## 1NC

### 1NC – Kritik

#### The AFF’s promise of progress through the expansion of core anti-trust law understands the world in terms of visible and fixable exchanges between subjects. This process misses the black hole of antiblack violence that undergirds all political and social arrangements of modernity.

**Mubirumusoke 21** [Mukasa Mubirumusoke, Assistant Professor of Africana Studies, October 16, 2021, Philosophy Today, “Prolegomena to any Future Cosmology”, Pages 6-11, JMH]

Similar to white supremacy, black holes may be confirmed to exist but, ultimately, they remain much of a mystery. Despite the excitement and wonderment recent images invoked, black holes do not fit seamlessly into the modern imagination of the cosmos: they are a scandal. Black people know all too well that visual evidence can hardly be considered definitive incontrovertible proof or understanding. The point of analogy that I want to begin with is that over against Bataille’s sun as the extra-metaphysical signifier of the excesses of meaning, profanity, unraveled hierarchies, and the possibility of intimacy between humans, over against the individuation of reasoning, is this: the black hole as anti-black white supremacy, while having cosmic effects on its surroundings, remains invisible and this invisibility is reproduced by Bataille’s inability to distinguish chattel slavery and its aftermath as a metaphysical foundation of modernity from other forms of slavery, oppression, and exploitation. The images of a black hole, just like images and statistics of violence against blacks, distract from a shared fundamental quality, namely that by nature they fundamentally cannot be perceived directly.8 The structural invisibility of the interiority of a black hole, as opposed to the possible effects it may render visible through its interactions with phenomena around it, is the first characteristic to consider in a prolegomena to a new cosmology. Frank Wilderson continually reiterates as a core argument of afropessimism the structural antagonism of white supremacy and blackness as opposed to a contingent relation that may be resolved through some form of reconciliation. The visual manifestations of antiblack racism are similar to the ring of light that indicates the presence of a black hole, but the core of white supremacy refuses to be seen. **The antagonism renders the uniqueness of antiblack racism illegible since we are compelled to speak of it with the same vocabulary as any other form of oppression, alienation, and violence even though the structural grammar of anti-blackness entails that blackness, or the positionality of “the Slave,” exists as a “socially dead” antagonist in opposition to the human**. A person is conceptualizing in the wrong register if they think any phenomenal events in themselves will get to white supremacy’s essence since its essence lies not in the individual or collective acts, but in the repetitive conceptual labor that the gratuitous violence against black people achieves for the social cohesion of white civil society. This is the invisible core of white supremacy beyond the event horizon. In their essay, “The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy,” Jared Sexton and Steve Martinot articulate a clearer context for the structural invisibility of antiblack violence through the dimension of the extra-ordinary. Beginning with the case of Amadou Diallo, Sexton and Martinot want to explain why police violence appears so frequently and moreover why calling attention to this violence does not seem to help, but, rather, it only seems to strengthen the policing paradigm. To explain this non-intuitive phenomenon, they argue that police violence against black people is not just the response of police officers to law breaking. The police literally create the law with these violent acts, that is to say, police violence against black people is not a response to any action of violation done by black actors per se, but, instead, is an initiating ritual of reifying blackness criminally through a self-substantiating legislative act and executive order that belongs to the structural grammar, or cosmological order, of white supremacy. Moreover, the spectacle of police violence as seen or reported through the news draws attention away from the extra-ordinary, mundane, devastation of black people that is the effect of the police’s legislative/executive power not merely as random spectacle of violence (at the event horizon), but more importantly as a necessarily mundane communal labor for white civil society. They explain: The spectacular event camouflages the operation of police law as contempt, as terror, its occupation of neighborhoods; the secret of police law is the fact that there is no recourse to the disruption of people’s lives by these activities. In fact, the focus on the spectacular event of police violence is to deploy (and thereby reaffirm) the logic of police profiling itself. . . . Examples cannot represent the spectrum of contemporary white supremacy from the subtle . . . to the extreme . . . all of which has becomes structural and everyday. . . . Most theories of white supremacy seek to plumb the depths of its excessiveness, beyond the ordinary; they miss the fact that racism is a mundane affair. (Sexton and Martinot 2003: 173) White supremacy and antiblackness as constituted through terror and contempt, but also as “ordinary,” “mundane,” or extra-ordinary, is the other dimension of the invisible black hole of white supremacy that is set adjacent to the excessive sun of human intimacy. Invisibly orientating Bataille’s sun is the gravitational pull of the black hole. The black hole of white supremacy has extraordinary power that is terrifying since it cannot be seen as such, but it is also said that a black hole is at the center of every galaxy, thus in some way is ordinary and constitutive. Furthermore, the black hole of white supremacy that gives spectacular glimmers at its event horizon is at its core, contentless, mundane, and also without reason. Martinot and Sexton explain, “White supremacy is nothing more than what we perceive of it; there is nothing beneath it nor outside it to give it justification. The structure of its banality is the surface on which it operates. The mythic content it pretends to claim is a priori empty. . . . In other words, its truth lies in the rituals that sustain its circuitous, contentless logic; it is, in fact, nothing but its very practices” (Sexton and Martinot 2003: 175). There is no absolute content to white supremacy’s authoritative position, only the brute assertion of the fact and, therefore, there is nothing really to be discerned except the gratuitous—as opposed to contingent—violence of its actions and the effects it has on black people. **The white supremacist black hole’s illogic is therefore a more sinister parody than Bataille’s illogical “Solar Anus” since the former affects black lives in a way that totally trivializes the profundity of the latter’s transgressive intervention even though both are founded in a disavowal of reason.**9 The communal function that white supremacy’s violence performs is not to shock through the spectacular—as one may be inclined to read Bataille’s “Solar Anus”—but to support the affective coherence of white civil society by providing a negation upon which to secure non-black identity through libidinal fortification in the more mundane execution of violence against black life. Antiblack violence that positions black people in the position of “the Slave” is the real labor at work. Or as Wilderson explains, “the slave is . . . an anti-Human, a position against which humanity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal integrity” (Wilderson 2010: 11). The fact that the duality of the spectacular and the mundane map well onto Bataille’s cosmological picture is not coincidental; Sexton and Martinot articulate the operations of white supremacy through a dual economy as well. Just as Bataille’s restricted economy functions through reason on earth and ultimately yields to the excessive general economy of the sun, in the proposed expanded cosmology of this essay the black hole has a dual structure where there is a spectacular economy at the event horizon of rationalized violence that ultimately yields to an excessive hyper economy of banality and irrationality. Sexton and Martinot describe their dual economy as such: The black hole of white supremacy is surrounded by a policing—which is not restricted to the actual police, but to a disposition of policing blackness—event horizon that distorts reality, but which appears spectacular from the human perspective. The hyper-economy of injustice is from where white supremacy excretes its irrational aura to justify its own self-conception and thus also allow for its everyday reality and ritualistic spectacular displays of violence in front of the mundane. The spectacular economy of police violence is the restricted economy of rational individuation where one sees black being as abject along the event horizon; whereas the banal mundane hyper injustice is the over rich center and together these economies make the invisible extra-ordinary black hole of white supremacy. V. Conclusion: To a New Cosmology The sun is also a night. In Bataille’s cosmologies he mistakes the solar system for the cosmos. In fact, there is another sun, the black hole, a scandal by no other name (Wilderson 2007: 23–35). The black hole of white supremacy is at the middle of the milky way of white civil society, which, while seemingly far away, still keeps the entire structure of white civil society afloat; it keeps Bataille’s generous sun in orbit. In this broader cosmology, where white supremacy is truly interrogated, black social—or perhaps more accurately political—death is a cosmological certainty, as the policing event horizon approaches and only x-rays escape the black hole’s gravitational pull. Over the centuries since the institution of chattel slavery and the absolute degradation of blacks, we have seen the idea of what or who constitute the human change and yet blacks retain their antagonistic positionality. In the future this may continue, or maybe humans even leave earth for other planets, but until the black hole of white supremacy is addressed, things may change, but antiblackness will remain the same. **Unless, of course, it doesn’t, because it never was the same. It’s hard to imagine that “social death” is all there is to black life—and it should be noted neither Wilderson nor Sexton ever make such a claim and acknowledge that indeed black people are more than the living dead.** With that said, in the name of something referred to as black social life, Fred Moten gives special attention to the possibilities intertwined in the impossibility of social death. In fact, **he argues the term “social death” is more properly understood as a political death,** writing: [W]hat I am trying to get to, by way of this terminological slide [of social and political death] in [Orlando] Patterson, is the consideration of a radical disjunction between sociality and the state-sanction, state sponsored error of power-laden intersubjectivity. . . . I am in total agreement with the Afro-pessimistic understanding of Blackness as exterior to civil society and, moreover, as unmappable within the cosmological grid of the transcendental subject. However, I **understand civil society and the coordinates of the transcendental aesthetic . . . to be the fundamentally and essential antisocial nursery for a necessarily necro-political imitation of life. (Moten 2013: 740).** If we leave behind “the cosmological grid of the transcendental subject”—which Bataille attempts, but, nevertheless, stays tethered to in his analyses by occluding the operations of white supremacy—what else do the stars leave us? **We must not forget that a black hole, in light of its mystery and physics of destruction, also permits the possibility of something beyond its scandalous core, whole other criminal dimensions.** Well if we follow Moten, along with Houston Baker Jr., but also Michelle Wallace, who suggests new cosmological dimensions that exemplify the capacities of black feminine creativity,10 then perhaps we can catch a fugitive glimpse, as this is only the prolegomena to any new cosmology.

#### Sovereignty and state power are maintained through the extermination of the excess of blackness. Rather than endorsing their investment in the 1AC’s capitalist project, you should use this as an opportunity to embrace the excess of the black hole of racial terror.

**Martin and Harney 07** [Randy and Stefano “Mode of Excess. Bataille, criminality and the war on terror.” Theory and Event (10: 2, 2007), JMH]

Capital's Excesses Bataille's vision bathes us all in the lap of luxury. So much of the political is cast in terms of lack-an insufficiency of activism, organization, theory, or resources to mobilize, in the face of an abundance of ossifying power. Excess refreshes the screen, it releases people from the enclosures of scarcity and the insuperable inevitability of aggression that springs from want. The compulsion to dominate is denormalized and exposed for its own peculiar excessiveness The dull efficiency of utilitarian accounting-where every drop is used best when used up and growth marches inexorably forward-loses its reason in desire's hall of mirrors. Understandably, Bataille's work is taken up as a cry for amplitude in a wilderness of self-limiting apocalypse. Entangling his thought in the present requires more than the lavishing of praise. He achieves his general economy by energic extension and squander that yields irrecuperable consumption. But his analysis proceeds by differentiating the ways in which societies attain their forms of surplus. These various means constitute nothing short of a mode of excess-a concept that can help extricate ourselves from Bataille's moment into that of contemporary affairs. If Bataille renders an ethnological or synchronic differentiation in his accounts of the Aztecs, Potlatch, Islam, Lamaism, bourgeois capitalism and Soviet socialism, we might look to his work of the middle of the last century to delineate the contours of excess in our own times. Let us consider three elements of what might constitute Bataille's own mode of excess, writing as he is, when consumer capitalism and Soviet socialism retain their status as historical projects, and war adheres snugly to a Keynesian metaphysic. Bataille, of course is writing under the sign of what came to be called Fordism, a regulatory apparatus that mass produced consumption as a disciplinary realm parallel to but outside that of production. While the externality was mutual, it was also directional-domesticity was the sphere were cars and people started out new and became old, where time was free, leisure expressed substantive rationality, and used luxuries could be put out in the garbage. Despite, or perhaps more precisely because of the way in which the Keynesian welfare state was involved in the economy, subventions for public assistance and military contracting stood as anti-productive. In the dream realm of popular culture and consumer markets, of manufactured desires, the state needed to be absent to locate excess in a space that would be free of coercion and domination-hence the formal distinction from work and government. The state operates for Bataille in a universe of general interest that can never use up the erotic extensive energies of the accursed share. "The State (at least the modern, fully developed State) cannot give full reign to a movement of destructive consumption without which an indefinite accumulation of resources situates us in the universe in exactly the same way as cancer is inscribed in the body, as a negation. " (Bataille 1993: 160) War is the consummate category of expenditure that can be stolen back by state and particularizing economic exchange, especially as it seeks an equilibrium between destruction and profit in what is intended as a virtuous cycle of demand absorbing supply that Franklin Delano Roosevelt dubbed, "Dr. Win The War." Like the partition between production and consumption, this political economy of war assumes that death and profitability belong to separate accounts, and that civic devastation will be restored by a reincorporating policy framework like the Marshall Plan. As Bataille observes: "Of course, what we spend in one category is in principle lost for the others. There are many possibilities of slippage: alcohol, war and holidays involve us in eroticism, but this means simply that the possible expenditures in one category are ultimately reduced by those we make in the others, so that only the profits found in war truly alter this principle; even so, in most cases these profits correspond to the losses of the vanquished.... We need to make a principle of the fact that sooner or later the sum of excess energy that is managed for us by a labor so great that it limits the share available for erotic purposes will be spent in a catastrophic war."(Bataille 1993: 188) Under these circumstances, the political choice becomes clear, expenditure can be wasted in war or applied to increase the standard of living. Finally, there is Bataille's enthusiasm for the Soviet socialism of his day. Here too, socialism is framed as an externality to capitalism, rather than being the latter's immanent condition. The Soviets form a geography of excess-that portion of global productive capacity that capitalist markets and development promises could not absorb. This perspective recasts Cold War bellicosity. The arms race certainly strains the Soviet social economy, as it supports a Western military-industrial complex. But the exclusion of more than half the world's peoples and territories by the partition of the three worlds was a condition for the concentration of consumption and masked the limits to its possible dispersion, as nearly two decades of post-Soviet opportunity now make plain. Still it was possible for Bataille to imagine the extension of a socialist geography as encroaching upon the ultimate utopian externality-the future. "Present day humanity has the communist horizon before it." (Bataille 1993: 261) Indeed the Cold War could be understood as a race toward disparate futures, each with their own utopian aspect, providing that the future remained on the horizon just outside of reach. Bataille has the benefit of imagining the chronotope of his own general economy as marked by clearly discernable divisions-between here and there, and between what is and what will come. He put such Cartesian formulations to tremendous effect, but we must consider what the general economy would consist of if history had not robbed us of that more clearly decidable grid of space and time. *finance* Still hot in pursuit of Bataille's horizon, we can now imagine capital's own tracks taking us toward a different mode of excess. These markings may map something apart from the post-fordist proliferation of the flexible which may have been more about clarifying what the initial formulation of a consumer society meant, than of what it would become. No doubt, stable and expanding careers of wage labor are now somewhat quaint, and mass consumption has been niched and customized in every conceivable direction. But what happens when production and consumption move in together, when one resides within the body of the other? Surely this is the generative condition of what is termed immaterial labor. It is also indicated where the investment logic of risk assumes the mantle of governmentality. Neoliberalism asked citizens to manage their own public good, insinuating a market trope where the state was meant to maintain its watchful eye. The domestic sphere is not simply an invitation to engage in home work (this it always was) but now also to serve as a platform for participation in myriad financial schemes, whether they be portfolios for retirement, education, or continued consumption itself. This implication of investment protocols in the labor of reproduction can be called financialization (Martin 2002). An ugly term perhaps but one that registers the invasion of capital for others into the realm of the self. Finance now occupies the spectre of excess in economic circulation. More than just acts of enclosure, financialization erupts where the socialization of capital meets the socialization of labor-amplifying mutual indebtedness, aggregating social wealth with extreme magnitude to the point where it moves from necessity to discretion. Finance signals a breach of referent that suggests huge sums can be applied anywhere for any purpose. The force of excess makes immediate the prospect that wealth might be applied otherwise. As much money moves in financial markets in a month as fills the accounts of industrial production in a year. The trade in derviatives alone-parsings of financial risk that disassemble and delocalize value so that it can be leveraged elsewhere-is tied to contracts valued at nearly $400 trillion. (Lipuma and Lee 2004: Bank of International Settlements, 2006) (Derivatives are identified by the value or notional price of the commodities that they are tied to, rather than to the amount of money they yield, which is but a fraction of that price. So, if one is paying $1,000 for the option to purchase $1,000,000 worth of Euros at a certain date, the contract is entered as $1,000,000 not $1,000). More than a vault of a determine form of capital, finance augurs an infectious logic that reorients the machinations of business as well a daily life. Banks no longer stand as intermediaries to circulation (disintermediation). Market share and stock price drive business planning (shareholder value). The speculative and the practical hedging of risk share instruments of operation (rentier capitalism). Even the state is internally riven between its neoliberal fantasy of leaving people alone to their fates, and the neoconservative obligations to intervene in private life to affect a kind of evangelical transformation or liberation. The neoconservative state intervenes to carve excess out of the social body by means of tax cuts, which are not simply redistributive to those most able to luxuriate, but to demonstrate the moral force behind setting capital free. But this freedom makes of those left behind, those populations incapable of managing themselves and termed "at risk," an accursed share in their own right. If financialization gives us production for and as consumption, ceaseless circulation nestled in what Marx called a "hidden abode," the implosion of the boundaries for enclosure liberate a whole matrix of capital from population. Bataille would see capital fleeing its social entailments of labor (whether wages or cities) to some secure outside-consumption, the state, or negatively in socialist topographies. The imbrication of production and consumption, the state's jettisoning of a general national interest, and a relinquishing of the socialist world has yielded a dizzying indifference. Rather than promising infinite absorption of population in accumulation, what was advertised under the watchwords of progress and development, liberation takes place in the here and now-a progressive and regressive freedom that turns against the history of difference (as all of the entanglements of social reproduction are brought together as interdependent demands for recognition, justice, resources and dispensation over what is done to make and live with social wealth).

#### Vote neg to jump into the Black hole. Come on, the water’s warm!

Murillo, 20—Assistant Professor, African American Studies School of Humanities, UC-Irvine (John, “Untimely Dispatch From the Middle of Nowhere 24,” Propter Nos Vol. 4 (2020), dml)

In its adherence to working with fragments, to accepting the absoluteness of fragmentation and the centrality of it to Black creative work, Zong!’s destructive approach to creation offers us a name for what it is we might best do with our untimeliness in the middle of nowhere: destructive writing. M. NourbeSe Philip’s poiesis is destruction. To leap into the Black w/hole of the text, the praxis, the theory, and the interpretive method necessary to operate on the same frequency of this work is to take very seriously the untimely, stanky, political-ontological relationship between Blackness, creation, and destruction. To “make generations” in the name of defending the dead, or to do the wake work, or to conjure the Black and cosmic magic, is to reckon with the paradoxical generativeness of destruction. It is to wholly embrace violence as violence, fragments as fragments, and incoherence as incoherence, in order to actively refuse, combat, and vie to destroy the very logic, or grammar, or order that murdered, continues to murder, and threatens to wholly obliterate Black being, or whatever deranged fragments of that being remain.

