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The Buddha was sitting at a festival of joy, where families celebrated their life and health. However, as he watched the procession, he realized the joy of these families was invariably connected to the trampling of ants.   
Similar to those ants, black being provides the structural support for a bridge of desire over which flows the everyday unreality of the sovereign -- debates over antitrust laws are inseparable from desire for cartographic coherence that drives the myth of transcendental control over space-time.

**Moten ’13** [Fred; 2013; Professor of Performance Studies at New York University; *Blackness and Nothingness: (Mysticism in the Flesh)*, “Just Friends,” p. 749-752]

Within this framework blackness and antiblackness remain in brutally antisocial structural support of one another like the stanchions of an absent bridge of lost desire over which flows the commerce and under which flows the current, the logistics and energy of exclusion and incorporation, that characterizes the political world. Though it might seem paradoxical, the bridge between blackness and antiblackness is “the unbridgeable gap between Black being and Human life” (Wilderson 2010: 57). What remains is the necessity of an attempt to index black existence by way of what Chandler (2007: 41) would call para ontological, rather than politico-ontological, means. The relative nothingness of black life, which shows up for political ontology as a relation of nonrelation or counterrelation precisely in the impossibility of political intersubjectivity, can be said both to obscure and to indicate the social animation of the bridge’s underside, where the im/possibilities of political intersubjectivity are exhausted. Political ontology backs away from the experimental declivity that Fanon and Du Bois were at least able to blaze, each in his own way forging a sociological path that would move against the limiting force, held in the ontological traces, of positivism, on the one hand, and phenomenology, on the other, as each would serve as the foundation of a theory of relations posing the nothingness of blackness in its (negative) relation to the substance of subjectivity-as-nonblackness (enacted in antiblackness). On the one hand, blackness and ontology are unavailable for one another; on the other hand, blackness must free itself from ontological expectation, must refuse subjection to ontology’s sanction against the very idea of black subjectivity. This imperative is not something up ahead, to which blackness aspires; it is the labor, which must not be mistaken for Sisyphean, that blackness serially commits. The paraontological distinction between blackness and blacks allows us no longer to be enthralled by the notion that blackness is a property that belongs to blacks (thereby placing certain formulations regarding non/relationality and non/communicability on a different footing and under a certain pressure) but also because ultimately it allows us to detach blackness from the question of (the meaning of) being. The infinitesimal difference between pessimism and optimism lies not in the belief or disbelief in descriptions of power relations or emancipatory projects; the difference is given in the space between an assertion of the relative nothingness of blackness and black people in the face, literally, of substantive (antiblack) subjectivity and an inhabitation of appositionality, its internal social relations, which remain unstructured by the protocols of subjectivity insofar as mu—which has been variously translated from the Japanese translation of the Chinese wu as no, not, nought, nonbeing, emptiness, nothingness, nothing, no thing but which also bears the semantic trace of dance, therefore of measure given in walking/falling, that sustenance of asymmetry, difference’s appositional mobility—also signifies an absolute nothingness whose antirelative and antithetical philosophical content is approached by way of Nishida Kitaro¯’s enactment of the affinities between structures and affects of mysticism that undergird and trouble metaphysics in the “East” and the “West.” Indeed, the content that is approached is approach, itself, and for the absolute beginner, who is at once pilgrim and penitent, mu signals that which is most emphatically and lyrically marked in Édouard Glissant’s phrase “consent not to be a single being” and indicated in Wilderson’s and Mackey’s gestures toward “fantasy in the hold,” the radical unsettlement that is where and what we are. Unsettlement is the displacement of sovereignty by initiation, so that what’s at stake—here, in displacement—is a certain black incapacity to desire sovereignty and ontological relationality whether they are recast in the terms and forms of a Lévinasian ethics or an Arendtian politics, a Fanonian resistance or a Pattersonian test of honor.

Unenabled by or in this incapacity, Nishida’s philosophy folds sovereignty in the delay that has always given it significance, putting it on hold, but not in the hold, where to be on hold is to have been committed to a kind of staging, a gathering of and for the self in which negation is supposed to foster true emergence in “a self-determination of that concrete place of the contradictory identity of objectivity and subjectivity” (Nishida 1987: 96). What I term, here, a delay is understood by Nishida as “the moment [that] can be said to be eternal . . . [wherein] consciously active individuals, encounter the absolute as its inverse polarity, its mirror opposite, at each and every step of our lives” (96). It is in echoing a traditional Buddhist teaching, which asserts the nonself even against what are considered foolish declarations of the nonexistence of self, that Nishida restages a standard ontotheological skit in which sovereignty—whether in the form of the consciously active indi-vidual or in that individual’s abstract and equivalent dispersion in the nation, “the mirror image of the Pure Land in this world” (123)—takes and holds the space-time, the paradoxically transcendental ground, of the everyday unreality of “the real world,” where the sovereign’s endless show carries a brutally material imposition. What remains to be seen is what (the thinking and the study of) blackness can bring to bear on the relation between the un/real world and its other(s). What if blackness is the refusal to defer to, given in the withdrawal from the eternal delay of, sovereignty? What if Nishida’s preparatory vestibule for a general and infinite self-determination is pierced, rather than structurally supported, by (the very intimation of) the no-place to which it is opposed in his own work? When Nishida argues that “the human, consciously active volitional world makes its appearance from the standpoint of the paradoxical logic of the Prajnaparamita Sutra literature,” which offers us the phrase “Having No Place wherein it abides, this Mind arises,” he means to assert the legitimacy of an idea or image of the whole that takes “the form of the contradictory identity of the consciously active self and the world, of the volitional individual and the absolute” (95–96). What if (the thinking and the study of) blackness is an inhabitation of the hold that disrupts the whole in which the absolute, or absolute nothingness, is structured by its relation to its relative other? What if the nothing that is in question here moves through to the other side of negation, in “the real presence” of blackness, in and as another idea of nothingness altogether that is given in and as and to things?

Both against the grain and by way of Fanon’s negation of the condition of relative nothingness, which is instantiated in what he takes to be the white man’s manufacture of the black, black study is attunement of and toward blackness as the place where something akin to the absolute nothingness that Nishida elaborates and a radical immanence of things that is not disavowed so much as it is unimagined in that same elaboration converge. This is to say that what remains unimagined by Nishida—not simply radical thingliness but its convergence with nothingness—is, nevertheless, made open to us by and in his thinking. Nishida helps prepare us to consider, even in the nationalist divigation of his own engagement with the heart of a teaching that has no center, that blackness is the place that has no place. “Having no place where it abides, this Mind [of the Little Negro Steelworker] arises.”1 Things are in, but they do not have, a world, a place, but it is precisely both the specificity of having neither world nor place and the generality of not having that we explore at the nexus of openness and confinement, internment and flight. Having no place wherein they abide, in the radically dispossessive no-place of the hold, in “Mutron,” Cherry and Blackwell touch intimacy from the walls. In that break, the architectonic intent of the hold as sovereign expression and recuperation breaks down. Feel the complete lysis of this morbid body/universe. Touch is not where subjectivity and objectivity come together in some kind of self-determining dialectical reality; beyond that, in the hold, in the basho (the place of nothingness, that underground, undercommon recess), is the social life of black things, which passeth (the) understanding. In the hold, blackness and imagination, in and as consent not to be a single being, are (more and less than) one.

We are prepared for this generative incapacity by Wilderson’s work, where what distinguishes the sovereign, the settler, and even the savage from the slave is precisely that they share “a capacity for time and space coherence. At every scale—the soul, the body, the group, the land, and the universe—they can both practice cartography, and although at every scale their maps are radically incompatible, their respective ‘mapness’ is never in question. This capacity for cartographic coherence is the thing itself, that which secures subjectivity for both the Settler and the ‘Savage’ and articulates them to one another in a network of connections, transfers and displacements” (Wilderson 2010: 181). Absent the “cartographic coherence [that] is the thing itself,” we must become interested in things, in a certain relationship between thingliness and nothingness and blackness that plays itself out—outside and against the grain of the very idea of self-determination—in the unmapped and unmappable immanence of undercommon sociality. This is fantasy in the hold, and Wilderson’s access to it is in the knowledge that he can have nothing and in the specific incapacity of a certain desire that this knowledge indexes. It remains for us to structure an accurate sense of what nothing is and what it constitutes in the exhaustion of home, intersubjectivity, and what Sexton calls “ontological reach” (Sexton 2011a). The truth of the formulation that the black cannot be among or in relation to his or her own is given in terminological failure. What’s at stake is how to improvise the declension from what is perceived as a failure to be together to the unmappable zone of paraontological consent. The promise of another world, or of the end of this one, is given in the general critique of world. In the meantime, what remains to be inhabited is nothing itself in its fullness, which is, in the absence of intersubjective relationality, high fantastical or, more precisely, given in the fugal, contrapuntal intrication that we can now call, by way of Mackey and Wilderson, fantasy in the hold, where the interplay of blackness and nothingness is given in an ongoing drama of force and entry.

#### Harvard’s demand for durable fiat is a form of white delusion that represents an active misapprehension of reality -- there is an epistemic imperative to dismantle this anti-black social practice.

**McRae ’19** [Emily; May 13; Associate Professor of Buddhism at the University of New Mexico; *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, *Philosophy of Race*, “Chapter 1,” p. 44-45]

I offer this story not only as an example of everyday white delusion, but also to set the tone of this chapter: From both the Buddhist and critical race theoretical perspectives that I draw on here, ignorance (delusion) is not someone else’s problem. There is a moral, and epistemic imperative to confront our own ignorance, to dismantle the false beliefs and misunderstandings that inform our everyday sense of reality. In this chapter, I use the Buddhist concept of avidyā (ignorance, confusion, delusion) to analyze the causes, mechanisms, and possible correctives for white delusion. In Buddhist contexts, avidyā refers not only to a lack of knowledge but also (and primarily) to an active misapprehension of reality, a warped projection onto reality that reinforces our own dysfunction and vice. Ignorance is rarely innocent; it is not an isolated phenomenon of just-not-happening-to-know-something. It is maintained and reinforced through personal and social habits, including practices of personal and collective false projection, strategic ignoring, and convenient “forgetting.” This view of avidyā has striking similarities to philosophical analyses of white ignorance, such as Charles Mills’s, which understand white ignorance not in terms of a passive lack of knowledge but as an active refusal by whites to confront basic facts about our social world.

I argue that Buddhist analyses of avidyā may help us understand the mechanisms of white ignorance and the practices for deconstructing it. On the Buddhist view, the mechanisms for maintaining avidyā include obsession with self and clinging to fixed narratives about the self (in the case of white delusion, “I’m not racist” or “I’ve earned and deserve everything I have”) and the refusal to take seriously cause and effect (such as a failure to historicize racism, the failure to understand broad, systemic effects of racism, and the inability to apply abstract knowledge of racism to specific cases). In my own case of white delusion, I was guilty of both kinds of mistakes: I was clinging to a narrative that obscured reality—that it was only women who bore the burden of managing physical appearance in our society—and I failed to apply my knowledge of how racism works in the abstract to the specifics of my partner’s life.  
Buddhist conceptions of ignorance or delusion may also help to locate possible correctives for white ignorance. Because avidyā is not simply a lack of knowledge, it cannot be completely remedied by exposure to facts and analyses of those facts. To be receptive to such knowledge in the first place, to remember and apply it, we must overcome our own dysfunctional emotional patterns that sustain our confusion. So, on a Buddhist ethical view, white people cannot combat white ignorance simply with knowledge about racism (which is already widely available) but rather white people need to do the personal and emotional work of deconstructing our own whiteness, as it arises in our own lives, to uproot our white ignorance. This is uncomfortable and ugly (but necessary) work that will require white people to correct for major moral blind spots by developing the moral skill of equanimity (or “tarrying,” as George Yancy has argued).3

#### Absent confronting Harvard’s delusion, debaters are trained in an epistemology of ignorance based in avidyā. Avidyā is NOT a “passive absence” BUT an “active delusion” which means any 2AC permutation sustains policy debates habitual ignorance in disguise -- a sound philosophical analysis upends the 1AC’s fantasyland complicit in racial injustice AND provides liberation from the root of all suffering.

**McRae ’19** [Emily; May 13; Associate Professor of Buddhism at the University of New Mexico; *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, *Philosophy of Race*, “Chapter 1,” p. 47-50]

Epistemologies of ignorance are of central importance in Buddhist philosophy, especially Buddhist ethics, and much philosophical effort is given to ethical and epistemological analyses of ignorance. According to all forms of Buddhism, ignorance—or avidyā—is at the root of human suffering, violence, and vice. The project of liberation is, essentially, liberation from avidyā. For these reasons, understanding what avidyā is, how it manifests, the mechanisms for creating and maintaining it, and the spiritual technologies to eliminate it are of central concern to Buddhist philosophers.

In Sanskrit, avidyā is a negation (“a”) of vidyā (knowledge). For this reason, avidyā has often been translated as ignorance, the lack of knowledge. In his survey of Indian Buddhist conceptions of avidyā, Bimal Matilal argues that such an English translation is, at best, misleading for two main reasons, one grammatical and the other philosophical. The grammatical reason is that, although the negation “a” can mean “lack” or “absence,” it can also mean, among other things, “that which is not X,” “that which is in opposition to X,” or “that which is similar, but not equivalent to X.” In the case of avidyā, these different grammatical interpretations lead to substantial philosophical differences: (1) avidyā could be “lack of knowledge,” (2) that which is “noknowledge,” (3) that which is “the opposite of knowledge,” or (4) that which is “mistaken for knowledge.”12

In the context of Buddhist philosophy, the first two possible understandings of avidyā are ruled out: avidyā cannot mean simply that which is not knowledge or the lack of knowledge (which is why both Matilal and Wayman argue against “ignorance” as a suitable translation of avidyā). In the Abhidharmakośa, the fourth-century Buddhist philosopher Vasubhandu asks, “What is avidyā?” His answer

The non-vidyā (knowledge), that which is not vidyā. Impossible; for the eye is also non-vidyā. It is an absence of vidyā, “ignorance.” This is also impossible, for an absence is not a thing and avidyā must be a thing, since it is a cause. Thus, Avidyā is a separate entity (dharma), the opposite of vidyā or knowledge, like a non-friend, the untrue, etc. The non-friend (amitra) is the opposite of friend, not a non-friend, that is, anyone other than a friend, not the absence of the friend . . . . Thus avidyā is the opposite of vidyā.13

Here Vasubhandu is arguing that defining avidyā as simply “non-knowledge” will not do, since there are many things that are not knowledge—such as the eye—but that does not mean that they are avidyā. Moreover, understanding avidyā as the lack or absence of knowledge is “impossible” in the context of Buddhist philosophy. This is because avidyā is causally efficacious; it is one of the root causes of suffering. And a non-entity, according to Vasubhandu, cannot be a cause. For this reason, Vasubhandu claims that we should understand avidyā as that which is opposed to knowledge. (Alex Wayman argued, along these lines, that we should translate avidyā as “unwisdom.”14) It is important to note that, philosophically, understanding avidyā as “that which is opposed to knowledge” includes the other grammatical interpretation of avidyā as “that which is mistaken for knowledge,” since false views that are mistaken for knowledge are in opposition to knowledge.

