

## BOOK REVIEW SECTION

JAMES M. JASPER. *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997

In April of 1999 a small number of activists broke into several research labs at the University of Minnesota and liberated a small number of nonhuman animals. In the days that followed, the press devoted substantial coverage to the action. One of the themes in the coverage was the irrationality of the individuals involved; they had risked substantial penalties, set back research, and destroyed property simply to free a few birds and rodents. Why would they do such a thing? The public was incensed, and the state legislature considered constitutionally questionable measures to stem the tide of animal rights terrorism. Why was there such a vitriolic response?

This book provides some of the tools that we may use to understand perspectives of the mainstream media and the public as well as the activists and their supporters. *The Art of Moral Protest* is an ambitious work that draws heavily on Jasper's previous research into both the anti-nuclear and animal rights movements. Because the former provides the bulk of information, individuals specifically interested in the issue of animal rights might prefer reading Jasper's previous book (with Nelkin), *The Animal Rights Crusade*. Those more broadly concerned with the nature of social movement mobilization, however, should find this volume engaging. Case histories and in-depth interviews mustered in support of his arguments abound.

In general, Jasper suggests that we need to take a more cultural approach to the study of social movements. In doing so, scholars must address the interplay between shared understandings (culture) and individual mental constructs regarding self and society (biography). Culture "provides the context and criteria for judging rationality" (p. 83) while biography builds on personal experiences to provide a unique outlook on the world. The arguments for a cultural component to social movement research are well taken. Although discussions of framing (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986) have addressed the processes by which organizations may attempt to match their concerns to those of potential activists, Jasper provides insights into how such concerns might be constructed and reconstructed in the course of social action. In addition, he points out that the nature of costs and benefits are ambiguous and fluid. Many of us would consider jail time to be a negative thing. By constructing jail time as a badge

of honor, however, activists may turn it into something positive and perhaps even desirable. This line of thought is not unique, but this work brings it out more explicitly than do most.

My primary quarrel with Jasper relates to his critique of “rationalists,” a group into which he lumps proponents of the rational-choice, resource mobilization, and political process models of social action. By holding up relatively narrow definitions of self-interests, costs, and benefits, Jasper effectively constructs a straw-person whom he then proceeds to knock down. Although such narrow views may certainly be found, particularly in early rationalist works, they are by no means emblematic of these models as a whole.

Jasper suggests that the value of much current social movement research is restricted by a reliance on an instrumental rationalism that focuses on “the acquisition of money and power, and distinguishes too sharply between the means and the ends” of protest (p. 33). Such a critique, though not without merit, is hardly new; many scholars in the rationalist camp have brought up similar points. What Jasper seems to ignore is that a number of these authors have also attempted to correct such shortcomings.

For example, Hechter (1994) distinguishes between instrumental and immanent goods as motivation for social protest. Instrumental goods, such as money, that may be exchanged for other goods certainly have the potential to stimulate action. Actors, however, also may rationally be motivated by immanent goods - things highly regarded in and of themselves rather than for their exchange value. Animal rights protesters, for instance, are unlikely to receive great material rewards for their activities and may even incur substantial costs. Yet, acting on one's deeply held beliefs may be so satisfying in and of itself that individuals are willing to bear the costs.

Opp (1988, 1989a, 1989b) argues that non-material or “soft” incentives are important determinants of protest and must be included in any rational models thereof. Likewise, Snow and Oliver (1995) discuss three different classes of incentives for protest: material, solidary, and purposive. Solidary incentives relate to interpersonal relations and address the influence on our actions of such things as the praise or contempt of valued others. Purposive incentives are intrapersonal in nature and arise from internalized values and norms. These works, as well as others, mirror and address many of Jasper's concerns yet receive little, if any, mention in his book.

In sum, *The Art of Moral Protest*, although flawed, provides food for thought. It is a reminder that culture, identity, and emotion can play an important part in social movements - such as the animal rights movement - that imply a substantial cosmological

shift. Students of contentious politics and new social movements are likely to find this book interesting but hardly revolutionary.

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FRANK ASCIONE and PHIL ARKOW (Eds.) *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1999.

“He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. . . .” And “Tender feelings towards dumb animals develop humane feelings towards mankind,” Kant stated two centuries ago, repeating thoughts Thomas Aquinas had put forward in the thirteenth century.

Many of the first nonhuman animal protection organizations implicitly or explicitly referred to this connection. The American Humane Association for example, has been stating since 1877 that its goal is to protect animals and children. Also, the development of animal welfare legislation was in many countries inspired by the potential link between nonhuman animal abuse and violence among humans.

