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NARRATIVES OF PROTEST

TELEVISION'S REPRESENTATION OF AN ANIMAL LIBERATION CAMPAIGN

A recent study by Rissel & Douglas (1993) of environmental issues in Australian television soap operas concluded that only 1.1% of scenes included environmental attitudes or actions that were central to the plot. Almost half of these were animal welfare/liberation stories which, the authors noted, are highly emotive issues that provide good drama and conflict. Similarly, a casual glance at television's news coverage of environmental and animal rights issues, excluding nature programs, reveals that only ecological disasters or calamitous threats to wildlife attract serious media attention. Likewise, only high-profile activists such as those in Greenpeace achieve the level of publicity needed to keep environmental issues in the public eye. Greenpeace's protests against French nuclear tests at Mururoa and its direct action against Shell in the North Sea – featured by ABC TV's *Four Corners* ('The Brent Spar') in 1995 – are recent examples of what the mass media designate as newsworthy environmental stories. More mundane events rarely attract the media's attention, either as themes in prime time television soap operas (Rissel & Douglas 1993) or in news bulletins.

One event that goes against this trend is what the electronic media have dubbed the Duck Wars, an annual and heated conflagration, as newsmakers see it, between duck shooters and duck rescuers from the Coalition Against Duck Shooting (CADS), an animal liberation group opposed to sport hunting. Television's coverage of the duck-shooting season in Victoria provides an interesting example of how the emotive issue of cruelty to animals can be framed in television news and feature stories in ways which provide a platform for – and at the same time distort – the protests of CADS, which makes strategic use of the media to promote its animal welfare and environmental concerns.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the effects, emotional and otherwise, of the coverage on the actual viewing audience. As Gamson notes, media discourse is 'a meaning system in its own right, independent of any claims that one might make about the causal effect on public opinion' (1992, 27). The focus of the paper is therefore on the media's framing of the Duck Wars, primarily the news commentaries and accompanying visual images of the duck-shooting season. Of particular relevance here is Patterson and McClure's observation that 'television is the medium that appeals to emotions and attracts the viewers' attention' (in Neuman et al 1992, 10). Following Eldridge (1993), the reports on the Duck Wars – news commentaries and the accompanying images – are analysed in order to explicate an emergent narrative during three distinct phases of the coverage. This paper contends that the representation of the Coalition's protest in the third and final phase of the narrative contains the dramatic, emotive moment which is crucial to the success of the campaign against duck shooting.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Gamson et al (1992) have suggested that it is the production of images – verbal and visual – not facts or information which is at the heart of the media's social construction of reality. Following Goffman (1974) and later Snow & Benford (1988) and Snow et al (1986), they argue that a frame functions as a storyline or unfolding narrative about an issue. In the case of the duck-shooting issue, the narrative, as it develops, seems to have a temporal quality so that the story unfolds like moments in a 'tale' culminating in the 'war on the wetlands' between the hunters and protesters. The protagonists are engaged in a contest of

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respectability, a struggle over the definition and construction of reality as well as a symbolic contest in the attribution of deviant identities.

This paper uses a form of content analysis to examine these issues by drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It is acknowledged that the former will often achieve no more than quantifying what can be reliably measured. Or as Ericson et al (1991, 51) note in their review of the limitations of quantitative-content analysis: 'What counts analytically is what can be counted'. Nonetheless, there is much in the coverage of the Duck Wars that can be counted and that provides a useful profile of the way the 'frames' overemphasised certain features of the protest and not necessarily those which the Coalition would wish to highlight.

Therefore the dual approach of qualitative/quantitative analysis was chosen in order to offer a comprehensive analysis of the media frames used in the Duck Wars coverage. It was decided that the visual images were more susceptible to an interpretive 'reading' whereas the news commentaries delivered by the reporters could be analysed by a more quantitative approach.

Approximately 90 minutes of television coverage of the 1993 and 1994 duck-shooting seasons provided the data for the analysis. Verbal commentaries were fully transcribed and the accompanying visuals were noted in detail by the author. The video material represents a complete record of television news stories of the Coalition's last two consecutive campaigns and was collated by the media monitoring service Rehome Australia for its client, CADS.

