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Source: *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (AUTUMN 2012), pp. 82-100

Published by: Berghahn Books

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43610876>

Accessed: 19-04-2019 21:15 UTC

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Inalienable Worlds

Inter-species Relations, Perspectives and 'Doublethink' in a Catalanian Chimpanzee Sanctuary

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This paper draws on ethnographic research conducted in a chimpanzee sanctuary in Catalunya, and contributes to contemporary theoretical debates surrounding Viveiros de Castro's recent injunction for anthropologists to 'take seriously' the worlds of their ethnographic interlocutors. Taking seriously apparent contradictions in keepers' reflections on the care of chimpanzees, the concept of 'doublethink' is introduced as a heuristic in order to appreciate *both* their practices of boundary maintenance *and* the strong inter-species relationships which proliferate at the sanctuary. Anthropologies of Euro-American naturalism must be ready to appreciate both the apparently unbridgeable dualisms utilized and enacted by their interlocutors, and the simultaneous disappearance, dissolution and intermittent irrelevance of these dualisms in their interlocutors' encounters and reflections. The paper concludes with a rethinking of the alienability/inalienability of others' worlds.

Keywords: Deleuze, Euro-Americans, human–animal relations, ontology, perspectivalism

Introduction

All by itself, a Go piece can destroy an entire constellation synchronically; a chess piece cannot.
(Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 389).

This paper has its roots in an ethnographic problem I encountered while conducting fieldwork in a chimpanzee sanctuary in rural Catalunya: what to make of the apparently paradoxical ways in which keepers explained to me the impossibility of knowing what another being (either human or non-human) thinks and feels, while simultaneously empathizing with the chimpanzees in their care, and teaching them to rediscover their 'natural selves' through practices of subjectification? While initially an ethnographic problem which I sought to unravel, an engagement with this apparent enigma can also



Cambridge Anthropology 30(2), Autumn 2012: 82–100 © Cambridge Anthropology
doi:10.3167/ca.2012.300206

contribute to contemporary theoretical debates surrounding Viveiros de Castro's (2003, 2011) recent consideration of how the injunction to 'take seriously' might be imbued with a meaning specific to social anthropology.

Towards the end of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (2004) argues that in order to transcend conceptualizations of the self/other polarity as it has been constrained by traditional oppositions of subject/object, one must refrain from an *explication* of the other (and the other's world). For Deleuze (2004: 324), 'the expressed' – that is, the other's vision of their world – 'has (for us) no existence apart from that which expresses it' – namely, the other. This conceptualization could be described as post-structuralist insofar as it seeks to expose and transcend the violent hierarchy of binary opposition, in which one concept inevitably subordinates the other (cf. Derrida 1998). However, Deleuze refrains from deconstruction, by holding apart the binary and suspending actualization. With this reconceptualization of self/other, in which 'other' cannot be grasped as either subject or object by the self, Viveiros de Castro builds on his previous assertion of 'the impossibility of continuing to practice our discipline within an economy of knowledge where the anthropological concept functions as a kind of surplus value extracted by the "observer" from the existential labour – the life – of the "observed"' (Viveiros de Castro 2003: 3); where the worldview of the 'observed' is engulfed by that of the 'observer', in order that his own world might be interrogated anew. Given our intimate engagements with others and their worlds, how might we then, as anthropologists, take seriously our ethnographic interlocutors?

Viveiros de Castro (2011: 137) argues that it should not be anthropology's aim to *describe* people's 'worldviews' in terms of belief or fantasy, nor to seek to validate or *believe in* the worlds of others, 'fantasizing about them as leading to the true reality'. Anthropology's project should not be to subsume the other's world within our own. 'Our own world' is here envisaged as a mononatural and yet multicultural world in which, to use the words of Mol (1999: 76) on perspectivalism, there exist 'mutually exclusive perspectives, discrete, existing side by side ... while in the centre the object of the many gazes and glances remains singular, intangible, untouched'. Rather, Viveiros de Castro argues, an anthropology of alterity should multiply our world with the 'possible worlds' of others – worlds which do not rely on *our* verification, critique or assent.¹ According to him, such an approach would have radical consequences for ethnography. As Latour suggests in his recounting of a recent *disputatio* between Descola and Viveiros de Castro, taking seriously these other worlds has – in a manner reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) war machine – 'the potential to explode the whole implicit philosophy so dominant in most ethnographers' interpretations of their material' (Latour 2009: 2).

This is an invigorating declaration of the anthropological project; a project which has, from its earliest forays into the worlds of others, sought to approach the imponderables of their lives with a certain naivety and openness – almost always finding inherited concepts and dualisms to be lacking in their ability to capture these worlds. One could argue that while it provides a timely rallying call to ethnographers still wrestling with many of the problems central to the late twentieth-century crisis of representation (Clifford and Marcus 1985; Marcus and Fischer 1996), it also gives a new direction to what has been termed the 'ontological turn' in ethnographic theory

and method (Henare, Holbraad and Wastall 2007). The ontological turn has been summarized as an interest in different worlds, rather than different worldviews (Candea 2010c: 175). Just as it echoes the aims of anthropologists to conceive of their discipline as something beyond an episteme of others' epistemes of our shared world – which anthropologists have called 'cultures' (cf. Wagner 1981; Strathern 1990) – Viveiros de Castro's earlier work (1998, 2012) also foregrounds these aims.²

However, in his recent paper, Viveiros de Castro (2011) infuses the oft-used injunction (to 'take seriously') with, in the words of Candea (2011: 146), 'a convincing, theoretically sophisticated, and precise content'. Viveiros de Castro's 'possible worlds' could therefore be described as a more decisive attempt at the end of epistemology (and of ontology in the singular); when what we are examining need neither be representation *nor* reality, others' inalienable worlds open up and multiply before us. Building upon Deleuze's reconceptualization of the other's world, 'inalienable' becomes the operative word; that is, these other worlds cannot be dissociated from those others for whom they are worlds. If we are to take them seriously, we cannot alienate these worlds (extracting their surplus value) in order to examine them in terms – our terms – which would make those worlds feel foreign to those from whom they originate.

