ISSA Proceedings 2002 – World Environment Day 2000: Arguing For Environmental Action

World Environment Day, established in 1972, is "one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates world wide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action … [it] is also a multi-media event which inspires thousands of journalists to write and report enthusiastically and critically on the environment" (UNEP Web page). World Environment Day is celebrated on June 5 (more than 100 countries observe the event annually) with a different country selected to host the ceremonies each year. Australia was selected as the host country and Adelaide as the primary site for the 2000 celebrations. I attended the event and took field notes on the activities, arguments advanced, and value appeals invoked in the public rhetoric. I collected available print materials and media coverage on site and later through a Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe review of General News. This essay explores the strategic events and discourse of World Environment Day 2000 including the media's response, offers a descriptive analysis of the argumentative strategies employed in the activities, and compares the observed events with the media's coverage of the celebration.

To understand the format and goals for the event, some additional background information is appropriate. The host site organizes public events that focus largely on spectacle as a way of generating public attention to the environment – parades, concerts, rallies, school competitions, clean-up activities, etc. World Environment Day celebrations also have a political component, the official events – symposia, treaty signings, and information campaigns. The political activities reinforce environmental agreements as well as provide a forum where delegates and international guests can exchange strategies for environmental action or garnering desirable media coverage.

In his December 1999 press release, Robert Hill, Australian Environment Minister, articulates an additional agenda for host countries, to garner favorable international attention for their environmental achievements and commitments: "World Environment Day is a cause for national activity and celebrations … to …

show the world that Australia's unique heritage is in good hands" (http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/env/99/mr18dec99.html).

The host country's agenda and the U.N.'s goals for the commemoration rely on good media coverage of political and public events. *1. Scholarship and Media Coverage of the Environment*

Since Earth Day 1970, media attention to environmental issues (Collins & Kephart, 1995) has been largely focused on events and discourse that created good spectacle: public controversies as in the fluoridation campaign and public reaction to nuclear power (Mazur, 1981); the accident at Three Mile Island (Friedman, 1981); media gatekeeping in the asbestos awareness campaign (Freimuth and Nevel, 1981); the snail darter controversy (Glynn & Tims, 1982); acid rain (Glynn, 1988); the spotted owl debate (Lange, 1993; Moore, 1993; Paystrup, 1994; Opt 1994); or potential/actual environmental disasters such as Chernobyl (Luke, 1987), environmental risk (Rentz, 1992), and the Exxon Valdez accident (Williams & Treadway, 1992). Each of these environmental situations lent itself to "crisis coverage" or was characterized by spectacle and most often framed, by the media, as a Race Against the Clock to prevent environmental disaster. Lange (1993) notes, "resource conflict has become a quintessential feature" (239) of environmental reporting with the media framing resource conflict as Economy vs. the Environment in which only one end is served, or as Political Wrangling in which the focus shifts from the environmental issue under consideration to a blow-by-blow reporting of the bickering between political factions–party politics, developed vs. developing nations, industry vs. environmentalists (Collins & Kephart, 1995).

Scholars investigating environmental campaigns and media coverage note a lack of research into how public attitudes and action with respect to the environment are changed. Oravec's (1984) discussion of competing value hierarchies and Cox's (1982) discussion of the *loci communes* which become the basis for the public's "interpretation of general values in situated moments of decision and action" (228) nudged scholarship toward a focus on argument in environmental discourse.

This essay explores how the symbolic activities associated with World Environment Day and the news accounts it encouraged constructed meaning for the public through the selection of particular rhetorical frames for the events, the emphasis on particular values, and the arguments advanced and reported. World Environment Day is a strategic act designed to construct a reality in which

environmental activism is central. As such, successful ceremonies will tap into the values, arguments, and assumptions of the global public (not the least of which is the global media) in such a way that environmental action becomes foremost in the public's agenda.

