



Donna Haraway, Excerpts from *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016).

“Staying with the trouble requires **making oddkin**; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all. That kind of material semiotics is always situated, someplace and not noplacement, entangled and worldly. Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little, and so we succumb to despair or to hope, and neither is a sensible attitude. Neither despair nor hope is tuned to the senses, to mindful matter, to material semiotics, to mortal earthlings in thick copresence. Neither hope nor despair knows how to teach us to **“play string figures with companion species,”** the title of the first chapter of this book.” (p. 4)

“String figures are like stories; they propose and enact patterns for participants to inhabit, somehow, on a vulnerable and wounded earth. My multispecies storytelling is about recuperation in complex histories that are as full of dying as living, as full of endings, even genocides, as beginnings. In the face of unrelenting historically specific surplus suffering in companion species knottings, I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. **Call that staying with the trouble.** And so I look for real stories that are also speculative fabulations and speculative realisms. These are stories in which multispecies players, who are enmeshed in partial and flawed translations across difference, redo ways of living and dying attuned to still possible finite flourishing, still possible recuperation.” (p. 10)

“Marilyn Strathern is an ethnographer of thinking practices... [She] writes about **accepting the risk of relentless contingency, of putting relations at risk with other relations, from unexpected worlds...** Strathern taught me—taught us—a simple but game-changing thing: “It matters what ideas we use to think other ideas.” I compost my soul in this hot pile. The worms are not human; their undulating bodies ingest and reach, and their feces fertilize worlds. **Their tentacles make string figures.**” (pg 34)



“The tentacular ones tangle me in SF. Their many appendages make string figures; they entwine me in the poiesis—the making—of speculative fabulation, science fiction... The tentacular ones make attachments and detachments; they make cuts and knots; they make a difference; they weave paths and consequences but not determinisms; they are both open and knotted in some ways and not others. SF is storytelling and fact-telling; it is the patterning of possible worlds and possible times, material-semiotic worlds, gone, here, and yet to come. I work with string figures as a theoretical trope... I work with and in SF as material-semiotic composting, as theory in the mud, as muddle.

The tentacular are not disembodied figures; they are cnidarians, spiders, fingery beings like humans and raccoons, squid, jellyfish, neural extravaganzas, fibrous entities... fungal tangles, probing creepers, swelling roots, reaching and climbing tendrilled ones. The tentacular are also nets and networks, IT critters, in and out of clouds. Tentacularity is about life lived along lines—and such a wealth of lines—not at points, not in spheres. “The inhabitants of the world, creatures of all kinds, human and non-human, are wayfarers”; generations are like **“a series of interlaced trails.”** (p. 31-32)

“Mourning is about dwelling with a loss and so coming to appreciate what it means, how the world has changed, and how we must *ourselves* change and renew our relationships if we are to move forward from here. In this context, genuine mourning should **open us into an aware-ness of our dependence on and relationships with those countless others being driven over the edge of extinction . . .** The reality, however, is that there *is* no avoiding the necessity of the difficult cultural work of reflection and mourning. This work is not opposed to practical action, rather it is the foundation of any sustainable and informed response.” (p. 38-39)