I will return to the distinction between alienability and inalienability as it pertains to the project of 'taking seriously' at the end of the paper. However, it is in the spirit of openness to alterity that I will now engage ethnographically with those others who were my ethnographic interlocutors, and their inalienable, multiple and constantly transforming worlds. Central to these worlds are my interlocutors' own practices of 'othering' and of considering the worlds of others. I will examine these complex entanglements of selves, others, worlds and perspectives in order to consider how it might be possible to take seriously *both* the apparently unbridgeable dualisms utilized by my interlocutors, *and* the simultaneous disappearance, dissolution and intermittent irrelevance of these dualisms in their encounters and reflections.

Making Selves out of Others

In 2007, I conducted a short period of ethnographic fieldwork in one of Europe's only primate sanctuaries, which is located on five acres of land donated by the local council of the small, rural Catalan town of Selva. The charity associated with the sanctuary has been instrumental in raising awareness of chimpanzee conservation efforts and CITES regulations in Spain and Europe.³ However, the Catalan founders often told me with pride that such a sanctuary could not exist in *Castellano* Spain, where 'people do not have the same respect for animals'.⁴

During the period of my fieldwork, the sanctuary provided a home for twelve chimpanzees, all of whom had become too unmanageable to continue being used in the entertainment industry (chimpanzees are difficult to handle after the age of five); or had been donated by laboratories, parks or zoological gardens which could no longer take care of them; or had been confiscated according to CITES regulations and with the help of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). The chimpanzees' spaces at the sanctuary consisted of two large outdoor enclosures for the two primary social groups; *los Machos*, a group of four adult males, and *la Familia*, which consisted

of one adult male, one adult female and five juveniles of different ages. There were also three other adult males in the smaller outdoor enclosures, who had been separated from the larger groups due to illness or because they had not yet been 'resocialized'.

The chimpanzees are the central focus of all activities connected to the sanctuary. Before proceeding therefore, it is imperative that I make clear how I will engage with them in this paper. The post-symbolic turn in anthropological studies of animals in the last decade has rallied against Levi-Strauss' (1962: 89) famous dictum that 'animals are good to think', by arguing that they are good for much more; that they have legible political and social lives (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010), and that they are, in the words of Haraway, 'good to live' (2003). Chimpanzees in this paper will not come into view simply as 'symbols' for Catalan nationalism, for example, but also as members of the sanctuary's inter-species social groups (cf. Knight 2005), and as distinctly real, 'fleshy, material-semiotic presences' (Haraway 2003: 5). However, one cannot deny that animals are indeed good to think, and while much of this paper is concerned with encounter (cf. Derrida 2008), *reflection* remains central to the conclusion.

In a recent reflection on the ontological aims of the edited volume *Thinking Through Things* (Henare, Holbraad and Wastall 2007), Holbraad (2011: 3) argues that while the authors originally sought the emancipation of 'things', they ultimately subsumed this task 'to that of emancipating the people for whom they are important'. In a manner similar to the original intentions of those anthropologists, I am fascinated by the possibilities opening up for theoretical intervention and methodological innovation in non-human anthropology (cf. Kohn 2007 and this issue; Candea 2010a; Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Indeed, many of the problems and questions raised by the multi-species turn, and anthropologies beyond the human, are central to my current ethnographic research projects. In this paper, however, I will not engage primarily with the chimpanzees and their worlds,⁵ but instead with the ways in which the people for whom they are important *themselves* attempted to do so.

I lived at the sanctuary for the duration of my fieldwork, and at first made it my aim to explore the ways in which different groups of people (keepers, research scientists, visitors attending free educational tours, students of ethology attending one of the field methods courses run at the sanctuary, and those paying for a 'working weekend' experience) related to the chimpanzees. How to think about these different relations? Perhaps especially, how to capture them in a way which did not reduce them to 'points of view'? In a move away from epistemological multiplicity and towards ontological multiplicity, Mol (2002) has elegantly followed the material assemblages through which bodies and diseases are enacted. However, ontological multiplicity was at times difficult to disentangle from epistemological multiplicity at the sanctuary. While it was possible to trace the different relations between chimpanzees and different groups of people at the sanctuary – relations bound up in the materiality of the wire fence, woollen blankets, food items, wooden structures, hose pipes filled with oatmeal and honey used for enrichment or experiment – the people themselves often disagreed with each other as to who had a privileged view of the 'real chimpanzees'.

Both keepers and scientists used the word 'real', which might have led me to presuppose a stable concept and context of intelligibility, and a perspectival world in which these mutually exclusive perspectives differed in their access to the chimpanzees,

some with a more privileged view than others. However, when I discussed what the concept meant to each of them, the matrix of contrasts within which it was embedded, and thus the epistemological claims and ontological concerns of keepers and scientists – which initially appeared to be in opposition – were very different. How to think about this without privileging the terms of one over the other?

For the scientists, ‘real’ referred to the comportment of a natural, wild chimpanzee – a chimpanzee whose behaviours towards his conspecifics and his environment were not being ‘modified’ by the presence of a human. Their perspective from the height of the observation tower, or hidden behind the wire mesh and bushes in one of the ground-level observation points, offered them a view of the chimpanzees engaged in foraging or social behaviours, which they privileged over the ‘messy’, ‘artificial’ view of the keepers, who had personal relationships with the chimpanzees and almost only ever saw them while engaged in interspecific social interactions with them. ‘Real’ here was something which one was best positioned to observe and document when the chimps were ‘in their element’, when their natural behaviours could be expressed and where the variable of human interference did not have to be taken into account – where it did not muddy the data.

