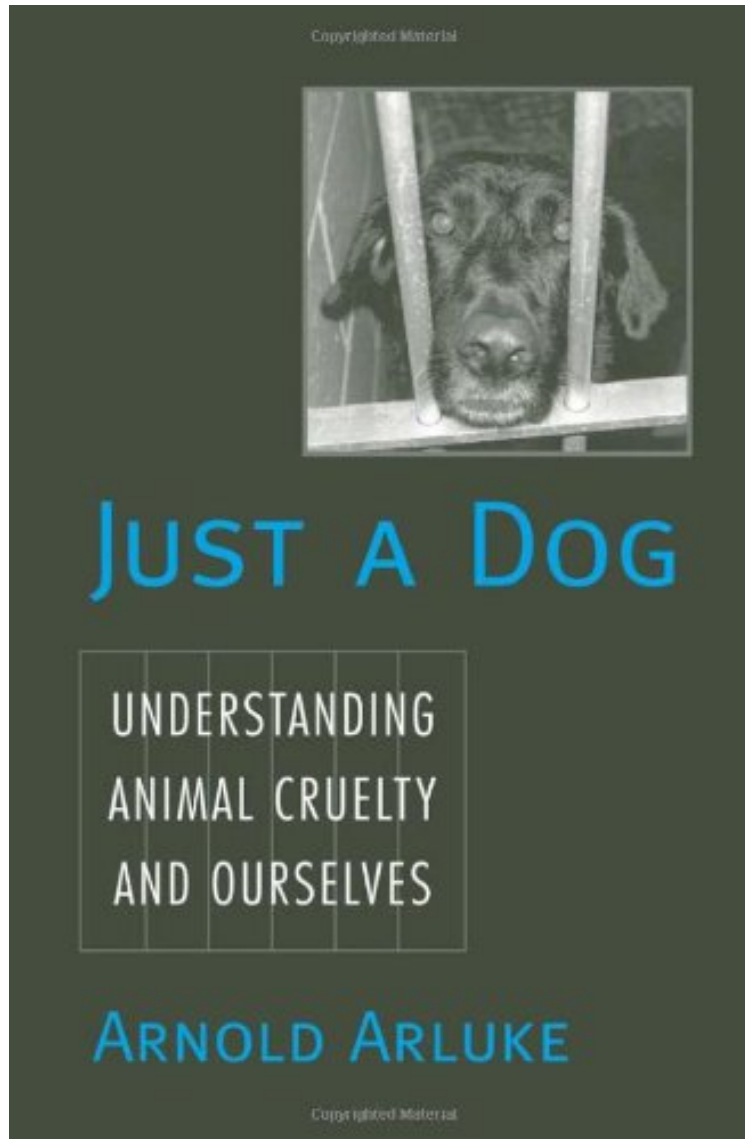


(Mobile book) Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves (Animals, Culture, And Society)

Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves (Animals, Culture, And Society)

Arnold Arluke

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Arnold Arluke : Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves (Animals, Culture, And Society) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves (Animals, Culture, And Society):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read for Animal Rights Advocates By D_shrink The author does a good job of presenting a fairly balanced description of what constitutes animal abuse, who does it, and why

