

Unmaking human-centered design

Summary and Learning outcomes

Summary

Through this teaching activity, students will learn to broaden their views, from focusing on humans (which is the core of human-centered design) to taking a more-than-human perspective. In this way, they are supported in working from "old practices" towards a new interpretation of the field of more-than-human-centered design.

Learning outcomes

After this activity students should be able to:

- Recognise the interrelationships between human and non-human elements in human-computer design.
- Engage in reflective discussions to evaluate the ethical, social, and environmental impacts of their design choices,
- Propose strategies for incorporating more-than-human considerations into future design projects.

Outline/Content

- What is human-centered design?
- What is more-than-human centered design?
- How can we unmake human-centered design?
- How can we make more-than-human centered design?

Key readings

Giaccardi, E., & Redström, J. (2020). Technology and More-Than-Human Design. *Design Issues*, 36, 33-44. https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00612.

Tarcan, B. (2022). Making-with the environment through more-than-human design. *Proceedings of DRS*. <https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2022.347>.

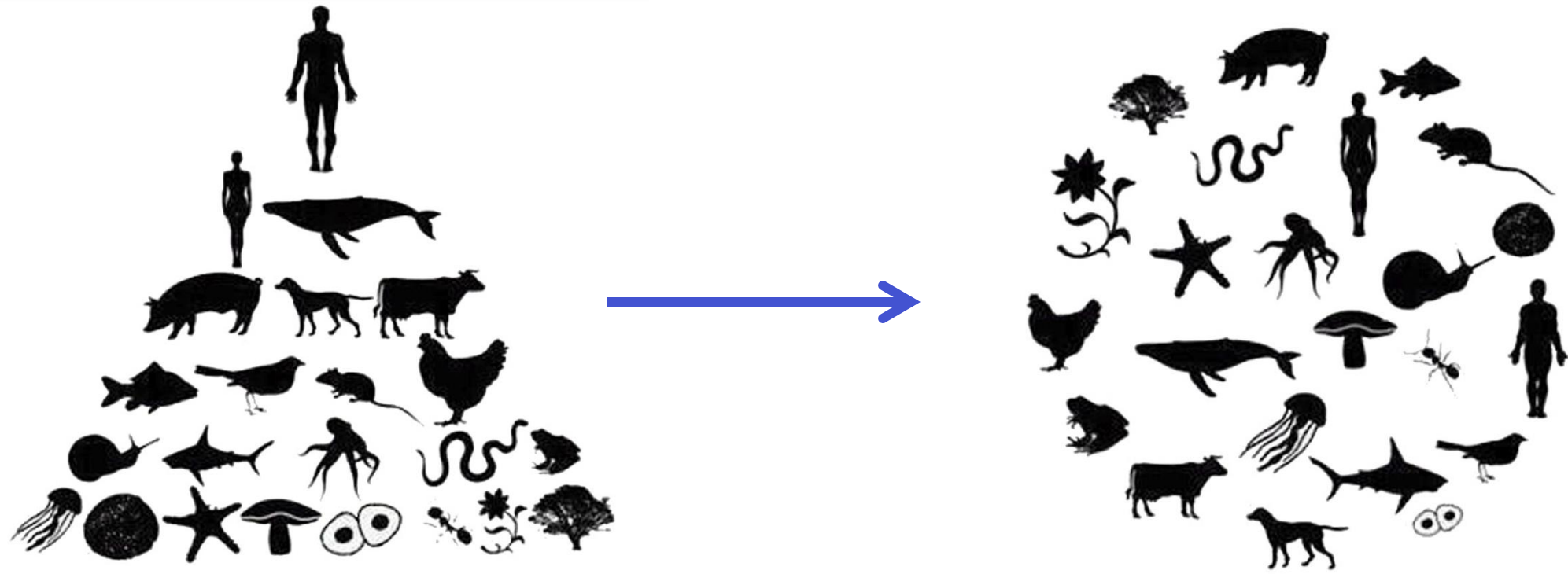
Sabie, S., Song, K. W., Parikh, T. S., Jackson, S., Paulos, E., Lindström, K., Ståhl, Å., Sabie, D., Andersen, K., & Wakkary, R. (2022). Unmaking@CHI: Concretizing the material and epistemological practices of unmaking in HCI. *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems Extended Abstracts*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3491101.3503721>

human-centered design

designing solutions that meet the needs, preferences,
and behaviors of humans

More-than-human-centered design

designing solutions that meet the needs, preferences, and behaviors of humans and impacts on **non-human actors, such as animals, plants, ecosystems**



recognizing the [interconnectedness of humans with the broader environment](#) and creating solutions that are not only beneficial for humans but also considerate of the well-being and sustainability of other species

HOW?

While design is generally about **making** and developing new things, the opposite process of **unmaking** something that already exists can enhance a critical reflection on existing things to reveal and consider crucial design challenges with socio-ecological consequences.

Unmaking

Challenge conventional human-centered design narratives in Human-Centered Design (HCD) and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) through critical reflection and collaborative exploration of non-human perspectives, using collages.

Unmaking human-centered design

1 Unmake

Individually disassemble the design magazines or other design or HCI literature provided. Cut out images, text, and any other pieces of relevant content that signals human-centered design perspectives.



15 min

Making more-than-human- centered design

2 Make

Use the materials collected to create a collage representing **more-than-human** topics in design/HCI together with peers (group of 3-5). Discuss individual findings, thoughts and perspectives on human-centered design vs. more-than-human design. Arrange, and paste the collected materials onto a shared poster creatively to create an image of more-than human design, considering how these cutout pieces interact and contribute to their overall message.



20 min

3 Reflecting discussion

Reflect in class on the collages (e.g., What story does it tell?) and the broader implications of more-than-human considerations in design. Collect current efforts, practices, and discourses on more-than-human topics in design.



25 min

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