



Think with the virus: anthropology in pandemic times

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MYSLET S VIREM: ANTROPOLOGIE V DOBĚ PANDEMIE

ABSTRAKT V tomto příspěvku je čtenáři předloženo k úvaze to, že k projasnění analýz důvodů vzniku pandemie nákazy Covid-19 lze využít recentní antropologická zkoumání komplexních interakcí mezi lidmi a zvířaty. Tyto vztahy jsou intimní a nepředvídatelné; mezi entitami, jejichž cíle a způsoby existence nejsou vždy přesně identifikovatelné. Předložena je též představa, že nahlížení těchto vztahů z „more-than-human“ pohledu doplňuje ideu, že my lidé s určitými živočišnými druhy vytváříme specifické mezidruhové vztahy založené na našich odlišnostech. Tyto vztahy jsou navíc konfigurovány metaforicky, což nám umožňuje vnímat mnohočetné a složité způsoby, jakými žijeme své životy v souvislosti s přirozenou a přírodní povahou všeho, co nás obklopuje. Nabízí se, že právě takové události jako je vznik a rozšíření SARS-CoV-2 dávají možnost k reflexi nad těmito mezidruhovými vztahy zvláště vědcům zabývajícím se interdisciplinárním výzkumem zvířecí říše, tzv. Animal Studies. Zásadní je uvědomit si, že úzce vymezené studium jen těch aspektů, které jsou považovány za zvířecí, je silně limitující a je potřeba rozšířit záběr i do sféry studia a také hledání odpovědi na důsledky našeho jednání vůči non-humánním entitám. Náprava vztahů mezi lidmi a jejich non-humánními protějšky je nahlížena v kontextu přežití a toho, co je k přežití potřebné a dostupné. Tyto souvislosti zohledňují přístup a využití dostupných zdrojů a jejich nerovnoměrné distribuci ve světě. S antropologickou perspektivou je pak možné se ptát, jak současně řešit otázky moci a marginality v kontextu kapitalismu a globalizace, nahlížet lidi a zvířata jako vzájemně se doprovázející druhy a využít výhody poznání žitého světa viděného.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA Animal Studies; antropologie; covid-19; pandemie; virus

ABSTRACT This essay proposes that analyses of the pandemic caused by Covid-19 can be clarified by reflections from the field of anthropology over recent decades regarding the plural effects of the interaction between human and non-human animals. These human–nonhuman relationships are intimate and unpredictable; between entities whose agency and modes of existence are not always precisely identifiable. Our contention is that ‘more than human’ perspective, as a relational marker, expresses a counterpoint defined by interspecific alterities that we humans establish with certain animal species. Furthermore, these relationships are configured as a ‘category-metaphor’ enabling us to perceive the multiple and complex ways in which we compose our lives in relation to the ‘nature’ of everything around us. We argue that events such as the appearance of SARS-CoV-2 have a reflective potential that can draw the attention of those who do Animal Studies to these relations. We highlight the limiting effects of a narrowly defined (‘absolutely animal’) disciplinary rhetoric, when instead we need to formulate meaningful responses to the consequences of our relationships with other beings. We address the valorization of relations between humans and non-humans in their vital contexts; that is, what is necessary and available to survive. They consider the access and utilization of available resources, and how they are unequal around the world. Our anthropological perspective asks what it means to simultaneously address issues of power and marginality in the face of capitalism and globalization, to consider humans and non-humans as companion species, and to take the benefits offered by anthropology learned from the lived world, without separating it from politics and history.

KEY WORDS Animal Studies; Anthropology; Covid-19; pandemic; virus

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic responsible for the disease that has plagued the planet since 2020, caused by new variations of the coronavirus

(SARS-CoV-2), has exposed aspects of the organization of human societies and of our species’ relations with everything that we consider non-human, and that the modern-colonial tradition has tacitly taught us to ignore (Rapchan – Carniel 2021).

On the one hand, we are learning more of how those neoliberal policies, which generate fortunes and concentrate income, are based on a financial capitalism that restricts participation of nation-states in healthcare, housing, food, education, labor, and civil rights (Stengers 2015). Societies that have managed to preserve their institutions that ensure rights and social welfare are the same ones that have managed to protect themselves relatively from the onslaught of the disease (Santos 2020). Where this has not been done, as in Brazil under Bolsonaro (Koury 2021), deep social asymmetries and inequalities are magnified by the pandemic. The rampant contagion and its consequences reflect these social chasms, revealing that the biggest victims of Covid-19, directly and indirectly, are the same ones punished daily by poverty, imperialism, racism, sexism, disablism, and multiple forms of social relegation.

