THEORY, RESEARCH, AND APPLICATION:

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK INTO THE PRACTICE OF MASS COMMUNICATION

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MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

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These major papers examined the aspects of theory, research and application in regard to mass communication through examples in each designated paper. As the portfolio title indicates, the methods analyzed throughout these major papers will first feature theory through an analysis of rhetorical criticism, then move to research with the literature review on environmental communication, and finally discuss application with a case study concerning the crisis communication efforts utilized by the state of Minnesota during the I-35W bridge collapse. Each of these facets of communication were included and analyzed for their contributions to the field of mass communication itself. Through establishing the importance of theory, research and application in the context of mass communication, this portfolio provides insight into the educational foundations of my graduate program with detailed explanations into why each piece was chosen. In addition to this in-depth look into my curriculum, this portfolio also includes suggestions for future research as well as discussion on what lessons I learned through the completion of my graduate program.

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In completing my graduate portfolio, I would like to extend enormous thanks and gratitude to my husband, Desi, and my son, Colin. It is only with the love and support of my family that I was able to manage this academic program and also balance my home and work life.

To my husband, thank you for always believing in me, especially when I myself did not; I never could have completed this without your continuous support and understanding. You have been a great source of strength for me through this process and are in life as well. I am forever grateful to you for all you have done to help me as I have worked toward this goal. Without your unyielding sense of calm, I would have ended up lost. I thank you for allowing me to work through this program and supporting me however necessary – especially for all of the times you made me take a break and recharge. Thank you for always knowing what I needed to keep going. You are my best friend.

To my little boy, you are the reason I have worked to obtain this degree. I want so very much to give you every opportunity I can to ensure that you are happy, healthy and know how loved you are. In starting this graduate program when you were eight weeks old, I will fondly remember these past two years including the infinite number of times I fed you bottles while working on assignments, the "art work" you have drawn on many of my print outs and of course, your sweet little voice asking to watch Thomas the Train videos on the computer. As we have read numerous times in one of your favorite books; I will love you forever. I will like you for always. As long as I am living, my baby you'll be.

B. A. F.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

To introduce this compilation of major papers, it is essential to first discuss the reasoning behind why each was selected and the significance these papers have as a representation of exemplary work. This portfolio includes the following three major papers: "A Rhetorical Analysis using Pentadic Criticism of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address" taken from COMM 767 – Rhetorical Criticism; "Environmental Communication and the Media: Demonstrating how the Media Influences how the Public Perceives Environmental Communication" taken from COMM 755 – The Rhetoric of Environmental Science; and "Crisis Management and the I-35W Bridge Collapse: Demonstrating how the State of Minnesota used Situational Crisis Communication Theory to Deal with the Disaster" taken from COMM 785 – Advanced Crisis Communication in Public Relations.

In presenting this body of work, each piece was chosen based on its representation of an integral part of my graduate program. Beginning with the COMM 767 major paper entitled "A Rhetorical Analysis using Pentadic Criticism of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address," the purpose of this introductory example lies in its demonstration of competency in using a rhetorical method of analysis. Admittedly, this was one of my first papers and it reflects my understanding at an early stage of my graduate education in communication. As with any powerful speech in history, a primary purpose for analyzing an oration of the past is to determine what aspects of rhetorical criticism can be identified as tools used by the speaker that assisted in the success of the speech itself. John F. Kennedy's inaugural address is no exception. With consistent rankings as one of the greatest speeches in American history, this epic 1961 address provides critics with an example of excellent rhetoric in action (Eidenmuller, 2001). In order to take another angle in researching Kennedy's classic speech, this analysis focused on analyzing this oration using the pentadic criticism as developed by Kenneth Burke (Foss, 2009). By determining how a critical view of Kennedy's speech supports an analysis of the five functions of pentadic criticism, which consist of act, agent, agency, purpose and scene as well as their subsequent ratios, the prominent rhetorical term of this inaugural address will be established. With this knowledge, we can gain important insight into how pentadic criticism is an essential tool in analyzing Kennedy's inaugural address to establish the motivations of the speaker. By addressing how the method of pentadic criticism can be applied to an oration in order to determine the success or failure of the speaker's rhetoric, this paper presents an argument about the importance of understanding the importance of acts. Along with the direct connection to the core principles of communication theory, this rhetorical analysis also provides insight into the curriculum of this academic program through the dual requirement of learning about rhetorical theory and the practiced application of implementing them into an oration and working through the process of rhetorical criticism itself. By breaking apart President Kennedy's inaugural address into the functions of pentadic criticism, this piece provides an example of the correct application of communication theory through rhetorical criticism.

The next featured major paper in this portfolio is taken from COMM 755: The Rhetoric of Environmental Science and is entitled, "Environmental Communication and the Media: Demonstrating how the Media Influences how the Public Perceives Environmental Communication." The purpose of its inclusion in this portfolio is to highlight how mass communication can be infused into nearly all fields of study. This bibliographic essay provides a review of the topic of environmental communication and media influence. As Cox discussed, environmental media developed into its own subfield with the tri-fold relationship between media coverage, environmental issues, and the effect of such coverage on the public's perceptions of the environment (Cox, 2010). With the broad nature of this topic, this essay breaks down the relationship of environmental communication and the media into the sub-groups of global warming, going green, pollution and recycling, and the power or influence of the media in environmental matters. The first section of this essay introduced the selected material and the second section analyzed the research and how it has been applied to environmental communication. When looking at the impact of rhetoric in the world of environmental science, the importance of implementing proper communication as a method to reach an audience cannot be understated. This bibliographic essay demonstrated how communication and rhetoric are essential tools in creating connections to promote the advances and findings of the field of environmental science. By breaking down the relationship between environmental communication and the media into three subgroups that hold much public interest in today's world, the evidence of the essential bond between environmental science and communication, as is demonstrated through the media in this case, was undeniably clear. With this essay's methodology established, the purpose for selecting this major paper can be seen as an example of communication, such as in the media, working in tandem with the realm of environmental science to create the growing field of environmental communication, which allows for audiences on a grand scale to obtain and understand information about environmental science. Without the go-between of environmental communication, it often can be difficult for people without extensive scientific backgrounds to break through the technical aspects of environmental science itself. This bibliographic essay provides an example of how communication and science can work together to create new fields and relationships where the general public can access and understand information to implement it into their daily lives.

The final piece of this graduate portfolio comes from COMM 785 – Advanced Crisis Communication in Public Relations. This piece, "Crisis Management and the I-35W Bridge Collapse: Demonstrating how the State of Minnesota used Situational Crisis Communication Theory to Deal with Disaster" provided an example of communication theory in action. This paper analyzed how the state of Minnesota and its department of transportation or MnDOT used the crisis response strategies of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to combat the challenges they faced when the Interstate 35W (I-35W) bridge collapsed in Minneapolis, Minn., on August 1, 2007. With the event falling into the Coombs's crisis communication theory of an accidental stage of crisis clusters, the state of Minnesota faced the challenge of restoring stakeholder trust as a technological breakdown resulted in the loss of thirteen lives and millions of dollars in damages (Coombs, 2006). In addition to analyzing how SCCT was used during this crisis, this paper also interpreted how SCCT fits into the three stages of crisis communication of pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis communication. Through both types of analysis, this paper demonstrated how the state of Minnesota effectively utilized SSCT and recovered from one of the worst tragedies and technological breakdowns it has ever seen. In dissecting how the state of Minnesota responded to the catastrophic event of August 1, 2007 with the collapse of the Interstate 35W Bridge, this major paper chronicled how the use of (SCCT) enabled the state to aid stakeholders in dealing with the tragedy. Through this analysis, this piece illustrated how communication theory such as SCCT played a key role in real world scenarios of assisting the public in continuing on after a disaster. By providing an interpretation of the state's efforts, this paper laid out a blueprint for any organization in the wake of a crisis to follow for a successful resolution of the event.

After the establishment of the rationale in choosing these examples for my master's paper, I am going to shift focus and discuss what these papers represent about myself as well as my graduate studies at North Dakota State University. Beginning with myself, these three examples provide insight into my interests and what I find to be important. Starting with the piece concerning rhetorical criticism, I chose this paper for two primary reasons. First, I have a strong passion for history and the chance to analyze a speech of the magnitude of President Kennedy's inauguration address gave me the opportunity to fit communication theory into American history. Secondly, I chose this example because I feel it is essential to acknowledge communication theory such as rhetorical criticism as a part of the foundations of communication itself. By including this work in my master's paper, I wanted to demonstrate not only my own connection to the subject matter of the piece but also show the importance of competency in communication theory as part of my graduate program. With this course being a required element to my degree, I felt it was essential to feature this paper to correlate a core competency of my program with a personal interest I possess.

In moving to the literature review centered on environmental communication, my reasons for choosing this example are as follows. First, I find it truly wonderful that mass communication can be adapted and implemented into multiple areas. The versatility of this field is what I find to be one of its most attractive attributes. In my own life, I currently am working in the medical field and frequently come across scenarios where a better understanding of communication theory would be a great benefit. As far as what this example demonstrates about my graduate experience at North Dakota State University, this literature review provided insight into how my program provided me the opportunity to stretch my own notions about mass communication. When registering for COMM 755 – The Rhetoric of Environmental Science, I remember pondering what the actual content of the course material was going to be. What I discovered when going through the course elements was a rapidly developing field of mass communication. In taking COMM 755, I was very enlightened to the potential future of mass communication and the opportunities for those who are a part of it. By including this paper, I wanted to showcase what lies ahead for the field as well as highlight my own experience with the developing arena of environmental communication. I feel this example provides a window to the future of mass communication and the continued progression of the graduate work I have completed with North Dakota State University.

With the final selection for this portfolio of the COMM 785 piece, I wanted to finish with the paper that was my favorite throughout my graduate program. The example "Crisis Management and the I-35W Bridge Collapse: Demonstrating how the State of Minnesota used Situational Crisis Communication Theory to Deal with the Disaster" is important to me for multiple reasons. On a personal level, I feel very connected to this piece because my sister, Stacy Bengs, lived within eyeshot of the former I-35W bridge at the time and was one of the first people on the scene. At the time, she was the photo editor for the *Minnesota Daily* and her photographs were featured around the world. In addition to this aspect, the context of this paper also appealed very much to my journalistic nature and background. On an academic level, my reason for featuring this example as my last paper is because it represents the area that became my real interest during my graduate program – risk and crisis communication. While completing the required course material for COMM 785, I became fascinated by the complex and in-depth reach of risk and crisis communication. As part of my graduate program, I wanted to include this example because I feel it represents how risk and crisis communication is a part of our daily lives whether we are aware of it or not. After taking this course, I began looking for potential opportunities at my current organization in the risk and crisis communication field. With this interest being directly attributed to my graduate program, I felt it very important to include this example as the last piece of my portfolio as it represents an area that I hope continues to be in my professional future.

With the rationales behind these three examples established, the theme for my mass communication portfolio is one of practice and application. I feel these papers represent a competent practice in communication theory as well as examples of mass communication being used in real world application. Through this combination, this portfolio represents not only my own personal interests but also demonstrates how my graduate program has impacted the future of my professional life by providing me with the necessary education and application of mass communication theories.

In this section, my three chosen examples were introduced and their significance was further developed through a rationale explaining how each piece represents key components of my demonstrated aptitude in this field of study through my graduate program with North Dakota State University. In the second through fourth sections, the selected examples will be individually presented. Following the presentation of my three major papers, section five will be comprised of a summary of the lessons learned throughout my graduate program as well as potential future directions I have in this field of study.

