



CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Section on Environmental Psychology

Section members conduct research and advance theory to understand and to improve interactions between human behavior and the physical environment, both built and natural. Our members' varied interests include: management of scarce natural resources; effects of extreme environments on personality and behaviour; territoriality and personal space; behavioural and mood effects of lighting and noise; perception and evaluation of building function and aesthetics; and, architectural design. Members receive the section newsletter, published three times annually.

Spring Issue, 2001

Cheuk F. Ng, PhD

Another year is coming to an end. For the benefit of those who cannot be at the annual convention, our section annual report, the 2000-2001 financial statement, and the 2001-02 budget proposal are attached for your review. If you have any questions about our financial health, please e-mail Mark Sandilands, our treasurer, at sandilands@hg.uleth.ca.

A reminder to our BEING members that your 2001 dues of \$ 5 is due. Please send a cheque to Mark Sandilands at Dept. of Psychology, U. of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4.

Nominations for 2001-2002 Officers

Once again, it is time for accepting nominations for executive positions for 2001-2002. The following positions are open:

Chair
Newsletter editor

Please send your nominations to Bob Gifford (at rgifford@uvic.ca) before the convention. Since I won't be at this year's convention, Bob has kindly agreed to chair the business meeting on my behalf. Nominations or self-nominations will also be accepted at the meeting. An election will be held at the business meeting. If a quorum is not reached at the business meeting, an election by mailed-out ballot will be held after the convention.

I have been Chair and Newsletter Editor for four years already. It is high time for other section members, old and new, to take the challenge.

It is absolutely necessary to have the positions filled for us to continue as a section. So, please volunteer yourself or nominate someone. Following is our membership list.

Members

John Berry	Nedra Lander
Annabel Cohen	Jane Ledingham
John Connors	Kang Lee
Douglas Creelman	John Marton
Stephanie Dudek	Chris Nash
David Eichhorn	Cheuk Ng
Gerald Farthing	Luc Pelletier
Jerome Fransblow	Thomas Rippon
Robert Gifford	Tim Rogers
Martin Girash	Mark Sandilands
Robert Hall	John Scull
Birgitta Jansen	Peter Suedfeld
Richard Kaley	Jennifer Veitch
Christopher K. Knapper	

CPA Annual Convention

Just a reminder that this year's CPA Annual Convention will be held at Laval University in Ste-Foy, Quebec, **June 21-23, 2001**. Our section has an exciting programme this year. *So book your flight now, if you haven't already done so.*

1. Section symposium: Human behavior in fires: Between panic and apathy, by Dr. Guylene Proulx, National Research Council of Canada, June 22 (Fri.), 2001, 1 – 2 pm, in Room 4.
2. A Theory Review session: Environnement physique et developpement, by Dr. Lacombe, June 22 (Fri.), 2001, 3:00 – 3:30 pm, in Room 3.
3. Environmental Psychology Poster Session, June 23 (Sat.), 2001, in 'Posters and Exhibitors' Room.
4. Section Business Meeting, June 22 (Fri.), 2001, 3:30 – 4:25 pm, in Room 3.

In addition, **Section 25 (History and Theory)** has organized a symposium that may be of interest to our section members. The symposium will be held in **Calgary** independently of the CPA Convention held in Ste-Foy, Quebec.

Dr. Tim Rogers, our section member, asked the thought-provoking questions: Why are psychologists silent on the relationship between nature and environment? What role can psychologists play in the current environment debate?

DISCOURSES OF NATURE: TOWARD A RENEWED PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Tim B. Rogers

Department of Psychology, University of Calgary

Introductory Considerations

Over the past few years my students and I have been involved in an intensive, interdisciplinary project exploring the domain of nature and the environment. One of the things that we noted very early on was the somewhat unexpected lack of reference to psychology in this literature. To the extent that the issues and concerns that are involved in our somewhat problematic relationships to the Earth are likely to find their manifestation in some aspect of human psychological functioning, we found this exclusion somewhat puzzling. Yet psychology was absent from the vast literatures we were encountering. It seemed:

... as psychologists, we have effectively excluded ourselves from this important conversation about nature and the environment. ... While the accomplishments of our colleagues in anthropology, archaeology, cultural studies, geography, literary studies, political science, philosophy, sociology and women's studies get press, we are left standing mutely on the sidelines seemingly with nothing to say (Rogers, 2000, p. 574).

