

Introduction

Environmental Communication Meets Presidential Rhetoric

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Presidential rhetoric both constrains and is constrained by political action regarding the natural environment. And our continued existence requires that environment. This collection of studies explores the interaction between presidential rhetoric and environmental debate. Its central purpose is to illuminate the rhetorical significance of crucial environmental discussions the presidency has participated in during the twentieth century. It attempts to achieve this goal by initiating integration between the burgeoning subdiscipline of environmental communication and the tradition of public address scholarship. Although it focuses primarily on environmentalism in the United States, the collection does not attempt to provide a comprehensive history of U.S. environmentalism. Neither does it attempt to analyze every presidential pronouncement related to environmental policy. Instead, it offers in-depth rhetorical analyses of selected key episodes in the history of U.S. environmental policy formation, all of which are inexorably linked to presidential rhetoric.

A second goal of this collection is to encourage a reexamination of basic presumptions guiding the study of presidential rhetoric and to suggest new directions in which it could move. To facilitate this comparative activity, I attempt to position this collection both within the emergent subdiscipline of environmental communication, and as it relates to the more mature research area of presidential rhetoric. This chapter first provides a select review of research in environmental rhetoric. Second, it describes how the scholarship collected in this volume differs from the traditional study of presidential rhetoric, with its grounding in public address scholarship. Third, it suggests three streams of environmental communication scholarship that might enrich the study of presidential rhetoric. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief guide to the studies in this collection.

Rhetorical Analysis of Environmental Communication

Research on rhetoric and the environment explores the rhetorical motivations within discourse about being at home in the world.¹ In addition to an awareness of symbolic action, it requires an intellectual engagement with questions of social responsibility and the material world. Environmental communication research should enable us to more critically examine our environmental politics. Consistent with the communication discipline's traditional concerns, environmental communication research has attended most closely to symbolic and instrumental messages concerning the environment, and analyses of environmental rhetoric have focused on verbal interactions. The studies in this current volume explore interpretations and political practices associated with the intersection between the environmental movement and environmental policy.²

Some publications on rhetoric and the environment are especially relevant to the current collection in that they use rhetorical perspectives and approaches to analyze environmental issues, and they identify with the discipline of communication. In 1992 Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline Palmer's *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* was published. *Ecospeak*, which integrates concerns from rhetorical studies and technical writing, provides a rhetorically grounded model for theorizing rhetorical practices and strategies that has influenced most subsequent analyses of environmental rhetoric.³

Three essay collections explicitly rhetorical in their perspectives and approaches were published in 1996. Star A. Muir and Thomas L. Veenendall's *Earthtalk: Communication Empowerment for Environmental Action* seeks to improve public dialogue by empowering readers to become more effective advocates. The book presents rhetorical strategies and discusses how the media can empower environmental action. Muir and Veenendall take an instrumentalist approach to rhetoric, describing language as a powerful tool for influencing perception and for motivating action to improve the environment. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown's *Green Culture: Rhetorical Analyses of Environmental Discourse* adds an exploration of rhetoric's ontological and epistemological function to concerns about strategy and politics. This volume puts a discursive spin on the traditional humanistic quest to discover "what exists, what is good, and what is possible." Herndl and Brown adapt *Ecospeak's* model of environmental communication to organize an excellent discussion of how regulatory, scientific, and poetic discourses contribute to and constrain the environmental dilemma facing Western society. In *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, James Cantrill and Christine Oravec assert that because we are symbol-using creatures the natural environment we

experience is largely a product of how we talk about the world. *Symbolic Earth* examines communication practices that socially construct nature. Its chapters are unified around an attempt to explain how different people facing different circumstances use language to construct the same material environment in radically different ways.⁴

In *Sharing the Earth: The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development* I brought a rhetorical perspective to bear on the increasingly contested term *sustainability*. *Sharing the Earth* uses aspects of Kenneth Burke's critical framework to ground a discussion of how different communities have participated in telling the story of sustainable development. It exemplifies how rhetorical analysis can be used to identify productive points of tension within debates over environmental issues.⁵

In addition to the books described above, rhetorical critics wrote about environmental communication during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1997 Craig Waddell collected examples from these studies to form the first volume of *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment*. Environmental communication research can also be tracked through the proceedings of the Conference on Communication and the Environment, which has occurred biennially since 1991. Lawrence Erlbaum is scheduled to publish the first Environmental Communication Yearbook in August 2003.⁶

Juxtaposition of Environmental Rhetoric and Presidential Rhetoric

Martin J. Medhurst delineates the two constructs "rhetorical presidency" and "presidential rhetoric" in his introduction to *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*. According to Medhurst, "the primary focus and basic concern of those working within the construct of the rhetorical presidency is largely, if not entirely, institutional. They are most concerned with the nature, scope, and function of the presidency as a constitutional office." He follows Tulis in defining the rhetorical presidency as "the use of popular speech addressed to mass audiences for the purpose of circumventing or bypassing congressional deliberation." Presidential rhetoric, on the other hand, refers to "the principles and practices of rhetoric, understood as the human capacity to see what is most likely to be persuasive to a given audience on a given occasion." In the case of presidential rhetoric, "rhetoric is the subject matter and presidential rhetoric the specific arena of investigation."⁷

Medhurst then sets out broad parameters within which students of presidential rhetoric have worked. Here, he mentions Aristotle's method of topical analysis, his three modes of persuasion (appeals from character, rationality, and

emotion), Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation, the context within which speaker, message, and audience relate, and the communicative medium. Medhurst follows Theodore Windt in describing presidential rhetoric scholarship as "criticism of single presidential speeches, criticism of rhetorical movements, development and criticism of genres of presidential speeches, and miscellaneous articles on ancillary topics."⁸

The current collection diverges in some ways from more traditional studies in presidential rhetoric. Windt's category scheme is not especially useful for describing the studies in this volume. For example, the closest any of them come to analysis of a single speech is to focus on a single campaign or a single president. Although most analyze certain aspects or dimensions of environmentalism or antienvironmentalism, none seek to encompass the entire movement. None focus on speech genres. It seems, rather, that, according to Windt's schema, these analyses focus on topics that are ancillary to the study of presidential rhetoric.

Neither is this collection best characterized within the traditional parameters of the rhetorical presidency. The studies in this book interpret presidential rhetoric broadly, including presidential advisers and public programs that are connected with presidential administrations, rather than focusing on speeches made by individual presidents. They are more interested in the cultural milieu than in the institution of the presidency. I have no doubt that more institutionally focused analyses would echo Dennis L. Soden's claim that "there is no environmental president." In *The Environmental Presidency*, Soden and contributors seek to "develop a systematic understanding of how presidents have influenced the development of environmental and natural resource policy." The evidence they present indicates that the environment has not provided a driving force in the administrations of any U.S. president, although presidents sometimes have used it as a political issue. Soden's initial hypothesis "that the environmental president is more symbolic than real" highlights a fundamental difference between concerns of researchers of the rhetorical presidency.⁹

For the contributors to this book, differences between the symbolic and the "real" are not so easily distinguished. They would argue that although environmental issues may not have defined the powerful presidential roles of commander in chief, chief diplomat, chief executive, or legislative leader identified by Soden et al., these issues (which became issues through processes that are fundamentally symbolic) are becoming increasingly significant to the presidential role of opinion leader. Further, as powerful technologies enable humans to increase the rate at which we alter the environment and other technologies enable us to monitor the disturbing results of those alterations, environmental issues increasingly impinge on the president's role as chief diplomat. George H.

Bush's decision to run as the "environmental president" in 1988 and Bill Clinton's attempt to claim the title for himself illustrate the increasingly central role of the environment as a political issue.¹⁰ The studies in this volume seek to illuminate the rhetorical significance of such choices, contributing to a systematic understanding of how public figures negotiate conflicts within the public sphere.

