## same 1ac

## 2ac

### death

#### Death is real – brain function is the only measure of life and it dies when we do – no compelling evidence to the contrary

Paul **Harrison**, freelance writer, consultant on population, environment and development, M.A. in European literature languages from Cambridge University, M.A. in sociology from the London School of Economics, and Ph.D. in environmental science from Cambridge University, **1997** (“The Afterlife: false promises, real problems,” Scientific Pantheism, March 13, Available Online at <http://members.aol.com/pantheism0/afterlif.htm>,)

Other than scripture, there is no reliable evidence for survival after death. There is a growing popular literature about near-death experiences, but these are about near-death - not actual death. People whose physical functions have stopped for a short time are not truly, irrevocably dead. Their experiences are based on processes inside their own oxygen-starved brain, and the accounts they give are untestable against hard evidence. No-one has ever truly returned from the dead to tell us what it's like. No-one has been dead for a week or a month or a year and come back to tell the tale. We are told that many accounts agree with each other and with texts like the Tibetan Book of the Dead. But we are not told of the accounts that do not agree. Nor are we reminded that in Judaism and early Christianity there is no heaven after death, no journey of the soul through a tunnel into light - only a sleep until the resurrection of the body. Death is real death. All our direct experience tells us that souls die with bodies. As Job says: A man dies, and is laid low; man breathes his last, and where is he? As waters fail from a lake, and a river wastes away and dries up, so man lies down and rises not again. [Job, 14:7-12] Neurology suggests that our minds are manifestations of our bodies. When parts of the brain are damaged or removed in operations, various functions disappear and our mental capacities change. The simplest explanation is that the soul is not separate: it is a function of the body. When all our brain functions cease, the available evidence suggests that all our individual consciousness and mind activities cease. Of course no-one could completely exclude the possibility that part of our minds may outlive our bodies: absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. But the onus is on those who claim survival after death to prove it conclusively. No-one has.

#### We should act to maximize life in its *current state* regardless of what happens after death

**Paterson, 03** - Department of Philosophy, Providence College, Rhode Island (Craig, “A Life Not Worth Living?”, Studies in Christian Ethics, <http://sce.sagepub.com>)

What we can know about death, based on natural human reason alone, is that it results in the destruction of the self. There will no longer be a human being in existence. There will be no carrier of value or disvalue. There will be no subject in existence that is capable of bearing any of the kinds of predication typical of living human beings. Death is an event that results in the non-being of the human person that was. 72 Unlike Devine, I would argue that an intention to bring about this non-state, given the relevant (if incomplete) knowledge we have about it, points to the incoherence behind the idea that death can really be said to be a benefit for the person who is dead, as argued for by contemporary deprivation authors. 73 When we assert that a person is harmed or benefited by a state, this requires that there is actually a subject in existence who is capable of being the bearer of the value or disvalue. If a person must actually exist in order to be the subject bearer of harms and benefits that happen, then how can there be said to be a subject who is capable of being benefited posthumously by his or her death? This line of argumentation against deprivation accounts (that death can be a benefit) is convincingly argued for by John Donnelly and J. L. A. Garcia. If a person succeeds in killing himself or herself, there can be no betterment ascribed to the person. For Donnelly, it is muddled to argue that a person can be said to be posthumously benefited or harmed if the person must first be destroyed as a prerequisite for the benefit. 74 The irrationality of thinking that death can be a benefit for a person is further addressed by Garcia. 75 If it is good to be without pain, as indeed it is under most circumstances, this presupposes the existence of the subject in order to instantiate that good (any good). If a person can be ‘better off dead’, then the continued existence of the person must continue after death. Yet no one on the basis of reason alone can justifiably claim that death can allow for the continuation of the person qua person. To realise goods and to minimise evils requires the presence of that single constant, **a live human being**, **who can possibly make sense of such value statements**. For Garcia, therefore, it is quite illicit to jump from the evaluation of means to minimise, or be free from, the evils of suffering and pain, to the conclusion that the destruction of the subject itself can make a person in any meaningful sense better off. Consequently, all that can reasonably be done is to seek to benefit persons **in their present lives**, that is to improve as best we can the extent of their flourishing within the framework of humanitarian means available at our disposal.

### transhumanism

#### Only the ethics of the Aff allows the emergence of transhumanism – we should make death a voluntary choice

**BOSTROM 2003** (Nick, Faculty of Philosophy, Oxford University, “Transhumanism FAQ,” October, http://www.transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/faq21/78/)