Of the few psychologists that we encountered participating in this domain at an interdisciplinary level we found they too shared the view that psychology was mute about this topic. For example Ted Roszak indicated: “In the great debate over human survival, ... psychology has elected not to be a player” (Roszak, 1999, p. ix). While granting that there was activity within the discipline in domains like environmental psychology, ecopsychology and ecological psychology, the general consensus was that this work was not reaching out beyond psychology’s disciplinary and metatheoretical boundaries and that, for the most part, it failed to address critical concerns regarding the environmental crisis. As noted by David Kidner, regarding psychology’s non-engagement of issues surrounding environmental destruction: “Examination of the psychological literature reveals that the number of articles dealing with the topic are minimal almost to the point of nonexistence” (Kidner, 1994, p. 359).

In an exploration entitled “Psychology’s betrayal of the natural world” Kidner (2001, pp. 41-106) further suggested the root problem was that psychology’s recapitulation of the predominant values of our exploitationist-industrialist society had rendered the discipline an unwitting agent of the very forces responsible for the destruction of the planet. This unholy alliance, of course, exempts psychology’s voice from efforts to change the status quo. He identifies the conceptualization of the person as an autonomous individual and an allied anthropocentric assumption regarding our species’ supposed position at the top of the biological heap, as central to this issue.

Kidner appears to be constructing psychologists as unwitting and unreflexive foot soldiers in the modernist campaign to dominate and exploit nature. In the same sense that it does not make much sense to talk to unreflexive foot soldiers about the desirability of stopping a war, so too is it inappropriate to listen to psychologists in efforts to stop the modernist surge toward environmental

collapse. While Kidner’s critique is painted with a fairly wide brush, it does point toward the nub of a critical point regarding mainstream psychology’s collusion with the status quo and the resultant lack of voice in environmental matters that matter.

Kidner, along with a number of philosophers and environmental critiques, articulates the need for reconsideration of this alliance with the modernist, industrial/scientific complex:

... we need to radically reassess the ideological bases of psychological theory and research before a constructive contribution to the environmental debate is possible (Kidner, 1994, p. 359, entry in braces added).

The present symposium is grounded in a concern about psychology’s lack of presence in environmental debate considered outside of its own disciplinary bailiwick, and, at least in part, to address Kidner’s concerns. Ours is a more moderate position than Kidner’s in which we ask whether it is possible to contribute meaningfully to this debate by positioning one’s self at the margins of the discipline, both metatheoretically and in terms of investigative practices used to articulate these framing assumptions. Perhaps by resisting the centre from the margins it is possible to carve out a space from which an effective position can be mounted.

To demonstrate this program, the following symposium involves five projects that have emerged out of our work over the past few years. The integrating element of the papers that follow comes from their application of framing assumptions and investigative practices that presently exist at the borders of mainstream psychology. The deeply varied intellectual traditions reflected in these presentations, in their own ways, challenge elements of the ideological hegemony suggested by Kidner. The symposium is steadfast in its optimism that these emerging frameworks and their associated research traditions have the potential of providing a niche in which the discipline can find a voice that has relevance beyond its own boundaries.

Symposium Presentations

1. Rebecca Malhi: *The Lion and the Leopard: Culture and Nature in the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh*.
2. Tara Holton: *The World Around Them: The Changing Depiction of Nature in Owl Magazine*.
3. Mirjam Knapik: *The Way of the Tiger: Conceptualizations of Nature in Poetry by Children*.
4. Cameron G. Regehr: *Shooting From the Lip: Empiricist Accounting in a Debate Concerning Elk Hunting*.
5. Joe R. Warren: *The Evolutionary Myth of 'Bi-Polar' Bears*.

The first paper, by Rebecca Malhi, is drawn from the tradition of literary theory in which interpretive/hermeneutic approaches to mythology and grand narratives are seen to provide insight into contemporary issues. In this case, the Mesopotamian epic story of Gilgamesh was analysed to instantiate a number of tensions seen to underlie critical issues in our psychological orientation toward the Earth.