SECTION TWO

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS USING PENTADIC CRITICISM OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

On January 20, 1961, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was sworn in as the 35th president of the United States of America. His first action as commander-in-chief was giving one of the most influential speeches in American history. Through his inaugural address, Kennedy demonstrated to the nation his new vision of guaranteed freedom of human rights for the United States and the world. This prolific oration captivated the attention of millions as Kennedy employed the powers of rhetorical style to convey his message. While this inaugural address has been studied multiple times in the forty-nine years since it was delivered, the purpose for dissecting this famous speech is to explore and determine how Kenneth Burke's dramatistic pentad helps to reveal why Kennedy's speech was perceived to have such overwhelming success.

According to Burke, the persuasion skills of a communicator determine the achievement or failure of the speaker to get an audience to acknowledge the presented view of reality as true (Griffin, 2009). Through Burke's establishment of the power a communicator has with their ability of persuasion, one can analyze how his dramatistic pentad reveals the strategies utilized by a speaker to influence the success of their message. By understanding the five terms of Burke's pentad of act, agent, agency, purpose and scene, a rhetorical critic may dissect the content of a speech to determine how each of the terms is used within the work.

In determining the five functions of pentadic criticism of act, agent, agency, purpose and scene, the next step is to take those functions and compare them against each other through ratios (Foss, 2009). The importance of using Burke's dramatistic pentad to decipher this information is to act as a method for determining why the speaker chose their route of persuasion. Because the pentad allows a critic to establish which rhetorical strategy the communicator used primarily with his or her audience, the critic can then gain access to the worldview or philosophy of the communicator (Griffin, 2009).

For the context of this paper, the completion of a pentadic analysis on Kennedy's inaugural address will allow for further determination of what tools a speaker can utilize for triumph as a communicator. With the known success of this famous oration, this paper will determine how John F. Kennedy used rhetoric to achieve the goal of his inaugural address as well as expand and offer insight into whether Kennedy used his rhetorical ability in an effort to lead the country and in the same breath redeem himself through Burke's guilt-redemption cycle.

According to Burke, the underlying factor behind any speech is the inherent need for communicators to rid themselves of an ever-present sense of guilt. This sense of guilt can be defined as an unpleasant emotion a human being can experience such as tension, embarrassment, anxiety, shame or any other woeful feeling a person can harbor (Griffin, 2009). By analyzing Kennedy's inaugural address using the primary pentad terms, as well as any instances of the guilt-redemption cycle, this paper highlights what rhetorical tools were utilized by Kennedy and identifies what he was attempting to be redeemed from through this speech.

Artifact Description and Context

Before delving into the pentadic analysis of the 1961 inaugural address and subsequent work with Burke's guilt-redemption cycle, it is essential to establish the historical context of this artifact.

Starting with some background on Kennedy himself, the World War II naval hero entered the political realm in 1946 when he was elected to the Massachusetts eleventh congressional district at twenty-nine (JFK Library, n.d.). Over the next fourteen years leading up to his 1960 presidential run, the young politician quickly gained popularity. Once elected to the United States Senate in 1952, Kennedy began vigorously working to earn the 1960 Democratic Party nomination (JFK Library, n.d.). During these formative years of his political career, Kennedy used his multiple venues of public speaking on the campaign trail to hone his oratory skills and charismatic presence.

On a national level, change was on the horizon as well. In January 1961, America, now nearly 200 years old, was experiencing some growing pains. As the nation was evolving from the portrayed images and expectations of wholesome family values that encompassed the 1950s, the decade of the 1960s offered our country the opportunity to explore different avenues for a social, political, and cultural revolution. From the creation of NASA in 1958 to the looming threat of the Cold War when Fidel Castro took over Cuba in January 1959 and America's own ongoing struggle for civil rights, the United States was on the verge of an intense period of change (America's Best History, 2009).

When Massachusetts Senator John Kennedy entered the national scene with his presidential run, he found himself at the forefront of mass reform throughout the country. After beating Richard Nixon in the 1960 presidential election by 120,000 votes in the popular election and 84 votes in the Electoral College, Kennedy was thrust into building a relationship with the public where he would be trusted to lead America. With 62.8 percent of the voting public taking part in this election, the newly elected president was at the center of American society. At 43 years of age, Kennedy was the youngest man and the first Catholic elected to the Oval Office. It was essential for Kennedy to create an instant bond with all citizens by uniting the country with a message about a new future for a growing America (JFK Library, n.d.). After providing a historical setting for the context of this speech, this paper can now shift focus into the analysis portions of Kennedy's inaugural address.

Methodology

To begin the discussion of how Kennedy utilized the dramatistic pentad as his primary means of persuasion, it is necessary to first establish the purpose of the method itself. As Burke states, the proper use of persuasion can lead anyone toward a given decision. "Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man only so far as he is *free*," (Burke, 1969, p. 50). With pentadic criticism working to determine what is rhetorically required when critics analyze what people are doing and why falls into Burke's concept of dramatism (Foss, 2009).

With the understanding that dramatism consists of two assumptions – the first that language use creates action and not motion and the second being that people develop and portray messages in a similar fashion to how plays are delivered, it is clear that rhetoric can be used in the pentadic sense to show an audience with a particular view on a given situation (Foss, 2009). The pentadic method also provides the critic with the ability to break down an oration by the five functions of act, agent, agency, purpose and scene to determine which aspect the orator uses as the prominent term. These functions of Burke's pentadic criticism are broken down by Foss as follows:

> Identification of the *agent* involves naming the group or individual who is the protagonist or main character of the situation as described in the artifact as it is presented by the rhetor… The *act* is the rhetor's presentation of the major action taken by the protagonist or agent… The means the rhetor says are used to perform the act or the instruments used to accomplish it are labeled the *agency*… *Scene* is the ground, location, or situation in which the rhetor says the act takes place – the kind of stage the rhetor sets when describing physical conditions, social and cultural influences or historical causes… The *purpose* of the act is what the rhetor suggests the agent intends to accomplish by performing the act. (Foss, 2009)

By establishing the five functions of Burke's pentadic criticism, the methodology for this portion of the analysis can be formulated. Through an investigation to determine the five functions, the ratios of the terms can be compared to identify the primary term. Once the prominent function used in the speech is clarified, a critic can gain understanding as to the persuasive aspect of the oration. To utilize Burke's pentad as a means of critical analysis for Kennedy's inaugural address, a critic can determine what means Kennedy used to portray, and hopefully influence, his audience.

After this half of the rhetorical analysis, this paper will then move into dissecting what motivated Kennedy's efforts in this speech in regard to Burke's guilt-redemption cycle. By breaking down the president's message, this analysis hopes to identify the underlying factors that were personally plaguing Kennedy and provide insight on how public figures attempt to sway the public for the betterment of their own feelings. The purpose for an analysis using the guilt-redemption cycle for Kennedy's inaugural address is to highlight that even the most prolific or significant messages have personal motives behind them. Through acknowledging this fact, this paper highlights that while a critical analysis using Burke's pentad does provide insight into Kennedy's chosen methods for persuasion, the addition of the guilt-redemption cycle adds another dimension to further establish how Burke's method of scapegoating identifies how public figures attempt to gloss over areas of their persona that may not be favorable in the public view. As Burke states, a proficient understanding of the notion that ideologies can sway us all is essential to maintaining one's own persona. "An 'ideology' is like a spirit taking up its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways; and that same body would have hopped around in different ways had a different ideology happened to inhabit it" (Burke, 1966, p. 6). With this analysis, this paper provides the dual benefit of Burke's pentad to demonstrate Kennedy's motivation and philosophy as well as Burke's guilt-redemption cycle to highlight how Kennedy attempted to shield less favorable aspects of his persona from the public.

Pentadic Analysis

The pentadic analysis of Kennedy's inaugural address will begin by identifying each of the five functions. In this oration, the *agent* is Kennedy himself, as he is the driving force behind the new democracy he wants to create in America. As the newly elected president, Kennedy was figuratively at the center of the free world while delivering this oration. To establish himself as the protagonist of his new process for democracy, Kennedy immediately identified himself in his new role and highlighted what positive changes he was hoping to bring to America. In addressing the nation, he stated, "We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom – symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning – signifying renewal, as well as change" (Kennedy, 1961). Through establishing himself as the nation's new leader, Kennedy was quick to demonstrate his purpose as the agent in this inaugural address.

For the *act* function of Kennedy's oration, the major action being presented was the young president's vision for a new America. One of the major influential aspects of Kennedy's speech was his use of metaphors or a rhetorical method that works through the contrasting balance between two ideas in a sentence (Kenny, 1965). As seen in nearly every paragraph of the inaugural address, Kennedy used antithesis to promote his nationwide call to action. In the most famous passage of the inaugural address, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" (Kennedy, 1961), the president showed his audience a striking parallel between which potential direction the future of the nation could lead. While Kenny categorized this as antithesis, in today's rhetorical world, Foss furthers Kennedy's rhetorical style as metaphoric criticism which can be defined as a communicator using symbols to create the reality they want their audience to see (Foss, 2009). With a strong grasp on the proper and powerful use of metaphors, Kennedy was able to present the major action of his new vision for America in such a manner that captivated the attention of his audience and provided him with the highest amount of credibility in regard to his ability to lead the nation.

To establish the *agency* aspect of this speech, an analysis of Kennedy's message leads to identifying "determination" as the agency function. According to the president, the monumental determination required to lead America and then the world for the global development of liberty was the force that bolstered his eventual purpose.

> Let the world go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this country, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. (Kennedy, 1961)

By establishing the necessary means to carry out the purpose of the inaugural address, Kennedy underlined his message to the American people with a strong sense of determination. In referencing this Americanized trait that he felt stretched back to the founding days of this nation, the president connected the determination that created this country to the determination he felt would be necessary to achieve his goals for the United States.

The *purpose* of Kennedy's inaugural address was to defend freedom of human rights. Throughout his speech, Kennedy not only provided metaphors for the positive and negative scenarios surrounding the proper defense of freedom, he also issued a call to duty in the hopes that all Americans would respond and assist in the forward progression of freedom in our country as well as the world. "In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course" (Kennedy, 1961). In addition to demonstrating the purpose for his speech for the rest of the country, Kennedy also declared his own intent to lead this drive of protecting the freedom of human rights throughout America and the globe. "The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it. And the glow from that fire can truly light the world" (Kennedy, 1961). By placing himself alongside the American people, Kennedy identified the purpose of his speech as something attainable by all Americans and assured his countrymen that he would lead the nation through this process. With his purpose established, Kennedy successfully performed this function serves to determine the reason for the action (Foss, 2009).

The *scene* that Kennedy portrays to his audience is one of struggle. This function of the pentad is meant to provide the audience with the background of the situation or act (Burke, 1945). By addressing the need for America and the rest of the world to work together toward the further progression of freedom, the president demonstrated how our country was at a crossroads by being in a position to either continue perpetuating the cycle of indifference or to lead the world in an effort to demand human rights for all. "The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life" (Kennedy, 1961). Through presenting this view of the world, Kennedy set a scene in need of imminent change. With this establishment of this scene, he asked Americans to follow him and create a different world view.

