Multispecies Organizing in the Web of Life: Ethico-Political Dynamics of Matters of Care in Ecologies-in-Place

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Contemporary human-centered organization and management practices endanger the planet's health, affecting the life and death of multiple species—including humans. Drawing on insights from multispecies ethnography and feminist new materialism, this article contributes to the business ethics literature by developing a theoretical framework for multispecies organizing as a matter of care. Going beyond existing understandings of human-animal relations, we show how ethico-political dynamics shape multispecies relations in three ways: how we and other species relate to ecologies-in-place (affective relationalities); what we and other species do (vital doings); and, finally, what kinds of worlds we—through our ethical sensibilities—commit to bringing into being (ethical obligations). Using an illustrative example of a rewilding site in England, this article shows how multispecies organizing plays out in a specific ecology-in-place. Our argument has important implications for the conception and contemporary practices of the organizational ethics of life and death.

Key Words: affect, ethics of care, more-than-human responsibility, regenerative organizations, rewilding, relational sustainability

How humans relate to other species and ecologies in the "web of life"—defined as the multiple relations and entanglements in the living ecologies that sustain the lives of humans and other living beings (Egmose et al. 2021; Moore 2015)—

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vitally impacts the future of planet Earth. Most business organizations work as if they are separate from the web of life. Nature is mostly treated as an external resource that can be extracted, exploited, or killed to become commoditized products (Clarke and Knights 2022; Kröger 2022; Sayers 2016). Essentially, this business-centric organizing "has taken the form of an undeclared war on nature" (Gills and Morgan 2021, 1315), causing large-scale ecosystem destruction and mass extinctions (Heikkurinen et al. 2019; Hoffman and Jennings 2021). Thus, we must question how businesses and we humans relate to other species through anthropocentric value systems (Ezzamel and Willmott 2014; Laasch, Ryazanova, and Wright 2022; Wright et al. 2018), as how we organize in the web of life can either support thriving ecosystems or destroy them (Egmose et al. 2021). Fostering a new ethics for the living, grounded in the dynamics of interspecies relations, is urgently needed to reverse this self-destructive trajectory of death-making.

In business ethics, it has long been argued that businesses need to take the natural world seriously (Schuler et al. 2017; Shrivastava 1995; Whiteman, Walker, and Perego 2013). However, most of this scholarship does not go beyond seeking a "business case" for environmental responsibility or assigning intrinsic value to nature (Johnsen 2021; Painter-Morland and ten Bos 2016). Recent debates have pointed to the relational agencies involved in organizational processes that are concurrently shaped by human and nonhuman beings (Banerjee and Arjaliès 2021; Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm 2022; Ergene, Banerjee, and Hoffman 2021). Furthermore, the posthuman turn has created an opening to explore the ethical implications of nonhuman stakeholders (Kortetmäki, Heikkinen, and Jokinen 2023; Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022), human-animal entanglements (Clarke and Knights 2022; Coulter 2022; Huopalainen 2022; Sayers 2016; Tallberg and Hamilton 2022), and other organizing contexts that include beings other than just humans (Bell and Vachhani 2020; Ergene and Calás 2023; Gherardi and Laasch 2022). However, with the exception of a few empirical case studies (e.g., Beacham 2018; Davies and Riach 2019; Vlasov 2021), what is missing is an understanding of the ethico-political dynamics of organizing processes shaped by the relational agencies of a myriad of different species situated in specific ecological contexts.

This article develops a framework for approaching the ethics of multispecies organizing processes involving both humans and other species in the web of life. Through their co-dependencies and relations of care, multispecies agencies collectively create a constant flux of "vital material forces" moving through and modifying ecologies, materialities, and bodies (Bennett 2010). Thus, multispecies organizing includes the living, the dying, and the dead—growth and decay—as life and death are intertwined processes within the web of life (Kallio and LaFleur 2023). While all forms of organizing involve the contribution of other species—whether humans are aware of it or not (Coulter 2022; Labatut, Munro, and Desmond 2016; Sayers 2016)—there is a marked difference between human-centered organizing processes that are detached from their life-sustaining ecology and focused on (death-making) extraction of value from nature and the multispecies organizing that we discuss in this article.

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Inspired by multispecies ethnographies (Davies and Riach 2019; Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016) and feminist new materialism (Haraway 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), we elaborate multispecies organizing in the web of life as a "matter of care" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017) that includes three dimensions: affective (how we relate), practical (what we do), and political (what kind of world is brought into being). These dimensions are not abstract but always situated in a specific place. For this reason, we present an illustration of our conceptual argument by engaging with a rewilding project at the Knepp Estate in England that helps us "think with" (Haraway 2008) matters of care in a specific ecology-in-place.

The article makes two interrelated contributions to the business ethics literature. First, we develop a framework for understanding the organizational dynamics involved when humans collaborate with other species in ways that seek to improve the vitality of ecosystems. This departs from previous research, which has focused on either introducing the concept of relational sustainability (Ergene, Banerjee, and Hoffman 2021) or on specific empirical contexts in which multispecies organizing is practiced (Davies and Riach 2019). We also develop key insights into the ethico-political dimensions of these types of organizational processes, not as defined by institutions, but by the worlding practices of multispecies becomings and entanglements in place, defined by subtle affective power configurations and historically situated practices that structure how humans relate to different nonhumans.

In this article, we use the term "nonhumans" to capture the array of biotic beings (i.e., animals, plants, fungi, and micro-organisms) and nonbiotic elements (i.e., minerals, air, water) that encompass the more-than-human or other-than-human elements that are present in a particular situated organizing context, or what we will refer to hereafter as the "ecology-in-place." We use the terms "species" and "multispecies" to refer more specifically to the living biotic beings in the ecology-in-place.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN-NONHUMAN ENTANGLEMENTS IN BUSINESS ETHICS

In the 1990s, scholars began to debate how managerial organizing relates to nature (Shrivastava 1995; Throop, Starik, and Rands 1993), considering topics like environmental ethics (Hoffman 1991) and whether other species have managerial standing (Starik 1995). In debates on environmental ethics, there is a divide between an instrumental and intrinsic approach to understanding the relationship between organizations and nature. Some scholars argue that most business ethics scholarship, including stakeholder management (Chowdhury, Sarasvathy, and Freeman 2022; Harrison and Wicks 2013) and sustainability management (Starik and Kanashiro 2013), follow an instrumental, natural resource-based view (Gabler, Itani, and Agnihotri 2023; Hart 1995), which highlights the utilitarian value of ecosystems for human well-being and organizing (see also Johnsen 2021; Painter-Morland and ten Bos 2016). While this scholarship acknowledges the importance of environmental ethics for business and society, the firm-centric analyses (Jiang, Wang, and

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Zhou 2023) tend to highlight the ability of the firm and its employees to manage the environment (Aravind and Christmann 2011).

In instrumental organizational contexts, most nonhuman species are objectified and assigned passive roles as resources (Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022) or "lively commodities" (Collard and Dempsey 2013). How nonhumans are treated often depends on how their species-specific functions can be converted into something of (economic) value for humans (Clarke and Knights 2022; Coulter 2022; Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt 2023; Painter-Morland and ten Bos 2016). Thus, from an instrumental ethical viewpoint, animals are given limited capacity to exert agency (Sage et al. 2016; Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt 2023) or are even systematically removed and killed when they do not perform according to managerial expectations (Coulter 2022; Clarke and Knights 2022; Sage et al. 2016). Thus, animals and ecosystems are seen as resource-rich stakeholders that provide economic value to the firm (Dale and Latham 2015; Hoffman 1991).

