

**When Life comes Between Us.**  
**Ethics and social relations in everyday life**

**23 – 24 January 2023**

**University of Humanistic Studies**

**Utrecht**

## Program Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January (day 1)

11.00 – 11.30	Registration and coffee/tea	canteen
11.30 – 12.00	Welcome and opening	plenary room (0.38)
12.00 – 13.15	Carlo Leget <i>Give us this day our daily bread: care ethics as everyday ethics</i> Response by Maria Louw	plenary room (0.38)
13.15 – 14.15	Lunch	canteen
14.15 – 15.45	Paper sessions (round 1) <i>Rethinking the relational self</i> <i>What happens between us</i> <i>Approaching the good</i>	room 0.38 room 1.15 room 0.22
15.45 – 16.15	Coffee/tea break	canteen
16.15 – 17.30	Jarrett Zigon <i>How is it between us?</i>	plenary room (0.38)
17.30	Drinks	canteen

## Program Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January (day 2)

09.00 – 09.15	Coffee/tea	canteen
09.15 – 10.45	Paper sessions (round 2)	
	<i>Rupture and potentiality in everyday life</i>	room 0.38
	<i>Power, inequality and care</i>	room 1.15
	<i>Workshop 'Images of meaning'</i>	room 0.22
10.45 – 11.15	Coffee/tea break	canteen
11.15 – 12.30	Lone Grøn & Rasmus Dyring	plenary room (0.38)
	<i>Staying-In-Between</i>	
	<i>Motifs from Critical Phenomenology and Imagistic Anthropology</i>	
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	canteen
13.30 – 15.00	Paper session (round 3)	
	<i>Ethics and being-with</i>	room 0.22
	<i>The (im)possibility of us</i>	room 1.15
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee/tea break	canteen
15.15 – 16.00	Looking back and forward	plenary room (0.38)
	Closing	

## Plenary sessions

*Each session will consist of a 45-minute presentation, followed by 30 minutes for questions and discussion*

<b>Plenary 1</b>	<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January</b>	<b>12.00 – 13.15</b>
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**Carlo Leget, Professor of Care Ethics and chair of the dept. of Care Ethics, University of Humanistic Studies**

*Give us this day our daily bread: care ethics as everyday ethics*



In this contribution I want to plea for the importance of an everyday ethics and explore how care ethics can be helpful in developing an everyday ethics. I will start my paper with a phenomenological description of something as ordinary as a slice of bread. From there I will plea that before being able to develop an everyday ethical perspective an understanding of the meaning structures inherent in our awareness of daily phenomena is needed. After an analysis of my description, I will use a care ethical perspective as a next step that helps to develop a moral interpretation of the everyday phenomenon of daily bread, laying bare the moral dimension of the practices the slice of bread is situated in. In my view the development of a care ethical everyday perspective is best developed engaging in a dialectical process between qualitative empirical research on the one hand, and a care ethical critical reflection on the other (Leget, van Nistelrooij, Visse 2017).



*Response by*

**Maria Louw, Associate Professor, dept. of Anthropology, Aarhus University**

<b>Plenary 2</b>	<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January</b>	<b>16.15 – 17.30</b>
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**Jarrett Zigon, Porterfield Chair in Bioethics and Professor of Anthropology, University of Virginia**

*How is it between us?*



In this talk, I will maintain that the most fundamental of all ethical questions is that of how is it between us. This question takes priority over more traditional questions such as did she act rightly or what is the good. The talk unfolds across two threads. First, through an exploration of ethics as *ēthos* it is shown that this etymology reveals that ethics involves a fundamental emplacement, and that relationally considered this place of ethics is what I call the between. Second, this concept of between and its significance for ethics is taken up through a critical engagement with the recent debate on transcendence within the anthropology of ethics. In contrast to those anthropologists who have considered transcendence in terms of beyond the everydayness of sociality, I read Levinas together with Nancy to argue that transcendence is best considered as the very structure of the being-with of sociality and ethics.

**Lone Grøn, Professor with special responsibilities in Anthropology, VIVE, Danish Centre for Social Science Research**

**Rasmus Dyring, Associate Professor, dept. of Philosophy and History of Ideas, Aarhus University**

*Staying-In-Between*

*Motifs from Critical Phenomenology and Imagistic Anthropology*



Social relations. Intersubjectivity. Relationality. That which in various ways can be said to lie “in between” persons and things has played fundamental roles in as well anthropology and the social sciences more broadly as in phenomenology in all its various incarnations. In this paper, we want to zero in on the “in-between” in all its experiential ambiguity and opacity. This concern with the in-between raises an array of methodological and theoretical issues. How do we explore it? Where do we find it? What is it – ontologically speaking? And, why bother? What does this move towards the in-between bring to our understanding of social relations and ethics in everyday life?