Analyses of avidyā are prioritized because avidyā is claimed by all Buddhist schools to be a foundational cause of suffering, which is why it is important to Vasubhandu that avidyā has causal efficacy. The link between avidyā and suffering is also important for moral psychological reasons: it explains our experience of suffering in the world and the psychological mechanisms of that suffering. Along with desire and hatred, avidyā is one of the three root “poisons” (and the most foundational of the three) that cause suffering. The basic idea is that our experiences of suffering—from minor dissatisfaction to abject misery—can be explained by our habit of projecting false views and assumptions and taking them to be real or accurate. For Buddhist philosophers, this is true on a mundane level: If I am upset because I was passed over for a promotion, this suffering is due to craving the promotion, aversion to being passed over, both of which are based on false ideas about the nature of reality (that getting overlooked never happens, that promotions are to be valued over other things, etc.). But it is also true on a deeper level. The suffering I experience in my life, it is claimed, is caused by a more fundamental delusion: that I am an independent, essential self, metaphysically distinct from other independent, essential selves. But we do not exist in this way, Buddhists argue; we are simply a collection of ever-changing parts, which are dependent on changing conditions, and are themselves empty of any inherent existence. Not recognizing this is avidyā. Because avidyā causes us to expect and desire things to be other than they are, it sets us up for suffering.

Since it is the fundamental cause of suffering, the elimination of avidyā is central to the Buddhist project of liberation, that is, the cessation of suffering. But the elimination of avidyā cannot simply be about attaining knowledge. This would be true if we understood avidyā as a lack of knowledge; then the antidote would simply be getting more knowledge.15 But since avidyā is better understood as that which stands in opposition to knowledge, as Vasubhandu argues, the elimination of avidyā demands that we actively dismantle these misunderstandings of the world and replace them with accurate understandings that we have reached through sound philosophical analysis and correct interpretation of experience.

There are some obvious differences between avidyā and white ignorance. Avidyā affects all non-liberated beings (that is, all beings who suffer), white ignorance does not affect everyone (although, as Mills notes, it is not strictly limited to white people). The elimination of avidyā constitutes a complete cessation from suffering, or at least that is what is claimed; the elimination of white ignorance constitutes the cessation of, at most, racial injustice, and even then, probably not all of it.

But there are some substantial points of conceptual overlap between avidyā and white ignorance that can motivate integrating Buddhist and critical race analyses. First, both avidyā and white ignorance are normative (broadly moral) concepts of ignorance. Avidyā has moral significance due to its direct link to human (and sentient) suffering. Moreover, the reason that we care about avidyā is for liberatory ends.16 White ignorance is also a moral ignorance. Mills argues that white ignorance is “not merely ignorance of facts with moral implications but moral non-knowings, incorrect judgments about the rights and wrongs of moral situations themselves.”17 And we want to eliminate white ignorance because we want to eliminate the racial injustice and suffering that is caused by it.

Second, due to their normative orientations, both avidyā and white ignorance are intended to pick out certain kinds of morally and soteriologically important delusions; neither concept is concerned with all forms of notknowing. Matilal argues that, even though “in a general context, avidyā may stand for false beliefs or a false belief-system which we all grow up with in the worldly environment,” in the Buddhist context, “it obtains a specialized meaning” because “not all false beliefs are technically called avidyā in Buddhism.”18 The reason that not all false beliefs count as avidyā is because not all false beliefs are implicated in human and sentient suffering and bondage. In most circumstances, the fact that I do not know how many pebbles there are in my yard, or that I assume there are more than there are, does not constitute a cause of my (or others’) suffering. Similarly, the domain of white ignorance is limited: it is not about all the things white people do not know, but what white people do not know qua white people in a white supremacy. That a white person does not know the distance between the Earth and Saturn does not count as the relevant form of white ignorance, since this not-knowing is not due to being a white person in a white supremacist society and it is not a moral nonknowing. That a white person believes “that the academy is a meritocracy, that modernity begins in Europe and then spread outward, and that global poverty is disconnected from Western wealth” would count as white ignorance since the miscognitions are due to being a white person and, because they obscure the realities of racial injustice, it is a moral non-knowing.

The third point of similarity is that Buddhist accounts of avidyā and critical race accounts of white ignorance both emphasize the active dimensions of ignorance. Both insist that the ignorance in question is not a passive absence but an active delusion that is maintained through effort. It is an “active production” that is maintained for personal, social, political, and economic reasons.20 Because both avidyā and white ignorance are active projections of falsity, I will translate avidyā as delusion and change “white ignorance” to “white delusion.” I think that the term white delusion is in line with many of the descriptions found in critical race theory/critical philosophy of race. Mills, who tends to use “white ignorance,” nevertheless sometimes describes it as an “invented delusional world, a racial fantasyland, a consensual hallucination.”21 In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine how Buddhist analyses of delusion (avidyā) help to further understand the causes and conditions of white delusion, and the possibility of eliminating it.

#### Antitrust law incorrectly assumes a closed economic system defined by market rationality and inherent competition—that paradigm ensures planetary immiseration and unhappiness.

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The definition of happiness needs further clarification. In the Buddhist view, which generally corresponds to those of other spiritual traditions, happiness is not simply sensory pleasure, derived from physical comfort. Rather, happiness is an innate state of mind which can be cultivated through spiritual practice, overcoming mental and emotional states which induce suffering. In the Buddhist tradition this is a path of ‘liberation’; other spiritual traditions call it self-transformation. This definition of happiness is absent from conventional western sciences, on which modern economic theory is based. In fact, conventional economics and its indicators such as GNP, deliberately leave human happiness outside its spectrum, tacitly assuming that material development, as measured by GNP growth, is positively correlated to human well-being. Further analysis of the relationship between material development and human psychology has been outside the scope of economic and social theory.

Yet this is changing: breakthrough research – in quantum physics, medicine, biology, behavioral science, psychology and cognitive science – is now making the science of the mind relevant to economics. Conversely, as the current discussion on GNH indicates, from within the profession of economics, attempts are made to broaden the scope of economics into the domain of psychology.

While this allows us to find a common basis for GDP and GNH, it is important to note that this change constitutes a paradigm shift in our thinking. GNP and GNH are rooted in very different (and even opposing) views we have of the world and ourselves. Once we recognize this, we can embark on a coherent journey finding the possible content and meaning of GNH. So let’s first review the foundations of GNH and GNP, respectively.

Buddhism

Buddhism is based on teachings of Gautama Buddha who lived 2500 years ago in ancient India. One of his key teachings is that suffering is caused by the way we perceive things and ourselves. Things appear to us as if they have the ability to provide us lasting happiness and comfort, so we become attached to them and we develop desire for them. But this craving is a result of ignorance about reality. The reality of things is that they are transient, impermanent, and therefore cannot produce the lasting happiness that we expect from them.

Buddhism does not reject matter and wealth as inherently evil, but considers them useful. First, material wealth prevents us from poverty and, second, it allows us to practice generosity; which causes ‘merit’ or positive karma, and a more happy society for all. Thus, “right livelihood” is one of the eight main requirements of the Buddha’s path, which has been defined as follows:

One should abstain from making one’s living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc., and one should live by a profession which is honorable, blameless and innocent of harm to others.1

A true Buddhist person not only seeks wealth lawfully and spends it for the good, but also enjoys spiritual freedom. The Buddhist Pali canon states that such person acts as follows2:

Seeking wealth lawfully and unarbitrarily

Making oneself happy and cheerful

Sharing with others and doing meritorious deeds

Making use of one’s wealth without greed and longing, possess of the insight that sustains spiritual freedom

These Buddhist principles provided the ground for some 21st century authors to define the concept of Buddhist economics 3. But Buddha himself made it very clear: real happiness does not come from acquiring or consuming material things. Happiness is essentially a state of mind or consciousness, and mind/consciousness is distinct from matter. Thus, Buddhism considers the path of mental or spiritual development superior to that of material development. What really matters is to psychologically detach oneself from matter, and strive for liberation and enlightenment, which is considered the ultimate state of happiness and fulfillment. This is achieved by the cultivation of values within one’s mind, such as insight, compassion, tolerance and detachment. Only this will bring true happiness, both for the individual and society4.

Economics

Economics has its roots in ancient Greece (the term is derived from ‘oikonomikos’, literally meaning ‘Household Management’), and now is commonly defined as ‘a science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which alternative uses’5. In this discussion, it is important to note that economics defines ends and means primarily in material terms, which moreover can be quantified in monetary terms. Immaterial and non monetary values are considered subjective and therefore outside its scope 6. Further, by stating that economic means are naturally limited and scarce, economic theory accepts a natural element of competition for these resources.

Economic textbooks talk of economic laws assuming man naturally competes for scarce and limited material resources. Happy is the man who is able to consume these resources, unhappy is the one who is not. Classical economics tell us that it makes no sense to exert time, effort or expense on maintaining values, if money can be made by ignoring them. Intangibles don't count.

One of the great economists of our time, Lord Keynes, wrote in 1930 that the time that everybody would be rich was not yet there: "For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and everyone else that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight"7. In Keynesian thought, which had a large effect on economists for much of the last century, ethical considerations are not merely irrelevant, and they are an actual hindrance.

The assumptions underlying the so-called "economic laws" were developed at a time when religion was being separated from science, the accepted worldview became secularized, and the sacred was substituted by belief in matter. Economic theory was affected by great scientific discoveries in physics, biology and psychology, and economic laws were presented with the same authority as laws of nature. Newton and Descartes described reality in terms of a more or less fixed number of “building blocks”, of “things”, subject to measurable laws such as gravity and, put together smartly, operating like a big machine. The world of matter was regarded as a mere machine, to be used by man, his reason and free will.

Darwin had described human beings as a relatively intelligent species evolved from primitive apes motivated by lusts and aggression (as Freud would confirm later in psychology). Our intelligence has taught us to behave socially, but fundamentally we are selfish beings subject to the law of "survival of the fittest". When Adam Smith, in his famous work The Wealth of Nations, introduced the "invisible hand" of the market, by which the things and building blocks can be exchanged efficiently on the basis of each individual's self interest, we extended these laws into the realm of economics. 19th century economists such as Malthus and Ricardo, added the notion that economies are closed systems, bound by fixed quantities of material goods. No matter how large economies become, they remain closed, thus limited. This has led to an important premise underlying classical economics: scarcity is a natural state. Hence it is believed that competition for scarce resources, or even war, is natural too. We forgot that Adam Smith wrote in his earlier work The Theory of Moral Sentiments that markets could not function without ethics and morals. We have come to believe that greed and selfishness is what economies are all about.

Economist E.F. Schumacher observed in his landmark book "Small is Beautiful" that the idea of competition, natural selection and the survival of the fittest, which purports to explain the natural and automatic process of evolution and development, still dominates the minds of educated people today. Schumacher argues that

These ideas, combined with the belief in positivism, have wrongly been given universal validity. They simply do not stand up to factual verification. But since they conveniently relieved us from responsibility - we could blame our immoral behavior on "instincts" - these ideas have retained a prominent place in the consciousness of modern man8.

In fact, over the last two centuries we have firmly enshrined these principles in our capitalist legal systems, domestically and internationally. For example, the international laws governing the main multilateral agency for international trade, the World Trade Organization (WTO), are based on Ricardo's concept of "comparative advantage", the idea that nations, by specializing yet keeping our borders open, will benefit from unfettered competition. This arose from 17th century Europe which had invented the nation state to better deal with the opportunities provided by colonialist expansion.

Likewise, with the emergence of the nation state, monetary systems and policies were developed based on the notion of scarce money supply, linked to gold and silver, the value of which was controlled by the nation. The artificial measurement of money scarcity, when the churches relaxed their restrictions on interest bearing lending (considered ‘usury’ for many centuries)9, introduced an official element of competition among those in need of funding10. In contrast, those with money could set rules on how the scarce resources should be invested. These rules, now enshrined in corporate and banking law (and forming the basis of what we know as ‘capitalism’), favor those with wealth over those who have not. These ‘have nots’, the vast majority, have been locked in a competitive cycle for scarce capital ever since. When a competitor achieves a monopoly, he is punished under anti-trust laws, for competition must go on. The judge in the antitrust case against Microsoft ruled that the firm's monopoly had done "violence to the competitive process"11. In our modern society we take it for granted, and in fact consider it healthy, that competition has become a structural feature of our societies.

What do We Measure?

At the same time we have developed indicators to measure the wellbeing of our society in terms of economic growth. Inspired by the mathematical approach of the natural sciences, we have chosen indicators which measure things that can be quantified by assigning monetary weightings. Thus, they exclude qualitative distinctions. Yet over the last decades it has appeared that it are exactly the qualitative factors that are crucial to our understanding the ecological, social and psychological dimensions of economic activity. For example, economic calculations ignore the value of things such as fresh water, green forests, clean air, traditional ways of life, to name but a few – simply because they cannot be easily quantified. This partial blindness of our current economic system is increasingly recognized as the most important force behind the accelerating destruction of the global environment.

The most basic measure of a nation’s economic performance, is called Gross National Product (GNP) calculated as on the basis of all quantifiable economic transactions recorded in a given period. Governments want to see this grow each year. Yet GNP statistics are inherently flawed. In calculating GNP, natural resources are not depreciated as they are being exploited. Buildings and factories are depreciated, as well as machinery, equipment, trucks and cars. Why are forests not depreciated after irresponsible logging and farming methods turn them into barren slopes causing erosion and landslides? The money received from the sale of logs is counted as part of the country’s income for the year. Further, the national statistics would show that the country has gone richer for cleaning up landslides. The funds spent on the chain-saws and logging trucks will be entered on the expense side of the project’s accounts, but those to be spent on the supposed replanting will not. Nowhere in the calculations of this countries GNP will be an entry reflecting the distressing reality that millions of trees are gone forever.

Aside from the environment, traditional GNP calculations ignore the informal, unpaid economy of caring, sharing, nurturing of the young, volunteering and mutual aid. This informal “Compassionate Economy” is hidden from economist’s statistics and therefore public view, yet it represents some fifty percent of all productive work and exchange in all societies.12 In developing countries, these traditional non-money sectors often predominate. Indeed, the United Nations Human Development Report in 1995 estimated such voluntary work and cooperative exchange at $16 trillion, which is simply missing from the world’s GNP statistics.

Classical economics holds that all participants in the market between supply and demand have ‘perfect information’ about the facts on which they base their choices. This is another assumption that has proven to be incorrect, especially in light of the buyer’s inability to ascertain to what extent a product has depleted natural resources or exploited labor. Our current economic system not only makes unrealistic assumptions about the information available to real people in the real world; it also assumes incorrectly that natural resources are limitless ‘free good’ failing to distinguish between renewable and non renewable goods and simply equating them on the basis of monetary values set by a supposedly ‘informed’ market.

