

Chimpanzee Sanctuary: “Surplus” Life and the Politics of Transspecies Care

Julietta Hua and Neel Ahuja

In the first decade of the new millennium, animal activists heralded unprecedented legal protections for nonhuman great apes. Countries across Europe and the Pacific abolished the medical use of chimpanzees, gorillas, bonobos, baboons, and orangutans; meanwhile, the United Nations formalized a new conservation effort in twenty-three range states in Africa and Southeast Asia. In 2000 the US Congress also passed the Chimpanzee Health, Improvement, Maintenance, and Protection (CHIMP) Act, which dedicates federal funding for a sanctuary system providing long-term care for captive chimpanzees previously used in US biomedical and military research. Such legislation acknowledges claims for legal redress against histories of displacement, confinement, and experimentation, signaling an apparent posthumanism of the law. In his signing statement for the CHIMP Act, former president Bill Clinton presented this expansion of state protection as a moral imperative: “This Act is a valuable affirmation of the Federal Government’s responsibility and moral obligation to . . . ensure a secure retirement for surplus Federal research chimpanzees and to meet their lifetime needs for shelter and care.”¹

Chimpanzee sanctuary, as both a social institution and a conceptual apparatus, signals the decline in the biomedical use of chimpanzees in the United States and the rise of a gendered ethic of carework, two developments deeply linked to twentieth-century imperial knowledge projects publicizing the cultural, biological, and emotional likeness of humans and chimpanzees. This article examines the rise of the US chimpanzee sanctuary—a system of domestic sanctuaries that house and care for chimpanzees declared “surplus” or “retired” from biomedical research²—as a site through which to understand the contradictory neoliberal conditions that transform chimpanzees from imperial conscripts in Cold War technological development into unkillable wards of the US state. We furthermore explore the deeply gendered ways in which the philosophy and practice of sanctuary is informed by—but ultimately exceeds—earlier models of animal rights and conservation. Animal rights and conservation serve as two dominant discourses through which to figure “the just” and “the moral”

when it comes to animals. Yet as Karla Armbruster notes, in the history of conservation, “protecting and speaking for the gorillas [and other great apes] often demonstrate[s] a serious disregard for the rights and needs of the native [human populations of Africa],”³ while idealistic invocations of universal ape rights, as Lori Gruen and Kari Weil make clear, “flattens or erases the complexity of our interactions with others . . . [and] truncates the description of moral problems.”⁴ Given these limitations, we read the chimpanzee sanctuary as a pragmatic yet constrained solution that focuses on the humane reform of captivity by marshaling feminized human labor to administer the surplus, nonlaboring time of captive chimpanzees. The emergent care-based vision of justice depends on a neoliberal valuation of feminized affective labor that is key to the sanctuary’s political–economic logic of humane captivity. In this context, the chimpanzee remains an exceptional species granted state redress, a status enabled at once by changing public understandings of animal ethics, the cost savings of feminized labor, and technical and economic pressures that devalue chimpanzees as once-privileged sources of bio-value.

Working from our interviews conducted with caregivers at one small chimpanzee sanctuary,⁵ we argue that the productive potential of chimpanzee sanctuary lies in the possibilities that the space/time awaiting death offers for reconceptualizing notions of justice. The sanctuary on which our claims are based is one that, like many others, espouses an explicit anticaptivity, but not necessarily rights-based or conservationist, mission and philosophy. We read the practice of the sanctuary and its workers as one that centers an idea of “the good” as providing for each individual chimpanzee’s needs, never the same from moment to moment even for any one individual, which institutes an obligation for care-into-death. This philosophy not only frames the project of the organization but also informs how each caregiver narrates the trajectory of his or her own career path as well as his or her opinions about animal activism. Our research is based primarily on our formal, recorded interviews of the paid (non-volunteer) employees of the sanctuary, but is also drawn from informal conversations (notated but not recorded) we had with the workers as well as observations made while visiting the sanctuary. While our observations are based on our ethnographic research of one sanctuary, we argue that the broader political and economic conditions under which sanctuaries in general have emerged shape its constraints as well as its conditions of promise and possibility.

In what follows, we first briefly outline the paradox of human–chimpanzee likeness, where projects of science and technology in the context of US imperialism utilize species comparisons to justify experimentation, exploitation,

and captivity even as they underline rationales for why chimpanzees should be protected. The brief history of the shifting discourses of likeness helps contextualize the institutionalization of the sanctuary, as well as the sanctuary’s discursive and political conditions of emergence. This historical paradox of likeness informs how we read our interviews with sanctuary caregivers, which document struggles to reshape duties toward chimpanzees through languages of care, highlighting three terms of transspecies engagement: (1) a hesitance toward claiming species-wide conservation goals and a focus on chimpanzee individuality; (2) awaiting and welcoming the death of wards during the “surplus time” of retirement; and (3) an obligation to provide a kind of good life, but acknowledging that this goal is deeply compromised by the realities of captivity. Unlike many conservation and rights initiatives, these approaches to care emphasize improvisation and complexity, resisting the collapsing of animal exploitation to a universalized model of oppression analogous to racism, sexism, or other structures of social power. While neoliberal institutional priorities frame hegemonic conceptions of justice for humans through the promise of greater expansion of rights, we ask, “What might it mean that late-liberal conceptions of justice, when it comes to chimpanzees, are often actively disengaged from rights?”

