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Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.\*

\*Emily Dickinson "Because I could not stop for Death"

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/stop.html>

from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Ralph W. Franklin ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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#### Utilizing technology to control the world presupposes the existence of an incomplete self that must achieve mastery over the world around us to achieve completion – nuclear technology is their method of doing so – this ignores the ultimate reality that there is no self – the prior question is reorienting our relationship towards technology

**Loy 3 –** card-carrying Buddhist

(David, *Technology and Cultural Values: on the edge of the third millennium*, pp.176-187, dml)

 According to Buddhism, this ego-self is illusory because it **corresponds to nothing substantial**: it is sunya, "empty". Instead of being separate from the world, my sense-of-self is one manifestation of it. In contemporary terms, the sense-of-self is an impermanent, because interdependent, construct. Furthermore, I think we are all at least dimly aware of this, for our lack of a more substantial, Cartesian-like self means that our ungrounded sense-of-self **is** haunted **by a profound insecurity which we can** never quite manage **to resolve**. We usually experience this insecurity as the feeling that "something is wrong with me", a feeling which we understand in different ways according to our particular character and situation. Contemporary culture conditions many of us into thinking that what is wrong with us is that we do not have enough money, or enough sex; academics, like aspiring Hollywood actors, are more likely to understand the problem as not being famous enough (not published enough, not read enough, etc.). But all these different ways of understanding our lack encourage the same trap: I try to ground myself and **make myself feel more real** **by** modifying **the world "outside" myself**. I try to subjectify myself by objectifying myself. Unfortunately, nothing in our notoriously-impermanent world can fill up the bottomless pit at the core of my being -- bottomless, because there is really no-thing to fill up. To put it another way, no amount of money or fame in the world can ever be enough if that is not what I really want.

According to Buddhism, such personal "reality projects" -- these ways we try to make ourselves feel more real -- **cannot be successful, for a very different approach is needed** to overcome our sense of lack. Instead of trying to ground ourselves somewhere on the "outside", we need to look "inside". Instead of **running away** from this sense of emptiness at our core, we need to become more comfortable with it and more aware of it, in which case it can transform from a sense of lack into the source of our creativity and spontaneity [Loy (1996)].

The above describes our individual problem. Now the big question: is the same thing true collectively? Can this shed any light on **our contemporary attitude toward technology?** Individually, we usually address the problem of our lack of self-grounding by trying to ground ourselves somewhere in the world -- e.g., in the size of our bank account or in the number of people who know our name. Are we collectively attempting to solve the problem of our collective lack of self-grounding in a similar fashion, by trying to ground ourselves in the world? In this case, **by** objectifying **and** transforming **the world technologically?**

Technology is not applied science. It **is the expression of a deep longing,** an original longing that is present in modern science from its beginning. This is the desire of the self to seek its own truth through the mastery of the object... The power of technique is not to connect thought effectively to nature; **it alters nature to its own purpose**. Its aim is to master its being; to own it. [Verene: 107]

What is that deep longing? Remember the problem of life-meaning that, I have suggested, motivates (or contributes to) our dualism between nature and culture/technology. Despite their material insecurity, most premodern societies are quite secure in another way: for such people, the meaning of their lives is determined for them, for better and worse. From our perspective they may be "stuck," but insofar as they do not know of any alternative they are able to enjoy themselves as much as their situation allows. In contrast, our freedom to determine the meaning of our lives, and the direction of our own societies, means we have lost such security due to the lack of any such "natural" ground for us. In compensation, has technological development **become our collective security project?**

Today we have become so familiar with rapid scientific and technological development that **we have come to think of it as natural,** which in this case means: something that does not need to be explained. But in what sense is it natural to "progress" from the Wright brothers' biplane to a moon-landing within one lifetime? (Bertrand Russell was already an adult when the Wright Brothers first flew; he lived long enough to watch the first moon-landing on television.) In response to the anxiety produced by our alienation from a more original type of "natural" condition, **we try to make ourselves feel more real by** reorganizing **the whole world until we can see our own image reflected in it everywhere**, in the "resources" with which we try to secure and manipulate the material conditions of our existence.

This is why so many of us have been able to dispense with the consolations of traditional religion: now we have other ways to control our fate, or at least try to. But we must also understand how that impels us: because the traditional security provided by religious meaning -- grounding us in God, etc. -- has been taken away from us, we have not been able to escape the task of trying to construct our own self-ground. According to Mahayana Buddhism, however, such projects **are doomed from the start**, for nothing can have self-existence: that everything interpenetrates everything else means that all things are composed of "non-self" elements -- an important truth for a species so wholly dependent on its deteriorating physical environment.

The result is that no amount of material security ("resources") can provide the kind of grounding we crave, the sense of reality we most need -- a need which is best understood as spiritual, for that helps us to see the fundamental contradiction that defeats us. Unfortunately, **we cannot manipulate the natural world** in a collective attempt to self-ground ourselves, and then also hope to find in that world a ground greater than ourselves. Our incredible technological power means we can do almost anything we want, yet the ironic consequence is that **we no longer know what we want to do**. Our reaction to this has been to grow and "develop" ever more quickly, but to what end? ... To keep evading these deepest questions about the meaning of our lives, one suspects. Our preoccupation with the means (the whole earth as "resources") means we perpetually postpone thinking about ends: where are we all going so fast? Or are we running so fast because we are trying to get away from something?

Another way to put it is that our technology **has become our attempt to own the universe**, an attempt that is always frustrated because, for reasons we do not quite understand, we never possess it fully enough to feel secure in our ownership. For many people dubious of this project, Nature has taken over the role of a more transcendental God, because like God it can fulfill our need to be grounded in something greater than we are; our technology cannot fill that role, because it is motivated by the opposite response, attempting to banish all such sacrality by extending our control. Our success in "improving" nature means we can no longer rest peacefully in its bosom.

Yet there seems to be a problem with this "lack" approach: doesn't it smear all technological development with the same Buddhist brush? Instead of deconstructing the nature vs. technology duality, doesn't such a perspective risk falling into the same pro-nature, anti-progress attitude that was questioned earlier?

In response, it is necessary to emphasize that **this approach** does not imply **any wholesale rejection of modern technology**. Remember that the Buddhist emphasis is on **our motivations.** This does not necessarily mean that any particular technology is bad in itself, insofar as **it is our problematic and confused negative motivations** that tend to lead to negative consequences. This allows us to **evaluate** specific situations by applying a Buddhist rule-of-thumb: is our interest in developing this new technology due to our greed or ill-will; and -- applying the third criterion of ignorance or delusion -- can we become clear about why we are doing this? Among other things, this means: do we clearly understand how this will reduce dukkha, and what its other effects will be?

Such questions encourage us, in effect, **to transform our motivations**, in a way that would enable us to evaluate technologies **in a more** conscious **and** thoughtful **fashion**. One crucial issue in this process, of course, is who the "we" is. Transformative technologies have often been initiated **without much thought of their long-range consequences** (e.g., automobiles), but sometimes they have been imposed by elites with a firm belief in their superior understanding (e.g., nuclear power). The evaluation process I am suggesting would involve engaging in a much more thorough and wide-ranging democratic discussion of what we collectively want from a technology. This will not stop us from making mistakes, but at least **they will be our collective mistakes**, rather than those of elites that may have more to gain and less to lose than the rest of us. Also, this will **inevitably slow down** the development of new technologies, something I see as usually being not a disadvantage but an advantage because it will allow for a more painstaking scientific and sociological evaluation less subverted by desire for profit or competitive advantage.