Average human life span hovered between 20 and 30 years for most of our species’ history. Most people today are thus living highly unnaturally long lives. Because of the high incidence of infectious disease, accidents, starvation, and violent death among our ancestors, very few of them lived much beyond 60 or 70. There was therefore little selection pressure to evolve the cellular repair mechanisms (and pay their metabolic costs) that would be required to keep us going beyond our meager three scores and ten. As a result of these circumstances in the distant past, we now suffer the inevitable decline of old age: damage accumulates at a faster pace than it can be repaired; tissues and organs begin to malfunction; and then we keel over and die. The quest for immortality is one of the most ancient and deep-rooted of human aspirations. It has been an important theme in human literature from the very earliest preserved written story, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and in innumerable narratives and myths ever since. It underlies the teachings of world religions about spiritual immortality and the hope of an afterlife. If death is part of the natural order, so too is the human desire to overcome death. Before transhumanism, the only hope of evading death was through reincarnation or otherworldly resurrection. Those who viewed such religious doctrines as figments of our own imagination had no alternative but to accept death as an inevitable fact of our existence. Secular worldviews, including traditional humanism, would typically include some sort of explanation of why death was not such a bad thing after all. Some existentialists even went so far as to maintain that death was necessary to give life meaning! That people should make excuses for death is understandable. Until recently there was absolutely nothing anybody could do about it, and it made some degree of sense then to create comforting philosophies according to which dying of old age is a fine thing (“deathism”). If such beliefs were once relatively harmless, and perhaps even provided some therapeutic benefit, they have now outlived their purpose. Today, we can foresee the possibility of eventually abolishing aging and we have the option of taking active measures to stay alive until then, through life extension techniques and, as a last resort, cryonics. This makes the illusions of deathist philosophies dangerous, indeed fatal, since they teach helplessness and encourage passivity. Espousing a deathist viewpoint tends to go with a certain element of hypocrisy. It is to be hoped and expected that a good many of death’s apologists, if they were one day presented with the concrete choice between (A) getting sick, old, and dying, and (B) being given a new shot of life to stay healthy, vigorous and to remain in the company of friends and loved ones to participate in the unfolding of the future, would, when push came to shove, choose this latter alternative. If some people would still choose death, that’s a choice that is of course to be regretted, but nevertheless this choice must be respected. The transhumanist position on the ethics of death is crystal clear: death should be voluntary. This means that everybody should be free to extend their lives and to arrange for cryonic suspension of their deanimated bodies. It also means that voluntary euthanasia, under conditions of informed consent, is a basic human right. It may turn out to be impossible to live forever, strictly speaking, even for those who are lucky enough to survive to such a time when technology has been perfected, and even under ideal conditions. The amount of matter and energy that our civilization can lay its hands on before they recede forever beyond our reach (due to the universe’s expansion) is finite in the current most favored cosmological models. The heat death of the universe is thus a matter of some personal concern to optimistic transhumanists! It is too early to tell whether our days are necessarily numbered. Cosmology and fundamental physics are still incomplete and in theoretical flux; theoretical possibilities for infinite information processing (which might enable an upload to live an infinite life) seem to open and close every few years. We have to live with this uncertainty, along with the much greater uncertainty about whether any of us will manage to avoid dying prematurely, before technology has become mature.

#### The philosophy of the alternative spills over to prevent scientific development

Raman 9 Masters in Math from University of Calcutta, quantum mechanics doctorate from University of Paris (Varadarajara, 1/23/09, “Global Spiral”, http://www.metanexus.net/Magazine/ArticleDetail/tabid/68/id/10678/Default.aspx)

Next there are philosophical reasons for the anti-science movements, formulated by thinkers who bring their full logical prowess to show that a framework based on logic alone is untenable. They explore the flaws in the foundations of scientific thinking, and question science's claim to hold monopoly for a correct interpretation of the natural world. These are interesting perspectives in the academic arena, but when they spill over to the general public and uproot the public's respect for science, they can cause serious damage to the framework of reason and rationality in which science operates in its interpretation of the world. When reason and rationality are devalued or are equated with unreason in our pursuit to explain the world, superstition and mindless magic can take over with serious adverse impacts on society. Societies which are persuaded that rationality can be dispensed with can do immense harm to their peoples. In this sense philosophical anti-science is perhaps the most dangerous of all.

#### Transhumanism solves all their impacts

**Bostrom 3** PhD from the London School of Economics (Nick, 2003, “Transhumanism FAQ”, http://www.paulbroman.com/myspace/Transhumanism\_FAQ.txt)

Shouldn’t we concentrate on current problems such as improving the situation of the poor, rather than putting our efforts into planning for the “far” future? We should do both. Focusing solely on current problems would leave us unprepared for the new challenges that we will encounter. Many of the technologies and trends that transhumanists discuss are already reality. Biotechnology and information technology have transformed large sectors of our economies. The relevance of transhumanist ethics is manifest in such contemporary issues as stem cell research, genetically modified crops, human genetic therapy, embryo screening, end of life decisions, enhancement medicine, information markets, and research funding priorities. The importance of transhumanist ideas is likely to increase as the opportunities for human enhancement proliferate. Transhuman technologies will tend to work well together and create synergies with other parts of human society. For example, one important factor in healthy life expectancy is access to good medical care. Improvements in medical care will extend healthy, active lifespan – “healthspan” – and research into healthspan extension is likely to benefit ordinary care. Work on amplifying intelligence has obvious applications in education, decision-making, and communication. Better communications would facilitate trade and understanding between people. As more and more people get access to the Internet and are able to receive satellite radio and television broadcasts, dictators and totalitarian regimes may find it harder to silence voices of dissent and to control the information flow in their populations. And with the Internet and email, people discover they can easily form friendships and business partnerships in foreign countries. A world order characterized by peace, international cooperation, and respect for human rights would much improve the odds that the potentially dangerous applications of some future technologies can be controlled and would also free up resources currently spent on military armaments, some of which could then hopefully be diverted to improving the condition of the poor. Nanotechnological manufacturing promises to be both economically profitable and environmentally sound. Transhumanists do not have a patent solution to achieve these outcomes, any more than anybody else has, but technology has a huge role to play. An argument can be made that the most efficient way of contributing to making the world better is by participating in the transhumanist project. This is so because the stakes are enormous – humanity’s entire future may depend on how we manage the coming technological transitions – and because relatively few resources are at the present time being devoted to transhumanist efforts. Even one extra person can still make a significant difference here.

