

Becoming Cross-Cultural Kids in K. J. Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*

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INTRODUCTION: MOVING CHILDHOODS

'The world is a complicated, surprising, often horrible and often beautiful place. I just hope we can keep it. We're not the only ones who live here.'

(Karen Joy Fowler)

Karen Joy Fowler's excerpt underlines that environmental and wildlife conservation have become an urgent imperative. Our planet, she admonishes, must be protected by humans for future generations. Today's children are the next generation, but so are animals. Discussing the main themes of her 2013 novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, Fowler comments:

A century ago the anti-vivisectionists battled with the medical community over the use of animal subjects in experiments both critical and trivial, and lost. Since then any objection to such experiments has been seen as sentimental, childish, and unprogressive. My novel is my attempt to think about this again. Also to ask what it means to be a human animal (Fowler, n.d., n.p.).

Fowler is concerned with the significance of human-animal relationships, which she examines in her novel by creating 'human-animal' beings. By paying particular attention to cross-cultural encounters in childhood, this article will focus on what it means to be *raised* as a 'human-animal.' Rosemary and Lowell Cooke, the two protagonists of Fowler's novel, grow up with their chimpanzee sister in a human-animal environment and theirs is thus a 'moving' childhood, in which they recurrently cross borders, human and nonhuman ones. Children all over the world are nowadays increasingly growing up in cross-cultural environments. These children either physically relocate to new neighborhoods or are raised in a multiplicity of cultural worlds for many different reasons. In sociology, individuals who are living or have 'lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments for a significant time during the first eighteen years of life' (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 43) are referred to as 'Cross-

Cultural Kids' (CCKs). Nowadays, the umbrella term CCK includes, for example, the children of immigrants and asylum seekers, the offspring of minority groups, such as the children of disabled individuals (Ataman 2012, n.p.), children of expatriate families who frequently relocate (commonly referred to in sociology as 'Third Culture Kids'), and children born to parents from at least two cultures or races (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 45).

In a 2014 interview, Fowler disclosed that she turned to creativity in adulthood as a consequence of a significant move in adolescence: 'We moved from Bloomington to Palo Alto when I was 11 years old – a difficult move for me because Palo Alto seemed so much more sophisticated. I arrived at not the right age for the cohort. I do believe, very much, that I wouldn't be a writer today if we hadn't made that move' (Berry 2014, n.p.). CCK research shows that moving into a new culture as a child and having to adapt to new people and settings, such as school and 'cohorts,' can be challenging (Crossman 2016, 134). Fowler's comment above about moving to a new town reflects this matter. She recalls relocating in adolescence from the State of Indiana to the more technological and, what the author calls, more 'sophisticated' West Coast of the USA. During a critical developmental stage in which one strives to fit in with peer groups, such moves can often make children feel out of place and like an outsider.

Not only do Fowler's childhood experiences indicate that she is a CCK, but her novel also reflects issues which are often discussed in CCK research. In this article, I argue that Rosemary, the main protagonist of *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, is a CCK too. By adopting CCK notions from fields such as intercultural, psychological and sociological studies, this article examines Fowler's protagonist Rosemary through the CCK lens. So far, the CCK lens has been adopted exclusively to examine the experiences of children growing up in multiple 'human' cultures. This article innovatively applies the CCK model to the notion of being raised in between the human and nonhuman worlds. Cultural primatologists, who investigate cultural transmission in primates, have determined the presence of culture in nonhuman primates. Therefore, I propose that the CCK perspective can be expanded to include cross-cultural interactions in childhood with nonhumans. Accordingly, Rosemary's childhood can be viewed as a CCK one. In the humanities and social sciences, scholars are increasingly re-thinking relationships between all classifications of creatures.

Notwithstanding this recent 'animal turn' in scholarship, many questions remain unanswered. Likewise, although children and young people 'are active participants in and contributors across different levels of society, culture and politics' (Douglas and Poletti 2016, 7), many scholars still tend to neglect the examination of childhood experiences. By discussing what it means to be a human-animal in Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* and by offering new modes of adopting the CCK perspective, this article aims to call attention to the significance of cross-cultural interactions both in childhood and with nonhumans.

INTERSECTIONS: BECOMING-ANIMAL/CHILD

There are noticeable parallels between discourses on human-animal relationships and cross-cultural encounters in childhood. In 1997, discussing how philosophers viewed animals in the past, and human-animal ‘gazes’ in general, Jacques Derrida speaks of the ‘othering’ of animals. Face to face with his cat, Derrida considers human encounters with animals, the limits of these relationships, the responsibility of humans within these interactions and what lies beyond being human (Derrida 2008). Similarly, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari talk about human, adult, male and white majorities. Deviations from these standards become ‘other,’ in that they are minority groups. By diverging from the majority, a process of ‘becoming-minor’ is initiated. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari speak of ‘becoming-animal’ and ‘becoming-child.’ In these spaces of betweenness, with no fixed demarcations, existing forms of majoritarianism can be unsettled and deterritorialized (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Regarding the notion of ‘becoming-child,’ it is important to point out that in this context ‘becoming’ does not refer to the ‘adult in the making,’ thus suggesting that the child lacks adult skills and competencies (Uprichard 2008, 304). Contrarily, these children are to be viewed as ‘beings’ in their own right. All these beings are active agents, open to transformation and new processes that can subvert majorities.