The critic of environmental communication, especially of public awareness campaigns such as World Environment Day, must assess the quality of the argumentative strategies that were adopted. To this end, this essay assesses the choice of public and political events to commemorate World Environment Day 2000 in Adelaide. Strategic choices at this level, however, can be enhanced or minimized by the media's coverage of the events. The paper analyzes the number of stories and the frames the media employs to report the event. Parades and rallies generate mass participation and heighten the excitement of the moment, but they are often given more importance in media stories (because they contain spectacle) than the scientific messages that are proposed in the more serious activities of the celebration. Similarly problematic, the symposia and treaty signings are easily reported as examples of a lack of global commitment, especially when the major players, like the United States, are unwilling to participate fully. In this case, Political Wrangling as a frame minimizes the scientific frames that could be employed. The media's coverage of these rhetorical acts has the potential to facilitate or to threaten the United Nations General Assembly's goal of fostering global environmental action because even the choice of frames that journalists employ (e.g., "The Environment" as a symbolic complex that demands attention) shape public understanding.

The remainder of this essay explores the strategic events and discourse of Australia's ceremonies and the media's response to this global event. It entails participant observation, a numerical assessment of patterns of media coverage, and a close textual analysis for narrative frames.

2. Public and Political Events in Adelaide
Adelaide hosted a large number of public events designed to enhance awareness of and commitment to protecting the environment. In the week leading up to June 5, Adelaide decorated the city and its public transportation with colorful banners and posters that included the logo and theme, "2000 The Environment Millennium: Time to Act". Posters, postcards, and banners feature a sea turtle and a graphic for the year 2000 with each number in a photo block (one of a golden frog, one of sand dunes, one of green leaves, one of coral on the ocean floor) to

remind the viewer of environmental problems facing the globe. Local stores developed merchandise to commemorate the day, including tee shirts, hats, and even chocolate frogs to remind those with a sweet tooth that many species of frogs are endangered. Eco Party 2000 provided entertainment along with environmental information on Adelaide's threatened plants and animals in exchange for a gold coin contribution for environmental action. The invitation noted, "This is your opportunity to party and protect our planet!"

The Rundle Mall in central Adelaide displayed local, governmental, and industry exhibits to promote environmental awareness. A giant inflated platypus and numerous activities tailored to children dominated the mall. Activities included a treasure hunt through informational materials and 3D art displays illustrating the effects of pollution on river plant and animal life with an emphasis on ways of preventing stormwater pollution. "The Treasure Hunt will . . .challenge the children to draw links between the messages and their own lives. Successful completion of the Treasure Hunt will result in participants taking home a raised awareness of stormwater issues and a treasure trove of goodies" ("World Environment Day program). During the week preceding June 5, the Australian Youth Parliament debated environmental issues as did high school virtual debate teams in Adelaide and in her sister cities, such as Christchurch, New Zealand. The Adelaide Botanic Gardens developed an interpretive trail to educate the public to the importance of water. Each of the preceding activities and displays was designed to bring the environment to the public's attention. It would have been difficult to live and work in Adelaide without seeing the environmental displays the city provided or read and hear about the World Environment Day events. The focus for most of these public activities, beyond environmental awareness, was the threat to life posed by water mismanagement (waste, salination), air pollution, and species endangerment.

Local organizations such as Threatened Species Network for South Australia sponsored additional activities, including a competition for the best biodiverse backyard. Smogbusters sought to educate the public to the need for sustainable transport by having "people wearing nitrogen dioxide samplers around the Adelaide city area" ("World Environment Day: Leave). Environmental groups and city planners sponsored numerous tree plantings, the most frequently employed symbolic activity in World Environment Day celebrations globally, and waterside cleanup activities to symbolize the role of human effort in addressing environmental needs. The value of waterside cleanup projects is well known to

Australian children. Public schools have units devoted to environmental education, especially the preservation of water resources. Activity projects and a poster campaign produced by the Waters and Rivers Commission teach children that human, plant, and animal life are interdependent and remain healthy only with a healthy water system. One poster campaign is organized around the theme, "I can do that" with individual posters focusing on clean water, a healthy wetlands, living streams and catchment friendly gardening. Each of the posters includes a statement about the dependence on water, e.g. "Dragonfly larvae and many other animals depend on clean water in our rivers and wetlands for their survival" followed by a list of activities that humans can engage in to preserve water resources. The water cleanup activities in the Adelaide area included removal of noxious weeds and exotic species and replanting the riverbanks with indigenous plants, water monitoring projects by local school children, and restoring coastal vegetation.