Seemingly a self-evident statement, supported by an abundance of anecdotal “evidence,” this link remained largely uninvestigated for a large part of the twentieth century. This has changed, however, during the last decades. The number of publications on the cruelty link has increased rapidly, and scientific investigations into the matter have become a major research topic in the research domain on human-animal relations. *Society & Animals* devoted a theme issue to animal cruelty in 1997 (Vol. 5, No. 3) containing several contributions on this topic. In 1998, Purdue University Press published an anthology, *Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence*, collecting reprints of all the major articles on the matter published to date (Lockwood & Ascione, Eds.).

## Two Perspectives

The line of investigation in these studies is twofold. On one hand, the supposed link between animal abuse and other expressions of family violence such as child abuse and abuse of women is examined. Different forms of violent behavior with different categories of victims often go hand in hand. Detecting the occurrence of animal abuse can lead to the detection of other forms of interpersonal violence. The occurrence of animal abuse can be an indication that other family members of the perpetrator are also potential victims. This can help in the prevention of other forms of interpersonal violence and vice versa.

From another perspective, research into the cruelty link examines the connection between animal abuse committed by children or youngsters and the development of aggressive or violent behavior at a later stage in life. It is stated that children or youngsters committing acts of extreme violence toward animals are more likely to develop aggressive and violent behavior in their relations when they grow older. Animal abuse in childhood is thus labeled an indicator of a possible future violent or even criminal career and can be a signifier for social agencies to intervene.

Ascione and Arkow's edited volume deals predominantly with the former line of investigation. A large part of the contributions focuses on the links between animal abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse in a family setting. Glancing through the book, the large number of - often very short - contributions is immediately strikingly apparent. It is no surprise then that many of the contributions give a repetitive recital empirical data previously published and repeatedly state the lack of co-operation between social and humane services. Over and over, reference is made to the same publications from the special issue of *Society & Animals* (1997) or to publications covered in the Lockwood and Ascione anthology (1998).

### Thoughts on Violence

The book contains no significant new empirical scientific material on the link between domestic violence, child abuse, and animal abuse. The general tone is of a more descriptive nature, giving an overview of how different organizations working in the field have dealt with these issues so far. Obvious recurrent themes then are the lack of empirical data establishing the link - hence the demand for further research - and the need for coalition-building between different organizations dealing with one or another aspect of the link. Much attention, however, also is paid to the legislative and legal context of these matters and the role veterinarians can or should play in recognizing and reporting animal abuse. The last section of the book deals with initiatives including animal-assisted therapy as a way to break the cycle of violence.

Stressing its links with other expressions of interpersonal violence makes, for many, the importance of detecting and preventing animal abuse a more justifiable and legitimate field of action and intervention. In the introduction to the book, Lockwood states the following:

Ironically, some animal rights advocates see giving too much attention to the connections between violence against animals and humans as undermining efforts to view animal abuse as an evil that stands alone, regardless of the implications for the treatment of people. (p. 5)

Is this really so ironic? The anthropocentric overtone underlying research on the cruelty link (preventing and detecting animal abuse is important because it can be a major signifier of other *human* victimization's) is exactly the kind of justification animal rights advocates have tried to transcend in establishing the moral significance of animals *in their own right*.

In line with this remark, the lack of attention to the definitional aspects of animal abuse - except for Rowan's typology (pp. 328-334) - and its unsystematic interpretation throughout the different contributions is conspicuous and reflects the general lack of reflexivity in publications on definitional matters. For example, the institutionalized expressions of animal abuse receive only sporadic attention. If the underlying idea about the cruelty link is the objectification of living beings - women, children, animals - why do these studies restrict their scope to the occurrence of abuse and violence in the domestic scene, perpetrated by individuals, and restricted to socially unacceptable forms of abuse? Is there some possibility that some sort of cruelty link also occurs with people and animals incorporated in larger, institutionalized systems of abuse - slaughterhouse employees, or men and women working in the sex industry?

The main basis of these industries' existence often relies on the objectification of living creatures who are turned into "chunks of meat," objects of experiment, "cute pussies," or hunting trophies. In restricting their scope to just these classic instances of animal abuse (companion animals in a domestic scene), I feel that these investigations make the same mistake as did those at the beginning of the animal protection movement in the nineteenth century. Their scope is narrowed down to the classic animal protection issues, leaving the bigger framework of animal exploitation - often in an institutionalized context - out of the picture. Agreeably, but from a broader non-anthropocentric perspective, one can indeed state that the cruelty link requires much more research and investigation.

