# 1NC Doubles

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#### We begin with a brief history of warfare, its disappearance and the reappearance of military informatics, logistics and digitalization. Warfare does not disappear for the desire of an ethical field of relations, but simply because it is obsolete. The reappearance of warfare is perpetual upgrading, a battlespace in potentia that predetermines all liberal guises of resistance. Warfare is not an event, it does not take place in some traditional understanding of ‘the happening of events,’ rather warfare is the Archimedean point that produces not just armies, weapons and tactics, but the real world itself. The 1AC’s fantasy of demilitarization, like the crossbows of the Great Italian Wars, is outdated. Warfare is all we know.

Öberg 19. Dan Öberg, Associate Professor of War Studies at the Swedish Defence University, his research focuses on the ontology of war, critical military studies and the thought of Jean Baudrillard, “Requiem for the Battlefield,” *The Disorder of Things*, January 13th, 2019, <https://thedisorderofthings.com/2019/01/13/requiem-for-the-battlefield/>, ar

If we look closely, we see that the real world begins, in the modern age, with the decision to transform the world, and to do so by means of science, analytical knowledge and the implementation of technology – that is to say that it begins, in Hannah Arendt’s words, with the invention of an Archimedean point outside the world (on the basis of the invention of the telescope by Galileo and the discovery of modern mathematical calculation) by which the natural world is definitively alienated. This is the moment when human beings, while setting about analyzing and transforming the world, take their leave of it, while at the same time lending it force of reality. We may say, then, that the real world begins, paradoxically, to disappear at the very same time as it begins to exist. (Jean Baudrillard, Why Hasn’t Everything Already Disappeared?) Antoine Bousquet’s excellent and much anticipated book The Eye of War: Military Perception from the Telescope to the Drone traces how the history of the rationalisation of vision and the mathematisation of space during the Renaissance have enabled an ever expanding martial gaze. Herein the reader, among many things, gets an in-depth look at the changing fields of military perception and the subsequent attempts to hide from its view. As the author notes, this development leads towards the dispersal and disappearance of the battlefield in its traditional sense.[1] In this intervention, I would like to put forward a complementary view of the battlefield in relation to the trajectory traced by the author. This view can be summarised as an insistence that from the end of the 18th century and onwards, the traditional battlefield starts to disappear as it is operationalised through military doctrines, planning, and conduct. Moreover, as a direct consequence, the battlefield reappears, refracted through military attempts to model space and time. Below I attempt to sketch out this dual process of disappearance and reappearance by engaging with the history of the military imaginary which both sees and targets, and which arguably corresponds to that martial gaze of which the book speaks so well. As The Eye of War illustrates, often through fantastic pictures and drawings from historical times, the introduction of new weapon-systems and their social interpretation influence the possibility of targeting and the remits of the battlefield. Historically, we may perhaps argue that varying conceptions of the battlefield have been part of warfare for as long as there has been strategic dispositions in war, evident particularly in attempts to connect tactical means with strategic ends. At times such connections have been drawn on spatially and temporally demarcated battlefields. However, at other times, we find examples of how the conception of the battlefield challenges such remits. For example, in medieval warfare when a strategy of attrition was employed to starve an opponent, the target was crops and the tactics was to put your army in the field, aggressively devastate the countryside, and live off the land. Here the battlefield expands and the target shifts from the enemy soldier to the milieu in which a system of production is established. Or when the strategy was one of plunder, the target was likely to be a poorly protected enemy fortress and the tactics assaulting its walls and exciting pay, while avoiding surrounding armies through manoeuvre. Consequently, the attempt to operationalise the tactical means into strategic ends, that is, the attempt “to target”, potentially constitutes and challenges the remits of the battlefield. That said, the characteristic of the classical battlefield was often a combination of disparate units, tactical conducts, and weapon-systems in gradual transition. One such transition during the Great Italian Wars (1494-1559) between two types of “targeteers”: the crossbowman and the arquebusier, is captured in Charles Oman’s classical work History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century. Oman (quoting Gascon Montluc) writes as follows regarding the French army: Arquebusiers were known, but there were very few of them in the early years of the war: it was only in the second generation that the arquebus superseded the cross-bow. Montluc remarks that in 1523, when he was ensign in the company of Monsieur de la Clotte, he had only six arquebusiers with him, and they were all deserters from the Spanish army.’Encore en ce temps la il n’y avait point d’arquebusiers parmi notre nation’. He then proceeds to remark that he wishes that the arquebus had never been invented.’Would to God that this unhappy weapon had never been devised, and that so many brave and valiant men had never died by the hands of those who are often cowards and shirkers, who would never dare to look in the face those whom they lay low with their wretched bullets…’ The day had gone by when a certain commander used to order that quarter should never be given to men carrying firearms, but they were still hated and despised, and it took some time to teach French generals that they must rather be encouraged, and introduced on the largest scale possible.’ This quote illustrates the shift from when the arquebus was rare and firearms were seen with hatred and contempt, towards a gradual acceptance of “their wretched bullets”, until we reach the point where their use was encouraged as part of all major armies. Beyond the fact that methods of warfare change due to the introduction of new weapon systems, this historical example illustrates an important aspect of the constant contestation of the traditional battlefield. The arquebusier doing the targeting (and thereby efficiently killing “so many brave and valiant men”) is present at the field of battle and at the same time hated, accepted, and encouraged. That is, the character of the battlefield is negotiated through the direct relationship between targeteer and target and their corresponding tactical means. Arguably, such negotiation between targeteer and target changes drastically in character from the Napoleonic wars and onward. With the risk of simplifying matters, we may say that from the medieval times up to the 18th century, the battlefield was characterised by a gradual homogenisation of units and their array. From a situation where warfare was dominated by disparate units and weapon systems, we move towards standardised infantry and cavalry based units and the use of firearms and bayonets. This is a homogenisation that mirrors the rise of modern society in a more general sense. However, it is not until the next century, with the French Grande Armée, particularly due to the administrative care of Lazare Carnot (1753-1823) and the military thinking of the likes of Comte de Guibert (1743-1790) that the military imaginary starts to view the battlefield as a consequence of military analysis and planning. That is, as an operational model. As is well known, the operational dimension of warfare comes up in part as a result of the levée en masse, responding to practical needs to oversee and manage a system of national mobilization with the training and movement of large-scale units. Technological innovations such as the railroad and the telegraph among others, also helped ushering warfare into this new era. It is from this time onward that the battlefield expands through logistics, new intelligence, new command structures, and the administrational machinery of which the most obvious examples are the improved staffs and corps and the divisional system. While the culminating battle of the Napoleonic wars, Waterloo, was fought at a battlefield where 140,000 men and 400 guns were crammed into an area of roughly 3,5 miles, the latter half of the 19th century becomes characterised by the dispersal and implosion of the battlefield. As Bousquet has directed our attention to in his work, after the birth of modern warfare the battlefield dissolves due to the increased range of weapons systems. Its disappearance is also facilitated by how the military logistics of perception conditions the appearances of targets, particularly through how the “eye of war” manages to move from the commander occupying a high-point next to the field of battle, to being facilitated by balloons, binoculars, aerial reconnaissance, satellites, algorithms, and cloud computing. It is as part of this process we eventually reach the contemporary era where targeting is characterised by polar inertia, as targets arrive as digital images from anywhere on the globe in front of a stationary targeteer. However, I would like to argue that, parallel to this, there is a corresponding process taking place, which erases and remodels the battlefield as a result of the military disposition that is born with the operational dimension of warfare. To grasp this disposition and its consequences we need to ponder the fact that it is no coincidence that the operational dimension emerges at precisely the time when the traditional battlefield is starting to disappear. As The Eye of War outlines, global targeting is enabled by a logistics of perception. However, the demand for maps and images as well as the attempts to make sense of the battlefield arguably receives its impetus and frame of reference from elsewhere. It finds its nexus in standard operating procedures, regulations, instructions and manuals, military working groups, administrative ideals, organisational routines, and bureaucratic rituals. And, as the battlefield is managed, coded, and homogenised, it simultaneously starts to become an external point of reference, enacted through operational analysis and planning far from the battlefield itself. Let us not forget here that “to analyse” literally means “to dissolve”, as the perception of the operational analyst subsumes the field of battle into compartmentalised objects and relations. Moreover, as Carl von Clausewitz reminds us, operational planning is necessarily a reductive enterprise.