

ecologue

Summer 1999

COCE Impends!

The Fifth Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment (COCE) is only days away! The conference will be held from July 24 to July 27, 1999, on the campus of Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona. Over sixty papers will be presented as well as several roundtable discussions on relevant topics.

The conference will begin on Saturday afternoon with registration and a keynote speaker that evening. There are panels on Sunday, July 25, and Monday, July 26, as well as in the morning on Tuesday, July 27. The conference will conclude at 11:00 a.m. that day.

The conference features a variety of panels related to communication and the environment, including panels on "Native American Perspectives on the Environment," "Science, Risk, and Environmental Communication," "Nuclear Communication and the Environment," "Culture, Meaning, and Environmental Communication," and "Rhetorical Studies of Environmental Communication."

In addition to panels featuring competitive papers, the conference will feature several round table discussions. One of these sessions, "What makes Environmental Communication Unique in the Field of Communication? A Facilitate Discussion," is tentatively slated for the evening session on Sunday, July 25. Panel participants include: Jim Cantrill, Robert Cox, Mark Meister, Sue Senecah, and Ben Tyson. The focus of this roundtable discussion is on environmental communication and applied community outreach activities.

On Monday, July 26, Stephen Depoe, Bryan Taylor, and JoAnn Valenti will be the discussion leaders for "Communication and the Nuclear Weapons Industry: Towards the Development of a National Consortium of Collaborative Research and Support." Also on Monday, several scholars will be "Defining Nature," in a discussion that will focus on the public construction(s) of nature and the natural world. Members of that discussion group include Michael Salvador, Tarla Rai Peterson, Lincoln Houde, and Richard Rogers. The panelists will be discussing Rogers's essay, "Overcoming the Objectification of Nature in Constitutive Theories: Toward a Transhuman, Materialist Theory of Communication," from the Western Journal of Communication, 62 (1998), 244-272.

For the conference program, registration costs, or information on local lodging and transportation, see www.nau.edu/soc/ecrc/confer/html or contact Brant Short at 520-523-4701 (office), 520-523-1505 (fax) or <<brant.short@nau.edu>> If you cannot attend the conference, information about the conference proceedings will be published in a future issue of Ecologue.

The Environmental Communication Commission

By Jim Cantrill, Northern Michigan University

Since the late 1980s, individuals from a variety of fields (most notably communication studies) have been focusing their attention on the link between communication and environmental issues. This interest has grounded a wide range of publications in both the popular and scholarly press, a series of biennial summer conferences (COCE), and an array of consultancies in

applied communication settings. In 1996, the National Communication Association (NCA) established the Environmental Communication Commission. The Commission presently consists of scholars, educators, and practitioners representing diverse specialties and perspectives. Furthermore, although commission members most often focus their attention on environmental communication per se, several individuals regularly deal with applied aspects of psychology, sociology, political science, and geography. The common thread is considered an interest

in the communication dynamics by which humans work through their relationships with the rest of the natural world. Those who are interested in learning more about NCA's Environmental Communication Commission may browse the newly-updated COCE website at <<<http://www.yorku.ca/academics/meisner/cocce>>> or contact its current President, Jim Cantrill, via e-mail (jcantril@nmu.edu) or by phone (906-227-2061).

Nuclear Weapons Discussion Group Emerges

By Rhonda Barnes-Kloth, University of Cincinnati

"Communication and Ecology at (Former) Nuclear Weapons Sites: A Roundtable Discussion" was held at the 1999 Western States Communication Association (WSCA) Conference in Vancouver, BC. During this session, a variety of nuclear weapons complex issues were discussed by Communication scholars from across the country. Roundtable participants described current academic projects underway pertaining to a number of U.S. nuclear weapons production and/or disposal sites. Participants also discussed ways to encourage collaboration and dialogue among academic researchers across the U.S. nuclear weapons complex.

At the conclusion of the roundtable, participants agreed that a half-day pre-conference on nuclear weapons issues would be proposed for the 1999 National Communication Association Conference. In addition, establishing a special interest group for the 2000 WSCA conference should be explored. Finally, it was agreed that an electronic discussion forum for individuals interested in nuclear weapons issues should be initiated.

The Communication and Nuclear Weapons Research Group was created in response to the roundtable discussion. The purpose of this electronic discussion group is to enhance dialogue among Communication scholars and other interested parties who are involved in studying nuclear weapons policy, technology, and institutions, particularly the U.S. nuclear weapons production complex. To join this discussion group, address an e-mail message to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.UC.EDU, and place the following command in the body of the message: SUBSCRIBE UC-CNWRG First MI Last.

Discussions concerning potential collaborative research projects will continue at the Summer 1999 Conference on Communication and the Environment in Flagstaff, AZ.

ECC Sets General Course Guidelines

Adapted from a Statement By Jim Hasenauer, CA State U, Northridge

One of the products of a seminar held at the National Communication Association conference in New York in November 1998 was a set of guidelines about the General Course in Environmental Communication. Many of the readers of this newsletter were at the seminar or are part of NCA's Environmental Communication Commission. This is what the group came up with:

The Environmental Communication Commission is committed to stimulating university teaching, scholarship and community service/outreach on human communication behavior related to the environment and environmental issues. Environmental communication courses place emphasis on revealing the role that rhetoric, communication and the media play in establishing the meaning(s) and value(s) of Nature, the perception and understanding of environmental problems and actions taken to address these problems, the foundations of environmental philosophies, and the advocacy of environmental protection.

Common topics in the general course in environmental communication include:

1. How conceptions of nature are socially constructed through communication behavior.
2. An understanding of the role of communication in environmental history with particular attention to the messages of people and groups who have influenced this history.
3. An examination of strategic communication choices in environmental decision making.
4. An examination of the problem of creating shared meanings in areas where technical knowledge and technical language make understanding of environmental issues difficult.
5. An examination of specific communication needs associated with significant environmental contexts, topics and audiences (e.g., risk communication, stakeholder conflict resolution, etc.)
6. A critical understanding of media texts as related to the environment.

COCE Web Page Updated

Mark Meisner, the Communication and Environment web page steward, has recently updated the COCE page. Check it out at:

[<<http://www.yorku.ca/academics/meisner/coce/>>](http://www.yorku.ca/academics/meisner/coce/)

In particular, the bibliography and environmental communication programs pages contain new material. As always, Dr. Meisner welcomes your suggestions for additions to these and the other listings on the web site. You can reach him via e-mail at: esac@yorku.ca

Bibliography Being Developed

Amy Lombardo, a master's student in the Department of Communication at the University of Cincinnati, is working to compile a comprehensive environmental communication bibliography that can be available via the Internet. The bibliography will eventually include conferences papers, academic articles, books, and pertinent book chapters in an effort to compile the wide variety of literature that is available on this topic.

Because much of the literature related to environmental communication does not directly fall under the discipline of communication, there will be an effort to collect materials from all related fields. The final bibliography will be organized by categories in order to make its use easier.

A number of people have already submitted personal bibliographies to Amy to help in this effort. If you have not done so yet, please email any leads or other information to Amy at <lombaraj@email.uc.edu>. Also, if you have suggestions about what categories to use for organizing the bibliography, please email those suggestions as well.

Once available on the internet, the bibliography will continue to be maintained and updated by a UC grad student in the years to come. Hopefully, this comprehensive approach to organizing environmental communication materials will provide teachers/academics with an excellent source of class materials.

