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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how particular forms of mass media spurred and guided the United States environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Its objective is to better understand how mass media contributed to the evolution of the environmental movement. Three particular types of media form the basis of this study: writing (books, newspapers, and magazines), audio-visual material (movies and television), and photographs. These three mediums of communications and their intrinsic effects on the human psyche and society as a whole are major contributing factors to a raised environmental consciousness, a lasting legacy of environmentalism, and the promotion of the environmental movement itself.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The environmental movement in the United States was one of the most sizable and influential social developments of the 20th century. Today, millions of people buy green products, belong to outdoor clubs, visit national parks, recycle, and are concerned about the environmental state of the U.S. and beyond.¹ The origins of the environmental movement, as we know it today, began in the 1960s, grew throughout the decade and into the 1970s. During this time environmental consciousness in the United States evolved rapidly, and provided the foundation for modern-day environmentalism.

The rise of environmental consciousness and the widespread scope of the environmental movement were partially due to the effects of mass media. People were more exposed to ideas, news, and data than ever before.² Not only were they exposed directly to the environmentalist movement, but it was also presented to them in a variety of formats. The distinctive forms in which environmental information was disseminated to the American public had varying effects on society. This is a well-known phenomenon to sociologists, historians, and even to everyday people; the media affects society and vice-versa. Exactly how these mediums of communication sparked, guided, and shaped the environmental movement is not clearly understood however. Each medium of mass communication has intrinsically different properties and abilities and is capable of relaying information and eliciting reactions that perhaps the other mediums cannot.


This thesis focuses on the three most important forms of mass media communications that spurred the environmental movement during this time period: writing (books, newspapers, and magazines), audio-visual material (movies and television), and photographs. The combination of these three mediums of communications and their intrinsic effects on the human psyche and on society as a whole is one of the primary contributing factors to a raised environmental consciousness, a lasting legacy of environmentalism, and the promotion of the environmental movement itself.

A few issues must be addressed about the scope and intent of this thesis. For years, scholars have argued whether mass media changes society or society dictates what the media presents, and the answer to this is usually highly complex and situational. A discernable pattern existed regarding how the environmental movement of the 60s and 70s and mass media affected one another. The environmental momentum that grew throughout the sixties and seventies started with a few unique individuals who utilized mass media to bring attention to both the public and the news media. Rachel Carson and her book *Silent Spring* exploded into the public eye in 1962 and triggered a new beginning for the environmental movement. This project argues that society, through a few individuals who championed environmentalism, spurred the environmental movement into being and only then did the news media catch on and begin to spur the rest of the nation to action. It was not the other way around, in which the media started and dictated the conversation, at least not in the gestation period of the environmental movement.

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This aspect between the relationship of mass media and the environmental movement in the sixties and seventies has been unanalyzed and ignored. This thesis will address that issue.

A different, but just as important issue to address is technological determinism. The three mediums of communication analyzed in this thesis played a significant role, but they were by no means the sole actors in establishing a mass movement of environmentalism in the United States and establishing an environmental legacy. There are circumstantial, historical, and societal factors unrelated to mass media that contributed to environmentalism’s surge during this time. The 1960s was a revolutionary period and environmentalism, to a certain extent, fit in to the counterculture that was taking place and mass media was just a tool that people used to express themselves. However, the size, influence, and lasting legacy the environmental movement of the 1960s would not have been possible without mass media, and certain characteristics of that media ultimately shaped its significance and triggered a revolution.

The terminology used in this study is also of note and needs to be clarified. Whether in conversation or the written word, the terms naturalism, conservation, and environmentalism often get used interchangeably. However, their meanings are subtly different and require clarification for their use in this work. A naturalist is someone who has a particular fascination with nature and studies it in a scientific way. A conservationist is someone who advocates for the protection of nature and wildlife in a balanced manner. They don’t have a strict noninterventionist attitude toward nature, but instead believe that while people are able to extract resources from the environment, extracting too much can be harmful. An environmentalist not only seeks to protect the environment, but to improve it and is often concerned with nature on a
global scale. This study uses all three of these terms often. For the purposes of this study, these terms are all used to explain an increased environmental consciousness. The growing awareness and appreciation of nature, no matter if it is through naturalism, conservationism, or environmentalism, raises environmental consciousness in the United States. For example, the messages seen in the cartoon Yogi Bear can be considered naturalist sentiments. The cartoons are not teaching about methods to protect the wilderness or that it even should be protected. Instead, it is exposing children to the natural world and giving them an appreciation for nature. While this is not technically environmentalism, it nevertheless contributes to an environmental consciousness.

Another issue on scope has to do with regionalization and social groups involved in environmentalism. This study often refers to the United States as a whole, that it is seemingly one group. While this is a sweeping determination, the scope of this thesis is unable to cover the different regional attitudes and social groups that populate the United States and may have had varying experiences and attitudes when it came to environmentalism. For example, the environmental movement affected urban and rural areas differently throughout the country, often dependent on the geography of any given region. There were also different groups of people that were more involved in the environmental movement than others. For instance, middle class women were often more open to environmental teachings during this time period. Due to the limitations on length, this project will discuss Americans as a whole, acknowledging that this is a simplification. Future research would benefit from an exploration of how different minority groups, such as African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans participated in the
environmental movement. This study is unable to relate all the complexities of the environmental movement of the United States due to its scope and length, however it does open up future research questions about these subject areas.

The approach for this study closely ties into its organization. Analyzing the distinct differences between written material, audio-visual media, and photographs in terms of their intrinsic effects on people and society is what sets this study apart. The organization follows suit, with the body chapters being split into the particular forms of media. The first chapter deals with written material generated during the sixties and seventies that promoted environmentalism and furthered the movement. This study begins with Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring*, which sparked the conversation about environmentalism and brought it into the public eye. While there is a great deal of other material printed during this time period, *Silent Spring* is one of the most important sources of mass media addressed in this study. The second chapter addresses audio-visual content produced in that period. The widespread use of television became an incredible phenomenon during this time period. The majority of Americans watched television everyday and its impact on society and the speed at which it was popularized is difficult to justly articulate. In many ways, television was the new medium of communication that cemented environmentalism in the minds of many who would have otherwise been unexposed to it. Movies, though less important than television, were still influential, and they also shared some of the same inherent characteristics as television. Finally, chapter three focuses on photography and its impact on the environmental movement and environmental consciousness. Many of the pictures were seen in other forms of media, such as in newspapers and magazines, but
photographs themselves have a different effect on the mind than written material. The most important photographs had a specific impact on the environmental movement and it is important to address. It is worth noting that the methodology of this thesis is difficult to articulate and does not fit neatly into one box. It is not a literary analysis, nor does it employ discourse analysis beyond a superficial level. The sources are better understood through the approach of this study, which analyzes the sources based on their media characteristics and content.

There is not an extensive body of literature that deals strictly with the relationship between U.S. environmentalism and mass media in the manner that this study does. Most monographs on the environmental movement of the sixties and seventies deal with mass media in some capacity. They provide examples of commercials, books, or newspapers that show the state of environmentalism and its growth. These authors, however, do not analyze these sources as a medium for mass communication, but strictly by the content of the source. The mass media sources they use are blurred together without any analysis of how these messages were delivered and disseminated among the public. Similarly, many monographs dealing with mass media theory rarely mention the United States environmental movement of the 1960s and 70s. There are, however, a few important monographs and articles that make up a relatively new and growing historiography.

One important monograph that does address the topic is Mark Neuzil and Bill Kovarik’s Mass Media and Environmental Conflict: America’s Green Crusades (1996).[^1] This book

examines three distinct areas: the type and timing of media involvement, circumstances in which environmentalists’ goals were met in some fashion, and circumstances in which those goals were not realized. The authors specifically look at incidents when mass media, politics, social institutions, and environmental groups worked in tandem to produce social change. The way they analyze and view their sources are used to this end, which is distinctly different than this paper’s approach. They do not use multidisciplinary methods to analyze the intrinsic effects that different media have on particular groups of people; instead, they are simply looking for the social change it enacted.

While this work does not deal with the 1960’s directly, its focus of study is somewhat similar to that of this thesis. Neuzil and Kovarik explore the relationship between environmentalism and media prior to Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking work *Silent Spring*, which is essentially where my project picks up. Neuzil and Kovarik even write, “The growth of television and the greening of America is a topic waiting to be explored.” In terms of the relationship between environmentalism and mass media, it is one of the few and more important monographs.

One of the first works published on the environmental movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s that also addressed mass media was David Pepper, John Perkins, and Martyn J. Youngs’s

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5 Neuziland and Kovarik, xi.

6 Neuzil and Kovarik, xi.
Roots of Modern Environmentalism, published in 1984. In this book, Pepper, Perkins, and Youngs delineate the origins of the environmental movement in the U.S. and devote a few chapters to the 1960’s and 1970’s. Importantly, the authors were also concerned with the role that mass media played in the movement and believed that it was vital. They conclude that environmental consciousness was only possible through mass communication and that it occurred “frequently at the prompting of mass demonstration of dissent over threats to the environment.” Although acknowledging that mass media played a role in the rising popularity of the environmental movement, they do not analyze it very deeply. They do not examine how specific forms of media have particular effects on people. Nor do they answer questions about how it connected people and directed the movement in specific ways. It is nevertheless one of the first books to address the relationship between the environmental movement and mass media and is therefore important to the historiography.

Bill Kovarik’s Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age (2011) traces the beginnings and revolutions of certain media, but also discusses their social, economic, and political consequences. Importantly, he also describes how particular forms of media have specific effects on people, both individual and in mass. One section of his book is entirely devoted to the visual revolution and illustrates the large-scale ramifications that the advent of new media have had on society. In a further subsection, titled “Conservation and environmental photography,” he uses environmental photography as an example of how visual

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8 Pepper, Perkins, and Youngs, 16.
media can have determining consequences on society. This section is the closest piece of scholarship that resembles the approach to this thesis. The monograph’s overall focus however is much more broad and does not look at the environmental movement in detail. Kovarik also does not examine how different forms of media had specific consequences for environmental consciousness the United States. Kovarik’s work is important to the historiography because of his broad ideas on how media can have large-scale consequences on society as a whole.

There are a few published works that concern the media and the environment that were released during the seventies while the environmental crisis and response was occurring. James A. Larsen published an essay, “Mass Communications and Environmental Revolution,” in the spring of 1972. Larsen postulates that there is a cultural lag between important ideas and technologies and that it takes approximately twenty years for society to accept them and implement them into everyday life. He believed that the idea of unsustainable resource depletion had been gaining ground and awareness, but had yet to be implemented and imbedded in American society. He believed that mass media might be the culprit for this increased conservationist awareness, but was not entirely sure. He writes, “It would now be interesting and very useful to know what influence mass media have had in achieving the current level of general knowledge--if not acceptance--of the idea that we need global management of resources and human life as a consequence of certain obvious and, conversely, certain obscure but

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nevertheless immutable ecological laws.” This is one of the first published articles that deals directly with mass media and the environment and marks a certain beginning in the historiography.

Since the study of the relationship between environmentalism and mass media in the 1960s and 70s is relatively new, many of the best historiographical sources come from recently published articles. Adam Rome’s article, “Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties,” is the best example of this. Rome’s article is closest in subject to this analysis than any other article. In this article, Rome uses a plethora of different content derived from mass media to argue that certain groups in the United States were influenced by environmentalism and subsequently took up its cause and spread it to large portions of the rest of the country. He takes issue with the fact that many scholars have glazed over the environmental movement and do not appreciate its magnitude in the sixties. To demonstrate this, he uses magazines, monographs, newspapers, best-selling books, and scholarly articles. Rome does not look at the intrinsic effects of these various forms of media to argue his point though. He uses an abundance of mass media sources, but only analyzes their content and potential influence. It is nevertheless an important analysis of the environmental movement in the sixties and depends heavily upon mass media sources and argues certain important demographic points.


