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Body Pedagogics, Transactional Identities and Human–Animal Relations

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Abstract

The sociology of the body developed as a reaction against Cartesian conceptions of *homo clausus* that haunted disciplinary thought in the late 20th century but exhibited anthropocentric tendencies in neglecting non-human animals. Building upon recent attempts to address this situation, I develop a transactional approach towards body pedagogics that explores how the shifting borders governing human–animal relations influence people's embodied identities. Transactions between humans and (other) animals have been an historic constant across contrasting societies, but the patterning of these exchanges is framed by specific cultural body pedagogics. Focusing on the institutional means, characteristic experiences and corporeal outcomes of 'civilising' and 'companionate' human–animal body pedagogics, I explore the identity-shaping impact of these different modalities of inter-species inter-corporeality and demonstrate the sociological utility of this transactional approach.

Keywords

body pedagogics, Dewey, human–animal relations, sociology of the body, transactionalism

Introduction

The rise of 'body studies' from the 1980s represented a departure from the legacy of Cartesian thought. Opposing conceptions of bodies as containers for cognitive selves, early proponents of embodied sociology engaged with theorists who explored human physicality as open to, as acquiring techniques or a habitus within, and as gendered and disciplined by, society (e.g. Bourdieu, 1979; Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1979; Mauss, 1973 [1934]). These and cognate sources inspired contrasting approaches, but each opposed *homo clausus* views of individuals, insisting on examining body-subjects as *connected to* and *shaped by* the wider environment. Nevertheless, there remained

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strong anthropocentric tendencies within body theories (Turner, 1984). It was not only that human physicality took precedence over the corporeality of (other) animals. It was also that these perspectives ignored those people–animal relations that throughout history affected individuals’ embodied identities in terms of what Dewey (1980 [1934]) analyses as their reflexive, felt and habitual sense of self.

Sociologists have recently injected greater concern with animals and the environment into accounts of the embodied basis of society (see Peggs, 2018), drawing on philosophical, anthropological and ‘new materialist’ perspectives sympathetic to this goal (Calarco, 2008; Kalof and Fitzgerald, 2007). Contributing to this aim, I seek to develop the sociology of the body by outlining a new approach to the significance of human–animal relations for people’s identities. This builds on body pedagogic analyses of cultural and social forms by engaging with Dewey’s pragmatist transactionalism. In so doing, it provides a new framework which anchors analysis around the exchanges occurring between core cultural processes, a focus enabling us to explore comparatively how these exchanges have changed historically.

In developing this transactionalist approach, the ‘civilising’ and later ‘companionate’ human–animal body pedagogics I focus upon are just two of the institutional practices, characteristic experiences and embodied outcomes with which these exchanges have been associated. It is also important to note they are ideal-types, highlighting significant processes but not representing all human–animal relations. They warrant selection, however, because of their key significance to the development of people’s identities in different historical periods, and because they delineate sharply contrasting forms of body pedagogics that enable us to highlight the utility of this approach.

This focus on human–animal relations is of most immediate sociological relevance to this article in that it challenges anthropocentric tendencies in body studies. Humans are not isolated monads and their actions and identities both shape and are shaped by their interrelationships with multiple other species. More generally, however, the transactionalist approach informing my analysis of body pedagogics directs attention to the importance of people’s exchanges with animals *as part of* their entanglement with the broader environment at a time when issues of sustainability have assumed renewed urgency in society (Farley and Smith, 2020).

Transactional Body Pedagogics

Body pedagogic studies have sought to construct embodied approaches to society that facilitate empirically informed investigations of contrasting cultural spheres. In so doing they have utilised various theoretical perspectives and interrogated a range of subjects including the military (Hockey, 2017), medicine (Kelly et al., 2019), religions (Wignall, 2016), music (Crossley, 2015), sports/leisure (Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2015; Nettleton, 2013; Shilling, 2021) and schooling (Andersson and Östman, 2015). Despite its theoretical and substantive diversity, this research converged in focusing upon the social, technological and material *means* of cultural transmission, the *characteristic experiences* of those exposed to pedagogics and the *embodied outcomes* associated with these processes (Shilling, 2017, 2018). The body pedagogic framework thus makes an ‘analytical cut’ from the overarching environment, enabling analysts to explore the

relationships and entangled links between key cultural processes (Allen-Collinson et al., 2019). This involves attending to the institutional borders in which skill-based, emotional and sensory training occurs (Willerslev, 2007), exploring the experiential cultivation of attention and attunement (Ingold, 2001), and identifying the corporeal inculcation of differential power ratios via the development of habits (Andersson et al., 2018).

