### 1

#### Interpretation: The affirmative must have the United States federal government substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico or Venezuela.

#### Definitions

#### The United States federal government is the actor defined by the resolution, not individual debaters

US Gov Official Website 2009

http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/federal.shtml

U.S. Federal Government The three branches of U.S. government—legislative, judicial, and executive—carry out governmental power and functions. View a complete diagram (.PDF) of the U.S. government's branches.

#### “Resolved” expresses intent to implement the plan

**Merriam-Webster Dictionary** 19**96** [http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=resolved, downloaded 07/20/03]

“6. To change or convert by resolution or formal vote; -- used only reflexively; as, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole.”

#### “Should” denotes an expectation of enacting a plan

American Heritage Dictionary 2000

[www.dictionary.com]

3 Used to express probability or expectation

#### Violation: The aff does not defend the United States federal government economically engaging with Latin America.

#### There are two net benefits to our interpretation.

#### First, is limits. The affirmative unlimits the topic by allowing the aff to defend an infinite number of affs.

#### Limits are important for:

#### A. Creativity – starting point that forces innovative thinking within the topic constraints

Intrator 10 – Harvard Film School Graduate, President of the Creative Organization, (Davd, “Thinking Inside the Box”, Training, 10/22/10, http://www.trainingmag.com/article/thinking-inside-box)

By David Intrator, president, The Creative Organization One of the most pernicious myths about creativity, one that seriously inhibits creative thinking and innovation, is the belief that one needs to “think outside the box.” As someone who has worked for decades as a professional creative, nothing could be further from the truth. This a is view shared by the vast majority of creatives, expressed famously by the modernist designer Charles Eame**s when he** wrote Design depends largely upon constraints.”, “The myth of thinking outside the box stems from a fundamental misconception of what creativity is, and what it’s not. In the popular imagination, creativity is something weird and wacky. The creative process is magical, or divinely inspired. But, in fact, creativity is not about divine inspiration or magic. It’s about problem-solving, and by definition a problem is a constraint, a limit, a box. One of the best illustrations of this is the work of photographers. They create by excluding the great mass what’s before them, choosing a small frame in which to work. Within that tiny frame, literally a box, they uncover relationships and establish priorities. What makes creative problem-solving uniquely challenging is that you, as the creator, are the one defining the problem. You’re the one choosing the frame. And you alone determine what’s an effective solution. This can be quite demanding, both intellectually and emotionally. Intellectually, you are required to establish limits, set priorities, and cull patterns and relationships from a great deal of material, much of it fragmentary. More often than not, this is the material you generated during brainstorming sessions. At the end of these sessions, you’re usually left with a big mess of ideas, half-ideas, vague notions, and the like. Now, chances are you’ve had a great time making your mess. You might have gone off-site, enjoyed a “brainstorming camp,” played a number of warm-up games. You feel artistic and empowered. But to be truly creative, you have to clean up your mess, organizing those fragments into something real, something useful, something that actually works. That’s the hard part. It takes a lot of energy, time, and willpower to make sense of the mess you’ve just generated. It also can be emotionally difficult. You’ll need to throw out many ideas you originally thought were great, ideas you’ve become attached to, because they simply don’t fit into the rules you’re creating as you build your box. You can always change the rules, but that also comes with an emotional price. Unlike many other kinds of problems, with creative problems there is no external authority to which you can appeal to determine whether you’re on the right track, whether one set of rules should have priority over another, or whether one box is better than another. There is no correct answer. Better said: There might be a number of correct answers. Or none at all. The responsibility of deciding the right path to take is entirely upon you. That’s a lot of responsibility, and it can be paralyzing. So it’s no wonder that the creative process often stalls after the brainstorming in many organizations. Whereas generating ideas is open-ended, and, in a sense, infinitely hopeful, having to pare those ideas down is restrictive, tedious, and, at times, scary. The good news, however, is that understanding the creative process as problem-solving is ultimately liberating. For one, all of those left-brainers with well-honed rational skills will find themselves far more creative than they ever thought. They’ll discover their talents for organization, abstraction, and clarity are very much what’s required to be a true creative thinker. Viewing creativity as problem-solving also makes the whole process far less intimidating, even though it might lose some of its glamour and mystery. Moreover, since creative problems are open to rational analysis, they can be broken down into smaller components that are easier to address. Best of all, the very act of problem-solving, of organizing and trying making sense of things, helps generate new ideas. Paradoxically, thinking within a box may be one of the most effective brainstorming techniques there is. That may be what Charles Eames meant when he added, “I welcome constraints.” Without some sort of structure to your creative thinking, you’re just flailing about. For a while you might feel like you’re making progress, generating a great mess of ideas that might hold some potential. But to turn those ideas into something truly innovative, your best bet is to build your box and play by the rules of your own creation.

#### B. Livability – we have to maintain our grades in school and spend time with our families. It is not possible to research an untargeted topic and be successful in debate.

#### C. A limited topic of discussion that provides for equitable ground is key to productive inculcation of decision-making

Steinberg & Freeley 8 \*Austin J. Freeley is a Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, AND David L. Steinberg , Lecturer of Communication Studies @ U Miami, Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making pp.45

Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a tact or value or policy, there is no need for debate: the matter can be settled by unanimous consent. Thus, for example, it would be pointless to attempt to debate "Resolved: That two plus two equals four," because there is simply no controversy about this statement. (Controversy is an essential prerequisite of debate. Where there is no clash of ideas, proposals, interests, or expressed positions on issues, there is no debate. In addition, debate cannot produce effective decisions without clear identification of a question or questions to be answered. For example, general argument may occur about the broad topic of illegal immigration. How many illegal immigrants are in the United States? What is the impact of illegal immigration and immigrants on our economy? What is their impact on our communities? Do they commit crimes? Do they take jobs from American workers? Do they pay taxes? Do they require social services? Is it a problem that some do not speak English? Is it the responsibility of employers to discourage illegal immigration by not hiring undocumented workers? Should they have the opportunity- to gain citizenship? Docs illegal immigration pose a security threat to our country? Do illegal immigrants do work that American workers are unwilling to do? Are their rights as workers and as human beings at risk due to their status? Are they abused by employers, law enforcement, housing, and businesses? I low are their families impacted by their status? What is the moral and philosophical obligation of a nation state to maintain its borders? Should we build a wall on the Mexican border, establish a national identification can!, or enforce existing laws against employers? Should we invite immigrants to become U.S. citizens? Surely you can think of many more concerns to be addressed by a conversation about the topic area of illegal immigration. Participation in this "debate" is likely to be emotional and intense. However, it is not likely to be productive or useful without focus on a particular question and identification of a line demarcating sides in the controversy. To be discussed and resolved effectively, controversies must be stated clearly. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor decisions, frustration, and emotional distress, as evidenced by the failure of the United States Congress to make progress on the immigration debate during the summer of 2007. Someone disturbed by the problem of the growing underclass of poorly educated, socially disenfranchised youths might observe, "Public schools are doing a terrible job! They are overcrowded, and many teachers are poorly qualified in their subject areas. Even the best teachers can do little more than struggle to maintain order in their classrooms." That same concerned citizen, facing a complex range of issues, might arrive at an unhelpful decision, such as "We ought to do something about this" or. worse. "It's too complicated a problem to deal with." Groups of concerned citizens worried about the state of public education could join together to express their frustrations, anger, disillusionment, and emotions regarding the schools, but without a focus for their discussions, they could easily agree about the sorry state of education without finding points of clarity or potential solutions. A gripe session would follow. But if a precise question is posed—such as "What can be done to improve public education?"—then a more profitable area of discussion is opened up simply by placing a focus on the search for a concrete solution step. One or more judgments can be phrased in the form of debate propositions, motions for parliamentary debate, or bills for legislative assemblies. The statements "Resolved: That the federal government should implement a program of charter schools in at-risk communities" and "Resolved: That the state of Florida should adopt a school voucher program" more clearly identify specific ways of dealing with educational problems in a manageable form, suitable for debate. They provide specific policies to be investigated and aid discussants in identifying points of difference. To have a productive debate, which facilitates effective decision making by directing and placing limits on the decision to be made, the basis for argument should be clearly defined. If we merely talk about "homelessness" or "abortion" or "crime'\* or "global warming" we are likely to have an interesting discussion but not to establish profitable basis for argument. For example, the statement "Resolved: That the pen is mightier than the sword" is debatable, yet fails to provide much basis for clear argumentation. If we take this statement to mean that the written word is more effective than physical force for some purposes, we can identify a problem area: the comparative effectiveness of writing or physical force for a specific purpose. Although we now have a general subject, we have not yet stated a problem. It is still too broad, too loosely worded to promote well-organized argument. What sort of writing are we concerned with—poems, novels, government documents, website development, advertising, or what? What does "effectiveness" mean in this context? What kind of physical force is being compared—fists, dueling swords, bazookas, nuclear weapons, or what? A more specific question might be. "Would a mutual defense treaty or a visit by our fleet be more effective in assuring Liurania of our support in a certain crisis?" The basis for argument could be phrased in a debate proposition such as "Resolved: That the United States should enter into a mutual defense treatv with Laurania." Negative advocates might oppose this proposition by arguing that fleet maneuvers would be a better solution. This is not to say that debates should completely avoid creative interpretation of the controversy by advocates, or that good debates cannot occur over competing interpretations of the controversy; in fact, these sorts of debates may be very engaging. The point is that debate is best facilitated by the guidance provided by focus on a particular point of difference, which will be outlined in the following discussion.