What have we done? What have we been doing? What should—must—we do? As we reflect upon the shards of thought, language, literary scene, physical property, lived experience, and unbearable inquiry that form the field of fragments we call Black Study, we consider how these arrangements we have made have all been an attempt at working with destruction. Arranging and deranging, ordering, reordering, and disordering, and always looking, listening, and attending to them carefully has always been the product of a continuous negotiation of the destructive forces that turned Black life and death into fragments. We spent our textual spacetime theorizing the nature of these forces in order to both, understand how they destroy us (how they work), and to begin to consider what ways we might refract/reflect them (how we can create with and from them). My arguments have turned on establishing the significance or rethinking these spatiotemporal forces and how they shatter our existences, indeed because rethinking time and space and how they play out upon us as a project on its own will help us better grasp the nature of our subjection to the various orders and structures of the antiblack world, but also because a deeper understanding of their mechanics and their essence radically transforms how we imagine, theorize, and perform Black creation.

I/we have performed our impossible alchemy thusly: (nigredo) disintegrate our core materials—time, space, and work—shedding the ashen detritus inessential to our work and leaving only what we need; (albedo) the distillation of what remains—untime, nowhere, and refraction—into the material we can synthesize into a greater conceptualization; and (rubedo) the synthesization of a new, vexing, abstract material that might reshape our understanding of Black existence and imaginative creation—destructive writing. While we knew and know our work aims to produce an alternative theory of Black creation that embraces and works with the destructive forces that make us untimely and displace us into nowhere, we perhaps (re)discover that our work is its own negotiation of destruction, our own staging of these principles of destructive writing. That invisible force suturing the fragments surrounding us into a field, that unseen thing that amplified the call of the fragments we sought out and were able to hold and behold, that animating element of untimeliness, refraction, and being nowhere: that undergirds the whole of this work, argumentatively and creatively, is destruction, and in our endeavor to make time and space for our considerations, we contemplate and imagine and write toward an answer to our most difficult set of questions.

How to tell a shattered story, one not meant to be passed on or passed on? How to “un-tell” a story that must be told?16 How to tell an impossible story?

Perhaps it is not exactly as Sharpe says. Perhaps the goal is not to ‘imagine the unimaginable’17 but, as part of the same refusal NourbeSe writes and performs, to radically un-imagine the imaginable.

How to defend the dead, the dying, and we who live untimely lives in the middle of nowhere?

By

becoming

everybody?

No.

*By destroying everything*.

Cowrie shells drag across the hard, wet wood. A constellation has been traced in water. A spell has been cast. A conjuring has taken place. We bear the water and the witness. We are a clamor of fragments in the oceanic dark. Telling and writing impossible stories is destructive work.

Telling, writing, and living impossible stories is destructive, dangerous work when deathliness, untimeliness, and stankiness are the conditions of whenever and wherever we try to be. To really listen to Ursa Corregidora’s blues18 and take the leap into the Black hole toward total destruction is to leap toward the singular possibility of radical, unimaginable, and impossible creation. Only in the dark and clamoring shatter, only from the nowhere of there and the untimeliness of then, might we really make time and space for one another.

Nothing less, nowhere else, and with no time to spare, we leap.

#### The alternative’s leap into the black hole overcomes the move towards restrictive economies that is foundational to the 1AC. Their siphoning of libidinal energies is a move towards the boiling point of civil society whereby blackness becomes the necessary informe for all political arrangements.

**Butler 21** [Daniel Butler, psychoanalytic psychotherapist and doctoral candidate in History of Consciousness, June 3, 2021, Psychoanalytic Dialogues The International Journal of Relational Perspective, “Fervish Nonknowledge, or Intuition at the Boiling Point”, Pages 284-292, JMH]

Hyperindustry feeds on “information without knowledge” (Stiegler, 2010, p. 129), which is to say that it flourishes without human intervention (e.g., mass automation).2 The hyperindustrial subject consumes endless streams of information, gradually forgetting how to produce as an agent within an information economy. Consumerism itself becomes the hyperindustrial subject’s most prolific form of production, and the product that the subject consumes above all is data. Manualized and prescriptive information about how to live (skills, techniques, etc.) substitutes for the savoir-vivre (knowing how to live) and savoir faire (know-how in general) through which one experiences living itself. Absolute nonknowledge mortifies, deadens, and leads to mass dissociation (Stiegler, 2018, p. 194), while digital technology is vitalized and divinized at the expense of psychosomatic life. Feverish nonknowledge struggles with this technological nihilism, in part by espousing the concept of informé over information. Informé is often translated as formless but means something closer to alteration, which, in the Latin (alter), connotes both a change of time and state (Krauss, 1993, p. 162), “moving [the subject] . . . in the sense of e-moting them” (Stiegler, 2018, p. 195), or orienting them to a future that is not or is not yet. The informé moves toward an abyss of nonknowledge, wherein the difference between subject and object is absent, but it does not move toward a transcendence of knowledge by way of information channels. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s intuition as extraordinary knowing seemingly enacts such a transcendence, and in a world of computational capitalism or capitalism sans human labor, such extraordinary knowledge easily doubles as something like the algorithm that not only tells me what I want but notifies me that I want at all. The subject’s mimetic doubling as a cybernetic, extraordinary computer is exciting and even necessary for a “non-inhuman” future (Stiegler, 2013, 2018), and yet it currently besets us with a veritable confusion of tongues, specifically insofar as desire and libido are overwhelmed by digital technology and perhaps even overspecialized clinical technique, whereby intuition and spontaneity mimic algorithmic and programmatic formulas that the (neuro)sciences have always already foretold. To “know” is both about comportment or how-to and about the desire that is embedded in the term’s libidinized etymology. There is a default or a lack in relation to knowledge as a developmental acquisition, whereas information is always already thought to be there, like a thing without life that nevertheless exists. By contrast, “the transitional object . . . does not exist” (Stiegler, 2013, p. 1), which means that the child is feverishly oriented to an absence and the unknown as the epicenter of their most vitalizing encounters with play. Slightly emending Stielger, Winnicott’s (1975a) transitional phenomena yield a (non)knowledge that makes life worth living (Stiegler, 2013, 2018), and while this knowledge spreads across the cultural field, inspiring the various domains of knowledge production, Winnicott was not anticipating a world in which there is nowhere to hide, where subjects are so localizable and trackable, and where the privacy of the self that is necessary for transitional experiencing is supplanted by algorithms that threaten the most incommunicado enclosures of psychic space. The digital technologies that orient much of our everyday lives effectively collapse the superficiality of the image with the heterogeneity of the signifier, such that the image no longer represents the mysterious and incalculable play of signification (Han, 2020). Things are what they seem, and algorithmically produced images tell us what things are. Image economies contort the self into an assemblage of likes, notifications, and information channels that can be mapped by way of various imaging and tracking devices. The image functions like its own brand of religious iconography, even within the sciences themselves, such that the psyche becomes visible by way of neural imaging, which is in turn divinized as the incarnation of noetic life. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow are rightly critical of biological reductionism, and they take heed not to fall into the same materialist traps. They critique a highly intractable Cartesianism within psychoanalysis and its scientistic opponents, and their critique advances “a unitary psychophysical paradigm,” which “requires a more accurate translation of physical and complexity concepts in order to mirror the interpenetration of body/brain/mind informational dynamics in the clinical setting” (this issue, p. 278). They express concern at psychoanalysis’ alienation from the sciences, in part due to the former’s misapplication of scientific concepts. This is not only a pedantic point but a sincere and laudable effort on their part to cross a disciplinary divide. Larger cultural and psychopolitical reasons account for this divide in a more robust way, but their metaphor shifts are nonetheless instructive. Among the shifts, we have intersubjective “matrix” rather than intersubjective “field,” but we also have interobjectivity, a term that has no clear precursor in psychoanalysis and that denotes “the existence of a unitary objective reality of which we are all an integral part” (this issue, p. 276). The post-Cartesian amalgam of transsubjective and interobjective boundaries suggests a lifeworld in which “we are all an integrated part of psychophysical reality, where material processes and processes of the mind merge below the surface of the classical macroworld” (this issue, p. 276). We are always already connected by the information that is superordinate to representation and signification, which would of course include the world of cultural stereotypes, but to make this point – a point which partly derives from Bohm’s theoretical physics – is itself an utterance that, like all language games (Lyotard, 1984), is socioculturally and psychopolitcally contingent, if only because scientific and technological advances cannot escape the histories and libidinal economics of slavery, capitalism, and colonialism that made (and continue to make) them possible (Jackson, 2019; Lyotard, 1984). Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s post-Cartesianism seems to enfold metapsychology into natural science, such that the claims of psychoanalysis need to be coordinated with natural science if the interdisciplinary dialogue is to sustain itself. This is not a dialectic of natural science and metapsychology, for there is no struggle or agonism. Natural science, for our authors, is the way, which seems clear in their plea for a metaphor shift, and which also appears to be a shift, ironically enough, away from metaphor. Metaphor plays with the real, but play, in its most enlivening form, is an offense to the real insofar it reveals the latter’s contingency (Barthes, 1972). Thus, the metaphorical and the scientific agonistically meet at the boiling point, where the task for each is to survive a potentially annihilating show of difference. In practice, this is typically not what happens, and the adaptation of psychoanalysis to natural science, as in the metaphor shift, disavows the psychopolitical conditions that make such a shift so seemingly imperative. In a hyperindustrial society, where the profits of computational capitalism see no end in sight, the humanities and social sciences are often called upon to adapt to STEM models as if there is no other choice, and while this is no reason to dismiss STEM as an ally, there is good reason to query the ways in which a move toward STEM within non-STEM fields is overdetermined by sociocultural and political-economic threats to the latter’s existence. If psychoanalysis is indeed trying to survive this era of the so-called dark enlightenment, what this means, at least according to the admittedly more pessimistic tendencies in media philosophy, is that digital technology increasingly dominates if not replaces the psyche itself, largely by siphoning off libidinal energy; and what this diagnosis means for the collaboration between science and metapsychology is that the psychic subject of such collaboration is increasingly dead and dissociated or without much of a psyche to investigate. Is this why we might manically search for intuitive moments of transubjectivity, where rather than contending with feverish nonknowledge, we long for the intuition or extraordinary knowledge Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow so convincingly (and beautifully) narrate in their clinical vignettes? We might wonder about the search for extraordinary knowing from a psychopolitical perspective, given that the psychopolitcal struggle of our contemporary is, in my view, less about control over informational than libidinal economies or more about a struggle to feel alive as the precondition of that which enables us to know (for Bataille, knowing and living are, at root, incommensurable, even if the latter exceeds and anticipates the former); and while the natural sciences can indeed become a necessary comrade in this struggle, they are heavily instrumental in (and the least informed about) the deadening and proletarianization of psychosomatic life. Such proletarianization does not invigorate an underclass ala Marx but invades the subject’s nervous system ala Stiegler (2010); it is a generalized condition of “mindpsyches,” to use Winnicott’s (1975b) term. This diagnosis points to a massive psychic and political problem, and it is why psychoanalytic engagements with sciences demand a continual awareness of the science’s proletarianizing function in hyperindustrial society. While far from their presumable intent, Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s metaphor shift could read like a proletarianizing gesture, insofar as psychoanalysis is asked to become more useful and productive to the sciences, instead of being critical, offensive, or even ruinous of the computational capitalism that basically controls the sciences as its handmaiden, and that leaves so many clinical dyads bored, unfilled, and generally unavailable for the varieties of intuition that Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow delineate. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow specifically acknowledge Bion (and Jung) for bringing intuition into the psychoanalytic mainstream. Unlike Freud’s (1911) reality principle as the neonate’s confrontation with a frustrating unpleasure, Bion’s intuition apperceives a continuous reality that is irreducible to any spatiotemporal or psychosomatic coordinates. This ultimate reality is a global form of psychic continuity that many psychoanalysts are wary of due to its mystical connotations, but from a quantum physics perspective, such mysticism is partly dispelled by way of thinkers like Bohm, whose “implicate order” informs Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s holistic theory of intuition. I say holistic because they, like Bohm, treat “the mental and the material” as an implicate order, or “[as] two sides of one reality” (Bohm, 1987, p. 20), and this unitary reality or Jung’s unus mundus facilitates nonlocal information sharing and the extraordinary knowing of intuition. For Bohm, Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow, the concept of wholeness is (explicitly, in Bohm’s case) tied to humanity and its survival. Conversely, Bataille’s boundlessness is a boiling point in relation to which human survival is risked and existentially held in suspense.3 Bataille argues that totalities cannot be conceptualized except by imaginary means, which is to say that a totality requires a thought from outside that undermines the totality itself. By extension, the greatest scientific truth is also the undoing of science or a transcendence of the point at which the object of science slips from view. This is not to suggest that science is unreal but that it is realest when it calls on the imaginary for its meaning or when its greatest meaning hinges on the disavowal of its insignificance. Where Bataille’s boundlessness aspires to an abundance of meaning that tips the scale into an absence of meaning, Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow implicitly reject such absence by aligning their nonlocal neurodynamics with concepts like the unus mundus and the implicate order, both of which transcend meaninglessness through a superordinate metanarrative of wholeness. Feverish with nonknowledge, the Bataillean subject does not turn to metanarrative to account for the boiling point’s beyond. Stielger’s teacher, Jean-Francois Lyotard, deserves mention here, especially since, in The Postmodern Condition – his still highly relevant “report on knowledge” that was commissioned by the Quebec government – he makes specific reference to quantum physics and to the hyperindustrial inversion of science and technology, whereby the latter now exploits the former rather than functioning as a scientific tool.4 Lyotard (1984) acknowledges that “quantum theory and microphysics require a far more radical revision of the idea of a continuous and predictable path,” but its “quest for precision is . . . limited . . . by the very nature of matter. It is not true that uncertainty (lack of control) decreases as accuracy goes up: it goes up as well” (p. 56). Lyotard continues with a reference to physicist Jean Perrin, whose study of air molecules, Lyotard argues, “resolves into a multiplicity of absolutely incompatible statements; they can only be made compatible if they are relativized in relation to a scale chosen by the speaker” (p. 57). Knowledge reaches its limit in this incompatibility, and this is where science draws on the imaginary and plays language games or creates a meta-language to legitimate itself, which in turn relativizes its status as “scientific.” This crisis of knowledge is traceable to the late-nineteenth century when metanarratives ala Hegel’s science of Spirit, Marx’s critique of capitalism, and Darwin’s theory of evolution no longer inspired faith in ineluctable progress and/or preordained emancipation. While the materialist turn in humanities and social sciences tends to lambast what appears to be a crude subjectivism in such “postmodern” thought (a critique Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow seem to share), it is less that Lyotard assumes matter only exists as an epistemological construction than that the sciences are partly contingent on metanarratives (or micronarratives) for their legitimation.5 Bohm’s holism would seem to be such a metanarrative. In order to supplement the localinteractive dynamics of interpersonal neurobiology with the nonlocal-participatory dynamics of quantum physics, Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow turn to thinkers like Bohm, who “postulated a unifying domain of active information, which underlies both matter and mind processes,” such that “matter loses its appearance of solidity and separate locality” (p. 18). Contra Bohm’s implicate order, Bataille’s espousal of boundlessness and nonknowledge suggests that any unity cannot account for the contingency by which it is constituted. In a conversation with Bohm (1987), an audience member challenges Bohm’s subsumption of contingency into wholeness, and Bohm (1987) admits to the speculative nature of his insights, adding “we are making models and . . . they are not models of ultimate reality, but proposals” (p. 57); the question, he notes, is “which presupposition are we choosing” (p. 53), and by presupposition Bohm would seem to mean the metaphysical premises, however propositional, that promote a world in which we want to live. Bohm is aware of the hermeneutics involved in interpreting science, but perhaps he is less aware of how the hermeneutic choices we make may or may not struggle against some of the more repressive forces that characterize every historical conjuncture. Like Bohm’s implicate order, the hermeneutic of Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s “inherent wholeness that unites us all” (this issue, p. 279) is arguably premised on a disavowed metaphysics as much as it is a speculative psychophysics. Their information channels that traverse psyche and physis are not, in my view, socially, politically, and culturally neutral. Borrowing a locution from afropessimist Frank Wilderson (2010), we might say that Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s conception of wholeness grounds itself in the “assumptive logic” of human ontology, which, even when recast according to an impersonal physics of information channels, takes for granted the “us” who are supposedly united. Following an anti-humanist reading of thinkers like Fanon, afropessimists do not accord human status to black “subjects,”6 and this discord extends to the natural sciences for at least two reasons: one, because anti-black violence epigenetically dehumanizes bodies that are epidermally black, thus leading to neurobiological conditions such as weathering (Jackson, 2019); and two, because modernity is built on economies of slavery that have libidinally and capitalistically funded scientific research as early as the Indian Ocean slave trade of 7th century Arabia (Vaziri, 2019).7 Whether one agrees with such positions or not, they surely highlight the contested terrain of the natural sciences, which is different from simply writing the sciences off or dismissing the realism on which scientific truths are based. When we speak of intuition, we might thus consider a racialized variety, namely that which reveals blackness as a potentially lethal encounter with the informé (Butler, 2020). I have written about this in relation to resignation syndrome as a condition that petrifies the refugee child into a protracted state of hallucinosis. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s When we speak of intuition, we might thus consider a racialized variety, namely that which reveals blackness as a potentially lethal encounter with the informé (Butler, 2020). I have written about this in relation to resignation syndrome as a condition that petrifies the refugee child into a protracted state of hallucinosis. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow’s. The nonlocal effects of an antiblack geopolitics thus register psychically as a blackness that is informé rather than informational or an absence that begins with the condemnation and denigration of black flesh but that shapes the psychopolitics of hypermodernity such that blackness is the primally repressed thing against and around which the psyche itself is formed. Blackness is constitutive of the psyche insofar as the latter is organized around the former as an inassimilable absence, but what this means for black “subjects,” at least according to a certain reading of Fanon, is that the psyche – and most definitely the psychophysical – is only ever legible as white (or as that which is not black, not the thing). Grappling with such thought seems crucial for the frontiers of psychoanalysis and the natural sciences, which Fanon, a psychoanalytic clinician, and experimental neuropsychiatrist, already knew. Like Fanon, many black critical theorists refuse the concept of psychophysical unity for the same reason they refuse the notion of a science that is not already saturated with stereotypes. After all, Fanon (2004) is decisive in stating that antiblack colonization creates a species division, such that the very concept of the human undergoes a lysis in which the black subject is psychically and physically jettisoned from the family of man. Lyotard’s critique in The Postmodern Condition (1984) addresses the way in which scientific knowledge is inextricable from a political–economic relationship to technology that metanarratives unwittingly work to obscure. In effect, metanarratives themselves serve the technical function of naturalizing science itself, as if the study of nature is not socially, politically, and economically motivated. Technology has historically aided human perception so that scientific observation becomes increasingly reliable, but this optimization of the scientific project is now firmly coupled with the logic of capitalism, where minimal input (e.g., automation) yields maximal output (surplus value), and where “an equation between p. 45). If the sciences now produce data and information that perpetuates absolute nonknowledge, this is because of the libidinal and economic surplus that their subordination to hyperindustry yields, not because there is something inherently insidious about science or technology. And yet, if Lyotard is right about the coupling of science and capital, how might the sciences critically account for that coupling so as to distance themselves from its proletarianizing effects? A proletarianized world thrives on speculation and superstition rather than investment and the time that it takes to develop knowledge. What Stiegler calls proletarianization, Achille Mbembe refers to as the becoming Black of the world (Mbembe & Stiegler, 2019), by which Mbembe means, in part, that historically denigrated African cosmologies now explain how objectified human life can become animated by perversely vitalized technologies. “The human person is trying to turn himself or herself into a thing or manufactured object” (Mbembe, 2016, 1:02:58), which is to say that they are becoming Black, specifically insofar as blackness is naturalized as an animate thing by antiblack and colonial imaginaries that still found our national settings (Butler, 2019b). In tandem with this turn toward animism, Mbembe (2016) notes the rise of interest in new materialisms, occult phenomena, and speculative realisms, all of which, in their own way, intersect with the transsubjective in Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow. Transcendent connectedness and unmediated access to the (im)material world inspires manic reparation that allows proletarianized populations to adapt to an antiblack techno-capitalism by feeling as though they can access otherworldly truths. Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow invite us to consider how the clinical setting of local-interactive processes is always already informed by much more expansive, nonlocal, or even subatomic settings or information channels, and thinkers like Mbembe remind us of the way in which such channels and technologies (e.g., settings) are historically, ontologically, and geopolitically racialized phenomena that always already condition the nonlocal as a concept. In a vitalist and animistic world in which technology is sovereign, some kind of rupture in local or nonlocal connection, a rupture in which information becomes informé, could recalibrate technology’s relationship to psychosomatic life. For Bataille, the informé “serves to bring things down in the world . . . what it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm” (Bataille, 1985, p. 31). The informé is like a debased life that paradoxically underscores the basics about what makes life matter. Like Winnicott (1971), Bataille sees the need for a formlessness that is never (in) formed but that remains an excess that is sacred in its indispensability. If information travels in an ultimately productive way, folding and unfolding bits of communicable data, the informé definitively interrupts such production, squashing the informational like a worm underfoot. Bataille goes so far as to view the universe as informé, as nothing, or the absence of meaning, and this absence is pharmacological in that it can be both a poison or a cure, inspiring creation or portending death. Bataille’s interwar and postwar writings meditate on a violence that is gratuitous, that admits no meaning, and that he, out of a vigorous anti-idealism, locates in a debased cosmos. His thought experiments press humanity to ask if it is implicated in a monstrosity that doubles as its disavowed constitution. This is a question natural science struggles to consider, especially when under the sway of a bio- and psychopolitical techno-capitalism in which the endless optimization of concomitantly automated life is the goal. All of Bataille’s concepts involve a question of the limit or the point at which life resembles (without simply becoming) its opposite, death. For Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow, the notion of a limit may be overly physical, energic, or material, whereas information deals less with limits than with the seriality of sharing across limitless channels or networks. There thus appears to be little room for the negativity of the informé in Shapiro and MarksTarlow’s thought. The clinical and psychopolitical implications of this are quite interesting, and many of them circle the question of physical and psychic death, not the mention of the death drive as a psychoanalytic construct. For example, how does one conceptualize breakdown in the analysis without some concept of a limit to the informational channels by which clinician and patient are putatively bound? How does one conceptualize the afterlife of social and political disasters ala slavery and colonialism, which, at least for many victims, would seem to be quite gratuitous and informé rather than somehow informational and nascently meaningful? A psychoanalysis without excess – or a psychoanalysis in which excess is always already contained by wholeness – offers a post- or even anti-Freudian vision of psychic and political life. To take a Bataillean and perhaps more Freudian tack, the avowal of excess is not some accelerationist acquiescence to total annihilation, but an opening to radically new and unknown psychopolitical vistas. Transitional experience and primary preoccupation are paradigmatic of such an avowal. For example, in the case of a subject’s excessive libido, the shock of such excess functions as a psychosomatic invention ala Freud’s (1990) protective shield, and this invention is what paradoxically enables the subject to survive its own drivebased undoing. Put otherwise, such shock is an excitation that defends against the perils of excitation itself (Aulagnier, 2001; Miller, 2014), which is why, in an adjacent register, Stoekl (2007) argues that conservation and sustainability should not be the focus of environmental politics and that Bataille’s post-sustainable politics of nonproductive expenditure might be a better alternative. (If the world is made of excess energy, then it should be spent rather than conserved, the question being how it is spent rather than whether to spend it or not.) Bataille (2018) associates this beneficent yet potentially annihilating expenditure with play, which in turn evokes the early caregiving through which the infant learns how to weather the drives (Butler, 2019a; Winnicott, 1975a). In theory, science could function as a protective shield against the shock of hyperindustrial society, but the formation of this shield would require the sciences’ commitment to reckoning with their own psychopolitical and epistemological excesses. In work that has the potential to shift some of the more prominent paradigms of relational psychoanalysis, perhaps Shapiro and Marks-Tarlow can consider some excesses I have in mind. We can certainly think of nonlocal-participatory processes in apolitical terms, but they are only truly apolitical when they falter as a holism; such faltering is the absence, the boiling point, as both the whole’s excess and its most key ingredient. Such is the counterintuitively apolitical moment of revolution when it is simply the fight that is at stake, not any ideology for which one is fighting. Bataille’s is not a politics of sustainability and conservation – a politics compatible with a humanistic predilection for wholeness. While there may be unspoken affinities (or overstated differences) between Bataille and our authors, on the surface the differences seem quite clear; rather than highlighting what unites us all, Bataille highlights the unknowable excess by which unity is constituted and perennially undone (Rossi, 2019). The ethical question then becomes what we do with social, physical, and ontological excess, rather than how can we better account for such excess through a wholeness by which we are all supposedly bound. If the sciences have no conception of excess, of the libidinal, of the boiling point, and all we have is a holistic system, then the only (false) choice is to adapt, which is how proletarianization becomes a disturbingly logical – if not somehow intuitive – way to live.

