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Telling Multispecies Worlds: Traces of a Counter-Concept to Speciesism

Humans are far from the only species who make worlds, and thus make futures; ‘Worlding’ entails an active ontological process that is enacted and embodied by all living beings. It is only when we fully recognize these practices as influential to ecological vulnerability and biodiversity that we can take a less anthropocentric approach to future-making.

The notion of “multispecies worlding” is coined by Donna Haraway as a practice of articulating the partial connections between all kinds of living entities; who relate, know, and tell stories with and through each other. Rather than telling multispecies worlds at all-encompassing scales, this paper argues (following Haraway) that multispecies futures are inscribed in more situated every-day ways in which living beings already negotiate futures with each other. The notion of ‘multispecies’ here is approached as a counter-concept to ‘speciesism’ and seeks to find traces of worlds that abandon animal oppression and explores the meaning of care in relation to living with other species.

This paper offers a collection of these traces through presenting annotated illustrations created by the author during a three-year project. These illustrations present a kind of technique for knowing that does not come from standing at a distance and representing something, but rather providing initial different entries into what multispecies worlds can entail. In this practice, we must recognize that other species have been speaking to us all along and that we learn about them in worlding practices that are partly told by them.