Ratios

With the determination of the five elements of the pentad in Kennedy's inaugural address, further analysis of the relationship of the ratios of these terms can begin. According to Foss, deciphering the prominent term is an essential component of this rhetorical method as it demonstrates which of the five terms the speaker found most important and is the gateway through which the presentation of the message happens. By understanding which term the communicator selected as most important, a critic can gain insight into the speaker's interpretation of the scenario (Foss, 2009). In order to ascertain Kennedy's motive for his inaugural address, it is necessary to apply this question to the twenty rhetorical ratios: "Does the act, or Kennedy's new vision for America, require the scene, or the struggle for human rights that was facing our country and the world to be a certain way?" (Foss, 2009). With the terms established, the twenty ratios can be applied to determine the prominent term. According to Burke, the overall premise for using these ratios is to ensure that the entirety of the pentad is solid; "It is the principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the scene" (Burke, 1945, p. 3). Following each set of five ratios, there will be an explanation of the process used to determine the ratio values.

Scene-Act: No

Scene -Agent: No

Scene-Agency: No

Scene-Purpose: Yes

In this set of ratios, the scene does not hold support as the dominant term. Aside from the scene, or the struggle facing America and the world to gain human rights, having human emotions attached to it, the scene alone is not enough to force the terms of act or agency into action. While the scene does warrant for action of purpose or defending freedom of human rights, scene alone cannot drive this force.

Act-Scene: No

Act-Agent: No

Act-Agency: Yes

Act-Purpose: Yes

While in this set of ratios, the act, or Kennedy's new vision for America, does promote action with the agency, or the determination needed to complete the late president's vision, and purpose otherwise known as the actual defense of human rights, the act alone is not enough to spur motivation for the scene or the agent. Although Kennedy's hopeful dream for the future of American and the world can determine the need for action among agency and purpose, as it stands alone this term lacks the necessary leadership and drive to successfully implement its message.

Agent-Scene: Yes

Agent-Act: Yes

Agent-Agency: Yes

Agent-Purpose: Yes

In this set of ratios, the agent, or John F. Kennedy himself, does possess enough momentum to create motivation. As the person performing the act, there are multiple factors that assist in Kennedy's successful utilization of agent as the primary term for this pentadic analysis. When coupling the late president's own rhetorical skill with his art of persuasion, one can determine that while the state of human rights in America as well as the rest of the world was not something he was directly responsible for, his charisma and willingness to lead provided the public with a perfect candidate to forward the progression of human rights across the globe. According to PBS (n.d.), the impact of this president on his country was almost immediate and upon his assassination has transformed into a longstanding legacy.

From the first moments of his presidency, Kennedy evoked a sense of security and a spirit of idealism which reassured Americans of their nation's strengths and inspired them to serve their country and the world... Dazzled by his poise, moved by his eloquence, Americans proudly embraced the vigor and vision of their young president. (PBS, n.d.).

By acknowledging the power Kennedy held through his charisma and unyielding drive to succeed, his influence as the agent demonstrates how he, as the agent, was the key component for success in this oration.

Agency-Scene: No

Agency-Act: No

Agency-Agent: No

Agency-Purpose: No

For the agency ratios, this term is identified in the context of Kennedy's inaugural address as determination. With this understanding, it is clear that a sense of drive and motivation alone is not enough to alter any of the other pentad terms. Through the determination Kennedy called for was an essential component of his overall message, on its own there is not enough rhetorical force for this part of the pentad to be the primary term.

Purpose-Scene: Yes

Purpose-Act: Yes

Purpose-Agent: No

Purpose-Agency: No

With the purpose section of these ratios, the defense of human rights is being set against the other four terms in the pentad. Although the purpose can impact the scene and the act, it cannot spur action with the agent, Kennedy, or the agency, the determination Kennedy called for through his inaugural address. As Burke discusses, purpose is the reason for the act (Burke, 1945). With this understanding, we can see that while the defense of human rights is the reason behind Kennedy's new vision for America, it requires a powerful leader to ensure successful implementation.

Through this pentadic analysis, Kennedy, as the agent, comes forth as the prominent term in this inaugural address as he is able to support the subsequent four terms. In returning to the research question: Does the act, or Kennedy's new vision for America, require the scene, or the struggle for human rights, to behave in a certain way?, the answer is no. The only term that can accomplish an impactful relationship with the fellow pentad terms is agent. Without Kennedy's style of delivery, his oration arguably would not have had the same effect on the American public. According to Foss, this determination demonstrates that Kennedy's own philosophies were the driving motives behind the speech. By acknowledging that a primary term of agent means that the philosophy of idealism is a key agent in the oration, it is clear Kennedy hoped his speech would demonstrate his vision to others (Foss, 2009). According to Burke, Kennedy's motivations support the intent of the pentad. "The manifest content of some symbolic expression is the analogue of a latent content, the nature of which is defined in accordance with the particular theories of motivation and interpretation propounded by the given psychological nomenclature" (Burke, 2003, p. 211-212). This aspect of the pentad is visible in Kennedy's words as he discussed his hope that all people would adhere to his message.

> Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good

> conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own. (Kennedy, 1961)

By connecting his idealism to God himself, Kennedy epitomized the purity of his intention and motive of his inaugural address. Through utilizing his own rhetorical abilities and charisma, Kennedy was able to present his new vision for America as an essential venture that he and the American people would take together.

Guilt-Redemption Cycle Analysis

After establishing how the pentad can be utilized in this speech to demonstrate Kennedy's motivations and philosophies, this paper now shifts into an analysis of how this inaugural address can be analyzed with Burke's guilt-redemption cycle to determine how Kennedy attempted to veil aspects of his persona that may have been considered as negative in public view.

According to Griffin (2009), the purpose of Burke's guilt-redemption cycle is to highlight the "rotten with perfection" aspect of this method (p. 293). "Both our successes and our failures heighten our desire to find someone on whom we can dump our load of guilt. Burke believed that getting rid of guilt is the basic plot of the human drama. At its root, rhetoric is the public search for a perfect scapegoat" (Griffin, 2009, p. 293). As Burke himself discussed, this attitude finds particular resonance in a Christian aspect. By attaching all guilt to Christ, Burke argued that the crux of the religion allows people to seamlessly place their guilt onto another; "The most perfect divine Logos also becomes the perfect fiend, in serving as the substitute vessel for the guilt of all" (Burke, 2003, p. 183). With this understanding of the guilt-redemption cycle, an analysis of Kennedy's inauguration address demonstrates instances where he was trying to either cover up his own perceived weaknesses or shift the blame for the state of the country onto others.

In 1965, Edward Kenny, a professor of Speech and Drama at New York's Pace College, stated that the key in the president's ability to overcome the immediate obstacles facing him was his understanding to shift the focus from what made him, at the time, strikingly different from the previous American presidents to what connected him to his predecessors.

> If the religion of the new president differs from the religion of those forebears, minimize the difference through a language form which intimates that your 'firstness' as a Catholic is overshadowed by your 'sameness' in that long line of presidential succession. The use of antithesis in Kennedy's Inaugural Address goes beyond mere appropriateness and reaches into the area of rhetorical advantage adroitly employed by the speaker. (Kenny, 1965)

With Kenny's insight into how Kennedy was able to negate the "first" aspects of his presidency and steer his audience in a different direction with rhetoric, it is clear that these components to his personal were things that he felt guilt about. If Kennedy was comfortable with the fact that he was the first Irish Catholic in office, one would think that he would address it directly versus detract from what made him different from those presidents that came before him. As seen in his address to the American people, Kennedy employed all means to reiterate that he was on the same level as his predecessors'. "For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago" (Kennedy, 1961).

Along with the personal aspects Kennedy seemed to be running from with his use of the guilt-redemption cycle, his utilization of rhetorical scapegoating allowed him to define a clear enemy and overshadow aspects of his own persona that may not have been favorable as he presented his new vision to America. Defined by Griffin (2009), scapegoating consists of "the process of naming an external enemy as the source of all personal or public ills" (p. 293). In the context of his inaugural address, Kennedy pinpointed all of the problems of human rights across the globe onto those who opposed America in her efforts: "Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction" (Kennedy, 1961). By shifting all of the focus and blame onto adversaries, Kennedy was able to walk into office without directly acknowledging the American government's own perceived efforts on establishing human rights across the country. As Griffin discussed, an analysis of Burke's guilt-redemption cycle demonstrates that the purpose for communicators to use this method was to then find their forgiveness or redemption after they had established their own guilt: "Burke was not an advocate of redemption through victimization, but he said he couldn't ignore the historical pattern of people uniting against a common enemy" (Griffin, 2009, p. 293-294). Through a successful utilization of the guilt-redemption cycle, Kennedy was able to take all of his preconceived noxious feelings, whether on a personal or public level, about his presidency and heave them onto a scapegoat. In doing so, he united himself with his audience and through his skill of persuasion created the idealistic vision that at that time, they were all on the same level ready to fight against the world.

Conclusion

According to his younger brother, Robert, John F. Kennedy's favorite quotation represented his views on the determination America would need to successfully complete his new vision for the country: "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in time of moral crisis preserve their neutrality" (JFK Library, n.d.). With this window into Kennedy's mindset, the motive for his inaugural address gains even more clarity. In order to ensure the successful acceptance of his message, Kennedy utilized his rhetorical talents of persuasion as the agent in Burke's pentad to create an epic inaugural address. Along with the aspect of the ideology he was hoping to impress upon the American people, Kennedy also demonstrated a proficient use in the guilt-redemption cycle. Through shifting the focus off of his own feelings of guilt or failure, whether on a personal or public level, the president was able to then redeem himself in the eyes of the public by adhering himself to his promised solution.

As this paper demonstrates, rhetorical critics can take an understanding of these methods and integrate them into their worlds. By acknowledging the theories of Burke, rhetorical critics can realize that every speech, declaration and public statement being delivered carries the means of persuasion as well as redemption through victimage. With this notion established, it is essential for people to be aware of the potentially skewed realities being presented to them. Through possessing a proficient knowledge in the field of rhetoric, critics can provide themselves the opportunity not only to decipher messages for the truth they seek but to also hold onto their own convictions and personal beliefs through the process.

SECTION THREE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AND THE MEDIA: DEMONSTRATING HOW THE MEDIA INFLUENCES HOW THE PUBLIC PERCEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION

As a field of study, environmental communication is relatively new. While Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) marked a clear beginning for the public realm of environmental communication, the concept has since developed into a field of its own. According to Cox, the relationship between environmental communication and the media has spurred the creation of environmental journalism. In this subfield, there is a distinct realization that through the use of environmental journalism, public perceptions and attitudes of environmental issues may be affected from the media coverage surrounding it (Cox, 2010). To provide a clear view of the literature surrounding environmental communication and its relationship with the media, this bibliographic essay will break down the topic into the sub-categories of global warming, going green, and the power or influence of the media. In addition to providing research on these sub-topics and recommendations on what literature is most important to clearly developing the relationship between environmental communication and the media, the second section of this essay will incorporate the major points of the course readings in a critique of the literature selected.

Identification of Subtopics

Before going into section one, it is necessary to first establish the subtopics that will be analyzed in this literature review. The subtopics include global warming, going green, and the power or influence of the media. Each of these subtopics was chosen based upon their current popularity and essential connection to environmental communication. Through an analysis of how these subtopics relate to environmental communication, this paper will then determine how the relationships between the media and these subtopics has created the growing field of environmental journalism to supplement the increasing popularity of environmental communication.