#### The solution to the world’s problem lies in the recognition that there is no solution – we must accept the world as it comes to us or we are doomed to the path of Don Quixote, fighting imaginary windmills for all eternity

**Khema 94**  (Ayya, 1994, Buddhist monk, “All of us beset by Birth, Decay, and Death.” Buddhism Today, <http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/philosophy/thera/003-allofus-5.htm>)

If you have ever read Don Quixote, you'll remember that he was fighting windmills. Everybody is doing just that, fighting windmills. Don Quixote was the figment of a writer's imagination, a man who believed himself to be a great warrior. He thought that every windmill he met was an enemy and started battling with it. That's exactly what we are doing within our own hearts and that's why this story has such an everlasting appeal. It tells us about ourselves. Writers and poets who have survived their own lifetimes have always told human beings about themselves. Mostly people don't listen, because it doesn't help when somebody else tells us what's wrong with us and few care to hear it. One has to find out for oneself and most people don't want to do that either. What does it really mean to fight windmills? It means fighting nothing important or real, just imaginary enemies and battles. All quite trifling matters, which we build into something solid and formidable in our minds. We say: "I can't stand that," so we start fighting, and "I don't like him," and a battle ensues, and "I feel so unhappy," and the inner war is raging. We hardly ever know what we're so unhappy about. The weather, the food, the people, the work, the leisure, the country, anything at all will usually do. Why does this happen to us? Because of the resistance to actually letting go and becoming what we really are, namely nothing. Nobody cares to be that. Everybody wants to be something or somebody even if it's only Don Quixote fighting windmills. Somebody who knows and acts and will become something else, someone who has certain attributes, views, opinions and ideas. Even patently wrong views are held onto tightly, because it makes the "me" more solid. It seems negative and depressing to be nobody and have nothing. We have to find out for ourselves that it is the most exhilarating and liberating feeling we can ever have. But because we fear that windmills might attack, we don't want to let go. Why can't we have peace in the world? Because nobody wants to disarm. Not a single country is ready to sign a disarmament pact, which all of us bemoan. But have we ever looked to see whether we, ourselves, have actually disarmed? When we haven't done so, why wonder that nobody else is ready for it either? Nobody wants to be the first one without weapons; others might win. Does it really matter? If there is nobody there, who can be conquered? How can there be a victory over nobody? Let those who fight win every war, all that matters is to have peace in one's own heart. As long as we are resisting and rejecting and continue to find all sorts of rational excuses to keep on doing that there has to be warfare. War manifests externally in violence, aggression and killing. But how does it reveal itself internally? We have an arsenal within us, not of guns and atomic bombs, but having the same effect. And the one who gets hurt is always the one who is shooting, namely oneself. Sometimes another person comes within firing range and if he or she isn't careful enough, he or she is wounded. That's a regrettable accident. The main blasts are the bombs which go off in one's own heart. Where they are detonated, that's the disaster area. The arsenal which we carry around within ourselves consists of our ill will and anger, our desires and cravings. The only criterion is that we don't feel peaceful inside. We need not believe in anything, we can just find out whether there is peace and joy in our heart. If they are lacking, most people try to find them outside of themselves. That's how all wars start. It is always the other country's fault and if one can't find anyone to blame then one needs more "Lebensraum," more room for expansion, more territorial sovereignty. In personal terms, one needs more entertainment, more pleasure, more comfort, more distractions for the mind. If one can't find anyone else to blame for one's lack of peace, then one believes it to be an unfulfilled need. Who is that person, who needs more? A figment of our own imagination, fighting windmills. That "more" is never ending. One can go from country to country, from person to person. There are billions of people on this globe; it's hardly likely that we will want to see every one of them, or even one-hundredth, a lifetime wouldn't be enough to do so. We may choose twenty or thirty people and then go from one to the next and back again, moving from one activity to another, from one idea to another. We are fighting against our own dukkha and don't want to admit that the windmills in our heart are self-generated. We believe somebody put them up against us, and by moving we can escape from them. Few people come to the final conclusion that these windmills are imaginary, that one can remove them by not endowing them with strength and importance. That we can open our hearts without fear and gently, gradually let go of our preconceived notions and opinions, views and ideas, suppressions and conditioned responses. When all that is removed, what does one have left? A large, open space, which one can fill with whatever one likes. If one has good sense, one will fill it with love, compassion and equanimity. Then there is nothing left to fight. Only joy and peacefulness remain, which cannot be found outside of oneself. It is quite impossible to take anything from outside and put it into oneself. There is no opening in us through which peace can enter. We have to start within and work outward. Unless that becomes clear to us, we will always find another crusade.

#### Our impacts outweigh – voting negative breaks the shackles of the ego through embracing its annihilation

**Perreira 10 –** Ph.D. candidate at UC Santa Barbara

(Todd LeRoy, ““Die before you die”: Death Meditation as Spiritual Technology of the Self in Islam and Buddhism”, The Muslim World Vol 100, Issue 2-3, 247-267, dml)

In Theravada Buddhism, death (marana ) is understood simply as the “interruption of the life faculty included within [the limits of] a single becoming (existence).” Buddhism distinguishes between two types of death: timely and untimely. A death determined by the “exhaustion of merit or the exhaustion of the life span” is considered a timely death whereas a death determined by “kamma (Skt. karma) that interrupts [other, life-producing] kamma” is regarded as an untimely death. 52 Human birth and death are, like all other phenomena, subjected to an impersonal principal of causation known as paticca samuppada - ¯ , “dependent origination.” Buddhism regards the idea of a permanent soul or atta (Skt. a¯tman) as a mental projection which has no corresponding reality and, as such, **is dangerous for it leads to false notions of “me” and “mine.**” The view that the self has an inner essence or eternal soul is nurtured on what are called the “three poisons” — greed, hatred, and delusion, around which the wheel of birth and death (samsara ¯ ) turns. According to the Buddha’s analysis what, by convention, is called the “self” is, in fact, constituted by the congeries of ﬁve aggregates or khandhas (matter, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness) which, in relation to paticca samuppada - ¯ or the law of cause and effect, are inherently impermanent. This explains why corpse meditation has long been, and continues to be, a practice vital to Buddhism: “For all its grave stillness **there is nothing more dynamic than a corpse**.” 53 It is the event of impermanence taking place before the eyes of the meditator. The corpse therefore serves as the ideal object lesson: **to “die” before you die is to die to false notions of an enduring self**. In spite of these two radically different perspectives both Islam and Buddhism agree that **the central human predicament is** not death but the unsatisfactoriness **that results from our identiﬁcation with a self** that hankers for the things of this world. According to al-Ghaza¯ l ı¯ the cause of this dissatisfaction is rooted in ignorance due to: (1) lengthy hopes and (2) desire for the things of this world. By lengthy hopes he means we generally go about our lives under the pretext that we can expect to enjoy a long and healthy life. To maintain this fantasy, **we plunge ourselves into the pursuit** of pleasure, wealth, and prestige and, in the process, become so “engrossed” **we fail to recognize how brief and ephemeral these frivolities are** in actuality. The Buddha offered an analogous perspective. The term he designated for the unsatisfactoriness of life is dukkha or suffering and it conveys a similar notion in that its cause is attributed to a thirsting or craving (tanha ) for sense pleasures that ultimately entrap us in the rounds of birth and death. And, as in Suﬁsm, it is the failure to penetrate the veil of ignorance (avijja¯) that keeps us from knowing the true nature of the self. Whether it is a question of gaining insight into the insubstantial nature of the “self ” (anatta), as in the case of the Buddhism, or, a need to effect a decisive break with that aspect of the “self ” (nafs) “engrossed” in worldly affairs and lengthy hopes as we ﬁnd in Suﬁsm, what is apparent in both traditions is that the experience of dying before dying seems to introduce two new forms of experience which were previously absent. The ﬁrst — that of introspection — **appears to be linked to a new knowledge of how one/I/you/we should live our lives** while the other is primarily one of interrogation — **the minute level of scrutiny required of one who goes to battle with his[/her] own demons**. This occurs at the very moment in al-Ghaza¯ l ı¯’s spiritual biography when, for the ﬁrst time, he conducts an examination of his motives for teaching and it culminates in the anxiety attack that robs him of the ability to speak in the lecture hall. In the case of Ajahn Chah this process of introspection and interrogation takes the form of an internal dialogue, one that is not willed but arises spontaneously at the moment he is seized with terror to the point of paralysis and is forced to confront the basis for his fears of death. In both cases, and this is signiﬁcant, each man temporarily loses the ability to control his external voice and, in the process, gains a new possibility for giving space over in his life to the authority of an interior voice. Thus, to access this new ﬁeld of experience one **must be willing to submit to a practice of “dying**” to those aspects of the self that otherwise stand in the way of spiritual development. There is also the possibility that **an intimate knowledge of death and dying may**, in fact, be an important vector **through which notions of the ethical life are transmitted** within the boundaries and parameters of a given tradition. If this is the case, if dying before dying **contributes to the formation of oneself as an ethical subject**, if it is generative of experiencing or imagining a new sense subjectivity, or at least new possibilities for reforming the old sense of self, then it appears to be **a process of identity formation that is both morally compelling and expansive**. By “dying” one rehearses, as it were, a role inscribed in the narrative ethics transmitted and performed by countless virtuosi through the ages. We saw how the ordination procedure of a new monk, together with his ﬁrst instruction in meditation, reenacts the Buddha’s response to his own confrontation with death by choosing to go forth with the Great Renunciation. Al-Ghaza¯ l ı¯’s ethical interiorization begins with his recognition that God, through the call of the inner voice beckoning him to take to the road, compelled him to renounce (i.e., “die”) to his attachment to a comfortable teaching post in what was then one of the most prestigious centers of learning in the world. New research into his life suggests this decision to turn away from the comforts of worldly life toward a life of “seclusion” (‘uzla) may also have been prompted by reports about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and about al-Ash‘arı¯, who, like other ﬁgures of Islam, had a life-changing experience at the age of forty. 54 Because turning one’s life around at age forty is a recurring motif in Muslim biographies, if true, this would conﬁrm that his decision to abandon his teaching post and embrace a mystical path of seclusion can also be understood in terms of Flood’s idea of asceticism, that is, as the “internalizing of tradition” and the shaping of the narrative of one’s life in accordance with the narrative of tradition. 55