[2] That is, it subtracts from the world, when reducing this said world to a theater of war. We may therefore say that the battlefield receives its force of reality through operational analysis and planning and appears as an “alienated” entity dominated by range, trajectories and a territory coded through a military grammar. Nevertheless, it seems that when the battlefield reappears as a concept or scenario, that is, as a model, it also starts to vanish. Therefore, it is arguably in the development of operational models of warfare: the doctrinal handbooks, the logistical apparatus, and the staff meetings on what to target, we find a corresponding erasure of the battlefield. If we return to the introductory quote, particularly to the insistence that the real world begins with the invention of an Archimedean point outside the world, we may say that it is with the introduction of the operational level of war that military practice and theory find and substantiate its own external point of reference. It finds it at the start of the Napoleonic wars, in the introduction of an operational military machinery which gradually starts to think warfare independently of the army in the field. It substantiates it through a code that strives to make war an efficient and integrated version of its own programmatic execution. This code outlines how to arrange and rearrange, compose, coordinate, and manufacture targets and effects. It also works as a method through the tasking and employment of tactical units, the translation of rules and diagrams into select weapon systems, and the integration of protocols into a concentration of force, making fires and bomb drops preplanned responses to problem situations. In the final chapter of The Eye of War we encounter a battlefield that is spatially and temporally boundless, what the author calls a “Global Imperium of Targeting”. What relationship between targeteer and target characterises this limitless battlefield? I will end by briefly introducing two alienating reference points that I have discussed elsewhere: the operational environment and the battle-rhythm as examples of a military modelling of space and time. According to the military imaginary, the operational environment consists of:’the composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military capabilities’ (see military doctrine). This term imposes a set of spatial relations that are conditioned through military concepts and functions: logistical routes and lines of communication, the range of weapon-platforms, perceived centres of gravity, the margining of targets, their weaponeering, and so forth. This spatial concept transmits relations through reductive doctrinal denominators such as “target-sets”, “undesirable systems” or “future end-states,” often visualised through PowerPoints. Corresponding to the remits of the operational environment, the’battle rhythm’ is the’combination of procedures, processes, and actions which facilitates extended continuous operations’. It is synchronised zulu-time: a coordinated 24 hour universal clock time enabling warfare to endure in real-time and coordinate fires and manoeuvres into tactical effects. The battle-rhythm is anticipatory, relating to ideas of dynamic actions, particularly in so called dynamic targeting. But it is also pre-planned as it forecasts and codes future time to shape its unfolding and becoming in accordance with the preparation and execution of warfare. So, as the traditional battlefield and its conceptualisation and contestation by crossbowmen and arquebusiers alike disappears due to the operationalisation of a martial gaze, what reappears is an abstract model of military space/time. This model perceives of the battlefield as that which facilitates military capabilities as extended operations as it targets for action. This means, I think, that in the Global Imperium of Targeting that The Eye of War portrays, the soldiers embodying the martial gaze assumes the roles of managers over our world as if it were this abstract and homogenous space/time. This points to a world that is indeed, a’battlespace in potentia’ watched over by’glacially indifferent machines’, as the author so eloquently puts it. However, it also points to the role of the military imaginary which oversees this gaze and which refines the modelling of space and time to impose a point of view on that which it sees. In short, the traditional battlefield may be dead, but we continue to live under the eye of its operational model.

#### The role of the ballot is to determine the productivity of the 1AC within debate ie they need to prove that there is a connection between their scholarship and the ballot – if not you vote negative on presumption

#### The internal net benefit is the armchair activism Disad – debate is a mausoleum of theories of power and resistance—ideas that were once alive are now filtered, managed, and expected by the machinations of academia. The proliferation of critical discourse within the debate space gets co-opted by the sign economy and merely circulates within the self-contained deliberation of the debate round. Terminal solvency defense and turn—their resistance is forever buried into the catacombs of empty school rooms. After this debate, we may go get lunch at a fast food joint that uses ingredients produced on the backs of disenfranchised workers in Latin America—they make us complacent by making us forget that we are only producing discourses about discourse in exchange for a ballot and we become complicit with the harms they speak to.