Perhaps the disjuncture between the current volume and both presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency occurs because although its contributors are motivated by many of the concerns Medhurst identifies with presidential rhetoric, they also are motivated by an interest in the cultural milieu beyond that traditionally associated with public address (which is related to but distinct from the institutional focus exhibited by studies of the rhetorical presidency). This discovery prompts at least two possibilities. We could decide that, because they do not fit the traditionally accepted schema, these studies are beyond the scope of presidential rhetoric. A more productive alternative might be to suggest a reexamination of the criteria we have used to define and evaluate scholarship in presidential rhetoric. Perhaps the construct could endure strategic expansion without falling into the trap against which Medhurst warns when he claims that an "explanation that accounts broadly for everything, accounts specifically for nothing."¹¹

Although Windt's schema is not useful in the context of this collection, another approach might suggest directions for an expanded description of presidential rhetoric. For example, we could divide the studies according to their use of traditional/nontraditional approaches to rhetorical criticism of traditional/nontraditional rhetorical texts. The chapters by Dorsey, Vickery, Short, and Moore use conventional rhetorical approaches to analyze texts that traditionally have been identified as public address, although in most scholarly contexts they would be notable for the careful detail with which they examine the cultural backgrounds for their texts. Other studies can be described as taking traditional approaches to nontraditional texts. The chapters by Daughton and Beasley, Henry, and Prelli use standard approaches to rhetorical criticism to examine texts that are less widely accepted as public addresses worthy of scholarly attention. Daughton and Beasley examine political cartoons, and how they function as a counterpoint to Pres. Franklin Roosevelt's words. Henry almost entirely dismisses the words uttered by President Clinton, focusing instead on the communication of a cabinet appointee who functioned as the president's surrogate during an important public campaign. Prelli uses that most traditional of rhetorical approaches (a topical analysis) to examine the processes whereby a public participation practice (that had no public figures in attendance) constituted democracy. Carcasson's chapter takes a third approach,

applying a nontraditional methodology (based in Luhmann's systems theory) to traditional texts (formal speeches by Presidents Bush and Clinton). Finally, two studies apply relatively nontraditional approaches (strongly influenced by cultural studies) to nontraditional texts. Oravec reverses the traditional textual positions by foregrounding the culture of the technoscientific sphere, with its accompanying ideas, and allowing the speech of Theodore Roosevelt to fade into the background. Cox's critical approach combines aspects of relatively traditional rhetorical criticism with postmodern reflexivity. Although he focuses on a president (Clinton), Cox constructs his text from a pastiche of cultural artifacts that include, but are not centered in, Clinton's formal speeches.

Categorizing the chapters in this volume comes with all the attendant weaknesses of any modernist system for describing reality. It oversimplifies relationships among the studies, creating false dichotomies between those that fall into different categories and masking differences among those that fall into the same category. I am certain there is room for argument regarding whether any individual study is best described as using a traditional/nontraditional approach, and whether it examines traditional/nontraditional texts. The point is not to use a Procrustean approach to force studies into particular categories so much as to find a way of organizing the studies that does not leave most of them in a category labeled "miscellaneous." Further, this organizational framework highlights a question suggested earlier. Environmental issues have assumed an increasingly central role within public discourse. The study of presidential rhetoric, with its roots in public address scholarship, has not attended to this discourse. The chapters in this volume focus on environmental communication as it is politically contested. Given that so many of these studies are "nontraditional" in some way, perhaps it is time to rearticulate the tradition.

Significant continuities exist between the current volume and the traditional study of presidential rhetoric. Three studies in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency* are especially relevant to this study of intersections between presidential rhetoric and the U.S. environmental movement. The first two, by Bruce Gronbeck and Thomas Benson, argue persuasively that electronic media, which have become as ubiquitous as the spoken word in contemporary society, have fundamentally altered presidential rhetoric. The third, by Robert Ivie, argues for an explicitly expanded notion of rhetoric as "a constitutive force and a source of national identity essential to the operation of the public sphere and the constitution of the polity." Presidential rhetoric then "is equated with the construction of political culture." This collection accepts and works from Gronbeck's and Benson's claims about the ubiquitous nature of electronic media, although not necessarily their interpretations of the influences these media have had. It also takes its cue from the expanded construct of presidential rhetoric as a con-

stitutive cultural force suggested by Ivie. All the studies exemplify to varying degrees the interest in the intersection between communication and culture that increasingly characterizes contemporary rhetorical studies. The subject matter differs, but the analyses in this volume share a fundamental analytical goal articulated in the second volume of Medhurst's presidential rhetoric series: discovering "ways of rhetorically enacting a strong and healthy democratic culture."¹²

This book offers environmental communication scholarship as an example of how the application of multiple perspectives can enrich traditional public address research, thus broadening its appeal for those primarily interested in rhetorical theory, rhetoric of science, applied communication, and other areas within the communication discipline. The practicality of public address studies for citizens has been the traditional and strongest rationale for those studies. This is consistent with public address scholarship's connection with the classical rhetorical tradition dating at least from Aristotle's attempts to systematize an approach that would enable citizens to participate rationally in their own governance.

Contemporary public address scholarship is illuminating, but it is increasingly difficult for the growing number of communication scholars who are not involved in that subdiscipline to imagine how these insights can be translated back to the practical, problem-oriented contexts where political deliberations transpire. Environmental communication is one of these contexts, including debates about energy policy, water use, and wildlife, fishery, forest, and wildland management. The strength of environmental communication studies is their gritty practicality concerning problems confronting a plurality of embodied, situated, interested audiences. Public address scholarship can settle for textual insight and illumination and then promise practicality in some distant future or idealized situation, but environmental communication scholars cannot make that trade-off without undercutting their reason for being. Put otherwise, whereas the appeals to practicality as rationale for public address studies have a highly theoretical quality, environmental communication studies require a more convincing demonstration of practical utility.

The crux of the argument for a book that juxtaposes these approaches to communication research is this: environmental communication studies can help to redeem the promise of practicality for public address scholarship (at least on natural resource issues), while public address scholarship can contribute sophisticated interpretive approaches for understanding the texts from which policies and continued debates transpire. The perspective outlined here is not intended to denigrate previous approaches to the study of presidential or of environmental rhetoric, but rather to enhance both. Perhaps the larger point

is that integrating the two approaches offers a different kind of rhetorical analysis—aside from treating different subjects—that could form part of the basis for a more powerful rationale for the study of presidential rhetoric.

Questions posed by this juxtaposition of multiple methods and divergent perspectives are fundamental for practitioners of rhetorical analysis. Do we write rhetorical analyses of political issues, events, and individuals for other public address scholars, for political critics, for decision makers, or for citizens? Should we desire to do so, how can we write rhetorical analyses that respond to the needs of more than one of these groups simultaneously? What qualities have marked rhetorical analyses in public address and in environmental communication? How do they compare and contrast? How can an integration of these diverse approaches to political speech contribute to a more lively public and scholarly debate? Although none of the chapters in this book respond to all these questions, all approach some of them and offer possibilities that could enrich the practice of rhetorical criticism at the same time they enliven the practice of political rhetoric.

Potential for Integration

Environmental communication has been about symbolic practices for constituting human identity and relationships with the earth. It has grown out of an intellectual shift that legitimates rhetoric's epistemic and ontological significance, a heightened awareness and distrust of science and technology, and an increasingly widespread discomfort with visible environmental degradation. It stresses communicative exchange as social engagement among diverse participants who coconstruct their situation. Environmental communication research should enable us to better understand what environmental policy means to society. At least three contemporary streams of environmental communication research suggest opportunities for enriching the study of presidential rhetoric.