they do it. Among the relevant points presented are: 1. "[W]orkers in animal laboratories or slaughterhouses, for example, are thought to undergo desensitization as a coping mechanism." P82. "[SPCA] agents think of professionalism as an ability to maintain emotional distance from cases." P433. Adolescents who engage in animal cruelty, which the author calls dirty play, sometimes do it to see if what adults say about things as cruelty is true and at other times, do it simply out of boredom. P56 However, I found the best chapter of the book to be the one on animal hoarders, especially as in my home city of Charleston, we are currently hearing about a man who killed over 200 hunting dogs, and was still found with about 45 more malnourished dogs at the time of his arrest, when neighbors alerted authorities to a terrible smell coming from his property. And just as the book predicted his defense is that he was simply a kindly man who wanted to help as many animals as he could, but things simply got out of hand. Yeah, and his saintly nature is why they found 200+ animal corpses in various stages of decay on his property. Having read this one chapter in the book almost makes it unnecessary to read the daily news on this event as it was all foretold in the book with the names and places changed. The author and I may disagree on this point, but I find these individuals to be suffering from anxiety types of disorders, and as he stated in the book, the man did not get along with other people, which is why it took the stink from 200 dead hunting dogs to cause neighbors to complain to local authorities. I think we can say this is an obsessive compulsive type of person, who becomes anxious at the lack of human to human contact, then displaces that to human animal contact, and then gets upset when the animals do not fulfill all his needs, so finally has to kill them as they are suffering due to his lack of proper care, although he believes he is actually helping them. The author also gives a nice presentation on the difference in no-kill and open-admission shelters and how the workers from each think they are the real saviors of animals and the other type of shelter is exhibiting a form of cruelty by either killing what they consider to be adoptable animals or merely keeping animals alive with minimal socialization for months and sometimes over a year while waiting for the right person to adopt them. Throughout the book the author describes how we anthropomorphize animal actions by intertwining their actions with our own fears and anxiety over what constitutes cruelty. Because what constitutes cruelty varies by culture from one group to another based on the sociological concepts of folkways and mores. This is a must read for all those interested in animal welfare regardless of your specialty field or even if just concerned as a lover of a companion animal, i.e. - a PET. You may not agree with every point, but it is a well presented argument on the whole. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Useful, but shallow. By Judith Shapiro. This book offers some useful ethnographic information on how animal cruelty is understood and talked about by humane agents, teen-agers, hoarders, shelter workers, marketers and media, and how people in these positions are seen by others. Unfortunately, it is also tedious, repetitious, and uninspired in its cultural analysis of animal cruelty as a window into how we see the relationship between humans and their fellow creatures. The author's mechanical use of the distinction between a "normative" and a "descriptive" approach (i.e. that he is not making judgments, but rather simply giving an objective account) ill fits his subject; his approach to it is also rather naive at this point in the history of the social sciences. The main upshot is a rather flattened account of what Arluke himself recognizes as a morally, legally, culturally, emotionally complex and compelling subject. Arluke draws on the work of some truly original and interesting thinkers - notably, Clifford Geertz and Claude Levi-Strauss - unfortunately, to very little effect. His use of Levi-Strauss's analysis of why animals are "good to think" is especially unfortunate; in calling animal cruelty "good to think", Arluke simply sows confusion in the mind of anyone who has felt truly enlightened by Levi-Strauss's brilliant analysis of totemism. My own favorite sentence in the book comes in the last paragraph, as the author is wrestling with the constraints imposed by his own concept of what is proper behavior for a sociologist: "I certainly struggled for the right words to describe the mistreatment of animals, but no matter how I expressed my thinking, it always fell short of what I suspected was the reality." One virtue this book definitely does have is honesty. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. interesting. By catclan. very interesting read. nice size book and great information. Thank you

Argues that in order to understand animal cruelty it is important to understand the social relationships rather than the psychological problem or personality disorders of those involved.

From Publishers Weekly Arluke (Regarding Animals), an authority on animal cruelty, believes that in order to formulate effective programs and policies to combat such behavior, society must have an in-depth understanding of why people mistreat or neglect animals and of the cultural and social factors that encourage abuse. In this dense and overly long sociological study, he reports on the results of interviews with five groups of people: law enforcement agents who investigate incidents of abuse, adolescent animal abusers, animal hoarders, animal shelter workers (including those who must sometimes euthanize animals as well as those who believe no animal should ever be killed) and public relations experts who use animal cruelty as a marketing tool for fund-raising and education. Arluke examines the experiences and motivations of each group and reflects on how individuals think about their actions "whether cruel or humane" and use them to create identities for themselves. Wisely, the author keeps passages describing specific examples of cruelty to a minimum, and he refrains from making moral judgments. But Arluke's academic approach and language are off-putting, thwarting his objective of stimulating discussion and debate among

the general public about the nature of animal cruelty and the importance of finding new ways to deal with it. (July) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Through courageous research Arluke set aside his judgment to explore how abusers see their behavior. He has given us a sociological understanding of animal abuse that recognizes the situational quality of cruelty and its ability to shape identity...In Just a Dog, Arnold Arluke uses cruelty to raise questions about what it means to be human. He also adds to our understanding of the complex and conflicting ways we humans regard other animals." -Contemporary Sociology "Arluke (Regarding Animals), an authority on animal cruelty, believes that in order to formulate effective programs and policies to combat such behavior, society must have an in-depth understanding of why people mistreat or neglect animals and of the cultural and social factors that encourage abuse. Wisely, the author keeps passages describing specific examples of cruelty to a minimum, and he refrains from making moral judgments." -Publishers Weekly

From the Publisher

How can we make sense of acts of cruelty towards animals?