Body pedagogic relevant research has not ignored completely the significance of human–animal relations for people’s identities and continues to be theoretically eclectic. Kavesh’s (2019) account of dog fighting and masculinity, and Vincent’s (2019) explorations of dog parks, for example, engage creatively with Bourdieu’s formulations. Bunyak’s (2019) sensitivity to the discursive pedagogy associated with identifying human-pet ‘obesity’ draws on Deleuze in scrutinising the internalisation of human–animal–‘fataphobic’ assemblages. Elsewhere, physically engaged learning is implicit in Michael’s (2000) earlier actor-network theory (ANT) depiction of the human-dog-lead-dog network (see also Gross, 2015), the ‘Hudogledog’, and emerges in Latimer and Birke’s (2009) reflections on how contrasting human–horse relations accomplish different social worlds.

Such accounts yield provocative analyses and are theoretically nuanced. Nevertheless, some of the frameworks with which they engage are arguably limited. Bourdieu (1996: 29) focuses on *social reproduction*, effected by the ‘unconscious’ cultivation of the *habitus*, making it difficult to conceptualise change or account for the significance of the ‘natural’ environment (Shilling, 2012). The Deleuzian ‘deterritorialisation’ of previous assemblages into ‘reterritorialized others’ can understate the *ongoing relevance* of the distinctive ontological properties of human bodies and those animal/other phenomena that shape them (Rutzou and Elder-Vass, 2019: 402–406). Finally, the ANT emphasis on describing networks, rather than ascertaining the causal significance of their parts, limits our understanding of how these phenomena change (Weisberg, 2009). This is exemplified by ANT’s tendency to refer to all components of networks as ‘actants’, a move which risks eliding their different properties (Elder-Vass, 2015). While ANT recognises that the meanings associated with actants can be ‘translated’ into different forms, depending on the assemblage they are part of (Callon, 1986), this elision downplays the distinct causal powers that humans possess when it comes to making and solving problems (Dewey, 1927). It also undermines the identity of animals as subjects worthy of particular valuation (Jones, 2003: 293; Wilkie, 2015).

This is not the place to compare in detail these approaches with the transactionalist alternative in this article. Yet, while they share with Dewey a concern with the processes connecting humans to their environment, none arguably highlights adequately what he analyses as the *partially transformative* exchanges occurring when individuals engage with animals – exchanges that *shape without rendering redundant* the ontological properties and particular value of those involved (Dewey and Bentley, 1949). As Dewey’s (2012, 2002 [1922]) analysis suggests, such processes do not determine human identity at an entirely unconscious level, neither do they completely transcend the elements from which they emerge, and nor are they unaffected by the specific ontological properties of those ‘transactants’ that enter exchanges with each other (Garrison, 2015; Hofverberg, 2021).

Dewey is key to the pragmatist tradition, providing foundations for the Chicago School, symbolic interactionism and ethnographic research. Nevertheless, he criticised sociology’s

focus on ‘interaction’ as it implied a ‘billiard ball’ notion of contact in which independent individuals ‘collided’ with their surroundings (Dewey and Bentley, 1949: 127). Instead, Dewey developed *transactional pragmatism* which recognised that people became entangled and made exchanges with others within a shared environment of which they were a part and to which they must adapt (Dewey, 1896; Dewey and Bentley, 1946a: 505).

The main principles of transactionalism can be presented as a distinctive approach towards body pedagogics. First, Dewey engaged with various terms, including ‘field’ and ‘event’, as descriptors for the borders circumscribing relevant exchanges possessed of identifiable ‘extensional-durational’ parameters (Dewey and Bentley, 1949; Pronko and Herman, 1982: 242; Ratner et al., 1964). This delineation usefully specifies and limits analytically the sphere of processes relevant to investigating those culturally shaped *means* through which people are exposed to particular milieu. Second, in line with the pragmatist view of humans as sensory beings always already engaged with a social/material environment, Dewey (2015 [1938]: 35) holds that these exchanges yield and indeed constitute *experiences* which modify those involved. Third, recognising that a ‘stability’ to action ‘is essential to living’, Dewey (1980 [1934]: 15) explores how the routinisation of transactional stimuli involving organisms and surroundings results in *outcomes* involving habits of thought, feeling and action key to our sense of self (Dewey, 2002 [1922]: 30, 44). Such habits are always revisable in response to subsequent exchanges that disturb or block routinised actions; however, never reaching the fixity implied by Bourdieu’s conception of the *habitus* (Shilling, 2008).

