April 12, 2007

Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III
Issue 1

Animals & People

by

Krzysztof T. Konecki

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

Editorial Board

Editorial Staff

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Editor-in-chief

Anna Kacperczyk
Slawomir Magala
Associate Editors

Lukas T. Marciniak
Executive Editor

Steven Kleinknecht
Antony Puddephatt
Approving Editors

Advisory Board

Piotr Chomczynski
Waldemar Dymarczyk
Anna Kubczak

Web Technology Developer

Maciej Gawin

Cover Designer

Anna Kacperczyk

Consulting Editors

Patricia A. Adler
Peter Adler
Mahbub Ahmed
Michael Atkinson
Howard S. Becker
Nicolette Bramley
Kathy Charmaz
Catherine A.. Chesla
Cesar A. Cisneros
Adele E. Clarke
Juliet Corbin
Norman K. Denzin
Robert Dingwall
Rosalind Edwards
Peter Eglin
Gary Alan Fine
Silvia Gherardi
Barney Glaser
Giampietro Gobo
Jaber F. Gubrium
Tony Hak
Scott R. Harris
Paul ten Have
Stephen Hester
Judith Holton
Domenico Jervolino
Hubert Knoblauch
Joseph Kotarba
Ireneusz Krzeminski
Riitta Kyllonen
Staffan Larsson
Lyn H. Lofland
Jordi Lopez
Michael Lynch
Christoph Maeder
Barbara Misztal
Setsuo Mizuno
Lorenza Mondada
Janusz Mucha
Tony O'Connor
Sandi Michele de Oliveira
Slawomir Partycki
Dorothy Pawluch
Eleni Petraki
Constantinos N Phellas
Andrea Press
Robert Prus
George Psathas
Anne Warfield Rawls
Johanna Rendle-Short
Brian Roberts
Roberto Rodríguez
Masamichi Sasaki
William Shaffir
Phyllis N. Stern
Antonio Strati
Joerg Struebing
Andrzej Szklarski
Roland Terborg
Victor Thiessen
Jan Trost
Jonathan H. Turner
Dennis D. Waskul
Shalva Weil
Fred Wester
Ingrid Westlund
Ruth Wodak
Kiyomitsu Yui

Note:
The journal and all published articles are a contribution to the contemporary social sciences. They are available without special permission to everyone who would like to use them for noncommercial, scientific, educational or other cognitive purposes. Making use of resources included in this journal for commercial or marketing aims requires a special permission from publisher. Possible commercial use of any published article will be consulted with the author beforehand.
It is forbidden to charge for access to this journal or to put any limitations on the accessibility of published papers.
The authors are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions for publication of materials, which are protected by a copyrights owned by other persons.

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

ISSN 1733-8077

Contents

Editorial:

Special issue - People and Animals.
On the problem of intersubjectivity in interactions of humans and animals
by Krzysztof T. Konecki 3

Articles:

The Question of Animal Selves: Implications for Sociological Knowledge and Practice
by Leslie Irvine 5

Beasts and boundaries: An introduction to animals in sociology, science and society
by Pru Hobson-West 23

Investigating the therapeutic benefits of companion animals: Problems and challenges
by Adrian Franklin, Michael Emmison, Donna Haraway and Max Travers 42

"Never an It": Intersubjectivity and the creation of animal personhood in animal shelters
by Nicola Taylor 59

Animal Archeology: Domestic Pigeons and the Nature-Culture Dialectic
by Colin Jerolmack 74

Without Words to Get in the Way: Symbolic Interaction in Prison-Based Animal Programs
by Gennifer Furst 96

Pets of Konrad Lorenz. Theorizing in the social world of pet owners
by Krzysztof T. Konecki 110

Contributors 128

Author-Supplied Abstracts and Keywords 130

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Lodz University, Poland

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

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

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

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

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

(e.g. pets) is a base of accomplishment of such social associations as play, partying, going for a walk, visiting friends, etc. Self indications in interactions give meaning to objects and activities, and when it is done together with a role-taking, we achieve so called “joint action”. The play, party, going for a walk are kinds of joint action - a realization of intersubjectivity - so important for doing science.

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

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

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Leslie Irvine
University of Colorado at Boulder, USA

The question of animal selves: Implications for sociological knowledge and practice

Abstract

The question of whether sociologists should investigate the subjective experience of non-human others arises regularly in discussions of research on animals. Recent criticism of this research agenda as speculative and therefore unproductive is examined and found wanting. Ample evidence indicates that animals have the capacity to see themselves as objects, which meets sociological criteria for selfhood. Resistance to this possibility highlights the discipline's entrenched anthropocentrism rather than lack of evidence. Sociological study of the moral status of animals, based on the presence of the self, is warranted because our treatment of animals is connected with numerous "mainstream" sociological issues. As knowledge has brought other forms of oppression to light, it has also helped to challenge and transform oppressive conditions. Consequently, sociologists have an obligation to challenge speciesism as part of a larger system of oppression.

Keywords
Animals; Self; Mead; Animal cognition; Consciousness

> *The intelligence of the lower forms of animal life, like a great deal of human intelligence, does not involve a self.* (Mead [1934] 1962: 135)
>
> *Future human-animal investigations should probably focus less on unverifiable speculations about the inner lives of animals and examine instead what is knowable about human-animal interactions and the significance that humans attribute to them.* (Jerolmack 2005: 660)
>
> *Because animals do not, and cannot (I argue), wonder what humans (or any other organism) are 'thinking' they do not (and cannot) possess a mind or self.* (Waskul 2004)

Do non-human animals have selves? Is the answer relevant for sociology, and if so, how? Most mainstream sociological work does not consider animals at all. For that matter, most mainstream sociology does not consider the issue of selves, regardless of species. For the majority of topics that sociologists study, the self never enters the picture. Consequently, one could easily dismiss the relevance of animals' inner lives for the discipline. As conveyed in the quote from Colin Jerolmack (2005)

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

above, some see this as the more productive sociological position: *Let us concentrate on verifiable observations and focus on what animals mean for human lives*. Despite this advice, a number of the seminal sociological works on human-animal interaction engage with questions about animal selves. Janet and Steven Alger (1997, 1999, 2003a) have observed interaction among cats and between cats and humans for over a decade. In their book, *Cat Culture* (2003a), they draw on extensive ethnography in a cat shelter and in multi-cat households to show how cats manifest self-awareness. Using indicators outlined by cognitive ethologist Donald Griffin (1976, 1992) and biologist Marian Stamp Dawkins (1987, 1998), among others, Alger and Alger document a wide range of emotions, the ability to learn from others, cooperation, adaptation, and complexity of behavior within the cat community. Clinton Sanders (1999, 2000, 2003) focuses on interactions between people and dogs. His qualitative research consistently presents a view of animals as minded, social actors who "have at least a rudimentary ability to construct meaning—to purposefully define situations and devise coherent plans of action on the basis of these definitions" (1999: 5). His studies of people and their canine companions have led him to advocate an expanded view of "personhood" and of the process through which we construct and assign that designation. He also argues for "an expanded view of mind that, like personhood, we can best understand as arising out of social interaction" (2003: 407). Moreover, his work demonstrates that "the conventional, linguicentric perspective on mind-as-internal-conversation is inadequate and confining" (2003: 407). Along similar lines, Keri Brandt's (2004) ethnographic research on human-horse interaction suggests the need for a new understanding of language that emphasizes the embodied nature of subjectivity. Likewise, Krzysztof Konecki (2005) argues that corporeality is the basis for a shared reality between companion animals and their guardians. My work (Irvine 2004a, b, c), makes use of ethnography and interviews to develop a model of animal selfhood based on concepts used in studies of the subjective experience of infants. Instead of relying on a language-based model of the self, I offer a wider conceptual lens that emphasizes the components of interaction. I have also examined play between humans and animals as a window on intersubjective experience (Irvine, 2001). In studies of children's interaction with animals, Olin Myers (1998) found that even without spoken language, an animal could be "a genuine (not merely projected or falsely assimilated) 'other'" to a child "in the dialectical and self-reflective process of subjective and objective senses of self" (Myers 2003: 56)

These works argue that animal selves *are* verifiable through observation; however, we must first rethink how and what we will observe. Exploring the question of animal selves constitutes nothing less than a reshaping of the discipline. As this essay points out, this reshaping is long overdue. Sociologists regularly overlook, disparage, and dismiss evidence of similarities between humans and other animals (see Arluke 2003; Kruse 2003). One can only dismiss the importance of animals' inner lives by dismissing entire bodies of research that document human-animal continuity in the form of animal minds, communication skills, and emotions. In what follows, I examine why animal selves are important for sociology, arguing that the omission stems more from the discipline's anthropocentric assumptions rather than from any lack of evidence.

On (re)defining the self

To explore the possibility of animal selves, it would be helpful to have a definition of what we should look for. However a singular definition of the self is problematic because the term refers to a range of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional manifestations. As a term, "the self" is folk psychology. It encompasses "what everybody knows" about why people act and think as they do. Consequently, the term has numerous uses. It can refer to the self-concept, or to self-esteem, the soul, the "inner child" of pop psychology, or a host of other ideas (see Irvine 1999 for a review). Some might even argue that selfhood is an illusion or a fiction. A "sense" of self might not be a sense at all, but simply an epiphenomenon, or side-effect of the way our brains function.

Traditionally, the sociological starting point for defining the self is Mead's assertion that it involves the capacity to see oneself as an object. This capacity gives humans the ability to coordinate activities with others in complex social environments. Mead ([1934] 1962) claimed that the self developed alongside the capacities for spoken language and the reflective capacities of the mind. He argued that the self is a product of evolution, allowing for complex, adaptive social behavior.[i] These abilities made human society possible by coordinating uniquely complex forms of interaction.

Mead pointed out that the process of seeing ourselves as objects involves the appearance of a "me" in consciousness (Mead 1913). Selfhood therefore presupposes consciousness. In this sense, consciousness means more than simply wakefulness or awareness of sensation (being "conscious" rather than "unconscious"). Consciousness, as used here, is more akin to self-consciousness, in that it involves the reflexive capacity. This, in turn, allows us to adapt our behavior, which is a valuable skill in a complex social world.

At this point, a basic working definition of the self becomes possible. It can be defined as an image (or images) of ourselves (as an object) that appears in consciousness, around which we adapt our subsequent behavior. For Mead, and for generations of sociologists to follow, the self distinguishes humans from other animals. Mead was very certain that the "lower animals," as he referred to them, did not have the capacity to see themselves as objects. In the epigraph by Dennis Waskul at the start of this paper, taken from the discussion list of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, the belief that animals are unable to see themselves as objects still holds, at least for some scholars. Research has shown that Mead was mistaken.[ii]

Do animals have selves?

Animals and Consciousness

There is ample evidence that many species of animals can see themselves as objects. Those who take a skeptical position on animal selves would up the ante by requiring that the definition of the self includes language. However, I would argue that most of the instances in which we humans see ourselves as objects do not involve language. If we simply look for evidence of the capacity to see oneself as an object, which indicates consciousness, then non-human animals can enter the conversation.

Few would deny that non-human animals can adapt their behavior. Moreover, behavioral flexibility is among the features commonly drawn on to support attributions

of consciousness among animals (Griffin 1976, 1992; see also Allen and Bekoff 1997, 153). Examples of animals adapting their behavior are abundant, among wild as well as domesticated animals. For instance, dog training involves encouraging the dog to shape his or her behavior to human expectations (see Arluke and Sanders 1996; Sanders 1999; Irvine 2004a). Dogs will also modify their behavior on their own. For example, while walking with my dog, Skipper, I began throwing a stick into a creek for him to retrieve. We stood on a smoothly banked section of the creek, and Skipper waded into shoulder-deep water to get the stick. However, at one point, the current carried the stick to an area with deeper water and a steep, cliff-like bank. Skipper does not enjoy swimming. He could have given up on the stick as it disappeared downstream. Instead, after investigating the bank further down the creek, he found another smoothly inclined spot and waited for the stick to arrive.[iii] There could be many explanations for Skipper's behavior, but one of these surely must be a rudimentary understanding of causality and the ability to adjust one's behavior to intervene in the action.

Although cats are seldom formally trained, they regularly monitor their own "performances" and make adjustments accordingly. For example, all five cats in my house have learned to jump up on the nearest high surface when they want to get away from Skipper. They could easily outrun him, but they seem to reserve running for times when they want to engage in play. When they want to get out of harm's way, they know that up is the way to go. Similarly, when Steven and Janet Alger studied interaction in a cat shelter, they found that even in behavior such as territoriality, the cats engaged in negotiation rather than constant dominance and outright aggression. With two exceptions, cats who fought on some occasions would not necessarily fight all the time. Instead, their shows of dominance were "highly relative and limited by time and place and activity" (2003a: 130).

Examples of behavioral flexibility from the wild are numerous. The research is especially important in this context because it indicates not only the ability to adapt behavior, but also that animals use the kind of referential communication that Mead claimed did not exist among animals. Using the example of a dog fight, Mead explained that "we have here a conversation of gestures. They are not, however, gestures in the sense that they are significant. We do not assume that the dog says to himself, 'If the animal comes from this direction he is going to spring at my throat and I will turn in such a way'" ([1934] 1962: 43).[iv] However, many studies have confirmed that numerous species have cognitive abilities that Mead and his contemporaries did not recognize. Indeed, research has "confirmed that the ability to discriminate between different alarm calls that signal the presence of different predators exists in a variety of species and that such signals lead to predictable behavior by the receivers" (Rogers and Kaplan 2004, 189). For instance, vervet monkeys distinguish between different vocalizations and respond accordingly (Seyfarth, Cheney, and Marler 1980). One type of vocalization signals "leopard," and the monkeys climb into the trees, but another sends them looking for snakes on the ground. The evolutionary benefits of this ability are clear, in that referential signaling and flexible behavior allows the monkeys to avoid different kinds of predators. Studies have revealed similar abilities among squirrels (Greene and Meagher 1998), meerkats (Manser 2001), marmots (Blumstein and Armitage 1997), and domestic chickens (Marler and Evans 1996; Evans 1997). The existence of a complex communication system indicates that "alarm calls may be intentional and convey meaning beyond a simple 'read-out' of the sender's emotional state" (Rogers and Kaplan 2004, 189; see also Kaplan and Rogers 2001). Among companion animals, examples of behavioral flexibility are numerous. Some of the earliest observations

come from the work of the Nobel Prize winning ethologist Konrad Lorenz (1952, 1953), best known for studying the imprinting of geese. Among the many examples recorded among dogs and cats, their ability to adjust their behavior around children and their play strategies are noteworthy.

The ability to adapt behavior indicates consciousness because it implies monitoring of one's own performance: "If this happens, I do that; if that happens, I do something else." In addition to behavioral flexibility, another characteristic that indicates consciousness is multi-sensory integration, or the ability to access information from different information pathways (see Allen and Bekoff 1997). For example, I might recognize a friend from a distance by the general shape of her body or the way she walks. If I cannot see her, I could nevertheless recognize her voice if she called out to me. Her dog could also recognize her scent. Species differ in the capacity to respond to certain stimuli, and her dog would have the advantage here, but I might also recognize her customary perfume. In short, multi-sensory integration means that we use various sensory pathways to gather information about our world. It is relevant for consciousness because it allows for the detection of misinformation based on a single input. For example, if I see someone who at first appears to be my friend, but then I hear that person speak in a voice I do not recognize, I can adjust my behavior to avoid the surprise and embarrassment of misidentifying that person. Likewise, Skipper might initially shy away from me if I appeared from a distance in a rain cape and hat. If I spoke to him on approaching, however, he would not be fooled, and once he sniffed me the test would be over. The ability to integrate information from different sensory pathways allows beings to detect misinformation and respond to it. The resulting behavioral flexibility both depends on and indicates consciousness.

Evidence of a *theory of mind* constitutes a reliable indicator of awareness of self. This refers to the ability to know (or wonder) what another individual is thinking (see Gopnik 1993, for a review). Human infants show evidence of being capable to interpret the mental states of others at between two and three years of age. Many species of animals have also demonstrated this ability. Chimpanzees and macaques have successfully distinguished between the "knower" and the "guesser," learning to act on the advice of the former rather than the latter (Thomasello and Call 1997; Povinelli, Nelson, and Boysen 1990; Povinelli, Parks, and Novak 1991).

One reliable indicator of whether an individual has a theory of mind is the ability to share the focus of attention. When a person or animal "attend[s] to the direction in which another is looking, the individual must have first realized that the other is attending to something different and at a distance" (Rogers and Kaplan 2004: 182). In infants, the capacity to alternately look at the mother's face and a "target" that the mother is pointing to or looking at begins at about twelve months of age. The act of alternately following the mother's gaze while "checking in" with her eyes and face suggests more than simply the ability to follow the mother's line of vision. It constitutes "a deliberate attempt to validate whether the joint attention has been achieved, that is, whether the focus of attention is being shared" (Stern 1985: 129).

Domestic dogs regularly follow the gaze of their human companions (see Sanders 1999; Irvine 2004a). As Sanders points out, dogs "display considerable interest in human facial expression and direct their own gaze in the directions indicated by human attention" (1999: 144). Research shows that dogs perform better at mutual looking than do great apes (Call 2003).[v] Dogs perform remarkably well in tasks requiring that they interpret signals from people, such as gazing and pointing, in order to find food. Dogs' striking ability to follow human signals is especially relevant for the self because the ability is not thought to be instinctual. Dogs (and even puppies) perform

these tasks far better than do wolves (Vila, Maldonado, and Wayne 1999; Wayne and Ostrander 1999). This indicates that the ability may have been acquired during the long process of domestication (Ruvinsky and Sampson 2001), which makes it a highly interactional, social skill.

In sum, the past decade, in particular, has seen mounting evidence that animals have the ability to see themselves as objects. We can acknowledge that animals have this ability even if we also want to argue that it is impossible to know the quality or contents of their consciousness. Thus, we can grant animals consciousness even if we do not have access to exactly what their consciousness is "like." But this begs the question of whether consciousness is tantamount to the self.

Consciousness and Selfhood

The concern for sociologists, whether focusing on human or non-human animals, has historically been the *self*, rather than consciousness. The term consciousness seldom appears in the sociological literature. I contend that sociologists have created an arbitrary distinction between self and consciousness and have entered the conversation only when the most sophisticated expressions of self-awareness appear. More specifically, sociologists have staked their claims only once spoken language and high levels of coordinated activity appear. In doing so, they deemed any less sophisticated expressions of self-awareness as unworthy of sociological investigation. They have defined the self in such uniquely human terms that it is impossible for other animals to "have" or "be" selves

Because of Mead's influence, and particularly because of his emphasis on language, sociologists who study the self have traditionally done so through narratives or descriptions of self-concepts. Such research provides insight into how selfhood is constructed within the context of language, but it fails to offer a coherent theory of self in the absence of verbal ability. In response, scholars have ventured into this terrain with the study of selfhood among the mentally disabled (Pollner and McDonald-Wikler 1985; Bogdan and Taylor 1989), Alzheimer's patients (Gubrium 1986), infants (Brazelton 1984; Stern 1985), deaf and blind children (Goode 1994), autistic children (Rocque 2003), and companion animals (Sanders 1999; Alger and Alger 1997, 2003; Irvine 2004a,b,c; Konecki 2005). In all these instances, those who provide care for others who have no capacity for verbal expression "literally 'do' the minds and selves" of those who cannot speak" (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 152). Through close, frequent interaction over a significant period, caregivers learn to read the non-verbal indicators of the self.

The criticism launched against this research is that attributing selves to those who cannot speak simply imposes a sense of self, with varying degrees of legitimacy for doing so. In the case of animals, it lays one open to charges of anthropomorphism. Granting selfhood to animals, most commonly in the form of personality, is something all children do. However, the tendency is shamed out of most of us before adulthood, as we are told that it is silly to believe that animals can think or feel as we do. Mead put it differently, but the message is the same. He wrote 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" ([1934] 1962: 182). In contrast, a decade's worth of sociological research on human-animal interaction argues that as we get insight into the "conditions" of animals, we gain more evidence for their ability to see themselves as

objects (see Arluke and Sanders 1996; Sanders 1999; Sanders and Arluke 1993; Alger and Alger 2003b; Irvine 2004a, b, c).

It is time to revise the sociological understanding of the self away from the focus on language. Skeptics will reply that changing the definition of the self to include animals is an unfair move. I would make clear that I do not claim that humans and non-human animals have exactly the same capacities. I have no illusions that my dog and my cats harbor any desire to compose their memoirs, nor do I believe the birds I hear outside care one wit about what I think. I agree that humans have a highly sophisticated sense of self that allows us to accomplish interactions that animals cannot undertake. However, as Arluke and Sanders (1996) pointed out, I argue that the differences are of *degree* rather than *kind*. Non-human animals have capacities that are important for their social lives, and it would be as unfair to measure human potential by their capacities as it is to measure their potential by human capacities. As far as a sociological understanding of animals and selfhood is concerned, the game has been rigged from the start. It is not biological, social, or psychological deficiencies that prevent the acknowledgement of animal selfhood; it is anthropocentrism, or the belief that all things should be judged in relation to humans. The prospect of animal selves is simply threatening to our field of study. In defense, we elevate humankind even while abundant research reveals continuities across species.

Anthropocentrism: The price of defending sociology's terrain

Anthropocentrism is one of the oldest social constructions. Anthropological research suggests that pre-literate peoples lived with nature in a relationship of oneness and respect (see Ingold 1994; Schwabe 1994; Noske 1997). To be sure, people could distinguish themselves from animals, but there is no evidence that they saw themselves as superior to the other creatures around them. They used animals' bodies to meet their material needs, but they also used animals, as beings, to meet spiritual needs. Many, if not most, preliterate peoples considered animals superior to humans, having magical, even divine powers.

The abiding respect for animals diminished as the means of production changed. Anthropologist Elizabeth Lawrence explains that "it is impossible to overestimate the importance of mankind's change from hunter-gatherer to domesticator of plants and animals" (Lawrence 1986: 46). The survival of hunter-gatherers meant that they could not overexploit the environment on which they depended. In contrast, the transition to farming required a conquering attitude toward the natural world. The farmer engages in continual battle with nature by eliminating plants and animals that have been labeled as "weeds" and "pests." The farmer also manipulates water and the reproduction of crops. The success of settled, agricultural civilizations required an attitude of domination, justified through beliefs that animals were not only "others," but also inferiors (see Thomas 1983; Tuan 1984; Franklin 1999). "Progress" required human communities to define the natural world (and its non-human animals) "as fundamentally different and ontologically separate" from their own (Wolch 1998: 121).[vi]

One subject that sociologists understand is power. We know that when a group has it, the members will not give it up without a fight. Thus, we humans are reluctant to admit the similarities we share with other animals. As a discipline, sociology emerged to point out how humans were not only different from what Mead regularly refers to as the "lower animals," but they were also better. Humans, after all, had

culture, society, religion, tools, and most important, language. The anthropocentric bias in the discipline has loosened its grip only slightly; overall, the belief that humans are not only unique still reigns. This is so even when ample research on animal behavior asserts otherwise. A slight digression will allow me to make this point.

Janet and Steven Alger (2003b) reviewed thirty major introductory sociology textbooks on the market as of December 2001. The Algers investigated how animals were constructed in the texts and how well the texts integrated newer research on animals that would allow the discipline to move beyond Mead. Introductory texts very often serve as students' first and most formative exposure to sociology. The Algers found that "with few exceptions, the main function of the treatment of animals in these texts is to affirm the hard line that sociology has always drawn between humans and other species" (Alger and Alger ibidem: 1). In addition, they found that the discipline "has not offered an adequate response to the new knowledge of animal behavior accumulated over the past twenty years" (Alger and Alger ibidem: 83-84). One of the best examples comes from the texts' ubiquitous chapters on culture.

> All of the textbooks we reviewed had a chapter or section devoted to human culture and all of the authors defined human culture in essentially the same way. Culture is a 'design or blueprint for living,' a 'way of life,' or a 'social heritage.' Culture is learned, it is shared, and it is passed on to the next generation. The elements of culture offered by these authors were also very similar and included beliefs, values, norms, symbols, language, customs, technology, knowledge and material objects. And, the tremendous diversity of cultures among different human groupings constituted the evidence that culture is a human creation, and not biologically determined. When these same authors turned their attention to the question of animals and culture, however, several problems immediately became apparent. (Alger and Alger ibidem: 72)

The first problem was one of poor scholarship. Most of the texts made claims about animals and culture (or more often, the lack of) without references, indicating that "many authors believed their views on animal culture were so well established that no source was necessary or that comments about animals were not of sufficient importance to warrant serious research" (Alger and Alger ibidem: 72). In the absence of references, authors ignored solid research asserting that numerous species of animals are indeed capable of developing culture (e.g., Alger and Alger 1999, 2003a on cats; Dawkins 1998; Goodall 1986 on chimpanzees; Pepperberg 1991 on parrots; Thomas 1993, 1994 on dogs and cats; Whiten *et al*. 1999 on chimpanzees).

The second problem concerned the evidence cited in the texts. The Algers explain that "if the authors were asking whether animals have culture, then, just as they did with humans, they needed to look at research that compares separate groupings of the same species to see if they had developed different solutions to the everyday problems of living" (Alger and Alger 2003b: 73). Only two texts cited this sort of evidence; most simply mentioned tool use among animals without seeking studies that investigated the variation in behavior that indicates culture. Eaton's (1976) study of macaques, native to Japan, who were transported to Oregon offers a good example. In Japan, where the colony occupied a large area, the adult males lived apart from females and their offspring. When juvenile male macaques got into fights, the mothers intervened because of proximity. Consequently, in Japan, the mother macaques' fighting ability influenced male dominance. However, in Oregon, the colony had less space, and the adult males lived with it. Males intervened in fights because they were close by, eliminating the females' role in the establishment

of male dominance. Similarly, Marler and Tamura (1964) found geographic variation in the songs of sparrows. In short, the research on animals uses the term "culture" to describe cases "in which one community can be readily distinguished from another by its unique suite of behavioral characteristics" (de Waal 1999). However, sociologists still cling to only one capacity in the "suite," which is language.[vii]

Disparagement and denial of animals' capacities also posed a problem in introductory texts. Even when authors acknowledged that animals had some form of culture, they took pains to elevate human expressions. To offer an illustrative case, one text instructs readers that "humans are not unique just because they make and use tools. However, the tools that humans make are unequaled in complexity. Think of the difference between using a twig to catch termites and making an automobile" (Andersen and Taylor 2002: 63). In most texts, the cultural "ante was raised such that it was necessary to have high culture to be considered as having a culture worthy of the name" (Alger and Alger 2003a: 75).

I used the Algers' research on textbooks to make a point. The failure to recognize culture among animals presents an analytic parallel to the failure to recognize self. One only needs to examine the research to learn that the evidence exists. The failure to look for and recognize the evidence not only signifies entrenched anthropocentrism, it also hints at disciplinary arrogance. This stems from the fear that including animals in the conversation about selfhood will somehow diminish human uniqueness. Acknowledging animal selfhood will mean we have to change not only the way we think about them, but the way we treat them. Most tellingly, the failure to recognize self leads to a refusal to enter the conversation about the moral standing of animals. I suggest that this is the most frightening aspect of animal selfhood for sociologists. As Jerolmack warns, the study of animal selfhood could result in human-animal studies "being dismissed as a thinly veiled, institutionalized branch of the animal rights movement (Jerolmack 2005: 651).

On first reading this, I thought of the comparison in human terms. Those who study race and ethnicity do not have to defend themselves against charges that they are supporting civil rights. Those who study gender inequality are not dismissed as feminists. However, we who study animals risk being disparaged and dismissed out of hand. This is speciesism, and it points to how the question of animal selfhood is relevant for the discipline.

Conclusion

The benefits to sociology from including animals in its studies have been amply documented by others. Clifton Bryant's now classic paper on "The Zoological Connection" (1979) outlines numerous potential avenues for sociological study. Bryant mentions, among others, the prevalence of animal metaphors in our language, animal imagery, artifacts, and labels in our material culture, animals as social problems, animals and work, and zoological crime. Arnold Arluke's research on animal experimentation and cruelty (e.g., 1988, 1989, 1991, 2004, 2006) reveals that the study of cruelty in its social context provides valuable insights into how the discipline and the culture at-large defines cruelty and determines what to do about it. Clifton Flynn's groundbreaking research on the role of animals in domestic violence concurs that "animal cruelty is a social phenomenon," requiring sociological study to counter decades of psychological framing (2001: 74; see also 1999a, b, 2000a,b,c). The work of Steven and Janet Alger, discussed in this paper, expands the sociological understanding of culture. Research by Clinton Sanders and Leslie Irvine,

also discussed here, broadens sociological theories of the mind and the self. These scholars, and others, have demonstrated that including animals in sociological research can only improve the discipline. My intention here is not to reinvent this wheel by providing yet more examples of how animals can enrich our knowledge. Rather, I want to emphasize that enriched knowledge brings increased responsibility. The question is not only, "what can animals do for sociology?" It is also one of "what can sociology do for animals?" Knowledge without practice simply highlights the question posed by Alfred McClung Lee (1978): "Sociology for Whom?" After several decades of systematic sociological research on interaction with non-human animals, it is time to put those research findings into practice. In the context of this paper, research that documents the accomplishment of selfhood among animals carries the obligation to recognize animals' moral standing.

Mead recognized a relationship between selfhood and moral standing, and explained the implications of a lack of self in this way:

> 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. (Mead [1934]1962: 183)

Quite simply, if animals cannot see themselves as objects, then they have no sense of what happens as happening to *them,* as individuals. Here, as in other instances, Mead's logic is outdated. Ample evidence shows that the future *does* exist for at least some species of animals. To be sure, it does not exist for them in the same sense as it does for human beings. We make elaborate plans for the future, imagining what we might do or become. Animals' lives pose no need for them to engage in this kind of planning. However, research shows that many animals do hold expectations, which is a solid indicator of having an idea of what the future might hold. For example, Bekoff's (1995) extensive research on canine play behavior reveals that dogs hold expectations. He found that some dogs "appear surprised when their play signals are responded to with aggression—they seem to expect that play will follow" (Allen and Bekoff 1997: 154; see also Lorenz 1953). Hunting, storing food, and building nests are all evidence that animals make plans for the future. Research has not yet determined whether animals take these actions instinctually or whether they actually think ahead. In the absence of reliable studies, it would be premature to assert that animals lack the ability to engage in planning. If the future exists for animals, then animals can see themselves as objects. If animals can see themselves as objects, then they have selves. If they have selves, then there are significant implications for the way we treat them and for their status in society.

The history of the discipline illustrates that simply including members of a marginalized group is not in itself transformative, either for the discipline or for the members of the group. For example, what is called the "add women and stir" approach, which merely incorporated women into existing scholarship, did little to challenge institutionalized sexism. However, feminist scholars (e.g., Smith 1990; Andersen and Collins 1992) made it clear that knowledge about women was embedded in material and social structures of power. Once women had a voice from their own standpoint, sociological knowledge was transformed *and transformative*. Because it addressed existing systems of sexist oppression from the standpoint of

those who experienced the effects of that oppression, knowledge gained in this way could begin to challenge sexism.

Scholars have pointed out that oppression seldom exists in isolation. As Nibert puts it, “the arrangements that lead to various forms of oppression are intricately woven together in such a way that the exploitation of one group frequently augments and compounds the mistreatment of others” (Nibert 2003: 6). Sociology has developed the tools to study sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression. However, the discipline has not yet challenged speciesism, which philosophers and others have compared to sexism and racism (see Singer [1975] 2002; Regan 1982; Speigel 1986). As Arluke points out, the neglect of animals in sociology “is strikingly ironic, given the discipline’s willingness in recent years to consider the plight of virtually every human minority” (Arluke 2003: 26, 2002). Several factors have led to this neglect. The first is the fear of or skepticism toward equating animals with humans. The increasing knowledge about the emotional and cognitive capacities of animals threatens the way sociologists have defined the social world (see Arluke 2003; Kruse 2003). If we come to believe that animals have selves, and therefore deserve at least some moral standing, the interests of animals will deserve equal consideration. Put differently, the recognition that humans and animals are more similar than they are different challenges sociology’s view that humans are sufficiently unique to merit their own field of study. To be sure, humans are indeed unique. But we need not deny that humans have special capacities in order to extend that recognition to animals, as well. Humans have gone to the moon, but a dog can be trained to sniff out cancer or bombs. Human uniqueness or superiority alone is not a sufficient argument for depriving animals of moral consideration. In any case, most of us would disagree that “might makes right.” However, this is the basis of our disciplinary neglect of non-human animals. Sociology can reveal what underpins the assumptions of human superiority. It can explore what makes it possible for people to think of some animals as food and others as family members. It can also explore the economic, political, and religious structures that uphold speciesism, even as other forms of oppression are regularly challenged.

The second reason that more sociologists have not incorporated non-human animals into our work is that it makes some of us uncomfortable. The majority of sociologists, like the majority of people, in general, prefer not to think about the ways that they are implicated in the abuse of animals. Put more simply, studying the oppression of animals makes us feel guilty. Exploring speciesism makes one aware of the oppression of animals and one’s own role in the process. Simply by eating meat and wearing leather, one is condoning institutionalized practices that cause an enormous amount of suffering to animals. This awareness also occurs when studying gender inequality, racism, homophobia, ageism, and other forms of discrimination. The resulting experience of consciousness-raising can be difficult to ignore.

Finally, some might argue that when one considers all the problems in the world, sociologists should devote our considerable research energies to solving some of the significant human issues. Poverty, environmental degradation, homelessness, war, and the threat of terrorism are all high on the social agenda. Some would argue that they are more pressing than the well-being of animals. The flaw in this argument is that all problems are connected, and the segmenting of issues is both illogical and morally questionable. For example, the moral status of animals as property justifies institutionalized cruelty on the basis that we humans can use them as we see fit. The ideology of superiority, coupled with “might makes right,” also underpins sexism, racism, and homophobia.

In sum, sociologists cannot ignore the issue of the moral status of animals simply by claiming that we have more important work to do on other issues. That is akin to saying that one has chosen to ignore sexism to better engage in opposition to war. The ideological assumptions that uphold our oppression of animals are well within the realm of sociological study. Animals deserve to be members of the moral community because they share our interests in not suffering. They have interests in not suffering because, like us, they can see themselves as objects. They have selves. The implications are too important for sociology to ignore.

Endnotes

i The notion of the self as a product of evolution has significant implications for sociological concepts. For example, if we accept the evolutionary account of the self, then we also deny that the self can be an illusion or a story, because natural selection works only on the heritable components of traits.

ii For additional discussions of Mead's oversights regarding animals, see Irvine 2003; Konecki 2005.

iii For another account of this instance, see Bekoff 2002: 86.

iv For another discussion of this passage from Mead, see Konecki 2005

v The finding that dogs perform better than great apes is relevant for animal rights because it defies the logic of the Great Ape Project, which seeks to include in the community of equals all great apes (human beings, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) based on considerable cognitive (and other) similarities.

vi Anthropocentrism was forever validated when Judaism, Islam, and Christianity endorsed its strong form, known as *dominionism*, or a divine right to rule over nature Some Biblical scholars claim that interpretations of the Hebrew that justify using animals as we please misrepresent the original Hebrew. Alternative interpretations translate the original as "stewardship," a form of anthropocentrism conveying a "God-given responsibility to care for the earth" (Linzey 1998, 287), rather than granting the right to rule over it (see also Cohen 1989).

vii Along similar lines, evidence that meerkats teach their young about hunting appeared in the journal *Science* 14 July 2006: (Vol. 313 no. 5784: 227 – 229). The authors point out that "the lack of evidence for teaching in species other than humans may reflect problems in producing unequivocal support for the occurrence of teaching, rather than the absence of teaching." (p. 227)

References

Alger, Janet M., and Steven F. Alger (1997) "Beyond Mead: Symbolic Interaction between Humans and Felines." *Society & Animals* 5:65-81.

------. (1999) "Cat Culture, Human Culture: An Ethnographic Study of a Cat Shelter." *Society and Animals* 7:199-218.

------. (2003a) *Cat Culture: The Social World of a Cat Shelter*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

------. (2003b) "Drawing the Line between Humans and Animals: An Examination of Introductory Sociology Textbooks." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23: 69-93.

Allen, Colin and Marc Bekoff (1997) *Species of Mind: The Philosophy and Biology of Cognitive Ethology*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Andersen, Margaret L. and Howard F. Taylor (2002) *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. 2nd edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins (1992) *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*: Belmont CA: Wadsworth.

Arluke, Arnold (1988) "Sacrificial Symbolism in Animal Experimentation: Object or Pet?" *Anthrozoös* 2:98-117.

------. (1989) "Living with Contradictions." *Anthrozoös* 3:90-99.

------. (1991) "Going Into the Closet with Science: Information Control among Animal Experimenters." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 20:306-330.

------. (2002) "A Sociology of Sociological Animal Studies." *Society & Animals* 10:369-374.

------. (2003) "Ethnozoology and the Future of Sociology." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23:26-45.

------. (2004) *Brute Force: Animal Police and the Challenge of Cruelty*. West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press.

------. (2006) *Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Arluke, Arnold and Clinton R. Sanders (1996) *Regarding Animals.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bekoff, Marc (1995) "Play Signals as Punctuation: The Structure of Social Play in Canids." *Behaviour* 132:419-29.

------. (2002) *Minding Animals: Awareness, Emotions, and Heart*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Blumstein, Daniel T. and Kenneth B. Armitage (1997) "Alarm Calling in Yellow-Bellied Marmots: The Meaning of Situationally Variable Alarm Calls." *Animal Behavior* 53:143-171.

Bogdan, Robert and Steven Taylor (1989) "Relationships with Severely Disabled People: The Social Construction of Humanness." *Social Problems* 36:135-148.

Brandt, Keri (2004) “A Language of their Own: An Interactionist Approach to Human-Horse Communication.” *Society & Animals* 12:299-316.

Brazelton, T. Berry (1984) “Four Stages in the Development of Mother-Infant Interaction.” Pp. 19-34 in *The Growing Child in Family and Society,* edited by Noboru Kobayashi and T. Berry Brazelton. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

Bryant, Clifton D. (1979) “The Zoological Connection: Animal-Related Human Behavior.” *Social Forces* 58:399-421.

Call, Josep (2003) The Use of Social Information in Chimpanzees and Dogs.” Pp. 263 – 286 in *Comparative Vertebrate Cognition*, edited by L. J. Rogers and G. Kaplan. New York: Kluwer.

Cohen, Jeremy (1989) *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Dawkins, Marian Stamp (1987) “Minding and Mattering.” Pp. 151-160 in *Mindwaves: Thoughts on Intelligence, Identity and Consciousness*, edited by Colin Blakemore and Susan Greenfield. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

------. (1998) *Through Our Eyes Only? The Search for Animal Consciousness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

de Waal, Franz B. M. (1999) “Cultural Primatology Comes of Age.” *Nature* 399:635-6.

Eaton, C. Gray. (1976) “The Social Order of Japanese Macaques.” *Scientific American* 235: 96-106.

Evans, Christopher S. (1997) “Referential Signals.” *Perspectives in Ethology* 12:99-143.

Flynn, Clifton P. (1999a) “Animal Abuse in Childhood and Later Support for Interpersonal Violence in Families.” *Society & Animals* 7:161-172.

------. (1999b) “Exploring the Link between Corporal Punishment and Children’s Cruelty to Animals.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61:971-981.

------. (2000a) “Why Family Professionals Can No Longer Ignore Violence toward Animals.” *Family Relations* 49:87-95.

------. (2000b) “Woman’s Best Friend: Pet Abuse and the Role of Companion Animals in the Lives of Battered Women.” *Violence Against Women* 6:162-177.

------. (2000c) “Battered Women and their Animal Companions: Symbolic Interaction between Humans and Nonhuman Animals.” *Society & Animals* 8:99-127.

------. (2001) “Ackowledging the ‘Zoological Connection’: A Sociological Analysis of Animal Cruelty.” *Society & Animals* 9:71-87.

Franklin, Adrian (1999) *Animals and Modern Cultures: A Sociology of Human-Animal Relations in Modernity*. London and Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Goodall, Jane (1986) *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press.

Goode, David (1994) *World without Words: The Social Construction of Children Born Deaf and Blind*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gopnik, Alison (1993) “Psychopsychology.” *Consciousness and Cognition* 2:264-280.

