

Clarence Glacken: Pioneer Environmental Historian

- Speaker:** S. Ravi Rajan
Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz
- Chair:** Dr Victor R Savage, Director of Alumni Relations, NUS and
A/P in Geography
- Date/Time:** Friday, 7 March 2014, 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm
- Place:** Earth Lab (AS2 02-03), Department of Geography, NUS

Abstract

Clarence Glacken's magnum opus *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, first published in 1976, was an intellectual history about ideas of nature and culture from ancient Greece to the end of the 18th century. The *Professional Geographer* called it 'One of the best and most important books published by a geographer in the English-speaking world in the last hundred years.' Little known, however, is the fact that Glacken, who actually published only one other book, an ethnographic study of Okinawan village life, was prolific in his later years. He wrote an unpublished (and lost) sequel to *Traces*, and a full draft a third book, wherein he returned to questions around the habitable earth that first wet his geographic imagination — such as how many people can the earth hold; what resources can sustain such populations; where land for growth is located; what is the potential of tropics to sustain the temperate areas of the earth; and what role do industrialization, colonization, science, and environmental degradation play in these debates. Drawing extensively upon the Glacken archives at the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, this paper will describe the intellectual evolution of Glacken as a geographer, which in significant respects, is very different from that of the mainstream discipline. The essay will end by exploring Glacken's legacy, and what it offers to the fields of environmental history and cultural geography.

About the Speaker



S. Ravi Rajan, currently on sabbatical at ARI, is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at University of California at Santa Cruz; Visiting Senior Fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), and a Visiting Professor at TERI University. Rajan is author of *Modernizing Nature* (2006), and *Engineered Conflicts* (forthcoming); editor of six books and special issues of journals, and several peer reviewed papers in environmental history, environmental policy and governance, environmental justice and human rights, risk and disasters, and social entrepreneurship. From 2006 - 2012, Rajan served as Provost of College

Eight at UC Santa Cruz, where he built a pioneering 'green' curriculum aimed at nurturing environmental entrepreneurs. Highlights of Rajan's academic service includes being a founding member of the editorial board of the journals, *Environment and History* and *Environmental Justice*, and Program Chair for the American Society for Environmental History Annual Meeting. Rajan's public service includes the Presidency of the Board of Directors of Pesticide Action Network, North America (PANNA); board service for the International Media Project; and Charter Membership of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), Silicon Valley, among others. He co-founded the Bhopal Group for Information and Action in 1985, and served on the core group of the Indian environmental organization, Kalpavriksh, during the 1980s. (<http://people.ucsc.edu/~srrajan>).

ADMISSION IS FREE – ALL ARE WELCOME

CONVENORS: Dr Karen Lai, Dr Sin Harng Luh and Dr Winston Chow  ENQUIRES: Sakinah – 65163559