#### Decision making skills key to problem solving in all facets of life—outweighs the case

Steinberg & Freeley 8 \*Austin J. Freeley is a Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, AND \*\*David L. Steinberg , Lecturer of Communication Studies @ U Miami, Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making pp. 9-10

If we assume it to be possible without recourse to violence to reach agreement on all the problems implied in the employment of the idea of justice we are granting the possibility of formulating an ideal of man and society, valid for all beings endowed with reason and accepted by what we have called elsewhere the universal audience.14 I think that the only discursive methods available to us stem from techniques that are not demonstrative—that is, conclusive and rational in the narrow sense of the term—but from argumentative techniques which are not conclusive but which may tend to demonstrate the reasonable character of the conceptions put forward. It is this recourse to the rational and reasonable for the realization of the ideal of universal communion that characterizes the age-long endeavor of all philosophies in their aspiration for a city of man in which violence may progressively give way to wisdom.13 Whenever an individual controls the dimensions of" a problem, he or she can solve the problem through a personal decision. For example, if the problem is whether to go to the basketball game tonight, if tickets are not too expensive and if transportation is available, the decision can be made individually. But if a friend's car is needed to get to the game, then that person's decision to furnish the transportation must be obtained. Complex problems, too, are subject to individual decision making. American business offers many examples of small companies that grew into major corporations while still under the individual control of the founder. Some computer companies that began in the 1970s as one-person operations burgeoned into multimillion-dollar corporations with the original inventor still making all the major decisions. And some of the multibillion-dollar leveraged buyouts of the 1980s were put together by daring—some would say greedy—financiers who made the day-to-day and even hour-to-hour decisions individually. When President George H. W. Bush launched Operation Desert Storm, when President Bill Clinton sent troops into Somalia and Haiti and authorized Operation Desert Fox, and when President George W. Bush authorized Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, they each used different methods of decision making, but in each case the ultimate decision was an individual one. In fact, many government decisions can be made only by the president. As Walter Lippmann pointed out, debate is the only satisfactory way the exact issues can be decided: A president, whoever he is, has to find a way of understanding the novel and changing issues which he must, under the Constitution, decide. Broadly speaking ... the president has two ways of making up his mind. The one is to turn to his subordinates—to his chiefs of staff and his cabinet officers and undersecretaries and the like—and to direct them to argue out the issues and to bring him an agreed decision… The other way is to sit like a judge at a hearing where the issues to be decided are debated. After he has heard the debate, after he has examined the evidence, after he has heard the debaters cross-examine one another, after he has questioned them himself he makes his decision… It is a much harder method in that it subjects the president to the stress of feeling the full impact of conflicting views, and then to the strain of making his decision, fully aware of how momentous it Is. But there is no other satisfactory way by which momentous and complex issues can be decided.16 John F. Kennedy used Cabinet sessions and National Security Council meetings to provide debate to illuminate diverse points of view, expose errors, and challenge assumptions before he reached decisions.17 As he gained experience in office, he placed greater emphasis on debate. One historian points out: "One reason for the difference between the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis was that [the Bay of Pig\*] fiasco instructed Kennedy in the importance of uninhibited debate in advance of major decision."18 All presidents, to varying degrees, encourage debate among their advisors. We may never be called on to render the final decision on great issues of national policy, but we are constantly concerned with decisions important to ourselves for which debate can be applied in similar ways. That is, this debate may take place in our minds as we weigh the pros and cons of the problem, or we may arrange for others to debate the problem for us. Because we all are increasingly involved in the decisions of the campus, community, and society in general, it is in our intelligent self-interest to reach these decisions through reasoned debate.

#### Second is:

#### Switch-side debate is key to advocacy skills and progressive change.

**Mitchell et al. 07** (Gordon, Eric English, Stephen Llano, Catherine E. Morrison, John Rief, and Carly Woods, Pitt Comm Studies Grad Students, Gordon Mitchell is an Associate Comm Studies Professor @ Pitt, Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies 4)

The problem for Greene and Hicks is that this notion of citizenship becomes tied to a normative conception of American democracy that justifies imperialism. They write, ‘‘The production and management of this field of governance allows liberalism to trade in cultural technologies in the global cosmopolitan marketplace at the same time as it creates a field of intervention to transform and change the world one subject (regime) at a time.’’11 Here, Greene and Hicks argue that this new conception of liberal governance, which epitomizes the ethical citizen as an individual trained in the switch-side technique, serves as a normative tool for judging other polities and justifying forcible regime change. One need look only to the Bush administration’s framing of war as an instrument of democracy promotion to grasp how the switch-side technique can be appropriated as a justification for violence. It is our position, however, that rather than acting as a cultural technology expanding American exceptionalism, switch-side debating originates from a civic attitude that serves as a bulwark against fundamentalism of all stripes. Several prominent voices reshaping the national dialogue on homeland security have come from the academic debate community and draw on its animating spirit of critical inquiry. For example, Georgetown University law professor Neal Katyal served as lead plaintiff ’s counsel in Hamdan, which challenged post-9/11 enemy combat definitions. 12 The foundation for Katyal’s winning argument in Hamdan was laid some four years before, when he collaborated with former intercollegiate debate champion Laurence Tribe on an influential Yale Law Journal addressing a similar topic.13 Tribe won the National Debate Tournament in 1961 while competing as an undergraduate debater for Harvard University. Thirty years later, Katyal represented Dartmouth College at the same tournament and finished third. The imprint of this debate training is evident in Tribe and Katyal’s contemporary public interventions, which are characterized by meticulous research, sound argumentation, and a staunch commitment to democratic principles. Katyal’s reflection on his early days of debating at Loyola High School in Chicago’s North Shore provides a vivid illustration. ‘‘I came in as a shy freshman with dreams of going to medical school. Then Loyola’s debate team opened my eyes to a different world: one of argumentation and policy.’’ As Katyal recounts, ‘‘the most important preparation for my career came from my experiences as a member of Loyola’s debate team.’’14 The success of former debaters like Katyal, Tribe, and others in challenging the dominant dialogue on homeland security points to the efficacy of academic debate as a training ground for future advocates of progressive change. Moreover, a robust understanding of the switch-side technique and the classical liberalism which underpins it would help prevent misappropriation of the technique to bolster suspect homeland security policies. For buried within an inner-city debater’s files is a secret threat to absolutism: the refusal to be classified as ‘‘with us or against us,’’ the embracing of intellectual experimentation in an age of orthodoxy, and reflexivity in the face of fundamentalism. But by now, the irony of our story should be apparent\*the more effectively academic debating practice can be focused toward these ends, the greater the proclivity of McCarthy’s ideological heirs to brand the activity as a ‘‘weapon of mass destruction.’’

#### Policy simulation is good because it’s a game—unlocks freedom to strategically experiment—empirically more effective than airing out your personal perspective

**Eijkman 12**

The role of simulations in the authentic learning for national security policy development: Implications for Practice / Dr. Henk Simon Eijkman. [electronic resource] <http://nsc.anu.edu.au/test/documents/Sims_in_authentic_learning_report.pdf>. Dr Henk Eijkman is currently an independent consultant as well as visiting fellow at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy and is Visiting Professor of Academic Development, Annasaheb Dange College of Engineering and Technology in India. As a sociologist he developed an active interest in tertiary learning and teaching with a focus on socially inclusive innovation and culture change. He has taught at various institutions in the social sciences and his work as an adult learning specialist has taken him to South Africa, Malaysia, Palestine, and India. He publishes widely in international journals, serves on Conference Committees and editorial boards of edited books and international journal

Policy simulations stimulate Creativity

Participation in policy games has proved to be a highly effective way of developing new combinations of experience and creativity, which is precisely what innovation requires (Geurts et al. 2007: 548). Gaming, whether in analog or digital mode, has the power to stimulate creativity, and is one of the most engaging and liberating ways for making group work productive, challenging and enjoyable. Geurts et al. (2007) cite one instance where, in a National Health Care policy change environment, ‘the many parties involved accepted the invitation to participate in what was a revolutionary and politically very sensitive experiment precisely because it was a game’ (Geurts et al. 2007: 547). Data from other policy simulations also indicate the uncovering of issues of which participants were not aware, the emergence of new ideas not anticipated, and a perception that policy simulations are also an enjoyable way to formulate strategy (Geurts et al. 2007). Gaming puts the players in an ‘experiential learning’ situation, where they discover a concrete, realistic and complex initial situation, and the gaming process of going through multiple learning cycles helps them work through the situation as it unfolds. Policy gaming stimulates ‘learning how to learn’, as in a game, and learning by doing alternates with reflection and discussion. The progression through learning cycles can also be much faster than in real-life (Geurts et al. 2007: 548). The bottom line is that problem solving in policy development processes requires creative experimentation. This cannot be primarily taught via ‘camp-fire’ story telling learning mode but demands hands-on ‘veld learning’ that allow for safe creative and productive experimentation. This is exactly what good policy simulations provide (De Geus, 1997; Ringland, 2006). In simulations participants cannot view issues solely from either their own perspective or that of one dominant stakeholder (Geurts et al. 2007). Policy simulations enable the seeking of Consensus Games are popular because historically people seek and enjoy the tension of competition, positive rivalry and the procedural justice of impartiality in safe and regulated environments. As in games, simulations temporarily remove the participants from their daily routines, political pressures, and the restrictions of real-life protocols. In consensus building, participants engage in extensive debate and need to act on a shared set of meanings and beliefs to guide the policy process in the desired direction

### 2

#### Thor and I affirm the position of the Zapataistas. Thor and I declare war on capitalism’s attempt to render entire population and the natural world as disposable.

#### The 1AC is littered with the word WE. The neg REJECTS the word ‘we’ in the 1ac- replace it with Thor and I. Thor and I affirm the rest of the speech act as well.

#### Use of the term ‘we’ paves the way for government intervention into individual lives and the debate space – this form of politicization in debate causes tyrannical rule and coercion, crushing the possibility for participatory democracy

Roger Kerr, Executive Director of the New Zealand Business Roundtable, ‘3 (“The 'We' Word: And the Tyranny of the Majority” http://www.cis.org.au/policy/summer03-04/polsumm0304-4.htm)

