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Editorial: Special issue - People and Animals. On the problem of intersubjectivity in interactions of humans and animals

Relationships between people and animals have been ignored by social researches for a long time. The main reason for this has been an assumption that achievement of intersubjectivity in testifying of animals' inner experiences and feelings is impossible. All "reactions" of animals to our stimuluses have been treated as one side interpretation due only to human actor. There has been no perception of the fact that intersubjectivity is accomplished by actions, and symbolic language is only one of the elements of action. Taking the role of the other gives the possibility of achieving the intersubjectivity proved not only by linguistic accounts, but also by non – linguistic activities directed to the partners of interaction. Action is an instrument of achieving intersubjectivity.

There has been a little attention given to the significance of corporality and non-verbal language, which is so important in definition of meanings and situations and in any activity. If we take tradition of pragmatism into consideration, social scientists can concentrate on analysis of interaction and action associated with human and non-human animals relationships. Meanings and definitions of situation also have an emotional dimension, and analysis of non – verbal communication, touching, and corporality allows us to see the role of emotions in our life, activities and self-construction.

Interactionism is another source of inspiration for considering aforementioned research problems. Mind and self are created in interactions. The whole knowledge and culture of an individual is of social origin; however it is activated, disavowed, totally refused or used according to goals of an actor in a particular interaction and situation together with some response of a partner of interaction. Context *here and now* and co-presence of bodies influence on the definition of situation testified later by our actions. If a dog reacts to my invitation to play according to the rules of play, it is difficult to say that the animal does not understand the ground rules of the activity that is socially defined as "play". Taking the role of the other is inscribed in exchange of gestures. This exchange is possible only if the gestures are understood in the same/ similar way by all sides of interaction. The animals, which are engaged in interactions with people, could not be a part of human lived experience and relationships with humans in reality without assumed possibility of achieving reciprocal understanding of humans and animals in everyday life. Such shared understanding of intentions in interactions between human and non-human animals (e.g. pets) is a base of accomplishment of such social associations as play, partying,

going for a walk, visiting friends, etc. Self indications in interactions give meaning to objects and activities, and when it is done together with a role-taking, we achieve so called “joint action”. The play, party, going for a walk are kind of joint action - a realization of intersubjectivity - so important for doing science.

The articles in this issue refer to aforementioned questions: issue of animals selves (Leslie Irvine), the boundaries between human and animal world (Pru Hobson–West), methodology of studying human and non – human animals relationships (Adrian Franklin, Michael Emmison, Donna Haraway, Max Travers), issues of animal personhood and intersubjectivity (Nicola Taylor), comeback of domesticated animals to “natural” world (Colin Jerolmack), process of developing and redefining identity in prison-based animal programs (Gennifer Furst), finally theorizing in the social world of pet owners (Krzysztof Konecki).

This issue, as a collection of well-considered and elaborated articles contributes to the ongoing, interdisciplinary discussion on relationships between people and animals and I hope it will inspire further studies and debates.