Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume I, Issue 1 – August 2005
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.1.1.05

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Lodz University, Poland

The Problem of Symbolic Interaction and of Constructing Self

Abstract

In the article we make an analysis of a thesis that verbal symbolic interaction is a necessary condition of constructing self. The main concepts used in the paper are: symbolic interaction, self and corporality. The aforementioned thesis and the concept of symbolic interaction originate from G.H Mead, who set the trend of thinking about interaction in human society in sociology and social psychology. This influence is noticeable up to this day. Symbolic interaction as a tool of understanding others actions and informing partners about our intensions is clearly visible in "language-centred" and anthropocentrically oriented analyses of interactions as well as in the concentration on linguistic conditions of creating a self. Self is understood as an interpreted concept of a person but mainly in a process of social perception of a human by others occurring in interactions based on verbal language. In the article we want to develop a thesis about "non-linguistic" possibilities of constructing interactions and self. The aforementioned thesis has been many times elaborated so far together with critical analyses of G. H. Mead (Irvin, 2004, Sanders, 1993, 1999, 2003; Myers, 1999, 2003). We want to integrate these elaborations, including our empirical experiences from a research on "The Social World of Pet's Owners' (research done in 2001-2005) on theoretical level and concentrate more on corporality and emotions issues and their relations to symbolic interaction and self. G.H. Mead's views on this topic are analysed with regard to their methodological consistency and adequacy. In the article there is another thesis proposed, that interactions between animals also have meanings and, sometimes, symbolic nature, or sometimes, non symbolic one, and not necessarily related to use of a verbal language. The creation of self is connected with issues of corporality that includes: 1. non-verbal communication, 2. a relation of bodies in physical space, 3. the so called "kinesthetic empathy", 4. emotions connected with body, mind and self processes. These elements of corporality may be the basis for taking the role of other. Researches and analyses of many sociologists (beginning from Ch. H. Cooley) show that self is often pre-verbal and that exclusion of an individual from her/his surroundings takes place also with the aid of the body and emotions tightly connected with functioning of self. The analysis of interactions between humans and animals provides us with much methodological and theoretical inspiration. Those researches and analyses obviously face a problem of "anthropomorphization of human behaviour", which is of frequent occurrence both among researchers and ordinary people. New sociological sub-discipline called the sociology of human -

non-human animals relationships adds a lot of new threads to the above-mentioned deliberations on conditions of constructing self.

Keywords
symbolic interaction, self, corporality, body, non – verbal communication, emotions.

"No action is possible without a body" (Anselm Strauss)

Symbolic interaction and self

There is a prevailing view in sociology that symbolic interaction is possible only in human society. Non-symbolic interactions are those in which partners respond to each other's actions directly. Although animal organisms can interact and even cooperate, the background of this cooperation is purely biological. In human relationships, the foundation of this cooperation is provided by social relations based on the communication process in which meanings are conveyed. The most important factor in human social relationships is symbolic interaction, consisting of interpretation, i.e. comprehending the meaning of other person's actions and definition i.e. informing that person about one's own intentions (Blumer,1966). This view was promulgated in sociology and social sciences by G.H Mead and is generally approved (Mead, 1932). It was also developed by his adherents, mainly Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 1962/1969; see Ziolkowski, 1998: 350; Halas, 1987: 54 – 59; Halas, 1998: 354).

Mead views on symbolic interaction and self

Let us indicate the basic principles of this view by G.H. Mead. Animals are able to adjust to the attitude of others, while changing the attitudes of others. They do it through gestures. Every movement causing the reaction of other organisms is a gesture. Yet, both the movement and the reaction are unconscious and non-rational. The gesture is being done without an intention of causing certain reaction: the organism is not conscious of its significance. This consciousness appears only when the gesture is accompanied by the expectation of certain response and organism A is able to react to his own gesture in the same way as organism B to which it directs its gesture. (Szacki, 1981; see Krzeminski; Halas, 1987; Ziolkowski, 1981). Mead claims that the reaction of the other organism to the gesture made by the first organism is its interpretation and constitutes its meaning (Mead, 1932:80). Since the vocal gesture is audible to the sender and is able to have a noticeable effect on him, it is the germ of a language. The fundamental significance of a language to the development of human experience is that the language is a stimulus for both the sender and the receiver (Mead, ibidem: 68). It is possible due to the occurrence of symbols, i.e. the language of human communication. Mead identifies the signifying symbols with the words of a language. The problem of anthropogenesis is equalled to the problem of genesis of human language. (Ziolkowski, 1981; see also Strauss, 1964).

The language consisting of vocal gestures is most important in the process of evoking identical attitudes in oneself and in others. Non-verbal gestures have no such meaning. Vocal gestures become more important than any others. We do not see ourselves when we change facial expression. When we hear ourselves talking, on the other hand, we are far more inclined to pay attention to ourselves. When we

are irritated, we hear that our voice sounds different and it surprises us. Yet, when a facial expression indicates irritation, this stimulus does not evoke in a given individual the same facial expression that it evokes in another individual. It is easier to notice and control one's vocal gestures than one's facial expressions. Only an actor makes use of his physical expression to look exactly the way he wants others to perceive him. By constant looking in the mirror he obtains answer about his appearance (Mead, 1932).

Symbols are conscious gestures, having some aspect of universality and stimulating also the sender. Transfer from gesture to symbol is an essential element of G. H Mead's social theory. The influence of evolutionistic thought is clearly visible here. The language facilitates the emergence of community, which (according to Mead) is not able to develop in the world of animals. The community between the human and the animal world is also impossible as those two use different ways of communication (gestures in the case of animals and symbols, mostly verbal, in the case of humans). The capability of abstract thinking is a feature attributed only to human beings. Their mind enables them to have conversations, including an inner conversation. Whereas the inner conversation enables one to adopt an attitude towards oneself, adopt other people's roles towards oneself, get to know oneself and others better. We do not acquaint ourselves with the world with the help of our bodies and emotions related to them. Human cognition has a symbolic nature.

Mead gives examples of dogfights in order to present what the conversation of gestures occuring among animals is and how it differs from the phenomenon of imitation.

The movement of one dog, causes the movement of another. Gestures are therefore a form of adjustment of one organism to the other in the social process of behaviour. Those movements create a sequence called the conversation of gestures. The latter dog adopts another pose, to avoid the attack of the first one. They do not imitate each other. The most important matter here is that the stimulus evoked by the movement of the first dog does not change his pose to the one it evoked in the other dog (Mead,1932; see Krzeminski, 1986; see also Halas, 1987; Strauss, 1964). Mead asserts that the vocal gesture may evoke certain tendency towards similar reaction in both the sender and the receiver but it is of rare and minor occurrence. A lion, for instance, is not too much terrified of its own roar. Lion's roar evokes fear in the animal, which is being attacked by the lion (Mead,1932: 64). Instinctively regulated conversation of gestures signifying the attack and the dodge occurs here. Those gestures are meaningful for both animals holding a "conversation". The mechanism of meaning is not only characteristic of human conversation. Consciousness and rational planning is not required. Gesture is a necessary vehicle of meaning (Krzeminski, 1986). It is only in the case of humans, though, that the symbol is added, which evokes reaction not only in the receiver but also in the sender. Moreover, this reaction is based on a generalisation of reactions characteristic to a given group. Interaction has a symbolic character. There is a possibility of conveying meanings with the aim of controlling others and creating the community spirit. Symbolic presence of the web of meanings, social relations and other people in one's mind is existent even when those people are not in one's immediate surroundings. Animals, according to Mead, do not possess this ability, for they do not possess self, which is a certain organisation of common attitudes of a given social group. This "collective" attitude eventually has a character of certain generalisation. To generalise in that way, one has to possess mind capable of abstract thinking. It has to be emphasised, that although the meaning of a gesture is invariable and permanent, it

changes together with the change of gestures being the responses to the preceding gestures. According to this, meanings will also be problematic, for they involve constant and lasting mutual interaction (Halas, 1987).