Of all such terms, **'we' is the most** subtle and **troublesome**. It is a term that we-so to speak-cannot dispense with, and so **we risk being trapped into connotations that we don't intend or are unaware of**. 'We' can be used in an individualistic sense: 'we' taken as individuals, who can act and make decisions on our own behalf. But it can also be used in a collective sense, meaning that on each issue 'we' have to make a single decision that applies to all of us. For example, after a natural catastrophe, someone might say, 'we should all help the victims'. **The** **words** by themselves **don't expose** two **crucial distinctions**: whether assistance should be by each of us as individuals or organised on a collective basis; and, if collective, whether it should be voluntary (through donations) or involuntary (through government action financed out of taxes). But my deeper point is that **thi**s **ambiguity of 'we' can lead us into collective thinking and coercive action** where it isn't necessary. Political rhetoric is full of phrases like 'we as a nation must decide whether we want a national airline/film industry/manufacturing sector/whatever'. **T**his assumes that 'we' have to make a single, collective **decision** as voters, **whereas in reality 'we' as individuals are making that decision every day**. If consumers prefer a domestically manufactured product to an imported one, a domestic manufacturing industry or firm will be there to meet the demand; if they prefer the imported product it won't. **The demand that 'we** as a nation **must decide' is to call on people to decide through the political system things that they can readily resolve as individual consume**rs. **The 'we' word may also be used by members of groups that are smaller than**, and contained within, **the wider society**. In a system that encourages lobbying by special interests and institutionalises 'disadvantaged' minorities, **spokespersons** of those groups **may be tempted into a false collectivism**. The media encourage this by commonly treating any member of a disadvantaged minority as automatically representative of that sub-set, as if all its members were unanimous about every issue. Underlying the individualist and collectivist senses of 'we' is the distinction between what David Green calls 'corporate association' and 'civil association': A 'corporate association' is composed of persons united in pursuit of a common interest or objective . . . In the pure form of a nation as a corporate association, there is but one overriding national objective. In a nation of 'civil associates', people are united not because they share a concrete goal, or are engaged together in a substantive task, but because they acknowledge the authority of the rules under which they live . . . The task of government under a corporate association is to manage the pursuit of the common goal and to direct individuals as appropriate . . . The task of the state under a civil association is to maintain and enforce the laws, and to supply services such as defence, which must be financed from taxation. The role of government is limited and subject to the law.2 As Green notes, if we take society to be a civil association rather than a corporate association, **the role of what 'we' collectively have to decide is limited to genuine public goods** like law-enforcement and defence-**since these are goods that we individually can't otherwise produce in the desired amounts**-plus some form of collectively provided social safety net. **There are not many genuine public goods**, and the number is shrinking with advancing technology. But **the constant use of the collective 'we'** in political debate **tends to push out the agenda of government into areas where we** as individuals are capable of looking after ourselves**.**  Indeed, most of the time **the 'we' word is really a disguise for the 'it' word: the government**. **Those who argue that 'we** as a nation' **must decide** whether we want a manufacturing industry **are really saying** that, since 'we' as individual consumers **have shown that we prefer imports, the government should override those preferences and protect domestic manufacturers from import competition**. The scope for special interests to advance under the cover of the 'we' word is obvious. It is true that sometimes such government intervention does appear to command a degree of popular support, and it is a huge advantage to a special interest seeking government favours when this is the case. Indeed, not only special interests but governments themselves are constantly in the business of testing 'public opinion' with polls, consultations, focus groups, and so on, trying to come up with putative majorities to legitimise their proposals instead of seriously demonstrating that they serve genuine collective interests. But **the further away 'we' collectively are taken from 'us' individually, the more contrived, artificial and fragile is the 'majority' that is formed in our name** <continues> For example, advocates of bigger government like to cite opinion polls that appear to show that a majority approves of higher taxes to finance better health, education or welfare benefits. Four major objections can be raised against this. First, the question itself assumes that it is axiomatic that higher taxes actually result in better services. They may well not, but the opinion pollsters don't normally accommodate this possibility. Second, the polls typically present a bogus either-or choice between raising taxes and leaving them unchanged. They exclude the entirely feasible options of charging for some services and lowering taxes to allow more individuals to make private arrangements. So the majority for higher taxes is largely contrived. Third, some of the many beneficiaries may expect others to pay the higher taxes: **'we' doesn't include 'me', as it were.** Finally, we tend in the privacy of the polling booth to vote against higher taxes, whatever we think we should say to opinion pollsters. Several Western political parties have lost elections in recent years after promising to increase taxes, or after increasing them when they had promised not to. It is a major problem for opinion polls that respondents may not reveal their true preferences but express preferences that are socially fashionable. Again, the collective **'we's that are constantly cobbled together in support of some proposal or other are highly dependent on the phrasing of whatever it is that is being put to us**. The question 'Should we protect our manufacturers from import competition?' may be supported by a majority. But if the question were rephrased 'Should the government raise the prices of manufactured goods by levying a tax on manufactured imports?', the majority would be smaller or even non-existent. If the 'we's that opinion polls record are so precarious, it's not surprising that they can be contradictory as well. A good example comes from the United States in the mid-1990s. In 1994, a new Republican-dominated Congress thought it had a clear mandate to move towards a balanced budget. It duly put up proposals to reduce the growth rate of some welfare entitlement programmes. But no sooner had the proposals been passed than President Clinton vetoed them, invoking the support of a new majority opposing them. Which did US citizens want? A balanced budget or guaranteed entitlement levels? They wanted both. **The 'will of the people' may be systematically ambiguous on the decisions that governments make on a daily basis**. The truth is that few consequences for the respondent hang on the answers given to an opinion pollster, and there is little incentive to make a considered judgment. This is largely true of voting as well, since a single vote hardly ever determines the outcome of an election. But there is some evidence that people take voting relatively seriously. **Devotees of the 'we' word might therefore be challenged to consider making more use of the system of citizens initiated referenda.** They are unlikely to do so because, unlike with opinion polls, the results of a referendum cannot be easily manipulated. But **the challenge could at least inject a little linguistic hygiene into the Towers of Babel that politicians, lobbyists, intellectuals and journalists have constructed in modern democracies.**  This is not to suggest that the collective 'we' must be confined to the limited range of collective or public goods that a government has to fund or produce in a civil association. Although the members of a society like Australia or New Zealand are for the most part unknown to one another, we have common bonds and share a common destiny. A civil association does not conscript its members into overriding collective purposes, but nor is it merely a collection of atomised individuals who have nothing to do with one another. We have our voluntary collective activities, like sports, churches, associations of all sorts, and our annual timetable of festivals and rituals. **When referring to our common life, we can use the 'we' word without ambiguity or sleight of hand. The problem arises when our common life is made the basis for what are usually spurious majorities for expanding the scope of government beyond its necessary limits**. **Such majorities typically reflect only the shifting and temporary coalitions that our political system produces, and government that is beh**olden to them ceases to be the agent of the society and **becomes an instrument of coercion.**  So **beware the 'we' word** in politics, **since**, despite its apparently communitarian connotations, **it** so often **portends a weakening rather than a strengthening of socia**l cohesion**. A key feature of constitutional democracy is the protection of minorities and the rights of dissenting,** law-abiding **individuals**. **Exercising through politics the so-called 'tyranny of the majority', and trampling on individual rights, are** recipes for social discord at best and a slide into an Orwellian world **at worst.**

#### Unchecked tyranny causes mass suffering

Rummel, Professor Emiritus at University of Hawaii, **19**94 [“Death By Government”, http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP1.HTM]

Power kills, absolute Power kills absolutely. This new Power Principle is the message emerging from my previous work on the causes of war and this book on genocide and government mass murder--what I call democide--in this century. T**he more power a government has,** the more it can act arbitrarily a**ccording to the whims and desires of the elite, the more it will make war** on others **and murder its** foreign and domestic **subjects. The more constrained the power of governments, the more it is** diffused, **checked and balanced, t**he less it will aggress on others and commit democide. At the extremes of Power2, **totalitarian** communist **governments slaughter their people by the tens of millions**, while many democracies can barely bring themselves to execute even serial murderers. <continued…> Consider also that library stacks have been written on the possible nature and consequences of nuclear war and how it might be avoided. Yet, **in the life of some still living we have experienced in the toll from democide** (**and related destruction and** misery among the survivors) **the equivalent of a nuclear war,** especially at the high **near 360,000,000** end of the estimates. It is as though one had already occurred! Yet to my knowledge, there is only one book dealing with the overall human cost of this "nuclear war"--Gil Elliot's Twentieth Century Book of the Dead.

### 3

### Solvency

#### 1. Despite political reforms, the Zapatista movement fails to create social change – empirically proven – their turn away from politics permanently doomed them

Lakin 09 Jason Lakin (Jason Lakin joined the International Budget Partnership as Program Officer fdor the Partnership Initiative in May 2009.¶ Lakin completed his Ph.D. in political science and social policy at Harvard University in 2008, and spent the 2008-2009 academic year as a research fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health. His dissertation focused on the politics surrounding the creation and implementation of Mexico’s 2003 health insurance reform. Prior to graduate school, Lakin worked briefly as a research assistant for the DC Fiscal Policy Institute in 2002.¶ Lakin completed a B.A. in History at Brown University in 1998 and went on to work as a research assistant to the late Seymour Martin Lipset. Lakin and Professor Lipset co-authored The Democratic Century in 2004. Jason has spent time working, volunteering ,and conducting research in a number of countries around the world since the mid-1990s, including Kenya, Zimbabwe, Chile, Mexico, and India.)¶ “Fifteen Years After The Zapatistas” Harvard International Review¶ April 13, 2009 ¶ <http://hir.harvard.edu/blog/jason-lakin/fifteen-years-after-the-zapatistas>

So why haven't all of these political changes made more of a difference to the lives of ordinary peasants? The conference participants suggested a few reasons. First, even the most ardent supporters of the Zapatistas admitted that the militants, who have largely given up violent struggle, have not replaced it with a realistic alternative tool of social change. Zapatistas today continue to experiment with the creation of “autonomous” zones of power in Chiapas, where they have set up parallel institutions of governance. Panelists disagreed about the efficacy of these institutions in political and juridical terms, but not in economic terms: the Zapatistas have not created a viable model of economic autonomy for poor peasants. At the same time, the turn inward, and away from the state, has rendered the Zapatistas less effective at reforming the Mexican state. While some panelists saw the Zapatista experiments as noble efforts to create alternative political structures that are more democratic than those of the wider society, others argued that the Zapatistas had missed an opportunity to build a broad movement to reform the state.¶ But of course, the failure of development in Chiapas goes far beyond the Zapatistas. The land reforms of the mid-1990s have not brought economic self-sufficiency, because the redistributed land is of low quality, and has been sub-divided into plots that are simply too small to yield enough for survival. All of this has happened at a time when the Mexican state has offered little in the way of subsidies to small farmers, and has also failed to offer an alternative development path that would move Chiapas up the value chain.¶ Electoral changes are also, to a certain degree, more apparent than real. A common theme to emerge from the panels was that, in spite of changes in political institutions, such as democratic elections, or decentralization, political practice at the state level in Mexico continues to be dominated by patron-client relationships and high discretion on the part of politicians. Thus, even though the PRI has been humbled, and new resources have been made available to Chiapas, and even though indigenous peasants have entered politics, dysfunctional institutions and corruption persist. The result is a failure to ameliorate basic inequalities. These findings are consistent across states as different as Oaxaca, Mexico and Chiapas.

#### 2. Dialogue is an ineffective way of breaking down the current system when they reject politics – this round solves nothing.