Our system also fails to account for all the associated costs of what is called consumption. Every time we consume something, some sort of waste is created, but these costs are usually overlooked and externalized. For instance, for all the fuel we consume in a given day, we do not account for extra CO2 emission in the atmosphere. Since we equate an increase in consumption with an increase in ‘standard of living’, we encourage ourselves to produce more and more, and also more waste. This has led to the disturbing reality that those countries which are considered richest, produce the most waste.

Discounting the Future

Our national accounting standards also contain questionable assumptions about what is valuable in the future as opposed to the present. In particular, the standard discount rate that assesses cash-flows resulting from the use or development of natural resources assumes that all resources belong totally to the present generation. As a result, any value that they may have to future generations is heavily discounted when compared to the value of using them up now. Likewise, by discounting the future value of money on the basis of interest rates, we have accepted that a dollar spent today is more valuable than a dollar spent tomorrow. This has not only caused a dangerous short-term mentality among fund managers who control increasing amounts of investment funds which can be moved from one country to another at the speed of online digital communication. It also provided a whirlpool-like force behind the expansion of our financial markets, which have come to grow to such an extent that national authorities can no longer control them.

The financial markets, in particular, with the daily turnover of more than US$ 1.5 trillion on foreign currency markets worldwide, are now setting the pace for continued growth and expansion. Money should be moved in order to make more money. Short term rewards are more important than long term, sustainable investments. An increase in stock prices are equated with economic success, and conversely, a drop is regarded as an economic failure with immediate divestment as a result. This has had already disastrous results, as is shown by the repeated crashes of emerging markets, the internet bubble and recent corporate scandals such as Enron. Many have blamed this entirely on weak and ineffective governance, while only few recognize that the global system itself is at fault. It should, of course, be quite obvious that preoccupation with growth in a finite environment leads to disaster, but the supertanker of short term capitalism seems unstoppable.

By concentrating on the mere statistics of monetary indicators, we fail to distinguish between the qualitative aspects of growth; healthy or unhealthy growth, temporary or sustainable growth. We do not question what growth is actually needed, what is required to actually improve the quality of our life.

Recognizing this dilemma, and out of concern for the rapid depletion of natural resources caused by economic development, the concept of ‘sustainable development’ has emerged. The 1987 report by the World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future, spread and popularized the term ‘sustainable development’, which it defined as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”13. This concept became a focus of national attention after the UN conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, 1992. Rio’s Agenda 21 commits all 178 signatory countries to expand their national statistical accounts by including both environmental factors and unpaid work14.

However, more than a decade later, only very few of these countries have been able to live up to their commitments. National Agenda 21 efforts have led to academic debates, heightened public awareness and minor adjustments in the SNA and taxation rules, but it has not fundamentally altered the way we manage and measure our national economy. National political agenda’s continue to be determined by interest groups dominated by commerce and industry who are locked on old paradigms, while in the meantime the power of national authorities and national democratic institutions have been gradually eroded by the globalization of industry, finance, technology and information.

Faith in the Market

Ironically, coinciding with the emergence of the sustainable development movement, mainstream political and economic leadership has embraced free market capitalism as a golden formula. Particularly since the 1980-ies, with the demise of socialism and the promising allure of globalization, we have come to see the competitive market process as sacred. The bodies that rule our global economy today, the G7 (the world’s industrialized countries), IMF and the World Bank (together known as the ‘Washington consensus’) prescribe the world a neoclassical recipe of privatization, decentralization and market reform, assuming that our common interests are best served by the invisible hand of the market.

Critics of this faith are generally silenced by powerful arguments. They are told that government interference in markets will only lead to inefficient wasteful government bureaucracies. They claim that history has shown that the libertarian or laissez faire approach will allow markets to increase wealth, promote innovation and optimize production - and to regulate itself flawlessly at the same time. The fact that humans persist in behaving "irrationally and uneconomically" according to the market model, far from invalidates the model, they say; we simply have not yet learned to appreciate the benefits of competition. Some economists, trying to account for "irrational" religious commitments, such as voluntary gifts or abstention from consumption, even introduced a new economic factor - "afterlife consumption"15.

As Robert Kuttner points out in "Everything for Sale":

Trust in the unfettered market place, enshrined in politics by Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory and by the clarion call for less government interference in people's lives, is undiminished to this day. Dissenting voices have been drowned out by a stream of circular arguments and complex mathematical models that ignore the real-world conditions and disregard values and pursuits that can't easily be turned into commodities. These values and pursuits happen to be ones that most of us consider integral to our identity: justice, freedom, worship, leisure, family, charity and love.16

Yet it is increasingly clear that our economies are inherently flawed. While substantial wealth is generated mostly by a minority elite in developed countries, the majority of the world population remains poor. The gap between rich and poor keeps growing in all societies, and also among countries in the world. Environmental degradation seems irreversible. Drugs and new forms of slave trade prosper. Corruption and corporate fraud is widespread. Stock markets are turning into global casinos. War is increasingly 'economic', motivated by either the lack or the protection of wealth. Even if the global economy prospers, it seems to prosper at the expense of the air, earth, water, our health and our rights to employment. So we have to revisit the assumptions that underlie all this. Are the economic laws really uncontrollable? Spiritual teachings tell us that we make up reality, so likewise it must be us who make up the economy. For better or for worse, economies and business don't function separately from our decisions, since without us they wouldn't exist.

So if we want a better economy we have to look deeply at who we are and how we live.

Spiritual Views Rediscovered

Buddhism and in fact all spiritual traditions have long described reality in rather different terms than traditional economic theory. While the latter are primarily concerned with a fragment of human behavior, namely "economic" actions defined as those which can be quantified in terms of money, the former approach reality holistically, incorporating all actions - and even thoughts - that make up our being and society. While Newton, Descartes and classical economics define the world in things, of separate building blocks, spiritual teachings point out there is really no independent thing there, and that the focus on things will miss the relations and the whole context that make the thing possible. In economic textbooks human beings are isolated consumers and producers interacting at markets driven by monetary gains. In spiritual traditions humans are viewed as being part of a larger whole with which they can communicate by opening up their hearts and minds.

This holistic viewpoint is lent credence by modern physics, which postulate that the universe consists of unified patterns of energy. According to one of Einstein's favorite epigrams, the field generates the object, not vice verse. That is, whole systems give rise to specific things, not the other way around. While in the Cartesian worldview we can only know reality by knowing specific parts, Einstein discovered that in order to know things, we need to know the whole from which they originate. In other words, we are not isolated hard and fast physical things but more like “light beings” or “energy-flows” continuously interrelating and changing. Thus, we are more like “intangibles” - exactly that which cannot be measured in classic economic models.

The new understanding of reality is a systemic understanding, which means that it is based not only on the analysis of material structures, but also on the analysis of patterns of relationships among these structures and of the specific processes underlying their formation. This is evident not only in modern physics, but also in biology, psychology and social sciences. The understanding of modern biology is that the process of life essentially is the spontaneous and self-organizing emergence of new order, which is the basis of life's inherent abundance and creativity. Moreover, the life processes are associated with the cognitive dimension of life, and the emergence of new order includes the emergence of language and consciousness.

Most economic strategies are built around the possession of material things such as land, labor and capital. What counts is how much real estate we own, how much money we have and how many hours we work. The ideal for many people is to own enough land and capital, so we don't have to sell our time. This strategy, which no doubt will be recognized by many of us in developed countries, is based on the assumption that land, labor and capital is all there is, that the real world is a closed end system. Spiritual traditions and modern sciences claim the opposite. They recognize the unlimited potential in every sentient being - the potential to be whole and enlightened. Our minds create and pervade everything, hence physical reality is open for the spiritual.

The concept of scarcity has also been refuted by modern discoveries. Nuclear energy is based on breaking the seemingly closed-end system of the atom and the universe has been found to continuously expand. Like the expanding limits of outer space, the modern business of cyber space and Internet, has created unexpected opportunities and amounts of new wealth. Another example, while being rightfully concerned about the limited availability of the planet's fossil fuel deposits, there is no shortage of energy in our solar system. In fact, we are surrounded by abundant energy sources: sun and wind, as well as the earth's heat, motion and magnetism. But most renewable energy resources are not available to us, not because they don't exits, but because we don't have the know how to tap them.

The key in the modern knowledge economy is that what counts here is not merely material possession, but know how and creativity, the domain of the mind17. As many of the new e-commerce companies have found out, a company cannot "own" the knowledge that resides in the heads of the employees. Research has shown that most successful business strategies focus less on things but more on how to manage them. It is commonly accepted that all technical and social innovation is based on what is now phrased as 'intellectual capital'. And unlike ordinary capital, intellectual capital is not subject to physical limits.

So what does all this tell us? Clearly, the 19th century mechanistic ‘matter only’ worldview has been turned on its head. And thus we should revise long held axioms. First, the traditional concept that we are simply competitive beings chasing scarce material resources is incorrect. Second, intangible values are equally important for our well-being. These intangibles are stored in the mind, free from physical constraints and therefore potentially of unlimited supply. Third, happiness is not merely determined by what we have, how much we consume, but also by what we know, how we can manage and how we can be creative, ultimately by who we are - so not by having, but by being. We are human beings after all. How do measure this reality?

How do we account for ‘self generation’, ‘spontaneity’ and ‘consciousness’ in our economic worldview? Deterministic logic is no longer sufficient. New ways of measuring are required to embrace this new reality.

Human Nature and Motivation

Before we can move there, let us first examine this ‘being’ side of our existence. What kind of beings are we? Happy or unhappy? Altruistic or selfish? Compassionate or competitive? Modest or greedy? Driven to seek short term pleasure, or seeking meaning, a higher purpose, a longer term state of happiness? These are important questions on which economic theory and spiritual traditions hold different views. Economists have accepted the principles of selfish individualism: the more the individual consumes, the better off he will be. And he consumes out of perpetual needs, which – if unmet – make him innately unhappy. Economic growth is achieved when individuals consume more and more so that demand and output are boosted. This leaves no room for altruism, where an individual may incur costs for no conceivable benefit to himself. This approach reduces the meaning of cooperation to a mere reciprocal arrangement among individuals: individual sacrifices on behalf of the community can only be seen as an insurance policy, for it will ensure the individual that the community will help him in the future.

We can understand the need for values such as compassion because of mutual dependence in this increasingly smaller and interconnected world. But spiritual traditions point to another, more profound and personal dimension of compassion. They advise us to make altruism the core of our practice, not only because it is the cheapest and most effective insurance policy for our future, but specifically because the real benefit of compassion is that it will bring about a transformation in the mind of the practitioner. It will make us happy.

How can this be done if our real nature is selfish? Compassion can only work if our nature is receptive to having an altruistic attitude, if somehow compassion is in harmony with our essence, so that we can actually enjoy being compassionate. If we are inherently selfish, any attempt to develop a compassionate attitude would be self defeating.

Most religions state that mankind's nature is good. As we might say, our kind is kind. Buddhism explains that there is no real independently existing self that is either good or bad. Our selfish motives are based on an illusionary belief in an independent self, separating ourselves from others. We do have selfish traits, they may even dominate us, but they can be removed by practice. And since we are so connected to the world, since there is no disconnected self, the practice of compassion is most effective.

Several modern scientific disciplines, such as biology, psychology and medical science, have started to study the effects of empathy on the human mind, body, health and relationships. Not surprisingly, they have ascertained that compassion is of tremendous help to our well-being. A compassionate frame of mind has a positive effect on our mental and physical health, as well as on our social life, while the lack of empathy has been found to cause or aggravate serious social, psychological and even physical disorders18. Recent research on stress shows that people who only seek short term pleasure, are more prone to stress than those who seek a higher purpose, who seek meaning rather than pleasure.19 Meaning generally is derived from values such as serving others, going beyond short term selfish needs. The fact that disregarding short term selfish needs is actually a source of longer term happiness, turns the classical economic notion of selfish individualism upside down.20

As economist Stanislav Menchikov observes:

The standard, neoclassical model is actually in conflict with human nature. It does not reflect prevailing patterns of human behavior. [..] If you look around carefully, you will see that most people are not really maximizers, but instead what you might call ‘satisfyers’: they want to satisfy their needs, and that means being in equilibrium with oneself, with other people, with society and with nature. This is reflected in families, where people spent most of their time, and where relations are mostly based on altruism and compassion. So most of our lifetime we are actually altruists and compassionate 21.

What does all this mean for our economy? Here we are entering unchartered territory, as is always the case in a paradigm shift. But some things are clear. The debate is not simply on government versus markets. As noted earlier, I believe it is about deeper, spiritual issues. Economic thinking is primarily focussed on creating systems of arranging matter for optimal intake of consumption. It assumes that the main human impulses are competition and consumption, and it has sidestepped spiritual and moral issues because it would involve a qualitative judgment on values and other intangibles that go beyond its initial premises. But by assuming that the more we consume, the happier we are, economists have overlooked the intricate working of the human mind.

At the root of this belief in the market lies a very fundamental misconception. That is, we have not really understood what makes us happy. Blind faith in economics has led us to believe that the market will bring us all the things that we want. We cling to the notion that contentment is obtained by the senses, by sensual experiences derived from consuming material goods. This feeds an emotion of sensual desire. At the same time, we are led to believe that others are our competitors who are longing after the same, limited resources as we are. Hence we experience fear, the fear of losing out, the fear that our desire will not be satisfied.

So we can observe that the whole machine of expanding capitalism is fuelled by two very strong emotions: desire and fear. They are so strong that they appear to be permanent features of our condition. Yet Buddha taught that since these emotions are based on ignorance, a misconception of reality, they can be removed by the understanding of reality, which is the prime object of Buddhist practice. According to Buddhism, happiness is an inner experience, available to anyone, regardless of wealth or poverty. Further, fundamentally there is nothing that we lack. By developing the mind, our inner qualities, we can experience perfect wholeness and contentment. Finally, if we share with others, we will find that we are not surrounded by competitors. Others depend on us as we depend on them.

#### The alternative is Black Buddhist meditation -- in the face of a case about antitrust laws, we only offer silence.

**Vesely-Flad ’19** [Rima; May 13; Ph.D. Director of Peace and Justice Studies at Warren Wilson College; *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, *Philosophy of Race*, “Chapter 5,” p. 85-86]

Lovingkindness practices toward the self, alongside personal interpretations of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, guide many Black Buddhist practitioners who have suffered generational trauma and racist degradation in our contemporary moment. Valerie Mason-John, also known as Vimalasara, an African-Canadian teacher in the Nichiren tradition, speaks of the importance of the Four Noble Truths for people of African descent in particular. The First Noble Truth is that suffering is a universal experience. Mason-John states, “We of African descent know what suffering is. It’s in our DNA.”20 The Second Noble Truth states that suffering is a result of ignorant craving. For many Black Buddhists, the interpretations of the causes of suffering are greatly expanded into teachings of white myopia, the desire to exist in delusion, and the collective ego of the dominant white culture. The Third Noble Truth is that there is a path to end suffering. The very promise of liberation is enticing for people of African descent. The Fourth Noble Truth describes the path of liberation, known as the Noble Eightfold Path. In this path, “Right Concentration,” which leads to settling the mind, is a particularly compelling practice.