In 2013, Paul C. Rosier, professor of history at Villanova University, published his article “‘Modern America Desperately Needs to Listen’: The Emerging Indian in an Age of Environmental Crisis.” Rosier focuses on Native Americans and their role in the environmental movement in the sixties and seventies, but he also heavily relies on mass media sources. He uses a wide variety of mass media that included newspapers, magazines, television commercials, and books. While this is also an article that does not analyze mass media in terms of its delivery and effects on human beings, it still embraces mass media and the environmental movement. Though slightly different in topic, this article is still important to the historiography of mass media and the environmental movement in the 1960s.

Since there are not any scholarly articles that deal with the environment and the specific types of mass media that shaped it, it is necessary to engage and mention a broad historiography on mass media theory. The first person to comprehensively articulate the idea that specific mediums of communication have large-scale impacts on how a civilization functions was Harold A. Innis in his monograph, Empire and Communications, published in 1950. Innis wrote, “It has seemed to me that the subject of communication offers possibilities in that it occupies a crucial position in the organization and administration of government and in turn of empires and of Western civilization.” He presented the idea that communications impacted civilizations


13 Harold A. Innis, Empire and Communications, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

14 Innis, 5.
through two hypotheses. First was that various forms of communications had distinct space/time biases. Next was that specific types of communications held certain monopolies on knowledge.

Innis organizes and presents *Empire and Communications* through the study of particular civilizations and how their use of different media dictated certain characteristics about them. Innis postulates the idea that specific media serve different purposes in space and time according to their composition. For example, written works transcribed onto stone, clay, or parchment revolves around time and favors decentralization and hierarchical types of institutions. Papyrus and paper, however, are light and favor space, which promote centralized institutions because they are able to send messages and instructions easily to faraway places.\(^\text{15}\)

Innis uses the Ancient Egyptians in his first chapter to exemplify how different media affected their civilization and empire. He formulated the idea that the Egyptian empire went through a destabilizing period due to a change in their medium of communication. He thought that because the early Egyptian government was using stone, clay, and parchment to administrate their government, literacy was limited and knowledge and power were held by the Pharaoh and a small, elite priesthood. The destabilizing period began with the ushering in of papyrus. Innis writes, “The profound disturbances in Egyptian civilization involved in the shift from absolute monarchy to a more democratic organization coincides with a shift in emphasis on stone as a medium of communication or as a basis of prestige, as shown in the pyramids, to an emphasis on papyrus.”\(^\text{16}\)

This example is important because it epitomizes the idea that it was not the content

\(^{15}\) Innis, 7.

\(^{16}\) Innis, *Empire and Communications*, 15.
of the message that caused disturbances in the Egyptian empire, but a new type of material medium that favored certain communication biases and a new distribution of knowledge.

Innis uses examples like these throughout his work to show how revolutions in communication mediums have been a determining catalyst of change within empires. He thought that the spread of writing in ancient Greece led to the collapse of their civilization because it undermined their oral tradition and culture, creating new structures that caused discord they could not control. He promoted his hypothesis that the Roman Empire, dependent on military conquest and bureaucratic administration, was only possible because it developed a written tradition with an ample supply of papyrus. He also wrote, “Use of parchment codex gave Christians an enormous advantage over other religions,” resulting in the spread of Christianity. He extolled the virtues of the printing press and how it was evident, not only in the philosophy of the seventeenth century, but also in the rise of the Parliamentary system. Significantly, he stressed the effect of printing and how it touched all facets of society and transformed it. He goes on further to write how the emergence of the radio and loud speaker had a “…decisive significance for the election of the Nazis”. He compares the emergence of radio to printing, claiming, “The sudden extension of communication precipitated an outbreak of savagery paralleling that of printing and the religious wars of the seventeenth century and again

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17 Innis, Empire and Communications, 83

18 Innis, Empire and Communications, ix.

19 Innis, Empire and Communications, 165.
devastating the regions of Germany.”

The principle notion that Innis preaches in these examples is how a new communication medium can profoundly alter civilizations militarily, socially, and economically.

While Innis is referred to as the “father” of medium theory, it was Marshall McLuhan who was its most prolific, famous, and influential writer. A colleague of Innis at the University of Toronto, McLuhan was deeply influenced by his predecessor and published many influential works about media theory, including The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (1962), The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man (1951), and most significantly, Understanding Media: Extensions of Man, published in 1964. Throughout his work he conveys several ideas that added significant contributions to media theory.

McLuhan presented the belief that the forms of media in which a society or people communicate are as important, if not more important, than the actual content of the communication. His most famous aphorism, “the medium is the message,” asserts this concept. It means that the form in which a message, information, or knowledge is delivered has intrinsic effects on our perceptions. Expanding this notion, McLuhan proclaims that different media act as extensions of the human senses, resulting in significant effects on cognition and social structures. This in turn results in societies imitating their technology.

The introduction of new media creates new social patterns. Therefore, the type of media a society utilizes has profound implications on the character of that society. Robert K. Logan, an expert on McLuhan and author

20 Innis, Empire and Communications, 165.

of Understanding New Media: Extending Marshall McLuhan, explains. He writes, “For example, the idea of building things from repeatable fragmented identical elements began with the introduction of the phonetic alphabet. As we will see, the extension of this idea resulted in the development of codified law, monotheism, abstract science, and deductive logic.”

McLuhan received criticism for some of his more eccentric ideas, such as “hot” and “cold” methods of communication, but he is still quite significant to the field and his ideas still have influence today.

There have been many works since Innis and McLuhan that dealt with the theory of media and to the revolutions in communications and their meaning. In 1986, Leo W. Jeffres published Mass Media Processes and Effects that includes a developed introduction on mass communication theory and several chapters on how mass media affects culture, politics, society, the economy, and how it does so. Dan Lacy wrote his book titled, From Grunts to Gigabytes: Communications and Society, published in 1996. He details every communication revolution, theorizing and explaining the effects of each one. As already mentioned before, Bill Kovarik published his Revolutions in Communications: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age in 2011. The field continues to expand in a world that is increasingly influenced by evolving media and the historiography will only become richer with time.

This thesis focuses on the 1960s and 1970s for a few reasons. The most significant reason is because these two decades contained many of the ‘firsts’ for environmentalism. The

publication of *Silent Spring*, Environmental Protection Agency, Earth Day, Greenwashing, the Crying Indian commercials, and the first photographs of the Earth from the Moon are examples of this. The 1980s were also a step back for environmentalism. When Ronald Reagan took office he cut many of the environmental programs and even questioned whether the EPA should be an independent entity. He believed in eliminating as much regulation in government as possible and that included regulating what could be done to the environment. There were also times during the subsequent decades in which environmentalism, if not disappeared, was at least subject to disinterest and apathy. There are periods in which it surged as an issue in the public eye, and there were times when other topics seemed to overshadow it and make it less relevant. It has never gone away however. Ever since the 1960s and 70s, environmentalism has been a part of American society.

The environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s was not the first movement concerned about the environment in the United States however. There were other times in which an appreciation for nature and the attempt to protect it were present. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau popularized transcendentalism in the 1820s and 1830s, which taught that nature was inherently good. They fought against the growing idea that nature should be conquered. Another example is naturalist John Muir, who tirelessly advocated for the protection of the United States wilderness. His efforts eventually led to the creation of Yosemite National Park in 1890 and the founding of The Sierra Club, an environmental activist group still in existence. President Teddy Roosevelt also believed in conservation and his efforts led to the creation of many national parks and increased protection for the environment. While these
instances can fall under the umbrella of environmentalism, they were not entirely an environmental movement like that of the 1960s and 70s.

There are several major reasons for why the environmental movement occurred during this time period, but one of the most important was the increased environmental consciousness due to the effects of mass media. Many scholars have noted this, analyzing particular mass media content and speculating on its influence. The way in which this content was delivered to individuals and disseminated to American society as a whole is important as well however. This approach to the environmental movement is a path that has yet to be explored in the current scholarship. Three particular mediums of communication, all different in their inherent abilities to affect people and society, combined to shape the movement, cement it in the American psyche, and create a legacy of environmentalism that would persist in the United States.
CHAPTER TWO: BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND NEWSPAPERS

One of the fundamental technologies created by mankind is the advent of writing. Writing and literacy prompted a significant advancement in the complexity of human thought and civilization. After language, writing is perhaps the most important revolution in humanity’s endeavor to communicate and can also be seen as language’s greatest extension. One scholar wrote that, “Among all the revolutionary creations of man, writing ranks as the supreme intellectual achievement.” While this statement is neither excessively bold, nor surprising, it is necessary to highlight. Reading and writing are supremely important to the dissemination of knowledge and ideas, and the environmental movement, like any other movement, was encouraged by books, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets. This chapter focuses on the written material that supported and encouraged a raised environmental consciousness in the United States during the sixties and seventies.

The question of how or why writing is important still stands and, as easy as it is to assume, should not be overlooked or avoided. First, writing has been known as ‘The Great Collector of Ideas’ and ‘The Great Clarifier of Thinking.’ These concepts are important to understanding why written material was significant to the environmental movement. Reading and writing engage the human brain differently than audiovisual content, though both mediums worked in tandem to promote an environmental consciousness. As R.D. Walshe wrote in The

English Journal, “Only writing can collect and store all the ideas that arise from reflecting, talking, researching. What it collects can then be made available as reading to curious minds.” Walshe continues, explaining that “writers take thoughts from the invisible mind and make them visible on paper. They can then contemplate this objectified thought and revise it till it becomes the best thinking of which they are capable.…. These two attributes are enough to establish that indeed the invention of writing introduced a huge potential for learning into human culture.”

Walshe highlights a certain aspect of reading and writing that will be a topic of this chapter: reading and writing are some of the fundamental tools for learning and environmentalism used it to teach its ideals in a way that television, movies, and photographs could not. In today’s society it is often easy to forget that during the sixties and seventies there was a certain lack of permanence to television and movies. Recording television shows, re-watching them and analyzing them on a deeper level simply were not possible, and movies were ephemeral, available only in theaters for discrete periods of time. Books, newspapers, and magazines, however, could be revisited at an individual’s leisure. This phenomenon is also related to the speed at which information is received. Television and movies dictate the speed at which the information is presented where as written material can be taken at a speed of the individual’s choosing. These characteristics, in certain ways, offer the possibility of complex ideas to be more clearly understood. This aspect of reading and writing is an important part of the learning process, which in turn was critical to environmental awareness.

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26 Jeffres, 5-6
The most important book to the birth of an environmental consciousness in the United States was Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, published in 1962. The book was so influential to the environmental movement that it has been compared to Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, which changed the food industry, and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which got Americans thinking differently about slavery. Just in 2007, PBS aired an hour-long special on Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring*. The narrator explains, “Rachel Carson changed our lives, changed how we think about the world and our place in it.” Time and again her book has been analyzed and revisited for its crucial role to environmentalism in the United States.

In post-war America, pesticides had become a way of life, with nearly 600 million pounds being sprayed every year and most people accepted it as normal. For five years, Carson researched the adverse side effects that pesticides had on the surrounding environment and to the United States as a whole. The beginning of her book illustrates an apocalyptic setting that has come about via poisonous gases. Carson describes a once beautiful and agriculturally productive town and how it fell into ruin. She writes that “a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flock of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death.”