### k

#### Pragmatic reasoning is correct- prior questions cause policy failure

Kratochwil, IR Prof @ Columbia, 8 [Friedrich Kratochwil is Assistant Professor of International Relations at Columbia University, Pragmatism in International Relations “Ten points to ponder about pragmatism” p11-25]

Firstly, a pragmatic approach does not begin with objects or “things” (ontology), or with reason and method (epistemology), but with “acting” ( *prattein*), thereby preventing some false starts. Since, as historical beings placed in a specific situations, we do not have the luxury of deferring decisions until we have found the “truth”, we have to act and must do so always under time pressures and in the face of incomplete information. Precisely because the social world is characterised by strategic interactions, what a situation “is”, is hardly ever clear *ex ante*, because it is being “produced” by the actors and their interactions, and the multiple possibilities are rife with incentives for (dis)information. This puts a premium on quick diagnostic and cognitive shortcuts informing actors about the relevant features of the situation, and on leaving an alternative open (“plan B”) in case of unexpected difficulties.

Instead of relying on certainty and universal validity gained through abstraction and controlled experiments, we know that completeness and attentiveness to detail, rather than to generality, matter.

#### Expression of opposition between the two are crucial to rethinking the status quo. The kritik by itself fails and becomes coopted- institutionalizing the dominant order.

Edelman, 87 - professor of Political Science @ U of Wisconsin (Murray, U of Minnesota Law Review, September)

Oppositions in expressed “opinion” accordingly make for social stability: they are almost synonymous with it, for they reaffirm and reify what everyone already knows and accepts. To express a prochoice or an anti-abortion position is to affirm that the opposite position is being expressed as well and to accept the opposition as a continuing feature of public discourse. The well established, thoroughly anticipated, and therefore ritualistic reaffirmation of the differences institutionalizes both rhetorics, minimizing the chance of major shifts and leaving the regime wide discretion, for there will be anticipated support and opposition no matter what forms of action or inaction occur. As long as there is substantial expression of opinion on both sides of an issue, social stability persists and so does regime discretion regardless of the exact numbers or of marginal shifts in the members. The persistence of unresolved problems with conflicting meanings is vital. It is not the expression of opposition but of consensus that makes for instability. Where statements need not be defended against counterstatements, they are readily changed or inverted. Consensual agreements about the foreign enemy or ally yield readily to acceptance of the erstwhile enemy as ally and the former ally as enemy, but opinions about abortion are likely to persist. Rebellion and revolution do not ferment in societies in which there has been a long history of ritualized exchange of opposing views of issues accepted as important, but rather where such exchanges have been lacking, so that a consensus on common action to oust the regime is easily built.

### predict

#### Policymakers have an obligation to err in favor of prediction—it’s inevitable and using explicit predictions enhances decision-making

Fitzsimmons 7 (Michael, Washington DC defense analyst, “The Problem of Uncertainty in Strategic Planning”, Survival, Winter 06-07, online)

