

Enlightening Lecture Reveals Causation

Three institutions are responsible for environmental problems

BY GENA BERLETT
STAFF REPORTER

A recent lecture was presented at UNLV titled "What's the Problem Here? Feminism & Environmental Analysis" by Joni Seager, Professor, Departments of Geography and Women's Studies, University of Vermont.

Seager is the author of *Earth Follies: Coming to Feminist Terms With the Global Environmental Crisis*. This book purports a strong argument for examining the "agency" when comprehending environmental crises. Seager uses the premise (in her argument) that world environmental crises are not only ozone depletion, over consumption, wastefulness, or global warming.

The current world environmental problems are a result of "institutional structures contributing to the cultural crises precipitated by the masculinist assumptions that shape modern institutions and life."

Seager's new book is titled *Earth Systems: A Feminist Approach*. Her motivation to write stemmed from being "provoked by real concern that we are in a state of environmental crisis."

Seager discussed the "green frenzy" and how publishers wanted environmental books badly in the 1980s, when corporate environmental problems were emphasized heavily in the media. It took Seager four years to write the book.

According to Seager, all of the environmental crises are a result of "physical systems under stress." Crises in physical systems have caused "the physical sciences to take the dominant lead in environmental studies. Chemistry, biology and geology insist on having environmental studies under their umbrella."

Unfortunately, Seager said, the physical science approach does not address the fact that environmental problems are caused by cultural crises and agents.

"Environmental information is couched very passively — pay attention to the way problems are reported by the media. There is no discussion of agency. There is also a strong undercurrent of passivity in environmental literature."

Seager stated that "feminists are very good at thinking about agency." Feminists ask "What are the agents? What are the causal changes?" By discussing agents or agencies, Seager addresses the real causation behind the physical symptoms of environmental catastrophe. She stresses looking beyond the immediate details of the latest disaster.

Agencies operate on masculin-

ist assumptions, according to Seager, and are really institutions active in our daily lives. Agents are the masculinist assumptions which cause the physical symptoms to appear.

Seager maintains that all environmental problems, caused by agents, are indicative of a severe "cultural crisis."

"Cultural and social arrangements cause the environmental problems (or physical symptoms)," Seager explained. A pattern, she claims, may be found in examining the three main institutions responsible for most environmental problems:

*Corporations: "Probably the single most major contributor to environmental degradation."

*Military: "The next biggest contributor to global destruction."

*Government: "In most places, governments play a major role in environmental destruction."

An unidentified student observed, during the lecture, that "In the United States a person cannot separate the military-industrial-government complex."

Seager stated "A feminist must ask 'Why do such institutions have such a large environmental impact?' as well as 'How does the culture of institutions create environmental destruction?'"

She strongly emphasized that all three main contributors of environmental destruction are "institutions of men" which she called "a massive social fact." Seager continued by saying that "These institutions are structured by around masculinist assumptions."

Finally, Seager asked "In what ways does it matter that there are gender workings of power? Does gender matter in environmental situations?"

Seager reached the following conclusions to these queries:

*Agents of environmental change are gendered;

*Environmental values by all three main institutions are gendered;

*Only a small percentage of men share the same environmental standards as most women — women appear to be more concerned with quality of life issues.

A question asked after the lecture stood out more than the others. "Do female-oriented organizations tend to be more environmentally friendly?"

Seager's answer was "No. Women become successful in business usually by adopting the same masculinist thinking."

Some types of masculinist norms discussed after the lecture included the more powerful you are the more wasteful you can afford to be, profit makes waste more acceptable and affluent societies have to be wasteful because there is more reliance on the technological control of nature.

RECYCLE



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News Briefs

Japanese Language Study Tour

The Japan Foundation is offering a single week, all expenses-paid study tour of Japan for an individual who is studying the Japanese language at the university level. The application deadline is Monday, April 3.

This program is intended to offer an outstanding student the opportunity to visit Japan and deepen their knowledge of the society and culture.

Those interested must take a language examination at the Consulate General of Japan, 50 Fremont St., Suite 2200, San Francisco, Calif., 94105, on Friday, April 7 at 2 p.m. The exam is approximately 1 1/2 hours long.

There are certain eligibility requirements. For more information, please contact *The Rebel Yell*, 895-3878, the Foreign Languages Department at 895-3431 or Hisako Takahashi at (415) 777-3533 X331.

