Editorial Board

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Editorial: Qualitative Understanding of Others and Qualitative Sociology

Welcome to the new journal Qualitative Sociology Review

We created this online Journal to promote qualitative understanding of social phenomena, human being and other species. Our aims are included in our mission http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/mission_eng.php. Community is one of the values that we want to advance. We would like to integrate qualitative researchers from all around the world and create one community. Community of individuals respecting each other as human beings with tolerance and equality in mind and approbation of scientific rules of understanding of a social world.

However we promote qualitative way of thinking, refusing "a rule of majority" that is used in quantitative research and generally in everyday life of societies dominated by "a survey philosophy". If we want to understand others and maybe explain their actions and interpretation of the world we should concentrate on definitions of situations that could be typologized and conceptualized in order to understand the more general dimensions of social worlds. Thus it is difficult to accept that the usage of quantity (the rule of majority) decides how we can understand human being acting. 'The more something is' does not designate any meaning for understanding of human action. If something is large in quantity it only means that it is large in quantity, nothing more. The individual and social meaning of quantity has a qualitative character and usually depends on a context and individual interpretation of social and cultural rules. The concept of quantity is important, especially in explaining material world, but in understanding human being as a social being and her/his actions it is not enough. Analysis of social phenomena described quantitatively is always understood qualitatively. We cannot say anything comprehensively using only numbers without types, classes, categories, properties of categories, descriptions, relations. Pure numbers do not exist, they exist only in experience of acting individuals.

The mind, thinking and self have a qualitative character, not a quantitative one. I am or I am not; there is no rule of majority deciding about existence of self. Me and not–me; there is no relation like that: "the less I am the more you are." Me and You exist only in certain form of relation. Relation with Other and this relation is a Quality, some form of social existence, not quantity.

Qualitative thinking is at the base of quantitative one. Every common sense or scientific statement about quantitative change in the phenomenon is based on classes and categories that have a qualitative character. Quantitative analysts are very rarely aware of qualitative analysis that they do. Every quantitative statement is an imprecise form of a qualitative one. Precision in social sciences is possible only in description of qualitative relations, especially in descriptions of processes and their consecutive stages. We can repeat situations and observe processes in many contexts but it is very difficult to repeat social situations and obtain identical statistical correlations describing the processes each time.

What we then mean by qualitative sociology?

Qualitative sociology is a perspective of description, understanding and sometimes explaining social phenomena by investigating and analyzing individual and group experiences and world outlooks plus human actions, using qualitative methods of research or qualitative analysis of qualitative and/or quantitative data. Qualitative sociology is not only associated with the usage of qualitative methods of research (group interviews, participant observations, field studies, etc.), as it is sometimes understood. It is a qualitative way of thinking about human experience, i.e. the way of "scientific intersubjective empathy" in getting the meaning of individual and group experience of so called external world. The effect of research and analysis could be a theoretical description or conceptualization and theoretical integration of concepts. But concepts must always be grounded in empirical observations. We should remember that the qualitative sociology is a kind of general orientation in sociology, not only a usage of so called qualitative methods. However we have to remember that this orientation is internally very diverse.

Our Journal is open to all perspectives in qualitative research and analysis of social phenomena. We promote diversity in qualitative social research. Qualitative Sociology Review is then the journal of Symbolic Interactionism, Grounded Theories, Social Worlds/Arenas Studies, Action Studies, Biographical Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Collaborative Social Research, Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Deconstructivism, Ethnography, Ethnoscience, Ethnomethodology, Evaluation Social Research, Hermeneutics, Holistic Ethnography, Institutional Ethnography, Phenomenology, Phenomenography, Narrative Studies, Naturalistic Studies, Social Anthropology, Qualitative Case Studies and other qualitative orientations within social sciences.

Our Journal is of an Open Access kind. Growing prices of scientific books, journals, monographs, etc. are a serious barrier for a wide and common access to scientific works. We would like to contribute to Open Access Movement in scientific endeavors and at the same time propagate our ideas, scientific works and discoveries.

We do not believe in any boundaries in the world, especially here in Lodz (Poland), where many editors settled down for a moment. The city is famous for its diverse culture, that it originally has had. Before the II WW it consisted of four big ethnicities: Poles, Jewish, Germans and Russians and also many others. It is a city of big artists: Artur Rubinstein, Wladyslaw Reymont, Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Antoni Tansmann, Julian Tuwim, Michal Urbaniak and many others come from Lodz. The tradition of tolerance and spiritual invigoration coming from the mixture of cultures

and nations is still alive but as every tradition should be supported by collective actions at all times.

We remember the time of scientific books and instruments shortage before 1989 and we know the high prices of books and journals today. Many of our friends from behind of the Iron Curtain helped us a lot sending the books and papers in the past. Now, we would like to assist other scientists in need, who maybe have some problems with a shortage of scientific publications from the whole world. Internet, as a very democratic instrument of communication, helps a lot to solve the problem. Webside journals seem to be a future of free scientific communication.

In the inaugural issue of our Journal we present diverse papers, in the approaching editions we plan to construct volumes and issues one subject oriented.

T. Berard's paper "Evaluative Categories of Action and Identity in Non-Evaluative Human Studies Research: Examples from Ethnomethodology" concentrates on practical use of evaluative concepts. The concepts are connected with such controversial phenomena as: suicide, mental illness, discrimination, also corruption, plagiarism, drug abuse, adultery, etc. The author tries to connect the detailed ethnomethodological analysis of empirical data with concepts that could be evaluative but should be exposed of their deep meanings.

K. Kosmala in her paper "Insights From Ricoeur's Hermeneutics On Best Practice In Professional Service Firms: On Perpetual Myth Creation?" deals with the question of how language takes part in creating individual judgments in professional work. The language and template of work deliver a base for the definition of "best practice". The paper shows the tension between structural content of the job and "soft facts" giving the margin for negotiation of meanings.

A. Bell in his paper "'Oh yes, I remember it well!' Reflections on using the life-grid in qualitative interviews with couples" deals with a methodological problem of using the life - grid tool in facilitating the process of interviewing. The author tries to answer if the life-grid help in opening interviewees and make them more reflexive, whether the tool helps in stimulating recall of past events etc. The conclusions of the paper are not promising in using life – grid in sociological qualitative interviewing.

My paper "The problem of symbolic interaction and of constructing self" presents discussion on an issue of creation of self concerning not only symbolization (human language) but also corporality. Corporality is connected with non-verbal communication, a relation of bodies in physical space, and so called "kinesthetic empathy" strictly associated with recognizing emotions by interaction partners. These elements of corporality may be the basis for taking the role of other and creating of common definition of situation and eventually social bonds not only between humans but also between human and non-human animals.

Feel free to read this new journal and to participate in creating its forthcoming issues! We await your papers, book reviews, comments and discussions.

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Evaluative Categories of Action and Identity in Non-Evaluative Human Studies Research: Examples from Ethnomethodology

Abstract

Ethnomethodologists have emphasized the pragmatic and contextual nature of description as a variety of social practice, and have suggested the ramifications of this insight for the methodology and philosophy of the social sciences. However, ethnomethodologists have thereby invited difficult questions about the moral and analytic status of their own descriptions. Drawing on Atkinson's study of suicide verdicts and Coulter's writings on schizophrenia, ethnomethodological scholarship is shown to display the possibility and promise of disinterested description, even when the subject matter involves the evaluation of problematic actions and identities. The combination of Wittgensteinian logical grammar and empirical studies of natural language use, suggested by Coulter, is presented as especially relevant and remarkable for purposes of studying social practices including describing, naming, categorizing, classifying, labeling, diagnosing, reaching a verdict, and kindred practices of language use conceived as varieties of practical action.

Distinterested Descriptions of Practical Descriptive Practices

It was a hard-won heuristic insight for the human sciences that *description* can be analyzed as a variety of practical activity, and can be taken as a *topic* for social inquiry, rather than serving as its unacknowledged analytic resource (see, e.g.,

Sacks, 1963; c.f. Zimmerman and Pollner, 1970). Ethnomethodological and conversation analytic contributions to the human sciences figure prominently among the various contributions responsible for elevating descriptive practices such that they became a subject in their own right, beyond questions of pedagogy and research methods[i]. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis figure especially prominently in exploring the ramifications of this insight for the human sciences. The reception of this heuristic insight in the wider social-scientific community, however, has been very mixed and very problematic.

On the one hand, many social scientists do not yet appreciate the practical and otherwise indexical (contextual, situated, etc.) properties of the commonsense descriptions that they employ as their data, or gloss over in the process of theory building. One significant example of this is the continuing and programmatic tendency, especially in the attenuated research tradition of positivism, to substitute objective expressions for indexical expressions (see, e.g., Garfinkel, 1967a:1-34), as in the employment of operational definitions for research variables, or coding procedures for "qualitative" data (cf. Atkinson, 1978: 22). In this methodological and analytic sense, the wider social science community has not yet 'got the message' about description as practical activity and topic of inquiry.

On the other hand, many social scientists have *endorsed* the political, ideological and relativistic implications of this insight for the social sciences, especially as concerns *other peoples' versions* of social science. This leads to the current state of affairs, in which the descriptive claims of every tradition of social inquiry are susceptible to being dismissed as *interested* descriptions, and yet such dismissals can in turn be dismissed, on the logic that if *all* descriptions are *interested* descriptions, then the interested nature of any particular description hardly needs to be defended. The implicit logic seems to be that all interests are in an important sense equivalent, if not for moral and political purposes, then at least for purposes of entertaining claims about non-partisan scholarship.

These issues seem to me to be central to the curious and problematic status of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis within the human sciences. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have suffered *professionally* from *both* the reluctance of many social scientists to acknowledge the methodological and analytic significance of description as practical action, and from the facility with which this insight is adopted for ideological purposes. Insofar as ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic claims about description are addressed at all by the wider social-scientific community, they are subject to being dismissed from both directions at once, as unwarranted or exaggerated criticisms of conventional social scientific methods and reasoning, and as ideologically suspect. On the latter point, EM/CA work has been criticized not so much for having a political agenda, as for lacking a political agenda, which to many theorists amounts to a tacit support for the status quo of class, race and gender relations. Ironically, then, it can be the *disinterested* nature of EM/CA scholarship which leads to the charge of ideological complicity. I suspect that the *alleged* inability of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis to handle 'macro' phenomena of political relevance is often invoked partly to allude to such complicity, without having to substantiate the thesis (c.f. Berard, 2005a, 2005b).

It is in this professional context that I feel it is professionally appropriate to qualify the initial insight into descriptive practices, by explicitly and programmatically carving out an analytic space in which disinterested description in the service of analytic inquiry is not only an intelligible and worthy principle (cf. Bogen and Lynch, 1990), but also *possible* to achieve. Without such argument, claims of

"ethnomethodological indifference" might well appear as a boot-strapping type argument, thus facilitating dismissals of ethnomethodological work in the wider community of the human sciences. By "disinterested", I do not mean that scholars *have* no interests outside scholarship, or *should have* no interests outside scholarship; nor do I mean to deny that scholarship involves its own variety of interests. I use the term "disinterested description" merely to suggest a variety of description which is not politically or morally driven, but rather driven by scholarly concerns, according to which social inquiry should be governed by principles of empiricism and logic, rather than ideology.

I intend the term "disinterested" to be consistent with the standard of "ethnomethodological indifference", especially insofar as this indifference involves a non-evaluative approach to the descriptive and accounting practices of members (of a culture). Garfinkel and Sacks observe, for example, that "there is no room in the world to *definitively* propose formulations of activities, identifications, and contexts" (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970: 359). This notion of "disinterested" is also consistent with Sacks' argument, in his paper on sociological description, that the task of sociology is not to clarify or criticize persons' descriptions of the social world, but to describe them (Sacks, 1963: 7). In remarks on "unmotivated examination" Sacks outlined a relevant analytic attitude in which no social phenomenon would be ignored because of the *presumed* results of its study. Theory is to be driven by analysis of the data, rather than data being selected and findings accomplished according to theoretical problems or agendas. As Sacks argues, and as his methods have arguably now demonstrated, "It is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs" (Sacks, 1984:24). While I have no objection to either of these terms, as I understand them, "ethnomethodological indifference" and "unmotivated examination" have already been used in other contexts to make somewhat different arguments, and have somewhat different and arguably more narrow meanings than I am trying to convey with the term "disinterested." This notion of "disinterested description" is also consistent with, but not identical with, the Wittgensteinian avoidance of criticizing linguistic conventions or prescribing their reform, in favor of describing the logical grammars of concepts, to be addressed below.

I believe it is a fair generalization that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have been involved in producing disinterested descriptions of their phenomena from the very beginning, and it seems to be the case that the reality of ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic studies has far outpaced the theoretical and programmatic arguments made on their behalf, despite very relevant and edifying ethnomethodological treatments addressing, e.g., the role of morality in different sociological paradigms (Wilson, 1970) and morality as a feature of mundane categorization practices (see esp. Jayyusi, 1984, 1991). Indeed, the claim that description is a practical activity is itself an example of disinterested description, i.e., it wasn't motivated by political or moral concerns, and hasn't even paid off professionally. It has been rewarding only if one evaluates it as an empirical and analytic insight, by which standards it is enormously important and yet enormously under-appreciated. Another way of stating this is to suggest ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic descriptions are in an important sense impractical, and cannot be understood or appreciated if read or heard ironically, as symptoms or indicators of practical interests in, e.g., conserving or critiquing social practices, accounts or

explanations, social beliefs, speech, or members' relations with each other, whether individually or in groups.

Evaluative Categories: "Suicide" & "Schizophrenia"

The professionally distinctive potential of ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic scholarship to produce disinterested descriptions of social phenomena should be apparent to anyone familiar with the relevant literature, but I would argue that nowhere is it *more* evident than in studies of evaluative categories, where, arguably, disinterested descriptions would be *least expected* and *most difficult to produce*. By "evaluative categories," I mean categories of social description that are commonly bound up with practices of *evaluating* persons, actions, institutions, social contexts, etc. Two examples: 'suicide' is an example of an evaluative action category, and "schizophrenic" is an evaluative identity category. These particular categorizations are not only typically used in an evaluative manner, but can also be quite consequential as a practical matter, both of which characteristics can be illustrated briefly for those who may benefit from a brief reminder about these specific domains of practice.

Claims or verdicts of "suicide" are evaluative and consequential for a variety of reasons, including the facts that suicide is considered by many an egregious sin, potentially determining the eternal fate of the soul; suicide can in some contexts be used to deny insurance benefits to the family of the deceased; suicide is often thought to reflect negatively on the responsibility of friends, family, or institutional custodians of the deceased, and in the latter cases may raise legal or professional issues of liability. Coroners who cannot adequately defend verdicts of suicide to various interested parties may also find their reputation or their job in jeopardy. Moreover, categorization of a sudden death as a suicide has an additional consequence in that it rules out the applicability of alternative explanations, some of them equally evaluative and consequential, especially the categorization "homicide." Categorizations of suicide can therefore raise profoundly important questions of a religious, financial, moral or legal nature.

The category of "schizophrenia" is equally evaluative and consequential, most clearly in that it is a term of stigmatization, suggesting that a member has a disease of the mind, or a mental illness, which stigmatization can continue even after years without suffering any symptoms of the ostensibly underlying, latent condition. Beyond the stigmatization of the label, psychiatric diagnoses of "schizophrenia" often serve as grounds for involuntary confinement and treatment regimens. Schizophrenia may also be used, informally or legally, as an excuse or mitigating factor in determining guilt and responsibility for criminal misconduct, and may also be treated as an indicator of dangerousness and recidivism for purposes of sentencing or preventive detention. It may figure as a ground for a divorce, or a custody decision, or other legal interventions in family structure. Diagnoses of schizophrenia can also figure into competency hearings which determine whether an individual himself or herself requires a custodian. "Schizophrenia," like "suicide," raises profound questions, specifically in this case for the institutions of the family, law, and psychiatric care and control. Thus both categorizations, suicide and schizophrenia,

should be understood as typically evaluative and consequential categorizations. Both categories operate in the overlap of moral, legal, and medical varieties of social conventions and social controls, as well as more diffuse cultural conventions and controls.

Not only are categorizations of suicide and schizophrenia typically evaluative and consequential, but so too are *studies* of coroners' verdicts and psychiatric diagnoses, in the sense that studies of professional decision-making are typically quite practical in nature, reflecting the interests of the funding agencies, the interests of the gatekeepers who can allow or deny access to the sites and subjects of research, and quite commonly reflecting a critical or reformist agenda on the part of the researcher him- or her-self, or perhaps merely the ambition to be "relevant." A common concern with suicide rates is the prevalence of erroneous determinations of cause of death, for example, and of course psychiatrists' diagnoses are susceptible to a wide range of generic professional skepticism and case-specific second-guessing.

This is not the case, however, with ethnomethodological forays into these domains of practice, of which I will single out for commentary Max Atkinson's book *Discovering Suicide* (1978), and Jeff Coulter's publications on schizophrenia, and mental illness or insanity more generally (see, esp., 1991a; 1973; 1983: 148-152). Not only do both authors explicitly disavow any practical interest in criticizing or improving the categorization practices of coroners and psychiatrists, but both authors *demonstrate*, cumulatively and compellingly, over the course of their respective studies, the possibility of studying evaluative categories in a non-evaluative manner.

I want to briefly summarize what I take to be some of the relevant details of these respective studies, with two goals in mind. First, I would like to further illustrate the non-evaluative nature of these studies, in the interest of making a larger point about the possibility of non-evaluative research in the human studies. Second, I would like to suggest what I take to be a quite promising direction for future studies of evaluative categories, suggested by Coulter's use of ethnomethodological analysis to complement Wittgensteinian inquiries into the logical grammars of natural language concepts, especially concepts of the "mental," including in this case the category of "schizophrenia."

