

When Life Comes Between Us.

Ethics and social relations in everyday life

23 and 24 January 2023

University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands

We are delighted to invite you to the first of two research meetings, co-hosted by Aarhus University (DK) and University of Humanistic Studies (Utrecht, NL), to cultivate international cross-connections.

We take our starting point in what Zigon takes to be the most fundamental of all ethical questions, namely '*How is it between us*'? As ethics begins with a demand that emerges from a situation within which one finds oneself with others, this points at the relationality of existence, but moreover draws our attention to what actually happens between people in everyday life. This deepens our scope of the everyday from the tacit and routine to the unpredictable and dynamics of learning and change. Over two days, we explore lived experiences of social relations in everyday life, ranging from the ambivalent and struggle, to recognition, transformation and the opening up of new or unexpected possibilities. We consider what these experiences expose on the existential, ethical or political plane, as well as what can or needs to be transformed for being together otherwise.

We aim to bring together conceptual and empirical contributions from different fields concerned with ethics and social relations, including care ethics, (critical) phenomenology, empirical ethics and the anthropology of ethics and morality. Topics we would like to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Dynamics at work in relational life and social practice, and their role in ethics; e.g. attunement, responsiveness, resonance, interruption
- Lived experiences of social relations and relational goods; e.g. intimate caring relationships, fleeting encounters in public space
- The ethics and politics of sites and practices for being-together otherwise; f.e. in intramural care, community work; spiritual counselling
- Methodological and conceptual issues pertaining to *how* we might best study everyday relational life and the search for the good

Call for papers

We invite abstracts of **250 – 300 words**, including a title, name and affiliation of the author(s) and contact information. Paper proposals must be in English and suitable for a **20-minute** presentation in a small-scale workshop or session. Please submit your abstract by **18 November 2022** to ethicsandsocialrelations@uvh.nl. Notification of acceptance will be no later than **9 December 2022**.

Call for participation

If you are interested to attend, please sign up as participant by sending directly an email to ethicsandsocialrelations@uvh.nl

Organizing committee: Femmianne Bredewold and Laurine Blonk (UHS)

Confirmed speakers

Jarrett Zigon. *Porterfield Chair in Bioethics and Professor of Anthropology, University of Virginia, VS.* His research interests include the anthropology of ethics, problematics of being human, the political, and ontological relationality, and thinking anthropology with philosophy. These interests are taken up from a perspective strongly influenced by post-Heideggerian continental philosophy and critical theory, and are explored in his most recent books *Disappointment: Toward a Critical Hermeneutics of Worldbuilding* and *A War on People: Drug User Politics and a New Ethics of Community*.

Carlo Leget. *Professor of Care Ethics and chair of the department of Care Ethics, University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht.* Drawing on care ethics and phenomenology, he works on the normative and existential dimension of care as a political, social and personal phenomenon. Research projects include spiritual care as interdisciplinary work in palliative care, existential conversations for people with early dementia and palliative care patients and families with a migrant background, and meaningful nursing home care.

Lone Grøn. *Professor with special responsibilities in Anthropology, VIVE, Danish Centre for Social Science Research.* Drawing on phenomenological anthropology and anthropology of ethics and morality, her work considers how we can study and meaningfully speak about the good old age amidst situations of suffering and decline. Research projects include family life with cognitive difference and disability, end of life care provided by volunteer death doulas, and everyday life in dementia care wards.

Rasmus Dyring. *Associate Professor of Philosophy, Aarhus University, Denmark.* As philosophical phenomenologist engaging with anthropology, and one of the main contributors to the emerging field of critical phenomenology, he works on conceptions of ethics and community that do justice to the singularity of human existence, and methodological questions pertaining to making "freedom", "the possible" or "the otherwise" the object of study. Research projects include phenomenology of aging and everyday creativity in dementia care.

Ambition: International Research Network

This meeting is more than a regular conference!

What: This is the first of two meetings in which we explore possibilities for further research collaboration on everyday relational life, and the significance of studying possibilities for things becoming otherwise for meaningful life in a just and caring society.

The second meeting will take place at Aarhus University, Denmark on 28-29 June 2023. We aim to launch a sustained conversation between the two meetings and beyond. We encourage participants to join both meetings, but you are also welcome to only join the meeting in January.

How: Next to plenary sessions, the seminars are structured around small-scale workshops and sessions, so participants can meet researchers with similar interests and get acquainted with one another's work.

For whom: Possibly fields of study might be, but are not restricted to:

- (critical) phenomenology
- the anthropology of ethics and morality
- philosophy of care, nursing and medicine
- moral philosophy/empirical ethics
- spiritual care
- care ethics