Table 1 shows that with the exception of four feature stories, most of the coverage was in the form of news stories broadcast mainly, but not exclusively, by the commercial networks.

TABLE 1: TELEVISION NETWORK COVERAGE OF THE DUCK WARS, 1993 AND 1994

Network	No. of News Stories 1993	No. of Features 1994
Commercial	37	2
ABC Regional	3	
ABC National	5	2
SBS	2	
Total (51)	47	4

The news bulletins collected averaged 100 seconds in duration, just above the 90 seconds which, according to Ward (1995, 150) is the norm for television news stories. Commercial networks (39 bulletins and features) greatly exceeded the coverage by the ABC (10 bulletins) and the SBS (2 bulletins) during 1993-94. For a two week period in March when the duck season opened, television coverage was intense and the audience was saturated with the gradual unfolding of the annual protest against duck shooting. Coverage during the early weeks of March can be broken down to pre-season (21 stories), the opening weekend (17 stories) and the aftermath of the season following the opening weekend (13 stories). About one-third of all stories featured prominently in the bulletins as either lead or second/third order items. In all, about 90 pages of transcripts consisting of verbal/visual statements and images were analysed

One way to judge the 'shape' of the coverage was to estimate how much each side in the 'war' was allowed to speak as well as how much the media itself had to say. All interviewed and reported source comments were transcribed in order to estimate how much 'space' the warring factions were permitted to occupy in news territory. This is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: AIRTIME ALLOCATED TO SPEAKERS IN THE NEWS BULLETINS AND FEATURE STORIES OF THE 1993 AND 1994 DUCK WARS COVERAGE CALCULATED IN LINES OF TRANSCRIPT

	No. of Lines	% of Spoken Lines
Media	1906	71
Rescuers	482	18
Shooters & Supporters	208	8
Police & Government Ministers	88	3
Total	2684	100

While Table 2 shows that the rescuers are afforded more than double the airtime given to the shooters and their supporters, media personnel are responsible for just over 70% of the verbal presentation in the Duck Wars. Cottle (1993) identified three different standardised news formats - restricted, limited and expanded - which, in ascending

order, either inhibit or enhance the free expression of contending environmental points of view. For both duck hunters and rescuers the opportunities are in the main restricted, although the expanded format was made available to the Coalition in 'soft' feature programs outside the regular evening news bulletins. On the basis of the figures in Table 2 it is important to know how the television news discourse works to frame the Duck Wars and how that it solicits individuals from 'outside' to explain it.

FRAMING THE DUCK WARS

Gamson et al's (1992) survey of the literature on the production of media images indicates a political economy of image production in which, along with advertising and ownership, journalistic practices are central. To account for these practices several studies (Epstein 1973; Segal 1973; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979) have emphasised the relations between journalists and their official sources. Segal (1973) for instance observed that journalists are exploited by their sources who use the news to propagandise their issues, a process which Lemert (1984) called 'mobilising information'. This feature of journalism has direct relevance for understanding the Duck Wars. The Coalition's campaign literature lists three main reasons for its anti-duck-shooting protest: first, it causes cruelty and suffering to waterbirds; second, it results in rare and protected birds being illegally shot; and third, lead pollution damages the environment (Levy 1989, 6). Social justice is the connecting thread to these moral, legal and environmental concerns and, according to Finsen & Finsen (1994, 281), is the basis for the worldwide animal rights movement.

As a former cameraman, the Coalition's director Laurie Levy has become adept at using the electronic media to promote the animal liberationist cause. He believes that television journalists have largely incorporated the Coalition's anti-duck-hunting message in their reports and pictures. Up to a point this is true, but as will be shown, it is the visual imagery only at the end of the coverage which ultimately makes television's representation of the Duck Wars a narrative of protest favourable to the Coalition since much of the Coalition's liberationist/environmentalist philosophy is simply ignored in the quest for dramatic images.

Eldridge (1993, 4) suggests that television is a massive feat of social construction and needs to be examined in terms of 'the way information is organised and the implicit and explicit explanations that are put before us'. An analysis of the Duck Wars coverage reveals an explanatory structure organised around a periodisation of the duck-shooting season into three distinct frames which weave together to create a news narrative: the dramatic build-up of the pre-season in which conflict is the predominant frame; a law and order frame characterises the opening weekend in which the police preserve the peace between shooters and protesters; and in the post-opening coverage, the drama of human conflict continues as a secondary theme but is largely replaced by the frame of an 'atrocious story' which for the first time puts the non-human animals, the targets of both the shooters and rescuers, at centre stage.

