The Art of Corporate Social Narrative: Promoting Social Change

While Building Markets for Products and Services

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty in Communication and Leadership

School of Professional Studies

Gonzaga University

Under the Supervision of Dr. Heather Crandall

Under the Mentorship of Dr. David Givens

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership

By

Lydia M. McGhee

May 2013
We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

Thesis or Project Director

Faculty Mentor

Faculty Reader

Gonzaga University

MA Program in Communication and Leadership Studies
ABSTRACT

For over four decades, the outdoor clothing company Patagonia has promoted environmentalist ideologies through essays and photographs published in their print media. This strategy offers an eco-friendly narrative that resonates with many brand consumers, but the art of constructing and publicizing a corporate narrative with social purpose (i.e. corporate social narrative) has yet to be explored. In this thesis, Patagonia’s corporate social narrative is reviewed in light of Fisher’s narrative paradigm theory, the principals of corporate social marketing, social exchange theories, and the idea that visual imagery holds significant power in consumer markets. Major themes in Patagonia’s environmental narrative are identified and explored via narrative analysis of promotional material published by the company between the years of 1972-2013, with a focus on product catalogs published after 1991. The narrative research delves into how the themes of journey, calculated risk, minimalist struggle, and a connectedness to nature help Patagonia create a self-proclaimed uncommon culture and explores how this culture is used to promote behavioral change in outdoor enthusiasts who purchase from the company. Lastly, lessons from Patagonia’s social narrative are detailed along with recommendations on how corporate social narrative can be used effectively in other consumer markets.

Keywords: Patagonia, corporate social marketing, corporate social narrative, narrative analysis, narrative paradigm theory
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................................. 4  
1.1 Importance of the Study ........................................................................................................... 4  
1.2 Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................................... 5  
1.3 Definition of Terms .................................................................................................................. 6  
1.4 Organization of the Remaining Chapters ................................................................................ 6  

Chapter 2: Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 8  
2.1 Philosophical Assumptions ....................................................................................................... 8  
2.2 Theoretical Basis ....................................................................................................................... 9  
2.3 Corporate Social Marketing ..................................................................................................... 11  
2.4 The Power of Visual Imagery .................................................................................................. 11  
2.5 Patagonia ................................................................................................................................ 12  
2.6 The Rationale ............................................................................................................................ 19  
2.7 Research Questions ................................................................................................................ 20  

Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology ............................................................................................... 21  
3.1 Scope of the Study ..................................................................................................................... 21  
3.2 Methodology of the Study ....................................................................................................... 22  
3.3 Validity and Reliability ........................................................................................................... 25  
3.4 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 27  

Chapter 4: The Study .................................................................................................................... 28  
4.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 28  
4.2 The Journey Matters ............................................................................................................... 30  
4.3 Calculated Risks ...................................................................................................................... 35  
4.4 A Minimalist Struggle .............................................................................................................. 38  
4.5 Connectedness to Nature ....................................................................................................... 42  
4.6 Uncommon Culture ................................................................................................................ 45  
4.7 A Dramatic Shift in the Narrative ........................................................................................ 48  
4.8 Discussion .............................................................................................................................. 50  

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions ......................................................................................... 59  
5.1 Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................................... 59  
5.2 Recommendations for Further Study ..................................................................................... 60  
5.3 Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 62
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of the Study

Humans share stories with each other every day – stories about our hopes and dreams, successes and failures, opinions and perspectives – and each time we share these stories it helps determine our worldview and the way others perceive us. Like individuals, companies share stories, and well-crafted, consistent, and believable corporate narratives often have powerful impacts on business relationships and personal beliefs. According to researchers, corporate storytelling can build community, inspire action, shape and reinforce values (McGee & Dricoll, 2006), improve cross-cultural communication (Barker & Gower, 2010), and help build consumer-brand connections (Escalas, 2004). But does corporate storytelling have the power to elicit positive behavioral response in consumers? If paired with messages of social responsibility and authentic attempts at corporate social marketing, research indicates that it may.

According to Kotler and Lee (2005), corporate social marketing is not philanthropy, but rather “a strategy that uses marketing principles and techniques to foster behavior change in a target population, improving society while at the same time building markets for products and services” (p. 92). Patagonia, Inc. (a successful outdoor clothing company) has been practicing corporate social marketing on behalf of the natural environment for years. Since its inception in the 1970’s, Patagonia has included environmental essays and outdoor photographs in its print media, and the founder of the company insists that much of this content was included to promote consumer activism on behalf of the natural environment (Gallagher, 1999). Thus, a critical review of the well-storied and artfully-photographed pages of Patagonia catalogs may offer insight into how one company has used corporate stories infused with social purpose (described
in this research as *corporate social narrative*) to shape consumer values and inspire brand enthusiasts towards action.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

For 40 years Patagonia has attempted to foster environmentally conscious consumers by exchanging stories and pictures with customers, and their corporate social narrative may offer insight into methodologies for creating positive social change in theirs and other consumer markets. Like it or not, the modern world is dominated by consumerism and marketing campaigns provide significant opportunities to influence the social perspectives of others. Thus, if we are to successfully move towards a society where social responsibility is valued as much (if not more) than monetary gain, it is imperative to study corporations actively promoting social change and seek ways to apply their methodologies to other business endeavors to inspire socially responsible behavior and elicit positive action in both producers and consumers.

According to Landrum and Gardner (2005), Patagonia is one of a handful of post-modern organizations striving to affect collective change in a world still entrenched in capitalist mentalities that marginalize certain voices by embracing excessive materialism. Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia, supports this notion by saying,

> We are in transition to a post-consumerist society, and toward the recovery of our collective senses—of time, of public space, of proportion. In a post-consumerist world, goods are likely to become more expensive, to reflect their true social and environmental cost, prompting us to shop less as a form of entertainment. That’s not so bad. We’ll be able to recover time for satisfying pleasures that derive from pursuing our deepest interests: we’ll have more time with our friends and family, and more time for meaningful work. (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012, p. 27)
Humans in capitalist societies may or may not be on a path towards a true post-consumerist society, but corporate social marketing enhanced by corporate social narrative may be an effective way to communicate the necessity of examining our habits as consumers and producers. Thus, a study that strives to understand corporate social narrative should add to the body of literature on fostering social change in consumer markets.

1.3 Definitions of Terms

*Corporate Narrative:* the overarching story an organization or business tells about themselves

*Corporate Social Marketing:* using marketing techniques to promote social change

*Corporate Social Narrative:* corporate stories infused with social purpose

*Dirtbags:* outdoor enthusiasts and heroes of the Patagonia narrative who live the minimalist ideal

*Narrative Fidelity:* the extent to which a narrative resonates with its audience

*Narrative Probability:* the extent to which a narrative agrees internally and structurally

*Piton:* metal spike driven into rock as a safety point for climbing

*Service Dominant Logic (S-D Logic):* the idea that products and services wield power because consumers give them that power

1.4 Organization of the Remaining Chapters

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Following this first chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of the academic literature on storytelling, including theoretical foundations of the narrative paradigm and narrative exchange, the principals of corporate social marketing, and the art of visual imagery as it relates to storytelling in consumer markets. Chapter 2 also includes background on the outdoor company Patagonia, explains the rationale for conducting narrative research on their corporate narrative, and specifies the questions to be addressed in the study. Chapter 3 explains the approach to narrative inquiry taken in the study, as well as the scope of
the research, while chapter 4 is an analysis of Patagonia’s corporate narrative that examines the characters, plot, conflict, and themes that compose the company’s social message. Chapter 5 comprises a summary of the research findings and draws conclusions about the authenticity and effectiveness of Patagonia’s corporate social narrative. This final chapter also notes the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Philosophical Assumptions

According to the Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, communication is the transmission of a message from a source to a recipient, and any disturbance in the transmission is considered noise. Humans are complex communicators capable of generating lots of noise. Our messages are often affected by the intent of the source, the expectations of the recipient, and the cultural, social and/or situational environment in which the message is transmitted (Griffin, 2009). Intensify that noise by the multitude of fast-paced and often impersonal ways that we communicate in the modern world, and it becomes clear that removing all noise from the communicative process is impossible. Noise can, however, be moderated by communicating with well-crafted stories that add clarity, resonance, and power to any message.

Peterson and Langellier (2006) note that a “storyteller hesitates over the selection of words, phrases, and meanings that will take the story closer to where it needs to go” (p. 126). A well-crafted story, whether written or spoken, has great influence. Pair a rhetoric message with clever timing, artful alliteration, and appealing body language, and your story generally increases in clarity. Mate clear prose with photographs that appeal to your audience, and your message increases in strength. Incorporate elements from the cultural, social, and situational environments of your recipients, and receptiveness will increase along with resonance. Furthermore, a well-crafted story with a message that rings true has greater potential to spread, take root, and grow. According to Peters’ (2006) dissemination perspective, recipients are more apt to convey a message to others if it evokes shared beliefs, which increases that likelihood that truth (or a certain version of truth) will spread over time.
2.2 Theoretical Basis

Fisher’s (1984) Narrative Paradigm Theory (NPT) posits that humans are innate storytellers capable of creating value-laden realities by sharing and evaluating stories with logic and rational thought, and Barker and Gower (2010) note that stories hold power because they are “memorable, easy to understand, and establish a common ground” while also creating “a sense of empathy from a cognitive and emotional position” (p. 299). Fisher (1984) envisions humans as “homo narrans” (p. 1) – creatures that make sense of their world and give meaning to life through storytelling. While this vision contrasts somewhat with the rational world paradigm that views man as a reasoned being who creates meaning through logical argument, Fisher notes that the narrative paradigm is a reasoned perspective, and states that it simply focuses more on “the literary, aesthetic theme” than “the argumentative, persuasive” one (p. 2). Fisher insists that the narrative paradigm is logical because stories are only accepted as cultural narratives if they “satisfy the demands of narrative probability and narrative fidelity” (p. 2). According to Roberts (2004), narrative probability refers to the extent to which a narrative “makes sense internally and structurally,” while narrative fidelity “assesses whether or not a narrative rings true with its participants” (p. 131). Like individuals, corporations tell stories, and narrative probability and fidelity determine whether these stories are accepted as believable corporate narratives.

The notion that narrative probability and fidelity are powerful meaning-making forces is supported by a marketing and management perspective known as service-dominant logic (S-D logic). S-D logic posits the idea that products and services wield power because consumers give them that authority and states that producers “cannot unilaterally create value” but can “only offer value propositions that provide the prerequisites for value” (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011, p. 327). S-D logic was born out of social exchange theories that suggest humans
choose relationships based on subjective cost-benefit analyses that weigh the positive benefits of a relationship against the negative costs (Edvardsson et al., 2011). While S-D logic suggests that the value of a product or service is determined by the long-term relationship that develops between producers and consumers, the narrative paradigm implies that stories can enhance that relationship if they ring true with their intended audience. As Barker and Gower (2010) note, storytelling helps “bypass the more time consuming social exchange because the exchanges are inherent in the story itself” (p. 300). This perspective is further supported by research on self-brand connections. According to Escala (2004), stories created via narrative exchange between producers and consumers often elicit deep self-brand connections (SBCs), where “a brand becomes more meaningful the more closely it is linked to the self” (p. 168). She notes that strong SBCs have the power to enhance and alter perspectives over time and found companies that inspire narrative processing are more meaningful to consumers, are evaluated more positively, and have better consumer success than brands with little or no SBCs. Escala also found that high self-brand connections have a positive correlation with behavioral intent, so high SBCs should increase the influential nature of producer-consumer relationships and ultimately lay a foundation where social change can be fostered.

By synthesizing Fisher’s (1984) narrative paradigm theory with S-D logic and the idea that high self-brand connections can inspire action, the following study will show that sharing value laden corporate narratives that include consumer response is a powerful way to influence consumers to take social action on behalf of certain shared beliefs. This perspective is not complete, however, without exploring the principals of corporate social marketing.
2.3 Corporate Social Marketing

Corporate social marketing (CSM) is a powerful tool available to companies for promoting social change. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), CSM involves strategic use of marketing principals to change the way targeted populations behave concerning social issues, and they state that when consumers alter a behavior, and then benefit from the behavioral modification, “they are likely to have a strong positive association with the company that spurred the change” (p. 93). According to Kotler, Hesekiel, and Lee (2012), however, corporate social marketing campaigns only work if the social cause being promoted is . . .

- Directed towards an appropriate target audience
- Incorporates achievable behavioral goals
- Takes barriers to behavioral change into consideration
- Identifies motivations for the desired behavioral change
- Includes a clear statement of intent
- Has a well defined marketing strategy

While the ultimate goal of corporate social marketing is promoting social change, Kotler and Lee (2005) note that companies can reap tangible benefits from CSM if they successfully communicate why behavioral change is relevant to their stakeholders. The narrative paradigm suggests that corporate social narrative is an effective way to address this communicative challenge because well-crafted stories can make the ideas behind behavioral change campaigns more salient.

2.4 The Power of Visual Imagery

While narratives are usually associated with oral or written stories, imagery is an important part of the narrative experience. Narratives can create images in our brain and are
often associated with photographs, drawings, or paintings – pictures that frequently tell their own stories. According to researchers, visual imagery has longer-lasting effects on memory than words (Gardner & Houston, 1986), may play a significant role in helping individuals make moral judgments (Amit & Greene, 2012), and often helps consumers build brand relationships by eliciting an emotional response (Stutts & Barker, 1999). Incorporating imagery into corporate narrative is, therefore, a wise move (especially if done well), and photography is a particularly effective form of imagery in western markets (Banks, 2006) where it is commonly used.

Pictures communicate on a deep cognitive level because humans have used them to converse since the dawn of mankind, and, according to Banks (2006), photography can be a particularly powerful medium for those accustomed to its use. According to Christmann (2008), “photographs do not offer an objective view of an object but a certain way to see it” (para. 6), and American companies certainly use photographs to present tailored views of products and services, as well as particular perspectives on values and ideals. In addition, unlike other forms of imagery, photographs project an appearance of reality in a way other forms of imagery do not (Stuken & Cartwright, 2001), and realistic impressions can certainly help advance social causes.

2.5 Patagonia

For years the outdoor clothing manufacturer Patagonia has published essays and photographs designed to engender sympathy for the natural world and by doing so they offer brand consumers a powerful corporate social narrative – or corporate story infused with social purpose. The company has carefully woven this narrative over a 40-year period, but it was not created in a vacuum. Rather, it was crafted via producer-consumer narrative exchange often inspired by the company’s corporate social marketing campaigns. Brand enthusiasts helped weave Patagonia’s social narrative by engaging the company in several ways – by purchasing
products and providing feedback; by submitting stories concerning environmental research, ecological perspectives, and outdoor adventures; by sending in photographs of themselves and others using Patagonia gear in natural environments; and by sharing the company’s corporate perspectives with friends and family – all the while constructing their own Patagonia narratives and self-brand connections capable of influencing values and promoting action.

Peterson and Langellier (2006) point out that (even when unapparent) storytelling often prompts an influential participatory relationship between tellers and their audience, and Patagonia is acutely aware of this relationship. In an introduction to *Patagonia: Notes from the Field* (a book of photos and essays submitted for publication in Patagonia catalogs), Yvon Chouinard, an avid climber and the founder of Patagonia, notes,

I learned that someone’s value to an expedition could largely be determined by their storytelling skills. Lingering on the details of distant events, describing and interpreting the natural setting, waiting as long as possible before saying the obvious – these skills are not frivolous. They delay the onset of insanity. They help stave off boredom. And boredom is what causes climbers to move on, to start climbing when it simply doesn’t make sense to do so. Imagine that: story-telling to save lives. (Gallagher, 1999, p. 8)

Stories often have a purpose beyond the obvious, and Patagonia clearly embraces this idea. The stories and pictures in Patagonia catalogs do not simply entertain, nor do they simply promote product. They provide information, communicate values, and offer perspectives about environmental and social issues while promoting an environmentally conscious brand image. The cover of Patagonia’s *Early Fall 2012* catalog (Appendix A) features a dead salmon lying in front of a dilapidated dam, and the first three pages are devoted exclusively to arguments for dam
removal (Appendix B). A featured quote says, “Dams: They are well named. In Latin, damno means ‘to condemn’ and we have done just that to rivers around the world with a frenzy of dam building” (p. 3). This quote is preceded by the environmental perspectives of Bruce Babbitt (former U.S. Secretary of the Interior) and is flanked by a colorful photograph of a sockeye salmon thriving in its natural environment. Not a single stitch of clothing or gear appear on the first three pages of the catalog, and over 20% of the total content is devoted to restoring natural ecosystems and rejuvenating local economies through dam removal. This is not a typical product catalog, and Patagonia is clearly not a typical manufacturer. Imagine that: corporate story-telling to promote environmental activism. Patagonia embraces the narrative paradigm and establishes common ground with outdoor enthusiasts by sharing stories and pictures concerning environmental issues and by ultimately challenging brand consumers to consider how their lifestyles impact the natural environment. By doing so, the company seeks to create meaning and promote social change through storytelling, and this meaning making helps Patagonia foster a loyal following in those who respond positively to their message.