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CLINTON R. SANDERS *Understanding Dogs: Living and Working with Canine Companions*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999. 201 pp.

Sanders has written a thought-provoking addition to the growing literature on human-animal relations. In this eminently readable and worthwhile book, he explores how people who work with dogs on an everyday basis understand their companion animals. Are they seen as objects to be controlled, used, and discarded or are they “thoughtful, and intentional individuals with whom we have ongoing interactions that parallel our social exchanges with fellow humans?” (p. xv). Using ethnographic methods, Sanders investigates this issue with four groups of people whose lives are intimately linked to canines: everyday dog owners, guide dog owners, guide dog trainers, and veterinarians. All are distinctive in terms of their relations with dogs, how dogs influence their daily lives, and how they interpret canine behavior. However, Sanders' rich ethnographic analysis reveals that although there is some ambivalence about dogs as minded subjects - reflecting the general ambivalence about animals that vacillates between “dominance and affection” (Tuan, 1984) - dogs mostly are seen as individuals who participate in meaningful social interactions with people. As such, they warrant inclusion in the sociological imagination, according to Sanders, and should be studied to better understand their roles in human social life, as well as to allow us to grasp the shape of their own lives as thinking, social beings.

The book has six chapters. An introductory essay provides an initial grounding on interactions between people and companion animals. Here, Sanders argues that contrary to both neo-Cartesians and animal rights advocates, he sees dogs as subjects but not slaves. Rather, he claims that dogs are part of the family. Not the romanticized family of the cultural right. Nor the vilified family intent on depriving dogs of their rightful existence in a romanticized nature. But rather the imperfect, problematic, potentially violent family of the contemporary western world that, for all its warts, typically provides a loving, supportive environment for canine members.

The next four chapters are devoted to the four groups under study. All are different in their experience of dogs and the impact of dogs on their social relationships, and such differences make for intriguing reading. But they share a view of canines as thinking, reasoning subjects – despite inconsistencies and lapses of objectification when convenient, dictated by professional norms (e.g., behaviorist trainers), or essential to emotional well being (e.g., vets). The final chapter traces the growing

acknowledgment of animals as individual subjects and identifies distinctive sociological research questions and methodological approaches to understanding people and animals. The book closes with a call for ethnographies that pay special attention to the mutual gaze and mutual play between people and dogs, since "it is in these linked activities that human-animal intersubjectivity and cooperative behavior are readily apparent" (p. 113).

By bringing canines back into the sociological fold, Sanders has donned the mantle of pioneering sociologist Read Bain, who in 1928 accused his profession of an anthropocentrism resulting from "theological teleology, an instance of organic ego-centrism, a type of wishful aggrandizement and self-glorification" (Bain, 1928, pp. 545-556). Like Bain, Sanders argues for a serious "animal sociology." But he also contributes to contemporary debates within mainstream sociology. For example, given that dogs are increasingly treated as members of the "brave new family" (Stacy, 1990), how does this influence the sociology of the family, as manifest in the organization of daily life, familial relationships, and household consumption and decision-making? Sanders also speaks to the sociology of work and professions; there are significant numbers of veterinarians and linked companion animal health professionals in the United States. The analysis provided here serves as an important point of comparison with studies of other helping professionals.

In the final analysis, Sanders sees relationships between people and dogs as mutually beneficial, despite human ambivalence and callousness. I would like to agree with this assessment, yet it is hard to square with the cold, hard facts facing canines dependent upon the kindness of people. The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control, for example, recently estimated that 45,000 stray dogs roam the streets of the county, many in packs. Not surprisingly, this has generated both a surge in dog bite incidents (an estimated 200,000 bites and 12,900 emergency visits per year), and loud demands for round-ups (Rivera, 1999).

Why are there so many abandoned dogs if they are such beloved members of the family? Economy, culture, and geography all play a role. Despite economic recovery, many Angelenos are extremely poor and live in overcrowded rental housing neighborhoods - increasing the challenges of caring for dogs in the city. The region's cultural diversity also means that attitudes towards dogs are far more heterogeneous than in the communities where Sanders conducted his work. In some Los Angeles neighborhoods, dogs may be bred to fight, bought to guard property, displayed as symbols of virile masculinity, or even eaten. This suggests the need for cross-cultural, class-specific, and geographically contextualized analyses that can illuminate how

different social groups in different places understand and relate to dogs and what such social differences mean for the everyday lives and fates of the dogs living there. That said, I heartily recommend *Understanding Dogs*. The book is a welcome contribution to the growing multidisciplinary literature on human-animal relations.

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