The second paper is located at the fuzzy borders between psychology, sociology and literary theory in its analysis of the construction of nature presented on the pages of the popular Canadian children's magazine *Owl*. Tara Holton will, through what began as a grounded theory analysis, show how the various discourses used to portray nature in this publication both instantiate and oppose discourses observable in adult culture, painting a complex portrait of the boundaries between these two domains.

Thirdly, Mirjam Knapik will provide some interesting observations about nature as revealed in a series of poems written by Grade 5 students. Here we find a strong argument for the sometimes-forgotten point that understandings of nature are inevitably grounded in the quotidian experience of those conversing about her, with the grander

conceptions of nature being part of a complex, boundary-like interchange.

Cam Regehr will address boundary issues explicitly in the 4th paper by examining the manner in which the authoritative voice of science in nature talk is both recruited and resisted by non-scientists. In the form of a detailed analysis of a debate in which a scientist was recruited to "solve" an environmental problem, we see issues of uptake and rejection of environmental science fully exposed in the science/public borderland.

Finally, Joe Warren will contextualise a number of points that have emerged in deeply critical analyses of environmental thought initiated by scholars like Donna Haraway. In Joe's case he will explore the boundary between popular media and scientific narratives as they emerge in a revealing series of events regarding the medicating of captive polar bears.

All five of these papers foreground boundaries, albeit in rather different ways. At a general level we see an interesting series of presentations that situate themselves at the margins/borders of traditional psychological thought and its implicit categories. In these analyses we see the potential of opening up a space for psychological analyses that are not necessarily "unwitting agents of the status quo" as David Kidner would chide. Of course the foundational tension regarding whether, and in what sense, this boundary work is still psychology, undergirds all of these papers and the symposium overall. For now, though, these five papers provide an object lesson in how elements of psychology can have a voice beyond, or perhaps from within, its well-patrolled borderland. And perhaps they begin to point, at least in a preliminary way, toward a possible resolution of Kidner's troubling observation that: "... psychology is, in many of its manifestations, part of the problem that we need to address, rather than part of any potential solution" (Kidner, 2001, p. 104).

The papers presented here are not intended to present a closed, complete or entirely coherent picture. Rather they are offered as multiple positions to initiate a conversation about the possibility of a renewed and wider-ranging psychological approach to nature and the environment. In this light we invite your suggestions and comments about how this project could be elaborated, extended and strengthened (tbrogers@ucalgary.ca).

The symposium will end by discussing similarities and differences between the various approaches outlined in the case studies. Focus will be upon the manner in which these offer generative alternatives to more traditional psychological approaches to approaching nature.

References

Kidner, D. W. (1994). Why psychology is mute about the environmental crisis. *Environmental Ethics*, 16, 359-376.

Kidner, D. W. (2001). *Nature and psyche: Radical environmentalism and the politics of subjectivity*. Albany NY: State University of New York.

Rogers, T. B. (2000). Missing out on an important conversation. *Theory and Psychology*, 10, 573-575.

Roszak, T. (1999). Foreword. In R. Metzner, *Green psychology: Transforming our relationship to the Earth*. Rochester VT: Park Street Press, pp. viii-x.

For a **recent paper** by Tim, please go to *The Trumpeter* published on-line by Athabasca University.

Rogers, T. B. (2000). In Search of a Space Where Nature and Culture Dissolve into a Unified Whole and Deep Ecology Comes Alive. *The Trumpeter*, 16(1),
[<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/content/v16.1/rogers.html>]

Upcoming Conferences

1. The 32nd Annual Conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, **July 3-6, 2001**.
2. The 109th Convention of the American Psychological Association will be held in San Francisco, **August 24-28, 2001**.
3. The International Conference on Ecology and Transportation is scheduled for **September 24-28, 2001** in Keystone, CO. For more information, please visit the conference website: <http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/cte/icoet2001.html>

New Publications

1. ***Environment-Behaviour Research on the Pacific Rim***, Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on People and Physical Environment Research. Edited by Gary Moore, J. Hunt & L. Trevillion. Sydney: University of Sydney, Faculty of Architecture, 2000 (396 pages).

The Proceedings has 11 major sections and 37 chapters on the following topics: positivist and postmodern approaches, environmental science and human factors, children youth and environment, housing and urban research, indigenous research, interiors, heritage conservation, urban design and planning, emerging research methods, and design computing.