#### Use the ballot to engage in meditative affirmation of the status quo.

**Astma 6 –** Professor of Philosophy at Columbia College

(Stephen, “Against Transcendentalism: Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life and Buddhism”, *Monty Python and Philosophy* ebook copy, dml)

Upon close inspection, Buddha shows, paradise crumbles. The atman, on the other hand, is a no show. The Buddha thinks that atman is nowhere to be found except in the literary inventions of Hinduism and the confusions of its followers. Buddhism, contrary to all dualistic theories, asserts that **we are not made up of two metaphysically different parts**, a permanent spirit and an impermanent body. Buddhism breaks with most religions, East and West, by recognizing that we are each a finite tangle of qualities, all of which eventually exhaust themselves, and none of which, conscious or other, carries on independently. All humans, according to Buddha, are composed of the five aggregates (khandas ); body (rupa), feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), dispositions or volitional tendencies (sankhara) and consciousness (vinnana). If the Buddha was standing around in the battlefield setting of the Bhagavad Gita, he would certainly chime-in and object to Krishna’s irresponsible claim that a permanent soul resides in Arjuna and his enemies. Show me this permanent entity, the Buddha would demand. Is the body permanent? Are feelings permanent? What about perceptions, or dispositions, or even consciousness? The Buddha says “If there really existed the atman, there would be also something that belonged to this atman. As however, in truth and reality, neither an atman nor anything belonging to an atman can be found, is it not really an utter fool’s doctrine to say: This is the world, this am I; after death I shall be permanent, persisting and eternal?” (Mijjhima Nikaya) Buddha examines all the elements of the human being, finds that they are all fleeting, and finds no additional permanent entity or soul amidst the tangle of human faculties. There is no ghost in the machine. What’s So Grotesque about That? In their rejection of transcendentalism, Buddhism and Monty Python converge in their celebrations of the grotesque. The Python crew seems to relish the disgusting facts of human biology and they take every opportunity to render them through special effects. Throughout Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life, blood spurts, vomit spews, babies explode from birth canals, decapitated heads abound, and limbs putrefy. Theravada Buddhism also celebrates the revolting, treating it as a meditation focus for contemplating the lack of permanence. The transcendentalist consoles herself with the idea that this physical body may decay and perish, but an eternal soul will outlast the material melt-down—not so for the Buddha. In an attempt to undercut human vanity and demonstrate the impermanence of all things, Buddhist scriptures are filled with nauseating details about rotting carcasses and putrid flesh. In the Anguttara Nikaya, for example, the scripture asks, “Did you never see in the world the corpse of a man or a woman, one or two or three days after death, swollen up, blue-black in color, and full of corruption? And did the thought never come to you that you also are subject to death, that you cannot escape it?” (III, 35) When I was at a monastery in Southern Thailand, I chanced upon some reproductions of “dhamma paintings” from the mid-nineteenth century. These pictures were from a Chaiya manuscript discovered nearby, and they depicted, in detail, the “Ten Reflections on Foulness” (asubha kammatthana). The paintings illustrate the various uses of corpses as objects for contemplating impermanence. Following the great Theravadan philosopher Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga text (“Path of Purification”), the artist rendered decaying corpses in rather comprehensive stages of dismemberment and putrification. According to Buddhaghosa, staring at a bloated corpse will be particularly useful to me if I’m feeling overly attached and arrogant about the shape and morphology of my body. If instead I’m feeling snobby or bigoted about my skin’s color or complexion, I should focus on the livid corpse that ranges from green to blue-black in color. Or, if I mistakenly feel that my body is my own, I am to rectify this error by meditating on a worm-infested corpse (puluvaka). As Buddhaghosa explains, “The body is shared by many and creatures live in dependence on (all parts and organs) and feed (on them). And there they are born, grow old, and die, evacuate and pass water; and the body is their maternity home, their hospital, their charnel ground, their privy and their urinal.” Buddhist “mindfulness” (meditational awareness) about the body is being aware of its transience, its brevity, its fugacity. The physical body is slowly macerating, and to try to hold onto it or recompose it is a pipe-dream. The single issue that invited comment from film reviewers when Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life was released was its wallow in the grotesque. One exclaimed that the film’s “ramshackle bouts of surreal physical comedy—a clotted mass of frenzied bodies, debris, mud, and gore—induce feelings of revolt and despair.”53 In light of the film’s critique of transcendentalism, however, this reviewer got it just backward. Far from despairing, the Pythons aimed to smash the deceptive veneer of puritanical snobbery that devalues the flesh and overvalues the invisible spirit. Like Buddhism, Python asks us to “say yes” to our true nature, **filled as it is with impermanence and unpleasantness.** At first this may seem jarring and disturbing, but in the long run **it is preferable to self-deception through figmentary transcendent reality**. Buddha’s rejection of a permanent transcendental soul is known as the anatta, or “no-self ” doctrine (and the companion doctrine that rejects the idea of a permanent God is called paticca samuppada, or “dependent arising,” because it denies the need for any transcendent uncaused cause). The most important Buddhist critique of the transcendental soul finds place in Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life. It is the idea that belief in unseen, eternal, and divine realities ultimately **distracts us from our own humanity**. Transcendentalism **dehumanizes us by feeding selfish craving**. If we embrace a worldview that pivots on the idea that we will attain immortality, then we are going to be overly concerned with our soul’s protection and its future fate. We become **more concerned with saving our own souls** than valuing and attending to the needs of those around us. Simply put, belief in a soul and a heaven of blissful happiness actually **makes you less ethical in this life**. The rejection of souls, heaven, and God, does not lead, as so many critics contend, to bleak egoistic nihilism. Many transcendentalists foretell a gloomy picture without the security of otherworldly meaning, predicting rampant hedonism (pure pleasure seeking) or nihilistic apathy. The Buddha disagrees and thinks that these life patterns are to be avoided as much as otherworldly dogmatism. The extremes, excesses, and general sufferings of the hedonist strategy and the nihilist strategy are revealed in the film. Terry’s Jones’s Mr. Creosote, for instance, is the giant embodiment of the crass pursuit of sensual gratification. After gorging himself on multiple servings of food and wine at a fancy French restaurant, his unchecked desire for the pleasures of chocolate puts him over the edge. Though he claims he can eat no more, Cleese easily seduces him with a single, small, “vaffer-thin” chocolate mint. Mr. Creosote then begins to inflate and he soon explodes, showering the restaurant in his blood and entrails. Obviously, such hedonism and self-gratification is not an appropriate fall-back for those who reject transcendental metaphysics and ethics. Nor is it appropriate to give oneself over to despair or indifference. The folly of that is illustrated in the movie’s gruesome portrayal of a liver transplant. After Graham Chapman starts the bloody business of removing this poor chap’s liver in his dining room, his partner, Cleese, chats up the man’s wife (Terry Jones in drag) in the kitchen. Cleese asks if she too would give up her liver, but she replies, “No . . . I don’t want to die.” Cleese perseveres and introduces her to Eric Idle, who steps out of her refrigerator and commences a musical tour of the sublime immensity of the universe and the tiny insignificance of her life: Just remember that you’re standing on a planet that’s evolving And revolving at nine hundred miles an hour, That’s orbiting at nineteen miles a second, so it’s reckoned, A sun that is the source of all our power. The sun and you and me and all the stars that we can see, Are moving at a million miles a day In an outer spiral arm, at forty thousand miles an hour, Of the galaxy we call the Milky Way. The Universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding In all of the directions it can whizz As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know, Twelve million miles a minute, and that’s the fastest speed there is. So remember when you’re feeling very small and insecure How amazingly unlikely is your birth And pray that there’s intelligent life somewhere up in space Because there’s bugger all down here on earth. “Makes you feel so sort of insignificant, doesn’t it?” Cleese and Chapman ask. “Can we have your liver then?” She gives in—“Yeah. All right, you talked me into it”—and the two doctors set upon her with their