The splashiest and predictably most frequently reported event because of its nature as spectacle was the 6000 school children marching in a parade that terminated at the reviewing stand where United Nations dignitaries joined Australian officials in formally opening the World Environment Day 2000 activities. The children were dressed as environmental problems and solutions. Anticipating the parade, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* reported that 65 schools from throughout South Australia would be sending 6200 children to participate. An elementary school teacher was quoted, "The children in my class are a big pond the children on the outside will all be in blue garbage bags with streams and invertebrates hanging from them … In the middle we've got frogs, tadpoles and a bit of pollution" (Huppatz, 6/3/00, 32). The television coverage in South Australia focused on the children's parade and replanting activities. References to the inflatable platypus and other larger than life environmental characters inhabiting Rundle Mall were frequently included in news accounts that anticipated and reported the events of June 5.

There is a consistent argument running across the public activities sponsored in recognition of World Environment Day: Human effort is needed immediately to correct numerous environmental problems. Although the problems are generally traceable back to human action, the focus is less on who or what caused the problem and more on the needed immediacy of a solution. By framing the argument in this way, humans are seen more as change agents and less as

culpable for environmental degradation. The argument assumes a public aware of the environmental issues and generally in agreement with the premise that human effort is needed immediately. It also presupposes an audience accepting of the proposed courses of action. The argumentative stance assumes that the only barrier to solving environmental problems is human inaction. The public, then, is seen as agreeing with environmental activists, but merely quiescent. Given these assumptions, the logical campaign to wage is one that raises public awareness of the necessity for acting immediately. Activating an agreeing but quiescent audience requires different arguments than educating or convincing a neutral or disagreeing audience. For example, arguments justifying tree plantings and waterway cleanup replantings emphasize how much help individuals have given and can provide in re-creating a sound ecosystem; they assume agreement with the definition of the problem and proposed solutions. The appeal is cast as a greening of Australia. Stephen R. Kellert's taxonomy of basic values would see this as a humanistic appeal to a love of nature. Although we seldom think of environmental activism as representing a dominionistic value, a form of mastery of nature, in effect tree plants and waterway restructuring reflect a belief in the human ability to design and thereby improve nature. The resultant worth value is to maintain nature/the environment for its potential use or to enhance nature's indirect use value by recognizing its ecosystem functions: worth value "refers to some tangible benefit that accrues to a human being" (Perlman, Adelson & Wilson, 1997, 44).

Value appeals and assessment of worth give substance to argument frames. Frames organize, clarify relationships, direct the attention of the receiver of the message. Edelman (1993) explained that frames can evoke particular and arbitrarily established social realities: "Far from being stable, the social world is … a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily evoked by alternating the ways in which observations are framed and categorized" (p. 232). Gamson (1989) makes the link between the substance of an argument and the meaning it takes on; e.g., facts have meaning only as they are "embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others" (p. 157). In the case in point, the explanation, that what is being removed are exotic plants introduced by humans, and that it is more environmentally sound to replanted with native species, is left unarticulated. The science behind this preference for native plants is also ignored frequently in the appeal for replanting. The argument frame and supporting value

appeals constitute what Murray Edelman would term a contestable category. An example of what happened at one of the advertised tree plantings on June 5 illustrates why argument frames and value appeals are worth considering when designing an informational or action campaign.

