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April 23, 2010: Happy Earth Day, One Day Late

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Title: Happy Earth Day, One Day Late

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4/23/2010—The question for Earth Day is this: can environmentalism form the basis of an alternative worldview (or religion) or is the world around us just one more aspect of reality that we view through the lenses we already operate with: religious, utilitarian, materialist etc.? I vote for the latter. I have yet to see a genuinely new consciousness arise out of environmental commitment, despite the contrary claims of “deep environmentalism”. Maybe Peter Singer is an exception. Most people are concerned about global warming, for example, for the same reason they are concerned about poverty: it is bad for humans. That is not a criticism, just an observation. One reason that the environment has not generated a new consciousness (at least as far as I know) is that the environment is really just a small aspect of the cosmos. And life itself is a very small minority in that cosmos, again as far as we know yet. So, physics rather than biology would have to serve as the basis for a new worldview. Such a view would not necessarily be recognizable as “environmental”.