

**Catarina Neves Abelha Coelho Ferreira**

**Walking on knuckles towards civilisation:  
Pre-evolutionary notions of the sixteenth and seventeenth  
centuries and the reaction of English intellectual circles upon  
the arrival of Peter, the Wild Boy**

Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos:  
Literaturas e Culturas orientada pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Miguel Pereira Bastos da  
Silva

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

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Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, orientada  
pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Miguel Pereira Bastos da Silva

Membros do Júri

Professor Doutor Gualter Mendes Queiroz Cunha  
Faculdade de Letras - Universidade do Porto

Professor Doutor Jorge Miguel Bastos da Silva  
Faculdade de Letras – Universidade do Porto

Professor Doutor Rui Manuel Gomes Carvalho Homem  
Faculdade de Letras - Universidade do Porto

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## Resumo

Palavras-chave: Macacos; Tyson; Crianças Selvagens; Defoe

Esta dissertação centra-se na exposição de teorias pré-darwinianas dos séculos XVI e XVII relativas à evolução, bem como a análise de um estudo anatómico realizado por Edward Tyson (*Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris or the Anatomy of a Pygmie Compared to that of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man*), publicado em 1699. Além disso, irá examinar a reação dos círculos intelectuais ingleses à chegada de Peter, the Wild Boy, reflectida no panfleto de Daniel Defoe intitulado *Mere NATURE Delineated: OR, A BODY without a SOUL – Being OBSERVATIONS UPON THE Young FORESTER Lately brought to Town from GERMANY*, publicado em 1726. Uma análise da obra, comparada com o trabalho de Tyson sobre as similaridades entre a raça humana e “apes”, será conduzida para descrever o ponto de vista de Defoe em relação ao lugar de Peter na sociedade moderna como ser humano, animal, ou meio-homem, meio-símio.

## Abstract

Keywords: Apes; Tyson; Feral children; Defoe.

This thesis will focus on the exposition of pre-Darwinian evolutionary theories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well as the analysis of an anatomical study of a *Pygmie* conducted by Edward Tyson (*Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris or the Anatomy of a Pygmie Compared to that of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man*), published in 1699. Moreover, supported by these notions, it will interpret the reaction of English intellectual circles when faced with the arrival of the ape-child, Peter, the Wild Boy, especially as reflected on a pamphlet written by Daniel Defoe entitled *Mere NATURE Delineated: OR, A BODY without a SOUL – Being OBSERVATIONS UPON THE Young FORESTER Lately brought to Town from GERMANY*, published in 1726. An analysis, crossed with Tyson's work on the similarities between the human race and apes, will be conducted in order to describe Defoe's point of view regarding Peter's place in modern society as a human, an animal, or a half-man, half-ape.

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## Introduction

This thesis will focus its attention on the link between the *sīmia* and the human race and its cultural impact on the English society of the eighteenth century. Moreover, in the first chapter it will disclose pre-evolutionary ideas of Edward Tyson through his study of a pygmy, and its comparison to apes and human beings.

In the second chapter, as a bridge to connect both ideas, an analysis of Peter the Wild Boy will be conducted as a way to expose the reaction of English intellectual circles through religious and scientific means. It will also interpret several medieval perspectives on the possession of a soul in order to explore descriptions of travellers when in contact with a native tribe. Daniel Defoe's pamphlet entitled *Mere NATURE Delineated: OR, A BODY without a SOUL – Being OBSERVATIONS UPON THE Young FORESTER Lately brought to Town from GERMANY. With Suitable APPLICATION. ALSO, A Brief Dissertation upon the Usefulness and Necessity of FOOLS, whether Political or Natural*, and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are the literary works in which the theme will be explored.

The conclusion, besides presenting a brief synthesis of what has been discussed, will also feature an introduction to the matter of racism present in the Enlightenment period.

For purposes of context this introduction will be divided into three stages: the first one will discuss the meaning of the several terms often confused as synonyms of 'ape'. The second part focuses on the image of the ape in Classical and Medieval mythology, whilst the third, and last, stage will analyse the cultural shock between travellers and natives during the Age of Discoveries.

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There is a constant confusion regarding the terms 'primate', 'ape', 'monkey' and 'macaque' that for sake of disclosure should be fairly analysed. According to Colin Peter Groves, a Biological Anthropology professor, the term 'primate' is referred to any mammal of a group that includes monkeys, apes and humans (Groves, 2014). The term is originated from Old French, 'primat', and Medieval Latin which is related to phrase "chief bishop" (Onions, 1966: 709), later used in Latin as an adjective for "of the first rank, chief, principal" (Onions, 1966: 709). Several primates possess claws, and also a



hallux – flat nail on the big toe. For all of them, with the exception of humans, the hallux diverges from the other toes thus forming a sort of pincer which results in the ability to grasp objects. Curiously, not all of them have opposable thumbs, which is a thumb that can be placed opposite to the fingers of the same hand allowing to grasp and hold objects (Groves, 2014).

The term ‘ape’ is originated from the Old English “apa” (Onions, 1966) – they are noted in medieval times for mimicking human behaviour and actions, thus the connection between “ape” and “fool”. It refers to any tailless primate of the *Hominidae* family, which includes chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, gorillas and human beings. They differ from ‘monkeys’ due to the complete lack of tail and presence of an appendix as well as having complex brains (Groves, 2013). Chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans and gorillas are called “Great Apes” due to their large size and the fact that they can behave like a human being, though, they are not related to each other. In fact, chimpanzees and human beings are closer to each other than any other species (Barnard, 2001: 9). Though highly intelligent, chimpanzees are known for their aggressiveness, ability to share and reciprocate feelings. Compared to other species that learn sign language in order to communicate with humans, chimpanzees show a tremendous ability in this sense since their cognitive level permits it (Barnard, 2001: 24).

Bonobos, on the other hand, differ from chimpanzees due to their more mellow behaviour. Barnard, also, argues an odd sexual behaviour between them, that it is not visible in other species:

They engage in sexual activity, including homosexual activity to a greater extent. Bonobo society, while possessing alpha-male dominance among males, is nevertheless female-focused in that much in social life revolve around specific females and groups of females (...) bonobos are emotionally sensitive and have the capacity for empathy and altruism (Barnard, 2001: 24).

Such descriptions approximate them to humans, not only for their social life, but also for their capability for humanlike cognitive behaviour, making chimpanzees and bonobos the species most related to the human race. Moreover, chimpanzees seem to have a keen sense for manual labour as they are capable of using tools as well as making them, while bonobos appear to have a harder time in this matter, difficulty

originated often due to “ecological reasons” related to the environment (Barnard, 2001: 24).

Orangutans, nevertheless, are the most arboreal compared to chimpanzees, bonobos and gorillas (Barnard, 2001: 22), and possess a less turbulent social life as they are described as loners. Although their sexual behaviour does not differ much from the others, orangutans have two distinctions to interpret male and female interaction:

These are the ‘community model’, which sees social organisation in terms of exploded polygyny and of residents and transients, and a ‘roving male promiscuity model’, which is based on male wanderings and a lack of territorial organisation (Barnard, 2001: 23).

Gorillas, for instance, do not have a female-focus social group; in fact, males have exclusive behaviour over females, even if these are more mature than them. It shows a different social organisation system not only in the mating process, but also in a “foraging effort, seasonal use of foods, and territories” (Barnard, 2001: 23). Once again, these behaviours are justified taking into account biology but also “ecological with no necessary genetic component and others may be, at least in part, defined as cultural” (Barnard, 2001: 23).

Nevertheless, ‘monkey’ is related to the species of tailed primate with a few exceptions, them being lemurs, tarsiers and lorises. The presence of a tail and their narrow chested bodies is what distinguishes them from ‘apes’. Some of their characteristics are sitting upright, being mostly arboreal, and, while on the ground, walking with the entire sole of their foot touching the ground, but with the palm of the hand rose for the purpose of balance. It is quite difficult for them to stand erect for a long time – sometimes not at all (Groves, 2015). Despite the fact they possess large brain and are known for their curiosity, ‘monkeys’ do not reach the cognitive level of the “Great Apes”, though they present a large sense of highly social skills.

‘Monkeys’ are divided into two categories: Old World monkeys and New World monkeys, being Old World monkeys the most relatable to both apes and humans. Old World monkeys are classified as catarrhines (“downward-nose”) whereas New World monkeys are platyrrhines (“flat-nose”); moreover, Old World monkeys have opposable thumbs which allows them to grasp and hold objects precisely – such like ‘apes’ – as opposed to New World monkeys which do not possess the same ability. On the other hand. New World monkeys have prehensile tails capable of supporting their entire body

weight whilst no Old World monkeys are capable of the same aptitude. The term originates from Low-German, “moneke” (Onions, 1966: 586).

Lastly, the term ‘macaque’ derives from French and Portuguese “macaco” related to a type of monkey (Onions, 1966: 542). It was introduced as a genus in 1849 and it refers to the species of gregarious Old World monkeys – almost all are Asian except the Barbarian macaque of North Africa. Physically they are robust whose arms and legs are about the same size, their fur is usually brown or black, and their tail varies between sizes, some are long, medium, short, or totally absent – if they possess a tail, they tend to be more arboreal than baboons (African or Arabian Old World monkeys with non-prehensile tails) – and unlike the most primates’ species, ‘macaques’ can swim. Socially, they live in troops of various sizes, and, though highly intelligent, they have a bad temper as adults.

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A certain level of obsession with monsters and bestial beings exist since the English medieval age, but the question of existence of such creatures has always been present throughout History, creatures that have often been compared to apes and monkeys. In ancient Egypt, for instance, *sīmia* were already determined to be evil – Babi, Egyptian god presented as a baboon was a bloodthirsty entity often represented as eating human souls (Hart, 2005: 44). Baboons being considered dead ancestors of humans scared humanity for a long time for their humanlike nature; their imitation of human behaviour tend to present them as clowns and fools.

Imitation was seen as the Devil’s trickery; the Aberdeen Bestiary, which was written and illustrated around 1200 in England, in Folio 12v (see image 1), makes references to apes stating that their closeness to evil comes from their habit of mimicking human beings:

(Of apes) Apes are called simie in Latin because the similarity between their mentality and that of humans is felt to be great (...) The ape does not have a tail. The Devil has the form of an ape, with head but no tail. Although every part of the ape is foul, its rear parts are disgusting and horrid enough. The Devil began as an angel in heaven. But inside he was hypocrite and a deceiver, and he lost his tail, because he will perish totally at the end, just as the apostle says: “The Lord shall consume him with the of his mouth”. (“Aberdeen Bestiary”, 1200)

Just like Satan turned into a fallen angel and “the chief of evil, the devil” (1883: 976), some primates lost their tail thus becoming more resemble to humans; as the devil is

considered to be the master of mimicry, the loss of his tail, in a figurative sense, only brings him closer to humans, and to present himself to humankind through the *sīmia* would be the perfect disguise – a horrid creature with humanlike mannerisms to mock and scare Man. If one would look for any indication of the devil as a caricaturist of Man in the Bible, the passage in Thessalonians 2:8 in the King James Version, regards the Wicked to be revealed to God, and when his mask has fallen, he can no longer mimic Man:

And then shall what Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming (...) And with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had the pleasure in unrighteousness. (II. Thessalonians, 2:8, 2:10-12)

The correlation of animals, human beings and evil became popular thus initiating a stream of illustrations and stories about it; some were not even about a creature that looked like an ape and a man at the same time, some only associated an animalistic feature in a human body. An example of this would be the story of Donestre in the Manuscript Cotton Tiberius Bv (see image 2); divided in three parts, it tells the story of Donestre, a hybrid creature with a lion like head and human male, visible genitalia, that encounters a human traveller. In the first part, Donestre is seen to possess the power of speech and is able to mimic human mannerisms to befriend the lonely traveller. However, on the second sequence, Donestre attacks the traveller and eats his body; on this part the vibrant genitalia is hidden from the reader which can be interpreted to be the shifting from human to animal – as the only thing that characterised him as a man was the sexual organ, and with it hidden Donestre is a mere dreadful looking beast eating a human. Finally, on the third and last sequence, the beast kneels nearby the lonesome head with a mournful look (Cohen, 1999: 2).

The similarities that approximate the beast to the traveller are the basis of violence in the story, for it was the power of speech of Donestre the main reason for the traveller to stop in order to communicate with him – the creature used its skills on imitating human behaviour to lure the traveller to befriend him. The last sequence, though, in which the beast beholds the lifeless head of the man translates into human

fragility as Donestre understands how fragile the traveller's life was and how easy it was to end it.

The Donestre-traveller stares at the mute, lifeless head with such affective sadness because at this moment of plurality he see the fragility of autonomous selfhood, how much of the world it excludes in its panic to remain the selfsame, singular stable. (Cohen, 1999: 4)

This Anglo-Saxon view argues that the concept of "human" lays on the premise that to be fully human is to be detached from everything that turns to be violent and irrational – thus proving that Donestre was a monster, and not related to Mankind at all. This evidence relates with a cultural and social background, since humans are by nature social beings, and evolution has made Man less keen to express such violence towards each other – by killing and feeding on their enemy. To be defined as human one needs both cultural and social features, the characteristic of a civilised society.

To be fully human is to disavow the strange space that the inhuman, the monstrous, occupies within every speaking subject. To succeed on a mass scale, this disavowal requires two things: a degree of cultural uniformity and relative social calm. (Cohen, 1999: 4)

The same was argued by Samuel Pufendorf, who stated that humankind's nature was present in "sociability", that is human's nature (Barnard, 2001: 71). But, before any other, already in fifth century BC Herodotus of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian, was more interested in human groups than with the origins of humankind (Hodge, 1964: 28). As part of the Greek civilisation, Herodotus saw himself and his society as the most civilised; Greece was the crib of modern civilisation, and saw outsiders as barbarians, regarding the original meaning of the term not with bestial beings, but with anyone on the outside of a sphere. Herodotus thought one could not live and learn about the world without constant interaction with everyone. His work *Histories* was only translated into Latin by the mid fifteenth century and set as part of the medieval heritage. New learners classified as note-takers and "epitomisers" (Hodge, 1964: 29), preserved some parts and omitted others from the *Histories* which led to most of Herodotus work to reached the masses as "fractional and mutilated" (Hodge, 1964: 29).

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For centuries travellers had made accounts on their voyages to the new lands they discovered along with the manners and behaviours of the natives. Columbus when discovered the American continent reaching the Bahamas thinking he had reached Japan in 1492, presented an impressive amount of tolerance when meeting the natives. Several records account Columbus' thoughts on them as friendly:

The Admiral noted with composure and photographic detachment that the people who came swimming to his ships had very handsome bodies and good faces; that they wore their hair down over their eyebrows; that some were painted black, some white and red; that some bore spears tipped with fishes' teeth. Though he found them deficient in everything that made life worth while for Europeans, he was delighted with their generosity and ingenuity. (Hodge, 1964: 17)

This impression highly contrasts with one made by André Thevet when dealing with the Tupinambá in South America. He referred to them as monsters (see image 3) as well as the inhabitants of the entire continent (Hodge, 1964: 20). Such description divergences from the one made by Pedro Álvarez Cabral in his expedition in Brazil in 1500 when dealing with the same tribe; Cabral described the members of Tupinamba as having "good faces and good noses, well shaped"; their nakedness made the Portuguese feel uncomfortable, so the cloth given to the natives to cover themselves were received with confusion; even if covered, the women of the tribe "made no effort" to keep themselves from showing their private parts to the travellers, thus presenting no sense of shame or embarrassment, common feelings in a civilised society (Fudge, 2002: 46).