H. Blumer, one of the most important of Mead's adherents, additionally introduced the notions of: interpretation and symbolic interaction. The term of symbolic interaction refers to a peculiar type of interaction occurring among humans. This peculiarity is caused by the fact that humans interpret and mutually "define" their actions instead of simply reacting to them. Thus human interaction is influenced by symbols, interpretation or addition of significance to other humans' actions (Blumer,1962/69)**.** The cognitive aspect in mutual cooperation, becoming the symbolic interaction in which interpretation of objects and actions is being done is much more visible in Blumer's work. The meanings are given and modified through the interpretative processes. The meanings are human, cognitive structures. Interactions between people are the source of meaning. Certain meanings rely on a common definition of a situation. In spite of that, they can be modified through the process of interpretation. The common definition relies on the social knowledge of objects (Halas, 1987)**,** included in the language. Blumer claims that people have acquired and developed common understanding or definitions of behaviour under such and such circumstances (Blumer, 1962/1969) **.**

According to Mead, only humans possess self, which is a result of symbolic interaction. During the interaction, stimuli are being interpreted selectively by an individual, always in accordance with self (Strauss, 1964: XXI). What distinguishes human from the world of nature is, above all, the self. G.H Mead distinguished two aspects of self: subjective *I* and objective *Me. I* is responsible for our interpretative reactions towards social stimuli. This aspect, which according to some interpretations has biological background, is responsible for our creativity, spontaneity and unpredictability at times. Thus *I* may be the basis of our self-image and our outlook on our possibilities of acting. The *me* aspect is, to some extent, the social self, developed in accordance with other people's views and expectations. This aspect is developed in the process of socialization, through contacts with "important others" and through participation in social groups. The process has three steps: play (taking the roles of separate others), game (taking the roles of others and simultaneously understanding the relations between them), generalized other (understanding the group perspective and even the whole society). The boundary between animal world, biological (here, the already mentioned corporality is consisted) and human has been drawn clearly. Mead claims that a characteristic feature of human behaviour in a social group is that a human being may become an object for itself. This social fact, and not the alleged possession of soul or mind, with which human is supposed to have been equipped in some mysterious, supernatural way and which animals do not have, is what differs human beings from animals. (Mead, 1932:137). *I* constantly reacts to social self (*me*), leading to certain situations, which are very often unpredictable to the subject of a given action.

Mead (1932) marginalizes corporality issues, at the same time underlining the difference between personality and body, which being devoid of mental qualities (only personality becomes the object of its own reflection) cannot be the object for itself:

> We can distinguish very definitely between the self and the body. The body can be there and can operate in a very intelligent fashion without there being a self involved in the experience. The self has the characteristic that it is an object to itself, and that characteristic distinguishes it from other objects and from the body. It is perfectly true that the eye can see the foot,

> but it does not see the body as a whole. We cannot see our backs; we can feel certain portions of them, if we are agile, but we cannot get an experience of our whole body. There are, of course, experiences which are somewhat vague and difficult of location, but the bodily experiences are for us organized about a self. The foot and hand belong to the self. We can see our feet, especially if we look at them from the wrong end of an opera glass, as strange things which we have difficulty in recognizing as our own. The parts of the body are quite distinguishable from the self. We can lose parts of the body without any serious invasion of the self. (pp. 190 – 191)

This restrictive exclusion of corporality issues from analysis concerning the creation of human self and, as a consequence, of social bonds, caused a restriction of analysis of human interactions only to the cognitive processes. Similarly, animals cannot be objects for themselves, for they have no reflective abilities. Mead (1932) provides an example of dogs' behaviour:

> But the animal does not have an idea of what he is going to do, and if we stopped with the child here we could not attribute to him any idea. What is involved in the giving of an idea is what cannot be stated in terms of this conditioning of a reflex. I have suggested that involved in such giving is the fact that the stimulus not only calls out the response, but that the individual who receives the response also himself uses that stimulus, that vocal gesture, and calls out that response in himself. Such is, at least, the beginning of that which follows. It is the further complication that we do not find in the conduct of the dog. The dog only stands on its hind legs and walks when we use a particular word, but the dog cannot give to himself that stimulus which somebody else gives to him. He can respond to it but he cannot himself take a hand, so to speak, in conditioning his own reflexes; his reflexes can be conditioned by another but he cannot do it himself. (pp. 107-108)

Some analytical comments on G. H. Mead views

There is a lot of incoherence and inexactness in Mead's reasoning. It is hard to imagine (and to prove) that a fighting dog does not react to its own gestures, which, after all, are supposed to cause a certain effect. Fighting strategies among dogs may have instinctive background, but individual gestures (or sequences of gestures) are supposed to cause the opponent's submission, defeat or even death. Mead maintains that "It is not a stimulus to the dog to take the attitude of the other dog." (Mead,1932: 63) and "the dog cannot give to himself that stimulus which somebody else gives to him" (Mead, ibidem: 108). The above-mentioned statements contradict zoological, ethological and psychological knowledge, for a dogfight consists of constant exchange of such stimuli and of anticipation of its consequences in a situation when dogs themselves send particular messages (according to Blumer it would be a "definition") without external conditioning[i]. It is hard to imagine that fighting dogs merely "exchange stimuli", not as sensitive beings, for whom the gestures have meaning due to the anticipated pain, inconvenience or injury, but as fighting machines. It is clearly visible that Mead uses Cartesian metaphor of a machine to comprehend the exchange of gestures among all animals (an animal is a machine devoid of self-consciousness) including the conversation of gestures being held during a dogfight[ii]. A statement that a lion is not terrified of its own roar is also refutable. If a lion utters that sound, it feels exactly what response it may anticipate

from another animal, basing on previous reinforcements from the past ("memory") concerning its own experiences and the process of socialization in the pride of lions. Animal is not an asocial machine here. As zoological, ethological and sociological achievements show, animals learn particular behaviour from other animals (or persons) belonging to their immediate surroundings (see Alger & Alger, 1999).

The fact that Mead chooses dogs as animals illustrating lack of even the rudiments of consciousness, and thus lack of rudiments of the mind, seems unfortunate, since exactly those animals have been domesticated for thousands of years and their reactions, due to the long process of domestication and selective breeding, have incorporated more features characteristic of human communication than reactions of animals remaining at large (see Mosciskier, 1998; Zuradzki, 2004). Another mistake that Mead makes consists in underestimating the differences between various species of animals. According to Mead: "If the sparrow makes use of a canary's note it is calling out in itself the response that the canary's note calls out" (Mead, 1932: 62, and 67-68).

Thus, while analyzing the process of imitation or dogfights as exchange of unconscious stimuli, Mead leaves the differences between species (and the levels of development of individual species) aside. The metaphor of an animal as a "reacting machine" in Mead's concept, pertains to all animals except for human. It allows him to draw a clear boundary between the human and animal world, without going into the differences between animals. This boundary is fixed mainly by a language of symbolic nature and there are no intermediate levels of development of this language or its equivalents (a non-verbal language, for instance) allowing the rudiments of self-consciousness and self to emerge.

The problem of corporality.