Greene, Erick and Thomas Meagher (1998) “Red Squirrels Produce Predator-Class Specific Alarm Calls.” *Animal Behavior* 55:511-518.

Griffin, Donald R. (1976) *The Question of Animal Awareness: Evolutionary Continuity of Mental Experience.* New York: Rockefeller University Press.

------. (1992) *Animal Minds.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gubrium, Jaber (1986) “The Social Preservation of Mind: The Alzheimer’s Disease Experience.” *Symbolic Interaction* 6:37-51.

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium (2000) *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Ingold, Tim (1994) "From Trust to Domination: An Alternative History of Human-Animal Relations." Pp. 1 – 22 in *Animals and Human Society*, edited by J. Serpell and A. Manning. London and New York: Routledge.

Irvine, Leslie (1999) *Codependent Forevermore: The Invention of Self in a Twelve Step Group*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

------. (2001) "The Power of Play." *Anthrozoös* 14:151-160.

------. (2003) “George’s Bulldog: What Mead’s Canine Companion Could Have Told Him About the Self.” *Sociological Origins* 3: 46-49

------. (2004a) *If You Tame Me: Understanding our Connection with Animals.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

------. (2004b) “Pampered or Enslaved? The Moral Dilemmas of Pets.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 24: 5-17

------. (2004c) “A Model of Animal Selfhood: Expanding Interactionist Possibilities.” *Symbolic Interaction* 27:3-21.

Jerolmack, Colin (2005) “Our Animals, Our Selves? Chipping Away the Human-Animal Divide.” *Sociological Forum* 20:651-660.

Kaplan, Gisela, and Lesley J. Rogers (2001) *Birds: Their Habits and Skills*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2005) “The Problem of Symbolic Interaction and of Constructing Self.” *Qualitative Sociology Review* 1(1). Retrieved December, 2006. (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/volume1.php)

Kruse, Corwin (2003) “Animal Studies and Sociology.” *Society & Animals* 10:375-379.

Lawrence, Elizabeth A. (1986) “Neoteny in American Perceptions of Animals.” *The Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology* 9: 41-54.

Lee, Alfred McClung (1978) *Sociology for Whom?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Linzey, Andrew (1998) "Christianity." Pp. 286-288 in *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, edited by Marc Bekoff. Westport CT: Greenwood.

Lorenz, Konrad (1952) *King Solomon’s Ring*. Translated by M.K. Wilson. London: Methuen.

------. (1953) *Man Meets Dog*. Translated by M.K. Wilson. New York and Tokyo: Kodansha.

Manser, Marta (2001) “The Acoustic Structure of Suricates’ Alarm Calls Varies Depending on Predator Type and the Level of Urgency.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* B: 2315-2324.

Marler, Peter and M. Tamura (1964) “Song ‘Dialects’ in Three Populations of White-Crowned Sparrows.” *Science* 146:1483-86.

Marler, Peter and Christopher Evans (1996) “Bird Calls: Just Emotional Displays or Something More?” *Ibis* 138:26-33.

Mead, George Herbert (1913) "The Social Self." *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 10: 374- 380.

------. ([1934] 1962) *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Myers, Jr. Olin E. (1998) Children and Animals *Social Development and Our Connections to Other Species.* Boulder: Westview Press.

------. (2003) “No Longer the Lonely Species: A Post-Mead Perspective on Animals and Sociology.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23:46-68.

Nibert, David (2002) *Animal Rights/Human Rights.* Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

------. (2003) “Humans and Other Animals: Sociology’s Moral and Intellectual Challenge.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23:5-23.

Noske, Barbara (1997) *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals.* Montreal, New York, London: Black Rose Books.

Pepperberg, Irene M. (1991) “A Communicative Approach to Animal Cognition: A Study of Conceptual Abilities of an African Grey Parrot.” Pp.153-186 in *Cognitive Ethology: The Minds of Other Animals*, edited by C.A. Ristau. Hillsdale. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pollner, Melvin and Lynn McDonald-Wikler (1985) “The Social Construction of Unreality: A Case Study of a Family’s Attribution of Competence to a Severely Retarded Child.” *Family Process* 24:241-54.

Povinelli, Daniel J., Kurt E. Nelson and Sarah T. Boysen (1990) “Inferences about Guessing and Knowing by Chimpanzees.” *Journal of Comparative Psychology* 104:203-210.

Povinelli, Daniel J., K.A. Parks and M.A. Novak (1991) “Do Rhesus Monkeys Attribute Knowledge and Ignorance to Others?” *Journal of Comparative Psychology* 105:318-325.

Regan, Tom (1982) *All That Dwell Therein: Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rocque, William (2003) “Body Talk: Identity and Narratives of Self in Families with Autistic Members.” Unpublished paper. Department of Sociology, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Rogers, Lesley J. and Gisela Kaplan (2004) “All Animals are *Not* Equal: The Interface between Scientific Knowledge and Legislation for Animal Rights.” Pp. 175-202 in *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, edited by Cass R. Sunstein and Martha C. Nussbaum. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ruvinsky, Anatole and Jeff Sampson (2001) *The Genetics of the Dog*. Wallingford CT: CABI Publishing.

Sanders, Clinton R. and Arnold Arluke (1993) "If Lions Could Speak: Investigating the Animal-Human Relationship and the Perspectives of Nonhuman Others." *The Sociological Quarterly* 34: 377-90.

Sanders, Clinton R. (1999) *Understanding Dogs: Living and Working with Canine Companions* . Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

------. (2000) "The Impact of Guide Dogs on the Identity of People with Visual Impairments." *Anthrozoös* 13:131-139.

------. (2003) "Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Close Relationships between Humans and Non-Human Animals." *Symbolic Interaction* 26:405-426.

Schwabe, Calvin (1994) "Animals in the Ancient World." Pp. 36-58 in *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives*, edited by Aubrey Manning and James Serpell. London and New York: Routledge.

Seyfarth, Robert M., Dorothy L. Cheney and Peter Marler (1980) "Vervet Monkey Alarm Calls: Semantic Communication in a Free Ranging Primate." *Animal Behavior* 28:1070-1094.

Singer, Peter ([1975] 2002) *Animal Liberation*. New York: HarperCollins.

Smith, Dorothy E. (1990) *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Spiegel, Marjorie (1996) *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*. New York: Mirror Books.

Stern, Daniel N. (1985) *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology.* New York: Basic Books.

Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall (1993) *The Hidden Life of Dogs*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

------. (1994) *The Tribe of Tiger: Cats and Their Culture*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

Thomas, Keith (1983) *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*. London: Allen Lane.

Thomasello, Michael and Joseph Call (1997) *Primate Cognition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tuan, Yi-Fu (1984) *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Vila, Carles, Jesus E. Maldondo and Robert K. Wayne (1999) "Phylogenetic Relationships, Evolution and Genetic Diversity of the Domestic Dog." *Journal of Heredity* 90:71-77.

Waskul, Dennis D. (2004) "RE: Thought is in signs, not in a brain lobe." SSSI Talk Discussion List Archives. Retrieved July, 2006 (http://venus.soci.niu.edu/~archives/SSSITALK/aug04/0276.html)

Wayne, Robert K. and E.A. Ostrander (1999) "Origin, Genetic Diversity, and Genome Structure of the Domestic Dog." *Bioessays* 21: 247-257.

Whiten, A., J. Goodall, W.C. McGrew, T. Nishida, V. Reynolds, Y. Sugiyama, C.E.G. Tutin, R.W. Wrangham and C. Boesch (1999) “Cultures in Chimpanzees.” *Nature* 399:682-85.

Wolch, Jennifer (1998) "Zoöpolis." Pp. 119-138 in *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*, edited by J. Wolch and J. Emel. London & New York: Verso.

Citation

Irvine, Leslie (2007) “The question of animal selves: Implications for sociological knowledge and practice.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Pru Hobson- West
University of Nottingham, UK

Beasts and boundaries: An introduction to animals in sociology, science and society

Abstract

Traditionally, sociology has spent much more time exploring relationships between humans, than between humans and other animals. However, this relative neglect is starting to be addressed. For sociologists interested in human identity construction, animals are symbolically important in functioning as a highly complex and ambiguous "other". Theoretical work analyses the blurring of the human-animal boundary as part of wider social shifts to postmodernity, whilst ethnographic research suggests that human and animal identities are not fixed but are constructed through interaction. After reviewing this literature, the second half of the paper concentrates on animals in science and shows how here too, animals (rodents and primates in particular) are symbolically ambiguous. In the laboratory, as in society, humans and animals have unstable identities. New genetic and computer technologies have attracted much sociological attention, and disagreements remain about the extent to which human-animal boundaries are fundamentally challenged. The value of sociologists' own categories has also been challenged, by those who argue that social scientists still persist in ignoring the experiences of animals themselves. This opens up notoriously difficult questions about animal agency. The paper has two main aims: First, to draw links between debates about animals in society and animals in science; and second, to highlight the ways in which sociologists interested in animals may benefit from approaches in Science and Technology Studies (STS).

Keywords

Human-animal boundary; Boundary-work; Science & Technology Studies; Identity; Ambiguity; Actor Network Theory

Animals in sociology

Defining what it is that separates humans from non-human animals has been an important task of moral philosophers for centuries. Descartes is often cited in these debates, for his famous (or infamous) notion of beasts as machines, without sentience and without moral standing. Against this view are critics who argue that animals have rights (e.g. Regan 1984), or have morally relevant interests that should be taken into account (e.g. Singer 1975) (see Garner 2005 for a recent review). For those who support these positions, to discriminate against animals on the basis of

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

their non-human status amounts to “speciesm”, in the same vein as racism or sexism (see Ryder 2005). Some of these philosophical debates are quite abstract but nevertheless have had a profound practical impact. In Jasper and Nelkin’s words, philosophers have served as midwives to the modern animal rights movement (1992: 90). More broadly, Lynch and Collins (1998) show how the subjects that Descartes was considering – about the distinctions between person, animal and machine - remain crucial to the social and cognitive sciences.

In contrast to significant philosophical consideration, the human-animal relationship, and the role of animals in general, have historically been less central to sociology. As Tovey writes, “to read most sociological texts, one might never know that society is populated by non-human as well as human animals” (2003: 197). There are three types of explanation for this traditional lack of attention: First, sociologists have traditionally focused their efforts on discussing relations *between humans* and the construction of social categories such as gender, ethnicity and class. Some may worry that the notion of oppression will become cheapened if speciesm is included as a form of discrimination (Arluke 2002); Second, sociologists may be wary of attracting charges of paternalism if we are seen to be “speaking for” animals (Munro 2005). However, this may partly reflect the “linguicentric” nature of contemporary sociology since G.H. Mead (Sanders 2003 and see Konecki 2005); And third, the relative neglect of animals as a topic of study may be part of a broader tendency to narrowly equate the social world with living humans. Given that anthropological research has shown that in non-Western societies, gods, plants and animals can also occupy social actor status, sociology has also been accused of an ethnocentric bias (Lindemann 2005).

However, the last few years have seen increasing sociological activity around human animal relations. This is particularly noticeable in the area of animal rights and social movement study. In the same journal issue as the 2002 Arluke article, Kruse argues that “the sociological literature, although somewhat sparse, is growing” (Kruse 2002: 375). This, he suggests, has been helped by new fora such as the *Society & Animals* journal and the acceptance by the American Sociological Association of a new section on this topic. In the UK, academic networks are still emerging, including the new British Sociological Association Animal/Human Studies Group (founded in 2006) and an ESRC research stream on animals and genomics. In addition, the first edition of *Qualitative Sociology Review* claims to “promote qualitative understanding of social phenomena, human being and other species” (Konecki 2005: 1). As will be become apparent in this article, the increasing sociological interest in animals is paralleled in other fields such as geography, history and Science and Technology Studies (STS). One theory is that this rising academic profile of animals is associated with a rising public profile of animal issues, and historical shifts in the human-animal boundary – more of which below.

As a researcher planning empirical work on this topic, this paper is motivated by the desire to make sense of many different strands of literature, and to draw some links between more traditional sociological accounts and work in STS. The discussion will hopefully be of interest to those not working on animal issues but who nevertheless may be intrigued by wider debates on boundaries or about the relationship between science and society. What follows is divided into two main sections: “Animals in Society” and “Animals in Science”. Under each heading I will first set the scene in terms of boundaries, then consider evidence of boundary blurring, and finally highlight the role of ambiguity and identity. As will be concluded, my own boundary-drawing between two domains of science and society is itself

problematic. The conclusion also provides some suggestions for future sociological research.

Animals in society

The importance of boundaries

For social scientists interested in the construction of (human) identity, animals may be of interest in so far as they function as the ultimate "other". For example, Franklin maintains that animals are "good to think with" (Franklin 1999: 9) and concludes that "the issue is not the ethical consideration of the 'other' but the moral consideration of 'ourselves'" (Franklin ibidem: 196). Michael also argues that "we get a partial grasp on who and what we are by getting a partial grasp on who and what animals are, and vice-versa" (2001: 214). One rationale for studying animals or the human-animal boundary is thus to better understand what it means to be a member of human society.

Another research agenda is to investigate the consequences of human-animal boundary-drawing. A result of identifying animals as other is that they are left out of the moral universe. Using Bauman's (1990; 1989) work on boundaries, Roger Yates (2004), a sociologist and animal activist argues that:

> Boundaries effectively produce 'moral distance' with regard to constructed 'others'; thus boundaries keep 'them' at bay, serving to emphasise distance and difference…A sufficiency of distance (social and moral) can apparently result in untold cruelty and utter disregard for the rights of those successfully classified as 'other'.

For the author, this "untold cruelty" includes the way that animals are routinely used by humans as if they were food, clothing, research models, or sources of entertainment. However, as Yates discusses, this kind of analysis has implications beyond the topic of human-animal relations and can arguably tell us much about human behaviour in general. For example, rather than analysing the Holocaust as a one-off event or a temporary surfacing of pre-modern barbarism, Bauman (1991;1989) claims that mass murder was the result of the very modern tendency to exclude whole groups of beings from the moral universe. This exclusion is often achieved by constructing the other as *less than human* or *non-human*, a strategy also highlighted by Ritvo (1995), and by feminist authors (e.g. Birke 1994). Building again on Bauman's ideas, Yates discusses how children are taught to see animals as the other, and learn the ability to distinguish between animals as pets and, through moral distancing, those animals that can be eaten.

In summary, these arguments suggest that the drawing of boundaries is a crucial part of what it means to be human, and goes wider than just seeing the animal as other. In addition, boundary drawing is not just an intellectual exercise but has 'real world' and sometimes dramatic consequences. Assuming this is so, the next section steps back to consider whether and how boundaries have shifted over time.

Boundary blurring in society

In his brief summary of the literature, Mike Michael states that before the rise of science and the Enlightenment, "the difference between human culture and non-human nature was blurred" (Michael 2001: 212). Most people had routine contact with animals as part of everyday life. From the thirteenth to the early eighteenth centuries, there are even cases of animals being tried for crimes and treated as

responsible actors in law (Lindemann 2005). The birth of modernity heralded the strict separation of nature and culture (Latour 1993[i]). In terms of the human-animal relationship, increasing urbanisation reduced daily contact and resulted in a romanticisation of animals and nature (Thomas 1983). This romanticisation contributed to a symbolic separation of humans and animals.

According to Franklin (1999) the human-animal boundary has once again been dismantled via three processes associated with a shift from modernity to postmodernity. First, he identifies a growing *misanthropy*. Modernity relied on a positive view of humanity with animals seen as a legitimate resource to aid human progress. Medical research and industrial husbandry could thus be justified by reference to the greater (human) good. However, this sanguine view of humanity is now replaced by a view of humanity as "a species which is out of control, deranged, sick or insane" (Franklin ibidem: 54). As the human capacity to destroy the environment became more apparent, so did the view that animal and human interests are tied up together. "It became possible therefore to identify with animals under conditions of common adversity" (Franklin ibidem: 55).

Second, Franklin uses Giddens to argue that *ontological insecurity* is changing the relationship between humans and animals. Ontological insecurity is associated with the "churning nature of postmodernity", and the anxiety that this state of constant flux promotes. In response to social and economic changes, the personal ties that used to morally bind (for example in marriage) have now become weakened. Franklin thinks that our relationship with pets or companion animals is highly significant and claims that "Animals become substitute love objects and companions precisely because they can be involved in enduring relations of mutual dependency" (Franklin 1999: 57). This potentially disrupts the old boundary between human and animal in terms of who/what is considered part of intimate personal relationships.

And thirdly, there is the notion of *risk-reflexivity*. Before the 1970s it was generally assumed that there was a wild area where animals were able to roam free from human interference. This has changed so that "there is no wilderness or perhaps no nature since everything everywhere is subject to human control" (Franklin 1999: 59). According to Beck, current "risk society" is characterised by new catastrophic environmental risks that can impact on the whole planet, for example as a result of a nuclear technology. The impact is a loss of distinction between nature and culture (cited in Tovey 2003: 205), and an associated weakening of the boundary between human and animal. Much of the literature taps in to one of more of these themes to consider "the porosity, ontological veracity, fluidity, blurring and relational configuration of the longstanding dividing line between society and nature" (Buller and Morris 2003:216).

Accounts such as Franklin's could be criticised for implying an oversimplified historical trajectory. For Tovey, for example, there is in fact "no single 'modernist' understanding of these boundaries" (Tovey 2003: 206). It is also important to note here that some of the theoretical accounts of postmodernity or risk society are written with Western society in mind, and appear to underplay cultural difference[ii]. However, the main point to take forward from this section is that the boundaries between human and animal, and the nature of the relationship between human and animal, are not fixed or static. Even those who may feel that the literature overemphasises macro social shifts can still agree that the human/animal boundary is socially and historically constructed, and relates to broader sociological topics such as nature or risk. A later section will discuss how this argument is also applicable to science. The next section looks in more detail at the symbolic meaning of the animal category.

Ambiguity and identity

For sociologists interested in human identity construction, the idea of animals as other is clearly a useful starting point, as is the recognition that the relationship between humans and animals has shifted over time. However, this does not mean that there is a fixed animal identity. Citing Franklin's work, Michael (2001: 214) argues that the symbolic role of animals has become "astonishingly complex". In short, "animals are symbolically very slippery, impure [and] ambiguous". Humans construct animals as symbolising both sides of dichotomies such as wild/tame, subject/object, and victim/aggressor (Michael ibidem; and see Haraway 1989). Michael uses this observation to explain why there is current public unease about new genetic technologies: The genetic modification or "technical bespoking" of animals means that they become understood as objects "off the peg" that can be made. This potentially reduces their symbolic ambiguity and hence the capacity of animals to help articulate human identity. In other words, new technology may be resisted because it can result in a *narrowing* of meaning. Turkle (2006) also expresses similar worries about narrowing, in her case by looking at machines: She concludes that people's relationships with a new generation of robots or "relational objects" may be compelling and educational, but ultimately cannot adequately reflect the ambivalence and complexity of the human life-cycle.

Recognising the importance of symbolic ambiguity has relevance for how sociologists analyse public attitudes. Poll data on a variety of topics has traditionally been used to show a public misunderstanding of science or to bemoan the public's attitude as "anti-science" (Hobson-West 2005). By contrast, Michael cites those who claim that recent polls on public attitudes to animal testing show their ability to weigh up cost and benefit issues. However, Michael's (2001) own interpretation of such research is more persuasive: that such surveys actually reveal a cultural volatility, based on our multiple identities in relation to animals. The implication is that no matter how much ethicists try to:

> distil the essence of moral arguments there is underpinning practical moral discussion a deep-seated ambivalence borne of the profound symbolic ambiguity of animal (and thus human) identities. (Michael 2001: 216)

This type of argument represents a challenge for social scientists to develop sufficiently open research methodologies that enable this ambivalence to be adequately captured and explored.

In addition to highlighting the symbolic ambivalence of animals, another strand of sociological thinking points out that animal and human identities are constructed *though interaction.* For example, Sanders (2003) shows how humans and their companion animals cooperatively create an "interspecies culture' and, when out in public, assume a couple identity and engage in collective action. The implication drawn is that sociologists should "reject (or at least bracket) conventional social scientific and cultural beliefs about the qualitative differences between human and non-human animals" (Sanders ibidem: 420). Whilst likely to be sympathetic to this conclusion, other ethnographers have problems with interviews as a source of data for exploring interaction. Using video and a conversational analytic approach, Laurier, Maze and Lundin (2006) show how dog walking in a park is a joint accomplishment between dog and human.

To recap, this paper has so far suggested that the topic of boundaries is a useful theoretical starting point and also shown how the human-animal boundary has shifted over time. I have also highlighted the complex symbolic ambiguity of animals,

and some methodological implications for sociologists. The Introduction claimed that there has been a rising sociological interest in this topic. Arguably this is partly associated with some of the shifts and boundary blurring characteristics of postmodernity.

Despite this general increase in scholarship, however, Tovey argues that "animals remain largely invisible in social science texts", even more recent ones (2003:196). This is not to say that topics involving animals are not studied at all, but rather that *the way* animals are talked about in sociology – as whole species or as part of nature – still means that their own experience is ignored. For example, academic discussion of BSE ("mad cow disease") is inevitably about consequences for humans, rather than animals. What is needed, she claims, is a new paradigm to;

> introduce into sociology the recognition that we are not alone in the world, that other animal species exist, have similar environmental experiences to our own, and are in many cases included within significant social relationships. (Tovey ibidem: 210)

This point is similar to Fudge's (2006) argument about the traditional exclusion of animals from the way we write history, and the need for a new approach which includes animals but crucially avoids seeing them as "blank pages onto which humans wrote their own perceptions". These research strands gets us into notoriously difficult debates about whether animals can be said to have actor status or *agency*.

Following the work of Callon and Latour, one theoretical approach, for which the question of non-human agency is central, is Actor Network Theory (ANT). In 1986, Michel Callon wrote a piece about the way a group of research scientists tried to highlight and respond to declining scallop populations in St. Brieuc Bay, France. Callon proposed a "sociology of translation" which starts with various principles. These principles include "free association", which requires the analyst to abandon prior distinctions between the natural and the social, and commit to following the actor to see how *they* define things. Furthermore, Callon argues that identity and goals are formed and adjusted through action. Building on the work of Bloor (1976), the principle of "generalised symmetry" requires that we treat all sides in a controversy equally, but also that we use the same language to describe natural and social actors – whether they are humans, animals, technologies or microbes. Hence, in the St. Brieuc Bay example, Callon constructs scallops as actors –or "actants" - who can negotiate and even dissent from the process instigated by the scientists. Through a process of "inscription" (Latour 1990), the scallops are also represented in the conference rooms, by graphs, tables and statistics. Overall, Callon argues that before the controversy, the fisherman, scallops and researchers were separate and didn't communicate with each other. By the end of the process, these actors had been unified in an association or network. In other words, what Latour and Callon demonstrate is that order is made up, not just of social groupings of humans, but of *mixtures* of humans and non-humans (Harbers and Koenis 1996).

Not surprisingly, such arguments have generated a huge amount of criticism and debate within STS. For example, Collins and Yearley (1992) object to way that animals and non-humans are discussed and want to maintain the pivotal role for humans. They claim that ANT may appear to be philosophically radical but, in practice, is highly conservative, as indicated by Callon's reliance on scientific accounts of scallop behaviour. My main aim here, however, is to note how ANT ideas have proved useful to a wider set of researchers. For example, Laurier et al do not adopt ANT explicitly but do acknowledge that this approach shares some intellectual

affinity with their own. By arguing that dog walking is a joint accomplishment, Laurier et al (2006) seem to be granting a certain agency to non-humans. They are also stressing the joint nature of action, in a similar way that Michael (2000) looks at how objects, humans and machines are combined as a singularity or unit. Likewise, Fudge (2006) argues that animals in history are "change-making creatures", rather than simply recipients of human action. For Fudge, animals can be said to have agency, *if* we appreciate that agency is relational, rather than something static that is possessed by an individual. Sociologists committed to the study of interaction or networks may thus find aspects of ANT attractive.

What this brief reference to ANT has hopefully alluded to is the idea that it is possible to look at human-animal relationships, without getting totally hung up on explicating the differences, at least not in terms of agency. If we start from the position that society is *performed*, rather than a kind of vessel in which social action takes place, then it becomes possible to accept Strum and Latour's argument (1999:199) that animals, for example, baboons, are "social players actively negotiating and renegotiating what their society is and what it will be". Note that these authors still recognise key empirical differences between human and baboon societies. However, these differences are not about whether or not agency is possessed. Rather, the difference is that humans possess a wider variety of practical means by which to implement their vision of social change, and can thus create more stable alliances or networks.

Animals in science

The importance of boundaries

The start of this paper cited Yates (2004), and his use of sociological work on boundaries to explain the exclusion of animals from the moral community. In some respects, this strand of sociological thinking ties in with STS research around the idea of "boundary-work" in science (Gieryn 1983). Gieryn sidesteps epistemic debates, about whether the production of scientific knowledge is different to other systems of knowledge, to ask how actors draw boundaries between science and non-science in day-to-day practice. Like the privilege afforded to those designated human, the science label carries with it certain social, cultural and economic advantages. One of the ways that boundary-work is achieved is through the expulsion of others considered by insiders to be non-real members (Gieryn 1995). These "others" that actors try to exclude could be maverick scientists or maverick ideas. In competing for resources or authority over a particular topic, the other could even be whole fields such as politics (Jasanoff 1990), or other sub-disciplines of science. It seems that the boundary drawing discussed at the start of the article under the heading of "society" also occurs in relation to science. So how can this help our understanding of animals?

First, we might accept that the social meaning of the human-animal boundary is socially and historically constructed, but expect that surely there must be stability and agreement within science about species differentiation. However, several authors point out that there is no one universally accepted definition of species. Rather, ecologists tend to stress ecological niches, biologists interested in evolution will focus on evolution, whilst those interested in morphology focus on morphological characteristics. The implication is that even the concept of species is "interest relative" and a social construction (see Yates 2004). Furthermore, scientists are likely to engage in boundary-work to protect their favoured definitions. Indeed, as Ritvo (1997) has shown, all classification exercises (including those designated as

"scientific") reflect social and political commitments, rather than what "just is" (and see Douglas 1966). In other words, science is not the place to look if you are expecting a neat, universal, stable or "value-free" definition of the human-animal boundary.

Second, as well as producing knowledge about differences between species, science as a form of work has a very practical association with animals: Animals have a crucial role to play in the day-to-day practice of many labs, as models for human diseases or as testers of pharmaceutical safety and efficacy. This role for animals has ancient origins and Maehle and Tröhler (1987) discuss early examples of vivisection, dating as far back as 500BC. However, sociologists need to explain how and why vivisection became so dominant by the end of the nineteenth century. One explanation relates to the emergence of experimental psychology which used animal experimentation as a tool of legitimisation. The same analysis is also applicable to medicine: The desire to appear more like a science and less like an art meant a willingness to embrace the experimental method which in turn meant embracing vivisection (Rupke 1987). A sociology of the professions type analysis, or the concept of boundary-work (this time between art/science or between experimental psychology/other fields), may thus help explain the current importance of animal use in biomedical science.

And third, the idea of boundaries is also relevant for sociologists interested in studying the identity of laboratory scientists. As will be discussed later, ethnographic research suggests that scientists have a complex role to perform and have a highly ambivalent relationship with laboratory animals. Scientists themselves draw boundaries – for example between themselves and other scientists, between the more "rational" public and animal rights protesters, and between animals they are personally willing to experiment on and those they are not (Michael and Birke 1994). Birke, Arluke and Michael (forthcoming) discuss how biology students have to *learn* to draw some of these boundaries and to manage complex identities. This suggests that moral boundary drawing is a fundamental part of the socialisation of scientists, just as with the socialisation of children.

Boundary blurring in science

Taking a long historical perspective on the human-animal boundary, Ritvo (1995) argues that;

> Since the renaissance, scientific consensus has gradually diverged from the traditional assertion of absolute, unbridgeable separation and shifted toward acknowledging relationship – and an ever closer relationship at that. (p. 483)

It would be possible to object to the sweep of such an argument, in the same way that critics cited above have objected to some accounts of boundary-blurring in postmodernity. As Ritvo herself shows, there has been significant resistance to the idea of human-animal similarity and heated debates in different periods over exactly how to define the human. Whilst recognising the inherent problems with defining epochs and universal shifts, it is still interesting to consider whether new developments in science and technology have changed the construction of the human/animal boundary and the meaning of human and animal.

At a recent conference on animals, ethics and biotechnology in Washington DC[iii], some of the speakers were at pains to stress that human selective breeding of animals in agriculture has being going on for centuries and has been relatively un-

remarked upon. To focus so much debate on new genetic techniques is thus to unfairly expect these techniques to shoulder the entire ethical burden. In response, Mike Appleby from World Society for the Protection of Animals argued that "genetic engineering sharpens the questions". For critics, then, the increasing standardisation and commodification of animals makes it easier to see pre-existing problems with agricultural or biomedical processes. The use of new genetic technologies may also serve to galvanise opposition. As Munro warns, genetic engineering, the production of hybrids, and the associated altering of an animal's telos may "unite animal lovers, environmentalists, consumer and health advocates, as well as ordinary God-fearing carnivores" (Munro 2005: 190). Focus group research into UK public attitudes to genetically modified animals does suggest deep concern about "going against nature" (Macnaghten 2004). Whilst recognising that hybrids are not new (Latour 1993) and boundaries were probably never fixed, we can be fairly confident that "genomics and associated biotechnologies offer new levels of analysis and new practices for the *continued revision* of the human-animal conceptual coupling" (Harvey 2006, my emphasis).

So how are humans distinguished from other animals in science? As we have already seen, there is no consensus on the definition of a species. The assumption that language or tool use can help draw distinctions between humans and animals has also been challenged by recent animal behaviour studies. More strikingly, genetic research, and the claim that humans and chimp genes are 98.7% identical in their DNA sequence (cited in Harvey 2006), arguably points to similarity. Animal activists have used this finding to restate what they see as a "contradictory logic"; where animals are seen as biologically similar enough to humans to serve as good research models but different enough to morally justify their sacrifice (Urbanik 2006).

There is some evidence that these questions of similarity and difference are debated within "the scientific community", although more detailed ethnographic research on this specific issue would be useful. In a fascinating opinion piece published in *Trends in Biotechnology*, Hoeyer and Koch (2006) discuss how functional genomics (the study of gene function and interaction) allows a more intensive comparison between species. The finding that sequences of the human genome are also found in other animals has significant implications: "With the indistinctiveness of humanness, the legitimacy of sacrificing the 'non-human' for the sake of the 'human' is challenged" (Hoeyer and Koch ibidem: 387). In conclusion, they argue, "functional genomics has a price". If it abandons anthropocentrism then the moral foundations of animal research are shattered. On the other hand, clinging to anthropocentrism and the continued infliction of suffering on animals might actually erode public trust in science and, ironically, erode our respect for what it means to be human. "In summary, the problem we need to address is a research practice that undermines its own legitimising principle" (Hoeyer and Koch ibidem: 388). The point about eroding respect for humanity sounds very similar to the claim, cited earlier, that new genetics may potentially disrupt processes of human identity construction (Michael 2001).

Others have come to a different conclusion about the impact of new developments in science and technology. Urbanik (2006) builds on recent developments in animal geography, a field which claims to unite concepts of place, identity and ethics. She argues that although the creation of hybrids such as transgenic mice is significant, laboratory researchers themselves have not reconceptualised the way they see the mouse as a model. On the contrary, Urbanik argues that the creation and patenting of animals like Oncomouse[iv] suggest an uncritical acceptance of the mouse as just another research tool, devoid of

subjectivity. Advances in our understanding of genetic connections with animals have explicitly *not* led to a reduction in speciesism. Humans have kept their (superior) identity intact.

Furthermore, Urbanik argues that this continued speciesism is visible in the arena of social theorising, for example in the discussion of hybridity by Haraway (1997) and Whatmore (2002). To map "technoscientific hybrid geographies", as these authors aim at, does not necessarily promote a more relational and ethical way of treating animals. To move forward, Urbanik wants geography to focus more on animal subjectivities, and what they themselves are doing. This echoes Tovey's criticism (cited above), that sociologists who do talk about animals continue to ignore animals' own experiences. It also chimes with a recent review which argues that academic research on cloning, genetic modification and xenotransplantation, still focuses on what these technologies might mean for humans, for example in terms of identity (Michael 2001) or regulation (Brown and Michael 2004); "What is happening to *the animal* is inconspicuous" (Harvey 2006: 2, original emphasis).

As well as focusing on new genetic techniques, other authors have looked at how human and animal boundaries have been changed by the application of new computer technologies. The production of a new generation of robots has already been mentioned (Turkle 2006). Another fascinating example in the field of STS is Fleischmann's (2003) US based research on cyberfrogs. Cyberfrogs are computer generated frogs which can be used as alternatives to dissection in school science lessons. Fleishmann shows how the manufacturers of cyberfrogs and animal advocacy organisations both benefit from their alliance with each other (see Hess 2006 for other examples of social movement-technology alliances). As well as arguing that the cyberfrogs are cyborgs that unite the physical and virtual worlds (Haraway 1991), Fleishmann claims that they should be understood as 'boundary-objects' (Star and Griesemer 1989), because of the way that they unite the two domains of information technology and animal advocacy. Social movements that utilise boundary objects and engage in boundary-work have been labeled as "boundary movements" (Brown et al 2004), in order to capture the way they blur categories, for example between expert and lay identities (see Epstein 1996; Eden, Donaldson and Walker 2006). Scholars interested in studying political institutions have also identified "boundary organizations" that straddle the apparent science-politics boundary (see Raman 2005). The question of boundaries and boundary blurring thus seems to be a key research trend, beyond the issue of human-animal boundaries.

Ambiguity and identity

Thus far, the discussion of "Animals in Science" has tried to show how boundaries and boundary-work matter, and how the human-animal boundary has arguably shifted and blurred over time. I have also alluded to the implications that this has for human identity. This section will concentrate more explicitly on the question of identity and look at the multiple constructions of the laboratory animal.

Existing accounts differ in their detail, but all seem to stress the ambivalent role and complex symbolism of the lab animal. Birke (2003) captures this particularly well by highlighting two intertwined strands of metaphor. First, lab animals have come to represent scientific endeavour and medical progress. Lab rodents in particular now "stand alongside the ubiquitous double helix as icons of the laboratory in western culture". Given the rich cultural symbolism of rats as disease carriers, this representation is particularly striking. In short, "the rodents themselves are

transformed from evil, disease-full vermin into sanitized, germ free angels of mercy". After studying the adverts used by animal breeding companies to sell their products, Arluke (1994) also noted the construction of the lab animal as pure and uncontaminated. Birke's second metaphorical strand is of the lab animal (and particularly the laboratory rodent) as "not quite an animal". All lab animals are "doubly othered ethically"; they are other to humans, as was discussed earlier, but are also other to other animals, and are thus subject to treatment that would usually be prohibited outside the lab.

In order to become "not quite an animal", the animal needs to change its symbolic status. In his classic lab study of neuroscientists, Lynch (1988) discusses how the animal is gradually transformed from a sentient, holistic *naturalistic* individual, which is the animal of common sense and the one campaigned for by animal activists, into an *analytic* object. The latter is understood as data, as a cultural artefact or sacred object. Through a process of inscription, the eventual result is a tiny set of figures, just as with the transformation of Callon's scallops into graphs. In Latour's memorable phrase, lab practice is devoted to "the transformation of rats and chemicals into paper" (1990: 22). Lynch suggests that the scientists' use of the "sacrifice" metaphor to describe the killing of animals is not simply euphemistic but actually hints at some of the transformation in meaning that is going on. Arluke (1992: 34) also picks up on this and argues that the term is the primary device for coping with, and giving meaning to, animal death in the laboratory.

Other studies have concluded that the "complete objectification of animals is difficult" and that laboratory workers do often acknowledge lab animals as sentient, sometimes affording them pet status (Arluke 1990:199). Many scientists also express significant discomfort, emotion and ambivalence about their work and their own identity (Arluke 1992; Birke et al forthcoming). Evidence also suggests an anthropomorphisation of animals, so that "lab animals can be seen and treated simultaneously as more object-like and more-human like than they in fact are" (Arluke 1994: 156). Overall, the literature suggests that the picture is highly complex, with competing constructions that coexist.

Indeed, Lynch himself wants to stress the interdependency of the relationship between the naturalistic and analytic animal; he is not simply saying that the animal moves from the natural into a completely divorced cultural domain. Rather, Lynch (1988) wants to show how the latter is derived from the former:

> The relation between the naturalistic and analytic animal is not simply a dichotomous one. The naturalistic animal provides the conditions for achieving its analytic counterpart. (p. 280)

For example, scientists still need to use everyday "subjugated" understandings of how to handle living animals, even if this tacit knowledge is written out of official accounts. The implication for sociologists of science is that whilst science may not openly acknowledge these common sense or cultural understandings, it is nevertheless reliant on them. For our purposes, the important implication is that even in science, too often assumed to be a neutral, objective space, uncluttered by culture, the animal still has complex meanings and representations. These meanings have to be carefully negotiated by laboratory scientists when explaining their actions to each other and a wider audience. Echoing the sociological work cited above on the interactional nature of identity, the identities of scientists, publics and lab animals construct and depend on each other (Birke, Arluke and Michael forthcoming).

Discussion of the "identity of scientists" should not be taken to imply that there is a single thing called a scientific identity, especially not in relation to animal

research. Perspectives differ within the research hierarchy; between principal investigators, research technicians, animal caretakers and veterinaries (Arluke 1990; Arluke and Groves 1998). Research also shows a difference in how these various groups learn to deal with the public "stigma" of their work (Birke, Arluke and Michael forthcoming). Similarly, discussion of "animals" should not detract from the differences in how species are treated (however we define species). As already implied, rodents have a particularly important place in the modern laboratory. In the UK, for example, rodents accounted for 85% of the total number of procedures carried out in 2005 (Home Office 2006). There is also a long and interesting history of how mice were standardised to become *the* research model of choice (Rader 2004).

To take another example, primates occupy a particularly significant place in ethical debates and are the subject of widespread media interest, (e.g. BBC 2000), policy examination (e.g. Weatherall 2006), and social science research. Drawing on Haraway's work, Rees (2001) argues that non-human primates occupy a space in western culture that is highly confused and contested (and see Ritvo 1995 for a historical trajectory). Rees interviewed primatologists who demonstrate a keen awareness of the way their objects of study are seen as straddling the nature/culture boundary. If primates are located at this boundary, what can debates in palaeoanthropology about "missing links" tell us? After studying a particularly controversial episode of where an apparent human-ape chimera was found in 1912, Goulden (2007) suggests that, paradoxically, the missing link concept *protects* the human-animal dichotomy by creating a "literal no-man's land between the two frontlines", thereby side-stepping potentially difficult questions. One of his conclusions is that altering our standard human-animal binary would result in considerable practical and philosophical costs to humans. This sounds similar to Hoeyer and Koch's (2006) warning that "functional genomics has a price", because of the potential impacts of human-animal boundary breakdown.

Conclusion: Animals in science/society

In reviewing sociological and other social scientific literature, this article has identified interesting links between debates about animals in society and animals in science. This was achieved by utilising three conceptual themes: boundaries, boundary change or boundary blurring, and ambiguity and identity.

First, following Bauman (1991; 1990; 1989), boundary-drawing was revealed to be an important part of modern human activity that goes far beyond the human/animal dichotomy, although designating the other as animal or less than human does appear to be a particularly important strategy. Symbolic othering was shown to have serious consequences. Gieryn's (1983) concept of boundary-work is a useful way of understanding a diverse range of phenomena relevant to the animal issue, from the historical rise of vivisection as a legitimate scientific methodology (Rupke 1987), to the discourses of laboratory scientists trying to negotiate and explain their own position (Michael and Birke 1994). Overall the conclusion is not just that boundary-drawing is a political or strategic activity, but that the boundaries themselves – and thus the categories delineated by boundaries – are themselves neither stable nor politically neutral. Human and animal categories are no exception.