The keepers, however, had framed the concept of ‘real’ altogether differently. Their privileged viewpoint came at feeding time in the sleeping cages. These were far more cramped than the outdoor enclosures, and particularly at feeding time, they were the site of heightened tension. Keepers are careful to hand out food in the order of social hierarchy which the chimpanzees have established amongst themselves (although this order is often reinforced during moments of tension, and thus the keepers can play an integral part in maintaining or subverting it). For the keepers, it is at times like these that spiteful, aggressive or manipulative individuals – who may appear calm or meek in the outdoor enclosures – show their ‘true colours’ by causing fights, stealing food (either overtly or covertly), or convincing others to give some, or all, of their food away. For the keepers, ‘real’ chimps came into view not when abstracted from human presence, but when interacting with other beings (human and chimpanzee) in close quarters and tense situations.

At least two questions arise (for the ethnographer) from this apparently perspectival disagreement. As an ethnographer in the field, it would appear that one does not only encounter others and their possible worlds, one regularly encounters epistemological and ontological claims. I will return to this at the end of the paper: it raises interesting questions on the alienability and inalienability of our interlocutors’ worlds. The second question concerns how an ethnographer might think about these claims in relation to one other. Viveiros de Castro (2010: 227) describes Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of the difference between the extensive and the intensive, from the perspective of each pole:

From the standpoint of the extensive (arborescent, molar, rigid, striated, etc.) pole, the relation that distinguishes it from the second pole is typically an opposition: an exclusive disjunction and a limitative synthesis, that is, an extensive, molar and actual relation itself. From the standpoint of the other (rhizomatic, molecular, supple, smooth) pole, however, there is no opposition but intensive difference.

When immersed within the worlds of keepers or research scientists, one could argue that since the difference is not the same, 'the way is not the same in both directions' (Viveiros de Castro 2010: 226). For the scientists, the disagreement about who sees the 'real' chimpanzees arises because the keepers are unable to distance themselves from them in order to observe their unmodified behaviour. For the keepers, the misunderstanding arises because the outside enclosures do not enable one to see the chimpanzees when they are in close enough quarters with others to show their true personalities. Taking either claim seriously therefore requires that it is not described in the terms of the other (or with a third set of imported terms introduced by the ethnographer), as this would create a symmetrical binary opposition. That is to say, whichever world from which the terms were chosen would automatically emerge as dominant; it would have the privileged viewpoint, in a singular world described as perspectival by the ethnographer.

Already, then, when taking seriously others' worlds, it is not only 'our terms' we have to refrain from deploying. Multiplicity in worlds – and disagreements about worldviews – compel the ethnographer to consider these different worlds in their own terms. From this point onwards, I will therefore 'cut the network' (Strathern 1996) a little further, and zoom in a little more, by focusing predominantly on the keepers and their world – or rather, *worlds*, for even at this scale incommensurable multiplicity reappears. The keepers are themselves, of course, both nodes and networks; people whose histories and identities always already hark to 'elsewhens [and] elsewhere's' (Candea 2010b: 36). While they could never be described as practitioners of Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) 'Royal Science', most of them have degrees in biology, zoology or veterinary medicine, and all of them regularly interact with research scientists, as well as reading published articles on wild chimpanzee behaviour and primate cognition.

In allowing the keepers' worlds (and their concern with the chimpanzees' worlds) to open up, let me begin with a philosophy. This is not an implicit philosophy, but an explicit one, as it was explained to me one afternoon over lunch by the head keeper, Alba.

The sanctuary's philosophy has three main points – rules – in the best interests of everyone. First, no human–chimpanzee contact – well, we keep that to a minimum, and only keepers and vets can touch the chimps. Second, we are not just rescuing chimps; we want them to have a life as close as they could have naturally in the wild, we want them to learn to be chimps again. And the third – education is really important; we want people to learn about chimpanzees so that they can respect them, and not anthropomorphize them or mistreat them.

This summary alone is intriguing, and defies many of the commonsense descriptions of a singular Euro-American ontology often deployed by anthropologists. Were we to interrogate the dimensions of this philosophy (and thereby not take it seriously), we might ask: why is it 'anthropomorphizing' that is here associated with mistreatment, and 'dehumanizing' which is associated with respect? How can chimpanzees who have never lived in the wild, learn to be wild 'again'? What does it mean to strive to artificially create something which approximates 'nature'? However, at this stage, these are problems posed by the ethnographer and not by the keepers themselves. In what

follows, I will therefore describe the keepers' practices and lay out their narratives in order to reveal the problems they themselves posed and negotiated.

Following our conversation over lunch, Alba invited me to join her at the 'socializing cages', which are located on the opposite side of the sleeping quarters to the large outdoor social enclosures. Up until that point, I had spent most of my time watching the chimpanzees in the outdoor enclosures, either sitting with researchers collecting behavioural data from the observation decks, accompanying organized visits around the perimeter of the enclosures, or helping keepers with mid-afternoon 'scatter' feeding. When we arrived at the socializing cages, I saw a chimpanzee I did not recognize. He was sitting, huddled beneath his blanket and dripping with rain, on the floor. 'This is Victor,' Alba declared. 'He's sulking.'

She proceeded to explain that while cleaning out his half of the socializing cages the previous morning, she had moved his sleeping hammock closer to the entrance of the sleeping quarters bordering those of the other chimpanzees. Victor, who had arrived at the sanctuary less than a year before (having spent ten years in a solitary cage in a French zoological garden), was not yet sharing spaces with the other chimpanzees. Alba explained to me that he was too afraid of them, and that she hoped that by moving his hammock from his preferred corner – far away from the other chimps – to a location closer to the sleeping quarters, he might engage more with them, and begin to get to know them. Alba explained how difficult it was proving for him to learn to 'speak chimpanzee'.⁶ I asked her to elaborate; 'When he arrived,' she explained, 'he was making strange sounds no chimp should make – no chimp could recognize them. He wouldn't eat any of the fruit and monkey chow we gave him. He was like: where's the pizza? He thinks he's human.'

