



Jane Doe

English 1123: Composition II, section 100

Assignment: Selecting a Subculture

H&P Animal Alliance

This study is an ethnography that examines the subculture of the *H&P Animal Alliance* workers in Magnolia, Arkansas. Although I have never set foot into an animal shelter before, I assume that they must be unsanitary places given the state of the animals that dwell there. The few ads I have watched on television paint a picture of skinny and sick animals that are either mistreated or abandoned by their owners, and these ads have fueled my initial assumptions that animal shelters must be depressing and sad places. Bearing such assumptions, I wonder what could possibly motivate someone to work at an animal shelter, what sort of training it takes to work there, what are the values held by the workers, what tools they used on a daily basis, how does a day at an animal shelter feel like, and how have animal shelters changed over time or how they are changing now.

To develop an insider perspective of life at *H&P Animal Alliance*, this study will deploy the following research methods: **library research** to explore the existing literature about animal shelters; **observation** to uncover the spoken and unspoken rules that underlie *Magnolia H&P Animal Alliance*; **interviews** to gain an insider perspective and debunk the myths and stereotypes about the subculture; and **artifact analysis** to uncover the loaded meaning, uses, and history of the objects and tools used at *H&P Animal Alliance* and better understand their users and the culture in which they exist. I chose these specific research methods because they are qualitative methods, involve a smaller number of participants, use open-ended questions, and will thus enable me to gain a deeper insight into the subculture of *H&P Animal Alliance* in Magnolia.

I am confident that I am not the only one to nurture such assumptions or have such questions (ref. paragraph 1) about animal shelters. As such, this ethnographic research will provide me with the right perspective about animal shelters, which I will in turn share with all those who would not be so familiar with them. Developing an insider perspective into this subculture will help society understand how these structures are funded and know their exact role within communities, the motivation and the drive of their employees and the people who visit them with the hope of giving a second chance and second and home to these fellow inhabitants of the earth.