This instrumental view has consequences for the web of life because it encourages the existence of only a few "standardized" species, domesticated, genetically altered, or carefully selected for their maximizing yield properties (Coulter 2022; Gillespie 2021), which are placed in carefully controlled environments (e.g., factory-farmed pigs) (Sayers 2016) or wholly removed from their natural habitat (e.g., plants cultivated in laboratories) (Sexton, Garnett, and Lorimer 2019). This approach to nature destroys ecosystems and drives the mass extinction of species and biodiversity loss (Kröger 2022). This instrumental view changes slightly with the notion of "regenerative capitalism" (Fullerton 2015), where the work of other species is appreciated for their ability to play a "value-adding role in regenerating life," yet still centered on "the long-term economic health and even the survival of the human species" (Fullerton 2015, 45–46), and not the health and well-being of the web of life.

In contrast, an intrinsic approach sees nature as having inherent value outside of contributing to resources or economic gain. Here, humans are seen as a part of nature and "embedded in a biospheric net" (Schuler et al. 2017, 217), which involves a multitude of entanglements between humans and the environment (Dale and Latham 2015; Hoffman 1991). From this position, people should not manage nature as a resource for human consumption. Rather, humans need to adapt to how nature functions (Ezzamel and Willmott 2014; Heikkurinen et al. 2016). However, the assumption that nature holds intrinsic value for its own sake is still assessed through disembodied and impersonal relations, which privilege abstract knowledge and not the relational, embodied experiences (Pullen and Rhodes 2015) that emerge from being immersed in the web of life. Simply focusing on human-derived "value propositions" (Laasch, Ryzanova, and Wright 2022, 2) or how nature is valued by humans, instrumentally or intrinsically, does not afford explorations of the ethical sensibilities and relational and political dynamics of distributed agencies among humans and other species working to restore the web of life in particular ecological contexts.

To deal with the relationalities forged among humans and nonhumans, some authors have called for a "posthuman" turn in management and organization studies

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(de Vaujany, Gherardi, and Silva 2024; Sayers, Martin, and Bell 2022). These posthuman approaches reject the centrality of humans as the site of intentional action (Gherardi and Laasch 2022). Instead, they highlight the central role of "the knower in knowledge production and the material configurations of the world's becoming" (Gherardi 2023, 317). Here, knowledge is always situated and shaped by the relations to the nonhuman beings through which it is produced, as illustrated by the notions of "thinking with" (Haraway 2008; Puig de la Bellacasa 2012) and "writing with" nonhumans such as rocks (Valtonen and Pullen 2021) or dogs (Huopalainen 2022). Such a shift "decentralises the human subject and emphasises our common worlding as well as the non-oppositional interconnections between humans and [other beings]" (Huopalainen 2022, 965).

Posthuman approaches depart from universalist and detached assumptions about instrumental and intrinsic cultural and organizational value systems. Instead, the focus lies on how humans and other beings become with, and relate to, each other through their affective and corporeal encounters (Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017), constantly "in a state of interdependent embodied becoming: being born, becoming co-constituted in ecologies, capable of pleasure, pain, suffering, and dying" (Sayers 2016, 372). As such, posthumanism challenges the binaries that separate culture (values) from nature (materialities) and the assumed human exceptionalism in organizations that elevates human agency over that of animals (Ergene and Calás 2023; Paring 2023). Organizations are understood as hybrid assemblages constituted by humans and multiple other nonhumans that, through their everyday practices and distributed agencies, shape management's organizing space (Gherardi and Laasch 2022; Sage et al. 2016; Valtonen and Pullen 2021).

Within this relational context, ethics is not separated from politics. Rather, it is practiced through the affective, relational organizing processes that bring particular worlds into being. As such, ethics is embedded in situated doings and affective relations of care.

FROM CARE FOR ANIMALS TO MULTISPECIES ETHNOGRAPHIES

Scholars have increasingly emphasized the different configurations of care and ethical commitments toward animals in organizational and business contexts. Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää's (2022) research on how dogs are cared for as workers in tourist companies and as pets in animal shelters shows how different organizational configurations create different possibilities for compassionate relations to emerge. Likewise, Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt (2023) point to how the roles assigned to animals define how they are cared for and how much freedom they have to exert their agency within organizations. Sayers's (2016) account of how badly pigs are treated in factory farms shows how the suffering of some animals is normalized and ignored, enabling widespread violence. Likewise, Clarke and Knights (2022) illustrate how veterinarians morally distance themselves from the suffering of dairy cows by using the language of economic rationality, linking productivity with animal well-being while justifying the harsh exploitation of cows for human preferences and profits.

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However, with a few exceptions (Beacham 2018; Davies and Riach 2019), the debate on the care for animals within organizational contexts has been chiefly focused on people's relationships with a given animal, portrayed as either harshly exploited (Clarke and Knight 2022; Sayers 2016) or deeply loved (Huopalainen 2022). Less emphasis has been put on organizational contexts where "multitudes of lively agents … bring one another into being through entangled relations" (Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016, 3). Labatut (2023, 1233) notes how these animal-centered studies are "rooted in an anthropomorphic approach to nature, focusing only on certain parts of non-human life," which "might give a limited account of the dynamics of ecosystems and their complex relations with human organizations." Davies and Riach (2019) call for novel ways of approaching "multi-species sustainability" based on "alternative ways of considering relations and reciprocity … embracing the entanglement of human, animal and other organic forces at play" (Davies and Riach 2019, 247).

In ecologically embedded contexts, what is cared for is not only marked by how humans relate to particular species through emotional bonds and compassion but also by the material interactions among a multitude of lively agents that, through their collective doings, sustain (and are sustained by) the ecology-in-place. To study the politico-ethical dynamics of such multispecies organizing, the focus must be on the situated practices among different species and their entanglements with ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (Gherardi and Laasch 2022).

Although we rely extensively on work by scholars who frame these types of organizational contexts (or assemblages) as "posthuman," we deliberately choose to work with the concepts of "multispecies organizing" rather than the abstract terms prevalent in current debates on relational ontologies in business ethics, such as "more-than-human" and "naturecultures" (Beacham 2018; Ergene and Calás 2023; Ergene, Banerjee, and Hoffman 2021; Gherardi and Laasch 2022). We make this choice because it grounds the organizing process in the relational threads between different species as they care for (and are cared for by) the specific ecologies upon which their lives depend (Davies and Riach 2019). The term "species" is not understood as a separate entity defined by the Linnean taxonomy (Kröger 2022). Rather, we use this term to make visible "the diverse ways of life that constitute worlds," acknowledging that these relations consist of entangled agents that "torque one another with their practices … enacted and sensed in the ongoing ebb and flow of agency in multispecies worlds" (Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016, 5)

The concept of "multispecies" points to the constantly changing and complex relationalities of a multiplicity of overlapping worlds, where organizing brings these worlds together in ways that coexist, conflict, combine, and co-constitute each species' existence (Paring 2023). In this sense, while acknowledging multiple ways of caring for other species, we remain cautious about mobilizing the word "speculative" as an endeavor of endless possibilities (Sayers, Martin, and Bell 2022). The ecology-in-place and the specific characteristics of different species come with conflicting and temporal constraints that have existential consequences for those whose lives are (not) cared for through these organizational assemblages—see the example of dock beetles and lettuce in Beacham (2018). This points to the

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need to examine the ethico-political dimension of multispecies organizing, as not all multispecies encounters are always appreciated in the ecology-in-place. Here, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's (2012, 2017) concept of "matters of care" helps us situate multispecies organizing within an ethico-political dynamics that involve both relational and species-specific agencies, which collectively sustain the conditions for life (and death) in the ecology-in-place.