The sanctuary was established in 2001, with the dramatic rescue of seven chimpanzees from a circus trainer in Valencia. All of the chimpanzees were described by the keepers as confused and 'damaged' upon their arrival to the sanctuary, forced (in their former lives) to smoke, wear clothes, ride motorbikes, and perform in commercials or circuses. Keepers argued that boundaries which 'should' have been maintained had previously been blurred, and that the chimpanzees had been forced to live lives in-between, where they had been neither chimpanzee nor human.

The separation between human and chimpanzee is therefore a central concern for keepers, not so that they may collect data on the chimpanzees' 'real' behaviours, but in order to 'return' the chimpanzees to their 'natural' selves – a self which recognizes the keepers/humans as 'other' and the 'self' as chimpanzee.⁷ Concepts of natural, wild and real are here drawn on for ends entirely different from those of the scientists, and also for ends other than recognizing which chimpanzee is likely to steal food, which ones can be trusted not to pull at keepers, and so on (the keepers' primary concerns during feeding time). These are different worlds of intent – where the outcome intended is different; for example, one focuses on maintaining order and limiting fights at feeding time, another on making sure that keepers are not endangered through proximity to the chimpanzees, and yet another on returning the chimpanzees to their 'natural' selves. Concepts, along with objects and identities, are different when keepers move from one world to the other.

When keepers are trying to comfort a more vulnerable chimpanzee they know well, like Nico (a juvenile who suffers from Arnold-Chiari syndrome),⁸ who has had an egg or a plum stolen from him at feeding time in the sleeping quarters, they might comfort him by grooming his hand gently before pressing a new egg or plum into his palm, when the other chimpanzees' gazes are occupied elsewhere. And yet the same keepers, as they try to encourage Victor to learn to 'speak chimpanzee', will often throw his food to the floor so that he can search for it, even as his hand remains outstretched, waiting for the food to move from their palm to his in a dependency which does not correspond to the independence the keepers envision for him. Both of these acts are conceived of as caring in the different contexts or worlds in which they are enacted.

Understanding Another's Perspective

It is becoming clear that keepers are not concerned only with what we might call 'their own worlds'. They are deeply preoccupied with the worlds of others, both chimpanzee and human. Keepers described three interrelated duties with regards to the chimpanzees' well-being. The first concerned their basic needs for survival and comfort: food, social and mental stimulation, water and shelter. The other two duties formed part of the keepers' vision of what the chimpanzees should become in order that they may lead fulfilling lives of the kind 'they were born to live': a kind of chimpanzee *eudaemonia*. These practices were referred to as 'dehumanization' and 'resocialization,' and they shaped the ways in which the keepers practised the first duty.

These two practices are complementary and together help the chimpanzees learn to 'speak chimpanzee'. Dehumanization focuses on the principle that chimpanzees are confused about their 'real identity', and must be separated from humans, housed with chimpanzees and fed chimpanzee food, in order to discover their 'true selves'. This practice therefore positions keepers as those with the privileged viewpoint on what it means to be a chimpanzee – based on their reading of scientific papers, consultation with experts and so on. Resocialization, however, prioritizes chimpanzees' own knowledge of how best to live their lives. They are given freedom throughout the day to choose to associate with each other in places which cannot be seen from outside the enclosures and to do what they want – a freedom which the keepers contrast with their previous lives in the circus or in advertising, where they were always at the whim of their human owner. Interference in chimpanzee worlds is therefore carefully managed and limited.

However, when these worlds are shaped by keepers, this is not done according to a schema or blueprint. Keepers build large wooden structures, with bars, towers and old hosepipes donated by the fire service at the end of the dry summer season, carefully considering how to construct them for the chimpanzees' maximum enjoyment. They also spend hours covering pine cones with honey and muesli, or – on hot days – freezing fruit juices (or *horchata*) inside plastic bottles where they are hard to reach, or building and elaborately painting cardboard boxes and puzzles for the chimpanzees to take apart, solve and then consume. In describing the embodied practice of weaving coiled basketry, Ingold (2000: 342) suggests that 'the form unfolds within a kind of force field, in which the weaver is caught up in a reciprocal and muscular dialogue

with the material.' The same shoe boxes filled with monkey chow and apple pieces fixed together by keepers' hands in a reciprocal and muscular dialogue are subsequently disassembled by chimpanzee hands. Mediated by these objects, worlds which are exclusively chimpanzee or exclusively keeper become hard to disentangle, as both groups lick fingers covered with the same honey, or stitch together and then unpick the same threads. The fences only come back into view as chimpanzees take apple pieces or nuts which have been thrown in with the rest of the afternoon scatter, and push them back through – avoiding the electrically charged wire – to share with the keepers who have taken a seat to watch them.

But the fences are also a reminder of the keepers' interest in the worlds of *human* others. Not only must keepers teach the chimpanzees not to consider themselves human, they must also educate members of the public not to anthropomorphize chimpanzees. Indeed, keepers often told me with pride that where tourists could previously be found throughout the Costa Brava with a photo of themselves in which they are holding a dressed-up baby chimp at the beach, now they are regularly seen with one of the sanctuary's leaflets in their back-pocket instead.

The buzzing reverberation of the electric fence, which has a large plaque warning visitors that there are *animales peligrosos* (dangerous animals) within, signals the absolute seal of the gate to keepers who have been scattering breakfast or cleaning the outdoor enclosures prior to the chimps' morning exit. This demarcation of a boundary not only protects the chimpanzees from those who would anthropomorphize them, however; it also protects them from those who would consider them to be only *animales peligrosos*.

The sanctuary has had two events since it was founded which keepers referred to as tragedies. Both have occurred when the boundaries of the outdoor enclosures no longer performed their function of separation. Once outside, chimpanzees who had softly groomed the keepers through the mesh of the sleeping cages became disorientated and defensive. When police officers were then faced with an animal⁹ which they considered dangerous for the surrounding human community, they did not listen to the keepers' arguments that the large male chimpanzees were themselves terrified. They imposed an oppositional hierarchy in which the chimpanzee was subordinated and did not escape the encounter alive.

