

HST 203: History of the United States Sp17 (Escobar Meta 41054 41053)

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Environmentalism as Religion

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 27, 2017, 12:18 AM

This thread is for discussions on the Environmentalism as Religion topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Environmentalism as Religion

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Judaism and Environmentalism

by Michael De Nitto - Sunday, May 28, 2017, 4:35 PM

I found the article by Paul Rubin was accurate to modern religions. IT seems the similarities to environmentalism and other modern religions are closer than they appear. For thousands of years primitive tribes and religions have deep moral commitment to their god(s), For environmentalists recycling is there prayer for a prosperous environment on earth. My faith ,Judaism preaches to protect and love the Earth. The Torah explains that God created the earth for our needs. according Jewish law (Bal Tashhit) in this excerpt from Deuteronomy 20:19-20:

“When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.”

Based on Paul Rubin's article I can see half of this old testament excerpt being approved by environmentalist. Protecting the bountiful resources our planet has should be supported by every tribe and religion across the board.

Troster, Rabbi Lawrence. "10 Teachings on Judaism and the Environment." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 06 Apr. 2011. Web. 28 May 2017.

10 TEACHINGS ON JUDAISM AND ENVIRONMENT

- God created the universe.
- God's Creation is good.
- Human beings are created in the image of God.
- Humanity should view their place in Creation with love and awe.
- The Sabbath and prayer help us to achieve this state of mind.
- The Torah prohibits the wasteful consumption of anything.
- The Torah gives an obligation to save human life.
- The Torah prohibits the extinction of species and causing undo pain to non-human creatures.
- Environmental Justice is a Jewish value.
- Tikkun Olam: The perfection/fixing of the world is in our hands.



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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by Nicholas Bates - Monday, May 29, 2017, 4:27 PM

I don't think that the issues will ever be completely resolved peacefully. In the United States we claim to be a nation of freedoms but with those freedoms comes individual responsibility. When religion ruled the main populace everyone abided by the same rules, morals, and laws without the direct enforcement of rule at all times. People didn't do things that were considered wrong because they felt that it wasn't the right thing to do. These days people are completely different. Take corruption for instance, I think we can all agree corruption is bad but if someone asked you to look the other way and offered you \$100,000 would u do it? Most people would and its because our own morals have a price now.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by Hope Walston - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 11:58 AM

When you talked about how our morals have a price now, I think your wrong and not at the same time. My Mother for instance, if offered a million or even two million dollars for her dog, she would probably beat the person up for even suggesting it. Now I am not speaking for everyone here. There is a good portion of people who on this planet who would look away if offered they right thing. However this is also a good portion of people who wouldn't do certain things for anything.

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Environmentalism vs. Communism vs. Conspiracy

by Isaac Anderson - Monday, May 29, 2017, 6:02 PM

This forum is tough for me because I can't stand on one side of the issue long enough to finish writing. I find myself constantly back and forth. Communism was feared by Americans because of its Anti-Capitalist nature. Environmentalism as a religion is also very Anti-Capitalist, portraying capitalism as the devil, so the two have that in common. I also think that environmental issues really are a problem and that educated political involvement will help to peacefully transition the malpractice of corporations to a cleaner, more sustainable way of doing business, but arresting people for using plastic bottles and incandescent light bulbs should be avoidable for us if we challenge the source. I find myself agreeing with a lot of the statements made in Mr. Rubins article. "Scientists are understandably uninterested in religious stories because they do not meet the basic criterion for science: They cannot be tested. God may or may not have created the world—there is no way of knowing, although we do know that the biblical creation story is scientifically incorrect. Since we cannot prove or disprove the existence of God, science can't help us answer questions about the truth of religion as a method of understanding the world (1)." Yes, environmentalism is a perfect religion for the people that cant make sense of the other religions, but If I was a conspiracy theorist I would argue that getting the entire population to worship something that we all have in common is a brilliant way achieve global domination. "Scientists, particularly evolutionary psychologists, have identified another function of religion in addition to its function of explaining the world. Religion often supplements or replaces the tribalism that is an innate part of our evolved nature. (1)."

1:<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304510004575186343555831322.html>

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Re: Rubin is Wildin'



by Dakota Brotherton - Monday, May 29, 2017, 7:24 PM

As an individual working towards a major in sustainability management, I definitely had a biased opinion before and while reading this article and because of that I probably should've chose a different topic to write on but I could not resist.

