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BOOK REVIEWS

John Cianchi, *Radical Environmentalism: Nature, Identity and More-than-human Agency*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015; pp. 191: 978-1-137-473873-3.

The activists' trajectory as actors in the environmental movement has barely been explored in the study of social movements worldwide, including Australia, where the research for this book was done. So far, the exploration of the activists' lives is still restricted to institutional areas such as their recruitment and mobilization by the environmental movement organizations, and so the agency and social structures that shape individual choices of an activist receives less attention from the majority social movement scholars. Having kept these shortcomings in mind, this book draws upon ethnographic research on environmental activists in Tasmania's forests and offers an alternative insight to environmental movement scholars. The social constructionism approach places nature as an integral dimension in the form of an intimate bond between human and nature and manages to present the profound meaning of being a forest defender activist with the surrounding nature.

As reviewed in the first chapter of this book, 'Defending Nature', environmental activism, which is activism in favour of the conservation of nature and has taken position as an anti-government agency, has been appearing for a long time, since the 1970s, and is mostly based in the United States. These activists institutionalize themselves as an independent environmental organization with financial support from non-governmental sectors - First Earth and Greenpeace are the examples mentioned. The emergence of these organizations, as emphasized in this book, is provoked by the government's inability to

stop the environmental impact of massive industrialization. Along with the neoliberal economy in the global world, as argued in this book, the government would bind themselves into alliances with industries or the private sector, and this phenomenon would then further cripple the government's efforts in enforcing international regulations to reduce the impact of industrialization on its citizens. This phenomena was concerning, especially for activists who have been building networks and have an emotional bond with nature. When fear and anger occurs as a result of the commodification of nature, it causes them to turn to violence. These activists further reinforce their actions to strengthen their networks and change the direction of this repertoire, which becomes more radical. Environmental radicalism, as explored in this book, is a reaction by progressive environmental activists against the discourse of neoliberalism by committing acts of resistance at the location of occurrence of environmental damage. Activities include undertaking sit-ins, unfurling banners on ships transporting coal, picketing, and directly entering the areas of resistance. The risk of radical environmental movement is of course greater for activists, especially from the point of view of their safety. Yet, it is precisely at this point that the environment shows their significance in shaping their radical personality. During this time in the study of environmental science, people are always placed on top of a superior but undervalued nature. This chapter precisely emphasizes the opposite. This book highlights that the existence of nature can shape the repertoire for the activists in their acts of resistance. In other words, nature has been embodied in their mind, and consequently their everyday lives.

As an environmental researcher, I can assert that this book sheds incredibly novel ideas in light of the growing phenomenon of radical activism. Although it takes a long time to read it, I really enjoyed reading chapters 6 to 10 that encapsulate the core of the book. The fifth chapter involuntarily seized my attention and forced me to linger and read this book. The book dedicates those five chapters to reviewing privileged narratives of the activists. The narrative in the book is shown with a great deal of details to enable readers to get an overview of their activities. Moreover, as a researcher with a Sociology background, I am captivated with these narratives. When reading, it felt as if it took me to a dialogue with the activists involved in this study. Chapter six unpacks details about the radicalization journey into a direct-action campaign. In this chapter, one of the most intriguing things is the social network they built with other activists over the years which had become their gravity that 'invites' them to take radical action. But more than that, these activists become heavily radical because they have a strong ecological identity in relations to the species they advocate. This identity is shaped and maintained in their

daily lives. For example, an anti-whale activist unpacks details of his experience as a vegetarian, which leads him to having moral ethics over the species of animals. By being a vegetarian, he positioned himself equal to the animals. He would never stop advocating and campaigning until whale hunting is banned. The forest defender activists also indicate similar lifestyle with forest defenders, the difference being spending their lives in the forests, which acted as the mother of earth for them. Interestingly, these activists have never been involved in direct action of the previous campaigns and their interest in radical activism is precisely constructed and ramificated by other individuals who share the same lifestyle. In other words, this chapter has referred to the 'submerged network' which brings together the cross-gender activists to join in the environmental movement based on shared interests and lifestyle.

In this book, the author eloquently reveals genuine experiences and the subjectivity of activists. This continuity makes me enjoy its storyline as a reader, which is framed with ideas and theories on human nature. The author does it well without leaving out the uniqueness of the characteristics of each of the activists. In this book, the trajectory of activists' identity formation is deeply discussed. This book opens the reader's eyes about the activists who share a transcendental relationship with nature. Eco-centric logic outlining that nature has more power over human is plainly pointed out with easily comprehensible terminology in this book. The activists' recognition of the formidable power of nature was a result of their reflective consciousness when partaking in an act of direct resistance.

A deep connection with nature, recognized by the activists, was built through experiences of resistance in support of nature from time to time. Their sensitivity to the animals became stronger due to its interaction with these species. In this chapter, the author elaborates an interesting experience of a wilderness scientist. Said scientist reveals that intensive interactions with lizards have gradually embodied a radical ethic in him. Moreover, phenomenological relations also create consistency within him and allow him to conduct further research on related species. Despite the fact that their educational backgrounds and experiences are diverse, these activists' subjectivities presented a common understanding related to the formation of their social personality, which, through this book, can be established through a dialectical process between structure and agency. This means that social identity is not only formed within 'self', but also by nature as the primary domain in a human social milieu. In other words, the discussion in this book can fill the theoretical gaps of environmental psychology, which confirms that the

formation of individual identity depends on internal motivation alone. The process of forming an identity as a radical environmental activist is also strengthened by connective communication between humans and nature. Radical activists in other countries, whom I had only ever encountered during fieldwork in 2014, looked as though they would be ready for acts of resistance at a moment's notice. Instead, this book is actually able to open up my eyes into the emotional side of the activists. Their outcry emerges when they are faced with the tragic events on the field. The author details this emotional side with an anti-whale activist who found enormous dead whales loaded onto a carrier.

In terms of the nature-human nexus and its understanding, this book is highly recommended to (environmental) academics who are undertaking studies on this issue of concern, particularly for social research. This book can become a pivotal reference in applying a transcendental phenomenology. At the end, this book has contributed to a fresh discourse of the debate related to the process of identity formation of environmental activists.

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