Grant is Given for a Three-Year Study on Rehabilitation of Texas Watersheds

By Sarah Olson, College of St. Benedict

Recently, Dr. Tarla Rai Peterson, of Texas A&M, along with a large interdisciplinary team of scientists and researchers, was awarded an \$838,767 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The money will be used in a project titled "The Development of an Urban Watershed Rehabilitation Method Using Stakeholder Feedback to Direct Investigation and Restoration Planning."

The study, which will run from January 1999 until December 2001, will be based on the findings in two urban watersheds, the Leon Creek and the Salado Creek, both of which run north to south through the city of San Antonio, Texas. Scientists of Ecology will evaluate the ecological integrity of the creeks by examining algae growth and respiratory functions of shellfish. Doing so will shed light on how the urban environment of San Antonio influences the changes in water quality. For example, one of the creeks has heavy metals in the water and in the soil along the water. Some of the industries along the watershed use the creek as a dumping ground for their waste, which may be causing the increased level of metal concentration in the water.

Since the quality of the watershed and other concerns such as the high metal content directly effect the communities and people who use the water, the scientists want all those affected to have access to the knowledge concerning the area. After gathering information on the watersheds, the ecological and social scientists as well as selected stakeholder groups plan to communicate with the area's communities. There are two purposes of the communication. First, scientists hope to teach community members to understand and use complex scientific information. Second, the researchers hope that residents will begin to think in terms of ecosystem management.

Dr. Peterson, who specializes in Environmental Communication, has a

specific goal in the research. She hopes to learn how all people involved with the study can communicate together through feedback loops. A feedback loop is the circle in which communication flows between people with different levels of knowledge concerning the issue. To learn more about how specific communication strategies and how feedback loops work in complex environmental conflicts, the researchers will have continual contact with members of the surrounding communities.

First, researchers will conduct telephone surveys to obtain an idea of general attitudes in the region. Next, a series of collaborative learning workshops will be conducted. In the seminars, stakeholders are given the opportunity to help guide the policy development process, within parameters set by the EPA, regarding water quality restoration. Therefore, when the policies concerning the restoration of the urban watersheds are installed, the residents' opinions will be a significant part of the final decisions.

Upon the completion of the study, the information will be shared with the agencies responsible for the water quality in the San Antonio area. In addition, each scientist will publish an analysis of the individual components in journals within their disciplines. Finally, information in the report will be used by the EPA to suggest how watershed rehabilitation plans can be implemented in other regions.

Student volunteers may still be needed with help in stakeholder recruitment. Duties would include enlisting stakeholder participants from the surrounding area, conducting interviews and meetings, and executing transcript analysis of the interviews and collaborative learning workshops. Interested students should contact Dr. Tarla Peterson at: <<tarla@unix.tamu.edu>> with any questions.

Call for Papers: Environment and Behavior Special Issue

The Medium of Poetry in Interpreting Environment and Behavior. Ruth Brent and Benyamin Schwarz, Guest Editors

Diverse groups of people are writing poetry to describe their habitats and behaviors that these places imbue. A Special Issue of Environment and Behavior will explore poetry as a medium for making genuine contributions to the advancement of knowledge regarding the influence of the physical environment on human behavior. Poetry is defined here as text set in verse. Submissions should be accompanied with comments about poetry written.

This Special Issue Call for Papers invites a wide range of perspectives in scholarly papers. Possible topics of submission may include, although not limited to, work which addresses questions such as:

- * Can the medium of poetry have a unique capacity in seeing and interpreting environment and behavior?
- * How can poetry communicate the context of environment and behavior in a specific time and place for a specific audience?
- * How has poetry described, defined, and explained environment and behavior historically?
- * Do biographical analyses of poets, or author-oriented criticism of poetry, help us understand environment and behavior?

Guidelines for submissions: Maximum manuscript length is 15 typed, double-spaced pages. Manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate. Each copy should include a 100-150 word abstract. Follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for journal style.

Deadline for manuscript submissions: August 1, 1999. Direct questions and manuscripts to: Ruth Brent or Benyamin Schwarz, 137 Stanley Hall, Department of Environmental Design, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211
BrentR@missouri.edu OR
SchwarzB@missouri.edu

Scholar Profile: Dr. Mark Meister

By Rachel Giannotti, College of St. Benedict

Dr. Mark Meister is a communication scholar whose research is focused on the use of environmental images. His interest in the environment is rooted in his boyhood days in Montana. While growing up, Dr. Meister developed a deep respect for the natural environment around him.

Currently, Dr. Meister's research is focused on a subject he has titled "Enviro-pop," which is the relationship between the juxtaposition of environmental rhetoric in popular culture and its effect on our culture. Dr. Meister uses a rhetorical critical perspective when examining images of the environment in popular culture. He studies specific texts that use the environment to sell or promote products and ideas.

The misperception that nature is here solely for human consumption has encouraged Dr. Meister to conduct his research. In a lecture to students at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, in February 1999, Meister stated that Americans participate in a culture of ignorance and need to be more open-minded. Media has a great effect on how people perceive their surroundings; because media says there is no environmental problem, many people believe that. Dr. Meister's research has tried to disprove that idea. His latest research is focused on three specific texts: the Television Food Network, The Weather Channel, and Jeep Advertisements.

Dr. Meister believes that for many of these advertisements and television channels "nature functions as a visual metaphor for 'the good life.'" To numerous Americans, living 'the good life' means owning things, and taking part in the consumerism and excessivism that makes up our culture." Owning things has become an obsession for many people. He thinks that as a society, "we have gone beyond our needs, and we now have greeds." Our culture encourages

materialism for many reasons. One is as a form of protection against nature and as comfort from the irritants often found in nature. In his research, Dr. Meister addresses these cultural ideas and explains how they fit into each of the texts.

What does the Television Food Network have to do with the environment? According to Dr. Meister, it has a great effect on the way we perceive our environment. He believes that the TV Food Network is a "constant reminder that our basic needs are not enough." The TV Food Network emphasizes the excessive consumption of food. It also promotes the changing of nature. The food shown on the network is "modified to an excess." Most of the time it is accessorized and changed so much that it does not even resemble its natural state. This, Dr. Meister says, is a problem because people become detached from the origins of their food. If people do not understand that their consumptive habits have an effect on the planet they will not take any measures to reduce their practices.

Another problem with the depiction of the environment in media is the Weather Channel. Meister believes that the structure of the Weather Channel is the reason why people's perceptions become distorted. The Weather Channel uses the environment and nature solely for a background. Nature essentially becomes nothing more than a billboard. The weather technology becomes something people use to control nature. It becomes a way to protect people from the dangers of the environment. The technology warns individuals of approaching dangers; it allows them to be ready for when Mother Nature knocks on their door.

Some other texts Meister has analyzed are Jeep advertisements. Jeep uses pristine environmental images to advertise their Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV's). Meister states that the environmental images are used in their advertising to attract a target audience. Their target audience is outdoors-oriented people who are encouraged to take their SUV's out into the wilderness to increase their enjoyment of the environment. Meister says the problem with these advertisements is that they neglect to inform their audience of

the negative environmental effects of using this vehicle in the wilderness. SUVs disrupt the life of the animals and plants in the area, speeds up erosion, and creates air pollution. According to Meister, another problem with these vehicles is that they consume more gas than smaller cars, and the majority of the people who own them use them in the city where a smaller car would be just as effective.

"Enviro-pop" is an interesting subject to study because it includes the fields of communication, environmental studies, and sociology. It also includes an assessment of the cultural values of the American people. It allows for the examination of the myths and beliefs of our culture. "Enviro-pop" also permits us to see how television and other forms of media use those cultural myths and beliefs to attract an audience. The environment is a topic that is discussed in all areas of society today, and it is very important for people to conduct studies such as this one to educate the American public about the harmful effects that their practices have on the environment. It is also important to understand the effect this use of the environment has on the way the public views the nature. Meister will continue his research on this subject and plans to publish a book sometime in the next year.