In defence of prediction ¶ Uncertainty is not a new phenomenon for strategists. Clausewitz knew that ‘many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain’. In coping with uncertainty, he believed that ‘what one can reasonably ask of an officer is that he should possess a standard of judgment, which he can gain only from knowledge of men and affairs and from common sense. He should be guided by the laws of probability.’34 Granted, one can certainly allow for epistemological debates about the best ways of gaining ‘a standard of judgment’ from ‘knowledge of men and affairs and from common sense’. Scientific inquiry into the ‘laws of probability’ for any given strate- gic question may not always be possible or appropriate. Certainly, analysis cannot and should not be presumed to trump the intuition of decision-makers. Nevertheless, Clausewitz’s implication seems to be that the burden of proof in any debates about planning should belong to the decision-maker who rejects formal analysis, standards of evidence and probabilistic reasoning. Ultimately, though, the value of prediction in strategic planning does not rest primarily in getting the correct answer, or even in the more feasible objective of bounding the range of correct answers. Rather, prediction requires decision- makers to expose, not only to others but to themselves, the beliefs they hold regarding why a given event is likely or unlikely and why it would be impor- tant or unimportant. Richard Neustadt and Ernest May highlight this useful property of probabilistic reasoning in their renowned study of the use of history in decision-making, Thinking in Time. In discussing the importance of probing presumptions, they contend: The need is for tests prompting questions, for sharp, straightforward mechanisms the decision makers and their aides might readily recall and use to dig into their own and each others’ presumptions. And they need tests that get at basics somewhat by indirection, not by frontal inquiry: not ‘what is your inferred causation, General?’ Above all, not, ‘what are your values, Mr. Secretary?’ ... If someone says ‘a fair chance’ ... ask, ‘if you were a betting man or woman, what odds would you put on that?’ If others are present, ask the same of each, and of yourself, too. Then probe the differences: why? This is tantamount to seeking and then arguing assumptions underlying different numbers placed on a subjective probability assessment. We know of no better way to force clarification of meanings while exposing hidden differences ... Once differing odds have been quoted, the question ‘why?’ can follow any number of tracks. Argument may pit common sense against common sense or analogy against analogy. What is important is that the expert’s basis for linking ‘if’ with ‘then’ gets exposed to the hearing of other experts before the lay official has to say yes or no.’35 There are at least three critical and related benefits of prediction in strate- gic planning. The first reflects Neustadt and May’s point – prediction enforces a certain level of discipline in making explicit the assumptions, key variables and implied causal relationships that constitute decision-makers’ beliefs and that might otherwise remain implicit. Imagine, for example, if Shinseki and Wolfowitz had been made to assign probabilities to their opposing expectations regarding post-war Iraq. Not only would they have had to work harder to justify their views, they might have seen more clearly the substantial chance that they were wrong and had to make greater efforts in their planning to prepare for that contingency. Secondly, the very process of making the relevant factors of a deci- sion explicit provides a firm, or at least transparent, basis for making choices. Alternative courses of action can be compared and assessed in like terms. Third, the transparency and discipline of the process of arriving at the initial strategy should heighten the decision-maker’s sensitivity toward changes in the envi- ronment that would suggest the need for adjustments to that strategy. In this way, prediction enhances rather than under-mines strategic flexibility. This defence of prediction does not imply that great stakes should be gambled on narrow, singular predictions of the future. On the contrary, the central problem of uncertainty in plan- ning remains that any given prediction may simply be wrong. Preparations for those eventualities must be made. Indeed, in many cases, relatively unlikely outcomes could be enormously consequential, and therefore merit extensive preparation and investment. In order to navigate this complexity, strategists must return to the dis- tinction between uncertainty and risk. While the complexity of the international security environment may make it somewhat resistant to the type of probabilis- tic thinking associated with risk, a risk-oriented approach seems to be the only viable model for national-security strategic planning. The alternative approach, which categorically denies prediction, precludes strategy. As Betts argues, Any assumption that some knowledge, whether intuitive or explicitly formalized, provides guidance about what should be done is a presumption that there is reason to believe the choice will produce a satisfactory outcome – that is, it is a prediction, however rough it may be. If there is no hope of discerning and manipulating causes to produce intended effects, analysts as well as politicians and generals should all quit and go fishing.36 Unless they are willing to quit and go fishing, then, strategists must sharpen their tools of risk assessment. Risk assessment comes in many varieties, but identification of two key parameters is common to all of them: the consequences of a harmful event or condition; and the likelihood of that harmful event or condition occurring. With no perspective on likelihood, a strategist can have no firm perspective on risk. With no firm perspective on risk, strategists cannot purposefully discriminate among alternative choices. Without purposeful choice, there is no strategy. \* \* \* One of the most widely read books in recent years on the complicated relation- ship between strategy and uncertainty is Peter Schwartz’s work on scenario-based planning, The Art of the Long View. Schwartz warns against the hazards faced by leaders who have deterministic habits of mind, or who deny the difficult implications of uncertainty for strategic planning. To overcome such tenden- cies, he advocates the use of alternative future scenarios for the purposes of examining alternative strategies. His view of scenarios is that their goal is not to predict the future, but to sensitise leaders to the highly contingent nature of their decision-making.37 This philosophy has taken root in the strategic-planning processes in the Pentagon and other parts of the US government, and properly so. Examination of alternative futures and the potential effects of surprise on current plans is essential. Appreciation of uncertainty also has a number of organisational impli- cations, many of which the national-security establishment is trying to take to heart, such as encouraging multidisciplinary study and training, enhancing information sharing, rewarding innovation, and placing a premium on speed and versatility. The arguments advanced here seek to take nothing away from these imperatives of planning and operating in an uncertain environment. But appreciation of uncertainty carries hazards of its own. Questioning assumptions is critical, but assumptions must be made in the end. Clausewitz’s ‘standard of judgment’ for discriminating among alternatives must be applied. Creative, unbounded speculation must resolve to choice or else there will be no strategy. Recent history suggests that unchecked scepticism regarding the validity of prediction can marginalise analysis, trade significant cost for ambiguous benefit, empower parochial interests in decision-making, and undermine flexibility. Accordingly, having fully recognised the need to broaden their strategic-planning aperture, national-security policymakers would do well now to reinvigorate their efforts in the messy but indispensable business of predicting the future.

