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THE ENVIRONMENT CONTAINS NO “RIGHT” AND “LEFT”:
NAVIGATING IDEOLOGY, RELIGION, AND VIEWS OF THE ENVIRONMENT
IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY

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Abstract: This paper explores, analyzes, and investigates how the political ideologies of American citizens and their elected representatives interact with views put forth by corporate media to help shape various ideologies about environmental issues in contemporary America. I specifically enter into this area of exploration by focusing on one variable, the variable of religion. Therefore, in this paper I seek to help elucidate broad patterns and understandings of environmental issues in America as they have developed since the beginning of the modern environmental movement, focusing especially on the role religion has and is playing in this process. The paper is driven by identifying two major groups in American society, Liberal/nurturant parent, and Conservative/strict father, and how the core values of each group influence their ideological approaches to religion, environmentalism, and politics. The investigation is undertaken in the larger context of worsening climate change, suggesting that the interplay of religious, political, and environmentalist ideology of the past few decades presages further ideological shifts in the coming decades about our changing biosphere.

Key Words: ideology, environmentalism, religion, ecology, framing, social construct, climate change, conflict

I sit to type this paper over the 2012 Autumnal Equinox weekend, pausing to reflect on the cyclical change from days of longer sunlight to days of longer night. At the same time, members of American society are doing their own reflecting, becoming more engrossed with the home stretch of the 2012 Presidential election. The blogosphere is working overtime to give "real time" updates and analyses of blunders and there are broken promises, charges levied, opportunities missed, and daily polling results. There are also new series on television vying for attention; both College and Professional football have resumed; Hollywood is offering seasonal blockbusters; and the economy, always the economy, dominates the concern of average American voters and citizens. This reality in which I undertake my own professional effort can be read backwards, exchanging the candidate's names every four years, for decades, with the onset of the internet and cable news being the main difference. Yet, the complexities of approximately 330 million people being centrifuged around American politics and forms of media belies a major shift that is underway; a shift that begins in earnest in the early 1900s and which is still largely off of the American radar. It is a shift that, indeed, reflects some heightened concern, as will be explored in this paper, but the larger pattern is still apparently yet to be taken seriously. This is the literal shift of the earth's climate and the planet's attendant biogeochemical cycles.

With the onset of the Industrial Revolution and the move towards systematically transporting *Homo sapiens* in America by the combustion engine of the automobile, humans (and historically, Americans, as we are responsible for approximately 25 percent of the world's consumption and its biggest per capita user of nonrenewable forms of climate-changing energy) have entered into a Faustian bargain with ecosystem functions that dwarf our understanding in their complexity and interlinked operations. The greenhouse gases humans have and are releasing into the atmospheric and oceanic commons are driving the earth through a variety of interlinked tipping points. Two are of major concern, and highlight the severity of the problem from an evolutionary survival fitness perspective: (1) the oceans are rapidly becoming more acidic, threatening the collapse of almost every major aquatic food chain, possibly within the coming twenty years; and (2) the rapid summer melting of the North Pole ice cap in the Northern Hemisphere's summer months. Predictions of this ice cap's viability from climate models just ten years ago suggested that climate change would not prevent severe threats to the North Pole's ice coverage until the turn of the century, in 2100. It turns out that these models have required revamping in their algorithms, as the rate of ice loss is surprising even experts who study the ice for a living. Not even a month ago, one scientist predicted at least one ice-free day in the summer

within ten years. A few days ago, another scientist upped the prediction by half, saying we would experience ice free days within four to five years.¹

Just as there is a lag time with carbon dioxide emissions and their impact on trapping the heat of the sun, so there is a lag time in generating science about these impacts, and distilling this science into policy recommendations. There appears to be even more lag time in the average American (politicians included) taking heed of the science and grappling with its implications. Furthermore, over the past decade, there has been a systematic effort to debunk this science, leading to a counter-intuitive (from an evolutionary survival perspective) entrenchment of denying that both this loss of ice and the changing of the ocean's pH level are anthropogenic in origin.

The responses in America to these and other environmental issues are the subject of this paper. What I aim to explore, analyze, and investigate is how the political ideologies of American citizens and their elected representatives interact with views put forth by corporate media to help shape various ideologies about environmental issues in contemporary America. Furthermore, I specifically enter into this area of exploration by focusing on one variable, the variable of religion. As someone trained in the study of religion and nature, I am part of a subfield of religious studies where my colleagues and I seek to understand the varying ways that religious beliefs, customs, actions, and institutional teachings and development have shaped the earth's various ecosystems, past and present. I also study the corollary of this: how the earth's ecosystems (and now, importantly, climate cycles) might influence how religious beliefs, cosmologies, emotions, practices, and teachings are generated and transmitted. Therefore, in this paper I seek to help elucidate broad patterns and understandings of environmental issues in America as they have developed since the beginning of the modern environmental movement, focusing especially on the role religion has and is playing in this process.² Constraints on time and space necessitates that this analysis will focus on broad trajectories in American politics, ideologies, and religious belief over this time, focusing more on macro-level trends than on particular groups of people and regions of the country, although ideally such nuance is needed in any study of religion-environmental interactions.

Religion and Ideology

I approach the study of religion from a social constructivist lens. This means I take seriously the insight that, “whatever else religion is, it is a social phenomenon. Regardless of whether religious beliefs and experiences actually relate to supernatural, superempirical or noumenal realities, religion is expressed by means of human ideas, symbols, feelings,

practices and organisations [sic]. These expressions are the products of social interactions, structures and processes and, in turn, they influence social life and cultural meanings to varying degrees."³ Here religion is not conceived as a reified, *sui generis* category, but as a non-native concept created by scholars to help understand how the contested (by "insiders" and "outsiders" both) domain of religion shapes and is shaped by political, cultural, economic, historical, and environmental processes. In other words, religion is a "contact sport" mediated by larger fault lines and trajectories of a society, such that, "Religion does not 'do' anything by itself. It does not have agency."⁴ From this perspective, it is the animating concerns and ideologies of the people who create religious beliefs, practices, and institutional mores and doctrines that matter and become the appropriate object of theoretical study, and not a "pure" realm of religion.