### 1NC – Innovation

#### Anticipatory logics of self-preservation and durability are entrenched in an impulse to cleanse the world of deviance, chaos, and disorder that cordons life from death. The conditioning of ethics into a fear of death reduces subjectivity into instrumental value and displaces violence onto racialized Others.

Winters 17. Joseph, asst. prof. of Religious Studies, member of dept. of African and African American Studies at Duke, “Baldwin, Bataille, and the Anguish of the (Racialized) Human,” Journal of Religious Ethics vol. 45, Issue2, June 2017, pp. 380-405)

The tendency to guard and preserve, to protect what we have accumulated, what we have come to be, and what we imagine ourselves as, is ultimately an issue about being committed to order or the ordering of things. This commitment, Baldwin suggests, is an indelible mark of social existence, the result of our existence as dependent, interactive beings. In his essay “The Creative Process,” he writes, The entire purpose of society is to create a bulwark against the inner and outer chaos, in order to make life bearable and to keep the human race alive.... We become social creatures because we cannot live any other way. But in order to become social, there are a great many other things that we must not become, and we are frightened, all of us, of these forces within us that perpetually menace our precarious security. (Baldwin 1985, 316–17) Baldwin, in a manner that resembles Freud’s discussion of the function of civilization, acknowledges a constitutive limitation of the human subject. While life and self-preservation rely on sociality, social existence—or the binding of individuals to social norms and expectations—necessarily prevents and forecloses certain kinds of “menacing” possibilities, desires, attachments, and modes of being. As the psychoanalytic tradition insists, the process of becoming an intelligible subject within the social order requires a separation from those “great many things that we must not become,” a rejection of various drives, forces, and beings that signify chaos, social death, ambivalence, and the precarity of the self and social world.8 We are disciplined into social logics that associate certain qualities, and beings, with life and fullness and other qualities with death, contradiction, and lack/excess. In Baldwin’s view, art occasionally enables us to experience the relationship between social order and excess, or intelligibility and opacity—and to experience this relationship not as a simple binary. For Baldwin, the artist’s responsibility is to “illuminate the darkness,” to reveal the “mystery of the human being,” to show “what we all know but would rather not know” (Baldwin 1985, 315–16). While the artist is shaped by and within the social order, her onus is to express what social beings must disavow, minimize, or explain away in order to preserve the semblance of order and coherence. In addition to what Baldwin calls extreme, inescapable states (birth, suffering, love, and death), art must be faithful to the general instability and flux that always exists below and behind the precarious durability provided by communities, traditions, and identities. This looming instability, while the source of much pain and anxiety, is also an indication that things can and do change; the present order of things is contingent and the world could be different. 2. Baldwin, Bataille, and the Ambivalent Sacred For Baldwin, anti-black racism, while containing its own particular logics and dynamics, remains emblematic of a collective will to innocence, which in turn reveals something fundamental about the self/other relationship. Our attachment to being coherent, durable selves places severe constraints on our capacity to give, receive, and be open to qualities and circumstances that threaten to unravel (or dirty) the self and the imagined order that it clings to. These ethical themes in Baldwin resonate with the arguments advanced by literary critic and philosopher, George Bataille. According to Bataille, the very qualities that make us human—our investment in duration, in meaning, and in being distinguishable from other beings—necessarily requires us to subordinate others to our desires and projects (Bataille 2006, 29). To live in the “order of things,” according to Bataille, is to inhabit a world in which beings are primarily the occasion to accumulate value, power, and meaning; beings are subordinated to the logic of instrumentality and accumulation. Consequently, the continuation of any individual or collective life requires mechanisms that discipline, contain, or exclude that which might impede the preservation of that life. As Bataille writes: The objective and in a sense transcendent (relative to the subject) positing of the world of things has duration as its foundation: no thing in fact has a separate existence, has a meaning, unless a subsequent time is posited, in view of which it is constituted as an object. The object is defined as an operative power only if its duration is implicitly understood... . Future time constitutes this real world to such a degree that death no longer has a place in it. But it is for this very reason that death means everything to it. (Bataille 2006, 46) To some extent, death and its intimations—loss, suffering, shame, ecstasy, vulnerability—cannot have a place in a world defined by duration and preservation. In other words, even though death is a permanent feature of human life, the order of things must cultivate and imagine ways to diminish, mitigate, and deflect its effects and implications. We feel this pressure in moments when instances of suffering and loss are expected to produce or express some reassuring meaning (everything happens for a reason; that person got what he deserved). This mitigating process typically happens when individuals and communities locate death, suffering, and excessive violence elsewhere, in another place and community—a strategy that often justifies and makes acceptable violent projects to fix or restore that other community. Therefore, when Bataille says that “death means everything” to the world of accumulation and duration, he is thinking about how the anxiety and horror around death is related to our commitment to preserving ourselves in the future, a commitment that involves various forms of displacement and deferral. In other words, the will to futurity intensifies the anxiety and anguish that accompany thoughts and images of death, mortality, and vulnerability. Of course, humans are also fascinated with images, and practices, of violence and death, but only if they can experience and view these images from a comfortable distance or participate in these practices in a manner that reduces the risks to the self’s coherence and duration.9 On the duplicity of the self’s relationship to violence, Bataille writes, “Violence, and death signifying violence, have a double meaning. On the one hand the horror of death drives us off, for we prefer life; on the other an element at once solemn and terrifying fascinates us and disturbs us profoundly” (Bataille 1986, 45). What is crucial here is that the order of things, the order of life preservation, is defined over and against death and loss—death means everything to this order. Yet I also take Bataille to be suggesting that everyday projects and strategies of self-preservation are implicated in the mundane, often undetected, exploitation and suffering of others; again, death means everything to the real world. Therefore, the human self is a site of a paradox: the world of projects, goals, and accumulation “imparts an unreal character to death even though man’s membership in this world is tied to the positing of the body as a thing insofar as it is mortal” (Bataille 2006, 46). According to Bataille, our general commitment to duration, to reproducing life, will always mean that some being, force, or desire will be marked as a threat or danger to that reproduction. And those threats will have to be managed, assimilated, disciplined, or subordinated in some manner. One’s ability to endure in this world, to accumulate recognition, prestige, and various kinds of capital means that one must separate oneself, to some extent, from those qualities and characteristics that endanger self or communal projects and aspirations. To put it differently, life needs to be cordoned off from death and those beings associated with death (even as we know that life and death are always intertwined and that certain kinds of subjects and communities are made more vulnerable to death and its intimations). Here Bataille’s line of thought converges with Baldwin’s point about social life providing a kind of barrier to “menacing” forces, to beings and desires that signify chaos and disorder. If Baldwin and Bataille are right, then racism, which is always about marking, disciplining, and managing “dangerous” bodies and communities, must be confronted alongside fundamental social and human limitations.

#### Liberal peace is inseparable from the violent façade of liberal pacification which obscures the escalating cycle of phenomenological violence at the heart of the world order that kills value to life and ensures nuclear war

Baron, et al, 19—Associate Professor in the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University (Ilan Zvi, with Jonathan Havercroft, Associate Professor in International Political Theory at the University of Southampton, Isaac Kamola, assistant professor of political science at Trinity College, Jonneke Koomen, Associate Professor of Politics, Sociology and Women’s and Gender Studies at Willamette University, Alex Prichard, senior lecturer in International Relations at the University of Exeter, and Justin Murphy, anticlimactically just an independent scholar, “Liberal Pacification and the Phenomenology of Violence,” International Studies Quarterly (2019) 63, 199–212, dml) [ableist language modifications denoted by brackets]

Phenomenology, as we are using it, is not about lived experience. It is the philosophical tradition of revealing different types of beings and things that contain meaning in our world, the structures and/or contexts in which they exist, and how these structures and contexts are meaningful. Understood in this way, violence is one of these structures and/or contexts. A phenomenological perspective does not approach violence from a particular normative position, although it does not preclude normative critique. A phenomenological approach does not treat violence as a discrete thing that one agent does to another, although it does not preclude such acts being described as violent. Instead, a phenomenological perspective adds to our intellectual and methodological toolbox by identifying violence as a condition or context in which people function. Phenomenology allows us to identify violence occurring in ways and in places that we otherwise would not be able to recognize. It does not change the meaning of violence (as harm, for example). Instead, it treats violence ontologically, enabling us to reveal more accurately the extent to which violence exists in the world.

From a phenomenological perspective, violence is often inconspicuous. Violence can function as a naturalized or internalized regime of compulsion or domination. Pacification reveals both the pervasiveness of violence and forms of violence that may otherwise remain inconspicuous. The erasing of tradition and the enforcement of particular legal codes at the expense of indigenous cultural norms is one example of an inconspicuous form of violence that involves conspicuous and inconspicous consequences (Cocks 2014). In understanding violence phenomenologically, as a structure of revealing across multiple worlds, we are better able to reveal the extent to which violence shapes our world and how we are then shaped by violence.

Pacavere

The Romans understood violence as a necessary condition for pax. The liberal imagination blinds itself to [obfuscates] the ways that pacification functions as violence in our world order. International relations scholarship’s strict distinction between peace and violence reinforces this obfuscation. Yet, the violence of (and in) pacification is central to the contemporary world. A phenomenological approach shows that moments of violent rupture are not aberrations of the world order. Violent outbreaks are breakdowns of pacification. It follows that multiple structures of the world order function as the violence of pacification, of pacavere.12 These structures include liberal capitalism, colonialism and the postcolonial aftermath, and war. Each functions as a key site of pacification. Anarchist thought reveals the pacification in liberal capitalism. Postcolonial thought reveals the pacification of colonial projects. Both anarchist and postcolonial thought demonstrate how war is a breakdown of pacification, revealing the hidden violent structures of our worldhood.

Anarchist critiques of capitalism, unlike Marxist and liberal interpretations, take seriously the decisive role of state violence in structuring society and markets. Anarchists view the state as an institution that sustains elite appropriations of political and economic power (Proudhon [1861] 1998; Sorel 1999; Prichard 2015). Those at the bottom of the social hierarchy bear the costs of this enforced order. The state diffuses violence (pacification) throughout the entire society—often in ways that go unrecognized by its subjects (Sorel 1999, 65). The naturalization of violence consolidates arbitrary regimes of domination in society. While specific, countable incidents of violence may decline, the social order is largely premised on the threat of violence for contravening social norms making specific, countable incidents of violence relatively rare (Kinna and Prichard, forthcoming).

Anarchist thinkers view rising inequality in the context of declining riots, insurgencies, and assassinations (see Figure 1) as evidence of pacification. Incidents of proletarian violence, anticolonial violence, riots, and protests are all examples of resistance to the “regimes of domination” that shape contemporary society, regimes easily identifiable by those subject to them (Gordon 2007, 33). Drawing on these accounts, we interpret declining rates of riots as a sign of increased pacification, rather than evidence that the system is becoming less violent. Conversely, eruptions of antistate and anticapitalist direct violence are signs of a breakdown in pacification. Much like Heidegger’s example of broken equipment (1962, 102–3, 412–13), which draws our attention to the background structures of our world, brief instances of direct violence reveal violently structured social relations.

Although the liberal imagination obscures the centrality of violence, violence has always been central to the liberal world order—to the liberal worldhood—particularly during the colonial and imperial projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Bell 2007a, 2007b). Colonial violence was diffused throughout the entire society, often in ways that went unrecognized by the colonized themselves. The violence of pacification structured the very existence of the colonized subject. This violence transformed the colonized subjects into a different “species” (Fanon 1963, 35– 40, 43). Colonial pacification was more than direct and indirect violence; it was sufficiently diffuse to remake the psyche of the colonized, affecting their mental health and emotions (Fanon 1963, 35–106). Fanon (1963, 31) described it as “atmospheric violence,” a “violence rippling under the skin.” Unable to lash out against the colonizer, the colonized lived everyday within a world ordered by violence. In this world, the colonized could not respond to the colonizers for fear of directly violent reprisals and would turn to symbolic activities such as a dance circle to expose the violence experienced on a daily basis (Fanon 1963, 57). For the colonized, rituals such as the dance were a means of expressing existential frustrations with and resistance to the violence of colonial pacification through reenactments of direct violence. Ultimately, anticolonial struggles exposed the violence of colonialism by directing that violence back on its authors.

Practices of colonial rule were central to developing liberal norms of sovereignty, as well as to the domination and control of recalcitrant populations whether within Europe, such as the English domination of the Welsh, Irish, and Scots, or outside of Europe by settler colonialists against indigenous populations (Deloria Jr 1974; Anghie 2005; Miller 2006; Havercroft 2008; Shaw 2008; Barkawi and Stanski 2012; Coulthard 2014; Simpson 2014; Lightfoot 2016; Rueda-Saiz 2017). This civilizing imagination functioned phenomenologically. It produced insiders as civilized and peaceful and outsiders as violent, external threats to civilization. In doing so, this imagination successfully obscured how the structures of liberalism produced colonial violence.13

FOOTNOTE 13 Arguments about the foundational role of colonialism, primitive accumulation, and white supremacy in structuring the modern international system are particularly useful in thinking about phenomenological violence (Jones 2006; Anievas, Manchanda, and Shilliam 2015; Du Bois 1915; Shaw 2008; Coulthard 2014; Deloria 1974; Lowe 2015; Hartman 1997). The legacy of these practices pervades contemporary liberal peace-building (Richmond 2014; Sabaratnam 2015; Bouka 2013; Autesserre 2009) and liberal global governance (Koomen 2014a, 2014b, 2013), while trade liberalization can facilitate mass violence (Kamola 2007; Smith 2016). Césaire argues that colonialism produced a “boomerang effect” within European societies; Nazism was the return of violence previously “applied only to non-European peoples” (Césaire 2000, 36). At independence, international law became a mechanism for reinforcing this international order upon the previously colonized world (Grovogui 1996).

