



Outbreaks The Sociology of Collective Behavior

Jerry D. Rose

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From the Salem witch hunts and the storming of the Bastille, to the Holocaust, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the People's Temple mass suicide, extraordinary episodes of collective behavior fill our history books. In "Outbreaks", Jerry D. Rose examines the social conditions that generate panic, nonviolent and violent protest, religious revivals, programs, and the like-- and analyzes their connection to ordinary human behavior.

Rose begins with an overview of traditional theories and approaches that have been applied to collective behavior and the introduces his own framework. Four chapters are devoted to the different categories of collective behavior:

Disasters- when social systems are unable to sustain the resources required for their own continuation

Protest- when unusual or extralegal tactics are used to achieve a political goal

Persecution- when persons or behaviors viewed as threats to the social order are sought out and suppressed

Renewal- when people work to change what they see as a growth in moral indifference and corruption

Each chapter examines the background causes of the episodes; participation (who starts or joins); process (how the episode develops and how the spectators, participants, and authorities interact); and the consequences (the success or failure of the action and its "side effects" and by-products). The final chapter revisits the realm of the general theory of collective behavior, seeking new, coherent, empirically valid insights into the role of the episodic dimension in human behavior

Rose brings the subject alive with numerous examples of collective behavior, from the panic created by Orson Welles's 1938 "Martian invasion" broadcast to the eruption of Mount St. Helens, the Italian earthquake, the Miami riots, the Attica prison uprising, the purges in revolutionary Iran, and the growth of religious cults.

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