

HST 203: History of the United States Sp14 (Escobar Meta 41237 41238)

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Forum 4

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Environmentalism as Religion

by **Joe Escobar** - Thursday, May 22, 2014, 8:46 AM

This forum thread is for the Environmentalism as Religion discussion.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

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. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Environmentalism as Religion

Sum of ratings: -

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Environmentalism vs. Human Rights

by **Hao Nguyen** - Monday, May 26, 2014, 10:20 PM

This article describes accurately in environmentalism as a religion by considering environmentalism as a religion, comparing it to other religions and pointing out reasons why environmentalism should be considered as a new religion, equally as Jewish or Christian or Buddhism, etc.

As the First Amendment states that Congress shall make no law prohibiting the freedom of choices of religion, people have their own right to decide which belief they want to live on and who they want to define themselves as. Plus, as defining themselves Greenish, they would make a more authentic action contributing towards the evolving of their religion "environmentalism" as saving Green environment, recycling, doing more meaningful rituals for Green, etc.

In my opinion, this issue could be resolved through variety aspects: education, campaign, etc. Since this issue bases on individual rights, it will end up voluntarily, but not touching others' belief in other religions.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Green Alarmism

by Dalyn Stram - Monday, May 26, 2014, 11:17 PM

I absolutely remember seeing the "green police" commercial when it first came out, and I remember thinking that this sort of thing would slowly become more and more commonplace. Part of me wants to believe that a commercial like this is all fun and games designed to get a chuckle out of people, but on the other hand the ever-present cynic inside me sees a deeper, darker side that certain groups, industries, and individuals (both those in and outside of public office) desire to push. Perfect case in point, the plastic bag ban in Eugene. Truth be told, banning plastic bags won't "save the environment". Plastic bags simply don't comprise a large enough percentage of trash to make a big difference. But it's something for the environmentalists to be loud and make a big deal about. Then they can feel good about themselves when in reality they made almost no impact on the environment. It's why I believe most environmentalists are hypocrites. They want to accomplish huge things, yet they refuse to live lifestyles that would actually help accomplish what they want. They do small things so they can feel good about themselves without changing their lifestyles to the extent that they actually inflict discomfort on themselves. It's about doing the bare minimum but convincing people it's actually a whole lot more.

I don't believe these issue will ever be "resolved" in the sense that the two side come completely together. I think there is too much radicalism and fanaticism on the fringes, and I believe when you have two sides which believe so strongly in what they believe, asking them to discard some of what they believe is simply impossible. You can throw all the evidence in the world out there at people like Al Gore or others pushing environmentalism and they simply won't believe it. They already think they're right, despite the evidence (I don't mean to exclude myself on this, there are certainly things I'm probably wrong on; it's simply human nature). But it goes a step too far when you start getting into public policies and laws, etc. I don't care what someone believes. But if someone believes something which can be proven to be wither wrong, circumstantial, or up to debate, and that person tries to force laws on me without proper evidence...that's a problem. That's why environmental policy is a slippery slope and needs to be treated with extreme caution. I believe we're already getting into certain coercive issues with forcing environmental policy.

I don't take any issues with describing environmentalism as a religion. The points are more or less accurate, and I think most importantly, viewing environmentalism as a religion provides the most accurate method of understanding environmentalism, those who adhere to it, and what the end-game is and the methods of getting to their goals.

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Re: Green as a Religion

by Karla Miller - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 8:15 AM

Environmentalists do act like going green is a religion. I get confronted every day about recycling. When I leave my house I see people cleaning the bike trail, on campus a young woman wanted me to sign a petition for cleaner air. I said it was already being taken care of and she stated that it was still a problem, which I know it is not even as bad as it was in the seventies. That whole encounter was funny to me, because I was on my way to smoke a cigarette. On the way to pollute the air some more. A person can't watch the news without seeing someone complaining how we are destroying the environment. These "fanatics" will never be satisfied. If they want more people to eat more organic foods, lower the prices. All of this reminds me of the people on the street corners with their signs saying "The End is Near." Let the citizens decide which light bulbs, cars, and food they want to have.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by Sherri Patterson - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 9:23 AM

I found this subject very interesting. When researching it I found that it is indeed an actual religion. One branch the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has been in practice since 1985. Now I do believe that there are extremists as there are with any religion. Just look at **Westboro Baptist Church (WBC)** talk about a church that took their beliefs to an extreme. As our instructor Joe has said throughout the whole term it is about spectrum and where people fall on them. You are always going to have those far out environmentalists who if they see you just throw a recyclable item away they will freak out. But what they don't understand is our human nature is that if you try to force us to do something we will rebel like a teen age kid who doesn't want to be told what to do. We as adults in control of our own destiny do not like to be told what to do. But if people make it feel like it is our decision or our idea we are more likely to conform and do what they would like. Even though it is in our best nature to recycle to lower the impact on Earth and make less waste we do not always listen to reason when we are being forced to do something. The video in some ways was right. It seems everywhere you turn you are having recycling thrown down your throat. On campus there is not just one or two bins, it is 3 in a row every few feet. And very few garbage cans. And one of the problems I have found is sometimes you can't even find the right can that is labeled for what you have? But hey they are providing more work for somebody.