#### Scenario planning is possible and key to making effective decisions

Kurasawa 4 (Professor of Sociology, York University of Toronto, Fuyuki, Constellations Volume 11, No 4)

A radically postmodern line of thinking, for instance, would lead us to believe that it is pointless, perhaps even harmful, to strive for farsightedness in light of the aforementioned crisis of conventional paradigms of historical analysis. If, contra teleological models, history has no intrinsic meaning, direction, or endpoint to be discovered through human reason, and if, contra scientistic futurism, prospective trends cannot be predicted without error, then the abyss of chronological inscrutability supposedly opens up at our feet. The future appears to be unknowable, an outcome of chance. Therefore, rather than embarking upon grandiose speculation about what may occur, we should adopt a pragmatism that abandons itself to the twists and turns of history; let us be content to formulate ad hoc responses to emergencies as they arise. While this argument has the merit of underscoring the fallibilistic nature of all predictive schemes, it conflates the necessary recognition of the contingency of history with unwarranted assertions about the latter’s total opacity and indeterminacy. Acknowledging the fact that the future cannot be known with absolute certainty does not imply abandoning the task of trying to understand what is brewing on the horizon and to prepare for crises already coming into their own. In fact, the incorporation of the principle of fallibility into the work of prevention means that we must be ever more vigilant for warning signs of disaster and for responses that provoke unintended or unexpected consequences (a point to which I will return in the final section of this paper). In addition, from a normative point of view, the acceptance of historical contingency and of the self-limiting character of farsightedness places the duty of preventing catastrophe squarely on the shoulders of present generations. The future no longer appears to be a metaphysical creature of destiny or of the cunning of reason, nor can it be sloughed off to pure randomness. It becomes, instead, a result of human action shaped by decisions in the present – including, of course, trying to anticipate and prepare for possible and avoidable sources of harm to our successors. Combining a sense of analytical contingency toward the future and ethical responsibility for it, the idea of early warning is making its way into preventive action on the global stage.

#### Conditional forecasting of specific events are effective---*they* presume overgeneralized trends that don’t correlate to our advantages and solvency claims which are based on specific, conditional probabilities

Cochrane 11 (John H. Cochrane is a Professor of finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and a contributor to Business Class "IN DEFENSE OF THE HEDGEHOGS" July 15 www.cato-unbound.org/2011/07/15/john-h-cochrane/in-defense-of-the-hedgehogs/)

Gardner and Tetlock admire the “foxes” who “used a wide assortment of analytical tools, sought out information from diverse sources, were comfortable with complexity and uncertainty, and were much less sure of themselves… they frequently shifted intellectual gears.” By contrast, “hedgehogs” “tended to use one analytical tool in many different domains, … preferred keeping their analysis simple and elegant by minimizing “distractions” and zeroing in on only essential information.”

There is another very important kind of “forecast” however, and here I think some “hedgehog” traits have an advantage.

Gardner and Tetlock have in mind what economists call “unconditional” forecasting. In this, they are content to use historical correlations to guess what comes next, with no need of structural understanding. We often do this in economic forecasting, and rightly. For example, the slope of the yield curve gives a good signal of whether recessions are coming. But this does not mean that if the government changes that slope it will change the recession. Forcing the weather forecaster to lie will not produce a sunny weekend. Leading indicators, confidence surveys, and more formal regression-based and statistical forecasts all operate this way.

But economics is really concerned with conditional forecasting; predicting the answers to questions such as “if we pass a trillion dollar stimulus, how much more GDP will we get next year?” “If we raise taxes on ‘the rich’, how much less will they work, and how much revenue will we actually raise?” “If the Fed monetizes $600 billion dollars of long-term debt, how much will GDP increase, and much inflation will we get, and how soon?” “If you tell insurance companies they have to take everyone at the same price no matter how sick, how many will sign up for insurance?”

Here we are trying to “predict” the effect of a policy, how much the future will change if a policy is enacted. Despite popular impression, the vast majority of economists spend the vast majority of their time on these sorts of questions, not on unconditional forecasts. Asking the average economist whether unemployment will go down next quarter is about as useless as asking a meteorological researcher who studies the physics of tornadoes whether it will rain over the weekend. He probably doesn’t even have a window in his office.

It was once hoped that really understanding the structure of the economy would also help in the sort of unconditional forecasting that Gardner and Tetlock are more interested in. Alas, that turned out not to be true. Big “structural” macroeconomic models predict no better than simple correlations. Even if you understand many structural linkages from policy to events, there are so many other unpredictable shocks that imposing “structure” just doesn’t help with unconditional forecasting.

But economics can be pretty good at such structural forecasting. We really do know what happens if you put in minimum wages, taxes, tariffs, and so on. We have a lot of experience with regulatory capture. At least we know the signs and general effects. Assigning numbers is a lot harder. But those are useful predictions, even if they typically dash youthful liberal hopes and dreams.