The local paper and posters surrounding the Town Hall in Adelaide advertised a tree planting activity to begin at 10 a.m. along the tramway at stop 18. It was one of only two activities listed for June 4, in addition to the informational exhibits in the Rundle Mall. As such, I assumed it would be a major activity, attended by dignitaries from Australia and the United Nations, and thus covered extensively by the media. I arrived 15 minutes early and discovered only one person who was hauling boxes of roses and perennial plants toward a recently cleared but not tilled patch of land (approximately 15 feet by 30 feet) located between the tram rails and a residential street. An umbrella table, several plastic chairs, and two unattended boom mikes set off to the side were the only indication that a media event might soon be happening at the site. The man told me that he lived across the street and had secured the plants from a local nursery. He had distributed flyers in the neighborhood to encourage people to join him in a planting program. He was not sure when the officials would arrive, but hoped that they would bring additional planting material. After the two of us planted for about 20 minutes a hand full of neighbors joined us to finish planting everything that he had managed to get contributed from a local nursery. The neighborhood was pleased with their efforts and assured me that by removing the overgrown bushes and re-landscaping the tram stop they felt they were contributing to increased use of the tram, and thus acting in the spirit of World Environment Day and the greening of Australia. Because the stop had been dark and overgrown, several muggings had taken place and the elderly community members had stopped using public transportation as a result. For the locals, replanting served a safety value, but it also represented an aesthetic value. The neighbors felt they were part of the Adopt-A-Tram Station program that had been developed in Adelaide. They were committed to maintaining the flowers, hand watering the plants and weeding out the native grasses that had previously given the stop an un-cared-for appearance.

Fifteen minutes after we finished planting, a corps of conservation volunteers arrived with more of the fast growing native trees and bushes that had earlier been removed. They informed the neighborhood group that the roses and perennials would need to be removed and native species planted in their stead.

On the heels of this announcement a handful of dignitaries arrived by private cars. Three reporters also arrived in time for a brief speech praising Adelaide for its World Environment Day activities, especially their commitment to planting trees throughout the area. During the speeches the corps of conservation volunteers planted about two dozen native trees. In less than thirty minutes after their arrival, the dignitaries, media, and conservation corps left Tram stop 18. They left a frustrated group of local volunteers who found themselves at odds with the official agenda for re-plantings. No one bothered to explain that native species require less water and support indigenous animal life. No one bothered to explain that an aesthetic garden was not necessarily environmentally sound. The greening of Adelaide was a contestable category, an argument that strategically would have been better framed from a scientific perspective. Rather than focus on action, the reasons for action might still have allowed accommodation of the neighborhood's safety concerns and desire to be involved with the science behind native planting.

This one example of miscommunication points to the need for careful audience analysis and subsequent arguments that seek what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) term "objects of agreement" shared by the public and that are less contestable. Because the public is already committed to water preservation and wary of increased salination (or seemed to be given general public discourse on the topic), this consensus might have made a better basis for seeking public action than the vaguer appeal to a green Australia or arguments designed to seek action/solutions before they carefully articulate the problems and their causes. The powerful spectacle of replanting garnered some desired media attention and even the imagination of the public (this was a neighborhood, I was told, that had not worked together before), but the rationale for the action was not clear and hence the neighborhood efforts were misdirected. Something less symbolic and more informational or, alternatively, symbolic activities based on a solid informational campaign would have better achieved the strategic end that the planners of World Environment Day 2000 sought.

The political events planned for World Environment Day 2000 were less numerous than the public events and were subsequently less visible to both the public and the media. UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) sponsored a major awards ceremony held June 4 to recognize outstanding achievement in environmental work internationally and within Australia, the Urban Forest

Biodiversity Program hosted a national conference that addressed "Conserving Biodiversity in Urban Environments" and the Adelaide City Council hosted an environment forum at the Town Hall for senior government officials, business leaders, and members of the public.

This later event dealt with the challenges and opportunities for implementing sustainability. The Lord Mayor's welcome focused on Adelaide's efforts to meet the Agenda 21 program and environmental management plan; the city's goal was to be recognized as a first class sustainability locale. The keynote was delivered by Professor Padayachee, Chair of the International Council for Local Government Initiatives. His argument was that environmental change would best emerge once the paradigm was changed from a focus on protocols and international diplomatic efforts to tackling the problems where they occur. Success, he argued, in environmental improvement depends on recognizing the value of local government and local initiatives and making sure local governments get their feet wet by talking with their constituencies about perceived environmental problems and what might be done to address these issues. He used an African saying, "Rain doesn't fall on a single hut" to argue that drought doesn't happen to a single hut or single nation; globally we are connected. The challenge then was to Australia; if Australia fails in its environmental action, it will be a real failure because they have so many resources and so few people. Adelaide was praised as being the second best city globally in setting a high goal for reducing emissions that contribute to the greenhouse effect. Five additional speakers talked about local initiates to enhance sustainability:Tony Wilkins, National Environmental Manager for News Ltd; Dr. Bill Brignal from Thames Water (UK); Alan Ockenden, Torrens and Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board; Margaret Bolster, Conservation Council of South Australia; and Greg Black, Housing Trust of South Australia. Each speaker used examples of their local efforts to enhance sustainability; each addressed the challenges their organizations or locales still faced. The speeches were followed by a question-answer session that was quite confrontational of the claims made by each of the speakers. The hostility of the questions made it clear that little dialogue would ensue.