On the other hand, there are the controversies around growing suspicions that contagion of the virus is related to the intensification of interactions between humans and wild animals (Cohen 2021) and to the over-exploitation of domestic species, such as pigs (Blanchette 2020), cattle (Wallace 2020) and poultry (Porter 2019). This link between human actions and the emergence of new diseases may be another consequence of the devastation of ecosystems that persists, despite all the scientific warnings about the risks associated with deforestation, global warming and mass extinction (Latour 2018). Despite the significant reduction in sickness rates resulting from lessons learned from countries such as South Korea as, for example, mitigation of health crisis focusing social determinants, memory of other respiratory disease epidemics, control of risks and action nationally coordinated (Rossi et al. 2022), the world's human population will have to deal with future epidemics (Kelly – Keck – Lynteris 2019) and perhaps find that nature includes us and so relate better to this fact of life (Rapchan – Carniel 2016).

The essence of our proposal is to think with the virus as the premise and also try to devise some of the layers and fringes that make up the often-invisible complexity of pandemics. Since the advent of modern microbiology (Löwy 2006) we know that infectious agents are often invisible to the human eye. They circulate in the environment along with other organisms, unnoticed, at least until the first symptoms appear. The invisibility of viruses may explain contemporary speculation of manipulation, disregard of hygienic recommendations, and insensitivity to the social effects of a pandemic. However, the invisibility of these 'diminutive life forms' to cite Louis Pasteur in the nineteenth century (Latour 1999), seems more than a mere communication problem, but the very metaphor that we need to re-imagine horizons of existence. The scenarios we humans envision currently are limited to what we can or want to imagine.

In this essay, we advocate the potential contributions that the anthropology of human-animal relations could offer to studies of the pandemic caused by Covid-19. We have mobilized theoretical perspectives and empirical investigations from anthropology in dialogue with the field of Animal Studies. We address the many and sometimes contradictory relationships

that modern human groups have with varied sets of non-human beings whose agency and modes of existence we cannot always identify accurately.

Therefore, we suggest that the notion of 'more than human' is not limited by the contrast defined by interspecific¹ alterities, or by the kind of relationships we establish with other forms of life. Instead, we hypothesize that 'more than human' is a 'category-metaphor' that may reveal varied ways in which we compose our lives in relation to the 'nature' of everything around us, which includes the new coronavirus and the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Perhaps we can understand more deeply how our worlds were always and continue to be forged from plural and contradictory relationships between diverse humans and unfamiliar natures. This might assist us in building ways to better cope with a future in which, for better or worse, we will have to face the challenges posed by inevitable, ever-closer relationships between humans and non-humans.

RECOMPOSING HUMANS AND NON-HUMANS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONTAMINATIONS

When imagining possible connections between animals and the Covid-19 pandemic, 'bat soup' or the consumption of other wild animal products from the wet markets of Wuhan may be the predominant images. However, the dubious attempts to accuse certain collectivities for their supposedly 'exotic' eating habits, as a significant portion of the Western media has tried to do over the past year (Segata – Beck – Muccillo 2020), certainly does not amount to a significant contribution to the study of health catastrophes like the one we have been experiencing.

Devoting attention to the many practices and meanings contained in the history of interaction between human and non-human animals seems much more productive for anthropological analyses of events that provoke what Bruno Latour (2017, 24) called 'a profound mutation in our relationship with the world'. Such interactions were intensified by the violent displacements of indigenous populations in America, Africa and Asia during the European colonization that have occurred in the last five centuries. Wild animals habituated or domesticated, microscopic or macroscopic or cosmological beings, became part of the social narratives of these displacements in the most diverse artistic, technical, literary, philosophical, martial, environmental, and cosmological contexts. None of this is new to anthropology. From the second half of the 19th century ad throughout the 20th century, we can find anthropological references to non-humans in the French tradition of Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), the founding father of French Social Anthropology, who analyzed the animal sacrifice (Hubert and Mauss 1981), the totemic kinship between

1 Interspecific is the term commonly used in the biosciences. Interspecies is the term used by environmental humanities and social Sciences in general.

humans and other animals and also the cultural conceptions of body.