Rather, because environmental issues are part of the fabric of American society, it can be assumed the concerns motivated by these issues, whatever these may be, will feed into the social construction of religion. In this paper I want to tease out some of this fabric to show how environmental issues are shaping religious production in American society. In this process it is important to recognize what Ninian Smart calls "syncretistic realism," or "the fact that any religious or worldview movement has an ideology which is a mixture of things."⁵ What I hope to show is that modern American views about both the environment and religion are invariably shaped by various political, religious, environmental, and economic ideologies, or "things." Thus, to understand the role environmental views play in the religious sphere of contemporary American society, we need to grasp how such views result from the process of social construction, where the "environment" embodies polysemous meanings in various religious and social imaginings.

What might be an operational definition of "ideology," given these are some of the "things" that help construct religions? We may posit that an ideology is a fairly rigid view of the world (although one that contains permeable boundaries) that helps a person or group of people make sense of and navigate a world that is both indifferent to them and yet that is of their own making. An ideology will contain implicit and explicit value statements and hierarchies; views of political right and wrong; views of economic right and wrong; in-group and out-group differentiations based on class, race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality; and beliefs about norms, duties, freedoms, and expectations of self and others, from local to national to international levels. Many people tend to hold a few core ideologies, be they religious, economic, environmental, and political, although these can and in fact do internally compete and conflict, depending on context. Nonetheless, most people try to remain in "paradigm isolation," where "the tendency of proponents of a given paradigm [is] to elevate their tenets over and against the tenets of other

paradigms."⁶ In regards to the public domain, ideologies often conflict due to their nature: most people understand and shape their own ideologies in opposition to other, competing ideologies. Nonetheless, "our contemporary ideas (and beliefs and values) are the product of not only ideologies of the past but also the substratum of socioeconomic conditions and trends that shape our life circumstances [, the] material conditions such as level of wealth or poverty, access to employment and resources, which themselves are influenced by socioeconomic trends such as rapid population growth, economic globalization, and democratization, among others."⁷ Therefore, like religion, our ideologies are constructed, representing influences of peer group networks, family upbringing, geographic location, religious heritage, and the intellectual heritage of the society (or a subset of society) at large.

The scholar Gary Lease goes as far as to collapse religion and ideology in terms of how they socially function. As he explains, "Religions, as specific forms of ideology, are culture-wide interpretations or code applications, dedicated to making manifest the latent meaning behind the text of the culture at large; myths, particularly in their manifestation within a religion, are the governing tools or codes by which this production is performed."⁸ What I am soon to explore are some of the key guiding myths in American society about values, politics, and the environment, as I try to grapple with how these influence religious views about nature in contemporary America. We must also note that these myths compete and interact, and also motivate American citizens in spheres religious, political, and economic, so that "ideology is crucially important even when a proponent of an environmental view may not display awareness of his or her own ideology, which is often the case."⁹

Environmentalism and Politics

While there have been recent ebbs and flows in American politics, noticeably of the Green Party (most especially under Ralph Nader in 2000), libertarianism (with crossovers into the current Tea Party), and a variety of independents (Ross Perot), most Americans politically align with and self-identify as either Democrat or Republican. These parties tend to be mapped onto a larger spectrum of political theory, Liberalism and Conservatism. However, the political scientist Morgan Marietta cautions us to not see these latter categories on a left-right dualism, because these are not opposite political ideologies. They are instead "two distinct worldviews that emphasize different assumptions about how the world works, different core values, and very different visions of a good society."¹⁰ Furthermore, we should expect, and indeed do witness, religious ideology informing where an American might identify along this continuum.

Marietta breaks down this continuum, explaining key views that motivate the two camps. They are as follows:

LIBERALISM (Social Justice)	CONSERVATISM (Ordered Liberty)
Human nature is good--government can help perfect our innate goodness	Cautious balancing of extremes for order--humans are problematic and democracy fragile
Pacifism, internationalism	Militarism, nationalism
Tolerance and equality--group orientation, anti-foundationalism	Individual liberty (yet need for social glue, given human shortcomings) and Patriotism
Responsive Government	Property/Work Ethic
Secularism	Religion
Worried about oppression, openness	Tradition
Central Motivation: Guilt--perfecting society	Central Motivation: Fear--protecting society

For Marietta, both groups mobilize these ideological tropes when thinking about how to govern, order, and structure society to deal with issues like the economy, national defense, and the environment. Thus, Conservatives in the realm of National Defense are more militaristic, worried about aggressive responses to terrorism, and advocate for more military spending; in the realm of social issues, they privilege religiosity and have strong views against abortion and gay marriage based on religious reasons; they are very individualistic in economic matters, with many worried about intrusions of the welfare state; and they embrace traditional values and nationalism. Conservatives believe it is possible to know good from bad and right from wrong but it is not possible to know the consequences for government action, hence their wariness about Big Government. Lastly, “Religion leads to social conservatism more often than the reverse.”¹¹

Liberals, on the other hand, are united under the larger heading of justice for all in society, both nationally and internationally. They tend to view consensus coalitions and peace keeping as the goal of National Defense; are more progressive with social issues and are typically supportive of feminist, race, class, and gender issues; feel more wedded to the social contract where the government should help those lower in society; and are much more likely to want a split between religion and politics. Lastly, since the 1970s they have historically been supportive of environmental causes, although it is important to recognize that many of America’s foundational environmental laws of the 1960s and 1970s were enacted by Nixon’s Republican Administration (which suggests that Republicans have developed different ideological responses to environmental issues since then, which will be explored below). Lastly, Liberals believe it is possible to know how to improve society, but that it is not possible to know absolute values. Overall, Conservatives tend to

compare America to other countries and to the past, and feel that America is a land of great opportunity (especially economic). Liberals are more ideologically concerned with a utopic, ideal state and what America should be.¹²

What is a key point to understand about this continuum is that Liberals and Conservatives do not see the same threats and so ask different questions and have different solutions to their core ideological concerns. This has important implications for the perceived ideological role of religion and its place in the social and political sphere, and also about ideological views of the planet, its resources, consensus environmental science, and environmental issues.