The idea of war as an external practice of states, not tied to their internal workings and located according to specific normative projections of Western identity, followed from this colonial mentality. This mentality legitimized the exporting of violence to create a Western imperial pax and was so widespread that it shaped the development of modern warfare (Ellis 1986; Proudhon [1861] 1998). The colonial wars reproduced and reinforced ideologies of Western superiority, evidenced in part by the West’s superior military technology. A consequence of this racist hubris was the inability to foresee the destructive tendencies of Western warfare when unleashed against themselves (Ellis 1986).

The discipline of international relations, founded in response to the unexpectedly destructive character of the First World War, reproduced this understanding of war.14 This understanding disguises the possibility of increasing violence within the liberal world by presuming a historical narrative of progress and being shocked by its aberration. War, however, is not the absence of peace or an aberration of liberal progress, but is instead a phenomenological breaking of the liberal worldhood.15

Once a liberal order of democracy, free markets, and international institutions are spread throughout the world, liberal ideology imagines peace as the end state. Yet, states often deploy war under liberal guises.16 Wars under the aegis of humanitarian values and regime change are examples of the multifaceted character of liberal pacification. Liberal regimes emphasize the violence of those that they are invading, while minimizing the violence involved in these military undertakings and the violence necessary to sustain the liberal societies themselves. What Pierre-Joseph Proudhon called “the moral phenomenology of war” (Prichard 2015, 112–34; Proudhon [1861] 1998) becomes an integral part of the everyday workings of society that shape innumerable aspects of our daily language. The upshot is that, within liberal ideology, the violence committed by liberal states is justified, whereas the violence committed by illiberal states is not.

Postcolonial and anarchist scholarship focuses on the incorporation of violence in the production of liberal spaces (Barkawi and Laffey 1999). These same concerns can be directed onto the liberal order itself. Seen from the perspective of marginalized and oppressed populations, the structures of liberal pacification take on a distinctly violent aspect. The liberal world is not less violent. Rather, the liberal world involves a sophisticated phenomenological process of legitimating certain types of violence in order to render other types of violence invisible.

Liberal Pacification

What does it mean to apply this third type of violence to our understanding of international relations? Pacification reveals liberalism as a violent process as opposed to a system that is emblematic of the absence of direct violence. There are parallels between the Pax Britannia, Pax Americana, and the ancient peace of the Pax Romana (Neocleous 2010, 13). However, our account emphasizes the crucial role of pacification as a distinct kind of violence in maintaining these pacific orders. Our theory offers the novel insight that incorporating pacification into the analysis of the liberal peace reveals crucial aspects of this peace that conventional and critical accounts neglect.

A focus on pacification provides three critical insights. First, it recovers the crucial role of pacification in the historical founding of the liberal order. Second, by distinguishing between three kinds of violence (Figure 2), we account for the empirical observations of the liberal peace as leading to a decline in direct violence and an increase in violence overall as part of the pacification of the Pax Americana. Conversely, the liberal version of the Pax Americana cannot account for key anomalies. Third, our approach draws attention to the violent ordering of social relations. This dimension of violence is neglected even in Marxist, postcolonial, neo-Gramscian, and post-structuralist critiques of the liberal peace, which primarily focus on the role of direct and indirect violence in maintaining the Pax Americana.

Contemporary liberal international relations theory emphasizes the nonviolent role of the liberal triad (democracy, free markets, and institutions) in causing the liberal peace. Yet, a quick review of the history of liberalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shows that key figures in liberalism, from John Stuart Mill, to Joseph Galliéni, to American foreign policy elites, understood pacification as a necessary step in establishing and maintaining the liberal order

Mill, one of the philosophical founders of liberalism, conceptualized and deployed liberalism as a domination strategy. Mill argued that it is appropriate to impose despotism or slavery on “savages” who incline to “fighting and rapine,” but the government should use force as little as possible:

What they require is not a government of force, but one of guidance. Being, however, in too low a state to yield to the guidance of any but those to whom they look up as the possessors of force, the sort of government fittest for them is one [that] possesses force, but seldom uses it. (Mill 1998, 232–33)

In terms of our conceptual distinction, Mill argued that liberalism as pacification was a more effective instrument of violence than the direct modes of violence that governments usually deploy.

The history of European colonialism is replete with this line of reasoning. “[L]iberal improvement” was a regular plank of colonial strategy by France and Britain in the nineteenth century (Owens 2015, 154). Consider one example from the French colonial tradition. Galliéni, a military commander and administrator, consciously deployed liberalism as a domination strategy in the pacification of Tonkin during the 1890s. Galliéni’s strategy involved slowly spreading military outposts and deploying civil administrators to create markets, schools, and amenities. The rationale was that locals would gain a personal interest in the continuation of French control and would help to quell Chinese brigandage. “Piracy,” said Galliéni, “is the result of an economic condition. It can be fought by prosperity” (quoted in Owens 2015, 157). Galliéni devised a “theory of pacification” in which “the correct combination of force and politics can socialize, pacify, and domesticate a population into regulating itself” (quoted in Owens 2015, 157). What Mill proposed in theory, Galliéni enacted in practice; pacification—the violent reordering of social relations in a colony—was a more effective means of maintaining liberal rule than the deployment of direct violence.

While less explicit, the relationship between liberalism and imperialism remained present in the twentieth-century development of the Pax Americana. During this era, US policy makers sought to construct a zone of peace distinct from the zones of war associated with authoritarian regimes. The US State Department first recognized the concept of “hegemonic pacification” in the Euro-Atlantic conference diplomacy of the 1920s (Cohrs 2008, 619). The United States’ “strategic restraint” in the aftermath of World War Two was motivated by this concept of liberal, hegemonic pacification (Ikenberry 2009; Ikenberry 2011, 173). US defense officials Stimson, Patterson, McCloy, and Assistant Secretary Howard C. Peterson agreed that it was a matter of the security interests of the United States to maintain “open markets, unhindered access to raw materials, and the rehabilitation of much—if not all—of Eurasia along liberal capitalist lines” (Leffler 1984, 349–56; Barkawi and Laffey 1999). Liberalism as a domination and pacifying strategy continued throughout (and long after) the Cold War (Laffey 2003; Stokes 2003), as evident in one of the founding documents of the post–World War Two liberal order, NSC-68 (Ikenberry 2011, 168). While the enforcement of a Pax Americana eventually yielded a decline in direct violence, it produced an increase in other types of violence. The first insight of our theory is that pacification has always been part of the liberal project and that the violence in the liberal project never went away.

The second insight is that by reinterpreting the liberal peace as liberal pacification we are able to grant the empirical findings of liberal peace theorists while maintaining that the Pax Americana represents an intensification of violence overall. In the language of positivist social science, our theory is observationally equivalent to that of liberal peace theory. We expect that the quantity of direct violence inversely associates with the degree of pacification in a society. Therefore, our interpretation challenges research that identifies liberal institutions as the cause of declining violence. Liberal institutions, as apparatuses of liberal pacification, ensure that direct violence is increasingly rare while leaving the structures of violence and domination in place. The observational equivalence on particular dependent variables (in our case, all forms of direct violence) produces a theoretical change requiring the generation of novel observable implications (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 30).

Furthermore, increased suffering in liberal societies provides evidence contradicting the main claims of liberal peace theories, while remaining consistent with liberal pacification. At its core, liberalism is a project that tries to maximize the utility of its subjects (in other words, minimize suffering while maximizing happiness). As such, a state of liberal peace should lead to a decrease in markers of suffering. However, there is more slavery in the world today than ever before, with conservative estimates of between 12.3 and 27 million people in debt bondage, chattel, or contract slavery (Gordon 2012).17 Moreover, there is ample evidence of rising psychological disorders in liberal societies. A preponderance of evidence from the United States suggests that depression, anxiety, alienation, opioid dependency, stress, other related psychological disorders, increased social isolation, and the decline of community have increased throughout the twentieth century (Twenge, Zhang, and Im 2004, 320; Adler, Boyce, Chesney, et al. 1994; Twenge 2000; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, et al. 2008; Twenge, Gentile, DeWall, et al. 2010; Cohen and Janicki-Deverts 2012; American Society of Addiction Medicine 2016). Changes to human life associated with modernity have caused psychological stress to increase (Jackson 2014). Mortality rates have increased for some white, non-Hispanics aged 45–54 in the United States between 1999 and 2013 (Case and Deaton 2015). Modern technological advances from television to the Internet may contribute to increasing separation and alienation of the social human animal into individualized bodies connected by increasingly weak and empty bonds (Putnam 2000; Gray 2011; Turkle 2011). At minimum, new information communication technology such as Facebook can increase the stress and anxiety of its users (Lee-Won, Herzog, and Park 2015). The violent structuring of liberalism enables increases in social alienation, anxiety, stress, and human bondage through repression, economic control, and social isolation.

These are not isolated instances of suffering. They are fundamental structural features of our liberal world. If liberalism is a process of pacification rather than simply peace, then this rise in individual suffering in liberal spaces may be evidence of a similar process that Fanon equated with the psychic life of the colonist. Just as Fanon’s colonial subjects, unable to lash out at the settler through direct violence, internalized their suffering, modern liberal subjects, unable to resist liberal pacification, internalize their suffering (1982, chap. 6; cf. Sorel 1999, 118). Liberal peace should bring about a rise in happiness; that it has instead led to rising suffering is evidence of liberal pacification.

Third, in addition to offering an alternative interpretation of the liberal peace, our theory of liberal pacification supplements key insights from critical approaches to peace. Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey’s work on imperial processes and liberal spaces makes a similar point to ours, that the celebrated zone of liberal peace rests on practices of violence (Barkawi and Laffey 1999, 2002; cf. Neocleous et al. 2013). Their account, however, focuses on practices of direct violence, such as humanitarian interventions against authoritarian regimes or corporations hiring local militias to make work sites in the global south safe for economic extraction (Barkawi and Laffey 1999, 422). Our point is that these moments of direct violence lead to pacification wherein social relations have been so violently reordered as to make direct violence no longer necessary. Once direct violence has established liberal space, pacification functions as a structure of violence that sustains the space. Direct violence only manifests itself when pacification weakens.

Pacification, however, does not merely operate through manipulating the conscience of its subjects. While Marxist and Gramscian concepts of ideology and hegemony are consistent with our theory of pacification (Peceny 1997, 418), they do not address how the constructed political order sustains itself through a violent reordering of social relations. A Gramscian-inspired critique of the democratic peace can yield a bird’s-eye view of the ways in which liberal peace theory is itself deployed as an ideological tool (Ish-Shalom 2006, 569–75). However, Gramscianinspired approaches do not account for the ways that everyday practices of violence (for example, surveillance technologies, implied threats from weapons, security barriers, etc.) sustain liberal pacification. While ideational factors are important in pacification, these factors rest upon practices and structures that are of an ontological-existential character. To review, our reinterpretation of the liberal peace as liberal pacification offers three novel insights. First, liberal scholars and others associate the development of the liberal order with peace and a decline in violence by ignoring how pacification is part of the liberal project. Second, the empirically observed decline in violence equated with the liberal peace is not necessarily a sign of human progress but could be a sign of intensified repression or increases in other forms of suffering across the liberal world order. Third, our concept of pacification reveals violence that is neither direct nor indirect but is phenomenologically structured into the world order. Understanding liberalism as pacification produces a paradigm shift. Liberal pacification is violent in the sense that it coerces a specific type of liberal docility, while also preventing types of resistance that might be understood as violent, including riots, insurrections, civil wars, and interstate wars. Pacification reveals the ongoing violence at the heart of a political project that imagines itself to be against violence.

Conclusion

Our account of pacification recovers a crucial aspect of pax, one originally etched into Roman monuments. The heading of the Res Gestae (the funeral monument to Emperor Augustus) reads, “[t]his is how he [Augustus] made the world subject to the power of the people of Rome” (Beard 2016, 364). This monument does not celebrate peace as the absence of violence; it celebrates pacification. Pax takes the form of a process that violently reorders the world so that imperial subjects are rendered incapable of using violence to resist Roman rule. The absence of overt acts of violence depends upon the maximization of pacification.

The practice of pacification includes threats, coercion, intimidation, and surveillance to restructure and sustain social and political relations. When this type of violence operates effectively, it appears as the absence of violence; pacification’s violence resides in the structuring of the prevailing order. While such an outcome may appear peaceful, it entails, at best, a negative peace that operates through a violent and coercive reordering of society.

Liberal peace advocates measure direct violence and equate the decline in that kind of violence with peace. However, our claim is that the spread of liberal institutions does not necessarily decrease violence but transforms it. Our phenomenological analysis captures empirical trends in human domination and suffering that liberal peace theories fail to account for, including increased inequality, slavery, anxiety, addiction, and anomie. Our analysis also highlights how a decline in direct violence may actually coincide with the transformation of violence in ways that are concealed, monopolized, and structured into the fabric of modern liberal society. If our theory is correct, we will find increases in markers of suffering as society liberalizes. While we cannot say whether these indicators are unique to pacified liberal societies, it is significant that they are rarely, if ever, discussed in terms of violence and the liberal peace.

Liberal pacification is observationally equivalent to liberal peace. This is not a semantic argument. Liberal peace advocates claim that processes that promote individual freedom and autonomy (that is, democracy, free markets, and global institutions) cause peace. While the restructuring of the global order—pacification—reduces direct violence, it also restructures social relations in ways that are violent. Declines in directly observable violence render other forms of violence invisible as violence; in fact, insidious, coercive, and violent systems of military deterrence and compellence, nuclear terror, surveillance, and intimidation constitute the worldhood of the liberal order.

#### Reject Brands---his “arguments” lack accountability, selectively reads history, and cause the wars the aff seeks to prevent---

Glaser, 18 – John Glaser, Director of Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, 2018(“TRUTH, POWER, AND THE ACADEMY: A RESPONSE TO HAL BRANDS,” War on the Rocks, 3-26-2018, Available Online from <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/truth-power-and-the-academy-a-response-to-hal-brands/>, bam)

Most of Brands’ account, however, is just flat out wrong. The evidence repudiates the suggestion, for example, that policymakers are held accountable for their ideas. The Obama administration’s war in Libya is widely considered a failure (Obama said not being prepared for the chaotic aftermath was the “worst mistake” of his presidency). Who in officialdom was held accountable? Which member of the Bush administration – or its Republican and Democratic enablers – suffered real consequences for the crime of preventive war against Iraq? Some point to Republican losses in subsequent elections, or the fact that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was fired for mismanagement of the war, as examples of accountability. But Rumsfeld got canned because of particular operational ideas he held about deployment and tactics, not because he favored the war. And short-term electoral losses in the mid-terms or the next presidential election are weak sauce, not just because these fickle changes can hardly rectify past wrongs of such magnitude, but because the same crop of analysts and politicians for whom the Iraq War made perfect sense continue to dominate the foreign policy establishment, both in and out of government. Trump’s decision this week to hire John Bolton, a paragon of everything that is wrong with the war-prone and expert-allergic nature of U.S. foreign policy, as national security advisor is a perfect example of this lack of accountability. As Steve Walt recently pointed out, none of the scholars that signed the famed 2002 full page advertisement in the New York Times opposing the Iraq War have served in policy positions, whereas plenty of people in elected office, the unelected national security apparatus, and the foreign policy commentariat who did support the war continue to dominate these arenas.

But it’s not just the big failures like Iraq and Libya. The ideas that drive these failed policies continue to dominate in Washington. The notion that America should fight preventive wars for the sake of non-proliferation is still widely shared. Fighting wars for the sake of credibility is also popular. Expanding NATO, despite the lack of benefit to U.S. interests and the instability it causes in Eastern Europe, almost amounts to religious doctrine. Despite its steep costs and risky adventurism, a grand strategy of primacy continues to monopolize U.S. foreign policy decision-making. The scholarship-policy gap persists because the people and ideas that drive foreign policy in Washington are not held accountable for their failures, and instead are often rewarded with a lifetime of high-status revolving door positions in the policy and think tank worlds. Bad ideas, particularly hawkish ones, and the people that hold them continue to win the day in Washington. That is not accountability.

Nor does Brands’ discussion of worst-case scenario policymaking ring true. Brands speaks favorably of former Vice President Dick Cheney’s “one percent doctrine,” which says that if a threat has even a one percent chance of becoming a reality, it requires enormous resources to mitigate. The argument that Washington ought to design policies based on inflated threats of worst-case scenarios, instead of the rational cost-benefit risk assessments done by scholars, is dangerously wrong. America’s post-9/11 “War on Terror” policies have done exactly that, and it has led to a host of destabilizing elective wars and egregious overspending on homeland security. Plus, Brands’ reading of history here is selective. On issues ranging from NATO expansion and competition with China, to humanitarian intervention in Libya and beyond, policymakers have roundly espoused best-case scenarios for the outcomes of their policies. Instead, it has been scholars who have warned of worst-case scenarios – citing standoffs with Russia, escalatory risks with China, and the impossibility of reconstructing broken states at any reasonable cost.

In short, Brands has presented the problem in reverse: What needs to be explained is not why academics are out of touch, but why policymakers have been so doggedly resistant to their more reliable counterparts in academia.