Peter Singer, too, discusses minority groups and in adopting Ryder’s term ‘speciesism’ (Ryder 1971, 81), he speaks of discrimination against those who do not belong to a certain species. For Singer, although animals cannot communicate, they deserve equal human consideration. Like those of infants who cannot speak, the interests of animals should always be considered (Singer 1975, 7). According to Singer, this form of species discrimination is neglected both inside and outside academia. In comparison to humans and adults, in many societies, both animals and children face discrimination (called ‘speciesism’ and ‘adultism’ respectively) because they have less power and their rights thus remain unfulfilled.¹

Derrida suggests that humans have placed the whole animal kingdom into a single and immense homogeneous group called ‘animals’ (2008, 40). Similarly, many scholars within the field of childhood studies discuss the limitations of the distinctive and universal category called ‘childhood’ (Cannella and Viruru 2004, 2). Although I refer to general terms such as CCK and critical ‘animal’ studies, I acknowledge that each of the members of the subcategories of the CCK model (such as the children of biracial parents, international adoptees and the children of asylum seekers) are diverse in character and face their own specific issues. Additionally, I recognize that different species within the widely varied

animal groups are distinct from one another. Notwithstanding the broadness of these terms, scholars in the fields of CCK and animal studies significantly contribute to enhancing our understanding of under-represented groups. For animals, the surrounding dominant culture is that of humans, whereas, for CCKs, the dominant culture can be viewed as both surrounding monocultural and adult environments. In her novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, Fowler attempts to give a voice to the chimp Fern through Rosemary's story. In childhood and migration studies, as I will describe below, the CCK model acknowledges the importance of examining cross-cultural encounters in childhood and CCK scholars examine the experiences of children who are raised 'on the move.' By discussing contact between multiple cultures in childhood (CCK studies) and animal and human encounters (critical animal studies), I am demonstrating that these two types of boundary crossings have shared concerns of marginalization. Addressing the experiences and intersections of and between different minority groups, I am creating shared spaces in which new discussions and changes can occur.²

Although I previously mentioned Fowler's biography in order to demonstrate how she was affected by relocating in childhood, in this article, I will solely focus on Fowler's novel, paying particular attention to the protagonist's fictional childhood experience of growing up in between two very different ways of life. By adopting notions from CCK and critical animal studies, I will explore the shifting of boundaries, such as cultural and relational ones. Fowler's novel, as will be demonstrated below, is about boundary issues and Fowler herself blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction – the novel is based on real-life cases of scientists raising chimps as human children. Like Rosemary's father, Fowler is the daughter of a psychologist who studied animal behavior, and she grew up observing the family's dogs, cats, birds, and rats. When asked how closely Fowler adopted scientific research for her novels, the author replies:

When I began thinking about the book, I was intimidated by how little I knew about chimps; I consoled myself that I did know quite a lot about psychologists. So I read all the accounts of cross-fostered chimps that I could find and, yes, there are several of these. Many of them are referenced in my novel: *The Ape and the Child* is about the Kelloggs. *Next of Kin* is about Washoe. Viki Hayes is *The Ape in Our House*. *The Chimp Who Would Be Human* is Nim Chimpsky. There is a very disturbing book by Maurice Temerlin called *Lucy: Growing Up Human*. I read a ton of other stuff as well, about chimps and bonobos in labs, in the wild, on preserves. I know I'm pushing the limits in many ways, but I wanted Fern's behaviors to be as plausible as I could make them, so I depended on these non-fiction accounts. I also took a 'chimposeum' at the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute in Ellensburg, Washington and got to observe the chimps in residence there (Fowler, n.d., n.p.).

Above, Fowler speaks of ‘pushing the limits.’ Throughout her novel, fiction merges with facts, generating literary/creative nonfiction, a genre which has been called ‘the bastard child’ (Anderson 1989, xix-x). The parallel between this derogatory term and the ways in which the protagonists of Fowler’s novel are labeled are striking. Hybrid literature can be very useful, and by integrating scientific research within a literary text, Fowler acknowledges the benefits of work which combines forms, skills and perspectives of multiple disciplines.

Similarly, the interdisciplinary approach of this article aims to show how the knowledge of one field can contribute to the other. Discussing anthropomorphism, Cadman points out: ‘There is growing consensus among animal studies scholars that fictional representations of animals, far from representing a discrete site of literary theory, offer insights into broader sociocultural forces and systems relevant to human-animal relations’ (2016, 162). A literary text and an analysis of it can help to divulge new ideas and several scholars are now exploring animal presence in literary texts by adopting new perspectives (Driscoll and Hoffman 2018; Weil 2012). Additionally, more and more authors, like Fowler, are addressing inequalities of human-animal relations in their literary texts. In her work, Fowler skillfully shifts the definition of family to include other species and reading about the everyday joys and rivalries of siblinghood – to the point that one forgets at times that Rosemary’s sister is ultimately a lab animal. CCK research explores ‘shifting’ families too. Its focus is on notions of multiple cultural interactions in childhood, on belonging and the challenges of fitting in and adapting to surrounding ‘majority’ cultures.

CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS

Karen Joy Fowler writes this novel from the first-person perspective of the main character, Rosemary Cooke. Rosemary and her older brother Lowell spend their childhood on a farm in Indiana with their chimpanzee sister Fern. Their father, together with a team of students of Indiana University, is conducting psychological research on cross-fostered primates. In order to ‘conduct comparative studies of chimpanzee development and language acquisition’ (Parry 2017, 196), as a baby, Rosemary is twinned with the baby chimp Fern. After five years, Fern is incarcerated in a cruel language research laboratory in South Dakota, where for the first time, Fern is considered and thus treated as an animal. This decision of moving Fern away from her family is taken by Fern’s foster parents, without giving any prior notice to their children, who for many years are unaware of and confused regarding the whereabouts of their sister. Fowler’s novel is essentially concerned with the many types of modern-day cruelty to animals and comprises several issues which are relevant to today’s theories of critical animal studies, some of which I will discuss in this article.

The animal/environmental philosophy scholar Matthew Calarco points out that ‘Fowler’s novel appears

at a time when animal studies has fundamentally questioned standard ideas about the human/animal distinction and what, if anything, should constitute that divide' (2014, 618). Rosemary and Lowell grow up moving between two very distinctive worlds, the chimpanzee one and the human one. Consequently, Calarco sees Rosemary as 'someone who has boundary issues (in multiple senses)' (2014, 618). Boundaries are often culturally influenced. Rosemary acts like a 'monkey girl' because the chimpanzee behavior of her twin sister is the culture she initially grows up in and knows best. Behaving this way, Rosemary infringes upon the physical boundaries of her human peers. Accordingly, relational interactions with human beings become problematic for the protagonist, who often feels misunderstood. Growing up, she relentlessly focuses on adjusting and adhering to others in order to prevent difficult situations. She creates borders, which are intended as protection so that no one can reach inside her very particular world.

The consequences of growing up in between different worlds and of having to constantly cross and grasp cultural boundaries (and often geographical ones too) in childhood are the key concerns of CCK research. The term CCK was coined by Ruth Van Reken in 2002, who together with David Pollock originally focused her research on 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs). TCKs are individuals who are raised outside their parents' passport country.³ Typically, TCKs relocate frequently due to their parents' career choices. The three cultures mentioned in this term refer to the home countries of the parents and host countries, in which these individuals have lived (the first and second cultures). The 'third culture' refers to the mixed identity that the child assumes. Integrating elements of the first and second cultures, these children acquire their own culture, and they share their experiences of cross-culturalism with other TCKs, who might have grown up in very different areas and situations. It can be argued that this notion of a new in between space, which TCKs share, is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'belonging-minor.' In this liminal space, TCKs adopt identities which are distinct from majority groups. The identities of these children, who are raised cross-culturally, are fluid and are constantly re-created.

In the past, TCK studies have predominantly examined the experiences of privileged globally hypermobile childhoods. Because the families of expatriates (such as diplomats, international business people and military staff) have been explored, TCK theories have 'been criticized for being a model for a small, privileged group of children which bears little relevance for the world's children, who migrate under much more difficult, at times traumatic, circumstances' (McLaughlin 2013, 52). In order, therefore, to respond to this criticism and wanting to focus research on 'the increasing cultural complexity of the world in which children grow up' (McLaughlin 2013, 54), Pollock and Van Reken decided to expand their research in the twenty-first century to all individuals who were raised cross-culturally.

Many CCK concepts echo emerging theories within transcultural studies. Contemporary transcultural

scholars such as Maurizio Ascari, Arianna Dagnino and Wolfgang Welsch discuss the concept of ‘*breaching the boundaries*’ (Ascari 2011, 8). For Epstein ‘*Transculture* is a new sphere of cultural development’ (2009, 330) in which ‘more and more individuals find themselves “outside” of any particular culture, “outside” of its national, racial, sexual, ideological, and other divisions’ (Epstein 2009, 349). CCKs too are raised ‘outside’ of any single culture. Nevertheless, although overlapping with the transcultural approach, the CCK perspective is up until today unique because its focal point lies within the experience of navigating between multiple cultures in *childhood*. As McLaughlin points out, the CCK approach recognizes ‘the fundamental gap between the experiences of parents and those of their children’ (2013, 51). CCK research has shown that growing up in different environments while individuals are learning to define themselves can affect one’s sense of identity and belonging.

Belonging and particularly the notion of ‘non-belonging’ to one single domain is central to CCK discourse as cross-cultural ‘individuals may encompass multiple places within their cultural identity’ (Grote 2015, 106). In *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, Rosemary and Lowell do indeed encompass multiple modes within their cultural identity because they are raised alongside their chimpanzee sister. At this stage, it is important to define the meaning of culture as described in both CCK theory and critical animal studies and consider how it can be applied to the cross-cultural childhood experiences of the three Cooke siblings.

Discussing cultures in animals and humans, Kathleen Gibson states that ‘Whether or not culture is truly unique to the human species, however, may depend on how one defines culture’ (2002, 324). Anthropologists and biologists have very disparate opinions when it comes to discussing whether chimpanzees are cultural creatures or not. As McGrew argues: ‘We cannot say, to everyone’s satisfaction, but the mounting evidence gives a rationale for cultural primatology’ (2009, 61). The work of Frans de Waal demonstrates the striking parallels between the behavior of great apes and humans (de Waal 2001; 2005). Many other animal behaviorists are increasingly proving that nonhuman life shares characteristics with humans too (Marshall Thomas 2018). In fact, for the zoologist Whiten, ‘the present century has seen an unprecedented flurry of reports that suggest ever more complex cultural repertoires in an expanding range of animal tax’ (2009, 99).