MULTISPECIES ORGANIZING AS MATTERS OF CARE IN THE ECOLOGY-IN-PLACE: A FRAMEWORK

In this article, we position care as a central feature of multispecies organizing that sustains life in the ecology-in-place. We build our framework for multispecies organizing on Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017, 2) work on "matters of care," in which she explores "the significance of care for thinking and living in more than human worlds."

Care theory acknowledges that humans are born dependent, and adults are also interdependent due to sickness, disability, aging, and their need for companionship. This interdependence is addressed through care (Phillips 2019). In human-animal studies, care has been mostly thought of as being delivered by humans to other species (e.g., Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt 2023; Kortetmäki, Heikkinen, and Jokinen 2023; Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022). However, humans also need the care of other species to survive. Multispecies care does not emerge from human-centric values about how nature contributes to human well-being through its economic worth, natural capital, ecosystem services, or compassionate affection. Instead, Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) conceptualization of "matters of care" parts from the ontological condition of how entanglements among multispecies communities sustain life.

This does not imply that humans have no role in multispecies care relations. Instead, matter of care points at how other "caring subjects" are also actively engaged in shaping the web of life. As Robinson et al. (2017, 13) argue when discussing human-soil relations, "[w]hile the ethical responsibility of soil care is a human affair, its concrete realisation depends on how different soils respond. The care we put into the soils—or the absence of care, neglect—will inevitably affect the capacity of soils to care for all the living beings and processes depending on it." Here, care functions as a relational force that interweaves multispecies life in an "ontological state in which humans and countless other beings unavoidably live" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 4).

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) refers to Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto's definition of care as a political practice that includes "*everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible.* That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Fisher and Tronto 1990, 34). To make visible that care includes others than just humans, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, 161) replaces "what we do" with "what is done" so that not just we, humans, but all beings "can live as well as possible." This definition of care fosters an understanding

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of the ethical sensibilities of multispecies organizing as something that is not defined by abstract moral stances but embodied in everyday practices, involving hands-on agencies with material consequences for the web of life.

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) builds on actor-network theory by connecting care with matter. However, she argues that how things come to matter in real material terms is not just a "matter of concern" (Latour 2005) but an ethically and politically charged practice of care. Matters of care involve a multilayered engagement with care through three different dimensions: as an affective state of being (e.g., "caring about" something), as a material practice (e.g., "taking care" of things), and as an ethical obligation (so that all are "cared for" as well as possible) (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). As such, "to care joins an affective state, a material vital doing, and an ethico-political obligation" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 42). Hence, matters of care cannot be understood from a singular dimension or in an abstract way. Rather, all dimensions of affective, practical, and ethical engagements with care involve embodied relations embedded in concrete conditions (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Thus, all three dimensions are important to understand how the concrete conditions materialize through multispecies organizing in specific ecologies.

Next, we provide an illustrative case that helps us to "think with" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 198) multispecies organizing as matters of care in a particular ecology-in-place. Drawing on the rewilding project at the Knepp Estate in England, we discuss how matters of care make visible the ethico-political dynamics that define life and death in the multispecies encounters of a concrete place.

THE KNEPP ESTATE, ENGLAND

The 3500-acre Knepp Estate, near London's Gatwick airport, operated as an industrial farm until the early 2000s when—due to declining profitability—it sold the remaining dairy herd and embarked on its first ecological restoration project (Dempsey 2021). Aside from the inability to make a living from the farm, the owners felt that the multiple decades of pesticide use, and intensive agricultural practice had caused a collapse in the wildlife, for example, insect and bird populations (Kneppflix 2023). This spurred the owners to change, rethinking how they wanted to relate to the land and reconsidering the species with which they wanted to share the land. Following this decision, the land management strategies put into use at the Estate depart from "traditional" conservation: instead of setting specific ecological targets, there is reliance on observing the processes that emerge in place and their landscape-level effects (Dempsey 2021; Tree 2019).

To "rewild" the land, the owners have gradually introduced free-roaming, large herbivores—mainly longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies, and deer. The estate owners have created experimental refuges in which herbivores are allowed to graze to simulate the activities of their wild ancestors, and planted tree saplings are used to catalyze the regrowth of forests (Lorimer 2020, 97–98). The reintroduction of large herbivores that restore grazing and decomposition has enabled the emergence of a mosaic of forest-pasture landscapes (Lorimer 2020). Isabella Tree, one of the owners of the Knepp Estate, elaborates on their approach: "what we are doing is putting

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more emphasis on natural processes … we are letting nature take the driving seat" (Kneppflix 2023, 3:58–4:04). Tree continues to explain, "[the animals] are grazing in ways that stimulate different types of vegetation. So, you get a very complex system that's ever shifting" (Kneppflix 2023, 5:12–5:19).

Herd sizes are managed by controlled breeding to generate sustainable grazing and browsing intensity, while surplus animals are slaughtered and sold as wild meat. The estate also runs wildlife safaris where the herbivores are the star attractions (Lorimer 2020). Thus, the rewilding at Knepp is not an example of "wilderness" per se. Rather, it is a farmland subject to low-grade management focused on attaining biodiversity by creating an ecology where multiple species can thrive while also operating a functioning business (Dempsey 2021). The owners of the Estate freely acknowledge that financial viability impacts the approaches chosen for their rewilding work. However, the underlying philosophy of "self-willed ecological processes" is woven through all the Estates' projects (Tree 2019, 8).

The shift in logics at the Knepp Estate points to a way of relating to other species and the land in ways that encourage organizational configurations where humans and other species collaborate "in service to life" (Wahl 2020, n.p.). Some refer to this shift as a probiotic turn that involves "deliberate efforts to engineer ecologies through the introduction of keystone species" (Lorimer 2017, 27) through which humans use "life to manage life" (Lorimer 2020). Others refer to a "regenerative turn," where organizations "pay greater attention to the inherent capacity of living ecologies to regenerate through diversity and reciprocity in human-nature relations" (Egmose et al. 2021, 1272; Muñoz and Brenzei 2021; Vlasov 2021).

However, the shift at the Knepp Estate is not only the outcome of how the landholders manage the land. Rather, the changes result from a shift in what is being cared for, which is not strictly derived from how humans care for nature. Other species at the farm also care in ways that enhance life in the ecology-in-place. These processes are not dependent on how humans "manage" life (Lorimer 2020), or how humans design and manipulate nature (Heikkurinen et al. 2019; Muñoz and Brenzei 2021; Vlasov 2021). Instead, the relational and distributed agencies among different species (including humans) care for the web of life in ways that enable shifts in how the ecology-in-place functions—regenerating life and landscapes.