Based on ethnographic vignettes from everyday social life at a Danish dementia ward, we will introduce two approaches: critical phenomenology and imagistic anthropology, arguing that the move to *stay-in-between* has radical implications for how we can think of socialities, ethics and everyday lives. In this, we draw on several years of interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropologists, philosophers and artists in the Aarhus-based projects ‘Aging as a human condition’ and ‘Ethics after individualism’, including the recently published book: *Imagistic Care: Growing Old in a Precarious World* (eds. Mattingly and Grøn 2022, Fordham U.P).

## Paper sessions

Paper sessions round 1	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	14.15-15:45
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### Rethinking the relational self

room 0.38

Chair: Simon van der Weele

- 14.15 – 14.35: Adrienne de Ruiter  
*How about artificial others? Exploring the limits to social community in light of AI and robots*
- 14.35 – 14.55: Thomas Schwarz Wentzer  
*Ethnography, Geography, Philography - an essay on disciplinary scales*
- 14.55 – 15.15: Doret de Ruyter  
*On the centrality of relationship in education*
- 15.15 – 15.45: Discussion

### What happens between us

room 1.15

Chair: Gaby Jacobs

- 14.15 – 14.35: Gustaaf Bos  
*Can researchers and participants be friends?*
- 14.35 – 14.55: Marie Rask Bjerre Odgaard  
*What melts between us: ethical encounters through atmospheric dimensions of female relationality*
- 14.55 – 15.15: Bram van Boxtel & Laurens ten Kate  
*Resonance as an existential-phenomenological approach to pluralism*
- 15.15 – 15.45: Discussion

### Approaching the good

room 0.22

Chair: Carmen Schuhmann

- 14.15 – 14.35: Alfred Sköld  
*Generational Hate in the Time of Climate Crisis*
- 14.35 – 14.55: Alistair Niemeijer & Merel Visse  
*The precarious moral good: towards an aesthetics of care and hope*
- 14.55 – 15.15: Ruud Meij  
*The priority of justice in experimental ethics*
- 15.15 – 15.45: Discussion

<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>09.00 – 10.45</b>
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### **Rupture and potentiality in everyday life**

**room 0.38**

*Chair: Alistair Niemeijer*

09.15 – 09.35: Natashe Lemos Dekker

*Refusing to foreclose the future: narratives of loss, hope and potentiality in ageing*

09.35 – 09.55: Laura Emdal Navne, Mikka Nielsen & Anne Toft Ramsbøl

*Nearness of kin and others worlds in neurodiverse family life*

09.55 – 10.15: Laurine Blonk

*Meeting sites between the prose of social roles and poetics of relation*

10.15 – 10.45: Discussion

### **Power, inequality and care**

**room 1.15**

*Chair: Carlo Leget*

09.15 – 09.35: Rikke Sand Anderson

*Solo living, cancer and care politics in Denmark*

09.35 – 09.55: Sara Lei Sparre

*Care through multi-lingual bodies: older adults and care workers with a migrant background in Danish elderly care*

09.55 – 10.15: Evelien Tonkens

*Everyday democracy*

10.15 – 10.45: Discussion

### **Workshop 'Images of Meaning.**

**Room 0.22**

#### **An Art-Based Narrative Study about Social Justice'**

*By Anja Zimmerman & Robin Stemerding*

<b>Round 3</b>	<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>13.30 – 15.00</b>
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### **Ethics and being-with**

**room 0.22**

*Chair: Bram van Bortel*

13.30 – 13.50: Maria Louw

*Being with Ghosts*

13.50 – 14.10: Alice Schippers

*A Robot doesn't Judge – or does it?*

14.10 – 14.30: Anne Goossensen

*Listening intelligence in a compassionate community*

14.30 – 15.00: Discussion

### **The (im)possibility of us**

**room 1.15**

*Chair: Laurens ten Kate*

13.30 – 13.50: Carmen Schuhmann

*Addressing Violence in spiritual care*

13.50 – 14.10: Michael Schnegg

*Shame. Tracing a neglected dimension of social exchange from Namibia*

14.10 – 14.30: Simon van der Weele

*"Placing people in life": Skepticism and the moral imagination in care for people with profound disability*

14.30 – 15.00: Discussion



# Paper Abstracts

## Rethinking the relational self

**Adrienne de Ruiter**, University of Humanistic Studies

*How about artificial others? Exploring the limits to social community in light of AI and robots*

When asking the fundamental ethical question of how things are between us, our attention is quickly drawn to “how”: what dynamics shape the social relations in which we stand to others? In this paper, I focus instead on “us”: who belongs to the community of beings with whom we (can) stand in social relations? In particular, I will explore the possibility of standing in social relations to artificial minds in light of recent development in the field of AI that (will) make close interactions between human beings, AI and robotics ever more prominent in society. This paper will consider what conditions render an encounter a potential source for a social relation and explore the extent to which artificial minds and robots seem likely to meet these conditions in interactions with human others.