In CCK discourse, Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock mention the work of the cultural anthropologist Paul Hiebert and maintain that ‘culture is learned rather than instinctive—something caught from, as well as taught by, the surrounding environment’ (2017, 56). For the purposes of this article, I refer to culture as a system of ‘socially transmitted information’ (Laland, Kendal and Kendal 2009, 178). Believing that nowadays one can acknowledge the existence of culture in chimpanzees, I speak here of two different cultures, namely chimpanzee culture and human culture. Rosemary and Lowell grow up in both these cultures in which information is transmitted from Fern to her siblings and vice-versa. Rosemary and

Lowell learn from and share certain characteristics with Fern, and the baby chimp also acquires cultural habits from the humans she lives with. As an example, Rosemary points out that her sister quickly learns about ‘first Mask Day, then Bird-Eating Day. First Sweet-Tree Day, and, only after that, No-Bedtime Day’ (Fowler 2013, 301). This shows that Fern understands the succession of festivities and the foods and habits related to each of these celebrations.

ALIENATION: THE ‘MONKEY GIRL’

As foreseen by the Indiana University researchers, the chimp baby sees herself as belonging to her surrounding environment: ‘Surrounded as she was by humans, Fern believed she was human’ (Fowler 2013, 101). Yet, new for the psychologists in the novel is Rosemary’s behavior. Because ‘the neural system of a young brain develops partly by mirroring the brains around it’ (Fowler 2013, 101), as time goes by, ‘that mirror went both ways’ (Fowler 2013, 101) and Rosemary too imitated her chimp sister. The twins communicate with each other through sign language and a system of monkey-like sounds. Consequently, Rosemary recounts that when she started kindergarten ‘my classmates called me the monkey girl or sometimes simply the monkey. There was something off about me, maybe in my gestures, my facial expressions or eye movements’ (Fowler 2013, 102).

For many CCKs, moving ‘back and forth from one culture to another *before* they have completed the critical development tasks of forming a sense of their personal, cultural, or national identity’ (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 54) can be problematic. Because it can prompt ‘cultural marginality’ that describes ‘an experience in which people don’t tend to fit perfectly into any one of the cultures to which they have been exposed or with which they have interacted, but may fit comfortably on the edge, in the margins, of each’ (Van Reken 2017, n.p.). The cultural beliefs of many CCKs are often different from those of their peers, and accordingly, they may lack ‘cultural balance.’ Repeatedly, CCKs report that they do not fit in with their peer groups. They ‘wonder *What is wrong with me? Why don’t I ever quite “get it”?* when what was normal in one place is seen as strange in the next’ (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 61).

Initially, ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ for Rosemary is to imitate her twin sister Fern, with whom she spends every day of the first five years of her life: ‘Until Fern’s expulsion, I’d scarcely known a moment alone’ (Fowler 2013, 78). The twins are inseparable: ‘Fern used to wrap her wiry pipe-cleaner arms around my waist from behind, press her face and body into my back, match me step for step when we walked, as if we were a single person’ (Fowler 2013, 108). As a consequence, because ‘culture is “caught” from those around us, not intentionally taught’ (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 58), Rosemary naturally picks up monkey traits, which are normal on the farm to her family and the PhD students, but are very

‘different’ within a wholly human context. ‘Once, at a parent-teacher conference, my kindergarten teacher had said that I had boundary issues. I must learn to keep my hands to myself, she’d said. I remember the mortification of being told this. I’d truly had no idea that other people weren’t to be touched; in fact, I’d thought quite the opposite. But I was always making mistakes like that’ (Fowler 2013, 30). In order to avoid cultural *faux pas*, Rosemary must be taught how to behave as expected in the human world. The list of new rules is long and exhaustive:

Here are some things my mother worked with me on, prior to sending me off to school:

Standing up straight.

Keeping my hands still when I talked.

Not putting my fingers into anyone else’s mouth or hair.

Not biting anyone, ever. No matter how much the situation warranted it.

Muting my excitement over tasty food, and not staring fixedly at someone else’s cupcake.

Not jumping on the tables and desks when I was playing (Fowler 2013, 102).

Discussing cultural marginality and explaining the challenges that a cross-cultural childhood can bring, intercultural communication scholars Schaetti and Ramsey argue that due to their interaction with multiple cultures, CCKs ‘may experience themselves as ‘culturally marginal’ (1999, n.p.). They typically will find that they do not fit into the cultural mainstream of the society’ (Schaetti and Ramsey 1999, n.p.). For Van Reken, due to their sense of cultural marginality, ‘CCKs of all sorts can’t fit the pre-assigned boxes’ (2017, n.p.). At a very young age, Rosemary, like many CCKs, learns that she is different from the children around her. In kindergarten, not only does she acquire new ‘human’ habits, but she also learns that she does not fit in: ‘But most of all, I learned that different is different. I could change what I did; I could change what I didn’t do. None of that changed who I fundamentally was, my not-quite-human, my tabloid monkey self’ (Fowler 2013, 103).

