Ethnozoology[1] and the Future of Sociology

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Abstract

Three questions are explored regarding ethnozoology's place in sociology. First, why has sociology been slow to explore this subject or to give it much credibility? Resistance by sociologists to ethnozoology is strikingly ironic, given the discipline's willingness in recent years to consider the plight of virtually every human minority. Although androcentric and conservative biases no doubt are part of this resistance, it is suggested that significant resistance comes from sociologists involved in the study of various oppressed groups. Second, what has sociology done to study ethnozoology so far? A critique is made of prior attempts to categorize research in this area along topical lines. Instead, the value of theoretically organizing this literature is advocated. Finally, how should sociology proceed with ethnozoological research? An argument is made for increasing applied research. Two exemplars are provided, including the trend by police to racially profile urban pit-bull owners and the growth of uneasiness among veterinary students who resist the traditional use of animals as educational tools.

Introduction

Although American popular culture has shown a long and active interest in the role played by animals in society, the academic social science community, with the exception of anthropology, has been slow to get involved with this subject until recently. This inattention is ironic given the commanding presence of animals in our society. Attendance at zoos, for example, far exceeds that at professional sporting events; the amount of money spent by pet owners on pet food is greater than the amount spent by parents on baby food; more people carry photographs of their pets in their wallets than their children; and the amount of mail received by congress regarding the protection of animals was greater than that received on the Vietnam war.

Merely because the topic has not been well studied is insufficient justification for doing so. There are both practical and scholarly reasons why ethnozoology should be vigorously pursued by the social sciences. As concern mounts and consciousness changes in our society over the proper use of animals, the findings of researchers will be absolutely critical to make what is often an emotionally charged and highly polarized debate more reasoned and informed. An example of this is the need for social scientists to research the ways in which laboratory personnel interact with animals used for experimentation. Fortunately, a handful of sociologists have started to pursue this question (e.g., Arluke, 1990, 1991, 1994; Groves, 1997; Phillips, 1993). Without such description, policy makers and concerned citizens can only draw upon the typically over-simplified diatribes of some animal advocates or the self-serving public relations efforts of biomedical researchers.

Animals also represent one of the richest windows for understanding ourselves, and it is at this level that scholars may find great opportunities. How we think and act toward them may reveal our most essential conceptions of the social order and unmask our most authentic attitudes toward people. For instance, the use of animal images may at times be tantamount to expressing underlying racism; some of the most damning testimony given by accused police at the Rodney King trial involved characterization of King as a "gorilla;" during the Gulf War Saddam Hussein was described in the American press as a "rat;" and the actions of people in the Los Angeles riots were likened by the media commentators to "packs of vicious animals."

Why Have We Been Reticent?

The most formidable barriers to the future of ethnozoology in sociology are internal rather than external to sociology. The obstacles come from sociologists who do research in this area as well as those who do not, and how they think about the study of human-animal relationships. When considering these barriers, and how future research could remedy them, it is helpful to ask why sociology has shown a lack of interest in ethnozoology, and whether those already doing research in

this field should adopt a different approach to studying the topic. Despite the fact that some of these issues are inevitably part of the formation and growth of any new specialty, it is valuable to pose these sociology of sociology concerns to foster healthy self-reflection and awareness, if not some strategies for growth.

Why has there not been more animal-studies research in sociology and what does this say about the discipline? Although sociologists have shown increasing interest in this topic, it can hardly be called a flood. A number of sociologists have fought for years to stimulate interest within sociology through research, editorial work, and professional organizing, but have met with resistance and apathy as much as sympathy and support.

By comparison, anthropologists have run with the ball, long ago labeling ethnozoology as a growth field and according it space in an annual state-of-the-art review (Shanklin, 1985). Predictably, they have focused on the use and function of animals in nonindustrialized societies and the role animals play in the symbolic structure of cultures (e.g., Geertz, 1972). While ethnographies have produced extensive data on how people think and act toward animals, much of this information is buried within more general descriptions of culture, despite the Human Relations Area Files category on "ethnozoology." Unfortunately, it will remain inaccessible to many scholars outside of anthropology until it is culled from texts and subjected to analysis from a comparative perspective. Although the domestication process has been one of the chief concerns of anthropologists, they still need to study the metaphorical and symbolic classification of domesticated animals in order to more extensively test notions that are now only equivocally answered, such as the belief that domesticated animals serve as a link between human culture and wild nature. Also, certain domesticated animals have been largely ignored, such as the symbolism of dogs in different types of societies. Indeed, many questions regarding human interaction with animals are begging for cross-cultural analysis. Why, for instance, are there striking variations in pet-keeping practices in the industrialized world, and why are animal metaphors, so present in non-industrialized societies, also highly present in the mod-

ern world? Sociologists can take up where anthropologists have stopped to better understand the symbolism of animals in postmodern society, among other questions suggested by ethnographers. For example, what is the meaning of animals in television, film, and print advertising, as well as in cartoons and comic strips, and how have these images changed in recent years? The recent work of Steve Baker (1993) begins to answer some of these questions.

