

Thought on Tap #5 (Environmental Issues)

3/14/19

Transcript:

Introduction:

00:00:00.030 Bretton Rodriguez: You're listening to Thought on Tap a monthly podcast about the role of a humanities in the world today

00:00:03.810 Carlos Mariscal: brought to you by the College of Liberal Arts and the Core Humanities department at the University of Nevada, Reno.

00:00:07.020 Bretton Rodriguez: This is Bretton Rodriguez a lecturer in core humanities and a co-organizer of Thought on Tap

00:00:15.389 Carlos Mariscal: and this is Carlos Mariscal, an assistant professor of philosophy and also a co-organizer of Thought on Tap

00:00:19.470 Bretton Rodriguez: and every month we convene a panel of local experts to discuss the issues of the day and have a moderated discussion at the University Laughing Planet. This month we're talking about the role of the humanities in addressing environmental issues and now here's Callum Ingram.

00:00:34.079 Callum Ingram: Thank you all for coming out tonight, spending your wild sort of penultimate day before spring break, hanging out with us. This is a good microphone location, y'all can hear I'm 784 d37 Tw (m2) Te

and social

them, we have an excellent panel assembled for you tonight. My hope is to pose a few questions to them, get the thoughts of our panelists on these questions, and then open up to you, hopefully for the last 15 or 20

00:10:12.240 Debra Harry: [In Paiute] Good Evening my relatives, my name is Debra Harry, I am a Kooyoee eater from Kooyoee Pah (Pyramid Lake). [In English] Good evening everybody, my name is Debra Harry I'm

understand, appreciate, and protect our local environments and we traditionally haven't done a very good job of that so I'm really glad to see that in all of our fields there's a lot of really positive change in that area.

00:18:48.130 Callum: Great, I'm kind of disappointed, I was hoping for a contrary and somewhere in there to be like, "Humans are not nature, we're separate and above or unredeemable below," it didn't pan out. So maybe move a little bit from talking about the environmen67 (v)7.u -437.885n0 Tc -0.048 Tw ()Tj1.639 0 Td[(e)9.417 ((v)7.u -4.u -437.885nai885ni037.885n

symptoms then the same problems

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which is like okay what can I do as a humanist to actually do something good, which has tortured me for a long time and so I hopefully will be able to resolve this by asking you all rather than a therapist or something. In part of this is like, so the humanities as a name for a kind of general orientation,

studies I've done on the communication of wildfire and right after a wildfire we see these big ideas in the media about connecting wildfire to climate change and the need to mitigate and have a different relationship with the way we manage our forests and then that slowly fades away and we see totally different kind of coverage later about wildfires and usually that turns into like how

condescending, this is not productive and I really think that it's important for everybody to send the message that we don't have to be perfect to be making a difference and we get into this kind of toggle mode where if we're not an environmental saint, we're an environmental sinner and it reflects a habit of mind that I think is really dangerous, so good for riding your bike is what I wanted to say and it's okay to take your car sometimes too. I guess I would give two super quick answers to this question about the role of humanities, one is absolutely as Elizabeth said narrative. I mean this is vitally important I mean the great Paleolithic invention is story, it's something that everybody responds to, it doesn't matter what the me t t n

Environmental issues are generally a bummer to talk about in activism and scholarship are often deadly serious undertakings. Is there any

we're making a difference and we're not just facing something huge that we don't know how to start with but I guess the core opinion I have on this which is fundamentally unpopular and often not at all persuasive as you will soon see is that you know the essential problem with arguing that we need to fully viscerally recognize the seriousness of our situation is that it demonstrably results in paralysis and fear and hopelessness and so I spent a lot of years being that sort of voice crying in the wilderness about everything that was wrong and finally got frustrated that that rhetoric didn't seem to have much traction, especially with the communities of people who I thought most needed to be brought in to the conversation. I'm really an advocate now of trying to find ways to make this series of problems more accessible to people, it's so easy to accuse me of pure naiveté but I really believe that hope motivates people and that despair does not, so psychologically my starting point is people have to have a way into, it has to be scaled so they feel like they can make a difference, so in all of my recent books I'm experimenting with using humor writing to approach environmental problems, it's not the only way in, it's not the best way in but after lots of years of writing you know dire and serious things that were read by 12 people who were already concerned about the same issue, I really have found humor work has opened my writing to a much wider audience that's much more diverse and it has brought in people who wouldn't otherwise be interested in the

publish in

physical environment every day and they're sort of absorbing what values that physical manifests.

00:55:53.830 Debra: I don't really have much more to add, I think you know the interdisciplinary nature of the work has to be deliberate and a part of the challenge is to get some of the disciplines out of their silos and committed to looking at cross you know cultural, cross-knowledge

00:59:30.190 Debra: It's interesting because we're sitting in the belly of the beast you know one of the very few countries of the world that takes this position where the vast majority of the countries of the world have been pushing for a

the door so you can ask whatever questions you see fit. I'd like to thank our panel one more time to give them all round of applause [Applause] I also want to thank Laughing Planet again, Core Humanities program, College of Liberal Arts thank all of you for showing up tonight please stick around there's little some quesadillas scraps over here, so have at it, yeah thank you very much.

THE END