Thus, Rosemary is aware of the fact that she is different from her peers due to her extraordinary traits. She believes that she is ‘not-quite-human’ but this, in many ways, also applies to her twin sister. The narrator emphasizes many times how she sees her sister: ‘By monkey girl, I mean me, of course, not Fern, who is not now and never has been a monkey’ (Fowler 2013, 128). Discussing the ‘sameness and difference of apes’ in Fowler’s novel, Catherine Parry argues that ‘Human child and chimpanzee child manifest a blurred species ontology which, for Rosemary, makes relationships with normal social and cultural roles difficult’ (2017, 204). Rosemary is not like her peers and ‘this not-quitiness challenges the Western sense of what Derrida calls ‘the abyssal limit of the human’ (Parry 2017, 204). For both Rosemary and Lowell, their sister is not an animal but is just like them. Derrida, as I have previously mentioned, explores human encounters with animals and here, Parry refers to Derrida’s experience

standing before the animal's gaze (in his case a cat) and contemplating what lies beyond being human. For Derrida, there is still an immeasurable margin between (so-called) humans and (so-called) animals due to wrong human assumptions and behavior. For a brief moment, through the Cooke siblings, who are initially unaware of the human gaze, the reader is led to believe that Derrida's 'abyssal limit' can be unsettled. In fact, the three children see each other as one same living creature. However, this view is short-lived, and as soon as the Cooke siblings encounter the real 'human' world outside their farm, they learn that what lies beyond being human is difference and indeed inhumanity.

Examining both existing and new approaches within critical animal studies, Calarco refers to three relevant perspectives, which he calls 'identity', 'difference' and 'indistinction' approaches. Explaining the identity approach, Calarco quotes animal ethicists such as Paola Cavalieri, Tom Regan, and Peter Singer, who argue that 'animals should be seen not as human property but as full and equal members of the moral community' (2015, 18). As seen above, playing together, Fern and Rosemary turn into one individual, they are the same, proving that the human-animal distinction subsides initially in Fowler's novel. Additionally, as young children, the Cooke twins play the 'Same/NotSame' game. The research team, led by Professor Cooke, gives Fern a red and a blue poker chip and show her sets of objects. Fern is then supposed to select a chip upon evaluating two objects. Red indicates that the objects are the 'same' and blue for 'not same.' As adults, Lowell observes that Rosemary was the only family member to whom Fern would always give a red chip, indicating that they were the same. Rosemary too, at the end of the novel, concludes her story by recalling this game: 'My sister, Fern. In the whole wide world, my only red poker chip. As if I were looking in a mirror' (Fowler 2013, 308).

Fern and Rosemary reflect back to one another, echoing an important concept in CCK discourse. When growing up in between different environments, CCKs adopt diverse identities and so-called 'boxes' 'depending on where they happen to be' in relation to surrounding dominant cultures (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 74).⁴ About this issue, Van Reken points out that the 'stress for most CCKs is not from the multiplicity of cultures they experience in their childhood but comes from when they try to repatriate or fit into some other cultural box others expect them to belong to' (Van Reken 2017, n.p.). One of these boxes is the mirror box, which 'is a comfortable box to be in' because here CCKs 'reflect back to one another a shared understanding of what it is to grow up global' (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 75). Looking at Fern, Rosemary sees herself; they share the same culture.

Interestingly, this mirror metaphor recalls the Lacanian mirror. Jacques Lacan discusses what children and chimps see when looking at themselves in a mirror. Drawing on work in physiology and animal psychology, Lacan argues that when viewing their image in a mirror for the first time, infants (aged six to eighteen months) are fascinated because they realize that they somehow see themselves. A chimpanzee of the same age, on the other hand, soon loses interest as it realizes that it does not see a

real creature but that the reflection is only an illusion (Lacan 2006, 75). For Lacan, this mirror stage is significant because through this reflection in the mirror (but also through the image of the infant represented by the primary caregiver), for the first time, the infant defines her or his identity and the mental representation of an 'I' arises (Lacan 2006, 75-82).

However, the mirror also separates us from ourselves because the self-image is alienating. When Derrida discusses the concept of standing naked beneath his cat's gaze, he is referring to the Lacanian mirror. 'Who am I?' Derrida asks in front of his cat, just like the infant, Rosemary and the CCK ask in front of their mirror 'images.' Discussing the notion of cultural identities and representations, Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock argue that 'for those who frequently move among different cultures, who people expect them to be (or who they expect themselves to be) compared to the reality of who they are can result in various outcomes' (2017, 74). The gaze of the other with its different expectations has the power of changing the child (and the animal). This uncomfortable outcome is described by Pollock, Van Reken and Pollock in the 'adopted' box, in which CCKs 'realize for the first time how 'foreign' others see them to be when they feel this is, indeed, the world of their heart' (2017, 74). For Rosemary, this first time occurs in kindergarten. Here she meets and interacts with human children, whom she assumes will be like her, but instead, these children call her names. In labeling and othering Rosemary, the kindergarten children are constructing borders.

Derrida asserts that humans have coined the homogenizing term 'animal' for creatures like his cat. Standing naked and almost powerless in front of the gaze of his cat, he acknowledges that these definitions give rise to differences and boundaries. Without limiting classifications, he could truly be face to face with his cat instead of belonging to the dominant human culture. Discussing classifications, Stuart Hall likewise speaks of cultural labels and argues that 'since identity shifts according to how the subject is addressed or represented, identification is not automatic, but can be won or lost. It has become politicized' (1996, 601). In this context, Hall examines identity in relation to difference. Above I referred to Calarco's three approaches within critical animal studies which are the 'identity,' 'difference' and 'indistinction' approaches and explained the identity approach. It is worth mentioning here that the 'difference' framework, according to Calarco, perceives 'the animal world as containing its own richly complex and differentiated modes of existence in order to allow for a more expansive ethical and political worldview' (2015, 18). This framework, as Calarco explains, has many advantages. The act of differentiating that I discuss below, however, has little to do with Calarco's framework. The kind of 'difference' I examine, adopting notions from CCK discourse and the concepts of Derrida and Hall, is typically detrimental for the child and the animal.