The Symbolic and the Material

Kevin DeLuca, whose research focuses on the significance of visual images, has moved toward a theory of critical rhetoric grounded in the visually oriented media event. He also argues that environmental groups must develop strategies and tactics for an electronically mediated age. Daughton and Beasley's analysis of Ding Darling's environmental cartoons (chap. 3, this volume) shows how environmental advocates began developing such strategies during the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. Phaedra Pezullo, whose research focuses

on rhetorical strategies used to focus attention on chemical contamination of the environment, cautions against focusing too narrowly on the visual. Since toxic substances frequently are invisible, she advocates that rhetorical scholars attend to a wider range of communicative practices. In arguing for a more embodied sense of rhetoric she turns to Blair and Selzer's concept of material rhetoric, pointing out that, since the material thus theorized often refers to aspects of the physical environment, rich possibilities for cross-fertilization exist.¹³

Pezullo notes as an example of this potential J. Robert Cox's 1982 article "The Die Is Cast: Tropical and Ontological Dimensions of the *Locus* of the Irreparable." Waddell characterizes this study as a defining moment in the scholarship of environmental rhetoric.¹⁴ As Cox explores doing what cannot be undone to a species or a place, he positions materiality centrally for evaluating the arguments of the irreparable and, therefore, of the environment. In my 1998 review of environmental communication scholarship, I further develop the discussion around the relationship between materiality and symbolicity, arguing that "although nature is not inherently a rhetorical text, human actions and social structures associated with it do function rhetorically . . . [and thus] environmental communication must maintain the integrity of both verbal and natural systems since both are essential: our existence depends on nature, and we use language to conceptualize and discuss the natural systems on which we rely."¹⁵ I acknowledge that while invention and symbolicity are important facets of environmental rhetoric, they do not constitute its entire domain. Several of the chapters in this collection discuss the problematic nexus between material and symbolic. Henry's examination of attempts to improve relationships between the U.S. Department of Energy and the public, Cox's alternate readings for Clinton's environmental policy, Prelli's explication of conflicting standards for sustainability, and Carcasson's exploratory analysis of contemporary presidential opportunities (and responsibilities) to participate in international governance are especially relevant to this endeavor.

Science, Technology, and the Rhetoric of Risk

A related site for productive integration is the rhetorical analysis of presidential speech about science and technology issues, which often require the ability to integrate the material and symbolic. Science and technology-based conflicts have become increasingly central to presidential speech since the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. With its grounding in science and technology, environmental communication studies can lend greater insight to the textual and historical analyses traditionally performed by public address scholars. In

turn, the sophisticated approaches to text that have evolved within rhetoric and public address promise to enhance the quality of environmental communication scholarship.

At the center of society's modern political concerns (such as the environment) lie the risks and consequences of modernization, which include irreversible threats to life. Exploring the political rhetoric about environmental issues provides a potentially rich basis for examining questions about the sources and social dynamics of reflexivity with which we might transform the project of modernity.¹⁶ Celeste Michelle Condit's sophisticated insights into the rhetoric of science exemplify these possibilities. For example, Condit has created a highly nuanced narrative of the U.S. debate about genetic research and manipulations by locating its major rhetorical formations in popular magazines, newspapers, and other media.¹⁷

Ulrich Beck claims that our access to this critical perspective is blocked by a barely recognized myth in which the social thought of the nineteenth century was essentially trapped and which still casts a shadow into the twenty-first century. This myth asserts that the developed nations of the world (best exemplified by the United States), with their patterns of work and life, their production sectors, their understanding of science and technology, and their forms of democracy, are thoroughly modern societies. Expressions of this myth include the claims that history has ended and that democracy requires radical privatization of the economy. Beck argues that although science and skepticism are institutionalized in modern society, skepticism is limited to the external objects of research, while the foundations and consequences of scientific work remain shielded from public scrutiny.¹⁸ Rhetorical analysis of environmental policy could enable a systematic extension of skepticism to the foundations and hazards of scientific work, exposing the discontinuity between its internal and external relations. We are concerned not only with making nature useful and releasing humans from traditional constraints but also with problems resulting from development itself. Political awareness that hazardous side effects pollute the sources of wealth is spreading.

The environmental issues emerging in our industrialized world cannot be sufficiently reinterpreted by better science or more powerful technology. Science itself has limits, for "there is not a single theory which is in agreement with all the facts in its domain."¹⁹ Ecology is perhaps the most integrative of the natural sciences. It attempts to grapple with the whole of nature by taking a systems approach. Inherent in this perspective is the idea of embedded ecological communities. The logical extension is that no ecological explanation is every wholly complete. When one explicitly focuses on normative questions, the insufficiency of the scientific approach becomes obvious. Despite all this,

discussions about the destruction of the environment are still conducted dominantly in the terms and formulas of natural science, while social, cultural, and political meanings inherent in scientific formulas remain largely unrecognized.

Rhetorical critiques of environmental discourse can encourage an awareness of conflicting environmental policy options as struggles among rationality claims, some competing and some overlapping. This critical approach presumes that the origin of any critique of science and technology lies not in the irrationality of the critics, but in the limitations of technoscientific rationality. The public refusal to accept the results of scientifically valid risk assessments, then, is not something to be reproached as irrationality. Rather, it indicates that the cultural premises of acceptability contained in technical statements on risks are inappropriate; the risk experts are mistaken in the empirical accuracy of their assumptions regarding what is acceptable.²⁰ It suggests the need for a rhetorical critique. The contributors to this volume work from the premise that environmental policy serves both a constitutive and an instrumental function. They use presidential rhetoric about environmental policy as a framework within which to examine political responses to the concern for how to prevent, minimize, dramatize, or focus the risks and hazards systematically produced as part of modernization.

Rhetoricizing the Public Sphere

A third topic with strong potential for cross-fertilization between research in environmental communication and presidential rhetoric is the public sphere. Numerous scholars have lamented the breakdown of the public sphere, arguing that an increased reliance on technical reasoning has excluded citizens from involvement in the development of public policy.²¹ Public participation in environmental decision making has been an official part of the national agenda since President Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act (see chap. 4, this volume). Caitlin W. Toker argues that the pursuit of an ideal public sphere within which this participation can occur has encouraged uncritical acceptance of stakeholder models that promise facilitation of open and free public deliberation according to principles of equality, representation, open deliberation, and consensus.²² In these forums, stakeholders from all walks of life theoretically come together and engage in open and free deliberation. Through such deliberation, individuals overcome differences to unite in the spirit of the common good and reach a rationally determined consensus. Because decision making occurs through an open competition between interests, the results will be legitimate and fair. Toker's analysis of a stakeholder group created by the Georgia Port Authority demonstrates that stakeholder models work very differently

in practice. The consensus process holds participants hostage, allowing powerful institutions to use legal and legislative channels with little disruption. She argues that public deliberation would be better served through an exploration of rhetorical strategies these groups can use to redefine situations, disassociate dysfunctional relationships, and introduce new perspectives.

Robert L. Ivie has suggested shifting the critical focus of the search for the public sphere to celebrate the diversity of participants, languages, types of reasoning, and evidence involved in public debate.²³ Such a shift reveals that, more than their skillful use of technical reasoning, power is what allows the elite to control deliberative processes. One of the weaknesses characterizing stakeholder models is that they ignore power.²⁴ Public deliberation in the environmental policy context is intensely political and always linked to power relationships and value conflicts. The conditions of public participation always privilege some interests over others. This makes them necessarily partial rather than fully representative. Perhaps more fundamentally disturbing is that rather than creating a safe space for genuine public deliberation, stakeholder involvement processes can create a dangerous space, a quasi-political environment where participants expend their energy articulating public ideals of freedom, equality, and openness while decisions are made elsewhere. Because of their connection to public policy, the studies in this collection speak to the intellectual pursuit of a richer public sphere, and the chapters by Moore, Henry, and Prelli critically analyze various attempts to involve citizens in the development and implementation of public policy.