The choice of speakers and their topics reflects the secondary agenda of demonstrating Australia's efforts to protect the environment. The speeches and the informational materials distributed outside of the hall by United Water, South Australian Housing Trust, Environmental Services, and Amcor Recycling Australia all were geared to this end. The explanation of environmental actions were

consonant with that ideal, but the arguments reflected direct use worth for the environment and the need to support the environment in order to sustain utilitarian values. It is perhaps not surprising that the tone of the question-answer session challenged these appeals. Environmental activists who rejected the congratulatory tone of the invited reports would argue that making efforts to recycle only so that you have more natural resources to use is not a sufficiently green attitude. For example, one questioner told the process specialist for Thames water that their solution to water treatment employed processes that were also destructive to the aquatic environment; another questioned *The Advertiser's* boast that they used significant amounts of recycled paper, countering the argument with statistics indicating their recycling was no better than other papers. The questioners' arguments reflected humanistic and moralistic values toward nature and illustrated little tolerance for the utilitarian value they heard articulated. In light of the questions, the speeches presented and the literature provided by the industries and organizations represented took on the appearance of a public relations campaign. Strategically the speakers would have been wiser to have acknowledge environmental issues that remain to be tackled by their organizations in addition to enumerating their successes. From the perspective of the planners of the forum, there was a disappointing lack of media coverage; had there been coverage, however, it would have been difficult to avoid reporting the event as political wrangling.

3. Media Coverage of World Environment Day 2000
The United Nation's agenda in establishing and continuing to support World Environment Day is best served with significant positive media coverage of the event. James Carey (1988) and others have long argued that the media circulate meanings for events and issues that are reproduced in social, political and economic actions. How the media reports an issue is conventionalized; the meaning is constructed through the narrative frames that are selected and through the decision that an event or issue is worthy of coverage. The more important the media deem an event, the more coverage it is given. Hence, one way to measure the success of the United Nation's effort to promote environmental awareness is to determine the number of news stories mentioning World Environment Day.

A Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe search using the key term World Environment Day reveals its first mention in 1972-73 (September 1 – August 31 are the

reporting dates. The June 5 event is generally out of the news by the end of August and coverage of the anticipated event does not begin until the fall or winter preceding the celebrations). Increasing coverage begins in 1993-94 when there were 25 stories; in 1995-96 there were 43 stories; in 1997-98 there were 66 stories; and in 1999-2000 for the Adelaide celebration there were 139 stories (adjusted to eliminate 17 duplicate stories). In 2000-01 the number of stories fell to 74. Although media attention has increased, for a major United Nations sponsored event the coverage is less extensive than one might have expected. As a comparison I also looked at two single days, June 1 and August 1 to see how many stories were reported using the single term, Environment. In comparison, World Environment Day coverage looks insignificant. For 2000, on June 1 a Lexis-Nexis search reveals 230 stories (only 2 of these stories deal with World Environment Day) and on August 1 there were166 stories reported. As was the case with stories about World Environment Day, stories about the environment have steadily risen since the early nineties. In comparison to routine environmental reporting, World Environment Day garners relatively little media attention. As a way of generating public interest in the environment by inspiring "thousands of journalists to write and report enthusiastically and critically on the environment" (UNEP Web page), then, World Environment Day is not especially successful.