The above ideological concerns are found mirrored in the work of the cognitive and linguistic scientist, George Lakoff. Lakoff states that our brains evolved to be motivated by metaphor and framing, so that when we hear a frame, certain thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and ideologies are elicited. Lakoff's research suggests that the two biggest frames operative in American society today are similar to the values and premises shared above. For Lakoff, the Conservative frame operates under what he calls a “Strict Father” model of reality, where things are seen in black and white and a strong father figure is needed to protect his family/society from perceived ills. Within this view, private property and hard work are seen as important goods, and if bad things happen to someone, it is because of their own moral failings. This frame triggers distrust of government intervention and triggers faith in market mechanisms, and the environment is not taken to be a key concern except in that it is seen as a source of resources for economic growth. The Liberal frame is what he calls a “Nurturant Parent” model of reality, one that is accepting of diversity and is more tolerant, and where government is needed to help uplift all of society and to protect those weakest in society, including the environment.¹³

How issues are framed, and what model this framing triggers, are important in motivating responses to current societal issues and this process is heavily determined by pre-existing religious and political ideologies. Since most of us operate under ideologies, new data tends to be interpreted through these lenses, so that as Lakoff points out, learning new facts does not mean a person will change their worldview or ideology. One reason is that it is hard to physically rewire our synapses, which is what is required on a biological level to think differently. Another is that research suggests we are more wedded to our ideological frames than we are to being open to new data, especially if this data conflicts with our ideologies.

This dynamic raises a key question: how might emerging environmental findings fit into pre-existing political and religious ideologies? Anthony Leiserowitz published a 2005 study that addressed this question, and found that when it comes to risk perception about

environmental problems, American citizens are members of "Interpretive Communities."¹⁴ These communities tend to share demographics, frames, and perceptions of risk. Leiserowitz found that those we would consider to be "strict father" Conservatives tended to be climate change naysayers. These members of American society typically are Republican, white, male, very religious, and hold anti-environmental and pro-individual, pro-hierarchical attitudes and they receive much of their news from the radio (such as Rush Limbaugh and religious/Conservative radio shows). Those in this group reject the perceived danger of climate change because they believe any warming is a result of natural cycles; they believe alarmist studies are being pushed by a liberal media; they distrust science; they believe researchers are making up data to receive funding; and/or they are in flat denial. Leiserowitz suggests that about seven percent of Americans fall in this group, but this group is disproportionately represented in state and federal politics, is active in voting, and has ties to media ownership.

On the other end of the spectrum of his findings is an interpretive community that he labels as "alarmists," a group that represents about eleven percent of Americans.¹⁵ Their demographics strongly match up with Liberal political ideologies, from supporting governmental policies to mitigate anthropogenic climate change, to engaging in lifestyle changes that are more environmentally friendly, to feelings of openness and trust towards fellow citizens. Leiserowitz's study suggests that more Americans tend to have alarmist-sympathies than do naysayer-sympathies, but the larger point is that as environmental findings enter into the public domain, they are interpreted into pre-existing ideological frames and interpretive communities.

Moreover, such frames are strongly wedded to religious beliefs and identity. This is a result of a unique American trajectory in regards to religious development, dating back to the First Amendment that created a free marketplace of non-state sanctioned religious ideas, practices, and institutional creativity that is still vibrant today. With the onset of modernity, dated to Darwin's theory of evolution, published in 1859, but also other late 1800 currents like the rise of the academic study of religion, industrialization, the rise of psychology and anthropology and sociology, and increasing sophistication in science and technology, came a fundamentalist backlash. In America, this backlash was wedded to the privileging of the heart over the head, or emotion over the intellect, that emerged from the Great Awakenings, a history that influences current distrust of science and that fuels the perception that climate scientists are elite, liberal secularists looking for money. The backlash was also fueled by the 1910-195 release of *The Fundamentals*, such that the stage was set for the Scopes Monkey Trial. Although religion won the decision, modernity won the larger battle, and the split between private religion and public citizenship gained speed through the "Protestant-Catholic-Jew" march

towards suburbia of the 1950s. This march was coupled with increased levels of consumption as the Baby Boomer generation was born after the horrors of the Great Depression and WWII, but was equally met by a migration to northern cities by blacks who were the victims of racism throughout America, and by the opening of national borders to a new wave of immigrants in 1965.

These demographic trends coalesced in 1960s liberation and identity politics: Vatican II in the Catholic Church; feminism; gay rights; Native American rights; the Civil Rights; the rise of environmentalism—all gained a foothold in the 1960s, and coupled with the Summer of Love and Vietnam Protests, the stage was set for the 1970s. The stage, that is, for the reinsertion of religious ideology into political ideology, a stage famously set by Jerry Falwell and the rise of the Moral Majority.

Falwell’s strategic merging of religion and politics drastically altered America’s social and political landscape, especially when Reagan catered to their votes. The Moral Majority represents the “ideal type” of the Conservative “strict father,” including a strong antipathy towards environmental issues and environmentalists, the latter who are often seen as being pagans and dangerous. Conservative, “strict father” Christianity has grown over the ensuing decades in power, influence, and political clout, with their key concerns being “bible, guns, and the market.”¹⁶ A key tenant of current religious Conservative ideology is that climate change is a hoax and not happening, and if there is any change, it is not human in origin.

This merging of Conservative political views and “strict father” religion actually cuts across religious lines, creating a fracture within American society between “right” and “left,” with religious, liberal, “nurturant parent” citizens being on the left. The religious historian Robert Wuthnow expertly traces this fraction back to its origins and points out that the more these two sides come into contact, the more they dislike each other.¹⁷ This is reflected in the extreme level of partisanship in contemporary American society (see below), and has direct implications for religious ideology about environmental issues in American society.

Views of Environmental Issues

America has its own unique ideologies about nature, and equally its own varieties of environmentalisms. The historically dominant strand of American environmentalism is concerned with protection of the environment, including wilderness areas. The concern with protecting nature evolved out of debates in the late 1800s around either conservation, as represented by Gifford Pinchot, or preservation, as represented by John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club. This debate occurred in the era after Henry David Thoreau, and at a time when both Yellowstone and Yosemite had been made into parks. Although Pinchot’s

conservationism was immediately favored, Muir’s legacy of preservation of nature for its intrinsic value, coupled with the rise of the science of ecology and the land ethic of Aldo Leopold, percolated into the modern-day environmental movement that properly began with Rachel Carson’s 1962 publication of *Silent Spring*.

Carson’s book documented the environmental ills of indiscriminate spraying of DDT on mosquitos in America, where the poison was making the shells of songbirds grow thinner so that less and less birds were hatching, leading to the possibility of a silent spring. The use of DDT, a technology that developed during WW II, signaled a broader view toward nature that was prevalent in America during the 1950s and 60s: the faith in American enterprise, progress, and material abundance. Such faith led to the Cornucopian vs. Cassandra debate that has in large part defined American ideologies about living within environmental limits or having faith that technology and ingenuity will counter any limits the environment may set on human growth. “First wave” environmentalists in the 60s and 70s saw it as their duty to protect what remained of America’s natural spaces from the perceived ills of industrialization, while their detractors labeled them as luddites, misanthropes, and afraid of progress.