Next, we discuss how these multispecies organizing processes are enacted as a matter of care through the relational threads of affect, vital doings, and ethico-political obligations among humans and other species.

MULTISPECIES CARE AS AFFECTIVE BEING AND RELATING

As an affective state of being and way of relating, care is an embodied phenomenon, which allows us to be affected by others and become emotionally involved with them (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Puig de la Bellacasa's work stresses how this affective state of care acts as a "relational thread" that involves "a strong sense of attachment and commitment" that makes humans "interested and involved in the things that plants care about" (Myers 2013, cited in Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 64). Similarly, Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani (2017, 11) note that affect acts as a relational

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force where "the ephemeral meets with history and remembering … flowing through encounters between humans and non-human factors that include sound, space, and weather." Huopalainen (2022, 964) stresses how the affective elements of human-dog encounters involve "the interacting senses of smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight."

At Knepp, the landholders were drawn into the field of rewilding due to their memories of wildlife experiences while traveling abroad. In particular, they were activated by Frans Vera's (2000) book about the history of grazing ecology in Europe and their experience with the results of rewilding firsthand at the Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve. This drew one of the owners, Charles Burrell, into becoming interested in and caring for free-ranging herbivores to restore the ecology at Knepp. It was the affective forces of other beings, transmitted through smell, touch, hearing, and sight in the Netherlands that drew his attention towards caring for large herbivores at home (Linnean Society 2021).

However, it was not the care for large herbivores that inspired the move into rewilding. Instead, it was what these herbivores could do—through their affective capacities—to the damaged farmland that attracted the landholders to them. As Tree (Linnean Society 2021, 14:20–14:36) notes, they "thought Vera's theories were fascinating and if [by] using free-roaming herbivores on our land to recover biodiversity, even if we managed to bring back life on our post-agricultural land just a little bit, that would be an experiment worth taking." Tree (2019, 82–84) describes how these relational forces affected the ecology-in-place shortly after they embarked on the rewilding journey:

> Every morning, we woke up cradled in an undulating prairie. From our windows industrial farming had vanished. No excavated soil, no machinery … Most conspicuous of all was the ambient noise: the low-level surround-sound thrumming of insects—something we hadn't even known we'd been missing. We walked knee-deep through ox-eye daisies, bird's-foot trefoil, ragged robin, knapweed, red clover, lady's bedstraw, crested dog's tail and sweet vernal grass, kicking up clouds of butterflies—common blues, meadow browns, ringlets, marbled whites, small and Essex skippers—and grasshoppers, hoverflies and all sorts of bumblebees … Somehow, nature had found us, homing in on our tiny patch of land from unseen distances the moment these few acres had become hospitable again.

The affective, relational threads woven in the ecology-in-place by humans, herbivores, and plants—instead of excavated soils, machinery, and fences—attracted more species that through their affective "touch," the sensation of the place being "hospitable" again was created, "homing" them in the ecology-in-place.

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) argues that the ethico-political dynamics of relational affect are transmitted through touch and touching bodies that allows for a sensory approach to perceive the less noticeable politics of ordinary material transformation (Bell and Vachhani 2020; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). The affective and embodied experiences of touch allow for an understanding of politics as inseparable from ethics within an everyday, practical setting. Thus, touch functions as "a force that places people [and other beings] in a co-subjective circuit of

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feeling and sensation" (Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017, 4), influencing their motivations, behaviors, and decision-making. This points to how humans care for things—whether living beings or dead material (e.g., garments or rocks) (Bell and Vachhani 2020; Valtonen and Pullen 2021)—has consequences for the ecologies brought into being (see the second dimension, vital doings). This "affective ethics of mattering" is a materially and ecologically grounded politics shaped by "a form of care(fulness) that emerges through situated, embodied encounters" (Bell and Vachhani 2020, 696). At Knepp, this affective ethics of mattering depends on what things humans and other species care for, provoking drastic transformations for a multiplicity of plants, insects, fungi, and animals.

Puig de la Bellacasa's work focuses on the direct encounters between humans and soils and not the "affective atmospheres" (Anderson 2009) that emerge at a collective level of organizing. Anderson (2009, 80) suggests that "atmospheres are interlinked with forms of enclosure—the couple, the room, the garden—and particular forms of circulation—enveloping, surrounding and radiating." These atmospheres are a "spatial carrier of attunement" (Böhme 1995, 29) that influence both what kind of objects are perceived and how they are sensed at a given time (LaFleur, 2023).

At Knepp, there was a time when the care for "huge quantities of wheat" used to provoke a sense of "shared joy" and "the feeling that you are doing something positive" (Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery 2023, 18:06–18:22) as it related to producing foodstuffs. At that time, Knepp was immersed in an atmosphere of productivism, foregrounding the care for only one species (i.e., wheat) to attain food security for the human population (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023). Then, the atmosphere drastically changed as the landholders focused on the appearance of multiple life forms at their estate. Under an atmosphere of rewilding, Burrell describes that they were "thrilled and excited" when the large tortoiseshell butterfly appeared at Knepp, which had not "been present in this country for 50 years" (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023, 24:53–25:10).

Tree (Linnean Society 2021 20:32–20:35) also expressed amazement about how "domesticated animals behave when they're released into a larger landscape." She was particularly struck by how the Tamworth pigs behave like hippos when searching for food in the bottom of the pond beds because she explains that as farm livestock stock "they just don't have the opportunity to express themselves as they would in a wilder freer landscape" (Linnean Society 2021, 21:08–21:14). This illustrates the transformations animals undergo with changing affective atmospheres from industrial agriculture to rewilded landscapes where the same animals are seen as "keystone species" holding the capacity to shape ecologies-in-place (Linnean Society 2021).

Depending on the (human-sensed) affective atmosphere, animals (e.g., bison, beavers, pigs, cows) become cared for as "keystone species," "ecosystem engineers" (Cusworth et al. 2022), "workers," "laborers," "collaborators" (Welden 2023), and "relatives" (Wall Kimmerer 2013). This also shapes how these animals are cared for by humans. For example, Indigenous scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) refers to plants, mountains, and lakes as relatives who freely give back love, care, and respect

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to those who take care of them through reciprocal relations. In contrast, Cusworth et al. (2022, 1020) note that when cattle are seen as ecological engineers, providing "nature-based solutions" to planetary environmental problems, humans are "geared less towards securing the size, health and identity of animal breeds to enable protein production, and more towards the modulation of earth systems to deliver desired processes and functions." Krzywoszynska (2020, 231) has pointed out that when soils and animals are cared for as "labor," it enables the same "processes of alienation and exploitation that characterize the relations between capital and human labor," expanding "the enrollment of ecosystems into capital accumulation" (Krzywoszynska 2020, 244). Paying attention to the different affective atmospheres under which the roles of different contributors to multispecies organizing are defined is important as these atmospheres always risk being captured as "an input that can be converted into a capital, a new form of accumulation and dispossession" (Endrissat and Islam 2022, 1042).