Environmental Sessions at Journalism Conference

On the program of The Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication annual convention scheduled for August 4-7 at the Sheraton New Orleans in LA are environmental topic sessions sponsored by AEJMC's Science Interest Group (SCIGroup). Panels and workshops include: "Helping Students Improve Their Reporting and Writing of Science, Health, and Environment News," "Investigating Complex Environment Stories: How to Convince Editors, How to Educate Readers," "Nutricious Nutria?: Evaluating and Promoting Food Safety," "LA...Louisiana, not Los Angeles...The New Disaster Capital," and refereed research paper sessions. Contact JoAnn Valenti (Valentij@BYU.edu) or email aejmc@sc.edu for more information.

Scholar Profile: Dr. J. Robert Cox

By Katie Olson, College of St. Benedict

Most people who do not live in a minority or low income community are not aware of the hazards of environmental racism. Some people may not be able to define this term and few may be able to give an example of it; however, this does not mean that environmental racism is not a problem. Environmental racism is the intentional placement of industries which pollute, including landfills and hazardous waste sites, in low income and minority communities.

Dr. Robert Cox, a professor of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is currently working on an article titled, "Indecorous' Voices: Low Income Communities and Environmental Decision Making." His article focuses on environmental justice for people living in low income communities who are subject to environmental racism.

In an interview with Dr. Cox, he stated that his main goal for the article is, "To explore the structural and epistemic sources for the dismissal of low-income voices within technical spheres, and the consequences this has for participatory, inclusive decision-making in US environmental policy."

Cox says that communities of low income and of color are dismissed when it comes to environmental decision making. The voices of the people in these communities are not heard, but considered inappropriate, and their testimonies are discounted. His article examines the articulation of narratives of environmental protection versus social justice.

The Washington Office of Environmental Justice listed seventeen definitions of the term environmental justice.

Environmental justice is a right to be free from ecological destruction. It demands that policy be formed with respect for all people, free from discrimination or prejudice. It demands ethical use of the land to be used sustainably for all living things.

The people living in the discriminated neighborhoods are not always opposed to the industries, for they are often employed by them. It is the environmental and health risks caused by the industries that worry the residents. Some hazards people in the communities face include air and water pollution, and an increase in cancer, lupus, birth defects, asthma, and other illnesses. Companies get away with building the plants, for the same reason they get away with not applying regulations to prevent harmful effects. If no one stops them from creating their hazardous waste system, no one will stop them from disobeying the regulations.

In Houston, a Chevron plant was charged with environmental racism for allowing minority housing on the contaminated land. The land was previously owned by Gulf Oil, who abandoned oil pits many years ago. The residents living in the neighborhood complain of contaminated water, lupus and high rates of other diseases, including cancer.

Before reaching his conclusions, Cox examines a variety of cases dealing with environmental racism around the United States. Most of these cases have not been published, but are ongoing, current cases. He pays special attention to the cases which contain the most controversy.

Dr. Cox, who was the National Sierra Club President from 1994-1996 obtains some of his information through his links with the organization. The Sierra Club sends him current information on pressing environmental issues including environmental racism. Cox also says he finds valuable information on web sites.

Dr. Cox is preparing his information to be presented this month at the Conference on Communication and Our Environment, at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Arctic Action Monitors Threats to Alaska

Arctic Action is managed by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center to inform people about threats to Alaska's Arctic. Arctic Action alerts are archived on the Northern Center's home page:
<<http://www.mosquitonet.com/~naec/alerts/arctic>>

To subscribe, send a message to <majordomo@onenw.org>. Write "subscribe arctic-action" and your email address in the BODY of your message. To unsubscribe, send a message to <majordomo@onenw.org>. Write "unsubscribe arctic-action" in the BODY of the message.

To find out about becoming a Northern Center member, intern, or volunteer, please contact us:

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Become an ECC Member

As of early June 1999, membership in the Environmental Communication Commission (ECC) of the National Communication Association (NCA) has grown to 143 members. Still, plenty of Ecologue readers (the mailing list is now over 500) have not become ECC members, even those who are active in NCA. The survival of the ECC depends on robust membership.

If you are a member of NCA, please consider becoming an ECC member. When you renew your NCA membership and are asked to select three Commissions, remember to check ECC. If you already belong to three Commissions you like, consider adding ECC to that list for only an additional \$5.

If you are not a member of the NCA, please check out the NCA web page <<<http://www.natcom.org>>> for membership details.

Environmental Communication Business Meeting Minutes

The Environmental Communication Commission (ECC) of the National Communication Association (NCA) held its annual meeting at the NCA National Convention in New York, New York, on November 22, 1998. Bruce Weaver, the ECC secretary, reported the following information to Ecologue:

- I. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM
- II. The minutes of the 1997 business meeting were approved.
- III. President S. Senecah reported the following:
 - A. It has been 10 years since the first NCA panel appeared on environmental communication issues.
 - B. The Environmental Communication Commission has 127 members in its official first year with approximately 400 persons on the Ecologue mailing list.
 - C. The day long seminar on "Growing the General Environmental Communication Course" included 21 participants and provided a useful opportunity for sharing of ideas on the general course in environmental communication.
 - D. Mark Meisner was thanked for his continued work with the COCE website.
- IV. Vice-President J. Cantrill discussed a number of issues.
 - A. Membership in the Commission should grow even more by making ties with other areas. He indicated that approximately 30% of the membership look at the political implications of environmental communication.
 - B. A short course on teaching the connection between environmental communication and technical centers would be a useful contribution for next year's convention.
 - C. Reminder of the Fifth Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment to be held at Flagstaff, Arizona in July 1999.
 - D. For next year's NCA convention, officers and committees need to organize materials so there is not a rush right before the convention. Two business meetings for the commission were suggested at next year's convention. The theme for the 1999 convention is

"Coloring Outside the Lines." Members of the commission should consider submissions with this theme in mind.

- V. Vice-President J. Hendry asked for volunteer readers of convention submissions for next year. She received an enthusiastic number of volunteers. Contrary to the policy this year, all readers will read all the submissions in the future. The authors will receive ranking sheets and comments from the readers. Judith presented a plaque to Sue Senecah for her contributions to the Commission. A standing ovation followed.
- VI. Secretary B. Weaver announced that a list of nominees for commission officers has been developed with the assistance of Dennis Jaehne, Chair of the Nominating Committee.
- VII. Publications Chair, S. Muir reported that he has put together two issues of Ecologue in the past year, and that the membership is encouraged to submit articles.
- VIII. The following officers were elected:
 - A. Vice-President Elect - Jean Retzinger
 - B. Secretary - Ann Jabro
 - C. Publications Chair - Terry Check
- IX. Old Business
 - A. S. Muir reported on Commission By-Laws changes: The suggestions made by Muir were accepted by the membership. The most important change reads: "The President will serve as the ECC representative of the NCA Legislative Council"
 - B. S. Muir displayed two attractive brochures he had designed for ECC outreach purposes.
 - C. S. Depoe reported on the electronic journal. He discussed the possible costs (paper based journals cost approximately 4 dollars per issue), sponsorship issues, and prestige concerns. J. Delicath moved for an ad hoc committee to further explore the issue. Seconded. All persons interested should contact S. Depoe.
 - D. L. Parker explained that abstracts are acceptable for submission for the Flagstaff COCE conference.
- X. No New Business
- XI. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Editor's Note

Welcome to the latest issue of Ecologue. I hope that you enjoy the latest news from the Environmental Communication Commission.