According to Stutts and Barker (1999), “businesses rely heavily on their stories, or images that suggest a story, to engender loyalty” (p. 209), and while it may seem counter-intuitive for a manufacturer to say “DON’T BUY THIS JACKET” as Patagonia did in a full page ad that ran in the New York Times on Black Friday, 2011 (Appendix C), Patagonia clearly views this type of communication as a way to build community, strengthen relationships, and promote brand loyalty. Although the ad suggests that Patagonia customers should refrain from excessive consumption, the company simultaneously proposes that purchasing products from a company that tracks its environmental footprint and attempts to engender social change is an alternative to giving up consumption altogether (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). At first glance, this anti-
consumption message appears contradictory to Patagonia’s image as a manufacturer, but this message may engender loyalty in consumers who want to make environmentally responsible choices, especially if the message has both narrative probability and fidelity. As Patagonia notes in their *New York Times* ad (Appendix C),

This is a 60% recycled polyester jacket, knit and sewn to a high standard; it is exceptionally durable, so you won’t have to replace it as often. And when it comes to the end of its useful life we’ll take it back to recycle into a product of equal value. But, as is true of all the things we can make and you can buy, this jacket comes with an environmental cost higher than its price. (para. 5)

The words imply that customers can buy the jacket and feel good about it but should also consider whether the environmental impact of the purchase is truly worth it. It is a multilayered corporate social message designed to evoke social change, and it is part of an extensive corporate social narrative that includes a long history of corporate social marketing campaigns directed at appropriate stakeholders.

As a part of their corporate social narrative, Patagonia targets outdoor enthusiasts and encourages them to embrace environmentally responsible behavior through well-designed campaigns that promote achievable goals. Patagonia’s *Common Threads Initiative* encourages consumers to REDUCE, REPAIR, RECYCLE, REUSE, AND REIMAGE, while their *Vote the Environment* campaign encourages consumers to vote for politicians who support environmental initiatives (www.patagonia.com) – all very doable actions that the company helps facilitate by offering to repair, recycle, and repurpose the clothes they produce once those items are no longer functional or desirable.
These campaigns not only promote social change, but also help Patagonia reap tangible benefits. According to the principals of CSM laid out by Kotler et al. (2012), if Patagonia inspires brand enthusiasts to vote for politicians that help create green jobs or protect national parks, and the consumers then perceive a personal benefit, they may develop a deeper loyalty to the Patagonia brand. So, while Patagonia products are often more expensive than those offered by competitors, the company’s environmental message helps them market higher priced products to consumers who are sympathetic to their message. This, in turn, helps Patagonia spread their vision of a responsible world, and this vision is particularly salient to their stakeholders because they present it in a creative narrative that includes the voices of those stakeholders.

Patagonia communicates a view of the world that embraces environmentalism through well-crafted essays written by politicians, authors, researchers, athletes, and other outdoor enthusiasts, and the words do not stand alone. They are paired with eye-catching photographs of wildlife, natural vistas, man embracing nature, or people simply experiencing outdoor life – pictures designed to engage. Many of the images are submitted by well-known photographers, but scores are sent in by brand enthusiasts who simply enjoy taking pictures. According to Patagonia’s photo editors, “some of the most memorable images came from friends, friends of friends, loyal customers – whom we lovingly call Patagoniacs – sending their shots from travels, expeditions, even their backyards” (Sievert & Ridgeway, 2010, p. 8). The editors note that the photographs “tell the full story” (p. 8), and the images do this by eliciting an emotional response in a way verbal mediums alone cannot.

Patagonia photographs present a tailored view of mankind’s relationship with the natural world. Their documentary style photographs beg consumers to consider nature from intimate perspectives – perched on the side of a cliff, standing on top of a mountain, submerged in an
ocean wave, or immersed in a forest. The vast majority of the photographs are bold and exciting images designed to communicate a sense of outdoor adventure, but occasionally a different kind of photo is included – a coyote in a trap, a dead fish, polluted water, a deforested old growth stand, or a people protesting environmental injustices. Along with many of the essays published by Patagonia, these photos are designed to make recipients reflect upon their personal relationship with nature and consider how their daily decisions affect the world around them.

Gardner and Houston (1986) note that words and pictures together strengthen consumer response, so promoting environmental agendas through a combination of stories and photographs enhances Patagonia’s environmental mission. This idea is further supported by research on ecological art exposure. Curtis (2009) found that Australians exposed to art depicting living ecosystems were more likely to feel emotionally connected to nature after exposure and were occasionally inspired towards activism if they engaged with the art on an intense level. Curtis (2009) investigated several forms of ecological art, including photographs, paintings, poems, sculptures, and stories. All were found to have effects on various study participants, but landscape photography (which is a staple in the Patagonia catalogs) had the most significant effect. Thus, the story-photo combinations found in Patagonia catalogs may promote connectness to nature and may help inspire environmental activism in some brand enthusiasts.

Researchers do note, however, that it is best to keep the stories and pictures associated with brands overwhelmingly positive. Gardner and Houston (1986) found that “favorably evaluated” (p. 65) pictures enhance brand evaluations, while Amit and Greene (2012) discovered that disturbing imagery makes some people more likely to approach moral issues from non-collectivist perspectives. Given that Patagonia is promoting a collectivist environmental perspective that balances the needs of both humans and nature, it is imperative that they keep the
majority of their stories and images positive so they do not turn potential customers away by embracing imagery that demonizes mankind. Too much negativity could lead to poor evaluations of the brand, which might damage sales and ultimately diminish the overall effectiveness of their environmental mission. Patagonia presents a largely positive message, and their overwhelming success as a company is a testament to their marketing strategy. According to Wang (2012), Patagonia had their best two years during the recent recession, and the company is still growing. Not an easy thing to accomplish without a winning strategy and a loyal following willing to help promote the company’s products.

S-D logic suggests that Patagonia can offer perspectives on environmentally responsible behavior but that consumers actually co-create the value of that behavior via their relationship with the company. Patagonia produces high-quality outdoor gear made in what they consider an ecologically responsible manner, but their customers determine whether the products (and the ideology behind the products) have value by purchasing them and subsequently promoting or disparaging the items. Product selection is much like Darwin’s theory of natural selection – strong products survive, while the weak go extinct. The same goes for corporations – if a corporate narrative is perceived as authentic, the company often thrives. If not, they often go out of business.

Potential customers certainly weigh the financial costs of purchasing Patagonia products against the possible benefits of owning the items, and offering these consumers a powerful corporate social narrative constructed with the help of brand enthusiasts appears to increase Patagonia’s ability to tilt the cost-benefit analysis in their favor, further their environmental causes, and increase the likelihood that they will survive in a highly competitive outdoor clothing market. Patagonia is one of the most successful outdoor industry companies in the world ("Little
Enlightened,” 2010), is revered as a socially and morally responsible company by many (Feldman, 2006; Landrum & Gardner, 2005; Mirvis, 1994), and some of its customers appear to have high SBCs grounded in environmental narratives. While Patagonia’s products certainly hold a range of values for a range of consumers, their corporate social message is hard to ignore, and studying the methodologies they use to convey their message has value for those interested in studying the art and practice of corporate social narrative.

2.6 Rationale

As the literature shows, various studies support the idea that strategic storytelling is a powerful communicative tool capable of transforming corporate cultures and impacting consumer brand relations (Barker & Gower, 2010; Chia, 2011; Driscoll & McKee, 2007; Escalas, 2004; Hollebeck, 2010; Rogojinaru, 2011). Similarly, research exists to support the idea that marketing (including corporate social marketing) can have significant effects on consumer behavior (Gardner & Houston, 2001; Koll, Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010; Kotler, 2011; Kotler & Lee, 2005; Stutts & Barker, 1999). No prior research, however, could be located on how corporate narratives with social agendas (corporate social narratives) inspire brand enthusiasts to take social action. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), corporations began embracing the idea of “change campaigns” (p. 93) during the 1990s, and Kotler, Hessekiel, and Lee (2012) provide copious examples of companies that have sparked positive social change over the last 20 years via corporate social marketing, including Patagonia. They do not, however, provide data on how corporate social narrative may have helped spark this social change, nor how narrative paradigm contributes to this effort, and these appear to be some gaps in the research this study addresses.

Given that Patagonia has been independently identified as an enlightened, progressive, and moral business (Feldman, 2006; “Little Enlightened”, 2010; Mirvis, 1994), they are a good
choice for a study of this kind. Patagonia gives 1 percent of their gross sales to grassroots environmental initiatives each year, co-founded 1% for the Planet (a non-profit group that encourages other companies to do the same), tracks and publishes their own carbon footprint, co-founded the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, and recently became one of the first benefit-corps in America – a corporation with a social mission stated in their corporate bylaws (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). While this does not guarantee that their mission to engender social change is authentic, it certainly appears to support that notion.

2.7 Research Questions

This thesis examines Patagonia’s corporate social narrative via Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm Theory (NPT) and the principals of corporate social marketing, and the research explores how strategic use of stories, photographs, and products can enhance social messaging in consumer markets. This study answers the following questions:

- What significant elements compose Patagonia’s corporate social narrative?
- How has Patagonia conveyed their narrative through photographs, essays, and products?
- Does Patagonia’s narrative have both narrative probability and narrative fidelity?
- How can Patagonia’s corporate social marketing strategies help other interested companies integrate social themes into their messaging with customers?
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

3.1 Scope of the Study

The following study examines Patagonia’s corporate social narrative as represented in a sample of print material published from 1972-2013, with a focus on material published after 1991. Twenty-three Patagonia catalogs were analyzed (Appendix CC), along with two 1972 essays on clean climbing and a significant advertisement that ran in the New York Times in 2011 (Appendix C). Corporate statements, environmental essays, adventure stories, product descriptions, actual products, and photographs found in Patagonia copy were all considered in the analysis – textual material originally provided to brand consumers through direct mail catalogs that were also available at Patagonia retailers.

Patagonia texts were selected via purposive sampling, which involves selecting research materials with a “specific purpose in mind” (Neuman, 2006, p. 222). The texts were sourced from original Patagonia catalogs, as well as print media currently available online. Most of the copy was retrieved directly from Patagonia catalogs published from 1991 to 2013 as the researcher was able to obtain approximately 150 catalogs from this time period, but an essay and editorial published in 1972 (a declaration on clean climbing that originally appeared in a Chouinard Equipment catalog) were also examined, as Chouinard Equipment was the precursor to Patagonia and, according to Gallagher (1999), these documents anchor Patagonia’s corporate narrative. Because copies of the 1972 essay are rare, an online copy was used in the analysis. Additionally, Patagonia’s "DON'T BUY THIS JACKET" advertisement that appeared in The New York Times on Black Friday, 2011 was reviewed via an Internet copy, as hard copies are not readily available.
Although Patagonia has a strong Internet presence, the representation of their corporate social narrative online is not addressed in this study. Additionally, while all sample materials were reviewed, this thesis provides a synthesis of Patagonia’s overall corporate social narrative with a focus on how that narrative may help promote environmental activism, rather than a detailed analysis of any particular selection of text.

3.2 Methodology of the Study

Research on Patagonia’s corporate social narrative was done via Josselson’s (2011) holistic thematic approach to narrative analysis. This approach involves examining the whole narrative to identify themes, subsequently breaking the themes down to find their individual meanings, and then considering how these themes fit together to explain the broader meaning of the entire narrative. Given this approach, all available Patagonia catalogs were initially perused, and then the focus was slowly reduced to one catalog per year between the years of 1991-2013. These 23 catalogs, along with the 1972 clean climbing declaration and the 2011 *New York Times* advertisement, provided the principal data for the study and were examined in increasing detail over several weeks.

Per Josselson’s (2011) method, multiple readings of the texts were completed to identify various *selves* within the narrative and how those selves interact with one another. Like most narrative researchers, Josselson’s approach was developed to study personal narratives rather than corporate ones, but her focus on identifying multiple identities within a single narrative worked well given that Patagonia’s corporate narrative is a fusion of corporate and independent voices. As Josselson’s approach specifies, repeated readings were also employed to discover patterns within the themes and/or contradictions in the overall plot.
Narrative analysis is a qualitative methodology with no single agreed upon approach (Reissman, 1993), but researchers do agree that narrative inquiry should focus on how stories are used to create meaning and interpret life. Researchers also note that narratives usually include moral directives, are often directed at a particular audience, and typically have a plotline that spans a period of time (Josselson, 2011; May, n.d.; Riessman, 1993). According to Riessman (1993) some narratives are chronological, while others are episodic or “stitched together by theme rather than by time” (p. 17). Patagonia’s narrative spans a 40-year period, is infused with various environmental and social themes, has a well-developed plot, a colorful cast of characters, and is directed at a range of outdoor enthusiasts. The research delves into all these aspects of Patagonia’s narrative but focuses on how Patagonia leverages that narrative to inspire environmental activism in outdoor enthusiasts.

The search for truth is an interesting aspect of narratives, and Josselson (2011) notes that narratives represent “a constructed account of experience” (Kindle edition, location 4884), rather than a factual one. Riessman (1993) supports this perspective by saying, “all we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively, and imperfectly” (p. 15). Reissman goes on to say that truth in narratives is a “thorny problem” (p. 21) and that various narrative analysts approach truth in various ways. “Some assume that language represents reality,” she states, while “others . . . take the position that narrative constitutes reality” and “still others . . . argue that narrators inscribe into their tales their ideologies and interests” (p. 22). Patagonia’s narrative is approached from the latter position, as the research suggests that Patagonia uses a well-developed corporate social narrative to promote environmentalist ideologies and create a version of truth for a specific audience.
According to Reissman (1993), where a narrative begins or ends in a text can be difficult to ascertain, and she notes that what a researcher ultimately identifies as narrative can “profoundly alter its shape and meaning (p. 18). She notes “most scholars treat narratives as discrete units, with clear beginnings and endings” and states that narrative is “detachable from the surrounding discourse” (p. 17). With this perspective in mind, only textual materials that inform Patagonia’s social and environmental message were analyzed as part of their corporate social narrative, and descriptive language concerning products was only examined if it specifically addressed some element of this narrative.

Josselson (2011) and Reissman (1993) agree that context is a critical narrative element and insist that narrative researchers give consideration to the motives behind (and circumstances surrounding) narrative construction. Patagonia’s corporate social narrative was born in the 1970’s, appears to be grounded in the environmentalist and socialist ideologies of that time, and clearly focuses on environmental agendas. Patagonia is, however, a commercial entity successfully competing in a capitalist economy, and their success as a manufacturer makes their social narrative suspect – thus, it was reviewed with a critical eye. Reissman (1993) and Josselson (2011) note that what is left out of a narrative is often as important as what is included, so efforts were taken to determine not only what Patagonia has included in their narrative, but what they may have chosen to exclude and why.

The perspective of the researcher is another important factor in narrative research. Josselson (2011) and Reissman (1993) state that narrative researchers must acknowledge the values and preconceptions they bring to narrative study. Patagonia’s narrative targets outdoor enthusiasts, and the researcher is not only an outdoor enthusiast but works in the outdoor industry, sold Patagonia products for several years, and is an avid Patagonia consumer.
Seventeen years of outdoor industry experience informed the research, but a concerted effort was made to approach the narrative from both a hermeneutic of faith and one of suspicion. According to Josselson (2011), a “hermeneutics of faith . . . aims to restore meaning to a text” while a “hermeneutics of suspicion . . . attempts to decode meanings that are disguised” (Kindle edition, location 4658). While the researcher is aware that the study is highly subjective, both hermeneutics informed the research.

Lastly, while the analysis of personal narratives typically involves careful elicitation of stories from informants during interviews (Reissman, 1993), analysis of corporate narratives (by contrast) involves thorough examination of information consciously publicized by an organization. The stories and pictures in Patagonia copy were meticulously chosen and artfully presented to promote certain perspectives, thus it was necessary to methodically break this presentation into distinctive parts to uncover patterns that offer insight into the art of narrative formation, and (in particular) methodologies for promoting social change in other consumer markets. Towards this end, certain catalog elements were listed and their transformation over time documented in a quantitative manner to support the narrative research.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

Just as truth in narratives is a “thorny problem” (Reissman, 1993), validity in narrative research is an equally complex problem. According to Reissman (1993), “narrativization assumes a point of view” (p. 64); thus finding truth in the narrative is not a measure of validity in narrative research. What does matter to Reissman, however, is the “trustworthiness” (p. 65) of the researcher’s interpretations, and Reissman suggests four ways to increase the validity of narrative analysis.
First, Reissman (1993) notes that a researcher’s persuasive ability enhances the validity of the research and argues that supporting one’s claims with evidence and presenting the information in a clear rhetorical voice is key. A concerted effort is made in this study to supply evidence for all claims made and present the material in a creative and persuasive manner.

Second, Reissman (1993) notes that an investigator has the option of corresponding with those under study to double check the analysis, and notes that “credibility is increased” (p. 66) when there is agreement between the researcher and the subject. She concedes, however, that this method of validation is suspect because stories are dynamic and “meanings of experiences shift as consciousness changes” (p. 66). On a given day, a subject might agree with the interpretation, while on the next, they might not. For this reason, Reissman notes that it is important to “clearly distinguish between our views and those of our subjects” (p. 67). She also states that researchers must ultimately take responsibility for the research and be prepared to argue their perspective. The study will be provided to Patagonia for review, but the researcher is also fully prepared to take responsibility for the arguments made in the research.

Coherence is the third criteria that Reissman (1993) uses to validate narrative research, and she notes that there are three kinds of coherence – “global, local, and themal” (p. 67). Global coherence refers to the goal of the narrator, while local coherence refers to the linguistic and visual methods used to affect that goal, and themal coherence refers to repetitive nature of the content. Reissman notes that for the research to be valid, all three types of coherence should agree at a high level, and, if not, the data should be reexamined. As Reissman notes, “investigators must continuously modify initial hypotheses about speaker beliefs and goals (global coherence) in light of the structure of particular narratives (local coherence) and recurrent themes that unify the text (themal coherence)” (p. 67). Multiple readings and extensive
evaluations of the textual material under study should enhance the interpretive coherence of the research.

Lastly, Reissman (1993) notes that “the extent to which a particular study becomes the basis of other’s work” is a form of validation (p. 68). While this does not validate the research in an immediate way, it provides a long-term methodology for determining the quality of the work, and encourages researchers to make primary data available for further study. For this reason, all primary data sources are noted, some are scanned and included in the document, and any material not directly included will be made available upon request.