In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, Edward Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973) founded the program of functional-structuralism, but also wrote two influential ethnographies about two African people: the Nuer who are gardeners, fishermen and herdsmen (Evans-Pritchard 1940) and the agro-pastoralist Dinka who lives a long-term diaspora. Gregory Bateson (1904-1980), influential in cultural anthropology, animal behavior and language studies, proposed the Ecology of Mind as a way of articulating social changes, language and education. Via the materialist perspectives in anthropology, we found in Marvin Harris (1927-2001) a cultural materialist whose approach on the sacred cow in India and on people who love or hate pigs only by material causes (Harris 1974).

Roy Rappaport's ecological perspective (1926-1997), one of the most influential ecological anthropologists, points out the distinction between operational knowledge and the environment known by a given human population. *Pigs for the Ancestors* (Rappaport 2000) analyzed the complex relations among meat consumption, rituals, and animal population fluctuation. With ethnobiological studies, we learn that the 'human' composition of society is always related to an extended world and in coexistence with other living beings, focusing on biocultural diversity (Newing 2010).

What is new now is not the empirical discovery of the presence of other beings, and other modes of multi-species co-existence besides those propagated by agro-industrial capitalism (Kirksey – Helmreich 2010). Rather, it is the contemporary densification of anthropological reflections on the relations between humans and non-humans. That is, contemporary anthropology has seen an intellectual movement that urgently seeks to revise Western theoretical-epistemological parameters supporting the Western analyses of these relations (Galvin 2019). Such a revision suggests at least two striking consequences for contemporary thought: The first impacts how knowledge is produced, demonstrating the need for awareness of the negative effects of the intensification of contacts between species, the destruction of non-renewable resources (Young et al. 2016), and the results of human actions on life and the planet (Moran 2010). To interpret the sociological and cultural implications of these events on biosocial structures, categories as diverse as the Anthropocene (Latour 2018), biopolitics (Foucault 2008) or biocapital (Blanchette 2015) are often mobilized.

Michel Foucault's conception of biopolitics appears in current reflections articulated to neoliberal practices as a 'government of life' based on uncontrolled appropriation of environmental resources (Lemm – Vatter 2014). Biocapital implies a join between capitalism and biotechnology that are articulated with the idea of biotic substance that is expressed simultaneously as economic speculation and sentiment (Helmreich 2008). Finally, despite their different emphases, anthropologists and philosophers who dialogue with the concept of Anthropocene argue the importance of focusing dialogues between 'physical' and 'cultural' as a way to understand our world and to construct manners to confront climate crises

suggesting political relevance of anthropology (Latour 2018). These interpretations have supported epistemological-philosophical criticism made of modern science that culminates in the growing suspicion of the explanatory validity of the dualisms established by it (Haraway 1989) and of the capacity of so-called modern thought to offer ideas to balance the relations between humans and non-humans (Latour 1994; Lemm 2013). One of the merits of these movements in anthropology is their emphasis on the awareness that human beings establish relationships not only with each other, in social and symbolic terms, but also that human beings are deeply tied to their bodies and to the world that these bodies inhabit (Macnaghten – Urry 2001), to other living beings and to artifacts (Appadurai 1988), technologies (Haraway 2015), resources and specific places (Janowski – Ingold 2016).

The second consequence concerns the necessity to rethink human uniqueness. Criteria such as bipedalism, a large brain, making of tools, social complexity, and cognitive ability, often used to distinguish humans from other living beings since the emergence of modern science, have been unsatisfactory (Rapchan 2019). As all humans have relations with other beings, practices such as the domestication of animals and plants, once considered examples of human progress, are being re-assessed through scrutiny of multi-species relations (Kirksey – Helmreich 2010).

These developments show that such processes are also exchange relations. They are pathways of contagion by pathogens, connections to the 'wild world' and with the oscillation between nature and culture (Bennet 2010). Domestication is unlikely to have occurred exclusively through conscious human actions. Such processes are strongly related to pathogenesis, zoonoses and epidemics, which become more acute in large-scale breeding and confinement settings. Domestication is a two-way street that similarly has transformed humans, as animals and plants were transformed (Cassidy – Mullin 2007; Ellen – Fukui 2020; Bollettin 2020).

In this sense, ethnographies such as Keck's (2010) as applied to the influenza epidemic triggered by the H1N1 virus in the past decade, exemplify the potential of anthropology's contribution. It displays the skills we have in facing the environmental and health catastrophes that terrorize our generation and offer ways for anthropology to contribute to this public debate. According to Keck, the 'flu-stricken world' ('*le monde grippé*') that emerged in 2009 showed that we are engaged with something assumed to be "external" to humanity but which, paradoxically, is inevitably associated with us.