Atkinson's book, *Discovering Suicide*, can be described as a cumulative account of a young scholar's conversion to ethnomethodology, a conversion which takes place over the course of his dissertation research, as he struggles simultaneously to find his place in the literature on suicide and make sense of a variety of ethnographic, interview, and documentary data concerning the work of coroners and coroners' officers. Atkinson ultimately accomplishes an ethnomethodological respecification of the suicide question. Constraints of time and space prevent me from addressing the important question of *why* one might find non-evaluative studies worthwhile, but Atkinson's book does offer an unusual narrative of an earnest researcher driven by his scholarly concerns into a progressive disenchantment with conventional positivistic[ii] and ironic/correctional formulations of the suicide question. One crucial aspect of this disenchantment which Atkinson expresses well is simply that many conventional studies, because they neglect the question of *how* the relevant data is identified and assembled, don't realize that many types of data are identified and assembled by means of commonsense theories (e.g. commonsense theories of suicide or mental illness) which are uncritically carried over into professional theories, thus rendering any testing of professional theories against such data a variety of circular reasoning, potentially involving self-fulfilling prophesies

(Atkinson, 1978; 1990: 462-465). But the disenchantment extends as well to the symbolic interactionist alternative offered by Jack Douglas (1967). Concurrently with this progressive disenchantment, Atkinson's analysis communicates a growing appreciation for the empirical and analytic promise of an ethnomethodological and non-evaluative approach to his phenomena. After such a respecification, suicide research revolves largely around the fundamental question of how categorizations of suicide get made, as a matter of practical methods and practical reasoning, given that a number of alternative categorizations are available for describing sudden deaths, including natural death, accident and homicide.

Much of the discussion in Atkinson's book details the practical reasoning involved in the process of establishing practically adequate grounds for reaching one formal verdict and official categorization for particular sudden deaths, given this availability of several verdicts. This is an important point, so I will paraphrase it in two additional ways, with the intention of prefiguring the subsequent development of my argument. One way to put this is to say that coroners and coroners' officers are involved in deciding on a categorization by which particular sudden deaths are *accountable* – that is, deciding on a formal, public decision about what sudden deaths amount to, what they count as, how they are observable and intelligible and reportable as this, that, or the other culturally known and officially recognized variety of sudden death. Another way to put this is to say that coroners and coroners' officers are involved in a variety of *search procedure*, where we could say the goal of the search is to establish the case-specific grounds for reaching the final verdict, the appropriateness of which is partly a function of *not* finding adequate grounds for reaching all *other* verdicts, adequate grounds for which should be accountably *lacking*[iii].

The details of coroners' work are complex; some of the key grounds for categorizing a sudden death as a suicide, by which a death becomes accountably a suicide, according to Atkinson (1978: 110-147), relate to communications (especially suicide notes, and verbal warnings or threats of suicide), mode of death (e.g. hanging, gassing, overdose), location and circumstances of death (e.g. places where one would not normally go), and the biography of the deceased, under which category would fall medical conditions (such as chronic illness, chronic pain), psychiatric conditions (mental illness, depression), and social conditions (including divorce, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, forced retirement, etc.). The intricate details of such work, however, presuppose a more basic understanding of suicide as the intentional taking of one's own life, in keeping with which the *fatality* of the incident and the suicidal *intent* are arguably the key criteria of suicides. Since coroners are only involved after a fatality, their work insofar as suicide verdicts are concerned amounts largely to judging evidence as to the presence or absence of suicidal intent or motive. Significantly, Atkinson discusses such work as involving "cues" or "criteria" for inferring intent (1978: 142-143), which will turn out to be a relevant point of comparison to Coulter's work on mental illness.

Atkinson is notably indebted to the more programmatic comments made by Garfinkel (1967b) in the course of his discussion of the work of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center, but Atkinson makes perhaps his most important contribution to the previous work of Garfinkel and Sacks in his careful and extended attention to the question of how coroners practically go about deciding between the available verdicts in specific cases, or the question of how the categorization of sudden deaths actually gets done as a practical and professional matter. Thus, where Garfinkel refers to the work of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center as

involving "common-sense situations of choice" (1967b:171) and refers to the requirement of assigning one of several "titles" of death to each case (1967b:173), Atkinson's book goes further by reporting upon the lived details which illustrate and substantiate Garfinkel's more abstract and programmatic conclusions, specifically reporting upon *how* common-sense situations of choice, involving choices between various institutionally allowable titles for sudden deaths, are handled as practical matters.

Similarly, Sacks' programmatic piece on "sociological description" (1963) states the importance of the type of work which Atkinson actually carried out. Most notably, Sacks (ibidem) writes:

> An investigation of how it is that a decision that a suicide occurred is assembled, and an investigation of how an object must be conceived in order to talk of it as 'commiting suicide,' these are the preliminary problems for sociology. Having produced procedural descriptions of the assembly of a suicide classification it may turn out that it is the category and the methodology for applying it that constitutes the interesting sociological problems. (p. 8)[iv]

Note that this is exactly what Atkinson's study subsequently delivers: Atkinson produces procedural descriptions of the assembly of suicide classifications, and in such a way as to argue, with reference to the details of his study as well as to methodological and theoretical considerations, how and why that type of inquiry might actually raise and address the most interesting sociological questions concerning suicide.

One important point of comparison between Atkinson's study of suicide and Coulter's work on schizophrenia is that they both pay serious attention to the criteria used in the practices of categorization, i.e., the criteria for reaching a verdict of suicide or for a diagnosis of schizophrenia. In Coulter's work on Schizophrenia, however, much of the discussion of these criteria appears in the service of an argument to the effect that the category "schizophrenia" is a polymorph, or a *catchall* category which can refer to so many and such diverse varieties of speech and conduct as to seriously undermine etiological inquiries, especially etiological inquiries which posit a single physiological determinant of schizophrenia. He suggests that the chronic problems of inconsistent operationalizations and the lack of comparable criteria for "schizophrenia" across studies reflect an "attempt to regiment this core concept's usage beyond its latitudes of tolerance" (Coulter, 1991a: 163). In an important sense, then, Coulter is suggesting that "schizophrenia" has been reified into a singular, natural kind, when the diversity of conduct and speech in question and the persistent failures of etiological research both suggest the need to de-reify "schizophrenia" and instead exhibit the range of properties and uses of this concept, as a tool of practical diagnostic work (cf. Coulter, ibidem: 168). Coulter asks rather pointedly: "If, as we are told with growing documentation, the category of 'schizophrenia' lacks uniform indicators, clear boundaries, common properties, strict recognition rules, or context-independent diagnostic criteria, what is it for which an etiological search is being mounted?" (Coulter, ibidem: 169). Speech and conduct which can lead to diagnoses of "schizophrenia" range from catatonic withdrawal, visual and auditory hallucinations, delusions, and disordered speech and thought, and these often appear independently of one another.

Despite the significant differences in emphasis, one of Coulter's primary arguments concerning the constellation of schizophrenia, clinical psychiatry, and research in the tradition of psychopathology, is in a way reminiscent of Atkinson's arguments concerning the constellation of suicide, the professional work of coroners, and suicidology - namely, that categorization practices are such an important part of the subject matter that we actually need to understood these categorization practices as *constitutive* of the phenomena being categorized; categorization practices are *internally and logically* related to the actions and identities in question, rather than being externally related in an empirical and contingent manner. This conclusion in both cases renders the program of causal explanation analytically dubious, at best, and must be understood in the context of the concern of both authors to address *how* categorizations of suicide and schizophrenia are accomplished, rather than offer deterministic *causal* explanations for why some members of our culture kill themselves, or speak and behave in ways that are unintelligible. The latter, conventional explanations conceive of human action and belief in terms of causes and effects which are contingently and mechanically related as discrete phenomena, missing the reflexive, mutually constitutive relationships between actions and their grounds, or between delusions and their explanations, following the mundane and holistic logic of what Garfinkel called the "documentary method of interpretation" (1967a:76-103). That is to say, classifications can be seen as implying (or at least prompting a search for) grounds which would render them accountably adequate, as much as grounds for the adequacy of classifications imply or prompt the classifications. Classifications and grounds both simultaneously confer meaning on each other in a reflexive relationship, and neither make full sense independently of each other, as they are defined partly by their relation to one another and the practices in which they are united.

Coulter's work on schizophrenia does not detail the grounds for diagnoses of schizophrenia to the degree that Atkinson details the grounds for verdicts of suicide. Rather, Coulter's work advances along another front, and constitutes a significant contribution to the naturalistic analysis of classifying practices especially by combining Wittgensteinian insights from analytic and linguistic philosophy with ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic sensibilities and methods[v].

A good place to begin the consideration of this combination of analytic traditions is with Peter Winch's famous book, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (1958), in which Winch outlines Wittgenstein's relevance to the philosophy of social sciences (c.f. Baccus, 1986).

One of the most relevant elements of Winch's arguments is the observation that "A regularity or uniformity is the constant recurrence of the same kind of event on the same kind of occasion; hence statements of uniformities presuppose judgments of identity" (Winch, 1958: 83) He continues soon after, "So to investigate the type of regularity studied in a given type of enquiry is to examine the nature of the rule according to which judgements of identity are made in that enquiry" (Winch, ibidem: 84). This argument soon brings him to the observation that such examinations would need to "include learning the criteria according to which [the relevant people] make judgements of identity" (Winch, ibidem: 84).

In the Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, this type of learning amounts to investigations of the logical grammar of concepts, such as investigations into the logical grammar of the concept "schizophrenia." Logical grammars of concepts identify rules for their intelligible use. This aspect of Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy is intimately related to what has been called his "use theory of meaning,"

suggesting that meaning is a function of usage (Winch, ibidem: 123). So the concern to specify "rules of use" for concepts should not be misunderstood as involving the philosophical legislation of correct usage, rather, logico-grammatical investigations are descriptive, explicative inquiries which remind us of the meanings of various natural-language concepts by drawing attention to how these concepts are used in our mundane practices and speech. These investigations identify rule-governed aspects of our language, but in a descriptive rather than prescriptive manner, as is suggested by Winch's notion of philosophy as "uncommitted enquiry," in the spirit of Wittgenstein's principle that "philosophy leaves everything as it was" (Winch, 1958: 102-103). You might note the similarity of these principles with the notions of "ethnomethodological indifference" "unmotivated examination," and "disinterested description" discussed previously.

A very important question arises at this point, about the compatibility of Wittgensteinian logical grammar with ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic studies, which are largely empirical enterprises. Two brief comments are in order, both of which draw significantly on the work of Coulter. First, there is absolutely no reason why the study of the practical use of concepts in our everyday lives can not be expanded in an empirical direction, enriching the methods of logico-grammatical investigations beyond examples drawn from memory, hypothetical scenarios, and the like. In this respect, ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic studies can directly contribute to and improve upon logico-grammatical investigations. There is nothing in Wittgenstein's works which would preclude such an innovation, which is very much in keeping with an emphasis on the use of concepts in natural languages, tied with practical activities and ultimately rooted in collective forms of life.

Second, the goals of logical grammar/conceptual analysis and ethnomethodology can be formulated as to overlap very significantly. Logical grammar is concerned with describing the conditions for intelligible use of a concept, which are called the "criterial features" of a concept[vi]. This concern may appear to be tangential for empirical social science, but it is not. The following discussion in Winch is very instructive: "… if the sociological investigator wants to regard [intellectual or social events] *as* social events… he has to take seriously the criteria which are applied for distinguishing "different" kinds of actions and [also for] identifying the "same" kinds of actions within the way of life he is studying. It is not open to him arbitrarily to impose his own standards from without. In so far as he does so, the events he is studying lose altogether their character as *social* events" (Winch, ibidem: 108). In his continuation of this discussion, Winch then prefigures some of the most important programmatic statements on suicide by Sacks and Atkinson by suggesting that Durkheim's *Suicide* was quite problematic by these standards (Winch, ibidem: 111).

Ethnomethodology, for its part, is often concerned with describing the *accountability* of social actions, social identities, and other social phenomena, all of which are only accountable (observable, reportable, describable) as being certain types of action (such as suicide) and certain types of identity (such as schizophrenic). These particular conventional meanings must, necessarily, be represented by or identified as concepts, such as the concepts "suicide" and "schizophrenia." The use of concepts in natural language and social interaction is clearly an empirical phenomenon, but it is also a rather privileged phenomenon, since it is inseparable from the question of methodology and ultimately constitutive of the topics of social order and social structure. This should suggest how central accountability is among the concerns of ethnomethodology. But it should also suggest that intelligibility and

accountability can be seen as amounting to much the same thing, indicating a profound overlap between analytic studies of logical grammar and empirical, ethnomethodological studies of accountability. This connection is especially apt in that in both traditions, the concerns with intelligibility and accountability express the basic insight that meaning is rooted in, constrained and enabled by social practices, and especially social practices of describing, naming, formulating, referring, classifying, categorizing, labeling, diagnosing, reaching a verdict as to an appropriate identification of an action or person legal purposes, etc.

This is certainly not the only argument to the effect that ethnomethodology is compatible with, or overlaps with, or profitably extends, central themes in Wittgensteinian ordinary language philosophy. In addition to numerous publications by Coulter, several other scholars have noted parallels or debts, in different but complementary ways (e.g. Heritage, 1978; Lynch, 1992, 1993; Francis, 2003).

John Heritage, for one, sees a point of convergence between Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy and ethnomethodology in a common interest with the indefiniteness of descriptive resources (Heritage, 1978: 179), related to what Sacks called the "etcetera problem" facing attempts at complete literal description in the social sciences (Sacks, 1963). An appreciation of the indefinite character of natural language and natural language terms is described by Heritage as a "condition for the theoretical treatment of conflicting descriptions, the flexibility of human descriptive resources and their novel applicability together with related problems concerning personal, cultural and linguistic change, cultural and linguistic relativism etc." (Heritage, ibidem: 79).

Heritage suggests that Garfinkel's interests in the understanding of natural language "derive from an interest in the ways in which descriptors can be concertedly and intelligibly used by practical language speakers," despite the "inexhaustible describability of states of affairs" in society (Heritage, ibidem: 85). While Heritage rightly traces this central interest of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology to phenomenological philosophy and gestalt psychology, it also overlaps significantly with the concerns of Wittgensteinian logical grammar, which informed early ethnomethodological scholarship through the influence of Harvey Sacks. Philosophical investigations into the logical grammar of concepts could aptly be paraphrased in the language Heritage uses (above) to describe Garfinkel's ethnomethodological concerns, as investigating the ways in which descriptors (concepts) can be concertedly and intelligibly (grammatically) used by practical language speakers to successfully and competently communicate with other members of a culture and speakers of a natural language, despite the indeterminate and indefinite (fuzzy, vague, muddy, etc) nature of natural language resources. This indefinite character of natural language terms even provides for the basic nature of description as practical activity which is the topic of the present paper; given that there is a practical selection problem of which criteria to orient to and which descriptions to use, "the selection of descriptors may be inspected to locate what the describer is understandably attempting to do with his description" (Heritage, ibidem: 91). This point is equally consistent with the ethnomethodological understanding of language as a means of practical action and a Wittgensteinian understanding of concepts and words as *instruments*, figuring *practically* into various language games (c.f. Coulter, 1991b:27).

Michael Lynch has also addressed similar issues in the course of outlining an ethnomethodological approach in the social studies of science. Lynch (1993) observes of Wittgenstein:

In recommending description rather than explanation, Wittgenstein took into account that a description is not a 'word-picture of the facts' and that descriptions 'are instruments for particular uses' [Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 291]. He did not propose delivering singularly correct descriptions of language use. Instead, he advocated a kind of reflexive investigation, in which philosophy's problems are addressed by 'looking into the workings of our language.' (p. 198-199)

This understanding of Wittgenstein's position on describing language in its workings leads Lynch, then, to a discussion of extending Wittgenstein in an empirical direction. Lynch suggests that empirical cases may play a role in Wittgenstein's project in the way that Garfinkel suggested using empirical investigations not as grounds for inductive theory-building or deductive theory-testing, but as "aids to a sluggish imagination" (Garfinkel 1967a: 38, quoted in Lynch, 1993: 199) in the course of reflective attempts to render the familiar as strange, in order to explicate the properties of mundane, taken-for-granted methods of practical action and practical reasoning. Empirical studies can therefore provide "perspicuous representation" of the use of our words, which is exactly what Wittgenstein argued is necessary for his ordinary language philosophy (Lynch, ibidem: 199).

With these arguments setting the context, I would now like to offer a brief and partial summary of Coulter's use of Wittgensteinian notions of logic, grammar, and "criteria" alongside and in the course of his ethnomethodological respecifications of mental predicates and mental phenomena, including schizophrenia, mental illness, and insanity.