#### Their faith in satellites locks in global crises – suturing space to warfare locks out alternative futures in favor of fantasies of existential threat that make their impacts inevitable.

Masco, 12 (Joseph, Prof. of Anthropology @ U. of Chicago, “The End of Ends” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (Fall 2012), pp. 1107-1124)

In an extreme age, we might well ask: what are the possibilities for a productive shock, an experience or insight that would allow us to rethink the terms of everyday life? In the discipline of biology, the recent discov- ery of microbial extremophiles in deep-sea volcanic vents has fundamen- tally challenged longstanding scientific definitions of life (Helmreich 2008). Living under conditions of extreme heat and pressure, these methane- eating beings have redefined the very limits of life on planet Earth and beyond. What could produce a similar effect in the domain of security? Opportunities for such a critique are ever present, an endless stream of moments in fact, yet constantly **subsumed by the normalizing effects** of a national security culture committed to a **constant state of emergency**. A return to basic questions of how to define profit, loss, and sustainability is a key concern today in the US and this paper asks what kind of analy- sis could begin to redefine the limits of a collective security? What kind of **de-familiarization** and/or **productive shock** might allow insight into the cultural terms of expert judgment today in the US, allowing us to **rethink** the logics and practices that have simultaneously produced a **global war on terror**, a global **financial meltdown**, **and a planetary climate crisis**? How can Americans- extremophiles of the national sort- assess their own his- tory within a national-cultural formation devoted to the **normalization of violence (as war, as boom and bust capitalism, as environmental ruin**) as the basis for everyday life? This short paper does not provide an answer to these questions (would that it could!), but rather seeks to offer a provocation and a meditation on paths constantly not taken in US national security culture. It asks: how can we read against the normalizing processes of the security state to assess **alternative futures,** alternative visions **rendered** **invisible** by the complex **logistics of military science, economic rationality**, and **global governance**? To do so is to break from the normalizing force of everyday national secu- rity/capitalism, and interrogate the assumed structures of security and risk that support a global American military deployment and permanent war posture. To accomplish this kind of critical maneuver, however, one needs to be able to recognize the **alternative futures rendered void** by the **specific configurations of politics and threat** empowering **military industrial action** at a given moment. An extreme critique requires the ability to assess the alternative costs and benefits that remain suspended within the spaces of an **everyday American life constantly rehearsing (via media, political culture, and military action) terror as normality**. What follows then is both an examination and a performance of extremity- pushing a critical history and theory well beyond the usual scholarly comfort level. It seeks less to settle and explain than to agitate and provoke. To engage an extreme point of view on crisis, both exterior and ob- jective, let's turn to a spectacular new technology that seemed to offer just such a perspective on US security culture in 1960- that of an exterior gaze on planet Earth. **The first satellite imagery** was not only a techno- logical revolution of profound importance to the military (and ultimately the earth and information sciences), it also **constituted a rare moment of ob- jective critique to American Cold War fantasies** at their most virulent and violent. Covert and extremely fragile, the first Corona satellite was secretly launched into outer space in August of 1 960, offering a new optics on Cold War military technologies and fantasies. Imagine, if you will, a rocket car- rying not a warhead but a giant panoramic camera (see Figures 1 and 2), slung into a low orbit over Europe, running a long reel of 70mm film, spe- cially designed by Kodak to function in outer space. The satellite makes a series of orbits exposing its film over designated areas, and then ejects a fire-proof capsule carrying the film, sending it back into Earth's atmosphere (see Figure 3). As the capsule descends via a series of parachutes, it emits a homing signal, allowing a specially equipped plane to detect the signal and swoop in, capturing the now charred film canister in mid-air via a gi- ant hook (see Figure 4). On August 18, 1960 the **Corona Project** became the first space based reconnaissance system, providing the CIA with the first satellite photographs of Soviet military installations (see Figures 5 and 6; as well as Day, Logsdon, and Latell 1998; and Peebles 1997). Corona provided the most accurate images of Soviet military capabilities to date, offering concrete photographic evidence of Soviet missile capabilities at a time of near hysterical speculation about imminent Soviet attack. Soon US **officials knew via photo- graphic documentation** of commu- nist military bases that **the Soviets did not have a vast and growing ICBM superiority** capable of over- whelming US defenses. In fact, the US had something on the order of a ten to one advantage in missiles, and even more