
From: jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 7:02 PM
To: Noam Chomsky
Cc: Lawrence Krauss; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: an article you may both hate. or like.

I think religion plays a major positive role in many lives. I don't like fanaticism on either side. Sorry

On Thu, Sep 10, 2015 at 7:52 PM, Noam Chomsky <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thanks for sending. A wide area of agreement, but not total.

On confronting dogma, I of course agree – though in my opinion the secular religions – nationalism, etc. – are much more dangerous. And if some find rational discussion offensive – as, for example, mainstream academics find dismantling myths of “American exceptionalism” or “Israeli self-defense” or Obama’s mass murder campaign, etc., offensive – so be it.

But I don’t see why that should extend to ridicule. That includes astrologists. Astronomers can refute astrology, while recognizing that perfectly honest and deluded people may believe it and should be treated with respect, while their beliefs are confronted with evidence. I also don’t see why we should ridicule religious dogma, just as I don’t think we should ridicule the much more pernicious secular dogmas. Rather, we should respond to irrational belief with argument and evidence, while recognizing that their advocates (like most of the intellectual world in the case of secular dogma) are people who we should be responding to but without ridiculing them. It may be hard sometimes. For example, when the icon and founding father of sober non-sentimental Realism in International Affairs informs us that the US, unlike other countries, has a “transcendental purpose,” and the fact that it constantly acts in contradiction to its purpose doesn’t matter because the facts are just “a misuse of history” while real history is “the evidence of history as our minds reflect it,” then it’s hard to avoid ridicule. But we should. There’s no point ridiculing virtually the entire IR profession and the major journals, even though such extraordinary irrationality leads to major human disasters.

On Davis, I frankly think that is a non-issue. If she decides she cannot do her job as the conditions of employment require (including following the law), then she can quit and look for another job. As in any other such case.

Noam

From: Lawrence Krauss [mailto:[REDACTED]]

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 1:51 AM

To: Noam Chomsky <[REDACTED]> <mailto:[REDACTED]> >; jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com
<mailto:jeevacati=n@gmail.com> >

Subject: an article you may both hate. or like.

=A0 hope all is well.

Lawrence

<http://www.new=orker.com/news/news-desk/all-scientists-should-be-militant-atheists>
<<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a=l-scientists-should-be-militant-atheists>> =/u>

Lawrence M. Krauss
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