Let me begin with an extended quotation from one of the most sustained treatments of these topics in Coulter's writings; in *Mind in Action*, Coulter (1989) is developing programmatic arguments for an "epistemic sociology," and in this context he describes the central notion of "grammars of practical cognition":

Grammars of concepts are rules which not only specify the linguistic frameworks within which words, phrases or types of words or phrases may be used, but also 'what counts as an application of' such expressions [Stanley Cavell]. Grammars reveal the manifold connections between words and other words, phrases and expressions as these are used by 'masters of natural language', and the manifold connections between kinds of expression and the sorts of circumstances within which and about which they may be used. Since it is the use of words, phrases and other forms of expression which articulate our concepts, and it is our concepts which afford us knowledge of the world… then the (evolving) grammar of our conceptual apparatus establishes (ongoingly) whatever intelligibility the world possesses for us. Exploring the connections and ramifications of concept-use for any domains of human interest within social contexts, practices, and institutional arrangements – the grammars of cognition – becomes the overarching interest of the kind of 'epistemic' sociology I am concerned to exemplify here. It might be argued that such inquiries are essentially 'non-empirical' in the sense that, although appeal is made to empirical … instances of human activities… in documenting parameters of conceptual articulation and the ways in which 'phenomena' of various kinds are thus rendered intelligible, none the

less the purpose of such analyses is 'logical' and thus ultimately distinct from a sociological enterprise. If, however, by 'logical' we mean 'grammatical' in Wittgenstein's (extended) sense… then it is clear that we can only arrive at our specifications of 'grammar' by inspecting actual occasions of reasoned use-and-context. We need for such a purpose elaborate 'reminders' when it is a question of examining facets of our commonplace cognition, and such 'reminders' take the form of systematically exemplifying 'data' derived from real-world social events and social processes. (p. 49-50)

Coulter goes on to suggest that in this extended sense, grammatical analysis is logical analysis. According to this understanding of logic, logic has to do quite generally with the question of orderliness, which is also a central concern of sociology and ethnomethodology, and so one finds Coulter at times altering the descriptor "sociological," putting a hyphen in the middle of it, rendering "sociological" inquiry into "socio-logical" inquiry, including inquiry into the social logic of concept deployment in natural language use. This is captured in at least one point as the transformation of "sociological explanation" into "socio-logical explication" (Coulter, 1989:5). The explication of grammars for natural language concepts, grammars which specify criterial features for concepts, is clearly one important method of examining the logic of practical action and practical reasoning, as grammars suggest the basic conditions of intelligibility and sense-making, without which neither members nor analysts could provide for the identity and order of any of our experiences.

Another expression of Coulter's respecification of themes from conventional sociology is his characterization of a new sociology of knowledge as involving "a greater interest in the *logic* of the achievement of 'intelligibility' in social life" (Coulter, ibidem: 3). Coulter's vision for the sociology of knowledge, reflecting ethnomethodological, Wittgensteinian, and also Schutzian traditions of inquiry, challenges the orthodox notion in analytic philosophy that the analyst is restricted to "invented" instances or examples as "data," and argues quite compellingly that the study of the practical logic of various conceptual and epistemic domains can benefit enormously by empirical data, and especially data from naturally occurring language use, of the kind emphasized in ethnomethodological studies.

More specific to ethnomethodology, here is a relevant discussion of ethnomethodology as a variety of logical inquiry:

> *Knowing what* people are doing (including oneself) is *knowing how* to identify what they are doing in the categories of a natural language, which requires *knowing how* to use those categories in discursive contexts, which includes *knowing when* to utter them. All of these types of knowledge are logically interrelated. They are all constitutive of human conduct. This integral linkage between what an action is (or what it could possibly, conventionally *be*) for those engaged in it, and how it could be 'made sense of' for anyone producing or witnessing it (correctly, appropriately, properly, rationally, etc.), forms a central insight of Garfinkel's programme of ethnomethodology (the study of the logic of practical action and practical reasoning in social affairs)[vii]. As Garfinkel articulates this insight, 'the activities whereby members [of society, of a common language and culture] produce and manage settings of

organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'account-able'.' The 'account-ability' of conduct and social arrangements (i.e. their intelligibility, describability, recognizability, etc.) is made possible by the very concepts which in turn make possible the production of such conducts and settings. I must *satisfy the criteria* for the conventional conceptualization ('account-ability' or describability) of my conduct as X-ing if indeed I may properly be said to have X-ed in the first place. And, naturally enough, the same is true for you, he, she, we and they! (Coulter, 1989: 15-16)

Similarly, Coulter refers to Garfinkel's work "on the natural logic of situated practical action and practical reasoning" (1973:ix). Relating to the Wittgensteinian notion of "criteria," Coulter offers another characterization of ethnomethodology which is especially relevant here; He argues, "One of the founding tenets of the ethnomethodological enterprise was to analyze human activities in terms which would preserve, without distortion, members' criteria for descriptive adequacy in relation to those activities. It is precisely this sort of constraint upon analytical conceptualization which distinguishes ethnomethodological inquiry, and we fully endorse it as a methodological principle" (Coulter and Parsons, 1991: 263-264).

Coulter's studies of schizophrenia, mental illness, insanity, etc. illustrate these programmatic concerns with domain-specific observations and arguments, amounting to studies of the natural logic of insanity ascription (1973: vii). According to this respecification of the sociology of mental illness, the focus of the field should be on "the *conventional procedures and presuppositions* involved in *any* set of recorded instances of talk about psychological status" (Coulter, ibidem: 152). In Coulter's most recent work on schizophrenia, he argues that we can avoid the reification of the concept "schizophrenia" by developing "*sociological* elucidations of its grammar of living usage" (1991a: 170).

Coulter's analyses of mental categorizations and predicates therefore draw from both ethnomethodology and linguistic philosophy, in the tradition of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin. Coulter's work can profitably be understood as illustrating what Austin called "fieldwork in philosophy," and what Paul ten Have has discussed more recently under the rubric of "empirical philosophy" (1997).

Let me explicitly relate what I take to be some of the significant aspects of the analytic and methodological developments I have been trying to describe. I began with the argument that ethnomethodological scholarship can and should be disinterested, in a sense similar to Garfinkel's principle of "ethnomethodological indifference," and Winch's notion of conceptual analysis as "uncommitted inquiry." Contrary to the fashionable skepticism concerning such battered terms as "objectivity" "value-freedom" and "value-neutrality," ethnomethodological and Wittgensteinian scholars have both been demonstrating the possibility of disinterested description for decades. This is perhaps nowhere so clear as in the case of the empirical studies and logico-grammatical investigations of the accountability and intelligibility of evaluative categorizations, including categorizations "suicide" and "schizophrenia." Other ethnomethodological studies of relevance have addressed contested sexual identity in the case study of "Agnes" (Garfinkel, 1967a: 116-185), "normal crimes" (Sudnow, 1965), "juvenile delinquency" (Cicourel, 1995), plea-bargaining (Maynard, 1984), traffic court hearings (Pollner, 1987), police interrogations (Watson, 1973), and another treatment of mental illness (Smith, 1978). And these are merely some of the better-known "classical" contributions among a

wealth of relevant studies. This scholarship demonstrates the ability to achieve rigorous and disinterested description in domains of practice which are notable for disagreements among experts as well as laypeople.

Orientation to Criterial Features of Evaluative Concepts in Arguments

In the above I have argued for disinterested description and for combining two traditions of inquiry, each descriptive rather than evaluative in purpose. But I would argue as well that evaluative categories, including those that name any number of individual and social problems, can be recognized as an especially important collection of subject matter for such inquiries. Rather than the contentiousness of these subjects being cause for analytic concern, this contentiousness is analytically invaluable, because debates about the applicability of evaluative categories display especially frequently and clearly the social practices of making phenomena accountable and intelligible in situ, practices in which the participants routinely orient to and display the relevance of the grounds or criteria of evaluative categorizations, in the content and process of their arguments and their (other) actions.

In his discussion of the flexibilities of natural language use, Heritage briefly discusses a transcript from a cross-examination of a senior police officer in Northern Ireland who is suspected of being overly polite in attempting to disperse a protestant "mob who had burned and pillaged a catholic area" (1978: 92). In the brief transcript provided by Heritage, it becomes clear that the officer contests the description of the Protestants as a "mob," instead characterizing them by the more neutral term "crowd," and the officer contests as well the description of himself as having knowledge, at the time, of the true extent of the protestants' violence. With respect to the distinction between the descriptors "mob" and "crowd," Heritage (ibidem) briefly summarizes the theoretical and methodological significance of this dispute. He observes that:

> (1) the contested descriptive distinction between a 'crowd' and a 'mob' is (2) not amenable to definitive (or criterial) definition, but summarizes a variety of different (themselves indefinite) attributes of large social groups; (3) instructs hearers to attend to different dimensions of the state of affairs described; (4) as part of that instruction, instructs hearers to prospectively orient themselves to the possibility of an 'accusation/defence' sequence concerning the adequacy of the police officer's conduct… and (5) could not be other than the object of … 'persuasive activity' and indeed is hearably the object of such activity. (p. 92)

One way in which this incident could be understood is in terms of a negotiation or contest about whether the officer's conduct satisfied the critieral features of professional competence or responsibility, or if on the other hand the officer's conduct satisfies the criterial features of incompetence, or negligence, or some other professional or legal failing. Certainly it can make a very practical difference in terms

of an evaluation of professional conduct whether the officer is understood as having been polite with a "crowd" or having been polite with a "mob," just as it can make a very practical difference whether the officer was polite with people he *knew* had burned and pillaged, or with people he *should have known* had burned and pillaged, or with people he *could not be expected to have known* had burned and pillaged. The confrontational nature of this cross-examination reveals two interlocutors describing "the same" incident differently, informed by the disjunctive interests which inform the disjunctive descriptions: the interest in investigating or faulting the conduct of the officer, on the one hand, and the interest in defending the officer's conduct, on the other. Just as violent or riotous behavior is a criterion of a mob, as distinguished from a crowd, and knowledgeability is a criterion of responsibility, as distinguished from innocence or mitigation, the cross-examination can be understood as pivoting around criterial features relevant for establishing whether or not the officer knowingly treated a violent mob with kid gloves.

Another example suggesting the possibility of combining a Wittgensteinian interest in the logical grammar and criterial features of concepts with ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic studies can be drawn from the author's contemporary research on discrimination. This will further illustrate some of the heuristic value of the arguments above and emphasize the profitability of studying evaluative concepts in contexts of arguments. In a precedential U.S. Supreme Court case (*McCleskey v. Kemp* 107 S. Ct. 1756 [1987]), concerning a complaint of systemic racial discrimination against Blacks in the state of Georgia's capital sentencing system, a finely ordered question and answer sequence between the Supreme Court Justices and the legal counsel for the Black plaintiff on death row can be examined in light of above observations and contentions.

68. QUESTION: But the statutory provisions – you don't allege that Georgia's

69.   death penalty statutes are unconstitutional?

70. [PETITION.]: Not facially, Your Honor;
71.   they were proved of course in the *Gregg* case.
72.   But they have proven incapable, in fact,
73.   of preventing this kind of discrimination
74.   which we've documented.
75.   And so, like *Furman*, we've reached a point where the Court,
76.   we argue, must say, these procedures, whatever they are,
77.   have not worked in the State of Georgia [--]
78. QUESTION: [Well,]
79.   Mr. Boger, don't you have to show
80.   that this particular jury discriminated?
81. [PETITION.]: Your Honor, I think we have shown

82.	that it's more likely than not that this jury did.
83. QUESTION	Well, this particular jury was only convened once.
84.	And I think you have to show under our cases
85.	that this particular jury would have dealt differently
86.	with a black defendant who killed a black person
87. [PETITION.]:	Well, Mr. Chief Justice, let me suggest to you why
88.	I believe we have made that showing.
89.	We of course don't have confessions from the jurors themselves.
90.	No one has come forward.
91.	But indirectly what we have is a pattern that
92.	Professor Baldus documented [--]
93. QUESTION:	[But]
94.	not a pattern on the part of this jury.
95. [PETITION.]:	No, this jury only assembles, as you say, for one decision.
96.	Of course, in the *Bazemore* case,
97.	you had a hundred county commissions that had to make
98.	judgments about what salaries were going to be paid.
99.	And the county commissions were composed of people
100.	who rotated on and off because of actual politics.
101. QUESTION:	But was there any – did the constitutional holding
102.	in *Bazemore* support your position, do you think?
103. [PETITION.]:	I believe *Bazemore* assisted, as did the *Batson* case,
104.	which talked about simply having proof that
105.	makes it more likely than not that discrimination exists.
106.	If we could show, Mr. Chief Justice, that six out of ten blacks
107.	who murdered whites are receiving death
108.	in a racially discriminatory fashion,
109.	on grounds where if there were white defendants,
110.	they wouldn't have, we would not be able to show,
111.	of course, which ones of the six [sic.] they were.
112. QUESTION:	No, but when you're --
113.	the institution that you're challenging is the jury here.
114.	And its [sic.] the jury in this defendant's case.

115. [PETITION.]: Well, of course, Your Honor, it's not simply the jury.

116.   I was responding in terms of your question.

117.   But Professor Baldus's evidence shows dramatically

118.   that the prosecutor plays a serious role in this process.

119. QUESTION: Well, then, do you think your evidence supports a

120.   finding that this particular prosecutor,

121.   who prosecuted this case, discriminated as between

122.   blacks who've killed whites and blacks who've killed blacks?

123. [PETITION.]: Not as between charging, but as between deciding

124.   who to plead out to a lesser defense

125.   or permit not to go to trial, and who to move on to penalty.

126. QUESTION: Okay, you say your evidence supports a finding

127.   that this particular prosecutor, in doing what you say,

128.   discriminated in the manner I described?

129. [PETITION.]: I don't believe we have to show that a particular prosecutor,

130.   as opposed to the prosecutorial office, Your Honor.

131.   What we have shown is [--]

132. QUESTION: [Well,] but don't you think

133.   your evidence would support a finding

134.   as to this particular prosecutor?

135. [PETITION.]: I think we could conclude under your *Fernco* rationale --

136.   you said that we looked to all of the rational reasons.

137.   We assume people act rationally.

138.   We look to all of the legitimate reasons why one

139.   would make a decision.

140.   And if none of the legitimate reasons make the distinction

141.   that seems to have been made, then we can infer that

142.   what is at work is an illegitimate consideration.

143.   In this case, we've shown that there have been 17

144.   defendants in Fulton County who killed police officers,

145.   or who were involved in police officer killings.

146.   Of those 17, in the 1973-1979 period,

147.   only two even went to a sentencing jury; and of those two,

148.   one went before a jury having killed a black police officer.

149.   And he received a life sentence.

                 […]

        Although there is clearly much interactional and legal work being accomplished in this exchange, in the context of this paper we can focus on one particularly relevant aspect of this questioning. The questioning excerpted here can be understood as an extended example of what Sacks referred to as a *search procedure*, in this case aimed at determining how the plaintiff's counsel would satisfy the criterial requirement that an adequate case for discrimination include an alleged *perpetrator*. The Justices can be heard or seen to systematically pursue *three separate candidates* for the role of *perpetrator*, first the state legislature (lines 68-69) then the trial jury (see the Justices' questions and challenges in the exchange from line 78-118), and then the District Attorney (see the exchange from line 119 to the end). The Justices demonstrate through tenacious and cumulative questioning an orientation to one constant question or theme throughout: the questionable existence of a discriminator in the defendant's legal case.

        For his part, the defendant's attorney can be seen to rather skillfully evade formulating one specific person or party as the discriminator, seemingly because the nature of the defendant's evidence is such that it more clearly evidences *disparate impact* upon Blacks than *discriminatory intent* on the part of any one person or party in Georgia's capital sentencing system. It can be appreciated in the transcript that the defendant's attorney responds to the question about the constitutionality of the statutory law by acknowledging that the state statutes are constitutional on their face, but by implying that they are unconstitutional in practice (lines 68-77). The Justices pursue the issue of how the statutes are implemented in practice by asking next about the particular jury in the defendant's case (lines 79-80). The defendant's attorney at this point impugns the deliberations of the defendant's particular jury (lines 81-82). When the availability or sufficiency of his evidence against the particular jury is questioned by the Justices in subsequent turns (83-86, 93-94, implicitly in 101-102- which might be considered part of an insertion sequence, and again in 112-114), the attorney first modifies his argument in a probabilistic direction by referring to aggregate data about jury verdicts in capital cases state-wide and a precedent that arguably allows for the relevance of aggregate data (91-92, 95-100, 103-111), and then when the relevance of aggregate data meets with continued skepticism from the Justices (line 114), the attorney also challenges the prosecutor in the particular case, without retracting his allegations about the jury (115-118). When the Justices try to get the attorney to commit to a complaint of discrimination against the specific prosecutor (126-128), the attorney again falls back to a more probabilistic argument based upon aggregate statistics from the prosecutor's *office* (129-149).

        Just as the Justices' tenacious questioning makes observable a continued search for the alleged discriminator in this case, the attorney's repeated equivocations and evasions and repeated appeals to aggregate level statistical data make observable the attorney's understanding that this criterion of discrimination is a weak link in his complaint, and that his arguments may fare best if the discrimination can be seen as a product or a characteristic of the capital sentencing system,

comprising multiple juries and multiple prosecutors, rather than as the intention of any particular person or party within it.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court rejected the plaintiff's complaint of racial discrimination because of a failing to show discrimination in his specific case, seemingly due to a failing to show *a discriminator* in his specific case. This criterial feature of discrimination is therefore a legal standard of proof as well as a praxiological application criterion for the concept "discrimination."

The data excerpt above illustrates not just that a discriminator or agent is a criterial feature of discrimination, but also that participants can be seen, empirically, to orient to the question of whether a criterial feature for an evaluative category is present or absent, proved or not proved. The participants clearly oriented to this criterial feature of discrimination in determining whether the petitioner's case was legally accountable or not as a case of unconstitutional racial discrimination in capital sentencing. In this case a conceptual understanding of discrimination and the examination of an empirical case of a discrimination dispute complement each other in that both provide insight as to what is praxiologically involved in making a particular death sentence intelligible and accountable as discrimination.