#### Primacy and Hegemony frames do literally nothing

Fettweis 17(Christopher J.-assistant professor of political science at Tulane University. “Unipolarity, Hegemony, and the New Peace” Published in Security Studies Vol 26 No 3. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09636412.2017.1306394?src=recsys&journalCode=fsst20>)//mba-alb

Even the most ardent supporters of the hegemonic-stability explanation do not contend that US influence extends equally to all corners of the globe. The United States has concentrated its policing in what George Kennan used to call “strong points,” or the most important parts of the world: Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Persian Gulf.64 By doing so, Washington may well have contributed more to great power peace than the overall global decline in warfare. If the former phenomenon contributed to the latter, by essentially providing a behavioral model for weaker states to emulate, then perhaps this lends some support to the hegemonic-stability case.65 During the Cold War, the United States played referee to a few intra-West squabbles, especially between Greece and Turkey, and provided Hobbesian reassurance to Germany’s nervous neighbors. Other, equally plausible explanations exist for stability in the first world, including the presence of a common enemy, democracy, economic interdependence, general war aversion, etc. The looming presence of the leviathan is certainly among these plausible explanations, but only inside the US sphere of influence. Bipolarity was bad for the nonaligned world, where Soviet and Western intervention routinely exacerbated local conflicts. Unipolarity has generally been much better, but whether or not this was due to US action is again unclear. Overall US interest in the affairs of the Global South has dropped markedly since the end of the Cold War, as has the level of violence in almost all regions. There is less US intervention in the political and military affairs of Latin America compared to any time in the twentieth century, for instance, and also less conflict. Warfare in Africa is at an all-time low, as is relative US interest outside of counterterrorism and security assistance.66 **Regional peace and stability exist where there is US active intervention, as well as where there is not. No direct relationship seems to exist across regions**. If intervention can be considered a function of direct and indirect activity, of both political and military action, a regional picture might look like what is outlined in Table 1. These assessments of conflict are by necessity relative, because there has not been a “high” level of conflict in any region outside the Middle East during the period of the New Peace. Putting aside for the moment that important caveat, some points become clear. The great powers of the world are clustered in the upper right quadrant, where US intervention has been high, but conflict levels low. US intervention is imperfectly correlated with stability, however. Indeed, it is conceivable that the **relatively high level of US interest and activity has made the security situation in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East worse**. In recent years, substantial hard power investments (Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq), moderate intervention (Libya), and reliance on diplomacy (Syria) have been equally ineffective in stabilizing states torn by conflict. While it is possible that the region is essentially unpacifiable and no amount of police work would bring peace to its people, it remains hard to make the case that the US presence has improved matters. In this “strong point,” at least, US hegemony has failed to bring peace. In much of the rest of the world, the United States has not been especially eager to enforce any particular rules. Even rather incontrovertible evidence of genocide has not been enough to inspire action. Washington’s intervention choices have at best been erratic; Libya and Kosovo brought about action, but much more blood flowed uninterrupted in Rwanda, Darfur, Congo, Sri Lanka, and Syria. The US record of peacemaking is not exactly a long uninterrupted string of successes. During the turn-of-the-century conventional war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a highlevel US delegation containing former and future National Security Advisors (Anthony Lake and Susan Rice) made a half-dozen trips to the region, but was unable to prevent either the outbreak or recurrence of the conflict. Lake and his team shuttled back and forth between the capitals with some frequency, and President Clinton made repeated phone calls to the leaders of the respective countries, offering to hold peace talks in the United States, all to no avail.67 The war ended in late 2000 when Ethiopia essentially won, and it controls the disputed territory to this day. The Horn of Africa is hardly the only region where states are free to fight one another today without fear of serious US involvement. Since they are choosing not to do so with increasing frequency, something else is probably affecting their calculations. Stability exists even in those places where the potential for intervention by the sheriff is minimal. Hegemonic stability can only take credit for influencing those decisions that would have ended in war without the presence, whether physical or psychological, of the United States. **It seems hard to make the case that the relative peace that has descended on so many regions is primarily due to the kind of heavy hand of the neoconservative leviathan,** or its lighter, more liberal cousin. Something else appears to be at work. Conflict and US Military Spending How does one measure polarity? Power is traditionally considered to be some combination of military and economic strength, but despite scores of efforts, no widely accepted formula exists. Perhaps overall military spending might be thought of as a proxy for hard power capabilities; perhaps too the amount of money the United States devotes to hard power is a reflection of the strength of the unipole. When compared to conflict levels, however, **there is no obvious correlation, and certainly not the kind of negative relationship between US spending and conflict that many hegemonic stability theorists would expect to see**. During the 1990s, the United States cut back on defense by about 25 percent, spending $100 billion less in real terms in 1998 that it did in 1990.68 To those believers in the neoconservative version of hegemonic stability, this irresponsible “peace dividend” endangered both national and global security. “No serious analyst of American military capabilities doubts that the defense budget has been cut much too far to meet America’s responsibilities to itself and to world peace,” argued Kristol and Kagan at the time.69 **The world grew dramatically more peaceful while the United States cut its forces**, however, and stayed just as peaceful while spending rebounded after the 9/11 terrorist attacks**. The incidence and magnitude of global conflict declined while the military budget was cut** under President Clinton, in other words, **and kept declining** (though more slowly, since levels were already low) as the Bush administration ramped it back up. Overall US military spending has varied during the period of the New Peace from a low in constant dollars of less than $400 billion to a high of more than $700 billion, but war does not seem to have noticed. The same nonrelationship exists between other potential proxy measurements for hegemony and conflict: **there does not seem to be much connection between warfare and fluctuations in US GDP, alliance commitments, and forward military presence**. There was very little fighting in Europe when there were 300,000 US troops stationed there, for example, and that has not changed as the number of Americans dwindled by 90 percent. Overall, **there does not seem to be much correlation between US actions and systemic stability**. Nothing the United States actually does seems to matter to the New Peace. It is possible that absolute military spending might not be as important to explain the phenomenon as relative. Although Washington cut back on spending during the 1990s, its relative advantage never wavered. The United States has accounted for between 35 and 41 percent of global military spending every year since the collapse of the Soviet Union.70 The perception of relative US power might be the decisive factor in decisions made in other capitals. One cannot rule out the possibility that it is the perception of US power—and its willingness to use it—that keeps the peace. In other words, perhaps it is the grand strategy of the United States, rather than its absolute capability, that is decisive in maintaining stability. It is that to which we now turn. Conflict and US Grand Strategy The perception of US power, and the strength of its hegemony, is to some degree a function of grand strategy. If indeed US strategic choices are responsible for the New Peace, then variation in those choices ought to have consequences for the level of international conflict. A restrained United States is much less likely to play the role of sheriff than one following a more activist approach. Were the unipole to follow such a path, hegemonic-stability theorists warn, disaster would follow. Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski spoke for many when he warned that “outright chaos” could be expected to follow a loss of hegemony, including a string of quite specific issues, including new or renewed attempts to build regional empires (by China, Turkey, Russia, and Brazil) and the collapse of the US relationship with Mexico, as emboldened nationalists south of the border reassert 150-year-old territorial claims. Overall, without US dominance, today’s relatively peaceful world would turn “violent and bloodthirsty.” 71 Niall Ferguson foresees a post-hegemonic “Dark Age” in which “plunderers and pirates” target the big coastal cities like New York and Rotterdam, terrorists attack cruise liners and aircraft carriers alike, and the “wretchedly poor citizens” of Latin America are unable to resist the Protestantism brought to them by US evangelicals. Following the multiple (regional, fortunately) nuclear wars and plagues, the few remaining airlines would be forced to suspend service to all but the very richest cities.72 These are somewhat extreme versions of a central assumption of all hegemonic-stability theorists: a restrained United States would be accompanied by utter disaster. The “present danger” of which Kristol, Kagan, and their fellow travelers warn is that the United States “will shrink its responsibilities and—in a fit of absentmindedness, or parsimony, or indifference— allow the international order that it created and sustains to collapse.” 73 Liberals fear restraint as well, and also warn that a militarized version of primacy would be counterproductive in the long run. Although they believe that the rule-based order established by United States is more durable than the relatively fragile order discussed by the neoconservatives, liberals argue that Washington can undermine its creation over time through thoughtless unilateral actions that violate those rules. Many predicted that the invasion of Iraq and its general contempt for international institutions and law would call the legitimacy of the order into question. G. John Ikenberry worried that Bush’s “geostrategic wrecking ball” would lead to a more hostile, divided, and dangerous world.74 Thus while all hegemonicstability theorists expect a rise of chaos during a restrained presidency, liberals also have grave concerns regarding primacy. Overall, if either version is correct and global stability is provided by US hegemony, then maintaining that stability through a grand strategy based on either primacy (to neoconservatives) or “deep engagement” (to liberals) is clearly a wise choice.75 If, however, US actions are only tangentially related to the outbreak of the New Peace, or if any of the other proposed explanations are decisive, then the United States can retrench without fear of negative consequences. The grand strategy of the United States is therefore crucial to beliefs in hegemonic stability Although few observers would agree on the details, most would probably acknowledge that post-Cold War grand strategies of American presidents have differed in some important ways. The four administrations are reasonable representations of the four ideal types outlined by Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross in 1996.76 Under George H. W. Bush, the United States followed the path of “selective engagement,” which is sometimes referred to as “balance-of-power realism”; Bill Clinton’s grand strategy looks a great deal like what Posen and Ross call “cooperative security,” and others call “liberal internationalism”; George W. Bush, especially in his first term, forged a strategy that was as close to “primacy” as any president is likely to get; and Barack Obama, despite some early flirtation with liberalism, has followed a restrained realist path, which Posen and Ross label “neo-isolationism” but its proponents refer to as “strategic restraint.” 77 In no case did the various anticipated disorders materialize**.** As Table 2 demonstrates, **armed conflict levels fell steadily, irrespective of the grand strategic path Washington chose.** Neither the primacy of George W. Bush nor the restraint of Barack Obama had much effect on the level of global violence. Despite continued warnings (and the high-profile mess in Syria), the world has not experienced an increase in violence while the United States chose uninvolvement. If the grand strategy of the United States is responsible for the New Peace, it is leaving no trace in the evidence. Perhaps we should not expect a correlation to show up in this kind of analysis. While US behavior might have varied in the margins during this period, nether its relative advantage over its nearest rivals nor its commitments waivered in any important way. However, it is surely worth noting that if trends opposite to those discussed in the previous two sections had unfolded, if other states had reacted differently to fluctuations in either US military spending or grand strategy, then surely hegemonic stability theorists would argue that their expectations had been fulfilled. Many liberals were on the lookout for chaos while George W. Bush was in the White House, just as neoconservatives have been quick to identify apparent worldwide catastrophe under President Obama.78 If increases in violence would have been evidence for the wisdom of hegemonic strategies, then logical consistency demands that the lack thereof should at least pose a problem. As it stands, the only evidence we have regarding the relationship between US power and international stability suggests that the two are unrelated. The rest of the world appears quite capable and willing to operate effectively without the presence of a global policeman. Those who think otherwise have precious little empirical support upon which to build their case. Hegemonic stability is a belief, in other words, rather than an established fact, and as such deserves a different kind of examination. The Political Psychology of Unipolarity Evidence supporting the notion that US power is primarily responsible for the New Peace is slim, but belief in the connection is quite strong, especially in policy circles. The best arena to examine the proposition is therefore not the world of measurable rationality, but rather that of the human mind. **Political psychology can shed more light on unipolarity than can any collection of data or evidence**. Just because an outcome is primarily psychological does not mean that it is less real; perception quickly becomes reality for both the unipolar state and those in the periphery. If all actors believe that the United States provides security and stability for the system, then behavior can be affected. Beliefs have deep explanatory power in international politics whether they have a firm foundation in empirical reality or not. Like all beliefs, faith in the stability provided by hegemony is rarely subjected to much analysis.79 Although they almost always have some basis in reality, beliefs need not pass rigorous tests to prove that they match it. No amount of evidence has been able to convince some people that vaccines do not cause autism, for example, or that the world is more peaceful than at any time before, or that the climate is changing due to human activity. Ultimately, as Robert Jervis explains, “we often believe as much in the face of evidence as because of it.” 80 Facts may change, but beliefs remain the same. When leaders are motivated to act based on unjustified, inaccurate beliefs, folly often follows. The person who decides to take a big risk because of astrological advice in the morning’s horoscope can benefit from baseless superstition if the risk pays off. Probability and luck suggest that successful policy choices can sometimes flow from incorrect beliefs. Far more often, however, poor intellectual foundations lead to suboptimal or even disastrous outcomes. It is worthwhile to analyze the foundations of even our most deeply held beliefs to determine which ones are good candidates to inspire poor policy choices in those who hold them. People are wonderful rationalizers. There is much to be said for being the strongest country in the world; their status provides Americans both security and psychological rewards, as well as strong incentives to construct a rationale for preserving the unipolar moment that goes beyond mere selfishness. Since people enjoy being “number one,” they are susceptible to perceiving reality in ways that brings the data in line with their desires. It is no coincidence that most hegemonic stability theorists are American.81 Perhaps the satisfaction that comes with being the unipolar power has inspired Americans to misperceive the positive role that their status plays in the world. Three findings from political psychology can shed light on perceptions of hegemonic stability. They are mutually supportive, and, when taken together, suggest that it is likely that US policymakers overestimate the extent to which their actions are responsible for the choices of others. The belief in the major US contribution to world peace is probably unjustified. The Illusion of Control Could 5 percent of the world’s population hope to enforce rules upon the rest? Would even an internationally hegemonic United States be capable of producing the New Peace? Perhaps, but it also may be true that believers in hegemonic stability may be affected by the very common tendency of people to overestimate their ability to control events. A variety of evidence has accumulated over the past forty years to support Ellen J. Langer’s original observations about the “illusion of control” that routinely distorts perception.82 Even in situations where outcomes are clearly generated by pure chance, people tend to believe that they can exert control over events.83 There is little reason to believe that leaders are somehow less susceptible to such illusions than subjects in controlled experiments. The extensive research on the illusion of control has revealed two further findings that suggest US illusions might be even stronger than average. First, misperceptions of control appear to be correlated with power: individuals with higher socioeconomic status, as well as those who are members of dominant groups, are more likely to overestimate their ability to control events.84 Powerful people tend to be far more confident than others, often overly so, and that confidence leads them to inflate their own importance.85 Leaders of superpowers are thus particularly vulnerable to distorted perceptions regarding their ability to affect the course of events. **US observers had a greater structural predisposition** than others, for example, **to believe that they would have been able to control events** in the Persian Gulf following an injection of creative instability in 2003. The skepticism of less powerful allies was easily discounted. Second, there is reason to believe that culture matters as well as power. People from societies that value individualism are more likely to harbor illusions of control than those from collectivist societies, where assumptions of group agency are more common. When compared to people from other parts of the world, Westerners tend to view the world as “highly subject to personal control,” in the words of Richard Nisbett.86 North Americans appear particularly vulnerable in this regard.87 Those who come from relatively powerful countries with individualistic societies are therefore at high risk for misperceiving their ability to influence events. For the United States, the illusion of control extends beyond the water’s edge. An oft-discussed public good supposedly conferred by US hegemony is order in those parts of the world uncontrolled by sovereign states, or the “global commons.” 88 One such common area is the sea, where the United States maintains the only true blue-water navy in the world. That the United States has brought this peace to the high seas is a central belief of hegemonic-stability theorists, one rarely examined in any serious way. Indeed the maritime environment has been unusually peaceful for decades; the biggest naval battles since Okinawa took place during the Falklands conflict in 1982, and they were fairly minor.89 If hegemony is the key variable explaining stability at sea, maritime security would have to be far more chaotic without the US Navy. It is equally if not more plausible to suggest, however, that the reason other states are not building blue-water navies is not because the United States dissuades them from doing so but rather because none feels that trade is imperiled.90 In earlier times, and certainly during the age of mercantilism, zero-sum economics inspired efforts to cut off the trade of opponents on occasion, making control the sea extremely important. Today the free flow of goods is vital to all economies, and it would be in the interest of no state to interrupt it.91 Free trade at sea may no longer need protection, in other words, because it essentially has no enemies; the sheriff may be patrolling a crime-free neighborhood. The threat from the few remaining pirates hardly requires a robust naval presence, and is certainly not what hegemonic-stability advocates mean when they compare the role played by the US Navy in 2016 to that of the Royal Navy in 1816. It is at least possible that shared interest in open, free commons keeps the peace at sea rather than the United States. Oceans unpatrolled by the US Navy may be about as stable as they are with the presence of its carriers. The degree to which 273 active-duty ships exert control over vast common parts is not at all clear. People overestimate the degree to which they control events in their lives. Furthermore, if these observations from political psychology are right about the factors that influence the growth of illusions of power, then **US leaders and analysts are particularly susceptible to misperception**. They may well be overestimating the degree to which the United States can affect the behavior of others. The rest of the world may be able to get along just fine, on land and at sea, without US attempts to control it. Ego-Centric and Self-Serving Biases in Attribution It is natural for people, whether presidents or commoners, to misperceive the role they play in the thinking process of others. Jervis was the first to discuss this phenomenon, now known as the “ego-centric bias,” which has been put to the test many times since he wrote four decades ago. Building on what was known as “attribution theory,” Jervis observed that actors tend to overestimate their importance in the decisions of others. Rarely are our actions as consequential upon their behavior as we believe them to be.92 This is not merely ego gratification, though that plays a role; actors are simply more conscious of their own actions than the other factors central to the internal deliberations in other capitals. Because people are more likely to remember their contributions to an outcome, they naturally grant themselves more causal weight.93 **Two further aspects of the ego-centric bias make US analysts even more susceptible to its effects.** First, the bias is magnified when the behavior of others is desirable. People generally take credit for positive outcomes and deflect responsibility for negative ones. This “self-serving bias” is one of the best-established findings in modern psychology, supported by many hundreds of studies.94 Supporters of Ronald Reagan are happy to give him credit for ending the Cold War, for instance, even though evidence that the United States had much influence on Premier Gorbachev’s decision making is scant at best.95 Today, since few outcomes are more desirable than global stability, it stands to reason that perceptions of the New Peace are prime candidates for distortion by ego-centric, self-serving biases. When war breaks out, it is not the fault of US leaders; when peace comes to a region, Washington is happy to take credit. There was for some time a debate among psychologists over just how universal self-serving biases were, or whether their effects varied across cultures. Extensive research has essentially settled the matter, to the extent that academic questions can ever be settled: a direct relationship appears to exist between cultural individualism and susceptibility to the bias, perhaps because of the value individualistic societies place on self-enhancement (as opposed to self-effacement).96 Actors from more collectivist societies tend to have their egos rewarded in different ways, such as through contributions to the community and connections to others. People from Western countries are far more likely to take credit for positive outcomes than those from Eastern, in other words, and subjects in the United States tower over the rest of the West. US leaders are therefore more culturally predisposed to believe that their actions are responsible for positive outcomes like peace. Second, self-perception is directly related to egocentric attributions. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to believe that they are at the center of the decision-making process of others than those who think somewhat more modestly.97 Leaders of any unipolar state may well be more likely to hold their country in high regard, and therefore are more vulnerable to exaggerated egocentric perceptions, than their contemporaries in smaller states. It might not occur to the lead diplomat of other counties to claim, as did Madeleine Albright, that “if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future.” 98 It is not unreasonable to suspect that the US security community may be even more vulnerable to this misperception than the average group of people. For example, many in that community believed that the United States played a decisive role in Vladimir Putin’s decisions regarding Crimea and eastern Ukraine. President Obama’s various critics argued that perceptions of American weakness inspired or even invited Russian aggression. The refusal to act in Syria in particular emboldened Moscow (despite the fact that in 2008, in the face of ample displays of US action in the Middle East, Moscow had proven sufficiently bold to invade Georgia). Other critics suggested that a variety of provocative US behaviors since the end of the Cold War, especially the expansion of NATO and dissolution of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, poisoned US–Russian relations and led to an increase in Kremlin paranoia and eventually to the invasion.99 So, either through provocative weakness or bullying, we were responsible for their actions. Egocentric misperceptions are so ubiquitous and pervasive that they generate something of a law of political psychology: we are probably less influential in others’ decision making than we think we are. This extends to their decisions to resolve contentious issues peacefully. While it may be natural for US policymakers to interpret their role as crucial in the maintenance of world peace, it is very likely that Washington exaggerates its importance in the decision making of others, and in the maintenance of international stability. The effect of the ego-centric bias may be especially difficult for the unipolar United States to resist, because other countries do regularly take Washington’s position into account before acting. But US leaders—and the people who analyze them—should keep in mind that they are still probably less important to calculations made in other capitals than they believe. They may well be especially unlikely to recognize the possibility that hegemony is epiphenomenal, that it exists alongside, but does not affect, global stability and the New Peace. Overestimated Benevolence After three years in the White House, Ronald Reagan had learned something surprising: “Many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans,” he wrote in his autobiography. He continued: “Perhaps this shouldn’t have surprised me, but it did … I’d always felt that from our deeds it must be clear to anyone that Americans were a moral people who starting at the birth of our nation had always used our power only as a force for good in the world…. During my first years in Washington, I think many of us took it for granted that the Russians, like ourselves, considered it unthinkable that the United States would launch a first strike against them.” 100 Reagan is certainly not alone in believing in the essential benevolent image of his nation. While it is common for actors to attribute negative motivations to the behavior of others, it is exceedingly difficult for them to accept that anyone could interpret their actions in negative ways. Leaders are well aware of their own motives and tend to assume that their peaceful intentions are obvious and transparent. Both strains of the hegemonic-stability explanation assume not only that US power is benevolent, but that others perceive it that way. Hegemonic stability depends on the perceptions of other states to be successful; it has no hope to succeed if it encounters resistance from the less powerful members of the system, or even if they simply refuse to follow the rules. Relatively small police forces require the general cooperation of large communities to have any chance of establishing order. They must perceive the sheriff as just, rational, and essentially nonthreatening. The lack of balancing behavior in the system, which has been puzzling to many realists, seems to support the notion of widespread perceptions of benevolent hegemony.101 Were they threatened by the order constructed by the United States, the argument goes, smaller states would react in ways that reflected their fears. Since internal and external balancing accompanied previous attempts to achieve hegemony, the absence of such behavior today suggests that something is different about the US version. Hegemonic-stability theorists purport to understand the perceptions of others, at times better than those others understand themselves. Complain as they may at times, other countries know that the United States is acting in the common interest. Objections to unipolarity, though widespread, are not “very seriously intended,” wrote Kagan, since “the truth about America’s dominant role in the world is known to most observers. And the truth is that the benevolent hegemony exercised by the United States is good for a vast portion of the world’s population.” 102 In the 1990s, Russian protests regarding NATO expansion—though nearly universal—were not taken seriously, since US planners believed the alliance’s benevolent intentions were apparent to all. Sagacious Russians understood that expansion would actually be beneficial, since it would bring stability to their western border.103 President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher were caught off guard by the hostility of their counterparts regarding the issue at a summit in Budapest in December 1994.104 Despite warnings from the vast majority of academic and policy experts about the likely Russian reaction and overall wisdom of expansion itself, the administration failed to anticipate Moscow’s position.105 The Russians did not seem to believe American assurances that expansion would actually be good for them**. The United States overestimated the degree to which others saw it as benevolent**. Once again, the culture of the United States might make its leaders more vulnerable to this misperception. The need for positive self-regard appears to be particularly strong in North American societies compared to elsewhere.106 Western egos tend to be gratified through self-promotion rather than humility, and independence rather than interdependence. Americans are more likely to feel good if they are unique rather than a good cog in society’s wheel, and uniquely good. The need to be perceived as benevolent, though universal, may well exert stronger encouragement for US observers to project their perceptions onto others. The United States almost certainly frightens others more than its leaders perceive. **A quarter of the 68,000 respondents to a 2013 Gallup poll in sixty-five countries identified the United States as the “greatest threat to world peace**,” which was more than three times the total for the second-place country (Pakistan).107 The international community always has to worry about the potential for police brutality, even if it occurs rarely. Such ungratefulness tends to come as a surprise to US leaders. In 2003, Condoleezza Rice was dismayed to discover resistance to US initiatives in Iraq: “There were times,” she said later, “that it appeared that American power was seen to be more dangerous than, perhaps, Saddam Hussein.” 108 Both liberals and neoconservatives probably exaggerate the extent to which US hegemony is everywhere secretly welcomed; it is not just petulant resentment, but understandable disagreement with US policies, that motivates counterhegemonic beliefs and behavior. To review, assuming for a moment that US leaders are subject to the same forces that affect every human being, they overestimate the amount of control they have over other actors, and are not as important to decisions made elsewhere as they believe themselves to be. And they probably perceive their own benevolence to be much greater than do others. These common phenomena all influence US beliefs in the same direction, and may well increase the apparent explanatory power of hegemony beyond what the facts would otherwise support. The United States is probably not as central to the New Peace as either liberals or neoconservatives believe. In the end, what can be said about the relationship between US power and international stability? Probably not much that will satisfy partisans, and the pacifying virtue of US hegemony will remain largely an article of faith in some circles in the policy world. Like most beliefs, it will remain immune to alteration by logic and evidence. Beliefs rarely change, so debates rarely end. For those not yet fully converted, however, perhaps it will be significant that corroborating evidence for the relationship is extremely hard to identify. If indeed hegemonic stability exists, it does so without leaving much of a trace. **Neither Washington’s spending, nor its interventions, nor its overall grand strategy seem to matter much to the levels of armed conflict around the world** (apart from those wars that Uncle Sam starts). The empirical record does not contain strong reasons to believe that unipolarity and the New Peace are related, and insights from political psychology suggest that hegemonic stability is a belief particularly susceptible to misperception. US leaders probably exaggerate the degree to which their power matters, and could retrench without much risk to themselves or the world around them. Researchers will need to look elsewhere to explain why the world has entered into the most peaceful period in its history. The good news from this is that the New Peace will probably persist for quite some time, no matter how dominant the United States is, or what policies President Trump follows, or how much resentment its actions cause in the periphery. The people of the twenty-first century are likely to be much safer and more secure than any of their predecessors, even if many of them do not always believe it.