The Likeness of Species: US Empire, Biocapital, and Postwar Primate Figures

Today’s great ape sanctuary efforts are informed by interlinked political struggles over the constitution of postwar imperial biomedicine and the rise of transnational animal rights and ecological movements, all of which have been deeply influenced by scientific research on the likeness between humans and other primates. Postwar efforts to incorporate primate models into scientific disciplines, research infrastructures, and projects to reconstitute a humanist internationalism from approximately 1945 to 1970 helped shape neoliberal debates that, from 1970 to the present, coalesce around the ethics and ecological impacts of the biomedical primate trade. Despite the heated public contestation between animal activists and research scientists over the captivity and vivisection of apes and monkeys, the biomedical, ecological, and animal rights discourses on primate research turn on similar constructions of the biological, social, and cognitive likeness of primate species, even as they also emphasize diversity within species.

In the three decades following the end of World War II, the US government, pharmaceutical producers, and private research institutions imported large numbers of nonhuman primate species for use in biomedical research, behavioral studies, defense experiments, toxicology testing, and vaccine production. The imperial trade in nonhuman primates, which exploited preexisting colonial divisions of economic and ecological resources between Asian and African range states and primate-importing states, made the United States home to the world's largest captive populations of nonhuman primates used in research. Testing bodily responses to zero-gravity expansionism and to new pharmaceuticals enlisted to battle polio and other diseases, federal officials and private labs imported apes and monkeys. Breeding projects became especially significant after importation schemes encountered political challenges of decolonizing states that refused unfettered access to primate biocapital.⁶ Postwar investments in high-tech biomedical research, the decolonization of primate range states, and an emergent Cold War "monkey race" between the United States and the Soviet Union contributed to a massive federal effort to figuratively and literally domesticate the bodies of nonhuman primates, with chimpanzees and rhesus macaques emerging as prized species. In the 1950s the defense apparatus imported hundreds of chimpanzees for radiation and spaceflight studies; meanwhile, the public-private effort to stem the spread of polio through mass vaccination depended on the bodies of an estimated 1 million rhesus macaques, put to death in the process. After the success of the rhesus-derived Salk vaccine, state officials began to view nonhuman primates as key raw materials of the national security state, necessary for the successful engineering of defense and immune technologies.

Responding to both heavy Soviet investments in primate research and the decolonial disruptions to the biomedical primate trade, US officials made a concerted effort to develop a domestic primate breeding program to ensure a steady supply of primates not dependent on importation schemes from Africa and Asia. This project developed into the eight National Primate Research Centers of the National Institutes of Health and the Caribbean Regional Primate Center located in Puerto Rico. The primate centers have housed forty-five species of primates, and currently maintain over seventy thousand individuals, with large populations of rhesus macaques, marmosets, and vervets. Because of the difficulty of importation, declining range populations, ethical controversies, low research demand, and high cost of care, the larger great ape species occupy a small niche in these institutions, with chimpanzees numbering around one thousand remaining the largest group.⁷

Expanded funding for primate resources during the 1950s and 1960s helped invigorate primatology more broadly.⁸ In *Primate Visions* Donna Haraway highlights the particular importance, in the wake of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Nazi genocides, that anthropological research on nonhuman primate bodies played in reinvigorating a universal concept of the human. Emerging evolutionary thought described the species differentiation of the human through an account of the rise of a patriarchal vision of hunting man attached to a nuclear family; this vision of human nature eclipsed the traumatic historical time of the racially fragmented humanity of the world wars with the shared evolutionary time of primate universality, reproduced through the patriarchal family as primordial scene of origins. Race did not disappear in this formulation—it was sedimented into the notion of cognitively equal but distinct “populations.” Even as apes and monkeys were figured as primordial origins of a globalized human, they also became important figures of modernity and conscripts of the Cold War effort: captive chimpanzees were triumphantly launched into outer space by NASA in 1960 and 1961 to prove that the nation could survive zero-gravity expansionism.⁹ Thus narratives of universal human origins emerged alongside Cold War efforts to differentiate the “advancement” of the United States from communist states.

Publicizing nonhuman primates as models for the past and future human also raised questions about the ethics of their indefinite captivity and unregulated exploitation. By 1970 a convergence of biomedical, ethical, and environmental concerns brought increasing attention to the plight of apes and monkeys, both within the continental borders of the United States and internationally. A new generation of species theorists concerned with the uses of animals in factory farming, hunting, and laboratories helped develop a liberal, rights-based critique of “speciesism” that followed on the anticaptivity discourses of British and American abolitionism as well as the social justice concepts of the civil rights and women’s movements.¹⁰ At the same time, pressured to act on growing environmental concerns over chemical toxicity at home and abroad during the Vietnam War,¹¹ the United States entered into negotiations for the first international agreements on the conservation of endangered animals. In the same year that it passed the 1973 Endangered Species Act, the United States ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This agreement banned the commercial trade of endangered species. In a contested series of decisions spanning 1984–1992, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) debated whether chimpanzees should be considered endangered and, furthermore, whether captive apes could be distinguished

from free-ranging apes and categorized differently for conservation purposes. Against the recommendations of animal rights organizations and increasingly outspoken primate behavioralists, including Roger Fouts and Jane Goodall, the FWS sided with the NIH, which argued for continued exploitation of captive chimpanzees.¹²

