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2-12-2019

February 12, 2019: Ishmael

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2019). February 12, 2019: Ishmael. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1225>

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Title: Ishmael

Date: 2019-02-12T05:22:00.001-05:00

2/12/2019--My class in Philosophy of Law finishes Ishmael by Daniel Quinn this week. I've mentioned the book from time to time on this blog. I always try to assign it in some class or other. The premise of the book is that the civilization that has its roots in the neolithic agricultural revolution--meaning the civilization of the whole world bar none--believes that the world belongs to man and man has to make it a suitable home. By following this bad belief, this worldwide civilization is destroying the world. Quinn calls this people the Takers. The Takers think of ourselves as humans, but we broke off from a much longer human tradition, which Quinn calls the Leavers. These are all the indigenous cultures and peoples who ever lived. These cultures are now mostly destroyed by the Takers. In fact, the descendants of these indigenous peoples now are mostly embedded in Taker culture, often against their will or even knowledge. The Leaver premise was that man belongs to the world and that the world was a garden for all. Following this belief, Leavers lived in harmony with the rest of the life community. Not because Leavers were any less violent, cruel and mean than Takers, but because they were living out a healthy story. Leavers were also happier and healthier. Quinn believes Leavers were experimenting with civilization in the Americas when Takers arrived and killed and enslaved them. But these experiments are available for Takers to consider and change our way to be in this civilization. But Quinn makes another point, you might say one about Taker politics. All of Taker civilization is a prison. The only liberation is liberation from that prison. Nevertheless, within the Taker prison, some people have more privileges than other inmates--like in any prison. The ones who have more privileges are wealthy white males. The teacher, Ishmael, a gorilla, warns the student not to become fixated on power within the prison. The point is liberation for the whole world from Taker destruction. The symbol the author chooses for wealthy, white male privilege is Donald Trump. On page 252. In 1992. You could look it up.