Of key import is that Muir, Leopold, and other leading voices of the nascent environmental movement, voices like Edward Abbey, Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner, and others, were influenced by biblical and then Romantic notions of wilderness. In this view, pristine nature, devoid of the presence of humans except as visitors, became seen as a repository of the sublime, where (wealthy, urban, Caucasian) Americans could escape the ills of modernity and urbanization and the other trappings of a “fallen” society.¹⁸ Such views of nature and humans motivated the early environmental movement, including those who started Earth Day in 1970, and found its apotheosis in the mid-1980s views of various Earth Firsters. The latter saw themselves as ecowarriors battling the hostile takeover of public and private lands by the Wise Use movement and Reagan’s Department of the Interior, whom Earth First! saw as terrorists (while Reagan’s administration saw Earth First! members as ecoterrorists). Meanwhile, the publication of the Brundtland Report’s *Our Common Future* in 1987 helped create the sustainability movement. Advocates of sustainability share the concern for protecting the environment from the footprint of human lifeways, but are also concerned about social justice and economic justice; advocates explain that these three concerns—environmental, social, and economic—make up the three legs of sustainability.

Taken together this means that there are divisions and fault lines within contemporary American ideologies about environmental issues. Many of these have been a response to the movement’s early concern with environmental protection, which later sympathetic critics felt was at the

expense of concern for human livelihoods.¹⁹ Thus, although many Americans still think of protecting nature from pollution and creating parks and wilderness areas when they hear the term "environmentalism," the movement has diversified to include concerns about conservation of biodiversity, urban ecological citizenship, environmental justice, and environmental racism.

William Sunderlin groups these and other American ideologies about the environment into three main classes. The first is civic environmentalism, which is a left of center, class oriented view about environmentalism, where citizens are motivated to protect the environment against the actions and interests of private enterprise. Broadly speaking, those in this group would be liberals/nurturant parents/alarmists. The second class is state environmentalism, where if a state/country has high GDP, is fairly democratic, and has less debt, then it will most likely be more willing to pursue state policies and enter into international treaties in order to protect the environment. The final group he calls corporate environmentalism. This is the response of industry and the managerial class of society to environmental issues and is in large part a reaction to civic environmentalism. Corporate environmentalism attempts to find "win-win" solutions, where the bottom line of industry is not compromised yet the environment is protected, either through more efficient technologies or the willingness to pay fines. If Conservatives/strict father citizens support environmental issues, it traditionally has been through this managerial approach, an approach that is consistent with Conservative beliefs in technology and minimum governmental intervention into the workings of private property and the economy.²⁰

Environmental ideologies have made an impact on American policy in a variety of ways, especially in the executive branch. This can be seen in the creation of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts, and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as other environmental laws passed in the 1960s and 70s, with many of these created by Nixon's administration. We also see the impact of environmental concern on the presidency of Jimmy Carter, who attempted to deal with the OPEC oil embargo by advocating for the development of alternative energy. Carter went so far as to have solar panels installed on the roof of the White House. This view of "greening" America was quickly rescinded by Ronald Reagan and followed by George Bush, Sr., who both trumped a Wise-Use approach that critics labeled as being favorable to the interests of big corporations at the expense of environmental health and safety. Bush, Sr. was the only leader of a Global North country who did not attend the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, a stance towards global environmental issues that was followed by his son during his administration. George Bush Jr.'s time as president may quite possibly bequeath upon him from future generations the charge as having the worst environmental administration

ever. This is because his administration concertedly doctored and discredited the reports and findings of government employees and scientists who tried to raise alarm about climate change, helping create the fracture between Conservatives and Liberals over views about climate change. Compared to this, the Bill Clinton years seem more progressive, yet Clinton signed NAFTA, thus speeding up consumerism and globalization. Al Gore famously wrote *Earth in Balance*, and he has spent the years after winning the popular vote in 2000 advocating on behalf of stopping climate change. This work saw the release of his award winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, which helped raise consciousness about climate change and won him and the International Panel on Climate Change a Nobel Peace Prize. Yet Gore has been vilified by Conservatives and politicians on the right, and this post hoc demonization has only contributed to the cleavage in American society around views about climate change.

Most recently, John McCain and Sarah Palin were buoyed by chants of “Drill, baby drill!” during the 2008 Republican National Convention, while the 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney has backtracked on prior views about climate change. While Governor of Massachusetts, he accepted anthropogenic climate change, but at this point denies it is caused by human activity. The Obama Administration, meanwhile, accepts that climate change is not a “hoax,” as he stated during the Democratic National Convention in 2012, and he advocates an “all of the above” approach to weaning America off of foreign oil. This approach includes developing domestic coal, gas, and oil, coupled with aggressive pursuit of renewable forms of energy and the creation of a green energy infrastructure. Although the effort to move America away from foreign oil is laudable, many critics point out that this approach will continue to release climate changing ghgs in massive quantities.

We can gain a broader understanding of American views about the environment via poll results. Most of the data I am about to summarize comes from the Pew Research Center, one of America’s most trusted polling outfits. I present the results below in a chart, giving the year the question was asked, how many people were asked, the question itself, and then the results. The data is then summarized and analyzed below the chart.

2006/N: 648	Have you heard of the environmental problem of global warming?	Yes: 91	No: 9 ²¹
2006/N: 410	How much do you personally worry about global warming?	A great deal: 19% A fair amount: 34% Don’t know/Refused: 1%	Only a little: 26% Not at all: 21% ²²

2007/N:771	Is global climate change a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem?	Very serious: 47% Somewhat serious: 28% DK/Refused: 2%	Not too serious: 13% Not a problem: 9% ²³
2010/N: 771	Same question as above	Very serious: 37% Somewhat serious: 30% DK/Refused: 2%	Not too serious: 15% Not a problem: 13% ²⁴
2010/N: 900	People should be willing to pay higher prices in order to address global climate change?	Agree: 38% DK/Refused: 4%	Disagree: 58% ²⁵
2008/N: 1123	Which one, if any, is hurting the world's environment the most: India, Germany, China, Brazil, Japan, the United States, or Russia?	India: 4% Germany: 0% China: 40% Brazil: 3% None/other/DK/Refused: 20%	Japan: 5% United States: 22% Russia: 7% ²⁶
2012/N: 1405	Has Obama gotten the United States to take significant measures to control global climate change?	Has: 35% DK/Refused: 14%	Has not: 51% ²⁷
2002/N: 907	Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs.	Completely agree: 25% Mostly agree: 44% DK/Refused: 4%	Mostly disagree: 18% Completely disagree: 8% ²⁸
2010/N: 907	Same question as above	Completely agree: 19% Mostly agree: 43% DK/Refused: 3%	Mostly disagree: 23% Completely disagree: 11%
2012/N: 3,130	Do you think the federal government should or should not regulate the release of greenhouse gases...in an effort to reduce global warming?	Should: 74% Unsure: 5%	Should not: 21% ²⁹