Even though from different centuries, thus different perspectives and reactions, they all had medieval ethology; nevertheless, Columbus was a man of science with a keener eye than Thevet, who was Franciscan preach, hence he was able to recognise the native's intelligence and kindness even if so different from the Europeans (Hodge, 1964). On the other hand, many of the records made by voyagers, such was the one by Thevet, made reference to lands covered with monsters or beasts, which could have been a way to advertise such trips and catch the attention of the people. However, by 1500, Columbus' tolerant views had settle in with the public – thus becoming, as Hodge puts it, "too tame, too commonplace, too unmedieval" (Hodge, 1964: 30). Therefore new records showed up battling for the readers' attention between "wild and mischievous cannibals, 'called of the old writers Anthropophagi'" (Hodge, 1964: 30).

Peter Matyr (1457 – 1526), was a Spanish historian who took account on the first explorations done in Central and South America. In a letter he described the natives eating their own children the way Europeans cooked chicken. He reported that the natives had told him the details of this atrocity:

‘Such children as they take (...) they geld to make them fat as we doe cooked chickings and young hogges, and eate them when they are wel fedde; of such as they eate, they first eate the intralles and extreme partes, as hands, feet, armes, necke, and head. The other most fleshye partes, they poudre for store, as we do pestels of porke, and gammondes of bakon’. (Hodge, 1964: 31)

Yet, not even Columbus was able to understand the language of the natives, therefore many of the records held in history of fantastic creatures and odd behaviours were perhaps not true. Nowadays, with all the information available, one can speculate on their accuracy and how many of these descriptions could only have been written in order to surprise the readers about non-existent wonders.

It is worth noticing that the same is visible in works of literature such as François Rabelais’, who used humour to attract a higher audience; his books *Gargantua* (1535) and *Pantagruel* (1553) were highly successful. Pantagruel, the hero of his story, defended the City of the Amaurots and the Land of Utopia – cities located in Cathay, “a region notorious in the Middle Ages as the refuge of monsters, the realm of the cockatrice, hippogriff, and dragon” (Hodge, 1964: 32) – against giants. This could be considered to be proof that those fantastic descriptions of creatures in God-forgotten lands were mandatory in the creative process. Consequently, many of the records were possibly fiction, and not accurate reports of facts. More than the fantastic, it was the scientific understanding that led so many scholars to deepen their knowledge of Mankind’s origins and proximity to animals.

## Chapter I: Comparative Anatomies: Pre-evolutionary ideas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

*We admit that we are like apes, but we seldom realise that we are apes.* (Lucht, 2010: 178)

As a child, Man tends to look for any evidence of similarity between himself and his parents as a way to ensure a biological connection, and his own identity as a person with origins. He does it so in the same way baby chimpanzees mimic every trait of their progenitors – neither is left alone, there is a root, a logical path for their existence. However, if a child tries to find similarities between himself and a baby chimpanzee instead of trying to find similarities with his parents, one is able to forecast the result: both would sense a connection for they would be mimicking one another in the search for guidance.

The science which studies Man, Anthropology, is divided into several branches depending on what the anthropologist is more interested in studying; if one is rather keen in studying the characteristic of the body and its evolution, one falls into the branch of Physical Anthropology, which can be driven either by the study of fossils or by dealing with and studying living creatures (Hoebel, 1958: 5); either way, the main job of a physical anthropologist will be comparing anatomies. Of course, if the anthropologist studies a living subject, the records and theories will also cover the subject's internal organs, skin colour, amount of body hair, and sex. Whilst only through the deepened study of a fossil, the skeleton will be the only support and evidence to justify all discoveries made.

The traits of similarities between species exist in great number; for instance, the development of a human embryo is significantly similar to the development of several species such as fish, lizards and monkeys (Hoebel, 1958: 26) because it has to go through several stages of development from the moment of conception until reaching the level of mammal. As Hoebel states, the stages are alike the stages of other animals as the human embryo starts by being a mass of cells, to a “worm”, to a “generalised fish with the foundation of gill arches in its neck region” and lastly “it takes on mammalian qualities and ultimately born a man-child” (Hoebel, 1958: 26), and when ready to be born, the baby resembles a baby monkey in almost every aspect (see image 4).



The coccyx is another example; in human beings the “tail” is hidden by the end of the spine, though it is visible as an embryo, and it is very rare to be born with a showing coccyx (Hoebel, 1958: 25). Apes have long lost their tails due to the overdevelopment of their fore limbs – the constant habit of swinging from branch to branch for millions of years has made evolution sensitive to their needs. Unlike New World monkeys, which use their tails to grasp and hold on to objects, apes have developed an amazing dexterity with their arms and hands. Their lower limbs have shown to be underdeveloped though apes are able to stand and walk upright naturally – even though they almost instantly bend down and use their knuckles to move (Hoebel, 1958: 41); apes are probably, in that sense, more related to humans than monkeys.

Anthropologist Earnest Hooton (1887 – 1954) argued that Man had “anatomical lags” (Hoebel, 1958: 25) for many of their features were and are not being use to its fulfilment. An example of this would be the ability to walk upright; before walking on his hind legs, Man would move around in all fours, and, even though today humans are developed to handle the weight and stress of the upper body on their legs, it is still too weak to handle it properly – contrary to the quadruped, which has a convex arch in the spine to support the extra weight (Hoebel, 1958: 25).

These differences were unknown for the most part in the seventeenth century, not to mention in the second century with Galen’s dissections, however, it is important to underline that if not for the studies of Galen, who would go on to inspire Vesalius, who made it possible for Tyson to compare anatomies, these differences would not be known – such discoveries would have taken a long time to be qualified and analysed. However, and for purposes of disclosure, the analysis of social behaviour will go hand in hand with the comparative study that this chapter will deal with, for it was not only curiosity regarding the body of a man compared to that of another living being, but the proximity of such living creatures, say apes and monkeys, and humans that led Edward Tyson, the author of the main focus of this chapter, and so many other scholars, before and after him, to find what is that links both species.

The image of the ape, as it was established in the Introduction, is present in Classic and Medieval times, both in which is presented as an evil creature for mimicking human behaviours; however as time went by the question about the apes’ genetic history and their contact with humans began to earn a place in the scientific community. Prior to Darwin’s work *On the Origin of Species*, the question on the proximity between animals and the human race had long been discussed, but despite the

several points of view one thing seem to be constant regardless of time: the similarity between humans and *sīmia*, in specific. Were apes an undeveloped form of a human being? Are they genetically related? Is the power of speech the only thing separating both species?

Galen was the leading physician of the Roman Empire during the second part of the second century. Interested in what linked apes to humans, Galen is known for his dissections on apes, since dissecting a human being was prohibited at the time (Vesalius, 1998: xv). However, with the arrival of the Renaissance, cultural movement dated from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, a spirit of enquiry affected scholars to go back in time in order to study classical works, as well as interpret them in the context of society at the time. A fresh, new perspective helped not only to revolutionise modern science with the help of ancient theories, but also inspired many in creating new concepts while, at the same time, correcting several misleading conclusions.

Andreas Vesalius, born in Brussels in 1514, was familiarised with anatomical studies as well as Galen's work; it was with an edgy attitude towards innovation that Vesalius became one of the first physicians to dissect human beings opening the doors to modern anatomy studies. Soon, however, he realised Galen's work was deceptive: after translating the Greek physician works into Latin, Vesalius exposed Galen's severe anatomical mistakes such as, mixing the anatomy of a dog and a monkey and present it as similar to the anatomy of a human being (Vesalius, 1998: xvi).

I cannot find the human body something described by Galen, or when I see something contrary to his exposition. I invariably look for these things in dumb animals and particularly in dogs (of which I have never lacked a supply); (Vesalius, 1998: xvi)

Facing the dreadful decision of having to expose Galen's mistakes, Vesalius came to the conclusion that Galen's spirit would not be in anyway unhappy with him, for Galen presented what he thought to be accurate at a time where his resources were limited; as Vesalius stated the stock on dogs was vast, it is possible that Galen used mainly dogs because they were easy to find. However, his work proved a tremendous amount of effort taking into account his obstacles:

I do not think his ghost will be angry with me for revealing that he teaches the fabric of the ape rather than the human, that because of the writings of certain anatomists who preceded him he moves from the

structure of the ape to that of man, and that he confuses the two, I say.  
(Vesalius, 1998: 194)

When Vesalius could not find something in Galen's studies in humans, he would use Galen's study method and would dissect animals. The same thing happened when analysing the lumbar vertebrae: Galen described it as the path through which the spinal marrow emerges which Vesalius could not find it in the human body, and only understood Galen's writing after a complete dissection of an ape with a human skeleton by his side. Even though he concluded that there is a descending process which forms an entering for the nerve, and the latter creates a gap in between where the vertebrae enters, this process is similar to the three lower thoracic vertebrae of a dog (an animal which was easy to find and have access to). Nonetheless, none of these observations were found in a human body – thus proving Galen's irrefutable mistakes with his dissections.

Another example would be the analysis of the lower jaw – as Vesalius proved to only have one bone – Galen assumed it had two bones due to his dissection of a dog. Since most animals have two bones joined by symphysis at the end of the chin, Galen made yet another wrong assumption: that Man would be no different. Vesalius states, though, that the jaw of a child consists of two bones joined together it is considered to be one single bone for it would not separate if boiled as Galen argued.

It is true that a child's jaw does consist of two bones joined together by symphysis; but that is no justification for stating that the jaw consist of two bones, unless we also admit that the occiput, the vertebrae, and the bones on either side of the sacrum are composed of more than one bone; for no one would deny that these others consist in childhood of several bones joined together by symphysis. (Vesalius, 1998: 108)

The collect works of Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* first published in 1543, contained several illustrations of the human body with complementary detailed descriptions – the first step towards modern anatomical studies. His work rectified several misleading concepts and similarities between animals and humans. He did not reject the idea of proximity of an ape and a man since finding out that conclusions made by Galen regarding, for example, a third bone between “this process and the clavicle, and that they call this bone *acromion* or *katakleis*” (Vesalius, 1998: 233) were in fact visible in both apes and humans.

I do not think that Galen regards this peculiar cartilage of this joint (described above) as a bone, since cartilages of this sort are much more like ligaments than cartilages and are not in the least osseous, and in any case they occur in the ape as well as the human. (Vesalius, 1998: 233)

Even though many of the scientific facts were clarified, the question on the origin of apes stood tall, refuting Vesalius' work and demanding concrete proof on the link between species. What is our connection with them? Is there none worth discussing?

In 1607 Edward Topsell used physiology to bring out the differences between apes and human beings referring to an ape as an almost hybrid creature whose purpose lied in imitating Man and his mannerisms, bringing back to the table the connection with the Devil and his own deceitful ways. Topsell thus stated "the body of an Ape is Ridiculous, by reason of an indecent likeness and imitation of man, so is his soule and spirit" (Fudge, 2002).

Since he classified the ape's body as an unnatural, hideous creation, its connection to humans was for him supposedly non-existent. However, it was Edward Tyson in 1699 with his work *Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris or the Anatomy of a Pygmie Compared with that of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man* that influenced anatomical research in the seventeenth century. His comparative anatomy study of a young *Pygmy* brought to light the several similarities between *sīmia* and humans not only on the branch of physiology, but also relating to social behaviour – field of study that Vesalius lacked on his analysis.

Anatomy studies had evolved since the sixteenth century; by 1600 physicians were used to conduct anatomy investigations through autopsies. Many of the first dissections were practiced on the cadavers of criminals and compared to that of animals; since it was necessary to have an official permission to open the body and examine its internal organs in order to reach a conclusion, numerous anatomists resort to the bodies of criminals, as society cared little to what happened to them. By the fifteenth century anatomy had gained the upmost respect; in Italy, anatomists were allowed to dissect the bodies of criminals and people with low social status, even though many believed it to be a sinful practice and fought against it. In the sixteenth century English academies were given four bodies of criminals to surgeons, physicians, and students. Not all of the bodies that underwent the process of autopsy were used in dissections – the two are different scientific processes: the first aims to discover the cause of death and the latter

wishes to cut out, hold and observe every internal organ to its minimal detail in order to not only learn more about the human body, but also, and by the sixteenth century this was not a new obsession, to find out what linked humans to animals (Harley, 2013).

In England, dissection was publicly authorised in 1546, when the Royal College of Physicians obtained a grant of four corpses yearly. The opening up of the body in the anatomy theatre provided a showcase for medicine, conspicuously laying bare the errors of hidebound Galenism. Cutting up malefactors, however, indelibly tarred a medical procedure with the brush of violence and the violation of taboos, kindling intense and enduring grassroots distrust of dissection. (Porter, 2003: 224)

Of course, many anatomists were still judged by a large part of the people, who considered the act of dissecting a cadaver to be sordid, and as a result several anatomists were linked to have illegal contacts with grave-robbers in order to find quality corpses to dissect. Nevertheless, when it came down to suicide, it seem as the challengers changed their attitude since suicide, in a Christian point of view, is together a sin and a crime (Porter, 2003: 225). As the corpses of those who committed suicide were left in the streets, with not possibility of a proper burial, anatomists took advantage and used them in their studies.

By the seventeenth century London was one of the most popular cities in Europe not only for its Royal family, courted laws, or beautiful sights, but also for its cultural growing. Besides theatres and the church dominance throughout the land, the centres of knowledge taught new scientific discoveries and subjects as well as mathematics previously prohibited:

London was the centre of cultural life even though the official centres of learning were at Cambridge and Oxford, which mostly served as finishing-schools for the wealthy and seminaries for the church. The Stationers' Company regulated the book trade and controlled the nation's printing-presses from London. And there in the early seventeenth century Gresham's College taught the new science and mathematics that were excluded from the church-dominated curriculum of the universities. (Kishlansky, 1996: 14)

Belonging to the Renaissance era played a big part in Vesalius' work, but through the Stuart period, from 1603 to 1714, England had a first row seat to an outburst of scientific discoveries from the theory of gravity by Isaac Newton to the explanation about the circulation of blood by William Harvey. Technologically speaking, the invention of the microscope and the quadrant are only two of the few

inventions that became prime instruments to a number of scientists (Kishlansky, 1996).