Section One

For this portion of the essay, each sub-topic will be covered with a presentation of supporting literature. Along with descriptions of featured research pieces, the essay includes lists of sources that are also worth reading for each sub-topic but, are not included in the essay itself. Before beginning with the selected material, it is important to note that the chosen selections are those of scholarly material. While a quick Internet search opens the door to countless blogs, posts and web sites concerning the topics of global warming, going green and the influence of media on environmental news coverage and communication, this essay suggests that unless such sources are proved credible through valid sources and links to credible institutions, they should not be considered as research-based material.

Global Warming

As one of the most successful documentaries of all time, Al Gore's "*An Inconvenient Truth*" (2006) is the subject matter for Rosteck and Frentz's *Myth and Multiple Readings in Environmental Rhetoric: The Case of An Inconvenient Truth* (2009). This paper analyzes the role of environmental rhetoric surrounding the documentary as Gore's work echoes the sentiments of Rachel Carson in Silent Spring through a call to action in promoting negative consequences of human behavior in regards to the environment. This paper also discusses how the use of the mythic frame in *An Inconvenient Truth* adds dimensions to the film that heighten the public's attitude by providing the audience with a sense of heroism and accomplishment as well as including a personal chronology of Gore's personal growth and change as he researches what he considers to be the imminent dangers of global warming (Rosteck & Frentz, 2009). In focusing on the mythic dimension, Rosteck and Frentz highlight that the film uses this rhetorical style to portray Gore and his message in a way that will appeal to American audiences and further the success of global warming awareness.

The primary argument of Kahlor's *An Augmented Risk Information Model: The Case of Global Warming*, is that the risk information people have about global warming determines the amount of action they will take. As this paper discusses, the Risk Information and Processing Model can be applied to global warming in the context that social pressures about the topic will lead people to seek out risk information for themselves (Kahlor, 2007). Kahlor's research highlights that the increased publicity and news coverage provides a perfect opportunity for those who are wanting to learn more about global warming. In comparison to the work of Rosteck and Frentz, Kahlor's piece contrasts their analysis of how the media presents their ideas on global warming with her focus on how the public reacts to media coverage of global warming through seeking out risk information.

When comparing the theories presented in *An Inconvenient Truth* and the realization of people seeking out risk information when facing social pressures, Zhao's *Media Use and Global Warming Perceptions: A Snapshot of the Reinforcing Spirals*, stands as a sort of middle ground between the two previous resources. As Zhao discusses, the goal of the paper is to investigate the mutual influence on a person's media use and their perceptions of global warming (Zhao, 2008). Through this analysis, the author establishes that despite the fact that global warming is rooted in science, the majority of the public learned about the topic through the media as well as the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* and the major motion picture *The Day After Tomorrow*. While the later film was not based in fact, the saturation of global warming news on the public through the media created a complex combination of environmental and political ramifications for society (Zhao, 2008). For Americans, in the wake of *An Inconvenient Truth*, the relationship between media use and public perception becomes heightened as the increased media coverage has the information on the forefront of news. As Zhao demonstrates in a study that analyses how media use affected respondents in awareness concerning environmental topics and willingness to act upon these fears, reinforcing spiral models predict that the concern felt by the general public over global warming is due to the media influence surrounding it (Zhou, 2008).

In his *Representations of the Apocalypse: Debating the Merits of an Inconvenient Truth and the Great Global Warming Swindle*, Bartlett takes a more commercialized look into global warming. This piece offers a contrasting view of the previous literature concerning the relationship between global warming and the media. Contrary to the prior works, Bartlett centers his work on the notion of the media coverage surrounding the environmental topic due to its high profit margin, not to inform and educate the public. For his feature, Bartlett compares the two documentaries *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Great Global Warming Swindle*. In comparing these two documentaries, which have polar opposite viewpoints, Bartlett discusses how each film uses the media to convey only the strengths of their arguments to the public. The importance of including this piece as a featured priority in this essay is that Bartlett shows the viewer that when the media is involved with a topic, profit margins are a key factor as well. In his analysis of Gore's film and more importantly, Durkin's Great Global Warming Swindle, Bartlett highlights the hypocrisy that while each documentary claims that to fight against big money, politics and the media, the promotion of their films works for those three exact agents (Bartlett, 2009). What Bartlett accomplishes in this article is forcing media consumers to realize the importance of analyzing sources and looking for multiple avenues of information to ensure the most accurate result.

In contrasting the other American articles on global warming, Gunster's *Environmental Journalism Viewed from Canada*, discusses how the Canadian media altered their news coverage stemming from the incredible popularity change of global warming news in America. As Gunster highlights, after the release of *An Inconvenient Truth* and subsequent global warming news coverage, the Canadian media entered 2008 with the goal to make global warming and environmental journalism the forefront topics in their news that year (Gunster, 2009). In addition to news coverage, the Canadian media also used marketing campaigns as well as providing information for the public on reducing their carbon footprint, going green and making changes to reduce the ramifications of global warming. Aside from this information, Gunster highlights another aspect of environmental journalism – the effects of the spiraling recession. Once the economy essentially crashed, environmental journalism hit a sort of stand-still as consumers are no longer getting the necessary news as politics shifted its focus to solving economic crisis. With the problem facing environmental journalism established, Gunster declares that journalism is necessary for the success of environmental communication as society cannot change what they do not know about. The public needs journalism, as the watchdog of government, to continually question government's policies concerning the environment and to provide that news coverage for everyone to take in (Gunster, 2009).

Other sources that can be used as additional research on global warming and the media's coverage of the topic are:

Banning, M. (2009). When poststructural theory and contemporary politics collide – the vexed case of global warming. *Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies*, *6*(3), 285-304.

Hart, P., Leiserowitz, A. (2009). Finding the teachable moment: An analysis of information-seeking behavior on global warming related websites during the release of The Day After Tomorrow. *Environmental Communication*, *3*(3), 355-366.

Mellor, F. (2009). The politics of accuracy in judging global warming films. *Environmental Communication*, *3*(2), 134-150.

Going Green

Recently, the idea of "going green" has touched nearly every aspect of our society. From politics to marketing, the media provides practically constant information for consumers who want to incorporate going green into their daily lives.

With such a large public appeal, media coverage of the green movement reaches the public on a daily basis. As Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer discuss, an area where consumers need to be aware of media influence is in environmental advertising. In their article, *Shades of Green: A Multidimensional Analysis of Environmental Advertising*, the authors, who are all marketing professors, demonstrate the increasing world of environmental advertising. From 1986 to 1991, the number of green products in the national market rose from 60 to 810 (Banerjee et al., 1995). Stemming from this trend, the media picked up on the expanding empire of green products and changed advertising to accommodate this trend. As the authors discuss, increased media participation in environmental advertising means consumers must assess the validity of the advertisements they are witnessing. According to the authors, three dimensions of green advertising include 1) green advertiser (for-profit or nonprofit organization) 2) green focus and 3) green depth (Banerjee et al., 1995). Through media use of these three dimensions, advertisements can be analyzed for their validity.

In taking the work of the previous authors another step, Lefkoff-Hagius and Schuhwerk analyze consumer reactions to environmental advertising in their article *Green or Non-Green? Does Type of Appeal Matter When Advertising a Green Product?* Through their analysis, the authors highlight how consumer commitment to going green is a strong factor in the success of environmental advertising. After determining the level of consumer interest, the authors analyzed how environmental advertisements are received by the consumers. Their conclusion was that while high-interest consumers are not concerned about the type of advertising, only the environmental benefit. For low-interest consumers, the only drive in purchasing environmentally-friendly products is through high energy advertisements (Lefkoff-Hagius & Schuhwerk, 1995). With this data, one can clearly see why the media pushes the going green concept at such a high intensity – it draws audience. Although highly vested environmental people will pay attention simply because they are interested in the topic, low-interest people need to be wowed into going green.

While the first two sources from this topic represent the early days of green advertising, Frazier's discusses that in recent years, interest in going green has picked up again from its small peak in the '90s. The contrast of *Going Green? Plant Deep Roots* versus the previous ones is that Frazier highlights that in the past few years, consumers and critics have shifted their focus in the going green routine. As this article demonstrates, organizations who take the step of marking their business as "green" must ensure that their entire campaign is solid because consumers will find out half-truths (Fraizer, 2007). Another aspect of the difference of this article is that Fraizer researches how the future of the going green movement will play out. As the article notes, with its continued success, being "green" will eventually not be a special feature of a product, it will be standard (Frazier, 2007).

Continuing on this idea, author R.B., discusses that while the media needs to present environmental communication in a savvy-manner, the public is willing to accept the responsibility of going green. In *Media Buyers feel Planter's Punch*, "going green" is described as a concept that the media must deal with properly. In order to garner a response from media savvy-audiences, media organizations must present programs, advertising and marketing campaigns that excite, inspire and drive viewers to take the step to go green (R.B., 2007).

As Hanas (2007) demonstrates in his article, *A World Gone Green*, the year 2006 was the tipping point for the recent surge of popularity in the green movement. According to the article, the changes made through media promotion in 2006 changed the way the world viewed going green. "A very profound change as taken place in the boardrooms of some of the largest corporations in the world that has redefined green in operational terms that go beyond doing the right thing and actually have to do with doing things right from a business perspective," (Hanas, 2007). As evidence of the major shift in public perceptions, 12 % of the American population can be described as "true greens" and 68 percent are "light greens" (Hanas, 2007). With 80 percent of the American population buying green either all or most of the time, one can see how media coverage of this movement has major influence on the public.

With the going green movement continuing to gain steam, other articles concerning the emergence of going green are:

ASHA Leader. (2009). Going "green" in New Orleans. *ASHA Leader, 14*(10), 36-36.

Lowery, T., McCarty, J., & Shrum, L. (1995). Buyer characteristics of the green consumer and their implications for advertising strategy. *Journal of Advertising, 24*(2), 71-82.

Strand, P. (1991). No. 2 retailer gong green but carefully. *Advertising Age, 62*(43), 16-16.

Power and Influence of the Media

As this essay has been establishing, the media have to understand their responsibility in wielding public influence. In regard to environmental coverage, the influence of the media has the potential to play key roles in environmental communication and decision-making. With the influx of media coverage on environmental issues, the public is in a position to be receiving these messages on a heightened level. The importance of this realization for the media is to understand the necessity of providing unbiased, or non-sided news coverage, and to present material in such a way that a viewer could draw their own conclusion.

In Hart, Nisbet and Shanahan's article, *The Influence of Environmental Values and Media Use on Predispositions for Public Engagement in Wildlife Management Decision*

Making (2009), the authors demonstrate how environmental values influence a person's exposure to media outlets and in turn, how a person's attention to environmental news affects their exposure to the environment itself. To connect this article with the previous two topics of global warming and going green, we can see that a major focus point for the authors is the idea that media use with environmental values leads the public to look for more information on their own – without media coverage. This notion blossoms into the overall concept that involved stakeholders use their information-seeking behavior to become involved in the decision-making process of the environmental movement (Hart, Nisbet & Shanahan, 2009). As the authors discuss, the media has an essential and influential role in the environmental movement as newspapers and news stories on television or radio serve as key methods for providing information that can be spread across the country – and the more people who know, the more will be done for the environmental movement.

In continuing the notions of media coverage being a key player in environmental communication, Hart's article *Market Influences on Climate Change Frames in CNN and Fox News Channel Broadcasts* (2009) discusses how the television news broadcasts on both CNN and Fox News have framed news concerning climate change. According to the study, the framing journalists use in their stories determines how viewers understand it. In addition, once media gets competitive, organizations tend to place market concerns over actual news choice (Hart, 2009). In translating this trend to environmental communication and the media, one can see where the surge for environmental communication was bolstered by news coverage that focused on the green movement. An aspect of this study that differs from the prior article is that Hart notes how through climate change news, advocacy groups take the environment's increased popularity and work with government to set policies about green products (Hart, 2009). Through this study, one can see how environmental communication and the media work hand-in-hand and their relationship has the dual-benefit of success for both groups.