Transactional situations are not unique to humans but involve all living organisms in ongoing adaptive entanglements with their environment (Dewey and Bentley, 1949: 290). Indeed, it is this emphasis on organism and adaptation – informed by Darwin’s evolutionary theory in which action is always assessed in conjunction with its surroundings – that makes Dewey’s writings particularly suited to the concerns of this article. Transactionalism not only avoids the ‘human exceptionalism’ evident in sociology’s tendency to ignore the role of ‘environmental facts’ in explaining ‘social facts’ (Kennedy and Johnston, 2019: 593–594). Dewey’s concern with organism–environment entanglements also provides a general approach to embodiment concerned with the *manner* and *extent* to which people shape and are shaped by their surroundings, as well as to the specific consideration of human–animal relations.

In terms of the manner in which this occurs, Cartesian mind/body dualism is rejected. Intellectual, cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagements with animals/other stimuli are viewed as distinctive exchanges existing on a single embodied ‘continuum’, leaving imprints on organism and environment according to the ontological properties of each (Dewey, 1958: 290). In terms of the extent of these processes, exchanges are pervasive, ongoing and constrained by adaptational necessities. Finally, in terms of the specifics of human–animal relations, transactionalism acknowledges that organisms and their milieu possess their own features conducive to exchanges relevant to survival, flourishing or decline (Pronko and Herman, 1982: 232; Sullivan, 2001: 1). A basic example of this is breathing – requiring exchanges of oxygen and carbon dioxide – yet human/animal transactions have ranged historically from the processes involved in hunting and being hunted, to intensive farming and the rise of ‘companionate pets’ (Dewey, 1927, 1980 [1934]; Swabe, 1999).

The main features of this account are exemplified in Dewey's discussion of people's embodied identities. Identity develops not as a fated absorption of a bodily hexis, or a prosthetic metamorphosis, or the internalisation of networked assemblages. It emerges through transactional experiences resulting from our intentional exchanges with people, animals, plants, diseases and other environmental stimuli (Dewey, 1980 [1934]: 25, 1958: 4). Such experiences constitute 'means of connection' with 'what lies beyond' our 'bodily frame', and our sense of 'who we are' emerges from their effects on our thoughts and feelings; an identity consolidated through our development of habits (Dewey, 1980 [1934]: 237). Emerging 'through' and 'within' individual skins, Dewey further explores how identity progresses through exchanges between *anoetic sensation* (a pre-conscious awareness of the stimuli one is exposed to) and *noetic meanings* (emerging when these stimuli permeate consciousness and are apprehended and assessed reflexively) (Dewey and Bentley, 1949). These distinctive yet connected physical and cognitive registers shape us, yet also mean that individuals can acquire different meanings from similar experiences.

Dewey's writings highlight the utility of a transactionalist body pedagogics that recognises and attributes analytical significance to the boundaries delineating the complex of mutually connected relations relevant to a particular cultural field. They also illuminate how this approach to body pedagogics aids understanding of the experientially charged exchanges that flow between humans and these environments, and the habitual outcomes resulting from these patterned processes. Having established the principles of this approach, I now explore how it provides a fresh perspective on human–animal relations.

Human–Animal Relations

Sociological accounts of human identity generally overlook the significance of human–animal relations, without justification. People's transactional engagements with animals impacted their diet and lifestyle since the origins of *Homo sapiens* over three hundred thousand years ago. While these exchanges became increasingly extensive and intensive alongside the expansion of the anthroposphere – that part of the biosphere inhabited and influenced by humans – the boundaries and character associated with them changed significantly.

Tracing the early stages of human–animal relations, providing background to the transactional fields and identities focused upon later, Goudsblom (1992: 21, 42) suggests pre-historic exchanges revolving around inter-species struggles for dominance were settled after a lengthy process involving the control of fire. The competitive advantage humans achieved by using fire to mould their environment – killing animals by clearing forests, and conserving meat through cooking – facilitated during the Neolithic era transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture and keeping livestock. Domestication was not universal, however, and cannot be reduced entirely to a narrative of competitive struggle. Mithien (2007) highlights the interpersonal and group-based search for prestige among humans informing this process, while Hurn's (2019) multi-species ethnographic recognition of animals as social actors explores the relevance of *cross-species* exchanges of intentionality.