3.4 Conclusion

As Josselson (2011) notes, the goal of narrative research is uncovering something new, something not previously apparent, and she notes “narrative method is not about techniques but rather is a way of thinking about inquiry and creative presentation to a scholarly body” (Kindle edition, location 1575). Narrative analysis, supported by simple quantitative analysis, was used in this study to dissect Patagonia’s corporate social narrative. The data was then examined in detail, assembled into a subjective essay interpreting Patagonia’s approach to social activism through storytelling, and ultimately offers a guide for promoting social perspectives through corporate social narrative in other consumer markets.
CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

Patagonia is an offshoot of Chouinard Equipment – a small company that produced climbing specific hardware from 1957-1989. As the legend goes, a young climber named Yvon Chouinard bought a small coal-fired forge and, in-between climbing and surfing, forged metal spikes for climbing (i.e. pitons), which he sold to support a vagabond lifestyle. By 1970, Chouinard Equipment was the premier supplier of pitons in the United States, but Chouinard and other climbers soon recognized that the spikes were damaging the vertical environment they loved. So, in 1972, Chouinard Equipment published their first catalog and included essays on why piton use should be curtailed. Given that piton sales comprised the vast majority of the company’s income in 1972 (Chouinard, 2006), it was a bold move.

That first Chouinard Equipment catalog is 73 pages long, includes a two-page editorial on the importance of climbing without pitons (i.e. clean climbing) entitled A Word . . . by Yvon Chouinard and Tom Frost, and features a 14-page essay on clean climbing entitled The Whole Art of Natural Protection by Doug Robinson (http://climbaz.com/chouinard72/chouinard.html). In addition to these essays and several pages of product specific text, the catalog contains numerous pictures – 79 black and white photographs, several instructional sketches, and one 16th century Chinese scroll painting. Product-only shots comprise thirty-one of the photographs, 16 photos show products being used in vertical environments, and the vast majority of the sketches focus on proper use of these products. By contrast, fifteen of the photos highlight the vertical wild with no focus on product, two of the photographs show only flowers, one photo features a sign denoting a $200 fine for defacing rocks, and the Chinese scroll painting on the catalog cover is simply a beautiful mountain scene. While the majority of the catalog focuses on selling
climbing products, over 22 percent of content is devoted to promoting natural spaces and environmental agendas. For this reason, the 1972 Chouinard Equipment catalog is revered by many outdoor enthusiasts and is significant in terms of social corporate marketing. Additionally, according to Gallagher (1999), the essays on clean climbing that were first published in the 1972 Chouinard Equipment catalog anchor Patagonia’s corporate narrative.

Patagonia was conceived in 1972 when Chouinard Equipment first began making climbing-specific wear. A special logo was created shortly after, and by 1975 Patagonia was standalone company (Chouinard, 2006). With the Patagonia brand came a new catalog – one that continued interspersing environmental essays and photographs amongst product specific content but was published in full color and distributed via direct mail. By exploring these catalogs in detail – particularly those published after 1991 when corporate social marketing became popular (Kotler & Lee, 2005) and Patagonia actively began promoting environmental agendas (Gallagher, 1999) – a general sense of how Patagonia has attempted to inspire environmental activism in consumers begins to take shape.

In Patagonia’s corporate social narrative, mankind is depicted as both a hero and a villain (a savior and sinner) caught in an epic struggle between the natural environment and the ravages of greed and materialism. The narrative encourages consumers to embrace a minimalist perspective, embodies a sense of urgency, and relishes struggle. It strives to inspire a spiritual connection to nature, seeks to communicate certain truths about humanity’s relationship with the natural world, and attempts to immerse humans in positive nature-based experiences. The narrative also embraces certain types of risk while eschewing others as environmentally irresponsible, and it ultimately insists that humans are faced with a serious environmental crisis that can only be resolved by reconnecting with the natural world. In an attempt to understand
Patagonia’s overall corporate social narrative, the following themes were identified and explored in detail – the journey matters, calculated risk, minimalist struggle, and connectness to nature – as well as the uncommon culture the themes promote.

4.2 The Journey Matters

In Chouinard and Frost’s 1972 Chouinard Equipment catalog editorial on the importance of clean climbing (http://climbaz.com/chouinard72/ch_page2.html), they note that a “serious problem” exists in the world – a “deterioration of the climbing environment,” and they note that the problem is “twofold, involving the physical aspect of the mountains and the moral integrity of the climbers” (p. 2, para. 1). They insist that “no longer can we assume the earth’s resources are limitless,” and assert, “Mountains are finite, and despite their massive appearance, they are fragile” (p. 2, para. 2). Chouinard and Frost ask climbers to look at the vertical wilderness from a new vantage point – from the perspective that even rock can be “delicate and soft” (p. 2, para. 3) – and note that it is the responsibility of those who enjoy climbing to protect what they cherish.

In the editorial, entitled A Word . . . (http://climbaz.com/chouinard72/ch_page2.html), Chouinard and Frost insist that piton-use should be curtailed and offer new technologies to fill the void, but they say simply changing techniques is not enough. They also ask climbers to show “moral restraint and individual responsibility” (p. 3, para. 2) and insist that it is the climbing journey, rather than the destination, that matters. They state, “. . . it is the style of the climb, not attainment of the summit, which is the measure of personal success” (p. 3, para. 2). This journey matters theme, which began with Chouinard Equipment, percolates throughout Patagonia’s corporate social narrative and addresses problems beyond those found in the climbing world.

With the success of their mother company behind them, Patagonia became the outdoor company that spoke on behalf of all nature, not just the vertical wild. Early catalogs feature
wildlife refuges, national parks, glaciers, rivers, trees, oceans, and a variety of wild creatures (Gallagher, 1999; Sievert & Ridgeway, 2010), while later issues specifically address a variety of environmental concerns. In an essay entitled The Issue is Not about Owls (Summer 1994, p. 24), author Nora Gallagher attacks the path timber companies have taken to provide humans with wood products and notes that the problem is not our need for wood but the way we fill it (Appendix D). She writes, “Like large, dangerous children we’ve destroyed forest ecosystems without understanding them. We have treated our forests like crops to be harvested rather than like living things to be tended and revered” (para. 2). Gallagher insists, “This situation is not about jobs vs. owls, this situation is about greed” (para. 6) and says sustainable harvesting methods are available that would increase job opportunities but also reduce high profits for timber companies. Her suggestion (Patagonia’s suggestion) is for consumers to demand sustainable products and willingly embrace subsequent price increases. Gallagher and Patagonia concede this is a difficult path but argue it is the right choice because how and where we get our wood matters.

While industrial forestry issues are the focus of many Patagonia essays and photos, dam removal is addressed even more frequently and is the sole focus of the Fall 2012 Dam Busters catalog, which features stories and photographs about dams being torn down and fish populations returning to natural habitats post dam removal (pp. 14-15), as well as an account of a local community coming back to life after native fish populations return (pp. 22-23; Appendix E), and an essay by former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt concerning the long and difficult journey to remove outdated dams via environmental activism (Appendix B). In The Dawn of Dam Removal (p. 3), Babbitt notes that outdated dams not only damage U.S. fish and wildlife populations but also disrupt local economies for very little tangible return. Concerning dams on
the Elwha River Babbitt says, “... the tiny amount of electricity from the dams could easily be replaced from other sources” (para. 1). He concedes that the fight to remove dams has been unpopular and notes, “Friends reminded me that cabinet secretaries who stir up too much controversy can and do lose their jobs” (para 5). Because of this threat, Babbitt says he publically retreated from the Elwha Project but continued to tread lightly on the path towards dam removal because he felt it was the right thing to do – “we quietly set about rebuilding our case” (para. 7), and two decades later several dams on the Elwha River were removed. Using Babbitt’s essay, Patagonia’s narrative suggests that environmental activism involves a long and difficult journey, but one well worth the trouble.

Of the 23 catalogs reviewed extensively in this study, Patagonia devotes three almost exclusively to industrial forestry issues (Fall/Winter 1993, Spring/Summer 1994, and Spring1998), six catalogs focus on dams or ecological problems associated with dams (Spring/Summer 1992, Fall/Winter 1993, Spring 1999, Fall 2003, Holiday 2011, and Fall 2012), six address worldwide wilderness depletion (Fall 1991, Fall/Winter 1995, Spring 2000, Spring 2009, and Early Fall 2010), four feature articles on ocean specific issues (Fall 1991, Spring 2006, Late Summer 2007, and Summer 2008), two attack genetic engineering (Summer 2001 and Heart of Winter 2002), and three address issues associated with clothing manufacture and pesticide use (Spring 1996, Fall 1997, Holiday 2011, and Spring 2013). Rather than a voice in the wilderness, Patagonia is a voice for the wilderness, and their corporate social narrative declares that how you travel through life on the planet matters more than where your travels end.

While Patagonia is relentless in their review of industries and activities they deem environmentally irresponsible, they are not shy about turning the microscope on their own business. In a piece entitled On Scrapping Clothes and Fabric Scraps (Fall/Winter 1995, p. 35),
Patagonia admits, “The best way of all to reduce waste is to give the planet a break and not make things people don’t need,” but they concede this is “counter-intuitive for a commercial enterprise” (para. 2) and admit “we fill dumpsters too” (para. 5). The company insists they mitigate environmental damage by making quality clothes, testing them extensively, and wasting “as little fabric as possible” (para. 2), but they also acknowledge more must be done (Appendix F). Self-examination plays a significant role in the journey matters theme that runs throughout Patagonia’s corporate social narrative.

In 1996, Patagonia took corporate self-examination to a new level when they openly discussed the results of an environmental assessment they commissioned on the fabrics used in their manufacturing processes. In an editorial entitled Choosing Organic (Spring 1996, p. 3), Chouinard notes,

In the course of our ongoing environmental assessment, we discovered that the most damaging fiber used to make our clothing may actually be conventionally grown, 100% “pure” cotton. That’s because the process of growing conventional cotton involves the heavy use of chemicals that toxify the soil, air and ground water. And since many of these chemicals were originally formulated as nerve gases for warfare, it is no surprise that where spraying occurs, health problems follow, including higher rates of cancer and birth defect in humans and wildlife. These are outrageous costs to pay for the battle against bugs. And it’s a battle we’ll never win: while the bugs adapt to the chemicals, the rest of us sustain the long-term damage. (para. 3; Appendix G)

In lieu of the study, Patagonia made a commitment to replace all conventional cotton products with organic ones. It was a risky venture, yet they discussed the risk openly. Chouinard notes,
“We’ve had to drop some products that no longer make economic sense to produce. And we have to be prepared for a loss in revenue should higher prices translate to fewer sales” (para. 6). He promises not to relent, however, as “making clothes out of conventional cotton is something our company can no longer afford to do” (para. 6). Patagonia’s corporate social narrative insists that how they conduct business is as important as making a profit.

While Patagonia strives to be environmentally responsible, they also admit that being 100 percent environmentally correct is not always practical from a business perspective – a viewpoint they explore in an editorial entitled Does Q=E? (Fall 1997, pp. 62-63). In the essay (Appendix H), Patagonia questions their own “emerald green reputation” (p. 62, para. 1) and admits, “. . . the clothing industry is dirty, and the production of our clothing takes a significant toll on the earth. No Patagonia products are genuinely sustainable” (p. 62, para. 2). The essay also says,

We’re aware of the immediate environmental crisis. But also have a commitment to making the best quality products we possibly can. So we’ve deliberately chosen a dual focus: We will reduce our impact on the earth - but we will also continue making the best outdoor gear available. Sounds simple. But that challenge involves trade-offs that our customers should understand. (p. 62, para. 3)

By exploring the trade-offs between producing quality products and being environmental conscious, Patagonia invites consumers into the debate, and they end the essay with a series of questions. “Can we really say that fabric breathability is so important that we reject a process that might reduce our impact on the earth?” (p. 63, para. 4). “Have we overstated your expectation for quality? What do you think of our math?” (p. 63, para. 5). The journey matters theme in Patagonia’s corporate social narrative includes a dialogue with consumers, explores
alternative approaches to a variety of environmental concerns, expresses a desire to be transparent, and is open to the idea that even the best laid plans often require detours.

4.3 Calculated Risk

Publically addressing environmental concerns and holding various entities accountable for environmental degradation is risky business, even for a company like Patagonia that panders to outdoor enthusiasts and tracks their own carbon footprint. Catalog content indicates, however, that Patagonia embraces a wide range of risky activities, as well as the pain that often accompanies risk (Appendix I). The Fall/Winter 1993 catalog includes a picture of a mountain biker crashing down a rocky slope (p. 45), while Fall 1997 features a photo of a wet, dirty, leech-covered sock (p.90), and Summer 2007 contains a close-up shot of a man with a fish hook stuck in his mouth (p. 26). The ultimate embrace of risk and pain in the Patagonia narrative, however, may be a field report by John Sherman entitled Frank’s Ass (Summer 2001, p. 64). The story begins (Appendix J), “I am Frank’s ass. And frankly, I’m nervous” (para. 1). It goes on to detail the exploits of a boulderer who has broken ankles, shattered wrists, crushed a heel, and detached a bicep on various climbing adventures (para. 2-5). Frank declares, “If it’s true that pain leads to enlightenment, then bouldering is the path to righteousness” (para. 2.). Frank has accepted risk and pain as a part of his active outdoor lifestyle, while Patagonia has accepted risk as a part of being an environmentally responsible company.

While the Patagonia narrative suggests that risk and pain can lead to enlightenment, Patagonia does not condone all risk, and this attitude can be traced back to Robinson’s essay in the 1972 Chouinard Equipment Catalog (climbaz.com/chouinard72/chouinard.html). In The Whole Art of Natural Protection (pp.12-25), Robinson says clean climbing requires “knowledge of one’s own limitations” (p.19, para. 2), and he advises climbers that “having the humility to
back off rather than continue” (p. 25, para. 2) is part of having good style. Patagonia embraces risk, but they tend to encourage calculated risk – an attitude they communicate in a variety of ways. The covers of Patagonia catalogs show climbers pulling off death-defying holds (*Fall 2004; Spring 2005; Spring 2009*), skiers navigating frightening obstacles on vertical summits (*Holiday 2011*), surfers cruising down dangerous-looking waves (*Spring/Summer 1992*), and kayakers plunging over seemingly endless falls (*Spring 2006*). Many of the photographs depict a high level of risk (Appendix K), but the athletes appear confident, competent, and very serious about their activities. The situations are risky, but the athletes appear to be in control.

Patagonia’s narrative portrays ecological risk as vastly different from personal risk, however, because they view ecological tampering as unmanageable. In an essay entitled *Ecological Risk and Surprise* (*Heart of Winter 2002*, p. 12), author and environmental scientist Ed Grumbine compares the risks associated with genetically modified organisms to those taken by outdoor enthusiasts (Appendix L).

Accessing the ecological risks of GMOs is, in the end, much more complex than the judgment calls that outdoor people make every day. If you fall off a rock face, that may be your final climb, but monarch butterflies will most likely survive. If a grizz mistakes me for a school of anchovies, I may not hike again, but soil microbes will continue to consume the dead and the down in the Cornbelt. The scale of risk associated with GMOs is not personal, but global. Transgenic risks are ecological and endlessly variable, not up close and personal like a boulder or a bear. (para. 13)

Grumbine writes, “We all take risks and manage them as best we can” (para. 2) but insists “risk should not be measured in hindsight” (para. 5). Using Grumbine’s words, Patagonia’s corporate
social narrative asserts that outdoor adventure risks are acceptable because they rarely (if ever) have global reverberations. Ecological risks, by contrast, are depicted as reckless because they can lead to wide-scale irreversible damage.

The idea that ecological risks are unacceptable is underscored by Mark Ritchie in the *Death of a Butterfly* (*Summer 2001*, p. 38). Ritchie (an organic farmer and President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy) writes (Appendix M),

Biotechnology and genetic engineering are an assault on the wild unlike any other. Genetic engineering alters nature at the genetic level. When companies alter the genetic makeup of a plant or animal they touch off a chain reaction – setting loose a form of genetic pollution that is unlikely to die out over time like nuclear pollution, nor is it limited to a geographic location like toxins. The evidence that we have before us today points to one fact: genetic pollution last forever. (para. 11)

Ritchie attacks the Monsanto Corporation by name, and notes that by “buying with a conscience” (para. 12) consumers can prevent genetic pollution from spreading. Personal responsibility is a large part of the Patagonia narrative, and since no one person can control the fallout from tampering with the natural environment, Patagonia suggests that no one person (or company) should take that risk.

In *What Does a Clothing Company Know about Genetic Engineering* (*Heart of Winter 2002*, p. 44-45), Patagonia CEO Yvon Chouinard concludes (Appendix N),

Apologists say that all new technologies entail risk, and all we can do - as a technological society - is to correct our worst mistakes once we become aware of them. They don’t seem to know what the average solo climber, whitewater
kayaker or big-wave surfer knows: the difference between risk and folly (p. 44, para. 6). You live for the edge, but stay on this side of it. You take intelligent risks. (p. 44, para. 7)

In Patagonia’s corporate social narrative, risk has value and calculated risks are encouraged, but an ecological line exists that simply should not be crossed.