In Haase-Reed, Koeppel and Kushin's *Framing the ELF: An Exploration of Media Representation of a Social Movement Organization* (2007), the authors discuss how the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) was represented to the public through the media and through their own actions. Through this study, the authors establish that the relationship between social movements and the media is essential for the dual survival of both organizations. Social movements need to promote themselves through the media and the media needs news to cover. The responsibility of media however, is being unbiased in their coverage and promoting social movements such as the ELF without intentionally swaying audiences. While this study compares with the previous article in the acknowledgement of dual-benefits, it contrasts in giving the concept of framing the distinction of being one of the most powerful tools in media. Through the ability to "choose and shape reality" the mass media is among the most important institutions that promote mainstream visions of society as well as reinforce existing inequalities in power between groups (Hasse-Reed, Koeppel & Kushin, 2007). When the clear power of the media is applied to environmental communication, it is clear that media influence plays a role in consumer action toward the environment.

In Christen's *Media Reach, Media Influence? The Effects of Local, National and Internet News on Public Opinion Inferences* (2005), the study contrasts the prior sources through its analysis of what happens to public opinion when exposed to media influence.

As Christen discusses, people base their opinion on the slant of news coverage as a whole on small fragments they see. Once they have their established opinion on the validity or slant of news coverage, they assume that the rest of the country is being exposed to the same news and thus, have the same opinion of bias. When this notion is transferred to the realm of environmental communication, it is clear that media influence is a powerful tool as individual stories or newscasts have the power to alter the way people view news in general. One could make the argument that a poorly written news story on global warming could be enough to turn a viewer off to the idea all together through their assumptions that all stories about global warming are similar. Through her analysis of the public's subjective news assessments, Christen highlights that Internet has become the major player in influencing public opinion as it is the crosscut between television and print (Christen, 2005). This study highlights how those seeking to learn from media coverage, as is the case with environmental communication, need to ensure they pull resources from a vast pool of media outlets.

In contrast to the previous studies on the power and influence of the media, Uppal's (2006) *Internationalism: Moving Toward Connecting the Publics-Covered Environmental Activism in our Interconnected World* (2006) discusses how the media should give global environmental matters the same attention as other news. If the public realized how environmental problems in other areas of the world would eventually affect our daily lives in America, there would be more willingness and drive to find solutions. The conflict for American news agencies however, is that American audiences and journalists subscribe to the idea that news should be objective when proper environmental news coverage is often considered partisan (Uppal, 2006). As this study highlights, the importance in understanding this reality is that "environmentalism has emerged as an answer to the lack of appropriate action on the part of politicians" (Uppal, 2006, p. 2). The purpose of this study is to determine if news coverage concerning the environment is "internationalizing" issues, or, is the news coverage connecting similar projects around the world (Uppal, 2006, p. 2). Through the comparison of Indian versus American newspapers, Uppal highlights the differences in how countries cover environmental issues in the news. As the study discusses, American news tends to stray away from controversial global issues, thus, leaving the American public blissfully unaware of the true global happenings. In breaking down how respective countries cover global environmental issues and introducing opportunities for internationalization, Uppal's study offers a solution to the continuing problem of real environmental news.

In addition to these resources, additional materials to look at are as follows:

Hutchins, B., Lester, L. (2009). Power games: Environmental protest, news media and the internet. *Media, culture and society, 31*(4), 579-595.

Kotcher, J., Nisbet, M. (2009). A two-step flow of influence? Opinion-leader campaigns on climate change. *Science Communication, 30*(3), 328-354.

McCluskey, M. (2008). Activist group attributes and their influences on news portrayal. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 85*(4), 769-784.

Critiques of Selected Material

In this section, the essay will offer critiques of the selected material in comparison with Cox's book, *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere* (2010). I chose this book as the basis for this critique as this text provided me the most insight about environmental communication and its growing relationship with the field of journalism. In addition to this aspect, I believe that this book is an effective guide for anyone seeking a higher understanding of environmental communication and the constant evolution it is under.

To begin, Cox declares in the early pages of this book that his purpose for writing are three-fold: 1) to increase insight into how communication shapes perceptions of environmental issues, 2) to introduce readers to different media and public forums that are used for environmental communication and 3) to teach readers, themselves, how to take part in environmental discussions being done at local, national and global levels (Cox, 2010). With the purpose of the book established, the rest of this section will demonstrate how the selected material supports Cox's goals for environmental communication.

Beginning with the notion of introducing insight into how communication shapes perception of environmental issues, Cox further examines this by discussing the three ideals that shape each chapter: 1) communication is a form of symbolic action, 2) our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors regarding nature and the environment are shaped by communication and 3) the public sphere has developed as an arena for communication about the environment (Cox, 2010). Even with the fact that these three areas overlap, they are still distinct aspects of the environmental communication process. By acknowledging the perceptions that communication can create within the realm of environmental issues, Cox establishes the overwhelming importance of a properly informed public sphere. With his dedication to creating an aware public sphere, Cox declares his intention for those wanting to be involved with environmental communication. "By becoming aware of some of the dynamics of human communication in constructing our response to environmental problems, we are able to join in public conversations about not only the fate of the Earth in the abstract, but urgent debates over the fate of the places where we live, work and enjoy everyday life" (Cox, 2010, p. 9).

In starting with communication as a form of symbolic action, Rosteck and Frentz highlight how Gore's use of rhetoric and communication inspires viewers to take action. As the study discusses in *An Inconvenient Truth* Gore's use of rhetoric and the introduction of the mythic frame uses communication to create social and symbolic opportunities for change with viewers. Another study that embodies Cox's notion of communication is Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer's study *Shades of Green*. Once the media had witnessed the profound surge of consumer interest in the green movement, there was a strong push within the industry to accommodate advertising to be green as well. By placing the human emotions of social and symbolic responsibilities toward the environment in advertising, media organizations understood the realization of how strongly consumers respond to communication through advertising. With this acknowledgment, it is clear that environmental journalism and communication has emerged as a field that is essential to the successful promotion of garnering response to environmental issues from the general public.

For the rest of section two, the selected material will be compared against Cox's ideals that our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors regarding nature and the environment are shaped by communication and the public sphere has developed as an arena for communication about the environment (Cox, 2010). Beginning with how the public's beliefs on the environment are shaped by communication, Hart's *Market Influence on Climate Change Frames in CNN and Fox News Channel Broadcasts* discusses how the framing journalists use in environmental stories determines how people understand environmental issues. With this understanding, the importance of objective news coverage is a clear factor in the environmental movement. While there is a lot of responsibility on the journalistic field, there is another component to public beliefs. Hart, Nisbet and Shanahan's *The Influence of Environmental Values and Media Use and Predispositions for Public Engagement in Wildlife Management Decision Making* demonstrates how the relationship between a person's environmental values determines their exposure to media and in return, their media use affects their environmental perspective. This dual-benefit relationship between personal perspective and media use is an example of what leads into Cox's major concept in the book, the public sphere. According to Cox, the public sphere is a discursive space where people have the ability to engage others in communication concerning the environment (2010). Through an active public sphere, people can become involved in public forums concerning the environment as well as conflict resolutions, media coverage, environmental advocacy and environmental justice. The clear realization Cox wants to get across is that the public sphere is the beginning of solid environmental communication among a community. It is, in a sense, the starting point for a proper understanding of environmental communication and its relationship with the media. Haase-Reed, Koeppel and Kushin's *Framing the ELF: An Exploration Media Representation of a Social Movement Organization* discusses how the relationship between social movements and the media are necessary for the survival of both. Cox supports this point in acknowledging that environmental justice and grassroots movements need to build popularity through the media to promote their messages. In addition, environmental advocacy campaigns are also dependent upon a strong relationship with the media and the public sphere to not only spread their ideas but, to gain more followers as well.

Conclusion

In this bibliographic essay, the relationship between environmental communication and the media has been established as a friendship of dual-benefits. As it is clear that each side needs one another for survival, we can see with the movements of global warming and going green that the media is a critical part of their success. In addition to demonstrating the power and influence of the media, the application of this fact to the field of environmental communication cements their relationship with one another as a necessary tool for educating the public about environmental issues, concerns and movements. Through discussing how these materials fit the description of Cox's public sphere, which is an essential tool for environmental communication, it is clear that environmental communication and the media will forever be linked.

SECTION FOUR

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND THE I-35W BRIDGE COLLAPSE: DEMONSTRATING HOW THE STATE OF MINNESOTA USED SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORY TO DEAL WITH DISASTER

Events that can be classified as crisis situations are not instances that most would welcome. In the case of the I-35W bridge collapse, the state of Minnesota was suddenly thrust into the one of the worst tragedies it had ever seen. Within an instant, the state of Minnesota and its department of transportation or MnDOT were literally immersed in the tangled destruction of a massive technological failure that resulted in the epitome of a crisis scenario – the loss of human life. The purpose of this case study is to analyze the methods used by the state of Minnesota and MnDOT to rebuild after this disaster versus the communication theory of situational crisis communication theory (SCCT).

Defined by Coombs, SCCT involves an organization choosing an appropriate response to their given crisis scenario (Coombs, 2009). In the days, weeks and months that followed the epic crisis, the state of Minnesota, primarily MnDOT, found themselves immersed in situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) seeing as the bridge collapse was a technological breakdown and thus met Coombs's definition of accidental cluster crisis (Coombs, 2006). This form of crisis management, as defined by Coombs, establishes that the ultimate goal of crisis management is to ensure stakeholders are safe from harm.

The subsequent goals for SCCT, through crisis management, is for an organization to protect their own reputation and finances (Coombs, 2009). By analyzing the efforts of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT in comparison to the standards of SCCT, this paper will determine if this organization chose an effective means of response to rebuild after the crisis of the I-35W bridge collapse. Extending on the foundation of crisis communication strategies, an analysis of SCCT demonstrates how the state of Minnesota and their MnDOT department used crisis response strategies to aid victims, accept responsibility and restore their image. The primary challenge for an organization in dealing with this type of crisis is that the stakeholders often feel that the organization was operating in an inappropriate manner therefore creating the opportunity for the crisis itself (Coombs, 2006). In this analysis of the crisis response strategies of SCCT, it can be determined how the state of Minnesota was working to rebuild the trust of stakeholders as well as repair their own damaged reputation. Along with the SCCT analysis, this paper will also interpret how the use of the crisis response strategies of SCCT fit into the three stages of crisis communication which consist of pre-crisis, crisis and crisis communication.

According to Coombs, these aspects fit into the two communication processes that comprise crisis communication – crisis knowledge management and stakeholder reaction management (Coombs, 2009). By analyzing what response the state of Minnesota chose in regard to SCCT as a means to rebuild their reputation and the relationship of this method to the actual crisis communication process, this paper will hopes to determine if the methods used by the state of Minnesota to rebuild after this crisis were successful as well as demonstrate methods for other organizations in regard to their own crisis management policies by providing a blueprint of how this organization endured and recovered from the I-35W bridge collapse.

Crisis Description

"The bridge started to buckle," Toivonen said. "It went up and came down. I thought I was going to die" (Levy, 2007). Berndt Toivonen's chilling eye-witness account stands as a testament of one of the worst tragedies the state of Minnesota has ever seen.