Such changes were, nevertheless, associated with shifts in the body pedagogics patterning human–animal relations. The techniques and dispositions integral to predator–prey pursuits, for example, were supplemented by exchanges involving tending sheep, goats and pigs that resulted in new skills and attitudes (Hirst and Woolley, 1982; Rose and Marshall, 1996). According to Irvine (2004: 35–36), it was against this agricultural background that the category ‘animals’ emerged as an indicator of life forms ‘distinct from and inferior to humans’. In these circumstances, contrasting human identities converged insofar as they were based on this experience of species dominance.

Human–animal relations continued to develop after agriculturisation: shared capacities for movement, sensory perception and physical contact facilitated exchanges resulting in outcomes from the human simulation of animal behaviour within ritual, dance and warfare (Haggerty and Trottier, 2018; Sterckx, 2016), to the cross-species spread of disease (Swabe, 1999). In what follows, however, I focus on two field-delineating forms of human–animal body pedagogics chosen because of their important but contrasting impact on people’s identities. I refer to these as ‘civilising’ and ‘companionate’ body pedagogics, cultural orientations that resonate with Tester’s (1991: 93) distinction between the ‘demand for difference’ and the ‘demand for similitude’ in human perceptions of animals. In contrast to Tester’s (1991) social constructionist focus on the human invention of ‘animal rights’ discourses, however, the transactional approach developed here focuses on the material as well as ideational exchanges that shape people’s experiences and identities.

The first human–animal body pedagogics I explore developed throughout the early modern era in the West and can be explicated via Elias’s (2000 [1939]) theory of the civilising process. Elias has been criticised for overgeneralising his thesis (Franklin, 1999), yet his writings are particularly suggestive when interpreted as a temporally specific form of ‘civilising’ body pedagogics involved in relocating and stigmatising human dealings with ‘the animal’. The second involves ‘companionate’ human–animal pedagogics promoted from the late 20th century; a transactional field of intimacy for people whose identities develop through a positive ‘being with’ other species rather than objectifying them for purposes of work, entertainment or status (Haraway, 2008).

Elias and Haraway explore exchanges between interdependent beings, as do certain animal studies scholars seeking to extend the interactionist tradition beyond symbolic recognition (e.g. Alger and Alger, 1997; Irvine, 2004). Yet this body pedagogic analysis remains distinctive. By highlighting and systematising the means–experiences–outcomes framework, it provides the basis for a consistent historical comparison of exchanges relevant to both past human–animal ‘dissociation’ and contemporary ‘mutual identification’. As such, it supplements the overriding concern with process in the writings of Elias (2000 [1939]) and others through a terminology that conceptually highlights, and anchors analysis around, the importance of these three core elements of culture, especially insofar as they relate to the embodied identity of human subjects (see Tversky and Kahneman, 1982). Relatedly, it differs from Haraway’s (2003, 2008) philosophical focus on developing an ethics of human–animal relations by exploring how relevant norms are themselves embedded within historically specific, and identity shaping, forms of body pedagogics (see Weisberg, 2009). While this transactionalist approach does not assume unchanging causal relations between the cultural means,

people's experiences and embodied outcomes of pedagogics – matters that remain open to empirical investigation – it enables analysts to 'shuttle between' these phenomena, alert and sensitised to their analytical significance.

'Civilising' Human–Animal Body Pedagogics

Exploring how people's embodied identities changed from medieval to modern Europe, Elias (2000 [1939]) identifies large-scale processes that transformed the transactional environment in which human–animal exchanges occurred. Increasing intra-state monopolies of violence, coupled with the entanglements occasioned by growing webs of interdependence, penalised impulsive behaviour and promoted forms of impression management in which embodied identities were conceptualised as *social*, rather than driven by natural processes shared with other animals. While animality became a negative referent for culturally valued forms of high-status selfhood slowly and unevenly from the late medieval era, it is possible to identify a set of 'civilising' body pedagogics facilitating these changes. These involved the *institutional* stigmatisation of 'animalistic' human behaviour, including violence, alongside the sequestration of socially polluting human–animal exchanges; the characteristic *experience* of repugnance, shame and embarrassment when these barriers were breached; and the subsequent re-calibration of human–animal transactions as an *outcome* congruent with the pursuit of self-distinction.