However, to reconnect the ties that bind us to the world in the midst of a pandemic requires us to overcome the fear caused by a disease that disrupts the 'natural' constitution of our biological bodies because it also brings the body to the center of political debates (Butler 2016). It seems necessary to relearn how to question the ways in which we relate to everything we understand as 'nature', especially non-human animals. The present moment is appropriate for this intellectual exercise because it allows us to take advantage of the social mobilization around a virus to build oblique instruments. This mobili-

zation makes visible what our scientific tradition often makes invisible: that we share a world that is not disconnected from us, but rather is composed and decomposed by all the life forms that dwell in it, including us.

The Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as another contemporary manifestation of the side-effects of the modern-colonial project (Rapchan – Carniel 2020). The consequences of this outbreak for public health systems around the planet have caused dramatic transformations in the way we live our lives and have magnified social inequalities on a frightening scale. This predicament is not the first time that hitherto unknown virus strains have sprung from non-human hosts to contaminate human populations, and it likely will not be the last.

The SARS epidemic, which happened in 2002-2003, the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, the emergence of the MERS coronavirus in 2014, and the Ebola outbreak between 2014-2016 are recent examples of infectious agents that originated from zoonotic transmissions. These all led to deadly diseases in large populations world-wide. These microorganisms teach us a basic lesson: awareness that we live in collectives made up of humans and non-humans is vital for both our present and our future (Auffrai et al. 2020).

In the 1980s, the appearance of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, popularly known as ‘mad cow disease’, alerted us to how urgent it was to foster the development of epistemic communities capable of blurring the boundaries between culture and nature. It warned us to seek appropriate responses to the accelerating emergence of new outbreaks precipitated by our lifestyles. The problem, as Segata (2020) notes, is that when a pathogen spreads, it carries not only vectors for diseases but also favors contingent agendas that seek to universalize global health policies (Mol 2008; Rajan 2017). If we fail to build alliances that bridge our differences and inequalities across the gaps left by the unstable universalist rhetoric’s of our time, we may perpetuate perverse modes that express the liberal, developmentalist monoculture that brought us here (Tsing 2015). We need a vibrant sense of urgency to produce intellectual alternatives and political agendas that are increasingly heterogeneous and better articulated. At the same time, we need less focus on building global biopolitical devices for monitoring and controlling living beings. With this, we may understand how Lévi-Strauss (2016) related the mad cow disease with the possibility of reducing massive meat consumption that could favor biological diversity in an evolutionary perspective. That is, Lévi-Strauss focuses that we must understand that we share with other species the challenge of living with our similarities and differences, in order to co-exist.

However, confronting the asymmetries that structure our relations with nature and with other living beings and seeking to generate new engagements with the world has never been easy. The task entails conflicts and controversies, as it implies reversing the ongoing disappearance of local models of production of nature and ecosystems. As Escobar argued (2005, 137), preponderance of global space over place, or the universal over the particular, acts as a device of deep domination, which has shaped both Eurocentrism and modern colo-

onialism. Our benchmarks for acting in the world, centered on naturalistic and rationalist ontologies, make it hard to see the effects of global phenomena, such as the Covid-19 pandemic that activates historical inequalities. These inequalities reprise undigested and little-debated legacies of colonialism that exist now and outline futures around the planet.

We argue here that the contiguity between human and non-human animals, whether autonomous or dependent, domesticated, or wild, literal, or fictional, raises anthropological, ecological, and political problems that have a long history in the modern-colonial world. How we relate to the viruses that circulate around the globe seems to coincide with how we relate to the diversity of ways of life. ‘More than human’ need not express exactly the identity of certain animals as different from us. Instead, ‘humanity’ is one of the many markers of the hegemonic imagining of our time, shaped by the influence of modern scientific thought and by political philosophy and colonial literature.

