitherto unprecedented. More than being a part of the environment or dependent on it, we perceive ourselves connected and limited in a distinct way, inhabiting a space that can no longer be conceived as a passive stage where we can exercise our freedoms. On the contrary, we inhabit an animated (or enchanted, to contrast with Weberian disenchantment), obstinate, and irritable world. Yes, as Isabelle Stengers (2015) claims, it is impossible to avoid the intrusion of Gaia.

The tale goes as follows: once Reason rose above all matter, above all beings in the world and exercised its freedom. It reached for the unconditioned, by safeguarding its importance. Reason, in its sovereignty, searched for more and more until the Planet could no longer sustain. It had been quiet for a while. Some complaints here and there were perceptible, but nothing to shatter Reason's dream of an unlimited freedom. Reason pushed further and further. The Planet awoke from its long rest. It was about time. It was time to show its force. There is still more to come, though: we will see the intensity and frequency of disasters grow. We will experience new pandemics, as new viruses emerge. The Anthropocene is, then, not only the age in which humans gain geological agency, but also when non-human agency can no longer be denied. We live now on an Animate Planet.

Let us go further in time when the reality of climate change began to sink in.

Oryx and Crake is a novel written by Margaret Atwood, first published in 2003. The story is set

in a future world where genetic engineering and biotechnology resulted in the creation of new species and the restructuring of human society. The narrative is primarily told from the perspective of Snowman, also known as Jimmy, who seems to be the last human alive.

It is a novel of crossings and divides. The walled communities metaphorically refer to how people lived within boundaries and limitations, both physically, mentally and affectively. Privileged elite classes lived in secure and isolated walled compounds and had all the technological facilities at their disposal. Living within the confines of the compounds meant living within a carefully ordered and regulated environment. Here, surveillance was standard, and the freedom to come and go was restricted. Residing in the compounds felt akin to inhabiting a bubble, protected from the disorderly shifts in the surrounding environment. It's no surprise that discussions on climate change and catastrophes popped up almost casually, treated as matter-of-fact comments or hurried descriptions that appeared detached from the central narrative. The inhabitants of the walled communities are isolated from the harsh realities of the outside world, which is characterized by poverty, crime, and environmental degradation. This isolation contributes to a lack of empathy and understanding among the privileged class regarding the struggles of those outside the walls. The novel abounds with divides, between rich and poor, humans and non-humans, and science and humanities.

Let us discuss how it addresses one specific divide. It explores the topic of the humanities/science divide by depicting a dystopian world where scientific advancements, particularly in genetic engineering and biotechnology, have deep and often catastrophic consequences for humanity. The narrative follows the lives of characters who embody different aspects of this divide. Crake, one of the central characters, represents the extreme scientific perspective. He believes in using science to improve humankind. Crake's aim is to eliminate human flaws and suffering by means of genetic manipulation. He creates a new

species called the Crakers, genetically engineered beings designed to be perfect, without the emotional complexities that, in his view, lead to human conflict and suffering. On the other side of the spectrum is Snowman, also known as Jimmy, who represents a more humanistic perspective. Snowman is more attuned to the emotional and cultural aspects of human existence. Atwood's novel, then, intensifies modernity's dichotomies and projects a gloomy future for a world within walls.

Instead of accepting the reality of climate change, the novel shows how humankind continued its pursuit for more and better, how it continued crossing the lines that enabled a co-existence between humans and non-humans, through the use of more intense and advanced technology. It was not enough, though. Crake announces that all their efforts had been in vain, as there was still scarcity of "space-time". Humankind as a project had failed. The boundaries were, this way, not enough. They were more porous than anticipated. Crake, nevertheless, instead of accepting the porosity of the boundaries, instead of acknowledging the non-human world, decided to put an end to human life as it was. He decided to go back to the beginning, but with a twist. After Crake's planned massive extinction, a newly improved race would take over. The Paradise Project was its name. By altering the ancient primate brain, destructive features such as racism, hierarchy, territoriality, torments due to sexuality would be eliminated, and these perfected beings would repopulate the world in their eco-friendly way.