PRE-SEASON NARRATIVE: DISORDER THREATENS

It has already been noted that the duck rescuers are given more opportunities than the shooters to get their message across in the news stories and features that make up the 1993 and 1994 coverage of the Duck Wars. From the onset, however, the designations used to describe the protagonists suggest a particular way of labelling which sets up the terms of 'difference' and deviance.

TABLE 3: DESIGNATIONS USED FOR THE COALITION AGAINST DUCK SHOOTING

	1993 Coverage	1994 Coverage	Total No. of Times	% Used
Protesters	67	46	113	49
Animal Liberationists	34	3	37	16
Conservationists	2	27	29	13
Coalition	13	12	25	11
Rescuers	15	7	22	9
Greenies	1	2	3	1
Environmentalists	0	2	2	1
Total	132	99	231	100

As shown in Table 3, the term 'protester' is used in almost half of the instances where CADS is referred to in news talk compared to only 9% when the Coalition's preferred designation 'rescuer' is used. This is a form of deviance designation which helps situate television news's representation of the Duck Wars as a 'disorder story'. Szasz (1994, 41) points out that studies of television news reveal the medium's stylistic preference for accessible stories with plenty of action and colour where abstract social issues are personalised, typically by reducing the issue to the level of an individual agitator. Environmentalists and peace activists have become the quintessential icons for modern-day protest and as such, are part of the highly repetitive, stereotyped imagery of television news. Szasz (1994, 63) describes the outcome as follows:

Addicted to the consumption of superficial imagery, deaf to complexity and subtlety, the news consumer watches, hears, or reads news stories in a way that preserves, even enhances their iconic quality: the strong visual and emotional components dominate; attitude formation takes place without much need for detail in the cognitive component.

Thus, the Duck Wars begins as a narrative of protest which threatens public order with little recognition given to the legitimate concerns of the rescuers who are summarily labelled in the news as deviant protesters. Waddington (1992, 177) points out in his discussion of media representations of public disorder that 'the media as a whole are predisposed to adopt a style of coverage which will pay scant regard to analysis of the causes of protest and the grievances of protesters'. Thus, an adversarial frame characterises the media's representation of duck shooting as a conflict of interest between the main protagonists – shooters versus protesters – while the thin blue line of the forces of law and order separates the two potentially dangerous groups. In the pre-season bulletins the metaphor of 'war on the wetlands' is used to evoke a sense of impending danger before the opening weekend. These early news stories explicitly warn of 'confrontation', 'annual

conflict', 'injury', 'the possibility of casualties' and that 'lives could be at risk', that 'tensions ... are likely to run high', and 'the possibility that it could all go horribly wrong'. The presence of uniformed police is the only guarantee against these potential threats to public order.

The networks' demand for drama and concision means that there is little attempt by the media to explain what motivates the warring parties. Except for two important instances, the presentation of the Duck Wars is both ahistorical and decontextualised. An early morning news bulletin by ABC TV's *First Edition* (18 March 1994) ran for 3 minutes 15 seconds and was the first story to frame the Duck Wars as something other than a law and order issue. Two infotainment programs on the Ten and Nine Networks respectively also followed an expanded format: *Good Morning Australia* (22 March 1993) ran a seven minute feature and the *Today* show (21 March 1994) included a four minute segment which favourably publicised the Coalition's campaign. *Live and Sweaty* (ABC TV, 18 March 1994), a popular sport/comedy show, also managed to override the law and order frame in order to focus, albeit in a jocular vein, on the Coalition's concerns about social justice, the rights of nature, vegetarianism and the impediments to changing the way wildlife is hunted as 'game' by duck shooters. Thus, it is only possible it seems, for television to explore the underlying causes of the Coalition's protest or to provide these activists with more expansive discursive opportunities in the leisurely early morning news editions or 'soft' feature programs. In no regular news bulletin is there anything which approximates this kind of 'in-depth' discussion. Instead, the protest is simplistically framed as a human interest story with the focus on conflict.