Dealing with these in turn, Elias (2000 [1939]) interpreted as evidence of broader institutional changes trends in manners books influential among the educated. From the 13th century, these pedagogic guides stigmatised animalistic behaviour for undermining 'what was supposedly distinctive and admirable' about humans (Thomas, 1983: 4). Typical to this genre were warnings that people who 'stand up and snort disgustingly over the dishes like swine belong with other farmyard beasts' (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 73). Such advice extended to children, with Calviac's 16th-century *Civilité* insisting that '[t]he child should not gnaw bones indecently, as dogs do' (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 78, 90). If eating assumed 'a new style corresponding to the new necessities of social life', so did other 'natural' functions (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 92). Defecation, urination and copulation were removed to the 'back regions' of private life, as animalistic behaviour ill-fitting the public display of 'social selves', while 18th-century etiquette insisted they not even be spoken about (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 111–118, 1983).

This stigmatisation of animalistic behaviour was aligned to the institutional segregation from public life of many inter-corporeal human–animal transactions – despite pigs, chickens, rabbits and cows being integral to city as well as rural existence, with their rhythms, noises, smell and waste leaving imprints on those involved with them (Fudge, 2018: 174). From the Renaissance, the slaughtering of animals moved from public view, with the first modern slaughterhouses in England built *outside* of cities. This sequestration of the most violent exchanges with animals also altered how meat was consumed, at least among the upper classes. Reminders that food involved killing were 'avoided to the utmost', and the previously 'pleasurable' carving of a dead animal at the table was increasingly moved 'behind the scenes' (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 103, 420). Such tendencies resulted eventually in the animal form being so 'concealed and changed' by its preparation that individuals were 'scarcely reminded of its origin' (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 102).

If the institutional stigmatisation and separation of animality from the public sphere constituted prime inter-species body pedagogic means facilitating high-status identities, Elias (2000 [1939]: 60) identifies the characteristic experiences of these developments as involving an ‘invisible wall of affects’ between bodies repelling individuals from everything indicative of animal laxity. These provided, in Dewey and Bentley’s (1949) terms, anoetic stimuli that complemented the noetic information codified within formal etiquette. Accelerating especially rapidly from the 16th century, this was manifest in advancing frontiers of, and increasing behavioural exchanges involving, *repugnance*, *shame* and *embarrassment* (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 60, 418).

Repugnance involved strong sensory aversion to any animal matter or behaviour considered ‘out of place’ (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 96, 114–119). Shame, in contrast, was associated with exchanges arising from stigmatised behaviour, prompting ‘fear of social degradation’ and loss of respect, stimulated by monitoring oneself from the standpoint of others (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 414–415; Scheff, 1988: 398). The proximity of repugnance and shame to inappropriate appearances of ‘the animal’ was complemented by the experience of embarrassment, a ‘displeasure or anxiety’ arising when another ‘threatens to breach, or breaches, society’s prohibitions’ (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 418). The unease caused by embarrassment re-motivated people’s efforts to avoid such infringement: it is, as Goffman (1956) highlights, a socially *ordering* emotion.

Promoting these emotional responses became increasingly central to childhood socialisation, with embarrassment, repugnance and shame important means of encouraging ‘conformity’ (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 109). As the private sphere became available to more people, moreover, these experiences spread to behaviours previously free of such feelings. Nakedness, another reminder of what humans shared with other animals, had to be guarded against ‘even when alone or in the closest family circle’ (Elias, 2000 [1939]: 114, 139–140).

The outcome of these ‘civilising’ body pedagogics involved *recalibrating*, rather than forbidding, human–animal relations, and was *partial* in scope. This recalibration, commensurate with the pursuit of civilised identities, was exemplified during Louis XIV’s reign by the substitution of animal combat for ‘the peaceful display of graceful birds’ as entertainment within the Vincennes menagerie (Sahlins, 2012: 237). It was evidenced further by the spread of ‘civilised’ high-status pets as signifiers of rank: small dogs were kept in Court Societies from the 15th century (Irvine, 2004: 43). While pet keeping became diffused throughout the class structure, and common in urban middle-class households from the 17th century (Thomas, 1983: 110), it is notable that the dogs favoured by the working classes have long been labelled dangerous and uncivilised: neither they nor their owners displayed behaviour compatible with the impression management valued by social elites (Iliopoulou et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2016; Podberscek, 1994).

The *partiality* of trends examined by Elias also needs emphasising: the unacceptability of violent human–animal transactions was situationally variable, as evident in Franklin’s (1996: 114) analysis of 19th-century fox hunting. This feature of civilising body pedagogics is also evident in those class-dependent patterns of diffusion whereby animal baiting and cock fighting among the working classes were halted through legal means rather than by emotional self-control. Lower class violence against animals was

prohibited as a threat to society and linked to a general disciplining of leisure (McCarthy, 2016; Thomas, 1983: 15). Furthermore, the ‘dirty work’ of slaughtering, cleaning and caring for animals was still undertaken by sections of the populace whose identities were now deemed even lower status.