Rationalization encompasses a variety of related processes, each of which opts for the precise, regular, constant, and reliable over the wild, spectacular, idiosyncratic, and surprising. In addition to eschewing magic as a strategy of will (i.e., "scientizing" desire), rationalization also systematizes knowledge (i.e., pursues "increasing theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts"); instrumentalizes thinking (i.e., methodically attains a "practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means"); secularizes metaphysical concerns (i.e., rejects "all non-utilitarian yardsticks"); and, finally, replaces traditional bonds as the basis of

social order with those founded on the natural reason of men. (BENNETT, 2001, p. 58)

Crake, then, attempts to reset the world by eliminating any trace of affect. He, then, represents this man of science that completely divorced from any humanistic concern, gives reason a prominent position. His plan for a new race does not take into account the affect, as if his universe could and would be governable by calculable forces. Crake's plan aims at a more thorough disenchantment of the world. Was disenchantment not enough? Was that why humankind failed? Because it did not take disenchantment to its ultimate consequences?

This clean slate was, however, still conditioned: "*Watch out for art, Crake used to say. As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view*" (ATWOOD, 2003, p. 361)

Snowman learns that the Crakers, in spite of Crake's efforts to eliminate any symbolic thinking, the G-spot in the brain as he called, are curious about their origins, are eager to create narratives: "They're up to something though, something Crake didn't anticipate: they're conversing with the invisible, they're developing reverence" (ATWOOD, 2003, p. 157); singing and dreaming were not the only things humans were hard-wired for. Symbolic thinking cannot be detached from humans. Human's demise again?

Crake is, once again, afraid of crossings, of the compounds that may emerge from mixing science and the humanities. When art comes into play, the calculable world may collapse. Or, at least, the narrative of disenchantment may so. Latour keenly pointed out how the process of hybridization continues throughout modernity, in despite of a narrative that says otherwise. The Great Divide was not so great, meaning that humans and non-humans had always been in constant hybridization. Jane Bennett identifies such process, hybridization, as a possible site for enchantment: "Latour helps me to identify hybridization as a modern form of magic and a potential site of enchantment" (BENNETT, 2001,

p. 98). But why art, anyway?

Harman (2017) claims that knowledge is not the sole cognitive activity worth pursuing, as there are other activities that, even though do not translate into literal prose terms, do have cognitive value. Philosophy and art occupy this position. It is no wonder then that for centuries they have been at odds. There was no place for the arts in Plato's republic; just as Crake, Plato anticipated the danger art may pose:

It does something to you. The Platonists were right: art has an inherently disturbing (in a nice or not so nice way) effect, an effect that you don't intend and can therefore strictly be called demonic, in the sense that demons are the messengers of the gods: it's a message from somewhere else. Platonists accurately see the power of art, which is why some of them (such as Plato himself) want it to be banned or very heavily censored. An artwork does something to you, so if you think that only lifeforms can do things to you, this is a weird and challenging fact. If you think on top of this that only humans are empowered with the magical ability to impose meaning and temporality on things, then you are in for a bigger shock, because as I've argued, art emits time, which tells you something about how everything emits time. It's designing your future as much as you're designing its. (MORTON, 2018, p. 52-53)

The aesthetic experience, following Morton's and Harman's ideas, begs for our involvement in the process and the acknowledgement of an object's autonomy. The thing-in-itself, or the real object in Harman's terms, is always out-of-reach. The aesthetic experience, therefore, reveals the withdrawal of objects (be they human or not), which are never at knowledge's disposal, but that can only be theatrically accessed. Aesthetics, thus, involves humans and non-humans, whose crossings may account for experiences of enchantment. And maybe just maybe propel a more ethical co-existence in an age of ecological crisis.

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Os textos deste artigo foram revisados pela Mais H Consultoria Linguística Internacional e submetidos para validação da autora antes da publicação.