



Ibercampus.eu

European education website



campus  | [Editorial Board](#) | [Who we are](#) | [Ideology](#) | [Contact](#) | [Advertising rates](#) | [Subscri](#)




The origin of drama in babies' minds, and

The Origin of the Human Mind in Infant Dramatism

Symbolic interactionism provides a theory of the origin of role-playing. Being a theory which stresses the inherent theatricality of human interaction and of the human mind, it is therefore, in an indirect way, a theory of the psychosocial roots of drama. Where we find the origin of language, and the origin of the human self, there we find, as well, the origin of drama.

Vanity Fea

11/7/2016

 [Send to a friend](#)

Surely a theory of the inherent theatricality of the human mind deserves mention in our site devoted to *The Great Theatre of the World*:

<https://www.facebook.com/elgranteatrodelmundo/>





El Gran Teatro del Mundo - Le Grand Théâtre du Monde - This Huge Stage



about a year ago

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN MIND IN INFANT DRAMATISM

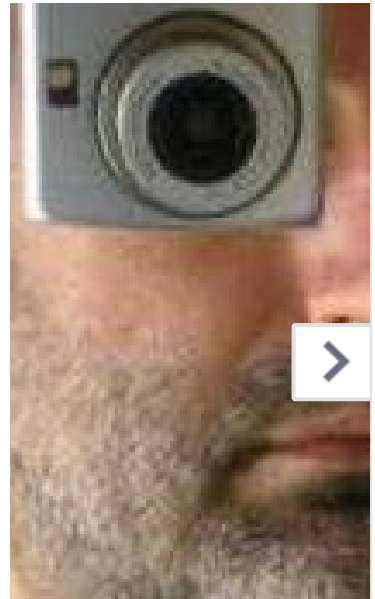
—And the origin of drama in the infant human mind.

I want to quote a crucial passage from George Herbert Mead's 'Mind, Self, and Society', developing G. H. Mead's central concept of self-interaction resulting from internalized interaction, as a generative process which gives rise to the complexity of the human mind —a mind which is inherently social, as its very structure is the result of an inner dramatization of sociality. Th...

[See More](#)



Vanity Fea: Una pequeña teoría sobre el origen y desarrollo del lenguaje



Vanity Fea: Una pequeña teor y desarrollo del lenguaje

Like Comment Share

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN MIND IN INFANT DRAMATISM

—And the origin of drama in the infant human mind.

Symbolic interactionism provides a theory of the origin of role-playing. Being a theory which stresses the inherent theatricality of human interaction and of the human mind, it is therefore, in an indirect way, a theory of the psychosocial roots of drama. Where we find the origin of language, and the origin of the human self, there we find, as well, the origin of drama.

I want to quote a crucial passage from George Herbert Mead's 'Mind, Self, and Society', developing G. H. Mead's central concept of self-interaction resulting from internalized interaction, as a generative process which gives rise to the complexity of the human mind—a mind which is inherently social, as its very structure is the result of an inner dramatization of sociality. The passage is equally important as a contribution to an interactional theory of the origin of language. I dealt with some aspects of Mead's theory of the self as it bears on the self and language in previous papers, for instance here:

_____. "Una pequeña teoría sobre el origen y desarrollo del lenguaje." In García Landa, Vanity Fea March 2015.*

<http://vanityfea.blogspot.com/es/.../una-pequena-teoria-sobre...>

2015

_____. "Bucles en la mente: Autointeracción, retroalimentación cerebral, y la realidad como expectativa autocumplida." Social Science Research Network 10 May 2015.*

<http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2604277>

2015

—but now I want to emphasize another dimension in Mead's conception: it is a theory of the origin of role-playing, and therefore, in an indirect way, a theory which stresses the inherent theatricality of human interaction and of the human mind. Where we find the origin of language, and the origin of the human self, there we find, as well, the origin of drama. Protodrama is inscribed in the very structure of the human mind, and in our earliest social interactions, those that take place between the newborn child and its parents.

Protodrama is to be found in play, and the complex role-play of the child goes beyond the playful or make-believe attitudes of young animals. This complexity is no doubt associated to the greater flexibility of the human brain (due to the human altricity and to the infant maturation in the 'social brain'—processes which feed back on each other). Human cognitive complexity, and cogntive flexibility, are inherently linked to the inner dramatism of the self, to the role-playing capacity of the human mind, and to the theatricality of human social structure. Theatre and role-playing build up our mind right from the origin of the species and of the individual.