These debates were resolved through the determination of the research potential of chimpanzees in the search for AIDS treatments; researchers found that chimpanzees were one of the only species susceptible to HIV infection, leading to a scramble for new supplies of the animals.¹³ From 1987 to 1993 the NIH ran a program that bred nearly four hundred captive chimpanzees at five research institutions across the United States.¹⁴ Yet by the early 1990s the HIV research yielded no advances, with scientists unable to accurately model human AIDS in chimpanzees. Citing the wasted resources and cruel conditions of the chimpanzee program, animal advocates made increasingly successful appeals to lawmakers to establish curbs on chimpanzee research. At the same time, a group of high-profile primatologists argued that free-ranging chimpanzees had distinct, geographically bound cultures that demonstrated shared learning of particular behaviors, customs, and technologies.¹⁵ Primatologists argued that humans coevolved with other apes' adaptive forms of social organization, affective connection, and cognitive capacity. The informational language of the new genomics offered even starker challenges to normative political and ethical distinctions dividing humans from other great apes, and the human body itself could be reconceived as "98% chimpanzee" based on the equivalence of DNA base-pair sequences.¹⁶ Increasingly, primates appeared biologically, socially, culturally, and cognitively "like us," "kin" of humanity, in the words of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.¹⁷ By the late 1990s NIH officials conceded the exceptional ethical status of chimpanzees even as they reasserted control over other species used in research: "The phylogenetic status and psychological complexity of chimpanzees indicate that they should be accorded a special status with regard to euthanasia that might not apply to other research animals, for example, rats, dogs, or some other nonhuman primates. Simply put, killing a chimpanzee currently requires more ethical and scientific justification than killing a dog."¹⁸ It was in this context of declining research use and increasingly aggressive public activism that the first privately run US sanctuaries were launched in the 1990s; in 2000 the federal government established an official sanctuary system with an accredited care institution called Chimp Haven in Louisiana.

Geographically, the paradox of chimpanzee likeness emerges mainly in the wealthy importing countries: it was here that species comparisons moved from

justifying importation and captive research to justifying redress and state care. The major transformations in laws would likely have been impossible without an international conversation sparked by the ethicists Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri.¹⁹ Singer and Cavalieri’s Great Ape Project (GAP) draws on the attributions of cognitive, cultural, and emotional complexity to great apes—as well as comparisons between these capacities and those of human infants and the cognitively disabled—to propose the 1993 Declaration on Great Apes, modeled after the UN Declaration on Human Rights. The declaration incorporates humans among the other great apes in a multispecies “community of equals” that would, with a global scope, recognize the universal “right to life,” “the protection of individual liberty” (banning incarceration except for criminal convictions and protection of the individual or commonweal, subject to due process), and “prohibition of torture.”²⁰ Although the declaration has yet to become international law, its emphasis on negative rights (freedoms from torture and captivity) as fundamental rights of all great apes influenced several of the legislative debates over ape rights in nonrange states in the 1990s and 2000s.

Yet the anticaptivity discourse mobilized against chimpanzee vivisection in the importing states seems less appropriate to the contexts of African and Asian range states, where discourses of sustainable development dominate elite efforts to conserve species within a neoliberal framework privileging extraction and ecotourism. In conflict areas, such as the Congo–Rwanda border region where both violence and mining for the blood mineral coltan (used in cellphones and computers) exacerbates the displacement and death of chimpanzees, formal rights seem most precarious. Given the complexities of conservation in the face of war and deepening international divisions of wealth and labor, global South elites at the 1992 United Nations summit on biodiversity in Rio de Janeiro worked to link biodiversity to cultural diversity and to capitalist efforts at “sustainable development.” Within this context, GAP supporters, including Goodall, helped parlay the rights initiative into a UN partnership, the Great Ape Survival Project (GRASP). In its Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes of 2005, GRASP aimed to tether conservationism to a post-1992 sustainable development agenda that moves beyond neocolonial parks and policing to recognizing the value of “ecosystem services” protected by chimpanzees and other flagship species, the self-determination of local communities, and, notably, the “common but differentiated responsibility” of humans to conserve the “genetic, ecological, and cultural diversity of all great ape populations for all time.”²¹

Despite this division in the politics of redress across range states and importing states, both approaches emphasize the particularity of groups and individu-

als within the family of great apes, making local practices central to attempts to grant care and rehabilitation to chimpanzees. The approaches to redress for great apes of the 1990s and 2000s suggest political strategies that privilege situated interactions, locality, and autonomy. Chimpanzees, in the post-Rio politics of sustainable development, are no longer simply signs of a shared evolutionary history; they are instead figures of diversity, evidence of the complexity of biological and cultural differentiation. Emerging alongside broader discourses of diversity and multiculturalism, the refiguring of categorical human/not-human distinctions through attention to particularity and complexity continues to define the conceptual grounds of these animals' incorporation into the law. This operation we think of as the workings of the racial, which continues to define how difference is characterized in global politics despite the apparently postracial and posthuman mythologies of particularity.²²

Prison and Personhood: Negotiating Likeness in Sanctuary Practice

Our interviews with sanctuary workers reveal the complexity of sanctuary as a space to delink justice from notions of freedom as return to the “wild” and from rights and legal personhood. Sanctuary workers' understandings of their work initiate new modes of relationality that offer a reconsideration of anthropocentrism, austerity, the logics of incarceration, “surplus time,” and the limited notions of justice based in liberal–humanist formalisms. Resisting the tendency to frame the plight of captive chimpanzees as yet another instance of the same forms of injustice that have historically kept humans from exercising their political freedoms and rights, the sanctuary workers keep from collapsing the issue of chimpanzee captivity into broader social justice calls for the extension of rights and the recognition of neoliberal difference. The practices of the sanctuary highlight the paradox of likeness that limits legal incorporation as a privileged avenue for framing justice, providing instead alternative modes of engagement that resist any universal script for understanding transspecies relations. Even while captivity and imprisonment provide the everyday architecture of life in the sanctuary, including the physical space of the sanctuary where chimpanzees live in enclosures, caregivers complicate legal discourses of personhood and rights.