I had hoped to get the first Ecologue of 1999 out sometime in the Spring, but I spent some time looking into a variety of different formats and materials for the newsletter. While in Costa Rica in June, I even looked into purchasing environmentally-friendly banana paper for the newsletter. Ultimately, these options proved prohibitively expensive.

The next issue should arrive in early to mid-Fall, with news of the environmentally-themed panels at this year's NCA Convention. To enhance the quality of the newsletter, please share your ideas with other readers of Ecologue. I need submissions on conferences, calls for papers, news of environmental projects, scholar profiles, course modules, book and video reviews, pedagogy suggestions, and more! Please submit articles to me via e-mail: tcheck@csbsju.edu (I prefer that you copy and paste articles and send them to me in the text of the e-mail).

I'd like to thank the following students from the College of St. Benedict for contributing articles to Ecologue: Heather Meierhofer, Rachel Giannotti, Katie Olson, and Sarah Olson. If you are an undergraduate or graduate student, consider writing a news story for Ecologue. If you are an instructor, encourage students to write news stories for the newsletter. It's great experience for them.

Not on the mailing list but would like to receive future issues of Ecologue? Know someone else who would like to receive Ecologue? On the mailing list but would like to be taken off? Please contact me.

I'll see many of you at COCE in Flagstaff! Cheers,

Terry Check, St. John's University

Resources for Teaching Environmental Communication

At a pre-convention meeting before the 1998 National Communication Association convention in New York, several communication scholars discussed environmental communication pedagogy. Participants agreed that course modules could serve as useful models for instructors interested in developing an environmental communication course at their institutions. Two prominent educators in the field of environmental communication, Dr. Jim Cantrill at Northern Michigan University, and Dr. Star Muir at George Mason University, have submitted modules to Ecologue. Other instructors interested in submitting modules to Ecologue for publication should contact the editor.

Module on Social Cognition and Environmental Communication

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CONTEXT

This module has been designed for use in a bridge-level course serving students in communication studies, public relations, environmental studies (in particular emphasizing public policy and resource management), and recreation/leisure studies. Other modules in the course focus on historical and cultural analyses of environmental rhetorics; environmental communication in government, business, and communities; and the role of the media in shaping public responses to information campaigns. It is the only course in environmental communication at the University; it is an upper-division requirement in the policy track of the environmental studies curriculum and a designated elective in speech, media studies, and public relations.

OBJECTIVES

The module features a review of social scientific research relevant to the perception of the natural environment and environmental communication. It attempts to (a) reveal the social and cognitive bases for understanding environmental issues, (b) demonstrate how psychological mechanisms mediate the perception of environmental appeals and policies, and (c) suggest avenues for the design of effective environmental

advocacy in light of what we know about social cognition.

KEY CONCEPTS & RESOURCES

The Social Cognitive Foundations for Environmental Perception.

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-- Tversky, B., & Hemenway, K. (1983). Categories of environmental scenes. Cognitive Psychology, 15, 121-149.

-- Vining, J. (1987). Environmental decisions: the interaction of emotions, information, and decision context. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 7, 13-18.

APPLICATIONS, EXERCISES, & ASSIGNMENTS

A. "Foundational" Bases.

1. Class develops and takes a survey to profile their own backgrounds regarding environmentalism, each student subsequently reports (using a timed, free-

association procedure) their own construct system for the term "environment," and the instructor facilitates a discussion concerning the relationships between and implications of the link between personal histories and environmental perception.

2. Small groups assume the role of different "publics" (e.g., farmers, industrialists, land-use planners), generate lists of features found in preferred and dispreferred community settings, and provide twenty minute presentations to the class for comparison and contrast.

3. Small groups select different watersheds in the region, map out (via narrative or GIS layering) the various human dimension influences on water quality, and provide twenty minute presentations to the class dealing with potential opportunities for or impediments to pollution prevention and/or remediation.

4. Each student traces historical social influences upon a current local environmental controversy, centering on how these influences are reflected in media (6 - 8 pages).

5. Each student compares and contrasts 19th and 20th century descriptions of "wilderness" (e.g., using travel accounts related to specific areas in the world or United States) and identifies the ways in which economic and technical developments have influenced changes in depictions (10-15 pages).

B. "Cognitive" Influences.

1. Class reads conflicting technical reports concerning "global climate change" and the instructor facilitates a discussion of (a) why academics can and do continue to debate the issue and (b) how this dispute in the public sphere is differentially processed by various publics (e.g., politicians, industry, NGOs).

2. Small groups contact and interview representatives from local NGOs to determine why members have joined such organizations and how the NGO mobilizes members to actively participate in relevant campaigns; student groups provide twenty minute presentations to the class focusing on how those in the contacted NGOs perceive local situations and what effect this has on their internal and external communication strategies.

3. Each student self-assesses their own

use of and personal origins for each of the EDMs identified in Cantrill, 1996 (4-6 page outlines).

4. Early in a term, students draft three page descriptions of their current and personal "sense of place." Subsequently, each student codes the descriptions for dominant themes and the extent to which these foci preference either environmental, social, or economic dimensions; in turn, they draft 7-10 analyses of the extent to which personal experience and contemporary local media have interacted to instill a particular "sense of place."

C. "Study" Applications.

1. Class reads reports concerning "endocrine disrupters" generated by the chemical industry, non-partisan researchers, and NGOs. Using this basis, the instructor facilitates a discussion directed at using the Theory of Reasoned Action to construct a public awareness campaign designed to promote the safe disposal of bioaccumulative toxic substances found in the home.

2. Early in a term, students complete a version of Kempton et al's. (1996) values survey. Subsequently, small groups discuss the reasons why students' profiles do or do not match those of the general public.

3. Small groups interview faculty and students on campus to compare and contrast different orientations to the local environment, and provide a twenty minute class presentation identifying specific influences on respondents' perceptions focusing on how differences in environmental orientations may affect student/faculty interactions.

4. Each student selects a local environmental "program" (e.g., community recycling policies, "green space" provisions, energy conservation initiatives), researches the extent to which the program has been successful, and critiques the program's outcomes in light of what is known about the processing of environmental advocacy (7-10 pages).

5. Each student designs (and preferably conducts) either a qualitative or quantitative study regarding the influence of selected variables (e.g., gender, age, ideology, religious orientation) on attitudes toward local, regional, and/or global issues (e.g., population "control"), with special emphasis placed on the role of cognitive biases or heuristics in

reasoning through complex issues (15-20 pages).

NOTES

Insofar as the influence of social cognition on the perception of environmental communication is often a subtle and largely nonconscious process, and to the extent college students typically fail to appreciate the very real differences between their frames of reference and those of the general public (born of, say, their curricular-bound analyses and content), this module requires an instructor to use many examples to promote greater perspective taking on the part of a student. Furthermore, unless they have previously completed a course in research methods, students often have a difficult time appreciating the application of social scientific research to practical communication problems. Consequently, great effort must sometimes be expended in the effort to get students to move beyond personal opinion to apply generic empirical findings in the completion of particular assignments.

Environmental Communication From a Rhetorical Perspective

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CONTEXT

This module is part of a broad-based introduction to Environmental Communication in a Department of Communication. It is an upper level course that draws communication and biology majors. Other parts of the course address the rhetorical history of the movement, media analysis, and critical studies. The course stands alone as the only environmental communication course at the University.

OBJECTIVES

The module features critical analysis of texts, focusing on rhetorical elements of drama, narrative and metaphor. It attempts to 1) Convey a sense of the rhetorical nature of environmentalism, 2) Focus critical analysis on language and discourse strategies, and 3) Empower students to think critically about metaphors and narratives that infuse environmental discourse.