The second conceptual theme was boundary blurring. If we take Franklin's (1999) trajectory seriously, then a partial breakdown in the cultural boundary between human and animal is part of a broader postmodern (re)blurring of dichotomies such as nature and culture. New technologies, and the creation of hybrids or cyborgs, are just one mechanism by which these boundaries are blurred. In this context, asking

questions about what separates humans and animals (or perhaps, normatively, what *should* separate humans and animals), and whether humans have the right to experiment on other species, are to be expected. The rising social scientific interest in animals and in science and technology is evidence that the birth of apparently new objects, whether transgenic mice (e.g. Urbanik 2006) or boundary movements in health (Brown et al. 2004), do enable us to "sharpen the questions". Of course, it is always possible to overstate epoch changes; as historical work shows, boundaries have always been contested and multiple definitions of species predate any cracking of genomes. Overall, analysts should not get so excited by instances of boundary blurring that they forget to explain how categories and binaries become stable, and are often extremely resilient to change.

Third, the paper identified themes of ambiguity and identity as vital for those studying human-animal relations or boundaries. Ethnographic work highlighting the symbolic ambiguity of the laboratory animal, and animals in general, is particularly compelling. The issue of whether sociologists should interpret this ambiguity/complexity as persuasive evidence for the instability or breakdown of dichotomies is still open to question. The argument that the identity of lab animals, publics and scientists are constructed through and depend on each other (Birke, Arluke and Michael forthcoming), will not appear particularly controversial to sociologists who have long argued that identity is produced in action (e.g. Sanders 2003).

That I have succeeded in drawing links between literatures by applying the same broad conceptual tools to look at animals in science and animals in society should not be seen as surprising, given the science and society are not really two separate domains. Indeed, the entire field known as STS was originally energised by the idea that science is just another social activity. This is not to deliberately denigrate science or scientists, but rather to encourage research which looks at what actually goes on scientific practice, and how the common construction of science as neutral and separate from society, politics, economics and so on, is achieved and contested.

With this in mind, is not the structure of this article evidence of my own boundary-work? Whilst eager to draw links and associations, critics could object that I still chose to utilise two separate headings of science and society. One explicit way of trying to capture the interdependency of science, technology and society, but without promoting determinism, is to adopt the concept of *co-production* (Jasanoff 2004). This approach demands that the analyst investigates how the ordering of nature (through knowledge and technology) and the ordering of society (through power and culture) simultaneously underwrite each other. The methodological challenge of ensuring the capture of complexity and ambiguity has already been identified above. My interpretation of co-production is that we need to show how scientific theories of what constitute human or animal nature are related to cultural understandings of human-animal boundaries. However, at the same time, we also need to demonstrate how regulations on animal research, for example, depend on ideas of species and sentience, concepts that are themselves constructed through scientific experimentation.

Another conclusion of this paper is that sociologists interested in human-animal boundaries will find it difficult to avoid tricky questions about animal agency. To some extent, therefore, traditional disciplinary anxiety about attracting charges of paternalism (Munro 2005), are understandable. Despite increases in sociological attention, critics such as Tovey (2003) and Urbanik (2006) still argue that the way we think and write about animals is problematic. In short, the experiences or motivations

of animals themselves are seen as unimportant, or are lost within broader categories of species, nature, or symbolic identity. For some sociologists, this situation will be seen as wholly justified. For others who would like the discipline to at least try to accommodate animals as social actors, work within STS may be able to help. Admittedly, ANT was designed to accommodate all non-human entities, not just animals, and critics could object that, at the end of the day, the fundamental "aliveness" of the scallop is lost through the comparison with artefacts. This may indeed be a fair point. If so, then the next question becomes: What is the meaning of aliveness, and what distinguishes human aliveness from scallop aliveness? We are back, it seems, to debating with Descartes.

Endnotes

i In *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour (1993) argues that modernity relies on the theoretical separation of nature and culture. Paradoxically, however, our continued attempts at *purification* actually results in *translation*, or the production of hybrids of human and non-human objects. For a classic account of purification and how culture deals with anomalies see Douglas (1966). Latour's ideas on actor networks and agency are returned to later in my article.

ii Jasanoff (2004: 14) writes that "Cultural specificity survives with astonishing resilience in the face of the leveling forces of modernity". Applied to animals, this suggests that there is no universal "human-animal boundary". In short, relationships between humans and animals differ between cultures, religions and regions. A full discussion of this is beyond the scope of this particular paper.

iii *Animal Biotechnology: Considering Ethical Issues* (2006) Conference sponsored by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology and Michigan State University, October 18, Washington D.C.

iv Oncomouse is a transgenic mouse with an induced mutation of a human gene that is linked to the development of breast cancer. Oncomouse became the first multi-cellular living organism to be patented in 1988 (Urbanik 2006 and see Haraway 1997).

Acknowledgements

Early ideas for this paper were presented at *Animal-Human Boundaries: Disciplinary and Spatial Perspectives,* a workshop at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, November 9, 2006. My thanks to the workshop participants for their contributions, and to Nottingham colleagues for their comments on the final version. This article is drawn from ongoing research in the UK on the use of animals in science funded through a Wellcome Trust Fellowship (grant number 078876).

References

Arluke, Arnold (1990) "Moral Elevation in Medical Research." *Advances in Medical Sociology* 1:189-204.

------. (1992) "Trapped in a Guilt Cage." *New Scientist* 1815:33-35.

------. (1994) "We Build a Better Beagle." *Qualitative Sociology* 17 (2): 143-158.

------. (2002) "A Sociology of Sociological Animal Studies." *Society & Animals* 10 (4): 369-374.

Arluke, Arnold and Julian Groves (1998) "Pushing the Boundaries: Scientists in the Public Arena." Pp. 145-164 in *Responsible Conduct in Research*, edited by L. Hart. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Oxford: Polity.

------. (1990) *Thinking Sociologically: An Introduction for Everyone.* Oxford: Blackwell.

------. (1991) *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.

BBC (2000) "Cousins." Retrieved February 23, 2007 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/programmes/tv/cousins/)

Birke, Lynda (1994) *Feminism, Animals and Science: The Naming of the Shrew*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

------. (2003) "Who-or-What is the Laboratory Rat (and Mouse)?" *Society & Animals* 11(3): 207-224.

Birke, Lynda, Arnold Arluke and Mike Michael (forthcoming) *The Sacrifice: How Scientific Experiments Transform Animals and People*. Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Bloor, David (1976) *Knowledge and Social Imagery*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Brown, Nik and Mike Michael (2004) "Risky Creatures: Institutional Species Boundary Change in Biotechnology Regulation." *Health, Risk & Society* 6 (3): 207-222.

Brown, Phil, Stephen Zavestoski, Sabrina McCormick, Brian Mayer, Rachel Morello-Frosch and Rebecca Gasior Altman (2004) "Embodied Health Movements: New Approaches to Social Movements in Health." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 26 (1): 50–80.

Buller, Henry and Carol Morris (2003) "Farm Animal Welfare: A New Repertoire of Nature-Society Relations or Modernism Re-embedded?" *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 216-237.

Callon, Michel (1986) "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fisherman of St. Brieuc Bay." Pp.196-233 in *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge*, edited by J. Law. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Collins, Harry M. and Steven Yearley (1992) "Epistemological Chicken." Pp. 301 - 326 in *Science as Practice and Culture*, edited by A. Pickering. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Douglas, Mary (1966) *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Eden, Sally, Andrew Donaldson and Gordon Walker (2006) "Green Groups and Grey Areas: Scientific Boundary Work, Nongovernmental Organisations, and Environmental Knowledge." *Environment and Planning A* 38 (6): 1061-1076.

Epstein, Steven (1996) *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism and the Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fleischmann, Kenneth R. (2003) "Frog and Cyberfrog are Friends: Dissection Simulation and Animal Advocacy." *Society & Animals* 11 (3): 123-143.

Franklin, Adrian (1999) *Animals and Modern cultures. A Sociology of Human-animal relations in modernity*. London: Sage.

Fudge, Erica (2006) "The History of Animals." *HNet*. Retrieved November 23, 2006. (http://www.h-net.org/~animal/ruminations_fudge.html).

Garner, Robert (2005) *Animal Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity.

Gieryn, Thomas F. (1983) "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists." *American Sociological Review* 48: 781-795.

------. (1995) "Boundaries of Science." Pp. 393-443 in *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*, edited by S. Jasanoff, G.E. Markle, J.C. Peterson and T.J. Pinch. London: Sage.

Goulden, Murray (2007) "Boundary-Working the Human-Animal binary: Piltdown Man, Science and the Media." Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Symposium of the Postgraduate Life Sciences and Society Network, January 14-17, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Haraway, Donna (1989) *Primate Visions*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

------. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* London: Routledge.

------. (1997) *Modest witness@second millennium: Femaleman meets OncoMouse*. London & New York: Routledge.

Harbers, Hans and Sjaak Koenis (1996) "The Political Eggs of the Chicken Debate." *EASST Review* 15(1) Retrieved February 19, 2007 (http://www.easst.net/review/march1996/harbers)

Harvey, Matthew (2006) "Animal Genomes in Science, Social Science and Culture: A Review." ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum Working Paper. Retrieved February 10, 2007 (http://www.genomicsforum.ac.uk/documents/pdf/MH_workstream_summary_Feb15.pdf)

Hess, David. J. (2006) "Technology-and-Product Oriented Movements: Approximating Social Movement Studies and Science and Technology Studies." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 30 (4): 515-535.

Hobson-West, Pru (2005) "Understanding Resistance to Childhood Vaccination in the UK: Radicals, Reformers and the Discourses of Risk, Trust and Science." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Nottingham, Nottingham.

Hoeyer, Klaus and Lene Koch (2006) "The Ethics of Functional Genomics: Same, Same, But Different?" *Trends in Biotechnology* 24: 387-389.

Home Office (2006) *Statistics on Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2005*. London: HMSO.

Jasanoff, Sheila (1990) *The Fifth Branch: Science Advisers as Policymakers.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

------. editor (2004) *States of Knowledge: The Co-production of Science and Social Order.* London: Routledge.

Jasper, James M. and Dorothy Nelkin (1992) *The Animal Rights Crusade: The Growth of a Moral Protest.* New York: Free Press.

Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2005) "Editorial: Qualitative Understanding of Others and Qualitative Sociology." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 1(1): 1-4.

Kruse, Corwin R. (2002) "Social Animals: Animal Studies and Sociology." *Society & Animals* 10: 375-379.

Latour, Bruno (1990) "Drawing Things Together." Pp. 19-68 in *Representation in Scientific Practice*, edited by M. Lynch and S. Woolgar. Cambridge: MIT Press.

------. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*. Southampton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Laurier, Eric, Ramia Maze and Johan Lundin (2006) "Putting the Dog Back in the Park: Animal and Human Mind-in-Action." *Mind, Culture & Activity* 13:2-24.

Lindemann, Gesa (2005) "The Analysis of the Borders of the Social World: A Challenge for Sociological Theory." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 35(1): 69-98.

Lynch, Michael (1988) "Sacrifice and the Transformation of the Animal Body into a Scientific Object: Laboratory Culture and Ritual Practice in the Neurosciences." *Social Studies of Science* 18 (2): 265-289.

Lynch, Michael and Harry M. Collins (1998) "Introduction." *Science, Technology & Human Values. Special Issue: Humans, Animals and Machines* 23 (4): 371-383.

Macnaghten, Phil (2004) "Animals in Their Nature: A Case Study of Public Attitudes on Animals, Genetic Modification and 'Nature'." *Sociology* 38(3): 533-551

Maehle, Andreas-Holger and Ulrich Tröhler (1987) "Animal Experimentation from Antiquity to the End of the Eighteenth Century: Attitudes and Arguments." Pp. 14 - 47 in *Vivisection In Historical Perspective,* edited by N.A Rupke. Beckenham: Croom Helm.

Michael, Mike (2000) *Reconnecting Culture, Technology and Nature: From Society to Heterogeneity*. London: Routledge.

------. (2001) "Technoscientific Bespoking: Animals, Publics and the New Genetics." *New Genetics & Society* 20 (3): 205-224.

Michael, Mike and Lynda Birke (1994) "Accounting For Animal Experiments: Identity and Disreputable 'Others'." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 19 (2): 189-204.

Munro, Lyle (2005) "Strategies, Action Repertories and DIY Activism in the Animal Rights Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 4: 75-94.

Rader, Karen (2004) *Making Mice: Standardizing Animals for American Biomedical Research, 1900-1955*. Princeton, MJ: Princeton University Press.

Raman, Sujatha (2005) "Introduction: Institutional Perspectives on Science-Policy Boundaries." *Science & Public Policy* 32(6): 418-422.

Rees, Amanda (2001) "Anthropomorphism, Anthropocentrism and Anecdote: Primatologists on Primatology." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 26 (2): 227-247.

Regan, Tom (1984) *The Case for Animal Rights*. London: Routledge

Ritvo, Harriet (1995) "Border Trouble: Shifting the Line Between People and Other Animals." *Social Research* 62: 481-499.

------. (1997) *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rupke, Nicholas A. (1987) "Introduction." Pp. 1-13 in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, edited by N.A Rupke. Beckenham: Croom Helm.

Ryder, Richard (2005) "All Beings That Feel Pain Deserve Human Rights." *The Guardian,* August 6. Retrieved December 8, 2006 (http://www.guardian.co.uk/animalrights/story/0,11917,1543799,00.html)

Sanders, Clinton (2003) "Actions Speak Louder than Words: Close Relationships Between Humans and Nonhuman Animals." *Symbolic Interaction* 26: 405-426.

Singer, Peter (1975) *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals*. New York: New York Review/Random House.

Star, Susan L. and James R. Griesemer (1989) "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-1939." *Social Studies of Science* 19: 387-420.

Strum, Shirley and Bruno Latour (1999) "Redefining the Social Link: From Baboons to Humans." Pp. 116-125 in *The Social Shaping of Technology*: *Second edition*, edited by D. MacKenzie and J.Wajcman. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thomas, Keith (1983) *Man and the Natural World: Changing attitudes in England 1500-1800.* London: Allen Lane.

Tovey, Hillary (2003) "Theorising Nature and Society in Sociology: The Invisibility of Animals." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43: 196-215.

Turkle, Sherry (2006) "A Nascent Robotics Culture: New Complicities for Companionship." On-line article. Retrieved January 6, 2007 (http://web.mit.edu/sturkle/www/nascentroboticsculture.pdf)

Urbanik, Julie (2006) "Geography and Animal Biotechnology: How Place and Scale are Shaping the Public Debate." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Clark University, Worcester, MA.

Weatherall, David (2006) *The Use of Non-Human Primates in Research*. A Working Group Report Chaired by Sir David Weatherall FRS FMedSci.

Whatmore, Sarah (2002) *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces*. London: Sage.

Yates, Roger (2004) “The Social Construction Of Human Beings And Other Animals In Human-Nonhuman Relations. Welfarism and Rights: A Contemporary Sociological Analysis.” Retrieved December 9, 2006 (http://roger.rbgi.net/)

Citation

Hobson-West, Pru (2007) “Beasts and boundaries: An introduction to animals in sociology, science and society.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Adrian Franklin, University of Tasmania, Australia
Michael Emmison, University of Queensland, Australia
Donna Haraway, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA
Max Travers, University of Tasmania, Australia

Investigating the therapeutic benefits of companion animals: Problems and challenges

Abstract

To investigate the health benefits of companion animals in a way that goes beyond finding statistical patterns involves appreciating the philosophical debates about the nature of animal consciousness that engage an inter-disciplinary field of scholarship cutting across the Great Divide of the hard sciences and humanities. It also requires developing a methodology to conduct empirical research which is often viewed as of secondary importance by researchers wishing to make a philosophical case about human beings and modernity. This paper considers the achievements of qualitative sociologists, particularly in the field of post-Meadian symbolic interactionism who have addressed these issues, and discusses ways of extending and deepening this agenda through cross-fertilization with similar work in ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and post-humanist sociology in investigating the health benefits of dogs.

Keywords

Animal-human relationship; Health; Methodology; Qualitative research; Ethnography

There has been a massive increase in the last twenty years of empirical research concerned with the health benefits of the animal-human relationship, particularly those between companion animals and older people. The objective of this paper is to focus on the methodological issues that arise in conducting research in this area. A lot of qualitative research has been conducted, particularly in the field of post-Meadian symbolic interactionism. There have also, however, been studies with significantly different methodological assumptions, and employing different qualitative methods, by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, and post-humanist sociologists. The paper will argue that these approaches can usefully be cross-fertilised. It is also important to understand the underlying issues to avoid fragmentation in this inter-disciplinary field.

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

One of the basic problems that qualitative approaches in this area need to address is the status of the animal as an agent, in other words, what is the nature of animal action and interaction as it become available to the qualitative researcher? Cartesian influences have dominated a view of animal agency, particularly in the sciences, that reduce it to instinct or pre-set behavioural responses. Since the statistical studies which show the health benefits of animal companions underline the importance of the relationship between an owner and a companion animal, much depends on how those relationships come into being. If they are merely the result of instinct or the transfer of pack behaviour on the part of the dog, there would seem to be very little point in social scientists working alone or in collaboration with colleagues from science in order to document and analyse how relations evolve. More recent evidence seems to suggest however that dogs and cats do evolve distinct relationships with human companions and that there is considerable scope for relationships to evolve in particular, dialectical and contingent ways (Haraway 2003; Bekoff et al. 2002). If this is the case, and we will argue that it is, then the qualitative researcher is in a unique position to explore ways of obtaining and analysing this data.

The first part of this paper sets out the significance of this issue by summarising the statistical basis of claims for the health benefits of companion animals and also those studies that have established the very significant financial savings that such relationships make on national health budgets. The second part discusses the philosophical debates that are relevant to human-animal relationships and pays particular attention to more recent ways in which Cartesian and behaviourist models have been challenged. This opens up new opportunities for qualitative research to engage in important pure-basic research but, clearly, it is a very new area which poses certain difficulties. The third section, therefore, discusses these difficulties and in the light of this discussion offers a new methodology that might be applied in a number of contexts. Attention is given both to the analysis of observational data and the technologies that might assist in gathering it.

We argue that a mix of ethnographic, ethnomethodological and conservation analysis is capable of revealing and examining relationships between humans and companion animals although the implication of our discussion points to the benefits of very large, time-consuming projects even where the number of cases examined is small. We also conclude that there is further scope using this methodology to form collaborations with human physiologists (and other medical researchers) in order to examine the physical and psychological basis for human health benefits.

The health benefits of companion animals

There is considerable evidence to show that companion animals can be highly beneficial to human wellbeing. In 1992, Anderson et al found that in a survey of those attending a cardiovascular screening service in Melbourne, pet owners reported significantly fewer visits to doctors and significantly less consumption of specified medications (for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, sleeping difficulties or heart problems). Pet owners had “significantly lower systolic blood pressure and plasma triglycerides than non-owners” but the two groups “did not differ in body mass index, socio-economic indicators, or smoking habits” (Jennings et al. 1998:163). Moreover, pet owners in the study ate more meat and take-out food. Since then numerous international follow-up studies have largely confirmed these findings (Headey 1999; Friedmann et al. 2000).

In 1998, Jennings et al estimated the health benefits of companion animals based on their 1992 survey. Using 1993-4 health costs in Australia, the total savings were estimated at $189. 992 million[i], comprising of savings from GP visits of $26.244 million; savings on pharmaceuticals of $18.856 million and savings on hospitalisation of $144.892 million. According to a later study based on nationally representative data, the actual figure was considerably higher. Headey and associates replicated Anderson's survey and found similar results: pet owners made significantly fewer visits to doctors and used significantly less medicine. Using 1994-5 Medicare[ii] expenditure and assuming that all recurrent health expenditure can be divided up *proportionately* to the number of doctor visits people make, Headey (1999) calculated the saving to be $988 million, representing 2.7% of the nation's health expenditure. However, as we enter a new phase of more intensive and detailed study of this phenomenon, the benefits may be more significant as a result of being able to direct them more effectively in the population through training and supervision. For example, Jennings et al strongly suggest that the critical benefit may not be from ownership per se but from specific types of relationship. They found, for example, that "non-partnered people who reported feeling close to their dogs made significantly fewer doctor visits and took less medication than non-partnered people who were not close to their dogs" (Jennings et al. 1998:168). This suggests that we need to understand *the relationship itself* and its variation, how close relationships develop and why they deliver health benefits. With greater confidence in their administration and armed with Headey's finding that the over 55s have the most to gain, countries such as Australia which are facing the increasing health cost burden of an aging population might elect to increase the proportion of pet owners in this age group or enact policies that promote their take-up.

While cardiovascular disease is a prominent problem for the nation, the benefit of understanding the relationship we have with companion species is considerably wider. It extends to general wellbeing (Garrity and Stallones 1998), treatment of depression, loneliness and anxiety (Wilson 1998:61), and Alzheimer's disease (Batson et al. 1998). Knowledge of this relationship could be significant for a multitude of interventional therapies that use companion species in prisons, hospital care, homes for the elderly, in special needs schools and psychiatric hospitals. In an aging society, understanding relationships that have a positive bearing on aspects of health and wellbeing for the elderly becomes imperative.

In their conclusion to a review of all evidence on the therapeutic benefits of companion animals, Friedmann, Thomas and Eddy (2000) argue that it provides "intriguing evidence that animals can be beneficial, particularly for cardiovascular health". They use the word "intriguing" because studies so far have only provided solid statistical proof of the benefit, not an explanation for it. They suggest that considerably more work needs to be done, but clearly statistical studies have run about as far as they can take us. Two major statistical studies in Australia and one each in the UK and USA (Anderson et al. 1992; Jennings et al 1998; Serpell 1991) give us confidence to proceed to a more *intensive*, qualitative interrogation of this question using other methodologies. To generalise, existing explanations of contemporary relationships between humans and dogs fall into one of two types that can be called *substitutive* and *anthropomorphic* theses. We consider both to be deficient precisely because what they take for granted about the human-dog relation (i.e. that it is a substitution *or* a representation) requires detailed and painstaking qualitative research that has never been done.

Substitutive theses tend to argue that companion animal species have become more significant to contemporary modern humans since they have been substituted for forms of sociability and solidarity previously provided by significant (and embodied) relationships with friends, community and family. Veevers (1985:19) identified "the surrogate function" as one of three functions that companion animals play in the social life of families and, clearly, she felt that there was something problematic with it: it is interaction that "too closely approximates interactions with humans". By the end of the century such concerns had softened and dogs and cats were seen as appropriate partners for domestic lives and companionships, especially where those with significant human companions had become fugitive and problematic. Jonica Newby (2001:170-177) for example, places great emphasis on the growth and scourge of loneliness in contemporary society as an effect of near-complete urbanisation. Garrity and Stallone's (1998:8-9) summary of research on the effects of pet contact on human wellbeing emphasises two ways in which social support from companion animals is effective. The first, the "direct effect" view simply portrays social support as having an unmediated, direct impact on aspects of human wellbeing. This is not, however, explained. The second they call the buffering model which "views social support as somehow intervening to protect the individual from damage to well-being when the person is under siege from stressful life events".

This thesis argues that animals can become love objects, objects for affection, bond creation, provide togetherness and loyalty etc, but the critical point is that their effects are merely *substitute* effects for *human* forms of sociability. They replace normative human needs necessary for wellbeing but do not add anything of themselves *as animals,* nor is anything important created from the *combination* of human and animal relationships. For this reason there has been little need to study the specifically *hybrid* nature of relations between humans and animals since the effect is not assumed to arise from the uniquely human-animal dimension but the replacement of human social support. And since this is so, the significance of what animals do, *their agency,* is downplayed or ignored, as is the ontological choreography that describes the way any one relationship develops (Haraway 2003). It is as if the main form of agency in the effect is the very acquisition of a companion animal and subsequent human imagination and, since that is a given independent variable, it needs no more investigation. This thesis is, however, unhelpful in explaining the pattern of health effects. One of the key findings in the statistical studies is that companion animals deliver health effects irrespective of whether a person has a human partner or not.

Anthropomorphic theses on the other hand suggest that the efficacy of companion animals for human health relies on the willingness of humans to project human meanings and motives (love, care, affection, loyalty etc.) onto animal behaviour and actions that simply do not exist or cannot be shown to exist. The typical sociological explanation can be summarised like this: because we have lots of interactions with animals that are ritualised, predictable and involve a shared focus of attention (in other words that they are intense), we make the assumption that there is reciprocity of perspectives, emotion and intent and think that we are loved. The simultaneous denial of communicative competence to animals and the assertion of human tendencies toward anthropomorphism descends from Mead and has remained very influential in scientific and psychological discourse. As Sanders (1999) observes, he was also influential on those rare moments when sociologists considered the human-animal relationship:

> Since animals were not fully fledged social actors from the Meadian point of view, their encounters with humans were one-way exchanges, lacking the intersubjectivity at the heart of true social interaction. People interacted with animals-as-objects. The dog owner babbling endearments to his or her canine companion is engaged in a form of happy self-delusion; he or she is simply taking the role of the animals and projecting human-like attributes into it. (pp. 118-119)[iii]

The asymmetrical nature of this exchange is mirrored in other follow-up studies that try to hone in on the cause of the effect. One of the more common is to measure blood pressure before and after a human does something (look at, stroke, be with) with an animal, as if only human agency and human thoughtfulness are at play and need to be understood. While we completely agree that human agency, thought and imagination are critical to understand and inevitably play an important role in explanation, we do not agree that this is all we need to attend to nor where the whole answer lies. This suggests that there are two other objects that demand to be investigated: the companion animals themselves and the relationship itself. Again, the statistical studies of companion species and human health suggest that human self-delusion may be less important than the type of relationship and the species in question. Cats are equally the objects of human projection but the statistical studies show that they offer less health benefit than dogs (Freidmann et al. 2000). Empirical research might show the relationship to be both a hybrid cultural form and one built on agency rather than imagination.

Humandog relationships: philosophical perspectives

We know that the beneficial health effects from companion dogs hold irrespective of whether the people concerned have human partners or not (Freidmann et al. 2000). This allows us to assume that the benefit is not solely from companionship or social support per se and, therefore, not merely from the substitution of animal for human contact. At the same time, although humans can never be perfectly sure what their companion animals are thinking or intending, the idea that they are purely deluding themselves by anthropomorphic projection is now widely doubted (see Sanders 1999:119-147 and Beckoff, Allen and Burghardt 2002:87-113 for a good discussion) while complex forms of mutual communication have been recorded extensively (Haraway 2003). There have been several recent publications, linked to comparative genomics as well as to comparative psychology, that speak to the consequences of the long association of these two species. Dogs read human indexical behaviour better than chimpanzees or wolves. Kaminski et al (2004) found that at least one dog (Rico) acquires/learns words for objects in a manner that used to be thought restricted to growing children--and does it fast and well. This evidence is important for the case we make for taking other animals, especially here dogs, more seriously as social partners in semiotically dense communication, and not just as objects for human meaning-making. This recent evidence, the result of collaborations between anthropologists, behaviourists, geographers, medical psychologists and others (who comprise a new discipline of human-animal studies) also suggests there are reasons to believe that dogs' basic biobehavioral heritage pre-adapts them for work in contemporary pet and social therapeutic relationships. Pepper and Smuts' (1999) work on evolutionary pathways of cooperation specific to dogs and humans supports such a view. In the field of

ethology, cognitive ethologists and sociobiologists have also questioned the behaviourist view that it is inappropriate to talk of an animal mind (Bekoff et al. 2002).

Underpinning much of this literature is a philosophical project based on the view that not only are previous views of animals as instinctual, insensate creatures entirely different to humans scientifically incorrect, but that this also has far-reaching implications for how we should treat animals and understand our place in the natural world. This is nicely expressed at the end of an essay by Eileen Crist (2002) that is about far more than Darwin's views on the capacity of earthworms to make choices in constructing their burrows:

> Does it matter whether earthworms are intelligent or experience their world? I would submit that what matters is that scientists be allowed and encouraged to pose these questions about worms and other animals. It is hoped that following their cue, common-sense views that are flippantly dismissive of such forms of awareness in the world will be discarded. Why is this desirable? The most significant reason today is the need to awaken and deepen our sense of wonder about the living world. For the erosion of this wonder – encouraged, in part, by the dominance of overly mechanistic models of animal behaviour in the twentieth century – is internally connected to the gathering speed of the human onslaught on the natural world, and to its darkest corollary, the sixth extinction. (p. 8)

This philosophical and ethical interest in the animal-human relationship informs most recent contributions to this literature. Donna Haraway (2003; 2007) has recently advanced an eloquent and powerful argument about the need to re-think our relations with animals, which although not cited by post-Meadian symbolic interactions or cognitive ethologists approaches the same issues from a distinctive philosophical position. Haraway began her intellectual career as a socialist-feminist, but more recently has argued as a poststructuralist that we need to rethink our relationship to objects and animals. Her writings in the areas of cyborg studies, primatology and latterly, about companion species have been inspired by a mix of Alfred Whitehead, feminist theory and science and technology studies. For Haraway, the key to understanding what happens between dogs and humans (and consequences such as health, wellbeing and happiness) is their relating and co-constitution. For her "beings do not pre-exist their relatings" and it is "[t]hrough their reaching into each other, through their 'prehensions' or graspings, [that] beings constitute each other and themselves" (Haraway 2003: 6). Any empirical work on this topic must recognise that both dogs and their human companions matter and it is what they do, how they reach out to each other, how they grasp each other (and their prehensions) that constitutes whatever relationship they have. This is what we researchers have to be there for (their embodied relatings); this is what we have to find ways of describing and analysing.

Two other contemporary social theorists, who are not usually mentioned in the animal studies or ethology literatures also use the case of animals to make philosophical arguments about humanity and modernity. The philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari, and especially their concept *becoming animal* provides the means to develop an alternative to humanist approaches to human-animal relations. Their concept "becoming animal" offers a way of exploring what a relationship with a companion species might *involve* and how that relationship can be therapeutic or beneficial to modern humans. Certainly for Deleuze and Guattari, animals provide a unique source of absorption in the *other* (i.e. being attentive to other *animal* "being in the world") but more positively and radically, a means of "sweeping away" fixed

notions of what it is to be properly human, producing a self more open, flexible and attentive to the world around it but also a self that is becoming more than a fixed human identity. Rather than a mere object for *human* contemplation then, *becoming animal* provides experiences that take humans beyond themselves. So *becoming animal* is an '"experimental" state of identity suspension but it is more than just this, as the word "becoming" suggests. In Deleuze and Guattari's view, what humans become is not evolutionary through its usual terms of filiation and descent but through *alliance*; "in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms with no possible filiation" (Deleuze and Guattari 1999: 238). In sum, "becoming animal" allows us to explore human-animal relationships both in terms of how they undermine the (modern) human sense of aloneness in the world, trapped inside the modern idea of a detached and perfectible self and how, at the same time, the parallel worlds of animals offer the possibility of embodied personal extension beyond the confines of the human, the experience of connectivity and the production of a new "humananimal" life world.

Writing in the tradition of Science and Technology Studies, Bruno Latour (1993) and others have also shown how non-humans are active agents in the human social world to a degree hitherto considered impossible. Their break-through was to abandon the Great Divide between the social and natural sciences and to commence treating all non-human objects and beings in a symmetrical way and as inextricably intertwined with the human world. Pickering (1995) argues that we must position ourselves *in medias res*, in the "thick of things", and study the choreography of agency as it unfolds. This approach warrants an ethnographic approach with its stress on symmetrical attention to both humans and animals and suggests the importance of studying new human-companion animal relations from their beginning. Their specific history and pattern of agency is critical.

All these writers and researchers provide a rich set of ideas enabling one to view animals as conscious agents. Although we have characterised them as driven by philosophical and ethical interests, many also use empirical examples.[iv] However, it would also be fair to say that as philosophers and social theorists, these writers are not interested in the different methods one might use in investigating the animal-human relationship or in practical questions such as the health benefits of companion animals. The next part of this paper will consider these issues.

Investigating the relationship

The investigation of human-nonhuman animal relations poses a number of challenges and a variety of methods have been suggested and employed to good effect by qualitative researchers. Post-Meadian symbolic interactionists have conducted ethnographies, auto-ethnographies and interview studies. A prominent concern of these studies has been to demonstrate that animals have agency (e.g. Alger and Alger 1997, 1999) and that the relationship between humans and animals must not be restricted by the linguicentric constraint bequeathed by Mead (e.g. Myers 2003; Sanders 2003). Others have sought to provide first-hand information about their beneficial effects (Flynn 2000; Irvine 2004). There are, however, also autoethnographies informed by different theoretical frameworks (e.g. Goode 2007; Shapiro 1990; Haraway 2003; Smuts 2001), and conversation analytic and ethnomethodological studies that investigate maturally occurring interaction using audio and video-recordings (e.g. Tannen 2004; Laurier, Maze and Lundin 2006). All these studies are interesting and informative, but they also invite critical discussion

on how they have obtained and analysed their data, and how one might ideally (that is to say with generous funding and a large research team) address this topic more systematically. We are particularly interested in the problems relating to whether one adopts a human or animal-centred perspective, the importance of studying a relationship over time as against a narrower period of interaction, and the possibility of a variety of relationships (which is arguably the key to understanding possible health benefits).

A human or animal-centred perspective?

Inevitably most research on human-animal interaction (this use of the term "interaction" rather than "relationship" is philosophically significant) has been conducted from an human centred perspective. To give an example, there have been a couple of methodologically sophisticated studies by conversation analysts based on analysing many hours of recordings of how people talk to or about their companion dogs. The focus, however, is on what humans are doing and saying. For example, Tannen (2004) looks at how 'talking to the dog' can be seen as a device by which humans manage conflict or do indirect challenges or complaints, a standard CA argument about the way that we prefer to work through interaction using inferences or implicature. Similarly, Robert's (2004) study of 'animal-directed talk' in veterinary clinics focuses on the way such talk facilitates the delivery of professional judgements, or the sustaining look of an expert demeanour by the vet. In both cases, the dogs interacting with these humans do not get much attention. Nevertheless, we argue that the fine-grained attention to the details of the interaction evidenced in these studies is something that must be replicated in an inquiry into how any health benefits are derived.

Another common way of presenting animals as if they were humans can be found in the post-Meadian symbolic interactionist literature. Although a number of positions are advanced by different researchers, it has become common to argue that although animals are unable to express themselves through language, they can be understood as having selves, exhibiting agency and expressing emotions in the same way as humans. Irvine (2004: 68-77) in a thoughtful discussion of these issues acknowledges the many differences between humans and animals, but defends a "critical anthropomorphism" (see also Bekoff et al. 2002). This involves finding a middle-ground between behaviourist description and sentimentalised "projection" of our own human feelings, preferences and attributes onto animals. She argues that this can be achieved by "informed, systematic interaction with and observation of an animal":

> For example, given what I know of cats, or about a particular cat, I can make reliable statements about when a cat feels contented as opposed to fearful. Cats use explicit body language, and anyone who pays close attention over time will come to understand that dilated eyes and flattened-back ears signal fear. If I ground my statements in knowledge about normal behavior, I can safely use anthropomorphic language to label it. Indeed, I have no other choice. Although I cannot know whether the cat's experience of fear is the same as mine, the label 'fear' is justified. (Irvine 2004: 69-70)

It seems implied in this passage that cats experience "fear" or "contentment" as if they were humans without the ability to communicate the range of their emotions or

desires through language. Later in the book, Irvine (ibidem) as a cat-owner also finds it easy to attribute agency, through anthropomorphising, to actions that could equally well be explained in behaviourist terms, without needing to suggest that cats have selves or feel emotions like humans:

> Cats will frequently impose themselves on people's activities to make their desire and intentions known. My cat Pusskin regularly paws at my arm for attention when I am working at the computer. Another cat, Leo, watches my husband shave. He also supervises (sic) all food preparation...Anyone who lives with cats is familiar with how they sit on reading material, making themselves the center of attention....Evidence of agency among animals helps explain why our experience of them as subjective beings is not solely the result of sentimental anthropomorphism. (pp. 132-3)

The difficulty here is that, despite the qualifications, there is some degree of anthropomorphism, and also the presentation of cats as always acting nicely towards other cats and humans. There is no mention, for example, of the fact that some cats (even the tamed variety) like fighting or hunting birds and mice, or spraying their territory or what happens during the mating season. This is another side to the anthropomorphism: the use of selective examples to advance a philosophical or ethically-driven argument.

Interaction or a relationship?

To date many studies of humans and nonhuman animals, partly because of time and resource constraints, have been concerned with case studies or single episodes of interaction. Others and particularly auto-ethnographies are concerned with how a relationship has developed over time with an animal that has (one is tempted to use "who" for "that") a particular personality. This is why the term "relationship" seems preferable to that of "interaction" in acknowledging how humans and companion animals develop a strong emotional bond based on intimacy and mutual discovery over a course of time. We would argue that these relationships must be studied as they are created and unfold over time, ideally from their inception, and also they must be studied reactively, observing how the relationship is built upon a long series of transactions between the partners as a result of which conventions, habits, practices and rituals become established. In this way, we can begin to understand whether dogs and humans shape each other in species specific ways. In other words these relationships have a biography, they have an unfolding or a becoming.

A variety of relationships

It is also important to recognise that there will be different types of relationships. Haraway (2003) recognises that relationships between humans and animals may not always be harmonious and fulfilling: they can be like other types of relationships that require patience, hard-work and the mutual tolerance of irritating habits. One should also recognise that there are many kinds of people who develop a relationship with an animal, and the trajectories may well be different. To give some examples, it would be interesting to learn how an elderly person who has recently suffered a stroke gets on with a dog bought at the suggestion of a doctor, how children relate to

dogs, or even at the experiences of families or individuals from different class or ethnic backgrounds. Recent research indicates almost half of Australian households contain a dog, eighty-eight per cent of owners thought that their dog was a member of the family and eighty-two per cent said that they acquired their dog for company. Australians are also expressing the significance of dogs in their lives through naming strategies: in the past fifty years dog names have shifted almost completely from dog specific names to human names (Franklin 2000; 2005).

Provocatively, one might add that there are also different types of dogs, and this does not simply mean different breeds, with their expected characteristics. Perhaps one can learn something from spending time with different families about these types, and how this shapes the relationship with a human or group of humans.

A proposed methodology

How though would one ideally wish to investigate the relationship between human beings and dogs, given generous funding and an interdisciplinary research team? We propose a methodology that will innovate a synthesis of traditions from anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork (where a cultural milieu is translated into terms understandable to those who live outside it) <u>and</u> animal behaviour research (where one species' behaviour is rendered explicable to another species albeit predominantly humans). We need to innovate an entirely new approach, which we have given the working title of *trans-species methodology*. And in order to innovate this methodology we will need to bring together specialists who would normally work on either side of the humanities-science divide. We need to train ethnographers to understand (and work appropriately alongside) dogs and to bring both types of expertise into practice. For this reason the ideal research team should include ethnographers, veterinarians and ethologists who will combine their knowledge and approaches during data collection and analysis stages.

Ideally, we would like to achieve a cross-fertilisation of approaches from cognitive ethology, social anthropology and ethnomethodology. Cognitive ethology is a diverse, multi-disciplinary subject that takes seriously the argument that animals have both agency and consciousness (Bekoff et al. 2002). From social anthropology comes the practice of maintaining an intensive fieldwork relationship over a long period of exposure. It is also predicated on flexibility and immersion in the fieldwork milieu and working with very different cultural milieux, usually mastering new languages as of course. These skills are useful in working with trans-species relationships, especially when combined with an ethnomethodological focus. From ethnomethodology comes the discipline of focussing only on what eventuates during and from interaction. The focus is on how people or "members" (and in this case two species in companionate relations) construct their world. For ethnomethodologists the world has an orderly, if not an ordered, quality and this orderliness is produced over time by people (and animals together) in everyday life.

An excellent example of the value of such an approach is offered by Laurier, Maze and Lundin (2006). Their analysis of the video-record of people walking dogs in a park illustrates that mind can be conceived as "embodied-in-action". If we locate dogs (and their humans) in contexts where cognition can be "naturally" deployed (such as a park) then the observational record documents in fine detail how the practical activity of dog-walking is accomplished through mutual gaze, bodily comportment and the contextual clues afforded by the paths and other environmental features. Although people (and animals) have to work continuously at making their

own actions make sense to others, the social world constructed attains a taken for granted quality. Part of this taken for grantedness is the indexical character of communication whereby members have to fill in background assumptions that are unique to most interactions. It is the everyday, taken for granted nature of relationships between humans and companion species that render them difficult to identify and research using survey or interview techniques. We would agree that video analysis must be central to any investigation, but the challenge lies in making sense of what the animal as well as the human is doing, and how the other party responds to or makes sense of this.