knives. Just as Mr. Creosote succumbs to sensual overindulgence, this housewife opts for a groundless underindulgence. Just because she realizes she lives in an almost infinitely large universe, that is no reason for her to think that her life is worthless in itself and not worth continuing. This is what the extreme nihilist does (indeed, this is what nihilism is all about), and the Python crew is showing us the absurdity of it. Life **does not become meaningless** once you give up the idea that you are playing a role in a transcendentally planned drama. The values of family, work, love, understanding, simple pleasures, and peace, **don’t go away** once you reject transcendent meaning. Nor does the woman’s natural desire for self-preservation and the avoidance of suffering evaporate once she realizes her own finitude. Transcendental dogmatism is dehumanizing, but so are the opposing extremes of hedonism and nihilistic skepticism. The Buddha made this point explicitly when he argued for a Middle Way between all opposing extremes. Just as **one should find a middle way** between the slaveries of excessive indulgence and excessive asceticism (self-denial), so too one must avoid embracing both absolutist worldviews (like Palin’s toadying transcendentalist chaplain) and relativist worldviews (where all values and meanings are leveled or negated). The Buddha’s Middle Way doctrine seeks to reclaim human values and meaning by avoiding overly rigid blind faith and also avoiding distracting speculations about matters that are remote from lived experience. Back Down to Earth So, what are these more down-to-earth human values that must be rescued from transcendental flights-of-fancy and nihilistic negativity? In light of the film’s critique of transcendentalism, the extremely modest list of values offered at the end as final “answers” to the meaning of life make good sense. They are introduced by Palin (in drag) as he interrupts the Vegas-style celebration of perpetual Christmas. “Well, that’s the end of the film,” she announces. “Now here’s the Meaning of Life.” She opens an envelope and reads, “Well, it’s nothing special. Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations.” This rather modest sounding list makes perfect sense if we no longer pine for some more grand transcendental meaning. Once we dispatch both the otherworldly values (toadying to God and conserving our sperm, for example) and the otherworldly “realities” which ground those values (soul, heaven, God), then **matters of meaning become markedly more pragmatic and demystified**. Like Buddha’s philosophy, the essential goals in life become attempts to realize moderation, actualize one’s potential, and reduce suffering. When we try to make issues of ultimate meaning more melodramatic than this, we end up with the distracting and dehumanizing edifices of transcendentalism. The Buddha offers us Four Noble Truths that can be used to fight these temptations and distractions. First, he says “All life is suffering, or all life is unsatisfactory (dukkha).” This seems pessimistic at first, but he’s simply pointing out that to have a biological body is to be subject to pain, illness, and eventually death. To have family and friends means that we are open to inevitable loss, disappointment, and also betrayal. But more importantly, even when we feel joy and happiness, these too are transient experiences that will fade because all things are impermanent. Second, the Buddha says “Suffering is caused by craving or attachment.” When we have a pleasurable experience we try to repeat it over and over or try to hang on to it and turn it into a permanent thing. Sensual experiences are not themselves the causes of suffering—they are inherently neutral phenomena. It is the psychological state of craving that rises up in the wake of sensations which causes us to have unrealistic expectations of those feelings—sending us chasing after fleeting experiences that cannot be possessed. The Third Noble Truth states that the cure for suffering is non-attachment or the cessation of craving. In the Samyutta Nikaya text, the Buddha says that the wise person “regards the delightful and pleasurable things of this world as impermanent, unsatisfactory and without atman (any permanent essence), as a disease and sorrow—it is he who overcomes the craving” (12:66). And the Fourth Noble Truth is an eight-fold path that helps the follower to steer a Middle Way of ethical moderation. Following the simple eight-fold path, which contains simple recommendations similar those listed at the end of Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life, allows the follower to overcome egoistic craving. Perhaps the most important craving that must be overcome, according to Buddha, is the craving for immortality. The Buddha claimed that giving up transcendental tendencies would help us to better see the people all around us who need our help. We would become more compassionate, he argued, because we would not be distracted by cravings for the “other world.” Mind the Mindfulness As the Pythons suggest, however, not all dehumanizing distraction comes from “above.” Often, we lose sight of compassion and humane living by drowning ourselves in a sea of trivial diversions. In existential terms, we lose our “authentic self ” in the unimportant hustle and bustle of everyday matters. Consider again the executives of the Very Big Corporation of America. Later in the film, we learn that just before they were attacked by the mutineers sailing the Crimson Permanent Assurance they were having a meeting about “Item Six on the Agenda, the Meaning of Life.” The board chairman, Graham Chapman, turns things over to Michael Palin: “Now Harry, you’ve had some thoughts on this.” “That’s right, yeah. I’ve had a team working on this over the past few weeks,” Palin explains in his best American accent: What we’ve come up with can be reduced to two fundamental concepts. One, people are not wearing enough hats. Two, matter is energy; in the Universe there are many energy fields which we cannot normally perceive. Some energies have a spiritual source which act upon a person’s soul. However, this soul does not exist ab initio, as orthodox Christianity teaches; it has to be brought into existence by a process of guided self-observation. However, this is rarely achieved owing to man’s unique ability to be distracted from spiritual matters by everyday trivia. The other Board members sit quietly through Palin’s impressive and important report. But, they need clarification about one of the more important points: “What was that about hats again?” one of them asks. Distraction reigns again in Part IV, Middle Age, when the hyper-pleasant, smiley, and vapid American couple (Palin and, in drag, Idle) are served up a “philosophy conversation” in the form of flashcard prompts. The waiter (Cleese) tries to get the insipid couple started on their philosophy conversation by asking, “Did you ever wonder why we’re here?” They fail utterly to stay on topic. “Oh! I never knew that Schopenhauer was a philosopher,” Idle exclaims. Palin responds, “Yeah. . . . He’s the one that begins with an S. WIFE: “Oh.” HUSBAND: “Um [pause] . . . like Nietzsche.” WIFE: “Does Nietzsche begin with an S?” HUSBAND: “There’s an S in Nietzsche.” WIFE: “Oh wow! Yes there is. Do all philosophers have an S in them?” HUSBAND: “Yeah I think most of them do.” WIFE: “Oh! Does that mean [the popular singer] Selina Jones is a philosopher?” HUSBAND: “Yeah, Right. She could be. She sings about the meaning of life.” WIFE: “Yeah, that’s right, but I don’t think she writes her own material.” HUSBAND: “No. Maybe Schopenhauer writes her material?” WIFE: “No. Burt Bacharach writes it.” HUSBAND: “There’s no S in Burt Bacharach.” If we combine this tedious conversation and the Boardroom’s fascination with hats, the results of Palin’s research begins to make sense. Human beings must “create” their “souls” day-by-day (rather than simply discover them, ready made) through “a process of guided self-observation.” The great enemy of this process, these sketches show, **is distraction**. This is a conception of the soul that the Buddha could agree with. It embraces impermanence, avoids transcendentalist metaphysics, and accepts the view that we must actively cultivate our “souls.” This is the point of Buddhist “mindfulness” (sati)—a powerful meditation that cuts through the dehumanizing distractions. There’s nothing mystical or particularly fancy about it. **You can do it in your daily activities as well as in isolated contemplation**. It just requires you to focus your mind and senses in the present moment, and to resist the mind’s natural tendency to wander off into the past or future, **to replay events or imagine scenarios that fill our minds** with worries, regrets, hopes or cravings. Mindfulness is a state of awareness that comes from training and discipline, a state that shuts out the drifting distractions of life and reveals the uniqueness of each present moment. In doing this careful attending, one can become more present in his or her own life. Mindfulness helps to rehumanize a person by taking their head out of the clouds. And according to Buddhism it reconnects us better with our compassionate hearts by revealing other human beings as just human beings. Once the distractions of trivia, or theoretical, transcendental, or ideological overlays are removed, **we may become better able to know ourselves** and compassionately recognize ourselves in others. We may even come to learn that, in fact, we should all wear more hats. But **we will only know for sure if we are less distracted and more mindful**.