Doublethink

When I attempted to 'cut the network' by focusing on the worlds of the keepers, I could not cut the trailing threads which lead to other elsewheres and elsewhens. Nor could I have hoped that by 'zooming in', complexity would decrease (cf. Strathern 2004). The worlds of my others (in this case, the keepers) appeared as multiple in their differences as had the worlds of 'people connected to the sanctuary' which I had first attempted to trace. Furthermore, they were impossible to disentangle from the worlds of the keepers' *own* others: the chimpanzees, the visitors, the local police.

In considering multiple worlds, Mol (2002: 6) writes, 'ontologies are brought into being, sustained or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices'. In line with the move to invert previous trends in which 'culture [was] seen to

hover over the material world – but not to permeate it’ (Ingold 2000: 340), anthropology and related disciplines have been increasingly characterized by materiality (Latour 1988; Law 2002; Miller 2005). However, I would now like to focus on the moment in which the multiplicity of worlds described above seemed to crystallize before me in stark contradiction. The significance of this moment was that the sociomaterial practices, in which I had understood these worlds to be suspended, appeared to be just traces – mere reflections.

The physicality of the moment could be described thus: a wooden picnic table in the mid-afternoon sun, half-shaded by the corrugated iron porch, dusty, with a couple of bowls and plates and an ashtray on the wooden slats, quiet again after a noisy and energetic lunch, a few wooden stools nearby, indicating that there have, until recently, been more people present than there has been space at the table. Almost everyone has left the table now: to check their email, to finish some paperwork, to take a *siesta* away from the hot sun. Jo, a volunteer keeper who has been at the sanctuary for eight months, and I, are the only two left talking.

Jo is leaning back on a wooden stool, two of its legs on the floor and one in the air, smoking a cigarette and rocking herself by pushing the bench with her toes. I am carving an apple into slices and eating it, being careful not to get apple juice on my notepad. We are talking again about Juanito, and the way he was when he was rescued – in a T-shirt and diaper, in his cot, with his brightly coloured toys and his blanket. Jo is saying that people do so much harm when they project false desires and attributes onto chimpanzees. ‘That’s why you shouldn’t anthropomorphize,’ she declares, and then (as if to emphasize this next point, she stubs her cigarette out in the ashtray): ‘There is no way we can know how a chimpanzee thinks or feels – we can’t even know what other people think, let alone a different species.’

In her argument, Jo articulates the perils of attempting to relate the other’s world to one’s own. Such a statement reinforces the philosophy of the sanctuary: to create a world of possibility, which approximates the natural world of a chimpanzee as closely as the keepers are able with the resources available to them, and which limits the movements and the actions of the chimpanzees as little as possible – aside from the fact that it imposes an original separation between humans and chimpanzees. According to Jo’s argument, only chimpanzees can grasp what it is to be a chimpanzee, and only they can make choices about how best to live their life each day – once they have been given the tools to do so in a way which requires minimal human interference. In fact, she goes further: the world of another, she claims, even another of your own species – even your own culture or social group – is inaccessible, unfathomable, impossible to conceive.

However, our conversation does not end there. Several minutes later we are talking about the importance of social interactions for chimpanzees, and the difficulty of ensuring this for those who are still in the socializing cages, or who have been separated due to illness. We are talking in particular about Julio, a large male who has been in quarantine due to a disease, which although contagious, has little noticeable effect on his health. He has been a great cause of concern for the keepers lately. Jo is emphatic that she can’t wait for tomorrow, when he’ll have a chance to go into the bigger enclosure and stretch his legs and climb the high tower. However, it is his lack of social interaction which is worrying her the most. ‘It’s horrible,’ she explains, ‘he gets so lonely all day on

his own.' Suddenly curious, given her earlier argument, I ask her how she can tell that he is lonely. 'It's obvious!' – she looks at me with a slightly chastising confusion on her face – 'You've seen him...! His body language, his face – he's so withdrawn. Sitting all day, staring, thinking. Not doing anything. Not like his normal self. How would you feel to be alone for days on end? When I'm cleaning the cage next to his, I can feel the weight of it. It's so sad.'

As I look down at my notes, where these two possibilities appear side by side, I am struck by what I perceive to be an irreconcilable contradiction. A paradox. How can it be both 'impossible' and 'obvious' to know what a chimpanzee thinks and feels? A temptation might now surface to resolve this contradiction structurally; can I make an opposition between thinking and feeling? For example, the keepers sometimes feel 'as if' they are empathizing with a chimpanzee, but they 'know' they can have no real knowledge of a chimp's thoughts, of the working of his mind. Or, perhaps I could conclude that while Jo aspires to, or thinks of herself as someone who makes separations between chimpanzees and humans and between selves and others, what she actually *does* is produce hybrids, and relate without discrimination.

But these conclusions are unsatisfactory. As I have shown, *both* of Jo's emphatic statements are enacted at the sanctuary without any clear prioritization; keepers just as often act *as if* they can grasp the perspective of a chimpanzee, as they act *as if* they cannot. Furthermore, I cannot disentangle thinking and feeling in the words Jo uses, and she has made no binary opposition – no discernable hierarchy. Undoubtedly though, were I to force the issue, such a formulation could be agreed upon. But instead, when I confront Jo with the apparent contradiction in what she has just told me, she looks puzzled and agrees that when I put the two statements next to one another, they do appear to contradict. But she does not retract either statement, and instead says that she will think about it.

I have also continued to think about it. Indeed, I have previously (Alcayna-Stevens 2009) made use of 'doublethink' as a heuristic in order to consider how I might refrain from 'actualizing the possible expressions' of these two apparently contradictory modes of thought 'and deciding to sustain them as possibilities' (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 137). In his dystopian vision of the future, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, George Orwell describes doublethink as:

the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them ... to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies. (Orwell [1949] 1990: 164–165)

My use of doublethink, however, had none of the diametric opposition of reality and illusion. Nor did it have any relation to 'doublespeak' – a language which deliberately disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. I found the concept of doublethink to be an interesting heuristic because of its appreciation of comings-in and -out of existence of what would appear (when placed side by side) to be incommensurable practices.