While the cows and pigs at Knepp do play an important role as "keystone species" (Tree 2019, 109), they are also cared for as "wildlife safari attractions" (Lorimer 2020, 99) and as "meat for premium markets" (Lorimer 2020, 99). These different modes of relating to the same species suggest differences in how these animals are cared for (as rewilders vs. resources) (Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt 2023) at different points in time, shaping their roles and affective states of being in the ecology-in-place. Despite the suggestion that the landholders left "nature in the driving seat" (Tree 2019, 88) when shifting to rewilding, humans and their organizational goals still largely dominate the affective atmosphere. The land managers control the locations where the herbivores graze, while the herds are carefully selected, bred, and culled to maintain the balance among species on the land (Lorimer 2020).

Recently, the affective relationalities at Knepp have become immersed in an atmosphere of "natural capital investments." As Burrell explains, rewilding is increasingly attracting the care of financial investors and corporations searching to "spend money on mitigation and on offsetting … of carbon and … biodiversity" (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023, 1:12:12–1:12:19) to compensate for being perceived as "dirty companies … not doing anything for the planet" (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023, 1:11:27–1:11:34). The affective care of humans shifts from the (touch of) multispecies dynamics in the ecology-in-place towards care for abstract, standardized representations that show how rewilding increases carbon in the soil (Burrell et al. 2024).

Thus, affect is not only a relational quality that, through its various forms of touch, shapes the ethico-political dynamics of human (Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017), material (Bell and Vachhani 2020), animal (Huopalainen 2022; Sayers 2016), and soil (Beacham 2018; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017) relations. Rather, continuously unfolding within shifting atmospheres, affect expresses itself differently, defining who or what is (not) cared for. The next section explores the consequences of such shifting affectivities by focusing on how matters of care come into being through the vital doings in the ecology-in-place.

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MULTISPECIES CARE AS VITAL DOINGS IN THE ECOLOGY-IN-PLACE

As a "material vital doing" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 161) matter of care continuously shapes the materialities and existences in the ecology-in-place. These vital doings are spread among "the agencies, materialities, and practicalities involved in the processes of caring" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 161). This turn to the (multispecies) practices of care that shape not just materialities but entire worlds is partly inspired by Haraway's (2016, 97) work on "worldings," or how "nothing comes without its world" (Haraway 1997, 137) that points at how humans and others always "become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time and stuff" (Haraway 2016, 97).

At Knepp, farm practices initially focused on achieving profitability by intensively managing the land so it would produce as much output per hectare as possible. This business-centric focus neglected the needs of other species, with disastrous consequences for their lives. As Burrell explains, the point was to make:

> your land profitable and if you had bloody trees in the middle of your old field, you plowed up underneath them until they died … For me, nature didn't belong in this landscape… (Moor Meadows 2019, 12:02–12:31).

Here, it is important to be attentive to what is being "neglected" through such caring practices. To stay committed to a world in which all species can live as well as possible, the ethical obligation needs to be "embedded in practices for remediating the neglect on Earth's need … [paying] attention to the invisible but indispensable labors and experiences of Earth's beings and resources" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 162). In this context, neglect is understood as "what happens when the doings of care are not attended" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 162), which is not the same as when care is more fully enacted by leaving something alone. This requires a shift toward the neglected labor and care work of all species that sustain the web of life.

Plants, animals, fungi, and insects are not passive background "props" (Haraway 2016) that do not matter for how humans organize. Through their species-specific capacity to care for others, these species are materially and intrinsically entangled with all life forms in the ecology-in-place. To stay attuned to the care enacted through such multispecies collaborative vital doings, humans need to cultivate an art of noticing (Tsing 2015) or an attentiveness towards the multiple and simultaneous rhythms of others "in their intimate particularity" while responding to their needs in ways that "cultivate worlds of mutual flourishing" (Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016, 17).

As the Knepp Estate changed its focus and introduced new species to the ecology-in-place, this enabled new life to surface where industrial agricultural practices had previously violently suppressed it. Tree describes an example of these vital multispecies doings:

> We're losing our wildflowers in our landscape … and consequently the species that depend on these wildflowers like pollinating insects are crashing too. At Knepp, thanks

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> largely to the pig rootling … we're seeing a resurgence of wildflowers … (Linnean Society 2021, 21:48–22:27).

This example points to how humans can contribute to the vital doings of multispecies care by being attentive to the rhythms and relations of other species. Through their capacity to evaluate what kind of vital doings were missing, the landholders brought in pigs that, through their species-specific characters, were then capable of creating the conditions for life for a multitude of plants and birds to flourish.

However, care is sometimes more fully enacted by leaving things alone (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), as Burrell also explained:

> One of the things you have got to learn to do is to sit on your hands. If a thistle grows in your backyard, don't touch it … Nature is not neat and tidy … And the messier it is … the better it is (Kneppflix 2023, 14:15–14:38).

At other moments, the role of human care work is more pronounced, mending the landscape while restraining the vital doings of some species in ways that materially support the human visions of what kind of landscapes should be sustained. As Burrell explains:

> [I can control] the species that are present, the large herbivore species, and the numbers of those species … The thought in the early stages was that we didn't want [the landscape] to turn into a closed woodland, but we also didn't want it to remain an open grassland … Those [ideas] restrict the thoughts and patterns of what you do (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023, 1:22:25–1:23:04).

This quote shows how the ethico-political dynamics of multispecies organizing is an outcome of humans' ability to respond to the needs of many different species while also tending to the visions, goals, and needs of humans (Vlasov 2021). Hence, humans have a delicate role when balancing human-centered interests and the ecology-in-place. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, 164) warns us of falling into the trap of regarding care as ideal "good feel" relationships, as "sometimes the question of how to care might mean that we have to engage with issues concerning if, why, and how to kill and for what." As Burrell explains:

> The movement of rewilding is about bringing back a functioning ecosystem that includes [carnivores, such as] bears, wolves, lynx … they are part of what makes nature … (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023, 6:42–7:09).

> Now we can act as the carnivores, we can control the populations of these herbivores, but we do need these herbivores to run the natural systems (Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery 2023, 9:32–9:57).

This shows how the landholders seek to control herbivores' grazing patterns by carefully selecting and culling the number of animals to maintain the balance among species while supporting each animal's well-being (Lorimer 2020). Such decisions are partly a consequence of the affective atmosphere of Knepp's business operations. Without visiting tourists, the landholders could just let the animals die a

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natural death, leaving "fallen stock on the land … [letting] the bones, the flesh, the skin to rot down into the soil and return all those trace elements" (Linnean Society 2021, 49:40–49:57). However, the Knepp Estate is affectively invested in deriving an income from ecotourism and meat sales. Having dead bodies of herbivores lying around would be unlikely to attract paying tourists or produce revenue from meat sales.

"Rewilding" has become a business shaped by capitalist market relations (Tsing 2015), involving specific affective atmospheres (see the first dimension of matter of care). With the recent shift in human care towards attracting natural capital investments from financial markets (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023) to scale up rewilding efforts, the practices of humans are shifting towards controlling, measuring, and reporting the amount of carbon that multispecies care work brings to the ecology-in-place (see Burrell et al. 2024). As Tree explains:

> At the beginning … we didn't look at our soils … but we are beginning to look at [the carbon content] … we are going very deeply into soil analysis [having] surveys and monitoring out there all the time (Linnean Society 2021, 1:06:56–1:07:44).