4.4 A Minimalist Struggle

The 1972 Chouinard Equipment Catalog publicized the idea that pitons were destructive (http://climbaz.com/chouinard72/chouinard.html), and within three years piton use all but ceased. Chouinard Equipment facilitated the change by offering consumers an alternative to pitons – a hexagonal chock (i.e. nut) that could be wedged into rocks and easily removed from the rock after climbing leaving it unscathed (pp. 8-9). In addition to the hexagonal chock, Chouinard Equipment also offered climbers a minimalist ideal. In The Whole Art of Natural Protection (pp. 12-25) Robinson says,

There is a word for it and the word is clean. Climbing with only nuts and runners for protection is clean climbing. Clean because the rock is unaltered by the passing climber. Clean because nothing is hammered into the rock and then hammered back out, leaving the rock scarred and the next climber’s experience less natural. (p. 12, para. 1)

In Robinson’s essay, clean is a metaphor for minimalism, but embracing this viewpoint is hard, and Robinson indicates sympathy for the struggle by saying, “... clean climbing is as much a battle with temptation as it is with the mountain” (p.19, para. 1). He notes that it is hard to leave the pitons and hammer behind but also notes that doing so means “the full rewards of clean climbing will be yours” (p. 19, para. 2). Robinson’s essay on clean climbing has been published
over and over in Patagonia literature, and the Patagonia narrative asserts that embracing a minimalist philosophy promises great rewards.

As the off-shoot of Chouinard Equipment, Patagonia is sensitive to the human struggle to resist temptation, and a minimalist struggle theme runs throughout their corporate social narrative. As noted previously, humans are both villains and heroes in the company’s narrative, both sinners and saints. We are depicted as creatures who crave products that decimate the environment and purchase things we do not need, but (following Chouinard Equipment’s lead) Patagonia also suggests that once humans understand the minimalism ideal, we will change our ways – a belief put forward in Patagonia’s “DO NOT BUY THIS JACKET” advertisement (Appendix C) that ran in the *New York Times* on Black Friday, 2011.

The environmental cost of everything we make is astonishing. Consider the R2 Jacket shown, one of our best sellers. To make it required 135 liters of water, enough to meet the daily needs (three glasses a day) of 45 people. Its journey from its origin as 60% recycled polyester to our Reno warehouse generated nearly 20 pounds of carbon dioxide, 24 times the weight of the finished product. This jacket left behind, on its way to Reno, two-thirds in weight in waste. There is much to be done and plenty for us all to do (para. 4). Don’t buy what you don’t need. (para 6)

The ad places an environmental cost on the jacket and challenges consumers to consider whether embracing the consumer frenzy associated with Black Friday is wise. It is a minimalist statement designed to challenge capitalist mentalities, and Patagonia makes it clear that humans are taking too much. The ad also states, “Black Friday, and the culture of consumption it reflects, puts the economy of natural systems that support all life firmly in the red. We’re now using the resources
of one-and-a-half planets on our one and only planet” (para. 1). Patagonia’s narrative insists that minimalism is the key to saving the planet, but it also concedes this is a difficult path to choose in a capitalist society.

Because Patagonia understands that embracing minimalism is hard, they highlight struggle as something very positive. Struggle can be seen in the tense back muscles and cramped hands of climbers, as well as in stories about outdoor adventure failures. In *Nanga Parbat - A Winter Attempt* (*Fall 1997*, p. 4-5), climber Victor Saunders says (Appendix O),

If you are not hungry, you are carrying too much food. If you are warm, you have too many clothes. If you are not frightened, you have too much gear. If you get up your climb, it was too easy anyway. (p. 4, para. 1)

Saunders concludes, “It is good to fail sometimes. It teaches one humility” (p. 5, para. 5). A reverence for struggle can be seen most clearly, however, on the serious faces found in catalog photos, and especially those on Patagonia covers. In over 22 years of catalog publication (approximately 150 catalogs reviewed in this study) only one cover photo clearly shows people smiling and they are engaging each other rather than the natural environment. The faces on most covers cannot be seen (as most are looking at the task at hand), but in the few instances where faces can be seen the expressions are intense, thoughtful, pensive, exhausted, even pained, but always serious when engaging nature.

While one cover photo of athletes at rest, several interior catalog photographs, and many Patagonia essays celebrate the lighter side of the outdoor experience, the vast majority of catalog covers – the face of the Patagonia brand – celebrate struggle and indicate that hard work leads to great rewards. The athletes are typically very fit and are often pictured accomplishing amazing feats of strength, endurance, and agility – feats only possible after embracing serious effort.
Several Patagonia essays also suggest that struggle, especially the minimalist struggle, leads to special rewards. In a story called *Release (Early Fall 2010*, p. 17) climber Tommy Caldwell explains how carrying very little gear and food helped him and friend Josh Wharton ascend two major Argentinean peaks in two days (Appendix P).

Our strategy had paid off – 300 calories of food per day, a single set of cams, one small pack and no sleeping bag. Josh’s meticulous preparations had been worth it – stripping zipper pulls, labels and straps from our pack and clothing, recording their three ounce weigh on a miniature scale. (para. 2)

The minimalist approach ultimately causes Caldwell and Wharton pain (they bivouac hungry and cold between the two peaks), but Caldwell admits that this was the point. “I had come to Patagonia to suffer, and by suffering be released from the crippling anguish I had felt when my wife left me” (para. 3). In the Patagonia narrative, the minimalist struggle pushes outdoor enthusiasts to self-actualize and is often therapeutic and healing.

In *Letting Go (Summer 2007*, p. 2), Jeff Johnson learns the importance of struggle from renowned climber and environmentalist Ron Kauk (Appendix Q). As Johnson tries to hurry Kauk out of his morning routine and off to the Yosemite rocks for a climbing session, Kauk asks,

How are we supposed to evolve when we’re so caught up in material things?

Society is so anxious. We want so much and we want it all, now. Man . . . you need to work at it, you need to put in the time in order to be rewarded. (para. 4)

Kauk then proceeds to teach Johnson how to properly split a log. Johnson struggles, but Kauk insists he do it again and again, and ultimately leaves Johnson alone to split wood alone while he goes off to climb.
I turned around and Ron was gone. He had left me six more logs to split. The sun was much higher; the clouds had parted and dropped well below the horizon – a beautiful day to go climbing. I took off my flannel shirt, raised the axe high above my head, and tried my best to let go. (para. 30)

Kauk lets Johnson know that struggle is the key to finding meaning in the climb and in life, and through stories and pictures Patagonia asserts that the minimalist struggle is the key to a life well-lived.

4.5 Connectedness to Nature

A connectedness to nature theme also runs throughout Patagonia’s corporate social narrative. In The Wildlands Project (Fall/Winter 1995, p. 2) – an essay about restoring native North American plants and animals in their natural habitats – author Dave Foreman states (Appendix R),

We face a historic choice, perhaps the most important in the life of our species: We can continue our attempts at conquest and control and suffer the resulting impoverishment, or we can rekindle the green fire in our souls and embrace the earth, the wild, as home, as lover, as giver of life. (para. 8)

Using Foreman words, Patagonia establishes the natural environment as something to be revered but says humans fail to protect wild spaces because we are detached from them.

In Patagonia’s narrative, reconnecting with nature is a critical step towards saving the planet and ourselves. In the essay Connections (Spring 1998, p. 3), Nora Gallagher writes (Appendix S),

The point is to save not only the creature but its home, because each living thing relies on, depends on and is connected to another. In a forest, the redwood needles
feed the soil, the soil feeds the trees, the trees shade the salmon eggs, the salmon’s bodies feed the bears, and on and on, each creature bound in an intricate web that is not ours to tinker with, much less destroy. (para. 4)

Gallagher goes on to say “. . . you, too, are connected, part of the web, a living creature with a mysterious place in the scheme of things that is also not quite known, not yet revealed” (para. 6).

In the Patagonia narrative, man and nature are both part of a sacred plan.

The idea that connecting with nature is a sacred experience with special rewards is repeated over and over in Patagonia catalogs. In Black Magic (Heart of Winter 2002, p. 50), writer and photographer Carlos Eyles tells the story of a 10-year old boy with cancer who finds joy connecting with an orca (Appendix T). After a long cold rainy day looking for whales, a pod is finally spotted on the port side of the boat and then quickly moves starboard. All the onlookers chase the pod to the other side of the boat except the boy and his dad, and a magical encounter ensues.

I too am starboard when I hear the boy squeal. I turn to see the last of a full breach by one of the males, then a second breach. The father is laughing and holding aloft the boy who is smiling, his eyes alight . . . The orca is doing this for the boy. The boy’s eyes are wide, filled; he is connected. He knows the orca is doing this for him . . . The boy has come alive with the experience. (para. 3)

Through Eyles story, Patagonia suggests that even in the darkest hours of existence connectedness to nature has the power to rejuvenate, but Patagonia’s narrative also says you must engage nature intimately to experience this joy.

Towards this goal, Patagonia attempts to immerse humans in nature-based experiences using breath-taking photographs as well as powerful stories (Appendix U). A photo in the Spring
1999 catalog draws customers into the curl of a crystal blue wave alongside a surfer (p. 14-15), while one in the Summer 1994 issue dares consumers to let a chickadee drink sugar water from their mouths (p. 91), and a Holiday 2011 photo takes customers on a rainy bike ride through a primeval forest (p. 63). In many of these photos the wilderness is depicted as expansive, while humans are very small. One catalog photo features an ice climber ascending a frozen stream up a rocky wall (Holiday 2011, p. 37). Rock and ice take up the majority of the picture, while the climber comprises less than 0.5% of the overall frame. A woman running near a waterfall in Spring 2005 takes up even less space in her photo (a mere 0.3% of the frame), and the caption reads, “Rejoice in your smallness” (p. 31). Again and again nature is depicted as something vast and powerful in the Patagonia narrative, and humans are encouraged to rejoice in this vastness - a joy that often evident in the text even when it is not evident in the pictures.

Humans are a small part of the natural world in the Patagonia narrative, but we are also an important element because we have the power to affect great change through intimate exchanges with nature – both bad and good (Appendix V). In the Fall 2012 issue, Yvon Chouinard is shown releasing a large salmon back into the Skeena River after an angling session (p.10), while the cover of Spring 1998 shows a group of tree sitters protecting an old-growth stand from a logging project. Natural resources are critical to human survival, but in the Patagonia narrative there is a time to take from nature and a time to give back. For Patagonia, our role in the natural world is one of stewardship, and in an essay entitled Sacred Ground (Spring 2000, p. 4) Ron Kauk speaks about his responsibility to nature and the Yosemite Valley (Appendix W).

I’ve become so close with this canyon. I grew up here – swimming in the river, climbing the cliffs above. The canyon has been my teacher while I climbed the
walls . . . watched the stars, lived within the magic that touches my soul (para. 5)

. . . I realized that we are connected to everything and should have respect for all our relations, meaning the water, the air, the animals, the trees . . . it’s a matter of taking care of what takes care of you. (para. 6)

With the help of athletes, researchers, politicians, and naturalists, Patagonia’s corporate social narrative professes that man has a responsibility to protect nature because we are a critical part of the natural world, and the narrative consistently makes calls to action concerning environmental issues. The voices are many and they are diverse, but they come together to create what Patagonia calls an *Uncommon Culture*.

**4.6 Uncommon Culture**

Throughout Patagonia’s corporate social narrative, the company speaks of an uncommon culture – sometimes referred to as the *dirtbag culture*. Dirtbags are climbers, surfers, kayakers, tree-huggers, and other eco-friendly types who strive to live the minimalist ideal and embrace nature whenever they can. Based on catalog content (Appendix X), dirtbags are physically-fit individuals who seek out risk, travel the world in search of adventure, and often wear worn-out clothing. A classic male Patagonia dirtbag can be seen in the *Late Summer 2007* catalog pedaling a modified bicycle to produce “power off the grid in Belize” (p. 23), while a female dirtbag working in a pair of patched shorts is highlighted in the *Fall/Winter 1995* catalog (p. 35), and an older male dirtbag wearing climbing gear and holding a “WILL BELAY FOR FOOD” sign is featured in the *Fall 2004* catalog (p. 11). Dirtbags join environmentalist groups and challenge environmentally irresponsible actions (*Summer 2001*, p. 35). They embrace organic farming (*Spring 1996*, p. 14), and some even drive vehicles powered by vegetable oil (*Spring 2005*, p.
12). While corporations like Monsanto are the mega villains of the Patagonia narrative, dirtbags are the super heroes, are depicted as uncommon, and often wear Patagonia clothes.

According to Patagonia, if you want to be part of the uncommon culture you must “REDUCE, REPAIR, REUSE, RECYCLE” (in that order) and “REIMAGE a world where we take only what we need” (www.patagonia.com/us/common-threads). Worn-out clothes and feats of outdoor athleticism are not required to be a part of the uncommon tribe but purchasing products that leave a minimal carbon footprint is highly recommended, and the less you buy the better. Patagonia says their products leave a smaller footprint (in-part) because they are tough, and thus are discarded less frequently. In The Decline and Fall of the Stand-up Short (Spring 1996, p. 5), Patagonia discusses their infamous 1970’s heavy-duty 16-oz cotton shorts that broke stitching needles, stood up without assistance, and caused adult customers to “complain of diaper rash” (para. 1; Appendix Y). Their new organic 8-oz Stand-Ups (sans environmental toxins) may not stand up anymore, but Patagonia insists the shorts are still uncommonly durable and thus worth the price. In 1996, Stand-Ups cost $48; today they retail for $59 (www.patagonia.com).

As a consumer of Patagonia products for over 22 years and a retailer of their gear for over 10, the researcher can attest to the extreme durability of the company’s products, but durability is not the only attribute Patagonia products possess. Patagonia strives to produce simple garments with multiple functions, and many include environmental purposes as well as practical ones. In the Fall/Winter 1993 catalog, Patagonia promotes an $18 cotton t-shirt featuring a salmon on the back and the words – “Mingled Destinies, Shared Habitat: Protect Wild Salmon” (p. 73). The product description says (Appendix Z),

The impact of human industry on rivers, estuaries and oceans has depleted salmon numbers to alarmingly low levels. You don’t have to live near a salmon to help
restore these remarkable fish and their habitat . . . The T-shirt’s ultimate mission:

to raise funds for organizations around the globe working to protect wild salmon.

Ten dollars from the sale of each shirt will equally benefit the following . . .

The shirt promotes an environmental cause, and over 50% of sales from the garment benefit that cause. Generating money for the natural environment is commonplace at Patagonia, and their narrative encourages customers to do the same. The cover of Fall 1991 features an endangered Chilean old growth forest, and the caption on the back says, “We ask our customers and friends – as concerned citizens of the earth – to speak with their wallets” (para. 4; Appendix AA).

Statements encouraging environmental action and monetary donations to environmental causes can be found throughout the Patagonia narrative, and Patagonia leads the way by giving one percent of gross sales to grassroots environmental groups.

Patagonia promotes an uncommon culture (in-part) by selling products they claim are uncommon – simple clothing built to last and made to function in a variety of harsh environments (Appendix BB). As they state in the Spring/Summer 1994 issue (p. 18), “Patagonia Sportswear tends to be classic, understated and overbuilt. You can trust these clothes. They will withstand a hard workday pounding nails, while still remaining presentable” (para. 1). In the Patagonia narrative, fabrics are chosen for their “strength, durability and easy care” and are expected handle “close encounters with granite” (para. 3), but the fabrics are also chosen based on environmental merit. In a statement called A Word on PCR Fleece (Fall 1997, p. 47) Patagonia says,

Almost all our fleece garments have at least 90% post-consumer recycled soda bottle content. This PCR® fabric has the same aesthetics and feel as virgin polyester with significant environmental savings . . . It may seem like a small
measure to by a garment made of recycled fleece, but the numbers add up. Every PCR garment snatches 25 (2 liter) bottles from the jaws of the dumpster. . . . We encourage all of our customers to insist on recycled content in the fleece garments they buy, regardless of the maker.

In Patagonia’s narrative, the company makes uncommon products with an unusual dedication to the natural environment, high quality standards, and responsible business practices, but whether the narrative speaks to outdoor enthusiasts, is ultimately up to the consumer.

4.7 A Dramatic Shift in the Narrative

For over 20 years, the stories and pictures in Patagonia catalogs have addressed environmental concerns in relatively positive, frequently informative, regularly inspirational, sometimes funny, and often serious ways, but the narrative has always remained focused on environmental concerns. All of the catalogs reviewed in this study devote at least eight percent of catalog content to environmental causes, while some devote up to 23 percent (Appendix CC). Additionally, outdoor shots typically focus on the environment rather than clothing, and Patagonia clothing shown on athletes is often difficult to identify or is well-worn if it can be identified as a Patagonia product. With the advent of the Spring 2013 catalog, however, this aspect of Patagonia’s narrative changed dramatically.

While the first two interior pages of most Patagonia catalogs reviewed in this study are devoted to information concerning environmental issues, immersion in nature, Patagonia initiatives, sustainability, or corporate responsibility, Spring 2013 devotes the first four pages of catalog content to a new technology called Encapsil Down (Appendix DD). These first few pages are an advertisement rather than an essay, which is a huge departure from the Patagonia narrative norm, and while the product is described as being cleaner and smarter than a lot of
products on the market (p. 1), it is predominately described in technical rather than environmental terms. While Patagonia has included advertisement-style pages in past catalogs, this type of media has never previously dominated the beginning of the catalog, as this space was traditionally reserved for environmental content. Additionally, on page five of the Spring 2013 catalog, Patagonia promotes a new M10 Alpine Jacket featured in bright green, and page six shows a climber clearly wearing a very clean version of this jacket (Appendix EE). This obvious paring of product with an outdoor adventure scene is atypical for Patagonia, as is the product-focused quote that accompanies the photo – “I’ve climbed in the M10 all over the world, from the Canadian Rockies to Patagonia, and it’s the key piece in my alpine kit.” By focusing on the jacket rather than the environment, one aspect of Patagonia’s corporate social narrative changes, and given the power of visual images to evoke an emotional response, it is a significant change.