Manuel writes in The Way of Tenderness:

Only in the deep silence of meditation did I begin to disbelieve that I was born only to suffer. Eventually after many years of sitting meditation, I recognized the root of my self-hatred, both external and internal, as a personal and collective denial or denigration of the body I inhabited.

Her reflections are echoed by Owens’s reflections on silence: “silence became the medium in which I was reborn into a sense of happiness and contentment. But overall, it ushered me into a period of thriving and flourishing in my life.”22 In meditation, practitioners cultivate their ability to confront the suffering wrought by their mental constructs rather than avoid pain. They seek to heal the damage wrought by racism and to rearticulate profound teachings that are rooted in concentration practices. In-depth interviews with Black Buddhist teachers and practitioners illuminate a progression in the process of acknowledging one’s racial identity and embracing teachings of non-self. The progression begins with claiming and rearticulating Blackness as part of the social self, and in so doing, embracing African ancestry. For many, the next step is entering into an experience of silence that facilitates a recognition of the truth of non-self. Finally, Black Buddhist teachers and long-term practitioners integrate embodiment with the psychologically liberating practice of silence. The ten Black Buddhist teachers and long-term practitioners interviewed for this chapter emphasized four primary themes in their articulation of embodiment and Anatta: (1) Being visible in social spaces; (2) Claiming African ancestral lineages; (3) Embracing the two truths of relative and absolute existence; and (4) Liberating the self and the community.

#### Our mystical endeavor into Black Buddhism creates a spiritual home in an environment that perpetuates suffering while paradoxically trying to alleviate it -- that psychological liberation is a necessary prerequisite to achieve social liberation.

**Vesely-Flad ’19** [Rima; May 13; Ph.D. Director of Peace and Justice Studies at Warren Wilson College; *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, *Philosophy of Race*, “Chapter 5,” p. 94-96]

The suffering induced by racism compels Black Buddhists to interpret teachings on non-self in nuanced ways. Many practitioners spoke of the importance of bringing lived experience—including suffering due to racism—to the cushion. These practitioners spoke of the trauma endured by African ancestors and a need to honor the cultural heritages within African traditions, as well as to remember the agony of being dislocated from families, land, traditions, and languages. The Black Buddhist teachers and practitioners interviewed for this study are keenly aware that they stand on the shoulders of those who have paved a path to social and institutional access; they are also deeply in touch with the anguish that they themselves feel. Black Buddhist practitioners feel the weight of oppression in predominantly white sanghas as well as the larger social environment. They note that white practitioners will notice dark skin color without acknowledging their own discomfort and myopia. The hegemonic whiteness of American Buddhism can feel alienating and isolating; whiteness perpetuates suffering in an environment that is, paradoxically, actively focused on alleviating suffering. As Black people become liberated, it is critical that white practitioners who possess privileged bodies—within white hegemonic contexts that privilege them—be compelled to interrogate their assumptions, their social power, and their tendency to individualize suffering.

As white people “do their work,” it is important that Black people be visible and affirmed in predominantly white spaces: in sanghas, workplaces, and in a society that aggressively polices people of color. In addition to promoting the value of Blackness, it is important to promote queer identity: to embrace the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality. For many Black Buddhist teachers, finding a spiritual home in which queer identity is welcomed is as paramount as finding a sangha that grapples with race, racism, and privilege.

In short, promoting Blackness and queerness allows for a social ease in a broader culture that suffers from white myopia, microaggressions, and systemic injustices. The ability to be honest about the origins of suffering facilitates exhaling, taking off masks, and cultivating of authentic presence. Practitioners feel that they are showing up for their own lives, in their entirety; that they can embrace Black identity and also let it dissolve; and that race does not have to be the central facilitating aspect of their relationships with themselves. They can be whole people who possess dark skin, and at the same time, they do not have to focus entirely on their embodiment, even as skin color mediates their experience in predominantly white social spaces, including sanghas.

In being able to take off masks and establish an authentic presence, Black Buddhist practitioners see themselves as being able to embrace two truths: conventional and mystical; relative and absolute. They can be “in the world, but not of it.” They acknowledge the importance of embodiment, but in the practice of silence, can also transcend the messages and norms that are relied upon in the social world. This is often a progression: Black practitioners grapple with their social identity while sitting on the cushion. Over time, the mind settles and a state of non-thinking is accessible. As Black practitioners access a psychological state of emptiness, not thinking, they can eventually hold together two ways of being: a self in the social world, and a non-self in a state of impermanence and constant change.

The ability to reach this internal state is psychologically liberating. The Black Buddhists who participated in this study assert that psychological liberation is a precursor for social liberation: Black people must be able to acknowledge, transcend, and transform the degrading constructs of Blackness in order to achieve political freedom. Sitting with racially induced suffering is essential for seeing the depth of it, allowing these messages to loosen their grip on the mind, and deconstructing the damage that has been wrought. Meditation practice facilitates liberation.

We live among those who, in having nothing, have everything.

**Moten ’13** [Fred; 2013; Professor of Performance Studies at New York University; *Blackness and Nothingness: (Mysticism in the Flesh)*, “Just Friends,” p. 753-757]

In a tradition of Buddhist teaching that goes back to the opening of The Gateless Gate, a thirteenth-century gathering of ko¯ans (case studies that take the form of stories, dialogues and/or questions meant to induce in the initiate dual intensities of doubt and concentration), that drama emerges as a deconstructive and deconstructed question, as exemplified in conventional presentations and interpretation of “Jo¯shu¯’s Dog.” The ko¯an reads: “A monk asked [Zen master] Jo¯shu¯ in all earnestness, ‘Does a dog have Buddha nature or not?’ Jo¯shu¯ said, ‘Mu!’” (Yamada 2004: 11). Even when we take into account Steven Heine’s warnings (Heine 2012) regarding the legitimacy of traditional attributions and interpretations of the Mu Ko¯an—which require us to consider both that it was not Jo¯shu¯ who responded to the question or that Jo¯shu¯’s response was the opposite of mu and that, therefore, the negative way that response is understood to open ought now to be closed—we are left with an ontotheological possibility that blackness may well exhaust. There is an appositional response, which this phantom query cannot properly be said to have called, that persists in and as an echoepistemology of passage, a sociotheology of the aneschaton, the instrumental interruption of telos by the universal (drum) machine, Blackwell’s prompt out to the study of the last things, the study carried out by the things that are last, by the least of these, whose movement constitutes a critique of the general and necessary relation between politics and death, a critique of the critique of judgment, a deconstruction of the opposition of heaven and hell. Cherry brings the noise of the end of the world in the invention of the earth. Though eschatology is understood to be a department, as it were, of theology, it has been both displaced by an administrative desire for the teleological and appropriated by a retributive desire for a kind of finality of and in sentencing, each in its commitment to sovereignty and the already existing structures that depend upon the very idea. But it’s not that I want to enclose things in the dialectical movement between beginning and end. Invention and passage denote an already existing alternative for which we are not constrained to wait. We are already down here on and under the ground, the water, as worked, unwrought nothingness working fleshly releasement in a privation of feasting, a fragility of healing. Mu is a practice of mysticism in the flesh; “Mutron,” the ritual Blackwell and Cherry perform, is their concentration meditation. It indexes the specific and material history of the drowned and burned, the shipped and held, as the condition for the release not just of the prevailing worldview but of the very idea of worldview, of transcendental standpoint and Pure Land. Cherry and Blackwell are initiates, who in turn initiate us, in what it is to abide in the social materiality of no place, of Having No Place, as a place for study. This shows up as a radical displacement of binary logic, moving through negation, because the way of the hold is no via negativa. Rather, the hold is distressed circuitry, an impedance or impediment of current, a placement of the self’s or the settler’s or the sovereign’s dyadic currency in kenotic abandon. “Mutron” is a way out of no way given in and as the exhaustion of what it is to abide, where the first and the last are neither first nor last.

To remain in the hold is to remain in that set of practices of living together where antikinetic theorizing is both bracketed and mobilized by performative contemplation, as in the monastic sociality of Minton’s, where the hermetic absence of and from home is given in and as a playhouse, a funnyhouse, a madhouse. The club, our subcenobitic thing, our block chapel, is a hard row of constant improvisational contact, a dispossessive intimacy of rubbing, whose mystic rehearsal is against the rules or, more precisely, is apposed to rule, and is, therefore, a concrete social logic often (mis)understood as nothing but foolishness, which is, on the other hand, exactly and absolutely what it is. Foucault’s meditations point precisely in this direction:

The ship of fools was heavily loaded with meaning, and clearly carried a great social force. . . . The madman on his crazy boat sets sail for the other world, and it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks. This enforced navigation is both rigorous division and absolute Passage, serving to underline in real and imaginary terms the liminal situation of the mad in medieval society. It was a highly symbolic role, made clear by the mental geography involved, where the madman was confined at the gates of the cities. His exclusion was his confinement, and if he had no prison other than the threshold itself he was still detained at this place of passage. . . .

A prisoner in the midst of the ultimate freedom, . . . he is the Passenger par excellence, the prisoner of the passage. It is not known where he will land, and when he lands, he knows not whence he came. His truth and his home are the barren wasteland between two lands that can never be his own. . . . The link between water and madness is deeply rooted in the dream of the Western man. (Foucault 2006: 10–11)

Deleuze has seized on this dimension of Foucault’s thought to probe how for him “the inside [functions] as an operation of the outside.” Indeed, “in all his work Foucault seems haunted by this theme of an inside which is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea. . . . Thought has no other being than this madman himself. As Blanchot says of Foucault: ‘He encloses the outside, that is, constitutes it in an interiority of expectation or exception’” (Deleuze 1988: 81). Deleuze continues:

Forces always come from the outside, from an outside that is farther away than any form of exteriority. So there are not only particular features taken up by the relations between forces, but particular features of resistance that are apt to modify and overturn these relations and to change the unstable diagram. . . . [This is] “where one can live and in fact where Life exists par excellence.” . . . [This is] life within the folds. This is the central chamber, which one need no longer fear is empty since one fills it with oneself. Here one becomes a master of one’s speed and, relatively speaking, a master of one’s molecules and particular features, in this zone of subjectivation: the boat as interior of the exterior. (Deleuze 1988: 100–101)

Passage, which is to say this passage, which is to say the passage between these passages of Foucault and Deleuze, the passage between these and those of Wilderson and Mackey, is given in the hold that Cherry and Blackwell deconstructively reconstruct just so you’ll know that the music and its performance was never about transcendence unless transcendence is understood as immanence’s fugitive impurity. How would you recognize the antiphonal accompaniment to gratuitous violence—the sound that can be heard as if in response to that violence, the sound that must be heard as that to which such violence responds? Wilderson asks the question again so that it can be unasked; so that we can hear Cherry and Blackwell unask it in and as intimacy in dislocation. Unasking takes the form of a caesura, an arrhythmia of the iron system, that Blackwell presses into the interruptive, already interrupted New Orleans continuum of his roll whose distended rearticulation stretches out so you can go down in it enough to think about what it means somewhere you’re only supposed to be going through, to be contained in the atopic atemporality that propels you, as the immanence of the transcendental hallway of our endless preparation, our experimental trial, given as our ongoing study of how to speak, the terrible beauty of our imprisonment in the passage, our life in the folds. Blackwell asks a question that Cherry anticipates, but by which Cherry is driven and to which Cherry responds in the bent, appositional reflection that unasks it. This drama is revived in Wilderson’s questioning; the question is a seizure that moves us to unask it. That unasking is mu not because the question’s terms and assumptions are incorrect; not because the implied opposition of nothing and something—where nothingness is too simply understood to veil (as if it were some epidermal livery) (some higher) being and is therefore relative as opposed to absolute—doesn’t signify; but because nothing (this paraontological interplay of blackness and nothingness, this aesthetic sociality) remains to be explored; because we don’t know what we mean by it even when we recite or record its multiphonic swerve; because blackness is not a category for ontology or for phenomenological analysis. Wilderson’s question—“Would nothing ever be with nothing again”—precisely in its irreducible necessity, cannot be answered but can only be unasked in the lyricism of that ill logic that black monks incessantly, thelonially, perform, as difference without opposition, in “a black hole,” as Jay Wright says (Wright 2013: 56), “germ and terminal, expansive/in its nothingness.

What would it be for this drama to be understood in its own terms, from its own standpoint, on its own ground? This is not simply a question of perspective awaiting its unasking, since what we speak of is this radical being beside itself of blackness, its appositionality. The standpoint, the home territory, chez lui—Charles Lam Markmann’s insightful mistranslation of Fanon illuminates something that Richard Philcox obscures by way of correction, Among one’s own, signifies a relationality that displaces the already displaced impossibility of home and the modes of relationality that home is supposed to afford (Fanon 1967). Can this sharing of a life in homelessness, this interplay of the refusal of what has been refused and consent, this undercommon appositionality, be a place from which to know, a place out of which emerges neither self-consciousness nor knowledge of the other but an improvisation that proceeds from somewhere on the other side of an unasked question? But not simply to be among one’s own; rather, also, to live among one’s own in dispossession, to live among the ones who cannot own, the ones who have nothing and who, in having nothing, have everything. To live, in other words, within the general commonness and openness of a life in Deleuze’s sense (hence the necessity of a philosophy of life; hence the necessity but also the rigor of a disbelief in social death, where social death is precisely understood as the imposition of the subject’s necessity rather than the refusal of the subject’s possibility, which, in any case, the imposition founds and enforces. At stake is the curve, the suppleness and subtlety, not only of contemplation on social life but of contemplative social life; at stake is the force of an extraphenomenological poetics of social life. And so we arrive, again and again, at a profound impulse in Fanon that—as Chandler indicates in his reading, which is the initial reading, of Du Bois—constitutes Du Bois’s horizon and which appears in the various forms of that question whose necessity is so fundamental that it must be unasked—the question of the meaning of (black) being, the question of the meaning of (black) things. We study in the sound of an unasked question. Our study is the sound of an unasked question. We study the sound of an unasked question. In the absence of the amenity (some pleasantness or pleasantry of welcome or material comfort), what is borne in the emptiness or nothingness of the amenity (of which love or soul is born, in exhaustion, as a society of friends), what are the other elements of mu? Chant and ko¯an and moan and Sprechgesang, and babble and gobbledygook, le petit nègre, the little nigger, pidgin, baby talk, bird talk, Bird’s talk, bard talk, bar talk, our locomotive bar walk and black chant, our pallet cries and shipped whispers, our black notes and black cant, the tenor’s irruptive habitation of the vehicle, the monastic preparation of a more than three-dimensional transcript, an imaginal manuscript we touch upon the walls and one another, so we can enter into the hold we’re in, where there is no way we were or are.