People may not be aware of the depth and complexity of their everyday communication and culture shared with dogs. Only those immersive, in-depth and long-term methods are likely to make sense of these relationships and demonstrate the complexity of the interaction. We know that people talk to animals constantly and that animals make responses to these utterances creating a trans-species conversation. In the past this was confused with anthropomorphism, but this confusion stemmed from the one-sided focus on humans alone and a rather limited understanding of the social and communicative capabilities of companion species. Since the mid-1980s, Meadian behaviourism has been largely discredited and researchers have demonstrated complex communicative interactions and the ability of companion animals to make sense of human spoken language and even to adopt greater use of vocalisation in communications with companion humans. However, as Sanders (1999:142) suggests, human conversation is but one in a range of *kinaesthetic* bases for mutual empathetic exchanges between people and dogs which gives rise to "a shared physical grammar". Importantly, Sanders is guided by Shapiro's observation that dogs spend most of their time in "concernful absorption".

The objective of a multi-disciplinary research project would be to study these mutual worlds with as much attention to detail as the ethnographer normally pays to human social and cultural worlds. It has been well documented that humans who live with companion animals spend a considerable amount of time talking to – and with – the animal (e.g. Arluke and Sanders 1996; Tannen 2004; Roberts 2004). Such studies have typically – and not surprisingly - focused upon the human contribution to these encounters and the "function" that such verbalizations might have, for example in mediating relations between family members or reinforcing the family's identity. Our proposed study will, however, take the investigation of such communication one step further by systematically incorporating the contribution of the companion animal into the research data. We envisage generating transcripts of naturally occurring interaction between our human and animal subjects in which both the human and the animal contributions can be identified.

To achieve this ambitious goal, we would need to draw upon the advice and expertise of ethologists who would work alongside the social scientists. They would need to generate and develop ethograms of dog behaviours that could be analysed as part of the sequences studied by conversation analysts. The objective would be to generate records of the interaction that in conversation analysis have the canonical form:

1. Human comment (typically verbal, but also likely to include gestures)

2. Animal "response" (to be identified through the ethogram)

3. Human comment on the response, or putative "repetition" of what animal meant etc.

Such a record would, we maintain, avoid the human-centred focus of previous interactional studies. The objective would be to obtain an objective and permanent record which can be used by an inter-disciplinary team to investigate how the relationship between the human and the animal is developed and sustained. We cannot specify in advance of conducting the research precisely what form these encounters will take or what "phenomena" we are likely to find. We can, however, be confident that it is only through such fine-grained attention to the details of the interaction that we will appreciate the intersubjectivity which characterizes the animal-human relationship.

The approach we envisage adopting for investigating this *trans-species* relationship will also be based upon the pioneering ethnomethodological studies of adult communication with alingual or disabled children (e.g. Goode 1994; Pollner and McDonald- Wickler 1985). Such studies have documented the myriad of ways in which parents, and other care-givers, have managed to construct complex and rewarding worlds of mutual intelligibility with children unable to communicate through conventional verbal means and who have typically been seen by professional outsiders as lacking any communicative competence. Crucially these relationships, and the methods which sustain and constitute them, are built through prolonged and close contact between the parties. The methods are typically tacit and defy explicit coding or measurement but they are nevertheless researchable and describable. Achieving intersubjectivity in "worlds without words" requires, as Goode shows, paying close and detailed attention to habitual routines, the spatialization of domestic life and tactile and embodied actions. We hypothesize that similar kinds of methods and communicative resources will be found in the relationships between humans and their companion animals. Indeed Goode (1994) makes this possibility explicit:

> certainly one would not be surprised to see similar findings in studies of interaction with very young children, mentally retarded children, or, as long as we are careful about the juxtaposition of people with mental retardation and animals, in communicative interaction with other species. (pp. 89-90)

Finally, because we understand human-dog relations as emergent, neither given in biology or culture nor seen as systems or structures, and we are interested in the diversity of relationships, we advocate an approach that explores them biographically over their life course. The research programme we envisage would combine several types of data collection:

1. Regular observation of interaction in natural settings, especially the home and during walks. This includes rigorous and symmetrical attention to both human and dog actions and interactions and the development of an ethogram or method of notation specific to human-dog interaction.

2. Observation and analysis of video film sent from a video cameras set up in living areas of the home. Video data and analysis is important because it allows the researchers to capture fleeting actions and sequences of action in detail that can then be analysed using conversation analysis. The video film also makes it possible to check that observed interactions are not biased by the presence of the observer, although one can accept that ethnography and discourse analysis are each valuable in conducting qualitative research (Travers 2001: 105-6).

3. Interviews with the human partners to obtain their understanding of the relationship as it develops over time.

4. Diaries kept by human partners to record anything they think is of interest and new in the relationship with their dog.

Because companion animals figure differently and perhaps in compound ways through the life course, the research would involve sampling the life course at four points: childhood (age 8-12); stable adult partnerships prior to childbirth (say, 25-39); post-child-rearing period (50-60) and post-retirement (60 plus). We would also wish to make sure our cases are not all drawn from one type of place, but places that might in a general sense be typical or useful. It might, for example, be interesting in an Australian context to distribute one set of four case studies in each of two cities: a provincial city that is stable or in population decline (such as Hobart) and a major metropolitan city that is growing fast (an example would be Brisbane). Since commentators (e.g. Melson 1998) have argued that the degree of metropolitan growth and lifestyles have impacted both on human quality of life and companion animal recruitment, these distinctly different cities provide an important comparison and test.

Conclusion: companion animals and human well-being

This paper began by engaging with a problem raised by years of statistical research about the health benefits of companion animals. We know that animals have health benefits but we do not know how this is achieved. It has argued that there is no simple answer, because it is difficult to describe the animal-human relationship without being drawn into deep philosophical disagreements both about this and the problems raised by modernity. Matters are compounded by the fact that most qualitative studies have been conducted by researchers who love animals and are already committed to a philosophical, political or ethical viewpoint about the need to treat them humanely. For this reason, great care needs to be taken in taking the case studies and vignettes in ethnographies by, for example, Irvine and Haraway, which are convincing about the contribution animals have made to their well-being, as saying everything about the relationship or the mechanisms behind the health benefits. We have argued that a range of methodologies might be useful, including ethnomethodologically informed video-analysis. We have also argued against the intellectual fragmentation that appears to characterise the field of animals and society. It is unfortunate that post-Meadian symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists, conversation analysts and varieties of post-humanist philosophy do not engage with each other, given that the arguments are similar and it is possible to deepen an analysis through cross-fertilisation. It is also unfortunate that there is not more contact and collaboration between ethologists and sociologists. Ethograms that attempt to represent animal perspectives may have conceptual problems, but there should be more communication across the Great Divide.

Although ethology is a well-resourced scientific discipline, there seem few opportunities, outside the small-scale or autoethnographic study, for exploratory or pure research on the animal-human relationship employing qualitative methods in the manner we have described. However, it is worth concluding by again suggesting that understanding the animal-human relationship can have practical benefits as well as contributing to ethical and philosophical debate about the human condition. In fact, we see funding from government for research on the health benefits of animals

as offering a good opportunity to bring together a team of inter-disciplinary researchers to conduct a large-scale, longitudinal project.

To date, explanations for the health benefits of companion animals have been conjectures based largely on statistical data and little additional data has been produced. Whereas previous studies of human-animal relations confined their attention to largely anthropomorphic constructions, interpretations and projections that humans *might place on* their relations with companion animals, which may in turn account for the health benefits, we hope that future research will also look closely at the *nature of exchange and communication between* humans and their animal companions. This will have to document how very specific relationships are established or created over time and investigate them as social spaces of interaction in which very tangible exchanges of communication, support and emotion take place. In other words, we are advocating an approach that in addition to asking what human-animal relationships *mean* (to humans) will also ask the more symmetrical and empirical question: what do they (i.e. both humans and animals) *do* and what ongoing partnerships are produced as a result. In the longer-term, it will explore whether there is anything about this activity and interaction that contains the bases for health and other benefits to humans.

We hypothesise that in such relationships people may experience two types of benefit. First, that companion animals and humans are capable of developing and have a propensity to develop a symbiotic relationship that entails both social support and mutual advantage. These relationships may develop and mature over time and cannot, therefore, be deemed to have a general effect based solely on ownership itself or co-presence per se. We want to discover how such relationships develop, how they are expressed as cultural repertoires of practice and how they coalesce into a social-spatial habitus. Second, we hypothesise that the social space of this interaction provides relief, or escape from, or perhaps an antidote to, concerns, tensions and anxieties that are produced in contemporary (human) society. Humans are drawn not only into relations with animals but into their world and a constructed parallel world of human-animal relations. On the face of it, dog owners spend considerable periods of time locked into this in-between world and they frequently report experiences of intense pleasure, but the temporal pattern and duration of this experience has not been recorded or analysed in a systematic or comparative framework. A well-resourced, inter-disciplinary project of this kind would be both valuable as a means of exploring philosophical debates and arguments, and might also contribute to improving human health.

Endnotes

i This figure (and all subsequent figures) is expressed in Australian dollars. Currently 1 Australian dollar equals 0.77 US dollars

ii Medicare is the name of the Australian Government's publically funded health care system.

iii In recent years, this position has been challenged from a number of disciplinary perspectives. In particular, post-Meadian symbolic interactionists have argued that there are ways of communicating with animals in the absence of language and that animals have selves; see, for example, Myers (2003), Irvine (2004) and Sanders (2003). These studies suggest the need to look closely at the animal-

human relationship. This is particularly relevant in studies about health effects where benefits are often seen as the fantasy creation of the human and what the dog is thinking or doing matters very little. We return to this issue, and these studies, in a later section of the paper.

iv As noted above, Crist (2002) considers Darwin's research on earthworms, and Haraway writes about her own relationship with two dogs.

References

Alger, Janet. M. and Alger Steven F. (1997) "Beyond Mead: symbolic interaction between humans and felines." *Society and Animals* 5(1): 65-81.

------. (1999) "Cat Culture, Human Culture: an ethnographic study of a cat shelter." *Society and Animals* 7(3): 199-218.

Anderson, Warwick, Christopher Reid and Garry Jennings (1992) "Pet Ownership and Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease." *Medical Journal of Australia* 157: 298-301.

Arluke, Arnold and Clinton R. Sanders (1996) *Regarding Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Batson, Kathryn, Barbara McCabe, Mara Baun and Cindy Wilson (1998) "The effect of a therapy dog on socialization and physiological indicators of stress in persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease." Pp. 203-216 in *Companion Animals in Human Health*, edited by C. C. Wilson and D. C. Turner. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bekoff, Marc, Colin Allen and Gordon Burghardt (2002) *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animal Cognition.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Corson, S. A. and Corson E. O'Leary (1980) "Pet animals as nonverbal communication mediators in psychotherapy in institutional settings." Pp. 87-101 in *Ethology and Nonverbal Communication in Mental Health*, edited by S.A. Corson and E. O'Leary Corson. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Crist, Eileen (2002) "The inner life of earthworms: Darwin's argument and its implications." Pp. 4 - 8 in *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animal Cognition* edited by M. Bekoff, C. Allen and G. Burghardt. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Deleuze, Giles and Felix Guattari (1999) *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Athlone Press.

Flynn, Clifton P. (2000) "Battered Women and their Animal Companions: symbolic interaction between human and nonhuman animals." *Society and Animals* 8(2): 101-127.

Franklin, Adrian S. (1999) *Animals and Modern Cultures*. London: Sage.

------. (2005) *Animal Nation: The True Story of Animals and Australia*. Sydney: University of NSW Press.

Freidmann, Erika, Sue Thomas and Timothy Eddy (2000) "Companion animals and human health: physical and cardiovascular influences." Pp. 125-142 in *Companion Animals and Us – Exploring the relationships between people and pets* edited by A. Podberscek, E. Paul and J. Serpell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garrity, Thomas and Lorann Stallones (1998) "Effects of pet contact on human well-being: review of recent research." Pp. 3-22 in *Companion Animals in Human Health* edited by C. C. Wilson and D. C. Turner. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Goode, David (1994) *A World Without Words: the social construction of children born deaf and blind*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

------. (2007) *Playing with My Dog Katie: An Ethnomethodological Study of Canine-Human Interaction.* Ashland, Ohio: Purdue University Press.

Haraway, Donna (2003) *The Companion Species Manifesto*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

------. (2007) *When Species Meet*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press,.

Headey, Bruce (1999) "Health Benefits and Health Cost Savings due to Pets: preliminary estimates from an Australian national survey." *Social Indicators Research* 47: 233-243.

Irvine, Leslie (2004) *If You Tame Me: Understanding our Connection with Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jennings, Garry, Christopher Reid, Irene Christy and Warwick Anderson (1998) "Animals and cardiovascular health." Pp. 161-172 in *Companion Animals in Human Health* edited by C. C. Wilson and D. C. Turner. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kaminski, Julianne, Joseph Call and Julian Fisher (2004) "Word Learning in a Domestic Dog: evidence for fast mapping." *Science* 304: 1682-83.

Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Laurier, Eric, Ramia Maze and Johan Lundin (2006) "Putting the Dog Back in the Park: animal and human mind-in-action." *Mind, Culture and Activity* 13(1): 2-24.

Melson, Gail (1998) "The role of companion animals in human development." Pp. 219-236 in *Companion Animals in Human Health* edited by C. C. Wilson and D. C. Turner. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Myers, Olin E. (2003) "No Longer the Lonely Species: a post-Mead perspective on animals and sociology." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23(3): 46-68.

Newby, Jonica. (1999) *The Animal Attraction: Humans and their Animal Companions*. Sydney: ABC Books.

Pepper John and Barbara Smuts (1999) "The evolution of cooperation in an ecological context: an agent-based model." Pp. 205-213 in *Dynamics in Human and Primate Societies* edited by T. Kohler and G. Gumerman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pickering, Andrew (1995) *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency and Science.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Pollner, Melvin and Lynn McDonald-Wikler (1985) “The Social Construction of Unreality: a case study of a family’s attribution of competence to a severely retarded child.” *Family Process* 24: 241-254.

Roberts, Felicia (2004) “Speaking to and for Animals in a Veterinary Clinic: a practice for managing interpersonal interaction.” *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 37(4): 421-446.

Sanders, Clinton R. (1993) “Understanding Dogs: caretakers’ attributions of mindedness in canine-human relationships.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(2): 205-26.

------. (1999) *Understanding Dogs*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

------. (2003) “Actions Speak Louder than Words: close relationships between humans and nonhuman animals.” *Symbolic Interaction* 26(3): 405-426.

Serpell, James, editor (1999) *The Domestic Dog*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shapiro, Kenneth (1990) “Understanding dogs through kinaesthetic empathy, social construction and history.” *Anthrozoos* 3 (3): 184-195.

Smuts, Barbara (2001) “Encounters with Animal Minds.” *Journal of Consciousness* 8(5-7): 87-113.

Tannen, Deborah (2004) “Talking the Dog: framing pets as interactional resources in family discourse.” *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 37(4) 399-420.

Travers, Max (2001) *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies*. London: Sage.

Veevers, Jean (1985) “The social meaning of pets: alternative roles for companion animals.” Pp. 11-29 in *Pets and the Family* edited by M. B. Sussman. New York: Haworth.

Wilson, Cindy C. (1998) “A conceptual framework for human-animal interaction research.” Pp. 61-90 in *Companion Animals in Human Health* edited by C. C. Wilson and D. C. Turner. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Citation

Franklin, Adrian, Michael Emmison, Donna Haraway and Max Travers (2007) “Investigating the therapeutic benefits of companion animals: Problems and challenges.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Nicola Taylor
Central Queensland University, Australia

'Never an It': Intersubjectivity and the creation of animal personhood in animal shelters

Abstract

This paper argues that sociology should begin to turn its attention to human-animal interaction and that one particularly effective way to do so is to adopt a phenomenological approach. This approach sees the personality, and thus the personhood of animals, as intersubjectively and reflexively created. Based on ethnographic data collected over three years in animal sanctuaries this paper assesses how animal sanctuary workers labour collectively to establish the identity of the animals under their care and how this, in turn, justifies their attitudes towards, and treatment of, them.

Keywords

Animals; Human-animal interaction; Intersubjectivity; Personhood; Personality

Sociology has, until recently, denied any possibility that human interaction with non-human animals could ever be considered *social* which has led to a "sociology as if nature did not matter" (Murphy 1995). This is based in part on the dualist post-Cartesian legacy which denies corporeality and posits a distinction between objective and subjective worlds. This has ultimately led to a post-Enlightenment sociology which sees "itself in terms of man's ascent from animality" (Murphy ibidem: 689). Not only has this created and maintained an anthropocentric view of the world but has also resulted in the social-natural relationship being characterized "in terms of unidirectional causality from the social to the natural" (Murphy ibidem: 690).

This (sociological) lack of interest in human-animal relationships is also based on Mead's assertion that symbolic interaction can only take place when the interactants possess a sense of self and moreover that only (adult) humans can possess this necessary sense of self. Whilst Mead "extend[ed] the frontiers of sociology into an explanation of the interior and the subjective" (Collins 1989: 1) he refused to acknowledge that this could apply to human-animal interactions because of his adamance that language was central to the full realization of an individual's selfhood. For Mead, only humans, because of their ability to use language and interpret the gestures of others, could be considered capable of *social* interaction. Hence he drew a sharp, and thus far enduring, distinction between humans and other animals.

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

The last decade or so has seen significant intellectual challenge to this 'limiting anthropocentric orthodoxy" (Sanders 2003: 406) with a number of authors arguing that human experiences of, and interactions with, animals should be considered a legitimate area of study for sociology (e.g. Arluke 2003; Alger and Alger 1997, 2003; Myers 2003; Sanders 1993). For the most part these arguments draw on the rich traditions of phenomenological and ethnomethodological sociology which see the mind as a social construction rather than a biological given. These sentiments sustain the perception of the social world as intersubjectively experienced (e.g. Coulter 1989; Schutz 1967). The relevance of this line of thought to the study of animals within human culture is that seeing the world as intersubjectively constituted allows us to include animals. That is, if we act towards animals at any given time as though they are minded interactants then, for the purposes of that interaction, they are indeed minded interactants. The proposition here, then, is that we can empirically investigate the role of animals in society by addressing human-animal interaction.

Goffman pointed out that "the social situation [is] the basic working unit in the study of the interaction order" (Drew and Wootton 1988: 4) and that to bring an occasion to life required the presentation of ourselves in ways which "render our behavior understandably relevant to what the other can come to perceive is going on" (Drew and Wootton ibidem: 5). However, Goffman was also at pains to assert that this exercise is not achieved alone and that "while it may be true that the individual has a unique self all his own, evidence of that possession is thoroughly a product of joint ceremonial labour"(Goffman 1967: 84-85 cited in Cahill 1998: 137). For Goffman the part of the person "expressed through the individual's demeanour" was no more "significant than the part conveyed by others" through their treatment of them (Goffman 1967: 85 cited in Cahill ibidem: 137). Moreover Goffman also recognized that not all interchanges between individuals need to be verbal and, further, that non-verbal interchanges could have the system requirements which are necessary to interaction; that interaction "can be *anything that the participants agree to treat as explicit*" (Drew and Wootton ibidem: 35-36. Author emphasis added).

Goffman (1963) specified that interaction takes place when two individuals are co-present with one another:

> Persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sense of being perceived. (p. 17)

Many interactions between humans and animals meet this criterion. For example, Weider (1980) explains how the human-animal interaction in a primate laboratory depends upon a *mutually* perceived otherness wherein chimpers (the technicians who work with the animals) are acutely aware of the chimps, and vice versa. It is precisely this mutual awareness which Weider argues mediates their interactions. He is arguing that the chimpers see chimp behavior during chimp-chimper interactions as *motivationally manifest* and not as the result of instinct. Weider (1980) points out that both the chimper and the chimp interact with each other with a view of themselves which is gained from the others' perception of them:

> Through the intermediary of events in the outer world, occurring on or brought about by the chimpanzee's body, the chimper comprehends the chimpanzee's cogitations and, most particularly, the chimpanzee's perception of the surrounding world, including the chimper. The chimper takes himself as similarly appresented to the chimpanzee (p. 97)

In other words the world shared by chimper and chimpanzee is essentially an intersubjective one based on mutual perceptions of mindedness. Moreover this "achievement" of mindedness is essentially a social, and practical, activity. As Coulter argues "if […] intelligibility is essentially *intersubjective* [then] cognition is, in neglected dimensions, fundamentally 'practical' and tied to organizations of social activities (in analyzable ways)" (Coulter 1989: 3). Thus we can begin, as sociologists, to elucidate the practices in everyday life wherein members of society "achieve" the mindedness of the animals they share their world with.

One particular way in which we can achieve this is to address how it is that members of society come to "bestow" personality upon, and "achieve" personhood for, non-human animals. Thus, if we move away from traditional, dualist accounts of mindedness and personality to a "praxiological, constructionist account" (Coulter ibidem: 6) it is logically open to animals "having," or at the very least, "being bestowed" a personality. As Coulter argues such an approach is "radically sociological" because it places "*practices* – actions, activities, interaction – rather than *persons* at the centre of its analytical attention" (Coulter ibidem: 6).

Constructing personhood?

Individuals often work together to situate and accord personhood to those humans unable to establish it for themselves, such as the severely mentally impaired (Bogdan and Taylor 1989) or small children, even before birth (Kaye 1982). For example, in speaking for their children and interpreting their noises as intentional communication parents "accord the infant psychological consciousness and, to the extent that they attribute distinctive intentions, motives, and psychological propensities to her or him, a unique self as well" (Cahill 1998: 139). Furthermore parents do not necessarily do this alone and often enlist the help of others in this process; they "utilize the interactional labors of others" (Cahill ibidem: 139). In the same way companion animal owners often strive to attribute personhood to their animals.

As a general rule "nonhuman animals are culturally defined as a generic group and, as such, relegated to the social category of "nonpersons" (Sanders 1995: 196). This may be the view of animals as "sentient commodities" that farmers often hold (Wilkie 2005) or the view of animals in strictly utilitarian terms (Kellert 1980) that is typical to those working in the primary industries (Taylor and Signal 2006). Nonetheless, animals are culturally customarily not granted personhood. Companion animals, however, are often viewed differently, at least by their "owners" who impute personalities and other attributions of "mind" to them.

Sanders (1995) argues that many human-companion animal relationships are characterized by an emotional intensity which leads to a rejection on the part of the humans of "their animals as mindless, objectified, nonpersons. Instead, they see the animals with whom they share their everyday lives as unique, emotional, reciprocating, and thoughtful "friends" or "family members" (Sanders ibidem: 197). Additionally, through various mechanisms, they are able to achieve for their pets the status of "person" without the animal contributing the "usual interactional labor to the person production process" (Cahill 1998: 140). For example, Sanders noted that dog owners often interpreted certain aspects of their dogs' behavior as a deliberate attempt to manipulate the owner into giving the dog something he or she wanted, thus imputing motive and mindedness to their animals and granting their relationships with them a fundamental intersubjectivity (Sanders 1993).

Whilst there are a growing number of sociological studies investigating animal shelter life (e.g. Arluke 1991) few of them have chosen to focus upon ways in which animal shelter workers impute mindedness and/or personality to the animals under their care. This seems somewhat of an oversight given that animals in shelters occupy a unique, intermediary, status between sentient commodity and family member; effectively a "pet-in-waiting." It is this very status that makes shelters a ripe place for the empirical study of human attribution of personhood, personality and mindedness to animals and it is to this that this paper now turns.

Methodology

This work is based three years of ethnographic research at two animal sanctuaries in the UK. The researcher visited the sanctuaries on average twice per week spending between three and five hours observing, interacting with, and often helping, the routine business of the sanctuary. Consent for the observation was gained from the senior staff at the sanctuaries. It was then left to their discretion whether, and how much, they told to the rest of the staff. One methodological consideration, as with all participant observation, was whether my presence would significantly alter the participant's behaviour. Due to the fact that I was already well known to staff and was routinely involved in work at the sanctuary this became less of a consideration. I gained access to the organizations easily because I had worked at one of them for five years and thus had "inside" contacts. Field notes were kept, taken at the site wherever possible, and/or completed at the end of each day. In addition I also conducted interviews with a number of staff from five other animal sanctuaries/welfare organizations, bringing the total number of animal welfare organizations/sanctuaries accessed to seven. Interviews were tape recorded and independently transcribed.

I also attended the monthly public meetings of one of these animal sanctuaries for six months. The public meetings were intended to bring members of the public who had an interest in the sanctuary up to date with what was occurring at the sanctuary and be a forum for a general discussion of sanctuary business. In reality the meetings were often used to air grievances between the staff, and between supporters and staff. Field notes were kept throughout the meetings. Many members of the public kept notes during these meetings so my note-keeping was not out of place and did not draw undue attention.

A general outline of the organizations

All of the organizations were involved in caring for unwanted or lost companion animals. The main animals sheltered were dogs and cats although smaller animals were fairly common, for example, rabbits, rats and gerbils. In the larger sanctuaries goats, pigs and horses were sometimes cared for, although due to limitations of space they were relatively few in number.

The organizations fell loosely into three different categories: (i) those in which individuals worked from home with no premises for the animals and with the aid of one or two volunteers (often family members); (ii) larger "structured" sanctuaries which had premises and any number of (sometimes paid) staff and volunteers who helped to run it; and (iii) organizations engaged in specific pedigree breed rescue.

Individually run welfare centres

Individuals managing these centres did not have approved premises for their animals. Instead, they relied on a "paperwork" system whereby they would advertise in the local press for "good homes." They would then take the details of people who called wanting to adopt a cat or dog and try to match them to the people who wanted to surrender their animal(s). A system was then in place which utilised volunteer drivers who brought the potential adopter together with the potential animal. The potential adopter was then evaluated and the animal was either passed on or returned to the original owner until another potential match was lined up.

Larger, structured organizations

The second category of organisation was a much larger, "structured" sanctuary that tended to be a registered charity. They dealt with between 600 and 1500 animals each year, with a supporting staff of between 10 and 30 people. In order to adopt an animal from this kind of sanctuary members of the public had to visit in person and pass through a verbal screening interview aimed at assessing their suitability as a "good home." Dependant upon the outcome of this interview they would either be invited to take an animal away immediately or told that a worker would come to visit them within the next few days for a "home visit." Home visits were generally used when the worker who performed the screening interview was unsure about the potential home and wanted to gather further information.

Local, breed specific rescues

The third category consisted of local off-shoots of national canine breed organizations. In the UK many pedigree breeds have their own rescue societies that are dedicated to giving advice about a specific breed to those interested. This can include advice about problem behaviour, nutrition and exercise and so on. They also re-home unwanted or problematic animals. Most of these breed rescues are national charities which operate by way of local off-shoots which pick-up and drop-off animals in their areas. Data was collected by interviewing the organizers of two of these local branches.

The breed rescues worked slightly differently to the other organizations discussed, although their homing practices and policies were largely similar. Everything revolved around a centralized headquarters that would take calls from the public with problem animals, or from those who wanted to adopt an animal. They would then contact the local operator to go and vet the home or evaluate the problem. Much of the initial vetting would be done by the HQ who would only pass people on to their local organizer if they were happy with the suitability of the home.

Results and Discussion

There were a number of different techniques used by the sanctuary staff, consciously and unconsciously, to ensure that the animals under their care were taken seriously (and, as a direct corollary that their own jobs were taken seriously). The great majority of these techniques were based on their collective efforts to

attribute personhood, personality and mindedness to the animals in the shelter (and to a lesser extent to animals more generally).

Naming

All of the animals, without exception, which were brought to the sanctuaries either already had a name or were named by the staff. The names generally followed conventional naming techniques for companion animals by utilizing names typically given to humans or names which reflected a particular characteristic (either physical or psychological) of that animal, for example, Sam, Jessie, Spot, Scruffy, Tyson (after a dog who liked to fight) and so on (e.g. Beck and Katcher 1996).

Naming is an important way to establish individuality as well as a biography and thereby establish personhood. Hickrod and Schmidt (1982) argue that the very practice of naming an animal turns it into an "interactional object" (Hickrod and Schmidt ibidem: 60-61) which forms the basis of any social interaction. Phillips (1994), in her investigation of the lack of naming practices of scientists who work with laboratory animals argues that "proper names are linked to the social emergence of personality, which engenders a matrix of ideas and behaviors unique to one individual" (Philips ibidem: 123). It should also be noted that this leads directly to a sense of responsibility for those named. Philips also points out that in order to "achieve" an individual through naming the collaborative efforts of both speaker and audience are needed. This was evidenced at the sanctuaries when young, nameless, animals were brought in.

Traditionally the humans who were surrendering animals to the sanctuary were subjected to an "entry interview" whereby the staff attempted to gather as much information as possible from them regarding the vagaries of that particular animal with the idea of being able to place them, appropriately, into a new home. With very young animals they often had not been named. Immediately upon receipt of young animals one staff member would take them to settle into their kennel/cattery and another staff member would talk to the surrenderers. It was common, after the surrenderers had left, to then witness exchanges between both staff regarding the naming of the new animals whereby the first member of staff would have already, in just a few moments interaction with the animals whilst settling them, have chosen a name. If the staff member who was conducting the interview with the surrenderers had also chosen a name for the animals the first staff members choice was invariably chosen as this was seen as based on the animals personality and therefore more apt.

Philips points out that the animal technicians and scientists she interviewed, whilst not necessarily making a link between naming animals and caring for them themselves, clearly expected her to (Philips ibidem). This link was evident in the current study when discussing the practices of the council repository for lost dogs who did not name their animals. Instead they assigned them a number and operated a seven day waiting period wherein the animal had seven days to be claimed by an owner and if he/she was not then they were put up for sale. Thereafter they were held between one and two weeks dependant upon the assessment of their "homeability" and then destroyed. The staff of all the shelters frowned upon the lost dogs home because they did not adopt their animals, they sold them, and because they made no attempt to screen those wanting a dog. Additionally the lack of naming was seen as being tied to the way the home operated:

> I worked there for a few weeks but just couldn't hack it. There were so many dogs and so many of them were killed, you know. And I couldn't do with the damn numbering system. I mean an 8 week old pup isn't number 3033 he's Fred, you know? They number them so we don't get close to them cos if you do it's just too hard when they're killed, and you know they will be cos there's just too many of them.

The fact that naming an animal was considered important was underlined by the fact that those homing animals did not like a prospective adopter to refer to an animal as "it." Whilst there was a general dislike of animals being called "it," this became even more distasteful if it was used when discussing the animal they were hoping to adopt. When asked what she looked for in prospective homes one sanctuary worker explained that amongst other things:

> One of the things I really hate is when they start asking me about 'it,' you know about the dog or cat that they want and they're asking 'is it friendly,' 'does it like kids.' I know it's a little thing but it really put me off them and they have to work harder then to convince me they are good enough for one of our animals. I mean, these are our babies, you know, they are never an it.

Assumption of care

All those involved in sanctuary life took their roles as "caretakers" of the "pets-in-waiting" seriously. They felt, generally, that they did a good job under hard circumstances. There was an element of "moral zealousness" among the staff who saw themselves as a "voice-for-the-voiceless." As such they often "spoke for" the animals on two levels. Firstly, in interaction situations they literally "spoke for" the animals and secondly, on a more structural level they spoke for the rights and welfare of individual animals. A requisite part of this was the assumption of care that all workers had towards the animals. The animals were seen as their "charges," as disempowered others who needed protecting:

> It's our fault in the first place, I mean we domesticated them and now we can't even take care of them. It should be our duty to do that at least seeing as though we did this to them in the first place…..right now there are and about 300 of them are being destroyed on a weekly basis because we aren't dealing with what we've done so […]. At least here I can be sure that this dog or this cat which can't survive on its own gets to live out the rest of its life in plush surroundings. It's the least we can do.

A large part of the "missionary zeal" with which workers approached their everyday activities (Taylor 2004) was justified by the very establishing of the personhood of these animals. These animals went beyond traditional conceptions of animals as "nonpersons" into that of "potential family member" and thereby deserved the workers commitment. The assumption of care that the workers had towards the animals often manifest itself during "homing" situations or in discussions of "homing" situations after the fact. The sanctuary workers had their own "rites of initiation," that is, occasions where they had made mistakes in the re-homing process, which were shared with newcomers as a kind of cautionary tale-cum-learning technique. It was commonly assumed that until a member of staff had completed their first erroneous "homing" they were not fully fledged "homers." Despite the angst that homing often caused it was taken as one of the most serious aspects of a workers life and certain

staff members did not wish to take on the "responsibility" of re-homing, as was explained by one worker:

> I must say I never felt confident enough to take a homing from beginning to end […]. I don't have enough confidence or experience […]. It's too much of a responsibility and I worry too much all the time whether I made the right decision, I'd rather let someone else do it instead.

Those who did re-home regularly approached it with near fanatical levels of zeal and often took pride in turning down "bad" homes. As one worker explained about their manager "she's a really good homer, she turns down well over half the idiots who come here." Given that the "business" of the sanctuary was to re-home animals and given that a successful re-homing was cause for much celebration it is somewhat contradictory to view a member of staff as good at their job because of their high turn down rates. However, when put into the perspective of those who work at sanctuaries and who see their jobs as "protecting" animals from bad homes it begins to make sense. As one interviewee explained:

> People with a bad history they're turned down […] People who have given animals away in the past. One of the first questions we ask here and on the home visit is whether they've had animals before and what happened to them. It puts you in an awkward situation sometimes you know when they've recently lost an animal and they start crying on you but that's generally a good sign, that they loved their previous animal enough. Then there's others who've got the cheek to turn up here wanting to adopt an animal when they've given their last couple of animals away for pathetic reasons and they expect us to let them have one of our dogs. It's a joke.

Further evidence of the assumption of care that staff members had when re-homing animals was their belief in the need for home visits. Home visits generally took place when a staff member was unsure about a potential home following an interview at the sanctuary. The potential new "owners" were told, on occasions such as this, that it was standard practice to home check prior to releasing any animal and an appointment was made for a staff member to visit them at home. This technique had a dual purpose according to the staff members. As well as giving staff members more opportunity to evaluate the potential home it was also seen as a way of "weeding out" bad homes; that those who were bad homes would balk at the idea of a home visit and those who were good homes would welcome the idea.

One sanctuary manager explained that if time and resources would have allowed they would have made home checks mandatory. As it was they could only afford to check on those they were unsure of. The shelter manager, however, reserved the right to check on any animal once homed. This caused a significant amount of dissent with those who sat on the sanctuary Committee but did not play a role on the day to day management of the shelter. The board members considered this to be an illegal act on behalf of the manager, especially if she removed animals she thought were not being treated well and the manager chose to ignore them, to see this as part of her job. As was explained to me:

> We had this dog who was a real problem to home so one day when no one else was here he [a worker who was subsequently asked to leave] homed him to these people. We were all a bit suspicious so I decided to go and check on [the dog]. It was the worst home you can possibly imagine and there's no way these people came off as a good home on the day he spoke to them either. He just wanted to get rid of [the dog] cos he wasn't an easy

> dog. Not long after he was back with us he bit one of the workers really badly and the decision was made to put him down. No one agreed with this decision. The Committee had decided based on the manager's report on [the dog's] behaviour that he was un-homeable. None of us agreed. A few people left over this one – I was nearly one of them. You can't work in a place where a good dog gets put down just cos the manager doesn't care.

The shelter workers saw their animals as individuals, with very real personalities, who were owed a duty of care by the staff that looked after them. Furthermore they often "achieved" the personality of the animal under their care by giving them narratives and biographies which served, in turn, to justify their own zealous approach to their jobs. A key component of this was the a priori assumption of personality that was given to these animals.

A priori assumption of personality

All the animals in the sanctuaries were assumed to have personalities. They were discussed among staff with reference to such personalities. One staff member when discussing re-homing a particularly boisterous spaniel explained that "we've got to bear in mind the individual dog. Grover here hates cats ["don't you boy" to the dog] and he hates kids. I often wonder what happened to him to make him this way but he won't tell me will you lad [to the dog]?" In another instance a staff member recounted a home check incident to me "I'd gone to see this family who wanted Sarah [a cat] and I had her in the car and they'd seen her. Halfway through the interview it's clear to me they wanted her as a mouser and I thought 'no way; this girl won't cope; she's too soft to be killing things all day for a living' so I made my excuses and got out of there with her as soon as I could."

A further way in which a prior assumption of personality is evidenced was in the very paperwork the staff completed regarding the animals. During the intake interview they asked the surrenderer to describe the animals' personality and when this was met with silence or a blank look (as it often was) they prompted by saying such things as "Is she easy-going? Does she like kids? Is she high strung? Does she like new people?" and so on. If the surrenderer was unable to answer such questions or answers only briefly this was taken as further evidence that they were a "bad home" or "bad people" which was the assumption that all staff had with every member of the public who surrenders and animal no matter what the reason.

Thus, the personality of an animal is inextricably interwoven with their biography and the naming practices of staff. Furthermore their personality, name and biography are all constitutive components of their "personhood."

Establishing personhood

Personhood for shelter animals can be established in a number of ways including those outlined above. One further way in which it was created in the current study, was in the fierce protective stance many of the staff had towards their charges. One example of this was the distaste that staff members had for those who want to "buy" an animal as opposed to "adopt" one. When explaining how she "got a feel" for potential new homes straight away one staff member said:

> A good example is when they phone up and the first question they ask is 'have you got any dogs for sale?' I know some of this is ignorance about what we do but it definitely puts you off and usually with good reason.

> When I first started doing this I wasn't so cynical and thought other members of staff were totally over the top…but I soon learned not to trust what most people say to you, and I realized that if their first interest was price then their first concern wasn't the dog, they didn't want them for the right reasons.

The personhood of animals was also established in the way that sanctuary workers laboured together to create "good" animals. Their belief system stressed that it was not the animals' fault that he/she was abandoned, but that it was the human owner who was responsible. In this way animals were perceived as never being intrinsically "bad," but were seen as being "made that way" by their errant owners. For example, one worker explained the following about a dog that had actually bitten three members of staff, one of them quite seriously:

> We had a guy bring a dog in who was snapping and biting at everyone. We couldn't handle him he was way too dangerous. We ended up putting him down then later we found out he'd belonged to this druggie who fed him drugs. No wonder he was so aggressive. We only found this out after we'd destroyed him. People like that really make me mad. If he'd have told us when he brought the dog in we would have worked with the dog and sorted him out. His anger wasn't his fault it was his stupid owner feeding him drugs.

If there is no such thing as an intrinsically bad animal then it must be the fault of the owner and this belief is clung to despite evidence to the contrary. A staff member recounted the following:

> We had a dog who bounced around five or six homes with each one of them bringing him back cos he chewed and wrecked things. Well you have to start wondering at this point. We'd be pretty unlucky to have six bad homes on the run so you have to ask whether it's the dog. We were thinking about getting him into training classes when this woman came along and fell in love with him. We warned her about him but she still wanted him. Anyway three months later we go and see them and what do you know he was completely happy and very well behaved. Maybe we did just have a real bad run of bad luck with the wrong personality match up between this dog and those six homes.

In such a way, then, the "technologies of person production," which Cahill (1998: 141) refers to as the construction and compilation of "socially credible" information about "persons" which is then taken as an external fact or truth, is applicable here. This "person production" which can involve direct surveillance, information collected from the individual or information collected from those who purport to "know" the individual often leads to the establishment of a "file person," a "hermeneutic and documentary technique [which] consequently make[s] each inmate a case" (Cahill ibidem: 143). This was evidenced in the shelter workers interactional labour aimed at "achieving" "good" animals. Just as Margolin (1994, cited in Cahill 1998: 144), when investigating gifted children centre staff, found "a flattering file person waiting to be hung on them there" (Cahill ibidem: 144) so, too, the shelter workers approached each animal with a "flattering file person" to attach to them and thus explain their "unruly" behaviour. Goffman pointed out that certain social environments such as psychological institutions limit individuals abilities to achieve the status of "personhood" by preventing them acting in appropriate ways (Cahill ibidem). It may be that animal sanctuaries operate in reverse to this by making the

shelter a place where any animal will automatically be able to achieve personhood, largely by the fact that a "flattering file person" automatically awaits them, *no matter what* their behaviour.