The Studies

At least since the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. presidents have marshaled their rhetorical power to persuade people to support or reject various environmental policies. They have also used the natural environment to vilify political opponents, burnish their own images, and garner support from special interest groups. The chapters in this book are arranged chronologically, beginning with the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, who is identified with the beginning of the conservation movement in the United States.

Environmental Rhetoric and the New Frontier

The conservation movement was consistent with the Progressive Era in its belief that through government regulation people could encourage more rational use of natural resources. Despite the dramatic pronouncements of Theodore Roosevelt and the poetic flights of John Muir, conservation was about using

science and technology to develop and implement policies that would encourage rational and efficient use of natural resources; it was not about nature. Nevertheless, conservationists left a significant natural legacy. The magical quality of Roosevelt's unusual sympathy for wilderness conservation, for example, contributed to his ability to set aside eighteen national monuments, enlarge the national forests from 42 to 172 million acres, and persuade Congress to create fifty-one national wildlife refuges.²⁵

Theodore Roosevelt is widely identified as both a rhetorical president and as a pioneer for visionary environmental policy in the United States. He called upon the mythos of the American frontier to imbue his environmental policies with the pathos of the American dream. Roosevelt's vision enabled conservation legislation by arguing that the nation's moral strength required the preservation of at least a few acres of untamed wilderness.

In chapter 1 Leroy G. Dorsey analyzes President Roosevelt's rhetorical mission to promote more prudent use of America's "sacred" natural resources. Dorsey argues that by changing the public's frame of reference for the natural environment, Theodore Roosevelt was able to overcome what would have otherwise been impossible odds and create support for a broadly supported conservation ethic. Prior to Roosevelt's conservation crusade, the American public viewed the country's natural resources as essentially inexhaustible. Even when faced with species extinction or deforestation of vast regions, the general response was that such changes were not significant losses. Dorsey argues that Roosevelt changed the public's interpretation of the natural environment from a resource owned by a person or group, to a gift from God. As such, it became the people's moral responsibility to treat nature well and preserve it. It also meant that conservation was everyone's responsibility.

Dorsey further argues that Theodore Roosevelt promoted wilderness as an essence with an intangible quality that enabled communion between God and humanity, fortifying both the body and soul. He built on the belief that the United States was God's chosen land, making Americans a chosen people who were destined to greatness. It was not acceptable for God's chosen people to reject his gift nor to treat it carelessly. Dorsey explains that Roosevelt categorized sins against nature into two categories. First, there was the sin of shortsighted greed, exhibited by business, mainly the timber industry, which was not claiming to practice sustainable forestry at that time. Dorsey demonstrates rhetorical practices used by Roosevelt to dramatize this sin. The second sin against nature was a sin of omission, or indifference, by the American people. Thus members of the public were required to become actively engaged in attempts to stop greedy corporations who threatened to destroy nature.

Dorsey also demonstrates that Roosevelt's rhetoric established links that more contemporary presidents have been less than successful at developing. First, Roosevelt successfully articulated a positive connection between environmental preservation and economic prosperity, which encouraged members of the public who were not likely to be motivated by his religious arguments. He also led the way to federal regulation of environmental issues, asserting that because nature is universal, it falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Contemporary presidents continue to struggle with these two issues, which provide important aspects of analysis in other chapters.

Christine Oravec's critique probes more deeply into the relationship between the rhetoric of Theodore Roosevelt, his enigmatic adviser W. J. McGee, and the ever elusive public sphere. Despite Roosevelt's lifelong fascination with science, discussions of his rhetorical contributions to the environmental movement have tended to ignore this influence. Oravec's examination of science and technology rhetoric adds complementary insights to the more traditional analysis of Roosevelt's environmental persona. Relying largely on the rhetorical theory of Michael Calvin McGee and Maurice Charland, Oravec examines how W. J. McGee constructed a public to whom Roosevelt could address environmental appeals.

Her study explains the process whereby Theodore Roosevelt's advisers developed the basis for a political policy of environmental action grounded primarily on scientific and technological premises, then succeeded in popularizing this policy by creating a conception of a conservationist public, which continues to exist in the contemporary political milieu. After reviewing some of the public pressures that encouraged the creation of a movement for effectively coordinating public policy, Oravec explores the rhetorical processes used by advocates of environmental conservation exemplified by W. J. McGee to formulate language that identified conservation as a social movement and justified the advocacy of a social policy based on principles of evolution and the progressive spirit of the "people."

Oravec extends Dorsey's analysis in two directions. First, she shows how conservationists within Roosevelt's administration constructed a continuum for the movement from various concepts and themes present into the public domain and positioned its audience as constituents. Oravec emphasizes the corporate, scientific basis of Roosevelt's conception of national government, shifting the explanatory focus from the archetypical mythic framework discussed by Dorsey toward an emphasis on scientists and technology entrepreneurs whose commodity was the environment as natural resource. The second extension includes her critical analysis of the concept of community, or public, for whom conservationists spoke. While Oravec's analysis confirms Dorsey's

claims that civil religion was central to the public created by Roosevelt's rhetoric, she argues that such a mythology does not stand alone as a motivation for public response but is woven into the political, scientific, social, and economic threads of a nation's culture.

Oravec's chapter critically analyzes how Roosevelt's advocacy-oriented advisers combined an artful construction of an activist, conservationist public with scientifically justified calls to action. Her detailed analysis of relevant texts also demonstrates one way an integration of textual analysis techniques often used by public address scholars, contemporary cultural theory, and environmental communication scholarship can enrich the concept of the rhetorical presidency and contribute to a more lively scholarly debate.

Environmental Rhetoric and Political Pragmatism

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan exemplified a more pragmatic use of the natural environment to achieve specific political ends. Although Franklin Roosevelt's and Nixon's overt pragmatism led to the development of powerful federal conservation agencies, neither engaged the hearts of the people as Theodore Roosevelt's rhetoric had. The materiality of the environmental crisis during the dust bowl and the 1960s, however, provided U.S. citizens with more than sufficient pathos. During Franklin Roosevelt's presidency, the earth itself coated people's throats, burned their eyes, and broke their hearts. Nixon presided at a time when the American landscape exhibited pollution realized from post-World War II prosperity. American rivers were so polluted they caught fire, and our national avian symbol was threatened with extinction. At the beginning of Reagan's presidency, a sense of complacency dominated the environmental movement. The demonstrated ability to clean up polluted air and water, industry's predictions of economic doom, and public anger toward increasing federal regulation of the individual, combined to spur a reaction against federal environmental regulation. Reagan's antienvironmental rhetoric combined the moral force of the American dream with contemporary public anger to effectively constrain enforcement of existing conservation statutes and regulations, which he characterized as anti-individualistic.

Like other social issues, conservation suffered during the 1920s. By the time Franklin D. Roosevelt was first elected (1932), the nation was already suffering from environmental devastation that was as serious as the more publicly present economic disaster. Franklin Roosevelt shared his cousin's positive regard for nature and made his own significant contributions to the conservationist agenda. FDR integrated environmental policy into his New Deal. His environmental

legacy can be seen today in agencies such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resource Conservation Service), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.²⁶

Suzanne M. Daughton and Vanessa B. Beasley use the political cartoons of Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling as a basis for their critique of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s conservation rhetoric. Darling served as Roosevelt’s first director of the Biological Survey, the precursor to today’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They argue that although the office of the presidency began exerting influence over U.S. environmental policy long before the rhetorical presidency gained ascendancy, presidential involvement in public policies explicitly designed to manage natural resources is of much more contemporary origin. Their study is a rhetorical analysis of environmental controversy within the Roosevelt administration, which established the basic organizational framework within which most contemporary environmental policy is developed and implemented.