KEY CONCEPTS/RESOURCES

Contexts of American Environmental Discourse.

-- Opie, John and Norbert Elliot. "Tracking the Elusive Jeremiad: The Rhetorical Character of American Environmental Discourse." The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment, eds. James Cantrill and Christine Oravec (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996) 9-37.

Strategies and Tactics in Environmental Discourse.

-- Spangle, Michael and David Knapp. "Ways We Talk About the Earth: An Exploration of Persuasive Tactics and Appeals in Environmental Discourse." Earthtalk, eds. Star Muir and Tom Veenendall (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 1996) 3-26.
-- Peterson, Tarla Rai. "The Meek Shall Inherit the Mountains: Dramatic Criticism of Grand Teton National Park's Interpretive Program." Central States Speech Journal 39 (Summer 1988) 121-133.

Metaphor Analysis.

-- Meisner, Mark. "Metaphors of Nature: Old Vinegar in New Bottles?" Trumpeter 12 (Winter 1995) 11-18.
-- Senecah, Susan. "Forever Wild or Forever in Battle: Metaphors of Empowerment in the Continuing Controversy over the Adirondacks." Earthtalk, eds. Star Muir and Tom Veenendall (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 1996) 95-118.
-- Hardy-Short, Dayle C. and C. Brant Short. "Fire, Death, and Rebirth: A Metaphoric Analysis of the 1988 Yellowstone Fire Debate." Proceedings of the Conference on Communication and the Environment,

eds. James Cantrill and J. Jimmie Killingsworth (Big Sky, MT: COCE, 1993) 165-179.

Narrative.

-- Van Matre, Steve and Bill Weiler, eds. The Earth Speaks (Greenville, WV: Institute for Earth Education, 1983).
-- McLain, Gary. The Indian Way: Learning to Communicate with Mother Earth (Santa Fe, NM: John Muir Publications, 1990).
-- Fisher, Walter. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." Professing the New Rhetorics: A Sourcebook, eds. Theresa Enos and Stuart C. Brown (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994) 374-396.
-- McComas, Katherine and James Shanahan. "Telling Stories About Global Climate Change: Measuring the Impact of Narratives on Issue Cycles." Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment, ed. Susan Senecah (Syracuse, NY: SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry) 168-181.

APPLICATIONS/EXERCISES ASSIGNMENTS

Case Study 1: Styles in Conflict.

Compare readings from Ron Bailey and from the Ehrlichs. Discuss some of the language and tactics of Wise Use and its response.
-- Bailey, Ronald. "The Imagination of Disaster." Eco-Scam: The False Prophets of Ecological Apocalypse (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 1-23.
-- Ehrlich, Paul and Ehrlich, Anne. "Wise Use' and Environmental Anti-Science." Betrayal of Science and Reason: How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric Threatens Our Future (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996) 11-23.

Case Study 2: Evolving Style.

Compare "how-to" books from the 1970s and the 1990s. Similarities and differences?
-- Swatek, Paul. The User's Guide to the Protection of the Environment (NY: Ballantine, 1970).
-- Mitchell, John G. and Constance L. Stallings, eds. Ecotactics: The Sierra Club Handbook for Environment Activists (NY: Pocket Books, 1970).

-- Earthworks Group. 50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save the Earth (Berkeley, CA: Earthworks Press, 1989).
-- Valley, Bernadette. 1,001 Ways to Save the Planet (NY: Ivy Books, 1990).

Critical Methods Workshop.

Bring a collection of environmental magazines, direct mail, advertisements, brochures, flyers, and other artifacts to class. Groups choose an artifact and spend 20-30 minutes analyzing it. Each group then presents the artifact and its analysis, and class discussion focuses on different lenses or perspectives that can increase understanding of environmental discourse.

Cultural analysis of an environmental conflict.

Using concepts from cultural studies, identify, frame and analyze the particulars of an environmental conflict. Focus particularly on symbolic or discursive elements that magnify the conflict. Make overall judgments about the potential resolution of the conflict, framing possibilities in communication strategies. Minimum 5 sources in references. 5-6 pages typed.

Application of a communication theory to an environmental campaign or organization.

Identify and explain a communication theory, and then apply it critically to evaluate and assess an environmental persuasive campaign or an environmental organization. Minimum 5 sources in references. 5-6 pages typed.

Write a critical review of an environmental "how to" book.

Select one of many books that offer different strategies for environmental action. Review the choices and strategies of the author(s), including stylistic elements, argument strategies, means of enhancing ethos, thoroughness, audience analysis, etc. 5-6 pages typed.

Write a critical analysis of appeals in a "wise use" book.

Select one of many books by authors such as Arnold, Bailey, Ray, who question environmentalism and environmental claims, and assess their

use of argument, language, and style. 5-6 pages typed.

Assess the credibility of an environmental database.

Identify and explore an electronic database available to the general public. Looking at and checking parts of the database, evaluate the overall credibility of the information in the database using three or more criteria for credibility. 3-4 pages.

Review and compare two environmental organization homepages.

Develop a set of criteria to apply, analyze and evaluate two world wide web homepages of environmental organizations. 3-4 pages typed.

Rhetorical criticism of an environmental message.

Using an explicitly developed rhetorical method or critical framework, analyze and assess an environmental message or a set of messages. Analysis may focus on different types of media (brochures, videos, songs, speeches, books, advertisements, etc.), may analyze the rhetoric of individuals, organizations, institutions, and communities, and should provide both a clear framework for critical analysis and clear implications of the application of that framework. Minimum 5 sources in references. 5-6 pages typed.

NOTES

This module seems to work better with lots of examples and actual in-class working with texts. The readings are a little choppy without a broad-based textbook in environmental communication, and there are certainly other readings that teachers will find useful. Getting past description to critical assessment is one of the toughest hurdles for new critics; separating a description section from critical analysis in the assignment structure can help focus explicit attention on making arguments with good reasons.

Environmental Communication Pedagogy

By Terry Check, St. John's University

At a pre-conference seminar in Environmental Communication held before the National Communication Association's convention in 1998, I presented information about the use of C-SPAN videos in my "Environmental Rhetoric" course at St. John's University in Minnesota. For those who did not attend the seminar, I would like to briefly discuss the advantages of using C-SPAN videos in the Environmental Communication classroom.

C-SPAN is a cable television network which telecasts the U.S. House of Representatives whenever it is in session. In addition, the network offers a number of regularly scheduled programs, including congressional hearings, election coverage, White House press briefings, university and political party forums, newsmaker speeches and debates, and other public affairs events. C-SPAN's companion network, C-SPAN 2, telecasts live sessions of the U.S. Senate.

In addition to their regular cable television programming, C-SPAN maintains the Public Affairs Video Archives, a video archive at Purdue University that preserves and catalogues all C-SPAN programming. The archive material is intended solely for the use of educators, and the rates are reasonable compared to other video collections. Most videos cost \$30-120, depending on the length of the program.

C-SPAN does not cover every political event. In particular, I was disappointed to learn that some of the key speeches on the environment delivered by Vice-Presidential candidate Al Gore in 1992 were not available in the Archives. However, there are a number of key environmental political events covered by C-SPAN that I have found useful in my classroom.

One such speech is Vice President Dan Quayle's address before the Economic Club of Grand Rapids on August 28, 1992 (C-SPAN ID# 29662, \$60.00).