Contemporary anthropologists – writing beyond the earliest twentieth-century ethnographies, which sought an ethnographic method which could capture structure,

internal integrity and the ways in which the parts of a system come together in the form of a whole – regularly experiment with heterogeneity, difference and complexity. As I have suggested above, like the Mandelbrot set or the Cantor dust, complexity remains evident on all distance scales (cf. Wagner 1991; Strathern 2004). In this case, however, ‘zooming out’ again might give insight into how to consider the apparent contradiction in Jo’s narrative. Recall the difference between the ‘real’ of the keepers and the ‘real’ of the scientists in relation to chimpanzees – ‘the way is not the same in both directions’. A concept like ‘doublethink’ allows for the possibility of suspending actualization of the worlds of several people, or of one person, by refraining from describing these worlds in the terms of one or the other, as well as refraining from bringing them together with a third set of terms – those of the ethnographer. Rather, the concept allows the ethnographer to refrain from actualization, which would signal the absorption of one or more worlds into the terms of the dominant one.

Candea’s (forthcoming) thought-provoking exploration of scepticism and ‘abstentionism’ in research scientists’ considerations of animal minds resonates with the arguments presented in this paper, and suggests that these practices of suspension, abstention and doublethink are not unique to Catalunyan chimpanzee keepers. Given the wealth of recent literature which suggests that ‘moderns’ are often ‘non-modern’ in their thoughts and practices, one might also conclude that what I term ‘doublethink’ here forms a significant part of Euro-Americans’ engagements with their world(s). The recent work of anthropologists such as Willerslev (2004) and Pederson (2011) also reminds us that ethnographers all over the world encounter apparent contradictions, inconsistencies and discontinuities in the narratives and ontologies of their interlocutors, and that multiple ontologies and ways of engaging with the world are equally important in the lives of ‘non-Euro-American’ people.

In considering these different narratives and engagements, however, it might be productive to linger a little on the *enactment* of worlds. While doublethink alludes to the simultaneity of *possible* worlds, I would argue that worlds themselves are rarely simultaneous. Willerslev (2004) makes use of the concept of ‘double perspective’ in order to conceive of the way in which a Yukaghir hunter assumes his prey’s point of view, while nonetheless remaining grounded as a human hunter. However, the experience of living in a world, in a manner approximating the paradox of Zeno’s arrow,¹⁰ is that the paradox ‘is resolved in reality, for the arrow – against all odds, as it were – rapidly arrives at its destination’ (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2011: 141). In the case of the Yukaghirs, the hunter is either successful in his hunt, or he *becomes* his prey and is thus lost in the forest. In this way, one might argue that while the possibilities are multiple, the multiple worlds enacted are never exactly simultaneous.

If one reads Orwell’s original description closely, ‘simultaneity’ appears to refer only to the *potential* of thoughts. The allusion to the ‘necessary’ implicitly speaks of broader connections and relations, through which one or other reality is ultimately enacted – even if it is followed *almost* simultaneously by difference. In the search for a post-deconstructive theory of the subject, Humphrey (2008) argues that subjects can emerge from multiplicity and possibility – if only momentarily – in what she terms ‘decision-events’. Similarly, while a concept such as Candea’s (forthcoming) ‘abstentionism’ might be productively used to capture Jo’s own reflections on her apparently contradictory

arguments, and her desire to refrain from actualization and 'think about it', I would like to suggest that enactment itself often prioritizes one of these possible worlds over another, even if they are enacted in rapid alternation. Indeed, when one moves away from the dystopian overtones of Orwell's original doublethink, it becomes clear that possible engagements with worlds, and the objects and concepts integral to them, are enacted creatively, expressively and (more often than not) wholeheartedly.

Jo's emphatic statement as she stubbed out her cigarette and exclaimed that it was 'impossible' to know the mind of another was just as definite as her statement that it was 'obvious' to know how another thinks and feels. However, here a difference begins to emerge between Willerslev's Yukaghirs and the Catalanian chimpanzee keepers. While Willerslev (2007: 117) emphasizes that the personhood of elk and reindeer were distinctly felt by the hunters when within the forest, he also argues that when in the village, and thus in the company of fur traders, their views on animals could more easily be described as 'modern'. These were different worlds, with different demands, different objects and different relations – but in what sense can we say that Jo, sitting at the picnic table with me, was inhabiting and enacting different worlds, when she made her statements? In order to take this seriously, I will return to Deleuze's reconceptualization of the other and the other's world. But first, let me relate one final ethnographic moment, without which I might not have made such a connection.

When there are downpours accompanied by thunder and lightening, the keepers rush outside to open the doors leading into the chimpanzee sleeping quarters. After much of the screaming and hooting has subsided, one can make out – within the blur of the rain – one after another of the chimpanzees darting into the cages and shaking themselves dry. All of them, that is, apart from one of the largest males: Marco. When it rains heavily, and the sky is streaked with lightening, Marco stands upright and walks bipedally around the perimeter of the fence with clenched fists and a look of extreme concentration, his hair standing on end. He interrupts his walking only to swing hosepipes or drag boxes, plastic bottles, or anything which will make a loud noise. He does not stop until the storm has subsided.

One afternoon, several days after a huge storm, I accompanied one of the research scientists, Didi, in his observations of the *Machos*' enclosure. Marco was sitting on the floor grooming himself and leaning against a wooden pole. All of the other chimpanzees were high above and out of view, relaxing in hammocks or on platforms. Suddenly, Marco's hair stood completely on end, the way it would if he were frightened, angry or in some other way aroused. 'What was that?' I asked Didi, 'did something happen?' Didi was also looking around, holding on to his clipboard and binoculars. 'No,' he shrugged and looked back down at his notes, 'he must just have been thinking about something.' In his introduction to an exploration of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of expression, Massumi (2002: 28) writes, 'Thought strikes like lightning, with sheering ontogenetic force. It is Felt.'