### 1NC – Counterplan

**Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by energy companies by**

* **expanding the scope of its core antitrust laws to account for “total welfare”**
* **establishing a “green antitrust policy” by establishing an upstream carbon fee on greenhouse gas emissions, with all revenue reimbursed as dividends to the population, starting at a price of $12.50 per metric ton of carbon dioxide-equivalent, and rising by that amount annually for the next ten years.**

#### The CP’s tax figure allows international negotiations to slow emissions fast enough to avoid runaway warming and solve global modeling

Handley 15[James Handley, a chemical engineer and attorney who previously worked for private industry and for U.S. EPA, “Don’t Anchor a Carbon Tax to the Social Cost of Carbon,” June 8, 2015, Carbon Tax Center, http://www.carbontax.org/blog/2015/06/08/dont-anchor-a-carbon-tax-to-the-central-social-cost-of-carbon/]

And **even if there were a “perfectly” specified SCC that accounted for catastrophic risks**, it would still make for a problematic framework for setting a carbon tax. Indeed, there are practical, real-world reasons for the carbon tax to start below the SCC — to allow households and businesses at least a little time to adjust to higher fossil fuel costs — but to soon rise to meet or even exceed the SCC, in order to **counterbalance institutional barriers that prevent societies from responding to price signals fully and instantly**.

A U.S. carbon tax should thus not be tethered to the IWG’s “central” SCC estimate. Instead, it should set a price and upward trajectory that can slash domestic emissions and **serve as a template** for other countries — as does Rep. Jim McDermott’s “Managed Carbon Price Act.” Starting at $12.50 per metric ton of CO2 (equivalent to $11.34 per U.S. ton), the McDermott carbon tax would rise by that same amount each year to **reach triple digits before the decade is out** — a trajectory that would drive down U.S. emissions by about one third in that time, according to CTC’s carbon tax model. And if global climate negotiators shift from squabbling over emissions caps to a price-based negotiation, as Harvard economist Martin Weitzman urges, a similar **global price trajectory** would **slow emissions fast enough** to offer a **decent shot at avoiding runaway warming**.

Which takes us to Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). This Wednesday (June 10), Sen. Whitehouse is to present his proposal for an economy-wide tax on greenhouse gases, the American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act (AOCFA), to the American Enterprise Institute. When Senator Whitehouse unveiled his bill last November, we applauded its broad coverage of all major greenhouse gases and its WTO-oriented border tax adjustment provisions. Presenting the proposal at AEI, a leading GOP and business-oriented think-tank, is a smart play for bipartisan support. The Senator’s willingness to discuss an array of options for use of the carbon tax revenue is a helpful invitation to his colleagues of both parties to **fold carbon taxes** into **broader tax and regulatory reform**.

But we would be remiss if we did not examine the bill’s effectiveness at reducing catastrophic climate risks. AOCFA’s pollution fee is pegged to U.S. EPA’s estimate of the SCC. The price would thus begin relatively high, at $42 per ton of carbon dioxide, but then rise by just 2% annually in real (after-inflation) terms. In our estimation, **this trajectory could be the worst of both worlds**.

#### The aff’s tax causes immediate electricity price spikes --- the counterplan prevents this through providing time for industry transition and solves warming better through providing continuing incentives for better tech

Handley 15[James Handley, a chemical engineer and attorney who previously worked for private industry and for U.S. EPA, “Don’t Anchor a Carbon Tax to the Social Cost of Carbon,” June 8, 2015, Carbon Tax Center, http://www.carbontax.org/blog/2015/06/08/dont-anchor-a-carbon-tax-to-the-central-social-cost-of-carbon/]

It’s a Marathon: **A Briskly Paced Carbon Tax Beats a Jackrabbit Start**

On the one hand, the overnight step from a zero carbon price all the way to $42 will hit hard. A $42 price per ton of CO2 equates to more than 4 cents per kWh for a 100% coal-dependent electric utility. In states like West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, where retail electricity prices average just 8₵/kWh (and industries and buildings are organized around cheap power), **rates would rise more than 50 percent overnight**. Without time to find and install low-carbon substitutes as well as more efficient processes and products, a **sudden increase of this magnitude** would be received as a punishment rather than a low-carbon incentive. **The political pushback would be immense**.

Moreover, we fear that without a persistent upward price trend, the climate benefits of AOCFA’s relatively high initial price will peter out. Our carbon tax spreadsheet model predicts that after an initial rapid 15% drop due to the bill’s aggressive starting price, CO2 emissions would rise on account of increased affluence and the rise in energy demand that tends to accompany it in the absence of continuing price incentives.

#### That undermines the recovery and sends the US into a deep recession– low energy prices have led to a boom in manufacturing and reshoring of jobs

Perry, 16—professor of economics at the Flint campus of The University of Michigan (Mark, “American Manufacturing, Re-energized,” <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-07-13/how-shale-gas-is-re-energizing-american-manufacturing>, dml)

Those claims that America doesn't produce anything anymore just aren't true. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. manufacturing output reached an all-time high of $2.17 trillion in 2015, making last year the best in at least a generation by all relevant measures of economic performance: output growth, employment gains and profits. In fact, today the U.S is the world's number two manufacturing nation, ranking behind only China. Also, consider that in 2014, the U.S. produced more manufacturing output than the combined output of Germany, South Korea, India, Italy and France.

Another reason for the resurgence of U.S. manufacturing: lower electricity prices. Adjusted for inflation, the cost of electricity to industrial users in the U.S. is lower this year than almost any year in history. Compared to 2008 in the early days of the shale revolution, industrial electricity prices are 17 percent lower today. That's because virtually every new power plant constructed in recent years has been fueled with natural gas. Gas plants are relatively inexpensive to build, and gas prices are projected to remain low for many decades.

We are also seeing an erosion of China's manufacturing cost advantages, especially for wages, which have been rising annually at an average rate of 12 percent. As a result, manufacturing production has started to return to the United States from China and other low-wage countries, reversing a decade-long trend of outsourcing production overseas. This trend can be summed up in one word: reshoring.

Nowhere are these changes more evident than in the dramatic turnabout in manufacturing employment. Until a few years ago, manufacturing employment in the U.S. had been on a steady and gradual decline since the peak of 19.5 million jobs in 1979, largely due to improvements in technology that allowed manufacturing output to steadily increase to recent record highs, using fewer and fewer workers. The decline in factory workers accelerated during the 2008 recession and then stabilized in early 2010. Since then, manufacturing employment from 2011 to 2015 has increased by 789,000 workers, which is the largest five-year job increase in factory jobs going back to the mid-1980s.

Starting in 2010, U.S. manufacturers have experienced an unprecedented boom, with annual profits above $500 billion in each of the last six years. Based on what is arguably the best measure of the health of the U.S. manufacturing sector – after-tax profits – the industry has been doing better over the last six years than in almost any other comparable period in history. And that's especially impressive considering the intense global competition from countries with lower labor costs such as China, South Korea and Brazil.

The bottom line is that America's abundant and low-cost natural gas and electricity have more than offset higher labor costs in the U.S. and have contributed to the strongest profitability in a generation or more for U.S. manufacturers. Within three years, and possibly even sooner, it will be cheaper for most U.S. companies to manufacture goods for the American market at home, compared to producing those same goods in Asia. As the overseas cost advantage disappears, the return of manufacturing production to the United States has the potential to create as many as 3 million new jobs over the next decade. And for many of those jobs and for the strength, vitality and profitability of U.S. manufacturing, we can thank America's amazing shale revolution.

#### Decline causes war

Pamlin and Armstrong 15 – Dennis Pamlin, Executive Project Manager, Global Challenges Foundation, Stuart Armstrong, James Martin Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford Martin School & Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford, 2015 (“Global Challenges: 12 Risks that Threaten Human Civilization,” *Global Challenges Foundation*, February 2015, <http://www.astro.sunysb.edu/fwalter/HON301/12-Risks-with-infinite-impact-full-report-1.pdf>)

Often economic collapse is accompanied by social chaos, civil unrest and sometimes a breakdown of law and order. Societal collapse usually refers to the fall or disintegration of human societies, often along with their life support systems. It broadly includes both quite abrupt societal failures typified by collapses, and more extended gradual declines of superpowers. Here only the former is included.

The world economic and political system is made up of many actors with many objectives and many links between them. Such intricate, interconnected systems are subject to unexpected system-wide failures due to the structure of the network311 – even if each component of the network is reliable. This gives rise to systemic risk: systemic risk occurs when parts that individually may function well become vulnerable when connected as a system to a self-reinforcing joint risk that can spread from part to part (contagion), potentially affecting the entire system and possibly spilling over to related outside systems.312 Such effects have been observed in such diverse areas as ecology,313 finance314 and critical infrastructure315 (such as power grids). They are characterised by the possibility that a small internal or external disruption could cause a highly non-linear effect,316 including a cascading failure that infects the whole system,317 as in the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

The possibility of collapse becomes more acute when several independent networks depend on each other, as is increasingly the case (water supply, transport, fuel and power stations are strongly coupled, for instance).318 This dependence links social and technological systems as well.319

This trend is likely to be intensified by continuing globalisation,320 while global governance and regulatory mechanisms seem inadequate to address the issue.321 This is possibly because the tension between resilience and efficiency322 can even exacerbate the problem.323

Many triggers could start such a failure cascade, such as the infrastructure damage wrought by a coronal mass ejection,324 an ongoing cyber conflict, or a milder form of some of the risks presented in the rest of the paper. Indeed the main risk factor with global systems collapse is as something which may exacerbate some of the other risks in this paper, or as a trigger. But a simple global systems collapse still poses risks on its own. The productivity of modern societies is largely dependent on the careful matching of different types of capital325 (social, technological, natural...) with each other. If this matching is disrupted, this could trigger a “social collapse” far out of proportion to the initial disruption.326 States and institutions have collapsed in the past for seemingly minor systemic reasons.327 And institutional collapses can create knock-on effects, such as the descent of formerly prosperous states to much more impoverished and destabilising entities.328 Such processes could trigger damage on a large scale if they weaken global political and economic systems to such an extent that secondary effects (such as conflict or starvation) could cause great death and suffering.

#### SCC-based policies rely on Integrated Assessment Models that can’t solve extinction – counterplan alone solves warming

Pindyck, 13—Professor, MIT Sloan School of Management (Robert, “Climate Change Policy: What Do the Models Tell Us?,” NBER Working Paper No. 19244, July 2013, dml)

I have argued that IAMs are of little or no value for evaluating alternative climate change policies and estimating the SCC. On the contrary, an IAM-based analysis suggests a level of knowledge and precision that is nonexistent, and allows the modeler to obtain almost any desired result because key inputs can be chosen arbitrarily.

As I have explained, the physical mechanisms that determine climate sensitivity involve crucial feedback loops, and the parameter values that determine the strength of those feedback loops are largely unknown. When it comes to the impact of climate change, we know even less. IAM damage functions are completely made up, with no theoretical or empirical foundation. They simply reflect common beliefs (which might be wrong) regarding the impact of 2◦C or 3◦C of warming, and can tell us nothing about what might happen if the temperature increases by 5◦C or more. And yet those damage functions are taken seriously when IAMs are used to analyze climate policy. Finally, IAMs tell us nothing about the likelihood and nature of catastrophic outcomes, but it is just such outcomes that matter most for climate change policy. Probably the best we can do at this point is come up with plausible estimates for probabilities and possible impacts of catastrophic outcomes. Doing otherwise is to delude ourselves.

### 1NC – Advantage

#### Whiteness is an existential threat— (let’s just do the extinction debate here)

Preston, 17—Cass School of Education and Communities, University of East London (John, “Rethinking Existential Threats and Education,” Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) and the End of Human Learning pp 61-93, dml)

After Marxism, the second existential threat is one of negation and elimination of the subject and here I shall consider conceptions of this from CRT and black existentialism.

Various contemporary educational theories consider the equity and social justice implications of different forms of education with regard to race. The work of Sleeter and Grant (2007) makes the ethical and pragmatic case for multicultural social justice as a key value of education. This has been followed in contemporary work that attempts to consider the various dimensions of social justice. For example, Bhopal and Shain (2014), consider the twin axis of recognition and redistribution as goals of education. Other work examines the role of social distancing from the ‘Other’ by white students as a dynamic process in which Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and working-class students are disadvantaged. In many ways denial of social justice in terms of lack of resources, recognition or access to social space can be considered to be a form of dehumanisation. However, whilst work on social justice and education might consider the lack of humanity in these systems of oppression (applying concepts such as ‘bare life’, Lewis 2006; or ‘othering’ Lebowitz 2016) they do not consider directly existential threats. Threats to humanity on the basis of difference may arise from totalitarianism as much as through war and threats to the environment. The various genocides which have taken place throughout human history have often had a racial, or ethnic, cleansing purpose to them. They have been eugenic threats that are based upon spurious ideas of genetic and moral superiority. Writers on race from Fanon to Du Bois have considered that the threat posed to racial groups may be existential and that there is a short step from psychic, to real extermination. The negation of individuals through economic, social and psychological processes allows for their physical extermination. Du Bois (2014) deals explicitly with existential threat in his short story ‘The Comet’ where humanity is almost wiped out by a threat from space, leaving only a small number of people to carry on. As one of the survivors of the comet is an African American, this leads Du Bois to consider the state of race relations in the USA. The implication of the story is that the existential threat of the comet (which allows the African American character to live in a world entirely free of racial prejudice) allows release from the existential threat of eugenic attitudes. Building on Du Bois, in other work (Preston 2012), I have considered the ways in which preparation for threats, including existential threats such as pandemics and nuclear war, has been in many ways eugenic in that it prioritises the survival of some more than others based upon criteria which include race and ethnicity (Preston 2012). Preparing for disasters and emergencies often prioritises the interests of white people above those of other ethnic minorities. One reason for this is tacit intentionality which means that policymakers and practitioners do not consider human diversity in considering how people may respond to disaster. Policy is often biased as policymakers expect that people will be ‘like me’ which (at least in the UK and USA) means they will often be white, middle-class, educated, English-speaking men. In planning for threats, there will be various ways in which such biases are included. For example, they may not consider publishing advice in a number of languages, the resources necessary to survive a disaster, the mobility of people and the attitudes of emergency responders. This is unwitting prejudice in that by not considering diversity they are actually making it less likely for BAME people to survive, or protect themselves against, the disaster.

Although these biases may lead to a gradient in terms of survival by different groups in a disaster, they do not appear to relate to existential threat. However, existential threat can be interpreted in a different way in perspectives from critical whiteness studies and CRT.