## Block

### Kritik

#### The view of heg as peaceful is a move towards epistemological and physical distancing that accelarates the virtualization of warfare---drives rippling state failure, terrorism, and mass warfare

**Duffield 16** [Mark, Professor of Development Politics and Director of the Global Insecurities Centre at the University of Bristol, “The resilience of the ruins: towards a critique of digital humanitarianism”, *Resilience*, published online March 15, 2016, DOI: 10.1080/21693293.2016.1153772]

At the end of the cold war, there was an historic upsurge in the liberal interventionism within the global South. In terms of the number of agencies involved, personnel deployed and money spent, this interventionism was reflected in a rapid increase of all kinds of UN and NGO humanitarian, development and peace activism throughout the 1990s (Duffield, 2001). Looking back over the last decade, however, it is striking how this intrusive interventionism has failed to achieve its defining aim. That is, with military force if necessary, to democratise and liberalise failed and non-integrating societies in the interest of international security (Mazarr, 2014). Such liberal interventionism now lies buried in the ruins of Iraq, Libya and Syria. The existential shock of this strategic defeat, needlessly amplified by the war on terror, has seen an increasing recourse to arm’s length remote management and risk-avoidance when it comes to international terrestrial deployments in the global South. There has been a widespread retreat or physical circumscription of an international ground presence in challenging or politically difficult environments. This defensive relocation not only involves the military, perhaps even more so, it affects diplomats (Worth, 2012), international aid agencies (Healy & Tiller, 2014; Lemay-Hébert, 2011), journalists (Sundaram, 2014) and academic researchers as well (Adams, 2007).

Unqualified ideas of ‘retreat’ or ‘withdrawal’, however, can be misleading. Although international actors may be limiting or circumscribing their ground presence, aid operations and academic research, for example, have not stopped or disappeared, indeed, they continue apace (Collinson & Duffield, 2013). There is a difference, however. The mode of engagement has changed. While exceptions exist, effects on the ground are now orchestrated at a distance through a mixture of remote technologies and subcontracting local players. While this shift is widely celebrated as the fruit of technological advancement, the current risk and anxiety-related distancing of international actors are closely intertwined with the negativity of policy failure, political push-back and humanitarian access denial (Duffield, 2013).1 The growing physical remoteness from what one could call the West’s clash with history has been compensated by the rise of data-based smart technology and remote management techniques (Howe, Stites, & Chudacoff, 2015; Verjee, 2005). Such capabilities are currently driving all manner of international security, research, media and aid interventions. The emergence of what has been called ‘digital humanitarianism’ (Conneally, 2011) is but one example of a terrestrial retreat which is being repositioned as a triumph of technoscience and its ability to achieve governmental effects from the enveloping electronic atmosphere (Livingston, 2015).2 It is a remoteness that, simultaneously, is a form of recapture and drawing near. The strategic plane has pivoted from the ground friction of the horizontal to the relative freedom of the vertical and volumetric dimensions (Elden, 2013; Weizman, 2002).

At a time of global rebalancing, remoteness involves a combination of epistemological, existential and physical distancing while, simultaneously, calling forth new technological means of digital recoupment and re-embodiment. Remoteness is inseparable from the increasing sophistication of the global North’s atmospheric ability to digitally rediscover, remap and, importantly, govern anew a now distant South. This strategic turn to the electronic atmosphere, however, is obscured by the inability of technoscience to conceive its own conditions of possibility. The political setback and failure of liberal interventionism is obscured by an affirmatory rhetoric that celebrates the restorative powers of smart technologies and fast machine thinking (Meier, 2015). Within this normalising narrative, new technologies are simply replacing older and less efficient terrestrial assemblages (Hanchard, 2012). The transformation of a negative into an affirmatory positive has allowed a failed liberal interventionism to live on as a delusional and revengeful digital afterlife. Against the backdrop of falling battle deaths, as a strategic platform, the electronic atmosphere has allowed the reconfiguration of the whole planet, irrespective of the claims of territorial sovereignty, as a seamless digital manhunt reserve (Chamayou, 2015). In addressing these concerns, this paper explores what Hannah Arendt would recognise as the world alienation intrinsic to technoscience (Arendt, 1998/1958). That this alienation now appears as a stupefying political psychosis, however, would possibly surprise and alarm her.

The positive and the negative

To introduce remoteness as digital recapture, the current humanitarian disaster in Syria is a good example. On any scale, this is a major complex political emergency affecting the region and beyond. There are over three million Syrian refugees alone representing almost 25% of the world total, with millions more people internally displaced (Borger, 2014). However, the single factor marking Syria as a modern humanitarian crisis is an absence of international aid agencies on the ground. Rather than a plethora of in-country offices, white sports utility vehicles (SUV’s) and a visible presence of international staff that used to define a humanitarian emergency, the Syrian crisis is being addressed through remote management techniques usually involving the arm’s length subcontracting of local agencies organised from secure locations within the region or even direct from agency HQs in Europe and the USA (Whittall & Bseiso, 2015). In another related example of remoteness, the brutal beheading of the American journalist, James Foley by the Islamic State in August 2014 revealed that, in places like Syria, international news groups have dispensed with their own in-country reporters and news infrastructure (Preston, 2014). In large parts of the global South what little on-the-ground news gathering still takes place is now down to independent risk takers like Foley (see, Sundaram, 2014).

Despite this physical pull-back, however, with the help of remote satellite sensing, biometrics and social media analysis, refugee management and news gathering continues in Syria. Regarding the former, since 2001, UNHCR has been quietly experimenting with the biometric registration of refugees, involving either fingerprinting or iris scans. Attracting little public attention at the time, biometric registration was announced as an official UNHCR policy in 2010. Given the large numbers of Syrian refugees and the volatility of their movements, UNHCR has pioneered a ‘cross-border identity’ that operates through a series of linked databases in Syria and the surrounding countries (Jacobsen, 2015). Maintained by local aid workers, refugees can be tracked and their entitlements managed even when on the move. Digital recoupment is also taking place in relation to news gathering. While there are few reporters on the ground in Syria, through the spread of the Internet and mobile telephones, it is the most socially mediated war to date (O’Callaghan et al., 2014). Using commercially available mapping and network analysis software, private and academic organisations are, for example, routinely analysing social media data to gain virtual situational intelligence of hardto-reach conflict zones like Libya and Syria (Laville, 2014; Slottlemyre & Slottlemyre, 2012).

Using the metaphor of analogue photography, from these brief examples, the real-world conditions driving physical distancing and remoteness can be regarded as a ‘negative’, while the compensatory process of digital recapture and drawing near constitutes a ‘positive’ take on these same conditions. In the negative, Syria is part of an unparalleled political upheaval that is unravelling the Middle East. On all sides, its coinage is zealotary and deliberate acts of urbicide (Coward, 2007) that are fomenting state collapse, persecution and societal fragmentation.

This negative is reflected in the significant increase in political push-back, access denial and the spread of international terrorism. Such ground friction has been accompanied by growing international risk aversion. When these factors are combined, they work against maintaining an international terrestrial presence. In the positive, however, we have a simultaneous digital remapping and reinterpreting of these new cartographic ‘white spaces’, together with an increasing ability, through remote sensing and the algorithmic analysis of metadata, to substitute ground truth with pattern recognition and behavioural analysis among the now hard-to-reach populations. Presence has been seamlessly swopped for speed and synchronicity (Bowker, 2014).

For a can do digital affirmationism, ground friction and the need for remote intelligence does not appear as a negative. While societal breakdown and the failure of humanitarian aid continues to telegraph warning signals, they fail to fully register as urgent political problems requiring sustained collective attention and determined resolution. To the contrary, for the military–industrial–academic complex (Giroux, 2007), ground friction presents itself as an engineering challenge for which technoscience can, and will, provide a methodological workaround. Through the accelerating sophistication of information technologies and their reducing cost, rather than dwell on the negative, technoscience maintains the cybernetic illusion that success equates with speed (Virilio, 2007/1977). The 2011 Libyan bombing campaign, for example, which helped bring the Ghaddafi regime down, was celebrated as a humanitarian success on the grounds that the allies were able to quickly bring precision military technology to bear (O’Sullivan, 2014). The same coalition of the willing, however, has subsequently fallen silent on the intractable political quagmire they helped create.

To reintroduce a sense of gravitational pull, it can be argued that just as wealth creation and consumerism produces poverty and pollution, there is a dialectical relationship between the negative conditions associated with remoteness, and the positive techno-affirmationism that defines their digital recapture and drawing near. Whereas a practical politics would acknowledge, navigate and compensate for such contradictions, neoliberalism denies any such connection. Instead we are regaled with speed spectacles and connectivity dreams that, while attempting to escape the drag of the real world, invariably fail to do so. Instead, they reproduce deceleration and stagnation. In order to understand this dialectic, the idea of ‘actually existing capitalism’ is useful. It is derived from ‘actually existing socialism’ coined by Rudolf Bahro to critically interrogate the East Germany of the 1970s (Bahro, 1978). While the party habitually described the German Democratic Republic as a workers’ paradise on earth, actually existing socialism was the negative reality of everyday shortages, regimentation and corruption. The qualifier ‘actually existing’ is a relational concept that seeks to rhetorically deflate self-serving affirmationism by drawing attention to the actual conditions of existence.

**The libidinal economy isn’t implicit bias, it’s about building a world and meaning off of slavery – solutions based off of this meaning only translate to perfecting slavery**

**Woods 18** – Tryon: Associate Professor of Crime & Justice Studies, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth and Special Lecturer in Black Studies, Providence College. Ph.D., University of California; M.S., Arizona State University; B.A., Wesleyan University.

Tryon P. Woods, 2018, “THE IMPLICIT BIAS OF IMPLICIT BIAS THEORY,” DREXEL LAW REVIEW [Vol. 10:631 // EO

A proponent of **implicit bias theory** might counter this Article by arguing that even though implicit biases are not created by the individual, the individual is nonetheless accountable to them.46 This point is true on its face, **but is unethical at its core** because **it betrays the realities of racism**. **Racism does not begin with the idea of “race,” about which society has developed negative and positive valuations in equal measure**. **This notion is inconsistent with both history and with the present realities of racism**. Instead, this Article suggests that **racism is an act of violence that produces the notion of “race” as its effect.** **Racism begets “race,” not the other way around.** **Racism is the Europeans**—and the Arabs before them and the Americans after them—**going to the African continent to kidnap and brutalize human beings**. The outcome of this collective act of violence— across almost twelve hundred years—is the meaning of “race**”: white is human, while black is the human’s negation** or, as Frantz Fanon put it, “the white man slaves to reach a human level.”47 In this sense**, “race” is never neutral, but is always the byproduct of violence**. It is a placeholder for violence and terror. **Implicit bias theory’s idea of “race” as something that can be scrubbed clean of violence by removing or exposing the bias**, the error of it all, **is a pretension that reveals its white authorship**. **White people are collectively invested in the fallacy that they are individuals first**, and only **members of a group secondarily and accidentally**. **Implicit bias theory only makes sense as a way out of being positioned as a collective**, of **being implicated in the historical crimes of the group**. **It makes white people’s absolution and historical escape feasible**: **everyone equally is affected by the brain’s cognitive processes**, the theory claims, **regardless of where one is situated in the historically entrenched hierarchy of racial regime**.48

#### Lesion, pharmacological, and deep brain stimulation studies provide empirical neurological support for psychoanalysis

Dall’Aglio 19 [John Dall’Aglio, Department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences, Brown University. Developmental Psychosomatics Laboratory, New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University Medical Center.] “Of brains and Borromean knots: A Lacanian meta-neuropsychology” Neuropsychoanalysis, Vol. 21, 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2019.1619091>) – MZhu

Affective consciousness and the real

Recall the concept of the real as a negativity (non-representational insistence) which is present from the beginning. Das Ding emerges simultaneously with understanding yet is outside of it (Freud, 1895). Reason (or cognition, understood as a symbolic-imaginary function) cannot represent, and thereby cannot comprehend, the real. In this way, the limit of reason is within reason (Copjec, 2012; Laplanche, 2011).

Therefore, neural areas corresponding to the real should be constitutive of, but not identical with, cognitive functions. As non-representational, they should insist their presence through affect and the compulsive repetition of the drive. At the core of the subject, the real is also at the core of cognition, while simultaneously the limit of that cognition.

The drive (iteration, source/pressure) refers to the real (Johnston, 2013). Freud (1915a) defined drive as:

a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body. (Freud, 1915a, pp. 121–122)

Drive, thereby, refers to the demand upon the mind concerning bodily needs. In the brain, the brainstem and diencephalon contain “need-detectors.” Each has a homeostatic set-point – for example, the ideal amount of salt to have in the blood. The hypothalamus and related systems closely monitor and modulate the internal body (see, for example, Waterson & Horvath, 2015; Williams, Harrold & Cutler, 2000; Woods, Seely, Prote, & Schwartz, 1993). These areas can be dynamically localized as important points of proximity between the body and the mind, and the locus of the pressure of the drive (Solms, 2013).

These diencephalic and upper brainstem systems are fundamentally affective (Panksepp, 1998; Solms, 2013). Deviations from set-points produce unpleasure, whereas moving towards the set-point generates pleasure. One major structure is the periaqueductal gray (PAG), which receives projections from these brainstem areas. Stimulation of the ventral columns of the PAG induces feelings of extreme pleasure, whereas stimulation of the dorsal columns corresponds to feelings of excruciating pain. Here, one finds the pleasure principle as a key dynamic in the process of maintaining homeostasis (Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

Importantly, this affective system is fundamental to consciousness, the feeling state of being. Disturbances to upper areas of the brain disrupt cognitive and emotional functions, but the subject retains affective being (Penfield & Jasper, 1954). For example, hydranencephalic patients are born with little-to-no cortex but intact subcortical affective circuits (Merker, 2007; Shewmon, Holmes, & Byrne, 1999). These patients are still conscious in the affective sense and respond to the environment through these circuits. Summarizing these various lines of evidence, Solms (2013) argues that consciousness can exist without cortex.