Throughout the Spring 2013 catalog, action photos highlight athletes wearing shiny new clothes in harsh environments, and the clothes clearly match product-specific shots on adjoining pages. Patagonia goes even further from their visual standard, however, by featuring athletes wearing casual clothes in serious situations. In Spring 2013 (pp. 24, 41 & 45), we see climbers wearing pristine button-down shirts while climbing in the vertical wild, and one photograph features a climber wearing a clean button down at the top of a climb (Appendix FF). While the athletes still have a serious manner about them and appear fully capable of completing the feats at hand, the pictures feel inappropriate because the clothing looks out of place. It is a radical departure from the visual appearance of past Patagonia catalogs, thus a new marketing strategy is clearly being employed – one that could potentially impact Patagonia’s corporate social narrative and be received as inauthentic by loyal brand consumers.
Discussion

Lessons from Patagonia’s Corporate Social Narrative

As Fisher’s (1984) Narrative Paradigm Theory (NPT) suggests, storytelling helps Patagonia create common ground with stakeholders by presenting the company’s perspectives on environmental issues and responsible business practices in a creative and memorable format, and the themes of journey, calculated risk, minimalist struggle, and connectedness to nature help the company define an uncommon culture many outdoor enthusiasts and brand consumers understand. Because Patagonia’s corporate social narrative speaks in a language its stakeholders appreciate, it displays a high level of narrative fidelity that is further enhanced by the company’s monetary and time commitment to environmental causes. This environmental commitment along with the core themes of journey, calculated risk, minimalist struggle, and connectness to nature are repeated throughout Patagonia’s literature, thus the company’s corporate social narrative displays a high level of narrative probability as well.

While Patagonia’s corporate social narrative satisfies Fisher’s (1984) requirements for a culturally coherent narrative, Patagonia’s uncommon culture does not speak to everyone, and the company readily acknowledges this. In a piece entitled Fan Mail (Appendix GG), which was included in a Spring 1999 catalog insert, Patagonia shares a letter from an adversary that says,

Greeting from Grants Pass, Oregon. Saw your ad in the Daily Courier. I have a suggestion. Why don’t you bastards keep your nose out of our business? And our lives!! Come around here and we will take care of pukes like you! YOU LIE AND YOU WILL BE STOPPED. STAY OUT AND STAY HOME. MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
Some individuals find Patagonia’s environmental rhetoric offensive and not all outdoor enthusiasts embrace the company’s perspectives either. Some people avoid owning Patagonia products because they dislike the company or the clothes, and some brand consumers simply ignore the environmental narrative and buy the products for other reasons. By addressing these diverse viewpoints openly, however, Patagonia more fully defines their uncommon culture and strengthens their environmentally conscious brand image. While this certainly limits the number of potential brand consumers, it helps Patagonia cultivate a loyal following that wants to be a part of the company’s uncommon tribe, and these consumers will continue to purchase from Patagonia as long as the company and products consistently meet expectations.

As Kotler et al. (2012) note, corporate social marketing only affects behavioral change if an appropriate audience is targeted, and Patagonia’s corporate social narrative targets a very specific consumer – one with the time, money, education, and action-oriented inclination that environmental campaigns demand. The photos in Patagonia catalogs depict physically-fit individuals engaged in outdoor activities that demand time and dedication – something many consumers may not have but perhaps desire. This perspective is reinforced in essays written by outdoor athletes who take significant risks, invest lots of time, and embrace considerable struggle to accomplish amazing feats. Patagonia clothing also communicates an action-oriented perspective as the garments are built to fit athletic frames and come in a limited range of sizes. While not all Patagonia consumers fit neatly into the targeted audience, those who fit in the clothes help create a visual representation of the brand, and the eco-friendly image the products offer is something many brand consumers want to project.

While environmental causes require time and dedication, they also require money, so Patagonia ultimately pursues individuals with disposable income, and this is done (in-part) by
appealing to intellectuals via their narrative. While many of the essays in Patagonia catalogs were written by outdoor athletes, a significant number were composed by academics or others with significant credentials (environmental researchers, published authors, well-known politicians, and famous activists), and stories that appeal to an educated audience are significant in terms of environmentalist action. According to Brisman (2009), studies indicate that members of environmental organizations tend to have college degrees, professional careers, and above-average incomes. He also notes that these environmentally conscious individuals are generally from the middle to upper-middle classes – people with disposable income and time to enjoy the great outdoors – and thus are logical targets for Patagonia causes and products.

It must also be noted that the vast majority of people depicted in Patagonia catalogs are Caucasian, and while the Patagonia narrative does address environmental injustices that affect minority populations, these minorities do not appear to be part of the company’s target audience. Given that Agyeman (2003) says research indicates whites are not more concerned about environmental issues than people of color, it seems imprudent for Patagonia to ignore these consumers, but Agyeman also concedes that American and European whites do spend more time in national parks and natural spaces engaging in strenuous activity than other groups. Thus, it may be logical for Patagonia to target educated whites with a passion for the outdoors as these people may be more likely to help fund the environmental causes the company supports.

The apparent Caucasian bias in the Patagonia narrative may also be a case of art imitating life. Many of the essays and photographs published in Patagonia catalogs were submitted by devoted Patagonia consumers, otherwise known as Patagoniacs (Sievert & Ridgeway, 2010). Thus, while the company certainly helped define the uncommon culture and dirtbag ideal through photograph and essay selection, they did not construct the culture in a vacuum.
Patagonia’s uncommon culture was created via a process of narrative exchange, and the individuals who originally submitted articles and photos for catalog publication may well have been mostly white. If outdoor adventure sports become more ethnically diverse, Patagonia’s narrative may become more varied to reflect this change, but only time will tell.

The outdoor enthusiasts that helped define Patagonia’s uncommon culture also helped define Patagonia’s value as a brand. As S-D logic suggests, the value of any product is ultimately determined by the consumer-producer relationships that develop over time (Edvardsson et al., 2011), and Patagonia’s success as a manufacturer proves that their products are highly valued. Additionally, the narrative paradigm suggests that Patagonia’s corporate social narrative may have helped create positive producer-consumer relations through story and photo exchange that ultimately cultivated consumers with high self-brand connections (SBCs). Since Escala (2004) notes that high SBCs can inspire action in consumers, a strong corporate social narrative focused on environmental agendas may have helped Patagonia inspire environmental activism in some customers while simply making others more aware of environmental concerns.

Patagonia has clearly identified and affectively targeted a core audience, but, as Kotler et al. (2012) note, companies must incorporate achievable goals in their social marketing campaigns, take barriers to change into consideration, and identify motivations for behavioral modification if they are to succeed in inspiring social action. Patagonia identifies the minimalist struggle as the major barrier to changing human action concerning environmental issues, and they establish empathy for their consumers by insisting that they understand how difficult it is to resist material temptations. Patagonia’s empathy helps consumers contemplate the minimalist struggle, while the notion that change entails a long and winding journey gives consumers an
opportunity to consider the long-term benefits of that struggle, and the company’s positive attitude towards calculated risks emboldens consumers to experiment with new ideas.

Patagonia suggests that the ultimate reward for embracing a minimalist path is a healthier world – something that appeals to a wide range of outdoor enthusiasts, as well as the general public. Ephemeral rewards such as enlightenment, a sense of inner peace, and a deeper connection to the natural world are other potential benefits that Patagonia promotes, but Patagonia makes it clear that living up to the dirtbag ideal may not be possible for everyone. As an alternative, they suggest consumers purchase high-quality products from a company that cares about nature and works hard to preserve wild spaces. They offer a minimalist ideal, suggest ways to reach that ideal, and provide inspiration and encouragement towards that goal, but Patagonia also gives its customers alternatives and suggests that as long as you are doing something positive for the environment, you are on the right path.

In many ways, Patagonia’s corporate social narrative has a religious feel. The minimalist struggle and journey matters themes can be found in philosophies from Zen Buddhism to Christianity, and the dirtbag who eschews material possessions and risks everything to connect with Mother Nature is reminiscent of Jesus and Buddha in many ways. While Patagonia is certainly not a religious institution, they do border on being an environmentalist one, and are ultimately a business with a clear statement of intent – BUILD THE BEST PRODUCTS; CAUSE NO UNNECESSARY HARM (Fall 2004, p. 3) – a statement they reiterate a lot (Appendix HH). Kotler et al. (2012) note that companies who wish to inspire social action must have a clear statement of intent, as well as a well-defined marketing plan. Patagonia’s marketing plan is two-fold using environmental marketing campaigns along with a well-defined corporate
social narrative that requests environmental action from its audience and offers information on how to affect environmental change.

That marketing plan may be changing, however. Where environmental concerns and the minimalist struggle formerly took center stage in the Patagonia narrative, products appear to be the focus of the Spring 2013 catalog in an unprecedented way, and although the catalog still includes a significant amount of environmental content (9%), how consumers dress for the journey seems to be as important as the journey itself – an indication that the dirtbag ideal may be fading away. Why Patagonia made this dramatic shift, whether it will continue, and what impact it may have on Patagonia’s corporate social narrative is not yet known, but it definitely feels like a radical departure from the corporate social narrative of Patagonia’s past and may ultimately compromise the narrative fidelity and probability of the company’s corporate story.

To the researcher, who is a long-time Patagonia customer and avid outdoor enthusiast, this new strategy feels disingenuous – especially the photographs of athletes wearing pristine clothing while doing outdoor activities, as clothing used in outdoors rarely stays clean and certainly would not stay clean for long in the environments pictured. Only time will tell how brand consumers will react to the change (if it indeed continues), and it must be noted that other factors may be behind this new strategy that this research did not unveil.

Recommendations for Other Companies

As this review of Patagonia textual material indicates, corporate social narrative is a powerful way to build a loyal following, enhance brand value, raise awareness for social causes, and inspire social change in some members of a targeted audience. It is not, however, an appropriate social change vehicle for all companies. Businesses interested in using corporate social narrative need to be committed to a cause they are willing to promote repeatedly, support
over the long-term, and advance in a variety of ways. Additionally, these companies must be prepared to handle both the positive and negative feedback that inevitably ensues from publicizing social perspectives.

According to Kotler and Lee (2005), many companies employ corporate social marketing campaigns to promote specific behaviors in consumers, but these campaigns do not overwhelmingly define these corporations and thus are not as risky as corporate social narrative. Lowe’s *Use it Wisely* campaign is an example of a corporate promotion designed to inspire water conservation behaviors in Arizona consumers. The campaign began in 1999 and is still supported by Lowe’s Home Improvement today (wateruseitwisely.com), but water conservation is not the only social cause supported by Lowe’s and is not intrinsically connected to the Lowe’s brand. While corporate social marketing campaigns build short-term consumer-brand connections by highlighting select concerns, corporate social narrative implicitly defines a company by connecting it to a specific social cause. Corporate social narrative is, therefore, a more powerful way to elicit behavioral change because the social cause is always connected to the brand, but the company and its employees need to be passionate about a given cause if they are going to support it affectively over the long haul.

Additionally, the social cause selected should have some logical connection to the brand. Patagonia is an outdoor company therefore protecting the environment makes sense from a corporate perspective. Toms Shoes is another company that logically connects a social cause to their brand (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Toms’ motto is *One for One* – for every shoe they sell, they give a pair to a child in need. Fighting poverty is Toms’ social mission and giving out free shoes makes sense from a corporate perspective. Similarly, a women’s clothing company might chose to promote feminist issues, while a food company might decide to address hunger issues. That
same clothing company, however, might find it hard to affectively address hunger in a corporate
social narrative, while the food company might find feminist issues a poor fit. The social cause
promoted via corporate social narrative needs to complement some aspect of the business, and
the narrative should be promoted in a creative and powerful way.

As Patagonia literature indicates, corporate social narrative is strengthened by enlisting a
variety of voices from outside the corporation. While many Patagonia essays were written by
Patagonia employees, many were also composed by independent voices, and these voices
strengthen Patagonia’s environmental mission by linking the company to a broader community
of environmentalists. Using multiple voices in a corporate social narrative indicates broad
support for a cause, and enlisting voices that offer a range of perspectives on that cause offers
numerous ways to connect with potential stakeholders. A highly educated bird watcher may not
appreciate the risk-taking perspectives of Frank the boulderer (*Summer 2001*; Appendix J), while
a dirtbag climber might not fully appreciate Grumbine’s (*Heart of Winter 2002*; Appendix L)
essay on the dangers of genetic engineering, but both might find Ron Kauk’s (*Spring 2000*
 Appendix W) views on environmental stewardship inspirational. You never know what angle
will resonate with consumers, so offering various perspectives on the core message is a good
way to cultivate a varied clientele.

How the various voices in a narrative speak is often as important as what they say, so it is
critical that they speak in a manner corporate stakeholders understand. All of Patagonia’s essays
(even the ones by extreme athletes) are written in a literary style most educated individuals
appreciate, and catalog photographs have a National Geographic quality that appeals to outdoor
enthusiasts from the middle and upper classes. A clothing company that targets a musical
subculture might take a highly different approach with a corporate social narrative, as might a company that sell pharmaceuticals.

Most importantly, companies must communicate openly with their customers concerning their corporate social narrative and listen to consumer feedback, as this feedback can help identify themes within the narrative that resonate on a high level and should be repeated over time. Some of the feedback will be highly positive, while some will be scathing, but all is valuable. Positive feedback can be incorporated into the narrative to help grow consumer-producer relations and high SBCs, while negative feedback can be used to fully define the company’s image and (by addressing the negative openly) explain what the company does and does not support. No company can appeal to everyone, but having a core group of brand consumers that embraces a company’s social perspectives can help with financial success, as well as social mission success.

Lastly, companies employing corporate social narrative should avoid drastically changing their narratives over a short period of time. Patagonia’s corporate social narrative concedes that life is a journey full of twists and turns, and in-between 1991-2012 they slowly tweaked their views on environmental and corporate responsibility in ways that preserved the idea that life is dirty, products cause environmental harm, and humans need to mitigate that harm. The unnaturally pristine depiction of Patagonia products in the Spring 2013 catalog is a radical departure from this message, as is the overwhelming focus on clothing in outdoor adventure scenes, and this may ultimately compromise the fidelity and probability of the company’s environmental narrative. Corporate social narrative demands commitment not only to a social cause but to the culture that grows out of that cause, and significantly changing the major elements of a strong corporate social narrative could lead to considerable changes in producer-
consumer relations over time. Given these relations ultimately determine the value of a company’s brand, corporate social narrative should be handled with great care.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Limitations of the Study

In order to track the development of Patagonia’s corporate social narrative in a consistent format, the study was limited to print material and focused on product catalogs, but Patagonia has a significant Internet presence and their environmental narrative is highly evident online (patagonia.com/us/environmentalism). In addition, since 2008 Patagonia has published yearly Environmental Initiatives that explores the environmental causes they support. This information was not included in the study because the Environmental Initiative booklets are less accessible to the general public than product catalogs and print advertisements, but these documents are an important part of Patagonia’s corporate social narrative. Patagonia also publishes a separate catalog for children’s products that includes textual material concerning their environmental narrative, but only adult catalogs were reviewed in the study as these were more readily available. In general, the study was limited by time constraints and access to Patagonia literature, and a complete review of all Patagonia textual information would significantly enhance the study.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Study

A study of Patagonia’s online corporate narrative could enhance knowledge of the company’s overall corporate social marketing strategy, might reveal differences in the way corporate narratives are projected in digital versus print environments, and could help explain why Patagonia has chosen to alter their visual approach to promoting products in their catalogs. According to Leppel and McCloskey (2011), younger people enjoy the interactive digital shopping experience and older people are using the Internet more and more to make purchases. The fast-paced interactive nature of the digital consumer experience is certainly transformative.
and may be impacting corporate narrative development and transmittance in other realms, thus studies of corporate social narrative would be greatly enhanced by reviewing the online presentations of these narratives.

Interestingly, research indicates that print media may be a more powerful medium for developing a sense of community than online media (Mersey, 2009), thus print catalogs may be a more powerful format for pitching social agendas to consumers than their digital counterparts. If so, more studies of print-based corporate social narratives should be done before print catalogs go extinct (and/or become difficult to find) in an effort to understand what is unique about the print experience and how this might be applied in the digital world. The younger generation is the future and hard-copy catalogs may soon be a thing of the past, but corporate storytelling will continue and corporate social narrative may become more common as companies search for ways to promote social causes along with their products and, in so doing, distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Lastly, focus group research with Patagonia brand consumers might reveal more about how and why Patagonia’s corporate social narrative impacts (or fails to impact) certain members of their targeted audience, as would research done with consumers of other companies employing corporate social narrative in their overall marketing plan. Narrative research is a powerful tool for analyzing how storytelling impacts audiences, but the results are highly subjective. Focus group research could significantly enhance or challenge the results of any narrative analysis on corporate social narratives, and thus further add to the body of knowledge on fostering social change in consumer markets.
5.3 Conclusion

As exemplified by Patagonia, corporate social narrative is a powerful way for companies to promote social causes and enhance brand recognition, but it is not without risk, demands serious commitment, and is enhanced by creative presentation directed at a specific audience. Corporate social narrative is not for everyone, and companies that enlist this type of dynamic storytelling strategy should consider the long term consequences of connecting social causes to their brand image. Much good can come from promoting causes that possess meaning for a company, its employees, and brand consumers, but a company’s image can be compromised if they promote a cause in a disingenuous way or drastically change their narrative over a short period of time. Patagonia’s commitment to the environment appears authentic, and (given the company embraces calculated risk) they may be changing their visual approach to promoting products for good reason. Thus, this change may not compromise their environmental narrative or their overall relationship with consumers, but that is another story for another day.
References


May, V. (n.d.). *What is narrative analysis?* Retrieved from
http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/events/whatis/narrativeanalysis.pdf

http://search.proquest.com.proxy.foley.gonzaga.edu/pql/docview/200639408/fulltextPDFF/13D7005523811A9587C/1?accountid=1557

http://search.proquest.com.proxy.foley.gonzaga.edu/pql/docview/197654930/fulltextPDFF/1397A6B630221EB3C9B/1?accountid=1557


APPENDIX B
DON'T BUY THIS JACKET

It's Black Friday. No day is the year made more from not to think and shop to make real money. But Black Friday and the culture of consumption it reverberates, pause the economy of natural systems that support all life to be sold. We're here using the example of a jacket and a half billion to one and only 1%.