Inextricably tied to the establishment of an animals personhood was the belief that the shelter staff were morally compelled to look after the animals well. Not only did this manifest itself in the ways outlined above but was also evident in the attitude the workers had towards the members of the public who wanted to adopt an animal. Their approach towards members of the public was generally skeptical and negative. They clearly saw themselves as gatekeepers that the public had to negotiate their way past in order to successfully be granted an animal. Those applying for animals were effectively screened a number of times. They would initially be screened over the telephone when they called the sanctuary. As one interviewee explained:

> On the phone I'd ask them enough to get an idea of whether they were OK or not. I never used to at first when I first started working here I'd just give them directions, but the kennel girls used to nag me about inviting dick-heads up, as they called them, as it would be up to them to fob them off politely which isn't always easy to do politely […] I'd say most of the job on the phone is just fending them off, telling them you don't have a suitable dog and so on.

If they managed to "pass" the telephone screening they were invited up to the sanctuary where they were subject to an interview. This was done informally whilst they were being shown round the sanctuary and ostensibly "chatting" to the staff. Following this they were either offered an animal or referred for a home visit if their suitability was in question. The shelter staff, whilst aiming to be polite at all times to members of the public, did not particularly worry about being rude to those considered "bad" homes. In one instance I witnessed a shelter manager abruptly tell a member of the public who wanted a kitten for Christmas for her daughter "our animals are not gifts; come back in the new year if you're still interested." When asked about this incident and the fact that the member of the public had left clearly quite angry the manager explained:

> Why do I care if I upset bad homes? She's never gonna get a cat from me – they're not presents they are animals. And if she bad mouths us to her mates if they think like she does then it doesn't matter, that's more people we don't have to fend off, and if they're good homes they'll understand anyway. I've lost nothing today.

This matter was then raised at the next public meeting when the shelter manager argued that the shelter should not re-home animals, except in extra-ordinary circumstances, throughout December in order to preclude those wanting animals as presents from visiting the sanctuary. The Committee disagreed with the manager who simply went ahead and instituted this rule informally anyway. The manager justified this by arguing that the Committee was removed from the day to day business of the sanctuary and that many of them were only serving on the Committee for the public recognition and not for the sake of helping the animals. Being "in it for the animals" was a common refrain among sanctuary workers, whether this be applied to those deemed good homes because they were in it for the animals or whether it be applied to sanctuary staff motivations.

In it for the animals

The staff at the sanctuaries had very fixed ideas about what constituted the "right" motives for working there and these were central to the way they categorized other staff and how they felt about them. It was often stressed that these were not personal views but depended upon the workers commitment to the job and the animals. A case in point was the arrival of a new animal manager at one of the sanctuaries. He had a long history of working in animal welfare and was seen as a welcome addition to the animal staff. He was not particularly popular, being seen variously as "bossy," a "know it all" and too rigidly inflexible in his ways. These problems were, however, overlooked, because he was seen as dedicated to the animals:

> He's not that popular really. He's a real pain, everything has to be done just so, exactly the way he wants or he hits the roof. But you can't complain really. He's miles better than [the last manager] and at least you know he's committed. He's always here, and you know, does a good job. You can see it when he's homing the dogs, there's no way these dogs are going to go to any old home, he cares you know.

All those involved in the animal sanctuaries studied subscribed to a belief system based on notions of what animals under their care needed. They judged and classified their fellow workers according to how far they met the criteria of being "in it for the animals." This notion of being "in it for the animals" was primary and often overcame personal likes and dislikes.

This belief often led to dissent amongst the staff in that, often, workers felt they were right to do whatever they wished/needed in order to facilitate the best interests of the animals. For example, a heated exchange between two workers concerning the euthanizing of a litter of newly born pups was witnessed. One worker wished to euthanize all but one of the pups to give the remaining pup and undernourished mother a chance to live, whilst the other worker wanted to take all the pups away from the mother in order to hand rear them. Both workers claimed to be acting in the best interests of the mother and both thought the others actions would compromise the mothers health and thus, that their opponent was not acting with the mother's best interests at heart. On the other side of the coin this same "moral certainty" had the power to diffuse arguments. The defense of having done something 'for the good of an animal" or "in the best interest" of the animal was not one which could not easily be overcome. In this way then the moral certainty that the welfare workers had concerning their work became a central, defining concept within their daily lives, and one which was powerful enough to represent the "last word" in all disagreements.

Conclusion

It is the premise of this paper that sociology can, and should, turn its attention to human-animal relationships and that one particularly effective way to do so is to utilize the radical sociology of the "cognizing subject" (Coulter 1989: 1) wherein "the identification and individuation of the *mental* cannot be independent of the social, cultural and historical environments of persons" (Coulter ibidem: 2). Thus, by seeing knowledge as practice (Francis 2005: 253) we can avoid what Goffman ironically called the "touching tendency to keep a part of the world safe from sociology" (Goffman 1961: 152, cited in Coulter 1989:1). This entails that we accept the view that knowledge is essentially and irrevocably socially produced and that this is only possible with the tacit agreement among members of a society or community where

such phenomena are created. The theoretical approach outlined in the current paper, i.e. a phenomenological approach, can meaningfully be utilized in this endeavour. The close attention to detail (e.g. Berger 1963) and a concentration on *how* the social comes to be in the first place (e.g. Garfinkel 1967), gives phenomenology a unique insight into human-animal relationships. This paper has shown how this applies to the establishment of the "personhood" of animals in shelters by the collaborative efforts of shelter staff. How, whilst the shelter staff never openly discuss, or otherwise appear to be aware of their actions in this regard, they still build an elaborate framework of assumptions and meanings that define the shelter animal as unique, as a "pet-in-waiting," which necessitates that humans act as a "voice-for-the-voiceless" for them.

Moreover, it may also be that the study of human-animal relationships itself opens up new modes of inquiry and thus contributes to the generation of social theory in return. For example, it may be that the adoption of such an approach to the study of human-animal relationships calls into question our reliance on post-Cartesian dualistic modes of thought. Such modes of thought are a fundamental starting point for most human-animal studies (e.g. "us" v. "them" ways of thinking) and serve to maintain the relationships of oppression and dominance we currently have with animals (e.g. Spiegel 1996). This ultimately results in an anthropocentric sociology. Studying human-animal relationships from a phenomenological perspective which sees the properties of both "human" and "animal" as performative and emergent calls such beliefs into question and leads to different ways of theorizing about the social world (e.g. Taylor 2007). Thus, human-animal studies are important for two reasons: nonhuman animals are a part of our social life and deserve attention, and, consideration of human-animal relationshionships may also contribute to advancements in social theory and therefore are important to sociology, and sociologists, per se.

References

Alger, Janet and Stephen Alger (1997) "Beyond Mead: Symbolic interaction between humans and felines." *Society and Animals* 5(1): 65-81.

------. (2003) *Cat Culture: The Social World of a Cat Shelter*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Arluke, Arnold (1991) "Coping With Euthanasia: A Case Study of Shelter Culture." *Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association* 198 (7): 1176-1180.

------. (2003) "Ethnozoology and the Future of Sociology." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23(3): 26-45.

Beck, Alan and Aaron Katcher (1996) *Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship*. Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Berger, Peter (1963) *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective.* New York: Anchor.

Bogdan, Robert and Steven Taylor (1989) "Relationships with Severely Disable People: The Social Construction of Humanness." *Social Problems* 36: 135-148.

Cahill, Spencer (1998) "Toward a Sociology of the Person." *Sociological Theory* 16(2): 131-148.

Collins, Randall (1989) "Toward a Neo-Meadian Sociology of Mind." *Symbolic Interaction* 12(1): 1-32.

Coulter, Jeff (1989) *Mind in Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Drew, Paul and Anthony Wootton (1988) "Introduction." Pp. 1-13 in *Erving Goffman: Exploring the Interaction Order,* edited by P. Drew and A. Wootton. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Francis, David (2005) "Using Wittgenstein to Respecify Constructivism." *Human Studies* 28: 251-290.

Garfinkel, Harold (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Goffman, Erving (1961) *Encounters.* Bobbs-Merrill: New York.

------. (1963) *Behaviour in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organisation of Gatherings.* New York: Free Press.

------. (1967) *Interaction Ritual*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hickrod, Lucy and R. Schmitt (1982) "A Naturalistic Study of Interaction and Frame: The Pet as 'Family Member.'' *Urban Life* 11(1): 55-77.

Kaye, Kenneth. (1982) *The Mental and Social Life of Babies.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kellert, Stephen (1980) "American Attitudes Toward and Knowledge of Animals: An Update." *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems* 1: 87-119.

Margolin, Leslie (1994) *Goodness personified: The Emergence of Gifted Children.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Murphy, Raymond (1995) "Sociology as if Nature did not Matter: An Ecological Critique." *British Journal of Sociology* 46(4): 688-707.

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

Philips, Mary (1994) "Proper Names and the Social Construction of Biography: The Negative Case of Laboratory Animals." *Qualitative Sociology* 17(2): 119-142.

Sanders, Clinton (1993) "Understanding Dogs: Caretakers' Attributions of Mindedness in Canine-Human Relationships." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(2): 205-226.

------. (1995) "Killing with Kindness: Veterinary Euthanasia and the Social Construction of Personhood." *Sociological Forum* 10(2): 195-214.

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

Schutz, Alfred (1967) *Phenomenology of the Social World.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Spiegel, Marjorie (1996) *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery.* New York: Mirror Books.

Taylor, Nicola (2004) "'In it for the Animals: Moral Certainty and Animal Welfare." *Society & Animals* 12(4): 317-339.

------. (2007, forthcoming) "Human-Animal Studies: A Challenge to Social Boundaries?" *Proteus: Journal of Ideas*.

Taylor, Nicola and Tania Signal (2006) "Attitudes to animals: Demographics within a community sample." *Society & Animals* 14(1): 147-157.

Robins, Douglas, Clinton Sanders and Spencer Cahill (1991) "Dogs and Their People: Pet-Facilitated Interaction in a Public Setting." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 20(1): 3-25.

Weider, D. Lawrence (1980) "Behaviouralistic Operationalism and the Life-World: Chimpanzees and Chimpanzee Researchers in Face to Face Interaction." *Sociological Inquiry* 50(3/4): 75-103.

Wilkie, Rhoda (2005) "Sentient Commodities and Productive Paradoxes: The Ambiguous Nature of Human-Livestock Relations in Northeast Scotland." *Journal of Rural Studies* 21: 213-230.

Citation

Taylor, Nicola (2007) "'Never an It': Intersubjectivity and the creation of animal personhood in animal shelters." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Colin Jerolmack
City University of New York, Graduate Center, USA

Animal archeology: Domestic pigeons and the nature-culture dialectic

Abstract

This paper historically traces the purposive domestication of pigeons in order to examine the dialectical relationship between nature and culture. It is demonstrated that each instance of the domestication of the pigeon for a new function (i.e., food, messenger) also entailed the construction of a role of the bird in human society, replete with symbolic representations and moral valuations. Yet it is also argued that, though animals are repositories for social meaning, and culture is literally inscribed into the physical structure of domesticated animals, such meanings are patterned and constrained according to the biological features of the animal itself. The ubiquitous and unwanted "street pigeon" now found around the globe is the descendent of escaped domestic pigeons, occupying the unique and ambiguous category of "feral"- neither truly wild nor domestic. Ironically, the very traits that were once so desirous and that were naturally selected for are now what make the feral pigeon so hard to get rid of and so loathsome.

Keywords
Pigeon; Human-animal Relations; Domestication; Nature; History; Wildlife

Pigeons are one of the most common, and problematic, birds in the world today. Throughout history, however, they have perhaps taken on more symbolic and functional roles than any other bird. Modified over millennia through genetic manipulation to serve as messengers and a food source, and used to represent images of love, peace, the holy spirit, and even heroism, the "street" pigeons that populate our cities today confront us as our own cultural detritus. They are no longer useful for most of society and are more likely than not to be deemed "out of place" (Philo and Wilbert 2000) in the modern metropolis. Increasingly portrayed as a nuisance and a health menace, today pigeons are commonly derided as unclean, "rats with wings" (Bronner 2005: 433).

This paper traces the various functional roles of pigeons throughout time and space, and the associated social meanings ascribed to pigeons based on these roles. The goal is to reveal how culture is inscribed in animals through the process of domestication in ways that, while context specific and somewhat fluid, are also cumulative and grounded in the biology of the animal. This leads to tensions and

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

contradictions in how pigeons are categorized, regulated, and interacted with today. While it has become common sense within sociology that animals and nature are never socially unmediated (Bell 1994; Bronner 2005; Fine 2003; Irvine 2003; Sabloff 2001; Tovey 2003; Wolch and Emel 1998), in describing the "natural history" of the pigeon I seek also to emphasize the ways that the biological particularities of the bird- as "objective conditions"- have guided and constrained the social meanings attributed to pigeons. In this sense, I seek to employ a historical case study to emphasize the dialectical relationship between the actual behavioral traits and biology of an animal and the social meanings that the animal takes on in various contexts (see Nash 1989). While it may appear unnecessary to dwell on this point, much recent work on animals- in its zeal to reveal the socially constructed aspects of beings long conceptualized as opposed to culture (Anderson 1998)- borders on "strict constructionism" (Herda-Rapp and Goedeke 2005: 8). Strict constructionism argues that objective conditions are relatively insignificant and can be ignored in examining the subjective processes of meaning-making (Spector and Kitsuse 1977), such as in May's (2004) analysis of how a boys' basketball team socially constructs mice in ways that affirm their masculinity, where he claims that "the particular object [the mouse] … matters little" (May ibidem: 175). However, it is also demonstrated that every instance of pigeon domestication necessarily resulted in the construction of a pigeon image or "character" and a moral valuation of this bird.

Lastly, while some qualitative human-animal scholars have employed history to examine human-animal relations and the changing nature-culture boundary, the majority of the sociologists among them have preferred ethnographic investigations (i.e., Alger and Alger 2003; Arluke and Sanders 1996; Goode 2006; Irvine 2004). There has also been a bias in sociology toward studies of companion animals (ibidem), with less attention paid to livestock (but see Tovey 2003; Buller and Morris 2003) and even less paid to wildlife and "nuisance" or "pest" animals (but see Herda-Rapp and Goedeke 2005). I seek to demonstrate how many of the claims advanced by interactionist scholars can be supplemented and advanced by excavating the historical record of animal domestication. The tension inherent in the category of "feral" is also revealed, whereby the pigeons that inhabit our streets are not truly wild nor domestic since they are the descendents of escaped domesticated animals that were "reorganized so that their 'natural' state became one of coexistence with humans" (Anderson 1998: 121).

The social construction of animals

While the seeming permeability of the boundary between nature and culture in "primitive" societies led scholars to closely examine human-animal relations, especially through the religion of totemism (Durkheim 1912; Levi-Strauss 1962), modernists see themselves as having clearly separated nature from the social order (Latour 1993). Thus examining animals in society no longer seemed important. But Berger (1980) once again asked the question "why look a animals?" a quarter century ago; and in 1979, Bryant urged social scientists to investigate "ideological conflicts" over animals, the significance of relationships with companion animals, and the link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Since then, scholars have taken up studies along all three lines that demonstrate the centrality of animals in contemporary society.

Recent ethnographies highlight the complexity of relationships between (human) guardians and their companion animals, documenting- contra Mead (1934)-

how such relationships shape human and animal selves and indicate levels of shared understanding traditionally not thought to exist across the human-animal divide (i.e., Alger and Alger 2003; Arluke and Sanders 1996; Irvine 2004). Whether or not one buys all of the claims (see Jerolmack 2005), their documentation of such relationships challenges students of interaction who, by failing to examine human-animal interaction, ignore processes that may be central to how humans live and make sense out of themselves. These investigations also make a serious attempt to understand how animals themselves perceive and interpret such interactions.

It is common to emphasize the ways that animals are imagined (Kean 2001) or become symbols that reflect the cultural context from which they emanate. Thus a pigeon or dove is portrayed as a gentle, loving symbol of peace by animal rights activists trying to prevent hunting while their opponents construct it as a useless, vermin-infested "rat with wings" (Bronner 2005; Herda-Rapp and Marotz 2005); sparrows, as an "invasive species," were framed as "filthy immigrants" to resonate with anti-foreigner sentiment during the turn of the 19th century (Fine and Christophorides 1991); mice are talked about and treated in ways that allow boys to reinforce hegemonic masculinity (May 2004); and the bulldog is bred to comical proportions to represent some Platonic aesthetic ideal (Nash 1989).

Some "cultural geographers" have focused on the ways that humans make or deny a *place* for non-companion animals in society, and what such actions and rhetoric say about how human groups construct and police the boundaries between "nature" and "culture" (Philo and Wilbert 2000; Wolch 2002). Drawing on Latour (1993), these scholars are "challenging the binary geographies of 'nature' and 'society'" and are elaborating "a notion of 'wildlife' as a relational achievement" (Whatmore & Thorne 1998: 437) that is always culturally mediated.

A group of sociologists examining conflict over wildlife (see Herda-Rapp and Goedeke 2005) has also utilized Latour's "actor network theory" to examine how social understandings of animals are contingent on institutions, technology, and who has the power to advance claims in the pubic arena. Some rural sociologists have advanced a similar agenda (Milbourne 2003; Tovey 2003; Skogen and Krange 2003; Enticott 2003), as have scholars who examine how laboratory animals are rendered as scientific objects (Birke 2003; Lynch 1988).

Because nature, including animals, is always social (never unmediated), how we construct animals reflects our conception not only of nature but also of society (Bell 1994; Fine 2003; Greider and Garkovich 1994; Milbourne 2003; Tovey 2003). Tracing the "placing" and domestication of animals- while of course demonstrating humankind's seemingly endless thirst to control (and destroy) nature- signifies the values of society and the ways in which the nature/culture and human/animal boundary is protected, negotiated, and challenged. For example, Philo (1995) demonstrates how the removal of slaughter houses and livestock from 19th century London had less to do with public health than with an obsession with sanitizing the city, literally and conceptually, as a moral value tied to modernist ideals that envision a pure human society divorced from nature. Anderson (1998) demonstrates that animal domestication was a sign of human civility that took on additional metaphorical significance in Judeo-Christian thought. And, in a case study of the bulldog, Nash (1989: 358) demonstrates how the bulldog is not only "the result of breeding for social meaning," but also how it occupies three distinct social categories- "show dogs, celebrities, and pets"- that each consist of separate interpretive frames and that result in varying placement of the animal along the human-animal (other) continuum based on their perceived character.

For my purposes, Nash's (1989) investigation is the most illustrative. Situated within the interpretive and constructionist paradigm, while Nash emphasizes that "nature is of little use in her primordial state" (Nash ibidem: 369) and that the bulldog "is a living symbol of social meanings for nature" (Nash ibidem: 368), he also grounds the examination of the bulldog's character in its biological traits and traces how the dog was originally selectively bred to fulfill certain functions. Today, the bulldog stands as the product of centuries of selective breeding; while no longer serving its original function for societies, that set of nature/culture relationships is literally inscribed in its body and plays a significant part in guiding and constraining current relationships between the bulldog and humans. As will be demonstrated below- though the history is far more complex- the same is true of the pigeon. It appears that no other animal besides the dog has been subjected to so much genetic manipulation.

Methodology

The veterinarian Dr. Wendell M. Levi, author of *The Pigeon* ([1941] 1963) - the most complete treatise on domestic pigeons ever written- and "accepted everywhere as MR. PIGEON" (Levi [1965] 1996: back cover), writes, "All available evidence shows that from the time primitive man first domesticated animals, the pigeon was regarded as the highest of all speechless creatures, and was an integral part of the life of man" (Levi 1996: 13). Few, including I, would take this statement at face value; but it does serve as an appropriate prelude to an historical examination of the numerous, often hidden, functional and symbolic roles that this bird has played in societies throughout the world and through the ages. As will be demonstrated, "any attempt to explore the history of the pigeon necessitates the tracing of the history of the human race" (Levi 1963: 1). Yet Levi's statement also points to the problem of locating unbiased and comprehensive information about the history of the pigeon and humans' relations to it.

While Levi leaves behind a wealth of information about pigeons with his two books *The Pigeon* and *The Encyclopedia of Pigeon Breeds* (1996), much of the information pertains to caring for pigeons and classifying breeds. Pigeons have mostly flown under the radar of historians. In their place, pigeon fanciers with their own favorite breeds or particular interests have provided partial histories in books and magazines dedicated to these birds; but they are often selective and perhaps inaccurate. Thus, attempting to cobble together a modest history of pigeons requires relying largely on trade publications and amateur historians. While I strive to present the historical facts in a readable form, my debt to these lay pigeon scholars and publications is hopefully evident on every page. All historical information provided is theirs.

The origin of the pigeon (and dove)

Many people today would be surprised to know that there are over 300 breeds of domestic pigeons, all originating "from one wild source, the *rock dove*" (Bodio 1990: 47). It was Darwin (1883), who himself kept domesticated pigeons, that first argued that the *Columba Livia* is the ancestor of all modern domestic pigeons, noting that "the evidence that all the domestic races [of pigeons] are descended from one

source is far clearer than with any other anciently domesticated animal" (quoted in Bodio 1990: 46).

The rock dove is also commonly known as the *rock pigeon*. This calls attention to the fact that the difference between a "dove" and a "pigeon" is a peculiarly baseless social construction. Biologically, they are the same animal. Ornithologists draw no substantive behavioral or physical distinctions between the two. "Some languages do not even have separate words for pigeons and doves" (Green-Armytage 2003: 14); the distinction is a matter of convention whereby larger members of the species have usually been called pigeons and smaller members have been called doves. In fact, the first definition of a "dove" in *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (1996: 410) is this: "1. PIGEON, esp. the smaller species." We also tend to call doves the variety that lives in wooded areas or that migrates, yet other birds that display such characteristics are called "wood pigeons." In light of the way that families of animals such as the "dog" are grouped despite variations by breed, the distinction between doves and pigeons appears quite capricious. I will use the terms interchangeably throughout.

Today, man*y* people, especially urbanites, experience only one kind of pigeon- the ubiquitous, sometimes dirty and always hungry, *feral* pigeon that lives off of human refuse. Many feral pigeons throughout the world strongly resemble the original rock dove in color and pattern. Weighing about 10-15 ounces, the rock dove has a solid colored head- usually dark, green and purple "metallic" neck ornamentation, and a light grey ("blue") body with dark "bars" on the wings and a dark tail. Colors and patterns of feral pigeons around the world may vary (i.e., "checkered" instead of "solid" color), as mating among varieties of pigeons (including newer domestic varieties) disperses color and pattern traits. Most of today's "street pigeons," found all over the world, "are the descendants of domesticated [rock doves] that got away and succeeded in living on their own" (Patent 1997: 13). In other words, the presence of feral pigeons in almost every city and town around the world- often called "rats with wings" and maligned for their supposed messiness and risk of disease transmission- is the result of prior generations of human intervention in nature. While the original rock dove is indeed wild, humans bred this animal and brought it with them around the world.

The exact origins of the rock dove are unknown, but are usually traced to North Africa, parts of coastal Europe, the Indian subcontinent, and Central Asia (Bodio 1990; Levi 1996). The natural habitat of this bird is generally among rocky ledges and cliffs, caves, and open country- not among forests and shrubbery. Naturally being ground-feeders, pigeons flocked to human settlements the moment agriculture was invented to eat from the earth made fruitful by human hands. Being at home in treeless areas and on ledges, adapting to urban environments proved unproblematic.

The historical functions of pigeons

Historical evidence shows that pigeons are among the first of any animals, and *the* first of all birds, to be domesticated. "Records and carvings of doves have been found as early as 3000BC" (Glover & Beaumont 1999: 9), but some argue that domestication may have taken place as long as 10,000 years ago (Patent 1997). Levi (1963) points to archeological records such as terra cotta figures found in present-day Turkey- dating from the fifth century B.C.- and a Greek grave stone depicting a man affectionately holding two pigeons- dating from 500 B.C.- as evidence of the early domestication, and high regard of, this bird. Pigeons appear on

Egyptian bas-reliefs from at least 2700 B.C. From Homer (circa ninth century B.C.) to Socrates (469-400 B.C.) to Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the Greeks displayed knowledge of the pigeon's habits and abilities and wrote about issues of selective breeding and domestication (Levi 1963: 30). Roman records from as far back as 200 B.C. document the force-feeding of pigeons for purposes of fattening them for consumption. The pigeon also finds its place in literature and mythology.

The pigeon as food and fertilizer

The oldest documented use of pigeons comes from areas in and around the Middle East and North Africa. Twelve thousand year-old pigeon bones found in caves in Israel that were used for human dwelling indicate that ancient hunter-gatherers used wild pigeons as a food source (Johnson & Janiga 1998: 270). The first domestication of pigeons was "probably brought about by grain farmers between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago" (Johnston & Janiga 1995: 6). That is, as soon as agriculture began in regions containing wild rock pigeons, these pigeons made their way to human settlements and foraged for grain. It is thought that the mud and stone walls of early human settlements- so similar to the pigeon's natural habitat in caves and on ledges- provided good nest sites for the birds, and that their presence in and around human settlements made them candidates for capture and domestication as a food source. Once pigeons were captured for consumption, they were noted for their "reproductive magic," breeding more times and for a longer season than any other bird and most other animals (Johnson & Janiga 1995).

Today, in such places as Egypt and Turkey one can still see the mud houses, some of them thousands of years old, built to shelter domesticated pigeons in separate small dugout holes (pigeons do well in such small places; they seem not to mind being "pigeon-holed"). It was quite common for entire "pigeon colonies" to exist, clusters of dozens of pigeon houses containing thousands of pigeons. Pigeons were also kept for their nitrogen-rich *guano*, or feces, which is likely one of the first types of fertilizers used by newly emerging agricultural societies. Pigeon meat has been a staple of some cultures and a delicacy among others. It is preferable to eat young pigeons- called squab- before their meat gets too hard. In France today, squab is often served in the finest restaurants. Squab has been and still is eaten in the United States as well. Yet while the Palmetto Pigeon Plant in South Carolina- which created its own breed of squab in the 1940's (Levi 1996: 212)- still exists, squab consumption is on the decline in the US.

Such mass consumption of squab can leave ecological scars. Prior to the 20th century, a type of wild migratory pigeon called the "Passenger Pigeon" used to call the United States home (see Eckert 1965; Schorger 1955). Their migrations around North America were said to be one of the largest mass movements of animals in existence. From Texas to Florida, an estimated five billion pigeons would migrate for food. It has been documented that a single flock could have two billion birds and be 2 miles wide and more than 10 miles long. Daytime would be transformed into night when they passed over an area while migrating. While John Audubon (Audubon Society n.d.) wrote in the 1830's, "they are killed in immense numbers, yet without any apparent diminution," it took only several decades for humans to kill every last one of these pigeons for meat. Taking advantage of breeding season, when the pigeons nested in close quarters and were stationary, hunters would simply pick up the birds and snap their necks, filling bag after bag with the valuable carcasses. Tens of thousands were killed everyday. By 1900, incredibly, the last known passenger pigeon living in the wild was killed by a young boy in Ohio. By 1910 only

one passenger pigeon, in a zoo in Cincinnati, remained. On September 14, 1914, "Martha" died, never having left her cage at the age of 29 years. Martha's body can be visited at the U.S. National Museum in Washington, D.C. The solitary cadaver neatly summarizes the confident, unflinching conquest of nature that proceeded more or less unabated at that time.

Today, few societies or regions rely on pigeon guano, as agribusiness has found more cost-efficient ways to produce fertilizer. In addition, squab meat is increasingly a specialty item (in the US, the industry was destroyed by the bigger and cheaper chicken), and many of the breeds originally created to provide the best- or the most- meat now are bred primarily for exhibition in competitive pigeon shows. These first and most functional uses of pigeons, while disappearing today, are what brought humans and pigeons together thousands of years ago. Once humans domesticated pigeons, even as they used them for food or fertilizer they began to explore other functional and leisure possibilities for these birds. Additionally, this early use of pigeons led to their value as a *commodity*, brought with traders and armies that began to march out of the Middle East and around the globe. Early civilizations also immediately noticed and valorized certain traits of pigeons, turning them into potent *symbols*.

The pigeon as metaphor

Humans often live their lives and describe their world through narratives (Smith 2003) and metaphors (Fine 2003). One of the defining characteristics of humans is their use of symbols to convey meaning (Mead 1934). As Levi-Strauss (1962) so famously stated, and as Durkheim (1912) also demonstrated in his study of Australian aboriginal clans, animals are "good to think" with; and close associations with animals inevitably lead to the incorporation of animals into the symbolic orders and narratives of human collectives. It is a biological fact that a pair of pigeons, once mated, usually remain- and only mate- with each other. While humans began to exploit this natural trait for the selective breeding of squab, a spillover effect of pigeons' monogamous habits was their candidacy for *anthropomorphizing*. Thus, initial breeding for consumption began to have unanticipated impacts on societal narratives. Monogamy is historically a morally valued trait in many societies; the fact that pigeons, unlike many other animals, display this trait resulted in positive moral evaluations of these animals by ancient civilizations. Their monogamous habits led to their use in rituals and shrines that celebrate love. The "reproductive magic" of pigeons described above also made them suitable for representations of fertility and sex in Mesopotamian mythology and shrines from as long as 6,500 years ago.

Levi reports (1963) that pigeons were regarded as sacred among the ancient Syrians and Assyrians. The pigeon was used by the Greeks to represent Aphrodite, the Goddess of love (Patent 1997); and in Hindu mythology, Kamadeva- the goddess of love- is portrayed using a dove for a steed. While the pigeon took on abstract and symbolic meanings, it is the close relationship between these societies and the natural world, and the subsequent catalogue of knowledge that human groups accumulated, which led to these specific social constructions. That is, for those who actively interact with animals, the process of translating animals into culturally meaningful objects- what Fine (2003) calls "naturework"- is significantly grounded in ascertaining objective conditions (in this case, the biological traits and habits of pigeons). As will be further demonstrated below, it appears exaggerated to state, "animals are indeed a blank paper which can be inscribed with *any* message, and symbolic meaning, that the social wishes" (Tester 1991: 46; emphasis added).

"One of the earliest records of the dove is to be found many thousands of years ago in the story of Noah and the flood" (Glover & Beaumont 1999: 9), where a dove delivered the news of dry land to Noah by returning with an olive branch (after a raven failed to return). "Ever since, the dove has symbolized deliverance and God's forgiveness" (Butz 2005). Levi (1996: 13) points out, "In the book of Leviticus the pigeon has the questionable honor of being considered clean enough to be used as sacrifice." Additionally, most Westerners are familiar with the image of the dove, from the New Testament onward, as the emblem of the Holy Spirit; and in early Christian paintings, "the dove, issuing from the lips of dying saints and martyrs, represents the human soul purified by suffering" (Levi 1963: 5). It is also claimed that pigeons saved the Islamic prophet Mohammed when he hid in a hole and they built a nest over the entrance. Those seeking his persecution did not search for him in holes where pigeons nested because it was believed that these cautious animals would never build a nest near humans.

Levi reports (1963: 3) that this "reverence for the pigeon has continued to this day in Mohammaden countries;" in 1925 a "near riot" was caused when two European boys killed some street pigeons in Bombay, prompting the closing of the general market and stock exchange. There is still a "Mosque of Doves" in Istanbul, Turkey where the pigeons are not to have their nests disturbed. Today, pigeons still are used to represent love. It is popular to release white pigeons (almost always called "doves") at weddings, as well as at funerals, to represent peace and the soul's eternity.

The dove as a symbol of peace is one of the most recognizable icons in the world. Continuing with *Webster's* (1996) definition of "dove":

> It is often used as a symbol of peace. 2. an advocate of measures in international affairs designed to avoid or reduce open hostilities. 3. a person regarded as gentle, innocent, or beloved. (p. 410)

Why are pigeons so represented? Green-Armytage (2003: 15) states, "Doves in particular have always appealed to us, with their attractive looks and gentle cooing sounds. Many of us find they have a calming effect . . . They are home-loving and monogamous, with tender signs of affection similar to those of human lovers. They have become symbols of wooing, romantic love, purity, fertility, and matrimonial fidelity." The seeming gentle nature of the dove, combined with its soft coo and its (sometimes) white plumage, render it appropriate as a symbol of peace and purity, whereas its predator- the hawk- stands in as a symbol of aggression and hostility.

In modern times, the status of the dove as a symbol of peace was cemented when Picasso painted a single white dove on a poster advertising the 1949 *World Peace Congress* (Picasso was an avid pigeon fancier, naming his first daughter "Paloma"- which means pigeon in Spanish). "House Resolution 244" in Michigan designated the "mourning dove" (sometimes so called because its soft coo is interpreted as "sad") the official "state bird of peace," and other American states like Wisconsin have made similar designations (although it has recently also been controversially designated as a "game bird" (see Herda-Rapp and Marotz 2005). The logo of the United Nations relies on a dove as well. References to the pigeon abound throughout literature, as when Shakespeare draws out some of their desirable qualities in his description of a fair maiden in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Act II, Scene I, line 295): "For she's not froward, but modest as the dove." (quoted in Levi 1963: 32).

The abovementioned symbolic uses of pigeons are but a small sample of such iconography, yet demonstrate the central significance of the image of this bird to

millions of people, around the world, for thousands of years. Such symbolic use has been founded on its perceived "natural" qualities. That is, based on the positive functions that this pigeon served for human civilizations, the character of this bird was constructed in morally positive- even sacred- terms. Yet, as should be apparent, the arbitrary linguistic division between doves and pigeons- despite the fact that they all share the traits named above- allows for an unusual tension and contradiction. Doves have come to represent all of the favorable qualities discussed, while pigeons have become recipients of social disgust and even hatred reserved for very few in the animal kingdom (i.e., rats and cockroaches). The conventional division between the two, inconsistently executed long ago as a folk method to aid classification, had the unintended consequence of enabling pigeons to become "rats with wings" today while doves are revered, though they are more physically similar than any pairing of two dog breeds. The folk characterization of pigeons vs. doves echoes a more general social mechanism whereby subtle differences are magnified and made meaningful through the social construction of "deceptive distinctions" (Epstein 1990) that appear essential when decoupled from the site of production.

The pigeon as messenger

Thus far, we have seen how humans in specific regions of North Africa and the Middle East began to domesticate pigeons for food thousands of years ago. The interactions between pigeons and humans led to the gradual accumulation of a stock of knowledge of the pigeon's traits. This knowledge was put to use to successfully breed pigeons, and incidentally led to the construction of symbols and myths that incorporate pigeons (along with other animals). Such interactions also led to serendipitous discoveries by humans, such as the value of pigeon guano as fertilizer. As the value of the pigeon became apparent, it became a commodity. Yet more fruitful serendipitous discoveries were to be made. The rock dove is naturally gifted with an ability to find its way "home" from far away places, relying on abilities beyond memorization. Humans discovered this capability by accident, when pigeons released far from home- either given or traded to someone or abandoned - found their way back to where they had previously lived. It was not long until humans began to selectively breed the most able pigeons to heighten this capability; and it is this unique ability of the pigeon that has perhaps become the most legendary. Thus, a "functional" or "positive" unanticipated consequence (Merton 1936) of the domestication of pigeons for food was the accidental discovery of its "homing abilities." This discovery became the foundation for increased domestication of pigeons aimed at new instrumental ends, which led to their proliferation to new locales and new moral valuations.

Glover and Beaumont (1999: 9) point out that an Egyptian bas-relief from around 1350 B.C. "depicts a flock of doves being released from their cages to fly and then return." They go on to say that early Greek poets tell stories of lovers relaying messages via pigeons, and that pigeons were used to send home the names of the victors in the original Olympic Games. Ancient Rome used pigeons to send war reports home from the front (such as Caesar's conquest of Gaul), there are accounts of breeding pigeons as messengers in ancient China (500 A.D.), and they were used to report earthquakes in Japan (Glover and Beaumont 1999; Levi 1996 & 1963; McCafferty 2002). Alexander the Great and Hannibal also made use of pigeons to coordinate war and announce victories.

By the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan had established a pigeon relay service across much of Asia and Europe (McCafferty 2002), Sultans of the Persian Empire

built pigeon lofts all over to transmit crucial information throughout the reaches of the Empire, and roving caravans in Africa employed them to communicate (Levi 1963: 29). During the beginning of global mercantilism in the twelfth century, Baghdad was a crucial crossroads for East-West trade. It is likely here that Western Europeans such as Dutch sailors encountered these early "homing pigeons" that they subsequently took home and bred to create the "homers" now found throughout the new world (Glover and Beaumont 1999). As commerce and warfare spread throughout Europe (i.e., the Crusades), pigeons slowly made their way across the continents.[i]

In more modern times, pigeons have been bred to fly much greater distances and have been credited with "saving" thousands of lives. Most homers in the heyday of the Persian Empire were limited to ranges of 100-200 miles. Bodio (1990) writes:

> Our world and the [modern] homing pigeon were born at the same time, in the turmoil of the Industrial Revolution, in the wars and uprootings that from the late 1700's onward transformed the stable old kingdoms into modern nation-states. Now they became state-of-the-art communications tools for expanding armies. (p. 30)

Many pigeon fanciers and historians of war agree that the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) represents the coming-of-age of the pigeon as a modern instrument of war.[ii] Heretofore isolated breeds of pigeons were crossed throughout Europe to maximize speed and endurance. Belgium came to be known for its fast short-distance flyers and its endurance flyers; meanwhile, the English increasingly bred their own varieties. It was not only warfare and postal services that led to the development of the homer; by the 1850's "Belgians had almost universally adopted *pigeon racing* as a hobby" (Glover and Beaumont 1999: 11), and across England the sport was taken up- particularly among working class males. Breeding innovations made by racers now translated back into more efficient messengers for war.

During the siege of Paris, Parisians released balloons carrying pigeons into the air; many made it to other countries, including England. In London, messages were put onto microfilm that was then tied to a pigeon's tail feathers; a microphotograph could contain up to 2,500 messages, and a pigeon could carry as many as 12 photographs. The pigeons were then released to fly home to Paris. The pigeons relayed over one million messages, personal and strategic, over Prussian lines and into Paris from London during the siege. The success of the pigeons led to most Western armies adopting Pigeon Service divisions. Few likely anticipated how soon these birds would prove their worth again, in the Great War and again in World War II.

The first "modern war," World War I, witnessed the use of phone and telegraph lines to send crucial messages in record speed between the front lines and command centers. Yet communication lines were repeatedly destroyed or tapped by the enemy; thus, homing pigeons were used on an unprecedented scale. In fact, pigeons were seen as so valuable, or dangerous in enemy hands, that the Germans ordered all pigeons destroyed when they occupied Belgium and France (Patent 1997: 54). The British Army trained "pigeoneers," soldiers specifically trained to care for and travel into battle with up to four pigeons. By 1917, hundreds of messages were being passed in every battle; and by the close of the war Britain had 22,000 pigeons in service, attached to 150 mobile lofts and 400 pigeoneers (McCafferty 2002: 11).

By the time World War II occurred, even with advances in technology pigeons were of major value. For example, Britain dropped birds from a plane into occupied France and Belgium. With luck, a sympathetic civilian in the occupied territory would find the bird in time, read the message, and take the risk of providing any known details about enemy positions or other helpful information. After filling out the survey, the individual would release the pigeon for its return flight over the sea to England. Pigeons were even strapped to the chest of American paratroopers during the D-Day invasion, bringing the first news of the invasion to England along with the position of enemy rocket launching sites (Patent 1997: 54).

Also during this time, the famous American behaviorist B.F. Skinner, who had been performing operant conditioning experiments with pigeons for years and applying the findings to human behavior,[iii] cooperated with the U.S. military on "Project Pigeon." Skinner trained pigeons to guide missiles to enemy submarines by devising a system that would reward the pigeon with a piece of food every time it pecked a moving target on a screen that represented the submarine (Skinner 1959). However, though trials proved successful, the program was scrapped when radar use became widespread among the Allies toward the end of the war.