**Thomas Schwarz Wentzer**, Aarhus University

*Ethnography, Geography, Philography - an essay on disciplinary scales*

Anthropology is the science of humans. However, social anthropology, the academic discourse about human social life in its various guises, has always dealt with non-humans or more-than-humans, as humans tend to relate to pets and beasts, gods and daemons, spirits and ghosts. Lately, the trend of multi-species ethnography has given this transhuman sociality another twist, as it insists social life to unfold in all directions in a web of symbiotic relations that cannot any longer be centered around humans. This trend however arguably falls short if it remains constrained to organic life deprived from its mineralogical or geological (atmospheric, hydrospheric, lithospheric) context. Multi-species ethnography then leads to ethno-geography, to speculative geography maybe. Let's call 'speculative geography' the revanche of anthropology that enters into the domain of 'Earth System Science' from the other side, from the portal of the humanities. Maybe then ethnography should better be understood as 'philography', as the relentless drive to observe and describe it all, in its vertical as well as horizontal social relationality? – The talk will argue for a revision of disciplinary boundaries between social anthropology, geography and philosophy.

**Doret de Ruyter**, University of Humanistic Studies

*On the centrality of relationship in education*

Education is a relational practice – teaching pupils to understand the world and to develop their human capacities happens in the relationship between teachers and pupils; pupils learn about the world and themselves through their relationships with others, other things and themselves.

In the everyday life of the classroom, teachers, especially in primary school, interact with their pupils for many hours a day and thus can get to know their pupils quite well. This enables them to form a

special type of relationship with their pupils: a pedagogical relationship. A pedagogical relationship is the relation between an adult and a child initiated by the adult for the child's sake and encloses a) caring for the child as s/he is and b) assisting the child's development towards adulthood.

In my presentation I will first explicate 'the pedagogical relationship'. I will then discuss its importance for the flourishing of pupils in the school as well as their future flourishing. Human flourishing I describe as the continuing development of human capacities that makes possible that children (as future adults) are able to engage in worthwhile relationships and to pursue worthwhile activities that are meaningful to them. In their relationship with pupils, teachers not only explicitly teach (what is worthwhile and how to form worthwhile relationships with each other, other beings and objects), but also exemplify what a worthwhile relationship could be. Yet, much of what takes place in the class is routine and teachers have to make many decisions each day without much time for reflection. So, my conceptual and normative talk needs an empirical counterpart. This is what I (also) hope to discuss during the seminar.

### What happens between us

**Gustaaf Bos**, University of Humanistic Studies

*Can researchers and participants be friends?*

Based on over twelve years of experience in collaborative research in chronic residential (IDD and MH) care contexts, I would like to take up the question whether researchers and participants (residents, practitioners and relatives) can be friends.

In contemporary collaborative research within MH, notions close to friendship arise: allyship, critical friendship (Happell, 2021). However, these notions tend to stay within a fairly distant realm of professionalism for the researchers (and practitioners) involved. And within IDD research, the question of relationality is often responded to by warnings regarding 'inequality' (Mans, 2016; Reinders, 2008) and otherness (Waldenfels, 1990; Bos & Abma, 2021).

While participants (peers, relatives) share their personal experience and knowledge, researchers (and practitioners) don't; they only bring professional or scientific knowledge to the table (von Peter & Bos, 2022). In the collaborative research projects I am involved in, the epistemological insight and methodological approach of: 'getting to(wards) know(ing) together' emanated gradually (Bos, 2016; Bos, Olivier & Niemeijer, forthcoming). Briefly, this entails that said practices are necessarily interpersonal, emotional and unsettling, not only or even mainly professional, since everyone involved responds to the others as a whole person, so why would researchers (and practitioners) shield behind a one-sided professional logic/legitimation for our position (Church, 1995)?

Participants (peers, relatives) in vulnerable situations tend to share personal issues, which many of us would normally share with friends. As researchers (and practitioners), we are repeatedly perceived of as (closest to) friends by people in vulnerable situations, sometimes accompanied with the cautioning adjective: 'unwanted/unexpected [NL: ongevraagd]'. How do we as researcher respond best to this experience of participants as researchers?

Within contemporary collaborative practices, academia and care organizations, explicit intimacy and personal exchanges (still) seem to be perceived of as something which ought to be mainly restricted to the realms of friends and family. This is problematic in the light of what we observed/experienced in our research projects. Therefore, with others, I advocate getting rid of the artificial professional-

private divide in our thinking about, and performing in, long-term research practices in chronic care contexts. I argue that an ethic of friendship (Tillmann-Healy, 2007) might help to get closer, to build sustainable connections, and try out challenging collaborations between researchers and participants – as persons in different positions but with shared interests, needs and dreams.