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Guaquitepec is a small village in Chiapas, the southernmost state in Mexico and by most estimates the poorest in the country. It is a humid, tropical area perhaps best known for the large-scale rebellion staged two decades ago by a leftist revolutionary group called Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), or as they are more popularly known: the Zapatistas. The famous Zapatista revolution dramatically impacted Mexican culture and politics, and in villages like Guaquitepec, its influence is still widely felt, and its legacy on the state of Chiapas has yet to be determined.[i]¶ The Zapatistas initially attracted a wave of local and international attention for their cause; as a result, Chiapas received an influx of development aid following the 1994 rebellion. The state currently has the second-highest number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and development organizations in the country. Yet even with all the aid, little has changed in fifteen years. While the Zapatistas secured a degree of autonomy from the Mexican government, very little progress has been made and the underlying sources of conflict remain unaddressed.¶ Today, the Zapatistas—representing a broad political culture of workers, teachers, students, and farmers and having a wider support base than the initial mid-1990s political-military apparatus—continue to move away from government programs, maintaining their independence from the state. Some argue that this self-imposed isolation has limited the political influence of Chiapas and hampered economic progress. Others highlight the alternative political and social structures that emerged, arguing that the Zapatistas actually missed a significant opportunity to truly reform the state for the better.¶ Visiting a village like Guaquitepec, one notes that the community embraces an alternative model of development, centered on sustainable economic and social practices. The community has developed its own unique market structures and agro-ecological systems. Students in Guaquitepec’s community-based schools are trained in traditional, family-given agricultural practices; classes are taught in Tzeltal, their mother tongue; and indigenous cultural norms are practiced extensively. High school graduates are placed in jobs within the community rather than migrating to cities, which preserves a sense of kinship and counteracts “brain drain.” Guaquitepec represents a practical success story of the unique Zapatista ideology of self-reliance; other villages across Chiapas present a less rosy picture, as will be discussed. While Chiapas has undergone massive political, economic, and social transformations since the Zapatista revolt, the impact is perceived as limited in indigenous minds.¶ As Mexico moves forward, the future of Chiapas and the role of the Zapatista political paradigm remain uncertain. On 1 December 2012, newly elected president Enrique Peña Nieto took up his new mandate. He is a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the same party that ran the country for nearly seventy years, under whom the Zapatistas revolted in 1994. What Nieto’s rise to power might mean for the Zapatista ideals of self-autonomy and independence from the state is impossible to predict; this article explores the unique nature of development and community building in Chiapas at this crucial and uncertain moment in its history. ¶ “Para Todos Todo”: The Zapatistas in Context¶ The EZLN emerged as an antiglobalization, anti-neoliberal social movement in Chiapas in the early 1990s, seeking indigenous rights over land and other local resources. Land reform was a key demand, since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) eliminated the guarantee of land reparations to indigenous groups, which had been mandated by the 1917 Mexican Constitution.[ii]¶ The Zapatistas believed that NAFTA would increase the gap between the rich and poor. Apart from opening the Mexican market to cheap, mass-produced, U.S. agricultural products, NAFTA would significantly reduce Mexican crop subsidies and affect the income and living standards for many southern Mexican farmers, making it difficult for them to compete with heavily subsidized imports from the United States. For the Zapatista rebellion, this became a critical opportunity to demand for greater democratization of the Mexican government and a stronger representation of the needs of the indigenous people.¶ The revolt—led by an estimated three-thousand insurgents marching into towns and cities in Chiapas—was quickly subdued by military forces, eventually leading to negotiations between the government and the Zapatista leadership. A major impact of the rebellion was the mass media campaign that put an international spotlight on issues facing the people of Chiapas. Development assistance came pouring into the state; the EZLN received significant notice from a variety of NGOs and organizations, as well as from broadcasts in both leftist and mainstream media outlets. International human rights organizations came to San Cristóbal De Las Casas, a colonial town in the highlands of Chiapas, to monitor possible human rights abuses by the army.¶ However, high international prominence and the increased flow of funds and human resources into the state have not translated into improved livelihoods for local communities. The prevailing paradigm of development in Chiapas during the 1990s was premised on neoliberal principles and failed to engage in meaningful consultations with local communities over their land and resource issues. The dominant development narratives effectively sidelined the indigenous demands that had been embodied by the Zapatistas.¶ Ideologically, the Zapatistas advocate for an alternative participatory system of development, which favors grassroots initiatives over top-down directives. The Zapatistas promote development principles that connect the complex socio-historical fabric of Chiapas’ indigenous communities with the local economic sphere. Their ideals revolve around the preservation of cultural and linguistic traditions, the sanctity of land for indigenous people, and the perpetuation of organic and local farming practices within the region. ¶ The Chiapas Model in Practice¶ Although critics of the Zapatista movement point out that the antigovernment rhetoric of the mid-1990s has not been galvanized into a viable model of economic autonomy for poor peasants, some cases of Zapatistas-led development—such as Guaquitepec—point to their success in reconciling local context and economic needs.¶ The residents of Guaquitepec continue to uphold Zapatista notions of the relationship between indigenous tradition and self-sufficiency. Alternative visions of modern farming practices, combined with the establishment of strong networks of local producers and consumers, have led to the emergence of a unique commercial dynamic that has improved livelihoods for many farmers.¶ The Guaquitepec model extends beyond community economics and into the political sphere as well. Through its local participatory process, the village offers a unique example of a community taking ownership of its institutions in a democratic manner. At a practical level, programs and projects are initiated through grassroots leadership and are implemented directly by the people. Locals are empowered to make changes from within.¶ While Guaquitepec represents a development success, taking local context and dynamics into consideration, most of Chiapas has engaged on a different path. Rather than embracing community-based development, many villages favor government-led interventions, which tend to be top-down and attempt to force change from the outside. Recently, the Mexican government has pushed to transform local farming practices into a commercially oriented industry, exemplifying the inherent tension between cultural practices and government attempts to monetize them.[iii] Generally, these types of interventions in Chiapas have only led to a perpetuation of poverty and under-development. As the seventh most populous state with approximately 4.3 percent of the Mexican population, Chiapas contributes only 1.8 percent to the national gross domestic product, according to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. Extreme social inequalities are prevalent within the region, and many indigenous communities lack basic provisions such as electricity, running water, and education.¶ Development and its Deficiencies¶ An interesting issue that arises from the contrast between the aforementioned paths to development is the question of what constitutes progress in a rural society. Among communities in Chiapas, such ideas as modernization, technology, and change are not unanimously perceived as “good.” Many believe progress is derived from autonomous agricultural practices and the creation of a secure system of self-reliance. The people of Chiapas cherish indigenous political systems that are based on consensus and representative democracy, giving local voices a say in an inclusive, participatory process.¶ While government development programs have come pouring into Chiapas since 1994, little has been achieved toward a political reconciliation with the Zapatistas. In 1996, the San Andrés Accords granted greater autonomy and rights to indigenous peoples, but the government never implemented the agreement. The accords called for conservation of natural resources within territories used and occupied by indigenous peoples, as well as the participation of indigenous communities in determining their own development plans.[iv] Zapatista leadership demanded autonomy from the Mexican government so that natural resources extracted from Chiapas would benefit the people of the state directly. But the government has failed to deliver.¶ Zapatista demands for land reforms also remain unresolved. While the movement eventually led to a dramatic redistribution of land from large landholders to small peasants between 1994 and 1998, the reforms did not bring the desired economic impact: the redistributed lands were of low yield and were subdivided into plots that were inadequate to provide enough means for survival. Simultaneously, the Mexican state offered little in the way of subsidies to small farmers and failed to offer an alternative development path that would move Chiapas up the value chain.[v] Additionally, due to the harassment of paramilitary groups and intolerance encouraged in some communities by the government, Zapatista families were often forced from their lands to relocate to smaller areas. The eviction of populations for appropriation of resources blatantly undermines the promises of the San Andrés Accords.[vi]¶ After 1994, indigenous peasants began to play a more active role in local and state politics, and various municipalities elected their first indigenous mayors; but despite enhanced political representation, Chiapas remains behind. While indigenous peasants have entered the politic sphere, dysfunctional institutions and corruption persist. Chiapas is the second most indigenously populated state in Mexico—approximately 30 percent—and yet it is poorly represented in the public sphere.[vii] The result has been a failure to ameliorate basic inequalities against indigenous peoples, with continued marginalization and limited access to public services.¶ Looking Ahead¶ With the recent election of President Nieto, some expect the government’s approach toward Chiapas to take a new direction. But the overall consensus among citizens in villages like Guaquitepec is one of distrust. Will the old PRI and its imposing practices return to power, or will it be a different kind of government? It is too early to say.¶ What is needed in Chiapas is a radically new political dialogue. The new presidency in Mexico offers an opportunity for the diverse stakeholders in Chiapas—politicians, bureaucrats, community organizations, Mayan and civil society leaders, teachers, experts, and more—to come together and seek long-term and sustainable solutions. Regarding rural development, a new platform is needed for rethinking poverty. It must be recognized that in certain contexts, local methods of development are more appropriate. Generating food security through community empowerment is more viable in Chiapas than through imported blueprints for development models that disregard context. Beyond dialogue, clear and specific guidelines should be established for policy implementation—without accountability mechanisms, talks would be ineffective.¶ What has emerged in the heart of Zapatista communities are alternative and autonomous forms of political and economic engagement, reflecting local cultural practices and traditions rather than top-down development concerns. This is reflected in the Zapatista slogan—Para todos todo, para nosotros nada (For everyone, everything; for us, nothing)—and oft-repeated mantra: “Autonomy is to do things ourselves, with our own ideas, and from our own traditions as indigenous people.”[viii] Such alternative models offer engaging platforms for local empowerment and collective action.