The two studies mentioned briefly above, concerning the possibility of police negligence and the possibility of discriminatory sentencing, illustrate that disputes can be invaluable data for empirical studies of the accountability (observability, reportability) of instances of evaluative categories as they are demonstrably relevant to and for members in society. Especially in the contexts of arguments, the applicability of an evaluative category such as "negligence," "discrimination" (or "mental illness" or "suicide" or "terrorism" or "heroic" or "nagging" or "over-priced" or "nutritious" or "cute," etc.) will often be contested explicitly, providing invaluable opportunities for the analysis of evaluative categories and their criterial features, as a topic of both conceptual and empirical analysis. Such opportunities allow for a Wittgensteinian study of concepts with reference to their meanings-in-use and their intelligibility, grounded in their uses in various language games and forms of life, as fleshed out empirically by drawing upon the methods of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and membership categorization analysis[viii].

A final point can be raised with respect to the concept of discrimination and the excerpt provided above, which brings us back full circle to the matter of values and politics. It may be argued that a specific perpetrator is not actually a criterial feature of discrimination, that discrimination can occur on an institutional, systemic, or societal "level." Indeed, that is what the plaintiff's counsel attempts in the above case. This argument has most often appeared under the name of "institutional racism." Far from being an objection, however, the development of the *concept* of 'institutional racism' in the sixties and seventies suggests that the earlier, and still conventional concept of "discrimination" has as one of its criterial features the presence and accountability of a perpetrator; this requirement had proved to be a crippling burden of proof for many progressive and radical causes, politically and legally, which is precisely the context in which the concept of "institutional racism" emerged. This new concept was an answer to the new pragmatic need, to speak of racial inequalities intelligibly and compellingly even when one of the criterial features of "discrimination" was difficult or impossible to establish. "Institutional racism" is therefore an example of the exception that proves the rule; it is precisely because social critics had difficulty satisfying the criteria of "racism" and "racial discrimination" that the new concept, "institutional racism," with less stringent application criteria concerning the presence and role of a perpetrator, became so important in the repertoire of social critics. A

related development took place in feminist studies of work, with the "glass ceiling" argument.

Clearly, such analytic attention to the practical use of evaluative concepts will result at times in findings that can be applied for the practical purposes of policy analysis, social criticism, administrative reform, auditing, job evaluations, business consulting, political strategy, litigation, etc. The above analysis and comments certainly have some bearing upon contemporary U.S. civil rights law and civil rights strategies.

As important as these various applications may prove to be, the primary advance for scholarship is simply the identification and exploration of a neglected dimension of controversial topics including suicide, mental illness, and discrimination, and also corruption, plagiarism, drug abuse, adultery, pollution, deficit spending, terrorism, and thousands of other evaluative categories. Such controversial topics have generated many studies and much debate, but much of it lacking the *combination* of conceptual-analytic leverage and detailed empirical materials necessary for truly compelling analysis. Such analysis is not only possible, but has been illustrated in ethnomethodological studies. This scholarship avoids the powerful temptation to *apply* controversial and evaluative terms, but promises to *explicate* the social logics of their meanings and uses, thus making a rare and fundamental contribution to academic social science where this overlaps with profound moral and political questions.

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Endnotes

i   The majority of ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic studies don't treat description as an explicit topic, but are nevertheless informed by and in a sense speak to an understanding of description as practical activity. Explicit, sustained coverage of description is offered in, e.g., Heap (1980). Ethnomethodological contributions to socio-legal studies have also produced many explicitly relevant papers, including Atkinson (1990), Drew (1998), and Pomerantz (1987). Many relevant studies address descriptive practices by other names, or specific kinds of descriptive practices, including formulations, accounts, glosses, and membership categorization practices.

ii   Some more sustained discussions of positivism, informed by ethnomethodology (among other traditions), can be found in Bittner (1973) and McHugh (1970).

iii   The notion of a "search procedure" originates with Sacks, but Coulter uses the term at least once in the more specific manner that I am employing it here, when he refers to "search procedures" for diagnostically relevant data, relevant to satisfying or ruling out the presence of criteria for mental illness (1979: 147).

iv   Although Sacks' paper, "The Search for Help: No One to Turn to" (1967) generally addresses quite different questions about suicide, Sacks does refer to what could be called a ground or criterion for a suicide classification; specifically, he mentions that police and coroners routinely inquire as to whether or not the deceased informed available co-incumbents of relational pair

categories for which such notification is expected, such as spouses, family members, and close friends. If the deceased *did* inform any such people of suicidal tendencies before his sudden death, this is a strong ground for suspecting suicide, and if he did not, this can be a significant obstacle to a suicide classification.

v   A very useful overview of the mutual relevance of Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy and ethnomethodology is provided in Coulter (1991b).

vi   For a detailed discussion of logical criteria, see e.g. Hacker (1986:307-335). Somewhat more accessibly, Cavell suggests: "… what we discover in the course of [grammatical] investigations, when we ask 'Under what circumstances, or in what particular cases, do we say…?', are our criteria" (1979:30). Criterial features for natural language concepts are thus less formal and more contextual and pragmatic than the "necessary conditions" of academic logic.

vii   Other relevant studies have addressed mental illness (Bittner, 1967), rape (Drew, 1992), an infamous gender-motivated hate crime (Eglin and Hester, 2003), deviance in school (Hester, 1992, 2000), developmental disabilities (Maynard and Gill, 1995), a political scandal/crime (Lynch and Bogen, 1996), gangs (Meehan, 2000), and discrimination (Watson, 1976; Berard, 2002; Berard, 2005b). Some more general discussions address deviance (Sharrock, 1984; McHugh, 1970b), crime (Hester and Eglin, 1992), social problems (Maynard, 1988), labeling theory (Pollner, 1978; Berard, 2003), victims and offenders (Watson, 1976), and motive attributions (Berard, 1998). Many more examples are included in a relevant bibliography on the web: www.timberard.info/_wsn/page5.html

viii   Practical descriptions of identity and the reflexive, mutually elaborative relations between identity, actions, beliefs, and other attributes or predicates of persons, is the stuff of membership categorization practices and is treated by membership categorization analysis (MCA). MCA constituted one dimension of Sacks' conversation analysis and is now incorporated into or combined with ethnomethodology in the writings of, e.g., Jayyusi (1984), Hester and Eglin (e.g.1997), and many others, including the author. This growing field is rich with relevant scholarship offering non-evaluative analyses of descriptive practices related to membership categories, including many analyses which trace the relevance of identity descriptions for evaluations, and vice versa.

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Insights From Ricoeur's Hermeneutics on Best Practice In Professional Service Firms: On Perpetual Myth Creation?

Abstract

Drawing on the work of Ricoeur, this paper contributes to theorisation of the organisational field in understanding of how structural power operates through professional langue in shaping a construction of individual judgement in professional service firms. As Ricoeur argued that judicial sense may be envisaged as one of the best examples of hermeneutic application (1991: 493), I explore practitioners' sense making and their interaction with the surrounding structures and its discourse, learned and assimilated during the formative years in the context of audit practice.

The interviews-based story provides an illustration of (1) the processes of socialisation that are geared towards conceptions of what constitutes professional best practice, where the professional learns to use judgement and follow structure in particular ways (a perpetuated myth of best practice), and (2) the effects of such formation on the working process. The paper contributes insights into organisational theory in areas of negotiating a balance between institutional requirements (structural conditioning of professional epistemology) and technical demands of hermeneutic function (purposive expert activities) in decision making process.

The paper concludes that practitioners assume the appearance of professionalism by adopting a particular professional langue where judgement becomes normative in its own terms. These re-production processes in accordance with organisational frames of references for action may be in opposition to the decisional autonomy, where there may be a space for simultaneously creating (agency) and sharing (structure) on the job. The study reveals that professional langue itself is a place of prejudice and bias on the job.

Keywords
judgement, structure, organisational practice, socialisation, hermeneutics

Introduction

We could argue that text and language work directly on reality and denotes reality. In the organisational context, the power of jargon operates through a professional discourse (professional langue). Socialising processes on the job result in an adoption of a common vocabulary for best practice, conveying the meanings for structures as potentially mediating capacity of individual action (Grey, 1998). Language in professional context of auditing is intimately related to conduct where the emphasis is placed upon professional judgement as an all encompassing (meta)-norm, one of the key aspect of best practice. Formally, the new approaches, that is, new supporting methods for the audit services re-shaped under the umbrella of assurance services, appear very judgmental, in the sense that the auditor is putatively empowered to make judgements based in part on individual insights. However, despite a shift in a discourse, judgements appear to have little decisional autonomy (Kosmala MacLullich, 2003).

The objectives of this paper stem from the assumption that there is a need for further theorising for organisational fields in areas of structure and human agency. I argue in this paper that the organisational field does not sufficiently theorise interdependencies between structural conditions and power relations, incorporating a notion of conflict in human agency, with few exceptions[i]. This paper contributes insights into organisational theory in areas of negotiating a balance between institutional requirements (structural conditioning of professional epistemology) and technical demands of hermeneutic function (purposive expert activities) in decision making process.

Ideally, structure and judgement, when "in balance", provide a mutual reinforcement for human agency. In other words, structure without space for judgement is as detrimental as judgement without the boundaries and discipline of structure. Hence, this paper is not about juxtaposing judgement against structure. Instead, this paper argues that the professional's interpretive capacities and decision autonomy are vulnerable to the hierarchies of structural power governing the audit profession and its environment, in particular when structure takes over the possibility of self-reflection in decision making.

As professional epistemology, and subsequently the rationality (structural conditions) within which audit is situated, exercise control over professionals (Arrington and Francis, 1993), they as agents placed in organisational settings, "need to know the state of experience as it is prior to reflections upon what sort of world we seek to produce." This study seeks insights how a construct of best practice, understood as a form of organisational (professional) doing enshrined in the norms of conduct, through socialisation with organisational culture and professional langue, perpetuates professional myth embodied in accounting (audit) epistemology.

Drawing on Ricoeur's hermeneutics, insights are sought as to the understanding of relations of structural power, particularly where structural conditions and professional langue are envisaged as a by-product of legitimation processes, preserving the professional status quo. The research focuses on a conceptualisation and an illustration of the circumstances in which professional judgements are taking place on the job. In particular, the paper seeks insights into negotiating institutional (processes of institutional legitimation) and technical (purposive work activities) demands of the job; structure vs agency of judgement in audit practice.

Becoming a professional involves a complex process of adopting norms which are both formally learned and tacitly acquired (Abbot, 1988). Socialisation in the professional setting is a constituent part of this process. During the first years in audit practice, the individual progressively adopts the professional langue and internal procedures as behavioural criteria (Dingwall, 1983). Prior research has examined the processes of becoming a professional in the professional service firms (e.g. Anderson-Gough, et al, 2001; 2000; Dirsmith et al. 1997, Covaleski et al. 1998). These studies have explored how professionals live their daily lives and enact what they understand as professionalism in the organisational settings, through their physical appearance and ways of a self-conduct, such as time management or ways of performing with the clients. These organisational socialising processes were also situated in the wider structural context of the profession (see e.g. Anderson-Gough et al. 2002). Dirsmith, Heian and Covaleski (1997) applied structural theory to organisational controls systems, concluding that professionals are powerless to fight structural conditioning of the work environment. This paper explores the area of structural conditioning of working environment and its impact of a hermeneutic function of decision making in the context of auditing profession.

The question is how the individual auditor makes sense of, and interacts dialectically with, the surrounding structures and realities of the work place, which are learned and assimilated during the formative years in practice. To answer this question interviews were designed to draw upon, and enter into dialogue with the practitioners' individual discourse concerning their perceptions of, and attitudes towards on-the-job performance. In any discursive practice, here auditing practice, there is "a general need for making our own what is foreign to us" (Ricoeur, 1974: 43). Therein resides the hermeneutical problem, a problem of making "our own" what was "alien" through deploying language and rules (as a structure for language) to donate meaning, intelligibility, and understanding to the lived experience which is, qua experience and sans discours, meaningless and unintelligible. Taking on the lens of Ricoeur's work, the interviewees (practising auditors) were invited to reflect upon their socialisation process on the job and consider any tensions resulting from their professional formation while applying judgement in the context of the supporting frames of references for an operational audit practice (structural conditions).

The paper concludes that practitioners assume the appearance of professionalism by adopting a particular professional langue where judgement becomes normative in its own terms. Hence, professional langue itself becomes a place of prejudice and bias in the organisational context. The paper proceeds as follows. Firstly, drawing on Ricoeur's hermeneutics, dynamics between judgement and structure in human (audit) practice are explained in the context of professional services firms. The subsequent section discusses the research design. The next section presents insights into the socialisation process in professional service (audit) firms with regard to (1) tacit processes of socialisation with structure where professional judgement is constructed and its application sequenced and framed through professional langue, and (2) the effects of such formation on balancing between structure and judgement in the context of working. What emerges from the study are insights that during socialisation processes the professionals learn to understand and use judgement in sequential manner, as a discourse of best practice, what contributes to reproducing working papers and subsequently audits.

Ricoeurian Hermeneutic Perspective

Hermeneutics, as a method of interpretation of the social world, facilitates an understanding of subjectivity constituted in the world of "situated practices" and working environments (here on-the-job performance). There are precedents in the adoption of a hermeneutic approach in organisational research. Francis (1994) discussed judgement as a hermeneutic practice; Arrington and Francis (1993), Llewellyn (1993), Willmott (1993) and Boland (1989) discussed hermeneutic contributions towards developing the paradigm of accounting research; Lavoie (1987) examined the application of hermeneutics to an understanding of accounting as the language of business. This paper, empirical in nature, contributes to organisational literature by adopting a Ricoeurian framework which introduces the notion of text as structure to understanding of decision making process. In particular, I situate a notion of professional judgement in structural working environments of audit. In such context, I explore different prisms of structure in which individual judgement may be situated. The paper contributes critical reflections with regard to a construction of a myth of best practice in audit.

In this paper, the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur (1991, 1991a, 1981, 1974) acts as a vehicle for a theorisation of a construction of judgement. Auditing practice, as any form of an organised professional practice, depends upon its societal significance engendered through the process of generating links between systems of meanings (that mediates the role of judgement with that of structure), and material work practices (processes of relying on a construct of judgement, relying on professional langue). The presence of both, a construct of judgement and supporting structures, enhances legitimation of the profession and preserves its status quo. These concepts are often used interchangeably in the construction of the myth of professional best practice, and thus, their socialised meanings become difficult to distinguish. Discourse [here: of best practice] refers back to its speakers at the same time that is refers to the world (Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, 1985: 22 cited in Valdes, 1991).

Ricoeur envisaged human practice in terms of a text analogue where parallels are made ontologically between aspects of social action and the interpretation of textual information (1981: 197). The existence of structures, at different levels of the organisational conduct, through which many unarticulated conditions encompass human practices, evokes the need for autonomous (subjective) understanding in a process of making sense of things (Llewellyn, 1993). Socialisation within a particular tradition with which one identifies, here professionalisation in audit practice, may predetermine tolerance and desire levels for structure. Professionals on the job socialise with the web of language and meanings that engage them with their professional world, facilitating understanding of working routines, tasks and clients' motives. Decisions and their fulfilment are made in the context of different layers of structure to which the individual consents in order to participate in practice (Thompson, 1981). Yet, more rigid structures may appear unalterable to an individual and, hence, not constructed as being subject to mediation.

Ricoeur insisted on the priority of the experience of being in the world and that proceeding from this ontological condition of belonging (the world of profession) one can move towards its expression in particular langue (professional langue). For Ricoeur, understanding consists of both understanding of one's self and of "being" in the world (1974:51), the latter referring to the context in which the individual is situated. To understand individual action is to understand the structures that

constitute language (here a professional langue), the network of myths and texts that constitute organisational culture of the firm and the supporting structures (Leuween, 1981: 75). Hermeneutics describes the ways that the world appears to us, what the world is for us, its meaning is a function of the ways in which consciousness intends it (Madison, 1990).

Ricoeur argued that there is a meaning-intention which, in some sense transcends the language (Jervolino, 1996). Meanings cannot be reduced to mere use. The task of interpretation of hermeneutics is to reconstruct the internal dynamic of a text so as to manifest the world it projects (a myth of professional best practice). In this study, a construction of audit judgement, situated in a context of language of "best practice", is a subject of a critical reflection.

How are layers of structure constructed? Drawing on hermeneutics and in particular Ricoeurian competing discourses, a notion of structure can be linked to power relations. Fincham (1992) discussed power as institutional, organisational and processual. Drawing on Fincham's work (1992), I have focused on textual expressions of structural dimensions of power in order to contribute to understanding of the effects of power at different levels of its verbalisation and execution on the job (Ricoeurian competing discourses). These different prisms of structure in which aspects of professional judgement in the audit environment are situated are consolidated in Table 1.

Level	Structure	Judgement
Epistemology	Abstraction of knowledge	Constructing 'best practice' myth
State/Profession (regulator)*	Legislation/Codification	Compliance: Myth facilitating
Organisation	Normalisation of conduct; Socialisation of conduct; 'Professionalisation' of conduct	Defensive: Myth managing
Individual/Team	Possibility of 'unstructure' in the task form; Device for internal communication	Residual (Cognitive) or (Re)making myth

Table 1. Structure versus Judgement: Terms of origin

* Including influences of other interest groups in the regulatory process (wider context)
  Arrow represents direction of aggregation process

As presented in Table 1, structure can be envisaged as the epistemological category (requiring a reference to constructs which form a myth of best practice), the regulator-level category (requiring a compliance practice and facilitate what is understood as best practice), the organisation-level category (depicting judgement in legitimation processes), and the individual/team category (referring primarily to cognitive aspects of decision making in the (un)structure of the task).