She ends her fable with more illuminating language, writing that, “No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it


28 Carson, 2.
themselves.” This descriptive language is combined with a plethora of well-documented factual evidence, which is in part what made *Silent Spring* so powerful. Rachel Carson was a biologist with a gift for creative prose that was factual and scientific. The scientific and factual aspect of Carson’s book was important in how it changed environmentalism in the United States. It was what got the attention of scientists, government officials, and ultimately the American people. *Silent Spring*, the hour-long television special might not have been as effective as the book. The book, however, was meticulously documented and her findings were not easy to ignore or discredit. Carson’s ideas are often considered the beginning of the environmental movement and the meticulous, scientific documentation that it contained helped legitimize her claims to the scientific community, other academics, and the government, something that may have been more difficult in the form a movie, news broadcast, or television special.

Carson did not shy away from her argument when her book was released, though her adversaries were rich and powerful, and the ensuing conversation and battle she had with them was partly responsible for raising awareness. Carson wrote in her first chapter that “the most alarming of all man’s assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible.” This statement is at the heart of Carson’s argument. It not only attacked the use of unregulated insecticides, but also promoted the idea that human kind must

\[\text{Carson, 3.}\]

\[\text{Carson, 6.}\]
live in conjunction with nature, rather than trying to dominant it. While the details of Carson’s book are important, what is also important is the conversation and controversy it started and the overall affect that the book had on the people of the United States.

Carson and her publishing company expected to receive ample criticism from the pesticide industry after they read portions of *Silent Spring* and they were correct in their expectations. The criticism by the pesticide industry was first elicited by a series of three articles that were published prior to the book being released, and gave a sample of the book that would be published later that year. The pesticide industry and members of the government, who had approved the use of certain chemicals and defended them vehemently, attacked Carson once they had read her claims. There were several national newspapers that brought the book attention and highlighted the controversy over Carson’s claims. The *New York Times* article, titled “Silent Spring Is Now Noisy Summer: Pesticides Industry Up in Arms Over a New Book—Rachel Carson Stirs Conflict—Producers Are Crying ‘Foul’,” discussed some of the pesticide industry’s comments. John M. Lee wrote, “The men who make the pesticides are crying foul. ‘Crass commercialism or idealistic flag waving,’ scoffs one industrial toxicologist. ‘We are aghast,’ says another. ‘Our members are raising hell,’ reports a trade association.”

Some agricultural chemical companies set their scientists to analyzing *Silent Spring* line by line in hopes of finding falsehoods. Other companies prepared briefs that defended their use of chemical agents. P. Rothberg, president of the Montrose Chemical Corporation of California, said in a statement that

Miss Carson wrote not “as a scientist but rather as a fanatic defender of the cult of the balance of nature.” Later, it would so happen that Carson was praised for her factual evidence and professionalism as a scientist.

After some time had been spent analyzing her articles, another New York Times article titled “Critic at Large: Rachel Carson’s Articles on the Danger of Chemical Sprays Prove Effective,” by Brook Atkinson was released just prior to the book. Atkinson began his article, “Nothing in the field of conservation has provoked such an explosive response as Rachel Carson’s articles in The New Yorker about the irresponsible use of chemical sprays…Miss Carson’s articles and the book soon to be published prove the case for ecology, which is also the case for mankind, by stating alarming facts soberly.” Not all the articles were positive however. A Time magazine article, “Pesticides: The Price for Progress,” published in 1962, was dismissive and insulting. The article claims, “Many of the scary generalizations—and there are lots of them—are patently unsound…It takes only a moment of reflection to show that this is nonsense.” The attacks from industry leaders and other critics only fueled the conversation and gave it more public exposure. Quickly, the concern over the ‘balance of nature’ and environmentalism had entered public discourse and while Silent Spring was attacked, the overall


http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,940091,00.html.
reviews were positive and encouraging. The book reviews that were released in early 1963 were indicative of *Silent Spring*’s reception. Clarence Cottam of the Welder Wildlife Foundation and Thomas G. Scott of the Illinois Natural History Survey wrote that, “It is our view that Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* is a major contribution to well-reasoned thinking. She has shown the determination and courage to say something that needed saying. Her book is timely and much needed. It merits public acclaim for the great service rendered. Future generations may rate this volume as one of the great publications of this century.”35 F.R. Fosberg, strongly backs Carson and advises every ecologist to read the book and think deeply about it. He then encourages everyone to find the ecologist in himself or herself and read it as well.36

The printed material surrounding Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring* is numerous and powerful. The controversy that was brought on by the disagreement between Carson and the pesticide companies and the government, only fueled the conversation further and brought it closer to the public eye. It has sold over two million copies since its release and the overall written material surrounding the book is positive and supportive.37 It spent 31 months on the bestseller list after its release in 1962 and sold hundreds of thousands of copies during that time.38 *Silent Spring* itself is groundbreaking for ecology and conservationism because of its

compelling evidence and its accessibility. The importance of the spark that Carson gave to the environmental movement cannot be overstated. Patricia Hynes, an environmental engineer and expert on Rachel Carson wrote, “*Silent Spring* altered the balance of power in the world. No one since would be able to sell pollution as the necessary underside of progress so easily or uncritically.”\(^{39}\) After the publication of *Silent Spring*, environmental consciousness in the United States only grew and it can reasonably be argued that it was because of Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book. Over the next 18 years an array of diverse authors followed Rachel Carson’s example and published books about ecology, environmentalism, and conservation.

One of the most powerful people to publish a book on environmentalism was President John F. Kennedy’s Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who published his book *The Quiet Crisis* in 1963. This book detailed the environmental disaster that the United States was currently experiencing and gave a history of U.S. conservationism. Udall saw the purpose of his book as a teaching tool more than anything else. He wrote that his goal was to have people understand that human kind must completely grasp their relationship with nature and understand the fragility of the earth.\(^{40}\) He described the attitudes Americans have had toward the land in the past and how when colonists first reached the land, they thought its resources were infinite. He coined this as “the Myth of Superabundance’ that has proved time and again to be false. Early settlers believed that it would take 1,000 years to deplete the timber supply, when in fact it only took a little over


The massive herds of buffalo that once roamed the land were hunted to the brink of extinction. As Udall wrote, “We raided the Indians, raided the continent, and raided the future.” Udall highlights the individuals in American history who took up the mantle of conservationism and praised their foresight and effort. *The Quiet Crisis* was reviewed positively in newspapers and in academic journals. Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* called *The Quiet Crisis* “invaluable.” Hal Borland, also a writer for the *New York Times* wrote, “[Udall] touches the heart of the whole conservation problem. These are welcome statements.” As for academic reviews, William C. Robison published a very positive one in *American Geographical Society*, he wrote, “Stewart Udall deserves our thanks for producing ‘The Quiet Crisis,’ which should be widely read both in the colleges and by the public at large.” Robert A. McCabe called it “a thunderous indictment of those elements in our society which debase its natural resources.” These reviews are helpful in several ways. The first reason is that it made the book more accepted among the academic community. But the reviews are also crucial because of the language and overwhelming support that they give. The book was a finalist for the National

41 Udall, 29.


Book Award for nonfiction in 1964 and President Lyndon B. Johnson kept a copy of it in the West Wing. It is also worth noting that Stewart Udall was the Secretary of the Interior in President Kennedy’s cabinet, a respected and highly visible position. Udall’s views carried more weight because, in a way, it was a reflection of public policy. The Quiet Crisis, from the topic to who wrote it, helped raise environmental awareness in the United States.

Another book, released in 1967, was Moment in the Sun: A Report of the Deteriorating Quality of the American Environment by Robert and Leona Rienow. This thick volume was filled with the basic scientific facts and information that documented how much the American environment had suffered by the hands of man. It was meticulously researched, citing official reports, statistics, and projections. Statistics and citations in this book helped legitimize the concerns of environmentalists. Beyond the numbers, the book has a distinctly pessimistic tone and warned about a future America that has been completely ravaged. This book exemplifies the many books that dealt with the environment in a scientific manner. These books were often used at universities and for students of ecology, but most importantly they balanced and worked with some of the more sensational works. These books include The Environmental Crisis, Agenda for Survival: The Environmental Crisis-2 (1970), Mankind May Never Make It! (1968), and Eco-


In the forward to *Eco-catastrophe*, David Horowitz wrote that the proceeding ideas in the book are radical and that the root of the ecological crisis was in the very structure of American society and that revolutionary steps needed to be taken in order to save America. The combination of books like *Mankind May Never Make it! And Moment in the Sun* worked together in order to promote an urgency to the environmental movement, while also giving it credibility. Many books were published in the sixties and seventies about the environmental crisis and each one contributed to the conversation and urgency of conservation in its own way.

While there were hundreds of other books about the ‘environmental crisis,’ there are a few more that deserve to be mentioned separately due to their popularity, exposure, and influence. Two authors in particular squared off against each other in a manner that helped the environmental movement. Paul R. Ehrlich and Barry Commoner were both major figures who advocated for environmental reform, but they had separate views on what was causing the problem and how to fix it. In a way, their discussion bypassed the argument of whether environmental degradation was happening or not and instead assumed that it was and that it was a major difficulty the U.S. was facing.

Paul R. Ehrlich was the Bing Professor of Population Studies at Stanford University when he published his highly influential and controversial book *The Population Bomb* in 1968.

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50 Editors of *Ramparts*, Eco-catastrophe, v.
Ehrlich believed that environmental degradation was primarily due to overpopulation, which put the world’s natural resources under strain. Ehrlich’s book began thusly, “The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now.”\textsuperscript{51} \textit{The Population Bomb} was filled with alarmist language. Ehrlich was popular with the media, however, and he was articulate about his ideas. While he was later criticized for his predictions, he was also credited with having prevented them from coming true.\textsuperscript{52} His bold ideas and language contributed to the idea that environmentalism was important to humanity and the U.S.

Barry Commoner, a biologist, writer, politician, and professor, pitted himself against Ehrlich by claiming that it was not overpopulation that was causing environmental deterioration, but advances in technology. He described this phenomenon in his book \textit{The Closing Circle: Nature, Man & Technology} (1974). Commoner believed that between World War II and 1974, the technological “advances” that had been made accounted for 80-85 percent of the pollution, while population increase only accounted for 12-20 percent. Commoner exposed the many ways in which technology had ravaged the environment. He delved into pesticides and explained their side effects with great detail, taking time to demonstrate how different pesticides worked and harmed the environment. He also put emphasis on his four laws of ecology, which were:

everything is connected to everything else, everything must go somewhere, nature knows best,

and there is no such thing as a free lunch.\textsuperscript{53} His ideas were important to the environmental movement partially because he was a prominent figure who received an ample amount of media attention for his efforts. Commoner was on the cover of the February 1970 issue of \textit{Time}, which featured a picture of him split into two halves. Half of the picture was in color and shows a vivid landscape that was clean and beautiful, the other half was in black and white and had factories polluting the air and garbage strewn about. The caption to the image read, “Ecologist Barry Commoner: The Emerging Science of Survival.”\textsuperscript{54} The article called him the “Paul Revere of ecology,” and praised his work for conservation. Michael Egan, author of \textit{Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of American Environmentalism} writes, “In choosing Commoner, \textit{Time} acknowledged both the extent and the complexity of [this] crisis as well as affirming Commoner’s role as a key voice of dissent in the larger environmental discourse.”\textsuperscript{55}

In less than two months after the article was published, the first Earth Day was held in the United States, showing just how popular the subject of environmentalism was becoming. \textit{The Closing Circle} received significant attention for a book that was largely academic and instructive. Teaching about environmentalism in this way worked in conjunction with the more emotionally based media such as the Crying Indian commercial and pictures of animals killed by environmental degradation, which is discussed later.