#### The aff isn’t forecasting, it’s risk management---the inherent unpredictability of social events is all the more reason for creating optimal resiliency through scenario planning

Cochrane 11 (John H. Cochrane is a Professor of finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and a contributor to Business Class "IN DEFENSE OF THE HEDGEHOGS" July 15 www.cato-unbound.org/2011/07/15/john-h-cochrane/in-defense-of-the-hedgehogs/)

Risk Management Rather than Forecast-and-Plan

The answer is to change the question, to focus on risk management, as Gardner and Tetlock suggest. There is a set of events that could happen tomorrow—Chicago could have an earthquake, there could be a run on Greek debt, the Administration could decide “Heavens, Dodd–Frank and Obamacare were huge mistakes, let’s fix them” (Okay, not the last one.) Attached to each event, there is some probability that it could happen.

Now “forecasting” as Gardner and Tetlock characterize it, is an attempt to figure out which event really will happen, whether the coin will land on heads or tails, and then make a plan based on that knowledge. It’s a fool’s game.

Once we recognize that uncertainty will always remain, risk management rather than forecasting is much wiser. Just the step of naming the events that could happen is useful. Then, ask yourself, “if this event happens, let’s make sure we have a contingency plan so we’re not really screwed.” Suppose you’re counting on diesel generators to keep cooling water flowing through a reactor. What if someone forgets to fill the tank?

The good use of “forecasting” is to get a better handle on probabilities, so we focus our risk management resources on the most important events. But we must still pay attention to events, and buy insurance against them, based as much on the painfulness of the event as on its probability. (Note to economics techies: what matters is the risk-neutral probability, probability weighted by marginal utility.)

So it’s not really the forecast that’s wrong, it’s what people do with it. If we all understood the essential unpredictability of the world, especially of rare and very costly events, if we got rid of the habit of mind that asks for a forecast and then makes “plans” as if that were the only state of the world that could occur; if we instead focused on laying out all the bad things that could happen and made sure we had insurance or contingency plans, both personal and public policies might be a lot better.

### apoc reps

#### Discussing death AFFIRMS value to life

BHAGWAD ’12 – St. Stephen’s College MBA from ICFAI Hyderabad (Bhagwad. “Why is talking about Death Taboo in Indian Society?” July 1, 2012. http://www.bhagwad.com/blog/2011/philosophy/why-is-talking-about-death-taboo-in-indian-society.html/)

This incident got me thinking – why are we so touchy about the subject of death in general? Anupa assures me that the hesitancy is pretty widespread and that I’m the anomaly for not minding. Perhaps it has something to do with both my parents being doctors. We discuss death all the time at home. Just the other day, my mother and I were discussing the best way to commit suicide without pain and expense in case my parents get so old and pain ridden than life is just not worth living anymore. In fact, whenever my mother used to go on a trip somewhere, she would pull us aside before leaving and tell us where the important keys and documents were kept just in case she never came back. I have a file in my Google docs which has all these important details so that we don’t have to go into a flap in case someone in the family dies.

So as a person who’s quite comfortable talking about death, I find the tendency to avoid the topic in Indian society pretty puzzling. I mean sure, no one wants a loved one to die. But talking about it won’t cause it to happen. Keeping quiet about it won’t prevent it either. Unless of course it’s a superstition, in which case I understand. We’re all superstitious about something or the other I guess. But if it’s not superstitious, what is it?

Strangely, I find that it’s Indians who dislike talk of death more than people here in the US for example. It’s strange because Hinduism is arguably a very chill religion when it comes to the final end. Other religions postulate that there’s a final judgement which is pretty scary if you ask me. Hinduism on the other hand simply treats death as shedding your clothes. The soul finds a new body and things go on as usual. Krishna told Arjun not to grieve for loved ones because they’re not really dead.

If anything, it should be the Atheists who hate discussing death because everything literally ends for them. No rebirth, no heaven…nothing. But I’ve met quite a few Atheists who don’t mind discussing their death or the death of others in public. But I don’t know whether it’s a religious thing, or a cultural thing here. Perhaps the problem is philosophical and people feel that since death is a horrible and bad thing, then talking about it is in poor taste.

It’s like the elephant in the room. Every knows it’s there but no one wants to acknowledge it. We all know we’re going to die and everyone we love is going to die and yet we don’t talk about it. This despite that fact that talking about death can be very interesting since it presents concepts such as the soul, mortality, God, the value of life etc. One of the most important distinctions between humans and animals is that we seem to be the only creature who is aware of our own mortality.

### vtl

**Short-sightedness is what makes life disposable—the techno-strategic logic that they indict is at its worst when we refuse to consider long-term consequences. Future orientation is the only way to make better decisions.**

**Kurasawa, 04**

(Professor of Sociology, York University of Toronto, Fuyuki, Constellations Volume 11, No 4, 2004).