In critical whiteness studies, whiteness is taken to be not a racial identity, but rather a system of power and oppression (Leonardo 2009). Whiteness was created as an identity not simply as a mode of social classification but as a way of exploiting and controlling others. There are obviously periods in history where this was objectively the case. During slavery in the USA, for example, whiteness was used as a means to distinguish between those people who had the right to own property (whites) and those who could not (Africans), Moreover, whiteness was the obverse of property in that only Africans could ‘be’ assets or property. Enslaved Africans were therefore treated as property and did not have access to the basic rights which would constitute humanity in American society (such as access to education, the right to own property, the right to decide who they should have relationships with). There are obviously parallels between this experience and holocaust when Jewish people (and other individuals) were dehumanised by the Nazis and denied access to basic resources. During imperialism there was also a period whereby other races were categorised to be less worthy than white people and this provided the justification for colonial control, exploitation and often extermination.

Advocates of whiteness studies go further than this and consider that whiteness is not merely a past system of oppression, but a continuing system of white supremacy (Leonardo 2009). The economy and society is comprised in such a way that white people will usually benefit, and BAME people will usually not. This is not only an economic and social system but also a psychological system whereby existence as a full human depends upon one’s racial categorisation. This idea has its roots in the work of Fanon (1986) who wrote that black identity was shaped by the white gaze, but also contemporary writers also consider the notion of whiteness as ‘death’, a categorisation that is rooted in past oppression and extermination, whose remnants exist to this day. This perspective on race and existence leads us to consider what is meant by life, and whether we are not currently living to our full potential (as Marxists would also propose) when existential threat is actually amongst us. For Marxists this would be the expansion of the ‘social universe’ of capitalism that flows between and through us, ‘capitalising humanity’. For critical whiteness studies, this existential threat would be one of whiteness and the negation of existence for a racially classified group of people.

In order to make this idea of constant existential threat more tangible (although the term is not used) critical race theorists use what are known as ‘counter-stories’ to consider how racial dynamics might develop in the future, or to highlight inequalities in the present (Delgado 1996). Derrick Bell (1992) who is considered to be the founder of CRT, uses a much cited counter-story ‘The Space Traders’ to consider the ways in which black people’s lives are classed as being not equal to those of whites in the USA. In ‘The Space Traders’ a race of aliens offer the USA a trade: all of America’s black citizens in return for unlimited, environmentally friendly, energy and technology. After some debate, the American people vote on the proposal and decide to give up all of America’s black citizens to the space traders in return for the futuristic technical goods. Of course, Bell is proposing an analogy between slavery in the past and the present situation of black people in the USA, and perhaps even suggesting that such a thing might happen again. On another level, though, there is also the idea that the existence of black people in America is categorised at a different level of metaphysical worth to that of white people. That life could be traded so cheaply, even plausibly (in the thought experiment) makes us pause for thought in terms of how we classify existential threat.

Although the relationship between CRT and black existentialism may not always seem obvious we can see that there is a nihilistic streak in the work of Bell (1992) with regard to the prospects for survival. In addition, the drawing on the work of Fanon by authors who use CRT as part of their work which shows the perpetual violence encountered by people of colour in education as well as the enduring influence of Du Bois on CRT (Delgado and Stefancic 2001) shows the close connection between the two theories. What links CRT and black existentialism is a basic concern with existence and the meaning of human life under constant threat that can be thought to underpin any concern with social justice. From CRT and black existentialism, we therefore see that existential threat is one of negation through economic, social and political systems and there are degrees of graduation between these forms of existential threats and actual genocide or extermination. The links between these points and CBET might be considered as obtuse but, as we shall see in the next chapter, systems of education can play a role in forms of negation. Obviously, there are social justice implications in the way in which people are treated in terms of race and ethnicity in education. The ‘triaging’ by race and ethnicity of access to education courses, the ways in which certain groups are rationed access to educational routes and the fragility of links between education and the labour market for BAME groups are all part of marginalisation, in which vocational education plays a large part. As part of this process, and probably not coincidentally, these groups are also more likely to find themselves in vocational, CBET courses. However, social justice is not the whole story, and there is a more profound form of equality associated with the right to existence. It is this that CBET threatens through the reduction of the subject to a digital organism as I will show in the next chapter.

#### Warming doesn’t cause extinction---new studies.

**Nordhaus 20** Ted Nordhaus, an American author, environmental policy expert, and the director of research at The Breakthrough Institute, citing new climate change forecasts. [Ignore the Fake Climate Debate, 1-23-2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/ignore-the-fake-climate-debate-11579795816]//BPS

Beyond the headlines and social media, where Greta Thunberg, Donald Trump and the online armies of climate “alarmists” and “deniers” do battle, there is a real climate debate bubbling along in scientific journals, conferences and, occasionally, even in the halls of Congress. It gets a lot less attention than the boisterous and fake debate that dominates our public discourse, but it is much more relevant to how the world might actually address the problem. In the real climate debate, no one denies the relationship between human emissions of greenhouse gases and a warming climate. Instead, the disagreement comes down to different views of climate risk in the face of multiple, cascading uncertainties. On one side of the debate are optimists, who believe that, with improving technology and greater affluence, our societies will prove quite adaptable to a changing climate. On the other side are pessimists, who are more concerned about the risks associated with rapid, large-scale and poorly understood transformations of the climate system. But most pessimists do not believe that runaway climate change or a hothouse earth are plausible scenarios, much less that human extinction is imminent. And most optimists recognize a need for policies to address climate change, even if they don’t support the radical measures that Ms. Thunberg and others have demanded. In the fake climate debate, both sides agree that economic growth and reduced emissions vary inversely; it’s a zero-sum game. In the real debate, the relationship is much more complicated. Long-term economic growth is associated with both rising per capita energy consumption and slower population growth. For this reason, as the world continues to get richer, higher per capita energy consumption is likely to be offset by a lower population. A richer world will also likely be more technologically advanced, which means that energy consumption should be less carbon-intensive than it would be in a poorer, less technologically advanced future. In fact, a number of the high-emissions scenarios produced by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change involve futures in which the world is relatively poor and populous and less technologically advanced. Affluent, developed societies are also much better equipped to respond to climate extremes and natural disasters. That’s why natural disasters kill and displace many more people in poor societies than in rich ones. It’s not just seawalls and flood channels that make us resilient; it’s air conditioning and refrigeration, modern transportation and communications networks, early warning systems, first responders and public health bureaucracies. New research published in the journal Global Environmental Change finds that global economic growth over the last decade has reduced climate mortality by a factor of five, with the greatest benefits documented in the poorest nations. In low-lying Bangladesh, 300,000 people died in Cyclone Bhola in 1970, when 80% of the population lived in extreme poverty. In 2019, with less than 20% of the population living in extreme poverty, Cyclone Fani killed just five people. “Poor nations are most vulnerable to a changing climate. The fastest way to reduce that vulnerability is through economic development.” So while it is true that poor nations are most vulnerable to a changing climate, it is also true that the fastest way to reduce that vulnerability is through economic development, which requires infrastructure and industrialization. Those activities, in turn, require cement, steel, process heat and chemical inputs, all of which are impossible to produce today without fossil fuels. For this and other reasons, the world is unlikely to cut emissions fast enough to stabilize global temperatures at less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, the long-standing international target, much less 1.5 degrees, as many activists now demand. But recent forecasts also suggest that many of the worst-case climate scenarios produced in the last decade, which assumed unbounded economic growth and fossil-fuel development, are also very unlikely. There is still substantial uncertainty about how sensitive global temperatures will be to higher emissions over the long-term. But the best estimates now suggest that the world is on track for 3 degrees of warming by the end of this century, not 4 or 5 degrees as was once feared. That is due in part to slower economic growth in the wake of the global financial crisis, but also to decades of technology policy and energy-modernization efforts. “We have better and cleaner technologies available today because policy-makers in the U.S. and elsewhere set out to develop those technologies.” The energy intensity of the global economy continues to fall. Lower-carbon natural gas has displaced coal as the primary source of new fossil energy. The falling cost of wind and solar energy has begun to have an effect on the growth of fossil fuels. Even nuclear energy has made a modest comeback in Asia.

#### No impact, adaptation solves, and alt causes

**Shani 15** (Amir Shani – PhD @ the University of Central Florida, researches ecotourism and ethics at the University of the Negev, Eilat Campus. Boaz Arad – spokesman in the Public Policy Center at the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies, “There is always time for rational skepticism: Reply to Hall et al,” April 2015, ScienceDirect)

The uncertainty that encompasses current climate change assessments is strengthened in light of the studies indicating that over earth's history there have been **distinct warm periods** with temperatures **exceeding the current ones** (Esper et al., 2012, McIntyre and McKittrick, 2003 and Soon and Baliunas, 2003). Reviewing the relevant scientific literature, Khandekar, Murty, and Chittibabu (2005) concluded that “in the context of the earth's climate through the last 500 million years, the recent (1975–2000) increase in the earth's mean temperature does not appear to be **unusual** or **unprecedented** as claimed by IPCC and many supporters of the global warming hypothesis” (p. 1568). Other studies challenged the mainstream climate change narrative, according to which CO2 levels in the earth's atmosphere play a prominent role in rising temperatures. One notable example is the research by Shaviv and Veizer (2003), which demonstrates that the earth's temperature correlates well with variations in cosmic ray flux, rather than changes in atmospheric CO2. These findings and others stir contentious debates within the climate scientific community, but are nevertheless largely overlooked by the IPCC, which ignores alternative explanations for climate change. Regrettably, Hall et al. scornfully dismiss this evidence, presented in our research note, based on cherry-picking of a few “non-peer-reviewed” references that were cited, some vague claims about “misreading” and “selective citing,” as well as other semantic nitpicking. 4. Impacts of climate change The IPCC warns that climate change is likely to have severe consequences, particularly for poor countries, such as increased hunger, water shortages, vulnerability to extreme weather events and debilitating diseases. **However**, these estimations have been **heavily criticized** for failing to properly account for **substantial improvements in adaptive capacity** (i.e., the capability of coping with the impact of global warming) that are likely to occur due to advances in **economic development**, **technological change** and **human capital** over the next century (Goklany, 2007). Fostering economic growth and technological development, largely achievable through the use of fossil fuels, will strengthen both industrialized and developing countries' **adaptive capacity** to deal not just with possible future climate change consequences, but also with other environmental and public health problems. Such policy will **provide greater benefits** at lower costs than drastic climate change mitigation efforts involving substantially cutting greenhouse gas emissions (Goklany, 2004 and Goklany, 2012). Furthermore, the analyses of Galiana and Green (2009) exemplify that in the current state of energy technologies, the suggested plans for ambitious emission reductions will likely severely clobber the global economy, especially in view of present economic conditions. In order to stabilize atmospheric CO2 at accepted levels, there is a need for enormous advances in efficient energy technology, which is currently missing (Pielke, Wigley & Green, 2008). In any case, **even if** every industrialized nation meets the most ambitious emissions targets set by the Kyoto Protocol, such efforts are likely to have **little effect**, particularly in the light of the considerable increases in greenhouse gas emissions by rising economic superpowers as **China** and **India**, as well as the **remaining developing world** (Wigley, 1998). Hall et al. criticized us for choosing “selective citations…that discuss natural processes potentially affect climate in specific locations and times.” Yet the purpose of referring to such studies was to refute the claims made by the IPCC and other climate change alarmists to the effect that recent extreme weather events (e.g., floods, droughts and storms) are the consequences of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases. Moreover, data shows that despite claims that the number and intensity of extreme weather has increased, between 1900 and 2010 the average annual death and death rates from extreme weather events has declined by 93% and 98%, respectively (Goklany, 2009). This is mostly due to economic and technological factors, such as improved global food production, increase globalized food trade and better disaster preparedness. IPCC's exaggerated estimations of climate change impacts were also noted in an op-ed in Financial Times written by climate economist Richard Tol (2014), a week following his demand that his name as one of the leading authors be removed from the IPCC's AR5 due to its over alarmist assessments of the impacts of AGW and underestimation of humanity's adaptive capacity. As concluded by Tol, “Humans are a **tough** and **adaptable** species. People live on the equator and in the Arctic, in the desert and in the rainforest. **We survived ice ages** with **primitive technologies**. The idea that climate change poses an existential threat to humankind is **laughable**” (2014, para 1).

#### But, it’s impossible to solve

Pearce, 13 – environmental consultant for New Scientist magazine with over 20 years of experience reporting on the environment, winner of 2002 CGIAR agricultural research science journalism award [9/25, Fred, The New Scientist, [www.newscientist.com/article/dn24261-world-wont-cool-without-geoengineering-warns-report.html#.VENB0VevdqO](http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn24261-world-wont-cool-without-geoengineering-warns-report.html#.VENB0VevdqO)]

Global warming is irreversible without massive geoengineering of the atmosphere's chemistry. This stark warning comes from the draft summary of the latest climate assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Delegates from national governments are discussing the draft this week, prior to its release on Friday morning. According to one of its lead authors, and the latest draft seen by New Scientist, the report will say: "CO2-induced warming is projected to remain approximately constant for many centuries following a complete cessation of emission. A large fraction of climate change is thus irreversible on a human timescale, except if net anthropogenic CO2 emissions were strongly negative over a sustained period." In other words, even if all the world ran on carbon-free energy and deforestation ceased, the only way of lowering temperatures would be to devise a scheme for sucking hundreds of billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Much of this week's report, the fifth assessment of the IPCC working group on the physical science of climate change, will reaffirm the findings of the previous four assessments, published regularly since 1990. It will point out that to limit global warming to 2 °C will require cumulative CO2 emissions from all human sources since the start of the industrial revolution to be kept below about a trillion tonnes of carbon. So far, we have emitted about half this. Current emissions are around 10.5 billion tonnes of carbon annually, and rising. Since the last assessment, published in 2007Speaker, the IPCC has almost doubled its estimate of the maximum sea-level rise likely in the coming century to about 1 metre. They also conclude that it is now "virtually certain" that sea levels will continue to rise for many centuries, even if warming ceases, due to the delayed effects of thermal expansion of warming oceans and melting ice sheets.

## Block

### Kritik

#### 2- Repetition Compulsion -- the addendum of “extinction outweighs” to “black lives are affected too” is the Slave State’s advertisement that pornotropes black flesh a fungible tool for its existential project -- that ritual reputation is inseparable from the episteme of slavery and ensures complacency -- turns case.