Non-verbal communication as an element of corporality and communication has been marginalized by Mead. Only the vocal gestures belonging to the language serve the function of causing identical reaction in both the receiver and the sender of a message. The mind, according to Mead is an entity based on an inner linguistic conversation and for this reason, supposedly, animals do not possess it. Mead's concept of mind as a conversation of a subject with itself is too restrictive (Sanders, 2003; see also Myers, 2003; Irvin, 2004). Mead has problems, here with non-verbal communication, for at some point he claims that hand gestures are of the same nature as vocal gestures, but in an effort to remain consequent he restricts its meaning to communication of actors with the audience and communication with the hearing impaired (Mead, 1932). In the light of contemporary knowledge about non-verbal communication, these are easily refutable statements. Sending and receiving non-verbal messages is a basis for communication and functioning of an individual in society (see Ekman, 1986; Goffman, 1959; 1979, Scheff, 1990; Myers, 2003) as well as for the emergence of self in primates (chimpanzees and orang-utans), where we have to deal with strong influence of the process of socialisation on the behaviour of animals living in natural conditions. Mead (1932) totally rejects the notion of consciousness based on feelings and bodily sensations:

> Gestures may be either conscious (significant) or unconscious (non-significant). The conversation of gestures is not significant below the human level, because it is not conscious, that is, not self-conscious (though it is conscious in the sense of involving feelings or sensations). (p. 81)

The consequently used concept of a man as a rationally acting subject allows Mead to reject the role of feelings (and thus also of the body, as a carrier and the main creator of emotions) in the process of making gestures conscious.

In Mead's concept the body (and therefore non-verbal communication expressing feelings) is not a source and a considerable element of the emergence of self. Language – orientation in the concept of symbolic interaction eliminated a possibility to see the interaction as "an embodied experience of the world" (Myers, 1999: 132 – 133; Myers, 2003: 53; see also Flynn, 2000: 100), and eliminated the interests in the basic social emotions (Scheff, 1990: 84)[iii]. G.H Mead as well as J. Dewey treat taking the role of other one, being the basis for human behaviour, as an entirely cognitive process in spite of the fact that both Ch. Darwin and Ch. Cooley have emphasised the role of emotions in human behaviour, development of self and many of its aspects (Cooley, 1922; Scheff, 1990; see also Dewey, 2002)[iv]. "The emotion or feeling of self may be regarded as instinctive, and was doubtless evolved in connection with its important function in stimulating and unifying the special activities of individuals." (Cooley, 1922: 170 - 171). The emergence of self is, therefore related to emotions and self also becomes interlinked with emotions further in life. Ch. H. Cooley maintained that there are two basic emotions required in the process of constructing identity and social bonds: pride and shame. They take various forms, they are indispensable in the construction of self and they always take part in human behaviour (see Cooley, 1922: 184 – 185; Scheff, 1990: 15, 81-82; see also Goffman, 1963). An individual often switches between the feelings of shame and pride, eventually giving shape of its own personality in relation to others and its moral attitude. It is especially important in the process of socialization, when abashment plays a vital part in understanding what is forbidden and shaping social responsibility (Cooley, 1922: 182, 201, 204). A. Strauss (1993: 31, see also 134) also emphasizes the role of emotional dimension in his interactionist theory of action: "Action has emotional aspects: To conceive of emotion as distinguishable from action, as entities accompanying action, is to reify those aspects of action." It is not the most important dimension for him, though. Mental and reflective processes, in which symbolizations of emotions are interpreted, are decisive in human actions and interactions (Strauss, ibidem). The adherents of G.H Mead's doctrine face difficulties trying to incorporate the emotional issues to their own concepts. Ch. Cooley's concept of shaping the human nature and of the role of emotions the process of socialization is omitted here on purpose.

Mind and body have been completely separated in G.H Mead concept. The body does not recognize and does not communicate the meaning, which could be understandable for the subject and for other partners of the non-linguistic communication. Abstract thinking and abstract symbols cover the whole part of us belonging to biological world (in the sense of naming and classification). In some, evolutionarily fixed point, the world of semiosis which can analyse itself reflectively and recognize itself in particular social contexts. There emerged a world of signs, which function as a device used for interpreting other signs. This way the body, the animal part of our subjectivity, as well as relations and interactions with animals have been marginalized. A very important function of body in an interaction has been forgotten. The body conveys our inner feelings to others. The emotions, which take part in the creation of common definitions of situations and in the construction of looking-glass-self (see Scheff, 1990) have also been underestimated. The body, 'defines' i.e. provides the partners of interaction with the information about our intentions. The location of bodies in space also communicate something to a partner.

The bodies also react in a certain way to their "actions", construing it in a certain way i.e. interpreting it. In spite of that, H. Blumer (G.H Meads main adherent and continuator) maintains that symbolic interaction is the typically human field of operation, and that the mental and cognitive aspect of constructing meanings excludes both interaction between human and nonhuman animals and interaction between nonhuman animals themselves from consideration. The latest interactionist and phenomenological research on intentionality and subjectivity of animals shows, that the communication between humans and animals is established on the principle of so called "kinesthetic empathy". Human observes the movements and gestures of animals in order to understand their intentions and the meaning of their behaviour, whereas animals do the same with human intentions (Shapiro, Myers, 2003). Body is an important factor in interpreting and providing others with the clues about our intentions. Moreover, the feeling of one's body is usually developed in relation to others (see also Cooley, 1922).

An analysis of animals' (pets) photographs in our research on "the social world of pet owners" shows a very important role of corporality in relations between owners and their companion animals. The photos were done by pet owners. The Goffmanian formal analysis of nonverbal communication in "the immediate context of social interaction" presented on the domestic animals photos shows that many scenic and bodily effects come from definitions of situation supported by some culture patterns of social positions presentation. The majority of pictures show the animals in anthropomorphic frame of display (cultural context). The animals stay in a private space of the owners, which may influence the interpretation of the role of animals in the life of their owners, for example perceiving animals as members of family. We can say, after the formal analysis, that photos are an evidence of construction of displays by locations of the bodies in space and non – verbal communications according to the frame of particular anthropomorphization, which means that "our pet" belonging to "our family" is a special one and its uniqueness and anthropomorphic features are caused by a specific and direct physical contact with the owner. The photographs are to be an evidence of this type of definition of situation.

We can also assert, from the formal analysis, that touching is a common practice of communication. However the "tender touching" of animals is only allowed for children and women. Male owners keep pets very strong at hand, or on leash, to be able to take a picture, although from a social point of view they show their dominant position not only in the immediate context of interaction, but also in a broader social context. There is a lot of spontaneity in making photographs. The composition of pictures is made beyond the rules of art. The photos are often done from above of object and it is not possible to see the small animals *en face.* The amateur photographers do not think about esthetics of background. This lack of esthetic creation only increases the sociological value of pictures. Although it should be noted that lack of leashes and muzzles, which could be the conscious esthetic creation of a scenic situation, and the social meaning of this is also analytically important. The photographed situations are mainly the holidays, rest, family ceremonies and untypical and often funny family situations in which pets participate and concentrate participants' attention (situations of gazing at animals, touching, kissing, etc). We can use the Goffmanian statement to define such situations as a "single focus of thought and visual attention". The corporality makes it definitely possible.