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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

P S

by Laura Newman - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 11:23 PM

"When researching it I found that it I indeed an actual religion. One branch the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has been in practice since 1985. Now I do believe that there are extremist as there are with any religion" I found this quote from fellow student Sherri interesting.

And while something like this is in existence, I still wouldn't qualify it as a religion. Religion is described "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods." (Courtesy of Google). A person or group that worships nature...hmm that sounds awfully familiar: Paganism, Pantheism, and even Earth Religion. And while these religions have been criticized or misunderstood in their beliefs, I doubt their practice includes hunting down Styrofoam consumers and arresting them.

Comparing extremist environmentalism to religion is farfetched! Perhaps this is bias, coming from a liberal college student who dwells in one of the most environmentally minded towns in the United States which recently has outlawed plastic bags, implementing a fee for more eco-friendly brown paper bags at a nickel a pop.

Side note: Anyone else notice that said brown paper bags are getting increasingly smaller as time goes on or it's just me? The cashier at Market of Choice didn't seem so enthused with that question last week.

Being environmentally aware doesn't hurt or stifle anyone; it is actually a practice or ideology which encourages bettering our world through caring for it, a benefit for all people. Pick up your trash. Recycle a container. Is it really that

hard to decipher between which bin you should place your glass bottles?



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by Kylie Stiglbauer - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 11:52 PM

I really liked the picture you chose to go along with your post. It really emphasized the ideal that many environmentalists are striving for. For these people their ideals are not extreme or outrageous. They are simply striving for a world that does not have the corruption of companies that use harmful products simply to save money. Environmentalists want the world to be seen for its natural beauty. They are protecting it because the way that humans are currently acting makes it difficult for the environment to flourish on its own. I really applaud the people that can stand up for what they believe in and protect it at all costs. It is these people that will make a difference in the world.

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Finding religion in nature.

by Kylie Stiglbauer - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 12:43 PM

The idea of environmentalism as a religion may seem far fetched and peculiar to

some, but after reading this article, I can clearly see where the argument can be made. Many people think of religions as simply ones that are clearly identified in textbooks, such as Christianity or Buddhism. I would say that Environmentalism is a religion in sense that it consumes an individual's life. The fact that it has a "holy" day known as earth day just solidifies this idea and gives a stronger connection between the two. Religion and it's definition are both interesting things. It seems that many things today could be classified as a religion due to the way in which the followers of said things let their lives be completely control their lives. Environmentalism may not seem to be one of those things at first glance, but after a closer look, one can see just how big of an impact it has. It is one of those things that has followers who are committed to the cause and change their whole lifestyle just to accommodate it. In this way it can be compared to a religion as well as show how religion and society work together

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Finding religion in nature.



by James Price - Friday, May 30, 2014, 1:11 AM

While I agree with you that many comparisons can be made between environmentalism and other religions, to equate the two might be a stretch. For me environmentalism more closely resembles an ideology which is defined in Wikipedia as a "set of conscious and unconscious ideas that constitute one's goals, expectations, and actions. An ideology is a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things,as in several philosophical tendencies, or a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society (a "received consciousness" or product of socialization)" (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology). For me the creation of Earth Day does little in helping show that environmentalism is a religion because we have "day" for everything. We have days for people (Father's Day and Mother's Day), days for important figures (President's Day and Martin Luther King Day), and days that hold special significance for particular groups of people (Earth Day, Memorial Day, and Gay Pride Day). Just because a particular movement gets a "holy" day doesn't mean they are automatically a religion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Finding religion in nature.



by Kylie Stiglbauer - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 2:37 PM

I agree with you in saying that this resembles an ideology. Making something a religion would require a "higher power" along with many other aspects. My argument was made simply to show just how similar the two are. I don't see Environmentalism being put under the category of religion with Christianity anytime soon, but I do see its prominent influence as

something that will affect many people. I was simply arguing with what the argument had to say and trying to picture if Environmentalism could actually be classified with other religions. I believe the points you displayed were also valid and also an option for this movement(in terms of a classification).

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Environmentalism as Religion

by Britney Painter - Friday, May 30, 2014, 8:16 PM

I never thought going green could be a religion until he matched up all those points(holy day-earth day,etc) and then I laughed out loud, realizing that it was completely a religion and that you got funny looks sometimes if you didn't follow it like everyone else. I think that it might gradually get more aggressive like they were in the commercial. When I lived in California, we never had people that were always trying to get the most organic food or making sure you put your trash in the right bin out of seven different bins, and I didn't notice that Oregon was kind of this way til I started to go to Lane and started to watch Portlandia. People have become so obsessed with it almost and it always seems like a competition on who can be more green, and they've lost the whole reason that we supposedly do it for.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Is Environmentalism truly a Religion?