As Roy Porter states:

Through the innovations of Descartes, Gassendi, Boyle, Hooke, Huygens, Newton and many other, the mechanical philosophy transformed physics and astronomy in the seventeenth century; inevitably it also prompted new research programmes in anatomy, physiology and medicine. Investigators were spurred to view living creatures mechanistically, as ingenious contraptions made up of skilfully articulated components (bones, joints, cartilage, muscles, vessels), functioning as levers, pulleys, cogs, pipes and wheels, in line with the laws of mechanics, kinetics, hydrostatics, and so forth. The body became a *machine carnis*, a machine of the flesh. (Porter, 2003: 51)

Before deepening the analysis of Tyson's work, it is important to underline the role of taxonomy and biological classification. In mid-seventeenth century, taxonomy was already in practice, however it constituted an era before Carl Linnaeus (1707 – 1778), the Swedish zoologist, who set the guidelines for biological classification of plants and animals. Even though his work later proved to be insufficient, for Linnaeus' system was synchronic (Hoebel, 1958: 18), meaning he did not take into account the species' development through a continuum time frame, as opposed to Darwin, who was concerned with keeping a diachronic classification system, Linnaeus would have been helpful to Tyson in differentiating all the *sīmia* species. As such, and with no evidence to the contrary at the time, Tyson used six different nouns in the title of his book as comparative to each other:

Tyson's title provides us with six nouns, names that are to be compared with one another, not as words but as bodies: "Orang – Outang," "Homo Sylvestris," "Pygmie," "Monkey," "Ape," and "Man." The first term, from with the modern-day "orangutan" is derived is a Malaya word meaning, literally, "wild man of the woods." It was first employed in Europe by the Dutch physician Nicolaas Tulp (the central subject of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson*) and was used generically to refer not only to creatures found in Borneo but to what are now referred to as "anthropoid apes." (Nash, 2003: 17)

Tyson wrote his book with no distinction between the terms of 'ape', 'monkey', 'orangutan' and 'man', being the first flaw of an otherwise impressive work. At the beginning of his essay, Tyson confesses his difficulty in naming the object of his study, for even the Ancients were unable to determine if a *Pygmie* was a kind of an ape or part

of the human race. Nevertheless, the author elects the noun “pygmie” due to the small stature of the frail creature:

But observing that under these Names, they describe different *Animals*; for Distinction – sake, and to avoid Equivocation, I shall call the Subject, of which I am about to give the *Anatomy*, a *Pygmie*, from its Stature; which I find to be just the same with the Stature of the *Pygmies* of the Ancients (...) But I must confess, there is so great Confusion in the Description of this sort of Creature, which I find is a very large Family (there being numerous *Species* of them) that in Transcribing the Authors that have wrote about them, it’s almost impossible but to make mistakes; (Tyson, 1699: 1)

Thus Tyson makes the statement that the final goal of his work is to understand all the complex body parts of the *Pygmie* and make the comparison between of such with the bodies of an ape, monkey, and, finally, a man. He goes as far to saying that the possible anatomical similarities between the species exist due to similarities in resemblance as well. As he goes on explaining, if one would perform a dissection to a small lion cub and a cat at the same time, one would find several body parts that would be parallel, thus aiding to the understand of different animals anatomies (Tyson, 1699; 2). However, the author refuses to believe that the *Pygmie* is the product of a mix generation – an odd crossover between species ape or monkey, and humans.

Just like Vesalius before him, Tyson researched earlier works on the same topic not only to build a bridge of reasoning but also to safeguard any mistakes he could make. Not only had he translated a text written by Aristotle, he also provided comments on the philosopher’s deductions. He then realised Aristotle’s own doubts about where to place the *Pygmie*, to what the author concluded his place would be between Man and Ape:

But at the same time I take him to wholly a *Brute*, though in the formation of the Body, and in the *Sensitive* or *Brutal* Soul, it may be, more resembling a Man, than any other *Animal* so that in this *Chain* of the *Creating*, as an intermediate Link between an *Ape* and a *Man*, I would place our *Pygmie*. (Tyson, 1699: 5)

While traveling to London from Angola, the *Pygmie* socialised with the travellers who later went back to visit it. The small creature proved to be sensitive and affectionate – such attitudes only reinforced Tyson’s view on the *Pygmie* being what connected *sīmia* and humans – even though he had a brute and animalistic figure, he

was sensitive and emotional. Moreover, its social relations with other animals seemed doubtful as, during the trip, the *Pygmie* never got close to the monkeys on board (Tyson, 1699: 7).

The author made an effort to be sure that he covered everything in his works about this small creature; he started with hair. Normally, the hair on apes and monkeys would cover most of their bodies, practically not letting skin visible; but, the hair of the *Pygmie* covered for the most part only its head and back, letting the front skin visible. Though such phenomenon is not observable in a man, it is still closer to it than a full hairy monkey.

The same with teeth: Aristotle made references to *Cynocephalis* (Tyson, 1699: 7) to refer to dog-like apes, which are in fact Old World Monkeys as baboons or macaques – as a comparison to the *Pygmie*. The teeth of these creatures were more resembling to those of a dog, while the *Pygmie* had human-like teeth (Tyson, 1699: 7).

Resemblance wise, the face of the *Pygmie* is more similar to one of a man's than of ape's and monkey's, due to its large forehead and a more spread jaw (Tyson, 1699). However, its nose is flat and the nostrils were upright just as the noses of New World Monkeys. Tyson took this opportunity to make a reference to “Indian Blacks” (Tyson, 1699: 9) and how it had been observed that their noses are far more flatter than European men – a possible way to compared savage men, most time referred to as beasts and animals, with members of the *hominoidea* family. This was the starting point, and the nucleus of this thesis: how close are “savages” and “animals”? Does the environment affects the growth and physical features of a being?

Even though, in a general way, the *Pygmie* resemblances a man more than an ape, it still resemblances an African man more than a European one. Take its hand for instance: it possessed a very large thumb like an ape's though the fingers were big like a man's, as well as the nails:

In both these respects, it more resembled the *Ape* – kind. But the *Fingers* of our *Pygmie* being so much bigger than those of *Apes* and *Monkeys*; and its *Nails* being broader, and flatter, on both these Accounts it was liked a *Man* (Tyson, 1699: 12).

As it was already mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, apes are capable of grasp and handle objects, climb trees as they have opposable thumbs (such like humans). Besides, both hands and feet, are abnormally long and disproportionate when compared to those of a human. Aristotle interpreted the feet as heel, as both hands and



feet were used in the same manner – grasping and climbing -, in addition to the ability to bend a foot like a hand differs from human’s hand and foot to a great level (Tyson, 1699: 12).

Several proofs of physical resemblance have been given at this point, however, there is a particular characteristic that, even today, separates apes, monkeys, pygmies, from humans: power of speech. As Tyson argues even though “black Men” from India look like these creatures, they can speak, ability unknown to the rest of the animals and the turning point of their separation. However, as it is believed that environment can modify behaviour, are apes, monkeys and pygmies mere victims of a non-existent society?

In his works, Tyson makes reference to a tribe in India (Tyson, 1699: 8) which were said to be *Pygmies*. These men and women were dark skinned and appear to have a very long hair. They lacked the sense of shame, as they walked naked in community with no piece of cloth covering at least their genitals, which were described to be so long that it reached their ankles. Such description portrayal seems to fit the one of Donestre, mentioned in the introductory chapter – a hybrid half-human, half-animal creature with the power of speech, but a brute figure which only emphasised its masculinity and human characteristics through its visible sexual organ. These natives spoke the same language as the rest of the “Indians” (Tyson, 1699: 8) as the tribe from Ethiopia, observed by an emissary for Emperor Justinian (Tyson, 1699: 10). They were also naked for the most part of their lives, although the elder members would cover their genitals with animal skin. Their dialect was at the time unknown and impossible to understand – still, they had a “Humane Voice” (Tyson, 1699: 11). The only thing that would separate both tribes and, perhaps, at a deeper level, both species, would be the factor of courage; whilst the first tribe was used to fight and hunt, the second lacked the same skill:

They liv’d upon Sea Oysters, and Fish that were cast out of the Sea, upon the Island. They had no Courage; for seeing our Men, they were frighted, as we are at the fight of the greatest with Beast. (Tyson, 1699: 11)

Donestre, on its hand, was able to speak and so communicate with the traveller, bringing it one step close to be consider human besides its lion-like head; Pygmies were not so lucky, as the noises they made were consider by Tyson, only sounds with no further significance, they cannot be consider part of a higher species.

Notwithstanding, Tyson analyses the brain of the *Pygmie* upon its death, due to an infection originated on its trip to England due to a fall (Nash, 2003: 18) and observed that the resemblance was greater than any other body part; at one point the author could be misunderstood and thought to be describing the brain of a human instead of a brain of the *Pygmie*:

Yet by comparing the *Brain* of our *Pygmie* with that of a *Man*; and, with the greatest exactness, observing each Part in both; it was surprising to me to find so great a resemblance of the one to the other (...) So that when I am describing the *Brain* of our *Pygmie*, you may justly suspect I am describing that of a *Man*, and may think that I might very well omit it wholly, by referring you to the accounts already given of the *Anatomy* of an *Humane Brain*. (Tyson, 1699: 54)

Not only did Tyson categorise the *Pygmie* as closest to man as possible, since their brains are so similar even in size, but he also disproved Vesalius who had observed 156 years earlier that a brain belonged to that of a human was similar to most animals, even birds (Tyson, 1699: 54). The author went as far as observing that since the brain was responsible for every action of the body, which means, the engine accountable of every part, fluid and cell's act, it was also the very core of the soul; and if so was true, that is the existence of a soul and its location in the body, then the *Pygmie* would be the closest animal to man.

For if this be true, then our *Pygmie* must equal a *Man*, or come very near him, since his *Brain* in proportion to his *Body*, was as large as a *Man's* (...) for then our *Pygmie* might be really a *Man*. (Tyson, 1699: 55)

However, as was mentioned before, Tyson's work not only observed the physiology of a creature and took conclusions on its proximity to humans, but it also interpreted social behaviour. Data regarding its sensitivity was already revealed during the *Pygmies'* trip, but its, even though short, life provided records of a more serious nature. For instance, the way the creature stood: Tyson found no evidence when analysing its skeleton to why the creature would not stand upright and walk as man all the time:

I did not observe any difference in the Structure of the *Thigh – bone* in our *Pygmie* from that in *Man*; nor was it's *Articulation* or Insertion of it's Head into the *Acetabulum*, more oblique than in *Man*. So that from this *Articulation*, I saw no reason why it should not walk

upright and fit; our *Pygmie* did both: When I saw it, 'twas just a little before it's death; and tho' 'twas weak and feeble, it would stand, and go upright. (Tyson, 1699: 75)

But this feature would turn the tide between ape and Man, and to whom was the *Pygmie* the closest: a continuous observation of the creature's stance announced that it would regularly change his position from walking upright and human-like, to bend down and go upon its four members. It is also interesting to emphasise that the animal would not place the palm of hand as a Quadruped would; instead it would place its knuckles - "or rather upon the first Joints of the Fingers of the Fore – hands, the second and third Joints being bended or touching the Ground" (Tyson, 1699: 80) – identical to the way Chimpanzees and Gorillas walk. This could be proof of not only non-developed skills, but also of a weakened condition finally ruling out any proximity between the *Pygmie* and a Man.

Tyson used visual aids in his book to show his readers how the creature would attempt to stand in a person-like manner (see image 5), but also as evidence of several other conclusions made throughout the book on matters such as its head, nose and teeth; the specimen would support its weight by holding a rope with its hand or by using a cane; even though it could stand for an extensive period of time, it would eventually switch to, what can only be consider to be, a more comfortable position and settled on the floor, action that was facilitated due to its large palms of its hands and feet:

the *Fingers* of the *right Hand* are represented bending, to show the *Action*, when it goes on all four; for then it places only the *Knuckles*, not the *Palms* of the *Hands* to the Ground. The *Sole* of the *left Foot*, by reason of the length of the *Toes*, and the setting on of the *Great Toe*, looks like the *Palm* of the *Hand*: but the *right*, having so long a *Heel* and its *Toes* being hid, appears rather like a *Foot*, and upon occasion performs the Office of both either of a *Foot* or *Hand*. (Tyson, 1699: 96)

Additionally, and regarding its food, the *Pygmie* presented extraordinary table manners and social skills for a creature deprived of such for the most part of its life. Granted food, the small creature would bow face the offer and accept it with kindness, cleaning the plate upon finishing the meal. It was also observed that a one-time indiscretion with alcohol prevented it to every repeating it again showing an amazing amount of self-control and awareness of what was considered to be right or wrong:

after it was taken, and made tame, it would readily eat any thing that was brought to the Table; and very orderly bring it's Plate thither, to receive

what they would give him. Once it was made Drunk with *Punch* (and they are fond enough of strong Liquors) But it was observed, that after that time, it would never drink above one Cup, and refused the offer of more than what he found agreed with him. Thus we see *Instinct of Nature* teaches Brutes *Temperance*; and *Intemperance* is a Crime not only against the *Laws of Morality*, but of *Nature* too. (Tyson, 1699: 30)

Edward Tyson's work was considered to be one of the most influential anatomy studies of the seventeenth century as well as the start of a public discussion on the matter of biology and species proximity magnifying Tyson's popularity. So much so that a satirical work by John Arbuthnot, originated at the very core of the Scriblerus Club, *The Memories of Martinus Scriblerus* published in 1741 by Pope after Arbuthnot's death (Nash, 2003; 36) mocked Tyson's work and specimen with the use of the "Madame Chimpanzee", a female chimpanzee who presented notable manners and values directly from Angola (Schiebinger, 2004: 101) to contrast against Tyson's *Pygmie*. It was described as:

The Chimpanzee was very pretty Company at the Tea – table, behav'd with Modesty and good Manners, and gave great Satisfaction to the Ladies who were pleased to honour her with their Visits ... it would fetch its Chair, and sit in it naturally, like a Human Creature, whilst it drank Tea: It would take the Dish in its Hand, and if the Liquor was two [sic] hot, wou'd pour the Tea into the Saucer to cool it. (Schiebinger, 2004: 101).

Such account was extremely close to the one made about Tyson's *Pygmie* and its own social skills and manners, since the image of the female chimp (see image 6) contrasts greatly with the *Pygmie* by standing upright with no assistance from a rope or a cane whilst holding a cup of tea. Still the anatomist would not consider Madame Chimpanzee a long lost member of the human race, just like the *Pygmie* for, after careful consideration, Tyson realised the incredible similarities were not enough to consider his object of study a man:

I shall conclude by observing to you, that this having been the Common Error of the Age, in believing the *Pigmies* to be sort of little *Men*, and it having been handed down from so great Antiquity, what might contribute farther to the confirming this Mistake, might be, the Imposture of the Navigators, who failing to these Parts where these *Apes* are, they have embalmed their Bodies, and brought them home, and then made the People believe that they were the *Men* of those Countries from whence they came. (Tyson, 1699: 36)

Tyson presented “an answer to a challenge” (Nash, 2003; 40): the detailed physiological and social study of a creature considered to be a beast, a monster, a hybrid, and, even, a link between humans and animals. Even though he mentioned the creature’s soul several times in his work, Tyson never really deepened the concept and its possible existence, as he abstained from giving any personal insights on the matter. The following chapter will dwell on this subject whilst analysing the arrival and life of Peter, the Wild Boy in England – the perfect case on which to test some of Tyson’s conclusions.

## Chapter II: The Reaction of English Intellectual Circles to the Arrival of Peter, the Wild Boy

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first one will expose the several theories on the possession of a soul by humans and animals during the Classical and Medieval period, divided between philosophical and theological debates. This section will be referred in the last section of this thesis, when analysing Peter, the Wild Boy's role as a human being or as an animal, by questioning his possession of a soul.