When I talked with Jo, there appeared to be no perceptible change in her world, no assemblages enacted which would render her previous statement irrelevant, and make it necessary for her to evoke a new world. How to explain this multiplicity when faced with an apparent continuity? If I think about Marco, Deleuze's reconceptualization of the other's world returns to me with a new emphasis: 'the expressed has (for us) no

existence apart from that which expresses it'. *For us*. But what about for the other? Deleuze digresses from his argument about how the self might grasp the other and her world for long enough to briefly suggest that for 'that which expresses it' (the other), 'the expressed' (the other's world) is related to '*as though to something completely different*' (Deleuze 2004: 323, emphasis added). To me, Jo's expressions appeared to contradict, because they appeared in the same world. That is, my world had not changed from the wooden picnic table in the mid-afternoon sun. Jo, meanwhile, had been wandering into and evoking different worlds in the course of the conversation. For Jo, these worlds were not simultaneous, or even in the same space – the elsewhens and elsewherees she evoked (and which I brought together in contradiction as I jotted them into my notes) comprised *different* worlds.¹¹

Actualization: Alienable Worlds

So, how can an appreciation – but not an actualization – of the multiple worlds of chimpanzee keepers contribute to contemporary theoretical debates surrounding Viveiros de Castro's consideration of how the injunction to 'take seriously' might be imbued with a meaning specific to social anthropology?

Other anthropologists (cf. Candea 2011) have rightly expressed concern that – in so many words – if we allow the bomb planted by Viveiros de Castro to detonate, certain fieldsites risk becoming concealed beneath the rubble. When taking 'others' seriously, Viveiros de Castro (2011: 133) argues, it is imperative that in a reciprocal – *anti*-symmetrical – move, anthropology must find a way not to take seriously 'almost all of the things ... near to or inside of us'. The potentially dangerous word in this formulation is, of course, 'us'. Whatever this pronoun is shorthand for, it undoubtedly produces reification. Indeed, as detailed in the introduction to this Special Section, recent work in anthropology has been characterized by an increase in the frequency with which Euro-American ontology is used as a 'familiar' world (cf. Descola 2006, 2009) against which to contrast and illuminate a multiplicity of non-Euro-American ontologies. It is undoubtedly true that anthropologists regularly utilize concepts inherited from an intellectual genealogy largely confined in origin to Western Europe; an intellectual genealogy which has itself shaped and been shaped by people and peoples outside academia. However, to homogenize the vast spatial and temporal heterogeneity of that social context – the boundaries of which remain undefined, or in a process of constant redefinition – as 'the West', 'the moderns' or 'the naturalists', is to commit an intellectual reification. As I hope to have demonstrated above, when looked at ethnographically, European chimpanzee keepers' worlds are not so easily pinned down.

Perhaps one could describe this complexity as the result of a relation internal to ethnographic writing. In his response to Viveiros de Castro's paper, Candea (2011: 150) suggests that 'the endo/exo contrast is not a starting point but an outcome'. In order to consider 'taking seriously' as an anthropological project, we might make use of another contrast, not concerning insides and outsides, but concerning the alienability of worlds. In order to achieve this, one might draw upon Viveiros de Castro's (2011: 136) paraphrase of Rorty, that 'to be an anthropologist is to divide the human race into people whose beliefs one can legitimately challenge and the others'. While Viveiros de Castro

does not endorse this definition, it nonetheless encapsulates the particular method of ethnographic writing, which artificially draws together narratives of different *intent*.

Focusing on 'intent' allows for a move away from the radical a priori contrast between 'our world' and 'theirs'. Considered in this way, 'taking seriously' emerges as the *ipso facto* marker of an ethnographer's relation to an ethnographic interlocutor. Ethnographic interlocutors do not precede the relating, but are revealed through their relation to an ethnographer's ethnography; a relation which might properly be defined as one in which the ethnographer 'takes seriously' the inalienability of the interlocutor's world, insofar as that world is not reduced to an object entirely encapsulated within the ethnographer's own world and disassociated from the people from whom it originated.

These ethnographic interlocutors have been described as anthropology's 'other'. However, it could be argued that anthropologists also relate through their ethnographies with other 'others'. These other interlocutors are highly partible, and they are often encountered and enrolled through their written texts – these are philosophers, social scientists and other anthropologists. One could argue that *their* narratives are of a different 'intent' because they have alienated their own worlds and invited us (readers, anthropologists) to join them in making – through critique, assent, assimilation or imitation – ontological claims about those worlds. We cannot therefore, once we accept the relation to be thus, take seriously the inalienability of *those* worlds. This, then, would mark a contrast between those people whose worlds (I would replace 'belief' in Viveiros de Castro's original paraphrasing of Rorty) we can legitimately challenge – indeed, we have been invited to do so¹² – and the others, whose worlds we must not affirm or deny, but rather, 'take seriously'.¹³

According to such a formulation, the injunction to take seriously opens the possibility for anyone to be an ethnographic interlocutor when related to in terms of the inalienability of their world(s). If we consider that anthropologists draw together narratives of different intent, then the endo/exo contrast is neither a starting point nor an outcome; both sets of interlocutors are others, and what we are concerned with as ethnographers is the alienability of their world. Such a distinction, then, is no longer based on *who* people are and a subsequent categorization of their worldviews, but on a very functional distinction made by the anthropologist as she engages these two sets of interlocutors (those who have alienated a world for debate, and those who have not) in the process of ethnographic writing.

However, having attempted to take seriously my own ethnographic interlocutors, another perturbation now appears; while the worlds of the ethnographic other may appear inalienable from the outside (to us), for our ethnographic interlocutors these worlds are experienced, enacted and related to 'as though to something completely different'. In order to take seriously our ethnographic interlocutors and their inalienable worlds, therefore, we must acknowledge that for *them*, these worlds are at times alienable – that is, our interlocutors make both epistemological and ontological claims. They offer their worlds up for critique or assent, as we do our own. Furthermore, they also multiply their own worlds by at times challenging, and at other times attempting to understand, the worlds of others from the perspective of those others.