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\textsuperscript{54} “Fighting to Save the Earth from Man,” \textit{Time}, February 2, 1970.
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Other books that were not academic, but were still educational, were children’s books. One of the most prominent of these was Dr. Seuss’s *The Lorax*, published in 1971. In this story a boy lived in a polluted and desolate town. The trees and plants were all dead, and the town was dark and dirty. The boy’s curiosity led him to the old Once-ler’s home, who told him the story of how the Lorax was taken away. The Once-ler came to the land a long time ago when “the grass was still green and the pond was still wet and the clouds were still clean.”\(^5^6\) The Once-ler then began to cut down the trees in order to make and sell an article of clothing called a Thneed. This is when the Lorax appeared, a creature that was able to speak for the things that cannot speak for themselves, such as the trees and the animals. The Lorax pled with the Once-ler to stop, but he did not. The Once-ler kept on chopping down trees, becoming so successful that he built a factory to produce more Thneeds. The consequence was that the land was depleted of its resources, the animals that had once lived there were forced to leave, and the Once-ler lived alone at the top of his crumbling building. The Once-ler, however, wanted to make things better, make them the way they use to be. He told the boy “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”\(^5^7\) He gave the boy the last Truffula seed and charged him with replanting the environment that he destroyed so that one day the Lorax and the other animals might return. The entire story revolved around the interconnectedness of the ecosystem. Once the trees were chopped down, the animals’ food supply was depleted and the balance of the ecosystem collapsed. The pictures and language help children to understand the


\(^5^7\) Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*, (New York: Random House, 1971), 44.
consequences of the rampant destruction of the environment for short-term economic goals. *The Lorax* is also an example of how books can be revisited over television shows. Research has shown that children often enjoy reading the same books and that it is beneficial for their development. Consequently, this also helps to cement the environmental messages into their mind. The *Lorax* was voted as number 33 in the “Top 100 Picture Books” poll conducted by *School Library Journal* and the National Education Association named the book as one of the best books for children to read. *The Lorax* teaches children important conservationist ideas, but it also helps parents and reinforces their attitude towards conservation as well. As with cartoons, a highly successful children’s book like the *The Lorax* is important for a lasting legacy of environmentalism.

It is important to note a few other popular children’s books that were written during this time. *Wump World*, by Bill Pete, was published in 1970 and was about a fictitious planet where moose-like animals called Wumps live. In this story, there were blue humanoid animals called the Pollutians. The Pollutians built a vast civilization that covered the world and the Wumps were forced to live in deep underground caves in order to survive. Eventually, the Pollutians used up every natural resource that the planet had to offer and thus left for another planet. The Wumps cautiously left their caves and returned to the surface to find a world filled with concrete.

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and metal. Bill Pete ends the story with a positive note when the Wumps found a single small flower growing through a sidewalk. Like The Lorax this story warned how unregulated pollution and resource collection could lead to the destruction of the Earth. Bill Pete also published a similar book titled Farewell to Shady Glade that also raised awareness about environmental degradation. These were only a few of the most popular children’s books that emerged from the environmental crisis of the sixties and seventies. They were critical to raising awareness among children and for creating a lasting legacy of environmentalism in the United States.61

In addition to books, newspapers and magazines were also important to the environmental movement. These publications not only delivered news about environmental happenings around the United States, but it also offered more comprehensive current event articles about particular environmental subjects. While newspapers in the 60’s and 70’s began to share their market with television, they were still important to how people received their news and kept up-to-date on popular issues. Prior to 1968, many newspapers and magazines were reluctant to cover environmental stories. Clay Schoenfeld, founding editor of The Journal for Environmental Education, has described how many newspapers and magazines largely ignored the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Then, in 1970, Fortune magazine named the environment as “The National Mission of the 70’s,” and many other publications followed suit.62 By 1971 environmental issues were common in both newspapers and magazines.

61 For other children’s books see The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle, Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O’Dell, Owls in the Family by Farley Mowat, and Frog and Toad are Friends, by Arnold Lobel.

Statistical data shows the increase in article publications about the environment throughout the late sixties and seventies. In one sample, environmental coverage in the *Chicago Times* rose from 70 in 1962, to 1036 in 1970. A similar number appeared in *The New York Times*, whose publications rose from 119 in 1962, to 1259 in 1970.\textsuperscript{63} Environmental advertising in magazines also greatly increased during this time period and peaked in the late 1970’s. A sample from three popular magazines (*Time, Better Homes, and Popular Mechanic*) shows this phenomenon.

Table 1: ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISING IN *BETTER HOMES, POPULAR MECHANIC*, AND *TIME* MAGAZINES, 1969-1979.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Better Homes</th>
<th>Popular Mechanic</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
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\textsuperscript{63} Schoenfeld, 31.
Environmentalism was appearing ever more frequently throughout the sixties and seventies, informing Americans, raising awareness, and calling for action.

There is an array of examples that demonstrate how newspapers and magazines reported on the environmental movement. Not only were there reviews of books such as *Silent Spring*, but newspapers also reported the daily environmental disasters that were occurring. *The New York Times* published over ten articles on the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969. One article in particular went into the intricacies of how President Nixon was willing to use G.I.’s to help clean up the slick and that he would be willing to implement stricter regulations to prevent an accident like this happening again.\(^64\) In December of that year the editor published an article by Ada Louise Huxtable, titled “The Crisis of the Environment.” Huxtable explained that continued development of wild areas was negatively affecting America in a deeper way than most people understand. She wrote that “conservation and community are the two sides of the environmental coin. For the crisis of the environment is also the crisis of cities and of the man-made world. It is a crisis of survival and the soul- and of conscience, as well.”\(^65\) Journalist Gladwin Hill also wrote “Environment May Eclipse Vietnam as College Issue,” in which he claimed that the environmental movement was more appealing to students than the Vietnam War for several reasons. First, the students knew that one day the Vietnam War would indeed end and that


American troops would be recalled. Secondly, the Vietnam War was far away, and difficult to feel a part of, whereas the environment was in the here and now. Lastly, he thought the students of all political backgrounds were uniting behind the environmental movement. Hill even briefly mentioned a mass, country-wide demonstration that was being planned for the following spring (Earth Day). Articles like this were important because they grabbed the attention of Americans outside of the younger generation. Hill himself wrote that “Most of the over-30” environmentalists see the student movement as the catalyst, if not the main driving force, that will get environmental improvement rolling and overcome the older generation’s tacit resignation to the status quo.”

Hill quoted many of the students and commented on their passion for the environment. He also quoted renowned ecologist Barry Commoner who applauded the students for their maturity and understanding. The Chicago Tribune had a short piece on the very first Earth Day in 1970. They are sure to point out their own leadership in cleaning up Chicago. It reads, “As our readers know, The Chicago Tribune has taken the lead in this community against water and air pollution. We take satisfaction in seeing the enthusiasm of young people for this good cause.”

In 1976 George Bugliarello published, “The Environment vs. the Economy,” claiming that there is room for both to be addressed simultaneously.

advocated for developing solar energy and postulated that there were a “variety of possibilities” for where the energy field could go that would be both valuable and environmentally friendly.\textsuperscript{70} The Chicago Tribune also had a piece on Robert Redford and his thoughts on the environment. Redford was quoted saying, “I don’t believe in trading off the integrity of our landscape just to have more toasters to plug in.”\textsuperscript{71} Having Hollywood stars like Redford promoting the environment only helped to raise awareness.

Newspapers all over the country were reporting like this and magazines were no different. Newsweek published a special section in its, “The Ravaged Environment” (1970) issue titled ‘America the Beautiful?’. Life magazine also published an article in 1970 titled “Ecology, the New Mass Movement,” Time published “Fighting to Save the Earth from Man,” and Fortune devoted two special issues to environmentalism.\textsuperscript{72} Life magazine also published a special issue on July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1971 that focused on Native Americans. The tribes were becoming more relevant during this time because of environmentalism. Native Americas were seen as protectors of the land who understood the value of balance in nature and conservation. Inside the issue, the article “Our Indian Heritage,” takes a strong stance for environmentalism and is worth nothing for its strong example of what other magazines were also publishing about the environment. The author started out writing:

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\textbf{72} Rome, 551.
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…[Chief Dan Katchongva] has witnessed the erosion of his people, their customs and their lands under the relentless tide of white American civilization. Living close to nature, geared to the rhythms and ritual of ancient days, his way—the Indian way—seemed an anachronism in modern society. Yet America is only now beginning to learn how valid this way was, how relevant to man’s needs. And barely in time, for the white man’s actions which brought the Indian close to extinction today seem destined to curse the whole environment. From its Indian citizens, the United States may yet learn some lessons about restoring the balance between man and his surroundings. The Indian has always been a part of nature, not a destroyer of it. In the legends he wove about mountains, trees, lakes and canyons, in his understanding of the spiritual force of nature, he has maintained a vision of coherence and beauty; the land and the men upon it must exist in harmony.\textsuperscript{73}

The increased number of publications from newspapers and magazines is indicative of a growing awareness and concern about the environment. These forms of mass media contributed to raising awareness in particular demographics that may not have otherwise paid attention. Newspapers and magazines provided information about everyday events and produced short articles that were readily accessible and taught about conservation, ecology, and environmental degradation. While books may be more adept at conjuring stronger attitudes toward conservationism and might be more detailed and informative, magazine and newspaper articles were shorter, more accessible to a broader audience, and were appearing more frequently on doorsteps, reminding Americans that environmentalism was not going away.

Books, magazines, and newspapers assume much of the responsibility for the rise of environmental consciousness in the United States. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* is perhaps the best example of how mass media influenced the people, rather than the people influencing mass media. Carson almost single handedly brought environmentalism into the public eye and the

\textsuperscript{73} Rome, 551.
controversy that surrounded it only increased its frequency in the public discourse. Carson was not persuaded to publish her book because it was a popular subject with the potential to make money, she did it because she had a relationship with nature and wanted to stop the possible annihilation of U.S. ecosystems. The same cannot be said of newspapers and magazines, though they did eventually come to realize that it was becoming a popular subject. Journalists and editors began to cover it more because it was in demand by the American public. This is, of course, not true of every newspaper and magazine: National Geographic and other individual journalists like Philip Shabecoff were consistent promoters of environmentalism even when it was not able to generate as much revenue. However, when more newspapers and magazines started printing pieces on the environment, they made it even more prominent in the minds of the American people. When *Fortune* magazine declared it the top issue for the seventies, it made an impact. Out of all the numerous political, social, and racial issues that the United States was dealing with during this period, *Fortune* declared that environmentalism was the most crucial. This is a solid example of how printed mass media promoted environmentalism in the U.S. Written mass media has been essential to social movements throughout history and the environmental movement in the U.S. was no different. Written material allows for complex ideas to be put forth in as clear a way as possible. Out of the mass communications discussed in this paper, written material is perhaps the most powerful in terms of teaching and learning, especially at a higher level of education. In this respect, written material was essential to raising

74 Rome, 551.
environmental awareness in the United States and did so in a manner that is intrinsically different than visual mass media.
CHAPTER THREE: TELEVISION AND MOVIES

The influence of audiovisual media in the form of television and movies is exceptionally powerful. Mention this in today’s society and most people would agree that in some way these mediums affect them and the society they live in. Movies have had this clout throughout the twentieth century, but it wasn’t until the 1960s and 70s that television became a dominant force in America. Both these mediums were harnessed in order to promote environmental consciousness and spread the environmentalist’s message. Movies are able to combine fantasy and realism in a seamless fashion so that fiction seems authentic and believable. Many of these movies contain sentiments of environmentalism and are therefore partly responsible for shifting attitudes about the environment. Television did even more for the environmental movement than motion pictures did. As Neil Postman wrote in his highly respected book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, “Television has gradually become our culture.” The effect that these mediums had on raising environmental consciousness in the U.S. was critical and was perhaps the defining medium that contributed to the lasting attitude of environmentalism that exists today.