At 6:05 p.m., on August 1, 2007, the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis collapsed during the middle of a busy rush hour. With four lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic, at least fifty vehicles plummeted into the Mississippi River and dozens of vehicles clung to pavement slabs at the riverbanks for safety. Tragically, Gregory Jolstad, 45, Scott Sathers, 30, Julia Blackhawk, 32, Patrick Holmes, 36, Artemio Trinidad-Mena, 29, Sherry Lou Engebretsen, 60, Paul Eickstadt, 51, Peter Hausmann, 47, Sadiya Sahal, 22 and her 22-month-old daughter Hana, Richard Chit, 20, Vera Peck, 50 and Christina Sacorafus-Mosher, 45, lost their lives in the bridge collapse.

Beginning with facts on the bridge itself, the steel-arched structure was built in 1967, stood about 64 feet above the river and was nearly 1,900 feet from riverbank to riverbank. The I-35W bridge was constructed with one 458-foot-long steel arch in an effort to avoid placing piers in the Mississippi River that may interfere with river traffic navigation (Associated Press, 2007). Ironically, twenty construction workers were getting ready to begin their night shift on the bridge as the Progressive Contractors Inc., company had been working on the structure for six weeks prior to the collapse (Levy, 2007). Upon the collapse of the structure four lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic plunged into the water and the crumpled structures of the bridge. Before providing a detailed timeline of the events surrounding and following this crisis, this paper will feature five photographs taken by my sister, Stacy Bengs, who was one of the first people on the scene of this crisis. At the time of the I-35W bridge collapse, she was the photo editor for the University of Minnesota's *Minnesota Daily*. The purpose for including these photographs is to provide the opportunity for a visual representation for the mass scale of crisis that the state of Minnesota was dealing with upon the collapse of the I-35W bridge.

Figure 1. Entrance to the I-35W bridge collapse.

Note. Photo credit to Stacy Bengs, 2007.

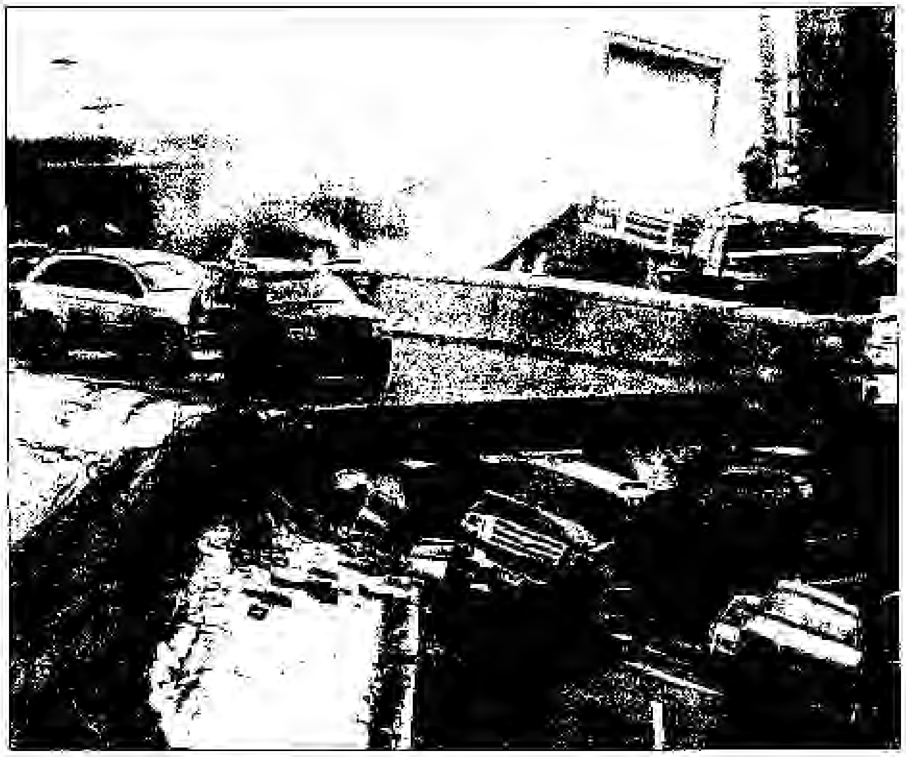

Figure 2. Center view of collapsed traffic lanes.

Note. Photo credit to Stacy Bengs, 2007.

Figure 3. Vehicle submerged in the Mississippi River after collapse.

Note. Photo credit to Stacy Bengs, 2007.

Figure 4. Collapse victims waiting for the arrival of medical assistance.

Note. Photo credit to Stacy Bengs, 2007.

Figure 5. View of bridge collapse from Mississippi River.

Note. Photo credit to Stacy Bengs, 2007.

In addition to the photographs, the following timeline demonstrates how the state of Minnesota, MnDOT, the city of Minneapolis and the federal government responded to the bridge collapse crisis.

Table 1. I-35W Bridge Collapse Timeline

Date	Event
Wednesday, August 1, 2007	6:05 p.m. – Bridge collapses 6:05 p.m. – First 911 call 6:08 p.m. – Minneapolis dispatch makes disasters call over Interstate Radio System requiring all available emergency assistance providers to respond to bridge. 6:10 p.m. – First Minneapolis police department unit arrives on scene. Children who were in a school bus that had just crossed the bridge before the collapse were rescued off the back of the bus. 6:11 p.m. – First Minneapolis fire department unit arrives on scene. 6:14 p.m. – First Hennepin County sheriff's personnel arrive on Mississippi River to begin search and rescue. 7:10 p.m. – The baseball game between the Kansas City Royals and the Minnesota Twins begins as scheduled. Officials say they did not postpone the game because they did not want to congest the area with more traffic. 7:40 p.m. – Reports say one body was pulled from the water. 8:25 p.m. – The Homeland Security Department says it has received no indications that the collapse was related to an act of terrorism. 8:52 p.m. – A hospital doctor says at least one person has died and 28 are injured in the collapse into the river. 9:15 p.m. – Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak says six people died, one by drowning, in the collapse. 10:24 p.m. – Officials say that the rescue mission has turned into a recovery effort. 10:30 p.m. – Officials confirm that seven people have died and more than 60 people are transported to local hospitals.

Table 1. (continued)

Thursday, August 2, 2007	Morning – Based on information from the medical examiner, police revise the death toll to at least four and say they expect it to increase throughout the day. Hospitals say they treated 79 injured people. Officials estimate 20 to 30 people are still missing. 6:00 a.m. – Recovery crews resume efforts. 10:00 a.m. – During a news conference, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announces a $5 million grant to help pay for rerouting traffic patterns in the area. 11:00 a.m. – Governor Tim Pawlenty orders an immediate inspection of all bridges in Minnesota that have a similar design to that of the bridge that collapsed Wednesday. 2:00 p.m. – Pawlenty says the 2005 and 2006 inspections found concerns with the bridge, but there was no call for immediate action. 2:30 p.m. – Officials say construction workers were patching tar and performing work on the bridge's joints before the collapse. 6:00 p.m. – Officials release the names of the four confirmed dead: Sherry Engebretsen, Julia Blackhawk, Patrick Holmes and Artemio Trinidad-Mena. 6:30 p.m. – U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters calls on all states to immediately inspect any steel deck truss bridges similar to the I-35W bridge. There are 756 of the bridges in the U.S.
Friday, August 3, 2007	6:30 a.m. – The medical examiner says a fifth body has been recovered. 7:30 a.m. – The Hennepin County sheriff says the number of missing is reduced to eight.
August 9, 2007	Authorities recover three more bodies from the wreckage bringing the official death toll to seven. Recovery workers have also removed an estimated 88 vehicles from the Mississippi River.
August 10, 2007	Dive teams recovered one more body, bringing the death toll to nine. Peter Hausmann was identified as one of the victims. He died from drowning. The body of a 2-year-old girl is discovered among the wreckage. The baby's mother has not yet been found.
August, 12, 2007	More remains are found in the Mississippi River. The body of Sadiya Sahal is found. Her 2-year-old daughter was found two days earlier.
August 15, 2007	The initial costs of the bridge collapse are reported at $10 million dollars by the Minneapolis Finance Department.

Table 1. (continued)

August 16, 2007	Two more victims, Vera Peck and Christina Sacorafas-Mosher, were found and identified. They are the tenth and eleventh victims.
August 19, 2007	The body of Scott Sathers was discovered by divers. He is the twelfth victim.
August 20, 2007	The Minneapolis City Council passes a set of principles for the new bridge. There is much concern that the new bridge be built as quickly as possible because of the economic cost of it being down.
August 21, 2007	The final bridge victim, Gregory Jolstad, was found by divers, completing the recovery effort.
October 6, 2007	The Mississippi River completely reopens for all river traffic.
January 15, 2008	The NTSB announced that the I-35W bridge had a fatal design flaw. Steel gusset plates that held together beams on the eight-lane bridge were half the thickness they should have been.
April 21, 2008	The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) releases report on the collapse. The report states that the local response to the crisis was extraordinary due to the extensive pre-crisis disaster planning and training done by the State of Minnesota and city of Minneapolis.
May 2, 2008	State lawmakers approve $38 million in compensation for the hundreds of families affected by the bridge collapse.
June 24, 2008	The main span of the new I-35W bridge will be more than half done.
July 7, 2008	The construction of the new bridge reaches a major milestone. The final segment of the northbound span is poured connecting the two sides of the bridge for the first time. The final pour for the southbound side is set for completion shortly after.
September 18, 2008	The new and completed Interstate 35W bridge reopens for use in Minneapolis.

With the background information and timeline for the crisis established, the framework for this study can be developed.

Theoretical Framework

In order to provide understanding for what will be examined in the subsequent portions of this paper, the theoretical framework will focus on analyzing the chosen response of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT to determine if it meets the standards of SCCT: According to Coombs (2009), "SCCT was developed as a research-based guide for selecting crisis response strategies, the communicative resources used to protect an organization's reputation during a crisis" (p. 1). Along with selecting the appropriate crisis response, SCCT is used to determine how stakeholders in a given situation respond to the chosen crisis response strategy. By determining how stakeholders are reacting, SCCT can assist in demonstrating if an organization's response to a crisis situation is effective or not at protecting and rebuilding their reputation (Coombs, 2009).

To complete the SCCT process for this paper, the study will analyze media coverage surrounding the I-35W bridge collapse to decipher if the actions taken by the state of Minnesota were congruent with the founding principles of SCCT. Along with these media references, this analysis will also compare the response choices of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT versus the foundations of risk and crisis communication and establish if their response was congruent with the standards of this method. Through making sense of the state of Minnesota's response to the I-35W bridge collapse in regard to SCCT as well as risk and crisis communication, this analysis hopes to determine if their choices represent an effective use of Coombs's SCCT and portray how the SCCT method fits into the larger aspect of crisis communication in the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis communication stages.

According to Coombs (2009), the phases of pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis communication are defined as follows: "Pre-crisis is composed of the actions organizations take before a crisis ever occurs" (p. 100). The crisis phase begins once an organization is hit by a crisis and subsequently, the post-crisis phase takes over once the organization begins the return to normal operations after the crisis event (2009). Through distinguishing how the state of Minnesota's response to the I-35W bridge collapse can utilize these stages of crisis communication, this paper will demonstrate how the use of SCCT as a crisis communication method can supplement the overall methods of crisis communication. After determining if the actions of the state of Minnesota were in accordance with the requirements of crisis communication standards, this paper will demonstrate how crisis communication can be utilized to provide the ultimate goal of organizational learning, which as Coombs (2009) states, provides the key function of crisis communication by providing opportunities for other organizations to learn and follow proper crisis communication response strategies.