### 1nc econ

#### Reject their scenarios even if they’re not individually refuted – point predictions aren’t true

**Bernstein et al, 2k** (Steven Bernstein.,Richard Ned Lebow, Janice Gross Stein and Steven Weber**,**University of Toronto, The Ohio State University, University of Toronto and University of California at Berkeley**.** **“**God Gave Physics the Easy Problems”European Journal of International Relations2000; 6; 43.)

Wars - to continue with the same example - are similar to chemical and nuclear reactions in that they have underlying and immediate causes. Even when all the underlying conditions are present, these processes generally require a catalyst to begin. Chain reactions are triggered by the decay of atomic nuclei. Some of the neutrons they emit strike other nuclei prompting them to fission and emit more neutrons, which strike still more nuclei. Physicists can calculate how many kilograms of Uranium 235 or Plutonium at given pressures are necessary to produce a chain reaction. They can take it for granted that if a 'critical mass' is achieved, a chain reaction will follow. This is because trillions of atoms are present, and at any given moment enough of them will decay to provide the neutrons needed to start the reaction. In a large enough sample, catalysts will be present in a statistical sense. **Wars involve relatively few actors**. Unlike the weak force responsible for nuclear decay, their catalysts are probably **not inherent properties** of the units. Catalysts may or may not be present, and their **potentially random distribution** relative to underlying causes makes it **difficult to predict when or if** an appropriate catalyst **will occur**. If in the course of time underlying conditions change, reducing basic incentives for one or more parties to use force, catalysts that would have triggered war will no longer do so. This uncertain and evolving relationship between underlying and immediate causes **makes point prediction extraordinarily difficult**. **It also makes more general statements about the causation of war problematic**, since we have **no way of knowing** what wars would have occurred in the presence of appropriate catalysts. It is probably impossible to define the universe of would-be wars or to construct a representative sample of them. Statistical inference requires knowledge about the state of independence of cases, but in a practical sense that knowledge is often **impossible to obtain in the analysis of international relations**. Molecules do not learn from experience. People do, or think they do. Relationships among cases exist in the minds of decision-makers, which makes it very hard to access that information **reliably** and for more than just a very small number of cases. We know that expectations and behavior are influenced by experience, one's own and others. The deterrence strategies pursued by the United States throughout much of the Cold War were one kind of response to the failure of appeasement to prevent World War II. Appeasement was at least in part a reaction to the belief of British leaders that the deterrent policies pursued by the continental powers earlier in the century had helped to provoke World War I. Neither appeasement nor deterrence can be explained without understanding the context in which they were formulated; that context isultimately **a set of mental constructs**. We have descriptive terms like 'chain reaction' or 'contagion effect' to describe these patterns, and hazard analysis among other techniques in statistics to measure their strength. But neither explains how and why these patterns emerge and persist. The broader point is that the relationship between human beings and their environment is not nearly so reactive as with inanimate objects. Social relations are not clock-like because the values and behavioral repertories of actors are not fixed; people have memories, learn from experience and undergo shifts in the vocabulary they use to construct reality. Law-like relationships - even if they existed - could not explain the most interesting social outcomes, since these are precisely the outcomes about which actors have the most incentive to learn and adapt their behavior. ***Any*****regularities** would be 'soft'; they **would be** the outcome of processes that are embedded *Overcoming Physics Envy*The conception of **causality** on which deductive-nomological models are based, in classical physics as well as social science, requires empirical invariance under specified boundary conditions. The standard form of such a statement is this - given A, B and C, if X then (not) Y.4 This kind of bounded invariance can be found in **closed** **systems**. Open systems can be influenced by **external** **stimuli**, and their structure and causal mechanisms evolve as a result. Rules that describe the functioning of an open system at time T do not necessarily do so at T + 1 or T + 2. The boundary conditions may have changed, rendering the statement irrelevant. Another axiomatic condition may have been added, and the outcome subject to multiple conjunctural causation. There is no way to know this *a priori*from the causal statement itself. Nor will complete knowledge (if it were possible) about the system at time T necessarily allow us to project its future course of development. In a practical sense, all social systems (and many physical and biological systems) are open. Empirical invariance does not exist in such systems, and seemingly probabilistic invariances may be causally unrelated (Harre and Secord, 1973; Bhaskar, 1979; Collier, 1994; Patomaki, 1996; Jervis, 1997). As **physicists readily admit, prediction in open systems, especially non-linear ones, is difficult, and often impossible**. The risk in saying that social scientists can 'predict' the value of variables in past history is that the value of these variables is already known to us, and thus we are not really making predictions. Rather, we are trying to convince each other of the logic that connects a statement of theory to an expectation about the value of a variable that derives from that theory. As long as we can establish the parameters within which the theoretical statement is valid, which is a prerequisite of generating expectations in any case, this 'theorytesting' or 'evaluating' activity is not different in a logical sense when done in past or future time.5

#### Growth is our new vision of evolution – our metrics for economic growth don’t line up with the health of the system

**Tremblay 10** – (Francois, 2/28/10, http://francoistremblay.wordpress.com/2010/02/28/what-is-the-economy/, RBatra)

We routinely talk about “the economy” as if it were a self-evident concept. We say “the economy is growing” and “the economy is in bad shape,” without really discussing what it is exactly that we’re referring to. There are three measures we use more or less interchangeably when we discuss “the economy”: GDP, retail sales and employment.

The GDP includes, to generalize, everything produced and consumed within a country or exported to other countries. In this “everything in one pot” view, everything counts, regardless of its causes or its effects on society. You contract an illness and buy medical care, you’re in a wreck and pay for car repairs, you buy cigarettes or alcohol based on an addiction, factories are rebuilt after a war, shells and fighter planes are built to destroy those factories, a lumber company cuts down a forest down to the last tree, the government spends billions on a new boondoggle, a corporation charges you monopoly prices, there’s a gas discount and everyone’s filling up. **Even though all these things are symptomatic of social problems, they are counted as part of “the economy.” The genocide in Iraq is a boon to “the economy”** (although, in the long term, war spending has a persistent negative effect on GDP and employment, either through inflation, higher interest rates, or increased taxes). Mindless consumption is a boon to “the economy.”

The money in the big pot could be going to cancer treatments or casinos, violent video games or usurious credit-card rates. It could go towards the $9 billion or so that Americans spend on gas they burn while they sit in traffic, or the billion plus that goes to such drugs as Ritalin and Prozac that schools are stuffing into kids to keep them quiet in class. The money could be the $20 billion or so that Americans spend on divorce lawyers each year, or the $41 billion on pets, or the $5 billion on identity theft, or the billions more spent to repair property damage caused by environmental pollution. The money in the pot could betoken social and environmental breakdown- misery and distress of all kinds. It makes no difference. You don’t ask. All you want to know is the total amount, which is the GDP. So long as it is growing then everything is fine.

Jonathan Rowe, co-director of West Marin Commons

One might reply that this is a misguided criticism, since the GDP is precisely meant as a “kitchen sink” metric for all production. But the GDP is also often criticized for omitting to count many vast areas of trade, including housekeeping, production for self-consumption, black markets and underground economies (which in some societies are bigger than the white market), crime, and barter. The only logical conclusion is that the subject most conducive to growth is a person who is perpetually just sick enough to need medical care but not enough to stop working, morbidly obese from constant eating, always drives everywhere, hires maids instead of cleaning his own house, and does not interact with anyone but Wal-Mart workers.

Retail sales is another metric that gets trotted out in the mainstream media, especially around Christmas. The assumption here is that the more money people spend during the year, the better off “the economy” is. But **this is counter-intuitive, as spending can be motivated by all sorts of reasons, including inflation, short-term biases, and outright fraud**. People are tricked into buying goods by marketing campaigns and a panoply of retail tricks and lies. Retail sales do not take into account the quality of products or what they may do to our quality of life, and under that point I could repeat a lot of the things I said above. **They also do not include the consequences of depending on big retail corporations for our livelihood, or the consequences of globalization on the third world.**

Saving money is actually a very positive thing for the well-being of the individual, and yet increased savings (as we are seeing right now) wreak havoc on “the economy.” Unfortunately, people generally under-save and get in debt too easily for their own good, partially due to human psychology and partially due to the centralized banking system which causes scarcity of credit.

**Measuring employment suffers from the same general flaws, as it does not take into account the nature of the jobs in question: not only the quality of the work environment, the wage, or the work structure (especially how hierarchical it is), but also what the work itself entails**. It’s easy to see what a CEO, a commodities trader or a monopoly banker contribute to the corporatist system, but very difficult to see their contribution to the well-being of society. Even though they are “employed,” it’s hard to say that a soldier, a policeman or a bureaucrat, on the whole, contribute anything positive to society. **Employment statistics, therefore, are at best very incomplete, and at worst completely misleading.**

If these three metrics do not measure general well-being, or even how well the economy fulfills our needs, what do they measure? The GDP measures how much is produced and consumed. Retail sales measure how much is consumed, and how much surplus is generated. Employment measures how many people are participating to production. It is not the nature of production or consumption that is examined, but the concept of production and consumption themselves. The only possible conclusion we can arrive at, is that **these metrics measure** **the health of the corporatist system, not well-being or the fulfillment of needs.**

The underlying premise behind the use of these metrics is shared by all parties and ideologies on the mainstream political spectrum: growth is inherently good. Not all of these ideologies support the idea that growth should be completely unlimited and unchecked (Greenies, for instance, believe that growth should be tempered with environmental considerations), **but they all judge growth as a primary objective.** Not only that, but they believe that growth alone can solve socio-economic problems, the good old tried-and-true statist technique of “if we project enough force and throw enough money at a problem, it will eventually disappear.” If “the economy” keeps growing, goes the argument, then we’ll have more money to pump into health care, we’ll have more money to pump into education, we’ll have more money to pump into social programs, and everything will correct itself. A shining example of this insanity, Mosler’s Law, states that “there is no financial crisis so deep that a sufficiently large increase in public spending cannot deal with it.”