THE OPENING WEEKEND COVERAGE: LAW AND ORDER PREVAILS

The second narrative moment comes with the depiction of the opening of the duck season when the law and order frame is increasingly emphasised as the following excerpt shows.

Lyle Munro

Announcer: Police crack down on animal liberationists trying to stop duck shooters in Victoria's wetlands today. They confiscated kayaks and late this afternoon began issuing fines under new State regulations designed to keep protesters away from hunters.

Reporter: By sunrise, Lake Buloke was again wide awake with the sound of hunters. But yesterday's onslaught had killed or scared off many birds. Today there were only a few successful hunters. The protesters were also back again in another attempt to defy the State Government's new regulations restricting them to the shore. (Sound effects include Laurie Levy: 'OK, the police are coming; quick, get the kayaks! Hurry up!') But the police didn't intervene at first; they watched from a distance, taking names and addresses as the Animal Liberation protesters came ashore.

Police Officer: What's your name?

Protester: Sorry, my name?

Reporter: But shortly after, police changed tactics; they confiscated kayaks and warned rescuers they could be fined. It was what the hunters had been waiting for.

Shooter: I think today the police can give him a credit.

Graphic shows a silhouetted shooter taking aim at a yellow sky where several birds are in full flight

A silhouetted hunter is filmed against a beautiful sunrise. A huge sun is clearly visible as shots ring out across the lake. A lone shooter searches the sky as his dog stands by. Two rescuers take their row boat to the water's edge.

Levy is shown briefly as he runs towards the water. The police are filmed looking on. One officer takes details from a male rescuer. There is a close-up of the police note book.

Another officer challenges a bearded rescuer who is wearing a T-shirt with the words 'Protect (indistinct) Duck Rescuer'. The reporter appears on camera with police and rescuers in the background. A police officer hauls a kayak from the water.

Speaking in broken English, an elderly hunter, with his rifle on his shoulder, praises the police.

Source: Munro (1995) 'Duck Opening', ABC TV News, 21 March 1993.

The stories that describe the opening weekend continue the law and order frame until it becomes clear that the predicted dangers to life and limb are unfounded. This is interpreted by the media as the 'system works' frame which is then used to reinforce the continuity of the pre-season's adversarial narrative. While there is a potential for violence, these stories repeatedly suggest that the police presence ensures that death and injury are inflicted only on the non-human protagonists in the Duck Wars. And when the predicted confrontation does not eventuate, news stories insert another narrative 'turn'— an unspoken pact which governs the behaviour of both shooters and protesters — a 'war' with 'rules'. This is summed up by the presenter of one of the lead stories:

And despite the tension, there were very few confrontations. They may be sworn enemies, but when the hunters and rescuers meet on the water, there is, believe it or not, a code of conduct; these rules of engagement ensure it's only the ducks that are shot at (Munro 1995, story 13, ATN 7).

Thus, when the predictions of violence do not eventuate, its non-occurrence becomes the news story. Despite the menace of guns in an atmosphere where 'tensions ... are likely to run high', commonsense prevails and a jittery viewing audience can have faith in a system which protects human beings against themselves. However, the fact that 'the system works' is framed in law and order terms means that the rules of engagement must be supervised and, if necessary, enforced. As the police officer in charge explained during an interview:

We don't want any confrontation between hunters and conservationists ... Human safety is what we're looking at here and that's what we'll be concentrating on (Munro 1995, story 3, HSV 7, and Munro, story 1, ATV 10).

Although the police are responsible for only 2% of the spoken material in the entire coverage, they are featured in virtually all of the visual sequences. The images of the police are often fleeting but their presence is nonetheless ubiquitous and helps to underline the 'system works' frame.

As noted earlier, Coalition members are typically described as protesters rather than as duck rescuers. The visual images also emphasise the deviance of duck rescue in contrast to the implied normalcy of duck hunting. This is particularly apparent in the sequences involving the police. With the exception of a single sequence (GTV 9 News, 20 March 1994) – where a hunter is arrested for firing at rescuers – it is always as protesters in conflict with authority that the duck rescuers are featured in the visual pictures. The news commentaries on the other hand do occasionally report that hunters also offend by breaching duck-season regulations. For example, GTV 9 reported that eight hunters were fined for shooting before the opening officially started and that another non-licensed hunter allegedly shot a protected bird. But compared to the reports of infringements by rescuers, these numbers have much less textual significance.