Research Question

Prior to starting the explanation of the methodology used in this case study, it is essential to first establish the research questions that are the center of this analysis. The research questions at hand for this paper are as follows: "Do the crisis methods used by the state of Minnesota and MnDOT after the I-35W bridge collapse meet the standards of an appropriate response in regard to the regulations of SCCT?" In comparing these methods to the stages of pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis communication, this paper aims to determine if the overall response of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT was effective or not in assisting stakeholders and rebuilding after the crisis.

Methodology

In beginning the discussion of whether or not the state of Minnesota correctly implemented SCCT when dealing with the crisis of the I-35W bridge, it is essential to first establish what the method itself consists of. With the purpose of SCCT to be used as a resource in crisis response situations, there are three components essential to its success, the crisis situation, crisis response strategies and a system for matching the crisis situation and crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2006). By analyzing the media coverage surrounding this crisis event, the subsequent analysis of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT's response will demonstrate if SCCT was utilized correctly. In determining this fact, this paper will show what SCCT truly encompasses and why it is so important for organizations to select the proper response when dealing with a crisis situation.

Following this portion, this study will then shift to an analysis of how the actions taken by the state of Minnesota and MnDOT fit into the stages of pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis communication. The importance of this aspect is to distinguish if the chosen response of the organization fit the required methods of crisis communication. According to Coombs, the imperative nature of this aspect lies in an organization's primary responsibility to protect their stakeholders as well as practice correct crisis communication to avoid future disasters (Coombs, 2009). In highlighting the efforts made by the state of Minnesota and MnDOT, this analysis will determine if the responses to protect their stakeholders and rebuild the trust in their organization were adequate after such a colossal crisis.

Through such an establishment, this crisis scenario can serve as a learning tool for other organizations as a demonstration of how to deal with a crisis. As Coombs (2009) states the most important thing crisis communication can do in general is provide a blueprint for other organizations to follow: "The learning from a crisis helps to prevent future crises and to improve future responses" (p. 99). By analyzing both the ways in which the state of Minnesota applied SCCT and how those methods fit into the overall context of crisis communication, this paper will demonstrate if the response to the I-35W bridge collapse was adequate and what organizations can learn from their recovery efforts.

Analysis of Situational Crisis Communication Theory

In the context of the I-35W bridge collapse, the method of SCCT allowed the primary leaders to determine the reputational threat they were facing in the wake of their crisis. As Coombs (2006) discusses, every organization must acknowledge their level of crisis responsibility, or how much stakeholders attribute the cause of the crisis to their organization. In the case of the state of Minnesota and MnDOT, the crisis responsibility they faced was severe as SCCT theory states that stakeholder opinion is often dependant on severity of damage (Coombs, 2006). With the understanding that this crisis involved four full lanes of traffic plummeting into the Mississippi River, the classification of this damage as severe is an easy distinction. For the state of Minnesota and MnDOT, the process of restoring stakeholder trust emerged immediately as the severity level hoisted them into the category of an accidental crisis cluster due to a technological breakdown. In these types of crisis scenarios, the distinguishing characteristic is that "the organizational actions leading to the crisis were unintentional" (Coombs, 2006, p. 4).

Upon being suddenly immersed in a crisis of this magnitude, the state of Minnesota was charged with restoring public trust as well as their image. Before analyzing how the organization used SCCT, it is necessary to first summarize the state's response to this disaster. In order to begin calming the public in the wake of this disaster, Governor Tim Pawlenty ordered an immediate inspection of all bridges throughout the state that had a similar design to the collapsed I-35W bridge (KSTP, 2007). Nearly immediately after the collapse, state investigators began working with computer modeling to test stress points to find the cause of the incident (Newser, 2007). Along with ordering bridge inspections, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT worked hand in hand with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to keep the public informed as to what caused the bridge to collapse. In the days and weeks that followed the crisis, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT worked to provide stakeholders with alternate traffic routes, free bus routes as well as continual reminders to stay safe in traffic due to congested roadways (Metzger, 2007).

Once MnDOT took over the clean-up efforts during the week of August 6, 2007, the organization expressed thanks for the hours put in by volunteers as well as a continued assurance that the work done would be "slow and tedious" to allow for finding additional victims in the water but, to also analyze debris to find the cause for the disaster (MPP Downtown Journal, 2007). On May 2, 2008, state legislators agreed to $38 million in compensation through the creation of the Minnesota's Survivor Compensation Fund. Along with responding with compassion to the victim's families, the state of Minnesota also demonstrated its drive to rebuild stakeholder confidence and move past the tragedy by adding the provision that those who opted to claim up to the maximum of $400,000 in damages would not be allowed to sue the state (MPP Downtown Journal, 2008).

Through these efforts, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT met the standards of a SCCT function known as the deal response option. For an organization to properly utilize the deal response option, the required steps of an organization are as follows:

> Ingratiation: The organization thanked stakeholders for their help and reminded stakeholders of the organization's past effort to help the community and to improve the environment. Concern: The organization expressed concern for the victims. Compassion: The organization offered money and products as compensation. Regret: The organization said it felt bad that the crisis incident occurred. Apology: The organization publicly accepted full responsibility for the crisis and asked stakeholders to forgive the mistake. (Coombs, 2006, p. 8)

With the analysis of media coverage surrounding the I-35W bridge collapse, the primary actions for each function of the deal response option can be determined. Beginning with ingratiation, MnDOT publically expressed their gratitude for the countless hours of volunteer assistance with the clean up five days after the historic collapse. Following this act of ingratiation, the aspects of concern and compassion were demonstrated by the state of Minnesota through two primary components. First, the demand that the collapse site be treated with utmost delicacy until all victims were located showed the public that the state was operating under the continual realization that this tragedy took human lives (Muehlhausen, 2009). Along with concern, the state made a public display of compassion toward this crisis by creating the Minnesota's Survivor Compensation Fund which consisted of $38 million in compensation for the bridge collapse victims (Pease, 2008).

After the initial phases of the deal response option, the final two stages of regret and apology were acknowledged at the opening of the new I-35W bridge in September 2008. Before the new bridge lanes were filled with vehicles, MnDOT Commissioner Tom Sorel released this public statement demonstrating his organization's efforts of rebuilding after the collapse.

> On August 1, 2007, Minnesota suffered a tragedy of historic proportions when the Interstate 35W bridge collapsed. Our hearts continue to go out to the victims, families and others affected by the collapse. We recognize the tragedy, although local, affected the entire nation as the safety of the nation's bridges was questioned and placed in a spotlight never before experienced. Much has happened in this past year in Minnesota and across the country. We all await the final report from the National Transportation Safety Board on the cause of the collapse. Their findings likely will have nationwide impact in ensuring bridge safety. MnDOT, and everyone in the transportation community, is dedicated to ensuring such a disaster never occurs again. Much already has been done to help restore confidence in the safety of Minnesota's infrastructure through inspection programs, gusset plate reviews and funding plans; and most notably the reconstruction of the new I-35W bridge. We have witnessed an unprecedented spirit of cooperation to respond and recover from this disaster. Minnesota and the nation rallied together to restore confidence, repair hearts and rebuild a bridge. We are grateful to all levels of government for their coordination and cooperation. The accelerated rebuilding of the new I-35W bridge is evidence of this unprecedented cooperation. As we look toward the opening of the new bridge, we remember with respect the events of one year ago, the thirteen whose lives were lost, the many injured, and their families. We will try to demonstrate how a resilient state and nation can indeed recover from such a tragedy. (MnDOT, 2008)

By effectively working through the deal response option, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT asserted their dedication to rebuilding after the crisis as well as attempted to restore their reputation (Coombs, 2006). According to Coombs, the importance of using the deal response option is crucial when dealing with a crisis on the scale of the I-35W bridge collapse. As he states, "the more responsibility stakeholders attribute to the organization the more the crisis response strategy must seem to accept responsibility for the crisis" (Coombs, 2006, p.8). Continuing this idea, the deal response option of SCCT also allows organizations to combat more than reputational damages it also deals with direct effects on intensifiers (Coombs, 2006). For the state of Minnesota, adapting the deal response option for their utilization of SCCT was an invaluable aspect in restoring their reputation as it demonstrated to stakeholders that they were committed and determined to resolve and rebuild from this crisis.

Application of Crisis Communication Stages

Pre-Crisis

According to Coombs, pre-crisis communication consists of the two components of prevention and preparation. Starting with prevention, the purpose of this stage of pre-crisis communication is to "identify and to reduce risks that can develop into crisis" (Coombs, 2009). With a risk having the potential to cause harm, it is important for organizations to use prevention properly. As Coombs describes, prevention can take on three forms: "(1) eliminate the risk, (2) reduce the likelihood of a risk manifesting, and (3) reduce the threat of a risk" (Coombs, 2009). While the work of prevention is to protect an organization from any crisis, no amount of prevention can stop every crisis. This is where the preparation phase of pre-crisis communication comes into play. Through the creation of crisis management plans, organizations are able to assign responsibilities to key leaders of the crisis management process in advance. Seeing as most crises arise quickly, having preestablished leaders to guide stakeholders through a potentially dangerous event prepares an organization for dealing with a crisis (Coombs, 2009). In the case of the state of Minnesota and the I-35W bridge collapse, the steps of pre-crisis communication included previous bridge inspections and the work that was being done on the structure the day of the collapse. Along with these areas, a primary component to the pre-crisis communication efforts was the use of TriTech Software Systems. In addition to the state of Minnesota, the additional agencies using this mobile system designed for disasters were the Minneapolis Police Department, the University of Minnesota Police, the Minneapolis Fire Department and the Hennepin County Medical Center. The system, purchased by the state of Minnesota after the events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina, allowed for agencies to take large volumes of calls from victims as well as connect all agencies immediately. With all of these organizations being linked onto one mobile system, the crisis management plan was to allow for instant communication between these organizations. In the instance of the I-35W bridge collapse, the use of this technology led Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak to state "We not only showed top-notch response to a crisis, we showed how a city, a state and a federal government can work together to get a job done" (TriTech, 2008). Although crisis events are an unfortunate aspect of life, crisis management plans such as this one of the state of Minnesota can protect stakeholders and save lives during these disasters.

Crisis

As Coombs describes, as soon as a crisis occurs, an organization is thrust into the crisis response phase. During this time, organizations must employ the stages of form and content. Staring with form, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT followed the proper procedures of being quick, avoiding "no comment," being accurate and being consistent

(Coombs, 2009). Immediately following the bridge collapse, Pawlenty released this statement to the public: "This is a catastrophe of historic proportions for Minnesota. We want to say to the families who are being impacted by this that our hearts and prayers are with you. But we also want to make sure that you know we are doing everything we can to make sure that we respond as quickly as we can to the needs of this emergency" (Pawlenty, 2007). The importance of this statement is that amidst the chaos of the immediate hours after the crisis is that Pawlenty, as the political leader of the state, wanted to ensure to the public that the state was responding as quickly as possible.

With the content stage of crisis response strategy, Coombs describes that the purpose of content is to determine the specific communication needs for a particular crisis. As he explains, the main goals for crisis response communication are to prevent or minimize damage, maintaining the organization's operations and reputation repair (Coombs, 2009). For Pawlenty, issuing an executive order for a peacetime emergency ordered all state agencies to provide assistance in any way possible to recover from the crisis and restore normal life as quickly as possible. By issuing this declaration, the state of Minnesota moved to protect people, most importantly, and restore the normal functions of the city of Minneapolis and MnDOT.