Same poll as above	Compared to 10 or so years ago, do you think the natural environment in the world today is:	Better: 10% Worse: 58% About the same: 31% Unsure: 2%	
Same poll	Over this period of time, do you think human activity had a mostly positive or mostly negative effect on the natural environment?	Positive: 26% Negative: 66% Unsure: 8%	

The above sample size, taken from surveys dating over the last ten years, suggests two things: a majority of Americans are aware that the environment has been and is being damaged, although many blame China for this; and that Americans are aware about climate change, but there has been a shift away from taking it seriously to seeing it as not being a serious problem, including a shift away from supporting government policies to mitigate climate change, especially if these policies were to impact economic growth. Nonetheless, the majority of Americans from these polls do think climate change is a problem, notice a worsening trend in the state of the planet’s health, and in the 2012 poll, a vast majority actually want the government to play a much more proactive role in regulating greenhouse gases. This does not reflect the actual actions of the U.S. Government in terms of international climate meetings, where to date we have not signed any binding treaties that would require a reduction in ghg emissions at a national level.

What might be a reason that some Americans take climate change less seriously than a few years ago, even though all the consensus science points to climate change and the effects of climate change on the earth getting worse? Here we return to ideology, both political and, quite possibly, religious. Politically, government regulation is seen as undesirable by Conservatives/strict father/naysayers, so we can expect the survey results above should correlate with these citizens. Related to this is a very large, systematic effort, funded by many wealthy Republicans, including especially the billionaire Koch Brothers, to disparage climate scientists, their efforts, and the science they release. This effort, funded at the cost of millions of dollars, probably plays a considerable role in shifting the views of Conservatives/strict

father/naysayers away from taking climate change seriously. If their frame is to already distrust Big Government, to believe in the workings of the free market, and to have a distrust of intellectuals and scientists, and if they receive their news from Conservative news sources like Fox or Rush Limbaugh, then we should expect to see a shift in Conservative circles away from taking environmental issues seriously. This has indeed been the Conservative position going back to Reagan and the rise of the Moral Majority. Pace Lakoff that we tend to interpret new facts through existing frames, and if citizens are getting their information through sources that only reinforce their frames and these sources are set out to discredit climate science, then the above shift in environmental views of some Americans is predictable.

Meanwhile, Liberals/nurturant parents tend to think in terms of justice and equality, and climate change and environmental issues broadly typically fall under this purview of values. There is also the long history of support within Liberal circles for environmental issues, especially via the ideology of civic environmentalism. Liberals also voted for either Gore or Nader, and many are indeed receptive to Gore's position on climate change, so most likely would have seen *An Inconvenient Truth* and would fit the data presented therein into their already existing Liberal/nurturant parent frames.

The Pew Research Center released a telling assessment about America's conflicting ideologies, given the results of their comprehensive polling in 2012. What they found is that Americans are more polarized along party lines right now than at any other time over the last twenty five years, with the partisan gap growing from 10% in 1987 to 18% in 2012. A major finding emerged from their summary, which is that, "On environmental matters, stark differences have appeared. Pew first asked questions about the environment in its values survey two decades ago. Then, almost no partisan difference showed up. In the 2003 survey, however, Republicans and Democrats averaged a 13-point difference. In the latest survey, the gap over environmental protection has grown into a chasm 46 points wide."³⁰

There are divisions even within parties, however, and especially for Republicans. This is seen in Pew results that asked questions about clean energy as compared to fossil fuels. Overall, Republicans have shifted from being about 50/50 in regards to choosing to pursue alternative energy as compared to domestic production of fossil fuels, to now being 65% for traditional sources against 26% for alternative. However, much of this shift has occurred in white Republican males over the age of 50. One analyst concludes that, "While there's clearly a partisan gap between Republicans and Democrats over fossil fuel production, this poll shows that it's really the Tea Party crowd that is the primary factor widening that gap. Support for fossil fuels hasn't grown nearly as much among moderate Republicans and Independents."³¹

A more telling split within Conservative/Republican/strict father citizens in regards to environmental views is seen in Pew poll results that date back to 2009. These polls found that from 2009 to 2011, moderate or liberal Republicans who believe there is solid evidence (as worded by Pew) that the earth is warming rose from 41% to 63%. At the same time, Independents went from 56% to 63%, with 39% of Independents now claiming that global warming is a very serious problem. One liberal analyst views these numbers as being representative of, "the extremists aligned with the Tea Party crowd who are in extreme denial and haven't budged in their views. No doubt that is because they get so much of their news from Fox News, Rush Limbaugh, and other media outlets that spread the disinformation developed and pushed by the Koch brothers," noting that the question of climate change has become a modern day wedge issue, even within the Republican party.³²

Academic analyses of American views about climate change also notice a deepening divide along party lines. One research team studied results from ten years of Gallup Polls and found that "The rightward shift in U.S. political culture that paralleled the Republican Revolution increased opportunities for the conservative movement to oppose climate science and policy via mainstream media. Conservative think tanks and their allied climate change contrarians successfully exploited American news media norms—especially the 'balancing norm,' or the equation of 'objectivity' with presenting 'both sides of the story'—to achieve a level of media visibility incommensurate with the limited scientific credibility of their claims."³³ They conclude by pointing out that "forces of anti-reflexivity, such as the American conservative movement, that defend the current economic system by challenging critiques mounted by the scientific community, environmentalists, and liberal policymakers" will most likely hamper America's ability to reach policy goals on dealing with climate change.³⁴

We want to keep in mind that with any polling data, complexity is lost and a poll only captures a moment in time. For example, if the North Pole is ice free in the summer within five to ten years, then polls in five to ten years will probably show a pronounced difference in some of the above percentages. Also, demographically America is under a large shift, so that by 2040 Caucasians will be in the minority. Therefore, how people of color view environmental (and religious) issues will play a larger role in terms of guiding environmental policy. Lastly, simple binary questions in polls, where there might be "the appearance of consensus in surveys" actually can "coexist alongside expressions of genuine ambivalence" about environmental issues and political means and ends.³⁵ Nonetheless, the polls cited above give credence to the split in America recognized by Wuthnow, and this split matches well with the work of Lakoff, Sunderlin, and Leiserowitz. This split is emblematic of both religious and ideological

differences in American society, and has direct implications about American environmental policy and ideology.