Peacework Summer Volunteer Programs

Peacework announces summer volunteer programs for students from the United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico and other countries. Volunteers will work together building houses in central Mexico, repairing schools in Palestine, rebuilding a youth center in Russia or working on an agricultural project in Cuba.

Foreign language skills and experience are desirable, but not required.

The deadline for this year's programs is April 1, yet applications will be accepted after that date on a space-available basis.

For more information or an application, please contact Peacework in California at (619) 299-9763 or in Virginia at (703) 953-1376. Inquires may be addressed to: Peacework, 305 Washington St., S.W., Blacksburg, VA 24060-4745.

Hospitality Design '95 Conference & Exposition

The Network of Executive Women in hospitality is again co-sponsoring the Hospitality Design '95 Conference, held at the Sands Convention Center from April 5-7.

Industry experts will speak in idea-packed seminars relating to the hospitality industry and the latest in technology and trends will be displayed by over 150 exhibiting companies.

Mario Cuomo Lecture Reminder

Former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo will speak on "Perfecting the Union" at 7:30 p.m. on March 27 in Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall on the UNLV campus.

The event, part of the continuing Barrick Lecture Series, is nearly sold out. Tickets are free and should be picked up as soon as possible to avoid missing the lecture.

For more information, please call the Performing Arts Center Box Office at 895-3801.

To view the exhibits only is \$10 per day. Four sessions are scheduled at \$20 each. For more information or to register, call 1-800-765-7616.

A pre-show event, HD '95 Spring Fling Golf Tournament & BBQ dinner at Painted Desert Golf Club, is available at \$100 per person on April 3. For ticket information, please contact Nikki Jones at 792-4788.

LIFT Workshop Addresses Disability Issues

Looking Into The Future, Today is a workshop addressing issues facing young adults with disabilities. It will be held on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the MSU. The cost of admission is \$3.

For more information, please call Alison Kasner at 799-7973.

CCSN Presents Robert Nylan

A slide presentation and discussion entitled "The Role of the Immigrants in Nevada History" will be given by Robert Nylan from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, March 31 at the Community College of Southern Nevada.

The event, open to the public and free of charge, will be held on the Cheyenne Campus, 3200 E. Cheyenne Avenue, in the Performing Arts Recital Hall, room 1430.

Nylan is the senior curator of history at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City and has published several articles about the subject. He is co-author of "Letters from the Nevada Frontier: Correspondence of Tasker L. Oddie, 1898-1902," and is writing a history of a Nevada mining town.

For more information, please call 651-4007.

Brown Bag Lunch Lecture

"Virginia Woolf as a Literary Critic" will be presented by Beth Rosenberg, Assistant Professor of English on Wednesday from 12 noon to 1 p.m. in John S. Wright Hall, Room 112.

The lecture is sponsored by the Women's Studies Program. For more information, please call 895-0837.

Training in Communications Seminar

The International Training in Communications will be conducting its annual seminar on "How to Handle Business at Meetings" on Saturday, April 1 in John S. Wright Hall, Room 116.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m., with instruction from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. A certificate of completion will be issued.

Advance reservation deadline is Saturday. Pre-paid registration is \$35; at the door is \$45. The fee covers handout materials. Refreshments will be served.

For registration or more information, please call 362-7460.

Volunteer for Adelson Hospice

The Nathan Adelson Hospice will begin its spring Volunteer Education Course on April 29. They provide care for the terminally ill without regard to age, gender, nationality or ability to pay.

Those interested in becoming patient care volunteers will be provided with 36 hours of training, covering topics such as active listening skills, communication, death and dying and emotional support.

Individual interested in participating must register by April 14. After the initial training period, volunteers can expect to spend four to six hours a week working with patients and families.

For more information on the training class, please call Gary Gardia or Dee King at 733-0320.

Women's Awareness Video Marathon

In recognition of Women's History Month, the Jean Nidetch Women's Center, in conjunction with the MSU, is presenting a video marathon in MSU - Room 203, Monday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Programs, brochures, handouts and videos will be available to inform students of services available to the public. This program will highlight women's issues.

Community Action Against Rape, NALA, the District Attorney's office, Cease Stalking, Temporary Assistance for Domestic Crisis, Community Action Against Rape, Student Health Services and the University Police are some of the agencies that will have representatives on hand to answer questions.

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