The role of pigeons in war was acclaimed throughout Europe and the U.S. A large monument in Lille, France and another in Brussells pay tribute to the efforts of the pigeons that served in the Great War. Hundreds of stories document the "heroic" character of these birds that saved human lives. Thirty-two pigeons received Britain's prestigious Dickens Medal, awarded to animals that serve humans heroically (only 54 total have been awarded). This bronze medal, created after World War II, bears the phrases "For Gallantry" and "We also serve" (McCafferty 2002: 168). One of the most famous recipients of this award is the American-bred pigeon named G.I. Joe. This pigeon delivered a message to Allied bombers telling them not to attack a position that the British had just seized from the enemy. Arriving at base just minutes before the bombers took off, the lives of hundreds of British soldiers were spared. The valor of these animals was memorialized again in November of 2004, when London unveiled a sculpture of dogs, mules, elephants, and pigeons with the inscription: "Animals in War. This monument is dedicated to all the animals that served and died alongside British and Allied forces in wars and campaigns throughout time. *They had no choice.*" At the ceremony, attended by many veterans, a stock of homing pigeons was released. The stuffed body of another heroic pigeon, Cher Ami. can be seen today at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Much as pigeons entered early mythology based on their admirable traits of reproduction and monogamy, for an era pigeons were constructed as heroes based on their ability to home. Aside from serving as messengers in war, they launched the Reuters news empire. It was not long after World War II, however, that using homers to send messages became "obsolete even as their efficiency topped out" (Bodio 1990: 24). Today, one is hard pressed to find such functional uses of pigeons. However, for some decades after World War II, homers would find an increasingly popular niche around the world as racers, their popularity heightened by their heroics in the war.

Racing homers

The use of the pigeon as a messenger led to its further global proliferation. As far as conquerors pushed- whether Roman, Greek, Arab, and so forth, they brought their pigeons with them. Even as the invaders left, descendents of their pigeons stayed behind to be bred for future wars with new enemies; many such descendents

also escaped to create new populations of feral pigeons. Pigeons continued to be genetically manipulated through selective breeding, leading to increasing numbers of pigeon breeds that varied in terms of flying abilities and coloration. Yet the discovery of the pigeon's homing ability opened unforeseen possibilities that extend beyond that of a messenger. Sports and gambling are as old as war, so it should come as no surprise that pigeons bred to be messengers became available for these leisure-oriented ends.

Some form of racing pigeons and betting on the outcome existed as early as 200 A.D. in Palestine (Levi 1963: 4). However, pigeon racing took off as an organized sport precisely at the moment that *homers* became prominent as commercial and military messengers. By the end of World War II, when this functional use became superfluous, the pigeons bred for such purposes would continue to provide a leisure and economic or competitive function to race enthusiasts around the world.[iv] As mentioned above, by the middle of the nineteenth century Belgians had nearly perfected the modern racing homer now used throughout the world through the continual crossbreeding of several types of pigeons. This pigeon is a "workhorse," a large and strong-boned bird able to endure long flights and heavy winds. Levi (1996: 169) says of this bird, "Size, color, type, or shape are of little concern if a bird is a consistent winner." That said, if one wants to envision a homer you need merely to imagine a typical "street pigeon" but with a larger body (especially a broad chest) and *cere* (the small piece of flesh located above the beak).

Reductions in working hours in many countries of Europe, along with increasing communications and travel links, opened up the possibility for new sport and leisure activities such as pigeon racing. The length of which the homer could fly, up to 1,000 miles, made it possible for international competitions on the European continent. In 1856, a race from Rome was put on by pigeon racers from Belgium, France, and Germany. The birds were released, or "liberated," at 4:00am on July 22 and were to fly home to the lofts from which they came. It took 7 days for the first pigeon to arrive, in Belgium; in all, only 12 birds out of 125 made it back. Yet the race was seen as a success, and was put on again in 1868 and 1878. By 1878 Belgium had established formal racing organizations that controlled the race, and on July 23 pigeons from 1,101 fanciers from several countries were liberated. It was not long until large races were being held every year throughout continental Europe, while formal racing organizations sprung up in various cities and held more frequent smaller races. By 1884 Germany had many racing clubs and an umbrella organization with 1,082 members owning a total of 29, 603 birds (Levi 1963: 28). The French pigeon fancier's magazine *Le Revue Colombofile* came into being in the late 1880's, and similar magazines helped establish an international network of racing enthusiasts. Racing became a high stakes affair, with cash prizes to the winner and numerous side-bets placed among competitors.[v]

Meanwhile in England, the English Carrier Pigeon that was bred to serve news agencies, but which became obsolete when the telegraph took off, started to be used for short races (Glover and Beaumont 1999:15). Ample amounts of industrial work brought disposable income to even the working class, especially in and around Lancashire, which became the hub of pigeon racing in England. Savvy fanciers began to import the more robust racing pigeons from Belgium, and railways made it possible to release pigeons for training from farther away and hold long distance races. Pigeon lofts began to pop up in backyards and on roofs throughout England and continental Europe. By 1896, a central bureaucratic body was established- the National Homing Union (today called the Royal Pigeon Racing Association, or

RPRA). Such pigeon racing organizations serve as central bodies do in other arenas of sport- they establish universal rules and disciplinary punishment for offenders, oversee the smaller clubs, and help coordinate large races involving several local clubs. The Unions also control the issuing of identification bands, to be placed on the legs of every pigeon, and implement standards regarding clocks.

The golden age of pigeon racing lasted until the decade or two after World War II. In 1956, West Germany alone boasted 85, 000 registered members (Levi 1963: 28). Though begun in Europe, working class immigrants from such countries as Belgium, Germany, Italy, England, and Poland brought the sport with them to the countries they settled in, such as the U.S. Enthusiasm for the sport spread to the colonies held by European powers in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Australia, Asia, and beyond. Today, this activity is on the decline worldwide even as it expands in some areas and modern technology is applied to every aspect of the sport. Besides increasing use of electronic bands and clocks, food and medicine have also become more sophisticated. Many fanciers use vaccines, pills, electrolytes, and so forth to maximize their birds' performance- and to protect their investment, as this sport becomes increasingly expensive and out of reach to members of the working class whose ancestors popularized the sport. Younger generations are less interested in the sport, likely due to the increasing cost and because of competing leisure opportunities. While still a worldwide avocation, few pigeon fanciers would argue with the assessment that pigeon racing is a "dying sport;" in Belgium the number of racers plummeted from about 200,000 to 40,000 in the past fifty years (Peters 2005).

However, pigeon racing is far from dead. The "Sun City Million Dollar Pigeon Race," held annually in South Africa, is the largest race in the world and attracts fanciers from dozens of countries. It was only begun ten years ago, and pigeon racing is now becoming popular and increasingly profitable in Taiwan. England's RPRA still has over 50,000 members today, and each year it distributes about 800,000 bands for newly bred pigeons to its members. The American Pigeon Racing Union serves as the umbrella organization for over 700 local racing clubs across the U.S.

Magazines such as the *Racing Pigeon Digest* ("The thinking person's journal of racing pigeons") in the U.S. and the *British Homing World* not only serve as informational clearinghouses about bird care and upcoming races and social events, they also reveal the competitiveness and potential costs of the sport and the perceived noble and strong character of these "racehorses of the sky." Articles and pigeon fanciers emphasize the strength, endurance, and-most commonly- the seeming intelligence of these birds, based on their ability to find their way home, without stopping, from hundred of miles away. Many pigeon fanciers also emphasize the home-loving nature and loyalty of the pigeon, who supposedly races to the loft in order to be with his or her family. In the clubhouses of U.S. pigeon racing organizations, pigeons are often depicted in front of an American flag, and their heroics in war are emphasized as a way to tie pigeon racing into a proud tradition. Full-page color adds describe racing pigeons with bold or regal names such "Aviator," a proven champion whose "direct children" fetch $3,500 (Racing Pigeon Digest 2005). Champions and their offspring have sold for well over $100,000. From small club races with little or no cash prizes, all the way up to the $200,000 cash prize of the "Vegas Classic," the sport is still going in the U.S. and around the world. However, unlike the early days, those who race today must do so within the confines of strict rules; all local clubs must be tied into a larger organization and abide by standard racing rules, and even small races now regularly involve testing stool samples of pigeons for illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

Pigeons of leisure and exhibition[vi]

For thousands of years, humans have kept pigeons for the pleasures of watching them fly[vii] and in producing pleasing varieties of colors and patterns. Bodio (1990) claims that the oldest "true" breeds of pigeon are not "utility types," but "fliers." Arabs were the first to have recognizable breeds of pigeons, many of which still exist today in Spain and Islamic cultures. The many flying varieties, from the New York Flight to the Peking Nasal-tufted Pigeon, are taught to fly as a unified stock above the loft of the caretaker. Those who kept pigeons long ago for guano or meat in places like Turkey and Egypt toyed with genetics as much as the breeders of homers, producing all types of specialty birds. Some began to keep fliers solely for the purposes of flying them for leisure. Some of these varieties, like *tumblers*, can even do acrobatics.

As long as pigeons have been racing, pigeons have been trained to fly in a stock above a coop and engage in a cat-and-mouse game that some call "the pigeon wars."

> In New York, Barcelona, Modena, Demascus, and Beijing, flocks of pigeons are sent up against 'enemy' flocks. The fanciers try to maneuver the birds together into one mass, then signal their own birds to come home. If the birds respond promptly and 'crash' to the rooftop they will most likely drag the other fanciers' [stocks] down too. Now the winner can catch all the strays. (Bodio 1990: 59)

For the uninitiated, these "wars" may be hard to understand, even as some reading this text have likely seen a "war" going on over their heads without knowing it. In places like New York City, stocks of 100-400 pigeons may often be seen flying in circles over rooftops. One trains one's birds to fly together as a stock and then commands them to fly to nearby rooftops where they meet another's stock. Birds can become disoriented when their stock meets unknown others, and the idea is that if one's stock is well trained, the pigeons can "hit" another stock and return with (or "steal") "strays" from that stock. Levi (1963: 4) cites passages from the Talmud that condemned ancient pigeon fliers for stealing one another's pigeons, and by 1327 Modena, Italy had codified rules about under what conditions one could keep or not keep the pigeons one captured. This game was also practiced in Palestine, India, and China at this time. In this sport dominated by men, akin to cockfighting (Geertz 1973) or dog fighting, one's ability to master his birds and show someone else up is translated into a successful display of masculinity.

Not everyone that keeps fliers is interested in "pigeon wars." There are several other leisure and competitive activities that pigeons can enable. Many varieties have been bred to perform acrobatics- especially *tumblers* and *rollers.* Turks, for example, have bred a tumbler that performs backwards summersaults while in flight without losing altitude. It appears that tumblers were bred as early as the 1500-1600's in and around the Middle East, yet by the 1800's many countries throughout Asia and Europe had their own breeds. Today people still form clubs and organize competitions based on this tumbling ability. *Tiplets,* or *tipplers*, are endurance fliers. The English "Flying Tippler," for example, "is a flying machine and has flown in England, where the days are long in summer, continuously for twenty hours" (Levi 1996: 589). Some breed these birds for competition- the pigeon that stays in the air the longest wins. Others keep tiplets for leisure flying.

A big reason why there are so many breeds of pigeons has less to do with breeding for function than with breeding *for show* or personal taste. Just as there are dog and cat shows where judges assess the best breed based on color, pattern, size, and other features- choosing the animal that best represents the "ideal" of the breed- so too are there competitive pigeon shows. "These are man-made 'designer birds,'" Green-Armytage (2003: 14) writes. It is through these show birds that the process of "breeding for social meaning" (Nash 1989: 358) is the most clear. The variation among show breeds is astounding. Pigeons like the "Budapester Short-faced Tumbler" have massive eyes on tiny heads, with stout beaks that barely protrude from the face (their head resembles the "pug" dog). Some breeds, such as the "African Owl," have been created with such short beaks that parents cannot feed their own young (who must rely on "foster feeder" pigeons). "Frillbacks," from Asia Minor, look just as if their feathers were placed in a curling iron, creating perfect spirals.

The name of many breeds of pigeons speaks to their origin and reveals how pigeons have been bred and kept around the world: Thai Fantail; Indian Gola; Baghdad Tumbler; Texan Pioneer; Slovak Pouter; Egyptian Swift; English Magpie; Ukrainian Skycutter; Kurdistan Roller; Tunisian Owl; Syrian Dewlap; and so forth. Pigeon fanciers, whether racers, exhibitionists, or leisure fliers, can still be found coveting these birds the world over. While direct descendents, these birds are a far cry from the rock doves first domesticated for food. These birds are produced purely to satisfy the aesthetic, often capricious, tastes of breeders. Not only are these birds mostly "nonfunctional," in any other contexts many of them would be clearly seen as *dysfunctional*. Many cannot fly, others must be hand fed, and still others can barely stand up because of their odd proportions. The value of these exaggerated, sometimes comical appearances mirrors the breeding and valuation of the bulldog (Nash 1989). Within a competitive organization that institutionalizes and validates the variety of peculiar tastes and which establishes the ideals for each breed, specific physical traits and behaviors come to have significant meaning- but meaning that is largely not translatable out of that context.

The global pigeon

Processes of globalization- political, economic, and cultural- have played a literal role in shaping the pigeon and in its proliferation around the world. If globalization is to be understood as "the growth of world interdependence" (Giddens, Duneier and Appelbaum 2003: 10), we have seen how the increasing intermingling of different societies through trade, war, and sport resulted in the spread of the pigeon to further reaches around the globe and shaped the direction of pigeon domestication. As selective breeding and interactions with pigeons altered the physical makeup of these birds and led to their increased intermingling with society, they were also inscribed with new cultural and moral meanings that reflected their role in society.

The introduction of pigeons to new environments has had enormous impact, both culturally and naturally; they provide unique useful functions for people but also present a unique set of unanticipated consequences and challenges. For example, pigeons are not native to the U.S. Yet in New York City (and most American cities), feral pigeons are ubiquitous and impact the lives of millions of people everyday- whether they are trapped and poisoned as "rats with wings" or are fed by sympathetic humans. Meanwhile, domesticated pigeons throughout the five boroughs sustain a diminishing but vibrant community of pigeon fliers who engage in "battle" from their

roofs in the "pigeon wars;" and over a dozen clubs race homers for sport and occasionally the chance to win thousands of dollars. European immigrants introduced this racing and flying "culture," along with the pigeon itself, to New York. Feral and domestic pigeons now reside around the world, affecting human communities and social relations in untold ways. Indeed, Johnston and Janiga (1998: vii) note, "feral pigeons are among the most familiar and abundant of the birds of the world."

Documenting how the pigeon came to exist around the world shows that humans manipulated these birds through selective breeding to serve immediate needs or desires, and that fulfilling these needs led to the serendipitous discovery of other useful functions. Such functions of the pigeon are contingent on time and place, and we have seen how pigeons constructed for one purpose (such as for meat) can be re-imagined to serve a different function (such as when squab pigeons become show pigeons). Through tracing the history of the varieties of pigeons, we catch glimpses of the societies that created them. In the pigeons' "habits and genes [are] encoded the history of people as well as pigeon breeds" (Bodio 1990: 55). The pigeon, or any animal, is of course never "just" a natural object with an essential meaning; it is given meaning and has action taken toward it by human beings based partially on contextual features of culture, individual biographies, and practical interests. Pigeons' depiction as both sacred and profane, symbols of love and winged rats, reveals this.

The feral pigeon

Today, "pigeons live just about everywhere people do" (Patent 1997: 7). This was not always so. As Johnston and Janiga (1995: 14) point out, "The escape of domestics to live in the wild probably always has been one of the facts of life about which poultry husbanders could not much worry;" today, "feral pigeons occur worldwide as a result of human transport of domestic pigeons." In all of the processes of intentional breeding and global movement of pigeons described above, one can imagine how many pigeons escaped into the wild. Sometimes, as when French peasants destroyed the aristocracy's pigeon houses during the revolution, or when an enemy was vanquished in war, pigeons have been intentionally released into the wild. Yet in both cases, it seems clear that few paid attention to the possibility that their individual actions, when aggregated across time and space, would result in the existence of feral pigeons in all cities of the world today. Having been brought up in and around human civilization for thousands of years, these pigeons are able to thrive in even the harsh concrete jungles of modern metropolises. Today, they are often conceptualized in harsh terms, confronting their human creators as pests who threaten society with disease and disgust society with their feces. Indeed, in an otherwise dispassionate biological treatise, Johnston and Janiga (1995: 4) feel compelled to admit that feral pigeons "are cast as pariahs… thought to be dirty and dangerous pests."

Conclusion

Cultural geographers argue that, in the imagining of modern cities, humans have increasingly less tolerance for "wildlife;" and while some wild animals are celebrated and adored because they are beautiful, rare, or useful (such as the red tail hawk "Pale Male" of New York), many become interpreted as pests (Wolch, West and Gaines 1995). While the moral status of companion animals has been elevated

to such an extent that many people consider them part of the family (Irvine 2004), and while animal rights activists continue to extend rights to include animals lower down on the zoological moral hierarchy (Arluke and Sanders 1996), the boundaries that separate companion animals, livestock, wildlife, and "nuisance" or "pest" animals are ossifying. Nash (1989: 369) points out that, "In modern society, nature is problematically related to culture." Nature "does not always yield to cultural transformations… [and] she may strike back at cultural practices [such as] with disease." Herda-Rapp and Goedeke (2005: 2) argue that some "wild animals [that] make themselves at home in human communities, greatly benefiting from a human-dominated landscape or advantaged by their human stewards… have shifted in the human conscience from wildlife to nuisances or pests." As such, animals such as sea gulls, starlings, rats, and, of course, pigeons, "are frequently the focus of deep-seated loathing among people" (Herda-Rapp and Goedeke ibidem: 2). Scarce (2005) notes an increased tendency to define wildlife in utilitarian terms, which does not bode well for "nuisance animals."

The pigeon that populates urban streets is, as Latour (1993) and Anderson (1998) would say, a "hybrid"- a product of nature and society. Yet the pigeon of history was always bred with a purpose. The hands of humans inscribed a set of social relationships into these birds through selective breeding- i.e., as a source of food and guano, or as a messenger. While not uniformly the case, pigeons- as domesticated animals- entered into relatively "stable or routinised relationships" (Tovey 2003: 211) with humans. Each role came with a set of expectations, and pigeons came to be endowed with symbolic meanings based on their perceived (and desirable) traits. Moral valuations were often placed on them as well, seen as heroes of war, and symbols of love, peace, and fertility.

While some human groups still enter into these functional relationships with this bird today, the pigeon most of us are familiar with is the "useless" street pigeon. This animal is what I would call a double hybrid. It was created by humans for domestic use but then escaped to become feral. Its physical and biological structure, as well as its reproductive abilities and habits such as dwelling on window ledges, are the product of millennia of human intervention in nature. This particular type of pigeon *never* existed "in the wild;" its "natural habitat" is among humans. "As a consequence of human activity, [pigeons] are also illegitimate offspring of artificial pigeons and not natural" (Johnston and Janiga 1995: 4). Yet that history is erased. As a feral animal, neither domestic nor wild, neither livestock nor wildlife, this animal occupies a conceptual category fraught with ambiguity. It was the pigeon's "naturally" docile nature, its "reproductive magic," and its easy adaptability to human environments that made it one of the first animals to be domesticated by humans. Worked over to possess exaggerated versions of these traits but then left to its own devices as the utility of the pigeon to mainstream society waned, it is exactly these traits that so annoy many urbanites who encounter the bird that appears to serve no function except to spread filth and disease. While it is true that all animals are inscribed with a set of social relationships, and that all domesticated animals are literally cultural products, seldom is this history so completely hidden and seldom has an animal's evolutionary history been so contradictory.

Endnotes

i While explicating the biological details of how a pigeon "homes" are beyond the scope of this paper, it is important here to understand what is possible. Homers generally *cannot* fly from their home loft to a designated place and come back. Rather, once a pigeon has been at a location long enough, that site becomes its "home." This pigeon can then be released from a place it has never been hundreds of miles away from "home" and find its way back. Pigeons generally cannot fly at night, resuming their flight "home" the following day at dawn. Today, a distance of 500-600 is the upper limit of the many of the birds' homing ability (though some can "home" from up to 1,000 miles away). Thus, in wars, pigeons were generally "homed" at a command center or mobile base for a week or more and then could be released from the front to relay a message attached to them back to the base.

ii Unless otherwise cited, most information reported below regarding the use of homing pigeons in warfare comes from the book *They Had No Choice: Racing Pigeons at War*, by Garry McCafferty.

iii Pigeons occupy a rather prominent place in the history of experimental psychology, thanks largely to Skinner. He and his followers trained pigeons to peck a variety of keys or objects on differing reward schedules, and to perform other tasks for rewards, to demonstrate the principle that *all sentient beings* choose and persist in those activities that offer rewards and cease or avoid those activities that are not rewarding. Many scientists have tested pigeons' abilities of memory and pattern recognition as well.

iv Unless otherwise cited, most information reported below regarding pigeon racing comes from the book *Racing Pigeons*, by David Glover and Mary Beaumont.

v How do such long-distance races work? This is not a race that is watched in the traditional sense of most spectator sports. To be able to participate, fanciers' lofts must be within an established radius. For example, in 400-mile races held by New Yorkers, only those who live in the greater metropolitan area may participate. The distance from the point of liberation to one's loft is measured. Those eligible jointly ship their race birds to the starting point. The pigeons are liberated and navigate their way home at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour. When the pigeon arrives home, the owner must be ready to trap it and either record the time into a tamper-proof manual clock or scan an electronic leg band on the pigeon into an electronic clock. Each clock must then be brought to a race club where officials collect them and record each time. The first pigeon home is not necessarily the winner, because the distance to each loft is different. Thus, the time is divided by distance to get the speed of the pigeon. The pigeon with the fastest average yards per minute is the winner.

vi Much of the information reported below about flying pigeons comes from the book *Aloft*, by Stephen J. Bodio.

vii Though a less popular candidate than other birds such as parrots or canaries, pigeons have and do take the role of *pet.*

References

Alger, Janet M. and Steven F. Alger (2003) *Cat Culture: The Social World of a Cat Shelter*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Anderson, Kay (1998) "Animal Domestication in Geographic Perspective." *Society and Animals* 6(2): 119-135.

Arluke, Arnold and Clinton Sanders (1996) *Regarding Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Audubon Society (no date) "The Passenger Pigeon." Retrieved August, 2006 (http://www.audubon.org/bird/BoA/F29_G3a.html)

Bell, Michael Mayerfeld (1994) *Childerley: Nature and Morality in a Country Village.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berger, John (1980) "Why Look at Animals?" Pp. 3-30 in *About Looking*, edited by John Berger. New York: Vintage Books.

Birke, Lynda (2003) "Who-or-What are the Rats (and Mice) in the Laboratory." *Society and Animals* 11(3): 207-224.

Bodio, Stephen (1990) *Aloft: A Meditation on Pigeons and Pigeon-Flying*. New York: Lyons and Burford Publishers.

Bronner, Simon J. (2005) "Contesting Tradition: The Deep Play and Protest of Pigeon Shoots." *Journal of American Folklore* 118(470): 409-452.

Buller, Henry, and Carol Morris (2003) "Farm Animal Welfare: a New Repertoire of Nature-Society Relations or Modernism Re-embedded?" *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 216-237.

Butz, Mark and Lyn Butz (2005) "Animal Symbols." *Thousand Cranes Peace Network*. Retrieved October, 2005 (http://rosella.apana.org.au/~mlb/cranes/symbols-.htm#Animal)

Bryant, Clifton D. (1979) "The Zoological Connection: Animal-related Human Behavior." *Social Forces* 58: 399-421.

Darwin, Charles (1883) *Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication.* New York: D. Appleton & Co.

Durkheim, Emile ([1912] 1995) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* New York: The Free Press.

Enticott, Gareth (2003) "Lay immunology, Local Foods and Rural Identity: Defending Unpasteurised Milk in England." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 258-270.

Epstein, Cynthia Fuchs (1990) *Deceptive Distinctions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fine, Gary Alan (2003) *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Fine, Gary Alan and Lazaros Christophorides (1991) "Dirty Birds, Filthy Immigrants, and the English Sparrow War: Metaphorical Linkage in Constructing Social Problems." *Symbolic Interaction* 14: 375-391.

Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, Anthony, Mitchell Duneier and Richard P. Applebaum (2003) *Introduction to Sociology*. 4th edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Glover, David and Marie Beaumont (2004) *Racing Pigeons*. Ramsbury, Marlborough (Great Britain): Crowood Press Ltd.

Goode, David (2006) *Playing with My Dog, Katie: An Ethnomethodological Study of Canine-Human Interaction.* Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Green-Armytage, Stephen (2003) *Extraordinary Pigeons*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Greider, Thomas and Lorraine Garkovich (1994) "Landscapes: The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment." *Rural Sociology* 59(1): 1-24.

Herda-Rapp, Ann and Karen G. Marotz (2005) "Contested Meanings: The Social Construction of the Mourning Dove in Wisconsin." Pp. 73-122 in *Mad About Wildlife,* edited by Ann Herda-Rapp and Theresa L. Goedeke. Boston: Brill.

Herda-Rapp, Ann and Theresa L. Goedeke, editors (2005) *Mad About Wildlife*. Boston: Brill.

Irvine, Leslie (2004) *If You Tame Me: Understanding Our Connection With Animals. Philadelphia*: Temple University Press.

Jerolmack, Colin (2005) "Our Animals, Ourselves? Chipping Away the Human-Animal Divide." *Sociological Forum* 20(4): 651-660.

Johnston, Richard F. & Marián Janiga (1995) *Feral Pigeons*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kean, Hilda (2001) "Imagining Rabbits and Squirrels in the English Countryside." *Society and Animals* 9(2): 163-175.

Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Levi, Wendell Mitchell ([1941] 1963) *The Pigeon*. Sumter, S.C.: Levi Publishing Co., Inc.

------. ([1965] 1996) *Encyclopedia of Pigeon Breeds*. Sumter, SC: Levi Publishing Co., Inc.

Levi-Strauss, Claude (1962) *Totemism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lynch, Michael E. (1988) "Sacrifice and the Transformation of the Animal Body into a Scientific Object: Laboratory Culture and the Ritual Practice in the Neurosciences." *Social Studies of Science* 18(2): 265-289.

May, Reuben A. Buford (2004) "Of Mice, Rats, and Men: Exploring the Role of Rodents in Constructing Masculinity Within a Group of Young African American Males." *Qualitative Sociology* 27(2): 159-177.

McCafferty, Garry (2002) *They Had No Choice: Racing Pigeons at War*. Charleston, SC: Tempus Publishing, Inc.

Mead, George Herbert (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Merton, Robert (1936) "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Action." *American Sociological Review* 1(6): 894-904.

Milbourne, Paul. 2003. "Nature-Society-Rurality." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 193-195.

Nash, Jeffrey E. 1989. "What's in a Face? The Social Character of the English Bulldog." *Qualitative Sociology* 12(4): 357-370.

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw (1997) *Pigeons*. New York: Clarion Books.

Peters, Wim (2005) *The Pigeon Sport: A Dying Game?* Unpublished Manuscript.

Philo, Chris (1995) "Animals, Geography, and the City: Notes on Inclusions and Exclusions." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13: 655-681.

Philo, Chris and Chris Wilbert, editors (2000) *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*. New York: Routledge.

Racing Pigeon Digest [no author] (2005, spring). Lake Charles, LA.

Sabloff, Annabelle (2001) *Reordering the Natural World*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Scarce, Rik (2005) "More Than Wolves at the Door: Reconstructing Community Amidst a Wildlife Controversy." Pp. 123-146 in *Mad About Wildlife,* edited by Ann Herda-Rapp and Theresa L. Goedeke. Boston: Brill.

Schorger, Arile W. (1955) *The Passenger Pigeon*. Madison WI.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Skinner, Burrhus F. (1959) *Cumulative Record*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Skogen, Ketil and Olve Krange (2003) "A Wolf at the Gate: The Anti-Carnivore Alliance and the Symbolic Construction of Community." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 309-325.

Smith, Christian (2003) *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Specter, Malcolm and John Kitsuse (1977) *Constructing Social Problems*. Menlo Park, CA: Cummings.

Tester, Keith (1991) Animals and Society: the Humanity of Animal Rights. London: Routledge.

Tovey, Hilary (2003) "Theorising Nature and Society in Sociology: The Invisibility of Animals." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(3): 196-215.

Webster's New World College Dictionary (1996). New York: Macmillan Company.

Whatmore, Sarah and Lorraine Thorne (1998) "Wild(er)ness: Reconfiguring the Geographies of Wildlife." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23(4): 435-454.

Wolch, Jennifer (2002) "Anima Urbis." *Progress in Human Geography* 26(6): 721-742.

Wolch, Jennifer and Jody Emel, editors (1998) *Animal Geographies*. New York: Verso.

Wolch, Jennifer, Kathleen West and Thomas E. Gaines (1995) "Transspecies Urban Theory." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13: 735-760.

Citation

Jerolmack, Colin (2007) "Animal archeology: Domestic pigeons and the nature-culture dialectic." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Gennifer Furst
William Patterson University, USA

Without words to get in the way: Symbolic interaction in prison-based animal programs

Abstract

George H. Mead ([1934] 1967) contended a person's sense of self develops from language-based interactions with other humans in society. According to contemporary sociologists, a person's sense of self is also influenced by non-verbal interactions with human and non-human animals. The present research extends Sanders (1993) work that examined how dog owners relate to their pets and come to develop a unique social identity for them. Through interviews with participants in prison-based animal programs (PAPs), this research explores whether inmates engaged in a similar process of assigning the animals with which they work a human-like identity. The implications of the relationships that develop in terms of desistance, which Maruna (2001) argued requires a redefinition of a person's self-identity, are discussed.

Keywords
Symbolic interaction; Animals in prison; Human-animal interaction

The interconnectedness of human and non-human animals is increasingly being considered by sociologists (Beck and Katcher 2003; Jerolmack 2005). But if this emerging field of study is to maintain legitimacy, it is necessary to "show how incorporating animals into our investigations of society will enhance understanding across many avenues of sociological inquiry" (Jerolmack 2005: 651). To that end, the present analysis considers the implications of prison-based animal programs that pair incarcerated people with domesticated animals, a trend in prison programming that has gone largely unstudied. The social identity the animal takes on for the program participant is examined according to Bogdan and Taylor's (1989) model, which Sanders (1993) applied to dog owners. Then, the ensuing effect the dog has on the development of the human participant's prosocial sense of self will be considered. Maruna (2001) argued a changed self-identity, as someone who is "making good," is necessary for desistance from crime. The present piece concludes with a discussion of whether the animals in these programs can influence the human participant's view of self and thereby play a part in the process of desistance described by Maruna (2001).

"The increasing importance of animals in our everyday lives" (Jerolmack 2005: 652) has not been restricted to people in the free world. Prison inmates are also being provided with the opportunity to develop relationships with animals while

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

incarcerated in what have been called prison-based animal programs, or PAPs (Furst 2006). While PAPs offer the psychosocial and physical benefits associated with animal-assisted therapy (AAT), the prison programs considered the present piece differ in several aspects from AAT with other populations, such as the elderly or abused children. Most importantly, the animal is not present primarily for the therapeutic benefit of the inmate. The animals are not used in conjunction with clinical methods, such as psychoanalysis, in order to more effectively communicate with patients (inmates). In prison, the programs do not have a clinical or psychological counseling component. Participants interact with animals, but usually with the goal of training them. While there are several program models, the most common is the community service design where participants train and care for animals, including dogs and wild horses, which are then adopted out to the community. Second most common is the service animal socialization model where assistance/work puppies or dogs are raised and taught basic commands before the dogs go on to specialized training such as for explosives- or drug-sniffing, or to work with people with physical disabilities. The programs, most of which have been implemented since 2000, are in 40 out of 50 states (Furst 2006).

In developing body of research that examines human-animal interactions, "the most innovative work making the 'zoological connection' in sociology today has emerged from the social constructivist/symbolic interactionist tradition" according to Jerolmack (2005: 652). As such, the present piece approaches the examination of the effects of animals on the self-identity of volunteers in a prison-based animal program (PAP) from a "neo-Median sociology of mind" perspective (Collins 1989). Although Mead ([1934] 1967) "denied that animals can engage in 'minded behavior,' numerous human-animal scholars have set out to demonstrate that animals have 'selves' in the Meadian sense and can share symbols with humans" (Jerolmack 2005: 652). Once this mutual understanding is established, according to Mead, what follows is the ability of each actor in the interaction to impact the other. While Mead maintained that the lack of shared language limited interactions between humans and other animals, it is argued here that the lack of language may characterize human-animal relations as uniquely situated to impact prison inmates who often have histories of being punished and rejected with words.

The effects of program participation on the inmates' self-concept will be discussed in terms of Maruna's (2001: 7) work on criminal desistance. Maruna argued that in order to "desist from crime ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, prosocial identity for themselves." For Maruna, the repaired ideas of self are incorporated into a "recovery story" or "redemption script" that establishes desisters as good or conventional. It is through the "help of some outside force, someone who 'believed in' the ex-offender, [that] the narrator is able to accomplish what he or she was 'always meant to do.' Newly empowered, he or she now also seeks to 'give something back' to society as a display of gratitude" (Maruna ibidem: 87). The present research considers whether participation in a PAP can contribute to the creation of a positive self-identity for the inmate volunteers.

Symbolic interaction and formation of self

G. H. Mead's ([1934] 1967) writings were a critical reaction to the purely behavioral approach to psychology that was widely accepted at the time. Today, however, his thinking is increasingly considered not distinct enough from the work to

which his contribution responded, particularly as his theory applies to animals. According to Mead, human self-consciousness or one's sense of self appeared because "we are, especially through the use of the vocal gestures, continually arousing in ourselves those responses which we call out in other persons, so that we are taking the attitudes of the other persons into our own conduct" (Mead [1934]1967: 69). For Mead, non-human animals are limited to the use of non-vocal gestures that allow them "to adjust to the attitude of others, while changing the attitudes of others" but in a manner that is "unconscious and non-rational. The gesture is being done without an intention of causing certain reaction: the organism is not conscious of its significance" (Konecki 2005: 69). The act "is carried out automatically and habitually" according to this model of behavior (Collins 1989: 12).

Mead theorized that humans, as a result of evolution, use vocal gestures, or language, that enables them to "carry out a true conversation of significant gestures, and hence engage in internalized conversation and imaginative rehearsal" (Collins 1989: 13). He argued that only vocal gestures are able to bring about common definitions between actors or "what we term the meaning of a thing, or its significance" (Mead [1934] 1967: 72). For an individual, when the response of another person "becomes a stimulus to control his action, then he has the meaning of the other person's act in his own experience. That is the general mechanism of what we term 'thought'" (Mead ibidem: 73). It is only through language, he said, that the actor can experience "the response which he is calling out in the other individual, a taking of the role of the other" (Mead ibidem: 73). Language, therefore, is necessary for this inner conversation, and thus an awareness of self, to occur. Even Herbert Blumer ([1969] 1998), who refined Mead's ideas and coined the phrase symbolic interactionism, limited the notion of self to humans. He argued that it was due to interpretation that symbolic interaction was unique to humans since "humans interpret and mutually 'define' their actions instead of simply reacting to them" as do animals (Konecki 2005: 71).

Contemporary response to Mead

Mead ([1934] 1967) was quite clear about the separation he perceived between human and non-human animals. "We say the animal does not think. He does not put himself in the place of the other person and say, in effect, 'He will act in such a way and I will act in this way'" (p. 73). However, his reliance on language as the defining factor for selfhood has increasingly come to be regarded as arbitrary. Collins (1989) referred to this as "a mysterious dividing line between humans and animals. Although humans start out as animals who make nonsignificant gestures, somehow they leap to the ability to add an inner" conversation (Collins ibidem: 13). Alger and Alger (1999) argue the demarcation between humans and other animals is necessary to:

> construct beings, who can be used, unimpeded by moral considerations. Those we call animals can be experimented on, forced to work for us, exploited for our entertainment, and eaten. It allows us to forget our common evolutionary background and the enormous number of similarities between us. (p. 203-4)

Contemporary scholars have produced a wide variety of research that counters Mead's contentions regarding animal subjectivity. Beyond the work of sociologists,

researchers from fields including neuroscience, evolutionary anthropology, behavioral biology, and the latest, cognitive etholoy or the study of animal self-awareness, can also point to evidence of animals experiencing selfhood (Marino 2006). A review of three (Alger and Alger 2003; Arluke and Sanders 1996; Irvine 2004) relatively recent ethnographic book-length works by sociologists exploring animal self-hood has already appeared (see Jerolmack 2005). The present review will present the theoretical basis for Sanders (1993) and describe how the framework can be extended and applied to PAP participants. In addition, how the unique, largely non-verbal, nature of human-animal interactions may be particularly able to impact prison inmates' self-concepts will be considered. Finally, the implications for criminal desistance according to Maruna's (2001) perspective are discussed.

Selfhood in others

Sanders (1993) based his work about companion animals on research regarding how nondisabled people in relationships with people with severe disabilities define that person's humanness (Bogdan and Taylor 1989). According to Bogdan and Taylor, "the nondisabled view the disabled people as full-fledged human beings. This stands in contrast to the dehumanizing perspectives often held by institutional staff and others in which people with severe disabilities are viewed as non-persons or sub-human" (Bogdan and Taylor ibidem: 138). The authors examined inter-subjectivity between the severely disabled and their caretakers and found the caretakers, despite a lack of language, continued to recognize the other as a human with a unique self.

Bogdan and Taylor (ibidem) identified four aspects of the nondisabled person's perspective that enable the maintenance of a human identity for the severely disabled person. First, the nondisabled person attributes thinking to the disabled person. Despite usually significant physiological limitations, the disabled person is regarded as intelligent, even if unable to fully communicate thoughts. Second, the disabled person is viewed as an individual with a unique personality comprised of likes and dislikes, feelings and motives, a life history, and a physical appearance. Third, the nondisabled person regards the disabled person as reciprocating or contributing to the relationship. In addition to companionship and the opportunity to meet others in the community, the nondisabled person may derive a "sense of accomplishment in contributing to the disabled other's well-being and personal growth" (Bogdan and Taylor ibidem: 144). Finally, the disabled person is given a social place and regarded as a "full and important member" and participates in the "rituals and routines of the social unit" (Bogdan and Taylor ibidem: 145).

Sanders (1993, 2000) investigated "how a close relationship with a companion animal shapes the human caretaker's identity" (Sanders 2000: 406). He found that through "routine, intimate interactions with their dogs, caretakers come to regard their animals as unique individuals who are minded, empathetic, reciprocating, and well aware of basic rules and roles that govern the relationship" (Sanders 1993: 207). Sanders found evidence of the same four features in the process by which people construct a subjective identity for their pets as identified by Bogdan and Taylor (1989). Pet owners attributed thinking to the animals and regarded their animals as intelligent and having free-will. Frequently, they cited "their dogs' play activities, and the adjustments they made while being trained. The dog's purposive modification of behavior was seen as indicating a basic ability to reason" (Sanders 1993: 213). Pet owners also viewed their dog as an individual with "unique personal tastes.

Informants typically took considerable pleasure in talking about individual likes and dislikes in food, activities, playthings, and people" (Sanders ibidem: 215-6). In addition to the "subjective experiences" described above, pet owners reported that "they frequently understood their relationships with the animals as revolving around emotional issues. …One indication of the intensely positive quality of their relationship with their animals were the owners' perceptions that their dogs were attuned to their own emotions and responded in ways that were appropriate and indicated empathy" (Sanders ibidem: 218). Given the value placed on the relationship, it should be no surprise that dog owners reported "they actively included their animals in the routine exchanges and the special ritual practices of the household" (Sanders ibidem: 219). Sanders thus concluded that the preceding are "categories of evidence used by dog owners to include their animals inside the ostensibly rigid but actually rather flexible boundaries that divide minded humans from mindless others" (Sanders ibidem: 221). It should be noted that Alger and Alger (1997, 2003) extended Sanders' findings on dog owners to cat owners and found a similar process of viewing cats as minded actors.