The notion of structure in this paper represents the surrounding formalised context of social practice, at different levels, in which professional judgements are made (Table 1). Some parallels to this categorisation can be found in prior research which has viewed structure primarily as (1) organisational category (e.g. Ramsay, 1994), (2) structure of the working approach (e.g. Bowrin, 1998), and (3) task structure (e.g. Kinney, 1986). I have clarified that structure through organisational frames of references, represented by internal policies, facilitates sense making, providing both a *raison d'etre* of how to do things as well as an external legitimation for the organisation (the firm), through references made to best practice. These organisational frames of references (Shirvasta and Schneider, 1984), somewhat negotiated, guide behaviour and create a context for decision making, a vital space for professional judgement to take place, protecting simultaneously the firm from intolerable levels of risk (an avoidance of uncertainty at a task level) and potential negative consequences.

The regulator-level structure encompasses statutory law and professional standards. Organisational methods and organisational policies are incorporated in the organisational-level structure (Table 1). The higher levels of structure provide the source of meaning, legitimation and external support for the task level structure (individual, internal processes directed at service delivery). There may be a potential conflict at the institutional level resulting in the disparities within this structural environment. The danger is that in order to mange demands of expertise and technical work activity (audit task), an individual through the professional langue may perform a ceremonial conformity with the institutional environment, through compliance with what is acknowledged as best practice (the socialisation effect), with no space for exercise of residual reading.

Potentially, the institutional level of structure may allow for a loose coupling in the context of organisational change (an introduction of the new working methods); a space for an organisational interpretive scheme in Ricoeurian sense and the structural arrangements designed to support it (space for judgement and structure). Such mechanisms may potentially provide description and interpretation (a notion of best practice in a relation to professional judgement). However, despite this interpretive scheme, the inertia around a dominant perspective in the firm becomes the norm for action, resulting in a compliance with the acknowledged best practice. Hence, the practitioner's capacity for autonomous interpretations in the judgement aggregation processes appears vulnerable to the power of (anonymous) structures governing what constitutes best practice at the individual level (Table 1).

Working Process As Open Work

Rules governing behaviour are constituted through meanings articulated from within an institutionalised context. Structure, at the organisational level, through standardisation of conduct and codification of knowledge, gives an appearance that procedures can always lead to a solution (see Table 1). It could be argued that this structural objectivity proceeds from the social fixation of individual behaviour (Ricoeur, 1981:207). One of the traits that characterise the text (as work) is its production in accordance with the rules that define its literary genre. In the same way in the audit context, "to master a genre" is "to master a competence" and to know the best practice which offers practical guidelines for "performing" an individual work (Lavoie, 1987). It is adherence to the professional best practice which facilitates an appearance of the successful professional (as a myth making process).

Subjective understanding cohabits with structure at the individual level, implying the possibility for "unstructured" (Table 1) whilst simultaneously accepting the values of the objectified reality:

> A text is a finite space of interpretations, there is no one interpretation, but in the same time there is no infinite number of them. A text is a space of variations that has its own constraints. (Ricoeur, 1991: 496-497)

Hence, structure simultaneously enables and constrains an individual endeavour and subsequently a formulation of judgement. This relates to Ricoeurian understanding of social action as a text. Autonomisation of an individual endeavour points at action (autonomy of judgement), as having both socialised and private dimensions. The lived experiences remain private but its sense, its meaning, becomes public through discourse; a process whereby a myth of best practice is created. Ricoeur (1981) integrated subjective understanding with the analysis of more objective conditions of human practice (structural conditioning of working environment). Ricoeur argued that a practice of reading is to reveal a dimension, a structure, a potential, which are ignored, inhibited or obscured. (1991: 492). Table 2 presents an outline for autonomy of action in Ricoeurian hermeneutics lens.

The fixation of action	The struggle with the text is a struggle which has its own rules (1991 p. 496). The objectification is made possible by some inner traits of the action that are similar to the structure of the speech act…a dialectic within the process of transaction prepares the detachment of the meaning of the action from the event of the action (1991a p. 151, emphasised in original).
The autonomisation of action	Action detached from its agent develops consequences of its own (1991a p. 153).

Disclosure of possibility: Relevance and importance	Social dimension of text implies the possibility of institutionalisation. (1991 p. 492) Critical dimension of language is directed neither at scientific verification nor at ordinary communication, but towards the disclosure of possible worlds (1991 p. 490). Meaningful action is an action the importance of which goes beyond its relevance to its initial situation (1991a, p. 154, emphasised in original).
Towards understanding: Action as an 'open work'	It is by an understanding of the worlds, actual and possible, opened by language that we may arrive at a better understanding of ourselves (1991 pp 490-491). All significant events and deeds are in a way opened to kind of practical interpretation through present praxis. Human action is opened to anybody who can read (1991a, p. 155, emphasised in original).

Table 2. Meaningful Action as Text: Framework of Ricoeur's Hermeneutics
(sources: Ricoeur, 1991: 490-498; 1991a: 150-167; Llewellyn, 1993: 238)

It is in the context of the autonomisation of action where the capacity for critical reasoning and the openness in judgement may be shaken (action as open work); every text displays possibilities for inhibiting the world (Ricoeur, 1991: 492).

Ricoeur (1981) argues that individual action is characterised by an "intentional exterioration" which facilitates the detachment of the meaning of the action from the event of its performance. In audit practice, this refers to a construction of 'good' judgement (the professional judgement). "Good" can be understood in a sense of reflecting on a language of best practice, hence on compliance criteria. Inertia around this dominant perspective renders the norm for action (a socialised process). Practitioners learn to defend value of their interpretations or judgements by arguing that they conform to generally accepted criteria, norms and principles (Pentland, 2000), applying discourse of the socialised best practice. Hence, individual judgements formulated in such a way perform a sort of hermeneutical function (Arrington and Francis, 1993), and in effect, appear professional, and thus, responsible and "good."

(Subjective) understanding	⟺	Best practice
Reflexive judgement judgement	⟺	Framed (tailored)
Auditor	⟺	Institution
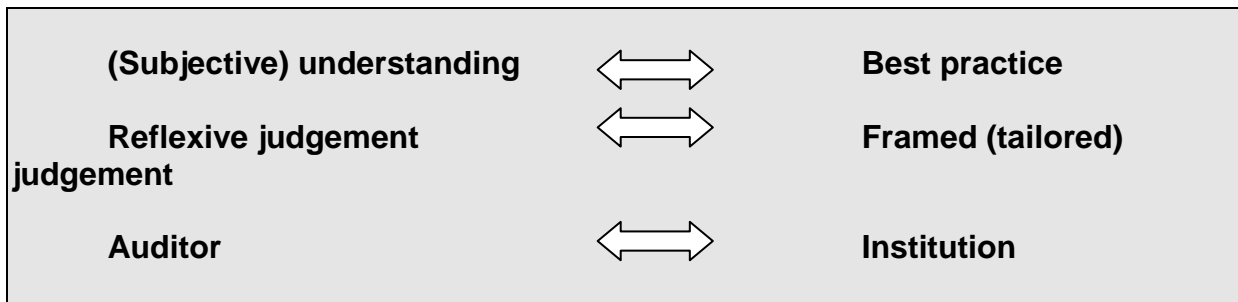
Exhibit 1. Dialectic relationship between structure and judgement: Balancing for autonomisation of human action in audit practice

The basis of structured approaches is a framework for judgement (objectified conditions for best practice in the Exhibit I). De facto judgement exists between two continuums of regulatory compliance on one side and individual ways of being on the other, implying that judgement can actually override structure. "There is a multiplicity of interpretations, everyone of which claims to present the truth, and none of which fully exhausts historical reality, because there is always a residue of reading [a residue of judgement] capable of being taken up in another reading" (Ricoeur, 1991: 493). This refers to a non-decisive side, a kind of floating judgement, the domain of imagination in a domain of the judicial. Balancing between judgement and supporting structures appears, in a sense, as a negotiation process for a space for an autonomous action in human agency (Exhibit 1).

Ideally, in any context, including the professional context we could use the acquired language for our own purposes. Subsequently, structure and judgement may be 'in balance' and in mutual reinforcement. Structure does not have to terminate judgement (Exhibit 1), rather it may extend judgement, reallocate and direct it in a certain way into different areas of the audit process. Structure in such a context may take the role of guidance for action leaving the final formulation of a decision at the discretion of the individual (disclosure of possibility). It could be argued that potentially there may be some space for a more interpretive approach involving a (radical) departure from accepted norms in understanding the particulars of the client's business environment and overall strategy (subjective understanding's side in the Exhibit 1). This space could facilitate openness towards a text in and behind financial statements (actions and texts are opened up):

> Decisive feature of hermeneutics is the capacity of world-disclosure
> yielded by texts …its primary concern is with the worlds which authors
> and texts open up. (Ricoeur, 1991: 490)

For example such an openness approach may be required in eventuality of fraud. It is argued here that judgement, if socialised and understood as an open work (action as an open work that is constituted with a conscious space for unstructured action), facilitates a critical evaluation of discourse and its fore-structures.

If an ideal communication (language) is situated in a context of structural power relations (Giddens, 1976), meanings conveyed by the professional jargon, a construct of best practice are directed at the legitimation of the profession, serving its purposes, losing a sense of an authentic communication in a service of professional appearance and myth making. The professional' story in this paper illustrates how

practitioners express themselves through their professional langue, whereby the socialised frames of references for action "support" the interviews' narratives.

Research Methodology

The interviews were designed to elicit individual perceptions of, and attitudes towards, their situated practices. The objective was to make the practitioners interpreters of their experience; to elicit a reflection on experience through vocabulary they chose to speak as "saying and doing, signifying and making are intermingled" (Ricoeur, 1965: 215). As hermeneutics facilitates an understanding of human agency, the auditors act as agents and choose the ways in which they represent their experience, constituted in part and influenced by the socialised frameworks of values.

Interviewees represented both senior and managerial levels in the audit firm (five audit seniors and five audit managers) to enable discussion on the individual auditor's engagement with the socialised frames of references and working methodologies. The minimum experience required was four years in audit work.

A semi-structured approach to interviews was chosen (Fontana and Frey, 1994), yet, the questions were mostly open-ended to allow the respondents to: define the professional world they belong to in their own way and in professional langue, to discuss audit process, what motivates them in judgement construction, and to elicit their attitudes towards structure.

Interview transcripts were coded for common themes that seemed to arise in the discussion on a construction of judgement and supportive structures. These codes were then interpreted and reflected upon for cross-validity. This reflexive process led to a reduction of the analysis to core codes (socialisation; judgement, structure(s)), and frames of references (ways of representing); the latter acting as contents informants for the core codes.

Narrative analysis was centred on how the auditors perceived themselves in a process of balancing between structure and judgement on audit and what vocabulary they have chosen to explain that process. Reflection on data was also associated with the more ambiguous aspects of formulation of judgement, in particular the interviewees' balancing between structure of audit task and the auditor's decision making processes. Therefore, in a codification process, a preliminary attempt was made to identify how the socialised frames of references were operationalised in the speech of the interviewees, how a judgement construct was perceived and how they might relate. This codification process was somewhat intuitive and exploratory in nature (e.g. issues of conceptual equivalence in interpretations).

Hermeneutics was brought to the interviews' contents as a means of the analysis of what had been conducted; a pre-interpreted world of practice (author's origin) was intermingled with the auditors' shared experience (actors' origin). Ricoeur argued that human discourse is overdetermined since it contains an excess or surplus of meaning (Madison, 1990). Therefore:

> [t]he spirit in which one reads is decisive: it is up to the reader to see it that literature exerts it critical force, and this can occur independently of the author's intentions. (Calvino, 1986: 12)

All appears mediated through language. The auditors' stories identified some of the possibilities for a space for judgements at the task level, and demonstrated how existing "conventional templates" for judgement are learned and normalised as the best practice, and hence, absorbed into the "taken for granted" assumptions of organisational reality. The interviewees' story demonstrates that each practitioner is given to, and knows the self, by means of the inhabited language, here the professional langue. The following section illustrates how auditors represent judgement and structure on audit through the socialised frameworks.

The limitations of the study are related to the partiality of interpretations and the specificity of the context. Derived meanings from the auditors' story are contextual, where the world of text represents reality, i.e. the "realm of the real" in audit practice, selectively. The findings are thus limited to those ten individuals with particular personal traits and work experience, although their relevance in other contexts is plausible. Auditors' narratives shared their temporal belonging in the audit judgement milieu (Ricoeur's conditions of "being in time").

On Socialisation In Auditing Practice

The dynamics that exist between the practitioner and the firm's ways are discussed through the individual accounts relating the perceived ways of navigating and adopting the structural conditions of the organisational context.

As "it is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity, we recognise ourselves in the stories we tell ourselves. It makes little difference whether these stories are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity" (Ricoeur, 1981), the auditors' story also may be only partially true.

The auditors' story constructs what appears to be the (perceived) best practice in balancing between judgement and structure on the task level. Firstly, socialisation processes with the abstract categories of the best practice, the nature of judgement and structure are discussed. The discourse of the firm's structural conditions and politics is absorbed during the formation process. Secondly, the effects of the formation on dynamics between judgement formulation strategies and structure on-the-job are presented.

Tacit Processes of Socialisation in the Firm

Within the auditing firms, the process of socialisation is both formal and informal, a necessary "rite of passage" in which, through a series of learning experiences the individual demonstrates absorption of particular norms and procedures of "how audit is done." During the first few years of employment, the auditor immerses him/herself into a rite of learning the norms, procedures and perspectives on existing structures. Andrew (senior auditor) argued that after describing the process of socialising in the firm (initial years in practice), the individual is able to identify with the "thinking" and "ways of doing" in the organisation:

Your thinking becomes very much the case of the firm's view rather than of your own, [auditors] are encouraged to take responsibility for the firm's culture and consult on things. It is a part of this profession, you find a consensus on how to manage the risks. (Andrew, senior auditor, firm A, emphasis added)

The auditor's learning how to be a successful professional appears associated with subjection to the existing organisational structures, perceived as conventional templates for action (the firm's view). Anderson-Gough et al (2001) and Dirsmith et al. (1997) also described the process of subordination to templates in the professional services firms. If a "personal view" is substituted, these organisational routines and procedures may be taken for granted, inscribed a language of daily operations.

"Junior members of the audit team are patronised" (Ernie), in particular in the area of their critical thinking. A discourse constructed in such a way becomes commonly accepted in the organisation as "[t]hese views affects the level of confidence of newcomers" (Ann, firm B, senior auditor). It appeared from the interviewees that novices come to question whether they will be able to succeed in the firm without a full immersion in the existing templates, "a demonstrator of expertise" (Ann).

John's narrative is an example of a discourse of the person who succeeded in the firm, learning to play the firm's game by adopting its rules. John's quotation illustrates how his thinking became merged (socialised) with the values of the organisation and from that perspective (a frame of reference), decisions of what is a good professional standard for action are made:

You have to have a lot of understanding about the level and the stage of each member of the team…and as [junior staff] progress you would hope that through training, their structured thinking would become less rigid, and that they should be able to think problems through themselves. Not like at the beginning…[long silence]. (John, firm A, audit manager, emphasis added)

His attitudes towards newcomers, somewhat unappreciative of the potential brought through a personal value system to the organisation, are also reflected in his way of speaking with long silences and a bit of frustration (a lack of patience perhaps) in his voice. His views represent the organisational views adopted through learned frameworks.

These in sense derogatory attitudes towards newcomers are reflected in ways their work is structured in the firm (on the job learning). Simple, secretarial tasks such as "copying, segregating files and coffee making" (Ernie) are imposed upon newcomers. Russell's quote illustrates how structured the progression process is:

In the first year you do lots of photocopies and adding up, in the second year you do a bit more, you do trial balances, and in the third year you get more responsibilities…you make coffees to all that time…[pause, reflection]. This is how you progress. [silence, change of a tone] At

higher levels in the firm you are encouraged to be more of a big-pictured thinker. (Russell, firm A, senior auditor)

Then Russell after long pause went on to refer to "widening the picture" which seemed to convey not ticking off steps mindlessly in the audit programme. A change in his voice however, into more optimistic tone perhaps indicates that "big-picture" is a socialised term conveying what the profession expects from the auditor. Russell appears uncritical of such a process of structural doing and does not question whether the "big picture" implies Big picture (seeing the client's environment through wide lens) or is a discourse of the professional langue (Pentland, 2000; Dirsmith et al, 1997). In the latter parts of the interview, Russell made several references to a need to be "seen as a big-picture thinker" and to "the professional demands for expertise." His views can be interpreted as an illustration of what auditors are socialised to do in the first years in the firm, and perhaps in what they believe they are aspire to do.

Ann shared her frustrations on the audit process-related "complications" experienced during the "junior years" (Ann):

> Intelligent human beings do not want to tick boxes [agitated voice] and do not want to be told to do, for example, twenty pages of the audit programme…But this is what you can expect. Someone will come and tell you what to do, and how. I personally hate [more agitated voice] audit work for its long spells. (Ann, emphasis added)

Ann emphasised the submissiveness of the newcomer to the power of promoted compliance with the established checklists and templates; Ann's reference to "twenty pages of the audit programme" can be interpreted as promoted myth of best practice, structure proscribed into individual decision processes.