Touching is a very important device of social bonds creation in the situation when it is difficult to use verbal communication. We can observe this kind of

communication also between care providers and terminally ill patients. The care providers express their acceptance to a patient by non – verbal communication, as a gestures, glances, looks, touches. The composure work includes: taking patient's hand, hugging, cuddling up, embracing, looking at patient with affection. These gestures give a patient a very valuable information about being an important person and being loved by others. The touching of patient by care providers is a communication act of expressing physical presence of others in the same space and total acceptance of a patient at the same time. For care providers it is a way of perceiving the patient as a total person, for patient a form of gratitude expression (Kacperczyk , forthcoming). The social bond is maintained by corporality, that give the meaning of social acceptance of others that not always is proved by verbal communication. We have similar situation, according to my observations in research on "social world of pet owners", in communication with companion animals. The aforementioned affection and mutual acceptance is shown by touching, embracing, kissing, meaningful glances, etc. We do not need verbal communication to create and maintain bonds with our pets. We can also assume that partner of interaction has a self, not having verbal proves from the other side on a validity of the assumption.

The problem of self

The emergence of self, according to Mead, is closely related to the ability of using the vocal gestures having meaning, with the acquisition of competence in using the language of symbolic nature. However, Charles Cooley mentioned the existence of a certain form of self, "self - feeling" before acquiring the language. The self can be ascribed to children at a very early stage of development. "Although he does not say 'I' or 'my' during the first year or two, yet he expresses so clearly by his actions the feeling that adults associate with these words that we cannot deny him a self even in the first weeks" (Cooley, 1922: 177 – 178). Cooley wonders how a child understands the term "my" if it had never been explained which things belong to it, if it does not use and does not understand words – concepts in abstract sense (is it about the concept of someone's property)? He arrives at the conclusion that gradual acquisition of pronouns and of the meaning of the word *my* (and then *I*) in the process of socialization had been preceded with the existence of self – feeling: "The self-feeling had always been there. From the first week she had wanted things and cried and fought for them." (Cooley, ibidem: 190). A child acquires the meaning of the words *I* and *my* in the same way as it does in the case of many other words pertaining to different emotions and feelings, such as: hope, resentment, sadness or disgust. It only confirms the emotional dimension of the existence of self. It is undoubtedly one of many of its dimensions.

A child in the stage before the acquisition of a language (aged 4,6,15 months) attempts, by means of some non-verbal actions (screaming, crying, embracing, pretending to cry, staring and observing reactions of others etc.) to attract other people's attention. Depending on the effects of its actions and the reactions of others to those actions, the child experiences happiness or sadness, which certainly proves the existence of some rudimentary form of social self (Cooley, ibidem). Cooley claims that some children give certain indications of self-consciousness in the first six months of life (Cooley, ibidem).

According to Cooley, a self consists of three elements: "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification." (Cooley, ibidem: 184).

Pride and shame are visible in many other emotions. Experiencing the world and reacting to others emotionally is a certain form of standing apart from the world and from others (with whom we interact). It is a certain form of, often "pre-verbal", *I.*

Body is not a self according to G.H Mead. Animals possess only their organisms and thus they cannot possess self, which is of reflective character.

Nevertheless, some animals are capable of distinguishing symbols, rules and also of creating the sense of community based on communication. According to social sciences, those skills are possible due to the fact of possessing self. It can be treated as a sociological variety of the concepts of "feeling of mortification" or conscience. Self-consciousness underlies its emergence. Ethological researches show that, beyond all doubt, a certain form of self-consciousness appears in chimpanzee and orang-utan communities. With the aid of the "mirror test", experiments have been carried out on a large number of species of animals. Generally, animals examining themselves in the mirror see other representatives of their own species. Both monkeys and cats behave in that manner (Mosciskier, 1998). A relevant experiment has been carried out by American psychologist, Gordon Gallup. He applied special methodology which proved the previously formulated theories on the existence of self-consciousness among chimpanzees and orang-utans highly probable. Before the experiments, animals were given much time to acquaint themselves with the mirrors and the reflections of both themselves and the surrounding world. Next, having anaesthetized them, scientists used a special odourless and smooth colour to paint some parts of their body; those visible with a naked eye (ex. palms of their hands) as well as the ones which could only be seen in the mirror (ex. foreheads). Having awoken, both monkeys and apes immediately noticed the colour on their palms and tried to wipe it off. However, when they were given the opportunity to take a walk in front of a large mirror which reflected their bodies entirely, not all of them reacted to their changed appearance. It turned out that monkeys did not notice the garish stain on their foreheads. They did not try to touch it, either. They just ignored it. Chimpanzees and orang-utans behaved in a completely different manner. Having awoken, they did not show any signs of being conscious of the fact that their foreheads had been painted. However, as soon as they saw their reflections in the mirror, they began touching the stains. They were trying to rub it off. They behaved in exactly the same manner as humans would in a similar situation. (Mosciskier, 1998).

The above-mentioned experiment based on the mirror-test proves the existence of self-consciousness among some species of apes. The emergence of self in those species could be the consequence of the animals having realized that the ability of cognition of other specimen's state of mind could be useful in predicting their behaviour (Mosciskier, ibidem)[v]. However, self-consciousness among some species of animals can manifest itself by means of other senses than eyesight. Smell is the most important sense of dogs. A dog recognizes its trace, probably realizing its own existence. Resorting to anthropomorphism, we can ascribe such thoughts to a dog: "Here is my smell. The smell is strong, I was here before, a moment ago" or "here my smell is faint so I was here long ago". The sense of smell allows an animal to stand apart as an individual among other animals or/and dogs. If chimpanzees, orang-utans, and (according to us) also dogs, possess self or its rudiments, then at the same time they are capable of seeing objects from the perspective of others. Obviously, this capability is not identical to ours. It is certainly on a lower level of generality in the very process of perception. Yet it exists, especially in relation to specific and direct interactional contexts. Animals are therefore able to obey the rules by looking at certain actions from the perspective of individuals or trainers who

transferred this perspective to them in the process of training and/or socialization. Obedience appears also during the absence of a person, who trained a given individual. In relation to dogs, a profound internalization of norms is considered (Mosciskier, 1998: 112). It must be remembered, though, that dogs have been exposed to the long and intensive processes of selective breeding and domestication. Their mental and physical features were selected by humans, not by nature. Still, Darwin very often made use of his knowledge of artificial selection to illustrate the power of natural selection. Reasoning analogically, one cannot exclude the possibility that the feature, which was selected artificially in dogs, was selected naturally in our own species (Mosciskier, ibidem).

Normative order appears among primates as well. There is evidence for that (see Mosciskier, 1998 and Van Lawick - Goodal, 1974). In the communities of primates living at large, normative order is transmitted and taught by leaders or members of a family. Females learn the roles and identities of mothers and babysitters and males learn the identities of fighters and dominats[vi]. The system of social control (sanctions) allows it to sustain in relation to adult specimen living at large. If it is so, we can assume that obedience of pet dogs is also something natural in a social sense. Especially due to the fact that humans consciously train dogs to obey certain rules; they are the “apparatus of social control” towards pets.

Strategic interaction

Many authors emphasize that symbolic interactions are not characteristic only of humans (Flynn, 2000; Sanders, 1993, 1999; Alger and Alger, 1997). In research by Flynn (2000), attention was drawn to the fact that animals are capable of creating (along with members of a household) common definition of a situation, taking the role of other and entering symbolic interactions[vii].

For instance, animals in households where domestic violence was present, were treated as beings possessing mind and capable not only of expressing emotions but also of adapting their emotional states to those of battered women. Animals often initiated interactions, somehow feeling that they were needed by their owner right after an act of violence had taken place. Sometimes they were trying directly to defend women. During the acts of violence towards their human friends, animals were in noticeable, identifiable emotional stress. Moreover, they often became victims due to their close relations with battered women (Flynn, ibidem).