During the 1960s and 70s television became a principal force in the United States. The 1950s were spent developing television and television networks and it was in the next two decades that it became pervasive to the American way of life. Dan Lacy writes about different forms of communication and their importance in his monograph *From Grunts to GigaBytes*:

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Communications and Society. He explains, “By far the greatest impact of the new media on society has come, however, from the series of inventions by which images were made to move and then to speak and at last to be projected across the land to audiences of millions: motion pictures and television. In what, in historical terms, is only an eyeblink of time, our whole means of perceiving the world has been radically changed.” The same concepts that apply to photography can be applied to television and movies, but to an even more amplified effect due to sound and movement. Human beings are primarily visual animals and the augmented reality of television and feature films appeals to human nature. Television is closer to reality than any other medium. In his book Revolutions in Communications, Bill Kovarik explains that, “Cinema clobbers the senses, influencing the way people perceive each other and their environment like no other medium….Nothing else requires so little personal involvement or can deliver content so deeply into the human psyche.” Sheila Jean Gibbons and Ray Eldon Hiebert illuminate this, writing, “Television is an interpretive medium. Its news programs assign value and urgency to the news it covers. It uses pulsing music to open the evening news.” The appealing quality of television led to an unprecedented increase in its use in the 1960s and 70s and several polls demonstrated this. For example, by 1960, 75% of households had a television, which steadily increased over the next twenty years. Another study published for the 1965-66 year concluded

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77 Kovarik, 138.
78 Hiebert and Gibbons, 231.
that nearly 30% of the average adult’s free time was spent watching television.\textsuperscript{80} It is also important to note that more Americans were getting their news via the television, rather than the traditional source of newspapers. In 1959 nearly 10% more people got their news from newspapers. By 1976, television was more popular, with nearly 15% more people expressing that they got most of their news from television over newspapers.\textsuperscript{81} As for television stations, in 1955 there were only 400 stations in the U.S. compared to 1980’s 1,000 stations.\textsuperscript{82} Television had become an important aspect to the American way of life and consequently also became critical to the environmental movement.

One of the most successful advertising campaigns for environmentalism was \textit{The Crying Indian} commercials that were produced by Keep America Beautiful, Inc. The first ad showed an Indian (Iron Eyes Cody), dressed in traditional Native American clothing. His hair was braided and had a feather sticking from it. He wore a necklace and clothing that looks like it was worn in the fifteenth century. The commercial began with Iron Eyes Cody rowing a canoe down a trash-ridden river. He morosely began to paddle between plastic bags, aluminum cans, and other trash, while large industrial factories emitted smoke in the background. He eventually banked his canoe and made landfall. He watched the many cars drive by when a bag full of trash was discarded by a driver, landing at his feet. All the while a voice speaks, “Some people have a deep, abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this country. And some people don’t. People start

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\textsuperscript{81} Orlik, 224.
\textsuperscript{82} Orlik, 231.
\end{flushleft}
pollution. People can stop it."  

As the last words were spoken, Iron Eyes looked directly into the camera as a single tear cascaded down his face.

In a different commercial, Iron Eyes Cody rode his horse through a pristine forest and river as the narrator spoke of the once beautiful land that America used to be. He also said, “The first American people loved the land, they held it in simple reverence. And in some Americans today, that spirit is reborn.” He went on to describe how the land Iron Eyes Cody was riding in used to be a dumping ground for trash, but thanks to the efforts of individuals like the viewer, the land had been cleaned up and returned to its natural state. Though the narrator included that there was still yet a long way to go and that they still need help to solve America’s pollution problem. Again, the commercial ended with a single tear running down Iron Eyes Cody’s face.

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The tear that fell from his face is important. It appealed to the viewer’s emotional sensibilities and made them more likely to remember the commercial and to act upon their feelings. It is no coincidence that the first Crying Indian commercial aired just before the second annual Earth Day. Kevin C. Armitage, a historian writing about the advertisement, writes, “Few of the tens of millions of Americans who were exposed to this 1971 advertisement ever forgot the image of Cherokee actor Iron Eyes Cody: the stoic yet mournful face, the famous tear, and the canoe.”85 This commercial received an enormous amount of attention in the United States. It was so successful that it was named one of the top 100 advertising campaigns of the 20th century by Ad Age magazine.86 It is one of the most iconic messages about environmentalism to have been created and was highly influential.

In many ways, the Crying Indian did as much for environmentalism as any other piece of mass media, yet it is quite different from Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring. These two pieces of media powerfully demonstrate the inherent abilities that different modes of communication can have. The Crying Indian was brief, emotional, and easily seen by millions of people who needed to do nothing but let the words and visuals wash over them. Silent Spring was factual, scientific, and an incredible source for legitimizing the environmental movement. These two pieces of media are inherently different and affected the environmental movement in profoundly different ways, yet they are both essential to how the environmental movement evolved.


There were other commercials in addition to the Crying Indian airing during this time period that reinforced the beauty and value of nature. The Keep America Beautiful advertisements were specifically made to promote a more conservationist society and to stop pollution. The environmental movement influenced American society in other ways as well though. Americans started demanding products that were natural and ecologically friendly in support of the environmental movement, and commercials for products started to adhere to these demands. For example, in 1976 Mazola Margarine came out with a commercial that starred a Native American woman. The woman narrates the commercial, saying, “You call it corn, we call it maize. We knew all about the goodness of maize, corn, before America was America. You call this Mazola Margarine, because the corn oil in Mazola comes from maize. Mazola Margarine has no cholesterol, naturally. And Mazola tastes fresh and good, naturally.” The packaging uses the image of a Native American princess to reiterate that the product is natural and healthy. The environmental movement influenced Americans to buy more natural and ecologically friendly products and advertisements like Mazola Margarine and companies responded by providing these products and advertising them. These advertisements, in turn, influenced more people and raised the environmental consciousness of the United States.

Another example of companies utilizing environmentalism in order to sell products is the Jeep Cherokee, which was first made in 1974. The Jeep Cherokee advertisements consistently placed the Jeep in the rugged outdoors, often in the desert or in the woods. They advertised it as

the “go anywhere” vehicle and emphasized its four-wheel drive capacity. It was designed and advertised to take the driver off road and into the wilderness. As the 1976 Cherokee Chief advertisements states, “The Chief- stands high, wild and handsome.”

Using the word “wild” and the idea that the Jeep Cherokee was made for the wilderness is important. These advertisements tapped into and reinforced Americans perceptions about the wild outdoors and the environment, that they were something to be desired and therefore something to protect.

Figure 2: AMC JEEP COMERCIAL.

Another crucial way that television influenced the environmental legacy of the 1960’s and 70’s was through educational films. A strong example of this is a series of films released by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare between 1972 and 1980. One documentary titled “Environmental Education: A Beginning” demonstrated the impact that environmental


education has had on children and teenagers. It was targeted more toward teachers, parents, and other educators, rather than young people themselves. It showed them the effects that teaching environmentalism and fostering an appreciation for nature could have on young people. In an early segment of the video, a team renovated an elementary school playground that was 95 percent concrete into a more green and natural landscape. While it showed the children playing in their new playground a man narrates, saying, “When we talk about environmental education we’re talking about everything that is connected to everything else. That is, the total environment is a reflection of life and education is a part of that concept including the very important emphasis of changing social habits and attitudes of people and that’s been one of the severe problems of our country and throughout the world.”90 The very beginning of the video simply had teachers and parents leading small children through a forest. The camera zoomed in on the children watching the wilderness, attempting to capture their reactions, while a woman sang in the background, “Living lightly on the land, holding nature in our hands, from the very youngest child learning for the first bright time in the very beginning of their lives.”91 This sort of message was much different from that of books and photographs. It showed the children smiling and delighting in nature as the parents and other adults led them through the forest. Without directly saying it, the video was telling the viewer that experiencing nature is an important part of human development and that it was also crucial to protect it for future generations. This kind of message


appealed more to people’s emotions than their logic. Seeing the children smiling and playing in nature, looking around fascinated by their surroundings was something many people wanted their children to experience.

This video highlighted another pivotal aspect of the 1960’s and 70’s environmental legacy. There was an educational movement and to a certain extent, indoctrination, which in regard to establishing continuity, is one of the most powerful methods available. Roderick Palmer, an education expert at Ohio University, explains in the *Peabody Journal of Education* that a mild definition of indoctrination is defined as any kind of teaching that hampers independent thinking. It is described as teaching a child what to think rather than how to think.92 One narration especially highlights this, “One of the things we’re doing here is to work with the student so that as they grow older and assume more responsibilities, they will care enough about their environment that the immediate pressures of life can be put aside occasionally so that they will render some decisions that our, what I would call, environmentally sound for their future and the future of their children.”93 During this time period educational videos played a role in teaching adults and educators how to teach kids about the environment and promote an environmentally friendly consciousness that would persist into adulthood.

Nature documentaries also began to receive widespread attention throughout the U.S. and became exceedingly popular. There were, of course, nature documentaries prior to the 1960’s,


such as *Africa Adventure*, *The Animal World*, and *White Wilderness*, but it was in this decade that they were widely viewed and endorsed.\(^{94}\) Perhaps the best example of this is the *Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom*, premiering January 6\(^{th}\), 1963 on NBC. According to its website, the show “took viewers to the far corners of the world and studied wild animals in their natural habitats. *Wild Kingdom* viewers witnessed exciting stories and learned about wildlife and conservation as hosts Marlin Perkins, Jim Fowler and Peter Gros faced the challenges of life in the wild.”\(^{95}\) *Wild Kingdom*’s website claims to be the pioneer in television education about conservation. While on the air from 1963 until 1971, *Wild Kingdom* enjoyed great popularity throughout the country and even claimed a prime-time spot on NBC. It brought American’s closer to other natural environments around the world, such as in Africa and South America. It also taught valuable lessons about conservation and its importance. In one promo, Marlin Perkins discussed an upcoming episode in which chimpanzees that had been living in captivity for biomedical purposes was being reeducated and reintroduced into the wild. It demonstrated the idea that progress should not be pursued at the cost of harm to animals. The same idea was applied to environmentalism as a whole and the manner in which environmentalists go about teaching this was important. Actually seeing the animals as they existed in their natural habitats and struggle with their surroundings was part of what made this television series successful. If this same story were presented in a book or in a photograph, it would have a different message and would elicit a


different reaction from the audience. The fact that children and other viewers actually see the animals living in tiny cages and see their fear and other emotions contributed their concern about nature and the environment.

*Wild Kingdom* is also important because of the popularity that it generated. It attracted sponsors and convinced other businesses that there was money in pursuing these sorts of endeavors. Other projects that were of the same ilk as *Wild Kingdom* would only fuel environmentalism and a concern for nature. In many ways *Wild Kingdom* is seen as the precursor for entire cable television stations dedicated to nature, such as *Animal Planet* (1996). *Wild Kingdom* was an intricate part of environmental awareness during 60s and 70s and its value should not be underestimated in regard to the environmental legacy that these two decades produced.

Educational programs were not the only way in which children were taught to appreciate nature. Other forms of entertainment also taught children what to think about the environment in subtle, but entertaining ways. Author David Whitley of Oxford University demonstrates in his book *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* that the messages in some animated films convey the crucial importance of nature to child viewers. He believes that many Disney films communicate the central environmental ideologies of the times in which they were produced and expressed the ambiguities and tensions that underlay dominant values in society.° Many films during the 1960’s and 70’s did this and in turn, raised environmental awareness among children.