**Warren ’18** [Calvin; 2018; Associate African American Studies at Emory University; *Ontological Terror; Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*, “THE INVENTION OF THE NEGRO AND THE NECESSITY OF BLACK BEING,” p. 45-48]

In this schematic, the body is a metaphor for instrumentality or abject use value. Spillers suggests that this body “is reduced to a thing, to being for the captor.” With the death of African existence (the flesh) an oppres- sive mode of existence is imposed on the Negro. This existence is unlike human being. The human being’s mode of existence is to be for itself, and this being for itself is the structure of care between Dasein and Being. Black ~~being~~ is invented, however, precisely to secure the human’s mode of existence. Reading Spillers’s metaphysical schema through Heidegger’s, we could suggest that the black body or this “thing, being for the captor,” is invented to serve as the premier tool or equipment for human being’s existential project (and I would argue that this equipment is not equivalent in form to the human, even if the structure of tool-being, as Graham Harman would call it, provides a general explanatory frame).37 In other words, the mode of existence for black being is what Heidegger would call “availableness.” Availableness is “the way of being of those entities which are defined by their use in the whole.”38 To exist as “a thing, being for the captor” is to inhabit a mode of existence dominated by internecine use and function. Black being, then, is invented not just to serve the needs of economic interest and cupidity, but also to fulfill the ontological needs of the human. This thing is something like Heidegger’s equipment—an object that when used with such regularity becomes almost invisible, or trans- parent, to the user (blackness is often unthought because the world uses it with such regularity; antiblackness is the systemization of both the use of blackness and the forgetting/concealment of black being). Utility eclipses the thing itself. We must, then, understand antiblackness as a global, 46 Chapter One systemic dealing with black bodies, as available equipment. Heidegger considers dealings the way the Being of entities, or equipment, is revealed phenomenologically through the use of this equipment. Antiblack dealings with black bodies do not expose the essential unfolding, or essence, of the equipment; rather, the purpose of antiblack dealings is to systemically obliterate the flesh, and to impose nothing onto that obliterated space—care and value are obsolete in this encounter.39 Therefore, equipment structure is predicated on the premier use of blacks within the network of equipment. In other words, black use cuts across every equip- mental assignment, making it the ultimate equipment. Why does black equipment cut across all assignments, and why is it the tool Dasein relies on to commence its existential journey? We might say the answer to these difficult questions is that the essence of black equipment is nothing— being is not there. If Heidegger assumes that equipment will reveal its being through its usage, then he did not anticipate the invention of the Negro— equipment in human form, embodied nothingness. Using black equipment reveals existence but not being (existence as non-being for Greek philosophers, according to Heidegger in Introduction to Metaphysics). This puzzle is what black philosophy must investigate, must think through, to understand the continuity of antiblackness.

Spillers describes black being is a “living laboratory,” and we can conceptualize this laboratory as the source of availableness for modernity. A living laboratory is a collection of instruments for carrying out ontological experimentation, or the construction of the human self. Black beings constitute this irresistible source of availableness for the world. Saidiya Hartman meditates on the ontological utility of black being for the human when she states:

The relation between pleasure and the possession of slave property, in both the figurative and literal senses, can be explained in part by the fungibility of the slave—that is, the joy made possible by virtue of the replaceability and interchangeability endemic to the commodity—and by the extensive capacities of property—that is, the augmentation of the master subject through his embodiment in external objects and persons. Put differently, the fungability of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others’ feelings, ideas, desires, and values; and, as property, the dispossessed body of the enslaved is the surrogate for the master’s body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion.

40 Instruments, tools, and equipment are interchangeable/replaceable; this is starkly different from human being, whose existential journey in the world renders it incalculable and unique. When I suggest that black being is pure function or utility, I mean precisely the way this being is used as a site of projection for the human’s desires, fantasies, and onto- logical narcissism. The body that Spillers presents is a necessary invention because it is through the human’s engagement with instruments (tools and equipment) that the human comes to understand the self. To be for the human is to serve as the empty vessel for the human’s reflection on the world and self. In short, what I am suggesting is that black being is invented as an instrument to serve the needs of the human’s ontological project. This use, or function, exceeds involuntary labor and economic interest. It is this particular antiblack use that philosophical discourse has neglected. The Negro, as invention, is the dirty secret of ontometaphysics.

If we follow Heidegger’s understanding of the human being as Dasein (being there) and thrown into the world, then black being emerges as a different entity: the Negro is precisely the permanence of not being there [Nicht Da Sein], an absence from ontology, an existence that is not just gone away (as if it has the potential to return to being there) but an exis- tence that is barred from ever arriving as an ontological entity, since it is stripped of the flesh.41 To assert that black being is not of the world is to suggest, then, that black being lives not just outside of itself, but outside of any structure of meaning that makes such existence valuable. Black being is situated in a spatiotemporality for which we lack a grammar to capture fully. Spillers’s body, then, is the symbolic and material signifi- cation of absence from Being. To be black and nothing is not to serve as an aperture of Being for the Negro; rather, it is to constitute something inassimilable and radically other, straddling nothing and infinity. The Negro is the execration of Being for the human; it is with the Negro that the terror of ontology, its emptiness, is projected and materialized. This is the Negro’s function.

Inventing the Negro is essential to an ontometaphysical order that wants to eradicate and obliterate such ontological terror (the terror of 48 Chapter One the nothing); and since ontometaphysics is obsessed with schematization and control, it needs the Negro to bear this unbearable burden, the execration of Being. To return to our proper metaphysical question “How is it going with black being?,” we can say that neither progressive legislation nor political movements have been able to transform black being into human being, from fleshless bodies to recognized ontologies. Spillers also seems to preempt the question when she states, “Even though the captive flesh/body has been ‘liberated,’ and no one need pretend that even the quotation marks do not matter . . . it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, show movement, as [the flesh] is ‘murdered’ over and over again by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise.”42 This onticide, the death of the flesh/African existence, continues impervious to legal, historical, and political change. This is to say that the problem of black being, as both a form of ontological terror for the human and a site of vicious strategies of obliteration, remains. To ask the (un)asked question “How is it going with black being?” is to inquire about the resolution of the problem of black and nothing, ontometaphysically, as it imposes itself onto the Negro. The answer to the Negro Question, then, is that the ritualistic and repetitive murder of the flesh, the primordial relation, is absolutely necessary and indispensable in an antiblack world. And as long as the world exists, this murder must continue.

#### 3- business as usual DA- 2AC framework arguments are an attempt to return to business as usual -- weighing the case and the K as a “middle ground” is a racialized politics of tolerance that can’t wait to change the channel and return to “real scholarship” Harvard recognizes. Overcorrect your desire to go back to the “scheduled programming” that “we all expect”.

**Suh ’19** [Sharon; May 13; Professor of Buddhism at Seattle University; *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, *Philosophy of Race*, “Chapter 1,” p. 5-7]

“WE INTERRUPT YOUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING TO BRING YOU THIS VERY IMPORTANT PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT . . .”: AKA BUSINESS AS USUAL IN THE ACADEMY

“We interrupt your regularly scheduled programming to bring you this very important public service announcement. . . .” Many of us grew up with this interruption, eyes glued to Saturday-morning cartoons, cereal bowl and spoon in hand. Or maybe it was the regular evening sitcom—an important announcement appears on the screen, the spectator watches with some concern, but maybe grows restless with the interruption of their televised fantasies, and then the programming we all expect and have invested in comes back on screen. I was reminded of these televised public service announcements while participating on a recent panel on power, privilege, and identity in American Buddhisms at the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion in 2017. The panel presenters included critical remarks on whiteness, class privilege, and sexual difference to a largely white audience of Buddhist Studies scholars who attended presumably to listen to some of the leading voices in Buddhism and difference. However, as the panel proceeded, it became readily apparent that the majority white audience was merely tolerating our scholarly interruptions (albeit with growing agitation) and that they could not wait to return to their regular programming of presentations analyzing Buddhist sutras or “real” scholarship. In other words, they wanted to change the channel on us and return to the disciplinary discussions they recognized— those that did not need to mention whiteness and that did not need to include much discussion of the simultaneity of identities that comprised much of the panel—Asian and Asian American Buddhist scholars, a queer white scholar from England, a white female scholar who studies whiteness and Buddhism, a black gay Buddhist lama, and myself—a second-generation Korean American cisgendered woman who studies Buddhism, gender, and race.

After the first few discussions of sexuality, the panel moved to the theme of race and that is when I began to sense in my bones that feathers were ruffled. Somehow, a presentation on sexuality was acceptable, but as soon as the term whiteness was uttered and whiteness in American Buddhism brought to the forefront, especially by an Asian American female body, there was a palpable shift in the room. I was not performing race in the ways the audience expected after all, for I began by troubling the whiteness in the room, the academy, and in sangha spaces. Our scholarly audience that was presumably here to listen to what we had to say about power and privilege began to fold arms over chests, shift in chairs, and the façade of exasperation and shut down ensued. They were not here for the purposes of genuine engagement and the egoless listening and epistemological humility that Charles Johnson offers as the foundations of Buddhism, but rather, out of a desire to gaze at difference with curiosity which soon turned into displeasure.13 They were there to witness the temporary disruption of their regular programming (an uncritical study of Buddhism steeped in Orientalist flavoring and racial superiority of whiteness and white normativity) and to show their support—tolerance—for diversity so they could return to their regular programming and business as usual.

In my own presentation, I spoke about the importance of acknowledging the hypervisibility and hyperinvisibility of people of color in American sanghas and studies of Buddhism in the West and how solid scholarship should engage in the requisite of interrogating power and privilege which induced sighs that seemed to complain “oh, this again?” I addressed the investments in whiteness that the field of Buddhist Studies has made and the costs of marginalization, racism, and minoritization of their knowledge meted out on people of color in the academy and in American sanghas. While their body language spoke volumes, their mouths remained silent. In the follow up question and answer, not one white scholar wanted to engage my explicit critique of Buddhism and whiteness. The experience was like a pin dropping—a silent but potential threat. As I gazed out at the audience, I could only see people of color with smiles on their faces; I got vigorous shakes of the head, thumbs up, and wide vocal applause. It was as if the only people in the room listening were the other people of color; white scholars neither challenged me nor expressed congratulations. In my hypervisibility I became invisible again. I was a flash on the screen giving a public announcement about whiteness and white supremacy and in an instant the channel returned to business as usual.

I am not sure why I was surprised by how the panel and presentation transpired; after all, it follows a formulaic storyline. This seems to be the way that spectatorship works with whiteness—a white gaze falls upon the spectacle of a person of color who has entered the guild, listens for evidence of their right to be part of the guild, notes the person’s failure to engage in “real scholarship,” and quickly returns to the gaze upon itself. It was in the question and answer period that I reached for my Buddhist killjoy survival kit and quickly devised an expedient mean to shift the dynamics of the panel itself, for several white male scholars of the audience began to pose exceptionally long questions about subjects not related to our panel and proceeded to answer the questions themselves. In so doing, they recentered whiteness as once again all eyes were on them; they attempted to reestablish that their words were the product of serious scholarship and that our time in public was up.

A seemingly endless debate about largely unrelated issues ensued as several white scholars in the audience began to pose critiques in the form of questions they themselves had the answers for and, in so doing, they shifted the attention of the room onto themselves. We, the actual panelists, were now sitting in the back of the room as the white male scholars suddenly recentered themselves and reestablished whiteness as the prevailing norm. I quickly decided in that moment that I no longer wished to be on air in this strange exhibition of power and privilege. I suddenly reached out for another Buddhist killjoy, one whose support I needed for my survival kit. I turned to the Buddhist lama, looked him in the eye and said, “I think we should have a moment together.” Shifting our gaze away from this curious spectacle of whiteness, our eyes locked and he said, “yes, let’s have a kumbayah moment” as he picked up my hands. Although the gesture was spontaneous, I reached out to the lama as another Buddhist killjoy, knowing that the gesture “is about the experience of having others who recognize the dynamics because they too have been there, in that place, that difficult place.”14 In so doing, we became the refuge and a gem to each other and created sanctuary in the midst of whiteness. I sought out safety and the only way that I knew how in that moment was to turn to my fellow Buddhist killjoy whose work on Buddhism, sexuality, and race I had deeply admired. I wanted to make a lateral dialogical move because I knew that the programming had just returned to “normal” so I shifted the landscape. Rather than become a silent voyeur to the new mini-panel that developed as a few audience members took over the space, I reached out to my co-panelist as a refuge and a lifeline that Ahmed describes as “a fragile rope, worn and tattered from the harshness of weather, but it is enough, just enough, to bear your weight, to pull you out, to help you survive a shattering experience.”15 It was a moment of co-bearing witness to whiteness.

2 -- Buddhist psychology is scientifically backed.

**Wright ’17** [Robert; August 8th; Visiting Professor of Science and Religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York; *Why* Buddhism is True *- The Science and Philosophy of Meditation and Enlightenment*, “A List of Buddhist Truths,”]

Not all of the “truths” I list are Buddhist doctrines. Some are more like takeaways, clear implications of Buddhist thought. But all of them, I’m arguing, draw substantial corroboration from modern science, including modern neuroscience and psychology, with special emphasis on evolutionary psychology—that is, with special emphasis on the study of how natural selection shaped the human mind.

And speaking of substantial corroboration from modern science: it’s important to understand that, strictly speaking, that’s all science ever offers. There is no such thing as a scientific theory that has been proven to be true in the sense that mathematical theorems are proven true. To be sure, some theories now merit so much confidence that, for practical purposes, we can think of them as if they’ve been proven true. For example, I think the chances of the theory of natural selection being true are significantly greater than 99.99 percent—which is good enough for me. But some theories that merit much less confidence than that are nonetheless the leading theories in their field.

The point is just that when we speak casually of a scientific theory being “true,” what we mean, strictly speaking, is that it has substantial corroborating evidence in its favor and has not yet encountered firm evidence that is incompatible with it. That’s what the title of this book means in referring to core Buddhist ideas as “true.” These ideas draw corroboration—in some cases overwhelming corroboration, in some cases substantial but less than overwhelming corroboration—from the available evidence. I’ve tried in this book to signal roughly how much confidence I think different Buddhist ideas warrant. But I certainly think the core of Buddhism’s assessment of the human condition—its basic view of why people suffer and why they make other people suffer and, more broadly, its conception of certain basic aspects of how the mind works and of how we can change how our minds work—warrants enough confidence to get the label that the title of this book gives it.

Okay; without further ado, here are some Buddhist “truths”:

1. Human beings often fail to see the world clearly, and this can lead them to suffer and to make others suffer. This costly misapprehension of the world can assume various forms, described in various ways in different Buddhist texts. For example:

2. Humans tend to anticipate more in the way of enduring satisfaction from the attainment of goals than will in fact transpire. This illusion, and the resulting mind-set of perpetual aspiration, makes sense as a product of natural selection (see chapter 1), but it’s not exactly a recipe for lifelong happiness.

3. Dukkha is a relentlessly recurring part of life as life is ordinarily lived. This fact is less evident if you translate dukkha as it’s conventionally translated—as “suffering” pure and simple—than if you translate it as involving a big component of “unsatisfactoriness.” Organisms, including humans, are designed by natural selection to react to their environments in ways that will make things “better” (in natural selection’s sense of the term). This means they are almost always, at some level, scanning the horizon for things to be unhappy about, uncomfortable with, unsatisfied with. And since being unsatisfied, by definition, involves at least a little suffering, thinking of dukkha as entailing unsatisfactoriness winds up lending credence to the idea that dukkha in the sense of suffering is a pervasive part of life. (See chapters 1 and 3.)

4. The source of dukkha identified in the Four Noble Truths—tanha, translated as “thirst” or “craving” or “desire”—makes sense against the backdrop of evolution. Tanha, you might say, is what natural selection instilled in animals so they wouldn’t be satisfied with anything for long (see chapter 1). Seeing tanha as the source of suffering makes even more sense when it is construed broadly, as not only the desire to obtain and cling to pleasant things but also the desire to escape from unpleasant things (see chapter 13). Clearly, if you took the suffering associated with feelings of aversion out of the picture, that would take a lot of suffering out of the picture.