This monitoring and measuring of the outcomes of multispecies care work based on standardized figures for carbon sequestration risks instrumentalizing multispecies care work. Based on the premise that "only that which can be measured can be valued," which dominates corporate-financial relations (Painter-Morland and ten Bos 2016), the appreciation and care for alternative organizing multispecies ties are made more difficult (Davies and Riach 2019). By operating on the principles of measurability, the vital doings of multispecies care are no longer based on assuring the health and well-being of different beings but on how these doings are "calculable, comparable and exchangeable" (Nyberg and Wright 2016, 634) according to predetermined, scientifically monitored, and universalized standards of carbon sequestration (Burrell et al. 2024).

Rather than cultivating an attentiveness towards the multiple rhythms of others (Van Dooren et al. 2016), this shift toward the care work is mediated through practices of detachment and alienation (Schroer et al. 2021), this risks neglecting the unmeasurable (and at times unknown) vital doings of multiple species (Kallio and LaFleur 2023) while converting multispecies care into exploitative labor (Krzywoszynska 2020) serving business-centric interest in capitalist (and financialized) markets (Fullerton 2015).

This points to "the diverse, situated, and often conflicting practices of care" (Schroer et al. 2021, n.p.). An analysis of the ethico-political dynamics of the vital doings of multispecies care must, therefore, always be grounded in understanding their material consequences. This brings us to the final dimension of what the ethical obligations of matters of care imply.

THE ETHICO-POLITICAL OBLIGATION OF MULTISPECIES CARE

Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) third dimension of matter of care involves "an ethico-political obligation" that requires us to think about "what worlds are being maintained

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and at the expense of which others" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 52). Care "obliges in that for life to be liveable it needs being fostered" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 198). From a feminist standpoint, she reminds us that matters of care often involve unvalued and invisible labor linked to exploitation and domination. This dimension prompts us to interrogate the power asymmetries related to care, which are often grounded in gendered and racialized injustices (Davies and Riach 2019; Jammaers and Huopalainen 2023; Tironi and Rodríguez-Giralt 2017). Interrogating what worlds we care for makes the politically contested nature of care visible, showing how non-innocent engagement with care may unknowingly reproduce asymmetric power relations (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017).

As all caring relations in interdependent worlds emerge out of situated knowledge, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, 204) urges scholars to "stay with the trouble of our own complicities and implications," reminding us that our non-innocent thinking must reside "in the inevitable entanglement between the critical and the speculative stance" as "there is not such an outside position that our involvements have no effects." Drawing on Haraway's (2016, 35) notions of how "[i]t matters what worlds world worlds" and "[i]t matters what stories tell stories," Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) encourages us to carefully examine the assumptions that shape caring relations, pointing to how care relations have consequences for the kind of world brought into being. Thus, the ethico-political obligation of care requires reflections on what is being cared for and neglected while also engaging with our complicities as researchers in sustaining particular worlds of (un)caring relations. This obligation is, hence, a speculative practice that invites us to "move beyond describing and unpacking things as they are in order to consider how they might be" (Coulter 2022, 19), reflecting on what the future might look like if multispecies care became more widespread. As such, it "refers to a mode of thought committed to fostering visions of other worlds possible" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 110).

At Knepp, the obligation to care has been directed towards damaged agricultural landscapes deprived of biodiversity. Although an increasing number of species can now flourish at Knepp, it is still important to note that how the landholders' care has implications for other worlds. The conversion of farmland into rewilding sites means that care for human aliment becomes neglected (or at least of secondary importance), which may encourage the extension of biodiversity-damaging monocultural food production elsewhere. The United Kingdom imports almost half of its food (UK Health Security Agency 2023), while more than two-thirds of the land needed to produce the UK's food is in countries with looser environmental regulations (de Ruiter et al. 2016). Hence, if rewilding in the UK were to scale up—which the Knepp landholders actively encourage through their books and seminars—this may lead to an intensification of destructive industrial agricultural practices elsewhere (Cusworth et al. 2022). Thus, our ethical-political obligation as researchers extends beyond specific rewilded ecologies, and it involves asking questions about what it would mean for multispecies life worlds if many farmers—in the name of rewilding—abandoned their ethical obligation to produce food for humans.

At Knepp, we note that there are two different ways in which the care for food (for humans) is envisioned. While presenting his vision of the future Knepp landscape,

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Burrell (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023) reveals the ethical obligations he holds towards the needs of humans regarding food. Citing the work of George Monbiot (2022), Burrell's vision includes a high-tech system of precision fermentation of bacteria in large factories that produce proteins, fat, and carbohydrates, which, according to abstract mathematical calculations, could release large areas of land from intensive agriculture for rewilding purposes (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023). Citing the work of regenerative farmers (Brown 2018), Tree provides a different vision for Knepp, where industrial farming shifts to regenerative practices (Linnean Society 2021). Such a shift, she argues, would make it possible to combine rewilding with the production of "as much food from the same amount of land without [soil damaging chemical] inputs [where also] food is healthier for us as human beings to eat" (Linnean Society 2021, 33:22–33:35).

Here, we can see how two different ethical obligations are at play. One sides with the business innovations of food fermentation in large-scale factories, neglecting the care for the ecologies (the so called "sacrifice zones") where the materials needed for the factories would be extracted (see De Bruyn 2023). The other situates its care for human needs of food produced through multispecies care in the ecology-in-place, neglecting the care for high-tech solutions and factory-based human nutrition. Each way of caring for food has implications for the materialities and ethical entanglements brought into being. The factory-based foods would produce rewilded ecologies but also sacrificed ecologies. At the same time, an integrated system would have implications for what animal and plant species would be allowed to care for the ecology-in-place. Hence, because "it matters what worlds world worlds" (Haraway 2016, 35); how we frame what food is and from where it is sourced has implications for the multispecies lives and ecologies (not) being cared for.

In another example of Haraway's (2016) contention about which worlds are worlding worlds, one can point to the prominent position of the Burrell family in the British upper class and Tree's profession as an author and journalist. This has helped the propagation of their rewilding stories, which have inspired many others. However, these stories are also a symptom of a world steeped in troubling power asymmetries that influence who can shape public debates and whose worlds are being cared for by whom. The Knepp Estate belongs to a family that has benefitted from the long-standing concentration of land ownership in the UK (Cahill 2002). While their ethical obligation to care deeply for their land heritage inspired the landholders to look for alternatives to their death-making agricultural practices, it is important to note that most people in the UK cannot foster such an affective relation to their home places other than as paying consumers of ecotourism and special meats. The concentration of land ownership in the hands of a wealthy few liberates ordinary consumers from having an obligation to care for the land through their everyday vital doings. From a speculative standpoint, one could ask: What would a world of multispecies care be like? What kinds of life forms would it encourage if more humans could engage in multispecies care, not only as paying consumers but as caring citizens engaged in revitalizing the liveliness of their ecologies-in-place? For example, some rewilding sites in the UK today encourage more community

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participation (Martin, Fischer, and McMorran 2023), inspiring us to think with care differently than through inherited land ownership.