In the week preceding and following the event–that time when media coverage is most extensive – there were 47 stories (May 29-June 4), and 24 stories between June 6-12. There were 43 stories on June 5. All 114 news accounts were read and coded for (1) how they reflected the established goals; (2) whether they reported public or political events or both; (3) the kind of story written – announcement or report of the proceedings, report of an environmental problem, or report about environmental activism; and (4) the narrative frames and environmental values apparent in the story.

Two goals were articulated in the United Nations announcement of World Environment Day, stimulating world wide awareness of the environment and enhancing political attention and action. Australian Environment Minister Hill added a third, to "show the world that Australia's unique heritage is in good hands." Coverage of the event outside of the Australian media was minimal, only 23 stories were included in the Lexis-Nexis data base. During the week preceding the event 17% of the reported stories were from non-Australian sources. On June

5, 2000, all but 4.6% of the stories came from Australian papers, although more than half of these were designated as either report advertisements or feature advertisements. In the week following the event the thirteen stories from outside Australia constituted 54.2% of the post-event pool.

Global attention does not seem to be generated by the event. Other United Nations environmental events, such as the Earth Summit, have garnered significant attention, more than 600 stories in the week before the summit, slightly more during the summit, and over 200 in the following week. The Environmental Forum, the main working event (political) in Adelaide, was not structured to generate global political attention or action and succeeded in creating divisions rather than consensus among local presenters and participants. Few stories served the third goal of publicizing the host nation's environmental heritage and record; 14.3% praised the nation while 2.6% refuted claims that Australia acted appropriately on environmental issues. Generally, then, media coverage did not support the three main goals of World Environment Day.

Most of the new stories, 57.9%, merely announced the event or recorded the activities, usually the award winners announced during the celebrations. One fourth of the stories mentioned environmental issues that needed to be addressed, and 22.8% mentioned environmental activism. When only 42% of the news stories go beyond an enumeration of events or awards to actually discuss environmental issues, it becomes again apparent that the goals for World Environment Day are not being met through news stories.

4. Media Frames in World Environment Day Stories
When news accounts about the day do report an environmental story, what arguments shape the discussion? The frames that the media select argue for particular approaches to environmental issues, highlight and hide selected issues, events, and orientations, and structure a public understanding of the Environment as a symbolic complex. Schudson (1982) contends that through the media's frames, "the world is incorporated into unquestioned and unnoticed conventions of narration, and then transfigured, no longer a subject for discussion but a premise of any conversation at all" (98). Framing research articulates where and how the media structures public understanding.
Even the definition of something as an event is the result of social construction. Hackett (1984) argues that research on media ideological explores story frames which privilege particular readings of events. "Such framing is not necessarily a

conscious process on the part of journalists; it may well be the result of the unconscious absorption of assumptions about the social world in which the news must be embedded in order to be intelligible to its intended audience" (Hackett,1986, 247-248).

Entman's (1993) review of early framing research concludes that "the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text" (51). Collins &Kephart's (1995) review of U.S. media's framing of biodiversity provided the list of frames coded in this project. Thirteen frames were identified in the 48 stories that developed arguments about the environment. Only five frames appear in at least 20% of the news accounts, and these are the frames reported.

The predominate frame, occurring in 66.7% of the stories is Humans as Change Agents. This frame argues that humans applying scientific solutions and modifying their behavior can reduce environmental degradation and sometimes reverse problems of species rarity, endangerment, and extinction. *The Sunday Mail* wrote a story about one couple's work on their property which "sets the standard for watercourse revegetation in the State" (World Environment Day ... Bob's a leading, L05). Human effort is cast as redressing the imbalance in the ecosystem. Stories framed in this way advance the United Nation's agenda. The frame argues that human effort makes a difference; the assumption behind this argumentative stance is that Human Survival depends on environmental health. This is a second frame that occurs in the news accounts of World Environment Day. Given the prevalence of the Humans as Change Agents frame, it is interesting that only 10.4% of the stories articulate this assumption. A third frame is similarly linked to these two, Humans as Culpable. This frame, occurring in 33.3% of the stories, and most frequently employed in the week after the celebrations, places human behavior as central to environmental degradation. Without this link to Humans as Culpable, as causal agents for environmental problems, appeals to Humans as Change Agents relies on altruism; when the two frames are linked, guilt and responsibility serve as additional motivation.