This is the same kind of argument that statists use when talking about government and corporatism, of the “we just need to put good people in charge” type. Putting better people or more money in a broken system won’t fix it. Solely producing more goods cannot change the balance of power in a society and cannot correct **inefficiencies and immoralities caused by the very fabric of the economy that produces them**. On the contrary, **one can only expect it to make the problems worse, because it maintains the viability of the current capital-democratic system.**

**Continued growth turns all environment impacts**

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(Glen, “This I Know to Be Ecological Truth”, <http://www.ecoearth.info/blog/2012/08/earth_meanders_this_i_know_to.asp#more>, dml)

Earth without its ecosystems and biosphere is no longer habitable. Earth's naturally evolved ecosystems required for a livable and abundant life are being destroyed by exponential, unsustainable and inequitable growth in population, consumption and industry. This exploitative relationship towards Earth, other humans, and all life is now being perfected and fully implemented globally. The sum of this "free-market" growth machine's destructive impact upon climate and ecosystems is crashing our one shared biosphere. When the ecosystems are gone, you can't eat money, and everything dies**.**

The human family faces an unprecedented ecological and social emergency, of its own making, and for which it is woefully unprepared. Humanity is sleep walking towards global ecological collapse – utterly oblivious to abrupt climate change, food scarcity, failing ecosystems, and other people and all life's suffering. Continued denial of the fundamentally ecological nature of being will ensure global ecosystem collapse, and a horrific and drawn out apocalyptic end to civilization, as perhaps all life is dragged down with us.

How much is enough? Earth really needs an answer, as planetary ecological boundaries in water, climate, and extinction have been exceeded, human habitat is crashing, and some have so much, while many have so little. We must abandon our current ecocidal way of "making a living" by destroying natural life for material "development" if the human family and kindred species are to survive, much less thrive.

Humanity was warned of over-population, environmental decline, climate change, and famine for centuries – now as our one shared biosphere begins its long-predicted collapse, a time of great dying threatens even rich nations. Shared survival depends upon learning to love, be happy, live long, and be well with less. And we must learn to live well within intact ecosystems without destroying them.

Earth can't stand further growth of industrial "development" at the expense of life-giving ecosystems. Jobs at the expense of ecosystem destruction are ecocide. Together the human family will wisely power down to a steady state economy, end fossil fuels, and protect and restore ecosystems; or face final horrific ecological, social, and economic collapse into nothingness.

America and the world are woefully unprepared for abrupt climate change and global ecosystem collapse, and resulting mayhem and mass death. We have largely dropped our quest for knowledge, wisdom and truth upon which real progress is based. We must not place our entire faith in gods, countries and markets – figments of the human imagination – but rather seek ecological and other fundamental and observable truths. Lack of rights, justice, equity and environment is not our natural condition – they are human choices. The only independent, observable, positive truths are ecology and love.

Ecology is the meaning of life. There can be no life without intact, healthy ecosystems. Ecology is the basis of life, and those undermining ecosystems are a disease destroying natural and human-being. They must be compelled to stop. There is nowhere to hide from abrupt climate change and global ecosystem collapse. Together we act now to reduce growth, ecocide, and inequitable consumption or being is over.

Corporatists are real eco-terrorists. All free-thinking lovers of life must come together now to end eco-terrorism. We have to stop known ecocidalists and greenwashers from destroying Earth. If we are to survive, there is no other option but to do so together. There is nothing sacrosanct about ecocidal industrial, agricultural, and consumption patterns – if your way of living is killing ecosystems, you have to stop now, or be compelled involuntarily to do so.

There has been a complete failure by government, business, media and society to recognize and urgently act upon abrupt climate change and ecosystem collapse. As US elections ignore urgent global (and thus national) ecological crises – even in the face of a climate change enhanced drought of biblical proportions that threatens global food supplies – it has become abundantly clear that real and sufficient solutions to climate change and ecosystem collapse will not come from the current political and economic system**.**

For any chance of global ecological survival, much less abundance, the human family must immediately power down, reject fossil fuels, demobilize armies, go back to the land, and embrace ecosystem protection and restoration. There are no other paths to global ecological sustainability and continued natural and human being that don't also include sharing so that basic human needs for all are met. Those that return to living within ecosystems may well inherit the Earth from those that don't.

**Also turns war**

**Street, 05** (March 18th, http://www.doublestandards.org/street1.html, Paul, Those Who Deny the Crimes of the Past: American Racist Atrocity Denial, Paul Street is research director at the Chicago Urban League. His articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in In These Times, Z Magazine, Monthly Review, Dissent, Journal of Social History, Mid-America, and the Journal of American Ethnic History).

It is especially important to appreciate the significance of the vicious, often explicitly genocidal "homeland" assaults on native-Americans, which **set foundational racist and national-narcissist patterns for subsequent U.S. global butchery**, disproportionately directed at non-European people of color. The deletion of the real story of the so-called "battle of Washita" from the official Seventh Cavalry history given to the perpetrators of the No Gun Ri massacre is no small detail. Denial about Washita and Sand Creek (and so on) encouraged US savagery at Wounded Knee, the denial of which encouraged US savagery in the Philippines, the denial of which encouraged US savagery in Korea, the denial of which encouraged US savagery in Vietnam, the denial of which (and all before) has recently encouraged US savagery in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's a vicious circle of recurrent violence, well known to mental health practitioners who deal with countless victims of domestic violence living in the dark shadows of the imperial homeland's crippling, stunted, and itself-occupied social and political order. Power-mad US forces deploying the latest genocidal war tools, some suggestively named after native tribes that white North American "pioneers" tried to wipe off the face of the earth (ie, "Apache," "Blackhawk," and "Comanche" helicopters) are walking in bloody footsteps that trace back across centuries, oceans, forests and plains to the leveled villages, shattered corpses, and stolen resources of those who Roosevelt acknowledged as America's "original inhabitants." Racist imperial carnage and its denial, like charity, begin at home. **Those who deny the crimes of the past are likely to repeat their offenses in the future** as long as they retain the means and motive to do so.  It is folly, however, for any nation to think that it can stand above the judgments of history, uniquely free of terrible consequences for what Ward Churchill calls "imperial arrogance and criminality." Every new U.S. murder of innocents abroad breeds untold numbers of anti-imperial resistance fighters, ready to die and eager to use the latest available technologies and techniques to kill representatives – even just ordinary citizens – of what they see as an American Predator state. This along with much else will help precipitate an inevitable return of US power to the grounds of earth and history. As that fall accelerates, the U.S. will face a fateful choice, full of potentially grave or liberating consequences for the fate of humanity and the earth. It will accept its fall with relief and gratitude, asking for forgiveness, and making true reparation at home and abroad, consistent with an honest appraisal of what Churchill, himself of native-American ancestry, calls "the realities of [its] national history and the responsibilities that history has bequeathed": goodbye American Exceptionalism and Woodrow Wilson's guns. Or Americans and the world will face the likely alternative of permanent imperial war and the construction of an ever-more imposing U.S. fortress state, perpetuated by Orwellian denial and savage intentional historical ignorance. This savage barbarism of dialectically inseparable empire and inequality will be defended in the last wagon-train instance by missiles and bombs loaded with radioactive materials wrenched from lands once freely roamed by an immeasurably more civilized people than those who came to destroy.