Another important aspect of what worlds are being cared for can be noted in how the increasing entanglements with financial investors shift the ethical commitments and obligations at Knepp (Oxford Biodiversity Network 2023). While the landholders used to derive their income from caring for what the land provided them—through ecotourism and meat sales—these novel financial arrangements entangle rewilding landholders with new assemblages of (un)care. As Burrell notes, these investments "will turn a bit of plowed land into a Knepp, and it will have life pouring back in it and will be important regionally for life [by selling] carbon and biodiversity credits" (Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery 2023, 56:41–56:59). However, are these investors truly committed to multispecies organizing? Or, perhaps, are their ethical obligations geared towards caring for companies "perceived to be dirty and not doing anything for the planet [seeking to invest in rewilding so that their] product[s can] have a shine on [them]" (Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery 2023, 1:11:31–1:11:36)? This corporate move into financing rewilding follows similar dynamics and injustices previously noted in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR), where the liveliness of multispecies worlds are converted to representations in CSR reports (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm 2022) that signal that corporations care for things such as carbon emission (Gond and Nyberg 2017), coffee plantations (Levy, Reinecke, and Manning 2016), and planted forests (Moog, Spicer, and Böhm 2015). However, the representational politics involved in how these entities come to matter (Latour 2005) hide alternative caring relations that do not use rewilding as a way of greenwashing their image (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm 2022). While turning other worlds into wastelands and sacrifice zones, these companies can continue to neglect their obligation to care for multispecies lives in the places that materially sustain their profits while compensating for their uncaring activity by investing in carbon and biodiversity credits at Knepp.

The multispecies injustices inherent in carbon and biodiversity offsetting schemes exploit the affective and vital doings of multispecies collectives in one place while destroying others somewhere else. These schemes also redirect what is being cared for away from affective and sensuous experiences to the care for carbon measures, which reduces the landholders' capacity to cultivate an attentiveness for the rhythms and relations (Van Doreen 2016) that make multispecies lives possible in ecologies-in-place. Kallio and LaFleur (2023, 3) warn us that universalized standards make local ways of relating to the land "vulnerable to manipulation or control from a distance," which marginalizes "the situated, sensuous and more-than-representational ways of knowing" in the ecology-in-place. Thus, the arrival of biodiversity and carbon credits risks shifting care obligations away from the situated and affective towards the standardized and universal, controlled from a distance.

As scholars committed to making visible environmental injustices, we acknowledge that it also matters what kind of worlds we, as scholars, world through our work. The cases with which we choose to think are not just intellectual and illustrative; they are ethical and political (Coulter 2022) in terms of the affective relationalities they illuminate and obscure. By choosing to think with Knepp, we chose a

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"privileged" ecology in the Global North. However, what about the sacrifice zones in the Global South? In these sacrifice zones, multispecies communities must come together to care for and repair the toxic lives forced upon them despite feeling displaced, unheard, and unseen (Tironi and Rodríguez-Giralt 2017).

In our writing, our ethical obligation is directed towards a world where multispecies life can flourish everywhere. We acknowledge that this requires systemic changes in how land is managed and distributed and how economies are performed into being. Such changes demand more from us humans than setting up natural capital investments for rewilding and nature-based solutions that compensate for dirty businesses elsewhere. It requires that we all learn to "think with care" (Haraway 2016) and how to be touched by the affective multispecies relationalities of care. Our organizing processes need to become affectively invested in what plants, animals, and other species care about while also allowing ourselves to be touched by their affective care.

DISCUSSION

Given that environmental ethics is dominated by instrumental approaches, such as CSR, there have been calls for a better understanding of the intrinsic relations between organizations and nature (Schuler et al. 2017). We follow this call by proposing an expanded approach to studying environmental ethics, emphasizing humans' inseparable relation to, and dependence on, other species in the ecology-in-place. We have introduced a theoretical frame to understand the dynamics of multispecies organizing that considers how humans connect and collaborate with other species as matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Our framework consists of three interrelated dimensions of analysis: the affective states of being that shape multispecies relations in the web of life, the vital doings of multispecies care that entangle multiple species and shape the vitality of the web of life, and the ethico-political obligations that define what is being cared for in the ecology-in-place.

The rewilding site at Knepp shows how the affective atmosphere has radically changed as the landowners have shifted away from suppressing other life forms through intensive agricultural practices towards multispecies organizing with care. As a result, life has multiplied as the landowners started to "work with nature," caring for the vital doings of living soils, animals, and plants. The affective atmosphere that has emerged is one in which birds and wildflowers have strengthened other life forms, revitalizing the ecology-in-place. The Knepp experience shows that human agencies alone cannot activate these processes within the web of life and that human existences and doings are deeply connected to other species. We argue that understanding these multispecies dynamics in the ecology-in-place is essential to converting a web of death into a web of life. Let us now discuss the main theoretical implications of our analysis.

Overcoming Anthropocentrism in Organizational Ethics by Grounding it in the Ecology-in-Place

Overcoming the human-centeredness that is prevalent in organizational ethics scholarship requires a shift towards examining how humans relate and collaborate

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with nonhumans in specific ecologies-in-place through their co-constituted ways of worlding. This shift has been facilitated by the posthuman turn in organizational ethics, which has shed light on organizing in multispecies contexts (e.g., Beacham 2018; Coulter 2022; Davies and Riach 2019; Gherardi and Laasch 2022; Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022). We argue that an ethics for the living should not be instrumentally focused on universalized scientific data and knowledge of how to remain within the Earth's planetary boundaries (Heikkurinen et al. 2019; Whiteman, Walker, and Perego 2013). Nor do we have any hope in managerial approaches that use CSR and capital investment mechanisms to shift our world towards more sustainable and regenerative futures. The instrumentality of these environmental ethics approaches (Schuler et al. 2017) is explained by their deep-seated anthropocentrism (Wright et al. 2018). If humans are always put first—even within a new paradigm of "regenerative capitalism" (Fullerton 2015)—then the doings and outcomes within this paradigm will always be one-sidedly informed by human-centered concerns.

Multispecies organizing is rooted in the relational encounters between humans and other species in place. What matters for life to flourish is cultivating curiosity for each other's existences in ways that enhance life instead of causing large-scale ecosystem destruction and mass extinction. Our framework allows for an analytical approach that brings the relational agencies between humans and other species forward, showing alternative visions (Banerjee and Arjaliès 2021; Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm 2022; Roux-Rosier, Azambuja, and Islam 2018) of how multispecies organizing is enacted practically and affectively. Our proposal is not an analysis of the institutional settings that shape how corporations or other human-based organizations use or manage natural resources and environments (Ezzamel and Willmott 2014; Hoffman and Jennings 2021) but how humans, together with other species, organize within the ecology-in-place.

Hence, what is important are the relations on the ground, the affective and material interspecies relations that form a new "terrestrial" politics (Latour 2018) that goes beyond self-interests, ideologies, and institutions. The politics of the terrestrial follow the dynamics of the lively and relational agents embedded in the ecology-in-place. These political dynamics do not depend on the most powerful actors in global negotiations, for example, on climate targets. Instead, we argue that more attention is to be paid to the processes that shape what is being cared for in multispecies encounters in place.