At another level, instrumental-strategic forms of thought and action, so pervasive in modern societies because institutionally entrenched in the state and the market, are rarely compatible with the demands of farsightedness. The calculation of the most technically efficient means to attain a particular bureaucratic or corporate objective, and the subsequent relentless pursuit of it, intrinsically exclude broader questions of long-term prospects or negative side-effects. What matters is the maximization of profits or national self-interest with the least effort, and as rapidly as possible. Growing risks and perils are transferred to future generations through a series of trade-offs: economic growth versus environmental protection, innovation versus safety, instant gratification versus future well-being. What can be done in the face of short-sightedness? Cosmopolitanism provides some of the clues to an answer, thanks to its formulation of a universal duty of care for humankind that transcends all geographical and socio-cultural borders. I want to expand the notion of cosmopolitan universalism in a temporal direction, so that it can become applicable to future generations and thereby nourish a vibrant culture of prevention. Consequently, we need to begin thinking about a farsighted cosmopolitanism, a chrono-cosmopolitics that takes seriously a sense of “intergenerational solidarity” toward human beings who will live in our wake as much as those living amidst us today. But for a farsighted cosmopolitanism to take root in global civil society, the latter must adopt a thicker regulative principle of care for the future than the one currently in vogue (which amounts to little more than an afterthought of the nondescript ‘don’t forget later generations’ ilk). Hans Jonas’s “imperative of responsibility” is valuable precisely because it prescribes an ethico-political relationship to the future consonant with the work of farsightedness.27 Fully appreciating Jonas’s position requires that we grasp the rupture it establishes with the presentist assumptions imbedded in the intentionalist tradition of Western ethics. In brief, intentionalism can be explained by reference to its best-known formulation, the Kantian categorical imperative, according to which the moral worth of a deed depends upon whether the a priori “principle of the will” or “volition” of the person performing it – that is, his or her intention – should become a universal law.28 Ex post facto evaluation of an act’s outcomes, and of whether they correspond to the initial intention, is peripheral to moral judgment. A variant of this logic is found in Weber’s discussion of the “ethic of absolute ends,” the “passionate devotion to a cause” elevating the realization of a vision of the world above all other considerations; conviction without the restraint of caution and prudence is intensely presentist.29 By contrast, Jonas’s strong consequentialism takes a cue from Weber’s “ethic of responsibility,” which stipulates that we must carefully ponder the potential impacts of our actions and assume responsibility for them – even for the incidence of unexpected and unintended results. Neither the contingency of outcomes nor the retrospective nature of certain moral judgments exempts an act from normative evaluation. On the contrary, consequentialism reconnects what intentionalism prefers to keep distinct: the moral worth of ends partly depends upon the means selected to attain them (and vice versa), while the correspondence between intentions and results is crucial. At the same time, Jonas goes further than Weber in breaking with presentism by advocating an “ethic of long-range responsibility” that refuses to accept the future’s indeterminacy, gesturing instead toward a practice of farsighted preparation for crises that could occur.30 From a consequentialist perspective, then, intergenerational solidarity would consist of striving to prevent our endeavors from causing large-scale human suffering and damage to the natural world over time. Jonas reformulates the categorical imperative along these lines: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life,” or “Act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life.”31 What we find here, I would hold, is a substantive and future-oriented ethos on the basis of which civic associations can enact the work of preventive foresight.

### chaos

**Chaos is not inevitable—careful future planning has been enormously effective. Medical research, humanitarian law, and environmental regulations are just a few areas where futurism has prevented enormous suffering. Debates amongst citizens are key to assessing probability and effectively planning.**

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(Professor of Sociology, York University of Toronto, Fuyuki, Constellations Volume 11, No 4, 2004).

Moreover, keeping in mind the sobering lessons of the past century cannot but make us wary about humankind’s supposedly unlimited ability for problemsolving or discovering solutions in time to avert calamities. In fact, the historical track-record of last-minute, technical ‘quick-fixes’ is hardly reassuring. What’s more, most of the serious perils that we face today (e.g., nuclear waste, climate change, global terrorism, genocide and civil war) demand complex, sustained, long-term strategies of planning, coordination, and execution. On the other hand, an examination of fatalism makes it readily apparent that the idea that humankind is doomed from the outset puts off any attempt to minimize risks for our successors, essentially condemning them to face cataclysms unprepared. An a priori pessimism is also unsustainable given the fact that long-term preventive action has had (and will continue to have) appreciable beneficial effects; the examples of medical research, the welfare state, international humanitarian law, as well as strict environmental regulations in some countries stand out among many others. The evaluative framework proposed above should not be restricted to the critique of misappropriations of farsightedness, since it can equally support public deliberation with a reconstructive intent, that is, democratic discussion and debate about a future that human beings would freely self-determine. Inverting Foucault’s Nietzschean metaphor, we can think of genealogies of the future that could perform a farsighted mapping out of the possible ways of organizing social life. They are, in other words, interventions into the present intended to facilitate global civil society’s participation in shaping the field of possibilities of what is to come. Once competing dystopian visions are filtered out on the basis of their analytical credibility, ethical commitments, and political underpinnings and consequences, groups and individuals can assess the remaining legitimate catastrophic scenarios through the lens of genealogical mappings of the future. Hence, our first duty consists in addressing the present-day causes of eventual perils, ensuring that the paths we decide upon do not contract the range of options available for our posterity.42 Just as importantly, the practice of genealogically inspired farsightedness nurtures the project of an autonomous future, one that is socially self-instituting. In so doing, we can acknowledge that the future is a human creation instead of the product of metaphysical and extra-social forces (god, nature, destiny, etc.), and begin to reflect upon and deliberate about the kind of legacy we want to leave for those who will follow us. Participants in global civil society can then take – and in many instances have already taken – a further step by committing themselves to socio-political struggles forging a world order that, aside from not jeopardizing human and environmental survival, is designed to rectify the sources of transnational injustice that will continue to inflict needless suffering upon future generations if left unchallenged.