*We believe Patagonia Fight the consumerism of our culture to fight how we're going to fight the fight. We're not to buy less and to reflect before we spend a cent on the jacket or anything else.

Environmental awareness, as well as corporate bankruptcy, are inextricably tied. That's all it costs. This is what we're here for. We're here to show you. To remove the damage. We're fighting back on behalf of the people, people, people - our planet, our health, and resources that support us.

The environmental cost of everything we make is telling. Consider the Patagonia jacket above, one of our best sellers. To make it happens 108 times of water enough to wash the daily needs of two people a day. That's a day of 10 people. For the transport of its origin, oil 60% recycled polyester to our factories and 60% generates nearly 52 pounds of carbon dioxide. In terms of the weight of the fiber products. This jacket will be used, or to shop for, two trucks to weight it.

And there is a 40% recycled polyester jacket. Just as green as a high street product. It's exceptionally durable. One that comes to the end of its useful life and is durable. And then it comes to the end of its useful life and is durable. When you've exhausted that product of equal value, but it's true of all the fibers we use and you can use it. This jacket comes with an environmental cost of higher than the price.

There is much to be done and please let us do it. Don't buy what you don't need. Think twice before you buy anything. Go to Patagonia Jackets and sign the Call us today. Take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, and join us in the Mission to protect a world where we live only what nature can replace.
APPENDIX D

The Issue is Not About Owls

In the last fifty years, almost half of the world's rain forests have been destroyed. The 12 to 16 billion acres of forests that once blanketed the earth have been reduced by half since the invention of agriculture. It may take a thousand years to restore the primary rain forest system, if it can be restored at all. In British Columbia, some of the last ancient forests on this continent are being cut at so fierce a pace that the province has earned the name, “Brazil of the North.” And the opening of Russia to Western enterprise means that Weyerhaeuser and Hyundai, among others, are competing to log off Siberia.

Clear cutting or industrial forestry, in which wide swaths of trees are cut to stumps, has resulted in devastating destruction not only to forests, but to rivers and lakes, habitat for salmon and hundreds of other animals. Like large dangerous children we've destroyed forest ecosystems without even understanding them. We have treated our forests like crops to be harvested rather than like living things to be tended and revered.

We need some of the lumber that comes out of these clearcuts, but generally, we simply use wood when we could use other materials or go without. Did you know that half of all the hardwood lumber cut down in the United States goes to shipping crates and pallets? And that those pallets are used an average of 1.7 times and then thrown away? Or, that of the old growth timber cut down in the U.S., half of the wood is used for fuel, match or paper? Forty percent of the old growth wood that is pulped is used for packaging. 6% for tissue. "If we eliminated the wood fiber that's used for packaging and the raw logs that are exported," said Tom Power, an economist at the University of Montana, "the pressure on our forests would be nearly non-existent."

We use wood because it is cheap. It was not until after World War II, after the timber companies had logged off their own private held stocks and a series of policy changes were made at the federal level, that cheap federal timber became attractive and available to the industry. Now, because timber companies are allowed to cut on public land in national forests owned by the United States Forest Service (and by you, as a taxpaying citizen), the companies are, in fact, subsidized. Forestry officials are measured, not by the health of the forests under their protection, but by the board feet they have sold that year.

The USFS is under the Department of Agriculture, as if trees were a crop. You can help change that: write your Congressperson and insist that the Forest Service be moved to the Department of Interior, whose job it is to preserve our national trust.

While much has been made of the loss of jobs in the timber industry and the suffering of loggers and their families, the reality is that this argument has been framed by the large timber companies to blame those losses on environmentalists. The truth is that industrial forestry has eaten up our old-growth forests. In the Northwest, we are seeing the inevitable shortages and the suffering brought about by that practice. Further, big timber companies (in the Northwest where the battle is the most fierce) export logs to the Pacific Rim. They could keep those logs here and employ people to turn them into lumber. They have moved their operations to the Southeast where labor is cheaper; they have chosen to automate their operations, which eliminates jobs. Many companies have refused to learn sustainable forestry methods when the models for them are readily available (lumber companies in Michigan, for example, are quickly moving toward forestry that at least takes habitat into consideration, and several companies in the U.S. have been certified for sustainability). Sustainable forestry would guarantee their jobs for a much longer time. This situation is not about jobs vs. owls, this situation is about greed.

These are the macro-issues; the points you should make in letters to your representatives. But there is another issue closer to home. As you sit down to write a letter note that you write it on paper. That paper, whether it is recycled or not, comes from trees. And making paper out of trees, as Gar Smith wrote in a recent Earth Island Institute article, is “like melting down stained glass windows to make jam jars.” The packaging we throw away, the copy paper we waste, the tissues with which we blow our elegant noses—all stained glass windows. Add to that the houses we build, the foundation forms we use once and toss, the studs we cover up, the decks of old growth redwood under our nicely shod feet. We use up wood extravagantly, as if we were little Marie Antoinettes who whisper prettily, “Let them eat forests.”

This is the easiest one of all: we as consumers can change our habits. Alternatives to each of the examples we have given are available. They are not as convenient as paper-based products; sometimes they are more expensive. But everywhere there are alternatives to the wasteful use of wood. (At Patagonia, for example, we used recycled wood for the flooring and fine woodworking in a new office building.) Understand: we don’t need the wood that comes from old-growth forests. It is because we will pay more (and the industry will make more) for decks of old-growth redwood and windows of ancient fir, that they are cut down.

~Nora Gallagher
APPENDIX E

Running Free

After working on the conservation of the province for two years, Thomas F. O’Neill, the executive director of the Nature Conservancy, was thrilled to see the salmon running through the community. In 1968, the first salmon were observed swimming up the river, and ever since then, the number of salmon has increased dramatically. The elk are also doing well, and the community is thriving.

EXPLOSIVE

Thomas O’Neill, director of the Nature Conservancy’s Pacific Northwest region, was interviewed about the efforts to restore the {river} in the region. He stated that the salmon are making a comeback, and the community is benefiting from the increased tourism.

RESTORING WILDLIFE HABITAT

The Nature Conservancy has been working on the restoration of the {river} for several years. They have been working to restore the habitat for the salmon, and the community is benefiting from the increased tourism.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: HOUSING SOLUTIONS

The {city} has been working on a strategy to provide housing solutions for the community. They have been working with local businesses to provide affordable housing options.

Longhouse Wisdom

Betula Mills and her family grew up hunting salmon that are found in {river}. They would travel to the beach to fish, and they would bring back salmon for their family. Betula Mills’s grandfather would often tell her that if you eat salmon from the river, you will have good luck. He would bring her salmon from the river and cook it for her.

The salmon were an important part of their culture, and they would often cook the salmon for their family. Betula Mills’s grandfather would often tell her that if you eat salmon from the river, you will have good luck.
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTES

ON SCRAPPING CLOTHES AND FABRIC SCRAP

The Art of Corporate Social Narrative

Chapter 7

APPENDIX F

Once in a while a customer sends us a shredded fifteen-year-old pair of "Stand Up" shirts or a shirt from a Watergate-era "Rugby". "I can't bear to throw this away," the attached note will read. "Maybe you could use it for your museum."

We're proud to see the stuff last so long but the truth is, we don't have a museum. So what can a customer do with clothes that can no longer be worn? Perhaps it's time to ask first what Patagonia does to minimize waste at the beginning of a garment's life cycle. Then we'll come around later in what the customer can do at its end.

"Reduce, reuse, recycle" is best bred at the time of product conception, and as a progressive, whistle-down set of instructions: first reduce then reuse, then recycle. The best way of all to reduce waste is to give the planet a break and not make things people don't need. This is obvious but counter-intuitive for a commercial enterprise, including our own. We do make clothes so last. We test technical products extensively before we introduce them. In cutting and sewing, we work hard to waste as little fabric as possible. But we do. When rectilinear hems of fabric must be cut to accommodate the curved volumes of the human body, scrap results. Computer CAD-CAM programs help us create an efficient jigsaw-like pattern or "marker," one, say, a neck band, sleeve, pocket, shoulder and back. But between the usable pieces is always a confetti of small scraps that add up to 10% to 20% of the total. The most inefficient yields result from special requirements like matching the plaid set by a Flannel Shirt to the plaid on the pocket.

Reducing scrap is an ongoing task. We routinely analyze our patterns to improve the yield. Sometimes we find that an extra seam can help the pieces fit better; or that we can plug a kid's hat or glove into a marker "hole" and save fabric.

The scrap we generate can't be reused as is. We do have Capilene® and Synchilla® scrap recycled into top stuffing and automobile insulation. We helped launch a successful recycling effort among three cutters in the Pacific Northwest. But we fill dumpsters, too. Some other fabric also get recycled, but coated nylon scraps, for example, have no market and so get thrown out, and wind up in landfills.

What can we all do as customers and clothing wearers? We can buy only what we need, fewer clothes, clothes that work well and last. And serve as many uses as possible. A shirt or jacket should not be so fashionable that its looks go before its components. Like those donors of "Rugby Shirts and Stand Up Shorts," we can wear our clothes out, then if we don't, we can give them to Goodwill or Salvation Army or Catholic Charities, who either sell them in thrift shops or export them to less rich countries. Our shredded, unsellable clothes can live on as rags.

Setting up a large program to collect and process used clothing into some other material for some other use is not easily done. But recycling is always the last, and foolproof step in reducing waste. The best we can all do is do with less, choose wisely what we will really use, care for, wear out.
Twenty years ago, I changed my eating habits after I read how much harm cattle grazing bullets on the earth. That was an easy choice for me — especially when I realized I did not need a steady diet of red meat to sustain my health.

As a company, we face a similar choice. In the course of our ongoing environmental assessment, we discovered that the most damaging fiber used to make our clothing may actually be conventionally grown, 100% "pure" cotton. That's because the process of growing conventional cotton involves the heavy use of chemicals that toxify the soil, air and ground water. And since many of these chemicals were originally formulated as nerve gases for warfare, it is no surprise that where spraying occurs, health problems follow, including higher rates of cancer and birth defects in humans and wildlife. These are outrageous costs to pay for the battle against bugs. And it's a battle we'll never win, while the bugs adapt to the chemicals, the rest of us sustain the long-term damage.

Meanwhile, in our own backyard, a handful of farmers have been growing cotton without chemicals for years. Their yields are just as high, or nearly as high, as those of their "conventional" counterparts and the quality of their fibers is equal or sometimes better. The environmental difference? Of all the potential fibers for clothing, organically-grown cotton may be the least damaging and the most sustainable.

Knowing how destructive conventionally-grown cotton is, and that there's a viable alternative, Patagonia has to choose organic. Now that we know it would be irresponsible for us to do anything less. That is why, as of this spring, we no longer use conventional cotton in any part of the line.

To change to organic cotton has its price. Organic farming is labor-intensive, and so it is more costly. And after the cotton leaves the field, nearly every step in production — ginning, spinning, and knitting — incurs added costs for our relatively small runs.

These higher costs also create new risks for our business. We've had to drop some products that no longer make economic sense to produce. And we have to be prepared for a loss in revenue should higher prices translate to fewer sales. We undertake another risk, too. We can't go back to do so would violate our basic principles: to make a quality product and to reduce our environmental harms. Making clothes out of conventional cotton is something we company can no longer afford to do.

Cotton sportswear makes up a small part of our product line. As we look ahead, we see immense challenges in making our other products in ways less harmful to the landscape. Those challenges prove that our organic cotton project is a single step in a very long process — but an important step nonetheless.

We are betting that we have enough loyal customers who will make the same choice we have made here at Patagonia: to pay more now for organics rather than the hidden environmental costs later. It's a simple, personal choice, of course, to act on what we learn. We've all made such choices: to give up on our day job, to pay more for an energy-efficient appliance, or to make a purchase entirely because it's not needed.

If those choices are simple and individual, their ripple effects are profound. The market is baselined on its response to changes in what people want. Together we can create a significant business base for the organic cotton movement. We should. Organic farmers are returning to the only model we have for sustainable commerce, one that gives back to the planet as much as it takes out. Their success will be a quiet revolution in modern life. Let's follow their lead.
If we use a low impact dye that leaves a customer with a tattered shoe nine months later, will that customer ever make an "environmentally friendly" purchase again?

The challenge resides within ourselves, within our environments, and within our competitive worlds.

DOES Q=E?

We’re trying to make the right decisions, considering the quality and environmental impact. We believe in the importance of the two concepts.

We’re testing the water-based coatings, the polyurethane coating, and the cellulose material. We’re considering the cost and the impact on the environment.

We’re also testing the low impact dyes, ensuring that the materials are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

We’re working on reducing waste and improving our processes.

We’re making significant and lasting advances by using recycled plastic and glass bottles in our FCY synthesis.

We’re also exploring the use of alternative materials such as biodegradable and renewable resources.

We believe that these efforts will lead to better results and a greater impact on the environment.

We’re committed to making a positive change and reducing our carbon footprint.

We’re making progress in our journey towards sustainability and environmental responsibility.

We’re striving towards creating a more sustainable and eco-friendly future.
APPENDIX J

field report

frank’s ass by John Sherman

I am Frank’s ass. And frankly, I’m nervous. My coccyx is one of the few bones Frank hasn’t busted while bouldering. With summer comes greasy holds, and sometimes slimy spotters. A good spotter can mean the difference between glory and pithrooey. This problem looks grim. Frank’s going for it. I hope he knows what he’s doing.

I am Frank’s ankle, pride of the Lake Placid Physical Therapy Department. I suffered even the Olympians training across the street when I showed up with a third degree “ring-around-the-rosy” sprain. It is indeed rare when an averager so thoroughly ruptures and crushes his ligaments. If it’s true that pain leads to enlightenment, then bouldering is the path to righteousness. Over a year later I’m still a holy mess. I hope that spotter is good, because we’re getting higher than I care to jump from.

I am Frank’s heel. I too have added to Frank’s collection of crutches. I know just how hard Yosemite granite feels, particularly the slab at the base of “the world’s most famous boulder problem.” While grunting on the crux mantle, Frank, from the corner of his eye, saw his spotter sinking away. Later the spotter slurred, “You, you Big Guy — you crush me.” This is getting kinda sketchy here Frank. Are you sure about this?

I am Frank’s biceps. And I’m not about to bash on Frank’s spotters. When I tore off Frank’s elbow trying to stick that dyno in Colorado we logged some serious air. The crampers gasped at the twisting sound and the arc of our flight, but Frank and I dropped into the monster mitts of our spotters, and we never touched the ground. I looked cool, rolled up like a window shade in Frank’s shoulder. What the heck, he always wanted bigger shoulders anyway. I trust your judgment Frank, grab that next hold.

We are Frank’s wrists. It was a crisp day in the West Texas desert. Remember the sound of snapping fingers when we simultaneously fractured? Remember the spotter saying, “Dude, y’all okay?” A word of advice: Never land in the push-up position from 15 feet up. You really find out who your friends are when you can’t swipe. That last move was stinking hard, Frank. You sure you want to go on?

I am Frank’s brain. I remember that time I couldn’t remember where I am. I mean there wasn’t a spotter, headfirst, and we couldn’t find the van, and the lights on the ambulance pulsed pretty pretty, it was what year, these trees are sure bright. I mean I didn’t even know what planet, somebody say New Jersey. I hope Frank’s... Do what? Okay.

I am Frank’s liver. That was a helluva problem today. I’m not sure if Frank made it up because he trusted his spotter, or because he didn’t. I all know is I’ll be working overtime tonight.

John Sherman recalls being one of the top boulders of his generation, especially after 5 or 6 beers. He says every joint now hurts.

Justin’s back. Brian’s hands. Camp 4 bouldering circuit. Yosemite Valley. AMY KULNER
ecological risk and surprise
ON THE GMO ROLLER COASTER

Next time you're dangling from a rope in the middle of a Yosemite big wall, roping down hill on a bike headed into a logging road hairpin or zipping shut your tent in occupied iyoa habitat deep in the African bush, take a moment to ponder all the ways you get yourself going too high, too fast and too far out for your own good.

We all take risks and manage them as best we can. Consider climbing rope. When it becomes visibly frayed, you replace it. Few people tackle Moab's bike trails knowing that their brake pads are as smooth as slickrock. And I do not go to sleep in the bush wearing the Baggies that I drenched with anchovy oil during dinner. Risk is part of the fabric of life. We can learn to deny, avoid and reduce risk, but we can never eliminate surprise. We all know this now—post-September 11, 2001—more than we ever did before. Yet while humans will always struggle to live with uncertainty, surprise is one of nature's ways of running the world. Unpredictability and nature's creative power are what yield biodiversity—the bewildering array of tropical orchids, the mysterious arc of monarch butterfly migration and the habits of bears all trace back to the endless recombination of the genetic building blocks of life.

We don't run the world. But with the creation of transgenic, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), we are acting as if we do. And because we think we are running the world, we have never thought through what risk really means as we splice our way into Earth's genetic pool. Like a climber on a 5.10 pitch with a thunderstorm approaching who discounts the behavior of lightning, if we don't gauge the risk of GMOs we can never judge well whether we should proceed or retreat.