However, sociologists have failed to acknowledge the importance of ethnozoology. Indeed, some belittle it as mere boutique sociology (Perrow, 2000) or consider it to be a passing fancy or trendy insignificance, as when a leading sociologist of domestic violence put down the study of animal cruelty as the latest abuse de jour. This reaction is ironic given sociology's willingness, even eagerness, to grant legitimacy to a variety of area studies for groups that have been oppressed, including but not limited to African-American studies, women's studies, Latino studies, disability studies, and gay/lesbian studies. Although explanations for this resistance usually blame sociology's androcentric bias or institutional conservatism, I believe the issue is more complicated and subtle. Pinpointing the nature and source of this resistance allows us to reach out to those sociologists most likely to decry the value of ethnozoology and contest its legitimacy.

My impression is that one such pocket of resistance comes from sociologists who study oppressed groups. As you listen to their objections or hesitations about ethnozoology, sometimes peppered with giggles and sarcasm, what comes through is a vague discomfort with the very idea of studying human-animal relationships. If my speculation is correct, then why are they disturbed or troubled with ethnozoology? Is it possible that advocates from these sociologically approved specialties see ethnozoology as an unwelcome interloper that will compete for university and foundation resources in an increasingly competitive financial environment of ever-shrinking budgets for research support? Is it possible that they see ethnozoology as a new competitor in a zero-sum game of status and power as various specialty studies groups vie for increasing visibility and clout in academe? Is it possible that they see ethnozoology as a parody of their specialty because interest in

non-human animals tarnishes or cheapens whatever group they champion and somehow in their minds trivializes the very notion of oppression? If so, this reveals more about the political and psychological insecurities of these area-study advocates than it does about ethnozoology and what it offers sociology. Yet these pockets of resistance have the potential to become our strongest allies. It may be well worth the time and effort to confirm the nature, strength, and source of resistance within the field, so we can focus and tailor some sort of outreach to turn our critics into collaborators.

What Have We Done?

How do we think about and organize our prior accomplishments? Prior state-of-the-art reviews (e.g., Bryant, 1979, 1993) have topically organized sociological research on human-animal relationships, so we see lists of publications on animals in the family, animals in advertising, crimes against animals, and so on. Putting aside the practical or heuristic value of topical lists, they may be symptomatic of our specialty's infancy and, as yet, limited theoretical contribution. Our theoretical contributions have been very modest to date, as is true of most emerging research specialties. Indeed, a few studies regarded as classics(e.g., Kellert, 1976) neither build upon or contribute much if anything to sociological theory per se.

Most others are derivative (e.g., Jasper and Nelkin, 1992) showing how old sociological theories apply to this new subject of study, although they at least stake a sociological claim to the topic of human-animal relationships. Beside the strategic importance of extending sociology into ethnozoology, this research does permit more conceptualization of our work than the topical organization described above. There is evidence of this especially among symbolic interactionist studies of human-animal relationships, where attention has focused on issues such as framing (Munro, 1997), stigma management (Twining and Arluke, 2000), negotiated orders (Balcom and Arluke, 2001), intersubjectivity (Sanders, 1999), the animal as other (Arluke, 1994), emotion management (Arluke, 1991), socialization (Arluke and

Hafferty, 1996), negotiated meanings (Dizard, 1994), and identity work (Groves and Arluke, 1998), to name a few.

We should stop thinking about and organizing our work along topical lines for academic and political reasons. Theoretically organizing our efforts provides a better vantage point to assess what we have done and to see where we need to go. In addition, the more we can describe our specialty's theoretical contribution, however modest, the more we can enhance the legitimacy of ethnozoology in the eyes of doubting sociologists, and there are many who question the value of this research and the justification for having this specialty.

What Should We Do?

