

We Speak in the First Person

Submitted by Danne W. Polk of the Philosophy Department, Villanova University, these reflections are the cumulative result of a thought experiment in which the 38 students in an Ecofeminism course were asked to imagine that if nonhuman beings could speak to us and we could understand their languages, what would they say?

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You look like a silent peaceful animal like myself; however, people are my main enemy. *** Just because you don't see us building factories and buildings does not mean we are dumb or unimportant; we don't need or want them. We can't come up to your world and ruin it, we can't dump toxic waste in your world—in fact, we don't want to—you do it yourself. ** I am the last of my kind. Did you know that? Who will remember me? **** I can't believe you actually appreciate me, so many of your people take us for granted. * They see me as something to be hunted for sport or as a valuable hide. Please help them realize that we are alive and have the right to exist with you. My people need a place to rest ... Your people are pushing us out of our homes—please not out of existence. *** I call you to realize our value and others to do so too. **** Think about that the next time you ride by, oblivious to all thoughts but your own. ** Where is my family? Will I ever see them again? There are only a few of us left ... the woods have been shrinking year by year. You don't understand the importance of woods. They take our homes, now they take us. I'm trapped! *** Save me and my children. Stop pretending you don't know what's happening to me. Face the pain. Cry. Speak what you know. *** Even one person can make a difference. *** I'm begging you to make other humans aware of the terrible destruction being done to my home Every day I find myself running from you as you destroy the greens, browns, yellows. Please, let the world know we need our home, where will we go? What will we do? You must stop thinking you own everything. *This is our home. These trees and plants are my family.* Stop, you wretched beings, stop! **** Slow down, and look out for me, Please! My name is Timeless. Countless eons span my existence. I have watched the rivers flood and ebb. The boulders crushed to dust the Earth trembled and quaked

in her birth pains. I've seen your brothers and sisters kill and maim and hurt. Can't you see I am your brother? Your sister? Am I just shade and wood and fuel and obstruction? Rather life giver, friend, mother and father. I cannot give you advice, but I pose these questions: What is it that you seek? What is it that you are? When you see your face reflected in mine will you understand? ***** Every time you see me maybe you should say good-by, because the next time you come this way, I might be gone. You just use and only think of the now. Listen to all others with the respect they deserve. Take their advice to heart. My cousin is about to be murdered today. Please go and stop them. ** We are just as real as humans and deserve the chance to live. You need to give me more time, because I am your lungs, the water and the flesh of your soul. I am your children's children.

Why are you just sitting back not joining us? ** As if I am nothing. As if I am beneath you. As if I am at your disposal. As if you created me. As if you can live without me. That is how you treat me and you are wrong. If you destroy me, you will destroy yourself. And so here is how you must change in your actions toward all others besides yourself, you must change. You must treat all with the respect and courtesy you so self-righteously demand for yourself. You must see, hear, taste, touch, smell, and live the interconnectedness of all entities. You must promise to do everything you can to never hurt or dispose of anything ever again. All things you do and say must be immediate and long term. You must finally love me and all other entities that make up mother earth so deeply that to harm us would be to die yourself. I leave you now to love.