THE NARRATIVE CLOSES: SPECTACLES OF SLAUGHTER

According to Lewis (1991, 140), media people believe that television stories are seen rather than heard by audiences, a belief which Coalition members actively exploit for the purpose of publicising their own cause, for they claim that it is the images from the Duck Wars that are decisive in turning public opinion against duck shooting:

The visual pictures of what we do are stronger than reading it in black and white or hearing about it on the radio; nothing could compare to those [television] pictures, particularly . wounded birds being rehabilitated Things like that, it touches most people (Interview with a Coalition activist, 1994).

These pictures are therefore central to the Coalition's campaign and are used to publicly shame hunters and their supporters. More than at any stage in the media's representation of Duck Wars, the Coalition's shaming rituals which follow the opening weekend highlight the duck rescuers' denunciation of duck shooting as morally, legally and environmentally reprehensible. While the adversarial and law and order frames continue in stories about fines and threats of legal action from both sides, the frame for the first time incorporates the Coalition's grievances as animal liberationists. In the final news stories in the narrative, the dominant imagery is of the 'slaughter' and 'carnage' inflicted on wildlife in the aftermath of 'the war on the wetlands'. The slaughter of innocents is however prefigured in the pre-season coverage, as the Coalition's director explains: 'We go into a war zone to help innocent victims' (Laurie Levy, ABC TV National News, 18 March 1994, Munro 1995).

The Coalition's duck-rescue operation is nonetheless overshadowed by the hunting images used in the graphics which introduce the bulletins. Of the 21 stories in 1993 that used illustrative graphics, all but two (stories 5 and 20), used a hunting image, typically, a lone hunter aiming his shotgun at birds in flight. In the nineteen bulletins that used graphics in the 1994 coverage, only one (ABC News, 19 March 1994), represented the Duck Wars using the Coalition's duck-rescue frame. This is a single still of Levy rescuing an injured waterbird. But even here, the message is ambiguous. Using the caption 'Duck Anger', the story goes on to describe the accidental death of a hunter and refers to the violence associated with the confrontations between hunters and rescuers as well as accusations of police brutality towards the rescuer. Thus, in the one graphic featuring Levy as the symbol of the Coalition's rescue operation, there is an implicit association of protest with death and violence.

All of this changes in the post-opening coverage. In the final days of the coverage, atrocity stories are featured in which images of slaughtered birds are used as 'moral shocks' in an appeal to the viewing public's moral intuitions (Jasper 1990, 25). In one story, Levy orchestrates the Coalition's ritualistic display of dead protected birds as follows:

Lyle Munro

Reporter: In the wake of last weekend's shootout, 115 birds including swans and rare freckled ducks were dumped outside the Premier's office. They were collected mainly from Lake Buloke just outside Donald in central Victoria where a surprisingly small number of hunters, perhaps no more than 2000, battled it out against an increasing number of protestors.

Levy holds a dead bird to the camera while other protesters display dead birds outside the Premier's office. In the background are members of the public and camera crews filming the scene.

Shot of dozens of birds on the footpath; some are held up to the camera by different protesters. The dead ducks are lined up in neat rows in the fashion of the war dead. A large stain of dried blood is clearly visible on the footpath.

Source: Munro (1995), 'Fine Fight', ATV 10 TV News, 21 March 1994.

The opportunity to discuss the meaning of these images is not taken up in the news but is left to a later program. During the *Today* show (GTV 9, 21 March 1994) Levy and another activist are interviewed at length by a sympathetic reporter in a four minute feature segment. Unlike regular news bulletins, the format of this program gives the Coalition an opportunity to highlight the cruelty of the duck season and perhaps importantly to explain the rescuers' motives. In the following excerpt Levy describes the Coalition's position:

We brought out a record number of wounded birds; birds that had been shot through the eye, through the back of the head, through the wings. And here's a young signet and it's been shot through the neck and this is a magnificent, beautiful, young bird. You know, duck shooting, the brutality that we see out there every year is just unacceptable. Duck shooting is not sport, it's cowardly, it's violent and it's anti-social, and that's why duck hunter numbers are dropping so dramatically (Munro 1995, story 18).

