When managers and horses interact in the explicit human pursuit of becoming a “natural” or “authentic leader”, their engagements are aided by an equine skilled management coach who helps translate the managers’ experiences with horses into insights about their leadership abilities and transfer these insights to the managers’ everyday reality of leading businesses and employees.

In this first draft of a chapter for my Ph.D. dissertation, I will explore the diverse rationalities, equivocations, and physical technologies facilitators of horse-assisted leadership training employ in order to develop managers into “authentic” or “natural” leaders. In the chapter, I will show how these diverse strategies form part of training both a particular kind of human and horse self.

Aja Smith is a Ph.D. student in the research group Consumption, Culture, Commerce at the Department of Marketing and Management, University of Southern Denmark. Aja graduated as Master of Anthropology from the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen (KU) in 2009 while she was based in Melbourne Australia, and went on to teaching and being a research affiliate at both Deakin and Monash University in Melbourne. Upon returning to Denmark, she briefly took up a position as a research executive at the international market and consumer research company, Synovate (now Ipsos), before returning to academia, teaching theory and methodology to undergraduate students at the Department of Anthropology, KU, and developing curricula for the department’s specialized Master degree in Anthropology and People-centered Business.

In her Ph.D. project Aja explores the kinds of selves and sociality trained in the multispecies relations between human and horses engaged in horse-assisted leadership training, and examine how such selves and socialities are tied up with politics of leadership and the Danish neoliberal welfare state.