### 1. The possession of a Soul – Classical and Medieval theories

*Since an ape is capable of conscious, rational, reflective, purposive, voluntary behaviour, the ape has a soul. (Globus, 2002: 127).*

Is possession of a soul the only thing separating humans and *sīmia*? and Since Ancient Greece, the question about the existence of a soul and how it would define the human condition has become an enquiry that has spread throughout the classical world to the present day. However, as any other argument, this query met two different approaches, one from a philosophical stand point, and the other from a theological view. Philosophically speaking, the dualism of body-soul has been referred to as relationship of hardware and software, to put it in colloquial terms: the body being the “matter” or clay if one will, is guided by the “animating principle”; as such the body could never be separated from the soul, otherwise it would have no action, no purpose. Pythagoras, for instance, was interested in morality and how the universe was “governed by a principle of Truth” (Porter, 2003: 29); he argued that the body requested mastering, thus the existence of a good soul.

The Neoplatonist Plotinus, for instance, described a continuum which extended down from Divine Intellect to brute matter, via angels, man, lower animals, the vegetable kingdom and inanimate matter.” (Porter, 2003: 29)

Already there was a sense of hierarchy, and correspondent superiority over beings with no or less soul than humans. It was Aristotle, Plato's pupil, who greatly disagree with his teacher when suggested that the senses of an individual played a huge

part on one's finding of the truth; before him, Plato had stated that intellect was enough to reach knowledge (Porter, 2003: 32). Whereas his teacher placed the soul in a constant battle with the body and did not subscribe to the illusion that the body needed a soul to function, to him the soul was "a substance separable from the body"; on the other hand, Aristotle believed one could not be without the other, otherwise it would not be possible to reach any sort of knowledge, as the senses are incontestably present in the soul.

The body, for Aristotle, was not the enemy of the soul. Rather, the soul needed to be wedded to the flesh, since only through the body could it function. The two were thus not estranged and competing sovereign entities, but were related as means to ends, potentiality to actualization. (Porter, 2003: 32)

Where does this leave animals, then? Since their body is capable of functioning, does it mean they are in possession of a soul? Aristotle was controversial when he decided to deny reason to animals as inferior beings, for he thought that perception of the surrounding world and intellect were two different features, and animals could not bear both. As reason was ruled out, Aristotle also refused animals any sense of thought, intellect or belief, and it would only be a wider sense of perception that would help animals to find their place in the world (Sorabji, 1993); however, this sense of perception would not come close to a human's. Shame, guilt, grief, relief are only a few senses that animals would not be able to understand and feel as it is out of their range – for human beings rank higher. The philosopher took shame to be a sense only suitable to old men, adolescents and women, not a sense that would be expressed by a man. However, and this might be the turning point, Aristotle states that animals would be unable to recognise, the same way man would be unable to express, such a sense; as beasts they are not sensitive enough – thus human – to comprehend an emotion that takes "self-conscious" to feel. In a way, Aristotle approximates man and animal, describing both as brutes.

In unconscious recuperation, Aristotle thus makes this most embarrassing of emotions an index for characteristically human intelligence and reflectiveness. For an animal can be thought neither to experience nor to recognise shame; indeed Aristotle goes so far as to say that a human will never feel shame in front of an animal, since an animal is incapable of understanding it. Aristotle thus creates a turn in his own argument: for the very emotion which aligns a person with the beasts also sets her apart. (Fudge, 2002: 28)

In the ninth century, William of Auvergne suggested that the soul ruled the body as a "pilot in a ship or a ruler in his kingdom" (Maurer, 1982: 115) to meet Plato's own belief, that the body is a prison in which the soul is incarcerated; however, without it the body would be capable of functioning. In exchange, Auvergne's notion strongly disagrees with Aristotle's take one he suggested that any deed accomplished by an individual would be because of the composition of body and soul. Auvergne believed the body to be a mere instrument of something greater – the soul - as Saint Albert, the Great, in the twelfth century allude to the fact that the matter and the soul were two independent essences; he highlighted the fact that even though many of the soul's characteristics are only expressed through the body, the intellect, which he presented to be the very core of the soul, was not.

Properly speaking, the arts are located in the human soul. True it is man who writes, builds, and knows, using his body as an instruments; but these are really operations of the soul and not, as Aristotle thought, of the composite of soul and body. (Maurer, 1982: 116)

The British essayist Thomas Wright wrote in *The Passion of the Minde*, published in 1601, analyses the hypothesis that emotions, or passions, are found in either the body or in the mind – “since they are expressed in physical movements of, say, the blood in the face or the heart” or “since they appear to be caused nonetheless by some mental motivation” (Fudge, 2002: 26). He argued that passions, contrary to what one might think, did not define a human being, but instead lower the individual to the level of beast, here contrasting with the Aristotelian thought that men do not sense shame. To Wright, animals were capable of producing the same sensations as a man and have those expressed in a physical manner – through their body or voice; the only thing capable of distinguish them at this point is that a human beings can to put into practice their reasoning in order to control their emotions.

Richard Sorabji believes Aristotle overreacted with his statement as later in *History of Animals*, animals had been given the gift of technical knowledge, or “tekhnikos”, as well as thought, “dianoia” (Sorabji, 1993: 12). In fact, Plato rationalised understanding as part of memory and belief, whilst memory and belief would come from perception – in that sense, man understands the world around him, as opposed to animals which can perceive it, but not understand it. Aristotle, thus, took belief to be a constituent part of the soul, and not intelligence or technical knowledge.



As opposed to his student, Plato subscribed that animals were in possession of reasoning and belief; however, he ranked both characteristics to be part of lower faculties, the soul, as he did not think they were necessary for a harmonious living, as stated before. He tried to prove this by suggesting that animals were mere reincarnations of humans, and that their attitudes and perceptions were a projection of a “soul distorted in a previous human incarnation” (Sorabji, 1993: 12). Animals are not deprived of reasoning, they just do not put it into practice. Aristotle’s and Plato’s theories, though, strongly disagree with the one made by Socrates – Plato’s mentor – who conceptualised that having a soul and being able to think went hand in hand, since the act of thinking is the ability of the soul to ask questions and answer them. If that would be the case, animals were deprived of such a skill as most human beings (Sorabji, 1993: 12). Nevertheless, what would distinguish both species would be man’s ability to learn, experience new sensations and feelings, as well as having a conscious – the constant battle a human being sets against himself, often, in order to clear his mind, is something unclear in the life of an animal. Humans cannot perceive it, and with no further evidences, tend to call it non-existent.

The destructive powers in the tragedies are no longer solely those of external fate, imperious gods and malevolent furies. For ruin is also self-inflicted – their heroes are consumed by *hubris*, by ambition or pride, followed by shame, grief and guilt; they tear themselves (*nemesis*). The psychic civil war staged by Greek tragedy was then rationalized in the philosophy of Socrates and Plato. (Porter, 2003: 30)

The seventeenth century philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, described the soul as an "immaterial substance' having no location or motion" (Willey, 1953: 101); it could work together with the body, but it remained a separable and "consequently immortal" (Willey, 1953; 101). Whilst, Aristotle thought that when the body died, the essence of individual would live on as a soul, Hobbes thought that its death was the death of the person. As the soul, for Hobbes, was another term for "life", it would make no sense to credited a person's immortality to something that had been independent from him the entire time (Willey, 1953: 105). Hobbes considered the soul the same way Descartes considered the ego, as immaterial and unruled by laws of motion – it would never project itself through a body.

From a theological point of view, the existence of the soul has been a central issue in Christianity. Saint Augustine was a Christian theologian and philosopher from

the fourth century, whose works strongly influenced Western theology and philosophy. As a Roman Catholic bishop, Saint Augustine believed that to be a human, one had to be connected to God, as his creator. In order to achieve such level, one should meet only one requirement, and that would be the perfect balance between body – created by God, thus good – and soul – man's centre and proof of God's creation. As Christian anthropologist, in a way, Saint Augustine argued that to be a human one would have to be in possession of a soul – finally ruling out animals. Even though this is a religious view of the matter, Saint Augustine's notion is similar to that of Aristotle's, for man is "a rational soul, using a mortal and earthly body"; one cannot exist without the other. Nevertheless, he did not refuse the idea that the presence of the body could harm the soul; in spite of their status as "good", the body could be described, as Saint Augustine did in his early works, as a prison for the soul.

As a Christian he knows that matter is good, because it had been created by God. So even the body is good, although the soul can become evil by giving the body too much care, to forgetfulness of itself and God. (Maurer, 1982: 10)

Like Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas also an advocate for God's creation; however, instead of believing that both soul and body were created by Him, Saint Thomas, a Catholic priest of the thirteenth century, insisted that God created the soul, thus the man, and gave it the form of a human body. Nonetheless, to Saint Thomas the intellect soul still was "a spiritual and immortal substance" (Maurer, 1982: 339) which would carry on the very essence of the human being after the body had died. Moreover, he supported the hypothesis that plants and animals had souls, however, theirs were extremely different from the ones of men, for animals did not possess any intellect, thus their souls would not be able to survive for they do not sense the same emotions and spirituality.

The souls of plants and brute animals, on the other hand, have no being besides that of the composite of which they are part. Hence they cannot survive the dissolution of the composite. Intellectual souls, however, being endowed with their own existence, do not cease to exist when the bodies they inform are destroyed. (Maurer, 1982: 340)

Regarding the matter of immortality, Marsilio Ficino, an Italian Catholic priest of the fifteenth century, who had been influenced by classical philosophy, was scared of

the popularity the Aristotelian idea was receiving, interpreted by Alexandrist philosophers that denied immortality (Maurer, 1982: 333). Inspired by the works of Plato and Augustine, Ficino subscribed to the notion that the soul thrives in know the absolute truth that not even death would it keep it from reaching its full potential. Since intellect and knowledge are infinitive, and are the constitute parts of the soul, it could never be more than an immortal substance. Additionally, after studying the works of Saint Thomas, Ficino was able to give a more scientific explanation about the form of the soul. A subject that gains form “beings to exist”, however, and since the human soul has no matter to constitute it, it is a “spiritual essence or form” (Maurer, 1982: 334).

It cannot lose its existence, therefore, any more than a circle can lose roundness. Once it has been given existence, it can never lose it by itself or by the action of an external agent. It cannot lose it by itself, because existence belongs to it through its very essence (that is to say, through its form, which is identical with its essence). Neither will it be deprived of existence by God, because it was he who determined the soul to be what it is and he will not go contrary to his law. Ficino concludes with St. Thomas that the human soul will never go out of existence, because it has no potentiality to non-existence. It has no tendency in itself to cease to exist, and God will not destroy it, because he has willed it to be indestructible, and his will is unchangeable. (Maurer, 1982: 334).

Nevertheless, it was sixteenth century philosopher, Pietro Pomponazzi, who contradicted Saint Thomas on the matter of, again, immortality. Pomponazzi believed that the intellect of a human being depends on the senses – given by the body – and if so, the soul cannot be separated from the body, besides also being a matter not an incorporeal substance. Here, Pomponazzi argues on the matter of dependence of the intellect by stating that it is “objectively” dependent on the sense organs, but not “subjectively” dependent because “it does not reside in a an organ” (Maurer, 1982: 340). As the power of seeing resides in the eyes, the intellect does not have one place only; even though is capable of great knowledge, the intellect suffers from not having a place on its own. In that sense, Pomponazzi, agrees with Plato when defines human intellect as participating in “immateriality and immortality” but without possessing the same characteristics.

According to which the participant in a perfection does not strictly possess that perfection but simply bears a resemblance to it. The participated quality is but a shadow or trace of immateriality and immortality; strictly speaking, it is material and mortal. The same is true

of the human soul. It is a material and mortal form, and it owes its existence not to an act of creation but to an act of natural generation; moreover, it ceases to exist when the body is destroyed. (Maurer, 1982: 341)

To sum up, most notions on the existence of the soul, either philosophical or theological, are very much alike; the point in which they seem to disagree the most is whether the soul is immortal or not. Yet, a common point between them, and an important one to this thesis, is the non-existence of the soul in animals, or the different soul brute animals and plants possess. As animals are seen to have no intellect, only perception, which would enable them to understand the civilised world, this maintains them in a lower status and not close at all to the human race.

There is, nonetheless, a misperception when one refers to “animal”; nowadays the term is often distinguished by the use of the adjectives “rational” or “irrational”; that means, if one is talking about a human being, one would refer to him as a “rational animal” – a being capable of reasoning and thought – whereas if one is referring to an ape during a discussion, one will use the phrase “irrational animal”, thus proving Man’s notion that animals do not hold the same mental capacities as humans.

In the Middle Ages there were two dissimilar descriptions regarding the term; the first would describe it as “a creature inhabited by ‘anima’, by a ‘soul’ or living principle” whilst the other designate “animal” as “a physical compound of organic, corruptible and mortal flesh” (Fudge, 2002: 33). In any case, if one had to choose, taking into consideration all the classical and medieval theories already mentioned, one would place a human being in the first category. A soul requires sensitiveness, power of emotion and their projection, such as happiness, anger, shame, or just reaction like blushing. When discovering foreign lands, the travellers were shocked to notice that natives had no sense of shame nor did they blush for being naked in front of strangers. This only adds to the argument that a being who cannot feel ashamed nor have a civilised reaction is possibly an animal for its soul knows no sensitivity (Fudge; 2002: 34).

In Léry’s analysis of nudity are seen the first stirring of anthropology (...) It is taken not only as axiomatic, but axiomatically natural that human beings wear clothes to hide their nakedness. No human culture previously reported in the West, however, outlandish, chose to go naked. Nudity was clear indication of monstrousness or of bestiality. (Fudge, 2002: 35)

This argument regarding the nonexistent blushing of the natives enlightened some discussions regarding the reality of a civilised society and how it had changed those who inhabited it. The natives were in fact part of a community, yet completely different from English society. However, let's not forget that Tyson's *Pygmie* when caught drunk was described to be terribly ashamed of its acts and to resemble a human when one feels ashamed or guilty. Even though humans are able to transmit their feeling of shame through their body (e.g. red face, trembling hands or lips), apes, nor the *Pygmie*, or any other animal known to Man is capable of the same. Is it possible that two beings, one being raised in the civilised London world and the other in the native community of Africa, would turned out to be two distinct human beings? One with a sense of shame and decorum, and the other with no idea why was it so important to have certain body parts covered? Does environment modify human behaviour lowering a person to the level of "irrational animals" or beasts? Even in possession of a soul, can the total separation with other forms of human interaction be that strong that would lower the status of an individual with an intellectual sense?

## 2. Peter, the Wild Boy – A brute in London society

*Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:21)*

As children everyone has heard of the story of Mowgli, the protagonist of *The Jungle Book*, written in 1894 by Rudyard Kipling. Mowgli was a feral child from Central India who was raised among the animals of the jungle. As part of a child's fantasy book, Mowgli was adopted by a couple of wolves after getting lost from his parents as a baby due to a tiger attack, and was friends with a giant black bear, Baloo, that taught him the Law of Jungle – that is the hierarchy among the animals. However, he never truly identify himself as just a human for he said “Mowgli the Frog I have been (...) Mowgli the Wolf have I said that I am. Now Mowgli the Ape I must be before I am Mowgli the Buck. And the end I shall be Mowgli the Man” (Newton, 2002: 198).