Post-Crisis

In the final stage of crisis communication, the major features of crisis response are instructing information, adjusting information and reputation repair. With instructing information, the key idea is to tell stakeholders what to do to protect themselves from the crisis (Coombs, 2009). In the case of the bridge collapse, MnDOT provided stakeholders with additional instruction in managing their way through the temporary traffic routes that were provided in the wake of the crisis. Along with initial news, MnDOT had constant updates in the media as well as through their own Web site to keep traffic rerouting information as current as possible.

Almost immediately after the crisis, MnDOT made Highway 280 the primary replacement for the I-35W traffic (MPP Downtown Journal, 2007). In addition to providing the public with rerouting information, MnDOT was also including the public on their plans for constructing the new bridge. Only six days after the collapse, MnDOT began putting plans together for the reconstruction (MPP Downtown Journal, 2007). Along with instructing information, crisis response strategy includes adjusting information.

According to Coombs, "adjusting information helps stakeholders cope psychologically with the effects of a crisis" (Coombs, 2009). To properly assist stakeholders in coping, an organization must inform the public about not only what happened during the crisis but, what is being done to address the event (Coombs, 2007). For the state of Minnesota and MnDOT, using their Web sites as well as the media were their tools for keeping stakeholders aware of the crisis itself and what the efforts taken because of it. MnDOT provided a detailed timeline of the collapse as well as video footage.

In addition to information directly concerning the collapse itself, the organization was also posting all information available concerning a discovery of a cause as well as rebuilding information. Through all of their combined efforts, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT began to immediately work on reputation repair following the bridge collapse. This final component to crisis communication describes how an organization works to restore their public image.

As Coombs describes, organizations must show stakeholders that they value their reputation and offer a corporate apology to achieve image restoration. With these actions, an organization can achieve the ultimate goal of maintaining a positive reputation despite weathering a crisis (Coombs, 2009). For the state of Minnesota and MnDOT, acknowledging fault and determination to find the cause of the collapse were a part of their efforts to repair their reputation. Along with those aspects, providing a monetary fund for victims and their families demonstrated their willingness to accept responsibility and work through the steps of crisis communication.

Discussion and Implications

After analyzing both the aspects of SCCT as well as crisis communication in regard to the I-35W bridge collapse, key discussion points were brought to the surface. First, upon analyzing the full scope of both the I-35W bridge collapse and the response of the state of Minnesota, it is arguably clear that this organization chose an appropriate response to this horrific crisis through their utilization of SCCT and the deal response option. In addition to being available to affected stakeholders and the general public through their recovery efforts, the state of Minnesota and MnDOT took charge of the rebuilding process by spearheading a campaign that resulted in a new bridge just over one year after the collapse. Through staying consistent with their proposed deadline for the new bridge structure, the state of Minnesota exemplified one of Coombs's key proponents of SCCT; "Moreover, SCCT recognizes the need to understand how stakeholders actually perceive the crisis response strategies" (Coombs, 2006, p. 10). With their successful implementation of SCCT, the state of Minnesota very publically reestablished their reputation with their ability to acknowledge responsibility and reaffirm their dedication to protect stakeholders through the construction of the new bridge.

The implications that presented themselves through this analysis include the obvious need for organizations, especially those on a scale like that of a state level, to practice and implement proper crisis communication procedures. With the previously established purpose of this case study, it can now be determined that SCCT and the subtopic of the deal response option were an effective choice as a response to this crisis. Through this implication, organizations can realize the need to have the appropriate staffing in place to provide the knowledge and tools to navigate through a crisis situation. While each organization faces its own limitations in regard to budgetary constraints, in the face of such a public crisis situation as the I-35W bridge collapse, administrative leaders of any sort cannot ignore the inherent need to select and maintain their own crisis communication response strategies.

For the overwhelming magnitude of this crisis event, the tactful and quick reaction of the state of Minnesota due to their chosen response methods demonstrates the essential nature of crisis communication methods. Without the effectiveness of their crisis communication measures, the reaction of the state of Minnesota in regard to the I-35W bridge collapse could have had potentially damaging effects on stakeholders as well as their own reputation.

When analyzing the overall impact of this crisis situation, it is clear that the state of Minnesota's response and recovery from the I-35W bridge collapse can stand as a template for any other organization to follow as an example of how to properly and efficiently overcome from a crisis scenario.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

In the wake of one of the worst disasters the state of Minnesota has ever seen, employing the SCCT theory as part of their crisis communication method allowed the organization to protect stakeholders and rebuild their damaged reputation. With the completion of the new I-35W bridge in September 2008, MnDOT proved that they could rebuild after such devastating loss. Although the state of Minnesota worked tirelessly to rebuild transportation in Minneapolis after the collapse and restore their own reputation with the public, there were effects of this crisis that will last indefinitely for the victims and families of the I-35W bridge collapse. Despite the tragic realization of the loss of human life with this crisis situation, there are opportunities to learn from this disaster. This paper has worked to provide conclusions concerning the crisis communication used by the state of Minnesota and MnDOT during and after the I-35W bridge collapse to serve as a template for other organizations as well as offer further direction for future research. Further progression of this case study could include completing similar studies on other crisis scenarios to determine which methods prove to be most successful. Along with this notion and in light of the country's current economic status, future work could also include case studies that would comprise of an analysis to decipher how organizations can effectively create their own crisis communication task forces while dealing with dwindling budgets. For now, whatever the future of research in this area holds, the example set by the state of Minnesota in responding to the I-35W bridge collapse provides a blueprint of the successful utilization of SCCT and crisis communication methods in action.

SECTION FIVE

REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

In this final section of my portfolio, the focus of this component will center on the concepts of lessons learned and future directions. Before going into the lessons learned through the completion of this program and portfolio, it is essential to first summarize my major paper. As the title indicates, the theme of this work is to provide an in-depth look into how my graduate experience has provided me the opportunity to gain a higher education in the mass communication field. In order to demonstrate a proper representation of my academic endeavor in this program, it was necessary to highlight the areas of theory, research and application. The meaning behind these choices can be deciphered through what each term represents in regard to my educational experience.

Beginning with theory, I chose the rhetorical criticism example to show the imperative understanding of communication theory as a means to begin obtaining a competent education in mass communication. Without the foundations of communication theory and its practices, one cannot possibly progress with a complete knowledge of mass communication. In moving on to the research portion of my portfolio, I included the literature review to demonstrate how the combination of proficiency in theory and research abilities allows for an expansion to bridge from the academic arena into a branch of the mass communication field with the media. By displaying how the media can influence the public's perception of environmental communication, the research aspect of my portfolio provides insight into an education in mass communication has real life implications through the ability to affect the decisions and attitudes of others. With this sense of responsibility, it is important to ensure that those in positions where they could potentially be influencing others have a proper understanding of the theory and necessary research that goes into being a capable voice in the mass communication field. With the final aspect of application, I chose the paper on crisis communication to demonstrate the convergence of the three concepts of theory, research and application in a real-life example. With the collapse of the I-35W bridge, the State of Minnesota was instantly pushed into a scenario where all three of these components had to work together to ensure a successful recover from this disaster. In the context of my portfolio, I wanted to demonstrate how all of these pieces are necessary to obtain a complete and cohesive knowledge of mass communication practices through my graduate program.

Lessons Learned

After summarizing my portfolio as a whole, this section can now progress to the discussion of lessons learned throughout this process. Upon reflection of my graduate experience, the key lessons I find myself impressed with consist of three factors.

First, I have gained a tremendous amount of respect of the amount of time and effort that are required as an online student to gain a proficient knowledge of an area of interest within the mass communication field. The papers I have submitted are examples that are supported by an immense quantity of effort. Through this experience, I have gained an appreciation for the ability to complete a project on a level sufficient for the standards of higher education. As a student in an online graduate program, this process gained particular importance. Without the physical presence of a university, this process taught me about advanced levels of self-discipline. In my experience, the course that was the primary teaching tool of this lesson was Advanced Crisis Communication in Public Relations." During the tenure of this course, I was introduced to a level of coursework that I had not previously been exposed to and this experience gave me the opportunity to complete my first major case study. By working through the required elements, I obtained a lasting impression of what academic works of this level truly entail. This understanding is something I will continue to take with me as I progress in my professional career.

The second lesson I took from this experience is fact that mass communication is a field that is under constant change and evolution. While the theories behind this field of expertise remain concrete, the methods of how they can be applied in today's world are under a continual metamorphosis. As demonstrated through the second paper with the introduction into environmental journalism, mass communication requires those who choose to be involved in it to acknowledge that this field will never quit expanding. During my graduate program, the course that exemplified this lesson was "Environmental Communication and the Media: Demonstrating how the Media Influences how the Public Perceives Environmental Communication." While a student in this course, I was impressed with the range of environmental communication itself. From what began with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) has transformed into the realm of environmental journalism where public awareness for all issues encompassing environmental communication is the core of this type of mass communication. Through being a part of this course, the evolutionary aspects of mass communication clearly came forward.

In building on the previous notion of the constant growth of mass communication, the final component for this lessons learned portion pertains to the fact that a successful career in mass communication requires an acknowledgment that an education in this field never truly stops. According to Griffin (1991), the reason that communication will forever be a continuous process is linked to its method; "Communication is relational process not only because it takes place between two or more persons, but also because it affects the nature of connections among those people" (Griffin, 1991, p. 8). When deciding upon a future career in this discipline, I was initially unaware of the realization that this entailed a lifetime commitment to advancing my own knowledge in mass communication. Instead of attributing this lesson to a particular course, this lesson is comprised of my graduate program as a whole. In its entirety, these courses in this program have touched on all aspects of the mass communication field. Within the required elements of my program, I have found that mass communication is an integral part of many other fields of study. As this program has demonstrated the broad reach of mass communication, it becomes obvious that the responsibility of a mass communication student is to continue on in their quest to become effective and educated communicators.

Future Directions

In continuing the message of mass communication as a continued educational process, this section can now progress into the final portion concerning future directions. When contemplating where potential future research opportunities for me could lead, I consistently find myself wanting to continue work in the risk and crisis communication arena. An aspect of this that especially peaks my interest is the idea of analyzing how school districts have prepared themselves as far as their risk and crisis communication efforts. Currently, I have a two-year-old son, Colin, and am preparing for the arrival of my second little boy this February. With the understanding that my children will someday be a part of a school district, I feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that school systems have proper risk and crisis communication strategies in place to protect their students.

In addition to my own hopes for future directions, other individuals could take this research I have presented and expand on what has been determined thus far. With the example of the literature review, a researcher could take my information on media influence of public perceptions on environmental communication and possibly further this study into an analysis of what these influenced perceptions of the public have done to the field of environmental journalism.

Aside from future potential research options, my primary hope in completing this degree is two-fold. First, I am aiming for the benefit of advancement in my professional career. In addition to my strong drive to grow professionally, my other aspirations upon the completion my graduate program are personal in nature. Shortly after finding out I was pregnant with my son, Colin, I understood the importance of not only wanting to provide financially for my family; I also wanted to give my children an example of being dedicated to the importance of obtaining an education. Regardless of the circumstances that life can present, earning a degree in higher education is a personal step an individual can take to ensure the potential for their success. With this degree, I hope to show my family, my children and myself that I can do that.

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