The speech was a major attack on the environmental policies of the Clinton/Gore ticket. Calling Gore's environmental proposals "pretty bizarre stuff," Quayle suggested that Democratic environmental initiatives were "detached from reality and devoid of common sense. The vital issue today is not some hysterical vision of a world in need of restructuring, but homes and workplaces in need of rejuvenation. Their manifesto is called 'Earth In The Balance,' but the real issue today is jobs in the balance."

An instructor can use Quayle's speech in a number of ways. First, the speech works well as an example of any number of rhetorical theories, as Quayle attempts to define his opponents as extreme and his views as reasonable. Sometimes I have students read Gore's "Marshall Plan" for the environment from Earth In The Balance, then ask students to write Quayle's speech. We then watch the actual speech and compare it to what the students came up with. To balance the political role-playing, I usually ask students to imagine themselves as Democratic speechwriters who have to write a rebuttal to Quayle's speech. I divide the class into small groups and ask each student to draft a rebuttal to a major argument used by Quayle in the speech, such as the Vice-President's claim that the Bush Administration passed strict Clean Air Act legislation. If they have done their research, the students are eager to introduce evidence in the next class session to refute Quayle's claims, making for a lively class session.

To see Quayle and Gore debate each other on the environment and other issues, try the Vice Presidential Candidates Debate (C-SPAN ID# 33086, \$120). This debate features a lively exchange between the two candidates on environmental issues, with Quayle incorrectly insisting that Gore's book calls for \$1 billion in taxpayer money to be spent on environmental programs in foreign countries. Throw in independent vice-presidential candidate James Stockdale, who calls environmentalists fanatics, and you have an interesting debate. One assignment that I use with this tape: students read the chapter in Earth In The Balance where Gore compares humanity to a dysfunctional family, then the class discusses why Gore failed to bring up

this metaphor in the context of a political debate.

There are a number of other environmental speeches available in the C-SPAN Archives, particularly from congressional hearings. For research assistance, scholars can contact the Archives at: C-SPAN Archives, P.O. Box 2909, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2909. Their toll-free telephone number is (800) 277-2698, and they are on the web at: <<www.c-spanarchives.org>>

Submissions Wanted!

Share your ideas in environmental communication pedagogy with other readers of Ecologue. Please submit articles to the editor via e-mail at: tcheck@csbsju.edu

Book Reviews

By Terry Check, St. John's University

Hal K. Rothman. The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998. pp. 219.

Hal Rothman has written a concise history of the American environmental movement since World War II that should be of interest to environmental communication instructors looking for a short text to integrate into their courses. Rothman even acknowledges the importance of rhetoric, suggesting that in the battle over wilderness, "the weapons were words and images" (p. 78). Unlike some environmental history books that claim that the modern environmental movement began with Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, Rothman contends that the pivotal moment in the transformation from conservationism to environmentalism was the Echo Park dam debate in the mid-1950s. His discussion of that controversy is informative.

Rothman writes frequently about the influence of the "cultural climate" on environmental thinking, but since none of his research comes from scholarship in cultural studies or rhetorical criticism, he

can only make sweeping generalizations about American culture that offer little insight into the values shared by a society. For example, Rothman assumes that certain wilderness areas are sacred, but offers little explanation about the origins and meaning of sacred spaces.

Any text that attempts to cover such a broad topic is going to leave out some issues and controversies. Rothman's attention is focused on western land controversies, with significant space devoted to a discussion of federal land agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management. He gives no attention to modern atmospheric pollution, such as acid rain, ozone depletion, and global warming. His discussion of the environmental movement in the 1990s is attenuated.

The index and bibliography to the book are seriously flawed. There are no footnotes or endnotes to the text, and some of the quotations cited in the text are impossible to find in the bibliography.

Joel Simon. Endangered Mexico: An Environment on the Edge. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997. pp. 275.

Based on the topics presented at this summer's Conference on Communication and Environment, the vast majority of scholarship in environmental communication is on American environmental issues and events. Surprisingly little, if any, scholarship in our field examines Mexico's environmental rhetoric, even though Mexico is the third most biologically diverse nation on the planet.

Although it is not a book specifically about environmental communication, Joel Simon's Endangered Mexico is a powerful reminder that America's southern neighbor is experiencing devastating environmental pressures. Simon discusses the range of environmental problems facing Mexico, from the notorious smog over Mexico City to the widespread depletion of the country's forests. Simon combines historical research with personal interviews to craft a well-written description of Mexico's environmental

crises. His discussion of Mexico City's water problems, and the sinking of the city caused by the depletion of its underground aquifer, are particularly striking.

From a communication viewpoint, one of the more interesting observations that Simon makes is that environmentalism has negative connotations in Mexico, particularly in poor communities that depend on extraction of resources for survival or short-term economic benefits. As an example, convincing poor mountain communities to preserve the forest sanctuaries of the monarch butterfly becomes an exceedingly difficult rhetorical task. Communication scholars interested in studying Mexican environmental issues should read this useful overview.

Ross Gelbspan. The Heat Is On: The High Stakes Battle Over Earth's Threatened Climate. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1997.

Ross Gelbspan is a reporter for the Boston Globe and Washington Post who takes a no-holds barred approach to global climate change: either act quickly and immediately to address global warming, or face impending totalitarianism caused by a weather-induced breakdown of society (plenty of great impact cards in here for debate types).

Of interest to communication scholars is Gelbspan's discussion of the "mystification campaign" promoted by industry that has created a "narcotic effect on the American public" by lulling people "into a deep apathy about the crisis by persuading them that the issue of climate change is terminally stuck in scientific uncertainty" (9). Although the book mentions advertisements and videos produced by industry front groups like the Information Council on the Environment and the Western Fuels Association, it does not provide a close textual reading of these documents. However, Gelbspan does a marvelous job at examining and debunking the pseudo-science of such climate change skeptics as S. Fred Singer and Richard Lindzen. Gelbspan concludes his book with "A Scientific Critique of the Greenhouse Skeptics," which

provides readers with useful rebuttal evidence against the climate naysayers.

Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson. Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising. New York: The Guilford Press, 1996.

Environmental communication scholars interested in the deceptive tactics of green marketing should not overlook this book, especially chapter six, "Green Marketing and the Commodity Self," and chapter seven, "The Corporate Politics of Sign Values." Goldman and Papson argue that green marketing works to legitimize consumption by juxtaposing images of products with those of an idealized nature. According to the authors, environmentally-themed advertising works to obscure issues of production by positioning companies as ecologically-friendly.

While Goldman and Papson pick some easy (and hilarious) targets to critique (such as an advertisement for a Toro lawnmower that claims to be environmentally-friendly), the authors pull no punches when it comes to criticizing more cherished icons. For example, the authors note that the Sierra Club Visa Card produces an appetite for consumption that legitimizes an economy based on instant gratification and convenience.

Submissions Wanted!

Please share your thoughts on books and articles, old and new, with other readers of Ecologue. Book and article reviews may be sent to the editor: Dr. Terence Check, Communication Department, Quad 442, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN 56321 USA, or by e-mail: tcheck@csbsju.edu

Environmental Education Books Available

Submitted by Walter Leal Filho, TU-TECH/Technical University

"Lifelong Learning and Environmental

Education." Edited by Walter Leal Filho, Peter Lang Verlag, New York, US-ISBN 0-8204-3511-2. 1998 (second edition).

This book was prepared in connection with the European Year of Lifelong Learning and the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (CONFITEA) held in Hamburg in July 1997. It outlines some ideas related to lifelong learning and the environment, dealing with environmental issues in contexts such as adult education, community-based education and quality of learning. A balanced emphasis to formal and non-formal environmental education initiatives is given, offering a wider view of the themes and its diversity.