The most popular of these was *The Jungle Book*, which was released in 1967 and was Walt Disney’s last film before his death in 1966. Whitley explains, “most Western narratives seek to heal the rift between what is natural and what is shaped (or deformed) by society through engaging their protagonists in closer contact with key elements of nature.”97 In *The Jungle Book*, the main character, Mowgli, was already immersed in the natural world and is in close contact with nature. This allowed for subtle ways in which ideas about nature could be introduced. As Whitley writes, “Mowgli’s situation in *The Jungle Book* is therefore best conceived as a device which, in reversing ordinary expectations, opens viewers up to potentially fresh ways of perceiving and thinking about one of the most fundamental polarities determining human experience.”98 Whitney goes to describe how adventure tales during this time would often have the protagonist enter a wild setting in order to restore some sort of moral order or to bring back something that civilized society was in need of. In the case of Mowgli, his problem was figuring out how to elude the pressures that would remove him from the jungle where he felt most at home.99 While *The Jungle Book* is a children’s film and many aspects of it are not concordant with the real world, its conflicting messages nevertheless got children thinking about nature from a different, more positive perspective.

Other Disney films from the 1960’s and 70’s are discussed in Robin L. Murray and Joseph K. Heumann’s book *That’s All Folks: Ecocritical Readings of American Animated*

97 Whitley, 101.

98 Whitley, 101.

Features, published in 2011. Murray and Heumann analyze two animated films from this time period, *The Aristocats* (1970), and *The Rescuers* (1977). They explain that these stories demonstrate the need for an interdependent relationship between human and nonhuman nature and that domesticated culture need not subsume irrational nature in order for both to survive.¹⁰⁰ Many of the ideas conveyed to children would have them think of wild nature as dangerous, unfit, and in need of domestication. In *Aristocats*, the domesticated cats were thrown into the countryside where they faced many dangers. In this story, however, the wild creatures living on the outskirts of civilization were there to aid the cats on their journey home. These characters were inherently different and sometimes eccentric, but they were not dangerous or evil. The same was true of *The Rescuers*, where the two main characters were mice that saved a human orphan and return her to a safe, domesticated environment. These two films subtly taught children about the environmental perspective that many Americans had during this time.

Another cartoon that dealt more directly with nature was the show and character Yogi Bear. While Yogi Bear was created in 1958, it became its own show in 1961 and would have several spinoffs throughout the next two decades.¹⁰¹ Yogi was a goofy and well natured character who comically stole food from park visitors while being chased by the park ranger (Ranger Smith). Children were drawn to Yogi Bear and laughed at his exploits and in the process they were exposed to animals, nature, and the broad workings of national parks. Children learned

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while the cartoons offered the continuous thread about the importance of not feeding wild
animals and the dangers of leaving food out (Yogi was best known for his picnic basket
stealing), the positive message equally implied by the episode was the value of a healthy
relationship with nature and its creatures. For example, one-episode begins by saying, “Every
summer thousands of pleasure seeking tourists head for the great outdoor playgrounds of
America and the favorite spot is this wonderland of nature called Jellystone Park.”
In a
different episode, Yogi and his companions Boo-boo and Cindy got lost in New York City and
desired nothing but to get back to there home in the forest. On their way back, they spoke of all
the things they missed. Yogi said, “I’ll even be glad to see the ‘do not feed the bear’ signs!”
Cindy wistfully chimed, “I just want to see green leaves again.” And then Boo-boo said
excitedly, “Yeah, and mountains and lakes!” Yogi ended with, “And a forest and the tall trees!”
When they ended up back in New York City instead of Jellystone park, like they expected, the
city was portrayed as hectic, dangerous, and scary. This sort of story line, dialogue, and
behavior promoted a fun and caring attitude toward nature. For children, this can have an impact,
even if they are unaware of it at the time. Cartoons and animated features are able to hold a
child’s attention and to teach them lessons while they enjoy themselves. This promotion of
nature can be directly correlated to environmentalism and conservation. These attitudes


103 “Hey There, It’s Yogi Bear – Three Bears get Lost in New York,”
combined with and reinforced by the environmental activism of the 1960s and 70s were important to its lasting influence.

Receiving news via the television became increasingly popular during 60s and 70s and eventually became the dominant way in which Americans were informed. One important aspect of television news is its ability to set the agenda. In Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder’s monograph *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* they explain the influence that television had on Americans. In one chapter, they describe the agenda-setting hypothesis as problems that receive prominent attention on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation’s most important.104 Their comprehensive study shows that by attending to some problems and ignoring others, national news via the television, shapes the American public’s political priorities. To show just how powerful this is, they write, “Our subjects regarded the target problem as more important for the country, cared more about it, believed that government should do more about it, reported stronger feelings about it, and were much more likely to identify it as one of the country’s most important problems.”105 Iyengar and Kinder also explain other phenomenon that are crucial to the relationship between environmentalism and television. They establish that people who are personally affected by a problem are more susceptible to the effects of agenda-setting. They demonstrate that the predicaments of personal life contribute directly and powerfully to the priorities Americans


105 Iyengar and Kinder, 112.
assign to national problems and that agenda-setting effects show up immediately among those directly affected by the problem. This is what makes environmentalism during this time period influential. Environmental problems are something every American experienced, sometimes powerfully, sometimes subtly. This made agenda-setting a useful tool for environmentalism because news broadcasts about the environment were numerous, often, and mostly easy to get behind. The Vanderbilt Television News Archive demonstrates the amount of news broadcasts that were devoted to the environment in some capacity. Hundreds of news broadcasts that deal with pollution, nuclear waste, Earth Day, endangered animals, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Environmental Quality Control Council, ocean pollution, and DDT. Television news also covered important speeches by presidents who often brought up the environment. JFK said in a speech, “If we do what is right, now, in 1963, we must set aside substantial areas of our country for all the people who are going to live in it by the year 2000. Where 180 million Americans now live, by the year 2000 there will be 350 million of them.” Or Lyndon Johnson, saying, “Either we stop the poisoning of our air or we become a nation in gas masks, groping our way through these dying cities and a wilderness of ghost towns that the people have evacuated.” Nixon asked, “The great question of the seventies is shall we surrender to our surroundings or shall we make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done

106 Iyengar and Kinder, 51.

to our air, to our land, and to our water.” These speeches are important to all other forms of media and content that deal with the environment during this decade because it some ways it is the base for much of it. It is another important catalyst that leads to a continued concern and interest in environmentalism that all other forms of media tapped into, utilized, and reinforced.

There were also several motion pictures that were released for a more mature audience in the 1960s and 70s that dealt with nature and environmentalism. These movies were important in a different sense than some of the other visual media, such as educational videos and various news broadcasts. Movies certainly play more on emotions and this can have a different effect on the audience. One film that dealt with this is *Soylent Green*, which was released in 1973. *Soylent Green* was a dystopic science fiction film that took place in 2022 in New York City and depicted an environmental nightmare riddled with overpopulation. The population of New York alone had risen to 41 million and half of the inhabitants were unemployed and lived in squalor. Overpopulation was a popular fear during the 60s and 70s and tied directly to environmentalism. The concern was that excess people would lead to a dwindling of natural resources and excess pollution and many books and movies tapped into this fear. Exploiting this fear for storytelling was partly possible because of a rise in environmental consciousness and movies like *Soylent Green* would only deepen that fear and reinforce the danger of environmental degradation. *Soylent Green* was not a book filled with statistics, but a movie that showed how the everyday lives that Americans enjoyed and loved could be turned into a nightmare if changes were not made. One reviewer of the film from *The Film Quarterly* wrote, “The best scenes in *Soylent Green*...”

Green are effective because they are simple: Thorn [,the main character,] reveling in water from
a faucet or in a dinner of genuine meat and vegetables-luxuries almost beyond imaging in this
world. Though the film is only a routine thriller beneath its clothing of environmental concern, at
least it is dressed with some care."

The people in the movie were also suffering from
unbearable heat from the greenhouse effect as only the very wealthy could afford air-
conditioning. The movie described New York’s weather as a year-round summer. The surprise
ending revealed that Soylent Corporation, the major food supplier to the population, was not, in
fact making plankton based rations but processing deceased humans. This disturbing revelation
demonstrated how bad life could get if environmental hazards went left unchecked. Soylent
Green is an exemplary film of how environmental concerns were becoming more of an issue in
Green instead showed Americans the sort of lifestyle they could expect if environmental
degradation continued. This difference was important. These two different styles of addressing
overpopulation worked together to promote environmental awareness.

The China Syndrome was another movie that had political and environmental
ramifications. The title referred to a hypothetical nuclear reactor accident in which a reactor core
melts down through the containment vessel, would continue unabated through the Earth itself
and end up in China. Scientists understand that this scenario is fanciful; instead the core would
burn through the container and into the ground, but only superficially. Eventually, the leak would
hit ground water and explode, sending out clouds of radioactivity over a large area. In the film an

investigative reporter and her crew coincidentally end up getting footage of an accident within a nuclear power plant outside Los Angeles. The people who controlled the plant told her that she would not be allowed to show it, since it would tarnish their credibility. They committed illegal acts in order to keep the footage and the story from the public and refused to admit that anything had gone wrong. The story, however, was distinctly anti-nuclear in a time where the issue was highly polarized in the United States, so much in fact that Fortune magazine stated that the nuclear controversy was “the bitterest environmental confrontation of the Seventies.”\textsuperscript{110,111} The China Syndrome attempted to highlight the dangers of nuclear power and its potential for environmental catastrophe.

Only twelve days after the movie’s release, the Three Mile Island nuclear accident occurred in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, the worst nuclear power plant accident in U.S. history. The incident was due to faulty equipment, undertrained personnel failing to recognize the problem, and computer design oversights. While the accident had a limited negative impact on the surrounding environment, it nevertheless reinforced The China Syndrome’s argument that nuclear power plants in the United States were under-regulated and the population began to listen more seriously. Tony Shaw, a film historian, explains, “Environmentalists used The China Syndrome as a teaching tool in colleges and schools, and demonstrators used it to inspire both fear and a sense of urgency among antinuclear protestors across the nation. During a civil


\textsuperscript{111} Samuel J. Walker, Three Mile Island: A Nuclear Crisis in Historical Prespective, (Berkeley: University of Califorina Press, 2004), 28.
disobedience occupation of a nuclear power plant in Virgina, for instance, one New York University physics professor told everyone that America’s nuclear power plants were riddled with safety defects, like *The China Syndrome.*"\(^{112}\) After the release of *The China Syndrome* and the Three Mile Island meltdown, Congress passed legislation that tightened nuclear power regulations, making them safer. Eventually, the government would begin to scale down the use of nuclear power in favor of more eco-friendly energy sources, such as wind and solar power. *The China Syndrome* is a first-rate example of how the big screen can influence the public in environmental matters and raise awareness about environmental degradation and disaster.

There are several other films that are worth noting briefly for their contributions to environmentalism during the sixties and seventies. *Chinatown,* released in 1974, was inspired by the California Water Wars of the early 20\(^{th}\) century. The film is a thriller and a mystery in nature, but has aspects of environmentalism sewed into its fabric. The whole basis of the movie is environmental, fighting over a limited natural resource. Many people and parts of the environment suffered from the diversion of water from the Owens River Valley to Los Angeles. The antagonist in the movie was a man fighting for the diversion of water who accomplished it in a brutal and violent manner. The film was nominated for several Academy Awards and achieved widespread popularity throughout the United States. Even though it is not as environmentally overt or political as other films, it nevertheless drew attention to environmentalism and raises awareness about environmental issues. *Born Free,* a British film released in the U.S. in 1966, also demonstrated the beauty of nature and the protection of

wildlife. The film was about a couple that raise an orphaned lioness and who were forced to send the lion to a zoo or to release her back into the wild. The lioness was reacquainted with the wild and her caretakers were eventually confident enough in her ability to survive on her own to release her into the wild. The film is strewn with beautiful shots of Africa, promoting an appreciation of nature and its wildlife. It also inspired a documentary entitled *The Lions are Free*, released in 1969. Other movies that dealt with environmentalism and nature included: *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961), *Godzilla vs. Hedorah* (1971), *The Last Paradises: On the Track of Rare Animals* (1967), *Mr. Forbush and the Penguins* (1971), and *Paddle to the Sea* (1966). All of these films contributed to a raised awareness of environmentalism.