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#### Fear of extinction is a legitimate and productive response to the modern condition---working through it by validating our representations is the only way to create an authentic relationship to the world and death

Macy 00 – adjunct professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies

(Joanna Macy, 2000, Environmental Discourse and Practice: A Reader, p. 243)

The move to a wider ecological sense of self is in large part a function of the dangers that are threatening to overwhelm us. We are confronted by social breakdown, wars, nuclear proliferation, and the progressive destruction of our biosphere. Polls show that people today are aware that the world, as they know it, may come to an end. This loss of certainty that there will be a future is the pivotal psychological reality of our time. ¶ Over the past twelve years my colleagues and I have worked with tens of thousands of people in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, helping them confront and explore what they know and feel about what is happening to their world. The purpose of this work, which was first known as “Despair and Empowerment Work,” is to overcome the numbing and powerlessness that result from suppression of painful responses to massively painful realities. As their grief and fear for the world is allowed to be expressed without apology or argument and validated as a wholesome, life-preserving response, people break through their avoidance mechanisms, break through their sense of futility and isolation. Generally what they break through into is a larger sense of identity. It is as if the pressure of their acknowledged awareness of the suffering of our world stretches or collapses the culturally defined boundaries of the self. ¶ It becomes clear, for example, that the grief and fear experienced for our world and our common future are categorically different from similar sentiments relating to one’s personal welfare. This pain cannot be equated with dread of one’s own individual demise. Its source lies less in concerns for personal survival than in apprehensions of collective suffering – of what looms for human life and other species and unborn generations to come. Its nature is akin to the original meaning of compassion – “suffering with.” It is the distress we feel on behalf of the larger whole of which we are a part. And, when it is so defined, it serves as a trigger or getaway to a more encompassing sense of identity, inseparable from the web of life in which we are as intricately connected as cells in a larger body. ¶ This shift in consciousness is an appropriate, adaptive response. For the crisis that threatens our planet, be it seen in its military, ecological, or social aspects, derives from a dysfunctional and pathogenic notion of the self. It is a mistake about our place in the order of things. It is the delusion that the self is so separate and fragile that we must delineate and defend its boundaries, that it is so small and needy that we must endlessly acquire and endlessly consume, that it is so aloof that we can – as individuals, corporations, nation-states, or as a species – be immune to what we do to other beings.

#### Torture is a deontological evil that must be rejected

Gross 4 (Oren Gross, Professor, Law, University of Minnesota, MINNESOTA LAW REVIEW, June 2004, p. 1492-1493.)

Absolutists - those who believe that an unconditional ban on torture ought to apply without exception regardless of circumstances - often base their position on deontological grounds. For adherents of the absolutist view of morality, torture is intrinsically wrong. It violates the physical and mental integrity of the person subjected to it, negates her autonomy, and deprives her of human dignity. It reduces her to a mere object, a body from which information is to be extracted; it coerces her to act in a manner that may be contrary to her most fundamental beliefs, values, and interests, depriving her of any choice and controlling her voice. Torture is also wrong because of its depraving and corrupting effects on individual torturers and society at large. Moreover, torture is an evil that can never be justified or excused. Under no circumstances should the resort to torture be morally acceptable or legally permissible. It is a reprehensible action whose wrongfulness may never be assuaged or rectified morally even if the consequences of taking such action in any particular case are deemed to be, on the whole, good. Indeed, one may argue that the inherent wrongfulness of torture and possible good consequences are incommensurable, i.e., they cannot be measured by any common currency and therefore cannot be compared, or balanced, one against the other. The conclusion drawn from such a claim is that "the wrong of torture can be taken as a trump or side constraint on welfare maximization in all possible cases."

#### Role playing is the best way to promote critical policy analysis and well-informed students

Schaap 5(Andrew, University of Melbourne, Politics, Vol 25 Iss 1, February)

Learning political theory is largely about acquiring a vocabulary that enables one to reflect more critically and precisely about the terms on which human beings (do and should) co-operate for and compete over public goods, symbolic and material. As such, political theory is necessarily abstract and general. But, competency in political theory requires an ability to move from the general to the particular and back again, not simply by applying general principles to particular events and experiences but by reflecting on and rearticulating concepts in the light of the particular. Role play is an effective technique for teaching political theory because it requires that students employ political concepts in a particular context so that learning takes place as students try out new vocabularies together with their peers and a lifelong learner in the subject: their teacher.