I close this section by sharing a few observations, with the first made by the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. He writes that, “A culture’s publicized ethos about its environment seldom covers more than a fraction of the total range of its attitudes and practices pertaining to that environment.”³⁶ In other words, ideological, ethical, normative, and value-laden views about both politics, religion, and the environment in American society are complex, may be contradictory (at aggregate and individual levels), and some of these may be hidden and misunderstood, even by the people that hold them. Nonetheless, in terms of human relationship to the environment, ideologies, values, ethics, and norms matter.

The second related observation comes from the feminist scholar Kate Soper, who explains, “nature is so relatively underdetermining of human culture and choice of lifestyle [so that] nature will not set any limits but rather elastic ones on our actions.”³⁷ Therefore, how we justify our actions and how we interpret the results of those actions matter. In fact, for Soper “[o]ur developed powers over nature have brought about a situation in which we are today far more at the mercy of what culture enforces than we are subject to biological dictate.”³⁸ In this view, our cultural ideologies and how these shape our views about and treatment of nature matter; more so, how we choose to respond to the threat of climate change is by default going to be overly-determined, at least in the coming years, by ideology, including religious ideology.

Religion, Environmentalism, and Ideology

The field of religion and nature/ecology began as a response to Lynn White, Jr.’s famous 1967 article, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” In this article, the geographer White, Jr. argues that the ecologic crisis is rooted in a Western, medieval Christian view of nature and God that provided the fertile ground upon which colonialism and today’s global science and technology were built. For White, Jr., “Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not.”³⁹ His own ecohermeneutical work was to reinvent St. Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of ecology. White Jr.’s article thus not only began a field of study, but also began a project by “insiders” via ecotheology to look within their own traditions so they could retrieve and reinterpret green teachings and practices. Thus, the “greening of religion” hypothesis was born, where both scholars and practitioners have sought to analyze and see how religion can help ameliorate today’s pressing environmental problems.

However, Yi-Fu Tuan offered an immediate corrective to White, Jr., pointing out that China equally has a long history of abusing its own lands

without any help from the West, and more so, that “In the play of forces that govern the world, esthetic and religious ideals rarely have a major role.”⁴⁰ Therefore, we must be cautious in attributing too much explanatory power to religious ideology in regards to how this shapes contemporary views of the environment and environmental issues. In fact, a 2010 Pew survey found that “religious beliefs have been highly influential in shaping their views about social issues...But far fewer cite religion as a top influence on their opinions about several other social and political issues, including how the government should deal with immigration, the environment and poverty.”⁴¹ So although the survey found that Americans broadly favor tougher laws and regulations to protect the environment (Sunderlin’s state environmentalism approach), this concern is not a high level concern when other political and policy issues are factored in to the equation. Thus, while “Solid majorities of all major religious traditions favor stronger laws and regulation, including 73% of white evangelical Protestants, 79% of black Protestants, 85% of Catholics and 84% of the unaffiliated[, r]eligion has far less influence on opinions about environmental policy than other factors do. Just 6% say that their religious beliefs have had the biggest influence on what they think about tougher environmental rules,” as compared to influence of both education and media reports.⁴² Despite the low correlation between religious concern for the environment as compared to other factors that drive such concern, 47% of respondents who attend worship services regularly do hear their clergy speak about the environment, and of these, 29% are encouraged to help protect or clean up the environment.

As scholars of religion, ideology, and American society, such results tell us two things. One is that there are members of American society who are religious and who care about the environment. The question is one of correlation; it appears that the direct connection between religious ideology and pro-environmental ideology is relatively small, at least compared to religious positions on other current political concerns. This can actually lead us to posit that, given the strong correlation between religious and political ideology on issues of social concern, such as abortion and gay marriage, there is possibly an anthropocentric bias in American religion where environmental issues are not seen as religious issues. This may mean that where religious ideology, broadly speaking, is concerned, it has yet to begin to take climate change and other pressing environmental issues seriously.

In other words, Lynn White, Jr. posited one of his reasons for blaming Western Christianity for the ecological crisis is because he feels it is the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen. While most scholars are not willing to go this far, the larger charge of anthropocentrism holds, and this human-centeredness is actually found in most every major world religion. This means that there is a strong likelihood that an ideology of anthropocentrism, broadly, greatly

influences our political, religious, and environmental ideologies. Such anthropocentrism may manifest in views of the economy, where we believe the planet is “background noise” and resources to be exploited, benefitting the landowner. This is very much a Conservative/strict father view. Or it may result in giving “lip-service” to environmental issues, but making no real demands in terms of changing consumer practice and voting. Indeed, the competing responsibilities of earning a paycheck, living in a consumer culture, and an economic ideology shared by both Liberal and Conservative alike that the economy must grow, most likely conspire to keep American citizens, religious or not, from taking environmental practice seriously. This presents a threat in terms of the large scale lifestyle changes of reducing consumption that America will need to undertake if we are to greatly curb our emissions of ghgs. The Buddhist and religious studies scholar David Loy has even gone so far as to argue that economic ideology is the functional equivalent of religion and that belief in the “Market” has de facto become the world’s first truly global religion.⁴³

The above thoughts might read as unfair, and indeed, given that modern environmental ideology is only a few decades old, and our understanding of climate change even younger, we should expect to see a slow but quickening emergence of religious environmental concerns. Anecdotal evidence does indeed bear this out. We see this in the poll results shared above, but also in real world examples where religious ideology is strongly merging with environmental ideology to have a bottom-up impact on American society. This impact is still very small, given the size of America, but it is making ever larger horizontal ripple effects in American society, ripples that will most likely continue to grow and shape American views of nature in the coming decades.