Television and movies were, and still are, essential pieces of American culture. During the 1960s and 70s television became a dominant force in entertaining Americans and informing them. The environmental movement used both of these functions of television to raise environmental consciousness and push an environmental agenda. Commercials like the Crying Indian were critical in teaching Americans about environmentalism and were credited with almost single handedly stopping Americans from detrimental littering. Television documentaries showed the majesty of nature and brought an appreciation for preserving it. News stations highlighted environmental disasters, cover stories about environmentalism, and televised political leaders speaking about the dangers of pollution and environmental degradation. Educational videos drove the point home, teaching adults how to teach their children about the importance of conservation. These ideas were then reinforced in children through cartoons and feature films. This sort of indoctrination-like education of environmental ideas was critical to the
lasting environmentalism that came out of the sixties and seventies. Television and the cinema raised Americans environmental consciousness through both entertainment and education, making it fundamental to the environmental movement. While these moving images were important to raising environmental consciousness, still photographs also played an important role.
CHAPTER FOUR: PHOTOGRAPHY

The messages that are presented through photography are exceptionally influential. Nearly everyone has heard the phrase, “a picture is worth a thousand words,” and, to an extent, it is true. Photographs and other visual stimuli have a distinctive affect on the human mind that words and sound alone cannot convey. As Stephen Jay Gould, a scientist and writer, claims, “Primates are visual animals and we think best in pictorial or geometric terms. Words are an evolutionary afterthought.”113 This has been shown in several scientific studies and has become known as the pictorial superiority effect, which demonstrates that pictures are much more likely to be recalled than words.114 Visual communication precedes writing by at least 32,000 years and is built into our biology more so than words and sounds. Anthropologists and psychologists believe that humans have evolved to become specialized in recognizing and remembering images. Psychologist William James also observed in the 1890’s that images, not words, were the building blocks of human psychology.115 Another important aspect of images is pointed out by Mitchell Stephens in his book, The Rise of the Image the Fall of the Word, published in 1992. He writes, “There are also understandings, sometimes deep understandings, that can be put into


images-accessibly, concisely, powerfully- but are difficult to put into words.”

This is an important concept that can enlighten our understanding of how images shaped the environmental movement.

It is also important to understand just how large of an impact that photographs can have on society. One example that serves to highlight this is the book How the Other Half Lives by Jacob Riis (1890). This book presented shocking photos of the impoverished and homeless in New York’s slums. It exposed the richer half to how abysmal living conditions were to the lower half in urban America. It became an overnight sensation and ushered in a period of reform and aid. In a more recent, critical version of the book, Hasia R. Diner, an American Historian at New York University, wrote that “How the Other Half Lives also occupies a premier place on a selective list of American books that, on hindsight, unmistakably changed public opinion, began the process of altering public policy, and left an indelible mark on history.”

Another example is Mathew Brady’s photographs of Civil War battlefields. Americans were shocked and disturbed at what they saw in his photos. They had read about war, either in newspapers or in books, but the photographs elicited a different, emotional response. The same concept can be applied to photographs in the environmental movement. Images evoked an emotional response and spurred individuals into action.

The photographs that were taken, published, and viewed during the 60s and 70s affected the environmental movement in a distinct manner. Just how these images influenced and shaped


the environmental movement is important to understand. Powerful pictures were utilized to raise environmental awareness and were easily recalled by the American public, which is an important quality that pictures have over other types of mass media. One of the most powerful and influential photos ever to be taken, which provoked a “deep understanding,” and is nearly impossible to put into words is the photo *Earthrise*. Taken 240,000 miles away from Earth by astronaut William Anders aboard *Apollo 8*, it is one of the most famous photographs ever taken and is reputed to be the most widely disseminated photograph in human history. Historian Benjamin Lazier writes that it is now printed on “T-shirts and tote bags, cartoon and coffee cups, stamps commemorating Earth Day and posters feting the exploits of suicide bombers.”


The influence of this single image is difficult to overstate. For the first time, people were able to see the Earth in its entirety. Wilderness photographer Galen Rowell referred to the photo as “the most influential environmental photograph ever taken.”\textsuperscript{120} Fred Hoyle, a British astrophysicist, even predicted its influence in 1948: “once a photograph of the Earth, taken from the outside, is available, we shall, in an emotional sense, acquire an additional dimension… once let the shear isolation of the Earth become plain to every man whatever his nationality of creed, and a new idea as powerful as any in history will be let loose.”\textsuperscript{121} Hoyle, inadvertently or not, was referring to the idea of environmentalism and how the issue would acquire an emotional aspect to it and would become even more powerful. The Earthrise photo was symbolic of a powerful new ideology in the United States that was growing in the 1960’s: Environmentalism. Environmentalists used it to show the fragility of the planet and that humanity was destined to destroy it unless preventative steps were taken. They used it to advance their social and political agendas to promote environmentalism. Hoyle made another important point in his prediction. He wrote that it would add a new emotional dimension to how the Earth was viewed. The emotional aspect of this is critical to how photographs influenced the environmental movement and especially pertains to the Earthrise photo. A few individuals writing and talking about this photograph highlighted exactly how emotionally powerful it was. The commander of Apollo 8,

\textsuperscript{120} Bill Kovarik, \textit{Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age} (New York: Continuum, 2011), 132.

\textsuperscript{121} Bryant, William and Lewis, C.S. “The Re-Vision of Planet Earth: Space Flight and Environmentalism in Postmodern America” \textit{American Studies} 36, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 44.
Frank Borman, reflected on his experience seeing it: “I happened to glance out of one of the still-clear windows just at the moment the Earth appeared over the lunar horizon. It was the most beautiful, heart-catching sight of my life, one that sent a torrent of nostalgia, of sheer homesickness, surging through me. It was the only thing in space that had any color to it. Everything else was either black or white, but not the Earth… Raging nationalistic interests, famines, wars, pestilences don’t show from that distance. We are one hunk of ground, water, air, clouds floating around in space. From out there it really is ‘one-world.’”¹²² The famous and eloquent cosmolologist Carl Sagan also highlighted the emotional aspect: “Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it, everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives… To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”¹²³ The sentiments expressed by Sagan and Borman were feelings that millions of Americans also felt after seeing the Earth from afar for the first time. Imagine writing a detailed description of the Earthrise photo and giving it to someone who had never seen it before. While that person might understand the concept, he or she could not truly appreciate the sight.


The *Earthrise* photograph also introduced the idea of “One World” and “Whole-Earth,” into the American psyche and fundamentally changed the way people thought about the Earth.\(^\text{124}\) The “One World” and “Whole Earth” terminology entered into environmental discourse and the American vocabulary. Biophysicist John Platt said, “That great picture of Earth taken from the moon is one of the most powerful images in the minds of men today and may be worth the cost of the whole Apollo project. It is changing our relationship to the Earth and to each other.”\(^\text{125}\) This is exactly what leaders in the environmental movement were hoping for, to have the population aware of the beauty and fragility of the Earth. Perhaps most importantly was the fact that this image was cemented into so many minds in the American population. The environmental movement was, in many ways, a grass-roots movement. To have a major portion of society see the *Earthrise* photo and be able to conceptualize the idea of a “One World” concept was essential to producing the environmental mass movement.

Nearly as important as the photographs from space were photos of nature itself. Images of the natural beauty that surrounded Americans were used to further the environmental agenda and influence public opinion. Perhaps the most important collection of these sorts of photographs was Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall’s *This is the American Earth*, published in 1960 and continually republished over the subsequent twenty years. Ansel Adams’ work with the Sierra Club throughout the 1960s and 70s made him one of the most influential figures in the


environmental movement. This particular work consisted of several dozen photos of the American landscape is accompanied by small portions of text. For example, the book contained two images side-by-side, one of a child standing in a field of flowers, surrounded by the forest and the other of trees in the StebeKin River Forest, with the caption, “You shall enter the living shelter of the forest. You shall walk where only the wind has walked before.”

The last page in the collection displayed a beautiful shot of nature in the Aspens and Adams and Newhall ended with the words, “Tenderly now/let all men/turn to the earth.” As reviewer Edward Deevey wrote, “Any purchaser who can get past the book’s repellent title will probably not even notice the text, and the pictures are magnificent.” This is the American Earth also used pictures of housing developments to contrast the natural beauty of the Earth to the distasteful symmetry of human construction. The book showed this by using William Garnett’s photos of before and after shots of the landscape. Adams and Newhall put on exhibits of their photos before they even considered publishing the book. Modern Photography magazine called it “One of the most beautiful and remarkable photographic exhibitions ever put together.”

The Wichita Beacon devoted its entire editorial page to the book shortly after it came out. It claimed, “This book delivers the most important message of this century.” Environmental historian Finis Dunaway explains in his

126 Ansel Adams and Newhall Nancy, This is the American Earth (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1960), 102-103.
127 Edward S. Deevey, “Reviewed Work: This is the American Earth,” Science 132, no. 3441 (December, 1960): 1759.
129 Dunaway, 131.
book, *Natural Visions*, that newspapers throughout the country positively reviewed *This is the American Earth* and often used phrases such as “superb images” and “a fitting celebration of our national parks.” Frank Moss, the democratic senator from Utah between 1955 and 1977, found the book “particularly moving,” and subsequently gave a speech on the importance of conservation and also published a book, *The Water Crisis*. Other government representatives championed the book as well, which inspired executive director of the Sierra Club David Brower to claim that the book’s emotional and aesthetic message would continue to convert Americans to environmentalist ideals. The images evoked similar emotions out of people that the photos from beyond earth inspired. While their words were important, the splendid photographs that Adams captured reminded Americans of the natural beauty of the country they resided in. The pictures, not the words, were responsible for the emotional responses that Americans had and inspired them to address environmental policy.

Images that captured the beauty and majesty of nature were important to the movement, as were pictures of the industrial disasters that were destroying it. Environmental photographers capitalized on the oil spills during the time period to further the environmental agenda. One of the first major stories revolved around the American oil tanker *Torrey Canyon* that became grounded in U.K. in 1967. It initiated widespread reports of wildlife that had been exposed to the

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130 Dunaway, 144.


132 *Congressional Record, 86th Cong., 2d sess.*, 16864, A6179. David Brower to Nancy Newhall (form letter to Sierra Club membership), 11 Oct. 1960, box 10, NNC.
oil and several images appeared of imperiled birds.\textsuperscript{133} Another incident that garnered attention was an eleven-day blowout on a Union Oil Company rig in 1969 that sent more than three million gallons of crude oil into the ocean and beaches near Santa Barbara, California, spoiling nearly 35 miles of coastline. The oil obstructed the blowholes of dolphins, sickened or killed seabirds, and sent gray whales through unnatural migration routes. Newspapers from around the country, including the \textit{Los Angeles Times}, the \textit{Washington Post}, the \textit{Boston Globe}, and \textit{Time}, printed pictures from the oil spill.

![Figure 4: SANTA BARBARA OIL SPILL, 1969.](image)

The visual images of injured or dead animals, such as that in Figure 4, had an impact on the American perspective. National Geographic’s cover of the December 1970 issue showed a bird covered in oil, swimming in thick black water, headlines such as, “Our Ecological Crisis,” “The

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\textsuperscript{133} Kathryn Morse, “There Will be Birds: Images of Oil Disasters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” \textit{Journal of American History} 99, no. 1 (June 2012): 129.