Some would argue that with GMOs the decision to proceed has already been made. In 1986, four million acres of GMO crops were planted worldwide. In 1999, that figure had increased to 87 million acres. So far, few negative consequences to biodiversity have occurred and despite the hype, few benefits have accrued. Yields (and profits) have increased modestly and herbicide use has decreased about one percent.

But risk should not be measured in hindsight.

Both mountainiers and scientists gauge future risk against conditions in the here and now. A climber observes peaks and weather, ponderers "what if?" and makes decisions. Using this same approach, when biologists measure what is known about transgenic plants, three kinds of ecological "what ifs" come into focus.

The first risk is that GMO plants will survive, reproduce and sustain themselves outside of cultivation. This could lead to herbicide- and insecticide-resistant weeds that could become highly invasive. Experiments done to evaluate this risk suggest that it will happen occasionally. The consequences are unknown.

A second risk is that GMOs will eventually hybridize with close wild relatives. When hybrids survive and reproduce in the wild, the spread or introduction of transgenes into wild gene pools will occur, creating new invasive species. This risk is not farfetched. Seven of the world's 13 major crop plants, simply through traditional breeding practices, have mixed their genes with closely related wild species to form new weeds. This has eliminated the genetic uniqueness of some wild plants and contributed to extinctions. One thing is clear, the potential for genetic mishmash increases with total area of cultivation.

Both self-sustaining GMO plants and transgenic hybrids could add to the worldwide list of biological invaders. After habitat degradation, most scientists consider invasive species to be the most dire threat to biodiversity. Over 50,000 plants are not native to North America. In my California county about one of every three plants in the wild is from someplace else. Exotics that out-compete native species cost $137 billion a year to control in the United States alone. GMOs will only add to this burden.

The third risk is the potential of transgenic plants to impact nontarget species and ecosystems. Say you plant a Roundup-tolerant GMO plant. With this wonder, you can spray your field and keep it clear of weeds while your transgenic crop thrives. But indirectly, there will be fewer seeds and insects for wild birds to eat. Multiply this by X millions of acres and watch what happens to food supplies for birds and small mammals. And nobody is watching. There are only a handful of experimental studies based on models and no long-term studies of any kind.

It is precisely because we are not running the world that the potential for a wide variety of negative, indirect ecological effects from GMO plants is great. You may have read recently how the monarch butterfly larvae were killed because the milkweed leaves they ingested were dusted with pollen from transgenic corn fitted out with the genes of Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt), a natural insecticide.

There is experimental evidence that GMO crops reduce soil decomposition rates and alter soil carbon and nitrogen levels. There is precious little data to evaluate the risks associated with these known ecosystem responses to transgenics. The same can be said of potential risks associated with virus-resistant GMO crops and forest superpests.

Assessing the ecological risks of GMOs is, in the end, much more complex than the judgment calls that outdoors people make every day. If you fall off a rock face, that may be your final climb, but monarch butterflies will most likely survive. If a grizzly mistakes me for a school of archonies, I may not hike again, but soil microbes will continue to consume the dead and the down in the Cornbelt. The scale of risk associated with GMOs is not personal, but global. Transgenic risks are ecological and endlessly variable, not up close and personal like a boulder or a bear.

With GMOs, the chips are down. Even with more experiments, field trials and better data, we cannot measure every ecological variable in a field of cotton, let alone a forest. Genes exist in the world to flow, and we are helping them move around in unprecedented ways.

There is only one sensible path to follow. We must place an immediate moratorium on introducing GMOs and use this interlude to clearly measure the risks of transgenics against the status quo, chemical-intensive agribusiness as well as the sustainable future offered by organic farming. Maybe we can grow enough food more efficiently and at a reduced ecological cost by releasing lady beetles instead of planting Monsanto Bt corn. No one really knows because no careful comparisons have ever been attempted.

We are rearranging the world because there are profits to be made and because dominant values are skewed toward power and control. There are other values alive in the world. In conservation science, we study nature and marvel at elegance and surprise. Organic growers ask the land not "how much?" but "how well over time?" In Zen, the teachers say "minimize harm."

Clip into your climbing harness, fasten your toe clips, cinch up your pack's hip belt, and remember why you are here.
One early morning last spring, my half-asleep eyes caught
the opening lines of a letter in my local newspaper:

"I am a farmer. I knew that since I was 5. I grow crops.
The land I farm also grows butterflies, birds, earthworms
and wildflowers, or at least I think it is supposed to.
Right now I am having trouble figuring out what kind
of farmer I am or should be. This question is not just for me
but for you. I am concerned that there is no room for
bluebirds and butterflies in big, precision, genetically-
modified agriculture."

The letter from a family farmer named Michael Klingelhoitz,
went on to describe one of the many destructive aspects
of industrial biotechnological agriculture: the destruction
of vital habitat for wildlife.

He wrote about the importance of milkweed as the sole
habitat for monarch butterfly caterpillars and about how,
before the advent of new biotech soybean and corn crops,
he had "raised a good crop of monarchs" as part of his
farming. But in the late 1990s, "Roundup Ready genetically
engineered soybeans became widely available. Roundup
herbicide kills everything green except the soybeans with
the genetic alteration."

The farmer eventually realized that more than just his
milkweeds had disappeared — so had the monarchs.

"My milkweeds are gone. My neighbor’s milkweeds are
gone. Farmers using Roundup Ready genetics in soybeans,
cotton, corn and sugar beets are eradicking milkweed from
their fields nationwide. Forcing the monarch butterflies to
lay their eggs on milkweed in field borders and ditches"

The purpose of most biotechnology in crop farming is to
kill all plants and insects except the single, genetically-
engineered crop the biotechnology is designed to protect.
The major biotech crops in use today, accounting for
most of the genetically engineered acres in the United
States, are Roundup Ready crops (like soybeans), men-
tioned in farmer Klingelhoitz’s letter, and Bt crops, short for
Bacillus thuringiensis, like Bt corn.

Monsanto Corporation’s Roundup Ready crops have been
manipulated to contain a special gene that makes them
immune to damage from very high doses of Monsanto’s
Roundup herbicide. Roundup kills essentially every growing
plant in its path except crops injected with the special gene.

Monsanto advertises that its products will maximize crop
yields and reduce costs, yet monarchs and other organisms
exposed to Roundup Ready crops suffer a two-fold
biotech assault: First, the destruction of natural habitat by
Monsanto’s plant killers. Second, poisoning from the herbici-

cides that are being spread over millions of acres of land
and running off into our waterways and estuaries.

In an article in Science magazine, British researchers
predicted that common weeds might be reduced to low
levels or practically eradicated, which could have a
severe impact on skylarks (and most likely other bird
species as well), if Roundup Ready sugar beets are widely
adopted in England. The near total destruction of all
plants except sugar beets could eliminate the major
sources of seeds that are the chief nutrition source for
these beautiful birds.

Biotechnology and genetic engineering are an assault
on the wild unlike any other. Genetic engineering alters
nature at the genetic level. When companies alter the
genetic makeup of a plant or animal they touch off a chain
reaction — setting loose a form of genetic pollution that is
unlikely to die out over time like nuclear pollution, nor is it
limited to a geographic location like toxins. The evidence
that we have before us today points to one fact: genetic
pollution lasts forever.

As Michael Klingelhoitz pointed out in his letter, it really
does matter how we produce our food and fiber. We can
grow “butterflies, birds, earthworms and wildflowers”
along with our crops, or we can kill them off. We can
move at breakneck speed toward a full embrace of the
industrial agricultural model or we can step back, reflect
on what we’ve done, and make a different choice. If
consumers are asking the right questions about these
issues and buying with a conscience, there is a chance
that we can move from a monocultural view
of farming to what
many are calling multi-
functional agriculture,
recognizing the many
things that farming
can and should pro-
duce—like milkweeds
and monarchs—along
with food, fiber and fuel.

Mark Ritchie is president of the
Institute for Agriculture and
Trade Policy, based in
Minneapolis, Minnesota. He
chairs the national Organic
Growers and Buyers Association
and serves on the boards of the
Minnesota Institute for
Sustainable Agriculture, Mothers
and Others for a Livable Planet
and Sustainable America.

Michael Klingelhoitz is a farmer in
Waconia, Minnesota. You can
read his letter in its entirety at
www.patagonia.com/letter
APPENDIX N
APPENDIX O
RELEASE
BY TOMMY CALDWELL

The two of us sat on a dirty, sloping ledge barely big enough for a single butt cheek. Without removing my helmet, I clipped the chinstrap into the anchor for support; not as comfortable as I had hoped. A small rock overhang partially protected us from above, but did little to calm my queasiness. I wasn’t sure if it was from the lack of food, or the chunks of ice exploding off the walls around us.

Moving light and fast had been exhilarating the previous day, as Josh Wharton and I ran up talus fields, scoured across crevassed glaciers, front-pointed walls of ice and ascended walls of rock. Ten hours after we started, we were enthroned upon the dollop of ice that tops the soaring rock spire of Cerro Standhardt. We gazed west over the blinding light of the Ice Cap, whooping and hollering in the afternoon sun. Our strategy had paid off – 300 calories of food per day, a single set of crampons, one small pack and no sleeping bag. Josh’s meticulous preparations had been worth it – stripping zip pulls, labels and straps from our pack and clothing, recording their three ounce weight on a miniature scale.

So why did we then decide to bivouac in the notch between Cerro Standhardt and Torre Egger, just so we could try to bag another summit? Maybe our strategy had worked too well! Cerro Standhardt had come too easily. Eight hundred meters up and wrapped in gear, I didn’t yet feel overcome by the power of the mountains. And I wanted to be. I had come to Patagonia to suffer, and by suffering be released from the crippling anguish I had felt when my wife left me. I could still vividly remember her empty stare when she pushed me out the door.

Eight hours later my teeth were sore from chattering and I couldn’t stop thinking about the sleeping bag in our tent at basecamp, or the mountains of pastries in the panadería of El Chalten. I had spent much of the night hacking away at our tiny ledge with my ice tool, just to relieve the shivering. “Man, we’re suffering like a couple of cogs,” I sniffled.

Josh’s belly laugh didn’t take long to turn into a dry hack: “This is probably my coldest night on a wall. Why do I love it so much? We should try and enchain something on the Fitz Roy side next.”

I stared, eyes glazed over as the rising sun lit up the top of Fitz Roy like a candle. Warmth entered my chest and flowed through my arms and legs. “Yeah, we should.”

TOMMY CALDWELL, like any true junkie, Colorado Native Tommy Caldwell can’t seem to get his climbing fix without the biggest, purest goods out there. Whether it’s the towering spires of Patagonia, or the big walls of Yosemite Valley, you can always find Tommy high off the ground, blasting his head against some monster project.
APPENDIX Q

Letting Go
by Jeff Johnson

He talks with a long, swaggering drawl and sharp, concentrated intonations. Half cowboy, half Indian. It’s like listening to John Wayne and Crazy Horse speak at the same time. Our evening began in his humble abode discussing the state of the human spirit.

He said, “You have to summon a special kind of energy to climb 5.15 or V14. It’s incredible. But I’m more concerned with where it’s all coming from. Are they motivated by the climb itself, the rock? Or is it coming from some video they saw on the internet?”

He put another log into the wood-burning stove, walked into the kitchen and poured himself some coffee.

He went on: “I’m just tryin’ to make sense of it all, you know? How we’re supposed to evolve when we’re so caught up in material things? Society is so anxious. We want so much and we want it all now. Man ... you need to work at it, you need to put in the time in order to be rewarded.”

The winter sun shone through the clouds as it crept over the walls of lower Yosemite Valley. Soft light surrounded the small, one-room cabin, lending an ethereal glow to our movements. It was still very cold outside.

“Ron,” I said, “the sun should be hitting the Cookie Cliff by now. It could be warm enough to climb.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” he said. “I need more wood for this stove.”

We went outside to the woodpile. Ron grabbed his axe and lifted it high above his head. With his smooth, resting blow, the log gave way to a tiny split. He swung again and the log split in two. He split those two into four.

“Ya wanna try?” he said.

“Sure.”

I picked up the axe and swung as hard as I could, making the tiniest crack. I swung it again and made another small crack.

He said, “You gotta hit it in the same spot a few times over. Then it will finally go.”

I gave it two more swings and could not hit the same spot twice.

“You’re working against it,” he said. “It’s like climbing. You gotta work with what you have. You look for the weakness in the rock, relax, and follow that line. See, you were hitting right on a knit here and swinging too hard. It’s all about technique.”

I swung again and the log remained in one piece.

“Man, you gotta let go of that ego,” he said. “You’re trying too hard.”

Standing in the Camp 4 parking lot with Bideau, I picked up a rock and threw it at a flagpole that was pretty far away—and hit the thing. Bideau turned to me and said, “You mean to do that?”

“Yeah,” I said, “I wanted to hit it but I wasn’t really trying. I never forget about that, and I applied the same approach to climbing, to life.”

I thought about that. Eventually, I split the log into four pieces, but it took me 12 hits as opposed to Ron’s four.

“What about the Cookie Cliff?” I said. “The sun should be on it.”

He put another log up for me. “Try it again,” he said.

Again, I could not hit it in the same place twice. It was frustrating. I really wanted to go climbing. I glanced at the spot that I wanted to hit, looked away and gave it a casual swing. It split in two!

“See,” he said, “you let go that time. It’s not hard.”

I split them into smaller pieces and thought about Red Zinger, Mont Grindel. When thin — all the routes that would be in the sun by now.

Ron set up another log for me to hit. I swung it twice, to no avail.

“Remember what I told you,” he said. “Don’t try so hard.”

I repositioned the log and gave it another go. The axe landed at least three inches off my mark. I swung again and missed. Damn it.

“Ron,” I said, still thinking about the Cookie. “Who did the first free ascent of Befehlisle?”

Silence.

“Ron?!”

I turned around and Ron was gone. He had left me six more logs to split. The sun was much higher. The clouds had parted and dropped well below the horizon — a beautiful day to go climbing.

I took off my filaneo thin, raised the axe high above my head, and tried the best to hit it.

For Jeff Johnson, climbing and surfing are parallel disciplines, following lines drawn on rock and water. Whether it’s searching for endless splitter cracks or perfect waves, he says, “We’re all after the same thing.”

Using his own as his record book, Jeff divides his time between Yosemite, California — where he works as a photographer and writer at the Patagonia headquarters — and wherever else he happens to find himself.

Ron Kauck at home in El Portal, California. JEFF JOHNSON
THE WILDLANDS PROJECT

From carbon to native grasses, the rich abundance of life on earth is imperiled. Whole ecosystems are unraveling, species by species, habitat by habitat. An audacious plan is needed for the survival and recovery of the great web of life — a plan that restores its integrity and sustains both wilderness and the spirit of future generations.

If we remain on the defensive, simply responding to threats, we will lose the very soul of the earth: its spontaneity, unpredictability, complexity and beauty. We must envision an alternative future — one that says yes to the web of life in all its diversity. And we must describe the steps toward that future.

The Wildlands Project was organized by conservation activists and scientists to create a plan for North America which protects and restores all native plants and animals in their natural habitat. Apart from the surroundings that have shaped each living thing through time, they lose their wholeness. A wolf in a zoo or theme park is not the wolf the earth made: nor is a baseball stadium. The goal is the home of evolution. The Wildlands Project works with grass roots activities, scientists, landowners, communities and others who cherish the earth’s wildlands and waterways, to create in each region of North America a plan that ensures the recovery and protection of ecological processes and all native species. Working the best science with our commitment to the natural world, we are creating plans for networks of reserves, encompassing all ecosystem types, from estuaries and wetlands to mountains and tundra.

Vast landscapes, covering as much as half of the continent must be kept whole or healed if we are to reverse the decline into mass extinction. Perhaps a quarter of the landscape will need some protection — roadsides, without trees and industrial and agricultural human communities. Buffer areas, surrounding these core, give us the opportunity to return precious knowledge we have lost — how to use the land without injuring it.

But even large reserves may be unable to support viable populations of some wide-ranging species, such as bears and mountain lions. Linking reserves together with wildlife corridors allows mountain lions to interact in a larger population instead of several smaller, isolated and therefore genetically weak populations that are more prone to extinction: it allows animals to travel between diverse areas used for calving in the summer and food in the winter.

Creating a vision of what we want to do for 200 years is an important step. More concrete and implementable than that appears on pages 84-86 of this catalog.

We seek not only the recovery of North America but to inspire similar efforts throughout the world. Though the woods of Europe have been forever a key refuge and the heart of many cultures and extinctions, we can and must reverse this tide of death. We can also — the long-suffering hills of Scotland are being repaired, people are organizing to protect Germany’s forests and the Tenerife (off the coast in Scandinavia) they are working to control - a new world of wilderness in the Pyrenees and Alps where problems will never end.

We face a historic choice, perhaps the most important of the life of our species. We can continue our attempts at conquest and control and suffer the resulting impoverishment or we can reestablish the green life in our souls and embrace the earth, the wild, at home, as long as giver of life.

Please join us.

DAVE FOREMAN
The Wildlands Project
CONN ECTIONS

When I first came to work at Patagonia as an editor in 1984, what I knew of the environment was made up mostly of newspaper headlines: Santa Barbara’s sea birds covered in oil, the losing battle over the Glen Canyon Dam, peregrine falcons and DDT.

One of the newspaper stories was about a threatened species of fish, the snail darter in Tennessee. The snail darter was threatened by the Tellico Dam, an extension of the Tennessee Valley Authority electric power project. A conservative member of Congress had made a speech regarding the fish. As I remember, because he was conservative I thought I knew where his sympathies would lie. I was wrong. The Senator said we must do all we could to save the snail darter because we did not know, in the wide scheme of things, its connection to us and to other creatures – its place.