by Roy Fernandez - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:14 PM

Though I agree that environmentalism does have some key traits of a religion, such as Earth day being considered a holy day and going green not merely being a belief, but a lifestyle, I disagree of it being considered a legitimate religion. In his article, Rubin claims that environmentalists "may be the first to build shrines to garbage," but Greenism lacks a true belief in a higher power. According to Dictionary.com, religion is defined as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency. Rubin fails to mention environmentalism's lack of belief in a higher power and creation theory; characteristics that in my opinion, are vital to the makeup of a religion.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by Karla Miller - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:30 PM

I compared myself to you, on the fact that you moved from California. I grew up

in Northern Idaho(and yes a person uses capitals for Northern and Southern when you say what part you grew up in) and going green was not even mentioned. My dad and three brothers have been loggers for years. If they lived here, they would have been out of work a long time ago. Oregon is more liberal and conservsation aware than where the rest of my family lives. When I was a teenager the threat was nuclear war, not global warming.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The Green Presence

by Roy Fernandez - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:55 PM

I also know exactly where you're coming from when it comes to other places not being as green as others. While going to school in San Diego, I noticed that no one gave recycling much thought. At the time it didn't seem like a big deal, but when I got back home to Southern Oregon, I realized how present environmentalism is in our every day lives here. Especially in Ashland OR, where I previously worked. They also have a plastic bag ban and they are HUGE on going green. They also have the "road diet" going on and there are multiple cans for trash and recycling as well. This presents the idea of environmentalism being a culture, on more than just an American level. It's become where certain states and cities are more green or environmentally oriented than others. Another question is whether the correlation between a state that is literally greener than another, such as Oregon in comparison to California, is a factor/cause of environmentalism.

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Ultimate Recyclers: These guys will help you with your recycling...

by Britney Painter - Friday, May 30, 2014, 8:32 PM

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd8rISuPAK8>

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Environmentalism vs. Capitalism

by Roy Fernandez - Friday, May 30, 2014, 9:22 PM

In my opinion, as long as products such as plastic, the incandescent bulb, and Styrofoam are sold, the issue of environmentalism is unlikely to be resolved. Because as long as these things are available to the people, they will keep being bought and used by those who prefer them as the cheap, alternative option. The reason why companies such as Hefty, Solo, and General Electric are still in business is because people continue to buy their products. And as I mentioned, the most effective way to end the conflict between environmentalists and those who that are not so green would be to eliminate companies such as these— or take more drastic measures such as the ones depicted in the commercial. But being a free, capitalist society, this would not be possible. The only solution would be so many people going green that eventually, these companies would go out of business and these products would no longer be available. However, the unlikelihood of that happening is clear.

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Re: Environmentalism vs. Capitalism

by Dalyn Stram - Friday, May 30, 2014, 10:58 PM

Sadly, we're already seeing some of this market manipulation by our government. Our govt spent (wasted in a more accurate term) billions of taxpayer money on things like solar energy, which went on to produce absolutely nothing. Some of the companies our govt gave money to have gone out of business altogether. Our govt simply called it "stimulus" and got away with wasting our money. And have you heard of carbon taxes? Some effort is already underway to stifle certain companies that produce more Co2 by taxing them for the Co2 they emit. This is our government overstepping their bounds and overregulating the free (not so free anymore) market by picking winners and losers, giving tax breaks to certain companies which they favor, and slamming other companies which they don't favor so much with carbon taxes. It's already happening, and it's scary to think of the power the government could posses within the market down the road if they go unchecked.

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Re: Environmentalism vs. Capitalism

by Karla Miller - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:54 PM

The issue of environmentalism will never be resolved. The problem is that some thing gets fixed or legislation get put in place and the fanatics come up with another reason that we are doing something wrong. The light bulb issue is the biggest one for me. If you break a LED or other bulb in your house, you need to pay for the clean-up. A person has to call for a HAZMET team in and pay about \$ 4000 for the service. This is the reason I don't use other lightbulbs.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Environmentalism vs. Capitalism

by Kylie Stiglbauer - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 11:01 PM

I agree that the only way to solve the environmental problems would be to get rid of products like these. I would say that that not only would it be impossible for us to get rid of these products because of our country being capitalist and the fact that so many big businesses use this product and supply them to so many companies. It is also impossible because of our reliance on these products. Many companies use these types of these things of in order to cut back on costs. There are far too many products made with these harmful products that it would be impossible to get rid of plastics and Styrofoam products. Other things like our reliance on fossil fuels and coal would not be a feasible thing to do. Not only in our country, but in the world it would be to hard to get rid of our reliance on these products, unless we are able to find green solutions that work as well as the harmful option. Environmentalism works against these products in an attempt to change the products that are prevalent in society by implementing new products that aren't as harmful to society. Unfortunately there is a long road ahead for the environmentalism movement. If measures continue however I believe that we can make improvements to our environment.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Environmentalism is a lifestyle

by Hao Nguyen - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 11:06 PM

In my opinion, environmentalism is not only a religion, but it's also a culture and lifestyle. The way you act to the environment is one of the way to show off who you are, how your background is. For instance, high education people never litter on the street.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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