At the risk of appearing contradictory, sociologists also should undertake more applied research in this specialty than we do now. I think we are missing the boat in this regard, although there simply may not be enough sociologists interested in ethnozoology to address all the concerns I raise. Nevertheless, as more sociologists get involved in this specialty, and if the course of research continues in its current direction, we may want to take a lesson from medical sociology, only in reverse.

In the 1950s, medical sociology was itself questioning its identity as a new sub-field (Reader, 1963). The controversy was that too many sociologists were doing what was dubbed sociology *in* medicine, which entailed answering research questions that served the interests of health-care providers (e.g., why don't more patients take their medications as prescribed?). Some sociologists argued that a less applied and more basic medical sociology, called the sociology *of* medicine, was desperately needed in order to pose research questions that would be theoretically more interesting to sociologists and analytically more critical of the practice of medicine, medical institutions, and providers. I argue that the current state of the sociology of human-animal relationships is the reverse of where medical sociology was decades ago.

The bulk of what sociologists write about in ethnozoology is more akin to the sociology of medicine. Like the sociology of medi-

cine, sociological research in ethnozoology has been driven by our own research agenda rather than by the needs of animal advocates and non-scholars who work directly with or for animals. I would like to see more sociological interest in understanding and assessing activities such as pet visitation programs or the use of animals as therapeutic aids, just to name two topics that could benefit from the sociologist's perspective and training. Sociological research in these areas would be a most welcome corrective to the current modest literature on the human experience with companion animals produced by psychologists, educators, veterinarians, humane advocates and the laity that describes the benefits animals have for humans, the characteristics of owners and those who bond with these animals, and the effects they have on the emotional and daily lives of people. Unfortunately, many of these articles are biased toward demonstrating the positive influences of animals on people and are limited by poor research design. Although positive influences may be real, it is not clear how prolonged they are when they occur, exactly what triggers a positive outcome, who benefits and why, and what influences humans have on animals either positively or negatively. These problems are blatant in anecdotal accounts provided by advocates of nursing-home visitation programs with animals, to name one line of "research" as an illustration. Despite claims that residents' morale improves after visits from animals, the claims often seem too sweeping and vague. Do all or most residents have improved morale? How long does it last? Do any report a drop in morale? Do brief morale checklists measure anything of qualitative significance? Are animals ever traumatized by such visits? Interestingly, in one of the better-designed studies, improvement in morale was only demonstrated in staff members rather than in residents, a not unimportant finding.

Of course with all applied research, and ethnozoology is no exception, there are dangers and pitfalls to avoid, but these are manageable and do not outweigh the potential benefits to practitioners, advocates, and sociologists. Entire aspects of ethnozoology have been off limits, if not taboo topics, to some humane organizations. A more comprehensive and complex understanding of human-companion ani-

mal relationships requires attention to what Carl Jung labeled the shadow—our vices, jealousies, and vanities. By studying this relationship through its shadow rather than through some preconceived notion or romantic bias, it is easier to see the relationship as it is, as distinct from how some feel it ought to be. The unsavory nature of what Rowan (1992) calls the dark side of human-animal relationships has led groups like the Delta Society to ignore issues such as animal cruelty when choosing talks for its annual professional meeting and setting an editorial agenda for the research journal *Anthrozoos*, when it was linked to the Society. Nor is it just a matter of limiting our research agenda. When the humane community considers the dark side, researchers studying this issue must contend with a spirited party line or orthodoxy when sharing their findings. Take my own research on the so-called 'link' between animal cruelty and other kinds of crimes (Arluke, Levin, Luke, and Ascione, 1999). Although my work reports strong statistical associations between cruelty and crime, there is very little basis to argue, as do many humane advocates, that cruelty is a predictor of subsequent human violence. Yet as moral entrepreneurs, various animal welfare and rights groups selectively use my findings as evidence *for* the link, despite my disavowal, and label me the doubter or the academic wet towel for not getting on board the ideological train with everyone else. While no picnic, such struggles are to be expected and should not stop us from venturing into the applied realm.