For example, Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) is a leading interfaith group begun by Reverend Sally Bingham.⁴⁴ They have a growing membership and have created a Carbon Covenant and have Preach-ins on global warming. They are using multimedia, especially the internet, to conduct webinars and distribute literature and sermon ideas about environmental issues. IPL has grown rapidly in the last ten years, and this growth is likely to continue. Another religious group that is steadily growing is Hazon, a Hebrew word for “Vision.”⁴⁵ Hazon is North America’s leading Jewish environmental/sustainable agriculture group. Hazon is reinterpreting and exploring Jewish tradition to see where and how it might be relevant to today’s environmental issues. Just as IPL helps its members “green” congregations, Hazon is also helping facilitate “green” practices with its members. In the case of Hazon, they help link local Community Supported Agriculture farms—ideally farms using organic and sustainable farming practices—with local synagogues and Jewish Community Centers, where members can pick up their “share” of produce

produced by the farms. Like IPL, Hazon is undergoing rapid growth compared to just ten years ago.

Such “greening” of religious ideology has created a huge schism in American evangelicalism. Richard Cizik helped spearhead the evangelical concern for “Creation Care,” and this focus on environmental stewardship led to a split at a national level. Cizik himself stepped down as a D.C. lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals, as many in the Association did not support him and his pro-stewardship views of the environment.

In fact, a competing religious ideology based on Dominionism has emerged in contemporary fundamentalist/evangelical Christianity, and this group calls environmentalism the “Green Dragon.”⁴⁶ There is some evidence that this project is funded by the Koch Brothers, the same billionaire oil investors who have also been connected with funding a large number of climate-denial studies (see above). We can quickly see that religious, political, and environmental ideology are merging and bumping into one another under the surface of America, with parties largely aligning along the Liberal/nurturant parent and Conservative/strict father models.

We can interpret such merging and responses to this merging via the lens of religious environmentalism. This means that Pace White, Jr., religion in American society is undergoing an Ecological Reformation. To be sure, this is a nascent movement, and in terms of actual influence on religious ideology, and even more, lifestyle practice, this Reformation currently represents only a small number of Americans. Such a reevaluation of religious teaching and practice is being triggered by modern environmental concerns, so that people within religions are reinterpreting their tradition from the standpoint of modern environmental ideology and concern, rather than advocating a traditional interpretation of nature related teachings.⁴⁷ This reinforces the perspective that religion is a social construct; because Americans are learning about how the environment is changing, largely for the worse, this is prompting some members of American society to bring environmental concerns into how they are constructing their religious beliefs, practices, and identities. These concerns then have an impact on American politics, whether the religious concern is pro-environment or pro-growth/anti-environmentalism, and these concerns have an impact on American society and ideology, broadly.⁴⁸

Conclusion

I began this exploration of the interlinked ideologies of religion, environmentalism, and politics and how these are shaping American society by referencing two events being triggered by anthropogenic climate change: the melting of our ice caps, and the acidification of our

oceans. Some American towns and cities are taking this seriously, so that at local levels, politicians are helping make policies that are attempting to mitigate, and now even adapt, to climate change. Some are motivated by the property damage and safety issues that come with climate change, while others realize that infrastructure needs to change in order to meet livelihood needs of citizens. For some this is a security issue, for others, a justice issue, and others are motivated by their environmentalist views. If current climate change trends continue, and all models suggest the trends are actually getting worse, faster, then we should expect to see such continued change, with more and more Americans taking climate change seriously. This will have huge impacts on the various ideologies that make up the "psyche" of America.

One of the guiding motifs of America is that we are an ingenuitive, abundant nation, defined by opportunity and freedom. Both Liberals and Conservatives hold to this narrative, although where they go with it often differs. What climate change is suggesting is that there are limits to growth, ingenuity, and freedom. Serious ecosystem constraints might make us question basic guiding ideologies that profoundly shape the American sense of self, whether that self is a nurturant parent or a strict father.

The social construction of religious ideology will not be immune from this process. We should expect to see a rise in non-mainstream religions that take environmentalism seriously, such as pantheism and paganism and possibly an earth-centered religion where planet earth itself is sacred, and we should also expect to see mainstream religions continue to go "green." However, this optimism should be tempered by recognizing that on a large-scale, many people of faith still have not taken climate change seriously, and many on the Right, for example the Green Dragonists, may actively campaign against a greening of religion. It should also be tempered because there is a lot more research to be done; as religion and nature scholar Bron Taylor points out, "The fact is that we are profoundly ignorant regarding the extent to which the world's predominant religions are becoming more environmentally friendly (beyond a vanguard that is demonstrably so)."⁴⁹

Nonetheless, humans via their social interactions and their emotional, physical, and psychological needs, construct religion. Environmental issues, especially related to climate change, are only going to become more of a concern in the coming years and decades. Equally, politics are not going anywhere—we live in community and have to organize our society around political institutions. Thus, religious, political, economic, and environmental ideologies will continue to mix in the coming years and decades. Such ideological maneuvering will be influenced by where Americans get their news/information, and whether they are Liberal/nurturant parents or Conservative/strict fathers. As scholars interested in the role ideology, especially the role religious

ideology, plays in shaping American society, then we must pay attention to the issues raised in this paper if we are to better understand what American ideology will resemble in world undergoing continued climate change.

Notes:

¹ On the pole being ice free within five years, see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/sep/19/arctic-ice-shrinks?newsfeed=true> (accessed September 19th, 2012). On the acidification of the oceans, see <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/03/05-1> (accessed May 7th, 2012).

² The rise of this movement is typically dated to the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 and the first Earth Day in 1970.

³ James Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

⁴ Beckford, 4.

⁵ Ninian Smart, *Religion and the Western Mind* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 17.

⁶ William Sunderlin, *Ideology, Social Theory, and the Environment* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 9. He mentions that some are able to undertake paradigm integration, or "the tendency of proponents to embrace not only the tenets of the home paradigm but those of competing paradigms as well" (9).

⁷ Sunderlin, 14.

⁸ Gary Lease, "Ideology" in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, eds. Willi Braun and Russell McCutcheon (New York: Cassell, 2000), 443.

⁹ Sunderlin, 4.

¹⁰ Morgan Marietta, *A Citizen's Guide to American Ideology: Conservatism and Liberalism in Contemporary Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

¹¹ Marietta, 82.

¹² The chart and discussion are summaries of Marietta, 2012.

¹³ George Lakoff, "Metaphor, Morality, and Politics, or, Why Conservatives Have Left Liberals In the Dust", <http://www.wgcd.org/issues/Lakoff.html> (accessed 17 May 2012).

¹⁴ Anthony Leiserowitz, "American Risk Perceptions: Is Climate Change Dangerous?", *Risk Analysis*, 25, 6 (2005).