**Marie Rask Bjerre Odgaard**, Aarhus University

*What melts between us: ethical encounters through atmospheric dimensions of female relationality*

A conversation in progress between artist and anthropologist on what emerges in-between. A light-green, soft, and smooth-looking scoop of pistachio ice cream catches the eye of the observer looking at Bayan Kiwan's "Pistachio" from 2021. The four women lounged around in comfortable chairs all seem to have their attention directed elsewhere, however. One scoops the ice cream in a mellow downward-looking movement. The other looks in the direction of the face of the third woman, a face that the observer can only long to see. On the right-hand corner, the vibrant purplish red hair of the fourth woman fills the space without immediately catching the eye of the observer. Crucial to the interaction, however, is the opacity of the space that emerges "there" in-between them. This paper is about the space of the in-between as one in which opacity can emerge and be strategically utilized to produce an excess of meaning and thus a certain ethical provocation. An excess that on the one hand is affectively felt, and on the other vanishes as soon as one tries to grasp it in language. The interlocutors to the paper are the artist and thinker behind producing strategic forms of opacity and the anthropologist observer with an interest in examples in art (in Amman) that deal with the abundance produced in staying in the between. In the production of atmospheres of opacity in art, there is a space of encounters on the boundary between pleasure, desire and politics: namely ethical encounters. This especially when the space produced emerges through combining attention to actual relationships between people, and attention to the material surroundings that emerge as traces of forms of relationality that rest uneasily with the former.

**Bram van Bortel & Laurens ten Kate**, University of Humanistic Studies

*Resonance as an existential-phenomenological approach to pluralism*

Discussions on pluralism have mainly focused on its socio-political dimensions. In this presentation, we will focus on the phenomenological dimension of pluralism, conceiving it as a responsive relationship to the other. We advance a philosophical reading of Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance in order to further explore this existential-phenomenological approach to pluralism. In doing so, we treat Rosa's work as a philosophical, rather than strictly sociological analysis of modernity. The theory of resonance offers a framework to understand the ways in which responsive relationships are at play throughout human life, through the concept of resonance. We argue that Rosa's account is promising in its contribution to a concept of pluralism as responsive relationship, but we problematize its inability to discern between genuine and false resonance. This problem, we argue, is rooted in an ambiguity in Rosa's analyses with regard to the status and role of the other in the resonant relationship. In further developing resonance, we see many fruitful connections with critical phenomenology – which we hope to further explore during the conference.

## Approaching the good

**Alfred Sköld**, Aalborg University

### *Generational Hate in the Time of Climate Crisis*

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please” (Marx, 1852). Human beings are historical and generational beings. We become who we are in the shadow of what precedes us. We arrive to a world already in the making and spend our lives trying to catch up. This attempt equally encompasses humble acceptance and ferocious revolt. While a generation is defined by following another, it always tries to do things differently.

The youth climate movement is historically unprecedented in attracting extremely young participants. The activists are often united through a common third, which is the struggle for a more sustainable future and a substantial degree of disappointment in the adult generation as well as the political systems ability to herald their rightful interests.

A vast majority of the 117 billion members of our species that have wondered the earth before us, have grown up expecting the adult world to be responsible and capable of making decisions for the sake of the common good. Listening to young climate activists today, this does not seem to be a widely shared belief. On the opposite, one is struck by an abounding feeling of responsibility for the dire environmental mess that they have inherited and are forced to shoulder at a very young age.

My paper will present some initial results from an ethnographic and interview-based study of the role of emotions in youth climate activism in Denmark and Sweden. Youth climate activist movements offer an excellent prism into a deeper understanding of how care, joy and love coexist and amalgamate with grief, anxiety, and hatred. This paper will focus on and seek to conceptualize the role generational hate in the time of climate crisis.

**Alistair Niemeijer & Merel Visse**, University of Humanistic Studies

### *The precarious moral good: towards an aesthetics of care and hope*

The headlines of several prominent news outlets can make us feel trapped in an actuality that feels unfamiliar. The pandemic changed the world as we knew it. Suddenly, we became potential ‘vectors’ and ‘victims’ of the virus. We are forced to make small and large-scale decisions that affect our private and public lives. Hard decisions. A culture of populism which embraces victimization and oppression nevertheless seems to soar in western democratic society and has a way of governing us. It channels our central preoccupation into one of dealing with chronic insecurity. It propels us to become aware of the fragility of our bodies, not only because they are finite, but because our bodies are socially bound as well.