### Cap

#### 1. Prefer our evidence – their evidence is futile intellectual pride

Saunders 7**-**Peter, Adjunct Professor at the [Australian Graduate School of Management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Graduate_School_of_Management), Why Capitalism is Good for the Soul, http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/summer%2007-08/saunders\_summer07.html

Andrew Norton notes that disaffected intellectuals since Rousseau have been attacking capitalism for its failure to meet ‘true human needs.’[(26)](http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/summer%2007-08/saunders_summer07.html#26) The claim is unfounded, so what is it about capitalism that so upsets them?  Joseph Schumpeter offered part of the answer. He observed that capitalism has brought into being an educated class that has no responsibility for practical affairs, and that this class can only make a mark by criticising the system that feeds them.[(27)](http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/summer%2007-08/saunders_summer07.html#27) Intellectuals attack capitalism because that is how they sell books and build careers. More recently, Robert Nozick has noted that intellectuals spend their childhoods excelling at school, where they occupy the top positions in the hierarchy, only to find later in life that their market value is much lower than they believe they are worth. Seeing ‘mere traders’ enjoying higher pay than them is unbearable, and it generates irreconcilable disaffection with the market system.[(28)](http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/summer%2007-08/saunders_summer07.html" \l "28)  But the best explanation for the intellectuals’ distaste for capitalism was offered by Friedrich Hayek in The Fatal Conceit.[(29)](http://www.cis.org.au/POLICY/summer%2007-08/saunders_summer07.html#29) Hayek understood that capitalism offends intellectual pride, while socialism flatters it. Humans like to believe they can design better systems than those that tradition or evolution have bequeathed. We distrust evolved systems, like markets, which seem to work without intelligent direction according to laws and dynamics that no one fully understands. Nobody planned the global capitalist system, nobody runs it, and nobody really comprehends it. This particularly offends intellectuals, for capitalism renders them redundant. It gets on perfectly well without them. It does not need them to make it run, to coordinate it, or to redesign it. The intellectual critics of capitalism believe they know what is good for us, but millions of people interacting in the marketplace keep rebuffing them. This, ultimately, is why they believe capitalism is ‘bad for the soul’: it fulfils human needs without first seeking their moral approval.

#### 2. Capitalism is inevitable and key to growth – empirics and problems are human nature

Heitzer 9 (Alan, economist and professor of Political Economy at Carnegie Mellon, 3/9/9, http://hiram7.wordpress.com/2009/03/12/there-is-no-better-alternative-than-capitalism/) JPG

There is no better alternative than capitalism as a social system for providing growth and personal freedom. The alternatives offer less freedom and lower growth. The “better alternatives” that people imagine are almost always someone’s idea of utopia. Libraries are full of books on utopia. Those that have been tried have not survived or flourished. The most common reason for failure is that one person or group’s utopian ideal is unsatisfactory for others who live subject to its rules. Either the rules change or they are enforced by authorities. Capitalism, particularly democratic capitalism, includes the means for orderly change. Critics of capitalism look for viable alternatives to support. They do not recognize that, unlike Socialism, capitalism is adaptive, not rigid. Private ownership of the means of production flourishes in many different cultures. Recently critics of capitalism discovered the success of Chinese capitalism as an alternative to American capitalism. Its main feature is mercantilist policies supported by rigid controls on capital. China’s progress takes advantage of an American or western model–the open trading system–and the willingness of the United States to run a current account balance. China is surely more authoritarian than Japan or western countries, a political difference that previously occurred in Meiji Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Growth in these countries produced a middle class followed by demands for political freedom. China is in the early stages of development following the successful path pioneered by Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and others who chose export-led growth under trade rules. Sustained economic growth led to social and political freedom in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Perhaps China will follow. Capitalism continues to spread. It is the only system humans have found in which personal freedom, progress, and opportunities coexist. Most of the faults and flaws on which critics dwell are human faults, as Kant recognized. Capitalism is the only system that adapts to all manner of cultural and institutional differences. It continues to spread and adapt and will for the foreseeable future.

#### And, growth solves all major global problems

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Like the Great Depression, the current economic slump has fanned the fires of nationalist, ethnic and religious hatred around the world. Economic hardship is not the only cause of these social and political pathologies, but it aggravates all of them, and in turn they feed back on economic development. They also undermine efforts to deal with such global problems as environmental pollution, the production and trafficking of drugs, crime, sickness, famine, AIDS and other plagues. Growth will not solve all those problems by itself. But economic growth--and growth alone--creates the additional resources that make it possible to achieve such fundamental goals as higher living standards, national and collective security, a healthier environment, and more liberal and open economies and societies.

#### 3. Neoliberalism is sustainable – the market evolves to stop crises

Norberg, 03(Johan Norberg, Senior Fellow at Cato Institute, “In Defense of Global Capitalism”, p. 223)

It is a mistake, then, to believe that growth automatically ruins the environment. And claims that we would need this or that number of planets for the whole world to attain a Western standard of consumption—those “ecological footprint” calculations—are equally untruthful. Such a claim is usually made by environmentalists, and it is concerned, not so much with emissions and pollution, as with resources running out if everyone were to live as we do in the affluent world. Clearly, certain of the raw materials we use today, in present day quantities, would not suffice for the whole world if everyone consumed the same things. But that information is just about as interesting as if a prosperous Stone Age man were to say that, if everyone attained his level of consumption, there would not be enough stone, salt, and furs to go around. Raw material consumption is not static. With more and more people achieving a high level of prosperity, we start looking for ways of using other raw materials. Humanity is constantly improving technology so as to get at raw materials that were previously inaccessible, and we are attaining a level of prosperity that makes this possible. New innovations make it possible for old raw materials to be put to better use and for garbage to be turned into new raw materials. A century and a half ago, oil was just something black and sticky that people preferred not to step in and definitely did not want to find beneath their land. But our interest in finding better energy sources led to methods being devised for using oil, and today it is one of our prime resources. Sand has never been all that exciting or precious, but today it is a vital raw material in the most powerful technology of our age, the computer. In the form of silicon—which makes up a quarter of the earth's crust— it is a key component in computer chips. There is a simple market mechanism that averts shortages. If a certain raw material comes to be in short supply, its price goes up. This makes everyone more interested in economizing on that resource, in finding more of it, in reusing it, and in trying to find substitutes for it.

#### 4. Neoliberalism isn’t a root cause – assertions to the contrary are logical fallacies

Larrivee 10— PF ECONOMICS AT MOUNT ST MARY’S UNIVERSITY – MASTERS FROM THE HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL AND PHD IN ECONOMICS FROM WISCONSIN, 10 [JOHN, A FRAMEWORK FOR THE MORAL ANALYSIS OF MARKETS, 10/1, <http://www.teacheconomicfreedom.org/files/larrivee-paper-1.pdf>]

The Second Focal Point: Moral, Social, and Cultural Issues of Capitalism Logical errors abound in critical commentary on capitalism. Some critics observe a problem and conclude: “I see X in our society. We have a capitalist economy. Therefore capitalism causes X.” They draw their conclusion by looking at a phenomenon as it appears only in one system. Others merely follow a host of popular theories according to which capitalism is particularly bad. 6 The solution to such flawed reasoning is to be comprehensive, to look at the good and bad, in market and non-market systems. Thus the following section considers a number of issues—greed, selfishness and human relationships, honesty and truth, alienation and work satisfaction, moral decay, and religious participation—that have often been associated with capitalism, but have also been problematic in other systems and usually in more extreme form. I conclude with some evidence for the view that markets foster (at least some) virtues rather than undermining them. My purpose is not to smear communism or to make the simplistic argument that “capitalism isn’t so bad because other systems have problems too.” The critical point is that certain people thought various social ills resulted from capitalism, and on this basis they took action to establish alternative economic systems to solve the problems they had identified. That they failed to solve the problems, and in fact exacerbated them while also creating new problems, implies that capitalism itself wasn’t the cause of the problems in the first place, at least not to the degree theorized.

#### 5. Neoliberalism helps the environment

Taylor 12, Christopher. "Green Capitalism." Breaking Washington DC News, Maryland News, Virginia News, US Politics News and Analysis. N.p., 16 Mar. 2012. Web. <http://washingtonexaminer.com/article/141806>.

James Watt, secretary of the Interior for Ronald Reagan is quoted as saying "After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back," as a reason for not worrying about the environment. Watt never said this, it was simply attributed to him by an author in Grist magazine, and later retracted. Still, many believe that conservatives and capitalists think that it’s okay to ~~rape~~ and destroy the planet in the name of riches and God. In reality, capitalism is one of the best hopes for our environment. The oil age did arguably save whales from extinction after all. Looking around the world, you can find a direct correlation between poverty and ecological disaster. Where people are poorest, the pollution and economic destruction are far worse than in more wealthy areas. Places where many poor people live in close quarters such as Calcutta, Beijing, and Mexico City are even worse. The main reason that poorer areas are such ecological disasters is because of the poverty. Economic stress causes people to stop being so fussy about how they find their next meal, or shelter, or clothing. When resources are limited, people begin choosing more critical needs over less, and picking up the trash stops being a priority, as does cleaning up waste, planting trees, and so on. It is also no coincidence that the poorer and less ecologically sound places in the world tend to be less capitalist. One of the most shocking things to academics and leftists when the Soviet Union collapsed is what an incredibly horrendous wasteland much of Russia had become under their rule. One infamous example is Lake Karachay, which the Soviet government used as a dumping ground for radioactive materials from their nuclear power plants. There is a company which specializes in finding radioactive materials scattered around the nation, including inside Moscow. China is the world’s leading producer of carbon dioxide and general pollution. Instead of resulting in better care for the environment, countries under totalitarian rule tend to have significantly worse care. The more collectivist the government, the worse their environmental care tends to be, for a few simple reasons. A significant reason is economic. Capitalism gives incentive to taking care of your environment because it is costly and less attractive to customers and investors. If your company is destroying the land around it, that tends to annoy and upset customers. Further, capitalism provides not just opportunity, but pressure for poor to get out of poverty and thus away from the desperation that creates environmental stress. Capitalism helps people achieve more and opens the way for anyone to become whatever they have the ability and will to become. Other, collectivist systems such as socialism and communism stifle and discourage this economic growth. However, the main reason is technological; capitalism tends to encourage and benefit people who innovate, invent, and create. Other systems with top-down control tend to stifle this, encouraging the status quo and simply obeying the rules to get a check. There’s no incentive to try harder, invent, or find a new way because you get paid the same either way. Technology results in less damage to the environment for better results. In the 1960’s Paul Ehrlich believed farming and food production techniques could not and would not get any better, so we’d become overpopulated and starve. In reality, food technology exploded in the end of the 20th century, resulting in massive increases in production while using fewer resources. Similarly, technology, driven by free-market capitalism, has resulted in a more energy-efficient world. Air conditioners and heaters are far more efficient today than they were even ten years ago. Computers, televisions, and other entertainment media use far less energy, often through simple innovations such as flat-screen LCD technology. These innovations come about because of the freedom and rewards which a free market affords, providing the tools for a cleaner planet. Companies realize that it’s cheaper in the long run to pollute less (and clean up less in the future) and they can advertise themselves as being good for the environment, which is popular with buyers. Capitalism can be destructive to the environment, but the free market inevitably over time provides counters and solutions to that, with advances to technology and pressures in the market. Collectivist systems tend to suppress both, resulting in stagnation and less benefit to the environment.