In a sense, I did agree with Professors Rubin's claim that environmentalism has created a label creating function that can typically affect how a person acts or lives their lives, but I feel as if this doesn't classify it as a religion therefore doesn't leave it up for any violations of somebody's first amendment. For example, people who consider themselves athletes tend to echo certain aspects that Rubin compares to religion like being a way for unrelated individuals from outside to join together to build a support system. Another example would be athletes refraining from certain things like performance enhancers or even foods yet I would never consider any sport or athletic event a 'religion'.

I also had an issue with the comparison points that Rubin brings up when the similarities between environmentalism and religions. For example, I certainly don't participate in any 'holy' activities on Earth day nor do I view people refraining from eco-friendly activities as evil. And as for it being taught in the education system like religion, I personally was taught close to nothing about aspects of environmentalism in the public-school system and I feel like we live in one of the most environmentally friendly states in the nation so Rubin's concern about students being taught wild aspects of environmentalism seems unfounded in my personal experience.

As for the mention of no logical basis and nuclear energy being the best solution to global warming and creating a sustainable future, there is currently no way for us to dispose of nuclear waste and the risk for a nuclear accident like the ones that have already occurred in Chernobyl and Fukushima leave us susceptible to evacuation and/or radioactive poisoning.

His mention of food taboos was also pretty laughable in my opinion. While sure it is substantially healthier for the environment as well as your body to consume locally grown produce, I have never seen an individual forbidden from the grocery section in Wal-mart. When looking at the definition of taboo, it seems to imply that there is some sort of punishment associated with it and I certainly have never been punished for eating an orange from California. Ultimately, I tried my hardest to read this article without a biased perspective but after he denied the benefits of recycling, composting and mentions his opinion that aspects need to be more rigorously tested by science, it was impossible and while he may not be an 'evil sinner', we certainly have different outlooks.

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Religious

by Angela Yackley - Monday, May 29, 2017, 9:18 PM

How does the strength of your own religious belief, or lack thereof, impact on your interpretation (acceptance or dismissal) of these materials?

I think it's a fair assertion that people have transformed the environmental movement into their own personal, yet shared belief structure. People believe in ideas, then they take those ideas and create habits and traditions to promote their beliefs. This can be done with anything; technology, television shows or characters, cooking techniques, brands or music tastes. The author of the Wall Street Journal article states, "Religion often supplements or replaces the tribalism" and I would agree that this is also true of every other thing I listed as it relates to personal or subjective experiences within each sphere of ideology. When I look to scientists to understand the phenomenological underpinnings of our world, I have to rely on them they way many would rely on priests. I cannot mentally or physically re-create their studies and must verify their work through careful consideration, critical thinking and the review of thousands of other scientists that peer review their work. This would be exhausting on a case by case basis so some things I take on faith but later evaluate or update as more or better developed information presents itself. I don't consider myself religious in any way and am comfortable letting new information change my currently held opinions or ideas if it proves applicable. I do like the point that the author Paul Rubin makes, that is, even for some very educated persons it is difficult to question the current lore on environmentalism. To me, that itches an old scar I got growing up in a religious environment: If you cannot question something, you are not be nurtured to think. This is where willful ignorance and naiveté are cultivated and people start getting taken advantage of. All in all, I take these materials as yet an ongoing chapter to read up on in our current (and recent) history. There are few definitive laws of the universe and even those get called into question on occasion.

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The distinction between earth and religion

by Justin Onusko - Monday, May 29, 2017, 10:20 PM

The article by Dr. Rubin brought up a lot of interesting points in regard to environmentalism and religion. A point that seemed to be a bit of a stretch was comparing recycling bins to sacred structures (such as temples). I don't see people going around and worshipping recycling bins, even in the most liberal parts of Eugene.