Lacking the resources or territorial control to return chimpanzees to a free-ranging environment, sanctuaries encounter the problem of captivity: How can the space of captivity be transformed into a maximally livable space for nonlaboring chimpanzees? Sanctuary practice is deeply inspired by anticaptivity discourses of animal rights movements. Published in 2000, the legal scholar

Steven Wise’s manifesto for great ape rights, *Rattling the Cage*, offers a powerful image of captivity. Wise begins with the death scene of Jerome, painting a portrait of an individual who “languished in his cell,” a “large, windowless, grey concrete box . . . 9 feet by 11 feet by 8.5 feet.” Wise’s brief prison narrative notes that “the teenager was dull, bloated, depressed, sapped, anemic, and plagued by diarrhea,” and it sensationally recounts his intentional infection with HIV strains as an infant. It is only after these details are presented that the reader is clued in to the fact that the incarcerated juvenile subjected to medical experimentation is not human—he is a chimpanzee who dies after eleven years of captivity in the Infectious Diseases Units at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center, affiliated with Emory University.²³ Wise’s book, which presents the first detailed legal case for extending personhood to other great apes, assembles decades of ethological study to demonstrate that chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans share emotional and cognitive capacities exceeding those of human infants and thus entitling them to legal rights. Drawing on a reading of antislavery jurisprudence as a basis for personal rights, Wise further argues that minimal capacities to suffer and to experience the world through self-recognition and memory entitle all great apes to the negative rights of legal persons: protection from bodily harm, death, enslavement, and a minimal recognition of the right to physical freedom.

In the emerging institutions of chimpanzee sanctuary, the mourning of captivity and the focus on individual suffering has become the basis of an ethic of expansive duties toward chimpanzees figured, as in Wise’s book, as kidnapped and wrongly imprisoned. Yet the sanctuary, in accepting the reality of lifelong captivity, reveals the limits to animal rights discourses that focus on expanding legal personhood. One sanctuary worker, Kelly, is succinct in expressing this basis for sanctuary: the chimpanzees “didn’t get to grow up in Africa and they had to go live in a cage. . . . They’re stuck here and we should do everything we can for them. . . . They didn’t commit any crime and that’s how I look at it; it’s not their fault but they have to live in a cage. They’re in for a crime they didn’t commit.” Kelly’s sentiment, if taken out of the context of her work as a sanctuary caregiver, can be read as a moment where the idea of injustice against chimpanzees slips into an anthropomorphic frame, collapsing the captive chimpanzee into human prisoners. However, Kelly and other sanctuary workers avoid such a collapsing by articulating the individuality and difference of each chimpanzee ward. Kelly’s statement of chimps as having to live in a cage for “a crime they didn’t commit” is, rather, an acknowledgment capturing the difficulties of reforming captivity that the workers negotiate daily, as chimpanzees are both like and unlike humans. Kelly continued to recount

to us how even though she tells visitors that chimpanzees are “our closest relatives so they feel the same emotions that we [humans] do,” she is continually reminded that “these [chimpanzee wards] are really great friends of mine, but I would never feel safe to be right next to them because they might bite. It doesn’t mean they’re any less of a good friend. They bite each other but they can handle it. We’re built differently, and I think that’s the thing. We have two separate worlds.” Invoking a likeness and even kinship between human and chimpanzee, caregivers nonetheless recognize limits to transspecies cohabitation. As Kelly says, her chimpanzee wards are “built differently”; they and she “have two separate worlds.” It is only the condition of captivity that brings the “two separate worlds” together. This tension in the idea of likeness—that chimpanzees are at once our kin even as they entrench the boundaries of difference separating species—is one that sanctuary workers regularly negotiate.

Sanctuary workers articulate the project of the sanctuary as departing from the history of conservation and animal rights movements. For example, Jennifer illustrates another recurring sentiment among the workers that conservation is a related, but nonetheless different, kind of project from the sanctuary: “I think of [conservation] as separate [from the work of the sanctuary]. . . . Ultimately I think there’s a tie, absolutely if people are learning about chimps or oranges from a sanctuary—I’m reluctant to say a zoo, since I don’t think you really learn anything from a zoo.” Another caregiver, Danny, says, “My motivation is the animals, the individual animals. I don’t see myself being all that involved in conservation. Not that I . . . I think it’s so important, but I have trouble being motivated by this vague concept of . . . an ecosystem [that] will be tipped out of balance. Something like that just wouldn’t make me get out of bed every morning to do the same thing. . . . It’s more like an injustice to an individual kind of thing than an idea of this sort of group that’s hard to define as a species [that motivates me].” The workers articulate their mission through anticaptivity discourse that troubles their own work in the space of the sanctuary as well as other institutional spaces like zoos. Further, in their hesitation to see conservation as a central part of their work at the sanctuary, Danny and Jennifer reject species as itself the categorical level for conceptualizing justice. In fact, all the workers we spoke to expressed a sentiment similar to Shannon’s claim: “I don’t want there to be chimps in zoos, so if that means they are all gone so be it. Of course, I don’t want chimps to go extinct, but I don’t think that having a handful in zoos is the solution.”