### 1nc scs

**Their attempt to describe China objectively arrogantly presumes that China exists as an object that can be known. This pseudoscientific description of Chinese hostility only reifies the justifications for violent American containment strategies that result in a self-fulfilling prophecy**

Chengxin **Pan, 2004** (Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, June-July 2004 v29 i3 p305(27), The "China threat" in American self-imagination: the discursive construction of other as power politics)

China and its relationship with the United States has long been a fascinating subject of study in the mainstream U.S. international relations community. This is reflected, for example, in the current heated debates over whether China is primarily a strategic threat to or a market bonanza for the United States and whether containment or engagement is the best way to deal with it. (1)

While U.S. China scholars argue fiercely over "what China precisely is," their debates have been underpinned by some common ground, especially in terms of a positivist epistemology. Firstly, they believe that China is ultimately a knowable object, whose reality can be, and ought to be, empirically revealed by scientific means. For example, after expressing his dissatisfaction with often conflicting Western perceptions of China, David M. Lampton, former president of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, suggests that "it is time to step back and look at where China is today, where it might be going, and what consequences that direction will hold for the rest of the world." (2) Like many other China scholars, Lampton views his object of study as essentially "something we can stand back from and observe with clinical detachment." (3) Secondly, associated with the first assumption, it is commonly believed that China scholars merely serve as "disinterested observers" and that their studies of China are neutral, passive descriptions of reality. And thirdly, in pondering whether China poses a threat or offers an opportunity to the United States, they rarely raise the question of "what the United States is." That is, the meaning of the United States is believed to be certain and beyond doubt. I do not dismiss altogether the conventional ways of debating China. It is not the purpose of this article to venture my own "observation" of "where China is today," nor to join the "containment" versus "engagement" debate per se. Rather, I want to contribute to a novel dimension of the China debate by questioning the seemingly unproblematic assumptions shared by most China scholars in the mainstream IR community in the United States. To perform this task, I will focus attention on a particularly significant component of the China debate; namely, the "China threat" literature. More specifically, I want to argue that U.S. conceptions of China as a threatening other are always intrinsically linked to how U.S. policymakers/mainstream China specialists see themselves (as representatives of the indispensable, security-conscious nation, for example). As such, they are not value-free, objective descriptions of an independent, preexisting Chinese reality out there, but are better understood as a kind of normative, meaning-giving practice that often legitimates power politics in U.S.-China relations and helps transform the "China threat" into social reality. In other words, it is self-fulfilling in practice, and is always part of the "China threat" problem it purports merely to describe. In doing so, I seek to bring to the fore two interconnected themes of self/other constructions and of theory as practice inherent in the "China threat" literature--themes that have been overridden and rendered largely invisible by those common positivist assumptions. These themes are of course nothing new nor peculiar to the "China threat" literature. They have been identified elsewhere by critics of some conventional fields of study such as ethnography, anthropology, oriental studies, political science, and international relations. (4) Yet, so far, the China field in the West in general and the U.S. "China threat" literature in particular have shown remarkable resistance to systematic critical reflection on both their normative status as discursive practice and their enormous practical implications for international politics.

**Their form of politics translates into a policymaking of aggressive containment that culminates in war**

Chengxin **Pan, 2004** (Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, June-July 2004 v29 i3 p305(27), The "China threat" in American self-imagination: the discursive construction of other as power politics)

Thus, even in the face of such a potentially explosive incident, the self-fulfilling effect of the "China threat" discourse has not been acknowledged by mainstream U.S. China analysts. To the contrary, deterring and containing China has gained new urgency. For example, in the aftermath of this standoff, neoconservative columnists Robert Kagan and William Kristol (chairman of the Project for the New American Century) wrote that "not only is the sale of Aegis [to Taiwan] ... the only appropriate response to Chinese behavior; We have been calling for the active containment of China for the past six years precisely because we think it is the only way to keep the peace." (87) Although the sale of the Aegis destroyers was deferred, President George W. 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Not only does this reductionist representation come at the expense of understanding China as a dynamic, multifaceted country but it leads inevitably to a policy of containment that, in turn, tends to enhance the influence of realpolitik thinking, nationalist extremism, and hard-line stance in today's China. Even a small dose of the containment strategy is likely to have a highly dramatic impact on U.S.-China relations, as the 1995-1996 missile crisis and the 2001 spy-plane incident have vividly attested. In this respect, Chalmers Johnson is right when he suggests that "a policy of containment toward China implies the possibility of war, just as it did during the Cold War vis-a-vis the former Soviet Union. The balance of terror prevented war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but this may not work in the case of China." (93) For instance, as the United States presses ahead with a missile-defence shield to "guarantee" its invulnerability from rather unlikely sources of missile attacks, it would be almost certain to intensify China's sense of vulnerability and compel it to expand its current small nuclear arsenal so as to maintain the efficiency of its limited deterrence. In consequence, it is not impossible that the two countries, and possibly the whole region, might be dragged into an escalating arms race that would eventually make war more likely.

**Prolif impacts are wrong**

Potter et al 8 – prof nonprolif studies @ monteray institute for IR and Mukhatzhanovaresearch fellow @ James Martin Center 2k8 (William, Gaukar, “Divining Nuclear Intentions: A Review Essay” International Security Volume 33, Number 1)

For much of the nuclear age, academic experts, intelligence analysts, and public commentators periodically have forecast rapid bursts of proliferation, **which have failed to materialize.** Central to their prognoses, often imbued with the imagery and metaphors of nuclear dominoes and proliferation chains, has been the assumption that one state's nuclearization is likely to trigger decisions by other states to "go nuclear" in quick succession. Today the proliferation metaphors of choice are "nuclear cascade" and "tipping point," but the implication is the same—we are on the cusp of rapid, large-scale nuclear weapons spread. It is with some justification, therefore, that the study of proliferation has been labeled "the sky-is-still-falling profession."[1](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/journals/international_security/v033/33.1.potter.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22f1)

Although proliferation projections abound, few of them are founded on, or even informed by, empirical research and theory.[2](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/journals/international_security/v033/33.1.potter.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22f2) This deficiency, though regrettable, is understandable given the small body of theoretically or empirically [End Page 139]grounded research on forecasting proliferation developments, and the underdeveloped state of theory on nonproliferation and nuclear decisionmaking more generally. Also contributing to this knowledge deficit is the stunted development of social science research on foreign policy–oriented forecasting and the emphasis on post hoc explanations, rather than predictions on the part of the more sophisticated frameworks and models of nuclear decisionmaking.

## 2nc

### zeroism

**our starting point for discourse must be the immorality of poetry**

**Land '12** Nick, former Lecturer in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University, *Fanged Noumena* ed. Ray Brassier and Robin Mackay "Shamanic Nietzche" in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader* 1993

**Philosophy is a ghoul that haunts only ruins, and the broken croaks of our hymns to sickness have scarcely begun. Borne by currents of deep exhaustion that flow silent and inexorable beneath the surface perturbations of twitch and chatter, damned, shivering**, **claw-like fingers hewn from torture and sunk into wreckage drawn with unbearable slowness down into the maw of flame and snuffed blackness** **twisted** skewerish **into fever-hollowed eyes. Eternal recurrence is our extermination**, and we cling to it as infants to their mother's breasts. **'Poetry leads from the known to the unknown'** writes Bataille, in words that resonate with Rimbaud. **Poetry is fluent silence, the only venture of writing to touch upon the sacred (=0), because 'the unknown... is not distinguished from nothingness by anything that discourse can announce'. To write the edge of the impossible is a transgression against discursive order, and an incitement to the unspeakable: 'poetry is immoral.'**

### buddhism

#### Econ link

**Loy 10** – card-carrying Buddhist

(David, “Healing Ecology”, Journal of Buddhist Ethics Volume 17, 2010, pg 253-267, dml)

When we ask the question in this way, I believe that the answer becomes apparent: it’s our obsession with never-ending “progress” and growth. What motivates our attitude towards economic and technological development? When will our Gross National Product be large enough? When will we collectively consume enough? When will we have all the technology we need? Why is more always better if it can never be enough?

My point is that technology and economic growth in themselves cannot resolve the basic human problem about what it means to be human. They may be a good means to accomplish something but they are not good as ends-in-themselves. Since we are not sure how else to solve that problem, however, they have become a collective substitute, in effect: forms of secular salvation that we seek but never quite attain. Since we don’t really know where we want to go, or what we should value, we have become demonically obsessed with ever-increasing power and control.

Notice the parallel with one’s individual predicament: lacking the security that comes from knowing our place and role in the cosmos, we have been trying to create our own security. Modern technology, in particular, has become our collective attempt to fully control the conditions of our existence on this planet. In effect, we have been trying to remold the earth so that it is completely adapted to serve our purposes, until everything becomes subject to our will, a “resource” we can use. This is despite the fact, or rather because of the fact, that we do not know what those purposes should be. Ironically, if predictably, this has not been providing the sense of security and meaning that we seek. We have become more anxious and confused, not less.

#### Turns their impacts and v2l

**Hagos 10** – writer for Wafrika, citing David Korten, former Professor at the Harvard Business School

(Michael, “The Cult Of Having Versus The City Of Being – Updated”, <http://www.wafrika.com/?p=267>, dml)

Put differently, democratic equality will never be achieved as long as we are alienated from human values, from nature, and from social and political reality, as long as we fail to challenge the disdainful superiority that men have over other men. Nor can this problem be resolved as long as we choose the having mode over the being mode of existence. We live in a soulless culture that promotes and glorifies the former at the expense of the latter.