\end{flushright}
Fragile Beauty All About Us,” “Pollution Threat To Man’s Only Home,” and “The World- And How We Abuse It.” The exposure to these photographs and articles aided an environmental consciousness.

Another important oil spill that captured the public’s attention and riled people to action occurred in 1970 off the coast of Tampa Bay. The accident provided the opportunity for George Silk to snap a particularly emotional photo of a drowned bluebill duck. The duck was lying on its side, staring sightlessly up and covered in oil. Other oil spills also received media attention and provided pictures in their story, including spills in Massachusetts and San Francisco.

Other negative photos also emerged, but did not focus on nature as much as it did people. Finis Dunaway wrote about how visual media affected the American environmental movement. He explained, “Images of gas masks personalized the sense of risk by showing the ecological threat intruding upon the daily lives of all Americans, warning that everyone could suffer from the deadly spread of pollution.” Images from Life magazine gave examples of the grim future ahead of Americans if they did not take up environmentalism as a serious issue.


Photos like those in Figure 5 and Figure 6 tapped into a different aspect of human psychology than the pictures of the wilderness and pollution did. While the images of Earth and nature appealed to Americans in a sort of big picture ideal, these photos of gas masks were much more personal. They showed how an individual’s daily life might be significantly affected because of

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139 Photographs by Michael Mauney, Sarah Pekkanen and Lucy Mauney, the photographers wife and daughter, are featured. Published in *Life*, January 30, 1970. Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.
their action-or inaction-with regard to the planet’s health. Dunaway also points out that gas masks had a highly negative connotation at the time. He wrote, “During World War I, the mask protected soldiers from asphyxiating gas, but it also became a purveyor of pejorative meaning, a symbol of the dehumanizing effects of modern warfare.” The conception that these bug-eyed, inhuman masks may have to be worn by all citizens because of their attitude toward the environment escalated concern about environmentalism. Simply writing about a society in which people wear gas masks outdoors would not be enough to get the point across. The picture of a woman walking her child in a stroller though produces the sort of emotional response that environmentalists were looking for.

In modern American, it may seem obvious that the blame for environmental degradation belongs, in part, to each individual. Many people know the term ‘carbon footprint’ and are aware that each person leaves a mark on the environment. This was not as obvious during the environmental movement of the 60’s and 70’s. Part of the environmental agenda was to have Americans appreciate the fact that they were as responsible as big industry. A surprising source to help achieve this was found in the cartoon Pogo the Possum, illustrated by Disney animator Walt Kelly. In the most famous of his cartoons, Pogo is found underneath two trees in a forest. The ground is littered with the waste left by humans. Centered right above Pogo is the statement, “WE HAVE MET THE ENEMY AND HE IS US.” This cartoon was surprisingly effective and was consistently reprinted in the months leading up to the first Earth Day. Pogo was an

140 Dunaway, 75.

141 Dunaway, 79.
important visual symbol associated with the environmental movement and helped raise awareness about the everyday effect that individual citizens had on the environment.

Pogo was not the only cartoon that furthered environmental consciousness in the United States. Major newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, published political cartoons focused on awareness, including this one by E.A. Harris:

Figure 7: PESTICIDE CARTOON. Another cartoon that was printed in the *New York Times* on September 7th 1969 displayed a man on a crowded bus stop in ‘Pollution City.’ The headline on the newspaper the man was reading

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stated, ‘US is winning space race.’ One cartoonist, Ron Cobb, was particularly influential for his environmental cartoons. It is more effective to see the cartoons in order to truly see the potential they had in influencing the American public.

Figure 8: RON COBB ENVIRONMENTAL CARTOON: BILLBOARDS.

Figure 9: RON COBB ENVIRONMENTAL CARTOON: TRASH IN SPACE.


The cartoon in Figure 8 shows a landscape so destroyed that billboards of a beautiful landscape were erected along the side of a highway. It is another example of what everyday people could look forward to if environmental degradation was not curbed. Figure 9 pokes fun of landing on the moon, implying that we have now reached another celestial body, only to pollute that one as well.


well. Comics have a unique effect on the human mind and have more influence than popularly believed. One psychoanalysis of comics states:

When you look at a photo or a realistic drawing of a face- you see it as the face of another. But when you enter the world of the cartoon- you see yourself. The cartoon is a vacuum into which our identity and awareness are pulled… an empty shell that we inhabit which enables us to travel in another realm. We don’t just observe the cartoon we become it.  

This sentiment rings true with a number of Cobb’s comics, especially the comic of vehicles driving down the road staring at billboards of natural scenery while factories emit pollution in the background. While comics often combine visuals and words, many of the comics were primarily visual and only had text to qualify some of the meaning. The humor or often horror of the images projected a future that photographs could not yet provide. These drawings contributed to environmental attitudes and actions in the United States.

Photography and other visual images were essential to the environmental movement in the 1960’s and 70’s and to the developing relationship between Americans and the Earth. Human beings are a predominately visual species and have an easier time recalling and being attached to visual stimuli. These images often provoked a quick emotional response within people, which also lodged the memory more firmly into a person’s mind. The Earthrise photo that was released in the late 1960’s is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon. This one image had a profound impact on people around the globe, especially Americans. It elicited a unique response in people and got them thinking about the beauty and fragility of the Earth. This rising

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147 Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics (Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink Press), 34.

consciousness and awareness about the harmful effects that people were having on the environment was absolutely essential to the environmental mass movement that was sparked during these two decades, which has led to modern day environmental policy and attitudes in the U.S.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In 2011, Apple, the richest company in the world, announced its plans to build an all-new office building to house 15,000 employees. Since that time, Apple has announced that the campus will be “the most energy-efficient building of its kind,” and that it will be powered by 100 percent renewable energy. Not only is Apple attempting to reduce its carbon footprint, but it is also trying to make the entire building a part of the environment for its employees. Apple explains that the building has air that flows freely between the inside and the outside of the building, providing natural ventilation. The building is also cylindrical, with the inside of the circle populated by more than 7,000 trees, 6,000 of these being newly planted by Apple. Windows cover both sides of the building, allowing employees to enjoy the view from all sides. Apple Campus 2 has been estimated to cost over five billion dollars. Why is Apple spending five billion dollars on an environmentally green campus? Why are they advertising the fact that they are spending such an exorbitant sum on this building? Partly, it is because ‘going green’ is seen as a positive in the public eye. A survey conducted by Tiller, LLC showed that 78% of Americans agree that corporations have a responsibility to adopt environmentally friendly policies. 43% said they declined to buy a product over the last year out of concern for the effect that product had on the environment. It also showed that 83% of Americans in 2015 looked for more opportunities to “go green” and that 90% of people say that it is important to

recycle, moderate household use of energy and conserve water.\textsuperscript{150} It is so crucial for businesses to ‘go green’ that there have been incidents of greenwashing, a term used to describe companies who claim to be environmentally friendly, but are not. Most Americans today believe that protecting the environment is important and it has permeated many levels of society.

Public policy has also reflected this. Since 2010, The United States government has spent over 50 billion dollars to help protect and restore the environment.\textsuperscript{151} President Barrack Obama recently released his Clean Power Plan, claiming that it is “a historic step in the Obama Administration’s fight against climate change.”\textsuperscript{152} The Clean Power Plan establishes the first-ever national standards on carbon pollution from power plants and aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030.\textsuperscript{153} In July of 2015, Quinnipiac University released a poll that asked which issue is the \textit{most} important in terms how people would vote in the general election and 6\% of the people said that climate change was their top concern. The only other issues on that list were economy, health care, terrorism, foreign policy, immigration, federal deficit, and taxes. Even if many do not consider it the top issue, it is still one of the eight subjects that is considered one of America’s top problem.


Since the United States has put a considerable priority on environmental issues, many other countries around the world have as well. The United States has put pressure on the Chinese government, requesting that they do their part in cleaning up the Earth and reducing pollution. Many European countries have taken enormous steps to reducing their carbon footprint and utilize clean energy. Just this year Norway announced its 5.4 billion dollar divestment from coal.\textsuperscript{154} Another example of how important the environment has become around the world is the celebration of Earth Day. In 2000 184 countries participated in the celebration, reaching hundreds of millions of people across the globe.\textsuperscript{155}

This massive concern for the environment did not occur overnight, it began in the 1960s and 1970s. Many of the “firsts” took place during this time period. Some of the most important first steps were Earth Day, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, seeing Earth from the outside, and effective, large scale public service announcements like The Crying Indian commercials. This was the time period in which environmentalism surged into the public consciousness and then stuck in the national psyche. It has become a part of American society. There have been other periods in which environmentalism was a concern, but it was never as popular or lasting as the surge during the 1960s and 1970s. In part, this was because the combination of different forms of mass media and their unique intrinsic effects on the individual and society as a whole shaped and guided the movement in distinct ways. These forms of mass


\textsuperscript{155} “Earth Day: The History of a Movement,” Earth Day Network, \url{http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-history-movement?gclid=CjwKEAjwwbyxBRCST49hEp0wSJACkO5v1jjjX6IjNXzYjF_bUda4O7QGi3uE2tOShpX8Awz8x0CnmPw_wcB} (accessed October 24, 2015).
media worked symbiotically and coalesced to spark one of the largest social movements of the 
twentieth century. This is an important point and Stewart Udall’s book *The Quite Crisis*
highlights how the environmental history of the United States in the sixties and seventies was
different from previous movements. Udall tells the story of environmental history and
conservationism through influential figures such as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Teddy
Roosevelt. William C. Robinson wrote that, “conservationism has never been a grass-roots
movement but rather has made most of its advances in the face of popular apathy or open
opposition…”156 This is why Udall was forced to tell the history of conservationism through the
few big names that championed it. Yet the sixties and seventies were not of the same ilk. This
time period had its big names like Rachel Carson and Barry Commoner, but the difference was
that these big names helped spark a grass-roots movement that was different from any previous
social movement that concerned the environment. They were able to do this, in part, because of
the various forms of mass media available. The movement garnered so much support in this way
that it started to feed on itself. Books, movies, and television shows were able to tap into the
public’s concern about environmentalism and solidify itself as a topic capable of making money,
therefore producing more content and raising more awareness. The news media then began
covering it more frequently, entrenching environmentalism as a foremost concern in American
society. The topic became so important that parents, writers, educators, cartoonists and the
government began to teach children at a very young age about the tenants of environmentalism.

This helped to secure an environmental legacy that still affects the U.S. today and can be seen in abundance.

There were, of course, other factors that played a role in environmental awareness. Music had an impact on the way people thought about the environment. Popular songs such as Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell (1970), Where Do the Children Play by Cat Stevens (1970), Hole in the Sky by Black Sabbath (1975), Mother Nature’s Son by the Beatles (1968), and Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth (1974), definitely played a role. Women played a role in spreading environmental awareness on the local level, especially in neighborhoods and in family life. Politics sometimes took the lead, making changes that were not yet being called upon by the public. A few of these issues, particularly music, were not addressed due to the scope and length of this thesis. While there were other factors that contributed to environmental consciousness, the three types of media analyzed in this work played a vital role in how the movement evolved and how it became to be what it is today.

Environmentalism has become an important and entrenched part of American society, its culture, business, politics, foreign affairs, and economy. It is one of the most important issues among Americans today. It came to be because of the emergence and fruition of an environmental consciousness that took place during the 1960s and 1970s. This raised awareness and concern for the environment and the legacy of environmentalism that came about was only possible because of mass media. It is not enough to say that mass media affected environmental consciousness however. The emergence of television, combined with printed material and photographs, shaped the environmental movement in important ways. Environmentalism in
America and around the world has become important in modern society because of the ways in which printed material, audio-visual content, and photographs guided the environmental movement and in 1960s and 70s and made it stick in the minds of Americans.
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