Interestingly, this very ideological resistance suggests that sociologists could turn their sites on the humane community as a focus for research. Although there have been a few studies of participants in the animal rights movement, other features and issues in the larger social world of "animal people" have been neglected. Researchers have failed to study the humane community itself except in the most narrow and sometimes self serving and perhaps narcissistic ways–such as figuring out the steps in becoming a vegetarian or why animal rights activists are moral sleuths. Researchers have not asked hard questions such as what if any relationship exists between childhood abuse and future careers in the humane community? This question is suggested

by studies of abused children who, when followed into adulthood, either reproduce this violence by becoming abusers or negate it by entering helping professions or involving themselves in other altruistic activities. Indeed, humane organizations themselves offer promising possibilities to sociologists interested in studying moral entrepreneurship or interorganizational competition and conflict, to name just two directions. For years, there has been tension between organizations purporting to advance the welfare of animals versus those advocating their rights, and even within these groups, there are tensions over the control of ideological and economic resources. A good example of the latter that calls for sociological study is the relatively recent rise of the "no-kill" movement within the animal shelter world and the division it has created with traditional "kill" shelters over what is the most appropriate way to handle the animal overpopulation problem.

A final problem for sociologists is that the humane and animal communities have produced a stock of folk knowledge that gets passed off as "fact" when it often is not. The danger is that there is seepage of popular mythology or lore about humans and animals as givens into our sociological thinking rather than as topics to study and challenge. For example, the so-called "unconditional love" of dogs for their guardians is taken for granted when it should itself be studied. It is wrong to assume such an anthropomorphized sentiment, but it is interesting to ask why we hold onto this notion so strongly. There is some animal behavior research that suggests that what we take as unconditional love is part of a dog's pack mentality, and that we are confusing a dog's behavior toward its perceived alpha male for love. Moreover, when dogs acquire new owners, their apparent "love" is often as strong as it was with prior owners despite many owners' belief that their dogs had a unique attachment to them.

What Would It Look Like?

Sociologists can easily manage these problems. I mention them to sensitize colleagues to the animal and humane community's response to and influence over our research. Hoping to promote this line of research, despite these concerns, I offer two detailed illustrations of how

sociological research can help animal advocates, the humane community, and animals themselves. Although both examples lend themselves to ethnographic, symbolic-interactionist study, they also could be approached using other theories and methods.

Emerging Problems with Urban Human-Animal Relationships

Over the past decade, the nature and frequency of dog ownership has radically changed in inner-city communities across the country. The 1990's saw the emergence of a "dangerous dog" problem in poor, urban neighborhoods that were historically not thought about in these terms. Before this period, there were occasional reports of pit-bull owners, for instance, who were charged with violating vicious dog ordinances because they did not adequately control and monitor their animals, leading to severe if not fatal attacks on neighbors or strangers (Hearne, 1991). Most of these owners were described as "tough" or "threatening" working class whites or Latinos, and typically the violation was an animal-control problem where someone's pet went astray.

This profile changed, however, as pit bulls increasingly appeared as part of the urban subculture of gangs. These dogs became vital players in the work of gang members as opposed to what is conventionally thought of as a pet-like relationship where animals primarily serve as companions. This change has resulted in a shift in their social roles as animals, serving more instrumental rather than affective ends, and doing so as deviant animals rather than as normal members of the community, so to speak.

This new role is shifting and complex, but always criminal, at least in press accounts and popular thinking. First, these animals are used in dog fights, an activity that has long been illegal because it violates the anti-cruelty statutes of most states as well as laws against gambling. However, in the inner-city context, these dog fights are less important for sport or gambling, as they were traditionally, and more important for creating an environment where illegal drug sales can thrive. In this instance, the dogs are more secondary to the illegal activity of drug sales. Second, these dogs are weaponized in several respects. At minimum, they can simply serve as a new type of weapon

(and status symbol) on the streets–one that is clearly visible to others but that is not illegal to possess–because it is assumed they are not "pets" but "four-legged guns." They also can serve in a more primary criminal role regarding drug sales, either as guards or carriers. Some reports suggest they may even be debarked to make them more effective as watchdogs that would give no warning as they fatally struck intruders (Patronek, 2001). Other reports claim that drugs can be concealed in dog collars or be ingested and later retrieved.

Given this background, various humane organizations in America mounted a concerted effort in the 1990's to crack down on dog fighting as a type of animal cruelty. Despite expensive publicity efforts, their campaign proved to be ineffective because few municipal police departments were willing to send officers to investigate cases that might be more appropriately handled by animal control or humane law enforcement departments.