in nuclear devices. At this moment in the Cold War, **outer space provided the only clear view of nuclear threat- providing a series of photographs that dramatically changed how US officials viewed the immediacy of nuclear war** (Richelson 2006). Over the next decade, **the race to the moon became the public face of a covert enterprise to extend and expand space surveillance**. Plans for manned photographic studios in space with Hubble telescope- sized lenses pointed toward Earth, soon were enhanced by digital communications that allowed in- stant data transmission (see Willis and Bamford 2007). The Corona cameras evolved quickly, moving from the 40-foot resolution offered in 1960 to five-foot resolution by 1967, a revolution in optics that was soon followed by digital satellite systems capable of three-inch resolution, in- frared imaging, and the near instantaneous transfer of information. These remote sensing technologies have since revolutionized everything from geography, to climate sciences, to the now ubiquitous GPS systems and Google Earth. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has long considered the Corona satellite one of its most im- portant achievements, a pure suc- cess story. As Director of the CIA, Richard Helms held a ceremony in honor of the Corona Program's re- tirement in 1 972 (in favor of the next generation digital satellite system). He presented a documentary film, entitled "A Point in Time" to CIA personnel detailing the crucial his- tory of the top-secret program, its technological achievements, and its central role in Cold War geopolitics. litics. A Corona capsule and an exten- sive photographic display of Corona satellite imagery was then centrally installed at CIA Headquarters in Langley to document its success for all future employees. On display there through the end of the Cold War, com- ponents of this exhibit can now be seen at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The extensive Corona photographic archive became available Corona as a fantastically successful covert spy system and others today value its photographic record for non-military scientific research, a basic lesson of the Corona achievement remains unrecognized: the first satellite system not only offered a new optic on Soviet technology, **it also revealed how fantastical American assessments of Soviet capabilities wer**e in the 1 950s. It offered a new remote viewing photography but also new insight into the American national security imaginary. The first Corona images have as much to say about the **ferocious US commitment to** nuclear weapons and **a global nuclear war machine** already set on a minute-to-minute trig- ger by 1960, as about Soviet weapons. The first Corona images contra- dicted expert US judgments of Soviet capabilities and desires, providing a powerful counterweight against arguments for a preemptive US attack on the Soviet Union. The slightly blurry satellite photographs thus held **the potential for a radical critique of American perceptions** of the Soviet Union, **showing that US officials were as much at war with their own apocalyptic projections** in 1 960 as with Soviet plans for territorial expansion. **An anthropology of extremes requires a non-normative reading of cul- ture and history, an effort to push past consensus logics to interrogate what alternative visions, projects, and futures are left unexplored at a given historical moment.** The rapidly evolving historical archive provides one op- portunity for this kind of critique: our understanding of the 20th century American security state is changing with each newly declassified program and document, dramatically reshaping what we know about US policy, mil- itary science, and threat assessments since World War II. The Corona pho- tographs are a compelling illustration of the power of the evolving national security archive. As the enormous military state apparatus that constitutes the core of the American political and economic machine is grudgingly opened to new kinds of conceptual interrogation, Americans should seize the opportunity to learn about their own commitments, political processes, and security imaginaries. Indeed, **the national security archive** is one place where we can formally consider how the 20th century "balance of terror" has been remade in the 21st century as a "war on terror"- following the **affective politics**, **technological fetishisms**, **and geopolitical** **ambitions** that have come to **structure US security culture**. The declassified Cold War ar- chive allows us to pursue an extreme reading of US security culture, one committed to pushing past official policy logics at moments of heightened emergency to consider how **threat**, historical contingency, **technological revolution**, **propaganda**, and geopolitical ambition **combine in a specific moment of extreme risk**. The first Corona images, for example, constitute a moment when administrators of the national security state had **their own logics** and fears **negated** in the form of direct photographic evidence, opening a **potential conceptual space for radical reassessment of their own** ambitions, perceptions, and **drives**, powerfully revealed in black and white photos **as fantasy**. We might well ask why **the Corona imagery** (**and** any number of **similar moments when existential threat** **has** objectively **dissolved into mere projection- most** recently, the missing weapons of mass destruction used to justify the US invasion of Iraq in 