Implications for prison inmates

While the evidence establishes an intersubjectivity between animals and people irrespective of language, it is this very lack of language that may facilitate the relationships developed through PAPs. In fact, it may be that interactions not reliant on a common language are of particular benefit to prison inmates who often have long histories of people's words being used to reject and punish them. That is, without language to offend or cause harm, interactions between people and animals can feel less judgmental and therefore more therapeutic for incarcerated people. Indeed, prison inmates and animals may even be regarded as sharing a history of being excluded from the category of "human". As Sanders (1993: 210) reminds us "'primitives,' African Americans, and members of various other human groups routinely have been, and continue to be, denied the status of human…and studies of interactions in total institutions…are filled with descriptions of the 'dehumanization' of inmates by staff members, principally on the grounds that the inmates do not possess the requisite level of mind."

Desistance

Developing ideas proposed by Sampson and Laub (1990) in their life course theory of criminality, which argued desistance results from trajectory-changing life events (e.g., employment, marriage), researchers are increasingly examining criminal desistance as rooted in the transformation of a person's self-identity. Maruna's (2001) concept of self-identity proposed that all adults create an "internalized life story – or personal myth – to provide their lives with unity, purpose, and meaning. The construction and reconstruction of this narrative, integrating one's perceived past, present, and anticipated future, is itself the process of identity development in adulthood" (Maruna 2001: 7). Maruna found that long-term, persistent offenders routinely maintained antisocial self-concepts that were reinforced by the messages heard from the "voice of a society that has largely given up on the person" (Maruna ibidem: 79). Ex-offenders unable to successfully desist from crime were found to "feel powerless to change their behavior….They do not want to offend, they said, but feel that they have no choice" (Maruna ibidem: 74). The "fundamental and

intentional shift in a person's sense of self" (Maruna ibidem: 17) that Maruna found in successful desisters occurred when ex-offenders experienced "social and interactional processes of empowerment and reintegration" (Maruna ibidem: 13).

Hans Toch argued this transformation in self is encouraged by participation in what he calls "altruistic activity" or "activity designed not for profit or gain but to assist some underprivileged people who stand in manifest need of assistance" (Toch 2000: 270). Similarly, the strengths-based approach to corrections outlined by Maruna, LeBel and Lanier (2004) refers to this idea as generative activity which allows "convicts and ex-convicts to make amends, demonstrate their value and potential, and experience success in support and leadership roles" (Maruna, LeBel and Lanier ibidem: 140). Participating in these types of activities can provide "a sense of purpose and meaning, allowing them to redeem themselves from their past mistakes, and legitimizing the person's claim to having changed" (Maruna, LeBel and Lanier ibidem: 133). The growth that can result can lead the offender to reject his "past offender identity" and adopt "a new identity and a new self and a new set of goals" (Toch 2000: 276).

It is this new sense of self that Maruna (2001: 1) argued is key for desistance because in order to "desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, prosocial identity for themselves." He found that desisters had changed or repaired their ideas of self and argued that desisters must not only be able to explain their reform in terms of their experiences to others, but also "perhaps more importantly, ex-offenders need to have a believable story of why they are going straight to convince *themselves* that this is a real change" (Maruna ibidem: 86, italics in original). The "recovery story" or "redemption script" created by ex-offenders often establishes them as good or conventional and through the "help of some outside force, someone who 'believed in' the ex-offender, the narrator is able to accomplish what he or she was 'always meant to do.' Newly empowered, he or she now also seeks to 'give something back' to society as a display of gratitude" (Maruna ibidem: 87). Maruna, LeBel, and Lanier (2004: 142) found desisters often adopted a role as a wounded healer, having experienced "the transformation of identity from victim to survivor to helper."

Present study

Thus, previous research has both examined the role of non-human social interactions in the development or reformulation of human self-identity, and assessed the contributions of one's sense of self to engaging in prosocial versus antisocial behavior. The present study examines whether participants in PAPs engage in the process of assigning the animals they work with a human-like identity by applying the model first outlined by Bogdan and Taylor (1989) and applied to dog owners by Sanders (1993). Then, respondents' self-reports regarding the treatment effects of their participation are analyzed for evidence that a redefinition of self, that Maruna (2001) argued is a precursor to desistance from criminal activity, occurred. The data were collected as part of a previous study of two PAPs in one northeastern state. The interviews were re-coded for evidence of the four dimensions of the human's "perspective that helps maintain the humanness of the other in their minds" (Bogdan and Taylor 1989: 135).

The present piece is an extension of Sanders' work because the relationships formed in PAPs differ from those in traditional pet ownership in a number of ways. Perhaps most significantly, the duration of the relationships between people and

animals in PAPs is briefer because participants care for the animals for a limited period of time, generally about one year. It is unknown if the development of a human-like identity will occur when the relationship is known from the outset to be temporary and relatively brief. In addition, while the participants of the PAPs interviewed in the present study were paired with specific dogs, they were also often responsible for caring for others' dogs. In one program, participants swapped dogs with participants from their sister-program located in another facility so the dogs would become accustomed to being around different people and situations. The process of assigning a dog person-status when one is also part of a team caring for a group of dogs, rather than the sole long-term owner of a particular animal, is unstudied.

Research methods

Interview data were collected from inmates at two separate prisons who were volunteering in their facility's PAP. The first program, in a maximum-security facility for females (housed in a low-security area of the compound), pairs offenders with puppies who are socialized in preparation for advanced training in explosives detection. The program has been in place since March 2001 and is administered by a non-profit organization founded in 1997 that also oversees the program at five other sites in two other states. At the time of the interviews in spring 2005, there were 13 dogs and 22 inmates participating, 15 as primary handlers and seven back-up handlers. Among the 15 primary handlers interviewed, the average age was 38.2 years and ranged from 24 to 50 years-old. Seven participants identified themselves as white, five as black, and one each Hispanic, Native American, and biracial. The average length of program participation was 22.4 months and ranged from six to 60 months.

The second program, in a medium-security facility for males aged 17-25 in the same northeastern state, pairs offenders with greyhounds rescued from being destroyed after the end of a racing career (usually 2-3 years) who are socialized for placement as pets in homes in the community. The program has been in place since May 2002 and is administered by a non-profit organization that is focused on finding homes for ex-racing greyhounds. At the time of the interviews there were seven dogs and 18 inmates participating, seven primary handlers, seven back-up handlers, and four trainees. Seven individual interviews with each primary handler and a focus group with 14 participants were conducted at the facility. Among the seven primary handlers, the average age was 25.6 years old and ranged from 21 to 33 years-old. Six participants identified themselves as Hispanic and one as Black. The average length of program participation was 18.1 months and ranged from nine to 36 months.

Access to the participants' disciplinary records was not possible. However, the prison administrators at the female facility and the executive director of the affiliated non-profit reported that in the five years the program had been in place, one participant was removed due to disciplinary misconduct and no participants had recidivated after release. At the male facility, the administrators and program director reported that in the approximately four years the program had been in place, one participant was removed for disciplinary misconduct.

Interview data

As Alger and Alger (1997) applied Sanders' (1993) work to relationships people have with their pet cats, the present research applies Sanders' work to the relationships that develop between temporary caretakers participating in PAPs and the dogs with which they work. The implications of the animal identity construction process and the resulting effects on the PAP participants, in terms of Maruna's (2001) findings regarding desistance from crime, are also presented. They were unaware of any participants having recidivated[i]

Dog as thinking, intelligent being

Participants' responses to the dogs' behaviors indicate support for the idea that the animals have free will. Participants reported controlling their own behaviors in response to the free will or actions of the dogs. More than half of the female sample said they were less angry and more patient as a result of their participation. "I was angry," said one woman, "and this is slowing me down and has taught me to be calm. We go at the pace of the puppy." Three male respondents also reported increased impulse and/or emotional control. For example, according to one participant, "I think before I react. I'll think 'Why is the dog acting that way?' and then I do something." Participants' responses indicated support for the idea that the dogs are capable of learning and progressing in their training.

Unlike with traditional pet ownership, the main purpose of the relationship in the PAPs is the training of the dogs. For the female participants, successful training meant the dogs will go on to specialized explosives training; for the male participants the dogs will be adopted by families. The participants' discussions of their dogs reflected this focus. Many participants were enthusiastic about describing their dog's intelligence and special skills. Through their participation, the women have learned that the dogs have innate abilities; the dogs were bred specifically to excel at their training and are usually the offspring of previously successful working dogs. One female participant told of how her dog progressed through the program more quickly than any other dog, which she attributed to his nature as a particularly gifted and intelligent creature, and denied she had any special ability as a trainer.

Dog as an individual

Participants' discussions of the dogs indicate support for the idea that they regard the animals as unique. Participants from both programs keep records of their dog's individual progress. Women create a Puppy Book that follows the dog's development from a puppy and accompanies the dog upon leaving the facility. The book contains samples from the dogs' first nail clipping and grooming as well as the dogs' baby teeth and pictures of them dressed for various holidays (such as Christmas and Easter) and in paper birthday hats during celebrations. During a tour of the participants' dormitory where they live with the dogs, two participants proudly shared their Puppy Books with the researcher. One woman commented that the books are much like the baby book she kept as a new parent. In the program at the male facility, participants keep a written journal about their dogs that is given to the adopting family. Participants include information such as how the dog progressed with training, the dog's favorite toys and tricks, and any behavioral quirks, such as chewing certain objects, that the dog may still possess. In addition, during interviews

at both facilities, participants consistently introduced the researcher to the dog after introducing themselves.

Dog as emotionally giving

There was agreement that the dogs they worked with provided emotional support to the participants. According to one female participant, "To come to a place with no hope or joy and get unconditional understanding is amazing." Another said, "He doesn't criticize me or talk back or want to pick a fight. No matter what I say, here is here for me." One woman described her relationship with her dog as "better than any I'll have with a person." Approximately half of sample from each program identified the companionship of the dog as the major benefit of participation.

Participants reported that their interactions with their dogs help alleviate their depression or improve their mood. As one woman emphatically stated, "These puppies make me happy." According to another participant, "I have my 'jail days' when I'm depressed and angry but I see that little face and the wagging tail and they're happy to see you and it just can't be a bad day." Another said the program has given her "happiness and a purpose to life." The ability of the dogs to fulfill participants' emotional needs was demonstrated by the woman who reported that she no longer gets "upset with my kids for not writing enough; I just talk to my best friend here [referring to the dog]."

The male program participants reported receiving similar emotional support from the dogs as described by the females. One male participant reported that, "I took Anger Management and Behavior Modification Therapy but they weren't as helpful as this program. I can show real emotion toward the dog. I have better sessions with the dog than I do with the doctor I see here in therapy. I'm more comfortable with the dog." One male participant said, "I let my barrier down with the dogs because they're not gonna judge me." According to another male participant, "I will talk to him after a tough call with my daughter; it definitely helps with stress." Another male respondent said simply, "I talk to my dog – she is better than a person." Thus, participants from both programs indicated having emotional needs met through their interactions with their dogs.

Dog as having a social role

Participants' responses indicated support for the idea that the dogs they work with take on social roles in their lives. Participants recognized their dogs' ability to serve as social facilitators; they told of increased communication with fellow participants, other inmates, and staff and administrators regarding their dogs. According to one female participant, other women "will ask about your dog when you wouldn't usually talk to them." Participants in both programs reported conversations about the dogs' health and training progress as common topics. One female participant related that, when she was seen walking the prison grounds without her dog, who was recuperating in the cell after being spade, "everyone was asking where she was. They were all worried about her, and if something bad had happened to her." This participant also told of how others "all greet her before me when we're walking around grounds." Describing increased interaction with facility staff and administrators, one woman said "we talk more about the dogs and they'll ask how they're doing. I talk to them about her health and stuff." In addition, the dogs

increase communication between participants. Among the female participants, one woman said, "We share concern over the dogs." A male respondent noted, "We have more trust with each other in the group." A second participant reported that "we get along for the dogs. If you took the dogs away we wouldn't be a community." Another participant agreed and said that "Without the dogs we wouldn't talk to each other as much."

Participants also reported the dogs had positive effects on their relationships with family members. One woman said, "My family loves it. I talk to them about the dogs on the phone. My mom always asks me about them. My family focuses on the dog when they come visit. They're proud of me and they see the changes in me." Another reported that her children are "less anxious about me being locked up. They get to see the dog when they visit and they'll even request a specific dog for me to bring." Male participants also reported that their families are interested in the dogs and they discuss the dogs with their families. According to one, "When my family calls me they check up on the dogs and me."

Another indication of the social role the dogs take on for the participants is the sadness they reported they will feel when their dogs leave the facility. "I do experience sadness with the program. It is tough to leave them; it's like separating from my kids all over again," according to one woman. (As with most programs, the two programs included here work to quickly pair the participant with another dog.) For some, as suggested by the female participants' puppy books, the dogs may serve as surrogate children. Dressing the dogs for holidays and birthdays also indicates the dogs take on social roles for the participants.

Contributions to the development of a prosocial identity

The interview data presented above support the idea that a process of identify formation occurs for the participants in these PAPs similar to that occurring in the pet owners included in Sanders (1993) and Alger and Alger (1997). Given the human-like identity assigned to the dogs, the interviews with PAP participants were analyzed for evidence that the programs can impact desistance. Maruna (2001) found that desisters "portray themselves very much in control of their current and future life direction. This change in personal agency is frequently attributed to empowerment from some outside source" (Maruna ibidem: 13). Interview data were examined for evidence that participants developed a new, prosocial identity, which Maruna argued, is incorporated into the "recovery story" or "redemption script". It is worth noting that because participation is contingent on maintaining a clean institutional record, participants in these programs are actively demonstrating desistance, albeit while still incarcerated.

When participants were asked what they learned about themselves as a result of their participation, the overwhelming response was feeling empowered by the program. One woman reported knowing, "I can get through anything. As uncomfortable as life can be, it is bearable. I can achieve anything I want to." Another said she learned "I'm not as stupid as I was always told I was. I have a lot to offer, to the community and to other women in the program, and to the dogs too." Another participant said she learned "to voice my opinion and not be a carpet. I say what I want people to know." Still another woman reported that, "If I can bring my dog to her full potential, I can reach mine." One woman described the program as "a tremendous life lesson. I'm trusted with something alive. We've lost trust being in here and to get it back we'll do this hard work." Another participant summed up the

program by saying "it will turn your life around. It will make you happy and proud." The sense of empowerment can also be seen in others according to a participant who noted she has seen "girls come in with no confidence and when they leave they've had success with a dog."

While using different language to describe their experiences, the male participants' responses also indicated their participation enabled them to view themselves as prosocial. One participant said "you feel mature taking care of something else." Another agreed and said "the dog depends on you and you look out for the dog. You take care of the dog first and then yourself." Referring to the other program participants, a respondent said that "we share concern over the dogs. We are overprotective with the dogs." Several of the participants referred to the program "as a learning experience."

The interview data also appear to support more recent work on the process of desistance. Maruna, LeBel, Mitchell, and Naples (2004: 278) found that clients in their study defined rehabilitation as "being trusted with additional responsibilities over others." In the present study, participants, staff, and administrators alike noted the programs' ability to instill a sense of responsibility in participants. In many PAPs, including the two examined here, participants begin as back-up handlers and progress to primary handlers who not only have more responsibilities associated with the dogs but also oversee junior participants. According to Maruna et al. (2004: 278), desisters experienced "the demonstration of trust as a means of encouraging self-change."

Both groups of participants commented on the program's ability to provide them with the opportunity to engage in a worthwhile activity with benefits beyond those they personally receive. Here the data support Maruna's (2001: 11) finding that desisters often adopt the role of the "wounded healer" and come to find altruistic behavior rewarding. According to one participant, "Your life is on hold while you're in here and this helps make the time not for nothing." Another participant recognized that she will "never have a block of time without responsibility like this again. This gives me more credibility on my journey to being a whole person again." It appears their participation can serve to counteract some, if not all, of the negative impact incarceration has had on their self concepts, as demonstrated by the woman who said, "These dogs are being trained for something fabulous – to save lives. This is my way of giving back even though society doesn't think much of convicts." According to a male participant, "We hurt people on the street and now we're helping the dog; it's sort of like penance." Another male participant added that, "you're not helping anyone being in prison – you're useless. At least with this, part of our work goes into helping other people and society."

Conclusion

The present research provides evidence that PAP participants engage in a process of developing a social identity for the dogs they work with similar to that identified by Sanders (1993) in dog owners and Alger and Alger (1997) in cat owners. Despite the relatively limited length of time and more communal nature of the relationships formed in PAPs, participants appear to assign the dogs they are paired with a human-like social identity that in turn impacts their own human self-identity. The respondents included here described positive effects as a result of their participation in the PAP and recognized they were capable of, and enjoyed participating in, prosocial behaviors. In addition, the interview data also reveal

support for Maruna's (2001) finding that desisters are often wounded healers. The self-reported data presented here indicate PAP participation may be able to provide a foundation for successful criminal desistance.

Mead's assertions are increasingly being replaced by researchers who agree that for symbolic interaction to occur "there does not appear to be a requirement of conversation or use of language" during interactions that influence one's self-identity (Alger and Alger 1997: 70). Contemporary relationships between people and animals are regarded as "analogous to intimate human relationships and human-pet interactions proceed along the same lines as do human-to-human social exchanges" (Sanders 1990: 84). Today, empirical evidence from a variety of scientific fields supports the idea that animals are not simple autonomic creatures whose behavior is determined by involuntary impulse or instinct.

The non-verbal nature of the social interactions people have with animals is often used to dismiss this type of contact as less valuable and/or legitimate than interactions between people. However, there are a number of human subpopulations that have been previously ostracized or considered deviant by the dominant culture, including people with disabilities and those institutionalized in prisons and hospitals, whose members in particular may benefit from the unique, non-verbal type of interactions that take place with animals. Without the language of rejection or judgment, interactions with animals are bound by the very limits of symbolic interaction that Mead ([1934] 1967) interpreted as discounting non-human animals from playing a role in the development of human self.

There are policy implications for this evolution of sociologists' research that has moved beyond Mead's traditional concept of a language-based process of defining one's self. As the ability of animals to influence a person's self-hood has become more widely recognized, animals should increasingly be included in treatment programs aimed at people with a range of psychosocial needs. Beck and Katcher (1996: 38) point out that it is "when people face real adversity, affection from a pet takes on new meaning." Few in our society face the level of hardship experienced by many of the over two million people incarcerated in our prisons and jails. While we have only just begun to examine the extent of the effects experienced by PAP participants, we know that not only do the humans benefit, but so too do the animals, and those they go on to serve, as well. It is difficult to identify other programs being administered in prisons today that can make a similar claim of creating a win-win-win situation.

For those still apt to dismiss the ability of animals to influence a person's sense of self, it may be useful to look at the animal kingdom for of an interspecies interactionist effect on selfhood. Koko, the gorilla known for communicating with people using American Sign Language, has had a series of cats she cared for and played with (see: www.koko.org). Other interspecies pairings that have been reported include a 45-year old orangutan who bonded with a cat after her partner died, a hog that paired with an antelope after his mate passed away, and a baby hippo who replaced his lost mother with a tortoise (Turner 2006). If two different non-human animals have been shown to be able to positively influence each other, why would the same effect not be present when one of the two different animals happens to be human?

Endnotes

i It is worth noting that many departments of correction have policies in place that forbid employees from contact with former inmates in the community.

References

Alger, Janet and Steven Alger (1997) "Beyond Mead: Symbolic interaction between humans and felines." *Society and Animals* 5(1): 65-81.

Beck, Alan and Aaron Katcher (1996) *Between Pets and People*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

------. (2003) "Future directions in human-animal bond research." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 47: 79-93.

Blumer, Herbert ([1969]1998) *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bogdan, Robert and Steven Taylor (1989) "Relationships with severely disabled people: The social construction of humanness." *Social Problems* 36: 135-148.

Furst, Gennifer (2006) "Prison-based animal programs: A national survey." *The Prison Journal* 86: 407-430.

Irvine, Leslie (2004) "A model of animal selfhood: Expanding interactionist possibilities." *Symbolic Interaction* 27: 3-21.

Jerolmack, Colin (2005) "Our animals, our selves? Chipping away at the human-animal divide." *Sociological Forum* 20: 651-660.

Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2005) "The Problem of Symbolic Interaction and of Constructing Self." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 1(1).

Marino, Lori (2006) "The ape in the mirror." *Best Friends Magazine* 15 (6): 24-25.

Maruna, Shadd (2001) *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Maruna, Shadd and Thomas LeBel (2003) "Welcome back? Examining the 're-entry court' concept from a strengths-based perspective." *Western Criminology Review* 4: 91-107.

Maruna, Shadd, Thomas LeBel and Charles Lanier (2004) "Generativity behind bars: Some 'redemptive truth' about prison society." Pp. 131 -151 in *The Generative society: Caring for future generations*, edited by E. de St. Aubin, D. McAdams, and T. Kim. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Maruna, Shadd, Thomas LeBel, Nick Mitchell and Michelle Naples (2004) "Pygmalion in the reintegration process: Desistance from crime through the looking glass." *Psychology, Crime & Law* 10: 271-281.

Mead, George H. ([1934] 1967) *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Myers, Olin (2003) "No longer the lonely species: A Post-Mead perspective on animals and sociology." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23: 46- 68.

Sampson, Robert and John Laub (1990) "Crime and deviance over the life course: the salience of adult social bonds." *American Sociological Review* 55: 609-627.

Sanders, Clinton (1990) "Excusing tactics: Social responses to the public misbehavior of companion animals." *Anthrozoos* 4: 82-90.

------. (1993) "Understanding dogs: Caregivers' attributions of mindedness in canine-human relationships." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22: 205-226.

------. (2003) "Actions speak louder than words: Close relationships between humans and nonhuman animals." *Symbolic Interaction* 26: 405-426.

Toch, Hans (2000) "Altruistic activity as correctional treatment." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 44: 270-278.

Turner, Debbye (2006) "Odd Couples Among Animals." Web page, April 19. Retrieved March 18, 2007. (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/04/19/earlyshow/contributors/debbyeturner/main1512591_page2.shtml).

Citation

Furst, Gennifer (2007) "Without words to get in the way: Symbolic interaction in prison-based animal programs." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume III, Issue 1 – April 2007

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Lodz University, Poland

Pets of Konrad Lorenz. Theorizing in the social world of pet owners

Abstract

This article explores the personal account titled *Man meets dog* ([1949] 2002) by an outstanding ethologist Konrad Lorenz who is one of the key theoreticians of the social world of pet owners. His lines of argumentation and categories of pet perception within this social world may be reconstructed from his personal recollections. The concepts of the social world and arena are the key notions that integrate the current analysis. The arena is also formed in the course of the inner conversation and is often going together with the outer disputes of a social world . It might seem that Konrad Lorenz as a scientist and ethologist should avoid using anthropomorphic categories. However, as he shares the same space (including private space) and communicates with domestic animals, the author tends to anthropomorphise their behaviour, even though formally he opposes or even despises the idea, applying a disdainful term of "sentimental anthropomorphisation" to people who do so. Additionally, the article addresses the biographic context of the ethologist's life and his writings together with the activities of the Second World War as well as his collaboration with the Nazi government. Konrad Lorenz represents the so-called "cult of nature" approach which, in the opinion of his opponents, has a lot in common with the Nazi doctrine (Sax 1997).

Keywords

Sociology of human animals – non-human animals relationships; Symbolic interaction; Anthropomorphisation; Social world; Legitimization; Theorizing; Arena

The scientific interest in relations and interactions between people and pets has a long-established tradition and has been institutionalised in the social world of science. A number of psychological, sociological, anthropological periodicals from all over the world cover different aspects of this subject. There is also a well-known interdisciplinary magazine *Society and Animals* devoted to the subject-matter which publishes numerous sociological papers. What is more, a lot of scientific books address this theme (Alger and Alger 2003; Franklin 1999; Griffin 1992; Kennedy 1992; Katcher, Beck 1983; Regan and Singer 1976). It is noteworthy that analyses of animal-human interactions include relations between various kinds of pets and their owners (Goode 2007; Irvin 2004; Arluke and Sanders 1996; Serpell 1996; Sanders 1993, 1999; Belk 1996; Sussman 1985; Foote 1956).

©2005-2007 Qualitative Sociology Review

In our culture the social world of pet owners still calls for justification and legitimisation. Although household pets are very common, there is no full cultural or religious recognition of their social and psychological role in our everyday life. The Old Testament has provided the groundwork for views and theorizing about animals as creatures strictly subject to people, and the insurmountable divide that separates culture and nature. The animalistic-anthropomorphic dichotomy has been validated by St Augustine of Hippo, and, more vital for us, by Descartes through introducing a mechanistic and materialistic logic for the explanation of bodily functioning, where animals are characterized as soulless creatures (Menache 1997). Negative perceptions of animals in proverbs and sayings often result from biblical references. These teachings stand in stark contrast to everyday life observations of such a common phenomenon as keeping pets at home and attributing an important role to them in our psychological, personal, or even social life. The contrast creates a need to justify and theorize the significant position of pets while upholding the socially relevant dichotomy at the same time. This is done by categories of perception included in the matrix of pet perception (see table 1).[i] As the matrix is of a dynamic nature, it never carries a single category of perception during the entire pet-keeping period (e.g. particularistic anthropomorphisation or universalistic anthropomorphisation). All the categories presented in the table may be applied, depending on the context or behaviour. The passages between the categories are unlimited. These categories are frequently used to account for some significant behaviour of a pet.

	Characteristic animal traits (“Animalism”, Animalistic Perspective)	**Characteristic human traits (Anthropomorphic Perspective)**
Universal qualities	Animalistic-universalistic perspective. “All animals, including pets, behave in a certain, standardized way; it is characteristic of them, for they are merely animals, they have no human qualities.”	Universalistic anthropomorphisation. “All animals, including pets, feel, suffer , think similarly to humans.”
Distinctive qualities	Animalistic-particularistic perspective. “My (our) pet is exceptional, mainly thanks to contact with me (with us); but it is only an animal, it has no human qualities.”	Particularistic anthropomorphisation. “My (our i.e. our family’s) pet is exceptional, mainly thanks to contact with me (with us) it behaves like a human.” Personification of animals, naming them.

Table 1. The pet perception matrix

The author looks at the accounts of the famous zoologist and ethologist Konrad Lorenz in *Man Meets Dog* ([1949] 2002) which depict him as a great pet lover. Konrad Lorenz was an expert in the social world of pet owners whose opinions largely shaped the social aura around pet-keeping. As a Nobel Laureate in animal behaviour, Konrad Lorenz was enormously influential in the social world of science. His writings on pets are a good example of theorizing on different aspects of the

interaction between humans and their pets whereas *Man Meets Dog* ([1949] 2002) in particular may be regarded as an instance of theorizing and an attempt to legitimise the social world of pet owners.

What is a social world? A social world comprises groups that share certain activities and resources in order to reach their aims and create common ideologies pertaining to their activities (Strauss 1993: 212; Clarke 1991). Social worlds are not isolated entities or "social structures". They are an isolated form of collective action (Strauss ibidem: 223). The boundaries and membership in social worlds are not as clearly defined as in other social groups such as professional organizations or families. One can join or leave a social world any time by taking a certain type of action. Individuals may obviously live in many different social worlds for, in the modern world, they may participate in many channels of communication. Therefore, they may act simultaneously in the academic world, the world of business, fashion, medicine, theatre, pet owners, the world of environmental protection and even in more loosely knit worlds of special interest, for example in the world of sports, stamp collectors or fans of a certain soap opera. Every social world is therefore a cultural area, which is defined neither by its territory nor by a formal group participation but by the boundaries of effective communication. This system of communication also creates a characteristic language, or jargon (Shibutani 1994). Below is the sample of words and expressions associated with the perspectives on the social world of pets under discussion:

- the anthropomorphic perspective: "an animal is not a thing", "species chauvinism", animal liberation, "animal emergency service", "mass murder of animals", sentimental anthropomorphisation, breeding nickname, etc. This language also contains many emotive and diminutive forms expressing particular meanings and attitudes of owners towards particular animals: kitty, kitty-kitty, kitten, pussy, pussy-cat or doggy, puppy, pup etc. (Dlugosz – Kurczabowa 2003: 242, 398), and calling a pet "a family member" (see Hickrod and Schmidt 1982; Veevers 1985; the problem of anthropomorphisation is extensively discussed in Kennedy 1992; Morris, Fiedler and Costall 2000; Irvine 2004).
- the animalistic perspective – sentimental anthropomorphisation, "stock farm", hog raising farm, poultry farming, stud farm, raising of fur bearing animals. Yearbooks contain terms typical of the animalistic perspective imposing an emotionally neutral perception of animals and eliminating a subjective and individual approach to them e.g. cattle, hog, sows, herd, poultry, etc. (see RSRP 2002)
- various segments of the world of pet owners – "dog-lovers", "cat-lovers", animal breeders etc.

It is a certain universe of discourse that distinguishes between different worlds and erects a symbolic barrier and boundary around a social world. This language is also full of moral meanings, i.e. "interpretative orientations" and frequently full of what can be called "neutralisation techniques" (Lowe 2002:107; Sykes and Matza 1979; see also Sanders 1990) or accounts of improper and unforeseen acts which usually receive a negative social and moral evaluation (Scott and Lyman 1975). In every social world there exist certain norms, values, hierarchies of prestige, forms of careers and common outlooks upon life - *Weltanschaung* (Strauss 1993: 269-73).

A social world, especially the recently created one, has to justify its existence. Legitimisation is one of the features of the social world and it is related to: the

demand for society's attribution of value to a given social world or its part, distancing from other worlds or their parts, building certain theories to emphasise the authenticity of a social world, setting standards of actions and their evaluation, defining boundaries of the social world or changing them (Strauss 1993:217, see also Strauss 1982).

Legitimisation of the new worlds may also be carried out by means of fables that connect conventions of the new social world with the already existing, related ones, by creating an organisational (institutional) basis for the social world, intercepting the infrastructure of the social worlds that have ceased to exist and by creating links of co-operation between scattered social actors (Becker 1982: 300, 339-42). Theorizing may be a form of legitimisation of actions within a social world. We may put forward a preliminary thesis that a social world needs a theory to legitimise its actions. Theorizing makes it possible to define one's own perspective on, let's say, the perception of pets as more authentic compared to categories of perception of other social actors, and set boundaries to the social worlds. There are many ways to do theorizing. It may be ordinary or scientific theorizing. The ordinary theorizing uses an *ad hoc* argumentation based on everyday observations and is not always logical. Scientific theorizing is based on reference to scientific theories and researches; it also ascribes meanings to the terms used. In both types of theorizing reference is made to scientific authorities. One may use i.e. the conception of animal liberation philosophy based on P. Singer's utilitarian theory. This is a more advanced form of theorizing that requires knowledge of certain philosophical and ethical concepts.

The social world provides individuals participating in it with a certain cognitive perspective by which they define situations. This perspective is an orderly way of perceiving the world, which comprises features of various objects, events, or human nature taken for granted. It is a matrix by means of which individuals perceive the world (Shibutani 1994: 269). This scheme provides individuals with a moral and cultural basis for their actions in a given social world as well as society. Judgments of events or actions of other people derive from these very perspectives just as selectivity of perception is conditioned by the perspective of a social world. The Animal Protection Society's activity in Poland will be perceived differently by a professional ethicist or theologian than it would be perceived by a member of this organisation. In every social world there are some divisive issues as following: do animals have some kind of mind or self and do they suffer like human beings? They are discussed, negotiated, fought against, forced and manipulated by representatives of emerging sub-worlds (Strauss 1978: 124). The common ground for this discussion is called an arena. An arena is of a political nature, but not necessarily referring to actions of purely political institutions. Not all the arenas are made public and we do not always get to know about their inner arguments via the mass media. Arenas exist inside organisations, inside sub-worlds and on the borders of different social worlds and sub-worlds. Some discussions tackle the issue of boundaries and problems with the legitimisation of worlds. Struggles for prominence, influence, power and resources are also common (Strauss 1982:189; Clarke 1991; Kacperczyk 2004).

Konrad Lorenz's theorizing concentrates on his own and other people's relations with dogs and other pets. He undertakes an analysis of these relations and pet behaviour both in scientific and popular terms. You would usually expect animalistic or even mechanistic descriptions of pet behaviour on the part of an outstanding scientist, zoologist and ethologist. This researcher is an opponent of

anthropomorphisation both as regards the analysis of pets and the theory of cognition in relation to nature (Lorenz 1977:52, 280). In his opinion, the difference between the world of nature and the world of human soul is indelible only when it comes to the culture/ nature dichotomy, but not in the case of "physiological matters and experiencing". The human heritage associated with rational thinking is of a cumulative nature and, according to the author, differentiates humans from the rest of the world of nature (Lorenz 1977: 285-90). Konrad Lorenz seems to be a great humanist who warns people against the speedy development of culture ahead of the phylogenetic development of our species (Lorenz 1986:12). It seems that owing to his scientific reputation of a renowned ethologist, the author of the memoirs has become one of the leading "theoreticians" of the social world of pet owners**.**

The analysis of personal accounts in *Man Meets Dog*

An attempt has been made to analyse Konrad Lorenz's personal accounts using the pet perception matrix (see table 1, with a primary focus on anthropomorphic and animalistic categories in various contexts of action as well as applied justifications) in order to verify its analytical adequacy and applicability. Triangulating the data, I show that a debate concerning the arena and categories of pet perception in the social world of pet owners exists not only in official arenas but at the individual level reflected in the inner conversation, too. A book by Konrad Lorenz ([1949] 2002) will be analysed in an effort to provide an answer to the following question: What meaning does Konrad Lorenz attribute to the relationship between humans and their pets? An outside sociological or psychological perspective applied to the text and the search for parallels with existing ideological, political or philosophical conceptions could distort the key intentions and structures of meaning included in the text itself and originally intended by the author.

To begin with, Konrad Lorenz keeps track of the pedigree of dogs as pets (Lorenz [1949] 2002:1-18) in the mode of fictitious story-telling. The phylogenesis of the species is indispensable for the subsequent plausible explanation of the behaviour of his own pets which appears later on in the book, whereby the author refers to the natural traits as compared to the modified qualities of the species resulting from breeding and domestication. According to Konrad Lorenz, our ancestors tamed the jackal and the wolf centuries ago, to the mutual benefit of both hunters and wild canines. Packs of golden jackals followed people and spent the night nearby to get leftovers, and warned people about dangerous predators approaching their camps at night. This was the beginning of the common ecological environment shared by humans and jackals. As mutual attachment developed, jackals helped people trace their prey. From a jackal's perspective, the killing of an animal by a human was associated with the possibility of obtaining and/or gaining meat leftovers. Humans established their first settlements at the beginning of the late stone age. At that time they already tamed the golden, Spitz-like jackal helpful for hunting and guard. The wolf had also been tamed by that time, being one of the ancestors of wolf-blooded dogs such as Huskies, Eskimo dogs, Samoyeds, Russian Laikas, Chow chows, and some other breeds. The majority of today's dogs have descended either from wolves or from jackals.

In the first chapter the author uses mainly <u>animalistic categories</u> to describe animal behaviour. The jackal is still not fully tame, but gets closer and closer to people. It is free, lives in the open space. It makes a choice including the choice of a human as a prospective companion indispensable for the species' procreation. This

is a choice made for biological reasons, to increase the chances of the species to survive. The animalistic categories used by the author apply to the reconstruction of a jackal's motives of dependence on human households. These motives are strictly biological and evolutional, not psychological or typically human.

In the second chapter ("Two origins of fidelity") the author further inquires into the reasons for dog fidelity in the animal traits of the species. The category of "fidelity" is in itself an instance of anthropomorphisation of pet behavioural motives. Konrad Lorenz uses an animalistic category at the theoretical level, to account for a term derived from our culture (fidelity). Today's dog behaviours are explained by their ancestral features typical of the species. Fidelity primarily originates from the bond between the dog and his master, namely

> a lifelong maintenance of those ties which bind the young wild dog to its mother, but which in the domestic dog remain part of a lifelong preservation of youthful characters. The other root of fidelity arises from the pack loyalty which binds the wild dog to the pack-leader or, respectively from the affection which the individual members of the pack feel for each other. This root goes much deeper in dogs with more wolf than jackal blood, for the obvious reason that the preservation of the pack plays a far larger role in the life of the wolf. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:20)

The author is using the terms "pack" and "bond" between animal child and its parents which in this particular context serve as animalistic categories. Pet's independence is accounted for by referring to other animalistic categories:

> the marks of domesticity particularly that of persistent youthfulness are much less distinct in Lupus-blooded dogs than in those of our Central European breeds. The place of this trait is taken by a completely different type of dependency which derives its origin from the specific propensities of the wolf. While the jackal is chiefly a carrion feeder, the wolf is almost purely a beast of prey and is dependent on the support of his fellows in the killing of the large animals which are his sole means of sustenance in the cold season (Lorenz [1949] 2002:25)

Jackal dogs perceive their master as their parent whereas wolf-like dogs perceive a parent as their "pack-leader". However, later on Lorenz applies anthropomorphic categories in order to explain motives of dogs' behaviours: "The submissiveness of the childish jackal dog is matched in the Lupus dog by a proud 'man to man' loyalty" (Lorenz [1949] 2002:25). The author shares his own observations as a specific empirical example to support this theoretical generalization.

In chapter four, "Training", the author once again adopts the animalistic perspective on animals and animalistic categories. Lorenz seems to be more attached to the breeds that have kept a lot of wildness and independence. The author shows that domestic animals, dogs in this case, may be educated. He does not explicitly clarify the reason for dog training, although we may guess that it is about introducing them to family and domestic life: teaching pets their hygiene and discipline "should simplify any dog owner's relations with his charge" (Lorenz 1949/2002:37). This can be achieved by three basic drills: "lie down", "basket", "heel". It is noteworthy that the author does not mention a popular command 'paw' as it is not crucial (from the point of view of the target behaviour pattern of a dog) for less troublesome companionship of a pet. It is rather used for expressing emotional states, initiated by the master and/or independently by the pet itself.

In chapter five "Canine customs" the author emphasizes the role of specific laws governing canine behaviour. He puts forward a strong methodological statement:

> Seen from without, the effects of these laws, which are firmly anchored to the hereditary behaviour pattern of the dog, closely resemble the regulations of our own transmitted human customs. This also applies to the effects of these laws on social life, and it is in the sense of this analogy that the chapter heading is to be understood. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:51)

Canine rituals are inhered in encounters and patterns of the ranking order behaviour as in e.g. the dog stiffening up and raising its tail vertically on high in self-display or dogs sniffing one another. It is the first instance of anthropomorphisation though used by the author to describe dog behaviour. He clearly comes across the arena of two competing categories of pet perception, the need to mingle animalistic and anthropomorphic terminology: "The urge to preserve prestige and dignity is not specifically human, but lies deep into the instinctive layers of the mind which, in the higher animals, are closely related to our own" (Lorenz [1949] 2002:53). In his application of human characteristics to domestic animals (dignity, prestige) the author emphasizes their common phylogenetic origin, in order perhaps to evade allegations of anthropomorphisation and uphold his former methodological statement.

Further details of canine customs call for further anthropomorphisation. The example below is a description of an interaction between two dogs of equal physical strength that would have separated and gone their own ways (having sniffed one another), had it not been for the interference of a bitch:

> Bitches behave in a peculiar way when they are present at a meeting of two dogs equal in strength and rank. On such occasions, Wolf's wife, Susi, certainly hopes for a fight; not that she helps her husband actively but she likes to see him thrash an opponent. I have twice watched her adopt a most deceitful ruse in order to achieve this end: Wolf was standing head to tail with another dog-each time it was an outsider, a 'summer visitor'-and Susi prowled round them carefully and interestedly, the dogs in the meantime taking no notice of her as a bitch. Then, silently but vigorously, she nipped her husband in his hindquarters, which were presented to a foe. Wolf assumed that the latter, by an intolerable breach of all the age-old laws of canine custom, had bitten his posterior whilst sniffing it, and fell on him immediately. Since the attack appeared to the other dog as equally unforgivable contravention, the ensuing battle was unusually grim. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:54)

Some instances of anthropomorphisation are of a social nature, namely role categorizations ("Wolf's wife"), taking the role of the other ("certainly hopes for a fight") and cracking down on the one who does not observe the custom. "Wolf's wife" took part in a strategic interaction determined to incite a fight between the two male dogs who are unaware of the provocation. From Susi's and observers' point of view, this must have been a closed awareness context (interaction partners are not aware of the real intentions of one of the participants). Thus, animals are ascribed the ability to get involved in strategic interaction. Social anthropomorphisation is accompanied by psychological anthropomorphisation e.g. dogs may hate each other, feel contempt and fear, which is deduced from their non-verbal behaviour (Lorenz [1949] 2002: 55-56). What is more, one may interpret pet gestures as the expression of feelings and views such as self-confidence, devotion, attack or self-defence.