How should liberal democracies deal with these polarized contexts that have as their central aim to de-stabilize and to make precarious our ways of knowing, where what we know is no longer certain? And what does this mean for the ethical researcher? There is of course no doubt that postmodern ethicists might respond that our claims to knowledge — especially moral knowledge of what is good or right — are always ‘unstable’ — never fixed, always open to revision, and always plural. But if we indeed assume unstable and plural knowledge, how can we understand, as ethical researchers, the moral good in particular settings in a time where any claim to knowledge is automatically considered equivocal? How do we as ethicists balance the polyphony of voices, some backed up by evidence,

and some lacking any argument or logic? These questions are especially meaningful to us as care ethicists who aim to develop a political care ethics that counters the dominance or opposing power of certain types of knowing, while other types and sources of knowledge are subordinated and obscured (Visse et al., 2015, Visse & Abma, 2018).

We argue for a generative perspective which opposes foundationalism and is rather -perhaps paradoxically- embedded in hope. We argue that the 'moral good', as well as matters of evidence, knowledge and truth are inherently insecure and cannot be known independently of the practices we enquire. As such, our current project titled "precarious knowing" aims to revitalize the meaning of the humanities for democracy, education and research. Our pursuit of insight in the 'moral good' is elusive and at the same time grounded in a care ethical view of the world. It thus assumes that the moral good is embedded within everyday lives, generated through a sensitive approach to inquiry which fosters openness and a caring responsiveness.

**Ruud Meij**, Foundation for Justice, Integrity, and Anti-Corruption / University of Humanistic Studies

*The priority of justice in experimental ethics. The case of additional care for people with severe physical and mental disabilities*

For two decades my colleagues and I from *Governance & Integrity* (G&I) and the *Foundation for Justice, Integrity & Anti-Corruption* (FJIAC) have been involved in countless projects supporting moral learning in a host of organizations ranging from the tax authorities, social security agencies and municipal councils to schools, universities, institutions for public health care and care for people with disabilities, and numerous government institutions in the Netherlands and abroad. Over the last decade, this has led to an original approach to empirical, or better experimental, ethics which generates grounded, authoritative, and guiding moral knowledge for organizational practice, also known as *moresprudence*.

Discussing an ongoing project on the financing of high-budget additional care for people with severe physical and mental disabilities, I will highlight the main characteristics of *moresprudence* as experimental ethics.

- First of all, the priority of justice for empirical ethics, and practice-oriented ethics in general, both for ethical and methodological guidance. (Valid guiding moral knowledge.)
- Second, the focus on studying and reconstruction of moral judgements in moral deliberation as ongoing experiments in moral learning and as generating empirical 'data'. (Grounded moral knowledge.)
- Third, creating communities of moral inquiry in communities of practice of practitioners and clients. (Authoritative moral knowledge.)

In end, the overall and ultimate aim of experimental generated *moresprudence* is creating a theory of justice, which supports practitioners and others in making morally right decisions in doubtful situations, sustain the integrity of organizations and, in an organizational society, warrants just institutions.

This said, it is obvious that a so conceived experimental ethics is both an ethical and methodological intervention in the field of empirical ethics. Without the priority of justice, so is my claim, empirical ethics, which also aims to be normative, is ethically blind and methodological arbitrary. The priority

of justice offers a solution to the persistent problem that haunts empirical ethics, namely how valid morally guiding knowledge ('ought') can be derived from empirical descriptions of practices ('is'). Second how a general theory of justice does justice to the history of moral philosophy and respects sufficiently the plurality of lifeforms which is characteristic of our modern world.

### Rupture and potentiality in everyday life

**Natashe Lemos Dekker**, Leiden University

*Refusing to foreclose the future: narratives of loss, hope and potentiality in ageing*

The continuation of everyday life following a disruptive event at old age, such as an accident, stroke, or illness, is a major challenge for many older adults. Based on ethnographic fieldwork among older adults in Brazil, I explore in this paper how moments that cause a rupture in the everyday, when life halts and turns upside down, become points of reference from which my interlocutors reconfigure their lives, social relations, and orientations to the future. I show that this often involves a process of letting go of specific aspects of life and making their worlds smaller. For example, many of my interlocutors no longer engage in specific (habitual) activities such as cooking, driving a car, or going outside unaccompanied, thus taking precautions out of fear of the event repeating itself. At the same time, they keep the future open by emphasizing the possibility to, once again, take up the activities they have suspended. These ruptures, then reverberate in everyday life as a loss of confidence in one's own abilities and sense of safety. They form, in other words, a confrontation with ageing, vulnerability and changing capacities—a confrontation that also brings into view the potential nearness of the end of life. Yet, in analyzing how my interlocutors refuse to foreclose the future by narrating potentiality and aspiration, I show how older adults may both embody and resist a scenario of frailty, through which they enable new forms of being together.

