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**Creaturely Ethics and Poetics: Vibrant possibilities of human-animal organization and culture**

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The domination-exploitation of human beings begins with animals, wild beasts and cattle; the humans associated with these inaugurated an experience that would turn back against them: killings, stockbreeding, slaughters, sacriﬁces and (in order better to submit) castration. All these practices were put to the test and succeeded…After which human beings separated themselves from each other: on the one hand the masters, men (sic) worthy of this name – and on the other, the subhumans, treated like animals, and with the same methods: dominated, exploited and humiliated.

* Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 2004, p. 52.

Henri Lefebvre, along with some perceptive members of the Frankfurt School such as Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno ([Gunderson, 2014](#_ENREF_2)), was one of the few 20th century sociologists to consider the position of animals in Western culture and society. He theorised that animals form the material base from which societies are built. It was through the control of animals that complex societies could be developed and further this created a situation where humans came to believe they had mastery over nature ([Plumwood, 1993](#_ENREF_8)) and then by same token, these techniques of control over animals could be applied to certain humans as well ([Krawczyk & Barthold, 2018](#_ENREF_4)). Hence, in our precarious present, we can perhaps sense how both non-human animals and groups of people with certain ‘social markings’ who as consequence have also been animalised, are made to sustain the lives of other humans, who seem unaware of the ethical costs of living their lives as they are.

It is very worthy and noble to articulate the grave situation faced by animals and animalised humans in culture and organization and then deliberate about the moral issues around this. However, in the spirit of constructing open futures where more beings are free from exploitation, the application of ethical frameworks is of fundamental importance to change these exploited relations. A more embodied approach to ethics, “the indissoluble relation between thinking and feeling” (Pullen & Rhodes, 2015, p.161), may well be needed here. The application of a more embodied approach to ethics that also accounts for both animal and animalised humans can be found in the work of Pick (2011), she calls a creaturely ethics that takes the position that living beings, regardless of being human or not, are vulnerable beings prone to violent forces. Her work blurs the divide between the ontological status of both animals and human, which can be starting point of our discussions in this stream. Pick believes that individuals and societies have an obligation to try and protect vulnerable beings from violent exposure and exploitation.

Drawing on the philosophical writings of Simone Weil, Pick further argues for ‘creaturely poetics’ for ‘the creature, then, is first and foremost a living – body – material, temporal, and vulnerable’ ([p. 5](#_ENREF_7)). At the same time, vulnerability is not a mundane fact of life. Weil (1953 as cited in Pick, 2011, 3) believes that: “[T]he vulnerability of precious things is beautiful because vulnerability is the mark of existence.” At the first instance, it seems counterintuitive to conceive of vulnerability of living beings as beautiful, particularly when violence is inflicted upon them. But if, as Pick (2011) argues, “fragility and finitude possess a special kind of beauty, this conception of beauty is already inherently ethical. It implies a sort of *sacred recognition* (our emphasis) of life’s value as material and temporal” (3). In turn, this understanding of sacredness invites a reverence for the lives of others for it encourages a mode of thought that in our view, is an expansive love, to some even reflecting a form of divine suffering ([Linzey, 2009](#_ENREF_6)). A type of love inspired by a caring ethic that heightens visibility and moral consideration ([Connolly & Cullen, 2017](#_ENREF_1)) or ethical affordances ([Warkentin, 2009](#_ENREF_10)) to other-than-human animals. Arising from this embodied ‘moral imagination’ ([Hamington, 2008](#_ENREF_3)) which these relationships bring forth, empathy and care can extend beyond previously considered limitations to animals, but also certain groups of humans as well or at some intersection of the two.

The convenors of this stream welcome submissions that explore the vulnerability of diverse subjects, within multiple contexts and different disciplinary fields of study that need not be managerial in focus. The overarching aim is to wrestle with the idea of the vulnerability of life and consider the possibility of sustaining ethical relations between beings that are intrinsically motivated by love, but often exists in contexts that are not always conducive to sustaining such relations.

*Please submit a 500-word abstract (excluding references, one page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, no header, footers or track changes) together with your contact information to* [creaturelyethics2019@gmail.com](mailto:creaturelyethics2019@gmail.com)*. The deadline for submission of abstracts is January 31st, 2019. We will notify you of our decision by the end of February.*

**References**

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