Attention is taken away from environmental problems in the second most frequent frame in the news accounts, Political Wrangling (35.4% of the stories). Political wrangling changes the focus from science to politics and replaces cooperative efforts to solve problems with political infighting between governmental factions or stakeholders. The drama of conflict predominates and diverts the reader's

attention away from the environment. For example, a story about environmental problems associated with Australia's Snowy River became a discussion of how the "issue falls on party lines" (Schubert, 2000, 6) and why political alliances are unlikely to be forged across party lines. Focusing environmental stories on political fighting can construct a situation in which the reader will view problems as insolvable and hence make individual efforts seem not worthwhile.

Two frames were used in 20.8% of the stories, Race Against the Clock which suggests that only through immediate action can extinction be prevented, and Interconnectedness of Organisms which links environmental problems in one area to all organisms within the ecosystem. U.S. Media coverage of biodiversity between 1986 and 1992 most frequently focused on the extinction crisis central to the Race Against the Clock frame; Interconnectedness was a seldom employed frame at that time (Collins& Kephart, 1995). The subsequent increase in attention to Interconnectedness and decrease in crisis reporting is a positive trend given the goal of educating the public to how human actions effect the environment.

Media stories that go beyond merely announcing World Environment Day highlight the role of human action in environmental improvement or degradation, even though a third of the time bickering becomes more central than the environmental conditions or solutions that are the ground for the dispute. The media's construction of the Environment Story contributes to the realization of the World Environment Day agenda. This agenda would be further advanced with fewer stories framed as political wrangling, and with more developed environmental stories.

The frames selected by the media shape the public's understanding of World Environment Day and of environmental issues generally. Media conventions and standards such as objectivity mask the power of ideological frames in shaping what is covered, how it is covered, and how news accounts privilege an audience's understanding of the reported events. Hackett (1986) summarizes: "In other words, part of television's ideological work consists precisely in presenting itself as *nonideological*" (Hackett, 1986, 249). The same argument can be extended to other media forms that Hackett applies to television. The more balanced and objective one says one is trying to be, the more powerful are frames which are obscured from critical attention. The media may begin the reporting process with a collection of facts, but these facts are narrated in news accounts: "Narration thus inevitably involves political assumptions, ideology, social values,

cultural and racial stereotypes and assumptions as well as specific textual strategies. In other words, journalistic texts are literary constructions that are yet profoundly aligned with viewpoints and values of particular social and economic interest" (Parisi, 1998, 239). In choosing Political Wrangling as a frame, the media reflect their preference for drama and the Political as a symbolic complex that is more important than a scientific discussion of environmental issues. Stories framed as scientific rather than political would better serve the goals of the United Nation's campaign.

In framing World Environment Day as the do, the act is named and given an implicit plotline, cast of characters, and motivation for actions. Kenneth Burke reminds us that as we name something we create boundaries that delimit the thing named, we become subject to the terministic screens we have created. Once named, the particular becomes universal; abstractions are treated as reality. Peer and Ettema warn us,"The process of framing, in other words, becomes invisible, or made to seem natural, precisely because news reporting follows conventional rules" (1998, 257).

There is nothing overtly inappropriate about the media's choice of frames in covering World Environment Day, but those choices limit the public's understanding of the complexity of environmental issues. Science-based frames such as the Importance of Ecosystem Function and Services, which would add clarity to the discussion of environmental problems and solutions, are seldom employed. News conventions to privilege the simple, the dramatic, the personal allow little opportunity for complex, non-dramatic, and abstract discussion, even if that is what the issue demands.

Without stories framed to explore the complexity of environmental issues, the United Nation's goal depends on generating a large number of stories so that at least the public's awareness of the environment is piqued in the short term. If the Untied Nations is to achieve its goal with World Environment Day, significantly more stories will need to be developed in conjunction with the event. As it stands, World Environment Day is good spectacle for the host community and selected other cities globally, but it does not generate the enthusiasm and commitment to the environment that it was designed to engender.

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