

Reflections on John Seed Presentation

By Pedro Defaria

John Seed, an Australian native, is known worldwide as a leader in rainforest conservation. Because of his outstanding efforts and unique tactics, he has succeeded in saving thousands, f not millions of acres of rainforest. John Seed is accredited as being the sole founder of The Rainforest Information Centre and is still, to this day, the center's director and biggest activist. Since the late 1970s, John has been able protect several of Australia's vital rainforests. He has also initiated many environmental programs, television documentaries, action networks, and environmental albums. He has held lectures on his beliefs in Australia, the United States, the UK, and parts of Asia. John is not just another activist set out on making a difference, he is also a teacher, director, producer, and established songwriter.

Anyone can see how our class Biology & Environment can relate to the work of John Seed. His most basic ideals are embedded in the course material in which we discuss everyday but only at a more intricate level. According to John the world is blind to the plights of the natural world. We are out of touch with nature in a time when we should be most interconnected with it. Everyone from the locals in the street, to the government in which governs them is, in fact, one step behind in their roles as environmental stewards. Most, if not all of our goals in life are short term when dealing with the environment never really thinking about nature's long term existence. It has gotten to a point in which species are being extinct by the hour and forests are being depleted by the minute.

John mentioned that we tend to believe that we as humans should be socially separated from nature. We have this anthropocentric attitude that segregates us from the rest of the world. John also made a point that we as organisms are all interconnected to one another on a global

level. Whatever one of us does or *does not do* greatly affects our symbiotic circle. He used the rainforest as an example to his unified view of everything. The rainforest is called the rainforest because, obviously, it features a lot of rainfall but where does all the water come from. Once the water falls in the river it feeds the trees, in which it helps other animals in the rainforest survive (food and shelter). It then vaporizes right back into the atmosphere to only once again feed the clouds for another round of rain. Just like humans sweat, plants transpire, giving evaporation a bit of a hand in getting the water vapor back up into the air. Those weren't his exact words but from the things he did say it made it seem like we are a lot more connected than we may think.

Furthermore, the video that John showed us in class really changed my perspective on industrialization. I am someone who believes tremendously in preserving the environment but I also do believe that some of the companies that cut down trees are important to running the world for its many uses. What I didn't realize was that these companies were not replanting trees in the areas they used and were also ripping off some of the locals. I thought it was brilliant how John Seed and his followers taught the locals how to do the job of the timber companies while earning more money and using fewer trees. Along with that John had introduced them to the "20 year cycle" in which trees could be chopped down but regrown 20 years later serving both needs of industrial consumption and environment sustainability. This method of thinking reminds me a lot of our class. As students in Biology & Environment we are taught to think outside the box, and beyond the norm to perhaps something along the line of John's work.

All in all, John Seed's presentation has put the environment back on my essentials list. Though my generation won't probably be around to experience the full effect of our ignorance, it is up to us to begin preserving it. As stewards to our planets we should begin to care for it as much as it has for us. What we must understand is that we have to rid ourselves of our "unlimited

needs” because we live in a planet with limited resources. If it wasn’t for people like John Seed, we would be in a lot worse shape than what we are in now. Not only did his presentation teach me new methods of acting and new ways of thinking, it also gave me a deeper respect for people who do such big things for the smallest of organisms.