This civilising human–animal body pedagogy was partial, but its institutional means and characteristic experiences contributed towards a transactional field suited to the outcome of distinctive identities. These identities were, moreover, congruent with an overarching environment in which social elites sought to defend and advance their privileges in line with the increased emphasis placed on symbolic displays of status. Having contributed to the taming or relocation of many public human–animal exchanges, however, the trends explored by Elias also stimulated subsequent reassessments of inter-species contacts; reassessments that contextualise the second pedagogics I explore.

Of most significance to these trends was how the distancing of humans from certain animal transactions facilitated the 18th/19th-century Romantic re-evaluation of ‘nature’. This lamented the increased separation between people and their environment, initiating a renewed focus on animals as ennobling means of leisure, sport and entertainment. Its emphasis on what humans and animals shared also inspired conservation and animal rights movements given the damage and destruction associated with treating the environment as a ‘standing reserve’ for the pursuit of distinction (Tester, 1991; Wilkie, 2015). In addition to these developments, moreover, Franklin (1999) suggests that the mid/late-19th-century influence of Darwin’s writings promoted a divergent transactional field based on the idea that nature was savage, justifying human engagement in the ‘struggle for survival’ through such activities as hunting. Importantly, this social Darwinism was also used to justify imperialist domination and environmental exploitation in and beyond Britain, with colonised people and their lands constructed as savage ‘others’ through their supposed proximity to animal nature (Clark and Szerszynski, 2021; Ritvo, 1989).

These divergent developments take us beyond Elias’s account and are associated with their own body pedagogics (Dahles, 1993; Hannson and Jacobsson, 2014). Their influence continues to be felt in the current era. Hunting is now a tourist activity in and beyond the USA, while a concern for animal rights and conservation of the environment has been combined within ‘edutainment’ activities (Franklin, 1999). However, the second set of human–animal body pedagogics I focus on became increasingly influential within, and involves jumping forward in time to, the late 20th century. Sharing limited affinity with the Romantic re-evaluation of the natural world, it involves a proliferation of personalised human–animal relations in which people’s identities are shaped by exchanges with selected animals as ‘virtual persons’ in the form of friends/family members (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 66).

‘Companionate’ Human–Animal Body Pedagogics

Companionate pedagogics crystallised during the late 20th century from an emerging transactional field in which institutionalised developments promoted an increase in inter-species partnerships. These encouraged among humans heightened experiences of intercorporeal and emotional attunement with certain animals and had as their outcome a

growth of intimate relationships. Companionate pedagogics delineate just a selection of the contemporary exchanges between humans and animals. They relate mostly to the category ‘pets’ and coexist with the mass exploitation of animals (for meat, dairy and egg consumption) elsewhere within the environment (Nibert, 2013). Nevertheless, the distinctive borders of companionate pedagogics illuminate the emergence of exchanges that are transforming certain animals from a ‘species apart’ to subjects of ‘human affection’ integral to people’s identities (Nast, 2006: 323).

The *institutional* means associated with this inter-corporeal body pedagogics have been identified in Franklin’s (1999) survey of species relations within the overarching environment of late modernity. Shifts in household structure and the destabilising impact of unprecedented social change have positioned pets as consolidators of ontological security and personal identity (Blackstone, 2014), while legislation encourages individuals to attend to the needs of animals in their care (Fox and Gee, 2019). More intimate human–animal relations have been reinforced by media promoted awareness of the Earth’s fragility – a risk consciousness placing humans alongside animals as sharing a common fate – and a misanthropy which contrasts people’s destructiveness with the romanticised ‘innocence’ of nature. Finally, commerce has been influential, with global expenditure on products/services for companion pets increasing from US\$36.3 billion in 2005 to nearly US\$70 billion by 2017 (Fox and Gee, 2016, 2019; Vincent, 2019).