Zourabichvili (2004, cited in Viveiros de Castro 2010: 225) argues that Deleuze's most profound insight is that 'difference is also communication and contagion between

heterogeneities; in other words, that a divergence never arises without reciprocal contamination of points of view'. This contamination of perspectives could be seen to describe the entanglements of worlds I have attempted to take seriously in this paper, or which have been drawn into view by the keepers' own attempts to produce and imagine alterity. Throughout his lecture *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida (2008) examines the animal's capacity to 'interrupt' our everyday existence through an inescapably ethical and political encounter. In their writing on humans and animals, philosophers from Heidegger (1962) to Agamben (2004) and Derrida have sought to question the atomistic, autonomous subject of modern philosophy, and in its place, to envision the subject as a witness to, and bearer of, an event which exceeds the singular subject, while nonetheless calling it into being.

When we take seriously the worlds of our ethnographic others, we must be open to the encounters – the multiple other worlds – within which they are entangled. In exploring Viveiros de Castro's reformulation of the injunction to 'take seriously' our interlocutors and their worlds, this paper has privileged certain imported terms and concepts (notably 'alienability', 'ontology' and 'doublethink') which were not themselves generated from the worlds of my interlocutors. However, I hope to have given equal importance to the thoughts, narratives and practices to which these concepts relate, and to have made clear that if we, as ethnographers, are to appreciate the significance of the multiple worlds within which our interlocutors live, we must take into account *both* the apparently unbridgeable dualisms which they utilize and enact, *and* the disappearance, dissolution and intermittent irrelevance of these dualisms in their encounters and reflections.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of those who had a part to play in the formation of this paper. Particular thanks go to Marilyn Strathern and the two anonymous peer reviewers for their invaluable comments. I am indebted to Matei Candea for his comments, intellectual insight, and his limitless generosity. I am grateful to the Newnham College Travel Bursary and the Cambridge European Trust Scholarship, without which the fieldwork on which this paper is based would not have been possible. To Harry, I am indebted more than words can say. My greatest thanks go to the keepers, researchers, volunteers and residents (human and non-human) at *Fundació Mona*, for sharing your thoughts and lives, and for your kindness.

Notes

1. My reading of 'possible worlds' here does not bear any relation to the modal claims of analytic philosophy, where such worlds indicate the truth, falsity or contingency of propositions (cf. Lewis 1973).
2. It is perhaps important to acknowledge that this is still very much a debate, and that other contemporary anthropologists, such as Ingold (2011: 229), are advocating precisely the opposite: while the objective of *ethnography* is 'to describe the lives of people other than ourselves', the objective of *anthropology* is to seek 'a comparative but nevertheless critical understanding of human being and knowing in the one world we all inhabit'.

3. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; drawn up in 1973, the Convention aims to protect wildlife against over-exploitation, and to prevent international trade from threatening endangered species such as chimpanzees. Spain became a member in 1986.
4. In July 2010, the Parliament of Catalonia voted for a bullfighting ban which came into effect on 1 January 2012, in a move which many have linked to Catalan nationalism and a desire to publicly distinguish the region from the rest of Spain and its traditions.
5. For thought-provoking attempts which examine this, see the work of Cheney and Seyfarth (1990, 2007) on primate psychologies and semiotics.
6. 'Learning to speak chimpanzee' is a process of re-socialization and re-naturalization, in that it encompasses a relearning of bodily as well as social being. Chimpanzees are introduced to a more 'natural' diet, and to a more 'naturalistic' environment; they are provided with vitamins and enrichment hidden in a way supposed to help them simulate wild foraging or problem-solving behaviours. One such example is termite fishing (using tools to retrieve honey and muesli from artificial termite mounds), which, although not practised by the majority of wild chimpanzee populations, and not always practised in the same way, has gained fame and iconic status since Goodall's discovery of its practice in the 1960s led to the demise of man's uniqueness as 'the toolmaker'.
7. The chimpanzees were considered too damaged to be released into the wild (itself an expensive, complicated – and often unsuccessful – endeavour), and the keepers always explained their striving for naturalistic environments and 'natural' behaviours as approximations of the real thing.
8. Arnold Chiari Syndrome is a congenital disease affecting the spinal cord, and causing immense pain to the sufferer. This disease was previously unknown in chimpanzees, and Nico has therefore been treated by surgeons and doctors who normally deal with the syndrome in humans. In 2006, he was invited to join, as an honorary member, an association for human sufferers of Arnold Chiari Syndrome in Catalunya.
9. This noun could be replaced with Derrida's (2008) neologism, 'animot', in order to evoke the violence done to animals by the word ('mot'), or concept of 'the animal', which reduces a vast heterogeneity of different beings into a homogenous plural to which 'the human' can be opposed.
10. Zeno's paradoxes are a set of philosophical problems devised by the Greek philosopher, Zeno of Elea. He states that for motion to occur, an object must change the position which it occupies. He gives an example of an arrow in flight. In the words of Viveiros de Castro (2011: 141), 'At each instant (indivisible, by definition), Zeno's arrow occupies a portion of space equal to itself; if it were to move during that instant, it would have to occupy a space larger than itself, for otherwise it would have no room to move'.
11. See also Kohn's (this issue) assertion that 'semiosis is alive', and the emphasis of Henare, Holbraad and Wastall (2007: 13) that things reveal themselves to people not as perceptions but as *conceptions*.
12. I am reminded here of Tarde's (2010: 5) justification for why he delivers his 'thought in fragments only'; more often than not, he points out, 'our successors will have nothing more pressing to do than demolish these structures in order to make some other use of the materials'.
13. One could conceive of an anthropology which does not relate the ontological claims of philosophers, social scientists and other anthropologists with the worlds of its ethnographic interlocutors (indeed, Mol's (2002: 2–6) subtext, beginning with 'How to Relate to the Literature?', is an attempt at organizing these materials differently). Therefore, this injunction would concern only the current ethnographic practice in which this is more or less the norm.

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