**Laura Emdal Navne, Mikka Nielsen & Anne Toft Ramsbøl**, VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research

*Nearness of kin and others worlds in neurodiverse family life*

How are we near to those closest to us if we think of nearness as a condition of likeness, proximity, and inclusion as well as difference, distance, alienation (Svendsen 2022)? In the context of fieldwork data on neurodiverse family life, this paper explores pluralities and alterities of relational selves and others in imagistic ways that enlarge the domain of the everyday to encompass the spectral, the alien, and the fantastical (Grøn and Mattingly 2022). Excerpts from three different fieldworks are used as figures for reflection: families with a child with cerebral palsy; families with an adolescent with autism; families with a parent with ADHD. We consider nearness in family life in two ways. Firstly, as a proximity to other worlds and modes of being as these are lived by neurodiverse kin. Secondly, as a potential feature of neurodiverse relationality itself. Drawing on the language of Nancy (2000) and Glissant (1997), nearness might be thought of as an engagement with multiplicity, a "consent not to be a single being" and as a "right to opacity." We, hence, argue that nearness in neurodiverse spaces, may be treated as consent to plurality and difference, enabling us to rethink kinship belonging and everyday life in families living with cognitive differences.

**Laurine Blonk**, University of Humanistic Studies

*Meeting sites between the prose of social roles and the poetics of relation*

Images of institutionalized meeting sites, ranging from the Greek agora to joint activities in the community center, express the practice and value of making people meet, be it in terms of fostering democracy, freedom, care or community (see Carter, 2013). Since critical approaches started to foreground the limiting conditions posed by the social, attention shifted from meeting to encounter, genres of meeting that are both disruptive and generative as they 'unsettle' these limiting conditions and 'make space' for new, alternative ways of relating and living together.

In this paper, I discuss this turn to encounter in the light of recent contributions in critical phenomenology and anthropology exploring the tension between the givenness of the social on the one hand and a realm of relational existence that exceeds or ungrounds it on the other. I discuss Plessner alongside my research into Dutch volunteer-led meeting sites in order to derive some suggestions for avoiding all too blunt oppositions between the two in the attempt not to reduce the one to the other, and how this opens up for ethnographic description the practice of making people meet beyond the 'paradox of organized encounter' (Wilson, 2017). Finally, I consider what is to be gained for the ethics and politics of encounter from the ethnographic study of their emplacement in meeting sites.

<b>Power, inequality and care</b>
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**Rikke Sand Anderson**, University of Southern Denmark / Aarhus University

*Solo living, cancer and care politics in Denmark*

The rise in solo living is a global trend. In Denmark solo living is sustained by an egalitarian care ethics and considered a normal way of life. In many societies, including the Danish, solo living, however, intersects with an ongoing naturalization of the family and private homes as contexts of care. Departing in prolonged fieldwork exploring how people who live alone sustain their everyday lives in the context of cancer care, I ask how ongoing shifts in the social organization of care can be understood in the context of solo living. Inspired by critical, feminist care theory and Judith Butler's (2020) notion of vulnerability as a way of understanding human subjectivity I attend to the vulnerabilities and the forms of relatedness that make themselves visible in these emerging contexts. I ask how care politics proposes itself as the architect of our human vulnerabilities? And I suggest that solo living is a political and social accomplishment, that is lived and experienced in the tension between relationality, vulnerability, and care politics.

**Sara Lei Sparre**, Aarhus University / VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research

*Care through multi-lingual bodies: older adults and care workers with a migrant background in Danish elderly care*

Increasingly, women and men with a migrant background are employed in the formal, public care sector in Denmark. Due to an acute and future lack of skilled SOSU workers in the elderly care sector, municipalities across the country are actively recruiting among migrants residing in Denmark to social and health education and skilled work in the public home care and nursing homes. Much literature on migration and care work in the Nordic countries focus primarily on local and public constructions



of care workers' 'otherness', both in positive and negative ways, and how such categorisations affect workers' wellbeing and working conditions (Jönson & Giertz 2013; Rostgaard 2015).

In this paper, we want to zoom in on the multi-lingual in concrete care situations by inquiring into how care workers' foreign accents and struggles with the Danish language affect their care work and their relations with the older adults. Based on ethnographic data material from the ongoing research and innovation project 'MIGSOSU: From migrant to SOSU aspirant', we explore the relational and intersubjective spaces that emerge when these care workers interact with care-demanding older adults in Danish public elderly care.

Our focus is on the productive practice (Buch 2018) that emerges from challenges and misunderstandings in the communication between the care worker and the older adult. By foregrounding language and verbal communication, while at the same time exploring the practice and affect of care in concrete situations, we show how lingual challenges and misunderstandings constitute productive "cracks" in care practices in interactions between ethnic majority older adults and care workers with a migrant background. Deploying the concept of 'careography' (Navne and Svendsen 2018), we call attention how both parties negotiate tensions and ambiguities between care giving and care receiving, trust and mistrust, independence and dependence, and thus step in and out of different roles and perspectives.