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, the term *feral* dates from the seventeenth century and means “wild, savage”. Mowgli is considered to be a feral child for he was deprived of human contact since he was an infant and the only social relationships that he was involved in was with animals. Even though he is not part of a so called “civilised society”, Mowgli has rules he must follow, rules that help to maintain the community's balance. The same phenomena happens in a human's society: there are rules to be followed, a hierarchy to be respected and social bonds to be created, half of which are with one's family.

Even though Mowgli is a fictional character who talks with animals, feral children could not be more real; in the eighteenth century, just a hundred years after the term was coined, a feral child, straight from the forest, was introduced to English society. His name was Peter, but he was forever known as Peter, the Wild Boy. Of course, Peter was not the first child ever to be deprived of human interaction; there are documented cases of feral children beginning from the fourteenth century, some of which were later proved to be exaggerated or completely false. Before Peter is possible to highlight the case of the Hessian children who were raised among wolves (Chamberlain, 2007) or the boy from Germany from sixteenth century that grew up among the cattle. Even today, in the twenty-first century, there are still cases of feral children in various parts of the World. In 2007, for instance, the Cambodian girl who is claimed to have lived in the jungle for 18 years, and, although many disregard these

claims, was reported to behave like an ape, walking on her knuckles, and having no manners at the dinner table. She went missing when she 8 years old from her family farm, on, as described by relatives, a normal day. Yet, many reports regard her presence as doubtful and her life in the jungle to be unrealistic for upon the finding media created all sorts of fantastic stories about her whereabouts, but the truth is the girl did not pronounce a word since discovered, even though her family described the little girl they had known as “bright, cheerful girl who was skilled at trimming banana skins into the shape of flowers, animals and people” (Watts, 2007).

Peter was also the headline of various testimonies and influenced social circles; discovered in 1725 in the cold German woods of Hamelin, north of Germany (Fudge, 2002: 196) he was brought to the presence of the King of England, who was enjoying the winter in his hometown, and quickly became the most precious thing of the Royal family, at least for the amount the time that took for the novelty to wear off. He was brought to London and stayed in St. James’ Palace with King George I, where he became a barrier between the King’s good relationship with his son, the future King, George Augustus. While the old King, who would die just a year after Peter was brought to England, was a private person, his son was known for the social circle implanted in his home, Leicester House. Their ages were not the only thing in the way; the King was described as “dull” and “tedious” (Newton, 2002: 28) but was a great outdoors man as well as an aficionado of literature and philosophy, something his son never had shown interest in until his marriage with Caroline of Ansbach, who grew close to Peter’s presence and mischievous acts.

There the Wild Boy played with a glove of Caroline’s; grew fascinated by a pocket watch that struck the hours, and, as was usual with him, attempted some minor pick pocking (...) The boy fascinated Caroline: she made up her mind that she would get Peter from the father-in-law and install him in the Leicester House. For a week the King hesitated to comply with her wish: he too enjoyed the boy’s company, and his antics provided welcome relief in the formal and stultifying atmosphere of the palace. At last he relented, and Peter made the short journey from the Mall to the West End. (Newton, 2002: 29-30)

Caroline treated the boy as something she could play with for hours on end; she would dress him up in royal outfits and try to teach him good manners, though it proved to be difficult. However, Peter presented an optimistic attitude as he was often seen laughing and participating in activities. It was during his stay at the home of Prince

George, that Peter became acquainted with some important personalities of the time, the main one in this case being Dr. John Arbuthnot, a Scottish physician, known for his knowledge, sense of decorum and pleasant company. Peter would go on to live with Arbuthnot, who would contribute to Peter's education and life, meaning his social relations as well as social behaviour; nonetheless, there seems to be no proofs of Arbuthnot desire in studying Peter, "for this reason, our knowledge of their relationship is sketchy and dependent upon the insecure authority of contemporary pamphlets" (Newton, 2002: 32). Nevertheless, Peter spent part of this time in London living with the physician and ended up being baptised in Burlington Garden, Arbuthnot's house.

Whilst in the Leicester House, Peter learnt to be caring and social by being pleasant to visits; when with Arbuthnot, he was from time to time subjected to corporal punishments when he would not behave along what was considered to be acceptable at the time. Arbuthnot would correct him "by striking his legs with a broad leather strap" (Newton, 2002: 33), which could have affected Peter's growth within society; as he was not used to be reprimanded for anything, these, nowadays called, acts of unnecessary violence on a child may have actually brought it farther of what was desired. If today they are supposed to harm the trust and bonds a child created with an adult, the same might have happened with Peter back in the eighteenth century.

Found in 1970, Genie was a 13 year old girl who was abused and deprived of human contact by her father. After years of being yelled at, beaten, and scared as her father would imitate a dog barking by her bedroom door to stop her from making any noise, Genie did not developed any sense of trust; when found, besides all the problems she bore as a consequence of her father's violent abuse, she was not capable of establishing relationships based on trust and affection.

She would glanced at you, then look away (...) Again Susan Curtiss thought of her as 'unsocialized, primitive, hardly human'. Unwittingly Genie's carers were repeating the tropes employed by all the previous educators of 'wild children'. She had fallen into the pit of the other than human. She was like a ghost, a sprite, a changeling child. She was the beautiful victim. (Newton, 2002: 214).

Of course the amount of suffering that Genie went through is not at any moment comparable to that of Peter, living in the forest alone; nevertheless, because she was a victim of corporal punishments, no matter how different in proportion they might be from the ones inflicted on Peter, she was not capable of proper social development,



making it that much harder to introduce her in modern society. In Peter's case, he had never been punished before; was the first time someone, a living being, was teaching him right from wrong. To what level were Arbuthnot's methods harmful to Peter's development? If dealt with in another way, would Peter closely resemble a "normal and civilized" Englishman by the end of his life? As fate would have it, and just like the royal family, John Arbuthnot gave up on Peter's education and the boy suffered yet again another major change in his life; he was put under the care of Mrs. Tichbourn, a member of the Queen Caroline's household, who was awarded a significant amount of money in order to ensure the well-being of the boy (Fudge, 2002: 197). Even though living happily in the English countryside, Peter, who passed away in 1785, never developed the power of speech, making him that much closer to an ape than to a human (Fudge, 2002: 197).

Daniel Defoe showed interest in the question of human origins and identity upon writing *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, as the main character experiences a cultural shock between his civilised background and the primitive men in an alien environment; but it was through a pamphlet entitled *Mere NATURE Delineated: OR, A BODY without a SOUL – Being OBSERVATIONS UPON THE Young FORESTER Lately brought to Town from GERMANY. With Suitable APPLICATION. ALSO, A Brief Dissertation upon the Usefulness and Necessity of FOOLS, whether Political or Natural*, published in 1726, that Defoe publicly presented his notions on the case of Peter, the Wild Boy and his origins. Was Peter human? If so he must have been in possession of a soul, but how could one prove it?

The pamphlet was divided into five parts where Defoe exposed some popular notions on the case of Peter: his origins, his status as a human or an animal, his difficulties in adapting to a civilised society and the barriers of communication between Peter and anyone who met him. Defoe begins explaining in the Preface the goals of his pamphlet highlighting that it was not trying to satirise an important issue, but rather a subject to the study on the general definition of what is in fact a human being. Never had England been subjected to the presence of "A Body without the due Exercise of a Soul" (Defoe, 2002: 153), so it is not surprising that an intellectual like Defoe would be interested in learning more about the odd creature that stirred the English minds of the eighteenth century.

Defoe starts the first part of his pamphlet with a brief description of Peter's whereabouts when found, how he was presented and what he used to feed himself

during the time he was lost. By doing so, Defoe continually exposed problematic questions regarding the authenticity of the popular reports as well as comparing Peter to an animal enquiring about his human origins. As found in a forest, it was obvious that Peter would not look like most 14 or 15 year old boys, but quite excluded from what was normal to see. When found, Peter was “wild, naked, dumb; known to, and knowing No-body” (Defoe, 2002: 156), leaving in the air the question of time: he was scared upon laying eyes on figures that could resemble himself, this might suggest that Peter had been lost for a long time. Defoe accuses him of acting “below a Brute Life, hardly a Sensitive, and not at all Rational” – such an account is easily contrasted with medieval manuscripts with colour illustration of animals acting though as humans (see image 7 and 8). In these particular examples one can see two apes dancing, and one ape walking erect working as a falconer; either one runs counter Defoe’s take on a brute life, that is an irrational animal, not possessing the sensitiveness or rationality of a human; either to dance or to couch, both activities require knowledge and skill.

They hardly allow, that he walk’d or step’d erect, but rather creeping on Hands and Knees, climbing Trees like a Cat, sitting on the Boughs like a Monkey, and the like; tho’ in that Part we must not carry our Fancy beyond the Fact, because we see him at present standing upright, as the Soul-informed Part of Mankind do, all which we shall examine in its Place. (Defoe, 2002: 156)

Right from the beginning the comparisons with several animals, including that of Monkeys, were regular; deprived of social contact and not had been taught by any adult on behaviour and manner, Peter would move around in a primitive position, almost instinctual to humans – as walking on all fours is the first position a baby reaches – however, and due to lack of information at the time as well as a poor organisational system of animals and plants categorisation – Defoe did not realised that the position Peter adopted would be more natural to apes than monkeys: as seen on the first chapter, apes are naturally predisposed to walk upright as humans, though they tend, maybe because of their undeveloped brains and senses, to walk on their knuckles; monkeys, on the other hand, need to be taught to stand erect. In any case, Peter’s position is known to Man as the first stage of babies’ development and the first step towards mobility independence – coincidentally or not – that is the same position used by apes, which possess nothing that could prevent them to always walk as humans, though they instinctively choose not to. Defoe doubts of the records on observations of

Peter walking on his knuckles for he sees it as “contrary to their natural Position”, nevertheless, he never actually dismisses an explanation completely since he had nothing to support his hypothesis.

He might, indeed, be said to go upon his Hands and Knees; but as that would be a painful and slow Progression, dragging his Heels after him, so it does not seem, even from the Creature itself, to be true; nor, when taken, did he (as we hear) make any Difficulty of standing upright, or of walking erect as he does now. (Defoe, 2002: 161)

Not only due to his age, but also because of his, yet to be proven, human status, Defoe was not sure how one could explain a child surviving extremely cold temperatures for an uncertain amount of time. Animals, such as bears, foxes, or any type of bird, are protected by their fur or feathers; they have a better chance than a human being in handling the cold – even though there are animals unsuitable for type of weather (Defoe, 2002: 158). Peter was found naked, not covering half his body or protected by coat made of moss and leaves, but with his bare and sensitive skin showing. Unlike the tale of Orson, “the Brother of *Valentine*” (Defoe, 2002: 159), Peter was a frail creature with no measurable strength and malnourished, not even rational enough to try built shelter. It was surprising, being used to hear about fantastic stories of virile men surviving in the woods by themselves, and then being faced with the reality of a small boy, incapable of speech or of using everyday objects, let alone weapons for protection. The tale of Orson in much resembles the one of Hercules, as Defoe stated:

They make him walk and step *erect* like a *Man*; they represent him strong as a Gyant, fierce as a Lyon, bold and daring as a Hero; they cloath him with Skins of wild Beasts, slain by himself; armed with vast Clubs, broken off from Trees by his mighty Strength; fearless of Man and Beast, and both Man and Beast afraid of him. (Defoe, 2002: 159)

However, this was not the case of Peter; on the matter of food it is possible to say the boy showed effective signs of being underfed for it was registered that he only ate "Grass, Moss, Leaves of Trees, and the like (...) Apples and Nuts" (Defoe, 2002: 156-157) during the time he lived in the forest. If Defoe was already suspicious about the boy's almost supernatural characteristic to deal with the cold weather, the food he consumed did not changed his mind: how could a starved young man handle freezing cold temperatures? The amount of food would play a major part on this matter, for animals, besides having their "coats of arms", have at their disposition not only

vegetative food, but also other small animals and the proper skills to hunt them. Peter was not a hunter, not shared of the other animals' instinct – another reason to why Peter did not fit the description of being an animal.

But Man, not form'd for a Savage, has neither Weapons to defend himself, nor has he Teeth or Claws to tear and devour; being appointed by his Maker, to supply all these by the Authority of his Person, an Awe of him is placed upon the Beasts, and he has Hands given him, first to make, and then to make Use of, Weapons, both to rule them for his Safety, and to destroy them for his Food. (Defoe, 2002: 158)

A human, a textbook definition of a human, is capable of creating anything just like Saint Albert, the Great, argued. Even lacking the possession of claws and the skills to hunt others, Peter was also missing the rational part of creation; not only was he a non-speaker, he showed no sign of higher intelligence able to create nor to understand the use of several man-made weapons. Not only can a Man create and use, but he also can become himself through the constant development of his body. Defoe argues that without a rational part, and by consequence a soul, his body becomes “unqualified to live” (Defoe, 2002: 158). Peter thus fits this notion perfectly.

His skin, as any other human being's, is rather sensitive to any harsh and rough matter; as Peter was supposedly lacking rationality, his body was only one more “carcass” with no purpose which could explain his indifference to the feeling his skin must have reflected when sleeping in a tree or between bushes. As fate would have it, a boy who never was inserted into a community, had no knowledge on how to build a shelter; Defoe sees this as proof that if he was in fact human he would have made a greater effort so he would not have to share his space with lower creatures. Records stated that Peter was sleeping in a “kind of a Couch” (Defoe, 2002: 159) when found; what could it signify? Either Peter was abandoned along with the couch or the German woods in which he inhabited for so long were not in fact that abandoned after all.

but there are no vast Desarts uninhabited, or Wilderness unfrequented; unknown Travellers often cross the widest and wildest Parts of them, from one Town and Place to another; Hunters and Gentlemen in Pursuit of their Game, and, above all, the Husbandmen and Boors, in quest of their Cattle, traverse the wildest Part of them continually. (Defoe, 2002: 159)

If the couch in question was, in fact, what one could consider to be a modern piece of furniture that means someone had abandoned it in the woods, confirming Defoe's worries that the men who found the boy were not the first human beings Peter ever came across with. It is possible that because of fear, Peter might have run from the travellers because he did not identify himself with them. Animals are known for their troupes, their community is exclusively consisted of other members of the same species; one will not see a troupe of lions and zebras living in harmony. It is more likely that Peter automatically identified himself with the animals he lived among than with the humans he saw passing through the woods. If Peter indeed saw men in the woods passing by and did not join them, it could be not only about identity, but because he felt comfortable among the other animals. Confronted with this idea, Defoe questioned whether Peter if given a choice would return to the wild or commit in becoming a productive member of society. At the same time, if he truly felt uncomfortable in England he would have found a way to escape back to the woods. Defoe gives him the possibility of soul possession for he noticed how better life was in the English society, and even though he was unable to communicate his thoughts, he was happy to be there. Nevertheless, he was comparable to an animal, but which animal was he more likely to recognise himself on?

