

Anthropology's Shifting Focus: From People to Animals to all of Life

Anthropologists travel around the world collecting information and experiences of what it is like to live in cultures typically other than their own. Their written accounts are called ethnographies. These books attempt to explain what it means to be human in different cultures.

From these accounts two things have become obvious. Firstly, that people around the world do not understand animals in the same way and secondly, that ignoring the role of animals in human lives is a mistake because they have a profound effect on what humans do and how they organise their days.

Another word of 2 parts:
Ethno - people
Graphy – writing
Ethnography – writing about people

As a result of these realisations a growing body of anthropologists have turned their attention towards human-animal relationships which has birthed a conjoined discipline called 'anthrozoology' and new ways of writing about human-animal interactions called, 'multi-species ethnographies'.

Click on the links in the text to get more information about anthrozoology and multi-species writing.



[Anthrozoology](#) explores how humans and other animals relate to each other. It is not just about how people use or need animals, it is also interested in understanding how animals see their lives with people, as well as what living together does to both parties.

[Multi-species ethnographies](#) are designed to help people understand the world from animals' points of view, as much as is possible.



Multi-species ethnographers attempt to give animals a voice and advocate for their welfare. This initially included all animals and has now extended out to other living beings such as bacteria and plants.



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Dr Luci Attala 2021