Human–animal companionships are not new: people cohabited with dogs in the Ice Age and developed intimate attachments to them in Ancient Greece. Livestock animals were given personalised names in early modern England, while working animals’ effectiveness has long been recognised as dependent on nurturing handler/charge relationships (Fudge, 2018; Kuhl, 2011; Menache, 1998; Podberscak et al., 2000). Yet the most pervasive shift towards intimate human–animal exchanges occurred from the late 20th century (Budiansky, 1999; Fox and Gee, 2016). Evidence for this ranges from the large increase in household pets during this period (McKinney, 2019), to widespread transformations in animal training (Broglio, 2012). ‘Top-down/discipline heavy’ approaches were condemned as ineffective and abusive, with greater validity attributed to ‘reward-based’ techniques for animal *and* guardian within *mutually beneficial* partnerships (Birke, 2008; Greenebaum, 2010; Pregowski, 2015: 525–526).

Explicating the characteristic *experiences* of humans involved in companionate relationships, Haraway (2008) argues that ‘being with’ other species has reached a level whereby guardians feel they ‘speak for’ their pets and are devastated by the loss of these companions (Sanders, 2006, 2010). This connection is forged through heightened senses of *inter-corporeal* and *emotional* attunement. In terms of the former, Pregowski (2015) notes how companionate relationships with dogs involve intense physical exchanges, as each becomes aware of the sounds, movements and body language of the other (Greenebaum, 2010). Pfoutz (2019: 141) identifies similar inter-corporeal receptivity in cases of equine companionship: mutual adjustments to inter-species body language result in ‘resonant motion’ despite the ‘very different anatomical makeups’ involved. The need for human adjustment is here highlighted in ideas associated with ‘natural horsemanship’: learning to ‘speak horse’ and encouraging changes in equine behaviour through subtle body movement should *harmonise* with the animal’s responses (Birke, 2008; Latimer and Birke, 2009). Each of these examples presupposes that people can

reflect upon, and be sensitive to, what Dewey refers to as the inter-corporeal anoetic stimuli that would otherwise escape consciousness.

In terms of emotional attunement, Irvine (2004: 106, 111) highlights how feelings of identification exist between animals and owners across various moods (Kuhl, 2011: 26). Sanders (1993, 2003: 408) and Alger and Alger (2003), for example, note that most of their respondents living and working with dogs and cats found them ‘thoughtful’, ‘emotional’ and reciprocating beings with unique personalities. While a guardian will come to recognise when a dog is in the mood for play, so will the dog come to recognise when its companion is happy or sad; a process facilitated by those anoetic chemosignals given off by body odour that constitute a pre-conscious inter-species mode of communication (Semin et al., 2019). These findings suggest that attunement cannot be reduced to a matter of anthropomorphism (Berger, 2009). They also cast doubt upon Mead’s (1907, 1925) relegation of animals from the sphere of intelligent interaction; a point addressed by Alger and Alger’s (1997) argument that the ability of cats and dogs to exploit the moods of their carers for the purpose of play, exercise or food, evidences an ability to ‘take the role of the human’. Dyadic exchanges involving the expression, recognition of and responses to emotions are key to these accounts.

The *outcome* of companionate body pedagogics involves highly personalised exchanges in which people’s identities develop in conjunction with animal ‘friends’, ‘family members’ and ‘confidants’. Indeed, the revaluation of animals as companions is evident across a range of transactional spheres including health care and therapy, play and leisure. Most significant, perhaps, is the increasing view that pets have the same rights to medical treatment as humans – reflected in the spread of specialist animal cancer treatment and research hospitals (Haraway, 2008) – and the growing belief that animals possess souls (McKinney, 2019). The health benefits of companionate body pedagogics are not, however, confined to animals. While the idea that animals have therapeutic value dates from the late 18th century, ‘pet therapy’ is now practised within educational, social service, psychiatric and prison services, and there are growing claims regarding the beneficial effects for humans of companionate animals (Britton and Button, 2006). These include enhanced cardiovascular biomarkers among heart disease patients, weight loss, improving mood and increasing children’s pro-social behaviours (Viztum and Urbanik, 2016). While humans can do much to enhance animal health, it seems that exchanges with living, breathing animals enhances human well-being.

Personalised exchanges are also evident in a growing human–animal sphere of sociability pursued as a ‘play form’ of interaction (Simmel, 1971 [1910]: 128). Exemplified by the rise of leisure in which animals are *partners in*, rather than *objects for*, entertainment and enjoyment, these are ludic activities wherein play ‘no longer becomes solely something the person does “for” the animal’ (Irvine, 2004: 168). Instead, it involves ‘partners playing together’, in exchanges of gesture, movement, sound and touch conducted for their intrinsic satisfactions (Haraway, 2008: 240; Irvine, 2004: 168). One increasingly popular sphere of human–animal leisure can be found in those agility competitions that spread from the 1980s across and beyond Europe, North America and Asia (Syrjala, 2016). While their competitive element removes us from a strictly Simmelian notion of sociability, devotees view this activity as structured play requiring enthusiasm from both parties (Haraway, 2008: 224–225).