Besides the initial similitude of Peter's stance compared to that of an ape, the boy was able to climb trees with a huge amount of ease; though he is compared to a squirrel (Defoe, 2002: 162), the ability of climbing trees is easily associated with apes or even monkeys: as stated on the first chapter, evolution has made apes lose their tails due to the their upper body development; monkeys, on the other hand, use their feet, hands and tail to help them move around in the forest, but both species are capable of the same deed. Yet, Peter's body was still considered to be too frail to climb trees, but nevertheless, the boy was skilful and agile enough to execute the role. Defoe argues that either the reports were fallacious and Peter spent his time on the ground, or he was indeed part human, part animal; the perfect and most common explanation to his existence – he was a hybrid.

The next is about his climbing Trees like a Squirrel; some have gone further, and said like a Cat; this he could not do. Monkeys do this by an Agility owing partly to the Practice of hanging by their Hands and Tail, and partly by the Smallness of their Bodies, neither of which could be his Case. (Defoe, 2002: 162)

So far this thesis has exposed several theories supporting the notion that Peter was an animal as well as notions to why he falls into the human category, but what could be the turning point to decipher and reach a more conclusive answer on this matter? As argued on the first part to this chapter, the possession of the soul has played a big part on the conception of a human being. Most classic theories aim to for the notion that in order to be a human one must possess a soul, which puts irrational animals, those deprived of reasoning, at the bottom of the hierarchy – thus not in possession of a soul. For years the world had wished to meet a creature in the same condition as Peter, someone unable to speak or with minor speech skills so to understand what language what the creature try to reproduce, thus discovering the “Language Nature would first form for Mankind” (Defoe, 2002: 165). Every indication seemed to stress Peter’s place in the animal world, though he looked as a human boy; regardless of there were manifold theories that supported the hypothesis of Peter having not only a soul but a rational part.

It is allow’d, that there are two Testimonies or Evidences of human Soul, which appear in this wild Creature, and which plainly intimate, that he has a *Soul*, however it may suffer by Organic Deficiencies; now, tho’ I do not grant, that if he has those two Faculties or Powers, that therefore he must have a Soul, unless he had them, in a more particular and explicit Manner, than as some tell us appears yet in him; yet I am willing to let every thing run as far as it will go, and therefore I shall examine these two Heads, perhaps several Times over, and in a differing Manner, to let those that boast of them in other Cases, see how far they will serve their Occasion. (Defoe, 2002: 165)

Defoe’s definition of a soul is in many ways similar to other already presented in this thesis: the soul is neither caged in the body nor only able to exist by having a body to live in; although it expresses itself through the body, the soul has “Liberty to act (...) only wanting Culture, and Improvements” (Defoe, 2002: 165). Peter only needed to fill out two categories to prove his soul and his humanness: he had to be able to think and to laugh. The first category was hard to analyse for even though Defoe admitted that he certainly thought Peter was capable of thinking, no one could be sure for he could not speak, thus inept to transmit his thoughts. Despite this, Defoe was sure to assume that there were numerous humans, considered to be and taken as humans, capable to think, express such feelings, but lacking a soul, not only, but on its vast majority, females (Defoe, 2002: 166).

While at Leicester House in the company of Caroline of Ansbach, Peter was often seen smiling, not exactly laughing but finding it hard to handle the outline of his smile. Still, Defoe also refutes this premise by referring to the horse's whickering as the horse's laugh; he does not use it as a way to say that animals, by the same train of thought, have souls, but as a way to highlight how only two categories to prove the existence of a soul prevent a more wide variety of arguments, since they do not represent an exact conclusion. By the same line of reasoning, if Peter is only capable of grinning just like a monkey, then a monkey must be in possession of at least half a soul, which would place him in a higher spot as a half human. However, Defoe was later informed of the progresses Peter was showing while integrated in a civilised society, in which Peter is said to laugh out loud willingly and naturally; still, it is not certain that the boy realised why he was laughing, nor that he understood the object or situation that cause him to laugh in the first place (Defoe, 2002: 166). As far as filling both categories goes, no one could assure society, those interested on the matter, that Peter could think, but he was proven to laugh – just like the monkey analysis, Peter was, by all means, at least half-human.

But what could in fact explain the supposedly lack of a soul when in fact Peter has one, could be that he just did not know how to use it. In any major theory, they all refer to the exercise of the soul, how that exercise makes one's body work, live and be. If the body, the individual, does not stimulate the soul, than it cannot do its job, and it will bring humans closer to animals – that lack reasoning. Peter is not fully compared to "brute animals" not because he lacks a soul, but because he existed in a state of such simpleness and pure nature that he was not yet aware of how to exist, how to be a human being. Animals are denied a soul for their lack, according to Defoe, of "Reflection and Retention, Understanding, Inquiring, Reasoning, and the like" (Defoe, 2002: 168), but Peter gradually showed progress when integrated in civilised society, thus refuting his place among the animals. At first glance he looked human though he acted with more sensitivity than the majority; yet, he had the basic instincts of a man, he showed potential for reasoning and understanding.

The only Way that I see we have to come off of this Part, is to grant this Creature to be Soul-less, his Judgment and Sense to be in a State of Non-Entity, and that he has no rational Faculties to make the Distinction: But even that remains upon our Hands to prove (...) let us take him then as he is, not entirely Demented, as that Word is understood, *viz.* Without

ever having a Soul in him at all; but having a Soul, such as it is, lock'd up and unable to exert itself in the ordinary Manner (...) but he is a Ship without Rudder, not steer'd or managed, or directed by any Pilot; no, hardly by that faithful Pilot called Sense, the Guide of Beasts. (Defoe, 2002: 168-169)

As the years went by, Peter progressed in many ways, most of them being social conventions, but he never learned how to speak. As an old man, near his death, he still resembled that young boy found in the woods: though his face had grown older, his hair was shaggy, he still had an unsettling stressful, scared, look present on his face (see image 9), and though he was fed every day, had clean clothes and shelter, Peter was still naked to the world. Lacked of protection, lacked the skill to protect himself; it was like he never really left the woods. It seems, though, that his state of “mere nature” could have brought him advantages; for instance, when confronted with someone's happiness, Peter never showed signs of jealousy or that he would desire the misery of those happier than him. In a way, Peter renounced every dreadful human characteristic arising of one's thoughts and needs; the constant need of having more than the next man was a feeling that surpassed Peter's innocent nature. In a way, Peter might have been stuck in a state of incorruption; a human before society and materialism, corrupted his young mind; rather being close to animals sensitivity, Peter might had been experiencing the original senses of a man before anything else got in the way (Defoe, 2002).

The situation of Peter may be highlighted by means of a comparison with the case of Kamala and Amala, two girls found in 1920 in India, which differs from Peter's. The case of Kamala and Amala can be used for purposes of comparison, because even though they were raised by a wolf pack, as opposed to Peter, since there is no evidence that a group of a specific species adopted the boy, the girls seemed to be even more detached than Peter had ever been centuries before them. When found at the age of eight years old and eighteen months old respectively, both girls would crawl instead of walking upright, their teeth were developed to the point of fangs and they made no eye contact for the first period of their staying in Reverend Singh's orphanage, the man who saved them from the wilderness. Perhaps because of the extended period of time they spent with the wolves, both Kamala and Amala were considered to be nocturnal, as well as having a keen sense of smell and eyesight (Newton, 2002: 186).

On the matter of socialisation, Peter showed a bit more potential than the girls, for he is said to have had relaxing moments with the royal family, never feeling detached from the people around him nor fighting to return to his animalistic instincts.



The feral girls, on the other hand, only befriended a baby in the orphanage before attacking him; one theory is that while the baby was still crawling, the girls felt closed to him as they saw themselves in him; whereas, when he learned how to walk, the girls “found some difference and understood that he was quite different from them” (Newton, 2002: 186). Unlike Peter, who never tried to escape to the wilderness, nor ran away when discovered, even though he was so different from those men, Kamala and Amala, could not identify themselves with anyone, only with wild animals; at the moment something changed they would refuse to be part of it and kept their distance.

After this when they fully came to know that he was not one of them, they fought with him, which frightened him so much that he left their company altogether and never approached them afterwards. The girls lived within themselves, choosing only each other for companion, shunning human society, longing to return to the jungle from which they had been dragged. (Newton, 2002: 186)

Either it was a question of identity or a matter of jealousy, for maybe they could perceive how the baby was evolving to the level of human beings, walking upright, and soon he would be talking, and they were not, whatever the reason was, these signs of violence and distrust were never found in Peter’s personality. Moreover, Kamala and Amala, could not express any feeling whatsoever; while Peter was recorded to feel confused, scared and even having the ability to laugh, both girls were not: “they had no sense of humour, no sadness or curiosity or connection to others” (Defoe, 2002: 186), although Kamala, when her younger sister succumbed to an unknown disease, was able to cry. Is this lack of self-expression, with one life time exception of crying at the face of a loss, the sign that the girls did not possessed a soul? So far, they did not fill out the requirements to be consider humans by the eighteenth century’s guidelines; nonetheless, after her grieving period, Kamala showed progresses: her social skills improved, even though she was closer to the Reverent and his wife than to any other child in the orphanage; she learned how to use the bathroom, and her nocturnal characteristics started to fade to the point when she was actually afraid of the dark – like any other child of her age. Yet, her progresses had flaws, maybe as an act to seek affection or because she could not understand her own limits, but Kamala would change her habits depending on who was with her; if the Reverend’s wife was present she would behave and do anything as she was taught; however, when left alone, Kamala would stop using

the bathroom and retrieve to her old self, that is to her 'bestial', 'brutal', and 'animalistic' self.

Peter, on the other hand, never showed signs of shifting from a well-behaved half-boy to an animal; contrary to the Indian girls, Peter gradually grabbed some knowledge necessary to live in community. Though he never learned how to speak properly, he was welcomed to keep company to Kings and Princesses, learned the proper dinner table manners, learned how to get dress and walk straight – learned how to be a man. Stopped grinning and started smiling – highlighting the development of bonds of trust with those in charge of him, he was comfortable enough to be himself, whatever that was, around anyone of his close circle. Still, there is no evidence that he possessed the power of reasoning, to be rational, to think; in any theory by any great philosopher, the most important thing to prove the existence of a soul was the ability to think and reason, which Peter could have lacked of, or not. At any extent his status does not leave the ground of half-human.

Peter, the Wild Boy's case made scholars question whether apes, as the closes species of *sīmia* to humans, were in fact half-developed human beings; the environment in which they were raise could have been a major factor to why apes turned out as apes not as men and women; if born and raised in a civilised community, they would have never succumbed to their animalistic instincts and turned out same as a Defoe or Arbuthnot. Or does one still have to wait for evolution to catch up with them? They have already lost their tail, and walk upright like any human individual, is it only a matter of time apes evolve to fully humans? Moreover, Peter's case also made scholars enquired if other animals were capable of reasoning, thus being half-humans. Such a theory is visible in *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, a book published in 1726 which the original read as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and then a Captain of Several Ships*.

*Gulliver's Travels* is characterised as prose satire on human nature through the exaggeration of travellers' tales; divided into four parts, Gulliver first fantastic discovery occurs after a shipwreck drives him to the Island of Lilliput – perhaps a wordplay with "little people" as the island's inhabitants were all very tiny. Due to his comparable enormous size, Gulliver becomes the Court's favourite; however, after a string of events that caused him to be sentenced to blindness, Gulliver escapes and returns to England. Gulliver's first discovery and his last tend to be contrasted; as the members of the Island of Lilliput are described to be so small, one would think that they would have absolutely

no power at face of Gulliver's presence, yet, the Emperor of Lilliput is both a good and caring character, and a frightening one. His power and politics impress Gulliver, however and when necessary, he would execute his subjects for minor mistakes turning him into a daunting ruler. When deciding on Gulliver's punishment, the Emperor decided against capital punishment but a hint of torture was left hovering, questioning the violent mind of a human being and its limitations:

But his Imperial Majesty, fully determined against capital punishment, was graciously pleased to say, that since the Council thought the loss of your eyes too easy a censure, some other may be inflicted hereafter (...) you would grow weak and faint, and lose your appetite, and consequently decay and consume in a few months. (Swift, 1994: 69)

Not only was he suggesting an act of incredible violence to make Gulliver suffer for his doings, but he was also implying Gulliver's slow and painful death by starvation. The size of the character in question is a central issue, for it emphasises how little size and strength have to do with imposing power and order; the Emperor's height, a mere six inches tall, compared to that of Gulliver, a strong and vigorous man, was not diminished nor was his power to rule; he showed no fear of Gulliver's reaction to his punishment, making him more powerful than the average human.

Notwithstanding, when Gulliver reaches his final destination before returning home permanently, he comes across a land in which the roles are inverted. In the fourth and last part, Gulliver is abandoned on a deserted island when his crew members turn on him; there he meets the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms – two distinct races which roles were not define by the conventional laws of modern England. The Yahoos were human like creatures, with hideous faces and disgusting habits, whilst the Houyhnhnms were an intelligence race of horses, rulers of the land and of the Yahoos. Upon meeting the Yahoos, Gulliver noticed similarities between his appearance and theirs, for they looked human even though their habits were the same as of wild animals and brutes, described by Gulliver as "ordinary cattle" (Swift, 1994: 251). They worked in the fields, under the watchful eye of the Houyhnhnms, had no manners or social skills and were rather impressed with what they called "shining stones" (Swift, 1994: 287); such stones were used as a bridge so Swift could represent human materialistic desire in its most raw status, for that desire can turn humans into animals, they lose all power of communication and reason, and are capable of violent acts just so they can have more than their neighbour.

As the eighteenth century commentator observed:

In all voyages, and above all in that to Houyhnhnms-land, the author attacks man in general, and makes us aware of the absurdity and the wretchedness of the human mind. He opens our eyes to enormous vices that we are accustomed to regard as, at most, slight faults, and makes us feel the value of a purified reason, more perfect than our own. (Desfontaines, 1787: 82)

Modern society had developed hugely and improved society's lifestyle to a great extent, but it also exposed the dark side of human behaviour: the urge of success came with the desire for money, money that would be used in purchase of luxurious items to parade ostentation. This kind of behaviour generated what was expected: jealousy; people would turn on each other and crave what the other possessed that they did not reducing perfectly capable and rational men to animals battling each other of material possessions.

Though visually he would fit better next to the Yahoos, Gulliver preferred the company of the Houyhnhnms; they were described as a perfectly rational horses, capable of great speech and interested in nothing more than culture and knowledge, the same goals human society set up to themselves though avid discussion of important matters; however, the Houyhnhnms were not familiarised with the act of "argue" with anyone such as the petty arguments over different opinions were nonexistent to them.