ANIMAL STUDIES IN THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

Animal Studies receive constant criticism of its difficulties in analyzing the different facets of power relations and the many inequalities in the collectivities of humans and other animals. Such objections often focus on aspects of the ethical or legal status of certain animal species (Nusbaum 2007; Wolfe 2003; Lemm 2013; Despret 2016; Korsgaard 2018). Critics point to the potential limits of the propositions inspired by the so-called ‘ontological turn’² dedicated to multi-species compositions in isolated and decontextualized environments (Besire and Bond 2014; Fisher 2014; Holbraad – Pedersen 2017). The theoretical and methodological invisibility of the processes and devices that render potentially ‘animalizable’ people subjected to modern-colonial systems of domination is a central challenge for future studies on relations between humans and other animals (Corbey – Theunissen 1995; Galvin 2019; Gruen 2018; Kim 2018; Marino 2018; Tuck – Yang 2012). Reprising Ingold (1994), classifying beings into the categories of human or animal enabled the very postulation of Animal Studies and that of its critics. The dichotomy depends less on the intrinsic ‘nature’ of beings and the special status we create for them, but more on the strength and regularity of the categorical attributes that give them materiality and intelligibility.

² The movement generically known as the “anthropological turn” began to gain consistency from the 1970s onwards. Bruno Latour and Tim Ingold, in different positions of the spectrum, presented propositions for anthropological research, from the end of the 20th century onwards, which must impose itself on the saturation of the preoccupation with meaning, derived from postmodern currents. In this process, the initiative to question the veracity and rigidity of the boundaries between “nature” and “society” or “culture” produced trends as diverse as their respective criticisms. Among them, we can mention Political Ecology, Ethno Sciences, Perspectivism, Actor-Network Theory, New Ontologies, Ontogeny, among others.

We understand that events, such as those we are currently experiencing, from the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, carry the potential to draw the attention of those who do Animal Studies (Münster et al. 2021), with regard to the limiting effects of the disciplinary rhetoric's of maintaining a narrow focus in the field, what we term the 'absolutely animal' interests of Animal Studies; instead, we need to formulate meaningful responses to the consequences of relations with other beings and the effects of the intrusion of groups of beings and relations that are much more plastic than we usually consider. For this reason, we suggest in this essay that the approximation between anthropology and Animal Studies, mediated by the type of crossing that the notion of 'more than human' has produced between the domains of nature and society, can help us to acknowledge once and for all that the foundations of differences and inequalities across the planet are not exclusively related to humans. The approximation is also supported by relationships with other living beings (Gruen 2018) since both tend to connect to, and justify, each other.

This state of affairs reflects emphasis on the public and relational perspectives of anthropology toward humans and other animals. It mirrors advances that defend the reproduction of plurality and diversity and support resilience against totalitarian forms of government, social life, and knowledge production (Latour 2016; Tsing 2015). The diagnosis offers at least two possible paths in the face of the immense challenges posed by the analysis and co-construction of ecological policies based on principles of care, rights and guarantee of life for the vulnerable (Münster – van Dooren – Schroer – Reinert 2021).

The first path entails a revision of Western scientific thought that offers homogenizing and dominating conceptions of nature and the place of humans in the world, of concern to both the biological and social sciences. This perspective emerged from influential scientists and philosophers who instituted paradigms inspired by the social hierarchies of the nineteenth-century and the development of positivism. These conceptions strip humans of their bodies and relations with non-humans, defends the exclusive legitimacy of Western conceptions, and analyzes evolutionary processes as phenomena independent from the flow of life (Oyama 2000; Oyama – Griffiths – Gray 2001).

The second path points to effectively overcoming the hierarchies that place scientific knowledge of modern-colonial origin as the only legitimate way of knowing and acting in the world, to the exclusion of other ways of living and of producing knowledge and technology. Recognizing the legitimacy of other types of knowledge and of their ability to promote alliances across different types of knowledge can spare us many setbacks. However, we must be aware that this path is particularly risky in times when conspiracy theories and anti-scientific movements abound. We must enter the shifting territories that constitute multi-species worlds to gather evidence, seeking to avoid what has the potential to destroy us. Ethnographic research and anthropological reflection can be valuable allies toward this direction.

Multispecies ethnographies appeared when ethnographers started to do fieldwork research casting a glance at the possibilities opened by the existence of subjectivity and agency of organisms that share their lives with humans (Kirksey – Helmreich 2010). This initiative displaced humans from the center of ethnographic narratives. Among many subjects, from interspecies ethnography emerge reflections about the condition of non-human person (Locke 2017), interspecies politics, ethics, and justice (Blattner – Donaldson – Wilcox 2020), the central relevance of indigenous standpoints (Tall-Bear 2011) and even timely intervention in response to Covid-19 (Tallberg – Huopalaainen – Hamilton 2020).