The sanctuary workers invoke an ethic of interpersonal engagement and duty at the level of the individual over a sense of saving the species. This sense

of personal stories and relationships is in fact what all our interviewees note as a key reason why they entered sanctuary carework; Shannon says, “I think there’s great value in being able to meet a chimp.” Danny says that it is the positive interaction and lifelong relationship that develops with the chimps that makes sanctuary work more appealing than, say, veterinary medicine. The interpersonal engagement that draws caregivers is one performed daily through the labor of care, which takes an improvisational form even as there are regularized duties of feeding and cleaning.

Caregivers design elaborate games and puzzles, and occasionally introduce foreign objects for the entertainment or socialization of chimpanzees. These “enrichment” processes dispense with any universal script for chimpanzee care, revealing that difference inheres in the micro-politics of caregiving rather than at the level of the group or species. While the caregivers avoid the state labels of “retirees” (recognizing national service) or “surplus” beings, they address chimpanzee wards as individuated bearers of surplus time,²⁴ creatures bearing an uncertain remainder of life free from laboratory exploitation. This surplus time is filled with activities to normatively socialize chimpanzees to accept the conditions of confinement, to forgo the infamous forms of aggression attributed to the traumas of captivity. For example, while some of the chimpanzee wards have acclimated to their lives in the sanctuary, shared with the other chimpanzee wards and their human caretakers, the workers all agreed that one chimpanzee, more than the others, continues to act in ways that caregivers understand as protest. Jennifer describes it this way:

She [the chimpanzee], when we were getting ready to leave at the end of the day . . . would start banging on the cage, stomping on the floor. She wanted something, she wanted something. So we would offer a pen or a boot or [ask] do you want some water. Nothing was ever good or right. She was never satisfied so we would leave at the end of the day with her banging at us. It was the most horrific time. I would struggle with that for hours after being home, of knowing that [she] is sitting there bored out of her mind, pulling her hair out [a nervous habit the chimpanzee brought with her to the sanctuary]. There was nothing I could do. So I came up with this idea of giving them evening puzzles. At the very end of the day we would give them something that hopefully takes some time. . . . I’m constantly trying to challenge her.

Jennifer expresses how even after many years with this chimpanzee, she is still working to devise new ways to negotiate their relationship. She told us how some days the chimpanzees disrupt the schedule (enclosure cleaning and feeding times), and on these days the caregivers simply wait for their wards to allow them to continue with their daily routines. Like her account of constantly

improvising new ways to make life meaningful for the chimpanzees, Jennifer describes the sanctuary's daily schedule as always also unfixed. Further, these improvisational practices and conditions point to how the relationships between the wards and their caregivers are continuously made and remade. The language of individual personhood, in our interviews, is not expressed in the kinds of terms established in the legal tradition outlined in Wise's work. Instead, it reframes individuality in terms of a particularized and improvisational ethical engagement in the practices of everyday life and labor.

This improvisational and individualized treatment of the chimpanzees' surplus time does not, of course, take place in an ideal space outside power relations; in fact, these practices echo Michel Foucault's description of the insidious production of docile bodies through a "political anatomy of detail";²⁵ enrichment activities help smooth the functioning of the reformed carceral space. From this humane practice of reforming captivity and articulating the chimpanzee as individual, the sanctuary workers express a new mode of relationality, one that transcends the debates over species difference and likeness in the public political discourse on the ape. Recognizing that chimpanzees should not be thought of as like humans, Jennifer resists blaming the individual chimpanzee for behaviors that contradict the efforts of the caregivers. Rather, it is because she is a chimpanzee *and* captive that she is treated differently: "Sometimes it can be irritating [accommodating the chimps' moods]. It's not her fault and I understand that. Maybe I'm more patient with chimps than I am with humans sometimes. Certainly no reprimanding, ever; she gets the choice to act how she wants." The difficult moments workers recounted—mainly when chimps throw sand, dirt, and excrement at them—are contextualized as part of the broader institutional conditions that placed the chimps in the sanctuary in the first place. In fact, the idea that a broader institutional context of injustice places the chimpanzees in the position of lifelong captivity is central to distinguishing the individuality of the chimpanzee wards—that difference that resists both a species as well as an anthropomorphic approach to understanding the relationship between ward and caregiver and "recognizes the importance of each individual animal while developing a more comprehensive analysis of her situation."²⁶ The chimpanzee wards are differentiated from other, noncaptive chimpanzees and from their human caregivers; their likeness to each is constantly held in tension.

What the workers express is the deeply entangled relationship between human caregiver and chimpanzee ward encountering an imperfect space of confinements and segregations, a space that overdetermines individual, day-to-

day relations. What Jacqueline Donovan and Carol Adams term a *care tradition* in animal ethics is evident in the practices of the sanctuary and its workers, where thinking about others beyond the species barrier means an obligation to consider each instantiation of the “other” in a way that does not reduce explanations to “species truths.” In other words, for the sanctuary caregivers, the “otherness” of their wards lies not in explanations based on notions of species difference but in the context of captivity that frames relations between caregivers and wards. In fact, no day-to-day relationship between caregiver and ward escapes the history of experimentation and differentiation that necessitates captivity until death. This broader institutional and discursive history thus does more than tell the story of the establishment of the sanctuary as a social and political structure; it shapes the very practices and relations formed in (and that form) the sanctuary’s space.