It could be argued that potentially a downside effect of the structured progression processes could be a loss of confidence in the individual success outside the organisational context. If the auditor's self-awareness and tenacity for critical reasoning is obfuscated through a socialisation with internal procedures, a "fixation" by novices may occurs (Ricoeur's notion of intentional exterioration). Indeed the fixation of decisional autonomy is regarded in part by the newcomers as a "gateway to success" (Ernie) in the auditing firm. A fixation facilitates a detachment of the meaning of action (own formulation of judgement strategies) from the event of its performance (Ricoeur, 1981), and can be depicted in its "production" in a sequential, ordered "from the above" manner (Ann). The individual production adopts the existing rules which offer practical guidelines for "performing" the professional act of audit (autonomisation of action). In such a context, a critical reflection on the reality constructed by the client may be delimited.

There seem to be no much scope for judgement envisaged as Ricoeurian unstructured "open" work. This suggests the auditors through socialisation in the firm simply learn to use a particular language when discussing and doing their work (Ricoeur). Hence, the interviewees appear to be sharing what they are socialised to say about judgement, and at the same time, their claims to professional judgement appear in a way as a facade.

The Dynamics between Judgement and Structure in Work

The effects of socialisation are visible in situated practice, in audit an emphasis in professional discourse is placed upon the execution of the professional judgements. These judgements tend to oscillate within the boundaries of the existing organisational structures and frames of references. Justin explained how he goes through the audit ritual:

> I tend to rely on my own intuition once I get the client, I decide how much work I need to do. You obviously have your technical guidance too as a base on whichever methodology you are operating under…and you need to fulfil those requirements, but you also need to maintain a degree of awareness on an on-going basis to be able to adopt the audit approach accordingly to your instincts. Your instincts are telling you that you need to do a bit more work here or there. (Justin, audit manager, firm A)

It could be interpreted that Justin argued as if he is working "with and through structure." On one side, he is aware of compliance-based audit, and most of all its appearance ("you need to fulfil those requirements"), on the other side he is relying on his gut-feeling. This could be related to de-coupling of the audit process. Justin emphasised that an objective to "demonstrate a compliance with the best practice" prevails and subsequently no time for privately performed de-coupled audit bits are facilitative of the process of "getting comfortable with a discomfort" (Mark). It could be argued that adopted structures do not leave much freedom to the auditor for the liberating of a personal values-based (as oppose to professional values-based) gut feeling.

Sarah emphasised that the formation process may illusively engender a perception of reflexive judgements. She argued that:

> You have to know when to sit back and to value your own judgement, because you may take it for granted, because it is a part of you and as you learn to use judgement in many ways, you learn to rely on it. (Sarah, audit manager, firm A)

Sarah implied that reflexivity in one's own (residual) judgement, including a gut feeling (Sarah) might also be learned in a sequential manner reflecting the know-how of the organisation. The language the auditors adopted when talking about operational reality suggests that audit is, in part, learned as being descriptive of gut feeling. Yet, Stephan's views pointed at overarching power of the learned structure:

> Understanding is good in enabling to see details. I had to learn structure first and then to step back. You have to show that you comply with the rules first, this is a priority. (Stephan, audit manager, firm B)

Structure learnt during the formative years is contained in a framework of the operationalised approach. It appears that structure filters a gut feeling on-the-job; that is intuitive resources are put in the context of compliance with the standards and are translated into symbolic "language of diagrams, flowcharts and checklists" (Sarah, Justin).

On the whole, existing structures at the firm-level were regarded as benefiting the legitimation of the auditing profession; the interviewees recognised the power of structure and its value in the preservation of professionalism. Mark referred to "turbulent environments" and Justin to the "expectations of the public".....and also, "you need to make sure that you are covered" (Justin).

Although Justin recognised the weaknesses inherent in the existing templates, he simultaneously explained that structure facilitates the processes of legitimation. He explained how structure in the firm acts as a "cover" for the auditor in the context of the litigious environment:

> Our instincts make us to hold on to something [structure] in order to be guided throughout the process. For instance, having a checklist you can go through, a test that is very clear about what steps you have to undertake… all to make sure that you have gone through the right hoops. (Justin)

Justin pointed out how the formative years construct the practitioners' priorities for demonstrating compliance on the job and best practice. The reliance on a structured method "protects" the auditor from potential litigation threats; the auditor creates a portfolio of applied rules and standards to justify their own approach in best professional manner. In such a way, the auditors tend to adopt judgement so as to conform to the existing fore-structures and standards so as to reproduce the kind of structured order required to document the audit process. This is how professional, that is, sequenced judgements become "safe judgements." It could be argued that auditors are performing a kind of ritual reflecting the best professional practice, demonstrating "going though the right hoops" (Justin).

There were different aspects of audit ritual emphasised during the interviews. Ann explained that the 'spray and pray' approach to audit testing (i.e. long spells of documentation and templates in the context of "risk-based" auditing) detaches the auditor's attention from the client's problems. She also discussed reproduction processes at task level; a routine of rolling files forward as a conventional template in the firm, an example of a task structure: "I do not want to follow what had been done in previous years and accepting it as a template. We often roll files forward…" (Ann).

The convention of reproducing evidence from prior year files discourages the auditor's openness in the field. As Ann also stressed that "a good thing is to be open in evaluating clients." This relates to Ricoeur point about the importance of openness in audit work. This can be echoed in other interviewees (e.g. Justin, Sarah). Judgements built into daily operations reflect the autonomisation of the individual endeavour in the context of objectified reality. It seems that auditors tend to put too much time on complying with structure in legitimating their work and demonstrating their professionalism. Sarah explains that such behaviour may obfuscate the creation of potentially new insights in the evidence gathering process (see Ann's comment above).

Sarah explained that the template of the audit methodology could be used as an exit route or as the easiest non-confronting way to conduct the engagement. There may be a hidden agenda within the audit firm where the balance of judgement and structure needs to be tacitly discerned by the auditor him/herself (Exhibit I), and may end up in a ritual performance (Justin) of best practice.

The auditor needs to learn the "craft," in the formative years, to apply judgement and structure so as to be open to the reality contained in the client's financial statements (audit as open work). This openness is not given a sufficient space, primarily due to time pressures (Justin, Andrew, Neil), so as to enable seeing the client's affairs in the "big-pictured" format within structured inquiry of operational approaches (disclosure of alternative possibilities).

Conclusions

The auditors' story reveals that the professional services (audit) firms predispose individuals to the work through the formative period and confirms that structure of the audit regimes, on the whole, endangers the interpretive capacities of the auditor, in particular in earlier stages of the career.

This paper contributes to theorisation of organisational field in exploring how institutional requirements (processes of learning) and technical demands on the job (work activities) are negotiated through language of best practice. I have illustrated how the socialisation processes affect auditors' critical ways of seeing, the potentially idealised ways merge with the organisational frames of references. Through inertia in a professional langue, the firm indoctrinates professionals to behave in a certain way; facilitating understanding of how to make "subjective" judgements in the context of existing structures and best practice. It could be argued that as a consequence of organisational inertia, confidence in verbalising a reliance on the personal skill somewhat diminishes.

The evidence reveals that the professionals learn to speak through the frameworks they are socialised with, and indeed, speak it. An emphasis on the role of judgement in the professional epistemology translates a "subjective (residual) dimension of judgement into a compliance ritual" (cf. Mills and Bettner, 1992), a ritual of best practice. During the formative years in the firm, the practitioner learns to use judgement in terms of a sequence of tasks to be followed, constructed in such a way to give an appearance of an autonomous action. The existing templates for action (the organisational level structure) construct a popular belief that audit judgement is embodying the ideals of a professional service in society (demonstration of expertise and best practice), not necessarily being based on an authentic commitment and accountability processes. Understanding of being in the world is thus equated with an appearance of professionalism. It could be argued that these templates act as important instruments of long distance control in the profession and contribute towards the preservation of its status quo.

The interviews' narratives provide examples of application of the professional langue for judgement; interviewees made frequent references to professional scepticism, a gut feeling, a common sense. The paper concludes that professional judgement acquired in a structured manner (a linguistic problem), as a discourse (a way of seeing), where working templates for the evidence gathering process provide the lens for further analysis, contribute, in part, to what is being re-produced (the myth of best practice). These re-production processes, in accordance with existing standards and templates, may be in an opposition to the decisional autonomy of a hermeneutic approach which professional (auditing) epistemology aspires to.

In the heart of an interpretive audit approach, judgement process could allow for space to produce accepted ways for risk assessments and materiality thresholds representing different views of the perceived normality. By making the soft texts the rule rather than the exception (unstructure dimension of the task), alternative ways for potentially idiosyncratic formation of judgement strategies could evolve. Ann embodies the hermeneutic perspective in audit that this paper sought to espouse. She argues: "I am comfortable with different types of complex tasks. I like a challenge not following what had been previously accepted as a template." She diss'es a novice experience, expressing hate (strong negative emotions) towards the structured context of the job and a rigid ladder for a career progression.

At the regulator and professional levels, hermeneutic codes for best practice as texts building on "soft facts", allowing a margin for negotiation and reflexivity, could merge with the non-negotiable "hard facts" -texts represented by the set procedures. Such texts would enable the polytonality of situated experiences where decisions displaying a choice of action would simultaneously seek the support of possible alternatives in judgement formulation. Within such an approach, the practitioner already during the socialisation process would learn a philosophy of how to embrace rather than simplify the complexity inherent in the socio-economic reality of the client with a space for simultaneous creating (judgement) and sharing (structure) (audit as open work). Ethnographic organisational research could develop more thorough understanding of processes in constructing appearances of professional identities for auditors and in other intense but codified knowledge-base professions, in particular seeking insights into practitioners' (power)lessness in constructing interpretative propensities for a professional success, and not just their being through the appearance of a success.

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Endnotes

i   For instance, Scapens and Roberts (1993) applied Giddens' structuration theory to distinguish conceptions of "power to do" and "power over" which can be used to focus on the tensions between the use of professional language in accounting and organisational context as potentially enabling device and simultaneously as a means of achieving organisational control

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"Oh yes, I remember it well!" Reflections on using the life-grid in qualitative interviews with couples

Abstract

The life-grid has previously been used as a tool for improving the reliability of retrospective data in epidemiology. Recent research has suggested that the life-grid may also prove a useful tool for qualitative sociological interviewing, by facilitating the asking of difficult questions and acting as an aide memoire. This paper describes a pilot study which examines the influences the life-grid has upon qualitative interviews with married couples. It finds that use of the life-grid limits interviewees' willingness to revisit topics, tends to create "event-centred", non-reflexive, data and does not facilitate the asking of difficult questions. This paper does find that the life-grid acts to stimulate recall, but in a limited, factual fashion. It concludes that the life-grid is unlikely to prove an appropriate tool for qualitative researchers in its present form.

Keywords

Life-grid; retrospective data; qualitative interviewing; recall; couples; reflexivity

Theoretical introduction

The life-grid, an interview tool which structures the collection of life-event data into chronological categories, was initially developed to address issues of recall validity in retrospective medical research (for an example of a blank life-grid, please see appendix 1: Blank life-grid – at the end of the paper). However, recent research using the life-grid has suggested that it may provide further benefits to the qualitative interview process, such as an increase in interviewer-interviewee rapport. These benefits have not yet been thoroughly explored, nor has the life-grid's potential for negatively affecting qualitative interviews. This paper will briefly cover the development and uses of the life-grid, before detailing a pilot study which explicitly examines the three key ways in which using the life-grid influences the process of qualitative interviewing. These are: 1) does the life-grid increase the accuracy of data collected? 2) Does the life-grid improve the quality of the data collected, in terms of improving interviewees' reflexive insights? 3) Does the life-grid improve rapport between researcher and interviewee?

Development of the life-grid

Previous work utilising the life-grid has been primarily concerned with its potential to improve the accuracy of recalled data. Because of this, the literature discussed here is heavily slanted towards the first of the three issues mentioned above, namely does the life-grid increase the accuracy of data collected? Retrospective data is perceived to suffer from significant degrees of inaccuracy due to recall bias (Cherry and Rodgers, 1979) and recall error. Recall is seen as being particularly prone to bias when the period of recall is especially long, during which time interviewees can reassess their memories in light of their current life situation (Holland et al. 1999). The issues of recall accuracy, particularly relating to forgetting and telescoping errors (where and event is remembered as occurring more recently than it actually did), have been examined in some depth by cognitive psychologists. (See Sudman and Bradman, 1973 for a discussion of these effects.) This may provide relatively little problem for those sociologists for whom the focus may not be on what actually happened, but what participants believe happened and how they act as a consequence. However, in the field of sociology of epidemiology inaccuracy in recall may lead to erroneous conclusions where, for example, exposure to disease risk factors is being recalled. It is in fields such as this, where data regarding people's actual behaviour needs to be as accurate as possible, particularly where these data are treated as factual rather than attitudinal, that the life-grid was first used.

The first use of the life-grid in the UK appears to be in the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative in the late 1980's. The life-grid was used to provide a framework which could then be used to aid recall. The SCELI research team used geographical and family histories to assist in the recall of work histories for their respondents. Unfortunately the working paper which appears to discuss the use of the life-grid is no longer available and the published work on this aspect of the SCEL Initiative does not discuss the life-grid. However, some details on the use of the grid by the SCELI team can be found in Dex (1991).

Use of the life-grid was then developed and assessed for reliability by Blane (1996) and Berney and Blane (Berney and Blane, 1997) in health research. Blane's initial work developed the life-grid as a tool for collecting quantitative data from qualitative interview situations. Blane used the life-grid to collect data about interviewees' exposure to risk factors for chronic obstructive airway disease (COAD). After interviewees had completed the life-grid, the interviewer analysed the grid to produce the data required. The results of Blane's analysis suggested risk factors regarding the development of COAD similar to those in more conventional medical research (Higgins et al. 1982). Blane did not run a set of control interviews which did not use the life-grid, however. Instead, there was a tacit assumption that retrospective data collected without the use of the life-grid would be irredeemably compromised by error.

Interestingly, Blane also noted that the visual proximity of (apparently) unrelated events encouraged participants to recall further or link life events, although this was not considered to be a major finding. This suggests that the life-grid was acting as a tool to improve the quality and quantity of the data gathered, by encouraging interviewees to analyse their life stories reflexively. This is the first time we see the life-grid acting as more than a tool for the improvement of data accuracy.

In a similar study, Berney and Blane (1997) found that, with the life-grid technique, levels of recall accuracy on relatively simple data recalled from a

considerable time previously could be maintained at the levels typically found in studies of recall over much shorter time periods. Again though, there was no adequate control group present in this study. Despite Blane's (1996) and Berney and Blane's (ibidem) lack of control groups where non life-grid assisted interview data could be assessed for accuracy of recall, their assertion that the life-grid improved recall accuracy remains the main justification for use of the life-grid.

Parry, Thomson and Fowkes (1999) moved towards utilising the life-grid to recall and collect more qualitative data in their study of smoking behaviour. Parry and colleagues sought to link life events to smoking behaviour and felt that the life-grid would provide a useful tool with which to do so. The data they collected differs from Blane's (ibidem) and Berney and Blane's (1997) in that they are explicitly qualitative in nature. Furthermore, the life-grid is not seen as a tool for directly collecting the data, but rather a tool for facilitating the interview itself. Their use of the grid allowed both interviewer and interviewees to identify links between events during the interview and to discuss them explicitly, effectively acting as a tool to improve the quality of the data gathered. They do not, however, discuss the effect the life-grid may have had on interviewees' linking smoking behaviours to events which are not on the life-grid. It must be noted that the life-grid, while explicitly encouraging linking some events, will implicitly discourage linking other events. Given that life histories are constructed and edited based upon the situations in which they are told (Rosenthal, 1993), researchers using the life-grid must be aware of the possibilities which they are discouraging while encouraging others. This means that there must a possibility that while the life-grid appears to improve data quality, it may actually be degrading it, by restricting the extent to which interviewees feel able to discuss events not covered by the life-grid.

Additionally, Parry et al (1999) found that the use of the life-grid in the interview setting helped to establish a rapport. They noted that some interviewees were pleased that the interviewer knew some basic facts about them (e.g. date of birth). Furthermore, the act of completing the life-grid was seen by most interviewees as an entertaining challenge. Once the life-grid was completed, Parry et al report that there was a sense of joint endeavour between the interviewer and interviewee which helped establish a sense that the interview as a whole was a shared project. This sense of enjoyment at filling in the life-grid is also reported by the SCELI research team (see Dex, ibidem).

Unfortunately, the pilot study reported in this paper will not be able to directly address the issue of accuracy of recall, as external sources of comparison do not exist against which interviewees' life histories can be compared. However, Blane's (1996) and Parry et al's (1999) research suggests that the life-grid could be a useful tool for qualitative interviewing regardless of its effect on recall accuracy The pilot study described here examined interviewees' uses of the life-grid and assessed the extent to which they use the life-grid as a cross-referencing tool, which, theoretically, should improve the accuracy of the data they recall (Loftus and Marburger, 1983). Furthermore, this pilot examines the other key affects which previous research has shown the life-grid to have upon the interview process, namely the extent to which it encouraged interviewees to produce and link data and the development of interview rapport.

In this paper I will discuss how the use of the life-grid during qualitative interviews affected the data gathered. Does the life-grid limit the data which interviewees produce, either by constraining the topics covered or the type of data generated (factual over attitudinal or reflexive data), thus degrading the quality of the data gathered? Does the life-grid encourage a chronologically aware approach to

the interview by participants, allowing for reflexive discussion surrounding changes over time and thus improving data quality? Does the life-grid facilitate returning to topics previously covered as it provides an aide-memoir to what has previously been discussed? Could the life-grid be used as a tool for indirectly approaching potentially difficult subjects (e.g. by phrasing questions to be about the life-grid, not about participants)? Does the life-grid improve the rapport developed in the interview situation? Lastly, are there any unexpected ways in which the life-grid affects the data or the interview process?

