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Equine Cultures in Transition: Decent work, decent leisure, decent lives

Abstract submission

This contribution fits into the streams 2) People, equids, places (including historical, philosophical, aesthetic and ethical perspectives) and 4) Open stream.
We would prefer to have 15 minutes to present, but we are also happy with the 5 minutes «provocations» format.

Emancipatory Education for a Shared Equine-Human Community

Education is key to a decent life. But the concept of education is marginalized in the equestrian world. Horses are trained, not educated. The riding-centric focus of most riding schools makes historically laden narratives of the proficient rider, rather than the learned horseperson, dominant. Many thus join this world through technical or performance commitments rather than educational ones. Moreover, attention is seldom given to what horses might gain, let alone meaningfully learn, from these interactions and their role within the triad *teacher—rider—horse* is ambiguous: Is the horse a co-teacher, a student, or a prop? According to philosopher and educator Ann Margaret Sharp, education should promote growth, teachers should thus become liberators through a commitment to the voice of children (or any historically excluded voice) (1975, 1981). In this talk, building on Sharp's vision of emancipatory education, we argue for an emancipatory educational model as the basis for decent lives in shared equine-human communities. We take seriously the claim that equines are cognitive creatures (Brubaker et al., 2016) and that their education should thus aim to promote their flourishing, rather than focus on functional training or conditioning (Kiley Worthington 2004). Within this model *teacher—horseperson—horse* are all meant to take part in a conversation, thus liberating the voices of horses, but also, encouragingly, of all others involved in this co-creative process. To draw out general implications of this model, two case studies will be discussed.

References

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Authors' biographies

Maude Ouellette-Dubé is a senior researcher and lecturer for the Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. She does research in animal ethics, animal studies, the ethics of care and the didactics of ethics. Her website www.horse-intricacies.com makes equine ethics and philosophy available to a broad audience.

Friederike Zenker is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen. Her research is focused on animal ethics, aesthetics, and education. She is author of *Das Tier im Bild* (2023), which examines the ethics of representing non-human animals in photography and film.

Together, Friederike and Maude teach courses and workshops in equine ethics. They are currently working on a monograph on the philosophical foundations of equine ethics.