2003)- **did not pro- duce a radical self-critique in the US**. The Cold War nuclear standoff installed **existential threat as a core structure of everyday American life**, making nuclear fear the coordinat- ing principle of US geo-policy and a **new psychosocial reality** for citizens increasingly connected via images of their own imminent death. Indeed, few societies have prepared so meticulously for collective death as did Cold War America while simultaneously denying the possibility of an ac- tual ending. From large scale civil defense drills in which the destruction of the nation-state became a kind of public theater, to the articulation of a Cold War militarism that understood all global political events as condi- tioning everyday American life, the height of the Cold War worked in novel ways both to enable and deny the possibility of a collective death (Masco 2008). **The early history of the Corona Satellite System offers a compel- ling story about the technological achievement of a total ending, and the Cold War hysteria of the years 1957-1962 in the US**. This is a moment of maximal danger but also of new perspectives- crucially those derived from outer space- that momentarily opened up multiple contingent and radically different security futures. For an anthropology of extremes, this period of Cold War can be approached as an ur-moment; foundational in terms of the technology, theory, politics, and ambitions supporting the American security state. Interrogating this first period of global nuclear danger via recently declassified materials allows us to ask: how does one end the possibility of a total ending? How does a society pursuing war as a normalized condition of everyday life pause and reflect on its own intel- lectual and psychosocial processes? Within modern political theory the means to an end has been embed- ded within the very concept of rationality, making ends and means syn- onymous with progress, a perpetual engine of improving the infrastruc- tures of everyday life as well as the morality of those living within it. Within this modernity- glossed here as the application of reason to nature as progress- we have few efforts to theorize the reality or implication of con- ceptual blockages or blindnesses within the very notion of security. The assumption that instrumental reason is not only a means to an end but an essential good structures a Euro-American modernity in which supersti- tion is set against the possibility of an unending technological progress (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002:1). Benjamin (1969) offers perhaps the most powerful critique of "progress" by showing how **the promise of the "new" can be the vehicle of social mystification and entrenchment**. His call to "brush history against the grain" and establish a critical method that can "seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" is ultimately a call to resist the normalization (and naturalization) of violence in everyday life. But how, and under what terms, can this be accomplished in a national security state that is premised on the total ending of nuclear war? Having built the war machine as a global system, how can a society turn towards an alternative notion of security, one not grounded in the technological possibility of total nuclear war? How, indeed, does **thinking about an absolute ending** work to **install a new set of fantasies and short circuits that prevent reflexive critique**? How do rational modes of planning work not to eliminate the possibility of collective death but rather, through self-mystification, to install its pos- sibility ever deeper into an expert state system? Kant (1986) articulated one central area where reason is installed as a compensation for a lack of understanding in his notion of the sublime. Sublime experience, in his view, overwhelms the human sensorium providing that strange mix of pleasure and terror involved in surpassing one's cognitive limit. For Kant, the experi- ence of incomprehensibility is then managed by an act of categorizing- by a naming of the event- rather than through understanding. Compensation rather than comprehension is thus achieved, installing at the very center of his notion of reason an irreducible problem about means, ends, and the ability of human beings in extreme moments to comprehend both. "**Terror**" has an inherent sublimity, one that has been multiplied across contempo- rary crisis- war, economy, environment- to create a new complex con- figuration of planetary risk that exceeds the power of the national security state (Masco 201 0). **Nuclear terror**, as a permanent state system, however, is not a momentary experience (as Kant's sublime requires) but **is** instead **a global infrastructure**- one **that coordinates American military power as well as its domestic politics**. **This infrastructure requires constant affective as well as technological support, merging complex social and technologi- cal processes that become fused in perceptions of global risk**. Put differently, instrumental reason has orchestrated our globalized, economized, technologized modernity but it has also installed a set of compensations for those events, desires, and biological facts that dis- rupt specific calculations of progress/profit. By the mid-20th century, the products of instrumental reason- the very means to an end- produced new forms of war that ultimately challenged the survival of the species. The atomic bomb stands as both a rational technology- produced via the