In at least one major metropolitan area, this changed after the local humane organization's law enforcement department created a collaborative relationship with the city's police force. Both departments discovered law enforcement opportunities in the same pit-bull cases. Although cruelty was the point of entry for humane officers, drug-related offenses were for regular police. At first, this collaboration was informal and serendipitous. Animal cops discovered that when investigating some cruelty cases involving pit bulls in inner-city settings they also saw evidence of illicit drugs on the premises, and would call regular police to alert them and get them involved. In one such case, the investigating animal cop found a pile of "suspicious dirt" next to ten pit-bull puppies in a cruelty case. Regular police were eager to also investigate the possible drug angle and were glad to have been called in after they discovered a substantial amount of crack cocaine on the premises. This collaboration was formalized when an interagency task force was created between these two departments that sought to reduce the use of vicious dogs as gang weapons or "mules." For the police, their interest initially was to confiscate deadly weapons possessed by suspected gang members. The humane organization's interest was to

take dogs away from owners who were thought to seriously endanger their animals' welfare.

To accomplish their overlapping aims, members of this task force carried out joint "sweeps" in suspected inner-city neighborhoods to spot "suspicious" dog owners and "disarm" them by taking their animals. Driving through certain high-risk urban neighborhoods allowed for opportunistic spotting of African Americans walking with pit bulls on sidewalks or sitting on stoops with their animals, the assumption being that these dogs were not mere pets but illegal and dangerous weapons. Task force members would ask if dogs were properly licensed and, if not, seize and take them to the local shelter. Of course, the apparent owner was told that a license could be applied for if proper forms were completed, including name, address, and phone number, all to be verified. However, task-force members believe that these individuals do not want to show their licenses if they have them or apply for new ones if they do not, in order to remain anonymous from authorities.

The work of this task force appears to have reduced the use of pit bulls as weapons or accomplices, claim officers. Because of task-force sweeps, an inner-city owner of a pit bull now knows that walking down the street with his animal will not be overlooked by authorities because it is "just a dog," and instead might result in charges of carrying a weapon or violating the cruelty law. They also now know that they will be expected to care for the animal, have it licensed, vaccinated and checked by veterinarians, making ownership more of a hindrance to them. Of course, "success" of such sweeps constitutes a drop in observed African American-pit bull interaction on the streets; there is no way to know whether exploitive use of these dogs has actually lessened in terms of their use in dog fights or as drug guards or couriers. Word of their apparent success has traveled within the police community; officers around the state and country are starting to view this task force as a "model program" to emulate in their own municipalities, since the "pit-bull problem" is increasingly recognized as a growing

and uncontrolled problem in urban, inner city neighborhoods throughout the nation.

Study of such a program offers a number of research prospects for sociologists. One that is glaring would be to explore whether and how task-force activities involve a novel form of racial (and breed) profiling. Extending the well-documented practice of using racial profiling to stop certain car drivers, racial profiling in the present case is used with pedestrian walkers who fit both the person and animal criminal profile. Because it is unique, recent, and unknown to the media, this form of racial profiling has escaped attention by both news reporters and academics. Such neglect is unfortunate because this instance of racial profiling presents a rare opportunity to explore the "natural history" and evolution of a single racial-profiling policy by a major metropolitan police department and humane law enforcement office.

Using the case of African-American pit bull owners, sociologists can explore how racial profiling by police develops into policy and practice, becomes normalized and justified by officers and other authorities such as court officials, and is exported to other municipalities. This question differs from prior studies of racial profiling that document its existence but do not help us understand the "underlife" (Freidson, 1976) of these policies–all the social and cultural forces that take place in the background of public policies that citizens never see, but that are necessary to produce policy in the first place, make it understandable to those who carry out policy, and translate abstract ideas into concrete actions on the job.

Emerging Problems in Veterinary Education

A number of social changes are affecting the training of veterinarians that impact both students in training as well as the animals they use. Veterinary educators have a poor understanding of these changes, why they are happening, and how they influence students and whether they are in the best interests of animals. Insights from sociologists might well point to ways to improve the quality of this training and protect the welfare of animals. One major change is the growing impact of the animal rights movement and its sensibilities on the perspectives of en-

tering veterinary students, along with the increasing feminization of the veterinary school student population. This new sensibility toward the meaning and importance of animals has led numbers of students to challenge traditional ways of teaching in veterinary schools, sometimes to the dismay of faculty and administrators. Two common practices are now being questioned at many schools, including the use of live animals taken from local shelters or purchased from dealers for practice in terminal surgery classes as well as the use of these dogs in gross anatomy. Many students appear to be apprehensive about the use of these animals in this manner while others are outraged because they feel that it is morally wrong and wasteful to kill healthy animals for their education and to use animals that had been pets for dissection.