#### 6. Neoliberalism is best at promoting fairness and equality to the poor – history proves

Bartholomew, 06- (James Bartholomew, “We need a revision course on why capitalism is a good thing” May 24th, 2006, Lexis-Nexis Academic)

Capitalism has made us richer and given us the opportunity of vastly more diverse experiences. Even in my own lifetime, I have seen the normal length of holidays rise from one or two weeks to four or five weeks. Foreign travel that was unknown for most working people two centuries ago is now commonplace. Did government direction make this possible? Of course not. Most families now have cars. Read Thomas Hardy's novels and you find that people are always walking. Walking can be healthy and pleasant, but the average family of Hardy's time did not have a choice. Who invented cars? Who refined their design and manufacture to the point where they are affordable by millions of people? Not governments. The diverse, resourceful, determined power of capitalism. Why does the system work? Because it provides incentives and motivation. If you invent something, you may get fame and fortune. If you supply food or cars cheaper, you get more customers. Simple enough. Provide a good product or service at a low price and you have a business. That simple logic means capitalism tends to produce good products and services at better prices. What about the argument that capitalism promotes inequality? Let's remember, before even starting to answer, just how disastrous were the attempts in the 20th century to impose equality. Farmers in Leninist Russia were prosecuted and in many cases killed. Tens of millions died under communist rule in China. And after all the oppression and suffering, there was still no equality. There was the privileged ruling class with, in Russia's case, special dachas in the country and road lanes in town. Imposing equality is not an easy ride. It is oppressive and doomed to failure. Capitalism, meanwhile, has claims, at the least, to reducing inequality over time. The inequality was enormous when George III was sitting on his gilded throne in 1806, with thousands of servants and farm workers and other underlings at his beck and call, while elsewhere in the country were those who could barely find enough to eat and, in some cases, died of hunger. Nowadays, more than nine out of 10 young people have mobile phones, 99 per cent of households have colour televisions, most households have cars. Yes, the rich are still with us. But the contrast in financial wealth has been greatly reduced over the long term. That was not due to any government, let alone a deliberate attempt to promote equality. It was achieved by capitalism. Why is the system now taken for granted and despised? Perhaps it is because the collapse of the communist states has removed from our sight useful reminders of how vastly superior capitalism is to state control. We should be careful.

#### 7. Collapse of neoliberalism brings global war, famines, environmental destruction, and mass violence

Bernardo V. Lopez, freelance journalist; corporate communications consultant, BusinessWorld, 9/10/1998

What would it be like if global recession becomes full bloom? The results will be catastrophic. Certainly, global recession will spawn wars of all kinds. Ethnic wars can easily escalate in the grapple for dwindling food stocks as in India-Pakistan-Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Indonesia. Regional conflicts in key flashpoints can easily erupt such as in the Middle East, Korea, and Taiwan. In the Philippines, as in some Latin American countries, splintered insurgency forces may take advantage of the economic drought to regroup and reemerge in the countryside. Unemployment worldwide will be in the billions. Famine can be triggered in key Third World nations with India, North Korea, Ethiopia and other African countries as first candidates. Food riots and the breakdown of law and order are possibilities. Global recession will see the deferment of globalization, the shrinking of international trade - especially of high-technology commodities such as in the computer, telecommunications, electronic and automotive industries. There will be a return to basics with food security being a prime concern of all governments, over industrialization and trade expansions. Protectionism will reemerge and trade liberalization will suffer a big setback. The WTO-GATT may have to redefine its provisions to adjust to the changing times. Even the World Bank-IMF consortium will experience continued crisis in dealing with financial hemorrhages. There will not be enough funds to rescue ailing economies. A few will get a windfall from the disaster with the erratic movement in world prices of basic goods. But the majority, especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), will suffer serious shrinkage. Mega-mergers and acquisitions will rock the corporate landscape. Capital markets will shrink and credit crisis and spiralling interest rates will spread internationally. And environmental advocacy will be shelved in the name of survival. Domestic markets will flourish but only on basic commodities. The focus of enterprise will shift into basic goods in the medium term. Agrarian economies are at an advantage since they are the food producers. Highly industrialized nations will be more affected by the recession. Technologies will concentrate on servicing domestic markets and the agrarian economy will be the first to regrow. The setback on research and development and high-end technologies will be compensated in its eventual focus on agrarian activity. A return to the rural areas will decongest the big cities and the ensuing real estate glut will send prices tumbling down. Tourism and travel will regress by a decade and airlines worldwide will need rescue. Among the indigenous communities and agrarian peasantry, many will shift back to prehistoric subsistence economy. But there will be a more crowded upland situation as lowlanders seek more lands for production. The current crisis for land of indigenous communities will worsen. Land conflicts will increase with the indigenous communities who have nowhere else to go either being massacred in armed conflicts or dying of starvation. Backyard gardens will be precious and home-based food production will flourish. As unemployment expands, labor will shift to self-reliant microenterprises if the little capital available can be sourced. In the past, the US could afford amnesty for millions of illegal migrants because of its resilient economy. But with unemployment increasing, the US will be forced to clamp down on a reemerging illegal migration which will increase rapidly. Unemployment in the US will be the hardest to cope with since it may have very little capability for subsistence economy and its agrarian base is automated and controlled by a few. The riots and looting of stores in New York City in the late '70s because of a state-wide brownout hint of the type of anarchy in the cities. Such looting in this most affluent nation is not impossible. The weapons industry may also grow rapidly because of the ensuing wars. Arms escalation will have primacy over food production if wars escalate. The US will depend increasingly on weapons exports to nurse its economy back to health. This will further induce wars and conflicts which will aggravate US recession rather than solve it. The US may depend more and more on the use of force and its superiority to get its ways internationally. The public will rebel against local monopolies. Anarchy and boycotts will be their primary weapons against cartels especially on agricultural products such as rice and vegetables, which are presently in the hands of a few in most Third World nations. Global recession will test the limits of human cooperation and sharing in the name of survival. Grants and aids will decrease. Rescues and international funding for advocacy NGOs will disappear rapidly.

#### 8. Neoliberal globalization prevents war

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First, trade and globalization have reinforced the trend toward democracy, and democracies don't pick fights with each other. Freedom to trade nurtures democracy by expanding the middle class in globalizing countries and equipping people with tools of communication such as cell phones, satellite TV, and the Internet. With trade comes more travel, more contact with people in other countries, and more exposure to new ideas. Thanks in part to globalization, almost two thirds of the world's countries today are democracies -- a record high. Second, as national economies become more integrated with each other, those nations have more to lose should war break out. War in a globalized world not only means human casualties and bigger government, but also ruptured trade and investment ties that impose lasting damage on the economy. In short, globalization has dramatically raised the economic cost of war. Third, globalization allows nations to acquire wealth through production and trade rather than conquest of territory and resources. Increasingly, wealth is measured in terms of intellectual property, financial assets, and human capital. Those are assets that cannot be seized by armies. If people need resources outside their national borders, say oil or timber or farm products, they can acquire them peacefully by trading away what they can produce best at home. Of course, free trade and globalization do not guarantee peace. Hot-blooded nationalism and ideological fervor can overwhelm cold economic calculations. But deep trade and investment ties among nations make war less attractive. Trade wars in the 1930s deepened the economic depression, exacerbated global tensions, and helped to usher in a world war. Out of the ashes of that experience, the United States urged Germany, France, and other Western European nations to form a common market that has become the European Union. In large part because of their intertwined economies, a general war in Europe is now unthinkable.

#### 10. The alternative destroys expansion to space – the result is extinction.

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It is not clear whether an economic system based on ideology could perform this function of capitalism. If the ideology was growth-oriented, then it would have no reason to conflict with the existing capitalist order, but would rather work in concert with it. But in the more plausible case that it was oriented towards social stability and economic stagnation, particularly in view of the environmentalist, anti-growth or anti-consumerist agendas it might very likely serve, then it would not want to promote disruptive new technologies such as those of access to space. The idea of a socially just socialist society(if such a hypothetical entity is possible) expanding into space is therefore a questionable one. If Earth remained divided among competing centres of power, then they might make the leap to interplanetary capability even without the driving force of capitalist economics. However, the competitive Moon-race of the 1960s showed, firstly, that if one competitor drops out, the other may well lose interest to the point of abandoning capabilities developed for that competition, and secondly, that an ideologically based collectivist society is unlikely to make a good showing in the technologies required. Economic growth, however, has a vested interest in preserving and extending gains made. Given that the opportunities for growth in space are so large, it seems unlikely that the present burst of growth will reach a plateau until space has been colonised. There is in fact an inconsistency about the idea of an industrial civilisation which does not move beyond its home planet – like a lone tree in the middle of a fertile plain. Such a tree will either die off, or it will naturally reproduce until it has engendered a whole forest, in which a far greater variety of life is possible than on the unsheltered plain. Similarly, a persistent industrial civilisation on one planet will naturally tend to populate its local planetary system, because the unique feature of industrialism is its applicability to a wide range of environments, not only earthlike ones. We here refer to an interplanetary civilisation as a “universal society”, because is it capable of making a home for itself anywhere in the astronomical universe. Some comments on the sociology of such a society follow. The decision-point There exists a historically brief period of a few centuries in which a civilisation at our current level of development may take one of two very different paths: it may successfully complete the transformation from a low-tech (pre-industrial)to a high-tech (fully industrial) society, or it may fall back onto a low-tech level. Finding a stable state inbetween these two levels seems unlikely: the dynamics of growth tend towards completing the process, while the limits to growth on Earth tend towards rendering the intermediate phase of a unified globalised society insecure. The world’s energy limits are, however, not as imminent as was believed in the latter part of the 20th century. The feared peak and subsequent decline in fossil fuel production has been greatly postponed by new discoveries and new extraction technologies for shale oil and gas and for methane hydrates. Meanwhile the decade-long flatlining of global temperature estimates has led to the end of the climate mania and of the extremist anti-growth movement that grew up around it. While the limits to growth on Earth remain, they are of a long-term nature, and will allow global civilisation an adequate breathing-space to develop into a high-tech one. A high-tech society possesses by definition the technologies required for access to and use of the resources of its local planetary system, and therefore experiences an incentive to become an interplanetary society. Since technologies for safe, economic and sustainable interplanetary travel and habitation are quite hard for a monoglobal civilisation to master, a successful transition to multiglobal range is by no means a foregone conclusion. But since the reward in terms of access to new territorial, material and power resources is so great, the impact of this social decision-point on the subsequent history of the species is of unparalleled significance. Ultimately the jump to interplanetary status is necessary, not only for the long-term growth of civilisation, but also for its long-term survival.