Daughton and Beasley’s central claim is that the natural environment poses unique political difficulties because of the intrinsic conflicts between the pragmatism of liberal democracy and the moral implications found in most environmental rhetoric. They point out that, despite Theodore Roosevelt’s dramatic environmental rhetoric (and his identification with the environmental movement and environmental preservation efforts in the public imagination), most of contemporary U.S. environmental policy is grounded in the political structure developed by Franklin Roosevelt (who is not strongly identified with the environmental movement in the popular imagination). Daughton and Beasley’s analysis follows from Oravec’s attempt to analyze how successful rhetorical appeals are woven into the political, scientific, social, and economic threads of a nation’s culture.

Daughton and Beasley argue that Roosevelt’s environmental rhetoric was consistent with his pragmatic approach of “experimenting with a variety of solutions to specific problems and discarding those he did not see as productive.” Because he integrated environmental issues into the political, scientific, social, and economic challenges facing his administration, Roosevelt was able to justify the establishment of a vast bureaucracy to ensure conservation of the nation’s natural resources. Roosevelt assured the American public that environmental conservation addressed their social and economic desires. Franklin Roosevelt also echoed Theodore Roosevelt’s claims that nature itself offered humans a periodic refuge from their frenetic struggle to survive and that given this universal potential, natural resources were appropriately translated into national resources (and therefore subject to federal regulation).

FDR’s ability to integrate the desire for short-term economic benefits with the imperative toward a more sustainable future did not, however, eliminate

controversy from environmental politics. Daughton and Beasley focus on how Ding Darling's political cartoons functioned as a source of this controversy, which in turn contributed to a perpetual state of negotiation that strengthened Roosevelt's environmental policies. They argue that the environmental rhetoric from his administration had lasting benefits and demonstrates the ubiquity of negotiation within democratic political rhetoric. Their analysis of how arguments within Roosevelt's administration integrated economic, scientific, and spiritual motives into environmental policy suggests ways in which contemporary advocates of environmental protection might enable presidents to more effectively transcend the rhetoric of the economy versus the environment.

During the decades following World War II conservation struggled to maintain a foothold as Americans scrambled for their share of postwar prosperity. Rapid advances in science and technology associated with the war effort were turned to domestic uses. For example, DDT, which had been invaluable in protecting U.S. soldiers from malaria, was sprayed throughout suburban environments, freeing people from the nuisance of mosquitoes and eventually bringing bald eagle numbers to dangerously low levels. Banning DDT resulted in one of environmentalism's rare successes, the recovery of this species.²⁷ Although a few scientists and conservationists were urging caution, the public was not listening until the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 brought environmental concerns into the public eye. Although the book was not universally accepted, it was universally noticed. Chemical companies devoted unprecedented resources to publicly demonizing Carson, which only ensured wider awareness of the book. John F. Kennedy read the book, invited Carson to the White House, and began federal investigations of U.S. chemical production. In terms of rhetorical significance, it is difficult to overrate *Silent Spring*. The change from the conservation to the environmental movement is commonly associated with its publication.²⁸

The environmental movement was again closely associated with other social issues. By 1970 it had become mainstream. Richard Nixon, who had not identified himself with the protests of the 1960s, responded to the increased public interest in environmental protection by addressing it in his 1970 state of the union address. On April 22 of that year some 20 million Americans took part in the first Earth Day celebration. Although the organizers tended to be former antiwar and civil rights activists, the celebration enjoyed broad participation among every socioeconomic group in the nation. Before middecade President Nixon had signed the National Environmental Policy Act and created the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). The Clean Air Act was joined by the Clean Water Act, the Ocean Dumping Act, and the Endangered Species Act. The international aspects of environmental problems did not go unnoticed.

In 1972 the United Nations sponsored the Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, which led to the establishment of the UN Environment Programme.²⁹

Micheal Vickery explores how political circumstances converged with Richard Nixon's political identity, administrative agenda, and rhetorical style to constitute the EPA. Vickery claims that, although many people struggle to locate Nixon along a liberal-conservative spectrum, his pragmatism is much more significant. Just as Daughton and Beasley argue that Franklin Roosevelt's environmental policies derived from his political pragmatism, Vickery argues that Nixon's creation of multiple federal agencies with responsibility for environmental regulation was politically expedient. Nixon was, above all else, a political animal, and his support of the EPA exemplified that tendency.

Vickery points out that Nixon became president in a time of raucous public demand for increased environmental protection. Concern for the natural environment enjoyed such broad popularity, particularly among politically active young adults, that it temporarily overwhelmed industry's claims that regulation would stifle the economy.

Vickery cites Nixon's observation that, next to peace, the environment was the major concern of the American people as an example of his awareness of the public interest. Environmental protection was the domestic focus of Nixon's first state of the union address, in which he advocated regulation of industrial pollution. Nixon responded to widespread popular interest in the environment by supporting legislation that enhanced environmental protection and allowing his domestic affairs adviser, John Ehrlichman, great latitude in advocating increased environmental protection. Vickery claims that establishing the EPA as an agency to enforce environmental standards, conduct research, and assist other agencies in recommending new policy was the logical response to public demands of the time. By ensuring that EPA's fiscal operations were overseen by the Office of Management and Budget, the Nixon administration also partially placated industry leaders' concerns that the EPA would interfere with their practices.

Vickery uses his analysis of Nixon and the EPA as a platform for arguing that although public pressures can play an important role in policymaking, rhetorical critics should be cautious about accepting assertions of such influence. He advocates expanding our conception of presidential rhetoric beyond public speeches and other formal discourse (a challenge taken up in many studies included in this collection) as a means for critically exploring the relationship between political realism and rhetorical action. His rhetorical critique of Nixon's relationship with the EPA leads to the conclusion that Nixon used it as a bureaucratic management tool that enabled industry to rationalize the

continuation of detrimental environmental practices. Vickery's analysis encourages readers to interpret Nixon's support of the EPA as the skillful use of political power to mediate differing perceptions of reality between factions. He points out that the EPA has enabled preservation of traditional ways in which science and popular desires combine to encourage continued economic expansion at the expense of environmental protection.

The environmental movement's success did not please everyone, and the 1980s marked a significant backlash. When Ronald Reagan was elected, he not only halted the development of government-sponsored measures to protect the environment but also began dismantling those in existence. He appointed antienvironmentalist individuals to key environmental positions, such as James Watt as interior secretary, Ann Burford as head of the EPA, and Donald Hodel as energy secretary.³⁰

C. Brant Short analyzes the antienvironmentalist rhetoric of the Reagan administration. Short builds on his previous analysis of Ronald Reagan's participation in the debate over public lands in the United States to evaluate the interaction between the mythology of the frontier and Reagan's environmental rhetoric. He notes Reagan's skillful use of American popular culture to increase his popularity and how his background as an actor enabled him to become known as "the Great Communicator." Short's study is similar to Dorsey's, in that it is focused on how Reagan used historical and cultural forces in his environmental rhetoric. Short demonstrates how Reagan's rhetoric relied on, while simultaneously further legitimating and expanding, the related mythologies of the Puritan errand and the frontier thesis. Short argues further that Reagan's rhetoric helped to develop a public image that identified his personal experience with this mythology, enabling him to more persuasively integrate it into his political rhetoric.

Short asserts that an analysis of Reagan's relationship to environmental policy must include the rhetoric of his flamboyant secretary of the interior James Watt, a born-again Christian who personified the culture of the New Right. Even more explicitly than Reagan, Watt argued that the administration had a mission to restore traditional values, which had been eroded by "the left," which included environmentalists. The four cornerstones upon which Watt's environmental policy was built were that America must have a solid economy in order to care for the environment, orderly development of energy resources was needed to avert a disaster, natural resources should be used for the advancement of civilization, and America has the ability to use and manage the environment wisely. During Watt's tenure, he emphasized that the secretary of the interior's job was to manage the public lands in a way that would enhance national security and encourage economic expansion.