As a sociologist it is easy to speculate about why these veterinary students feel uneasy when facing traditional anatomy and surgery classes. For one, many students probably view animals used in these classes as companion animals, and this definition in their eyes would trump educational definitions of these animals as tools imposed by faculty and administrators. Students may sense that the ability and adeptness of faculty to categorize teaching animals as objects is an intellectual game or institutional convenience that too easily robs the actual animal of its integrity, sensate nature, history of companionship, and spirit. It may be patently obvious to students that these dogs are more than objects, even if they do not have relationships and histories with the dogs used in their training. If so, students will see through the superficiality and contradiction of shifting between these human-created and self-serving statuses.

Having this alternative definition means that students feel their attitudes and behavior are out of sync, causing them to experience conflict between their desire to help animals seen as companions and the requirement to objectify and kill them as part of their education. In other words, at some level, they feel they are harming rather than helping animals, or at least acting inappropriately toward them.

Veterinary students also are likely to feel alienated from faculty, believing that veterinary schools send out the wrong message for how

animals should be regarded and treated. They no doubt see faculty supporting the "harmful" use of animals as "tools" and do not identify with them or understand how they can be expected to do this. They probably feel that veterinary administrators and some faculty "just don't get it," especially if they blame student resistance on their squeamishness or sentimentality. This leaves veterinary students, like medical students, feeling alone with their objections.

There may be additional sources of uneasiness. For instance, students may see larger contradictions in veterinary school policy and practice. On the one hand, schools may be seen as profiting from and promoting the human-animal bond in general, encouraging students to be empathic and sensitive to clients' animals and to value individual animals. On the other hand, students are then expected to easily jump from categorizing animals as beloved, client pets to a different category where they are not concerned about or empathic toward animals just because they are in the status of lab animal or teaching tool. Practices such as doing "heroics" on clients' dogs when they are terminal may seem particularly contradictory, if not unsavory, to students and make it very difficult to draw the line between clients' animals and teaching tools.

Veterinary students probably fall back on institutional coping devices to get through traditional classes in anatomy and surgery practice, just as do medical students (Arluke and Hafferty, 1996; Smith and Kleinman, 1989) and shelter workers (Arluke and Sanders 1996). Like some of their counterparts in medical school gross anatomy class (Hafferty, 1991), they may play the role of detached professionals but not become the role, as part of the culture of veterinary schools. They also may feel lingering moral stress, but not necessarily experience long-term moral damage from their experiences. Reports that veterinary students show a decline in moral reasoning and compassion over their four years of training may have the same significance as similar reports of medical student desensitization and objectification of patients (Becker et al., 1961). Three recent studies, in particular, are often cited in the "alternatives" literature to support the allegation that traditional anatomy labs and surgical practice "inure students to animal suffering"

(HSUS, 2001:4). One reported that students in two veterinary schools were less compassionate about animal hunger and pain, as well as fear and boredom, at the end of their training (Paul and Podberscek, 2000). A second study found that moral reasoning declined over the four years of veterinary education (Self, et al., 1991). And a third study argued that fourth year veterinary students appeared to be less likely to treat animal pain than were second or third-year students (Hellyer et al., 1999).

These findings are likely byproducts of student cynicism about their larger academic experience and a group's short-term, situational coping rather than evidence of lasting moral injury to individuals. If so, traditional practices in anatomy lab and surgical practice should not be singled out as the culprit behind declining moral sensitivity. Their elimination or modification might not even produce better results in pre/post surveys of moral reasoning and compassion. Of course, alternatives should be enacted if done in the name of protecting the welfare of animals or making veterinary training more consistent with the assumptions underlying companion animal practice.

All of this is speculation of course, and as such the true nature of uneasiness among veterinary students awaits future research. Sociologists interested in the study of professions and gender would find a gold mine of issues to explore, in addition to those I raise, in the current dilemmas of veterinary education. Equally important, this research would have implications for enhancing the quality of veterinary training and reducing the numbers and kinds of animals harmfully used in such programs.

Patently, other directions for future ethnozoological study can and should be raised in addition to those posed here. Asking and debating these sorts of questions will serve us well down the line as sociological interest in this nascent area matures and acceptance of the specialty grows.

Endnotes

1. I prefer the term ethnozoology to society and animals, or human-animal relationships because it avoids the ambiguity of the term animal. I do not object to the competing terms sociozoology or anthrozoology, although use of ethnozoology predates them and seems broader without the discipline limiting prefixes.

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