Interactive strategy is one of the forms of symbolic interaction. Interactive strategies are usually comprehended as those, in which one or both sides of the interaction conceal their true intentions in order to mislead the other side and achieve certain goals (see Goffman, 1969). It happens frequently, that these aims are achieved at the expense of the partner of interaction and then such interaction may transform into a zero-sum game (Ziolkowski, 1998). There exists a distinct intention of achieving a certain aim, of which initiator and sender of messages is conscious. The problem with proving the occurrence of constructing interactional strategy by animals seems to be the argument for rejection of the view, that animals possess mind and ability of initiating symbolic interactions. However, many owners are able to provide numerous instances of the existence of interactive strategy among pets. Those include planning of future effects of certain actions by trying to falsify or conceal the true motives of actions by means of specific gestures. Obviously, it is not a conclusive proof that interactive strategy appears among observed animals.

However, those observations are an incentive for a more in-depth analysis of a problem.

Interactive strategies among apes are often observable and natural; they are connected with intentional resorting to deceit i.e. cheating other individuals. De Wall describes the situation in which a zoo keeper during a round noticed that a gorilla was desperately trying to free its arm from between the bars of a cage. The man immediately opened the cage and rushed to help the animal. Yet, the gorilla, whose arm had not really been trapped between the bars, quickly hid behind the doors in order to make a surprise attack. It embraced the naive man; in the case of a gorilla it is enough to completely immobilize a man. (F. De Wall, 1996, quotation in Mosciskier, 1998: 82).

Development of behavioural mechanisms serving as a means of cheating is observable in relations between apes themselves. It requires mind. Moreover, they have developed a mechanism enabling them to detect imposture (Mosciskier, 1998: 57 – 58). If it is so, then the ability of looking at something from another individual's perspective is well developed among this species of primates.

A similar example is provided by a renowned zoologist and expert on animals, Konrad Lorenz (2002), who treats the phenomenon of trickery among animals as "a great achievement of intellect". This time it pertains to a pet:

> I had just opened the yard gate, and before I had had time to shut it the dog rushed up barking loudly. Upon recognizing me, he hesitated in a moment of acute embarrassment, then, pushing past my leg he raced through the opened gates and across the lane where he continued to bark furiously at our neighbour's gate just as though he had been addressing an enemy in the garden from the very beginning. This time I believed him and concluded that I had imagined his moment of embarrassment and that I myself had made a wrong observation. Our neighbours really possessed a dog which was a rival of Bully's and his vituperations might easily have been addressed to it and not to me. However his frequent, almost daily reiteration of this behaviour taught me that he literally sought an excuse to veil the fact that he had accidentally barked at his master. (p. 164; see also pp. 167-168)

Is this interpretation of interactive strategy also an over-interpretation of an observer? It is hard to say whether dog's intentions were really identical with their interpretation by K. Lorenz. A lie is an unusually sophisticated undertaking, requiring planning, intelligence and, very often, great experience. Moreover, an attempt to cheat emphasizes the ability of recognizing rules, for breaking them would require specially planned action[viii].

Play

The problem of symbolic interaction pertains also to the ability to differentiate between play and fight. Distinction between these two forms of behaviour among humans is undoubtedly possible due to symbolic interaction. This ability is essential for the interactions between humans and animals, but also for the interactions between animals themselves. Do we also deal in those cases with symbolic interactions? Some gestures lose its original meaning, for instance those expressing attack, aggression, warning etc. The meaning of those gestures becomes redefined for fake attack, fake aggression, fake fear, fake suffering, fake warnings etc. Originator of ethology, Konrad Lorenz (2002), provides an excellent example of such situation derived from his observations of pets:

> One day I noticed how Thomas (*cat*) once more coyly approached the dog and again abruptly turned tail. To my horrified astonishment, the dog leapt up and rushed furiously after the kitten which disappeared behind the sofa. With his large head wedged firmly beneath this piece of furniture the dog remained lying, only responding to my flabbergasted expostulations by ardent wagging of his short stump. This did not necessarily signify a friendly disposition towards the cat, since he would also vehemently wag his tail when his teeth were embedded in the flesh of a hated enemy. In front he would bite with murderous intent whilst behind he was wagging most amiably. What an extraordinarily complicated mechanism of the brain. Obviously the posterior activities were thus to be interpreted: 'Dear Master, please do not be crossed but, for the moment, I much regret to say, I am quite unable to let go of this dirty dog, even if you should think fit to punish me later by a whacking or – as God forbid – at this instant with a bucket of cold water.' But this was not the kind of wagging that Bully was indulging in just then. A moment later as, obedient to my call, Bully was extricating himself from the sofa, Thomas shot out like a cannon – ball, precipitated himself upon him, dug one set of claws into his neck, the other into his face and, painstakingly twisting his little face upwards from below, attempted to bite him in the gullet. For one moment I had before me on the carpet a wonderfully plastic group, resembling to the last detail a picture by famous animal painter, Wilhelm Kunert, who has portrayed a lion killing a buffalo with just the same artistic movements.
>
> Bully at once played up, most convincingly mimicking the movements of the victimized buffalo. He collapsed heavily in front, yielding to the drag of tiny paws, and rolled over on to his back emitting as hi did so a most realistic death rattle, such as only a happy bulldog or an expiring buffalo can ever produce. When he had had enough being slaughtered, Bully took the initiative and, jumping up, shook the kitten off… And now for the first time in my life, I watched one of the most delightful animal games that one can ever witness. (p. 96-97)[ix]

Fight and play are somehow opposite forms of social association and the ability to redefine one for the other by means of almost identical gestures may prove the ability to interpret symbols and redefine signs and nuances of certain gestures indicating "surreptitiously" either aggressive or playful behaviour. Recognition of the rules of play is an extremely important element of a definition of some form of social association. A dog recognises the rules, despite the fact that some gestures of its partner closely resemble combat gestures (ex. we do not have the intention of killing each other – we just fake it; I pretend to be an aggressor and you pretend to be a victim)x. If we ascribed the term of "pretense awareness context" to this case of play, it would form a basic metarule, allowing to treat the above-mentioned exchange of gestures as play.

In animals' play (as well as in human-animal play) one can distinguish the basic level of intentionality. "Pretending something" at play involves some intentionality of action, for "pretending" includes certain element of imagination, which (when switched on) becomes some form of reflectiveness. According to Mead, a child at play does behave fully consciously and intentionally, planning all its actions. However, play is not exempt from planning and conscious intentionality of actions. It is already in the play situation, that the necessity of taking the role of other and of differentiating between oneself and another occurs (Myers, 2003: 58-59). Therefore

play presents some primary context of emergence of the concept of self, even if it is rudimentary.