Short demonstrates that Reagan's environmental rhetoric relied on arguments similar to those used by Theodore Roosevelt. Both were technological optimists, assuming that humans could harness natural resources for the betterment of society. Reagan also echoed Roosevelt's association of American values with an entrepreneurial spirit of risk taking and individualism. Reagan's rhetoric emphasized that America was God's chosen land, over which American citizens held stewardship. At this point, however, the rhetoric of the two administrations diverged. Roosevelt extended his religious claim to support pronouncements that Americans were responsible for conserving natural resources and to justify federal regulation of those resources for the communal good. Short argues that Reagan's rhetoric emphasized American's God-given mandate to explore nature for the purpose of developing new energy resources. Further, although Reagan claimed it was appropriate to use natural resources wisely, he not only attempted to reduce environmental regulations but also publicly ridiculed environmental standards designed to protect public health. Through detailed analysis of the public statements made by Reagan and advisers such as Watt, Short demonstrates that, for the natural environment to have any significance within the Reagan administration, it first had to be identified with immediate economic needs or national security.

Sensing an increasing public nervousness about Reagan's antienvironmentalist politics, George Bush promised to be an "environmental president." He signaled his commitment to this promise by appointing William K. Reilly, a respected environmentalist, to head the EPA, but did not take a leadership role himself. For example, in 1989 several states agreed to adopt vehicle emissions standards that were tougher than those recommended by the Bush administration. In 1990 the Bush administration and Congress cooperated to pass amendments upgrading the Clean Air Act to comparable standards. In addition, rather than attempting to integrate the two, Bush struggled to balance environmental and economic concerns. Bush's failure as an environmental president was most obvious in his participation at the 1992 Earth Summit, sponsored by the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro.³¹ Carcasson's chapter on global environmental governance examines Bush's rhetoric in greater detail.

The Environmental President Who Wasn't

William Jefferson Clinton promised to reverse the Reagan-Bush record on environmental protection. But Clinton presided at a time when the public was far more concerned with the federal deficit than with the bald eagle. The pragmatism that worked so well for Franklin Roosevelt and Nixon was insufficient to the rhetorical situation in the 1990s, and Clinton's rhetoric lacked the moral

conviction of either Theodore Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan. Three chapters focus on Clinton's attempt to become the first environmental president.

J. Robert Cox critiques the rhetorical constraints faced by the Clinton-Gore White House, arguing that a more inclusive model of presidential rhetoric could enrich both the natural world and our public life by reaffirming, refining, and renewing a vocabulary that enhances opportunities for public judgment of conservation efforts. Cox claims that any analysis of motives associated with Clinton's environmental rhetoric must account for his enigmatic appeal to American audiences and his apparent desire to leave a lasting political legacy. He points out that Clinton's choice of Al Gore, who was well known for his environmentalist leanings, as his vice presidential running mate assured him the green vote, while maintaining maximum flexibility for Clinton himself regarding environmental issues. The value of this flexibility continued throughout the years Clinton held office, especially as he faced a Republican Congress that became increasingly confrontational in its opposition to regulation, including environmental regulation. Additionally, this flexibility enabled him to survive when his plans for environmental protection were shot down by competing federal and state agencies, as well as by people within his own administration. Cox asserts that Clinton's republican style of leadership was instrumental in his ability to navigate the stormy relationship between the White House and Congress, as well as his rhetorical self-presentation before the American public.

Cox argues, however, that this leadership style lacked the power needed to support controversial environmental policy decisions. When faced with environmental issues, Clinton followed his general tendency to make political promises without the ability to follow through. The public perception that he surpassed previous presidents in this regard was reinforced when Clinton reneged on his campaign promises to restore and protect the environment. Environmentalists' great expectations for a "real environmental president" quickly turned to disillusionment and a sense of betrayal. They charged that Clinton immediately compromised important environmental questions in favor of polluters and big business. Cox argues that the specter of a hostile Congress waiting to attack further stifled Clinton's feeble attempts to strengthen existing environmental protection policy.

Environmentalists identified Clinton's signing of the 1995 Rescissions Act, which included the now infamous "salvage timber" rider, as the environmental low point of his presidency. By this time, they had labeled Clinton as environmentally irresponsible and an enemy of the environment. Faced with increasingly vocal and widespread public alarm over his apparent antienvironmental stance, Clinton began vetoing Republican-backed antienvironment bills. The

Republican party also began to soften its antienvironmental protection stance, perhaps in response to the same public alarm. Clinton's advisers pointed toward Republican congressmen who were voted out of office, in part due to their poor records regarding environmental protection, and argued that in order to be reelected, Clinton needed the support of environmentalists within his own party and proenvironment Republican women. In order to gain their support, he would have to persuade them that he was serious about saving the earth.

Cox suggests that communication scholarship should contextualize interpretations of Clinton's environmental rhetoric within this general concern for political expediency. From this perspective, Clinton's invitation to the people to "come together" to resolve environmentally based conflicts makes good political sense. Encouraging public involvement in environmental decisions enabled Clinton to appear sympathetic to all parties, as he tried to minimize conflict between environmentalist and opposing factions. Clinton used these public involvement opportunities to emphasize the importance of community, claiming environmental struggles occurred because the people were divided. He viewed environmental conflict as an opportunity to show his commitment to the strengthening of civic community. Thus it made perfect sense for Clinton to declare that in order to renew the natural environment, we needed to renew community.

Cox points out that the American people have shown a strong desire to improve the quality of the natural environment, even including willingness to accept government regulation to achieve that goal. Clinton's republican style of leadership, however, with its overemphasis on community reconciliation as the means to achieve environmentally sustainable public policy, was insufficient to harness this desire. Cox uses a review of the multiple fronts from which Clinton faced opposition to environmental protection policies to help explain why his espousal of republicanism and reliance on community reconciliation were insufficient to support policies that would enhance environmental protection. Cox argues that Clinton sensed the need for public support in order to take effective actions on environmental issues. His republicanism led him to assume people would view public pronouncements regarding environmental protection as binding to the degree that they proclaimed general intentions but not to the degree that they directed how those intentions would be implemented. Thus rather than discussing practical implementation, Clinton retreated to vague pronouncements about civic community.

Cox argues that presidential rhetoric about environmental policy must encourage serious public debate, and rather than focusing on reconciliation, it must encourage citizens to hold public officials responsible for their actions. Because such policy requires a fundamental reordering of many political and

social expectations, a strong political vision is necessary but not sufficient. That vision must be translated into a rhetoric of prudence, stewardship, intelligence, and competence. Clinton's civic republicanism was insufficiently credible as a political vision and failed to be translated into a compelling rhetoric.

Mark Moore's analysis of Clinton's spectacular failure to be all things to all people in the Pacific Northwest is a cautionary tale suggesting that successful application of pragmatic politics requires an understanding of the rhetorical situation. Moore points out that many people interpret Clinton's involvement in the controversial 1995 Rescissions Act as just one more example of his disastrous attempts to develop policy for the sole purpose of enhancing his approval ratings. Although Moore does not dispute this possibility, he suggests that, for those who are more interested in understanding how rhetoric functions in the political realm than in either burnishing or denigrating Clinton's personal image, a detailed analysis of rhetorical irony is more fruitful. Viewed from within the perspective set out by Cox, Moore's analytical suggestion seems quite reasonable.

Moore shows that the Northwest timber controversy was incongruous at multiple levels. He argues that Clinton's campaign promises to resolve this issue very likely stemmed from the optimistic belief that, as with other political problems, all that was lacking was a sense of community. He assumed that if someone (and who better than a newly elected president) would provide an opportunity for key disputants to come together, they would develop a sense of community that would enable them to reach a rational compromise. Clinton devoted valuable time and energy to an activity that eventually alienated him from both timber and environmental interests.