Once in kindergarten and in school, in contact with the dominant human culture, the children around her differentiate Rosemary. She is defined according to the 'other' culture she was raised in: 'I spent the

first eighteen years of my life defined by this one fact, that I was raised with a chimpanzee' (Fowler 2013, 77). Developmental scientists argue that children in school strive to fit in and feel lonely and isolated if they cannot be accepted by their peer groups (Crosnoe 2011; Erikson 1950). Due to her different upbringing, Rosemary is 'inhumanly' teased at school:

On my first day of seventh grade, someone taped a page from *National Geographic* to the back of my jacket. It was a glossy view of a fertile female chimp butt, pink and swollen and target-like. For the next two hours, whenever I was in the hall, kids poked at my back as I went past, in a fucking motion, until finally, in French class, my teacher noticed the picture and removed it. I figured the rest of my time at middle school would be more of the same. Add gum and ink and water from the toilet bowl. Stir vigorously. I came home that first day, locked myself in the bathroom, took a shower to cover the noise, and cried and cried (Fowler 2013, 120).

Reading the passage above, one can yet again return to Derrida's question 'Who am I?' and additionally ask 'what does it mean to be human (school children) in front of a nonhuman (the monkey girl)?' Here we see human hostility and are reminded of Lacan's mirror stage too, in which the infant reacts aggressively to the 'other' in the mirrored reflection. Face to face with Rosemary, the monkey girl, do the other children see their image reflected and act aggressively? Are the teenagers above haunted by the fine line between humans and nonhumans? The children are inhuman towards Rosemary, and in order to avoid this aggressiveness and discrimination as an adult, Rosemary chooses to study in California where nobody knows about her 'different' childhood. Here, she deliberately avoids discussing this with her new friends: 'As part of leaving Bloomington for college and my brand-new start, I'd made a careful decision to never *ever* tell anyone about my sister' (Fowler 2013, 55). 'Hidden diversity' is commonly discussed in CCK discourse (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 78) because the hidden cultural diversity of the lives of CCKs typically remains invisible to others. At university, Rosemary strives to achieve this hidden diversity and attempts to ultimately disguise the culture she was raised in: 'In the comments section of my kindergarten report card I'd been described as impulsive, possessive, and demanding. These are classic chimp traits and I've worked hard over the years to eradicate them' (Fowler 2013, 137-38).

Notwithstanding her efforts to assimilate, similarly to many CCKs, Rosemary enduringly feels like an outsider, even when she tries to act 'normally' in a purely human world: 'Except that now I'd achieved it, normal suddenly didn't sound so desirable. Weird was the new normal and, of course, I hadn't gotten the memo. I still wasn't fitting in. I still had no friends. Maybe I just didn't know how. Certainly I'd had no practice' (Fowler 2013, 132). Far away from home, Rosemary realizes that her animal culture cannot be easily eradicated since she continues to mirror chimpanzee behavior:

Once, in class, I'd reached out to touch a coil of braids on the head of the woman in the seat in front of me. I hadn't been thinking at all, overwhelmed by the need to feel the intricacy of hair. She'd turned around. 'My head doesn't belong to you,' she'd said icily, leaving me stuttering an apology, horrified at the way my chimp nature still popped out when I wasn't paying attention (Fowler 2013, 221).

Far from home, Lowell behaves differently from his sister Rosemary. Whereas as an adult, in order to make friends at university, Rosemary initially strives to be 'Not Same' to the monkey culture she was raised in, Lowell takes a different direction. In line with identity theorists, Lowell fights for human-animal 'sameness' and thus for the 'total abolition of all instrumental and disrespectful treatment of animals' (Calarco 2015, 18). Instigated by anger and grief caused by the loss of Fern, he attempts to achieve this by becoming an animal rights' militant. Lowell commits several crimes, such as illegally liberating animals from research laboratories.

Consequently, at the end of the novel, he is incarcerated, just like Fern. Rosemary is left alone and explains that she is the only Cooke sibling who is currently able to recount the story of their extraordinary childhood: 'The only reason I'm telling it is that I'm the one not currently in a cage' (Fowler 2013, 304). It is Rosemary's task to give a voice to Fern and to explain how and why they were separated as children. Significantly, Rosemary, who was raised cross-culturally, possesses the ability and voice to speak for human-animal beings.

UNRESOLVED GRIEF: 'FERN WAS *GONE*'

Despite the privileges and the richness of a global childhood, CCK scholars argue that the primary challenge of growing up on the move is 'Finding a sense of personal and cultural identity and dealing with *unresolved grief*' (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 81). In this context, unresolved grief is defined by Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 'as grief that comes from recognized and unrecognized losses, but one that has never been mourned in a healing way' (2017, 81). Each child reacts to losses in a different way. A common way to deal with unresolved grief according to CCK scholars is to become angry and rebellious (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 97-100), and this is exactly how Lowell behaves as he 'continued to be a problem' (Fowler 2013, 109). Although his parents attempt to tackle Lowell's grief by sending him to a therapist, Ms. Delancy, it is hard for members of the dominant culture to understand what the Cooke siblings are going through. Rosemary discusses the counselor's remarks:

I don't think Ms. Delancy's assessment was wrong, but I do think it was incomplete. The part she was missing was our shared and searing grief. Fern was *gone*. Her disappearance represented many things—confusions, insecurities, betrayals, a Gordian knot of interpersonal complications. But it also was a thing itself. Fern had loved us. She'd filled the house with color and noise, warmth and energy. She deserved to be missed and we missed her terribly. No one outside the house ever really seemed to get that (Fowler 2013, 111).

