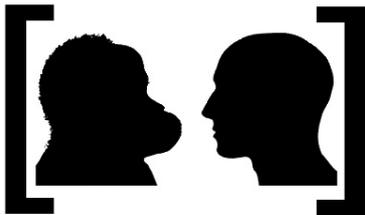


Centre for Philosophy of Science of the University of Lisbon

FROM GROOMING TO SPEAKING:
RECENT TRENDS IN SOCIAL PRIMATOLOGY AND HUMAN
ETHOLOGY

International Colloquium

September 10-11, 2012, University of Lisbon



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

NATHALIE GONTIER
OLGA POMBO

RESEARCH GROUP

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE SCIENCES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS | **DEADLINE JUNE 30TH, 2012**

We call for primatologists, ethologists, anthropologists, sociobiologists, evolutionary, cognitive and comparative psychologists, biolinguists, evolutionary linguists, bio-ethicists, philosophers and historians of science, to provide talks on:

(1) Historical reviews on the introduction and use of primate studies to acquire knowledge on the origin and evolution of communication and language

- The rise of comparative psychology, ethology, primatology, sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, evolutionary linguistics, and evolutionary anthropology
- Cross-fostering experiments, experiments that had as goal to learn non-human primates to talk or sign, or to learn artificial languages such as Yerkes
- The shifts from behaviorism and instructionism to cognitivism and selectionism
- The nature/culture debate
- The innate/acquired debate
- The continuity/discontinuity debate

(2) Methodologies of primate communication and language research

- Which research methodologies combine and diversify ethologists, primatologists, sociobiologists, anthropologists, evolutionary psychologists and evolutionary linguists? (ASL and Yerkes experiments; instructionist, behavioral versus selectionist, adaptationist approaches; the use and disuse of Tinbergen's 4 questions in ethology; how to study ultimate and proximate causes of behavior)
- Did classic ethology and comparative psychology, with its focus on instructionist and behaviorist methodologies, fail? Did the cognitive turn succeed in providing answers there were behaviorism failed? And is selection theory able to provide answers to questions neither ethologists nor cognitivists could?
- Which methodologies are used to study (human) primate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in wild, captive, and natural settings (how are experiments

set up, how are biases controlled, how is data collected and interpreted, how are theories formed)?

- How do ontogenetic studies of normal and pathological behavior lend insight into phylogeny (what aspects of development enable or disable scientists to draw inferences on human evolution, what's the rationale behind comparative research, how do pathologies lend insight, either into normal development, or into the evolutionary past of hominins)?
- How do the primate and ethological research methodologies differ from, relate to, or complement genetic and neurological research?

(3) Theories on primate communication and the evolution of language

- Gestural versus vocal origin theories (grooming as gossip theories, mirror neurons, non-verbal communication theories (including facial expressions, pointing and gestural research), co-verbal gesturing theories, signing theories, mimesis, imitation).
- Evolutionary theories on language as a social communication device
- Theory of Mind versus embodiment theory, in human and non-human primates
- Theories on learning (conditioning, observational learning, imitation)
- Theories on cultural transmission (chimpanzee, bonobo and human cultures)
- Which theoretical frameworks and evolutionary mechanisms enable adequate explanations on language evolution (natural selection, drift, systems theory, the Baldwin and ratchet effect, co-evolutionary theories, dual inheritance theories)

(4) Ethical issues in social primatology and human ethology

- Policy and guidelines on (human) primate studies in the wild, under captivity, or under experimental conditions
- Animal rights (e.g. if non-human primates have ToM, do we need to attribute them legal rights, does the concept of "legal person" apply to non-human primates)
- The role and responsibility of researchers

Much more than providing a platform for the dissemination of new research results, the conference organizers will give preference to reflexive talks, that deal with theoretical, methodological and ethical issues of primate research and ethology, and how the latter fields provide insight into human language evolution.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Abstracts can be sent electronically, to [Ricardo Santos](#). The following information should be included:

- FIRST NAME
- LAST NAME (+ POSSIBLE CO-PRESENTERS)
- AFFILIATION
- CONTACT ADDRESS
- E-MAIL ADDRESS

Abstracts can maximally contain **500 words**, references not included.

Deadline for abstract submission is June 30th, 2012, and notification of acceptance will follow by July, 15th, 2012.

PROCEEDINGS

A selection of talks will be published in an anthology for the Springer Book Series "Interdisciplinary Evolution Research". Editors-in-chief of the series are Nathalie Gontier and Olga Pombo.

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline abstract submission

June 30th, 2012

Notification of acceptance

July 15th, 2012

Registration Deadline

August 15th, 2012

Conference

September 10-11, 2012

CONTACTS

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