Levy and a female rescuer are shown holding dead or injured birds as they speak. The Coalition believes that images of the 'innocent victims' of the Duck Wars elicit powerful emotional responses from the viewing public, especially the sight of the 'casualties of war' being laid to rest:

Levy is shown in a kneeling position preparing to lay out a large swan. The camera shows protesters laying out the birds as members of the public look on. There are close-ups of the ducks as Levy displays one for the camera and delivers his message:

Duck hunting is a dying activity and duck hunters themselves have become an endangered species (Munro 1995, story 20).

EMOTION MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDIA

The display of dead birds in close-up is one of the powerful moments in the coverage which the Coalition believes is responsible for mobilising support against duck shooting. Close-ups of live signets, freckled ducks and the occasional pelican or swan bear no resemblance to the unrecognisable species amongst the dead birds put on public display after each opening of the duck-shooting season. It is also a moment favoured by television news as well since it is full of drama, portent, and an issue made 'real' by the images of 'innocent victims'. Here, the aims of the Coalition and of television news seem fortuitously to coincide. The shaming rituals and body counts of the casualties of the Duck Wars are intended to function as spectacles of slaughter, as potent symbols of the Coalition's anti-hunting campaign. Activists believe that these images, along with the sequences of duck rescue, serve as prods to action in mobilising public support to their cause. Levy claims that the image of compassion (duck rescue) in contrast to the image of violence (duck shooting) resonates with a public that has increasingly come to see the killing of wildlife as morally reprehensible. For Levy, these fleeting images of animal rescue and rehabilitation provide a dramatic, emotional message when juxtaposed against the sights and sounds of hunters shooting and retrieving their quarry. The Coalition believes that these contrasting images rather than the words of the actors in the Duck Wars, ensure their ultimate victory in their media-driven campaign against duck shooting. There is some supporting evidence in the literature on environmental activism that television news stories about nature can affect not just the cognitive process of the viewer 'but can also frequently be found to

work at a deeper cultural level in which widespread, if rarely articulated, structures of feeling towards nature and the environment are mobilised' (Cottle 1993, 131).

As an ex-media insider, Levy understands how the television news works as well as how to exploit the camera to the best advantage. Kielbowicz & Scherer (1986) argue that a social movement will be more successful if its 'entrepreneurs' are knowledgeable about the media routines and values. All social movement organisations and interest groups seek to use the mass media for gaining public support (Ryan 1991). Klandermans (1992, 88) argues that social movement organisations profoundly affect media discourse by framing issues, defining grievances and staging collective actions that will attract media attention.

Interviews (1994/1995) with animal liberationists in CADS reveal that they believe this is how this relationship with the media works. That is, the Coalition's framing work is reproduced more or less faithfully by the television networks.

MOBILISING EMOTIONS

According to Snow & Benford (1988), the process of framing involves three tasks for a social movement: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. Diagnostic framing identifies some condition or event as problematic. In the Coalition's case, the diagnosis of duck shooting as wrong is based on three injustices – moral (cruelty), legal (shooting of protected species) and environmental (lead pollution). The prognostic task is closely linked to the diagnosis as it attempts to specify what is to be done about the problem. For the activists in CADS this means identifying strategies and tactics which will result in the banning of duck shooting. Thus in their diagnostic and prognostic framing work, the Coalition has to make a successful claim that duck shooting is wrong and then do something about it. In these tasks the media, especially television, is crucially important to the Coalition's campaign, so much so that CADS is a client of a media monitoring service which provides the activists with summary reports and video recordings of radio and television coverage of issues related to their campaign. Activists study these reports, particularly television footage, with a view to improving their campaign tactics.

