



Interdisciplinary Research Project “Non-Anthropocentric Cultural Subjectivity”
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Call for Papers

Thematic focus of the issue:
The Ethics of Human-Animal Relationships

In recent years, human-animal relationships have become an established field of interest for scholars outside the natural sciences. In fact, the humanities and social sciences have witnessed a profound “animal turn,” challenging traditional anthropocentric frameworks and rethinking human-animal relationships. Donna Haraway, in works such as *The Companion Species Manifesto*, has emphasized the intertwined histories and relationships between humans and non-human animals, proposing a framework of “becoming with” to understand these entanglements.¹ Vinciane Despret has highlighted the active agency of animals and their role in shaping shared worlds, urging scholars to consider animals as co-creators of meaning.² Cary Wolfe, through his influential work

¹ Donna Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

² Vinciane Despret, “The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-zoo-genesis,” *Body and Society* 10, no. 2/3 (2003): 111-134.

in posthumanism, has critiqued the exclusionary boundaries of human exceptionalism and advocated for an ethical reevaluation of our interactions with nonhuman life.³ Together, these scholars have laid the groundwork for a transformative reconsideration of animals as subjects of intellectual and ethical inquiry.

Ethics has emerged as a central concern in this reexamination of human-animal relationships, with key contributions from prominent philosophers and ethicists. Lori Gruen's *Entangled Empathy* advocates for an empathetic, relational approach to ethics that considers the lived experiences of animals.⁴ Alasdair Cochrane, in *Animal Rights without Liberation*, challenges traditional rights-based approaches by proposing a nuanced framework that emphasizes the welfare and interests of animals without necessitating their liberation from human contexts.⁵ Clare Palmer's *Animal Ethics in Context* argues for a situational understanding of ethical obligations, emphasizing that our responsibilities to animals depend on the specific contexts of our relationships with them.⁶ These works underscore the urgency of developing ethical frameworks that address the complexities of human-animal interactions in a rapidly changing world.

However, the exploration of the ethics of human-animal relationships extends beyond philosophy and ethics. This is not surprising as the ethical dimension of human-animal relationships has always been – and continues to be, perhaps even more overtly than in the past – a key concern for many artists, writers, and filmmakers. In response, scholars in cultural studies and literary studies bring their unique methodologies to bear on these pressing questions. Through analyses of literature, film, and other forms of cultural production, these scholars examine how human-animal relationships are represented, negotiated, and imagined across different historical and cultural contexts. They explore the symbolic and material dimensions of these relationships, uncovering how cultural narratives shape our understanding of animals and the ethical dilemmas

³ Cary Wolfe, *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁴ Lori Gruen, *Entangled Empathy: An Alternative Ethic for Our Relationships with Animals* (New York: Lantern Books, 2015).

⁵ Alasdair Cochrane, *Animal Rights Without Liberation: Applied Ethics and Human Obligations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁶ Clare Palmer, *Animal Ethics in Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

they pose. Such interdisciplinary approaches offer new insights into how we conceptualize and enact our responsibilities toward nonhuman animals.

Scholars in the social sciences – anthropologists, sociologists, and geographers – are also exploring the complexities of human-animal ethics from both micro and macro perspectives. They investigate the everyday practices and localized strategies that individuals and communities adopt to navigate ethical dilemmas, while also examining the larger structural forces – economic, political, and environmental – that shape these interactions. By bridging the personal and systemic, these disciplines contribute a nuanced understanding of how human-animal relationships evolve in response to changing social, cultural, and ecological landscapes, further enriching the interdisciplinary dialogue on this subject.

We invite contributions to this special issue that engage with the ethics of human-animal relationships from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. Potential topics include, but are not limited to, the philosophical and ethical dimensions of human-animal interactions, cultural representations of animals and their ethical implications, historical perspectives on human-animal relationships, and the role of animals in shaping social, political, and ecological systems. We particularly welcome submissions that draw on interdisciplinary methodologies, integrate diverse cultural and geographical perspectives, or propose new frameworks for understanding the ethics of our entangled lives with animals.

Proposals comprising a 250-word abstract in English or German and a brief biographical note should be sent to: transpositiones@uw.edu.pl by **February 20, 2025**.

A decision will be made regarding the final selection by **February 25**.

Deadline for submitting completed manuscripts: **May 15, 2025**.

The issue is expected to be published in autumn 2025.

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More information: <https://transpositiones.uw.edu.pl/en>