As these noble *Houyhnhnms* are endowed by nature with a general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is, to cultivate reason, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is reason among them a point problematical, as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question, but strikes you with immediate conviction; as it must needs do, where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured, by passion and interest. I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word opinion, or how a point could be disputable; because reason taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain; and beyond our knowledge we cannot do either. So that controversies, wranglings, disputes, and positiveness, in false or dubious propositions, are evils unknown among the *Houyhnhnms*. (Swift, 1994: 295)

Even though at first glance they looked perfect, the Houyhnhnms had flaws, just like any other society, and, in a way, because of their perfection. The question to whether they were the perfect example of what humans should be like was fairly

discussed for a great amount of time (Fox, 2003: 233): as extremely rational, the horses showed no signs of excitement or spontaneity for everything had a time and place, and unruly events were off the table. Abbé Desfontaines argued, after reading *Gulliver's Travels*, that the burden of so many discoveries, finally colliding with the land of the Houyhnhnms as made Gulliver intolerable to the company men, as disgusted as he was by the Yahoos, he was similar to them which became a great burden to Gulliver to deal with (Desfontaines, 1787: 83). Moreover, the Houyhnhnms' attitude towards the Yahoos may be interpreted as rough and abusive, but rather, they were treating them the same way human beings treated untamed animals or half-people, such like Peter. It is possible that Swift based the race of the Yahoos on Peter, the Wild Boy upon meeting him, for they also needed someone to impose order in their lives, even if it seemed rude to do so; as Peter was, possibly, a human being he, as the Yahoos, was also incapable to live without help for he had not knowledge on how to proceed, how to behave, how to exist.

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is a parody of human nature and a perfect example of how human's treatment towards other creatures, would be considered to be unfit if the roles were reversed. It also questions the existence of a soul in animals, for if the horses were rational than the human-like Yahoos, were sensitive to nature and more balanced than humans for they were not accustomed to have heated arguments over differences of opinion, according to the Christian doctrine and medieval/modern philosophy they should be in possession of a soul.

The eighteenth century was built on the cultural impact early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' anthropology and anatomist studies had on a growing society. It not only exposed the similarities and anatomical differences between *sīmia* and humans, but it also opened an argument, still running nowadays, on the proximity of species being only a bump on an otherwise perfect road: with some many similar features, anatomical, social and cultural, between apes and Man, could not they actually be a human in process? Like Peter, missing a few characteristics that would set him to be "fully" human, but instead he was closer to an ape – could not apes just be humans that because of environment factors as well as not having the luxury to live nearby an already grown civilised society happened to stagnate the evolutionary process? This question not only raises arguments on racism and cultural anthropology, but also on the entire Christian doctrine, which was the base of Western society, suggesting that humans were apes all along.

## Conclusion

To this point one has already concluded the existence of several similarities between apes and humans, rather than *simia* in general, that is, New and Old World monkeys and macaques. As stated in the works of Andreas Vesalius and Edward Tyson, apes and humans are close species when it comes to bone structure as well as skull capacity (Tyson, 1699). The fact that apes, not monkeys, are able to walk upright without training, plus the loss of their tail due to years of evolution, just like human beings, are proofs, even if in a general sense, of their proximity to Mankind. In Classical and Medieval imagery apes are often represented as evil creatures, for as kings of mimicry and fools, they could only be connected to the Devil himself. However, their mimicry, also observed in monkeys, does not make them evil, but human beings' long lost cousins; they were not imitating men, for when an ape is observed away from its natural habitat, it does not need to look at human beings' behaviour in order to stand up and walk; like Tyson observed in the *Pygmie's* social behaviour, it would resemble Man without being taught how; in fact Tyson sometimes forgot he was dealing with a wild animal, since the small creature was, at some many levels, close to a man (Tyson, 1699).

Whereas on the first chapter of this dissertation dealt with the scientific aspects, as a dissertation in the field of culture all of the facts mentioned there were later connected with the interpretation of the existence of feral children, with particularly close attention to Peter, the Wild Boy, and how Tyson's conclusions were often observable in his behaviour. As a long lost child, much like the fictional character of Mowgli, Peter found himself to be in a state of "mere nature" (Defoe, 2002), as Defoe stated; the complete lack of touch with modern, civilised reality turned Peter into a beast and led several people to believe he was half-human whilst others subscribed that he was a full beast, such a hideous creature that had to be rejected by God. His ape-like mannerisms, such as climbing trees with strongly developed forearms, pick pocking from those around him – a very animalistic way to gather objects – and his non-ability to speak, nor even a basic form of language, are the main features that made it possible for elite members of English intellectual circles to describe him to be an animal, particularly an ape. The latter being the one that provoked more concern in the minds of the English society, gave him a place in the animal kingdom as an irrational animal for

that matter. There are important connections between young Peter and Tyson's *Pygmie*, being the most important one the inability to speak which was observed in both creatures; if human, Peter would be capable of reasoning, yet he was never able to speak, nor to imitate those around him; whereas whatever sounds made by the *Pygmie* were considered to be part of his wild nature, and probably its own language. The fact that Peter showed no signs of improvement on this matter was believed to be reason enough to place him in a half-human status, if not a full beast. Even though throughout his anatomical study, Tyson emphasised how close the *Pygmie* was to humans, moreover, how he sometimes would forget he was dealing with a wild animal, Peter's case is far from this stage for there are almost no records of moments in which the person observing the young ape-child thought he was dealing with a man-child.

Socially, the *Pygmie* showed signs of shame and guilt; let's not forget how important the existence of these feelings were to determine the existence of a soul during the Classical period, for Aristotle theorised how a wild animal – as well as a male adult – was not capable of expressing or feeling these passions. This point led us to the following inquiry: on the one hand, and following Aristotle's train of thought, a male adult and a wild animal, in this case an ape, found themselves close for not being able to feel shame; on the other hand, later it was conventional for all humans, no matter the gender or age, to feel and express shame through words, acts, and bodily expression (i.e. blushing); With that said, falling on a more modern approach, Peter was not a human being, whereas the *Pygmie* was closer to that level. The same is observable on the other cases of feral children presented on the second chapter: Genie, Kamala and Amala after found had great difficulties in interacting with those around them as well as adapting to a civilized community; Kamala's grief for her sister's death was surprising for until then neither of the girls showed any capacity of feeling, not even towards each other, and it is comparable to a gorilla expressing the same feeling: saved in 2012 and brought to the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a gorilla, after its mother's death, was photographed showing clear signs of grief, while leaning on a park ranger for support (see image 10.) (Kelleher, 2015). At a difficult moment both Kamala and the gorilla reached outside their comfort zone by expressing feelings they never experienced before.

The constant development in scientific and anatomical studies, along with the case of Peter, the Wild Boy, raised questions regarding human identity and what place we have in society: namely, the visible differences between individuals, their

understanding of basic community rules, and, lastly, their proximity to animals, to apes, were only a few of the characteristics called into question. Are apes humans in-process? Do they belong to the same species? The difficulty to answer all of these questions begins when one starts mixing anthropologic studies with culture and race, and even religion.

In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the protagonist finds himself, in the last part of the story, in a country ruled by a race of intelligent horses called the Houyhnhnms; and even though he was in no sense similar to them, visually, Gulliver felt a great empathy towards their high intelligence and rich culture. Also, upon his arrival, Gulliver crosses path with the Yahoos: these creatures were similar to humans, though uncivilised. Their manners were nonexistent, and, besides their lack of reasoning and sensitivity, the Yahoos were driven by the possession of shining stones, a clever metaphor for how a materialist society would lower the individual status of an intelligent being to a beast; in this sense the Yahoos were only interested in finding and keeping the biggest amount of stones they could, instead of working to rise themselves morally and intellectually. As they were incapable to follow simple life rules without supervision, the Houyhnhnms were their rulers, which brought them to a very difficult decision for when they realised that Gulliver was probably of the same species as the Yahoos, due to their human looks, the horses expelled him from the country. Upon returning home, Gulliver renounced his status as a man and spent the rest of his days talking with the horses on the stables, forgetting his duty as a citizen and a family man.

Swift's story highlights the question of nature and identity – upon meeting the Yahoos, Gulliver was not drawn to identify himself with them; the same was questioned about Peter and his possible encounters with men over the years before being found; if he was in fact human, he would have seen similarities between himself and others, thus risking approximation with the unknown, but he did not – he chose the wild life for the time being. Moreover, on *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift purposely uses the horses to shake the established notion that animals had no souls, Peter included; their high intellect and sensitivity were proofs of a possession of a soul greater than the average human.

Additionally, and this question has already been discussed in this dissertation, Swift's work also reflects upon the matter of slavery and natural rights, both featuring during the period known as the Enlightenment. As a philosopher, Thomas Hobbes defined a man in a state of pure nature as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” (Valls, 2005: 45) though not only to describe white Europeans or English society only



for that matter, but he included every community in the world – disregarding skin colour, background, culture or country. Nevertheless, Hobbes suggests that the ‘state of nature’ was not visible in every society; Barbara Hall argues that Hobbes hinted that “such a horrible state did not exist in all parts of the world; some societies experienced a superior form of development” (Valls, 2005: 47) automatically contradicting the philosopher’s first idea. To Hobbes, the state of nature is a stage some individuals have to go through in order to evolve (Valls, 2005: 49). Much like Tyson’s *Pygmie*, that showed progressive signs of adaptation to the civilised sphere, also did Peter, the Wild Boy: even though he lacked power of speech, Peter frequented several influential circles before moving to the country which proves how he was able to adapt to a different environment as well as following the social conventional rules of modern civilisation. Moreover, the notion that, by Hobbes theory, any being could climb the evolutionary scale if subjected to a vast sphere of art and culture to developed their intellect, and, if so, apes would excellent candidates for the experience, since they already have so many similar characteristics with humans. Nevertheless, Hobbes distinguished African and Native American tribes as communities in a constant state of nature (Valls, 2005: 47), creating the philosophical basis of racism.

Not falling behind Hobbes, John Locke also had controversial theories on ‘natural rights’ and slavery. As the pioneer of natural rights, which he strongly opposed to abuse of power, and supported the equal right to freedom, Locke was actively involved in the slave trade of the seventeenth century. This upsetting paradox was not, unfortunately, a rare scenario as the business of slavery was a great source of income, still, there was a loop hole: as Christians, slave owners could not enslave other Christians, and there are records of African and Native Americans slaves being freed after baptism (Valls, 2005: 93); however, the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, written in 1690, stated that no change of religious status would translated in the regaining of freedom, baptism, though allowed, was by no means reason enough to leave the house of the Master (Valls, 2005: 93). As members of a powerful society, slave owners, Locke included, are nowadays labeled as hypocrites for preaching freedom and equal rights to every human being, but, at the same time, enslaving those who they believed to be unruled – much like the Yahoos on *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Later in the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed the similarity between ‘natural man’ as human and an orangutan stating that, even though both are similar, when tested a man is capable of creating “language and acquire faculties”

(Valls; 2005, 156) whereas orangutans, or even apes, are incapable of such originality. Nevertheless, Rousseau was an apologist of the notion that if in contact with civilisation there would be change of intellectual development; victimised by the poor reports made by travellers during their trips to Africa, Rousseau was surprised with infinite descriptions of human-like beings, half-humans, half-animals of a very dark skin. Doubting his previous statement, Rousseau questioned if orangutans were in fact 'natural man' only half-developed due to the environment they were inserted in, placing them at the same level as humans.

Rousseau was not being unreasonable when he insisted that we should wait on experiment and more careful observation before we could be confident enough that orangutans were not human (2D, 217). I was simply good science given that he had a plausible theory that predicted that solitary human beings could be somewhat like orangutans. (Valls, 2005: 158)

Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) also touched on the matter of racism, if ever so slightly, through the character of Friday. Crusoe's companion is taught how to speak English, how to worship God by Christian guidelines and to respect the superior, his master, much like in slave trade with Locke, however, they become close than any other master and slave would at the time. Crusoe is found in the middle of a community where he has no power, and he also lacks the knowledge of the rules in place; on the one hand, one could consider his approach to Friday as a master-slave relationship, which would later evolve to imperialistic concepts; on the other hand, one could also interpret the character of Crusoe as a minority:

The sense of isolation that pervades *Robinson Crusoe*, the terrors of the storms, the wild beasts and the cannibals, evoke a sense of the sublime power of natural forces. No doubt the sense of power is enhanced by the seeming purpose behind nature. Having ventured foolishly from Brazil to encounter near-death and a 'terrible' salvation, he finds when he ventures offshore in the boat of his own making that he is almost destroyed once more. After witnessing another shipwreck from which there are no survivors, he stands on the shore shaking involuntarily and muttering, in despair, against his fate. (Novak, 1983: 56).

As a member of civilised society, Crusoe was not ready for what he found after arriving to the island for he did not went through the stage of natural man, like Friday, and every other native in the story, did. His basic animalistic instincts were nonexistent

as well as his capacity of rationality for his mind was dominated by fear of the unknown:

I had a dreadful Deliverance: For I was wet, had no Clothes to shift me, nor any thing either to eat or drink to comfort me, neither did I see any Prospect before, but that of perishing with Hunger, or being devour'd by wild Beasts; and that which was particularly afflicting to me, was, that I had no Weapon either to hunt and kill any Creature for my Sustenance, or to defend my self against any other Creature that might desire to kill me for theirs: In a Word, I had nothing about me but a Knife, a Tobacco-pipe, and a little Tobacco in a Box, this was all my Provision, and this threw me into terrible Agonies of Mind, that for a while I run about like a Mad-man; Night coming upon me, I began with a heavy Heart to consider what would be my Lot if there were any ravenous Beasts in that Country, seeing at Night they always come abroad for their Prey. (Defoe, 1994: 36)

As Maximillian Novak argues in *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, the first impression given by the protagonist is one of fear, as he is worried about his situation, missing the luxury of comfort and panicking about whether he is going to die of starvation or killed by a beast (Novak, 1963: 25). Even though later Crusoe would claim his independence, confidence and even consider himself the ruler of the island, he never went through the stage of the 'state of nature', for if he did he would have known what to do and how to survive instantly. Born in an already civilised society, Crusoe lacked the tools of a man in a state of 'mere nature', if one will, as opposed to Peter, who was living proof that one could survive in the woods among wild animals.

Arthur Lovejoy suggested that there were three principal meanings for the term 'state of nature' in the eighteenth century. It could be used in an historical or anthropological sense to refer to the 'primeval condition of a man'; in a 'cultural sense' to refer to a stage of society in which the arts and sciences had not yet progressed beyond a few primitive tools; or in a political sense to indicate the relationships between men before the creation of government. (Novak, 1963: 22)

It was no surprise that Crusoe took some time to get used to the idea of having to create means to survive otherwise useless in his home country; the focus here should be on 'adaptation': Peter was able, even though with difficulties, to adapt to a totally alien environment from the one he was living in for so long – his basic animalistic instincts could be put at ease since the possibility of him dying due to an attack by a wild animal were rather slim; Crusoe went through the same situation, only in reverse which proved

to be even harder, for Peter was kept under close attention, whereas Crusoe found himself lost and alone, as Novak states: “Both Crusoe and Peter, the Wild Boy were in a natural state because they were solitaries, entirely outside of society” (Novak, 2005: 31). Still, Crusoe was able to gain back his power, and even to think of himself as the higher individual on the island due to his cultural background.

I believe the most natural man is able to balance both his rational and irrational animalistic instincts, regardless of whether he possesses a soul or not; as children we look to imitate all of our parents’ behaviours, just like apes do with their progenitors – this is translated to the only time in which both human and animal world meet, through the innocence of a child. However, the never ending differences, both visual and geographical, are still matter of discussion – to what point are some individuals more savage than others?