"Chivalry" is a term taken from our cultural milieu, and its application in reference to the animal world requires a biological explanation:

> There is one particularly endearing canine habit, which has been fixed since early times in the hereditary characters of the central nervous system of the dog. This is the chivalrous treatment of females and puppies. No normal male will bite a female of its species; the bitch is absolutely taboo and can treat a dog as she likes, nipping or even seriously biting him. The dog has at his disposal no means of retaliation other than differential gestures and the 'politeness look', with which he may attempt to divert the attacks of the bitch into play. Masculine dignity forbids the only other outlet-flight-for dogs are always at great pains to 'keep face' in front of bitches. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:60)

As stems from the above, male dignity and chivalry are hereditary in dogs.

In the chapter "Master and dog" the author engages in "theorizing". Konrad Lorenz strongly emphasizes the difference between the animal and human world. Anthropomorphisation of canine customs from the previous chapter is replaced by the animal/ human dichotomy:

> Extensive knowledge of the social behaviour of the higher animals does not, as so many think, make one underestimate differences between man and animal. I maintain, on the contrary, that only somebody who is really familiar with animal behaviour is able to appreciate the unique and exalted position held by man in the world of living creatures. (…) The scientific comparison of man and animals which forms such a large part of our research methods no more implies a lowering of human dignity than does the recognition of the origin of species. The essence of creative organic evolution is that it produces completely new and higher characters which were in no way indicated or even implicit in the preceding stage from which they took their origin. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:64-65)

Despite the unity that exists between our part of animal nature and the animal realm, human culture continuously creates something new, something that has never existed before, the achievements of human mind and ethics: "The assertion that animals are better than man is sheer blasphemy" (Lorenz [1949] 2002: 65). The author criticizes those who bestow their love on dogs or cats while doubting the moral virtues of mankind. He calls this phenomenon a "social perversion". Animalistic categories in pet perception are again attributed to the world of animals whilst anthropomorphic (and anthropocentric) categories - to the human world. As a result of the author's "theorizing", the original balance of the analysed dichotomy is restored. One can still observe the existence of the arena across the accounts of domestic animals.

In the chapter "Dogs and children" the author stresses the positive impact of pet-keeping on children and their socialization, as they learn very quickly how to treat animals in order to strike up a "friendship" with them. He undermines the belief that dogs are a real danger to children as ensuing from the learned distortions in their interrelations. According to Konrad Lorenz, the human and animal realms join together when it comes to relations between children and pets. Culture has not yet managed to create an insurmountable divide between the two which is subsequently formed in the course of primary socialization.

The next chapter "Choosing a dog" advises on how to choose the right dog that goes with its owner. According to Konrad Lorenz, "comical breeds" like Sealyhams may be a great support for a melancholic person. To those who prefer wild nature,

independent breeds that are closer to their wild ancestors are advised. Nervous persons should avoid getting very lively dogs, like fox-terriers. When getting a dog, one should always take heed of picking a dog that is physically and mentally fit. Konrad Lorenz claims that bitches are much more noble, intelligent and faithful than dogs, which should also be taken into consideration when choosing a pet. It is clear that the two worlds, animal and human, can be brought closer together by a rational choice of the man.

Dog breeders, as it is stated in the chapter "An appeal to dog breeders", overestimate the importance of physical qualities in comparison to mental ones. The lack of fidelity in the case of some gundogs is an example. Physical perfection is ill-assorted with mental characteristics. Selective breeding is, so to speak, anthropomorphisation in action, as it follows a rational conception of breed shaping that closes the sharp divide between the two worlds and distorts relations between them. The author is an advocate for milder interference, since too much of human intrusion into the animal world is destructive.

The chapters titled "Animals that lie" and "Cat!" seem to be the most pertinent to the analysis in question. The facial expression of the cat openly communicates its mood. An attack in self-defence is preceded by threatening gestures such as making the "hunchback", with ears laid flat, the tail slightly to one side, the corners of its mouth pulled backwards, the nose wrinkled, producing a metallic growl and splutter. Konrad Lorenz claims that such non-verbal communication is present and noticeable in interactions between cats as well as dogs and may be deciphered together with the underlying motives. Apart form the most superficial layer of gestures involved in direct communication, pets are also capable of using symbolic communication for strategic purposes. "Deliberate misrepresentation of facts" understood as a lie or hiding some facts, is the case under consideration (Lorenz [1949] 2002:164).

Despite clear anthropomorphisation, the author shows his usual scientific meticulousness, as in his use of the term "lie" in inverted commas (Lorenz [1949] 2002: 164). The real, disguised intentions behind pet behaviour are noticed and decoded by the observer. In other words, an animal has adopted a certain strategy in order to achieve a given goal by misleading behaviour. Closed awareness context may turn into open awareness context if one party discovers the true motives governing other partner's actions (Glaser and Strauss 1964).[ii]

The description of animal interactions in human terms is a manifestation of anthropomorphisation. A search for real intentions behind certain gestures is rational and applies to a rational actor such as a human being. Interaction is seen as symbolic (gestures are interpreted on the basis of conventionally ascribed meaning) or strategic (goals are achieved by way of actions which conceal the party's true motives).

In the chapter "The truce" Konrad Lorenz once again tries to restrain himself from anthropomorphising animal behaviour. The author adopts the animalistic-particularistic perspective. He claims, for instance, that his own dogs would usually win a fight. The author turns to an animalistic outlook when maintaining that friendship between different species is impossible. Apparently, numerous animal species (badgers, monkeys, dogs, cats, geese and others) were forced into peaceful coexistence in his house by the law of a "cease-fire" and not the bonds of friendship. Mutual tolerance is an essential element of the code of conduct observed by the occupants of a shared dwelling place who may even resort to play, but never an act of aggression against another animal who occupies the same home. A play as symbolic interaction is an essential prerequisite for this type of coexistence.[iii]

Play authorises mutual tolerance and acceptance imposed by the shared dwelling place.

The author proceeds to assert that "sentimental anthropomorphisation" of animals disgusts him:

> It makes me feel slightly sick when, in some magazine published by an animal defence society, I read the caption 'Good Friends' or something of the kind under a picture which portrays a cat, a dachshund and a robin all eating out of the same dish […]. From my own experience, I should say that real friendships between members of different species only exist between man and animals, and hardly ever between animals amongst themselves […]. Mutual toleration is certainly not synonymous with friendship, and even when animals unite in common interest, as for a game, it cannot generally be said that they are bound by a real social contact, far less by a firm friendship. (Lorenz [1949] 2002: 106-107)

The author clearly tries to refrain from anthropomorphising by applying the animalistic-universalistic view of the relations between different species (Lorenz [1949] 2002:90-108) although it does not come easy. Still, he maintains that real friendship is possible only between a human and a pet.

The animalistic-universalistic perspective is also present in the following two chapters: "The fence" and "Much ado about a little dingo". Konrad Lorenz tackles the issue of a distance as the biological constituent of pet nature. As an illustration of this point, the author mentions aggression expressed by animals towards outsiders who encroach on their territory. Similarly, the success of the adoption of a changeling by a bitch largely depends on the site of the first encounter between the prospective foster-mother and the puppy. To stimulate the female's brood-tending instinct, it is advisable to present her with a strange baby outside her nest. If the foster-mother initially encounters an orphan among her own litter, she may bite or even devour it. The latter action may be preceded by a sucking and licking movements normally employed to remove the foetal membranes from the newborn puppies. Thus, even domestic animals abide by the code of behaviour that is only too different from human.

Theoretical thinking based on home ethnography is continued in the chapter "What a pity he can't speak - he understands every word". Dogs, similarly to wild animals, express a plethora of feelings including anger, humility and happiness using their facial expression and gesticulation. A large number of gestures, however, are acquired in the course of socialization and training. For example, giving the paw, laying its head on its master's knee are learned actions practised by a dog to ask for forgiveness or conciliation. The dog breeds that are most advanced in domestication are also the most apt at miming. Apart from understanding and communicating feelings, dogs can understand words and even entire sentences. They recognize messages not only by their tone:

> Every dog-owner is familiar with a certain behaviour in dogs which can never be produced under laboratory conditions. The owner says, without special intonation and avoiding mention of the dogs name, 'I don't know whether I'll take him or not.' At once the dog is on the spot, wagging his tail and dancing with excitement, for he already senses a walk. […] on the final pronouncement, 'I'll leave him at home', the dog turns dejectedly away and lies down again. (Lorenz [1949] 2002:132)

The process of theorizing results in the conclusion that domestic dogs demonstrate a superior ability to understand human language even compared to

anthropoid apes. Konrad Lorenz goes even further, drawing a parallel between dogs and people. The first similarity is the "liberation from the fixed tracks of instinctive behaviour", and the second is "that persistent youthfulness, which in the dog is the root of his permanent longing for affection" (Lorenz [1949] 2002:133). In this chapter, the author partly abandons the animalistic-universalistic perspective in favour of universalistic anthropomorphisation.

The subsequent chapter "Affection's claim" raises ethical questions in human-pet relations. Dogs are exceptionally faithful: "The bond with a true dog is as lasting as ties of this earth can ever be" (Lorenz ibidem:135). Affection and friendship that develops between a master and his dog shall be based on mutual fidelity. Regrettably, dogs are more faithful than humans. The human religion of brotherly love falls short of fidelity and love of a pet towards its master. Konrad Lorenz immediately reiterates that it is not sentimental anthropomorphisation: "Even the noblest human love arises, not from reason and the specifically human, rational moral sense, but from the much deeper age-old layers of instinctive feeling" (Lorenz ibidem :137). The author believes that deep layers of feelings and their dynamics are typical of both humans and animals. While apparently refraining from "sentimental anthropomorphisation" of pets, he looks at people from an animalistic perspective instead.[iv] The same goes for the chapter "The animal with a conscience" whereby Konrad Lorenz argues that common sense and reason alone are an insufficient basis for morality. Although animals are not humans, their treatment by people stems from deep-rooted affection. A more rational treatment of an animal e.g. for utilitarian purposes deriving from an animalistic perspective and suggested by one's mind may still be hampered by deeply rooted instinctive feelings (Lorenz ibidem:178-179).

Konrad Lorenz's book abounds in instances of pet anthropomophisation mostly of a psychological nature. As the scientist puts it, his dog-bitch was embarrassed when she had missed a mouse trying to catch it (Lorenz ibidem:142). Psychological underpinnings may also be with a cognitive focus, as when the author ascribes his dogs the ability to classify other domestic animals and their respective species depending on their use. Some breeds of domestic fowl e.g. ducks, geese are easily recognised as inviolable by dogs whereas the canine pets encounter considerable difficulties trying to discriminate between different kinds of gallinaceous birds e.g. peacocks (Lorenz ibidem: 184). Anthropomorphisation may also involve moral issues, as in the chapter "The animal with a conscience". In the author's words, dogs feel remorse, e.g., when they misbehave. The feelings of remorse and guilt last as pets have to unreservedly express their genuine regret about the wrongdoing (Lorenz ibidem:182-183).

The last chapter, "Fidelity and death" is a word of praise for the master's fidelity to his pets. Faithfulness to animal friends is difficult to maintain as their life span is shorter than ours. This biological maladjustment may be overcome by keeping the descendants of a certain animal. The descendants remind them of their ancestors in many ways, which helps to preserve recollections of all the forebears once owned. The most recent offspring reminds of all that has been before as if accumulating the feelings of affection and fidelity cultivated between dogs and people sharing their home. This phenomenon may be called "steered reincarnation" (the term coined by K. T. Konecki). The anthropomorphically perceived relation between a human being and a pet (based on mutual love and fidelity) is extended by means of "selective breeding" whereby animals are treated objectively and scientifically, after all.

To sum up, the author's personal accounts abound in various rhetorical "tricks" employed in order to maintain a scientific approach which roughly corresponds to an animalistic perspective. At the same time, an anthropomorphic perspective seems

indispensable for harmonious everyday coexistence with pets. Konrad Lorenz's accounts become contradictory when his two identities of scientist and pet lover collide. The animals are no longer an object of sheer scientific experiment but a part of his everyday family life.

The cult of nature according to Konrad Lorenz

Let us now focus on the socio-historical context of Konrad Lorenz's writings. Perhaps a closer look at the socio-cultural context of the renowned ethologist's writings will enhance the understanding of the author's statement, especially as regards his standpoint in a scientific debate in ethology and eugenics**.**

Animal psychology as a discipline flourished under the auspices of the Third Reich. Some researchers seek the roots of Konrad Lorenz's opinions in his political and organizational entanglements with Nazi Germany (see an extensive elaboration on the thesis in Sax 1997). As a member of the Nazi Party, Konrad Lorenz worked at the Race-policy Bureau at the time. In 1942 he participated in the study of 877 individuals of mixed Polish-German descent estimating their ability to assimilate into German culture. Individuals classified as antisocial or with a limited inherent aptitude were sent to concentration camps, whereas eligible candidates were assigned for forced Germanisation (Deichman 1996:193-97, 323; see Sax 1997). The fascist cult of the race and disregard for human life, individuality and individual freedom is characteristic of Nazi ideology (Sax 1997, 2000). In the light of Nazi ideology nature appears as orderly and disciplined, whereas a civilized society is permeated with anarchy and disorder. Absolute order is only an attribute of wild nature untouched by civilization. The fight for the *Lebenswelt* and survival are absolutely fundamental to this order. The Nazis disdained liberal-democratic societies as decadent, deprived of the natural power and fighting skills. Pets are a part of these degrading tendencies of a decadent**,** demoralized society.

Konrad Lorenz was a co-editor of *Zeitschirft für Tierpsychologie*, a journal published by the German Society for Animal Psychology established in 1936. The bulk of Konrad Lorenz's articles were published by the journal in the Nazi period. These included, among others, his writings on the detrimental effects of domestication and civilization (Sax 1997). Due to domestication and selective breeding animals are severed from their natural ancestry and wild environment. As a consequence, natural selection does not work, natural instincts deteriorate, which impedes both innate psychological and behavioural qualities. The same goes for the residents of metropolises. This entails "entropy", that is the proliferation of random variations of forms as a substitute for the natural and remarkable variety of the kind, which, in turn, leads to genetic decline and should be treated as an illness or social downfall[v] According to Konrad Lorenz, further degeneration in humans may be halted by means of eugenics. Boria Sax, a vehement critic of Lorenz's scientific achievements, seeks a parallel between his theory of the dual origin of dogs (domesticated from the Mesopotamian jackal, and the Northern Wolf, the "aureus dogs" and "lupus dogs", respectively; the theory is also formulated in the book under discussion) and the racialist theories of the Semitic and Aryan races. The Mesopotamian jackal is an individualist (it hunts alone), a vagabond not attached to his "own" land, it has no aptitude for team work. It is of the southern lineage, which reminds one of the origin of the Semitic race. On the contrary, the descendants of the Northern Wolf stick together, hunt in packs, know their position in a hierarchy (a

hierarchical animal), and males are chivalrous towards females. The description of the lupus dog clearly corresponds to that of the Aryan race.

According to Konrad Lorenz, dog breeds, similarly to human races, display psychological and behavioural differences. The theory of the dual origin of the domestic dog is in line with the imagery and structure of perception propagated under the Nazi government. Apart from his fascination with structure, dominance and submission in wolf packs, Konrad Lorenz took a keen interest in the 'orderly wildness' of wolfs. He directed special attention to this issue (as if trying to track down the origins of the hierarchical order and positions of power in human society) in meticulously studied animal gestures and interactions. As is pointed out by Boria Sax (1997), Lorenz's post-war popularisations of animal psychology that convey his views and structural outlook shaped back in the Nazi period enable researchers to quote his thoughts without the need to refer to his shameful past. Thus, Konrad Lorenz has managed to smuggle his views in the form of popular scientific writings targeted at the general public, and above all pet owners.

The present analysis of Konrad Lorenz's personal accounts focuses on a single book and categories of pet perception expressed herein. The historical context in which Konrad Lorenz's views on animal psychology were formed is taken into account. His marked preference for dogs exhibiting fewer signs of domestication, and which are equipped with what he calls "chivalry" is in concurrence with the author's aversion to selective breeding and may suggest the cult of nature (or wildness). Nonetheless, the analysis has shown that an animalistic perspective is not the dominant line in pet description or perception. The cult of wild nature is juxtaposed with the human and cultural legacy, with a special emphasis on the latter's superiority over the animal realm.

There must be certain suppressions and omissions involved in the personal recollections under study. To discover them one has to be well acquainted with the author's biography and have access to more than his personal sources. Still, there are clear signs of reticence when Konrad Lorenz describes a great friendship that developed between him and his dog in 1940: "After two short months, my bond with this dog was broken by the force of destiny: I was called to the University of Königsberg as professor of psychology" (Lorenz [1949] 2002:32). The above reflection raises a number of questions. What was Konrad Lorenz doing at the University of Königsberg in 1940? Who could occupy a university position in Nazi Germany? How did he manage to get or to keep the job? Why does not he mention the findings of his university or home research on animals from that period? The book leaves these and similar questions unanswered. He writes elsewhere that he had to part with his four-legged friend as he had been called up for military service (what army?) in 1941. He was then working as a neurologist in the military hospital in Posen (Polish name Poznan), was sent to the front in 1944, and finally his dog was killed in an air-raid as the war was coming to an end (Lorenz ibidem: 36). Thus, the stories of the author's friendships with dogs took place during the Second World War. However, the war itself is not present as the background or the frame for the memoirs. The war is mentioned only twice, in passing, which may be explained by the fact that the subject of the accounts has nothing to do with war. The memories of war trauma usually present in war survivors' recollections cannot be found in any of Konrad Lorenz's lifestories.[vi] Perhaps in this case the suppressions are a manifestation of the trauma.

Konrad Lorenz's biographical note which goes with his Nobel Lecture of 1973 comprises barely one passage of a personal comment on his use of Nazi terminology and his writings on the dangers of domestication as well as his concern that

“analogous genetical processes of deterioration may be at work with civilized humanity” (Lorenz 1974) which unluckily came out shortly after the German invasion of Austria. Still, you would be looking in vain for a public act of contrition. Konrad Lorenz admits that he genuinely believed that National Socialism would make a change for the better. What is more, this view was shared by many of his friends and teachers, as well as his father. They had no idea at the time that the word “selection” used by the Nazi government could possibly mean “murder”. Thus, Konrad Lorenz extenuates his faults by saying that he knew nothing about the fascist atrocities against humanity. It is not to say that the ethologist repudiates the beliefs expressed in his publications. He regrets “those writings not so much for the undeniable discredit they reflect on my person as for their effect of hampering the future recognition of the dangers of domestication” (Lorenz 1974). Konrad Lorenz devotes three paragraphs to his experiences in Soviet captivity. Apparently, his stay in the captive camp enabled him to see a parallel between the Nazi and Marxist education and comprehend the nature of indoctrination. Still, the biographical note contains no mention of the fact that Konrad Lorenz joined the Nazi party and was a staff member of some of the Nazi authorities.

Conclusion

The context behind the book *Man meets dog* notwithstanding, the above analysis has focused on the text itself. The analysis has largely concentrated on that which could be directly reconstructed from the text, namely the views articulated by the author and their structure of meaning. In sociology there is always a temptation to start searching for parallels and connections with other ideological or philosophical concepts of the time. Yet this is the subject for one more article. It is definitely worthwhile to establish procedures whereby biographical narration and other sources of personal data can be combined and/or checked against each other. For the time being let us conclude that the cultural and historical context (the Nazi era and the Second World War) could have motivated the author to produce personal accounts. Konrad Lorenz’s views may have indeed crystallized in the Nazi period, and he decided to popularise them at the time out of his own volition. The personal accounts under study were written after the Second World War.

Konrad Lorenz’s text abounds in examples of theorizing about the relations between domestic animals and people in the social world of pet owners. One can outline the arena at the individual level (the inner conversation) with the underlying, wider socio-moral context.

Is it possible to treat animals subjectively and anthropomorphise them at the same time? Is an anthropomorphic perspective moral? The author rejects the plausibility of the latter. Both as a scientist and a human being he acknowledges the Kantian view of morality as related to reason. Thus, a clear distinction is drawn between the realm of values and the realm of nature. On the other hand, one often comes across the descriptions of feelings and behaviours that anthropomorphise pets and are immediately followed by the animalistic standpoint. In this way the author ensures continuity with his original statement about the insurmountable divide between the world of animals (even domesticated ones) and the world of culture. The two conflicting perspectives frequently swap places in the course of Lorenz’s interpretation of everyday life. The interpretation of the pet definition that emerges from the memoirs seems to be rather complex. Although, from the very outset, the relationship between nature and culture was severed, the dynamics of the inner

arena clearly shows that pets, especially dogs, turn into a hybrid ascribed both human and animal qualities. In other words, the entire world grows to be in symbiosis continuously reconstructed by human interpretations. Konrad Lorenz finds it difficult to cope with the nature/ culture dichotomy. He ends up combining both the animalistic and anthropomorphic outlook on pets. The alternate application of these perspectives to the interpretation of everyday experiences makes it possible to keep up the belief that the human realm is peculiar and unique, and is separated from the animal realm by the impenetrable barrier. However, the actual actions and interactions narrow the divide e.g. by means of "interpreted symbolic interaction" the pets are involved in. Due to accurate interpretation and meticulous theorizing the author manages to see the difference. Konrad Lorenz provides an example of theorizing inside the social world of pet owners in which the dichotomy between animalistic and anthropomorphic categories of pet perception is maintained (and validated by the author's scientific authority) along the lines of the cultural model of perception of these relations. Clear and culturally legitimised superiority of humans over the (wild) nature and the ever-lasting nature/ culture dichotomy receives further justification in the context of everyday life, where anthropomorphic categories of pet perception justify the position of animals in human homes and in their immediate interaction setting. Thus, one witnesses persistent reproduction of the model of relations in question at the level of theoretical justifications in the social world of pets owners, in Konrad Lorenz's personal accounts as well as in interpretational work carried out by pet owners on a daily basis.

Endnotes

i The matrix and categories were generated in the course of the qualitative field study entitled "Pets in a Polish family" conducted by the author in 2000-2005. Grounded theory methodology was applied to the data analysis. The above perception matrix can be successfully applied to the description of owner-pet interactions in a number of contexts. We try in the paper to use the matrix in the analysis of personal accounts of Konrad Lorenz.

ii The notion of "awareness context" was introduced by B. Glaser and A. Strauss (1964) and refers to the level and type of the interaction participants' knowledge about the partner's identity and their own identity as perceived by the partner. Four types of awareness contexts may be outlined: 1. Open awareness context- each participant knows both the partner's true identity and their own identity as perceived by the interaction partner 2. Closed awareness context -one of the participants knows neither his own identity, nor the partner's; 3. A suspicion awareness context-one of the participants suspects the real identity of the partner or the partner's view on his/her own identity 4. A pretence awareness context - both participants know their real identities but pretend not to. Interactions can be categorized in terms of a certain type of awareness context.

iii Compare other descriptions of games between animals of different species such as dogs and badger, monkeys and dogs (Lorenz [1949] 2002:100-102).

iv Usually the adjective "sentimental" is used to depreciate people who defend animals against human cruelty. "In order to forestall such a response, T. Kotarbinski entitled his text branding ill-treatment of animals 'Sentimental meditation'."(Lazari-Pawlowska 1992: 35).

v Konrad Lorenz still adhered to the view when declared the Noble laureate in 1973; see K. Lorenz 1974.

vi One comes across suppressions of the war years in yet another book by this author based on his recollections, although war experiences are implied in the author's sorrow following the death of the animals he took care of and that took part in his research: "Ravens are missing, geese flew away from Könnigsberg, where I have been lecturing at the university, because of flak. God knows where they have flown" (Lorenz 1997:19).

References

Alger, Janet M. and Steven F. Alger (2003) *Cat Culture : The Social World of a Cat Shelter*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Arluke, Arnold and Clinton Sanders (1996) *Regarding Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Becker, Howard (1982) *Art Worlds*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

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

Clarke, Adele (1991) "Social Worlds/Arenas Theory as Organizational Theory." Pp. 119 – 158 in *Social Organization and social Process. Essays in Honor of Anselm Strauss,* edited by D. Maines. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Deichman, Ute (1996) *Biologists under Hitler.* Cambridge: Harvard University.

Dlugosz– Kurczabowa, Krystyna (2003) *Nowy slownik etymologiczny jezyka polskiego (The new etymology dictionary of Polish)* . Warszawa: PWN.

Foote, Nelson N. (1956) "A neglected member of the family." *Marriage and family living* 28: 213-18. Franklin, Adrian (1999) *Animals and Modern Cultures : A Sociology of Human-Animal Relations in Modernity*. London: Sage.

Glaser, Barney and Anselm L. Strauss (1964) "Awareness Contexts and Social Interaction." *American Sociological Review* 29(5): 669-70.

Goode, David (2007) *Playing With My Dog Katie*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Griffin, Donald R. (1992) *Animal Minds. Beyond Cognition to Consciousness*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hickrod, Lucy J. H. and Raymond L Schmitt (1982) "A naturalistic study of interaction and frame: The pet as a family member." *Urban Life* 11(1): 55-77.

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

Kacperczyk, Anna (2004) *Zastosowanie koncepcji społecznych światów w badaniach empirycznych [Application of the concept of social worlds in empirical research].* Paper presented at the 12th Polish Sociological Congress, September 10, Poznan, Poland.

Katcher, Aaron H. and Allan M. Beck, editors (1983) *New perspectives on our lives with companion animals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.

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

Lazari - Pawlowska, Ilja (1992) *Etyka. Pisma zebrane*. Wroclaw: Zaklad Narodowy im. Ossolinskich.

Lorenz, Konrad (1974) "Autobiography." *Les Prix Nobel en 1973*, October. Stockholm: Nobel Foundation. Retrieved February 20, 2007 (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1973/lorenz-autobio.html).

------. (1975) *Tak zwane zlo (The So Called Evil)*. Warszawa: PWN

------. (1977) *Odwrotna strona zwierciadla. Proba historii naturalnej ludzkiego poznania (Behind the Mirror).* Warszawa: PIW.

------. (1986) *Regres człowieczeństwa (The wanning of humaness) .* Warszawa: PIW.

------. (1997) *Rozmawial z bydletami, ptakami rybami. Opowiadania o zwierzetach (King Solomon's Ring).* Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza S.A.

------. ([1949] 2002) *Man meets Dog* (*So kam der Mensch auf dem Hund*). London-New York: Routledge

Lowe, Brian M. (2002) "Hearts and Minds and Morality: Analyzing Moral Vocabularies in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Sociology* 25(1): 105-23.

Menache, Sophia (1997) "Dogs: God's Worst Enemies." *Society and Animals* 5(1): 23-43.

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

Regan, Tom and Peter Singer, editors (1976) *Animal rights and human obligations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

RSRP (2002) *The Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland*. Warszawa: Zaklad Wydawnictw Statystycznych.

Sanders, Clinton (1990) "Excusing tactics: Social responses to the public misbehavior of companion animals." *Anthrozoos* 4(2): 82-90.

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

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

Sax, Boria (1997) "What is a 'Jewish Dog'? Konrad Lorenz and Cult of Wildness." *Society and Animals* 5(1):3-21.

------. (2000) *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats, and the Holocaust.* New York: Continuum.

Scott, Marvin B. and Stanford M. Lyman (1975) "Accounts." Pp. 146–170 in *Readings in Social Psychology*, edited by A. Lindesmith, A. Strauss. and N. Denzin. Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press.

Serpell, James A. (1996) *In the Company of Animals*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shibutani, Tamotsu (1994) "Reference Group as Perspectives." Pp. 128-145 in *Symbolic Interaction. An Introduction to Social Psychology*, edited by N. Herman and L. Reynolds. Dix Hills, New York: General Hall Inc.

Strauss, Anselm (1978) "A social world perspective." Pp. 119-128 in *Studies in Symbolic Interaction vol. 1*, edited by N. Denzin. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

------. (1982) "Social World and Legitimation Processes." Pp. 171-90 in *Studies in Symbolic Interaction vol. 4*, edited by N. Denzin. Greenwich, CT:JAI Press.

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

Sussman, Marvin B., editor (1985) *Pets and family*. New York: Haworth.

Sykes, Gresham M. and David Matza (1979) "Techniques of Neutralization: A theory of Deliquency." Pp. 497-504 in *Social Interaction. Introductory Readings in Sociology*, edited by H. Robboy, S.Greenblatt and C. Clark. New York: St. Martin Press.

Veevers, Jean E. (1985) "The social meaning of pets: Alternative roles for companion animals." *Marriage and Family Review* 8: 11-30.

Citation

Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2007) "Pets of Konrad Lorenz. Theorizing in the social world of pet owners." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 1. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org /ENG/archive_eng.php)

Contributors

Leslie Irvine is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her courses include Animals and Society, Social Psychology, and Sociological Theory. She is the author of *If You Tame Me: Understanding our Connection with Animals* (2004; Temple University Press) and *Codependent Forevermore: The Invention of Self in a Twelve Step Group (1999; University of Chicago Press).* Her current research examines the impact of disasters on animals.
Contact: irvinel@colorado.edu

Pru Hobson-West (PhD) is a postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Institute for Science and Society at the University of Nottingham. She holds an MA in politics from the University of Edinburgh and a PhD from Nottingham. Her PhD thesis looked at organised parental resistance to UK childhood vaccination policy. In 2006, Pru spend one semester as a visiting fellow at Harvard University. Funded through a Wellcome Trust Fellowship in Biomedical Ethics, Pru is currently investigating the controversy over the use of animals in laboratory science. Her research interests include human-animal relations, public understanding of science, risk and social movements.
Contact: Pru.Hobson-West@nottingham.ac.uk

Adrian Franklin (Professor) trained as an anthropologist in the UK, and has held Professorial positions at the University of Bristol, UK and the University of Oslo (Norway). He is best known for his work on the relationships between humans and the natural world, especially with animals. His books include *Animal Nation: The True Story of Animals and Australia*; *Animals and Modern Cultures*, *Nature and Social Theory* and *Tourism*. He is currently working on two new books: City Life and *A Culture of Fire: Eucalypts, Australians, Fire*. Adrian Franklin's work has focused on social and cultural change in modernity, and this includes work on city life, the sociology of nature and environments, our relationships with animals, and the orderings of travel, mobility and tourism.
Contact: Adrian.franklin@utas.edu.au

Michael Emmison (PhD) is Reader in Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of Queensland, Australia. His research interests are primarily in the field of language and interaction and he is currently examining the impact of technology (telephone, email and online web counselling) on troubles telling on a national children's helpline. He is the co-author of *Accounting for Tastes* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and *Researching the Visual* (2000; Sage) and co-editor of *Calling for Help: language and social interaction in telephone helplines* (2005; Benjamins).
Contact: m.emmison@uq.edu.au

Donna Haraway is a Professor in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California at Santa Cruz, USA where she teaches feminist theory, science studies, and animal studies. Her publications include *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989); *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women The Reinvention of Nature* (1991); *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan© Meets OncoMouse™* (1997); *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (2003); and *When Species Meet* (forthcoming 2007; University of Minnesota Press,).
Contact: haraway@ucsc.edu

Max Travers (PhD) is a Lecturer in sociology in the School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania. He qualified as a solicitor before completing a doctorate at the University of Manchester examining legal practice from an ethnomethodological perspective. His publications include *The Reality of Law* (1997), *The British Immigration Courts* (1999), *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies* (2001), *An Introduction to Law and Social Theory* (edited with Reza Banakar, 2002) and *The New Bureaucracy: Quality Assurance and Its Critics* (2007).
Contact: max.travers@utas.edu.au

Nicola Taylor (PhD) is currently a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Central Queensland University. She has published a number of articles concerning human-animal interaction, domestic violence and harm to companion animals and has been highlighting the importance of studying these areas to sociologists, policy makers and practitioners alike since 1997. She is an Honorary member of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies, the Executive Director of the Centre for Animal Liberation Affairs and sits on the editorial board of Anthrozoos. She also acts as reviewer for a number of international journals dedicated to human-animal studies such as Society & Animals and the Animal Liberation Philosophy & Policy Journal.
Contact: n.taylor@cqu.edu.au

Colin Jerolmack is a PhD candidate in sociology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has published in Sociological Theory, Sociological Forum, and Society and Animals; and his interests include qualitative methods, community and urban studies, social psychology, and human-animal relations. His dissertation (in progress) is a comparative ethnography that seeks to contribute to theorizing about the roles of animals in place, politics, problems, public health, community, and identity.
Contact: cjerolmack@gc.cuny.edu

Gennifer Furst (PhD) received her doctorate in criminal justice from CUNY Graduate Center (NYC) and is an assistant professor in the sociology department of William Paterson University (NJ). She conducted the first national survey of prison-based animal programs. In addition to issues of punishment and corrections, her research interests include capital punishment, drugs and crime, and race and the administration of justice.
Contact: furstg@wpunj.edu

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

Author-Supplied Abstracts & Keywords

Leslie Irvine
University of Colorado at Boulder, USA

The question of animal selves: Implications for sociological knowledge and practice

The question of whether sociologists should investigate the subjective experience of non-human others arises regularly in discussions of research on animals. Recent criticism of this research agenda as speculative and therefore unproductive is examined and found wanting. Ample evidence indicates that animals have the capacity to see themselves as objects, which meets sociological criteria for selfhood. Resistance to this possibility highlights the discipline's entrenched anthropocentrism rather than lack of evidence. Sociological study of the moral status of animals, based on the presence of the self, is warranted because our treatment of animals is connected with numerous "mainstream" sociological issues. As knowledge has brought other forms of oppression to light, it has also helped to challenge and transform oppressive conditions. Consequently, sociologists have an obligation to challenge speciesism as part of a larger system of oppression.

Keywords:

Animals; Self; Mead; Animal cognition; Consciousness

Pru Hobson-West
University of Nottingham, UK

Beasts and boundaries: An introduction to animals in sociology, science and society

Traditionally, sociology has spent much more time exploring relationships between humans, than between humans and other animals. However, this relative neglect is starting to be addressed. For sociologists interested in human identity construction, animals are symbolically important in functioning as a highly complex and ambiguous "other". Theoretical work analyses the blurring of the human-animal boundary as part of wider social shifts to postmodernity, whilst ethnographic research suggests that human and animal identities are not fixed but are constructed through interaction. After reviewing this literature, the second half of the paper concentrates on animals in science and shows how here too, animals (rodents and primates in particular) are symbolically ambiguous. In the laboratory, as in society, humans and animals have unstable identities. New genetic and computer technologies have attracted much sociological attention, and disagreements remain about the extent to which human-animal boundaries are fundamentally challenged. The value of sociologists' own categories has also been challenged, by those who argue that social scientists still persist in ignoring the experiences of animals themselves. This opens up notoriously difficult questions about animal agency. The paper has two main aims: First, to draw links between debates about animals in society and animals in science; and second, to highlight the ways in which

sociologists interested in animals may benefit from approaches in Science and Technology Studies (STS).

Keywords:

Human-animal boundary; Boundary-work; Science & Technology Studies; Identity; Ambiguity; Actor Network Theory

---

Adrian Franklin, University of Tasmania, Australia
Michael Emmison, University of Queensland, Australia
Donna Haraway, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA
Max Travers, University of Tasmania, Australia

Investigating the therapeutic benefits of companion animals: Problems and challenges

To investigate the health benefits of companion animals in a way that goes beyond finding statistical patterns involves appreciating the philosophical debates about the nature of animal consciousness that engage an inter-disciplinary field of scholarship cutting across the Great Divide of the hard sciences and humanities. It also requires developing a methodology to conduct empirical research which is often viewed as of secondary importance by researchers wishing to make a philosophical case about human beings and modernity. This paper considers the achievements of qualitative sociologists, particularly in the field of post-Meadian symbolic interactionism who have addressed these issues, and discusses ways of extending and deepening this agenda through cross-fertilization with similar work in ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and post-humanist sociology in investigating the health benefits of dogs.

Keywords:

Animal-human relationship; Health; Methodology; Qualitative research; Ethnography

---

Nicola Taylor
Central Queensland University, Australia

'Never an It': Intersubjectivity and the creation of animal personhood in animal shelters

This paper argues that sociology should begin to turn its attention to human-animal interaction and that one particularly effective way to do so is to adopt a phenomenological approach. This approach sees the personality, and thus the personhood of animals, as intersubjectively and reflexively created. Based on ethnographic data collected over three years in animal sanctuaries this paper assesses how animal sanctuary workers labour collectively to establish the identity

of the animals under their care and how this, in turn, justifies their attitudes towards, and treatment of, them.

Keywords:

Animals; Human-animal interaction; Intersubjectivity; Personhood; Personality

---

Colin Jerolmack
City University of New York, Graduate Center, USA

Animal archeology: Domestic pigeons and the nature-culture dialectic

This paper historically traces the purposive domestication of pigeons in order to examine the dialectical relationship between nature and culture. It is demonstrated that each instance of the domestication of the pigeon for a new function (i.e., food, messenger) also entailed the construction of a role of the bird in human society, replete with symbolic representations and moral valuations. Yet it is also argued that, though animals are repositories for social meaning, and culture is literally inscribed into the physical structure of domesticated animals, such meanings are patterned and constrained according to the biological features of the animal itself. The ubiquitous and unwanted "street pigeon" now found around the globe is the descendent of escaped domestic pigeons, occupying the unique and ambiguous category of "feral"- neither truly wild nor domestic. Ironically, the very traits that were once so desirous and that were naturally selected for are now what make the feral pigeon so hard to get rid of and so loathsome.

Keywords:

Pigeon; Human-animal Relations; Domestication; Nature; History; Wildlife

---

Gennifer Furst
William Patterson University, USA

Without words to get in the way: Symbolic interaction in prison-based animal programs

George H. Mead (1934) contended a person's sense of self develops from language-based interactions with other humans in society. According to contemporary sociologists, a person's sense of self is also influenced by non-verbal interactions with human and non-human animals. The present research extends Sanders (1993) work that examined how dog owners relate to their pets and come to develop a unique social identity for them. Through interviews with participants in prison-based animal programs (PAPs), this research explores whether inmates engaged in a similar process of assigning the animals with which they work a human-like identity. The implications of the relationships that develop in terms of desistance, which

Maruna (2001) argued requires a redefinition of a person's self-identity, are discussed.

Keywords:

Symbolic interaction; Animals in prison; Human-animal interaction

---

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Lodz University, Poland

Pets of Konrad Lorenz. Theorizing in the social world of pet owners

This article explores the personal account titled *Man meets dog* ([1949] 2002) by an outstanding ethologist Konrad Lorenz who is one of the key theoreticians of the social world of pet owners. His lines of argumentation and categories of pet perception within this social world may be reconstructed from his personal recollections. The concepts of the social world and arena are the key notions that integrate the current analysis. The arena is also formed in the course of the inner conversation and is often going together with the outer disputes of a social world . It might seem that Konrad Lorenz as a scientist and ethologist should avoid using anthropomorphic categories. However, as he shares the same space (including private space) and communicates with domestic animals, the author tends to anthropomorphise their behaviour, even though formally he opposes or even despises the idea, applying a disdainful term of "sentimental anthropomorphisation" to people who do so. Additionally, the article addresses the biographic context of the ethologist's life and his writings together with the activities of the Second World War as well as his collaboration with the Nazi government. Konrad Lorenz represents the so-called "cult of nature" approach which, in the opinion of his opponents, has a lot in common with the Nazi doctrine (Sax 1997).

Keywords:

Sociology of human animals – non-human animals relationships; Symbolic interaction; Anthropomorphisation; Social world; Legitimization; Theorizing; Arena

QSR

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

For all sociologists for whom interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are basic perspectives of studying social reality.
In order to enable a free flow of information
and to integrate the community of qualitative sociologists.

EVERYWHERE ~ EVERY TIME

"Animals & People"

Volume III ~ Issue 1
April 12, 2007

EDITOR OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE: Krzysztof T. Konecki
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Krzysztof T. Konecki
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Anna Kacperczyk, Slawomir Magala
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lukas T. Marciniak
COVER DESIGNER: Anna Kacperczyk

ISSN: 1733-8077