¹⁵ The reader should keep in mind that this study was published in 2005, right about the time of Hurricane Katrina, an event that did motivate some Americans to take climate change more seriously as models all predict increased severity and frequency of hurricanes, such that Katrina was seen as evidence of these predictions. Since then consensus climate science has become even more unequivocal about anthropogenic climate change, yet there has also been a politicized issue of leaked emails from climate researchers, titled "Climategate" by Conservative politicians and pundits. It would be helpful to the community of scholars if Leiserowitz revisited the study and updated his results to account for and reflect upon these and other similar developments of the last seven years. If the insurance industry is taken as a barometer of changing perceptions, then

there is evidence to suggest more and more of the public is accepting climate change, as insurance companies are becoming increasingly concerned about underwriting properties, businesses, and other projects due to projected costs of paying back climate change related losses. For a sobering analysis of media coverage of climate change, see Anna Clark, “America’s Miasma of Misinformation on Climate Change”, <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/09/23> (accessed September 22nd, 2012).

¹⁶ See Howard Fineman, “Rise of Faith Within GOP Has Created America’s First Religious Party”, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/05/republican-party-religion-first-religious-party_n_1322132.html?ref=fb&src=sp&comm_ref=false (accessed September 22nd, 2012), and Michael Lin, “The Three Fundamentalisms of the American Right”, http://www.salon.com/2011/07/05/lind_three_fundamentalisms/ (accessed September 15th, 2012). For a bit more nuanced view, see Joan Walsh, “Beyond Guns and God”, http://www.salon.com/2012/09/20/beyond_guns_and_god/ (accessed September 20th, 2012).

¹⁷ Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America’s Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism* (New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1989); see especially chapter two, “Old Fissures, New Fractures”. Pace Lakoff, studies suggest this division might be biological: “An increasing body of science suggests we disagree about politics not for intellectual or philosophical reasons, but because we have fundamentally different ways of responding to the basic information presented to us by the world.” See Chris Mooney, “Is There a Scientific Reason Many Conservatives Hate Science?”

http://www.alternet.org/story/153736/is_there_a_scientific_reason_many_conservatives_hate_science (accessed September 26th, 2012).

¹⁸ This history is excellently covered by William Cronon in his (in)famous article, “The Trouble With Wilderness, Or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”, *Environmental History*, 1,1 (January 1996): 7-28. For a broader treatment of the history of U.S. environmentalism, see both Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) and Carolyn Merchant, *American Environmental History: An Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger call for a post-environmental movement that can mobilize American ingenuity, progressive ideals, strength, and capacity to make positive changes based not on fear and paralysis, but hope and opportunity, where there is global interdependence and a new respect for well-being rather than unlimited economic growth. See *Break Through: Why We Can’t Leave Saving the Planet to Environmentalists* (New York: Mariner Books, 2007).

²⁰ Sunderlin, 187-206.

²¹ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=648&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).

²² <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=410&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).

²³ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=771&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).

²⁴ Ibid.

- ²⁵ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=900&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).
- ²⁶ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=1123&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012). The same question asked in 2007 elicited a response where only 22% of respondents said China, and 33% said the United States, a not unsizeable shift in just one year.
- ²⁷ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=1405&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).
- ²⁸ <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/?qid=907&cntIDs=@50-&stdIDs=> (accessed September 22, 2012).
- ²⁹ These questions are from a Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation Poll. <http://www.pollingreport.com/enviro.htm> (accessed September 22, 2012).
- ³⁰ Meteor Blades, “Pew Survey: Americans show most partisan polarization in 25 years”, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/06/05/1097554/-Pew-Survey-Americans-show-most-partisan-polarization-seen-in-25-years> (accessed September 21, 2012).
- ³¹ Stephen Lacey, “Pew Poll Finds Clean Energy Is A Political Wedge Issue for Republicans”, http://www.alternet.org/story/155573/pew_poll_finds_clean_energy_is_a_political_wedge_issue_for_republicans (accessed September 24, 2012).
- ³² Joe Romm, “Koch-Fueled Denial Backfires: Independents, Other Republicans Split with Tea-Party Extremists on Global Warming”, <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2011/12/02/380400/koch-denial-backfires-independents-other-republicans-split-with-tea-party-on-global-warming/> (accessed September 24, 2012).
- ³³ Aaron McCright and Riley Dunlap, “The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public’s Views of Global Warming”, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 52 (2011): 159.
- ³⁴ McCright and Dunlap, 180.
- ³⁵ Deborah Guber, *The Grassroots of a Green Revolution: Polling America on the Environment* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003), 35.
- ³⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan, “Our Treatment of the Environment in Ideal and Actuality”, *American Scientist*, 58 (May-June 1970), 244.
- ³⁷ Kate Soper, “Feminism and Ecology: Realism and Rhetoric in the Discourses of Nature”, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 20, 3 (Summer 1995), 328.
- ³⁸ Soper, 326.
- ³⁹ Lynn White, Jr, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”, *Science*, 155 (March 10, 1967), 1207.
- ⁴⁰ Tuan, 244.
- ⁴¹ Pew Forum, “Few Say Religion Shapes Immigration, Environment Views”, <http://www.people-press.org/2010/09/17/few-say-religion-shapes-immigration-environment-views/> (accessed on September 24, 2012).
- ⁴² Pew Forum, “Few Say Religion Shapes Immigration, Environment Views”.
- ⁴³ David Loy, “The Religion of the Market”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 65, 2 (Summer 1997).
- ⁴⁴ www.interfaithpowerandlight.org
- ⁴⁵ www.hazon.org

⁴⁶ www.resistingthegreendragon.com For an analysis of this group from a liberal political perspective, see People for the American Way, “The ‘Green Dragon’ Slayers: How the Religious Right and the Corporate Right are Joining Forces to Fight Environmental Protection”, <http://www.pfaw.org/rww-in-focus/the-green-dragon-slayers-how-the-religious-right-and-the-corporate-right-are-joining-fo> (accessed September 26th, 2012).

⁴⁷ For more on the analysis of religious environmentalism vs. nature religion, see Emma Tomalin, “The Limitations of Religious Environmentalism for India”, *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, 6 (2002).

⁴⁸ Other examples abound, such as Jean Chemnick, “Vatican Report Shines Light on Climate Change Divisions Within the U.S. Faith Community”, <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2011/05/10/10greenwire-vatican-report-shines-light-on-climate-change-98836.html?ref=earth> (accessed September 26th, 2012);

⁴⁹ “Editor’s Introduction”, *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 5, 3 (2011): 261. My analysis of non-mainstream religions is greatly helped by this article as well.

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