Methods

This paper discusses the results of a pilot study undertaken in preparation for a larger scale interview study on long term marriage in the UK. As well as addressing issues regarding the use of the life-grid, the pilot study also addressed issues of interviewing couples and substantive, topic based, issues for the main study (neither of which are reported here). The pilot consisted of in-depth qualitative interviews with three married couples. Each couple was interviewed both as a couple, as well as both partners being interviewed separately, making a total of nine interviews. During each of the nine interviews the life-grid was used to structure the interview and to assist in recall of retrospective data.

It should be noted that the author, who conducted this pilot, had had considerable interviewing experience from previous training and research projects (e.g. Bell, 2003) which allowed a reflexive comparison between qualitative interviews using the life-grid and those which do not.

Recruitment of participants

Participants were recruited outside a local supermarket which serves an area of similar approximate socio-economic composition to that of Scotland as a whole (SCROL, 2004). Couples were informed that, although the interviews would be about their relationship together, the main interest of the study was to pilot an interviewing method and that the analysis carried out would focus on the interview process rather than analysing their relationships. There were no obvious differences between the couples who did or did not agree to take part after being informed about the study, for instance those who agreed to take part represented a broad range of ages, as did those who refused to participate. Note, though, that the lack of difference between participating and non-participating couples is purely based on prima facia observations, as no factual details were gathered from non-participating couples. Those who agreed were then contacted a couple of days later and asked to confirm that they were still willing to participate in the study. None of the couples dropped out at this stage. Interviews were then arranged at the couples' homes at times convenient for them and were carried out after written, informed consent had been obtained.
It is worth noting that no couples with children present whilst shopping agreed to stop when first approached. Consequently, none of the couples recruited had dependent children younger than 14.

Sample characteristics

The three couples recruited had all been married for 25-30 years. Two of the couples had met when relatively young, at 15 and 16 for Mr and Mrs A and at 17 and

18 for Mr and Mrs C. Mr and Mrs B had met somewhat later, at 28 and 29 years old. The current ages of the participants range from 46-60 years old. For all but one of the participants their current marriage was their first marriage. Only Mr B had been married before.

All three of the couples had children living with them at the time of the study. For Mr and Mrs A and Mr and Mrs C these were dependent children from their marriage. For Mr and Mrs B, this was the daughter of the Mr B from his previous marriage and her daughter, their granddaughter, who had moved in temporarily. Mr and Mrs B had not had any children of their own during their marriage.

All of the participants were white Scottish, reflecting the overwhelmingly white population of the area involved (GRO-Scotland, 2004). The three couples recruited all lived within 10 minutes drive from the supermarket at which recruitment was conducted, although they all lived in different towns. Socio-economic class was not a criteria for recruitment, nor a major aspect of the study. The social group of the three couples recruited was assessed as middle class, although they represent the extremes of the income and status brackets that middle class covers. None of the three women involved in the study was in paid employment. Only Mrs B out of all of the participants had obtained a further educational qualification.

Participant	Current age	Paid employment	Years married	Children
Mr A	46	Self employed, advertising executive	25	2
Mrs A	46	None		
Mr B	60	Civil servant	30	0
Mrs B	59	None		
Mr C	52	Senior Management	25	2
Mrs C	50	None		

Table 1. Summary of key characteristics of participants

Interview method

Interviews were conducted by the author in the participants' homes. Mr and Mrs A and Mr and Mrs B were interviewed as couples first, and then each participant separately. Mr and Mrs C were interviewed separately first, and then as a couple after both separate interviews had been completed. This allows for comparison of effects of interview order on participants' responses to questions, as well as ensuring that differences between initial interviews and follow up interviews can be attributed to the difference in content, rather than the differences in interview situation.

The first round of interviews for each participant, whether being interviewed as a couple or singly, consisted of asking them to provide a history of their married life, focusing on events which the participants felt had been important to them. During each interview, the participants and the interviewer completed a life-grid, a tool designed to improve the reliability of retrospective data and to facilitate discussion during interviews. The life-grid was filled in by the interviewer as the interviewees

detailed their life stories. The life-grid was available throughout the interview for the interviewees to refer to in order to keep track of what they had already mentioned.

Interviewees were very much involved in reflecting upon the interview process. The first interviews concluded with a reflexive session, during which time the participants were encouraged to reflect upon the experience of the interview and how they had felt during it. The second interviews took a similar form, but with the first half focusing specifically on leisure pursuits and division of labour over time. Again, the interviewer completed a life-grid during this part of the interview. The interview again ended with a reflexive session, this time comparing the two interviews as well as examining how the second interview had gone.

All the interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the interviewer. Field notes were also taken during and after the interviews and these and the life-grids were referred to when sections of the tape recordings were unintelligible.

The life-grid

The life-grid was an A3 sheet of paper with a six column by fifty one row grid printed onto it. In the first round of interviews, the six columns were headed "Year"; "Age"; "Life Events"; a category for events such as moving house, new jobs and so forth; "Marriage and Family", which covered events specifically related to either the couples' relationships with each other or their kin; "Holidays"; and "Relationship issues", which was intended to provide space for highs and lows in the couples' relationships to be recorded. In the second round of interviews, "Holidays" and "Relationship Issues" were replaced by "Leisure pursuits" and "Division of Labour" respectively. Participants were introduced to the life-grid and informed about how it worked at the start of the interview. The life-grid was filled in by the interviewer, partly to ensure that completing the grid did not interrupt the flow of the interview and partly to ensure that the data gathered would be intelligible during later analysis. A blank life-grid is included in appendix 1: Blank life-grid – at the end of the paper.

Practicalities of working with life-grids

The practicalities of completing the life-grid with multiple participants in the same interview proved complex. Given that the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes and it was not possible to prepare a suitable set-up in advance, in two of the couple interviews either one or both of the participants could not see what was being written on the life grid. This clearly hindered the life-grid's intended function as an aide memoire for the participants when they could not refer to it easily throughout the interview. It would also have improved the sense of a shared task if the interviewees had been able to monitor what was being entered onto the life-grid. Additionally, when interviewees were not able to monitor what was being written on the life-grid they were unable to correct any mistakes which may have been entered at time. Moving to solve this would either have been socially unacceptable, as the interviewer had been clearly assigned a seat and moving to another one would have encroached on the participants' personal space, or would have been physically impossible, given the layout of the room. Although this was not ideal, it is debatable how much the couples would have looked at or questioned what was being entered into the grid even if they had been able to see it. (See the results section on the influence of the life-grid on the interview for further discussion on this point.)

Completing the life-grid

Although participants were not given any specific instructions on how to complete the life-grid (i.e. they were not told to work chronologically, or to complete certain columns first before moving onto others), participants were however asked for a "history" of their relationship and this is bound to have influenced the way in which they talked during the interview. For example, participants tended to work largely chronologically, covering all of the columns in reference to a particular timeframe before progressing to the next timeframe, rather than mentioning key events (e.g. the birth of a child) in order of perceived importance to the task at hand, with no regard for chronological order. In the initial interviews, all interviewees were led by direct questioning from the time they met to the time at which they got married, with the data being entered into the life-grid as the interview progressed before they were asked to recount the history of their marriage and left to direct the interview themselves. During the first interviews, none of the participants completed the life-grid column by column, preferring instead the approach described above, which they felt was the most natural method of completion. This is in contrast to the work of Parry et al (1999), who found that column by column completion of the grid was the favoured approach. In the follow-up interviews, interviewees were not led into the interview, but were left to direct the pace and approach of the interview themselves from the beginning.

Method of Analysis

Once the interview data collected had been transcribed, a thematic content analysis was carried out. The data were initially subjected to an iterative within-case analysis to establish the themes and issues arising from individuals' data. Specifically, the extent to which the content of the interview appeared to be influenced, either positively or negatively, by the life-grid was addressed as a key aim of the content analysis (Holsti, 1969). A cross-case analysis was then performed to establish if these themes were unique to the individuals concerned, or if they represented a trend across the entire sample (Huberman and Miles, 1994). A relatively limited discourse analysis was also performed on the data, primarily addressing the differences in interview talk between couple and individual interviews, which is not discussed in this article, although this analysis informed by some of the results regarding reflexive talk and emotional talk discussed below (Nunan, 1993). This analysis was done by hand, given that the amount of data did not warrant the use of a computer assisted analysis programme. The results that follow are based mainly upon this analysis of the transcripts and a reflexive assessment of the effects of the methods on the data which were generated. Where results or discussion are based on either field notes or on life-grid data this will be explicitly mentioned.

Results

Does the life-grid improve retrospective data accuracy?

The life-grid can be seen as encouraging certain strategies in the recollection of data by interviewees. For example, one event of unknown date may be recalled in relation to another event, whose date is already known. Providing the interviewee can recall the chronological relationship between these two events, they can calculate the missing date with reference to the known date. These strategies have

been seen as improving the accuracy of recalled data, particularly with reference to the time at which events happened (e.g. Blane, 1996). During the pilot interviews discussed here, interviewees used other events, either public events such as wars or private events such as the birth of a child, as reference points to which other, less clearly recalled events could be linked. This is a standard technique for recalling information about past events and the life-grid is not vital, but it does provide a formalisation of the process and encourage interviewees to recall in this way. As the life-grid lays these events out, then the interviewee can link other events to them explicitly, and with the help of a numbered grid. Thus the data should be more reliable in terms of chronology. Examples of both recall in relation to a public event and recall in relation to a private event were found in the study. Of course, this method of dating requires that the date being worked from is correctly remembered to improve recall accuracy. For instance, it appeared that Mrs C incorrectly remembered her date of birth, and thus gave an incorrect date when she first met her husband, although the life grid allowed for some degree of internal checking which caught this error.

As Mr and Mrs C were interviewed separately first, they each completed a individual life-grid detailing the main events in their relationship. Some of the events recorded were mentioned in each life-grid, but as occurring at different times. When attempting to compile a composite life-grid for Mr and Mrs C it was noticed that only 6 out of 11 events that were on both grids were noted as happening on the same date. This calls into question the hoped for improvements in data accuracy, although some degree of error is to be expected in recollection of exact dates. Some degree of blame for the varying dates on the life grids must attach to the interviewer. At several points events were noted down in a best guess position, so as not to interrupt the flow of the narrative in order to get exact dates. Providing the events were in an obvious time order, it was felt that the increased reliability (or perhaps verifiability) of exact dates would not outweigh the disruption to the flow of the interview. Additionally, given the highly qualitative nature of the main project, it was not felt that an extremely high degree of data accuracy was necessary.

While some degree of error in the reporting of dates may not prove significant, a more important disagreement was found to have occurred between Mr and Mrs C's single interview life-grids. The dates, and more importantly the sequence, of two significant events in their marriage were different in each interview. Mr C dated his nervous breakdown with a specific year, 1990, and dated a disastrous trip to London as being on his 40th birthday, two years later. Mrs C dated the London trip as being on her 40th birthday, but placed Mr C's breakdown after the trip, although not with explicit dates, but by referring to events caused by the trip to London as leading up (in part) to the breakdown. This is clearly quite a major disagreement in versions of events. As well as being a factual disagreement, the different sequencing lead to significantly different interpretations of the reasons of their holiday to London being so unenjoyable, with Mrs C seeing the trip as being one of several symptoms leading up to her husband's breakdown. In this part of the interview, the life-grid does not appear to have either improved the reliability of the data given the disagreement, nor did the life-grid highlight the error until after the interview had finished, unlike the example mentioned in the paragraph above.

Life-grid influences on the interview data

There were several ways in which the use of the life-grid could affect the interview data gathered which fall outside the realm of data accuracy. Firstly the pilot

study found that the life-grid appeared to influence interviewees' narrative in relation to changes over time.

During their first interviews, all of the interviewees approached their narratives from a chronologically driven perspective. Interviewees tended to discuss events in the order in which they occurred, rather than in the order of their importance. Although they approached events chronologically, it was still clear which events interviewees saw as being the most important to them. The life-grid did not inhibit their ability to express the differing importance of events. When discussing their life histories, interviewees inherently addressed the concept of time and change over time without being prompted to do so by the interviewer. This allows for a richer data set to be gathered, as interviewees talk reflexively about the changes in their lives. Interestingly, however, in the follow up interviews, only Mr and Mrs C, who were interviewed as a couple, continued to discuss issues in relation to change over time. All of the other interviewees required much more prompting to discuss changes over time.

Although it is by no means conclusive, there is some evidence to suggest that the use of the life-grid, not the difference in interview dynamics between single and couple interviews nor the difference in topics discussed, leads to these different approaches to time in the initial and follow up interviews. If the tendency to address the affects of time were related purely to being interviewed as a couple, then it would be expected that Mr and Mrs C's initial interviews would not address changes over time, but this is not the case. If the topics under discussion were the cause of the differences between interviews, we would expect Mr and Mrs C to follow the same pattern as the other interviewees, but this is not the caser. The use of the life-grid in Mr and Mrs C's follow up interview did, however, differ from its use in the other follow up interviews. As has been mentioned above, a composite life-grid was created from Mr and Mrs C's single interview life-grids, but this composite life-grid required some additional input and checking to complete it. In this fashion, Mr and Mrs C were actively re-introduced to and involved with the life-grid. In the other follow up interviews, where the life-grid was simply a copy of the one completed in the previous couple interviews, interviewees were simply asked to read over the life-grid and suggest any corrections or additions. This difference may have meant that Mr and Mrs C were given more of a warm up to thinking chronologically than the other interviewees.

It must also be noted that other possible explanations exist for this difference between Mr and Mrs C and the other two couples. It could be that there is an interaction between the single/couple interview dynamic and the topics discussed, it could be that Mr and Mrs C are more predisposed to thinking chronologically than the other interviewees, or it could be related to differing desires to re-engage with the interview process, as Mr and Mrs C had the longest break between initial and follow up interviews out of all the interviewees.

Secondly, it was found that the life-grid did not facilitate difficult subjects to be raised safely in the interview situation. Interviews about marriage and personal relationships obviously have the potential to broach subjects which are emotionally difficult for interviewees to discuss and potentially difficult for the interviewer raise. The presence of the life-grid in the interview had the potential to act as a device to allow difficult issues to be raised indirectly by the interviewer. For example, a section of Mr and Mrs A's life-grid was highlighted by the interviewer where a large number of entries clustered around one time period.

> Int: ...Just to cover a few periods you were mentioning, perhaps to
> recap over some of the things. You were saying when you erm,
> when you started your very first business, back in 85, erm, 85/86
> sort of time, and in 87 started your family, err, you were saying you
> were obviously very busy and you were obviously had a new baby
> to contend with, how did that affect your relationship?

Note that in the example above, the question "how did that affect your relationship?" has to be explicitly articulated rendering the question more direct than indirect. It had been hoped that the life-grid could act as a point of discussion which would be at one remove from interviewees' lives, however it did not prove possible to address questions in such a fashion.

Similarly, the rather prescriptive, event driven, nature of the life-grid, which is discussed further below, meant that it was very difficult to phrase questions so that they unpacked interviewees' opinions on events in their lives rather than simply prompting a recap of the events at that time. In the example below, Mr and Mrs B were asked to elaborate on a difficult period in their relationship, but as the question is phrased to be primarily concerned with the timing of this, the response is based on factual events, rather than emotional experiences. A more direct question had to be asked to prompt a more emotionally based response. This was typical of the difficulties in phrasing questions indirectly with the assistance of the life-grid.

> Int: So was that, the sort of difficult time period been from about
> 82ish, when you moved to [town2] initially through to about, erm,
> say 10, 12 years ago, about 95 kind of time, or was there a
> particularly, particularly bad patch in that?

Thirdly, and in a similar vein, it was hoped that the life-grid would enable the interviewees to return to certain topics that had been previously mentioned with relative ease, as the life-grid would act as an aide-memoir to the events which they had been discussing by contextualising them in relation to other events they had previously mentioned. However, when interviewees were asked about topics they had previously raised, there seemed to be a general reluctance to elaborate significantly on them. Instead, interviewees would tend to discuss other events, which might be somewhat related to the event or time on which they were initially probed. Interviewees seemed to feel a requirement to discuss new events which had not already been entered into the life-grid. This obviously made returning to previously mentioned topics problematic. For example, when Mr and Mrs A were asked to further discuss how a prolonged stay in hospital for Mrs A had affected their relationship they instead discussed similar events (hospital stays) which had not been mentioned before in preference to returning to a topic already discussed. To this end, the life-grid appears to have increased the quantity of data gathered, by reducing the extent of forgetting of past events, but has not necessarily improved the quality of the data gathered.

Furthermore, the sense of having to complete the life-grid during the interview influenced the interview dynamic from the interviewer's perspective. There was a reluctance to interrupt narratives when they were making good progress through the history of the interviewees' relationships in order to focus on specific events, occurrences or feelings. This meant that not only did the life-grid make returning to topics difficult, thus making it more important to probe at the time, but it also decreased the likelihood of timely probes from the interviewer.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly for the implications for use of the life-grid in qualitative interviewing, the use of the life-grid seemed to encourage a

particularly event driven narrative approach from interviewees. This approach had several consequences for the data which were produced by the interviews. For instance the data were "event centred". Thus data which did not fit into the life-grid, but were generated by interviewees talking around events seemed only to come up if there was an event into which the data could be linked. As much of day to day life is comparatively uneventful, this "event centred" nature of the narrative did not lend itself to the unpacking of day to day life. Interviewees did discuss their day to day lives but only when they coincided with an event in their relationship. Thus, significant amounts of data were generated in relation to change in day to day routine at the birth of children, an event which clearly influenced both partners and their relationship. In contrast there were comparatively few data generated about the changes in day to day life when children went to school for the first time, an event which, in this sample, is likely to have had a much more significant effect on the women involved, but less of an impact on the men. The life-grid appeared to discourage interviewees from discussing day to day events when they could not be linked to more unique or significant events in the relationship. This also meant that gradual changes in routine were not discussed in any of the interviews.