Appendix - Illustrations

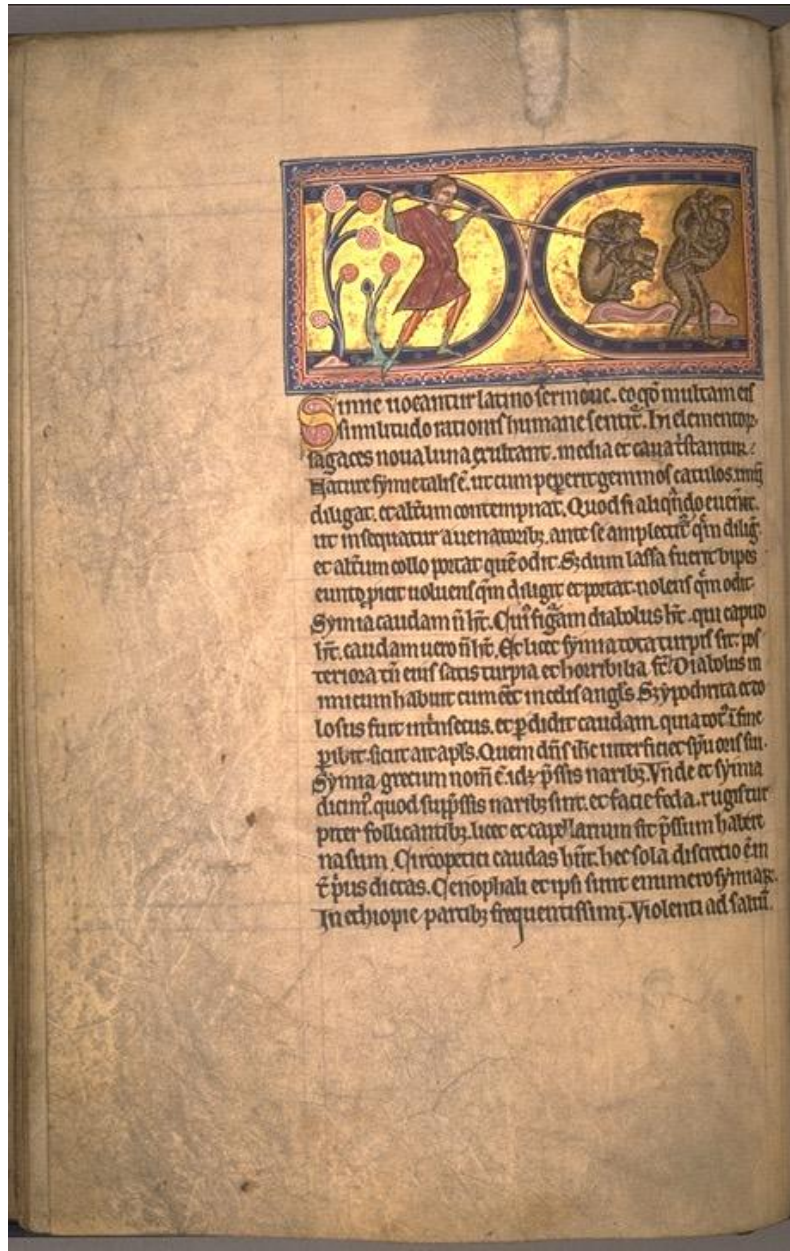


Image 1. "Of apes", fol. 12v in Aberdeen Bestiary  
<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/12v.hti>



Image 2. "Donestre" in Manuscript Cotton Tiberius Bv  
(Cohen, 1999: 3)



Image 3. Tupinambá Indians

<http://oldsite.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/rralej/courses/engl165CL/early-modern.htm>

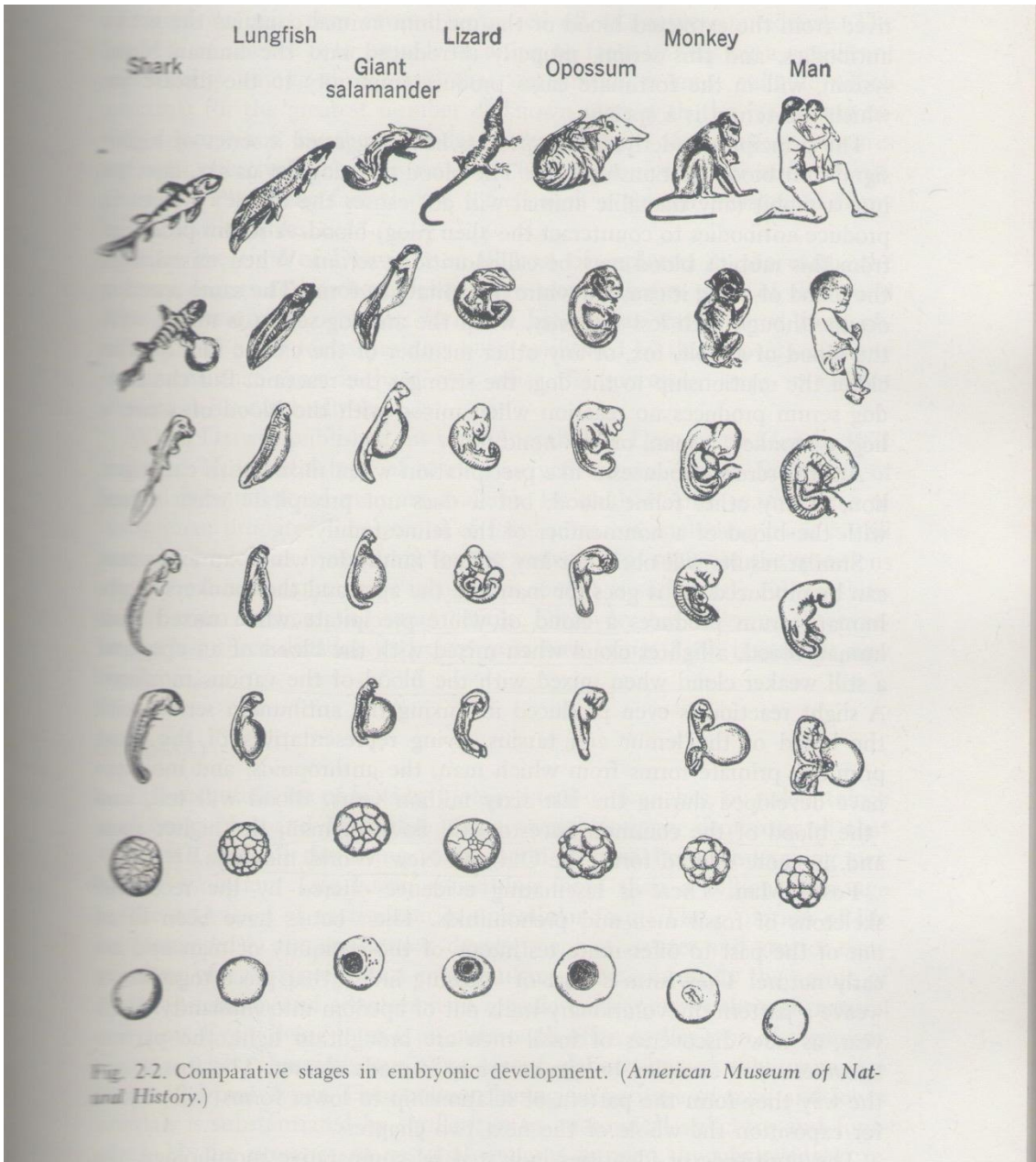


Image 4. Stages of embryonic development  
(Hoebel, 1958: 27)



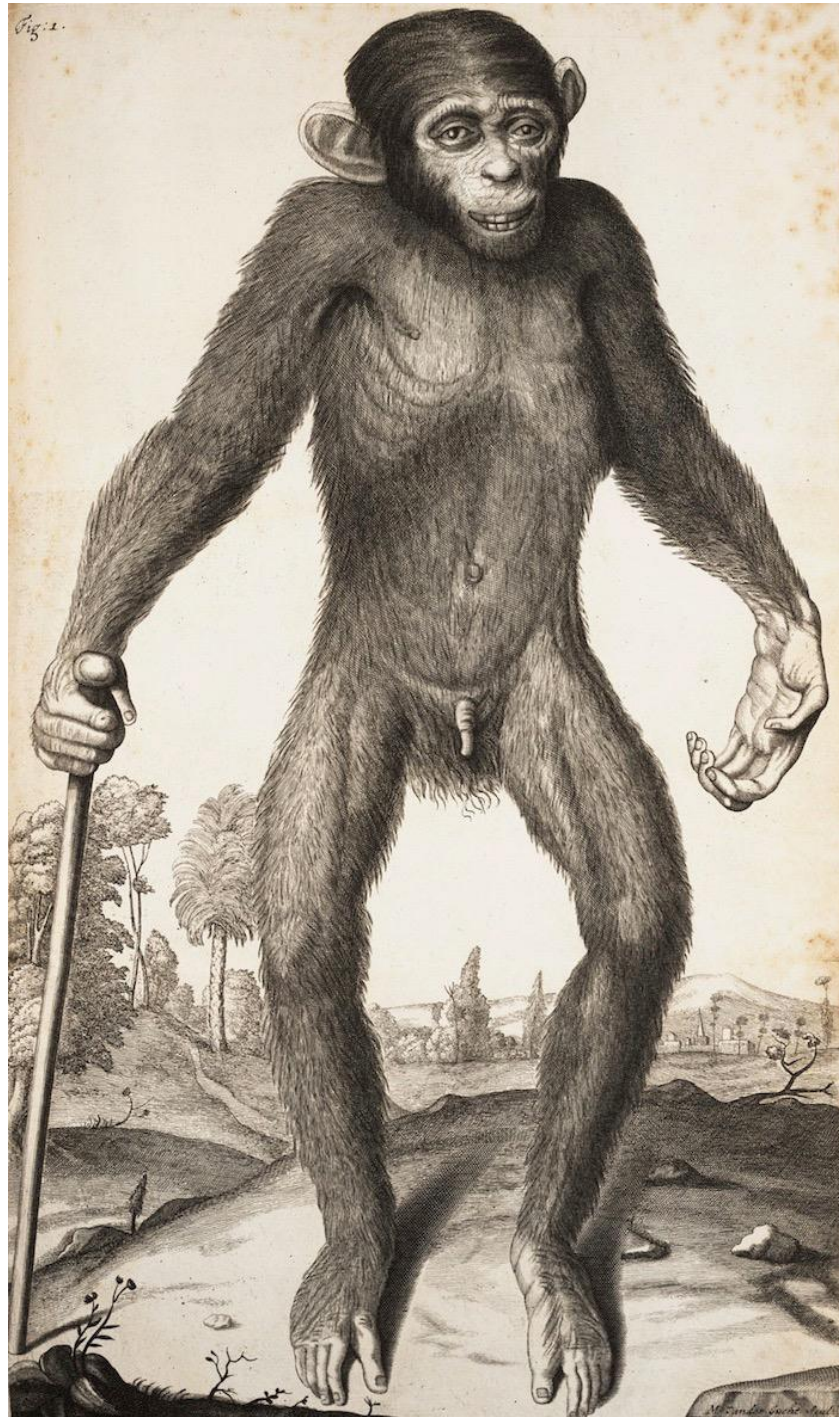


Image 5. Tyson's *Pygmie* standing upright whilst holding a cane.  
(Tyson, 1699: 97)



Image 6. “Madame Chimpanzee” holding a tea cup with no need to hold on to a rope or cane in order to maintain balance.

(Nash, 2003: 39)

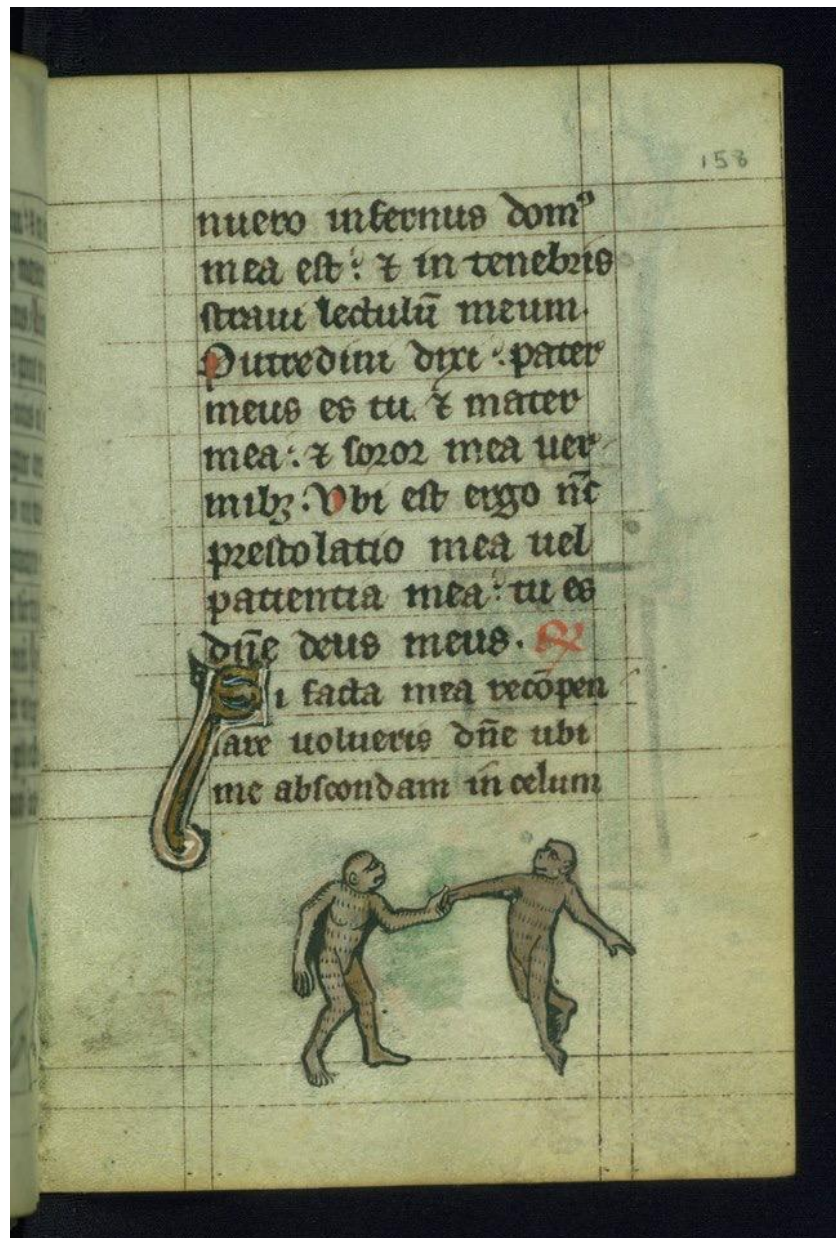


Image 7. Apes sharing a dance, fol. 158r in W. 88 Book of Hours, fourteenth century.

<http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W88/>



Image 8. Ape as falconer, fol. 278r in Stowe MS 17, fourteenth century.

[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=stowe\\_ms\\_17\\_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=stowe_ms_17_fs001r)



Image 9. “Peter as an old man, as Lord Monboddo saw him in a Hertfordshire farmhouse at the close of the eighteenth century.”

(Newton, 2002: illust. 5)



Image 10. Gorilla leaning on park ranger for support after losing its mother.

<https://www.thedodo.com/gorilla-seeks-comfort-1355648291.html>

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