5. The two basic feelings that sponsor dukkha—the two sides of tanha, a clinging attraction to things and an aversion to things—needn’t enslave us as they tend to do. Meditative disciplines such as mindfulness meditation can weaken the grip they exert. People disagree on whether complete and lasting liberation—nirvana in the classic sense of the term—is attainable, but there is no doubt that lives have been transformed by meditative practice. It’s important to emphasize that becoming less enslaved by craving and aversion doesn’t mean becoming numb to feelings; it can mean developing a different relationship to them and becoming more selective about which feelings to most fully engage with. Indeed, this revised relationship can include the accentuation of certain feelings, including wonder, compassion, and the sense of beauty. (See chapters 2, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 16.)

6. Our intuitive conception of the “self” is misleading at best. We tend to uncritically embrace all kinds of thoughts and feelings as “ours,” as part of us, when in fact that identification is optional. Recognizing that the identification is optional and learning, through meditation, how to make the identification less reflexive can reduce suffering. An understanding of why natural selection engineered various feelings into the human mind (see chapter 3) can help validate the idea that we shouldn’t uncritically accept the guidance of our feelings and can help us choose which feelings to accept guidance from. To exercise this kind of discretion is to follow a strictly pragmatic rendering of Buddhism’s famous “not-self” idea—a rendering that is a plausible interpretation of the foundational text on not-self, the second discourse the Buddha delivered after his enlightenment. (See chapter 5.)

7. The more expansive and more common interpretation of the Buddha’s second discourse—as saying that the “self” simply does not exist—is rendered in various ways in various Buddhist texts. A common rendering—that there is no CEO self, no self that is the “doer of deeds,” the “thinker of thoughts”—is substantially corroborated by modern psychology, which has shown the conscious self to be much less in charge of our behavior than it seems to be. A number of psychologists, including in particular evolutionary psychologists, subscribe to a “modular” model of the mind that is quite consistent with this view that there is no CEO self. This model can help explain a common apprehension of advanced meditators: that “thoughts think themselves.” All told, what I call the “interior” version of the not-self experience—an experience that calls into question your “ownership” of your thoughts and feelings and calls into question the existence of the chief executive “you” that you normally think of as owning these things—draws validation both from experimental psychology and from prevailing ideas about how natural selection shaped the mind. (See chapters 6, 7, and 8.)

8. What I call the “exterior” version of the not-self experience—a sense that the bounds surrounding the self have dissolved and were in some sense illusory to begin with—is not empirically and theoretically corroborated in the same sense that, I argue, the “interior” version of the not-self experience is corroborated. Indeed, I’d say the exterior version is not in principle amenable to corroboration in the same sense that the interior version can be corroborated, because it amounts to a claim that is less about psychology than about metaphysics (in the sense of the term metaphysics used in mainstream philosophy, not in any more exotic sense). At the same time, considerations from evolutionary biology suggest a distinct sense in which the bounds of the self can be thought of as arbitrary, which in turn suggests that sensing a kind of dissolution of the bounds of the self can be thought of as no less accurate an apprehension than our ordinary sense of the bounds of the self. (See chapters 13 and 15.)

9. Leaving aside the metaphysical validity of our ordinary sense of self, and of alternatives to that ordinary sense of self, there is the question of moral validity. In particular, when a sense of the dissolution of the bounds of self (perhaps paired with the “interior” version of the not-self experience in the form of reduced identification with selfish impulses) leads to a less pronounced prioritization of “my” interests over the interests of others, does that move a person closer to moral truth? I argue that considerations from evolutionary biology support an affirmative answer to that question. (See chapter 15.)

10. The intuition that objects and beings we perceive have “essences” is, as the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness holds, an illusion. Specifically, it is an illusion engineered by natural selection to identify the significance of things with respect to the Darwinian interests of the organisms doing the perceiving. (See chapters 10 and 11. This Darwinian defense of the idea of emptiness is quite different from traditional Buddhist defenses of the idea, but it’s compatible with them.) Seeing essences in things doesn’t always lead us to suffer or to inflict suffering on others, but it can. In particular, an “essentialist” view of other people and groups of people can lead us to countenance or intentionally cause their suffering. (See chapter 12.) So awareness that essence is a perceptual construct, not a reality, can be valuable, especially if paired with meditative practice that dampens the sense of essence or permits selective engagement with it. Advanced meditators who report having lost a sense of essence fairly broadly—that is, who report apprehending emptiness or formlessness in a fairly thoroughgoing way—seem to be very happy and, in my (limited) experience, benevolent people. (See chapter 13.)

11. The preceding point about essence and essentialism is one illustration of the broader proposition that not seeing the world clearly can lead not just to our own suffering but to bad conduct in the sense of making others suffer needlessly. Or, to put a more positive spin on it: Seeing the world more clearly can make you not just happier but more moral. This isn’t a guaranteed outcome. There have been very good meditators who were (apparently) very happy and (manifestly) very bad people. Still, there is a close enough association between the psychological dynamics that make us suffer and the psychological dynamics that make us behave badly toward people that the Buddhist prescription for lessening or ending suffering will tend to make us not just happier but better people. That this moral progress isn’t guaranteed is one reason meditative instruction has typically been paired with the sort of ethical instruction that is so prominent in Buddhism. (See chapter 16.)

12. Many Buddhist teachings, including several of those listed here, could be lumped under the rubric of “awareness of conditioning,” where “conditioning” means, roughly speaking, causes. Mindfulness meditation involves increased attentiveness to the things that cause our behavior—attentiveness to how perceptions influence our internal states and how certain internal states lead to other internal states and to behaviors. This attentiveness includes an awareness of the critical role feelings seem to play in these chains of influence—a role shaped by natural selection, which seems to have calibrated feelings as part of its programming of our brains. Importantly, the meditative practices that bring awareness of these chains of influence also empower us to intervene and change the patterns of influence. To a large extent, that’s what Buddhist liberation is: a fairly literal escape from chains of influence that had previously bound us and, often, to which we had previously been blind. (See chapter 14.)

### Case

#### 3 -- Unethical delusions are an existential threat.

**Loy ’18** [David; April 21st; Former professor of Ethics, Religion, and Society at Xavier University; Mountain Cloud, “Are Humans Special? Part 3 by David Loy,” <https://www.mountaincloud.org/are-humans-special-part-3-by-david-loy-2/>]

If we are special because of our potential, we must choose. We are free to derive the meaning of our lives from delusions about who we are — from dysfunctional stories about what the world is and how we fit into it—or we can derive that meaning from insight into our nonduality with the rest of the world. In either case, there are consequences.

The problem with basing one’s life on delusions is that the consequences are unlikely to be good. As well as producing poetry and cathedrals, our creativity has recently found expression in world wars, genocides, and weapons of mass destruction, to mention a few disagreeable examples. We are in the early stages of an ecological crisis that threatens the natural and cultural legacy of future generations, including a mass extinction event that may lead to the disappearance of half the earth’s plant and animal species within a century, according to E. O. Wilson—an extinction event that may include ourselves.

What needs to be done so that our extraordinary co-creative powers will promote collective well-being (collective in this case referring to all the ecosystems of the biosphere)?

From a Buddhist perspective our unethical tendencies ultimately derive from a misapprehension: the delusion of a self that is separate from others, a big mistake for a species whose well-being is not separate from the well-being of other species. Insofar as we are ignorant of our true nature, individual and collective self-preoccupation naturally motivates us to be selfish. Without the compassion that arises when we feel empathy — not only with other humans, but with the whole of the biosphere — it is likely that civilization as we know it will not survive many more generations.

In either case, we seem fated to be special. If we continue to devastate the rest of the biosphere, we are arguably the worst species on earth: a cancer of the biosphere. If, however, humanity can wake up to become its collective bodhisattva —undertaking the long-term task of repairing the rupture between us and Mother Earth — perhaps we as a species will fulfill the unique potential of precious human life.

#### 4. Embracing extinction is better than fearing it.

Batchelor, 20—member of the core faculty of Bodhi College (Stephen, “Embracing Extinction,” Tricycle Magazine, Volume 30, Number 1, Fall 2020, dml)

As he witnessed the nuclear arms race in the 1950s, Heidegger admitted that his deepest concern was not the outbreak of nuclear war. For him the greater danger was that the calculative thinking of technology would one day come to prevail as “the only way of thinking.” Were this to happen, he argued, we would lose what is most essentially human about us: that we are “contemplative beings.” The most urgent task of humanity at this time of crisis was, for the philosopher, that of “keeping contemplative thinking alive.”

To think in a more contemplative way means to slow down and recover our rootedness on Earth, which allows us to ponder and question what kind of beings we are and how best to live in this world. Heidegger called this kind of questioning the “piety of thinking.” At the heart of such contemplation lies the need to become more aware of our technological relationship to nature. This technical approach has proved so successful in everything from building skyscrapers to eliminating polio that many today regard it as simply the most reasonable way to conduct their lives. As a result, they find themselves treating life itself—and their own lives in particular—as problems to be solved by application of the right techniques.

For another 20th-century philosopher, the French writer Gabriel Marcel, our existential condition of having been born and being subject to death is not a problem to be eradicated but a mystery to be embraced. A problem, for Marcel, always stands apart from the one confronting it, whereas a mystery is inseparable from the one who embraces it. As the person who falls sick, ages, and is destined to die, I cannot stand outside these processes in order to treat them as problems to be solved. Instead, I can open myself to the mystery of being here and embrace it in wordless astonishment. Unlike a problem, which vanishes as soon as it is solved, the more deeply we penetrate a mystery the more mysterious it becomes.

In coming to view life through the lens of technology, we risk losing a sense of our unfathomable poignancy and strangeness. In order to manipulate technically the physical and mental elements of our world, they need to appear to us as discrete, definable, readily graspable objects. Only then can we confidently embark on bending them to our will. “A world where techniques are paramount,” remarked Marcel, “is a world given over to desire and fear; because every technique is there to serve some desire or fear.” Heidegger was concerned that a world dominated by technology would accelerate out of control and overwhelm us. In the 1950s he hoped that humanity might wake up to this danger and recover a more contemplative relationship with life before it was too late. As the power and reach of industrial technologies expanded relentlessly, he lost this hope. In an interview conducted in 1966 that was published after his death in 1976, he remarked: “Now only a god can save us.”

Three years later, in 1979, the first governmental climate study reported that, at current rates, carbon emissions from human activities would increase the average surface temperature of the globe by between 2.0 and 3.5 degrees Celsius, doubling the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 2030, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

‘Whoever would tend to me,” said Gotama to a group of followers who had neglected one among them suffering from dysentery, “he should tend to the sick.” On arriving at the community, Gotama and his attendant Ananda had entered a lodging to find a mendicant lying alone on the floor in a pool of his own excrement. They bathed and cleaned him, lifted him up and laid him on a couch. Gotama then reproached the other mendicants for failing in their ethical obligations to one of their own.

In identifying himself with the sick mendicant, Gotama implies that the awakening he embodies and advocates is rooted in our capacity to care for the specific suffering of others. The episode shows this care to be a spontaneous, empathetic, and heartfelt act. It demonstrates how a healer would respond to the urgency of another person’s suffering rather than provide an abstract diagnosis of why that person is in pain. In his discourses, too, we often find Gotama evoking the hands-on skill of a physician to illustrate how to practice the dharma.

Gotama invited his followers to engage in an interconnected set of four tasks. These tasks challenge us to embrace suffering, let our reactive emotions be, see the stopping of reactivity, and respond with care. When facing a climate emergency that threatens the viability of intelligent life on Earth, this would entail embracing the possibility of extinction, not being paralyzed by the fear of extinction, dwelling in a space of fearless awareness, and, from there, responding appropriately to the threats that face us and future generations. The four tasks flesh out what it means to care. For Gotama, care is the cardinal virtue that encompasses all others. His final recorded words were: “Things fall apart; tread the path with care.”

To practice such care does not require believing in rebirth and the law of karma, or insisting that craving is the cause of suffering and nirvana its cessation. Such beliefs can stand in the way of a wholehearted engagement with the threat of ecological catastrophe. During an interview in 1989, when asked whether a Buddhist would be concerned about environmental destruction, the Dalai Lama replied: “A Buddhist would say it doesn’t matter.” For even if the world were to become uninhabitable and mass extinction ensued, the sentient beings who perished would be reborn according to their karma in another realm in this or some other universe. Buddhists may well feel deep compassion for those who suffer the consequences of climate change and may do their best to alleviate that suffering, but in the end some form of consciousness will survive death and be reborn. What really matters is to free oneself from the cycle of rebirth and attain the eternal peace of nirvana.

For orthodox Buddhists (like Hindus and Jains), not to be born and not to die are preferable to birth and death. As the end of suffering, nirvana, therefore, is also the end of life. While Mahayana Buddhists renounce nirvana and vow to be reborn out of compassion for others, they do so only as long as there are sentient beings still trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Once the bodhisattva has liberated all these beings, she too enters nirvana and is born no more. Although this may take an immeasurably long time, the same underlying principle holds true: not-life is preferable to life.

The four tasks, by contrast, demand direct engagement with life itself irrespective of any a priori beliefs about the origins and end of suffering or the nature of the self. By entering into a contemplative, empathetic, and existential relationship with the pain of the world, one seeks to respond with situation-specific compassion. The challenge is to tackle the crisis at hand, which may be unprecedented, and find imaginative responses that may not have occurred to anyone before. Taking into account the causal role played by psychological factors such as greed, dislike, and stupidity, one’s primary concern is to arrive at a response based on an understanding of the full range of particular conditions—biological, social, economic, religious, and political—that underlie and contribute to the crisis.

A traditional Buddhist meditation on death requires that you contemplate the certainty of your own death and the uncertainty of its time, and then dwell on the question of how, given this mortal condition, you should live now. Expanding this personal reflection to include Homo sapiens as a species, the meditation would look like this:

Extinction is certain;

The time of extinction is uncertain;

How should we live now?

Extinction is certain. Either the human species will evolve into a form of life that we cannot now even imagine, or, if we manage to survive in a more or less humanoid form, we will be wiped out when the sun becomes too hot to sustain life on Earth in around a billion years’ time. Yet neither of these scenarios is certain. A massive meteor impact, a highly virulent disease, volcanic eruptions, nuclear devastation, or the repercussions of climate change could terminate human existence much sooner, possibly within this century.

Just as death focuses attention on what matters most for you as an individual, extinction focuses attention on what matters most for us as a species. In embracing extinction, we become intensely conscious that we are complex thinking, feeling, sensing, caring creatures who emerged from millions of years of evolution by natural selection. For self-aware animals like you and me, to contemplate extinction can open up an astonished, quasi-religious wonder at the grandeur of being alive at all.