The problem of anthropomorphization

The above-mentioned deliberations on the processes of communication among animals and between humans and animals may be pigeonholed as anthropomorphization of animal behaviour and treated as a methodological fault. In social sciences (especially in sociology and social psychology) strong opposition against anthropomorphization descends from the already mentioned, illustrious behaviorist and forerunner of symbolic interactionism, G.H. Mead. Up to this day, he exerts a very strong influence both on social scientists passing over the issues of analysis of human-non-human animals relationships and on the way of embarking on analysis. Mead (1932) claimed that:

> We, of course, tend to endow our domestic animals with personality, but as we get insight into their conditions we see there is no place for this sort of importation of the social process into the conduct of the individual. They do not have the mechanism for it-language. So we say that they have no personality; they are not responsible for the social situation in which they find themselves. The human individual, on the other hand, identifies himself with that social situation. He responds to it, and although his response to it may be in the nature of criticism as well as support, it involves an acceptance of the responsibility presented by the situation. Such an acceptance does not exist in the case of the lower animals. We put personalities into the animals, but they do not belong to them; and ultimately we realize that those animals have no rights. We are at liberty to cut off their lives; there is no wrong committed when an animal's life is taken away. He has not lost anything because the future does not exist for the animal; he has not the 'me' in his experience which by the response of the 'I' is in some sense under his control, so that the future can exist for him. He has no conscious past since there is no self of the sort we have been describing that can be extended into the past by memories. There are presumably images in the experience of lower animals, but no ideas or memories in the required sense. They have not the personality that looks before or after. They have not that future and past which gives them, so to speak, any rights as such. And yet the common attitude is that of giving them just such personalities as our own. We talk to them and in our talking to them we act as if they had the sort of inner world that we have. (pp. 182-183)

Mead ignored the significance of corporality including non-verbal communication (gestures, touching, embracing, looking, staring at one another etc.) in communicating with animals. His option is thoroughly language-centred and anthropocentric at the same time i.e. only verbal language allows symbolic interaction, for only by being able to react to our own words in the same way as we would like others to react to them are we able to establish contact with others. This ability, according to him, is characteristic of humans only. Moreover, Mead denies animals rights of any kind, for they do not possess personality and self-consciousness. Ethical consequences of this sort of views are amply visible in the above-mentioned quotation. "There is no wrong committed when an animal's life is

taken away". According to Mead, anthropomorphization is an error (see also Mead, 1932:138), although in everyday life it appears very often. The reason why it is an error of such common occurrence is not to be found in Mead's works, though. Mead does not consider such questions in any way, because in his analysis he relatively ignores the processes of communication between humans and animals and between animals themselves. Anthropomorphization of animals was usually thought of as a deficiency of our cognitive and analytical devices. Since long ago, it was perceived as a methodological error, i.e. it was claimed that we cannot interpret animal behaviour in psychological categories, as we describe and interpret human behaviour (Morgan, 1903; Mead, 1932: 138; Kennedy, 1992: 24). At present, anthropomorphism is also considered as a threat to scientific progress (for instance in neobehaviorism) as it is apparently associated with such archaic views as totemism or vitalism (Kennedy, 1992: 3, 9, 14, 160). Animal behaviour, from the so called scientific point of view, ought to be described in a mechanistic way, by adding certain movements and gestures, of which larger parts of integrated behaviour consist. However, the problem of "getting to know the other" concerns also (or, perhaps, above all) other people, who are different from us and do not share our experience. Moreover, some of them are blind, deaf or affected by some mental and physical defects as in terminally ill patients (Kacperczyk, forthcoming). In communication with strangers we always make some assumptions. It enables the projection of our own, subjective experiences and motives on others. Basing on many researches, also our own, we can say that anthropomorphization of animals is a common of everyday life phenomenon. It seems inevitable in everyday contacts with animals and just as in relation to other people it is a projection of one's own, subjective experiences and motives. My observations during research on "social world of pet owners" shown that so called "particular anthropomorphization" ("my or our i.e. our family's pet is exceptional, mainly thanks to contact with me, or with us, it behaves like a human"; plus personification of animals, naming them) is indispensable interactional devise to communicate with domesticated animals. Anthropomorhization is also a condition of pets socialization and consequently a condition for treating them as a members of a human family.

Anthropomorphic descriptions of animal behaviour are usually of psychological and sociological character. What is interesting, psychological research shows, that in the case of many people, anthropomorphic perception of certain animal behaviour is identical or nearly identical. This identity is probably caused by the structure of certain patterns of behaviour among animals and people (Morris, Fidler, Costall, 2000). Anthropomorphic descriptions concern also attributing human positions and social roles to animals and treating them as members of families. Research shows, that anthropomorphization is the first step towards accepting animals as members of the families (Belk, 1996). Animals are treated as children or siblings, and their participation in family rituals is a proof of their admission to the family (Belk, 1996).

In a family owning pets, anthropomorphization is an essential device of socialization of animals and of human communication with them. Personification (an animal is given a name and a personality) as one of the concretisations of anthropomorphization of animals, allows us to include them in our everyday, family life. We assert that anthropomorphization as human cognitive device enables us to communicate with animals, predict their behaviour, create their identity and (as a consequence) commonly shared reality. Anthropomorphization is a cognitive device (also analytically – interpretative) far better than mechanistic description of behaviour.

Conclusions

The influence of Mead on our thinking about communication among animals and humans and between animals and humans and also about self as a typically human quality and a boundary between humans and animals is very strong. To conclude, it can be said that in the light of our analyses and analyses of other, above-mentioned researchers, G.H. Mead was wrong as far as the views on language and communication, language and human – animals communication, on self and symbolic interaction and corporality are concerned (Tab. 1.).

Views	G. H. Mead Views	Alternative Views
1. On language and communication	Language facilitates the creation of community which, according to Mead, cannot emerge in the animal world due to lack of the verbal language.	It appears that the community can emerge also on the basis of non-verbal communication, direct controlling actions and examples of proper behaviour.
2. On language & human – animals communication	The creation of community between animal and human world is impossible, for those two make use of different means of 'communication' – gesture among animals and symbol among humans.	Symbolization is not a necessary condition as far as communication between humans and animals is concerned.
3. On possessing self	The symbolic presence of the web of meanings of social relations and other individuals in our mind is existent even when they are not present in our immediate surroundings. Animals do not possess this ability, for they do not possess self, which is a certain organization of attitudes common among a given social group.	Ethology and psychology of animals have proved that some species of primates do possess self or its rudiments. Dogs may possess it as well, for these animals are able to recognise and realise the norms both when the direct social control is lacking and during one of the forms of social associations, namely play, in which there are clear indications of taking the role of other.
4. On symbolic interaction, corporality and self	Symbolic interaction by verbal language and verbal communication and not the body (organism) are the basic elements of the creation of self.	Human corporality is a rightful dimension of communicating and creating self, especially its emotional aspect. Conveying and unveiling the feelings is a conveyance of indications about our future actions to the partners of interaction; by means of feelings of our own body we also interpret the meanings of other individuals' actions.

Tab. 1. Juxtaposition of some G H. Mead views and alternative views.

In the light of contemporary ethological, psychological and anthropological knowledge, Mead's and his adherents' arguments are easily refutable, which does not mean that the concept of self created through verbal communication and the concept of symbolic communication understood as a cognitive process are useless. On the contrary: these are the basic means of analysis of social actions, including actions resulting from interactions between humans and animals.

However, the creation of social bonds may occur not only by means of strictly symbolic communication. Social encounters and social bonds may emerge due to the process of attunement (Scheff, 1990). When E. Goffman (1963) spoke about an effective social encounter he had a "single focus of thought and visual attention" in mind. T. Scheff calls this phenomenon attunement, adding to this, the dimension of emotional adjustment of acting individuals. Therefore, attunement will be "tuning up" intentions, mutual understanding not only the cognitive character, but also emotional one, in which corporality including body and non-verbal communication (touching, embracing one another, smelling, looking, staring at one another, bodily movements, blushing etc.) plays a considerable role. Attunement is rather emphatic intersubjectivity or mind reading (Scheff, 1990: 7, 199). This sort of phenomenon occurs among humans but it also, undoubtedly, occurs in communication between people and companion animals. Its consequence is a mutual attachment and devotion in the human - non-human animals relationships. It is clearly visible when pets feel their owner's grief and try to "comfort" or "cheer him up"; attunement of pet's and owner's emotions occurs here (see Sable, 1995: 338; see also Sanders, 2004: 416). The owners use excusing tactics very often to defend their companion animals in a situation of public misbehaviour. It is connected with their self - defining process (Sanders, 1990). With the aid of the process of attunement, a suitable "social aura" is created, facilitating the emergence of some different phenomena and social processes. That is why the term "attunement" in which the mutual emotional adjustment (or "tuning up the feelings") is taken into consideration, should be used to a larger extent in our analyses of group communication and social bonds emerging from it (see Fig. 1).

