

Narrating the Multispecies World. Stories in Times of Crises, Loss, Hope

August 3 to 5, 2023, University of Würzburg

**An interdisciplinary, hybrid conference,
organized by the Chair of European Ethnology**

We are living in a multispecies world. Although the world is constantly changing, this change has accelerated extraordinarily in recent years, bringing forth substantial and manifold crises. Essentially caused by the capitalist pervasion of almost every part of our everyday, we are currently experiencing an increasing loss of diversity, particularly in the more-than-human world: due to changing circumstances in their original habitats, numerous living beings such as plants, insects, and mammals (including humans) migrate all over the world; some of them become extinct, and others are forced to adapt to new ecologies.

Narrating is a powerful practice. It allows us to understand what happens, and it enables us to shape the world, particularly in times of crises. Storytelling can also be seen as a practice of other-than-humans, as anthropologists Deborah Bird Rose and Thom van Dooren remind us of in their work. What are the stories of our multispecies world today? Which observations, needs, desires, dreams, nightmares, aspirations, and ethics are shared by narrating? Who is narrating which stories for whom, where, when? What is the role of the past, and which parts of our narrative heritage do we still maintain? What is the role of multispecies temporalities in narratives? What are the new powerful stories developing possibilities for a peaceful cohabitation in the multispecies world?

We are looking for critical scholarly studies and artistic projects focusing on narratives dealing with the effects of the current crises on the more-than-human world, particularly those involving more than one single species. The scope of possible topics is wide and ranges from the extinction of species, the loss of bio-diversity in the everyday lives, memories of former ecologies, historical experiences with extinction to present-day narratives about the returns of species and stories of the living together in emergent ecologies.

We will work with a broad concept of narrative culture to encompass, in addition to verbal art, diverse forms, genres, and media such as everyday narrations, films, fictional texts, multimodal artefacts, photographs, art installations, collages, inscription into landscapes etc. We invite scholars of any career level (including students) from different fields such as

- Ecocriticism
- Econarratology
- (Environmental) Humanities
- Multispecies Studies
- Extinction Studies
- Cultural and Social Anthropology, European Ethnology, Visual Anthropology etc.
- Literary Studies
- Arts and Art History
- History

to contribute to our exploration of the potentials of narratives in the multispecies world.

Please send your proposal with your name and email-address until December 31, 2022 to: multispecies.conference@uni-wuerzburg.de

For more information, please visit: <https://www.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/eevk/multispecies-conference/>

We can offer up to ten stipends of 500,00 Euros each to cover the cost for travel and accommodation of accepted speakers. Please inform us whether you are interested to apply for one of the grants when submitting your proposal.

For those who will participate in person, we request a conference fee of 40,00 Euros for lunches and the conference dinner, and 20,00 Euros for the optional excursion, for which registration is needed.