"Environmental Education in Protected Areas: International Perspectives and Experiences." Edited by Walter Leal Filho, Cristina Carvalho and Bill Hale, Parthenon Publishing, New York, ISBN 1-85070-004-4. 1998.

This book contains an analysis of the various contexts within which environmental education can serve the purpose of raising awareness in, through and about protected areas, combined with the views of representatives of some of the institutions which are influencing developments in this field (e.g. IUCN, UNESCO). In addition, the book presents a set of case studies from Brazil, Indonesia, St. Lucia, Germany and Italy, written by people working on the ground, which illustrate the diversity of environmental education initiatives being performed in protected areas in both industrialized and developing countries today.

"Distance Education and Environmental Education." Edited by Walter Leal Filho and Farrukh Tahir, Peter Lang Verlag, New York, US-ISBN 0-8204-3563-5, 1998.

The book deals with the matter of environmental education and distance education, introducing concepts and ideas from people working in this field. It contains case studies illustrating approaches used by universities in industrialized and developing countries aimed at fostering environmental learning through distance education. A useful tool for specialists involved with distance education and for institutions already

active or willing to plan initiatives in this field.

Environmental Education for Sustainability: Good Environment, Good Life." Edited by Walter Leal Filho and Mauri Ahlberg, ISBN 3-631-33617-9. US ISBN 0-8204-3612-7.

The initial chapters of this book discuss the concept of sustainability and how it is linked with environmental education and quality of life, while subsequent contributions outline a diverse range of approaches, initiatives and projects in Europe, North America and Africa. This book provides a wealth of information on formal and non-formal aspects of environmental education and pushes forward the debate on its links with areas such as sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

"Environmental Engineering: Interdisciplinary Perspectives." Edited by Walter Leal Filho ISBN- 3-631-33455-9, US ISBN 0-8204-3602-X.

Prepared as part of the EU-Leonardo da Vinci project "PREENE" (Programme for Environmental Engineering Education in Europe), this book emphasizes the connections between environmental education and professional development, using the engineering profession as a case study. Since the engineering profession is potentially capable of greatly influencing the environment, it is important that proper environmental considerations are made in the training of engineers. Along with background information on environmental engineering per se, the book congregates interdisciplinary examples illustrating how sustainable consumption, environmental law, waste management and eco-auditing may contribute to more ecologically-sound engineering practices.

These books are part of the series "Environmental Education, Communication and Sustainability," edited by W. Leal Filho and published by the Verlag Peter Lang, a leading scientific publisher, with offices in Frankfurt, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris and Vienna. For further information contact: Prof. Walter Leal Filho, e-mail: leal@tu-harburg.de

Video Reviews

By Terry Check, St. John's University

The X-Files. "Darkness Falls" and "The Erlenmeyer Flask". Starring David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. Fox Home Video, 1994. 88 min. \$14.98.

As the top-rated television program on the Fox Network, "The X-Files" has become required viewing for a legion of science-fiction fans and anti-government paranoids who watch the skies for black helicopters. Given the popularity of the program in the last couple of years, Fox has released many of the earlier episodes on home video. Two of these gems are "Darkness Falls" and "The Erlenmeyer Flask," both from the show's first season.

FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) work on cases involving paranormal phenomena. In "Darkness Falls," the agents are called out to the forests of the Pacific Northwest, where a group of loggers have disappeared. The agents discover that extraterrestrial insects -- embedded in the rings of old-growth trees and released when loggers carelessly cut the trees down -- are responsible for the deaths.

Although this episode received an Environmental Media Award for its discussion of old growth forests, the episode reinforces the dualism that exists in most media depictions of the environment. The chief logger is portrayed as greedy and impatient, while the environmentalist is portrayed as radical and untrustworthy. In the middle of the rhetorical battle is the forest ranger, who struggles to wisely protect the resources and its inhabitants. "Darkness Falls" also suffers from other plot failings: the usually tough Scully exhibits stereotypical female reactions to bugs, and none of the protagonists think to light a fire to keep the light-shy insects at bay. Still, "Darkness Falls" is a useful illustration of how well-meaning environmental programs can falter, and a worthy addition to any class that discusses media portrayals of the environment. Finally, the companion

episode on this tape, "The Erlenmeyer Flask," is perhaps the finest episode from the show's first season.

Forest Warrior. Starring Chuck Norris. 1996. \$14.98.

In a panel discussion on the future of environmental communication research at the 1997 National Communication Association convention, Star Muir suggested that more scholars examine environmental appeals directed to children. Those interested in such appeals should check out "Forest Warrior," a made-for-cable children's movie first aired on TNT in 1996 and now available on home video. But beware: to use the vernacular of the children in this film, this video is totally lame.

Norris plays a part Native-American Indian warrior (groan) who administers his own version of neck-snapping, eco-justice on greedy loggers who want to destroy his forest home. In the movie, Norris has the ability to change shapes into any forest creature he desires. But he is most potent in his human form, where he administers slow-motion karate kicks into the guts of overconfident loggers, in scenes painfully reminiscent of the old television program "Kung Fu." Norris is aided by a team of youngsters who don camouflage and engage in the kind of eco-terrorism that would make Dave Foreman proud. Norris even shows one lad how to properly kick a logger so he falls down and doesn't get up. Perhaps by portraying this role, Norris hopes to atone for all those years of supporting anti-environmental Republican political candidates.

Although painful to watch all the way through, scenes from the movie can be shown in an environmental communication class to illustrate an eco-feminist critique of mainstream environmental media. Most troubling, the protagonists in the film use violence as a way of addressing environmental threats.

Web Resources

Prof. Walter Leal Filho (leal@tu-harburg.de) suggests the following web pages: the European Environmental Education Newsletter <<<http://eeen.realworld.de>>>; the European Environmental Information Dissemination Database <<<http://eidd.realworld.de>>> and the Millennium Conference on Environmental Education and Communication (MC-ECOM) <<www.crossroad.de/millennium>>

Mike Pollastro, Managing Editor of the Electronic Green Journal, wrote to the COCE list with news of the journal. Access and distribution of the Electronic Green Journal with images and hypertext links integrated into the text is via the WorldWide Web at: <<<http://www.lib.uidaho.edu:70/docs/egj.html>>>

Second Nature Offers Database

Submitted to the COCE list by Steve Layman Bolton, Manager, Electronic Resources, Second Nature, Inc.

- Are you interested in joining thousands of your colleagues who have found there is a place that promotes Best Practices and case studies in higher education chronicling sustainability "on the ground"?
- Do you work in the classroom, campus or community seeking solutions to environmental issues using an interdisciplinary approach?
- Are you willing to share your experiences with collaborators who can help expand the Education for Sustainability movement through an internationally recognized Internet resource?

You are invited to explore and add your story to Second Nature's online "EFS Profiles" database <<<http://www.2nature.org/programs/profiles.nsf>>>. Inclusion of your project in our EFS Profiles database will help promote your leadership to our substantial and continually growing audience of users. The www.2nature.org website receives thousands of hits per week from members

of the higher education community and interested stakeholders.

Second Nature's EFS Profiles database already includes over 130 examples of how others have been making changes for and around sustainable development at their colleges and universities and in the surrounding communities. The EFS Profiles database encompasses work in curriculum change, campus greening, community involvement, sustainability research and institutional transformation. These profiles have been gathered into this database with the intent to spark new ideas and allow those planning new sustainability projects to benefit from the insights and experiences of colleagues.

Second Nature <<http://www.2nature.org>> is a nonprofit organization working to help colleges and universities expand their efforts to make environmentally sustainable and just action a foundation of learning and practice. Education for Sustainability (EFS) is a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having the creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions.