Furthermore, the "event centred" nature of the narratives led to a particular focus on the factual side of interviewees' relationships. For example, when Mr and Mrs A were discussing the hospital stay mentioned above, they discussed it in relation to the practicalities of child-care and disruption to routine, rather than in emotional terms. This was surprising, considering the period of hospitalisation included a dangerous operation. It should not be inferred from this that all of the interview talk was non-reflexive. However, when interviewees were completing the life-grid, their narratives tended to focus more on the factual aspects of their relationships than on the emotional aspects.

This factual, event centred narrative must be seen in part as being influenced as much by the application of the life-grid by the author, as by the use of the life-grid itself. Out of a desire to ensure the data gathered would be legible to the author, the life-grid was filled in by the researcher, not by the interviewees. Although the researcher was careful to only enter events highlighted by the participants as important, this may well have sent out signals that this (the life-grid and its completion) was what the researcher was interested in. However, even if interviewees had filled in the life-grid themselves, it is likely that a pre-printed sheet provided by the researcher would have had a similar constraining effect.

The non-reflexive narrative the life-grid seemed to encourage may also be linked to the life-grid's design as being concerned with specific events. Doucet (1996) discusses the use of a "Household Portrait", where couples are asked to assign various household tasks to one of five catagories. Doucet finds that this task encourages couples to reflect upon these tasks and to produce richer data. The difference may be due to the household portrait dealing with generalities, but the life-grid dealing with specifics. The general nature of the household portrait may be vital in ensuring that couples do not become focused on factual events.

While the interviewees may have been led by the life-grid to providing a very event centred narrative, when they reflected upon the interview, interviewees did not feel that they had been tailoring their life stories to suit the grid. They particularly emphasised that they did not worry about the column headings of the life-grids. Interviewees' assertions that they were not simply responding to the column headings is given further support by the completed life-grids, in particular the "holidays". While all interviewees had some holidays which they felt were of particular importance or memorability, none of them felt obliged to provide a

complete list of all of the holidays they had been on. Interviewees also said that the column headings were sufficiently general that they did not feel constrained by the headings.

Unexpectedly, the life-grid seems to take on a degree of inviolability once it has been completed. When the second, individual, interviews were conducted with Mr and Mrs A and B, copies of the life-grids which had been completed during the couple interviews were brought back and each interviewee was asked to read over the life-grid and asked if they had any additions or corrections they would like to see. Given that some of the events had been entered at best guess dates by the interviewer and given the degree of disagreement between Mr and Mrs C's life-grid described above, it is likely that some of the information included on the life-grids must have not agreed with the interviewees' recollections. Despite this, only one interviewee, Mr A, raised any issues with the life-grid as it was presented to him. When the composite life-grid was being prepared for Mr and Mrs C's couple interview, two events which both had mentioned were intentionally left off the composite life-grid by the researcher and were not mentioned by the interviewer. When asked if there were any corrections or additions they would like to make to the life-grid, Mr and Mrs C only mentioned one of the two events. It is possible that the life-grid becomes an authorised version of the relationship, and to add to it or correct it is to contradict your partner. Alternatively, the interviewees may not wish to contradict the "expert" interviewer, as the original life-grids were completed by the interviewer for reasons of expediency detailed above in the methods section. Furthermore, it is possible that the interviewees simply did not concentrate on reading the life-grids, or on thinking of things which could be added. Lastly, the data included on the life-grids may have been an adequate representation of the events which interviewees perceived to be important in their lives.

Interviewees' responses to the life-grid and the interview process

The above findings have focused on the effects the life-grid has had upon the interview data, based largely upon the data themselves. However, the life-grid also had an effect in the ways in which interviewees reacted to it. These responses can be broken down into three categories: alarm at first being introduced to the life-grid; satisfaction at completion of the life-grid; and pleasant surprise at the structure of the interview process as a whole.

Alarm surrounding the introduction of the life-grid was understandably centred on the intimidating appearance of the life-grid. At the time of producing the life-grid, a lack of data regarding the couples meant that the life-grid was printed on A3 paper, even though for two of the three couples the life-grid could have fitted onto an A4 sheet. Furthermore, the design of the life-grid makes a blank copy look particularly busy, with many lines, columns and boxes. Although Mr A was the only one to raise the issue of the appearance of the life-grid, from their reactions when first introduced to it, the other interviewees also found it slightly intimidating. It was possible, however, to mitigate this alarm by introducing some degree of shared humour between interviewer and interviewee regarding the life-grid. Although most qualitative interviews will have some point in the beginning at which the interviewee is nervous or intimidated (often when a tape recorder is produced), it was noticeable that the life-grid increased the level of disquiet, especially as its introduction came after the interviewees had initially been settled in to the interview. To this end, the life-grid did not produce an immediate improvement in rapport, unlike that experienced by Parry et al (1999).

Once the life-grid was completed several interviewees expressed satisfaction at having produced a tangible history of their relationship. Although standard qualitative interviewing tends to produce pleasure for interviewees from telling their stories, use of the life-grid produces a very obvious result and one which led to other memories surfacing. Even though these additional memories may not have been useful to the interviewer in this present study, as they were often very factual in nature, interviewees were very aware of the life-grid prompting these memories, and this seemed to give them a sense of pleasure and usefulness from the life-grid.

Lastly, interviewees expressed pleasant surprise at the open ended nature of the interview process as a whole. Both Mr and Mrs B and Mr and Mrs C mentioned that they had been expecting a more questionnaire style approach, with strict questions and strict possible answers and both couples were pleased to have had their expectations confounded. Clearly the life-grid did not seem constraining to them by the end of the interview.

Interviewer's responses to the life-grid and the interview process

From the perspective of the qualitative interviewer, the life-grid complicates the task of interviewing to some extent. From a practical perspective, the space required to complete the life-grid is slightly larger than a lap can comfortably accommodate. When interviewing in participants' homes, this can mean either struggling for space throughout the interview if the seat which you have been assigned is not near a table, or asking to move, which at times would not be appropriate. Furthermore, as discussed in the methods section above, it was not always possible for interviewees to be able to see what was written on the life-grid, which would have been desirable if only to allow them to object to or correct data as it was entered and to make the life-grid feel more like a collaborative effort.

In its original usage the life-grid was designed to assess factual data in terms of years of behaviour or exposure to risk factors and, as such, the emphasis was clearly upon obtaining detailed, accurate, factual data with regard to dates. In its current usage, as a tool for primarily facilitating the qualitative interview process, the importance of specific dates has decreased. However, the life-grid is a very regimented tool which requires events to be entered under certain years. As a qualitative sociological interviewer, when faced with data which are not clearly dated by the interviewee, the interviewer can either insert the event at the point at which they think it has occurred, (previously referred to in this paper as "best guess"), or they can interrupt the flow of the interview. Too many best guesses risks possibly contaminating the data in terms of sequence of events. Too many interruptions for specific dates risks damaging the narrative, both in terms of flow, but also in terms of focusing the interviewee too heavily towards factual data at the expense of reflexive data.

Finally, completion of the life-grid requires a significant amount of cognitive effort which would otherwise have been available for use in monitoring and responding to interviewees' life stories. Completing the life-grid is similar to having to maintain two different but similar sets of field notes. That said, the life-grid does provide useful data which may not have been included in field notes. At several points during the transcription process for this study, life-grids were able to shed light upon unintelligible portions of tape which field notes had not. Furthermore, the life-grid does make it undeniably easier to assess the sequence of events described by interviewees compared to assessing the sequence of events directly from either tapes or transcriptions of the interviews.

Conclusion

Although there is not an external data source to which participants' narratives may be compared, the evidence from this study does not seem to support the assertion by Blane (1996) and Berney and Blaine (1997) that the life-grid improves the accuracy of recalled data. Some degree of disagreement over exact years is to be expected and often it may not be an important concern to qualitative researchers. A more significant error is that of the different sequencing of two key events by Mr and Mrs C. These events can be seen to have a causal link and yet one of the two participants has recalled them in the incorrect order despite the assistance of the life-grid. However, as Coleman (Coleman, 1991) asks, does it matter if the facts of a life story are inaccurate if the message and content remain accurate? Although this lack of accuracy may not be important to many qualitative researchers, it does raise questions as to the use of the life-grid to improve recall accuracy in those fields where accurate, factual data are required..

There is evidence to suggest in this study that interviewees did tell their stories in a more chronological fashion than if they had not been completing the life-grid. It could be argued that this stops interviewees from telling their stories as they would do so naturally, but providing that the content of the narratives is not altered, merely the order of their telling, then this does not appear significant to the author. All qualitative interviews are structured to some extent by the interviewer and by social conventions, otherwise the data would be impossible to interpret.

The life-grid also appears at times to encourage interviewees to address the issue of change over time explicitly in their narratives. However, this seems to require active participation with the life-grid at an early stage in the interview, before the substantive questions begin. Simply having a life-grid present, and asking interviewees to recount a history does not produce narratives which take into account change over time, even when they have taken part in a life-grid interview within the last week.

Completing the life-grid task does produce a sense of gratification and rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee, as Parry et al (1999) found. However, due to the limited data known about the participants in this study, there was no opportunity to take advantage of the early improvements in rapport which Parry et al (ibidem) were able to establish by utilising the life-grid as a reference guide to certain biographical facts about the interviewee. This meant that the rapport which the completion of the life-grid produced was only really felt towards the end of the interview, when a rapport would be expected to have developed between interviewer and interviewee in a standard qualitative interview in any case. Furthermore, the initial appearance and imposing nature of the life-grid may hinder the development of rapport at the start of the interview when it is most needed.

More worryingly, given the emotional focus of much qualitative interviewing, use of the life-grid in its current form seems to encourage a non-reflexive, event centred narrative. Not only are day to day aspects of life often skipped over by interviewees, but they do not tend to focus on the emotional aspects to their experiences, instead tending to try and complete the apparent task of having to produce events to fit in the life-grid. This clearly suggests that such an event focused tool as the life-grid may be inappropriate for a topic which requires a significant degree of reflexivity from participants.

Additionally, the life-grid does not facilitate other aspects of the interviewing process. The event centred nature of the life-grid makes it unsuitable for the indirect phrasing of potentially difficult questions. Interviewees were also unwilling to return

to events which they had already discussed, preferring instead to discuss previously unmentioned events and thus continue with the task of completing the life-grid. This, coupled with the life-grid's tendency to inhibit interviewer probes, meant that follow up questions were significantly harder to ask and have answered than in standard qualitative interviews.

It should be noted, though, that the negative effects discussed may be significantly related to the situation in which the life-grid was being used (i.e. with relatively confident, adult couples in their own homes, discussing, for the most part, relatively unthreatening topics). Other recent research utilising the life-grid in interviews with young people discussing parental substance use found opposite results from those documented above, suggesting that the interview situation will have significant impacts upon the life-grid's efficacy as a qualitative interviewing tool (Wilson et al, forthcoming).

Overall, the debilitating aspects of the life-grid appear to outweigh the enabling ones in relation to qualitative interviews on attitudinal or emotional topics in this study. Parry et al's (ibidem) data, while more qualitative than previous life-grid researchers, still focuses on relatively factual data, and for this the life-grid may still prove a suitable tool, although only if the researchers involved find it aids them in the collection of data, as its use cannot be justified purely on data reliability. However, there are some positive aspects to the life-grid, not least of which its encouragement to interviewees to address the issue of change over time. As the life-grid as it currently stands though, it is too imposing and too date and event centred and these aspects affect the interview process significantly. Perhaps a less formal version of the life-grid which is less clearly event driven and less date focused, a simple time-line perhaps, may provide some of the benefits while mitigating some of the more detrimental aspects of the life-grid.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Blank life-grid

Year	Age	Life Events	Marriage & Family	Holidays	Relationship Issues

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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.

"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).
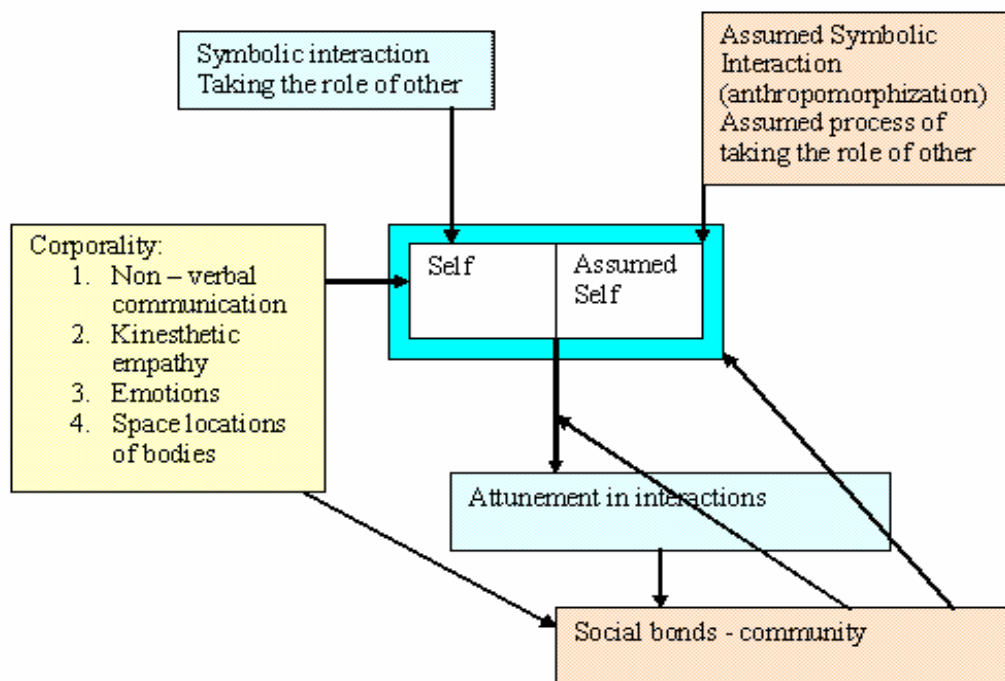
Figure1. Symbolic interaction, corporality and constructing self

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.

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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).

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Evaluative Categories of Action and Identity in Non-Evaluative Human Studies Research: Examples from Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodologists have emphasized the pragmatic and contextual nature of description as a variety of social practice, and have suggested the ramifications of this insight for the methodology and philosophy of the social sciences. However, ethnomethodologists have thereby invited difficult questions about the moral and analytic status of their own descriptions. Drawing on Atkinson's study of suicide verdicts and Coulter's writings on schizophrenia, ethnomethodological scholarship is shown to display the possibility and promise of disinterested description, even when the subject matter involves the evaluation of problematic actions and identities. The combination of Wittgensteinian logical grammar and empirical studies of natural language use, suggested by Coulter, is presented as especially relevant and remarkable for purposes of studying social practices including describing, naming, categorizing, classifying, labeling, diagnosing, reaching a verdict, and kindred practices of language use conceived as varieties of practical action.

Keywords:
description, ethnomethodology, evaluation, Jeff Coulter, discrimination, labeling, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Peter Winch, schizophrenia, suicide

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Insights from Ricoeur's Hermeneutics on Best Practice in Professional Service Firms: On Perpetual Myth Creation?

Drawing on the work of Ricoeur, this paper contributes to theorisation of the organisational field in understanding of how structural power operates through professional langue in shaping a construction of individual judgement in professional service firms. As Ricoeur argued that judicial sense may be envisaged as one of the best examples of hermeneutic application, I explore practitioners' sense making and their interaction with the surrounding structures and its discourse, learned and assimilated during the formative years in the context of audit practice.
The interviews-based story provides an illustration of (1) the processes of socialisation that are geared towards conceptions of what constitutes professional best practice, where the professional learns to use judgement and follow structure in particular ways (a perpetuated myth of best practice), and (2) the effects of such formation on the working process. The paper contributes insights into organisational theory in areas of negotiating a balance between institutional requirements (structural

conditioning of professional epistemology) and technical demands of hermeneutic function (purposive expert activities) in decision making process.

The paper concludes that practitioners assume the appearance of professionalism by adopting a particular professional langue where judgement becomes normative in its own terms. These re-production processes in accordance with organisational frames of references for action may be in opposition to the decisional autonomy, where there may be a space for simultaneously creating (agency) and sharing (structure) on the job. The study reveals that professional langue itself is a place of prejudice and bias on the job.

Keywords:
judgement, structure, organisational practice, socialisation, hermeneutics

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"Oh yes, I remember it well!"   Reflections on Using The Life-grid in Qualitative Interviews with Couples

The life-grid has previously been used as a tool for improving the reliability of retrospective data in epidemiology. Recent research has suggested that the life-grid may also prove a useful tool for qualitative sociological interviewing, by facilitating the asking of difficult questions and acting as an aide memoire. This paper describes a pilot study which examines the influences the life-grid has upon qualitative interviews with married couples. It finds that use of the life-grid limits interviewees' willingness to revisit topics, tends to create "event-centred", non-reflexive, data and does not facilitate the asking of difficult questions. This paper does find that the life-grid acts to stimulate recall, but in a limited, factual fashion. It concludes that the life-grid is unlikely to prove an appropriate tool for qualitative researchers in its present form.

Keywords:
Life-grid, retrospective data, qualitative interviewing, recall, couples, reflexivity

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The problem of symbolic interaction and of constructing self

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.

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