In Snow & Benford's model, the third task – motivational framing – is how the

movement organisation can mobilise people to take action on behalf of its cause. Motivational framing is an 'elaboration of a call to arms or *rationale for action* that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis' (Snow & Benford 1988, 202). For CADS, the mobilising strategy is to construct their campaign as a duck-rescue operation rather than simply as an anti-duck-shooting protest. The notion of 'rescue' resonates well in a culture which values kindness to animals and where the connotations of saving the lives of animals and humans in the tradition of Noah's Ark and the Red Cross can strike a responsive chord. As a public relations exercise the idea of duck rescue may have an appeal which conventional protest lacks. Furthermore, the idea of 'duck liberation' is sufficiently novel to attract media attention, although there are dangers in the Coalition's dependence on the media for promoting its anti-hunting message.

Indeed, several writers, most notably Herman & Chomsky (1988) warn that the mass media are nothing more than propaganda machines which 'manufacture consent' on behalf of ruling elites. Tarrow (1994, 230) is similarly pessimistic when he asserts that social movements possess little cultural power when pitted against 'the inherent power of the media to shape perceptions'. A more optimistic argument is put by Gamson (1992, 71) who recognises the central importance of media discourse in framing issues for the public but explains that media practices can both help and hurt a social movement's efforts to communicate its issues to a wider public. Rootes (1984, 6) succinctly explains the dilemma for activists:

A movement may seek to exploit the media's insatiable appetite for novelty and spectacle, but no movement without a very broad social base and very considerable resources of power can hope to dictate the terms of the transaction or its outcome

As the Coalition's strategic manager, Laurie Levy, is in no doubt about the power of the electronic media to either promote or trivialise a campaign such as the Coalition's. Nor does he doubt the emotional appeal of television's dominant images of its protest against duck shooting:

Two pictures come out every season – a hunter dressed as a soldier carrying a semi-automatic and shooting at a defenceless bird. Or there is the single image of a rescuer coming out with a wounded bird

The second, of concern and compassion will always beat an image of violence (La Trobe University Newspaper, March 1994).

Levy believes that the success of the Coalition's protest depends on how much emotional energy it generates because 'there's a lot of emotion tied up with the electronic media. Television is the most powerful of them all, mainly because of the visual impact and the emotional side of it' (Interview 4, Munro 18 October 1994).

Jasper & Poulsen (1995) seem to support Levy's position. They argue that 'moral shocks', more than any other factor, are responsible for the recruitment of strangers to the animal movement because animals have extraordinary potential as condensing symbols. By this they mean 'verbal and visual images that neatly capture - both cognitively and emotionally - a range of meanings and convey a frame, a master frame, or theme' (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 498). Images of 'the suffering of innocents' are immensely influential in prodding people into action. The Coalition's annual display of dead and injured birds in the aftermath of the opening of the duck-shooting season, Levy might argue, provides just such a prod.

The Coalition is aware that the public, including newspaper journalists and editors, are influenced by the images they see on television. In several interviews and press releases in 1993 and 1994 Levy referred to what he considers a turning point in the Duck Wars, an editorial in one of Melbourne's major daily newspapers - the *Age* (24 March 1993) - in which duck shooting is described as an obscenity that should be outlawed. He explains the significance of editorial opinion:

Governments read editorials and it's part of that impact you're having on governments. I don't believe in going in, making a meeting with a Minister and just saying, 'This shouldn't be happening Minister!' because all you get is a pat on the head. The only way you influence government in this country is by having the public on your side to start with. And of course, it's only with those sort of editorials that governments really start to take action (Interview 4, Munro 18 October 1994).

CONCLUSION

Coalition activists believe that they are winning the Duck Wars. The reason they give for this is the dramatic decline over the

past decade in the number of duck shooters - 95 000 in 1986 down to 21 000 in 1994 - rather than to any increase in their own membership. They do, however, believe that their support base has widened considerably as a result of the campaign's media exposure.

Gamson et al (1992, 385) succinctly articulate how social movement organisations like CADS interpret media coverage of their issues:

Participants in symbolic contests read their success or failure by how well their preferred meanings and interpretation are doing in various media arenas. Prominence in these arenas is taken as an outcome measure in its own right, independent of evidence on the degree to which the messages are being read by the public.

For the Coalition Against Duck Shooting, television images of their rescue operation, particularly the ritualistic display of dead and injured birds, are their most potent weapon in the campaign against duck hunting. More than in any part of television's representation of the Duck Wars, the aftermath of the opening to the duck season is a moment in which the aims of television news and the Coalition's objectives seem remarkably to coincide.

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