Mead's text—from George Herbert Mead's 'Mind, Self, and Society'
(Supplementary Essay III, 'The Self and the Process of Reflection'), pp. 364-66:

"There are two interesting human types of conduct that seemingly arise out of this relationship of child and parent. On the one hand we find what has been called the imitation of the child, and on the other the sympathetic response of the parent. The basis of each of these types of conduct is to be found in the individual stimulating himself to respond in the same fashion as that in which the other responds to him. As we have seen, this is possible if two conditions are fulfilled. The individual must be affected by the stimulus which affects the other, and affected through the same channel. This is the case with the vocal gesture. The sound which is uttered strikes on the ear of the individual uttering it in the same physiological fashion as that in which it strikes on the ear of the person addressed. The other condition is that there should be an impulse seeking expression in the individual who utters the sound, which is functionally of the same sort as that to which the stimulus answers in the other individual who hears the sound. The illustration most familiar to us is that of a child crying and then uttering the soothing sound which belongs to the parental attitude of protection. This childish type of conduct runs out later into the countless forms of play in which the child assumes the rôles of the adults about him. The very universal habit of playing with dolls indicates how ready for expression, in the child, is the parental attitude, or perhaps one should say, certain of the parental attitudes. The long period of dependence of the human infant during which his interest centers in his relations to those who care for him gives a remarkable opportunity for the play back and forth of this sort of taking of the rôles of others. Where the young animal of lower forms very quickly finds itself resonding directly to the appropriate

stimuli for the conduct of the adult of its species, with instinctive activities that are early matured, the child for a considerable period directs his attention toward the social environment provided by the primitive family, seeking support and nourishment and warmth and protection through his gestures—especially his vocal gestures. These gestures inevitably must call out in himself the parental response which is so markedly ready for expression very early in the child's nature, and this response will include the parent's corresponding vocal gesture. The child will stimulate himself to make the sounds which he stimulates the parent to make. In so far as the social situation within which the child reacts is determined by his social environment, that environment will determine what sounds he makes and therefore what responses he stimulates both in others and himself. The life about him will indirectly determine what parental responses he produces in his conduct, but the direct stimulation to adult response will be inevitably found in his own childish appeal. To the adult stimulation he responds as a child. There is nothing in these stimulations to call out an adult response. But in so far as he gives attention to his own childish appeals it will be the adult response that will appear—but will appear only in case that some phases of these adult impulses are ready in him for expression. It is, of course, the incompleteness and relative immaturity of these adult responses that gives to the child's conduct one of the peculiar characters which attach to play. The other is that the child can stimulate himself to this activity. In the play of young children, even when they play together, there is abundant evidence of the child's taking different rôles in the process; and a solitary child will keep up the process of stimulating himself by his vocal gestures to act in different rôles almost indefinitely. The play of the young animal of other species lacks this self-stimulating character and exhibits far more maturity of instinctive response than is found in the early play of children. It is evident that out of just such conduct as this, out of addressing one's self and responding with the appropriate response of another, 'self-consciousness' arises. The child during this period of infancy creates a forum within which he assumes various rôles, and the child's self is gradually integrated out of these socially different attitudes, always retaining the capacity of addressing itself and responding to that address with a reaction that belongs in a certain sense to another. He comes into the adult period with the mechanism of a mind."

Thus far G.H. Mead in "The Self and the Process of Reflection". It is a passage

which surely deserves to be reread and reassessed in the light of contemporary developments in neurology and in neuropsychology, which cannot but shed light on two aspects of Mead's theory:

- 1) the reflexive dimension inherent for instance in the mechanism of mirror neurons, and
- 2) the extraordinary plasticity of the human brain, which may shed further light on the ability to manage role-playing (as well as on the early internalization of the self-image reflected in others, —e.g. in the development of the moral conscience, as well as of gendered identity).

For further discussion of internalized dramatism in Mead and other symbolic interactionists, see the following:

García Landa, José Angel. "Interacción internalizada: el desarrollo especular del lenguaje y el orden simbólico." Online PDF at *ResearchGate* 23 April 2012.*

<http://www.researchgate.net/publication/33419873>

2012

_____. "Goffman: Reality as Self-Fulfilling Expectation and the Theatre of Interiority / Goffman: La realidad como expectativa autocumplida y el teatro de la interioridad." Online PDF at *Social Science Research Network* (April 2008):

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1124990>

2008

_____. "'Inner Dramatization': The Theatre of Interiority in George Herbert Mead." *El Gran Teatro del Mundo* 3 July 2016.*

<https://www.facebook.com/elgranteatrodelmundo/posts/1328682690493961>

2017

In García Landa, *Vanity Fea* 3 July 2016.*

<http://vanityfea.blogspot.com.es/2016/07/inner-dramatization-theatre-of.html>

2016

_____. "Mead on Topsight." In García Landa, *Vanity Fea* 8 July 2016.*

<http://vanityfea.blogspot.com.es/2016/07/mead-on-topsight.html>

2016

_____. "The Ideal of Universal Communication." In García Landa, *Vanity Fea* 9 July 2016.*

<http://vanityfea.blogspot.com.es/2016/07/the-ideal-of-universal-communication.html>

2016

_____. "Consciousness as Rationality as Internalized Dramatism." In García Landa, *Vanity Fea* 9 July 2016.* (G. H. Mead).

<http://vanityfea.blogspot.com.es/2016/07/consciousness-as-rationality-as.html>

2016

—oOo—

☰ Other issues Blogs

- ✓ Intellectuals against 'Evil'
- ✓ Let them have it?
- ✓ One Drop of Blood
- ✓ Indoctrinating young men —and young women too
- ✓ Long Line of Sevens
- ✓ On the Universe as a Process of Unique Events
- ✓ Being Congratulated 6
- ✓ Bob Dylan's 2016 Nobel Prize Lecture in Literature
- ✓ THE CIRCLE, closer to Completion
- ✓ On the end of Academia(.edu)