If you are interested in a copy for personal use or for your library, they are available for Aud\$ 35.00 (including postage and handling) from Conference Publications, Centre for Continuing Professional Development, Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney, Sydney NSW 2006, Australia.

2. The Spring 2001 issue of the International Association for Applied Psychology (IAAP)

Newsletter has a collection of articles focusing on environmental psychology and conservation. The website address is <http://www.psy.gu.se/iaap/IAAPnewsletter.htm>

Employment Opportunities

Assistant or Associate Research Officer in Environmental Psychology/Human Factors Institute for Research in Construction National Research Council Canada

Your Challenge

The successful incumbent will contribute to the achievement of Indoor Environment program goals: to develop cost-effective technologies for the design and operation of indoor environments that maximize the comfort, productivity, health and safety of people in buildings. This person will join existing teams and develop new lines of investigation in areas related to human behavioural consequences of the physical indoor environment (including but not limited to acoustics, thermal comfort, lighting, and ventilation/indoor air quality). Part of the job requires working to put research findings into building practice through communicating to practitioners and other interested parties.

Your Credentials

Ph.D. in Psychology with specialization in Environmental Psychology, or Human Factors/Ergonomics, or in other related subfields of Psychology (e.g., social psychology, industrial/organisational psychology, or health psychology). Experience in behavioural science research concerning the effects of the built environment on performance, health, mood, and comfort is essential. Some scholarly publication in this area is essential. Experience with a variety of research designs and statistical techniques for both

laboratory and field research is essential. English is essential. An Enhanced Reliability Check will be required.

Salary commensurate with qualifications, in the range C\$43890 – C\$63609 (Assistant RO) or C\$65451 – C\$77479 (Associate RO), plus \$7000 terminable allowance, and superior benefits package. Relocation costs may be negotiable.

A full job description available on request.

To apply, send a complete curriculum vitae and 3-5 recent representative scholarly publications before **31 July 2001**, indicating reference number 44-01-01 to: Sylvie Brault, Human Resources Systems Coordinator, National Research Council Canada, M-20, Room E-103, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R6, by fax at (613) 954-5984, or e-mail at sylvie.brault@nrc.ca. Please visit our website at www.nrc.ca/irc/.

Lecturer A/B in Psychology (Ref: 2886)

(Two posts)

***Department of Psychology
School of Human Science
University of Surrey, UK***

The Department is seeking to employ two psychologists to contribute to its research and teaching activities in the broad areas of Social Psychology and Environmental Psychology. Applicants should have a good publication record commensurate with the stage in their career and be able to attract external research income. The successful candidates will join active research teams and contribute to the delivery of the Department's undergraduate and Masters' psychology courses. These posts are available for 3 years in the first instance, with an expectation that this may become permanent.

Applications from related areas of psychology will be welcome. Salary for the Lectureship: UK 21,435 to 30,967 pounds per annum.

For an informal discussion, please contact Dr. Chris Fife-Schaw, Head of Department of Psychology on 01483 876873 or email: c.fife-schaw@surrey.ac.uk.

For an application pack please contact Mrs. Linda Allen, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XH. Telephone 01483 879279 (24 hours). Email: L.Allen@surrey.ac.uk or download application documents from www.surrey.ac.uk 'Employment Opportunities'. Please quote Reference number 2886 and supply your postal address. Closing date for applications is **08/06/01**.

Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Cognition and Development, Northwestern University

We invite applications for a postdoctoral research fellowship beginning September 1, 2001 or January 2002. The stipend is based on the candidate's experience and there is a small travel allowance.

Applicants should have a Ph.D. in psychology or in a field related to spatial cognition (e.g., geography, computer science, education, etc.).

To apply, send a vitae, a short statement of research interests, reprints or preprints of relevant articles, and three letters of recommendation to:

David Uttal, Department of Psychology,
Northwestern University, 2029 Sheridan Road,
Evanston, IL 60208-2710;

Email: duttal@northwestern.edu;

Fax: 847-467-1925

Informal enquiries are encouraged.

Please send any information about conferences, publications, teaching and research ideas, brief reports on conferences attended, etc. to me at:

Athabasca University, 1 University Drive,
Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3

Tel. No.: (780)-675-6146; Fax. No.: (780)-675-6186; e-mail: cheukn@athabascau.ca

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