The suggestion that companionate relations shape people's identities is reinforced more generally by Jackson's (2012) identification of what we can term 'transactional orders' in dog parks and elsewhere where the unit of social exchange is no longer the individual but the human–animal couple. In these situations, Jackson (2012) observes norms and practices in which a guardian's sense of self is harnessed to their pet's behaviour. Birke et al.'s (2010) observation that animal behaviour is seen increasingly as a moral comment on owners is another sign of the growing entanglement of human and animal identities. This point is complemented by Hill et al.'s (2008) suggestion that many guardians see their companion animals as an 'extended self'. There is no irreversible prosthetic amalgamation of partners here, but human–animal combinations do seem to be producing something new.

Discussion and Conclusion

Seeking to advance the sociology of the body, I have developed Dewey's transactionalist approach, applying it to the body pedagogics of human–animal relations. Focusing on the means, experiences and outcomes of human–animal relations, alongside the transactional concern with the borders and entanglements central to these considerations, provides us with a framework suited to historical comparison which avoids the limitations of alternative approaches. The transactional fields delineating 'civilising' from 'companionate' inter-species body pedagogics usefully illustrate how border setting processes can promote, marginalise and exclude particular exchanges. Civilising body pedagogics stigmatised animalistic behaviours, and many human–animal transactions, encouraging exchanges of shame, repugnance and embarrassment as a way of facilitating high-status identities. Companionate body pedagogics, in contrast, promote intimate contacts, associated with the experience of inter-corporeal and emotional attunement, resulting in personal identities informed by cross-species sociabilities.

Despite their differences, there is some continuity between these pedagogics: both promote the socialisation of human–animal behavioural forms, removing animal exploitation to 'back regions'. Both promote exchanges of repugnance when witnessing violence against animals, though responding negatively to breaches of civilised human behaviour contrasts with responses moulded by companionate attunement. Their respective valuations of animals are also different. Civilising pedagogics revolve around socialised displays of distinction, while companionate exchanges involve an appreciation of pets that appears to extend greater sympathy to the intrinsic properties of these animals. It is also worth noting that companionate pedagogics have flourished at a time when veganism has grown in popularity, perhaps indicating a broader adaptation not only to other species but also to the wider environment during an era when sustainability has become a critical problem (Thornes, 2018).

These human–animal body pedagogics represent real changes in the transactional fields that shape people's identities, but remain ideal types, existing and developing unevenly. It is also important to recognise the potential for tensions to exist within them, as evident in companionate pedagogics. Predicated upon mutual attunement, the norms and standards associated with these practices remain controlled by *humans*. Guardians 'speak for' their pets, retaining the power to ill-treat, abandon and euthanise them. Tensions also

remain in the forms of training to which animals are subjected. Savalois et al. (2013) highlight the difficult balance between ‘obedience’ and ‘autonomy’ that exists in producing herding dogs, and this is reflected in police dog training and in the partnerships forged with horses in sports (Birke and Hockenhull, 2015; Pfoutz, 2019). Again, human identities develop from a position of dominance.

While it is possible to suggest that this companionate pedagogics obfuscates what remains a form of human–animal colonisation, Nimmo (2016) identifies an intimate ‘being-with-otherness’ that recognises alterity and is facilitated by the common qualities required for existence within a shared environment. Relatedly, it would be wrong to conclude that it is impossible to gain *any* animal perspective on companionate developments. While non-human species cannot engage in abstract symbolic representation and communication to the extent humans do (Ingold, 1993), the transactional body pedagogic approach recognises inter-corporeal responses and accommodations from humans and animals as creative forms of practical intelligence that can facilitate communication. Irvine’s (2004) distinction between sentimental and critical forms of anthropomorphism is also relevant here. Critical anthropomorphism acknowledges that the distinctive properties of animals entail there will be limitations to our representation of their cultural ‘ways of life’. Nevertheless, it also interprets as meaningful those convergences that exist between humans and animals in their individual and combined attempts to maintain exchanges enabling them to survive and flourish within their environment. In this context, it is at least possible to look at companionate human–animal body pedagogics as prefiguring some of the action required to address those acute environmental problems threatening the planet’s future (Foster, 1999).

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