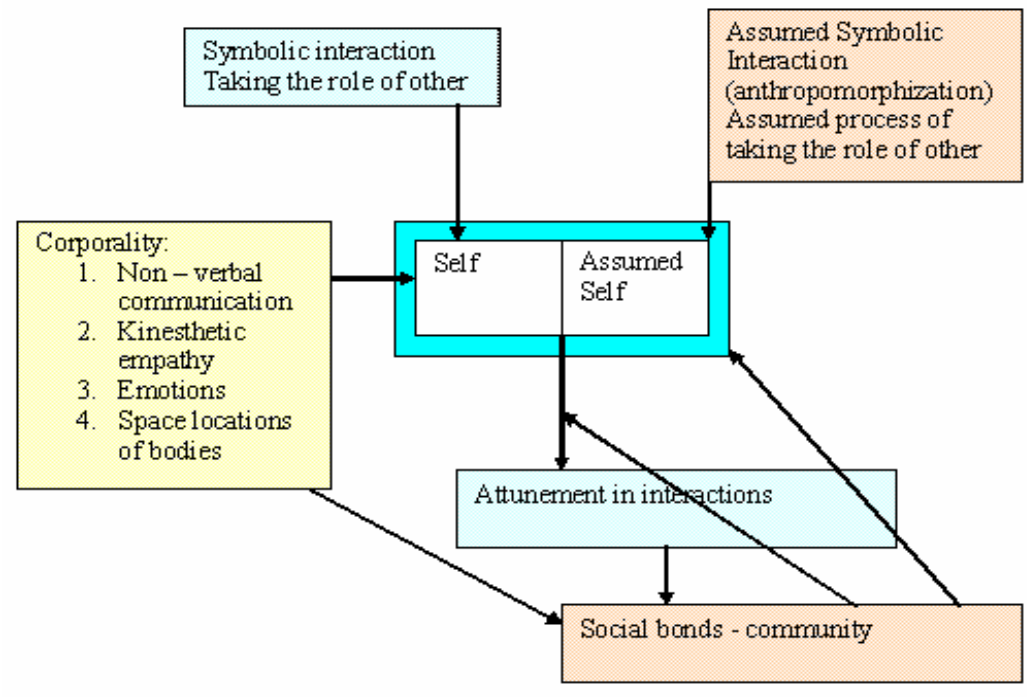

Figure1. Symbolic interaction, corporality and constructing self

Symbolic interactions are constructed by verbal symbols and seem to have an evident influence on constructing self. However we often assume that symbolic interaction takes place not having directly observable symbolic and verbal proves. That often happen in our interactions with mentally and physically handicapped humans and with animals (pets) when we anthropomorphize the animals' thinking and behaviour and process of role taking. These situations influence constructing self, even if it is a "real" or assumed one. "Assumed self" seems to be indispensable to get into interaction with animals without common verbal communication. The situation happens also in case of mentally and physically handicapped people, when there is no possibility to communicate verbally with such persons.

Corporality becomes a very important condition of self creation. This condition shows a possibility of creating self in and beyond symbolic interaction sphere. "Kinesthetic empathy", tuning up emotions, locations of bodies in the space (proximity and/or touching) also create a direct attunement in interactions. Attunement and self processes are conditions of social bond creation. A consequence of created social bonds is a sense of community that, in return, maintains or modifies the self feeling (see Fig.1)

Contemporary sociology is very language-centred. It means that the assumption that the essential role of language in the process of creating self and, as a consequence, of social bonds, causes use of certain research techniques. This view still plays a decisive role in choosing methods and techniques of research in social sciences.

Techniques of collecting data in contemporary sociology used the most frequently base on linguistic (verbal) data, proving some previously proposed sociological thesis. These techniques are namely: questionnaire interview, in – depth interview, narrative interview, surveys of different kinds etc. Usage of these techniques causes exclusion of an important dimension of creating social bonds; emotions and different aspects of functioning of our corporality, manifesting itself mainly in non-verbal communication (Scheff, 1990), the role of which was mentioned already by Charles Darwin (1872), who analysed it in his works (see ibidem: 296-7, 299-301, 306 – 307). The touching is, for example, so obvious and taken for granted as an element of communication and social bond creation that we do not perceive it and analyse its function. Sociologists do not receive full information about unconscious corporal behaviours in the interviews. Visual techniques of research (photography, video – records) give us a view of the role of touching and other signs of corporality and its role in creating a bond, assumed self, anthropomorphization. Visual sociology discovers once again for us the corporality as a base of self and society. It is especially important in creating bonds, selves and other phenomena on the level of interaction between humans and their companion animals. The social world of pet owners is, for example, based on corporality as the main socializing tool of common social world *weltanschaung* creation.

The view about the role of corporality in constructing of self has long been accepted in social sciences, although it is not always sufficiently reflected and considered in sociological research on the dimension of non-verbal communication and creating self. Visual sociology, making use of photography and video recordings seems to be an indispensable part of sociology aiming at capturing the whole

panorama of data helpful in analysis of symbolic interactions and emotional (and, as a consequence also corporal) conditions of the emergence of self, social bonds and the society itself.

Endnotes

i According to my observations during a research on "Social World of Pet Owners" (2001 – 2005) dog owners are able to give numerous instances of their pets' trying to communicate information on their own initiative (without external stimuli) and show signs of receiving stimuli which they themselves provide. A dog can stand up or sit on its hind legs on its own initiative, to let its owner know about its feelings or longings. In that case the dog does not have to be stimulated in order to communicate certain meanings (see also Lorenz, 2002).

ii In her book In the Shadow of Man, Jane Goodal (1974) notices that in the case of expressing particular feelings and emotions, non-verbal ways of communication are more important than language. These may be, for instance, patting someone on the shoulder, clapping hands, embracing someone warmly etc. The basic signals communicating pain, fear, anger, love, joy, astonishment, sexual arousal and many other emotional states are not exclusive features of our kind (Singer,1975).

iii In order to express various attitudes and physiological/emotional states, ex. pain, one does not need verbal language,it is possible to observe in the interactions with ifants and small children: Infants and small children are unable to speak either. Will we deny a one-year-old child's ability to suffer, then? If not, the language is not a determining factor. Obviously, parents usually understand their children's reactions better then the reactions of animals; though it results from our having relatively deeper knowledge about our own kind and our more frequent contact with infants than with animals. Those who study animal behaviour and who have their favorite animals, quickly learn to understand their reactions as well (or sometimes even better) as children's reactions (Singer, 1975). Understanding of inner physiological/emotional states and attitudes is possible due to the profound contextual knowledge resulting from the direct contact with an animal or a child.

iv Grammar express the unconsious logic of a common mind. Our native language has created the main thinking classifications and they are the base of thinking process. (see Dewey, 2002: 186).