Since authentic love has been a rare phenomenon in the modern period particularly, it is no surprise that the ideological quest for money is a defining cultural trait throughout much of the world, since it is not just a reflection of, but an overcompensation for, lack of authentic love:

Our seemingly insatiable quest for money and material consumption is in fact a quest to fill a void in our lives created by a lack of love. It is a consequence of dysfunctional societies in which money has displaced our sense of spiritual connection as the foundation of our cultural values and relationships. The result is a world of material scarcity, massive inequality, overtaxed environmental systems, and social disintegration. As long as we embrace money-making as our collective purpose and structure our institutions to give this goal precedence over all others, the void in our lives will grow and the human crisis will deepen. (David Korten)

## 1nr

### china

**Their form of politics translates into a policymaking of aggressive containment that culminates in war**

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**No Asia war—multiple safeguards and reversible tensions**

**Feng 10 –** professor at the Peking University International Studies [Zhu, “An Emerging Trend in East Asia: Military Budget Increases and Their Impact”, <http://www.fpif.org/articles/an_emerging_trend_in_east_asia?utm_source=feed>]

As such, the surge of defense expenditures in East Asia does not add up to an arms race. No country in East Asia wants to see a new geopolitical divide and spiraling tensions in the region. The growing defense expenditures powerfully illuminate the deepening of a regional “security dilemma,” whereby the “defensive” actions taken by one country are perceived as “offensive” by another country, which in turn takes its own “defensive” actions that the first country deems “offensive.” As long as the region doesn’t split into rival blocs, however, an arms race will not ensue. What is happening in East Asia is the extension of what Robert Hartfiel and Brian Job call “competitive arms processes.” The history of the cold war is telling in this regard. Arm races occur between great-power rivals only if the rivalry is doomed to intensify. The perceived tensions in the region do not automatically translate into consistent and lasting increases in military spending. Even declared budget increases are reversible. Taiwan’s defense budget for fiscal year 2010, for instance, will fall 9 percent. This is a convincing case of how domestic constraints can reverse a government decision to increase the defense budget. Australia’s twenty-year plan to increase the defense budget could change with a domestic economic contraction or if a new party comes to power. China’s two-digit increase in its military budget might vanish one day if the type of regime changes or the high rate of economic growth slows. Without a geopolitical split or a significant great-power rivalry, military budget increases will not likely evolve into “arms races.” The security dilemma alone is not a leading variable in determining the curve of military expenditures. Nor will trends in weapon development and procurement inevitably induce “risk-taking” behavior. Given the stability of the regional security architecture—the combination of U.S.-centered alliance politics and regional, cooperation-based security networking—any power shift in East Asia will hardly upset the overall status quo. China’s military modernization, its determination to “prepare for the worst and hope for the best,” hasn’t yet led to a regional response in military budget increases. In contrast, countries in the region continue to emphasize political and economic engagement with China, though “balancing China” strategies can be found in almost every corner of the region as part of an overall balance-of-power logic. In the last few years, China has taken big strides toward building up asymmetric war capabilities against Taiwan. Beijing also holds to the formula of a peaceful solution of the Taiwan issue except in the case of the island’s de jure declaration of independence. Despite its nascent capability of power projection, China shows no sign that it would coerce Taiwan or become militarily assertive over contentious territorial claims ranging from the Senkaku Islands to the Spratly Islands to the India-China border dispute.

**Multiple alt causes that spill over**

**UN 6** (United Nations, Sixty-first session August 2006, Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-first session: A proactive role for the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in East Asia, http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:sjdJ-QwBI0UJ:www.mofa.gov.tw/webapp/public/Data/681698871.doc+asean+%22east+asia%22+war+resolution+mediation&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a)

Rapid economic and trade development in East Asia has depended upon peace in the region, and whether or not growth continues relies heavily upon the maintenance of this peace and security. However, long-standing potential threats to East Asian peace and security, which include such issues as ethnic tensions, historical hatred and territorial disputes, have not been properly removed, and some of them have openly surfaced. In addition, there are new factors for potential conflict and other non-traditional threats to security, such as competition for energy and other resources, terrorism and environmental degradation, which could trigger regional political confrontations and even military conflicts. While these are causing much uncertainty in East Asia, what concerns us more is that multilateral cooperation mechanisms in the region only play a very limited role in security issues, and have no function with regard to collective military security. Hence the region cannot cope effectively with the ever-more complicated security challenges.

**Relations are resilient**

**Rosecrance and Qingguo 2010** – \*political science professor at Cal and senior fellow at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, former director of the Burkle Center for International Relations at UCLA, \*\*PhD from Cornell, Professor and Associate Dean of the School of International Studies of Peking University (Jia Qingguo and Richard Rosecrance, Global Asia, 4.4, “Delicately Poised: Are China and the US Heading for Conflict?”, <http://www.globalasia.org/l.php?c=e251>, WEA)

Sustained Cooperation?
The fact that the rise of China is unlikely to lead to armed conflict with the US does not necessarily mean that the two countries can achieve a wholly cooperative relationship in the long term. For that to happen, the two need to have shared interests, aspirations, and mutually acceptable approaches to promoting their national goals. It appears that these conditions are increasingly becoming a reality.
To begin with, after years of interaction, China and the US have developed a shared stake in cooperation. Their relationship has deepened to the point where their economic futures have become closely interlinked. Western demand, principally from the US, sustains a whole range of Chinese industries. Chinese investments support America’s deficit financing, with China holding more than $1 trillion of US government debt. The US, meanwhile, contributes greatly to China’s foreign trade surplus. If America stopped buying Chinese goods, it would put a serious crimp in Chinese economic growth. Chinese sovereign wealth funds are also moving into the US financial market to rebalance the amount of foreign direct investment on each side.
The Emergence of Shared Values
Chinese-American ties now range well beyond economics. As major beneficiaries of existing international arrangements, both China and the US have an important stake in many areas, including defending a free trade system, maintaining international peace and stability, opposing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting terrorism, ensuring secure energy supplies and reversing global warming. In addition, as a result of changes within China, the two countries increasingly find themselves sharing similar aspirations in the world. Among other things, China has replaced its centrally-planned economy with a market-oriented one. It has attached increasing importance to the rule of law. It has publicly advocated protection of human rights and has adopted many measures to improve its human rights situation. It has also tried to introduce democratic reforms such as nationwide village-level elections and measures to broaden participation in the selection of leaders at various levels of the Chinese government and in the policy making process. Recently, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that China wants democracy and will make more efforts in this regard. These and other changes on the part of China have narrowed the value differences between the two countries and provided an expanding political basis for China-US cooperation.
Finally, leaders of the two countries have learned how to cooperate after years of interaction. With the scope and depth of contacts increasing, China and the US find themselves with greater understanding and appreciation of each other’s legitimate interests and political sensitivities than ever before. Policy makers in the two countries not only know each other as counterparts, but also increasingly as personal friends. Many become acquainted long before they become important in their respective policy making institutions. Previous misunderstandings at the policy level are no longer serious. This has made miscalculation between the two countries less likely and facilitated cooperation.

### econ

**The economy is resilient**

**Washington Times 2008** – chief political correspondent for The Washington Times (7/28, Donald Lambro, The Washington Times, "Always darkest before dawn", lexis, WEA)

The doom-and-gloomers are still with us, of course, and they will go to their graves forecasting that life as we know it is coming to an end and that we are in for years of economic depression and recession. Last week, the New York Times ran a Page One story maintaining that Americans were saving less than ever, and that their debt burden had risen by an average of $117,951 per household. And the London Telegraph says there are even harder times ahead, comparing today's economy to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Wall Street economist David Malpass thinks that kind of fearmongering is filled with manipulated statistics that ignore long-term wealth creation in our country, as well as globally. Increasingly, people are investing "for the long run - for capital gains (not counted in savings) rather than current income - in preparation for retirement," he told his clients last week. Instead of a coming recession, "we think the U.S. is in gradual recovery after a sharp two-quarter slowdown, with consumer resilience more likely than the decades-old expectation of a consumer slump," Mr. Malpass said. "Fed data shows clearly that household savings of all types - liquid, financial and tangible - are still close to the record levels set in September. IMF data shows U.S. households holding more net financial savings than the rest of the world combined. Consumption has repeatedly outperformed expectations in recent quarters and year," he said. The American economy has been pounded by a lot of factors, including the housing collapse (a needed correction to bring home prices down to earth), the mortgage scandal and the meteoric rise in oil and gas prices. But this $14 trillion economy, though slowing down, continues to grow by about 1 percent on an annualized basis, confounding the pessimists who said we were plunging into a recession, defined by negative growth over two quarters. That has not happened - yet. Call me a cockeyed optimist, but I do not think we are heading into a recession. On the contrary, I'm more bullish than ever on our economy's long-term prospects.