Explaining the difficult years after Fern's disappearance, Rosemary discusses how differently the two remaining siblings behaved: 'but while Lowell was responding by pushing the boundaries, I was trying my best to be good. Both reactions made sense. Both should be seen as cries of help' (Fowler 2013, 110). In order to avoid feeling the pain of their losses, withdrawal and denial are mechanisms adopted by CCKs to deal with their unresolved grief. Once Lowell runs away from home when Rosemary is eleven years old, the young girl has yet another loss to cope with, and when she secretly meets her brother again in California, she remarks: 'I'd loved him for twenty-two years and missed him most of that time' (Fowler 2013, 239). After losing both Fern and Lowell, Rosemary withdraws by keeping her mouth shut (Fowler 2013, 120). This is her strategy to avoid having to deal with painful topics:

At dinner, I adopted my usual strategy of saying nothing. The spoken word converts individual knowledge into mutual knowledge, and there is no way back once you've gone over that cliff. Saying nothing was more amendable, and over time I'd come to see that it was usually your best course of action. I'd come to silence hard, but at fifteen I was a true believer. And then I tried to never think of Fern again. By the time I left for college, I'd come surprisingly close to achieving this (Fowler 2013, 126-27).

In order for CCKs to cope with losses, researchers emphasize the importance of 'Saying good-bye in culturally and age-appropriate ways to people, places, pets and possessions' (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2017, 242). Rosemary, sadly, not only is prohibited from saying farewell to Fern, but also to Lowell, who leaves without giving any prior notice. Suddenly an only child, and not fitting in with her peers at school, Rosemary obviously feels very lonely:

It's hard to overstate how lonely I was. Let me just repeat that I'd gone, in a matter of days, from a childhood where I was never alone to this prolonged, silent only-ness. When I lost Fern, I'd lost Lowell—at least I lost him in the way he'd been before—and I'd lost my mother and father in that same way, and I lost all the grad students for real, including my beloved Matt from Birmingham (Fowler 2013, 138).

Rosemary, as seen above, loses almost everything overnight and suffers tremendously. The excruciating pain she feels after losing her twin sister is also a physical one. Hers is an unbearable ache, which is not visible to others:

I think it's inarguable that Mom, Dad, and Lowell were more shattered by Fern's departure than I was. I fared better simply by virtue of being too young to quite take it in. And yet there were ways in which I was the one who carried the damage . . . For me, Fern was the beginning. I was just over a month old when she arrived in my life . . . I felt her loss in a powerfully physical way. I missed her smell and the sticky wet of her breath on my neck. I missed her fingers scratching through my hair. We sat next to each other, lay across each other, pushed, pulled, stroked, and struck each other a hundred times a day and I suffered the deprivation of this. It was an ache, a hunger on the surface of my skin (Fowler 2013, 107).

Van Reken argues that the two main issues of growing up in multiple domains are unresolved grief (due to losses which 'are not visible or recognized by others') and cultural marginality (2017, n.p.). Rosemary, as I have argued, clearly faces challenges which are common to many CCKs. As the 'monkey girl' she feels alienated and she suffers terribly from having lost her siblings. Yet, Fowler's novel is fundamentally about animal ethics, a significant concern which should no longer be ignored, and which is attracting interest from a wide range of disciplines. Rosemary and Lowell, like many CCKs, have to navigate from one culture to another permanently and at times find it difficult to fit in with each culture.

Similarly, Fern is suddenly forced to change her habits when she enters a new human yet very inhuman domain. Fern too loses her siblings and parents overnight and is not allowed to say goodbye to them. The chimpanzee also suffers immensely. The new culture Fern suddenly encounters is an extremely cruel one. And 'once she enters the world of the research laboratory she is taught which side of the distinction she belongs to with brute force: she is literally caged by her human handlers, prodded and controlled by tasers, and placed violently within a hierarchy with other primates—all in the name of becoming an object of research' (Calarco 2014, 622).

Although readers of Fowler's novel, when confronted with these descriptions of cruelty to animals, might be relieved by the thought that Fowler's narrative is a fictional one, 'Rosemary's allusion to real-world research' (Parry 2017, 210) reminds us throughout the novel of the fine line between fact and fiction. Fowler does not only disrupt literary boundaries but, like Derrida, she also continually refers to human-animal borders. At the end of the novel, Rosemary is re-united with her sister and finds that looking at her is like looking in a mirror. However, the image in the mirror is a distorted one as Fern is behind a barrier glass in a new institution for chimpanzees. Like Derrida and his cat, Rosemary comes

face to face with her sister, who is looking back at her. They are seemingly together again, but the two sisters are grown up at the end of the novel, and in the past years they have lived in two very diverse locations. What Rosemary ultimately sees is no longer the image of herself reflected in a mirror but her sister through a thick partition glass. Facing each other, yet separated, Fern gazes at the human being - between them is now an abyssal limit.