Please contact me directly at <<sbolton@2nature.org>> if you have any questions or comments. We truly look forward to hearing from you and hope you will visit our website soon.

International Conference On Sustainable Management of Coastal Ecosystems

You are invited to attend the International Conference on Sustainable Management of Coastal Ecosystems in Oporto, Portugal. The conference focuses on studies at the ecosystem level, related to sustainable management of coastal ecosystems. Papers on experimental, theoretical and mathematical modelling work will be accepted as well as papers dealing with economic aspects of coastal ecosystem management. The conference will be held at Fernando Pessoa University in the city of Oporto, Portugal, from November 3 to 5, 1999. For more information, contact by e-mail: <<pduarte@ufp.pt>> You may also register on the web:

<<<http://www.ufp.pt/units/geonucleo/coastal-ecosystems/>>>

National Communication Association 85th Annual Convention

Held at the Chicago Hilton and Towers from November 4-7, 1999, this annual conference features papers from a variety of communication divisions, including the Environmental Communication Commission. The conference will feature a Top Papers in Environmental Communication panel, as well as the annual business meeting of the ECC. Information about panels and locations will be printed in the next issue of Ecologue. Until then, you can visit the NCA home page for up-to-date information about the conference: <<www.natcom.org>>

MC-ECOM - The Millennium Conference on Environmental Education and Communication

Registrations for MC-ECOM, organized by the European Environmental Education Newsletter (<http://eeen.realworld.de>) in liaison with UNEP, UNESCO, GreenCOM and the North American Association for Environmental Education, are now open. This internet-based conference makes void the barrier of time and geography, since it is taking place in the world wide web. An intensive, 2 days-long dialogue is planned for the 9th and 10th December 1999. Participation is free of charge for people and institutions from developing countries, as well as for those working at NGOs (from both industrialized and developing nations). A conference book containing some of the key papers presented at the meeting (Environmental Education and Communication in the New Millennium: the Way Ahead), will be published in the earlier part of the year 2000 to provide a long-term record of the scheme. This is an event which intends to document and disseminate case studies and practical experiences. For further information, please visit the web site: <<<http://crossroad.de/millennium>>> or contact: eeen@realworld.de.

Shanahan and McComas Publish *Nature Stories*

By Heather Meierhofer, College of St. Benedict

Nature Stories: Depictions of the Environment and Their Effects is a book recently published by James Shanahan and Katherine McComas. Shanahan is currently an Assistant Professor of Communication at Cornell University, while McComas is a Communication Ph.D. candidate at the same Ithaca, New York, college.

The book, available from Hampton Press, Inc., of Cresskill, New Jersey, focuses on narrative and the environment. It examines how environmental messages are portrayed in mass media, particularly television. Nature Stories judges whether media play a positive or a negative role in the inception, promotion, and development of environmental consciousness in mass publics. The book's aim is to explore the role of mass media, especially television, in the construction of the environment from a dominant narrative perspective.

In examining the use of narrative in televised environmental portrayals, Shanahan and McComas consider aspects of how environmental issues are incorporated into the conventions of storytelling. Rather than focusing on facts and "rational" explanations of the environment, the media - especially television - tend to incorporate more emotional, narrative factors into the communication of environmental information and ideas. Sometimes, environmental issues are portrayed on television through the use of dramatized and even sensationalized stories. According to an article by Shanahan and McComas entitled "Television's portrayal of the environment: 1991-1995," results of their studies suggest that television is a very important narrative system in American culture, and it "tends to separate 'issues' such as the environment from the 'meat' of its narratives" (156). Media's tendency to create stories and dramas from environmental issues has undergone much criticism from industry and government officials, leading scientists, and representatives of environmental advocacy groups.

Authors James Shanahan and Katherine McComas have been working together for a number of years. They met in the early 1990s in Boston. At that time, Shanahan served as an assistant professor at Boston University while McComas was working on a master's degree there. Shanahan had been examining media messages about the environment since the late 1980s, when media began to pay significantly more attention to environmental issues. McComas' thesis dealt with a pertinent environmental issue, that of communication about acid rain, which was then an important public environmental controversy.

During the early 1990s, Shanahan and McComas began to develop the collaboration that eventually led to the publication of Nature Stories. McComas visited Ithaca, New York in 1994 to learn about the Ph.D. program in Communication at Cornell University. Through that connection, Shanahan heard about a new position opening up in environmental communication. Later that year, both Shanahan and McComas moved to Ithaca to pursue their passions for the environment. Since then, the authors have been able to pursue work on Nature Stories with one of the few research programs that examines how television portrays environmental issues.

In contrast to the many studies which focus on environmental portrayal in the news, the conclusions and data reported in Nature Stories show how television entertainment programs tend to minimize and marginalize environmental issues. According to yearly content analyses of prime-time programs, environmental interest as portrayed in television reached a small peak in the early 1990s and has unfortunately been declining ever since. According to Shanahan and McComas' article, "Major environmental issues such as Earth Day and the global warming scare had propelled the environment into the cultural consciousness of the early 1990s" (156). However, by the mid-1990s media's attention toward the environment seems to have faded.

Conclusions reached in Nature Stories show that the scarce television images are correlated with less public interest in environmental issues. The results imply that television plays a role in slowing the development of environmental concern in the United States. In the same article, Shanahan and McComas claim that television serves as one of the most important barriers between environmental issues and Americans' everyday experience because of the medium's ability to dominate the consciousness of so many people (147).

Some researchers hypothesize that television and other media outlets possess an agenda-setting function wherein a correlation exists between media issue emphasis and subsequent audience issue salience. In other words, with their agenda-setting power, media have the ability to make certain issues seem more important than others by portraying more or less information and programs about issues such as the environment, families, relationships, and money. People tend to associate more importance with issues that are frequently highlighted in television programs and on newscasts. Therefore, by decreasing the amount of time given to the environment on television programs, media outlets can have an affect on the rise or fall of public concern for the environment. In fact, in the article "Media agenda setting with environmental issues," authors Tony Atwater, Michael Salwen, and Ronald Anderson state that since few people have direct experience with pollution and environmental damage, the environment is the "kind of issue for which most audience members depend heavily on the media [particularly television] for knowledge and salience" (395).

Researchers Kandice Salamone, Michael Greenberg, Peter Sandman, and David Sachsman state the idea succinctly in their article "A question of quality: How journalists and news sources evaluate coverage of environmental risk." They note the incredible influence and agenda-setting power of the media in their opening lines: "Most of what Americans know about radon, pesticides, hazardous waste, the greenhouse effect, and other environmental risks comes from watching television and reading newspapers" (117). They continue in this manner: "The information [people] acquire affects whether they pressure government to oppose new facilities or welcome them, whether they demand restrictions on research and development or embrace them, and whether they move out of a community or stay. The relative effectiveness of public communication about environmental risk has high stakes for industry, government, and society" (117). Whether industry and government officials, leading scientists, and representatives of environmental advocacy groups agree with media's portrayal of environmental issues is another concern, claim the authors. In these ways, television may play a crucial role in helping to shape public opinion and concern about environmental issues.

Overall, Shanahan and McComas' book Nature Stories argues that television's messages can give important clues to an understanding of current environmental problems. Their research has shown that television programs and content can influence viewers' beliefs and attitudes about the environment. After their study of the relationship between media environment portrayal and public environmental concern from 1991 to 1995, they decided that their results implied that "television's pervasive and studious inattention to the environment results in societal neglect of environmental issues" (147). The book also examines effects from television's messages about nature and the environment and how journalism deals with environmental issues, considers future directions in which environmental narrative seems to be heading, and proposes directions for further research.

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