

Minisymposium zur Umweltgeschichte.

Eine Veranstaltung im Rahmen der Vortragsreihe „Lectures on Social Ecology“ in Kooperation mit dem Zentrum für Umweltgeschichte (ZUG)

Im Rahmen dieses Minisymposiums präsentieren zwei Gäste aus den USA aktuelle umwelthistorische Forschungen.

Geoff Cunfer: "Agricultural Land Use and Environment in the U.S. Great Plains, 1870-2000"

This talk evaluates the ways that people have intersected and altered ecosystem processes over more than a century in the Great Plains, one of the U.S.'s leading agricultural regions. It evaluates historical farming from the perspective of ecological systems: plant diversity, hydrology, energy transfers, wind erosion, and nutrient cycles. To what extent did Euro-American farmers disrupt the ecology of the prairies? How did climate and environment mold human land use? Is modern industrial agriculture sustainable? What caused the 1930s Dust Bowl? Empirical data suggest that the answers to these questions are more complex (and interesting) than many people believe. This lecture summarizes the Great Plains Population and Environment Project, which created a database and GIS of historical agricultural land use covering one fifth of the U.S. and 130 years of evolving interactions between people and nature. It also previews a new project, called "Demography and Environment in Grassland Settlement," which will trace thousands of individual farm families and farmsteads through 70 years of evolving land use and family structures.

Geoff Cunfer is associate professor of environmental history and studies at the Center for Rural and Regional Studies, Southwest Minnesota State University, in the U.S. He explores past interactions between people and the natural world, focusing especially on agriculture, agroecology, and land use in the prairies and Great Plains. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Texas. His first book, tentatively entitled *The Great Plains: An Agricultural and Environmental History*, is forthcoming from Texas A&M University press in 2004.

<http://www.southweststate.edu/regional/>

Ravi Rajan: "Technological Disasters and Cultures of Safety: Policy Lessons from Qualitative Risk Studies"

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the policy relevant "lessons" afforded by recent qualitative social scientific approaches - anthropological and historical - to technological disasters. I base this on my work on the "metaphysics" of environmental violence, which, in essence, consists of a five-pronged typology: a) Technological Violence, or the violence of the "normal accident"; b) Corporate violence, or the violence of irresponsible capital; c) Distributive Violence, or the violence of environmental justice; d) Bureaucratic Violence-comprising the violence of bureaucratic absence; the violence of the routine and of scientism; and e) Discursive Violence, or the violence of the symbolic appropriation of social suffering.

Ravi Rajan is an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. After studying mathematics and philosophy at the University of Delhi, he

obtained his D-Phil in environmental history and the history of science at Oxford, following which he held post-doctoral positions in geography, science and technology studies and environmental history, respectively at Berkeley, Cornell and the Max Planck Institute für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin. He divides his research time between environmental history and studies of technological risks in complex systems. Rajan has also worked for a number of environmental organizations, including the Pesticide Action Network, North America, of whose board he recently served as President.

<http://people.ucsc.edu/~srrajan/>

Ort: IFF Abteilung Soziale Ökologie, Schottenfeldg. 29, 1070 Wien, Seminarraum Nr. 6, 6. Stock

Zeit: 11. September 2003, 18.00 - 20.00