#### Moral tunnel vision is complicit with the evil they criticize

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As writers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hannah Arendt have taught, an unyielding concern with moral goodness undercuts political responsibility. The concern may be morally laudable, reflecting a kind of personal integrity, but it suffers from three fatal flaws: (1) It fails to see that the purity of one’s intention does not ensure the achievement of what one intends. Abjuring violence or refusing to make common cause with morally compromised parties may seem like the right thing; but if such tactics entail impotence, then it is hard to view them as serving any moral good beyond the clean conscience of their supporters; (2) it fails to see that in a world of real violence and injustice, moral purity is not simply a form of powerlessness; it is often a form of complicity in injustice. This is why, from the standpoint of politics—as opposed to religion—pacifism is always a potentially immoral stand. In categorically repudiating violence, it refuses in principle to oppose certain violent injustices with any effect; and (3) it fails to see that politics is as much about unintended consequences as it is about intentions; it is the effects of action, rather than the motives of action, that is most significant. Just as the alignment with “good” may engender impotence, it is often the pursuit of “good” that generates evil. This is the lesson of communism in the twentieth century: it is not enough that one’s goals be sincere or idealistic; it is equally important, always, to ask about the effects of pursuing these goals and to judge these effects in pragmatic and historically contextualized ways. Moral absolutism inhibits this judgment. It alienates those who are not true believers. It promotes arrogance. And it undermines political effectiveness.

#### Negative state action in a positive direction proves that the state can be used to stop doing bad things – their actions bow to neoliberalism – turns the aff

Barbrook 97 Dr. Richard Barbrook, Hypermedia Research Centre – U. of Westminster, 6-5-1997, “More Provocations,” Amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9706/msg00034.html

I thought that this position is clear from my remarks about the ultra-left posturing of the ‘zero-work’ demand. In Europe, we have real social problems of deprivation and poverty which, in part, can only be solved by state action. This does not make me a statist, but rather anti-anti-statist. By opposing such intervention because they are carried out by the state anarchists are tacitly lining up with the neo-liberals. Even worse, refusing even to vote for the left, they acquiese to rule by neo-liberal parties. I deeply admire direct action movements. I was a radio pirate and we provide server space for anti-roads and environmental movements. However, this doesn’t mean that I support political abstentionism or, even worse, the mystical nonsense produced by Hakim Bey. It is great for artists and others to adopt a marginality as a life style choice, but most of the people who are economically and socially marginalised were never given any choice. They are excluded from society as a result of deliberate policies of deregulation, privatisation and welfare cutbacks carried out by neo-liberal governments. During the ‘70s. I was a pro-situ punk rocker until Thatcher got elected. Then we learnt the hard way that voting did change things and lots of people suffered if state power was withdrawn from certain areas of our life, such as welfare and employment. Anarchism can be a fun artistic pose. However, human suffering is not.

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#### The aff is a façade --- a pseudo-sign image of real progress

WILLIAMS 2k (Christopher R. Williams, PhD, forensic psychology, professor and chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice Studies at Bradley University, Bruce A. Arrigo, PhD, administration of justice, professor of criminology, law, and society, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at the University of North Carolina, Faculty Associate in the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics, “The (Im)Possibility of Democratic Justice and the ‘Gift’ of the Majority,” Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, Vol. 16, No. 3, August 2000, pgs. 321-343)

The impediments to establishing democratic justice in contemporary American society have caused a national paralysis; one that has recklessly spawned an aporetic1 existence for minorities. The entrenched ideological complexities afflicting under- and nonrepresented groups (e.g., poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, crime) at the hands of political, legal, cultural, and economic power elites have produced counterfeit, perhaps even fraudulent, efforts at reform: Discrimination and inequality in opportunity prevail (e.g., Lynch & Patterson, 1996). The misguided and futile initiatives of the state, in pursuit of transcending this public affairs crisis, have fostered a reification, that is, a reinforcement of divisiveness. This time, however, minority groups compete with one another for recognition, affirmation, and identity in the national collective psyche (Rosenfeld, 1993). What ensues by way of state effort, though, is a contemporaneous sense of equality for all and a near imperceptible endorsement of inequality; a silent conviction that the majority still retains power. **The “gift” of equality, procured through state legislative enactments as an emblem of democratic justice, embodies true (legitimated) power that remains nervously secure in the hands of the majority**. **The ostensible empowerment of minority groups is a facade; it is the ruse of the majority gift**. What exists, in fact, is a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1981, 1983) of equality (and by extension, democratic justice): a pseudo-sign image (a hypertext or simulation) of real sociopolitical progress.

#### This narcissistic reinforcement of power turns the case

WILLIAMS 2k (Christopher R. Williams, PhD, forensic psychology, professor and chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice Studies at Bradley University, Bruce A. Arrigo, PhD, administration of justice, professor of criminology, law, and society, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at the University of North Carolina, Faculty Associate in the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics, “The (Im)Possibility of Democratic Justice and the ‘Gift’ of the Majority,” Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, Vol. 16, No. 3, August 2000, pgs. 321-343)

Reciprocation on your part is impossible. Even if one day you are able to return our monetary favor twofold, **we will always know that it was us who first hosted you;** extended to and entrusted in you an opportunity given your time of need. **As the initiators of such a charity, we are always in a position of power, and you are always indebted to us**. This is where the notion of egoism or conceit assumes a hegemonic role. By giving to you, a supposed act of generosity in the name of furthering your cause, we have not empowered you. Rather, we have empowered ourselves. We have less than subtlely let you know that we have more than you. We have so much more, in fact, that we can afford to give you some. **Our giving becomes, not an act of beneficence, but a show of power, that is, narcissistic hegemony**! Thus, we see that the majority gift is a ruse: a simulacrum of movement toward aporetic equality and a simulation of democratic justice. By relying on the legislature (representing the majority) when economic and social opportunities are availed to minority or underrepresented collectives, the process takes on exactly the form of Derrida’s gift. The majority controls the political, economic, legal, and social arenas; that is, it is (and always has been) in control of such communities as the employment sector and the educational system. The mandated opportunities that under- or nonrepresented citizens receive as a result of this falsely eudemonic endeavor are gifts and, thus, ultimately constitute an effort to make minority populations feel better. There is a sense of movement toward equality in the name of democratic justice, albeit falsely manufactured. 18 In return for this effort, the majority shows off its long-standing authority (this provides a stark realization to minority groups that power elites are the forces that critically form society as a community), forever indebts under- and nonrepresented classes to the generosity of the majority (after all, minorities groups now have, presumably, a real chance to attain happiness), and, in a more general sense, furthers the narcissism of the majority (its representatives have displayed power and have been generous). Thus, the ruse of the majority gift assumes the form and has the hegemonical effect of empowering the empowered, relegitimating the privileged, and fueling the voracious conceit of the advantaged.

#### Their demand for the ballot is trapped in a web of scheming --- this poisons their call for change

MCGOWAN 2009 (Todd McGowan, Associate Professor, film theory, University of Vermont, PhD, Ohio State University, studies the intersection of Hegel, psychoanalysis, and existentialism and cinema, “The Exceptional Darkness of The Dark Knight,” Jump Cut, No. 51, Spring 2009, http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc51.2009/darkKnightKant/text.html)

According to Kant, when we emerge as subjects, we do so as beings of radical evil, that is, beings **who do good for evil reasons**. We help our neighbor for the recognition we gain; we volunteer to help with the school dance in order to spend time with a potential romantic interest; we give money for disaster relief in order to feel comfortable about our level of material comfort; and so on. For Kant, this is the fundamental problem that morality confronts and the most difficult type of evil to extirpate. He explains, “**The human being (even the best) is evil only because he reverses the moral order of his incentives in incorporating them into his maxims**. He indeed incorporates the moral law into those maxims, together with the law of self-love; since, however, he realizes that the two cannot stand on an equal footing, but one must be subordinated to the other as its supreme condition, he makes the incentives of self-love and their inclinations the condition of compliance with the moral law — whereas it is this latter that, as the supreme condition of the satisfaction of the former, should have been incorporated into the universal maxim of the power of choice as the sole incentive.”[12] Though Kant believes that we have the capacity to turn from beings of radical evil to moral beings, we cannot escape a certain originary radical evil that leads us to place our incentives of self-love above the law and that prevents us from adhering to the law for its own sake.[13] Our first inclination always involves the thought of what we will gain from not lying rather than the importance of telling the truth. Even when we do tell the truth, we do so out of prudence or convenience rather than out of duty. This is why Kant contends that most obedience to the moral law is in fact radical evil — obedience for the wrong reasons. The presence of radical evil at the heart of obedience to the law taints this obedience and gives criminality the upper hand over the law. There is always a fundamental imbalance between law and criminality. Criminality is inscribed into the law itself in the form of misdirected obedience, and no law can free itself from its reliance on the evil of such obedience. A consequentialist ethics develops as a compromise with this radical evil at the heart of the law. Consequentialism is an ethics that sees value only in the end — obedience — and it disregards whatever evil means that the subject uses to arrive at that obedience. If people obey the law, the consequentialist thinks, it doesn’t matter why they do so. Those who take up this or some other compromise with radical evil predominate within society, and they constitute the behavioral norm. They obey the law when necessary, but they do so in order to satisfy some incentive of self-love. Theirs is a morality of calculation in which acts have value in terms of the ultimate good that they produce or the interest that they serve. Anyone who obeys the law for its own sake becomes exceptional. Both Batman and the Joker exist outside the calculating morality that predominates among the police, the law-abiding citizens, and the criminal underworld in Gotham. Both have the status of an exception because they adhere to a code that cuts against their incentives for self-love and violates any consequentialist morality or morality concerned solely with results. Though Batman tries to save Gotham and the Joker tries to destroy it, though Batman commits himself to justice and the Joker commits himself to injustice, they share a position that transcends the inadequate and calculated ethics authorized by the law itself. Their differences mask a similar relationship to Kantian morality. Through the parallel between them, Christopher Nolan makes clear the role that evil must play in authentic heroism. It is the Joker, not Batman, who gives the most eloquent account of the ethical position that they occupy together. He sets himself up against the consequentialist and utilitarian ethic that rules Gotham, and he tries to analyze this ethic in order to understand what motivates it. As the Joker sees it, despite their apparent differences, all of the different groups in Gotham indulge in an ethics of what he calls scheming. That is to say, they act not on the basis of the rightness or wrongness of the act itself but in order to achieve some ultimate object. In doing so, they inherently degrade their acts and deprive them of their basis in freedom. Scheming enslaves one to the object of one’s scheme.