Towards a Relational Understanding of the Vital Doings of Caring Multispecies Practices

Moving towards an understanding of organizing involving humans and multiple other life forms requires new ways of theorizing environmental ethics that account for the complexities and agencies involved in multispecies relations. The "outcomes" are not dependent on how humans value nature through price or other valuation schemes (Böhm, Misoczky, and Moog 2012; Islam, Rüling, and Schüßler 2019; Levy, Reinecke, and Manning 2016; Wright and Nyberg 2022) or how sustainability is measured through standardized indicators incorporated into governance systems and CSR

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(Gond and Nyberg 2017; Moog, Spicer, and Böhm 2015; van den Broek 2024), or by how animals are cared for as "stakeholders" or "commodities" within particular businesses and organizational assemblages (Kandel, Dlouhy, and Schmitt 2023; Kortetmäki, Heikkinen, and Jokinen 2023; Sayers 2016; Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022). Instead, it is the relational agencies of multispecies caring relations that shape how the ecology-in-place functions.

How the ethics for the living emerges through these historically contingent and situated practices (Gherardi and Laasch 2022) depends on the caring relations—involving affect, vital doings, and ethico-political obligations—that revitalize the life-sustaining threads among different species (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Through affective bonds, humans engage with other species and shape how different species become with the ecology-in-place. In turn, their relational agencies shape the kind of ethical sensitivities brought into being.

Previous research ascribes force to matter in organizational life through the affective relations that flow from encounters between bodies and objects (Bell and Vachhani 2020, Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017; Valtonen and Pullen 2021). These forces are understood to shape the agential qualities of organizing, showing how material encounters shape the relations and interactions within the organizational whole (Bell and Vachhani 2020). We argue—in relation to the vital materialities of multispecies life—that these agential qualities are more dynamic and complex, depending on how different species, through their affect and vital doings respond and sustain each other's lives in place. Thus, to understand the dynamics of matters of care, one must also attend to the life-sustaining affective threads of multispecies relations that bring these matters into being in ecologies-in-place, making humans interested and involved in what other species care about (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). These sustainability concerns do not rely on abstract definitions set in universal environmental ethics standards (e.g., Levy, Reinecke, and Manning 2016; Moog, Spicer, and Böhm 2015). Rather, they are "worlded" through the caring relationalities that rendered each species capable of revitalizing the ecology-in-place, which in turn enables the emergence of many novel life forms. These multispecies organizing processes are not machine-like systems where humans use "life to manage life" (Lorimer 2020). It is impossible to manage and control life. Instead, humans become immersed in the dynamic and relational forces of the web of life, where Earth itself provides guidance on how to care for multispecies life.

Shifting Systems: From Enacting a Web of Death Towards Strengthening the Web of Life

Multispecies organizing does not occur in corporate boardrooms, through governance, activism, or with products that are certified sustainable (Levy, Reinecke, and Manning 2016; Moog, Spicer, and Böhm 2015). Instead, change is mobilized based on shifts in how humans view themselves and care for other species through their vital doings in the ecology-in-place.

In our illustrative example, we see how modern agricultural practices and understandings of land as a resource for human-centric (ab)use have historically shaped the dynamics of multispecies relations by "battling against [nature]" (Tree 2019, 83) and

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not "giving nature the space and opportunity to express itself" (Tree 2019, 31). This approach weakens the relational threads between different species, producing a web of death rather than life-enhancing relations, resulting in degenerative processes that undermine the ecological functions of the land. The political dynamics of these processes involve affective sensibilities that depend largely on how histories in place unfold, and where the touch of smell, sound, and sight produced by multispecies affectivities (Huopalainen 2022) shape how humans remember (Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017) and are drawn to care for the well-being of other species. For example, the history of Knepp was shaped by monoculture industrial, agricultural landscapes, which made the landowners draw on the historical memory of free-grazing megafauna in Europe (Vera 2000) to "rewild" the landscapes with species such as wild horses and longhorn cattle.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have argued that organizational ethics needs to go firmly beyond instrumental, human-centered approaches, taking intrinsic relations of care and multispecies entanglements seriously. Building on multispecies ethnographies (Davies and Riach 2019; Tsing 2015; Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016) and feminist new materialism (Haraway 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), we have developed a theoretical framework for understanding relations of care and the ethico-political dynamics of multispecies organizing in the ecology-in-place. Our framework consists of three interrelated dimensions of analysis that are important to consider in the context of multispecies organizing: the affective states of being that shape the multispecies relations in the web of life (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), the vital doings that entangle multiple species, and the ethico-political obligation of multispecies care.

This article makes two interrelated contributions to the business ethics literature. First, we go beyond extant literature focused on nonhuman dimensions of organizing (Sayers, Martin, and Bell 2022; Tallberg, García-Rosell, and Haanpää 2022) and affective relations (Fotaki, Kenny, and Vachhani 2017) by developing a framework for understanding the organizational dynamics involved when humans collaborate with other species to improve the vitality of ecosystems. This is based on the understanding that most existing organizational ethics scholarship has not understood the multiple entanglements between humans and other species well enough (Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016).

Second, we have pointed to the ethico-political dimensions of these entanglements within ecologies-in-place, which always have a broader footprint regarding their wider geographical connections and historical trajectories. In our illustrative case, we have seen how the rewilding project is driven by the interests of landowners, their historical imaginations, and their need to make an income from the land. We have considered that if large farmland areas in the Global North were transformed into rewilded spaces, industrial agriculture could be expanded and intensified elsewhere. These unequal power relations are important to consider. Hence, while local in practice, multispecies organizing must be complemented by a global ethics of multispecies justice.

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In this regard, rewilding is not the only type of multispecies organizing where matters of care are relevant. We could also have "thought with" the reindeer herders, whose affective relationalities with place in northern Finland are threatened by the government's care for "green" and decarbonized economies (Lassila 2023), or with small-scale farmers whose care for native species and herbivores is threatened by the expansion of monocultural tree plantations (Ehrnström-Fuentes 2022), or the alternative economic practices embedded in permaculture communities (Beacham 2018; Roux-Rosier, Azambuja, and Islam 2018) and sites of agroforestry experimentation (Vlasov 2021). All these sites are examples of multispecies organizing processes sustained by matters of care in the web of life.

We suggest that future research examine how green investments and monetization approaches (e.g., payments for ecosystem services) affect how matters of care are enacted in contexts of multispecies organizing. New methodological advancements are required to study multispecies organizing in various settings. In terms of questions related to sustainability, more attention must be directed toward the multispecies threads of relations that sustain both human and others' lives—the web of life—in our respective ecologies-in-place. We, as researchers, should not just extract knowledge through representations (e.g., numerical measure of biodiversity, carbon sequestration) but acknowledge our own complicity in how multispecies care is represented in research. By embedding ourselves and our methodologies in the affective, sensuous, and caring relations of specific ecologies-in-place, we can deal with questions about how multispecies needs are cared for, on whose terms, and for whose benefit (Kallio and LaFleur 2023).

Most of the debates on rewilding occur in the Global North. At the same time, many multispecies communities in the Global South face the threat of land grabbing in the name of green investments (Bruna 2022; Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones 2012). Just as rewilding is important for local biodiversity in the UK, so are the ancestral systems in the Global South (Banerjee and Arjaliès 2021; Ehrnström-Fuentes and Böhm 2022). Thus, it is important to incorporate insights from these locations. There is always a danger that if research on topics such as multispecies organizing is too focused on positive examples in the Global North, it will not account for how changing land use in the Global North is a driver of extractive practices in the Global South. Future research should examine multispecies organizational processes in both the Global North and South, aiming to understand the different challenges they face so that not just humans but all species—both in the Global North and South—can live as well as possible.

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