Awaiting Death: Neoliberalism and the Ethic of Care

One way some animal rights and conservation traditions understand their projects is to problematize the killing of animals, whether in hunting, farming/ranching, science, and other activities. What might it mean, then, that the project of the sanctuary welcomes the death of the chimpanzee? Haraway makes a case for entanglement over rights, and even life, as the lens through which to consider transspecies relations.²⁷ Making a case to move away from the abhorrence of death, Haraway suggests an attention to labor where “animals are working subjects, not just worked objects,”²⁸ where laboring conditions produce a context of entanglement that locates ethical relations in death and even acts of killing. In a moment when neoliberal politics calls on “certain people . . . to fulfill the role of those who ‘care,’”²⁹ chimpanzee sanctuary suggests the messy politics of redress that belie confident assertions of universal right or uncomplicated claims for life. Thus, in welcoming death, the sanctuary highlights the uneven ways affect entangles subjects. As Sam says,

Our goal is to put ourselves out of business so we can’t just provide care; we want to be really proactive about doing what we can to stop their [chimpanzee] use. Hopefully one day we’ll be out of business. The sanctuary community has been doing this population modeling project. . . . we’re projected to still have 3 chimps 25 years from now. That would be if we didn’t add any more. So it’s still a long time before we put ourselves out of business. It’s bittersweet.

This desire to “put ourselves out of business” imagines “the just” as one of awaiting death, where rights and even life are not sufficient grounds for considering what constitutes justice for chimpanzee wards.

In her ethnography of a Malaysian orangutan rehabilitation center, Rheana Salazar Parreñas argues that “affective encounters of mutual vulnerability are crucial for the center’s operation,” structuring the unequal relations of gender, class, and nationality within an institution driven in part by the capital of tourists who travel to experience the affective intensity of “custodial labor.”³⁰ Likewise, the North American sanctuary we visited demonstrates a kind of politics of entanglement that fails to resolve into universal claims to life, rights, and freedom, highlighting the close relation of bodies that constitute care. Kathy Rudy and other feminist animal studies scholars emphasize the “affective connection constituted by the stories we tell about [animals], by our affection for them and theirs for us, and by the various ways their characters inspire us.”³¹ This is the form of connection through which the sanctuary sustains the system of undervalued labor on which it depends.

Affect thus entangles subjects unevenly by allowing donors to care for chimpanzee wards, even as they escape the structures of undervalued care labor. As Blaine says, the sanctuary “purposefully concentrates on positive stories. That’s one thing we sat down and said, ‘This is how we’re going to frame what we do,’ because I think people are more attracted to that.” The idea of affection between individuals—human and chimpanzee—mobilizes private donors, who do not volunteer at the sanctuary, to pay for the outsourced labor of caring for the state’s chimpanzees. “Purposefully concentrating on positive stories” of sanctuary wards celebrating birthdays, enjoying new toys and puzzles, and other activities indicating successful assimilation into a so-called better life moves donors to care. Sanctuary workers cultivate affect in their donors, but this affective tie between donor and sanctuary, routed through the individualized stories of chimpanzee “successes,” cannot address the undervaluing of carework, the reality of captivity, the needs of the many other species held captive in labs, or the unequal distributions of sovereignty that have militarized conservation efforts in range states, displacing countless indigenous communities. While wealthy philanthropists express caring by donating money for the outsourced retirement of state chimpanzees, caregivers perform the improvised and often undignified labor of caring for chimpanzees with varied histories, behaviors, and desires.

The structural conditions of neoliberal capital that stress austerity shape the conditions of labor within the sanctuary. For instance, Jennifer says, “There are definitely times where I just want to say ‘I work at [the convenience store] 7-11.’” Jennifer’s desire to imagine a different kind of labor is an acknowledgment that the work of caregiving is difficult and undervalued; nonetheless caregivers (even Jennifer) express enjoying their work and do not resent either

long workdays or the emotional burdens they carry after working hours. While many feminist scholars have critiqued the way the idea of a care obligation hides structural conditions that continue to undervalue certain kinds of feminized domestic and care labor (and circumscribe them outside the formal definitions of “work”),³² the sanctuary operates by mobilizing this care obligation among the white and primarily female cohort of caretakers; as Danny says, “The staff and volunteers are servants to the chimps.” In this sense, the sanctuary workers find themselves caught between the ethical imperative to render care as justice and the state imperative to reduce labor and housing costs for “surplus” animals. The affective cannot address the structural conditions that undervalue the carework on which the sanctuary depends.

Given the neoliberal context out of which sanctuaries emerge—of cost savings and austerity as the key reasons to retire chimpanzees from research—it is interesting to note the questioning of these terms by sanctuary workers. Sam admits that while developing a rapport with people who might hold views oppositional to those of the sanctuary is important, “It’s harder to find common ground [with researchers and labs]. . . . a lot of the conversations with those types of people generally revolve around money and how we can provide care cheaper than they can . . . [but] there’s just this really big disconnect.” What Sam seems to acknowledge, then, is the way sanctuary coalesces around the energies of differentiated actors and has never simply been about cost savings even though it operates through neoliberal frameworks favoring privatization. The dedication to their work and the fulfillment that caregivers receive suggest that there is something that escapes the institutional conditions that overdetermine the sanctuary. Yet the fact that invocations of a care obligation devalue carework illustrates the ambivalence that underpins the sanctuary—an ambivalence that the caregivers recognize in their underpaid work and in the realities of lifelong captivity. For example, Blaine expresses skepticism about some African sanctuaries that are attempting to rehabilitate and reintroduce once-captive chimps into “the wild,” noting that “it’s confusing as to how that would even work . . . there’s not a lot of land to go back to.” This reluctance to see return-to-the-wild-as-freedom as a viable alternative, and the adoption instead of a form of waiting for death in (and thus of) captivity critiques the idea that “the saving of nature . . . [is] an innocent endeavor, a noble exercise for the good of all life.”³³ Foregrounding the constructedness of the idea of nature and “the wild,” particularly through “a morality tale about the impending death of nature,” the sanctuary workers are wary of what Stephanie Rutherford calls a one-world discourse, the possibility of integrating displaced captive species into liberal notions of freedom. In accepting and even preferring death,

sanctuary workers work to resolve the paradoxes of captivity arising from deep transnational histories of projects of the laboratory, wildlife conservation and biodiversity, and animal legal rights.