**Evelien Tonkens**, University of Humanistic Studies

#### *Everyday democracy*

Democracy is not just a political system of decision making but also a culture: a way to relate to others on equal footing in everyday practices while simultaneously acknowledging and different roles and responsibilities and juggling these. While democracy as a political system has been thoroughly theorized, little theoretical effort has been put into conceptualizing everyday democratic culture. In this paper, I explore how Joan Tronto's conceptualization of 'caring democracy' and 'democratic caring' could contribute to theorizing everyday democracy in care practices and maybe also more widely. (How) can a 'caring democracy' be caring and democratic on an everyday basis? Tronto's concepts of 'democratic caring' and 'caring democracy' are rather abstract and point to macro level issues like the gendered division of caring and the marketization of care as inimical to democratic caring, but her work also points to everyday interactions in care relations that deserve theoretical exploration.

#### **Workshop: Images of Meaning. An Art-Based Narrative Study about Social Justice**

During our work as art therapists, we experience that for many patients social justice is not self-evident in care practices, and is a wicked relational practice to reflect on. To understand social justice from our means, we conducted an art-based narrative study in which we were our participants. We chose this save-space design to be able to reflect on what matters to us personally concerning social justice. The design was inspired by Margaret Urban Walker, who argued that the moral good allows and requires understanding ourselves as bearers of particular identities and actors in various relationships.

From March 2021 to December 2022, we created art-based narratives, engaged in dialogue about their meaning in relationship to social justice, and analyzed iteratively, appreciating Walker's ideas that understandings of the moral good are revealed in stories of identity, relationships, and values. We analyzed data by hermeneutical, dialectical, narrative analysis.



Results show that social justice means to us, that vulnerability is valued as a gift and starting point of a relationship, that we can hear each other and are being heard, and that social action is (re)created appreciating a “theatre of possibilities” where social and public selves meet.

During our workshop we present our study method. We invite you to experience the way we collected data by choosing a picture and create a narrative, appreciating “visual thinking strategies”. We will also present a selection of our images and stories. We are looking forward to discuss possibilities and limits of appreciating images, stories and dialogues in research methods.

### **Ethics and being-with**

**Maria Louw**, Aarhus University

#### *Being with Ghosts*

In this paper, I will reflect on the question of what the specters who dwell in Kyrgyz worlds may tell us about the relationality of existence – and on the question of how one may take inspiration from them when it comes to studying it.

In Kyrgyzstan, ancestor spirits are ethically motivated beings who come with care for the living when moral worlds break down, pointing the attention of the living to possibilities they may not have noticed themselves and being hinges to forms of selfhood that could have been or may become in the future. Engaging with ancestor spirits, Kyrgyz people experiment with possible lives, which – whether they are actualized or not – may sometimes be more important to them than the lives they actually live when it comes to their orientation to the good. Studying such possible lives and the (spectral) relationality they hinge one, one may take inspiration from the ghosts, seeking to becoming a hinge to spectral virtues to make them present. I will discuss how I have tried to do so during recent fieldwork among elderly Kyrgyz people – and reflect on the question of whether the insights from this study may be of relevance to the study of relationality and possibility in contexts that may not be as hospitable to ancestor spirits as the context of Kyrgyzstan.

**Alice Schippers**, University of Humanistic Studies

#### *A Robot doesn't Judge – or does it?*

As of recent, there have been a number of advances in assistive technologies aimed at improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities. Examples range from mobility and telepresence robots to care robots for those with dementia and similar disabilities.

Current philosophical and human rights approaches to care practices support the view that disability is no reason to assume poor quality of life. Lived experiences and self-evaluations of quality of life by disabled people and their families are generally positive. However, ableist perspectives in research tend to ignore these in favour of more ‘objective’ sources of data. This is particular evident in parenting with disability. Disabled parenthood is seen as ‘reduced’ in public, professional and scientific discourse, and as inevitably leading to a poorer quality of life among their families in general. Parents with disabilities internalize these assumptions, and prefer ‘neutral’ non-human support. However, the aforementioned assumptions are represented in assistive technologies, whose design often seems to be ‘fixing’ disability and reproduce eugenics.

Drawing from examples and experiences from our studies on Robotics & Family Quality of Life and Disabled Parenthood, we will explore the role of assistive technologies in 'mending' this poorer quality of life. Moreover, we will examine how their application is not truly neutral, and that it imposes a value system upon its users.