By highlighting these paths, we underscore the contributions that Animal Studies offers to critical reflection on human exceptionalism. Through locally situated knowledge and practices, which may or may not be globally articulated, these studies present other layers of complexity to challenge biopower asymmetries (Korsgaard 2018), to complexities linked to ethical and moral principles (Lemm 2013) or even to contractual logics that homogenize and standardize the parts played by humans and other living beings in multi-species relations (Nussbaum 2007). Such alternatives favor approaches and collaborations based on specific situations and local participation that articulate areas of knowledge and distinct collectivities, which produce a more sensitive, responsible, and committed kind of knowledge. Good examples are provided when researchers recognize the role of local, and traditional or contemporary knowledge, to balance relations between humans and other life forms. It is essential to highlight that effectively recognizing local knowledge implies in overcoming conceptions based on the epistemological, methodological, or conceptual superiority of western knowledge (Goldman 2007). For example, for relations between humans and great apes in Sub-saharan Africa, see Amir (2019) and Giles-Vernick – Rupp (2006). And for co-production among indigenous knowledge, research and environmental governance, see Latulippe – Klenk (2020).

We are trying to signal a sense of urgency. We should be learning from the harsh lessons of the current pandemic that the future of human life, other non-human lives, and the planet itself depend on the relationships we can establish with the world. (Danowski – Viveiros De Castro 2014; van Dooren 2014; Kolbert 2014). The basic challenge of this realization is the need to produce an alternative type of knowledge-power to that which regulates and homogenizes what is diverse in order to make it 'controllable'. As Tsing (2015) argued, the desire to tame nature in order to control society, so recurrent in the stories the Euro-American world talks about itself, has become a kind of 'civilizational monoculture'. This focus subjected the generations before us to the establishment of increasingly rigid biopolitical borders that aimed to restructure territories and ways of life. This produced discourses of 'their representatives', like 'ours' (Stengers 2015), and self-proclaimed their merits in building an ongoing state of technological and societal 'progress'. The illusion of the absolute control of nature, non-human animals and animalized hu-

mans fueled by extermination, subjugation, or abuses committed against animals, people, territories, and resources, are revived every time a zoonosis becomes an epidemic.

Science fiction often employs a literary theme of introducing (or removing) a single variable in a given social body and analyzing the impacts of that change in various dimensions: nature, power, old age, genre, transcendence, oppression, living beings, etc. This small displacement, and its profound consequences, offer the opportunity to reflect on how complex and interconnected our world is. Jennifer Dickenson (2000, 56) observes that the way as European outsider writers perceived relations between humans and other beings by, for example, the gothic *tropos* (e.g. boundary transgressions, haunting past) produced insights that disturbed conceptions about European superiority and colonialist values. Contemporary literary expressions, e.g. Solarpunk, Vaporpunk and Dieselpunk (Cogbill-Seiders 2018), not only adds complexity to the relations between humans and other beings, but also produces utopias of a post-apocalyptic world (Więkowska 2018), based on environmental justice (Farver 2019) departing from the Anthropocene dystopian world.

The scenario resulting from the current pandemic and its impacts arises from the global infection caused by a microscopic entity. The emergence of this small entity-virus and its ambiguous and hybrid character has yielded impacts that have altered our lives and that can help us reflect on our world. After all, are we talking about a 'bug,' a protein with agency, or even a living being? From microbiology perspective, Van Regenmortel (2010) argues that viruses are genetic parasites and are not living beings. Keck (2008; 2010) presents Anthropological points of view that can stimulate reflections about interhuman forms of infectious viruses (Keck 2008; 2010). Judith Butler (2016), from a philosophical point of view observes that Covid pandemic demonstrates that we are all connected by our common vulnerabilities because all of us can be sick. It also points out that we are interdependent. That puts in check the neoliberal idea of liberty. We need to act together to be free because health is related to protecting everyone and to care for the common. Also, Covid pandemic drew attention to inequalities while accentuating them.

So, despite that we don't love viruses, we argue that it is urgent to understand that the virus need not be seen exclusively as only an 'enemy' to be faced. Virosis, epidemics and pandemics spread alerts us to our societal mistakes and reveals connections that we have neglected, about our fellow humans, other organisms, places we inhabit and the planet as a whole. They also place the body at the center of politics (Butler 2016).

For anthropology, our proposal emphasizes the relationships between humans and 'more than human beings' in terms of their vital contexts. This approach means simultaneously addressing issues of power and marginality concerning capitalism and globalization, seeing humans and others as fellow species, and embracing anthropology's approach to the lived world, without separating it from politics or history.

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