Conclusion: Reframing Justice and Providing “the Good Life”

We understand the chimpanzee sanctuary as a social project defined by and through the daily practices of sociality taking place between human caregivers, between chimpanzee wards, between caregivers and wards, and between the sanctuary and its broader political community of volunteers, donors, and government officials. As such, the practices that constitute the sanctuary reveal the micro-practices of care that negotiate broader institutional conditions of privatization, austerity, and individuation that often fall under the sign of the neoliberal. If the collapsing of identitarian differences (in an ever-emergent field of unending differences) also falls under the sign of the neoliberal—evident, for example, in the 1990s rise of multicultural discourses critiqued for rendering race an aesthetic rather than material matter existing alongside gender, sexuality, citizenship, and so on³⁴—the practices of the sanctuary provide an opportunity to question these conceptual grounds. The extension of rights and political-legal inclusion enable a conceptual terrain of ever-expanding and equivalent differences in need of recognition, including the difference of nonhuman animals. How do the practices of the sanctuary refigure the conceptual grounds for thinking about difference, likeness, and entanglement?

Neoliberal discourses of difference, like multiculturalism, are troubling insofar as they enable an analogic frame for understanding difference and power, which brings resemblance or likeness to otherwise unlike subjects, even when these subjects are interconnected. In his analysis of the logic of analogy in the right to marriage campaigns, Chandan Reddy articulates the trouble with analogy this way: “They regulate what we understand as the essential matter and meaning of those subjects by their reduction to the ‘principle’ supposedly shared between them. . . . In linking unlike subjects through a single principle that principle must cut off anything that is irrelevant.”³⁵ The focus on likeness can initiate a field of equivalence that can truncate analysis of the uneven ways power produces and entangles fields of difference. The practices of the sanctuary, in questioning whether the captivity of their wards is like human captivity, and in refusing to see the wards as like other chimpanzees, forgo the logic of analogy in understanding what justice might mean for the wards. The sanctuary’s practices instead highlight the limits of juridical humanization by calling into question the premises of likeness through which chimpanzees are figured

not only as sources of bio-value but later as subjects of redress.³⁶ Thus while animalization is certainly one strategy used in varied forms of social violence including racism and sexism, we are also interested in accounting for the differentiated histories by which some exceptional species, like chimpanzees, are privileged through institutionalized forms of labor undervaluation. In this case, that means thinking through the emerging emphases on complexity, particularity, and affect that accompany neoliberal state attempts at animal sanctuary.³⁷

The labor of difference itself, of improvised relationality with chimpanzees, is evident in sanctuary workers’ insistence on the uniqueness of their wards and in their unending attempts to perform the ethical relation anew as caregivers await the deaths of their wards. In our interviews, only Shannon spoke of her work and relationship with chimpanzees as tied to a broader political sense of justice for disenfranchised humans (“oppressed groups”). Though she noted her general concern for human disenfranchisement, Shannon was also quick to note that she did not consider her dedication toward chimpanzees as equivalent to her general concern for human rights. The sense of justice conveyed by the interviewees (none of whom used that term) was one of ethical interaction rather than the extension of rights. This ethical form, which also includes educational outreach and advocacy, is framed primarily in terms of providing a limited form of the “good life” for the chimps—of improvising enrichment in the limited architectures of surplus time in confinement, of doing what they can, but knowing that they will fail to materialize any ideal of freedom. As Jennifer says, “My job is to make it [life] as interesting and exciting for them as possible. I can’t give them Africa, but I can give them the best I can.”

Notes

1. Bill Clinton, Clinton Statement on Chimpanzee Health Act, December 20, 2000, <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/research/welfare/clinton.html>.
2. The CHIMP Act designates Chimp Haven, a large outdoor sanctuary located in a forested area of rural Louisiana, as the first national chimpanzee sanctuary. Founded in 2002, Chimp Haven is the only sanctuary that receives federal funding in addition to private donations. On January 22, 2013, the National Institutes of Medicine made its final recommendation to retire the majority of some seven hundred federally owned chimpanzees, leaving only a small colony of approximately fifty animals in NIH custody. The remainder of “surplus chimpanzees” will be retired to Chimp Haven and other accredited sanctuaries. In addition to Chimp Haven, the North American Primate Sanctuaries Alliance consists of six other chimpanzee sanctuaries—including the one we visited for the present study—that currently house chimpanzees formerly used as companion animals and in entertainment or biomedical research. These sanctuaries operate through private donations. Anticipating the mass “retirement” of federally owned apes to sanctuaries, NAPSA is developing care standards that would allow its member institutions to join Chimp Haven in the official federal system.