#### The alternative is to vote negative because the 1AC’s ethics are right --- to be the Dark Knight --- this is the only option for true heroism and substantive change

MCGOWAN 2009 (Todd McGowan, Associate Professor, film theory, University of Vermont, PhD, Ohio State University, studies the intersection of Hegel, psychoanalysis, and existentialism and cinema, “The Exceptional Darkness of The Dark Knight,” Jump Cut, No. 51, Spring 2009, http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc51.2009/darkKnightKant/text.html)

Just as The Dark Knight illustrates the inextricable relation between heroism and evil, it also undermines the idea of the hero who can appear as heroic. From early in the film, Batman proclaims his desire to step aside in order to cede his position to someone who can be heroic without wearing a mask. He sees this possibility in the figure of Harvey Dent. But the film shows that there is no hero without a mask — and, more specifically, without a mask of evil. As Slavoj Žižek puts it, “**The properly human good, the good elevated above the natural good, the infinite spiritual good, is ultimately the mask of evil**.”[20] Without the mask of evil, good cannot emerge and remains stuck the calculation of interest; without the mask of evil, good remains scheming. This is precisely what Harvey Dent evinces, despite the promise that Batman sees in him for the perfect form of heroism. Throughout the beginning part of the film, Harvey Dent seems like a figure of pure good. The purity of his goodness allows him to never be nonplused. Even when a mobster tries to shoot him in open court, he calmly grabs the gun from the mobster’s hand and punches the mobster in the face. After the punch, we see Dent’s expression of total equanimity, even in the midst of an attempted assassination. This coolness stems from his absolute certainty that events will ultimately follow according to his plans. The rapidity with which Nolan edits together the threat from the mobster and Dent’s response minimizes the spectator’s sense of danger. The threat against Dent’s life disappears almost before we can experience it as such, which suggests that it lacks a quality of realness, both for Dent and for the spectator. The court scene establishes him as a hero whom one cannot harm. Ironically, the superhero in the film, Batman, shows himself to be vulnerable when he first appears in the film, as dogs bite him through his protective armor. This distinction between Dent and Batman’s vulnerability explains why the former cannot be an authentic hero. In contrast to Batman, Dent’s heroism does not involve the experience of loss and is based on a repudiation of the very possibility of losing. Bruce Wayne adopted the identity of Batman after the trauma of being dropped in a cave full of bats and the loss of his parents, but no such traumatic loss animates the heroism of Dent. He is heroic through an immediate identification with the good, which enables him to have a purity that Batman doesn’t have. No rupture and subsequent return animates his commitment to justice. He can publicly avow his heroic actions because he performs them in a pure way, without resorting to the guise of evil. But the falsity of this immediate identification with the good becomes apparent in Dent’s disavowal of loss, which Nolan locates in the tic that marks Dent’s character — his proclivity for flipping a coin to resolve dilemmas. On several occasions, he flips the coin that his father had given him in order to introduce the possibility of loss into his activities. By flipping a coin, one admits that events might not go according to plan, that the other might win, and that loss is an ever-present possibility. Though the coin flip represents an attempt to master loss by rendering it random rather than necessary or constitutive, it nonetheless ipso facto accedes to the fact that one might lose. Dent first flips the coin when he is late to examine a key witness in court, and the coin flip will determine whether he or his assistant Rachel will do the questioning. When Rachel wonders how he could leave something so important to chance, Dent replies, “I make my own luck.” It is just after this that the mobster tries and fails to shoot Dent, further suggesting his invulnerability. Dent wins this and subsequent coin flips in the first part of the film because he uses a loaded coin, a coin with two heads. When it comes to the coin flip, Dent does make his own luck by eliminating the element of chance. The coin that he uses ensures that he will avoid the possibility of losing. The coin with two heads is certainly a clever device, but it also stands as the objective correlative for Dent’s lack of authentic heroism. The immediacy of his heroism cannot survive any mediation. Once loss is introduced into Dent’s world, his heroism disappears, and he becomes a figure of criminality. The transformation of Harvey Dent after his disfigurement is so precipitous that it strains credulity. One day he is the pure defender of absolute justice, and the next he is on a homicidal warpath willing to shoot innocent children. One could chalk up this rapid change to sloppy filmmaking on Christopher Nolan’s part, to an eagerness to move too quickly to the film’s concluding moments of tension. But the rapidity of the transformation signifies all the more because it seems so forced and jarring. It allows us to retroactively examine Harvey Dent’s relationship to the law earlier in the film. Dent becomes Two-Face after his injury, but in doing so he merely takes up the identity that police department had adopted for him when he was working for the Internal Affairs division. As an investigator of other officers, Dent earned this nickname by insisting on absolute purity and by targeting any sign of police corruption. Even Gordon, an officer who is not corrupt, complains to Dent of the paralyzing effects on the department of these tactics. On the one hand, an insistence on purity seems to be a consistently noncalculating ethical position. One can imagine this insistence obstructing the longterm goal of better law enforcement (which is why Gordon objects to it). On the other hand, however, the demand for purity always anticipates its own failure. The pure hero quickly becomes the criminal when an experience of loss disrupts this purity. This first occurs when Gordon is apparently killed at the police commissioner’s funeral. In response to this blatant display of public criminality, Dent abuses a suspect from the shooting and even threatens to kill him, using his trick coin as a device for mental torture. Even though Dent has no intention of actually shooting the suspect, Batman nonetheless scolds Dent for his methods when he interrupts the private interrogation. This scene offers the first insight into what Dent will become later in the film, but it also shows the implications of his form of heroism. Dent resorts to torture because his form of heroism has no ontological space for loss. When it occurs, his heroism becomes completely derailed. Rachel's death and his own disfigurement introduce traumatic loss into Dent’s existence. Nolan shows the ramifications of this change through the transformation that his coin undergoes during the explosion that kills Rachel. The explosion chars one side of Dent’s two-headed coin (which he had earlier flipped to Rachel as he was taken away to jail), so that it becomes, through being submitted to a traumatic force, a coin with two different sides. The film indicates here how trauma introduces loss into the world and how this introduction of loss removes all subjective certainty. When Dent as Two-Face flips the newly marked coin, the act takes on an entirely new significance. Unlike earlier, he is no longer certain about the result of the flip. He flips to decide whether he will kill the Joker in the hospital room, whether he will kill Detective Wuertz (Ron Dean) in a bar, or whether he will kill Detective Ramirez (Monique Curnen) in an alley. Of the three, only Wuertz ends up dead, but Dent also kills another officer and the criminal boss Maroni, along with some of his men. This rampage ends with Dent holding Gordon’s family hostage and threatening to kill the one whom Gordon holds most dear. Dent becomes a killer in order to inflict his own experience of loss on others: he tells Gordon that he wants to kill what is most precious to him so that Gordon will feel what he felt. Dent can so quickly take up this attitude because his heroism has no place for loss. When it occurs, the heroism becomes completely undone. After Dent’s death, the film ends with Batman accepting responsibility for the killings performed by Dent in order to salvage Dent’s public reputation and thereby sustain the image of the public hero. Gordon and Batman believe that this gesture is necessary for saving the city and keeping its hope for justice alive. When Gordon says, “Gotham needs its true hero,” we see a shot of him turning Dent’s face over, obscuring the burned side and exposing the human side. In death, Dent will begin to wear the mask that he would never wear in life. A mask of heroism will cover his criminality. As the film conceives it, this lie — that purity is possible — represents the sine qua non of social being. Without it, without the idea that one can sustain an ethical position, calculation of interest would have nothing to offset it, and the city would become identified with criminality. But the real interest of the film’s conclusion lies with Batman and the form of appearance that his heroism takes. It is as if Batman takes responsibility for Dent’s act not to save Dent’s face but to stain his own image irrevocably with evil. He remains the heroic exception, but his status changes radically. In order to guarantee that Dent dies as a hero, Batman must take responsibility for the murders that Dent committed. With this gesture, he truly adopts the mask of evil. In the closing montage sequence, we see the police hunting him down, Gordon smashing the Bat Signal, and finally Batman driving away into the night on his motorcycle. As this sequence concludes, we hear Gordon’s voiceover say, “He’s the hero Gotham deserves, but not the one it needs right now. And so we’ll hunt him, because he can take it. Because he’s not a hero. He’s a silent guardian, a watchful protector ... a dark knight.” As Gordon pronounces the final word, the film cuts to black from the image of Batman on his motorcycle. The melodrama of this voiceover elevates Batman's heroism, but it does so precisely because he agrees to appear as evil. This gesture, even more than any of his physical acts of courage, is the gesture of the true hero because it leaves him without any recognition for his heroism. For the hero who appears in the form of evil, heroic exceptionality must be an end in itself without any hope for a greater reward. When the exception takes this form, it loses the danger that adheres to the typical hero. The mask of evil allows the exception to persist without multiplying itself. By adopting this position at the end of the film, Batman reveals that he has taken up the lesson of the Joker and grasped the importance of the break from calculation. Dent, the hero who wants to appear heroic, descends into murderous evil. But Batman, the hero who accepts evil as his form of appearance, sustains the only possible path for heroic exceptionality. In an epoch when the law's inadequacy is evident, the need for the heroic exception becomes ever more pronounced, but the danger of the exception has also never been more apparent. Declarations of exceptionality abound in the contemporary world, and they allow us to see the negative ramifications that follow from the exception, no matter how heroic its intent. Audiences flock to superhero movies in search of a heroic exception that they can embrace, an exception that would work toward justice without simultaneously adding to injustice in the manner of today’s real world exceptions. In The Dark Knight, Christopher Nolan offers a viable image of heroic exceptionality. As he sees, its form of appearance must be its opposite if it to avoid implicating itself in the injustice that it fights. The lesson for our real world exceptions is thus a difficult one. Rather than being celebrated as the liberator of Iraq and the savoir of U.S. freedom, George W. Bush would have to act behind the scenes to encourage charges being brought against him as a war criminal at the World Court, and then he would have to flee to the streets of The Hague as the authorities pursue him there. In the eyes of the public, true heroes must identify themselves with the evil that we fight.