However, damage to these affective circuits significantly impairs consciousness (along with cognition). In fact, a lesion to the PAG completely wipes out consciousness, extinguishing affective being. This supports the critical role of the upper brainstem in the generation of consciousness (Moruzzi & Magoun, 1949), which leads Solms (2013) to conclude that affective consciousness is the bedrock of consciousness. Later cognitive functions of the cortex depend upon and are shaped by the affective circuits which function prior to them (Panksepp, 1998; Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

With its (extimate) relationship with the internal body via homeostasis and drives, the upper brainstem and associated structures correspond functionally to Freud’s id. In contrast, the cortical focus on exteroception corresponds to Freud’s ego. Since the upper brainstem is intrinsically conscious (i.e. its activity generates the affective bedrock of consciousness) and the cortex is dependent on the brainstem for consciousness, Solms (2013) argues that the id is fundamentally conscious. Rather than the nucleus of the unconscious, the id is the font of consciousness.

More specifically, the id (upper brainstem and associated structures) is affectively conscious. It generates being as a feeling state without representation. Through a Lacanian lens, this affective consciousness corresponds to the insistence of the real. It is non-representational, a primary affect (Lacan, 1997). It is beyond (indeed, prior to) cognition – constituting a limit, an impasse. Furthermore, as the bedrock of consciousness, it is constitutive of cognition. This fits well within Lacan’s conception of the real and the drive (Johnston, 2013a).

Affective instincts

Additionally, affective consciousness extends into the limbic system. Panksepp (1998) identifies seven affective systems: SEEKING, RAGE, PANIC, PLAY, CARE, LUST, and FEAR.7 Across mammals, they exhibit the same circuitry, neurotransmitters, and stereotyped motor functions (see Panksepp, 1998 for neuroanatomical details). A combination of lesion, pharmacological, and deep brain stimulation studies supports the dynamic localization of their functions.

SEEKING closely resembles the Freudian libidinal drive (Solms, 2012a). It is an objectless, volitional system that carries its own subjective quality of excitatory pleasure (as opposed to a reduction of tension). The rest of the circuits are more specialized. For example, RAGE characterizes the aggressive impulse to destroy that which frustrates the subject’s goals. PANIC activates in response to separation from a loved object, connoting separation-anxiety. Generally speaking, all seven systems generate a distinct response to an experience of the external world.

Furthermore, these experiences also concern socio-emotional needs, such as attachment needs in the PANIC system (Solms, 2012b). These limbic circuits qualitatively elaborate upper brainstem affective consciousness through distinct socio-emotional needs. These affective instincts prepare the organism to interact with the world and meet its needs, albeit in a rough-and-ready way (Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

Insofar as these affective instincts are prepared for certain types of experiences, I would suggest that they are not the real proper and are better localized at the intersection of the real and the imaginary. Nevertheless, they also have built in “holes” – the potential to acquire new objects. For example, the FEAR system has certain built-in objects (such as a fear of falling). However, it also has the potential to learn new objects, such as electrical outlets. This potential is never exhausted, for these areas are subject to neuroplasticity (Ansermet & Magistretti, 2007; Solms & Turnbull, 2002). I suggest that these seven affective instincts might be considered “highways” from the real to the symbolic-imaginary. Similarly, Verhaeghe (2004) highlights Panksepp’s (1998) instincts as potential neurobiological underpinnings in the child’s turn to the Other (symbolic-imaginary registers) to answer the pressure of the drive (the real).

These instincts contrast with the upper brainstem homeostatic drives. Each instinct represents a socio-emotional need. In the perspective of drive as representative of bodily need (i.e. located in brainstem and diencephalon “need-detectors”), there is not much flexibility in terms of what objects might satisfy the drive. Only water can satisfy the demand made upon the mind when dehydrated, for example. However, affective instincts are more flexible – emotional needs may find any number of objects.

Therefore, the flexibility attributed to the psychoanalytic drive (i.e. alteration, the aim and object) corresponds with the plasticity and potentiality of these affective instincts. In contrast, the brainstem, corresponds to the real of the drive (i.e. iteration, the source and pressure). Indeed, drive itself is split – here, neuro-structurally and evolutionarily, for the affective instincts are more evolutionarily recent than the upper brainstem (Solms & Turnbull, 2002). For Lacan, the tension of the drive is never eliminated. SEEKING corresponds best to this notion of excitatory pleasure in the drive, for it is innately objectless (Solms, 2012a). However, this inexhaustibility may be attributed to all seven affective instincts.

### Case

#### Primacy and Hegemony frames do literally nothing

Fettweis 17(Christopher J.-assistant professor of political science at Tulane University. “Unipolarity, Hegemony, and the New Peace” Published in Security Studies Vol 26 No 3. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09636412.2017.1306394?src=recsys&journalCode=fsst20>)//mba-alb

Even the most ardent supporters of the hegemonic-stability explanation do not contend that US influence extends equally to all corners of the globe. The United States has concentrated its policing in what George Kennan used to call “strong points,” or the most important parts of the world: Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Persian Gulf.64 By doing so, Washington may well have contributed more to great power peace than the overall global decline in warfare. If the former phenomenon contributed to the latter, by essentially providing a behavioral model for weaker states to emulate, then perhaps this lends some support to the hegemonic-stability case.65 During the Cold War, the United States played referee to a few intra-West squabbles, especially between Greece and Turkey, and provided Hobbesian reassurance to Germany’s nervous neighbors. Other, equally plausible explanations exist for stability in the first world, including the presence of a common enemy, democracy, economic interdependence, general war aversion, etc. The looming presence of the leviathan is certainly among these plausible explanations, but only inside the US sphere of influence. Bipolarity was bad for the nonaligned world, where Soviet and Western intervention routinely exacerbated local conflicts. Unipolarity has generally been much better, but whether or not this was due to US action is again unclear. Overall US interest in the affairs of the Global South has dropped markedly since the end of the Cold War, as has the level of violence in almost all regions. There is less US intervention in the political and military affairs of Latin America compared to any time in the twentieth century, for instance, and also less conflict. Warfare in Africa is at an all-time low, as is relative US interest outside of counterterrorism and security assistance.66 **Regional peace and stability exist where there is US active intervention, as well as where there is not. No direct relationship seems to exist across regions**. If intervention can be considered a function of direct and indirect activity, of both political and military action, a regional picture might look like what is outlined in Table 1. These assessments of conflict are by necessity relative, because there has not been a “high” level of conflict in any region outside the Middle East during the period of the New Peace. Putting aside for the moment that important caveat, some points become clear. The great powers of the world are clustered in the upper right quadrant, where US intervention has been high, but conflict levels low. US intervention is imperfectly correlated with stability, however. Indeed, it is conceivable that the **relatively high level of US interest and activity has made the security situation in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East worse**. In recent years, substantial hard power investments (Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq), moderate intervention (Libya), and reliance on diplomacy (Syria) have been equally ineffective in stabilizing states torn by conflict. While it is possible that the region is essentially unpacifiable and no amount of police work would bring peace to its people, it remains hard to make the case that the US presence has improved matters. In this “strong point,” at least, US hegemony has failed to bring peace. In much of the rest of the world, the United States has not been especially eager to enforce any particular rules. Even rather incontrovertible evidence of genocide has not been enough to inspire action. Washington’s intervention choices have at best been erratic; Libya and Kosovo brought about action, but much more blood flowed uninterrupted in Rwanda, Darfur, Congo, Sri Lanka, and Syria. The US record of peacemaking is not exactly a long uninterrupted string of successes. During the turn-of-the-century conventional war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a highlevel US delegation containing former and future National Security Advisors (Anthony Lake and Susan Rice) made a half-dozen trips to the region, but was unable to prevent either the outbreak or recurrence of the conflict. Lake and his team shuttled back and forth between the capitals with some frequency, and President Clinton made repeated phone calls to the leaders of the respective countries, offering to hold peace talks in the United States, all to no avail.67 The war ended in late 2000 when Ethiopia essentially won, and it controls the disputed territory to this day. The Horn of Africa is hardly the only region where states are free to fight one another today without fear of serious US involvement. Since they are choosing not to do so with increasing frequency, something else is probably affecting their calculations. Stability exists even in those places where the potential for intervention by the sheriff is minimal. Hegemonic stability can only take credit for influencing those decisions that would have ended in war without the presence, whether physical or psychological, of the United States. **It seems hard to make the case that the relative peace that has descended on so many regions is primarily due to the kind of heavy hand of the neoconservative leviathan,** or its lighter, more liberal cousin. Something else appears to be at work. Conflict and US Military Spending How does one measure polarity? Power is traditionally considered to be some combination of military and economic strength, but despite scores of efforts, no widely accepted formula exists. Perhaps overall military spending might be thought of as a proxy for hard power capabilities; perhaps too the amount of money the United States devotes to hard power is a reflection of the strength of the unipole. When compared to conflict levels, however, **there is no obvious correlation, and certainly not the kind of negative relationship between US spending and conflict that many hegemonic stability theorists would expect to see**. During the 1990s, the United States cut back on defense by about 25 percent, spending $100 billion less in real terms in 1998 that it did in 1990.68 To those believers in the neoconservative version of hegemonic stability, this irresponsible “peace dividend” endangered both national and global security. “No serious analyst of American military capabilities doubts that the defense budget has been cut much too far to meet America’s responsibilities to itself and to world peace,” argued Kristol and Kagan at the time.69 **The world grew dramatically more peaceful while the United States cut its forces**, however, and stayed just as peaceful while spending rebounded after the 9/11 terrorist attacks**. The incidence and magnitude of global conflict declined while the military budget was cut** under President Clinton, in other words, **and kept declining** (though more slowly, since levels were already low) as the Bush administration ramped it back up. Overall US military spending has varied during the period of the New Peace from a low in constant dollars of less than $400 billion to a high of more than $700 billion, but war does not seem to have noticed. The same nonrelationship exists between other potential proxy measurements for hegemony and conflict: **there does not seem to be much connection between warfare and fluctuations in US GDP, alliance commitments, and forward military presence**. There was very little fighting in Europe when there were 300,000 US troops stationed there, for example, and that has not changed as the number of Americans dwindled by 90 percent. Overall, **there does not seem to be much correlation between US actions and systemic stability**. Nothing the United States actually does seems to matter to the New Peace. It is possible that absolute military spending might not be as important to explain the phenomenon as relative. Although Washington cut back on spending during the 1990s, its relative advantage never wavered. The United States has accounted for between 35 and 41 percent of global military spending every year since the collapse of the Soviet Union.70 The perception of relative US power might be the decisive factor in decisions made in other capitals. One cannot rule out the possibility that it is the perception of US power—and its willingness to use it—that keeps the peace. In other words, perhaps it is the grand strategy of the United States, rather than its absolute capability, that is decisive in maintaining stability. It is that to which we now turn. Conflict and US Grand Strategy The perception of US power, and the strength of its hegemony, is to some degree a function of grand strategy. If indeed US strategic choices are responsible for the New Peace, then variation in those choices ought to have consequences for the level of international conflict. A restrained United States is much less likely to play the role of sheriff than one following a more activist approach. Were the unipole to follow such a path, hegemonic-stability theorists warn, disaster would follow. Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski spoke for many when he warned that “outright chaos” could be expected to follow a loss of hegemony, including a string of quite specific issues, including new or renewed attempts to build regional empires (by China, Turkey, Russia, and Brazil) and the collapse of the US relationship with Mexico, as emboldened nationalists south of the border reassert 150-year-old territorial claims. Overall, without US dominance, today’s relatively peaceful world would turn “violent and bloodthirsty.” 71 Niall Ferguson foresees a post-hegemonic “Dark Age” in which “plunderers and pirates” target the big coastal cities like New York and Rotterdam, terrorists attack cruise liners and aircraft carriers alike, and the “wretchedly poor citizens” of Latin America are unable to resist the Protestantism brought to them by US evangelicals. Following the multiple (regional, fortunately) nuclear wars and plagues, the few remaining airlines would be forced to suspend service to all but the very richest cities.72 These are somewhat extreme versions of a central assumption of all hegemonic-stability theorists: a restrained United States would be accompanied by utter disaster. The “present danger” of which Kristol, Kagan, and their fellow travelers warn is that the United States “will shrink its responsibilities and—in a fit of absentmindedness, or parsimony, or indifference— allow the international order that it created and sustains to collapse.” 73 Liberals fear restraint as well, and also warn that a militarized version of primacy would be counterproductive in the long run. Although they believe that the rule-based order established by United States is more durable than the relatively fragile order discussed by the neoconservatives, liberals argue that Washington can undermine its creation over time through thoughtless unilateral actions that violate those rules. Many predicted that the invasion of Iraq and its general contempt for international institutions and law would call the legitimacy of the order into question. G. John Ikenberry worried that Bush’s “geostrategic wrecking ball” would lead to a more hostile, divided, and dangerous world.74 Thus while all hegemonicstability theorists expect a rise of chaos during a restrained presidency, liberals also have grave concerns regarding primacy. Overall, if either version is correct and global stability is provided by US hegemony, then maintaining that stability through a grand strategy based on either primacy (to neoconservatives) or “deep engagement” (to liberals) is clearly a wise choice.75 If, however, US actions are only tangentially related to the outbreak of the New Peace, or if any of the other proposed explanations are decisive, then the United States can retrench without fear of negative consequences. The grand strategy of the United States is therefore crucial to beliefs in hegemonic stability Although few observers would agree on the details, most would probably acknowledge that post-Cold War grand strategies of American presidents have differed in some important ways. The four administrations are reasonable representations of the four ideal types outlined by Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross in 1996.76 Under George H. W. Bush, the United States followed the path of “selective engagement,” which is sometimes referred to as “balance-of-power realism”; Bill Clinton’s grand strategy looks a great deal like what Posen and Ross call “cooperative security,” and others call “liberal internationalism”; George W. Bush, especially in his first term, forged a strategy that was as close to “primacy” as any president is likely to get; and Barack Obama, despite some early flirtation with liberalism, has followed a restrained realist path, which Posen and Ross label “neo-isolationism” but its proponents refer to as “strategic restraint.” 77 In no case did the various anticipated disorders materialize**.** As Table 2 demonstrates, **armed conflict levels fell steadily, irrespective of the grand strategic path Washington chose.** Neither the primacy of George W. Bush nor the restraint of Barack Obama had much effect on the level of global violence. Despite continued warnings (and the high-profile mess in Syria), the world has not experienced an increase in violence while the United States chose uninvolvement. If the grand strategy of the United States is responsible for the New Peace, it is leaving no trace in the evidence. Perhaps we should not expect a correlation to show up in this kind of analysis. While US behavior might have varied in the margins during this period, nether its relative advantage over its nearest rivals nor its commitments waivered in any important way. However, it is surely worth noting that if trends opposite to those discussed in the previous two sections had unfolded, if other states had reacted differently to fluctuations in either US military spending or grand strategy, then surely hegemonic stability theorists would argue that their expectations had been fulfilled. Many liberals were on the lookout for chaos while George W. Bush was in the White House, just as neoconservatives have been quick to identify apparent worldwide catastrophe under President Obama.78 If increases in violence would have been evidence for the wisdom of hegemonic strategies, then logical consistency demands that the lack thereof should at least pose a problem. As it stands, the only evidence we have regarding the relationship between US power and international stability suggests that the two are unrelated. The rest of the world appears quite capable and willing to operate effectively without the presence of a global policeman. Those who think otherwise have precious little empirical support upon which to build their case. Hegemonic stability is a belief, in other words, rather than an established fact, and as such deserves a different kind of examination. The Political Psychology of Unipolarity Evidence supporting the notion that US power is primarily responsible for the New Peace is slim, but belief in the connection is quite strong, especially in policy circles. The best arena to examine the proposition is therefore not the world of measurable rationality, but rather that of the human mind. **Political psychology can shed more light on unipolarity than can any collection of data or evidence**. Just because an outcome is primarily psychological does not mean that it is less real; perception quickly becomes reality for both the unipolar state and those in the periphery. If all actors believe that the United States provides security and stability for the system, then behavior can be affected. Beliefs have deep explanatory power in international politics whether they have a firm foundation in empirical reality or not. Like all beliefs, faith in the stability provided by hegemony is rarely subjected to much analysis.79 Although they almost always have some basis in reality, beliefs need not pass rigorous tests to prove that they match it. No amount of evidence has been able to convince some people that vaccines do not cause autism, for example, or that the world is more peaceful than at any time before, or that the climate is changing due to human activity. Ultimately, as Robert Jervis explains, “we often believe as much in the face of evidence as because of it.” 80 Facts may change, but beliefs remain the same. When leaders are motivated to act based on unjustified, inaccurate beliefs, folly often follows. The person who decides to take a big risk because of astrological advice in the morning’s horoscope can benefit from baseless superstition if the risk pays off. Probability and luck suggest that successful policy choices can sometimes flow from incorrect beliefs. Far more often, however, poor intellectual foundations lead to suboptimal or even disastrous outcomes. It is worthwhile to analyze the foundations of even our most deeply held beliefs to determine which ones are good candidates to inspire poor policy choices in those who hold them. People are wonderful rationalizers. There is much to be said for being the strongest country in the world; their status provides Americans both security and psychological rewards, as well as strong incentives to construct a rationale for preserving the unipolar moment that goes beyond mere selfishness. Since people enjoy being “number one,” they are susceptible to perceiving reality in ways that brings the data in line with their desires. It is no coincidence that most hegemonic stability theorists are American.81 Perhaps the satisfaction that comes with being the unipolar power has inspired Americans to misperceive the positive role that their status plays in the world. Three findings from political psychology can shed light on perceptions of hegemonic stability. They are mutually supportive, and, when taken together, suggest that it is likely that US policymakers overestimate the extent to which their actions are responsible for the choices of others. The belief in the major US contribution to world peace is probably unjustified. The Illusion of Control Could 5 percent of the world’s population hope to enforce rules upon the rest? Would even an internationally hegemonic United States be capable of producing the New Peace? Perhaps, but it also may be true that believers in hegemonic stability may be affected by the very common tendency of people to overestimate their ability to control events. A variety of evidence has accumulated over the past forty years to support Ellen J. Langer’s original observations about the “illusion of control” that routinely distorts perception.82 Even in situations where outcomes are clearly generated by pure chance, people tend to believe that they can exert control over events.83 There is little reason to believe that leaders are somehow less susceptible to such illusions than subjects in controlled experiments. The extensive research on the illusion of control has revealed two further findings that suggest US illusions might be even stronger than average. First, misperceptions of control appear to be correlated with power: individuals with higher socioeconomic status, as well as those who are members of dominant groups, are more likely to overestimate their ability to control events.84 Powerful people tend to be far more confident than others, often overly so, and that confidence leads them to inflate their own importance.85 Leaders of superpowers are thus particularly vulnerable to distorted perceptions regarding their ability to affect the course of events. **US observers had a greater structural predisposition** than others, for example, **to believe that they would have been able to control events** in the Persian Gulf following an injection of creative instability in 2003. The skepticism of less powerful allies was easily discounted. Second, there is reason to believe that culture matters as well as power. People from societies that value individualism are more likely to harbor illusions of control than those from collectivist societies, where assumptions of group agency are more common. When compared to people from other parts of the world, Westerners tend to view the world as “highly subject to personal control,” in the words of Richard Nisbett.86 North Americans appear particularly vulnerable in this regard.87 Those who come from relatively powerful countries with individualistic societies are therefore at high risk for misperceiving their ability to influence events. For the United States, the illusion of control extends beyond the water’s edge. An oft-discussed public good supposedly conferred by US hegemony is order in those parts of the world uncontrolled by sovereign states, or the “global commons.” 88 One such common area is the sea, where the United States maintains the only true blue-water navy in the world. That the United States has brought this peace to the high seas is a central belief of hegemonic-stability theorists, one rarely examined in any serious way. Indeed the maritime environment has been unusually peaceful for decades; the biggest naval battles since Okinawa took place during the Falklands conflict in 1982, and they were fairly minor.89 If hegemony is the key variable explaining stability at sea, maritime security would have to be far more chaotic without the US Navy. It is equally if not more plausible to suggest, however, that the reason other states are not building blue-water navies is not because the United States dissuades them from doing so but rather because none feels that trade is imperiled.90 In earlier times, and certainly during the age of mercantilism, zero-sum economics inspired efforts to cut off the trade of opponents on occasion, making control the sea extremely important. Today the free flow of goods is vital to all economies, and it would be in the interest of no state to interrupt it.91 Free trade at sea may no longer need protection, in other words, because it essentially has no enemies; the sheriff may be patrolling a crime-free neighborhood. The threat from the few remaining pirates hardly requires a robust naval presence, and is certainly not what hegemonic-stability advocates mean when they compare the role played by the US Navy in 2016 to that of the Royal Navy in 1816. It is at least possible that shared interest in open, free commons keeps the peace at sea rather than the United States. Oceans unpatrolled by the US Navy may be about as stable as they are with the presence of its carriers. The degree to which 273 active-duty ships exert control over vast common parts is not at all clear. People overestimate the degree to which they control events in their lives. Furthermore, if these observations from political psychology are right about the factors that influence the growth of illusions of power, then **US leaders and analysts are particularly susceptible to misperception**. They may well be overestimating the degree to which the United States can affect the behavior of others. The rest of the world may be able to get along just fine, on land and at sea, without US attempts to control it. Ego-Centric and Self-Serving Biases in Attribution It is natural for people, whether presidents or commoners, to misperceive the role they play in the thinking process of others. Jervis was the first to discuss this phenomenon, now known as the “ego-centric bias,” which has been put to the test many times since he wrote four decades ago. Building on what was known as “attribution theory,” Jervis observed that actors tend to overestimate their importance in the decisions of others. Rarely are our actions as consequential upon their behavior as we believe them to be.92 This is not merely ego gratification, though that plays a role; actors are simply more conscious of their own actions than the other factors central to the internal deliberations in other capitals. Because people are more likely to remember their contributions to an outcome, they naturally grant themselves more causal weight.93 **Two further aspects of the ego-centric bias make US analysts even more susceptible to its effects.** First, the bias is magnified when the behavior of others is desirable. People generally take credit for positive outcomes and deflect responsibility for negative ones. This “self-serving bias” is one of the best-established findings in modern psychology, supported by many hundreds of studies.94 Supporters of Ronald Reagan are happy to give him credit for ending the Cold War, for instance, even though evidence that the United States had much influence on Premier Gorbachev’s decision making is scant at best.95 Today, since few outcomes are more desirable than global stability, it stands to reason that perceptions of the New Peace are prime candidates for distortion by ego-centric, self-serving biases. When war breaks out, it is not the fault of US leaders; when peace comes to a region, Washington is happy to take credit. There was for some time a debate among psychologists over just how universal self-serving biases were, or whether their effects varied across cultures. Extensive research has essentially settled the matter, to the extent that academic questions can ever be settled: a direct relationship appears to exist between cultural individualism and susceptibility to the bias, perhaps because of the value individualistic societies place on self-enhancement (as opposed to self-effacement).96 Actors from more collectivist societies tend to have their egos rewarded in different ways, such as through contributions to the community and connections to others. People from Western countries are far more likely to take credit for positive outcomes than those from Eastern, in other words, and subjects in the United States tower over the rest of the West. US leaders are therefore more culturally predisposed to believe that their actions are responsible for positive outcomes like peace. Second, self-perception is directly related to egocentric attributions. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to believe that they are at the center of the decision-making process of others than those who think somewhat more modestly.97 Leaders of any unipolar state may well be more likely to hold their country in high regard, and therefore are more vulnerable to exaggerated egocentric perceptions, than their contemporaries in smaller states. It might not occur to the lead diplomat of other counties to claim, as did Madeleine Albright, that “if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future.” 98 It is not unreasonable to suspect that the US security community may be even more vulnerable to this misperception than the average group of people. For example, many in that community believed that the United States played a decisive role in Vladimir Putin’s decisions regarding Crimea and eastern Ukraine. President Obama’s various critics argued that perceptions of American weakness inspired or even invited Russian aggression. The refusal to act in Syria in particular emboldened Moscow (despite the fact that in 2008, in the face of ample displays of US action in the Middle East, Moscow had proven sufficiently bold to invade Georgia). Other critics suggested that a variety of provocative US behaviors since the end of the Cold War, especially the expansion of NATO and dissolution of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, poisoned US–Russian relations and led to an increase in Kremlin paranoia and eventually to the invasion.99 So, either through provocative weakness or bullying, we were responsible for their actions. Egocentric misperceptions are so ubiquitous and pervasive that they generate something of a law of political psychology: we are probably less influential in others’ decision making than we think we are. This extends to their decisions to resolve contentious issues peacefully. While it may be natural for US policymakers to interpret their role as crucial in the maintenance of world peace, it is very likely that Washington exaggerates its importance in the decision making of others, and in the maintenance of international stability. The effect of the ego-centric bias may be especially difficult for the unipolar United States to resist, because other countries do regularly take Washington’s position into account before acting. But US leaders—and the people who analyze them—should keep in mind that they are still probably less important to calculations made in other capitals than they believe. They may well be especially unlikely to recognize the possibility that hegemony is epiphenomenal, that it exists alongside, but does not affect, global stability and the New Peace. Overestimated Benevolence After three years in the White House, Ronald Reagan had learned something surprising: “Many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans,” he wrote in his autobiography. He continued: “Perhaps this shouldn’t have surprised me, but it did … I’d always felt that from our deeds it must be clear to anyone that Americans were a moral people who starting at the birth of our nation had always used our power only as a force for good in the world…. During my first years in Washington, I think many of us took it for granted that the Russians, like ourselves, considered it unthinkable that the United States would launch a first strike against them.” 100 Reagan is certainly not alone in believing in the essential benevolent image of his nation. While it is common for actors to attribute negative motivations to the behavior of others, it is exceedingly difficult for them to accept that anyone could interpret their actions in negative ways. Leaders are well aware of their own motives and tend to assume that their peaceful intentions are obvious and transparent. Both strains of the hegemonic-stability explanation assume not only that US power is benevolent, but that others perceive it that way. Hegemonic stability depends on the perceptions of other states to be successful; it has no hope to succeed if it encounters resistance from the less powerful members of the system, or even if they simply refuse to follow the rules. Relatively small police forces require the general cooperation of large communities to have any chance of establishing order. They must perceive the sheriff as just, rational, and essentially nonthreatening. The lack of balancing behavior in the system, which has been puzzling to many realists, seems to support the notion of widespread perceptions of benevolent hegemony.101 Were they threatened by the order constructed by the United States, the argument goes, smaller states would react in ways that reflected their fears. Since internal and external balancing accompanied previous attempts to achieve hegemony, the absence of such behavior today suggests that something is different about the US version. Hegemonic-stability theorists purport to understand the perceptions of others, at times better than those others understand themselves. Complain as they may at times, other countries know that the United States is acting in the common interest. Objections to unipolarity, though widespread, are not “very seriously intended,” wrote Kagan, since “the truth about America’s dominant role in the world is known to most observers. And the truth is that the benevolent hegemony exercised by the United States is good for a vast portion of the world’s population.” 102 In the 1990s, Russian protests regarding NATO expansion—though nearly universal—were not taken seriously, since US planners believed the alliance’s benevolent intentions were apparent to all. Sagacious Russians understood that expansion would actually be beneficial, since it would bring stability to their western border.103 President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher were caught off guard by the hostility of their counterparts regarding the issue at a summit in Budapest in December 1994.104 Despite warnings from the vast majority of academic and policy experts about the likely Russian reaction and overall wisdom of expansion itself, the administration failed to anticipate Moscow’s position.105 The Russians did not seem to believe American assurances that expansion would actually be good for them**. The United States overestimated the degree to which others saw it as benevolent**. Once again, the culture of the United States might make its leaders more vulnerable to this misperception. The need for positive self-regard appears to be particularly strong in North American societies compared to elsewhere.106 Western egos tend to be gratified through self-promotion rather than humility, and independence rather than interdependence. Americans are more likely to feel good if they are unique rather than a good cog in society’s wheel, and uniquely good. The need to be perceived as benevolent, though universal, may well exert stronger encouragement for US observers to project their perceptions onto others. The United States almost certainly frightens others more than its leaders perceive. **A quarter of the 68,000 respondents to a 2013 Gallup poll in sixty-five countries identified the United States as the “greatest threat to world peace**,” which was more than three times the total for the second-place country (Pakistan).107 The international community always has to worry about the potential for police brutality, even if it occurs rarely. Such ungratefulness tends to come as a surprise to US leaders. In 2003, Condoleezza Rice was dismayed to discover resistance to US initiatives in Iraq: “There were times,” she said later, “that it appeared that American power was seen to be more dangerous than, perhaps, Saddam Hussein.” 108 Both liberals and neoconservatives probably exaggerate the extent to which US hegemony is everywhere secretly welcomed; it is not just petulant resentment, but understandable disagreement with US policies, that motivates counterhegemonic beliefs and behavior. To review, assuming for a moment that US leaders are subject to the same forces that affect every human being, they overestimate the amount of control they have over other actors, and are not as important to decisions made elsewhere as they believe themselves to be. And they probably perceive their own benevolence to be much greater than do others. These common phenomena all influence US beliefs in the same direction, and may well increase the apparent explanatory power of hegemony beyond what the facts would otherwise support. The United States is probably not as central to the New Peace as either liberals or neoconservatives believe. In the end, what can be said about the relationship between US power and international stability? Probably not much that will satisfy partisans, and the pacifying virtue of US hegemony will remain largely an article of faith in some circles in the policy world. Like most beliefs, it will remain immune to alteration by logic and evidence. Beliefs rarely change, so debates rarely end. For those not yet fully converted, however, perhaps it will be significant that corroborating evidence for the relationship is extremely hard to identify. If indeed hegemonic stability exists, it does so without leaving much of a trace. **Neither Washington’s spending, nor its interventions, nor its overall grand strategy seem to matter much to the levels of armed conflict around the world** (apart from those wars that Uncle Sam starts). The empirical record does not contain strong reasons to believe that unipolarity and the New Peace are related, and insights from political psychology suggest that hegemonic stability is a belief particularly susceptible to misperception. US leaders probably exaggerate the degree to which their power matters, and could retrench without much risk to themselves or the world around them. Researchers will need to look elsewhere to explain why the world has entered into the most peaceful period in its history. The good news from this is that the New Peace will probably persist for quite some time, no matter how dominant the United States is, or what policies President Trump follows, or how much resentment its actions cause in the periphery. The people of the twenty-first century are likely to be much safer and more secure than any of their predecessors, even if many of them do not always believe it.

