

From wire evil to power line poetics: the ethics and aesthetics of renewable transmission

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Abstract-

Building upon a selective history of so-called “wire evil,” and more recent social science research regarding public perceptions of electric infrastructure, this article explores renewable transmission lines as sites of tension between landscape aesthetics and environmental ethics. It reports the results of an ethnographic study performed at a utility-owned arboretum in Omaha, Nebraska and suggests a “power line poetics” may help balance the aesthetic experience of electric infrastructures and the ethics of renewable energy development.

Index Terms- Aesthetics; Overhead transmission lines; Public perceptions; Electricity rhetoric

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