That stuck. As I worked at Patagonia, I learned about the environment through the eyes of those the company supported – women and men who were out to save creatures very much like the snail darter: the red-legged frog, salmon in the Loire Valley, olive ridley sea turtles.

When I wondered what connected these efforts, I came to understand the word “habitat” – that the point is to save not only the creature but its home, because each living thing relies on, depends on and is connected to another. In a forest, the redwood needles feed the soil, the soil feeds the trees, the trees shade the salmon eggs, the salmon’s bodies feed the bears, and on and on, each creature bound in an intricate web that is not ours to tinker with, much less destroy.

Finally I understood that what connects Patagonia’s environmental efforts is the interconnection in nature that is already there.

In this catalog, we’ve asked four activists to tell us how the struggle is going in each of four areas Patagonia supports: salmon, ancient forests, organic farming and wildlands conservation. A fifth activist, who is employed here, tells us of the current situation in industrial forestry. Please read them knowing that you, too, are connected, part of the web, a living creature with a mysterious place in the scheme of things that is also not quite known, not yet revealed.

NORA GALLAGHER
It is late fall in British Columbia, and the weather is scarcely holding on to its memory of summer. I am in the tiny hamlet of Telegraph Cove on the northern edge of Vancouver Island to photograph the orcas that frequent Johnstone Strait. I have been at it for a week, with little to show for my efforts. This morning the sky is overcast and there is frost on the ground. On the boat is a boy of 10 or so who has terminal brain cancer. He is here as a recipient of The Children's Wish Foundation of Canada; he could have gone to Disneyland, his father tells me, but the boy, though dull-eyed and obese from steroids, wants no false magic. His wish is to see a killer whale.

True magic is not easy to find. A morning of no sightings spills into afternoon, and it is drizzling rain when a soft definitive pitch is heard over the underwater microphones. The animals could be within six to 12 miles in any direction. The skipper swings the boat north, and after a half-hour run the whales are spotted.

Twenty minutes into the encounter, the pod of five orcas drifts close to the boat, and then steams off the bow, going starboard to port. On the port side, the father of the boy holds his son above the railing for a clear look at the whales. The female orca turns, comes back toward the boat and dives beneath it to the opposite side. Everyone except the boy and his father rush starboard. I too am looking starboard when I hear the boy squeal. I turn to see the less of a full breach by one of the males, then a second breach. The father is laughing and holding aloft the boy who is smiling, his eyes alight. The same orca does a spy hop: a third of his body pushes vertically out of the water and nooses for several seconds while he looks around. The boy points and squeals again.

The orca is doing this for the boy. The boy’s eyes are wide, filled; he is connected. He knows the orca is doing this for him. The father looks at me and shrugs. We both know that something is going on here, but neither of us knows as much as the boy or the orca. The male swims directly to the stopped boat, comes to rest beneath the boy and rolls to his side, revealing striking black and white markings and a clear eye. The boy waves and smiles. The intent of the whale is obvious. The boy has come alive with the experience.

Finally, the whales drift off and the boy’s mother, who has been in the stern, comes forward and upon seeing the face of her son, begins to weep.

Writer and underwater photographer CARLOS EYLES has traveled many of the planet’s oceans and seas and recorded his experiences in eight books and scores of magazine articles. His award-winning images are found in publications worldwide.

Photo: CARLOS EYLES
Field Report

Sacred Ground by Ron Kauk

One day while driving up Highway 140 in the lower Merced Canyon to Yosemite, I said to my climbing partner, “Who in their right minds would want to widen this road?”

She replied, “Obviously, they’re not in their right minds.”

If we as a people can keep tearing up Yosemite, a so-called sacred place, set aside to protect the natural world and everything living in it, what will the future be? If I love something and don’t protect it, what good am I?

I was looking at the beautiful boulders blown up. The trees lying beside the road. Steel walls down to the river, and five recent sewage spills in the Merced.

I’ve become so close with this canyon. I grew up here – swimming in the river, climbing the cliffs above. The canyon has been my teacher while I climbed the walls, passed the water bottle to my partner, watched the stars, lived within the magic that touches my soul. How much Yosemite has helped me to know myself. The word “sacred” keeps popping up, a word I need to know.

Later, I was lying down at Tenaya Beach in Tuolumne Meadows working out what to say from my heart about sacredness. Just a month before, I had joined Native American spiritual leaders in a sweat lodge. To remember that night was magic. We sat in a sacred circle of friends, and I realized we are connected to everything and should have respect for all our relations, meaning the water, the air, the animals, the trees. It’s a matter of taking care of what takes care of you. After the sweat, we dove into the lake with the full moon overhead, and the water felt pure, and it seemed to wash off anything I didn’t need.

As I remembered that night, I got up from the beach and dove into the lake. Before diving in, I said, “Thank you for all the beauty around me. On my way out I looked down, and in a half-inch of water was something black and shining. I reached down and brushed the sand away, and there was a perfect arrowhead. I was flooded with feeling, and again felt the love of this place. I knew the arrowhead was a gift, but also a responsibility: to take care of what takes care of me.

Ron Kauk is a legendary climber who is well-grounded in all aspects of the outdoors. He focuses his climbing and environmental energy on Yosemite, where he strives to protect the haven from over-development and abuse.
Regardless of what it says here, none of us who should know can agree on when we made our first pair of Stand Up Shorts. It was the early 70s. Yvon designed them and Youngman Sunwoo made the first pair on a walking-foot machine designed for sewing leather patches. She laughed and said, "Look, they stand up."

When it was warm outside, Peter Carman would move our home-model Singer into the courtyard, prop it up on an overturned climbing cape crate, and sew up a new crop of shorts. He was always supplementing the needle. He broke a needle every two or three minutes triple-stitching through the two layers of 16-oz. cotton canvas we thought we had to use. The fabric was so stiff that adult customers began to complain of diaper rash. Every hour or so, when the old Singer's motor began to smoke, Peter would spring that OLD Stand Up really stood up then, on their own, it took an 8-lb. wedge to knock them down.

It was Doug Tempkins who harnessed us into uniformed and compromise - he knew someone in Hong Kong who could make Stand Ups cheaper and somewhat faster than Peter could. But the contractor loved his machines and insisted we switch to 10-oz. fabric, even though we told him how to use the sprayer. The customers were delighted. Only a couple wrote to tell us bitterly that it was now a little tricky getting a Stand Up to stand up on its own. You could still do it, even late at night, after you learned the skill.

After that, at least until now, the company left the Stand Up alone, though we did add -- don't ask us when -- Lightweights and Women's in an 8-oz. fabric. These did not stand up at all without careful pinning against a wall in a stable building with no heavy traffic nearby. Now many of us old-timers have been told that the new, organic Stand Ups will be softer still. The weight's the same, but it turns out that all those textures provided a certain stiffness that will now go missing. Stand Ups may no longer stand up at all. We're keeping it from Peter Carman.

**Men's Stand Up & Lightweight Stand Up Shorts**

For 30 years Stand Ups have been our standard for ruggedness. Now we make them in organic cotton, so our stand up. So they're just as tough that we had in the early. Stand Ups are made of 100% organic cotton canvas. Lightweights are 8-oz. for warmer weather. Two layers stitched with web on the inner seam (optional) and creases. Yoke is bias-cut. Cotton canvas - a sharp 10-oz. canvas is available. Cotton canvas - a sharp 10-oz. canvas is available. A similar product is available for kids.

---

**MEN'S STAND UP & LIGHTWEIGHT STAND UP SHORTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Weight  (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M10074</td>
<td>Stand Up Short</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10075</td>
<td>Lightweight</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10076</td>
<td>Stand Up Short</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10077</td>
<td>Lightweight</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar product is available for kids.
APPENDIX Z

**Salmon T-Shirt**
The impact of human industry on rivers, estuaries and oceans has depleted salmon numbers to alarmingly low levels. You don’t have to live near a salmon to help restore these remarkable fish and their habitat. The call to act on this T-shirt shares space with a handsome blockprint by artist Christopher Epp. The T-Shirt’s ultimate mission: to raise funds for organizations around the globe working to protect wild salmon. Ten dollars from the sale of each shirt will equally benefit the following groups: Atlantic Salmon Federation (eastern U.S.), Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition (western U.S.), and River Network (national). The shirt is made of tightly knitted 100% cotton. Overstretched to accommodate shrinkage of 7-9%. Made in USA.

Salmon T-Shirt #51960 $18.00
Sizes S-XL (unisex)
Color: • White (170)
Weight: 294 g (10 oz.)
A similar product is available for kids.

**Salmon Poster**
Artist Dougald Stermer’s exclusive drawing for Patagonia of a 65-pound Atlantic salmon. Ten dollars from the sale of each poster will be shared equally among the Atlantic Salmon Federation, American Rivers – Northwest Office, and Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition.

Salmon Poster #91283 $16.00
Size: 40” x 30”
APPENDIX AA

The Araucaria araucana of southern Chile is one of the earth's oldest tree species, but for the last hundred years it has been systematically destroyed. Now, timber barons want to log the last of these ancient forests for the 17 lakes and is home to the world's smallest deer, puma and many threatened bird species. The survival of the Pehuencche natives also depends in part on their annual visit there to gather the araucaria pine nuts. Patagonia, Escot, and the Frank Woodson Foundation have created an endowment to secure the integrity of the area – a rare and complex ecosystem with 2,000-year-old trees – in perpetuity.

But first, AFI has a plan to save one of the few remaining stands, located in an ancient caldera in the Cañi mountains. The 170-acre area has 17 lakes and is home to the pudú, the world's smallest deer. The survival of the Pehuencche natives also depends in part on their annual visit there to gather the araucaria pine nuts. Patagonia, Escot, and the Frank Woodson Foundation have created an endowment to secure the integrity of the area – a rare and complex ecosystem with 2,000-year-old trees – in perpetuity.

But first, AFI has a plan to save one of the few remaining stands, located in an ancient caldera in the Cañi mountains. The 170-acre area has 17 lakes and is home to the world's smallest deer, puma and many threatened bird species. The survival of the Pehuencche natives also depends in part on their annual visit there to gather the araucaria pine nuts. Patagonia, Escot, and the Frank Woodson Foundation have created an endowment to secure the integrity of the area – a rare and complex ecosystem with 2,000-year-old trees – in perpetuity.
Patagonia Sportswear tends to be classic, understated and overbuilt. You can trust these clothes. They will withstand a hard working pounding rain, while still remaining fashionable.

We chose fabrics for their strength, durability, and color-fastness. Certain colors in the line are offered in three different weights. The three weights of the Patagonia Sportswear line are: G1, G2, and G3. The G1 and G2 weights are made from recycled materials. The G3 weight is made from 100% cotton. The Patagonia Sportswear line is made in the USA and Canada.

The Patagonia Sportswear line is made from high-quality materials. The fabrics are durable and will last for many years. The line includes a variety of products, including pants, shirts, jackets, and outerwear. The Patagonia Sportswear line is designed for outdoor activities and offers great value for the money.

One of the best features of the Patagonia Sportswear line is its sustainability. The line is made from recycled materials and is designed to last for many years. The line includes a variety of products, including pants, shirts, jackets, and outerwear. The Patagonia Sportswear line is designed for outdoor activities and offers great value for the money.
### APPENDIX CC

**Patagonia Catalogs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Cover Photograph</th>
<th>% Enviro-content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Indigenous Cani walking in winter scene</td>
<td>11 out of 116 pages (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Spring/Summer</td>
<td>Surfer on a nice wave</td>
<td>14 out of 124 pages (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Fall/Winter</td>
<td>Waterfall in Yellowstone National Park (no humans)</td>
<td>11 out of 112 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Spring/Summer</td>
<td>Tree growing out of old car (no humans)</td>
<td>12 out of 120 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Fall/Winter</td>
<td>Wide angle shot of migrating caribou (no humans)</td>
<td>10 out of 84 pages (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Two male climbers bivouacking on a wall</td>
<td>10 out of 80 pages (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Female skier on a mountain slope</td>
<td>15 out of 96 pages (15.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Tree sitters/environmental activists at work</td>
<td>13 out of 84 pages (15.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Kayaker at play in a river hole</td>
<td>9 out of 84 pages (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Male climber on a wall</td>
<td>8 out of 92 pages (8.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Surfer captured from under the wave</td>
<td>6 out of 72 pages (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Heart of Winter</td>
<td>Two male climbers on a ridge</td>
<td>10 out of 68 pages (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Male climber on ridge near ocean</td>
<td>10 out of 92 pages (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Male climber on a wall</td>
<td>8 out of 80 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Female and male climbers on a wall</td>
<td>8 out of 88 pages (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Male kayaker going over the falls</td>
<td>9 out of 88 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Late Summer</td>
<td>Closeup of Fred Beckley (Senior Citizen climber)</td>
<td>6 out of 60 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Female climber jumping off ledge into water</td>
<td>8 out of 60 pages (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Male climber on a wall</td>
<td>14 out of 60 pages (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Early Fall</td>
<td>Female climber in Patagonia Mts.</td>
<td>4 out of 40 pages (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>Downhill skier in the Cascades</td>
<td>6 out of 72 pages (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Early Fall</td>
<td>Dead salmon  below dilapidated dam (no humans)</td>
<td>9 out of 44 pages (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>Male climber on ridge</td>
<td>6 out of 64 pages (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX DD

Encapsil® Down

Water repellent and much more

1000: The highest fill power ever achieved

Darker to warmer, lighter and more comprehensive for its weight than any other filling material—natural or synthetic. FilmcoreDown® shows off these advantages. It has been treated to be water-repellent down has been a key goal for outdoor companies for decades.

Water-repellent down garments are, for the first time, now available from several mountain wear, backpacks, and other outdoor products. In anticipation, Patagonia, Inc., has taken a unique approach, one that not only protects the water-repellent down, but that delivers a significant amount of added durability, protection, and performance.

Encapsil® technology: Patagonia's proprietary process patterner provides a new level of performance, durability, and weight reduction. It also makes the product more water-resistant, reducing weight and providing the performance needed for outdoor use.

cleaner

Extends the life of down fill and reduces the tendency for down to clump together. This allows the down to absorb and retain moisture, keeping the wearer dry. It is a revolutionary technology that combines a multi-layered system with a unique technology to absorb and retain moisture, keeping the wearer dry.

SMARTER

The technology used in the core of the product is designed to deliver maximum warmth and performance while minimizing bulk. This allows for a more comfortable and versatile product, providing the user with a more comfortable and versatile product.

The Patagonia® Encapsil® Down Belay Parka is made with 100% recycled down fill and features a revolutionary new design that provides unparalleled warmth and performance. The parka is made with 100% recycled down fill, which provides exceptional warmth and performance, while also being environmentally friendly. The design features a unique core construction that provides maximum warmth and performance, while minimizing bulk. The parka is also made with a water-resistant material that keeps the wearer dry in wet conditions. The Patagonia® Encapsil® Down Belay Parka is available in a variety of colors and sizes, making it the perfect choice for outdoor enthusiasts everywhere.
APPENDIX EE

"I've climbed in the M10 all over the world, from the Canadian Rockies to Patagonia and it's the key piece in my alpine kit."

Alpine
APPENDIX FF
Fan Mail

Four years after launching our grants program, we finally mentioned it in our catalog. Though it took us a while to go public, feedback was instantaneous. Much of it has been positive – but not all of it.

For our support of forest protection groups, we received thousands of angry letters and a box full of one customer’s Patagonia gear. A California dealer dropped us after heavy pressure from a lumber company. A dealer in Maine did so because we supported the creation of a national park in their state.

Much more controversy came in the wake of our Planned Parenthood contributions. Letters flooded in, critics organized a national boycott of our products and one group threatened to picket our stores. When we promised to give Planned Parenthood $10 for every picket that showed up each day (we called this “Pledge-a-Picket”), the protesters quietly changed plans. But we still get letters about it. And we still support Planned Parenthood’s educational programs.

We welcome your feedback. Some gets posted in our cafeteria. Some gets passed around the office. All of it is taken seriously. And all of it helps us learn more about our customers and ourselves.

Patagonia
259 West Santa Clara Street, Ventura, CA 93001
www.patagonia.com

Printed on chlorine-free, 100% recycled paper 28% post-consumer waste. © Patagonia Inc. 1998
APPENDIX HH

Build the best products

CAUSE NO UNNECESSARY HARM

Thousands of people are employed every day on our team and throughout the supply chain, working to ensure that our products are made in the highest standard. Any garment could be our own or a friend’s. We have stood reasons to ensure that a zippered hood or a sewn-down fleece in an adverse storm.

There is, of course, another tale to tell. In the course of making our products and doing business, we cause a great deal of environmental harm. Our Vermont headquarters, built in the early 1980s, is energy inefficient. We take business trips that don’t have to be taken, and we package to the next level that gets from big box of Merkne. We make products from virgin materials that can’t be recycled. Every day, our enterprise collects 1,000 employees in offices and warehouses and retail stores that have to be warmed up, or cooled down, and traveled to, mostly in cars.

Building the best product and doing the least harm, in our time, is not two processes but one. Every product we make or buy should be longer-lasting and necessary. If human beings are to have a future 100 years from now, every part of every product will have to come from renewable or recycled – and recyclable material. This is no longer a luxury we can afford. Wanting the gifts of the earth has become a necessary virtue, and we should all embrace it.

Which brings us back to the individual. Every person who says no to a bad environmental practice, by riding with feet or walking, helps bring that possibility to its realism. Selling to itself, too, is something. Each of us can be part of our government’s environmental policies. Read our report in this issue. "The New High Stakes" from Patagonia’s founder Yvon Chouinard and "High Stakes" from the League of Conservation Voters. On November 2nd, vote the environment – and the future – in your lives, too.