

Study Questions, Week 12

Topics for the Week:

Air & Water: Flood Control on the Mississippi River

Readings for the Week:

John McPhee. 1989. *The Control of Nature*. New York: Farrar, Staus and Giroux. pp. 3–92.

Questions:

- (1) Why has the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertaken the task of controlling the course of the Mississippi River? What actions have they taken to do so?
- (2) What are some problems the Corps and others have encountered in trying to control the Mississippi? What lessons can be derived from these problems?
- (3) What social and environmental changes have efforts to control the Mississippi brought about? Have these efforts increased people's well-being and security, or have they put people in greater danger?
- (4) What are the different stakeholder groups that McPhee identifies? How has each group been affected by the efforts to engineer the river? How has each group participated in the process?
- (5) Do you think humans ultimately will be successful in controlling the Mississippi River? Is this an example of sustainable development?