CONCLUSION

This article has discussed how the primary concern of CCK studies is to explore the ways in which children who grow up in two or more cultures can best adapt to multiple and new surroundings. Cultural boundaries shift continuously for these individuals. CCK research examines how CCKs view the dominant culture and how they are perceived and, at times, differentiated by members of these surrounding dominant cultures. Likewise, Fowler, along the lines of scholars of critical animal studies, questions the gaze and actions of the other in relation to animals. She pushes readers to consider the human-nonhuman boundaries and how to act appropriately in the 'abyssal' gap between humans and animals. The CCK model was conceived in order to incite thinking about the roles and responsibilities of adults (parents, educators, researchers, etc.) when children come into contact with multiple cultures. Similarly, Fowler hopes to make her readers think about the roles and responsibilities of humans when nonhumans come into contact with humans and their environments.

Analogously, then, what is being asked is 'when encountering other cultures and the foreign gaze, can boundaries truly be dismantled?' Calarco's two approaches 'identity' and 'difference' have been discussed previously and to answer this question (in relation to human-animal relationships), one should consider his third framework. Discussing the concept of 'becoming animal,' Calarco proposes to look at identity and difference through 'indistinction' (2015, 48-9). For Calarco a shared indistinction with animals allows them 'their own worlds, their own joys and sufferings, and their own differences' (2014, 633). Does the glass which separates Fern and Rosemary at the end of the novel represent this indistinction? Fern now lives in a more suitable institution and Rosemary, and their mother lives close by. Perhaps then, Rosemary ultimately shares indistinction with Fern.

Discussing human-animal differences and whether chimpanzees are cultural creatures or not, McGrew argues 'we humans may need to re-think the boundaries of multiculturalism. We may need to be more inclusive in extending our appreciation of cultural diversity beyond anthropocentrism to admit our cousins, the great apes' (2009, 61). By considering the childhood of Rosemary as a cross-cultural one, I have reconceptualized the boundaries of the cross-cultural kid perspective. I have shown that within academia, the concerns of children and animals have been neglected in the past, which is why scholars

such as Singer and Deleuze and Guattari have discussed the similarities of these minority groups. Decisions are taken for both animals and children on behalf of the dominant culture and, as I have argued in this article, animals and CCKs often face challenges trying to adapt to these dominant cultures.

In telling the story of the ‘monkey girls’ and explaining the consequences of decisions taken by adult humans, Rosemary voices the challenges of encountering dominant cultures in childhood. Addressing together the intersectional positions of minority groups, one can speak of junctions and shared spaces in order to enact change. In the spaces inhabited by ‘becoming-minor’ groups, pre-fixed views of majorities can be unsettled. Here the subject ‘no longer occupies a realm of stability and identity’ (Bruns 2007, 703) and it is in this indistinct space that Rosemary tells her story about crossing boundaries. In commenting: ‘I’m just telling you that I feel different from other people. But maybe you feel different too’ (Fowler 2013, 133), Rosemary forces us to reconsider our ways of defining identity and diversity. Nowadays, there is an increasing number of individuals who identify as CCKs because they grow up moving in between multiple domains, just like Rosemary. Their diverse identities often reflect their creativity and versatility, they are prone to thinking ‘outside the box.’ CCKs typically have a wide understanding and acceptance of different cultures and in their spaces of ‘becoming-CCK child,’ they can start creating areas in which minority groups (just like Derrida’s cat) are allowed to look back. As a result, in today’s increasingly interconnected world, greater respect can be achieved through these cross-cultural individuals, for all humans and nonhumans alike.

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NOTES

¹ For further discussion regarding the notion of ‘adulthood’ see Flasher (1978). In this respect, also see Butler (1969), who speaks of ‘ageism.’

² Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first spoke of the intersection of race and sex. Subsequently, the notion of ‘intersectionality’ was expanded by Patricia Hill Collins (1998). This term is used to explain the intersection of different systems of oppression and how these systems overlap, for example, the interconnections between categories of gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality and class are discussed. In this respect, see also Staunæs and Søndergaard (2011).

³ *Third Culture Kids* was originally written by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken and was first published in 1999. In this article, I refer to the third edition of 2017, which is co-authored by Michael Pollock. For further information on the origins of the Third Culture Kid concept see Useem (1993); and Tanu (2015). See also Rauwerda (2013), who applies the TCK perspective to examine fiction written by ‘Third Culture’ individuals. As Trąbka points out, although the term TCK was coined by Ruth Hill Useem, a professor at Michigan University, initially the concept of Third Culture Kids did not enter mainstream migration studies. Instead, as Trąbka explains, ‘many governmental and non-governmental organizations were created promoting the notion and offering counselling, practical information, and facilitating networking for expatriates and TCKs’ (2014). Now, many self-help books about this topic are still being published but at the same time, new academic sociological research is being carried out (see, for example, Saija and Benjamin 2015). In her article of 2014, Trąbka also compares the TCK concept to Bhabha’s ‘Third Space.’ In many ways, this notion is similar to the ‘belonging-minor’ concept, which I discuss in this article.

⁴ Van Reken refers to four boxes when explaining how CCKs behave when attempting to adjust to surrounding dominant mono-cultural environments. These four boxes are ‘the foreigner’ box, in which a CCK looks and thinks differently to the surrounding culture, the ‘hidden immigrant’ box, in which a CCK looks alike but thinks differently, the ‘adopted’ box, in which CCKs look different and think alike, and finally, the ‘mirror’ box, in which CCKs both look alike and think like their peers (Van Reken 2017).¹