**Anne Goossensen**, University of Humanistic Studies / University of Applied Sciences Drechtsteden

*Listening intelligence in a compassionate community*

The concept of compassionate communities pops up for about 5 years in the research fields focused on the last stage of life, death, dying and grief. In essence, this concept aims to reorganize care and support within communities, alongside and partly instead of professional care. Since Alan Kellehear argued this, many initiatives have been started, especially in the UK. The question with these voluntary and civic organizations is to what extent they address, reflect on, evaluate and improve the quality of interactions between citizens. This is important since this social, emotional and existential support is the main contribution of these communities to people in a vulnerable stage of their lives.

This contribution is rooted in concrete experiences within a compassionate community for people in grief in Dordrecht. After a brief description of the development path and building questions, reflection on accomplished practice and training is central.

- What concepts help to reflect on the quality of human connection?
- How can this be made accessible to all involved?
- What inhibits this?
- Can the work of Levinas be helpful?
- And what ethical challenges are at play?

Next, we delve into (im)possibilities to operationalize quality of listening and realized compassion. This helps to design and shape research. Reflection about data, methods and analyses will be shared.

<b>The (im)possibility of us</b>
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**Carmen Schuhmann**, University of Humanistic Studies

*Addressing Violence in spiritual care*

This paper focuses on practices of spiritual care in penitentiaries and the military. In these contexts, the role of violence in human relationships - which may remain more at the background in, for instance, the context of healthcare, where spiritual care is usually seen as an integral dimension of care – prominently comes to the fore. Prison chaplains and military chaplains often need to address moral issues, related to violence that their clients have inflicted, undergone, or both.

Central in the paper is the question: how do chaplains in the military and penitentiaries open up new possibilities when responding to stories about moral damage, and what is the spiritual aspect of this response? There is no straightforward answer to this question. The context of the military, for instance, shows that moral damage may be deeply ambiguous: acting as a 'good' soldier may involve acting in ways that are morally unsettling. And in the context of criminal justice, it becomes painfully

clear that 'recovery' of moral damage, in the sense of restoration of relationships, may be impossible. Damage that was inflicted on others may be irreversible, relationships may be disrupted forever.

I explore the above question by developing a notion of 'moral recovery' that highlights the spiritual dimension of morality, and that elucidates the task of chaplains when responding to moral damage that clients have experienced or inflicted. Here, I look at (recovery from) moral damage from a feminist philosophical perspective, perceiving moral processes as consisting of embodied relational practices that are entangled in sociocultural contexts. Furthermore, I use Arendt's image of 'the web of relationships' in order to elaborate on the spiritual dimension of moral processes. Finally, in my explorations, I include empirical material from my research on spiritual care in the military, and reflections on my personal experience of working as a chaplain in Dutch penitentiaries.

**Michael Schnegg**, Universität Hamburg

*Shame. Tracing a neglected dimension of social exchange from Namibia*

According to anthropological theory, food sharing is instrumental. It is initiated by the receiver and applies to goods that are either so abundant or so essential that one can hardly deny someone access. Damara pastoralists fit this model in many respects and share food once or twice a day. However, one observation contradicts the theory: when demanding food, people increasingly feel shame (taob). Why this affectivity? And is it new? To explore this, I conceptualize shame phenomenologically and argue that shame is felt when the taken for granted social being-in-the-world is disrupted. At this point, the gaze of others makes us painfully aware of our body, our position, and our relation to them. Exclusion is felt. But when does this rupture occur? With food sharing this is increasingly the case when people fear that asking for a share displays a dependency on others that could become a "story" (ǀhâab) in the community. This fear is fostered by the neoliberal transformation and the changing conception of the self—a self that is now responsible for itself. To unravel this process, I theorize neoliberal institutions and discourses as a quasi-transcendental structure that shapes how subjects are intentionally oriented towards themselves and others. Considering this, does not only encourage reformulating established theories of food sharing, but also opens a window for critically reflecting on the economic transformations that made some sharing shameful.

**Simon van der Weele**, University of Humanistic Studies

*"Placing people in life": Skepticism and the moral imagination in care for people with profound disability*

Caring for people with profound disability can be exceptionally challenging. This article draws on an ethnographic study of such care in order to theorize that challenge as a constant struggle against skepticism: skepticism about the accuracy of one's inferences about the other's needs and wants; skepticism about the purpose of one's support; and ultimately, skepticism about the humanity of the people for whom one cares. The argument is that care assistants of people with profound disability constantly anticipate and wrestle with such skepticism and that many of their ordinary practices are geared towards keeping it at bay. In making this argument, the article offers two contributions. First, it augments the ethnographic corpus on the lives of and care for people with profound disability, which is still remarkably limited. Second, it illuminates certain mistakes in the philosophical debate

on “moral status” of people with profound disability – a debate marked by a skeptical impulse of its own. For this latter task, the article reads the ethnographic material alongside Cora Diamond’s work on moral status and the moral imagination. The goal is both to confront the skeptical impulse of the debate on moral status and to glean insights into how the threat of skepticism can be averted in everyday care practice.