

Apocalypse Now, in both Religious and Secular Flavors

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There's a great line by [Steve Hayward at Power Line](#), in his post on the Rapture that's scheduled to begin late tonight/early tomorrow morning, [depending upon your time zone](#):

At least the religious versions of the end of the world come with a promise of redemption for man and nature. The secular apocalypse is usually without hope. Yet they share one larger thing in common: the deep, passionate commitment that the end is near. And when the end doesn't come, instead of relief, there is disappointment. Fundamentalist preachers and environmental prophets-of-doom react the same way every time: they'd go back over their math, and offer new predictions for the end. The preachers end up with dwindling congregations and radio audiences; the green prophets get [appointed science adviser to the president](#). People often ask me why environmentalists tend always to incline to apocalyptic conclusions about the state of the planet. "Because it makes them happy," is my standard response. This is not tongue-in-cheek. There is something about certain kinds of personality types that derives a *frisson* of delight from contemplating the end of the world. And if you point out that the end of the world is not at hand, it makes environmentalists very unhappy, in part because it deprives them of the opportunity to play savior to the world.

You can see the religious worldviews intersect in [this passage by Jay Nordlinger](#) involving the late economist Julian Simon:

Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute tells a story about Julian Simon, the late and great economist. He was at some environmental forum, and he said, "How many people here believe that the earth is increasingly polluted and that our natural resources are being exhausted?" Naturally, every hand shot up. He said, "Is there any evidence that could dissuade you?" Nothing. Again: "Is there any evidence I could give you — anything at all — that would lead you to reconsider these assumptions?" Not a stir. Simon then said, "Well, excuse me, I'm not dressed for church."

I love that story, for what it says about the fixity of these beliefs, immune to evidence, reason, or anything else.

You can *really* see the apocalyptic worldview of environmentalism in this passage on ["Progressives Against Progress"](#) by Fred Siegel in *City Journal*:

Crankery, in short, became respectable. In 1972, Sir John Maddox, editor of the British journal *Nature*, noted that though it had once been usual to see maniacs wearing sandwich boards that proclaimed the imminent end of the Earth, they had been replaced by a growing number of frenzied activists and politicized scientists making precisely the same claim. In the years since then, liberalism has seen recurring waves of such end-of-days hysteria.

Or as sage philosopher [Frank Zappa once said](#), "It isn't necessary to imagine the world ending in fire or ice — there are two other possibilities: one is paperwork, and the other is nostalgia."

And of course, environmentalism combines both in one handy, easy to use alternative religion, as the late Michael Crichton [perceptively dubbed it](#). The endless paperwork that's forced upon everyone, from the person who wants to build onto his house, to the business owner who wants to build a new warehouse, or Gaia forbid, drill for oil or produce more electricity. All to sustain a cult that — if taken at its word — abhors [both economic progress](#), and most if not all of the technology developed [beginning with the industrial revolution](#).

Oh, about [the other doomsday cult](#): I had assumed that the world is coming to end tomorrow night between six and seven PM, Pacific Time. If I'm out to dinner at the time, I hope it's after dessert, but before the check arrives.

Update: The Anchoress has a ["Rapture Round-up"](#) to keep those of us remaining on Planet Earth informed.

But as Belushi impersonating Shatner would say, but for how long, Mr. Spock...*for...how...long?*