I do not necessarily agree with the article. Taking care of the earth is something that has to be done even without the creation of religion. Sure, some people choose to participate more in keeping the earth healthy, however without a healthy earth there would be no outlet to practice religion. To me environmentalism is not a religion and therefore does not need to adhere to the first amendment of the constitution like Dr. Rubin said.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion- supporting image

by Luz Fandino - Wednesday, May 31, 2017, 11:38 PM

The Oregon Country Fair I think is a great example to support the claim that environmentalism is a religion. In the Fair, all along the paths are several "sacred structures" with big colorful signs inviting you to partake in the "self-sacrificing rituals" of recycling and composting (Forum Article). Often times during the day, the composting and recycling crews will hold an event where they test the crowds' knowledge on the "self-sacrificing rituals" like what kind of

plastics can be recycled, and what's considered trash vs. compost. If you get the most answers right out of everyone in the crowd then you win a free meal, much like how kids who go to Sunday school get praised for their knowledge on the Holy Bible.



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A little confused

by Hope Walston - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 11:11 AM

First off this subject is a little wild. I had never thought of Environmentalism in this way before and I must say It's a little shocking. I am a little confused on this subject though. Looking through the Forum info for this subject, there were many things that suggested that Environmentalism was the "New" Communism. I don't understand the connection so I am hoping someone would be kind enough to explain it to me.

On the other hand I don't think people should be forced to change how they live because others think the world is dying. I can say, personally, I have never met a family who doesn't recycle. Most people I know will pick up trash on the ground if they see it and it's not a big deal. People don't need to be pressured or forced to "be green" because most people already make a little effort to be. I don't want our planet to die or be covered in trash, but the reality is there will always be people who will pick up trash they come across and keep themselves in line when it comes to keeping Green.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion; can these types of conflict ever be resolved, either through education, legislation, or prosecution?

by Trevor Remington - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 3:42 PM

It is a personal belief that environmental conflict can be resolved through a combination of education, legislation and prosecution. In fact there are already examples of each criteria seen being enacted in every day society. The "Green police Audi ad Super Bowl 2010" commercial shows examples of all three in a comical way. Education is the commercial itself through a medium that reaches many people on how to be green and options to do so, as in buying an Audi. Legislation is shown by making it illegal to use styrofoam cups and not recycling as some examples of the many other environmental infractions. However; legislation and prosecution is not as extreme in every day life as it is portrayed in the commercial. Finally prosecution, is being arrested by the "Green Police" for the environmental infractions that were previously listed above.

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Re: Who is Paul Rubin?

by Dakota Brotherton - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 6:16 PM

After a bit of thought, I was curious about the individual behind the article and decided to do a quick search on the man who is putting a stake to the claim that environmentalism has progressed to the point where it should be considered a religion. I was not surprised to find out that Rubin was a man who specialized in economics and knowledge concerned with the distribution and consumption of wealth. With a little more reading, I learned that Rubin was actually a senior member of the President's Council of Economic Advisors as well as a position in the Federal Trade Commission. With that being known, I think it is safe to assume that Paul has nothing but the interests of businesses and the wealth of America at heart so it isn't surprising that he would write an opinion piece on why he thinks environmental concerns and implementations should be considered religiously inclined and therefore dissociated with the government. With the knowledge that environmental movements have a substantial impact on consumerism and the way resources are utilized it is no surprise that he wants this influence eliminated from the business and economic aspect of our country and with media outlets publishing these forms of opinions, there will forever be a way for wealthy privileged white males to further their interests through manipulation of public opinion.

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Re: Implications of an Environmentalism as Religion Perspective

by Dakota Brotherton - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 6:32 PM

What would the world look like today if aspects of environmentalism like recycling and resource consumption were out of the governments hands due to a religious connotation? I think that certain non-governmental organizations would even be discredited and specialists from groups like National Geographic and the Audubon Society would lose credibility because they would be considered spreading a religiously inclined message or agenda with their talks on conservation.

Keeping in mind conservation and the movement largely inspired by Theodore Roosevelt, would environmentally themed laws and implementations be considered unconstitutional in a society with these values and outlooks? Would park services be disbanded and public land be divvied up for development and industrialization? One thing that keeps coming to mind is the

fact that the very same things that Paul Rubin mentions should be considered religious and up to the public to decide for themselves, are things that at one time considered a top priority by one of our nations greatest presidents. While aspects of the environmentalist movement are extreme such as becoming a vegan or refusing to use plastic, ultimately the main concern of the movement is conservation and the sustainability of the planet for the future. I just don't see how the health of the environment should be considered a religious matter..

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