Moore explains that the fallout from this political disaster continued to escalate after the public participation was concluded. A salvage act that ignored the recommendations of the citizen groups was proposed in Congress. Realizing that the act flew in the face of what little progress had been made during the public participation attempts, Clinton put off signing it. When he finally did, he telephoned to warn some of those with whom he had proposed building a sense of community that they would need to find a way to stop the results themselves.

Moore also details the incongruity between expected and actual results of the public participation venues Clinton enabled. He points out the irony associated with the timber companies' dire warnings that environmentally motivated stoppages of logging on public lands would destroy the economy of the region, environmentalists' predictions of total ecological devastation, and loggers' self-righteous paranoia. He shows how, through their successful campaign to dichotomize environmental from economic interests and human from non-

human animals, timber companies unwittingly positioned themselves as responsible for ensuring the continued employment of the laborers they thrust into the public eye.

By ignoring (whether intentionally or accidentally) the rhetorical complexity of the Pacific Northwest timber controversy, Clinton ensured disastrous results. Moore's analysis points out the danger of oversimplifying conflicts and precipitously attempting their resolution, and suggests the utility of detailed rhetorical analysis of environmental conflicts prior to designing management strategies. In this case, only a solution that incorporated the complex ironies within the conflict itself could have offered a reasonable possibility of success.

David Henry writes about a more rhetorically successful attempt by the Clinton administration to encourage public participation, even to serve as a public advocate, in the controversy surrounding the release of information concerning nuclear testing that had occurred between 1963 and 1990. Henry focuses on rhetorical dimensions of responding to demands for disclosure and accountability in a democratic society. He examines surrogate advocacy, where a proxy takes responsibility for discussion and future action while shielding the president from accountability.

Henry examines how Hazel O'Leary, who assumed the role of surrogate, defined the grounds of the discussion, how she attempted to use a deliberative forum, and the role ethics played in this and similar debates. Henry argues that O'Leary's approach to the crisis came from rethinking traditional methods of public advocacy, and responding to demands with induction, personal experience and examples, proofs derived from narratives, and generally personalized rhetoric. She displayed a "feminine" rhetorical style, conveying emotion openly, encouraging self-disclosure from others, and maintaining group harmony. Henry claims that O'Leary wanted to find appropriate solutions and to implement them, which often proved difficult because of public distrust for the Department of Energy. In her presentations she tried to disclose information to the public, to invite independent review, to explain the background of specific situations, to cite examples, and to use illustrations for comparisons of size and amount. Henry also describes the venues O'Leary used for "doing public business in public." He points out their structural requirements (the involvement of stakeholders, open meetings, and increased public discussion), as well as specifically rhetorical aspects, such as the conflict between correct understanding of information and the desire for complete openness and statements concerning moral leadership.

Henry also uses O'Leary's campaign to highlight the potential intersection between ethical and rhetorical concerns. Here, Henry suggests that a rhetori-

cal approach could help negotiate the conflict between the utilitarian ethics of consequences and the ethics of virtue by suggesting a third approach that synthesizes both. He proposes using Nye's "three-dimensional ethics," which evaluates an activity or event's ethical dimensions by examining the relationship among motives, approaches (or means), and consequences. Henry demonstrates that O'Leary was successful as a surrogate advocate and that rhetorical, political, and ethical dimensions all interact in the development of public policy. As Henry argues, O'Leary's short-lived campaign to minimize public fear and loathing toward the U.S. Department of Energy suggests one model for instigating a more collaborative environment for future environmental policy-making.

*Presidential Rhetoric and Environmental Governance
for the Twenty-first Century*

The final section explores new rhetorical opportunities for environmental governance, suggesting that U.S. presidents face audiences that are not content to defer questions of environmental policy to technical experts and are increasingly global in their outlook. Perhaps even more germane to students of rhetoric, public trust in political leadership has eroded along with trust in technical expertise. Increasingly large proportions of the general public demand the right to participate in defining environmental issues rather than simply choosing among options selected by an elite cadre of political insiders. Prelli's and Carcasson's chapters suggest that, within such a lively social context, rhetorical theorists and critics are especially well suited to contribute to the public conversation.

Lawrence J. Prelli provides a detailed examination of a public participation process that grew out of the Clinton administration's preoccupation with community involvement as the means to solve environmental problems. He then shows how traditional rhetorical theory can enhance our understanding of environmental decision making. Prelli begins by reminding us of the difficulties inherent in the development and guidance of collaborative action in the presence of pluralism (such as in the case examined by Moore). He then builds on Cox's claim that sound environmental policy will require rhetoric that exhibits prudence, stewardship, intelligence, and competence. He does this by investigating the problem of judgment within the rhetoric used by citizens who are deliberating environmental policy.

Prelli argues that practical reasoning and situated judgment are essential to environmental debate. He suggests that the rhetorical analyst is well positioned to ask if the rhetoric being used is appropriate to the situation and if it meets

practical demands. Pluralism causes complications for those attempting to develop environmental policy, however, because different groups come to the issue with different standards of judgment. Prelli suggests that traditional rhetorical theory can provide a means for discovering acceptable standards such as the taken-for-granted value premise and general patterns of thought that influence decision making.

Prelli examines the rhetoric of the New Hampshire Forest Sustainability Standards Work Team, a group of shareholders who tried to implement sustainability, a concept much celebrated by the Clinton administration. The study demonstrates how the use of different standards can cause a single action to be judged positively or negatively, depending on the standard used. In this case, sustainability was judged in terms of either human utility or ecosystem integrity. Separately each argument appeared valid, yet they contradicted each other. Gradual awareness of this juxtaposition led to the realization of interdependence and the need for mutually agreeable principles of coordinated action. Ultimately, the group provided a variety of options in order to make people aware of better alternatives to their current practices, to allow landowners to retain control of their land, and to avoid the negative response typically associated with additional regulations.

Prelli's chapter reiterates the largely unrealized political potential of rhetorical analysis, as well as suggesting that broad public participation in discussions of environmental policy offers an opportunity to refine traditional rhetorical concepts. His analysis responds directly to Cox's concern with the limitations of civic republicanism as practiced by Clinton. Prelli suggests that while recognition of broad community interests does not solve all environmental problems, it does create opportunities for their resolution. Carefully designed public processes can be used creatively to develop reasoned alternatives. Prelli does not argue that effective public processes enable people to replace personal preferences with community goals. Rather, he argues that rhetorical theory can be used to enhance practical environmental communication and advocacy, and to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of public processes; an understanding that includes the ability to move beyond personal preferences to collaborative action. In the political culture following from Clinton's civic republicanism, opportunities for public involvement in environmental decision making have expanded far beyond that mandated by the National Environment Policy Act. Prelli emphasizes that, within this realm, effective rhetoric must minimize polarization and emphasize collaborative pursuit of the best alternative as defined by a pluralistic audience.

Martín Carcasson concludes this exploration of presidential rhetoric and

environmental policy with a study that expands the notion of the rhetorical presidency to questions of international governance. Carcasson considers the years from 1988 to 2000 and points out opportunities and constraints associated with the rhetoric of George H. Bush and Bill Clinton. The issue of global warming provides Carcasson with a quintessentially rhetorical issue on which to focus his analysis. Although the existence of global warming is not in doubt, its specific causes and its potential sociopolitical significance are the subject of acrimonious debate. It is likely that no other environmental issue so fully represents the increasingly global nature of environmental policy. Not surprisingly, Carcasson's analysis of presidential rhetoric regarding the international environment finds many of the same limitations discovered in rhetoric focused on domestic issues. Carcasson's analysis reveals that both Bush and Clinton fell far short of proposing necessary actions to confront the developing international environmental crisis. Further, despite each president's claims to the contrary, neither demonstrated the ability to minimize polarization and emphasize the collaborative pursuits that Prelli suggests could lead to a more rhetorically informed participation in environmental politics.

