



Resource Review

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Review:

Environment, Media and Communication is part of the Routledge 'Introductions to Environment' Series, and would be 'of interest to students in media/communication studies, geography, environmental studies, political sciences and sociology as well as to environmental professionals and activists'. Taking the student audience first, this seven chapter and 235 page book contains common textbook forms of organisation and engagement, including a glossary section, break out text boxes and exercises. The exercises are particularly productive for directing inquiry and further research. Secondly, for environmental professionals and activists, a sense of their role as claim-makers is clear. Hansen examines the intersection of activist and pressure group activities with news media, journalists and different 'publics' (the addition of the 's' within the study of news media, journalism, science and the environment is significant – see Allan, 2002, chapter four), and evaluates a number of specific campaigns.

The identification of students and activists holds out an interesting possibility in terms of how students may position themselves ethically, politically, and socially in terms of the debates presented. Paul Routledge (1996), for example, has conceptualised the third space between academia and activism, and implicit within Hansen's volume are the opportunities to consider these different registers and subject positions. Used within specific modules (for example, I teach a level module on 'Journalism and Citizenship' within a BA Media Communications programme), *Environment, Media and Communication* could be used to respond to Barnett and Coate's (2005, p. 58) suggestion that the responsibility of curriculum designers is to help students develop 'a sense of acting and being in the wider world'.

In common with a range of volumes exploring the media and science, environment and risk communication (see Allan, Adam and Carter, 2000; Allan, 2002; Boyce, 2007; Cottle, 2009; Boyce and Lewis, 2009), *Environment, Media and Communications* examines the social construction of risks, claim-makers, journalistic practices and news sources and framing, public understandings and citizenship. The social construction approach to social problems/environmental issues is clearly explained by a glossary entry, an exercise box, a breakout box, and in-text discussion. The social construction approach is the starting point of a level 6 module on 'Reporting Risk' that I coordinate. Here I have used Hughes, Kitzinger and Murdock (2006), but am persuaded by, and drawn to, Hansen's overview for the research enquiry tasks for students that accompany his discussion.

A further broad, stand-out feature of this volume is the account of the various analytical frameworks that can be used. In chapter five, Hansen refers to 'interpretative packages (also often referred to in the literature as, *inter alia*, scripts, schemes, frames, narratives or discourse)'. It is the thorough and clear overview of these terms and the literature that makes this volume of huge value for the wider study and analysis of news, journalism, claim-making, sources, and so on. There are glossary entries and also applied examples throughout.

This volume moves seamlessly from chapter to chapter, with chapter overview bullet points at the start and a conclusion at the end. Bridging themes are introduced and clearly identified as the lead off point for the next chapter. Concepts are built upon and returned to throughout – this allows for a comprehensive consolidation of learning and for individual chapters to be drawn on as discrete units. An impressive range of literature is explored, and whilst at times this comes across too heavily as a literature review, it does ensure the volume meets its stated aim of examining 'the ways in which communication research has contributed, and can contribute, to our understanding of the role played by the mass media and associated communication processes in making the environment and environmental problems issues for public and political concern'. With the breakout boxes and exercises activities with comments to direct analysis, the authorial voice comes through consistently and reassuringly.

Chapter one sets out some key prompts and ideas around how it is possible to make sense of the environment and the role of education and Media Communications. It also introduces questions that will be dealt with, such as on 'who gets to define what environmental issues are covered', and provides a synopsis of each chapter.

Chapter two sets out the social construction approach (discussed above) and outlines 'issue careers' as key to contextualising social issues and not seeing the news in terms of isolated events. Importantly, Hansen takes care to distinguish 'media' career from 'social and political career'. In terms of analytical perspectives, Hansen outlines claims-making and framing with detailed reference to Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) and makes clear how this approach sits alongside and differs from the Gamson's framing approach that is introduced later.

Chapter three focuses on the media as a key public arena for claim-making *and* states the role of media institutions/actors in organizing and arranging this. This key insight resonates with Critcher's (2002) critique of moral panic theory when he highlights the role of *The Sun* in establishing 'Sarah's Law' - acting not as an arena of the claims of others, but contributing and enacting. Like Critcher and Cottle (2006), Hansen works through the strengths and shortfalls of 'Primary Definers' analysis. The discussion of activism and 'old/new media' is very welcome, but seems slightly restricted by the focus on 'ICTS' and the Internet and deliberative democracy. Without wanting to press for coverage of the latest 'new' technologies, Hansen's

discussion does seem to be somewhat off the pace. There seems sufficient general analysis of and literature on social networking sites and 'web 2.0' (see Joyce, 2010) that it could be integrated into a specific discussion of the environment, claim-making negotiations and pressure group strategies.

Within chapter three, an extended case study of Greenpeace (Box 3.1) provides empirical application and exercise 3.1 encourages the same kind of research in relation to genetic modification. This exercise, as with all the exercises throughout, encourages primary research and includes concise prompt questions (e.g. 'who are they key claims-makers/sources quoted or referred to?'). It is very easy to see how each chapter/exercise could be incorporated within teaching and learning.

Chapter four moves to consider key institutional settings, and explore the role of the journalists (emergence of environmental beat) and debates about pro- and re-active journalism (with reference to PR-driven news). In the final part, Hansen touches how 'cultural factors also impinge on the nature of environmental news' (p.102), and this provides a clear lead into the following chapter on popular culture.

In chapter five a range of analytical perspectives again figure prominently (scripts, cultural packages, interpretative packages, cultural resonance). As Hansen states, 'deep-seated cultural resonances have reflected, and in turn shaped, particular ideological interpretations of nature and the environment' (p.105). This chapter covers lexical choices and metaphors as ideological scripts or cultural narratives, As with the rest of the volume, Hansen presents accessible case studies with a digest of the literature (nuclear power) and encourages primary research (exercise 5.1 on nuclear power and climate change). The main focus of the rest of the chapter is on wildlife films and nature documentaries.

Chapter six further demonstrates the wide range of possible perspective on the environment, media and communication by addressing 'advertising, natures, national identity, nostalgia and the environmental image'. The key approach on construction continues to underpin the discussion and the reader is able to explore the ways in which 'nature' is employed. An impressive range of literature and analytical approaches are introduced, and the focus on 'nature' and the 'environment' is situated in terms of wider research on advertising, representation and national identity.

Given the focus on journalistic practices and news framing in early chapters, the final chapter makes a crucial contribution in addressing media influence and public opinion, though Hansen does not go as far as other communication researchers exploring the social construction of 'risks' or 'anxieties' in terms of audience reception (for example, see Miller et al., 1998 on AIDS). The section outlining major communications approaches to media and public opinion (agenda-setting; quantity of coverage; cultivation analysis; and framing) performs a valuable, broad overview role. In turn though, the section on 'other (mainly qualitative) approaches' seems far too brief and limited. A wider range of approaches could have been signalled. For example, David Gauntlett's *Video Critical* (1997) explores how school children created videos to explore their views on the environment and then situated these in relation to the aims of broadcast television producers.

Overall, *Environment, Media and Communication* brings together valuable insights into a wide range of existing literature, engaging activities and exercises, and clear accounts of different analytical perspectives. It is hugely accessible and a key resource in the specific study of the environment and wider analysis of journalism and media communications.

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