v Myers (2003) draws our attention to the similar phenomenon of recognizing oneself in the mirror by human babies, claiming that the self appears earlier than Mead thought, i.e after the full acquisition of a language. Children aged 18 months pass the mirror-test. Moreover, they act emphatically towards others, they can pretend (and thus play certain roles) and use pronouns in relation to themselves. Many researches emphasize the existence of pre-verbal self which provides a sense of coherence and wholeness of oneself. It is not the self based on self-consiousness gained with the aid of language, but on the primal feeling of the existence of pre-verbal, comprehensive self. This feeling is contained in our corporality and its relation to the other (ibidem: 57).

vi A similar normative order appears among cats (see Alger, Alger, 1999).

vii Already Max Weber, wondering if sociology of relationships between humans and animals is possible claims that some forms of understanding and self-consciousness appear among animals. Would sociology of relationships between humans and animals (pets and hunting animals) be theoretically possible (many "animals" understand orders, anger, love, threat of assault and often react to them in a non fully mechanically-instinctive manner. On the contrary: in a way to some extent conscious, sensible, experience-oriented)? (Weber, 2002: 13).

viii The existence of some kind of interactive strategy in dogs' communication (in spite of the fact that primates are more closely related to humans) is more comprehensible in the light of recent anthropological research, which shows that, as far as cognitive abilities are concerned, dogs have outdone the apes most closely related genetically to humans. Dogs' abilities of communicating with humans have been developed in the process of domestication of the whole species. During this long process, lasting 15 000 years, dogs' physiology and morphology have changed, and the cognitive abilities have been improved (Zuradzki, 2004).

ix See also other K. Lorenz descriptions of a play among representatives of different species, eg. Between dogs and beavers, apes and dogs (2002: 99-101).

x Already Charles Darwin ascribes the ability to recognize the rules of the play and the accompanying gestures to dogs. Yet, he ascribes it to instinct rather than to socially acquired abilities (Darwin, 1872: 64).

References

Alger, Janet M. and Steven F. Alger (1999) "Cat Culture, Human Culture: An Ethnographic Study of a Cat Shelter." *Society & Animals* 7(3): 199 – 218.

Belk, Russel W. (1996) "Metaphoric relationships with pets." *Society and Animals* 4(2): 121 – 145.

Blumer, Herbert (1966) "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead." *American Journal of Sociology* 71: 534-544.

------. (1962/69) "Society as Symbolic Interaction." Pp. 78-89 in *Symbolic Interaction*, edited by H. Blumer. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Cooley, Charles H. (1922) *Human Nature and the Social Order.* Revised edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Darwin, Charles (1872) *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. London: John Murray.

Dewey, John (2002) *Jak myslimy?* (How we think). Warszawa: DeAgostini, Altaya.

Ekman, Paul (1986) *Telling lies. Clues to deceit in the marketplace, politics and marriage*. New York – London: W.W. Norton.

Flynn Clifton P. (2000) "Battered Women and Their Animal Companions: Symbolic Interaction Between Human and Nonhuman Animals." *Society & Animals* 8(2): 99 – 127.

Goffman, Erving (1963) *Behaviour in Public Places*. New York: Free Press.

------. (1969) *Strategic Interaction*. Philadelphia" University of Pennsylvania Press.

------. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.

------. (1979) *Gender Advertisements*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Halas, Elzbieta (1987) *Social context of meanings in the theory of symbolic interactionism* (in Polish). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego.

------. (1998) "Symbolic interactionism. Creators of a theory and its conceptual roots." Pp. 353 - 357 in *Encyclopedia of Sociology* (in Polish), edited by W. Kwasniewicz. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.

Irvin, Leslie (2004) If *you tame me. Understanding our connections with animals*. Temple University Press.

Lorenz, Konrad (2002) *Man meets dog*. London, New York: Routledge.

Kacperczyk, Anna (forthcoming) *Wsparcie spoleczne w instytucjach opieki paliatywnej i hospicyjnej (*Social support in paliative care institutions*)*. Lodz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Lodzkiego.

Kennedy, John S. (1992) *The New Anthropomorphism*. Cambridge: The University of Cambridge Press.

Krzeminski, Ireneusz (1986) *Symboliczny interakcjonizm i socjologia*, (in Polish, Symbolic Interactionism and sociology). Warszawa: PWN.

Mead George H. (1932), *Mind Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

------. (1964) *On Social Psychology. Selected Papers*. Edited and with an Introduction by Anselm Strauss. Chicago and London: Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press.

Morgan, Lloyd Convy (1903) *Introduction to comparative psychology*. 2nd edition. London: Walter Scott.

Morris, Paul, Margaret Fiedler, Alan Costall (2000) "Beyond Anecdotes; An Empirical Study of 'Anthropomorphism'." *Society & Animals* 8(2): 151 – 165.

Mosciskier, Andrzej (1998) *Argument about human nature* (in Polish). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Myers, Olin (1999) "Human Development as Transcendence of the Animal Body and the Child – Animal Association in Psychological Thought." *Society & Animals* 7(2): 121 – 140.

------. (2003) "No longer the lonely species. A Post Mead Perspective on Animals and Sociology." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23(3): 46 – 68.

Sable, Pat (1995) "Pets, Attachment, and Well – Being across the Life Cycle." *Social Work* 40(3): 334 – 341.

Sanders, Clinton (1990) "Excusing Tactics: Social Responses to the Public Misbehavior of Companion Animals." *Anthroozos* 4(2): 82-90.

------. (1993) "Understanding dogs: Caretakers' attributes of mindedness in canine – human relationship." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22: 205 – 226.

------. (1999) *Understanding Dogs: Living and Working with Canine Companions*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

------. (2003) “Actions Speak Louder than Words: Close Relationship between Humans and Nonhuman Animals.” *Symbolic Interaction* 26(3): 405 – 426.

Scheff, Thomas (1990) *Microsociology. Discourse, Emotion and Social Structure*. Chicago, London: Chicago University Press.

Shapiro, Kenneth J. (1989) “Understanding Dogs through Kinesthetic Empathy, Social Construction, and History.” *Antrozoos* 3 (3): 184 – 95.

Singer, Peter (1975) *Animal Liberation*. New York: The New York Review of Books.

Strauss, Anselm L., editor (1964) “Introduction” in *Mead, G. H., On Social Psychology. Selected Papers*. Chicago, London: Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press.

------. (1993) *Continual Permutations of Action*. New York: Aldine.

Szacki, Jerzy (1981) *The History of the sociological thought* (in Polish). Warszawa: PWN.

Van Lavick – Goodal Jane (1974) *In the Shadow of the Man* (in Polish). Warszawa: PWN.

Wall de, Frans (1996) *Good Natured. The origins of the Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.

Weber, Max (2002) *Economy and society. Outline of understanding sociology* (in Polish). Warszawa: PWN.

Ziolkowski, Marek (1981) *Meaning, interaction, understanding* (in Polish). Warszawa: PWN.

------. (1998) “Interaction.” Pp. 349 – 353 in *Encyclopedia of Sociology* (in Polish), edited by W. Kwasniewicz. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.

Zuradzki, Tomasz (2004) “Dog sapiens.” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 February, p. 15

Citation

Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2005) “The Problem of Symbolic Interaction and of Constructing Self.” Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol. I Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Author

Krzysztof Tomasz Konecki (Professor of Sociology), chair of Organizational and Management Sociology Department, Lodz University, Poland. His major research areas are: qualitative sociology, grounded theory, symbolic interactionism, sociology of management and organization, sociology of work, organizational symbolism, Japanese culture and management, human – non-human-animals relationships.
Contact: konecki@uni.lodz.pl