Carcasson is interested not in blaming or absolving Bush and Clinton (or any other U.S. president) for this failure, however, but in exploring its contextualization within the contemporary American political system. For this, Carcasson turns to Luhmann's theory of function systems, which identifies six functions that characterize modern society. Using this theoretical framework, Carcasson attempts to clarify how Clinton's and Bush's environmental rhetoric constrains the opportunities for serious responses to environmental problems. He delineates which function systems dominate and which are neglected in their rhetoric.

Carcasson shows how this social structure has constrained political action and then uses his initial analysis as the basis for suggesting new possibilities that could transform the debate into one that enhances opportunities for making public judgments within a pluralistic society, by explicitly including the concepts of prudence, stewardship, intelligence, and competence, as identified by Cox and Prelli. He argues that rhetorical analysis of public controversy (including, but not limited to environmental issues) should identify constraints to action for the purpose of developing appropriate strategies for challenging those constraints. By explicating the systemic social context within which we encounter environmental problems, Carcasson attempts to suggest how environmental advocates can influence the rhetorical situation faced by political actors in ways that enable them to respond more proactively to environmental challenges.

New Directions for Theory and Practice

Perhaps President Clinton's vacillation regarding environmental policy reflects the anxiety of a society entering a new millennium. Exploring the connections between presidential rhetoric and environmental policy provides a means for examining that anxiety and for more fully understanding our relationship (both its material and its symbolic dimensions) with the environment upon which we rely. As we move into the twenty-first century our entire means for making sense of the universe is in flux. Even the cherished taxonomic distinctions between living and nonliving matter are questioned. It is no wonder that the sense of order found in Thoreau's *Walden* or the sublime purity of Muir's Yosemite as interpreted through Ansel Adams beckons. Clarence Glacken claims that the most striking aspect of human conceptions of nature is "the yearning for purpose and order." If it does nothing else, rhetoric provides order to otherwise confused complexity. The very use of the term *environment*, for example, enables us to impose order on nature. Berleant points out that it enables us to reconstruct the earth as "an entity that we can think of and deal with as if it were outside and independent of ourselves." As Kenneth Burke argues, language provides humans with the ability to identify with, and separate ourselves from something or someone else. Thus we turn to the concept of agency to discover that, just as humans have chosen to separate themselves from their natural environment, so can they choose to reunite themselves with it. An explicitly rhetorical approach to environmental issues enables such efforts to proceed within a spirit of friendly skepticism (as opposed to cynicism).³²

This book illustrates how the incorporation of multiple perspectives and approaches can enhance both our theory and practice by supplying missing strengths and mitigating weaknesses. Although this integration is unusual, it is not unique. Kevin DeLuca's "Trains in the Wilderness: Myths, Corporations, and Environmental Politics" weaves together concepts from political, rhetorical, and critical theory. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, the interdisciplinary journal where his study was published, illustrates the new venues that are developing for the crosscutting research this collection seeks to encourage. I hope this volume will provoke readers to think about both presidential rhetoric and environmental communication in new ways, thus providing the spark for an increasingly productive dialogue between public address and environmental communication scholars.³³

Notes

1. Tarla Rai Peterson, "Environmental Communication: Tales of Life on Earth," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998): 371–93.
2. For overviews of the development of environmental communication within the communication discipline, see James G. Cantrill, "Communication and Our Environment: Categorizing Research in Environmental Advocacy," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 21 (1993): 66–95; Stephen P. Depoe, "Environmental Studies in Mass Communication," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 14 (1997): 368–72; and Stephen P. Depoe, "Talking about the Earth: On the Growing Significance of Environmental Communication Studies," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 435–68.
3. M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).
4. Star A. Muir and Thomas L. Veenendall, eds., *Earthtalk: Communication Empowerment for Environmental Action* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Press, 1996); Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, eds., *Green Culture: Rhetorical Analyses of Environmental Discourse* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec, eds., *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).
5. Tarla Rai Peterson, *Sharing the Earth: The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997).
6. Craig Waddell, ed., *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997). The Environmental Communication Network (ECN) maintains environmental communication bibliographies at <http://www.esf.edu/ecn/bibl.htm>; proceedings of the biennial conferences on communication and the environment from 1991 through 2001 are listed at and can be obtained through this site. Susan Senecah, ed., Stephen Depoe, Mark Neuzil, and Gregg Walker, assoc. eds., *The Environmental Communication Yearbook* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004).
7. Martin J. Medhurst, "A Tale of Two Constructs: The Rhetorical Presidency versus Presidential Rhetoric," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), xiii, xiv.
8. *Ibid.*, xiv–xx. See also Theodore Windt, "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Discipline of Study," in *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric*, ed. Theodore Ingold and Beth Ingold (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1987), xxiii; Martin J. Medhurst, "American Public Address: A Tradition in Transition," in *Landmark Essays on American Public Address*, ed. Medhurst (Davis, Calif.: Hermagoras Press, 1993), xi–xliii.
9. Dennis L. Soden and Brent S. Steel, "Evaluating the Environmental Presidency," in *The Environmental Presidency*, ed. Soden (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 348; Soden, ed., *The Environmental Presidency*, 2–3.
10. Peterson, *Sharing the Earth*, 6.
11. Medhurst, "Public Address and Significant Scholarship: Four Challenges to the Rhetorical Renaissance," in *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric*, ed. Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, Calif.: Hermagoras Press, 1989), 33.

12. Bruce E. Gronbeck, "The Presidency in the Age of Secondary Orality," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, 30–49; Thomas W. Benson, "Desktop Demos: New Communication Technologies and the Future of the Rhetorical Presidency," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, 50–74; Robert L. Ivie, "Tragic Fear and the Rhetorical Presidency: Combating Evil in the Persian Gulf," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, 153–78, quotation on 162; Robert L. Ivie, "A New Democratic World Order," in *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst and H. W. Brands (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000), 262.
13. Kevin M. DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (New York: Guilford, 1998); Phaedra Pezullo, "Toxic Tours: Communicating the Presence of Chemical Contamination," in *Proceedings of the Sixth Biennial Conference on Communication and Environment*, ed. Marie-France Aeppli, John W. Delicath, and Stephen P. Depoe (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 2000), 1–12; Carole Blair, "Challenges and Openings in Rethinking Rhetoric: Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies: Toward a Material Rhetoric*, ed. Jack Selzer and Susan Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 16–57; Jack Selzer, "Habeas Corpus: An Introduction," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, 3–15.
14. J. Robert Cox, "The Die Is Cast: Topical and Ontological Dimensions of the Locus of the Irreparable," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 227–39; Craig Waddell, *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment*.
15. Peterson, "Environmental Communication," 372; see also Peterson, *Sharing the Earth*, 36–39.
16. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990); Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Identity in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); Niklas Luhmann, *Ecological Communication*, trans. John Bednarz, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Peterson, *Sharing the Earth*.
17. Celeste Michelle Condit, *The Meanings of the Gene: Public Debates about Human Heredity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999). See also Thomas Gieryn, *Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Jeanne Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Figures in Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
18. Beck, *Risk Society*.
19. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Knowledge, Science, and Relativism* (Cambridge, Eng., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 146.
20. Peterson, "Subverting the Culture of Expertise: Community Participation in Development Decisions," in *Sharing the Earth*, 86–118.
21. Examples include Celeste M. Condit, "Crafting Virtue: The Rhetorical Construction of Public Morality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 79–97; Walter Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987); G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation," *Journal of American Forensics Association* 18 (1982): 214–27; G. Thomas Goodnight, "Public Discourse," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (1987): 428–32; G. Thomas Goodnight and D. B. Hingsman, "Studies in the Public Sphere," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 351–99.

22. Caitlin Wills Toker, "The Vocabulary of Consensus: Struggle and Redefinition in the Georgia Port Authority's Stakeholder Evaluation Group," paper presented at the National Communication Association Convention, Atlanta, Nov. 2001.
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