**Embracing extinction as a narrative—not biological—phenomenon is a prerequisite to disrupting white desires**

**Schotten, 18**—Associate Professor of Political Science and an affiliated faculty in Women's and Gender Studies, University of Massachusetts-Boston (C. Heike, “SOCIETY MUST BE DESTROYED,” *Queer Terror: Life, Death, and Desire in the Settler Colony* pg 108-111, dml)

How, then, to articulate and effect the radical abolitionism of revolutionary desire without getting caught up in the stranglehold of futurism? Futurism’s inescapability means **not simply that politics is irredeemable** and **reform insufficient**, but also that the deconstructive or queer practice of **subversive redeployment** is a **naïve delusion** regarding our own ability to **think** and **act outside** or **beyond futurist mandates**. As Edelman simultaneously argues and demonstrates, futurism’s **stifling determination** of the very domain of the political itself means that **any** and **all resistance is always already coopted**, while revolt is an impossibly queered space that is simultaneously named and foreclosed by the death drive. Yet Edelman’s solution to this dilemma is to recommend neither **capitulation** to futurism nor some sort of **compromise** with it but rather an **accession to its worst nightmares** in an embrace of queerness that will **destroy it from within**, “shortcircuit[ing] the social in its present form.”74 In other words, rather than **defend** society, which Edelman finds indefensible, much less **deconstruct** society, as a queer critique of norms might recommend, or even (dear me!) **redeem** society, by **entreating a utopian vision** that imagines the overcoming of all suffering and oppression, Edelman instead declares we must **destroy society**. And we do so by **taking up**, **inhabiting**, or “**embracing**” the very “**death**” that futurism **inevitably produces** as the queer by- product of its social ordering. He thus **dismisses utopianism** in the name of an **immediacy** that “**the future stop here**,”75 challenging us to live life as an **insistent presentism** that will **do nothing else afterward but die**, and casting this alliance with death as the **act of revolutionary resistance**.

While Dean vociferously rejects this “embrace” because of its psychoanalytic impossibility, Edelman, I think, is well aware of this fact and recommends it precisely for this reason, a contradiction that becomes more intelligible if understood politically rather than solely psychoanalytically. Indeed, Edelman’s recommendation of this “embrace” is a clearly political position— despite what he may say otherwise— in two specific, complex ways. First, recall the historicization of Edelman’s argument provided in chapter 2, wherein I characterized his version of “politics” as a distinctly modern, European, settler colonial sovereignty. An important consequence of this historicization is that, even in his allegedly non- or antipolitical advocacy, Edelman **cannot actually be rejecting politics per se** since, despite his own claims to the contrary, there is **no such thing**. Abolishing modern politics or futurist politics is **not equivalent to abolishing politics as such** and could only mean as much if **every modernity were European modernity**, if **every politics were a sovereign biopolitics**, and if **every temporality were futurist**. To understand Edelman’s refusal of politics as a **refusal of any and all politics existing anywhere** is to **go along with** his unmarked **universalist presentation of** reproductive **futurism** as the **logic of everything existing everywhere all the time**, itself a frequent conceit of psychoanalytic frames.76 But if futurism is the **temporality of modern biopolitical sovereignty**, it **immediately becomes clear that other temporalities are possible**, even as other versions of politics **must necessarily exist**.77 As Audra Simpson argues, for example, “Indigenous political orders are quite simply, first, . . . **prior** to the project of founding, of settling, and as such **continue to point**, in their persistence and vigor, to the **failure of the settler project to eliminate them**, and yet are subjects of dispossession, of removal, but their polities serve as **alternative forms of legitimacy** and **sovereignties** to that of the settler state.”78

Historicizing futurist politics in this way means that alternative temporalities or political schemas **exist** but are queer(ed) and **represented as existential threats** to it: as **unintelligible**, **unlivable**, **immoral**, **backward**, and “**savage**.” While Edelman does indeed conflate all politics with futurism, such that his call for the destruction of politics seems to portend an unthinkable and intolerable nihilism, it is nevertheless the case that, once situated historically, the advocacy that queers **accede to the deathly positioning** to which they are always already relegated by reproductive futurism is **not some sort of unthinkable**, **antipolitical vision**, nor is it an **advocacy of suicide** or **some sort of necropolitical imperative**. Rather, in the context of a **European modernity** built on the colonization of most of the rest of the world, Edelman’s embrace of death can be read as a **prescription** for an **anticolonial allegiance to** and **alliance with those forms of politics** and **temporality that thwart**, **refuse**, or **deny futurism’s colonial mandates**. No Future’s embrace of the “death drive,” in other words, is a **championing of resistant futures** and **political systems** that **show up as death from a futurist perspective** and are various surrogates for the broad, structural category he designates as “queer.” In advocating for a revolution on behalf of queers and arguing for an embrace of queerness, then, Edelman is very much arguing in the name of something— not the future, of course, and certainly not life in any biological sense. But he is also **not quite arguing in the name of death in a biological sense**, either. Rather, he is arguing that “the dead” should “live,” that is, that they “come to life” (or insistently exist) and **animate the destruction of the settler order** that they are always already **consigned by that social order to symbolize**. This is, in other words, an argument for indigenous existence as resistance to settler sovereignty. Siting and situating futurism historically make clear that Edelman’s recommended accession to queerness/death is another name for radical resistance to sovereign biopolitics and that, **far from nihilism**, it is an **emancipatory** and **decolonizing political recommendation** of the first order. In this sense, even Edelman’s own project is wedded to life, albeit a life that is unlivable as life, which is the status of native life within settler colonial regimes. As he says in recommendation of embracing the death drive, “political self- destruction inheres in the only act that counts as one: the act of resisting enslavement to the future in the name of having a life.”79 Edelman’s opposition to the political can therefore be reread as a **wholesale opposition** to the sovereign biopolitics of European modernity and an **imagining of the death of that political order** as the **content of revolutionary politics**. Indeed, his suggestion of a necessary “counterproject”80 to futurism makes clear that his recommendation of this refusal is the **essential**, **necessary**, and **definitive act of political resistance**, even as it is a **championing of the lives** and **political temporalities** of those **determined to be emissaries of death**.

Importantly, this destructive refusal is a threat that redounds back on Edelman himself and on **all of us who share** his **habitation of futurist politics** in Western modernity (or who were ourselves **trained in the history of that thought**). This is the second, complex way that Edelman’s rejection of politics is in fact a **maximally political entreaty**. The tension at work in Edelman’s inevitably futurist call to end futurism means that he is also and necessarily calling for the destruction of his own revolutionary project and subjective/authorial position. This is a queer revolution that **queers the aims of revolution itself**, divesting itself of futurism even as it speaks in its name. As a political act, it amounts “to **put[ting] one’s foot down at last**, **even if doing so costs us the ground on which we**, **like all others**, **must stand**.”81 It is a revolutionary desire that seeks to dispossess revolution of its failed foundations without thereby relinquishing either revolution or its animating desire. This revolutionary discourse exceeds the parameters of revolution as it has hitherto unfolded in modernity, even as it promises a liberation from modernity’s— and liberation’s— moralizing constraints.

This paradoxical, queer(ed) revolution is therefore **unmistakably tied to death**, and in more than one way: not only because queerness is the structural position of anything antisociety and antilife; not only because it **demands the destruction of all that has been construed as life** (as **valuable life**, as **worthy life**, as life **worth living** and **endowed with a future**); but also because the revolutionary call to destroy society and its futurist temporality will **necessarily result in the eradication of its own revolutionary demand in the process**. This is why Edelman’s queer political project **can never recommit us to sovereignty**, whether of a charismatic revolutionary leader, a vanguard revolutionary class, or a theological vision of an allpowerful monarch, much less the **sovereign subject**, whose **very European coherence requires futurism’s linear temporality**. It can commit us **only to the destruction of these things**, as well as to the **eradication of our own commitments precisely to that very destruction** if, as, and when they **threaten to become the next crushing futurist ideal**. Edelman’s formulation of the **impossible** yet **wholly revolutionary goal** of refusing futurism— a refusal achievable only in a future that lies beyond its textual articulation and summary rejection there— offers a **rich** and **provocative articulation** of a revolutionary desire that seeks to **dispossess revolution of its very foundations**, even as it speaks in its name.