3. Karla Armbruster, "Surely, God, These Are My Kin: The Dynamics of Identity and Advocacy in the Life and Works of Dian Fossey," in *Animal Acts*, ed. Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior (New York: Routledge, 1997), 218.
4. Lori Gruen and Kari Weil, "Animal Others—Editor's Introduction," *Hypatia* 27.3 (2012): 477–87.
5. For purposes of anonymity to our informants, we choose to refrain from naming the sanctuary or its location. *Caregiver* is the term preferred and used by the sanctuary's paid workers.
6. The Indian government briefly banned primate exports to the United States in 1955, citing radiological experiments and animal welfare concerns, and imposed new restrictions on the types of research that could be conducted following the embargo. And in 1960 the decolonization of the Congo brought about a dramatic end to a Belgian-run primate institution at which the National Institutes of Health planned to develop a new program of chimpanzee importation.
7. Neel Ahuja, "Macaques and Biomedicine: Notes on Decolonization, Polio, and the Changing Representations of Indian Rhesus in the United States, 1930–1960," in *The Macaque Connection: Cooperation and Conflict between Humans and Macaques*, ed. Sindhu Radhakrishna et al. (New York: Springer, 2012), 71–91; Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 121, 136–39.
8. Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 125–26.
9. *Ibid.*, 197–202.
10. See, for example, Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon, 1975); Richard Ryder, *Victims of Science: The Use of Animals in Research* (London: David-Poynter, 1975); Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (New York: Routledge, 1983); Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983). On the long history of animal activism and links to other social movements, see Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion: 1998); and Kathryn Shevelov, *For the Love of Animals: The Rise of the Animal Protection Movement* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008).
11. The rise of conservationism globally was intimately tied to new medical theories about the ecological foundations of disease. Within the United States, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962) notably connected concern for birds and other species threatened by chemical toxicity to concerns over human health. These links between medical and ecological concern intensified with the rise of organized ecological movements, especially in response to the chemical bombing campaigns carried out by the United States during the Vietnam War. See Barry Weisberg, *Ecocide in Indochina: The Ecology of War* (San Francisco: Canfield, 1970).
12. Debrah Blum, *The Monkey Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 20–25.
13. Chimpanzees and rabbits were the only experimental animals found susceptible to HIV infection. Following a series of studies published between 1984 and 1986, chimpanzees were understood to be the most appropriate animal model for the disease given phylogenetic similarity to humans. See, for example, Harvey J. Alter et al., "Transmission of HTLV-III Infection from Human Plasma to Chimpanzees: An Animal Model for AIDS," *Science* 226.4674 (1984): 549–52; Patricia N. Fultz et al., "Persistent Infection of Chimpanzees with Human T-Lymphotropic Virus Type III/Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus: A Potential Model for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome," *Journal of Virology* 58.1 (1986): 116–24.
14. Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, *Chimpanzees in Research: Strategies for Ethical Care, Management, and Use* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1997), 7, 49.
15. Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1982); Richard W. Wrangham, W. C. McGrew, Frans B. M. de Waal, and Paul Heltne, eds., *Chimpanzee Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). See also W. C. McGrew, *Chimpanzee Material Culture: Implications for Human Evolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
16. Jonathan Marks, *What It Means to Be 98% Chimpanzee: Apes, People, and Their Genes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
17. Kofi Annan, foreword to *The World Atlas of Great Apes and Their Conservation*, ed. Julian Caldecott and Lera Miles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
18. Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, *Chimpanzees in Research*, 38.
19. Although only Spain granted full personhood to apes, a number of other nonrange states including New Zealand, the European Union, the UK, Japan, India, and the United States established de jure or de facto bans on invasive experimentation, reversing long-standing state support for biomedical researchers to appropriate all nonhuman species in the expansive quest to engineer cures for disease.

20. “The Great Ape Project, Declaration on Great Apes,” in *The Great Ape Project: Equality beyond Humanity*, ed. Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 312.
21. Kinshasa Declaration, 2.
22. Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
23. Steven Wise, *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals* (New York: Picador, 1999), 1–2.
24. This term is adapted from Michael Ralph, “‘Flirt[ing] with Death,’ but ‘Still Alive’: The Sexual Dimension of Surplus Time in Hip Hop Fantasy,” *Cultural Dynamics* 18.1 (2006): 61–88.
25. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 139.
26. Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams, introduction to *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.
27. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
28. *Ibid.*, 80.
29. Stephanie Rutherford, *Governing the Wild: Ecotours of Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xvi.
30. Rheana Salazar Parreñas, “Producing Affect,” *American Ethnologist* 39.4 (2012): 673–87.
31. Kathy Rudy, *Loving Animals: Toward a New Animal Advocacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 18.
32. See, for example, Eileen Boris, *Home to Work* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Eileen Boris and Rachel Parreñas, eds., *Intimate Labors* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Domestica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
33. Rutherford, *Governing the Wild*, xvii.
34. For this critique, see, for example, Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).
35. Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 190, 200.
36. “Juridical humanization” is borrowed from Samera Esmeir’s *Juridical Humanity* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012). Hers is one of many works, including Colin Dayan’s *The Law Is a White Dog* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), that considers the ways, in Esmeir’s terms, “modern law recovers the human” (*Juridical Humanity*, 2). For such scholars, the law operates as a gatekeeping device, which defines the boundaries of humanity. As such, inclusion into legal personhood for chimpanzees is always a constrained project, since it does not necessarily displace the law’s function as a humanizing mechanism.
37. See the critique of intersectionality and the turn to complexity in feminist science studies, outlined in Jasbir Puar, “‘I Would Rather Be a Cyborg Than a Goddess’: Intersectionality, Assemblage, and Affective Politics,” 2011, <http://eipep.net/transversal/0811/puar/en/>.