combined work of physicists, engineers, chemists, industrialists, military planners, defense intellectuals, and civilian policy makers- and as a limit case to that instrumental reason (see Edwards 1996, Oakes 1994). In the early days of the nuclear age, some Manhattan Project scientists hoped this new technology would be so terrible that it would simply end the pos- sibility of war (e.g., Federation of American Scientists 1946). Instead, US war planners built a global system for nuclear war that could end life itself within a few minutes of actual conflict. Each new nuclear system- bomb- er, submarine, and missile- was both a technological achievement of the first order and an accelerating progression towards the end of modernity in the form of nuclear war. What these technical experts were attempting to negotiate through engineering is a basic relationship to death, a perverse project of build- ing ever more destructive machines in the name of producing "security." Indeed, **displacing** the threat of **one machine** (the bomb) with another (the bomb) became the basis for **deterrence theory, a way of organizing and containing the thought of death by expanding technological systems**. Freud (1991) saw this contradiction in militarism early on, and in his remarkable 1915 essay "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" he is definitive that it is impossible to comprehend- to actually believe in- one's own death. Thus, he notes, even as the human organism moves closer to death with each tick of the clock, the ego pursues a program of immortality and works **to relocate the** onrushing **reality of death to exterior locations**- to novels, to foreign populations, to distant wars, **to a radical outside**. Thus, **the thought of an "ending" here literally pro- duces a new set of means- fantasies, projections, displacements, and amnesias all mobilized to suture together an idea of an eternal** **self**. In American national-culture, the Cold War performed this task through a series of circuits: the communist threat was simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, and the immanent threat of nuclear war was mitigated by a fetishistic focus on technological detail. Cold War planners managed the threat of nuclear war through constant proliferation- of weapons, deliv- ery systems, images, theories, and calculations. Through this prolifera- tion, Cold War planners pursued a program of intellectual compensation for the confrontation with a new kind of death. They did so by mobilizing all national resources (changing the very temporal horizon of war from days, to hours, to minutes in the process), as well as by pursuing proxy wars and covert actions around the world. In the process, Americans learned how to be committed to total war as a precondition for everyday life while locating death as exterior to the nation, even as the war machine grew ferociously in its technological capacities. This represents a distinc- tive national-cultural achievement: a notion of **security** that **brings collective death ever closer in an attempt to fix its location with ever more precision**. By the time of the first Corona photograph, the US nuclear system was on constant and permanent alert, managing a global war machine on a minute-by-minute temporal scale- one that imagined a Soviet nuclear strike coming with less than seven minutes warning (Keeney 201 1 :1 86). US military systems became both the most direct application of tech- nical rationality and the location of deep fantasies about national immor- tality and systems of total control. In the first decade of the Cold War, for example, the lack of detailed intelligence about the Soviet Union enabled an American national security project that was both technologically Uto- pian and driven by increasingly apocalyptic visions of an omnipotent other. A top-secret, blue-ribbon panel studying the possibility of nuclear civil defense in 1957, known as the Gaither Committee, not only recom- mended a nationwide commitment to building underground bunkers and training citizens to think calmly about experiencing nuclear war, its mem- bers also concluded that a "missile gap" with the Soviet Union left the US increasingly vulnerable to a devastating "first strike" (Security Resources Panel of the Science Advisory Committee 1 957). Reinforced by the hys- teria over Sputnik later in 1957- the first artificial satellite in space- US national security debates, by the end of the 1950s, were structured by visions of a Soviet sneak attack that would destroy urban America in an instant. The Gaither Committee leaked to the press their conclusion that by 1959 the Soviets would have a decisive advantage in ICBMs (see Roman 1995, Snead 1999) provoking huge nuclear arms expenditures in the US. The domestic politics informing the "missile gap" narrative were part of the battle between military branches for nuclear resources and soon key to John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign strategy of positioning his Republican rivals (Eisenhower and then Nixon) as weak on national security. Thus**, a threat projection with multiple political uses became codified as a kind of truth in US national security policy**, leading to massive increases in defense spending at the end of the Eisenhower administration and then again at the start of the Kennedy administration. The nuclear triad- of bombers, ICBMs, and submarines- is built at this moment, providing multiple redundant systems for waging nuclear war and giving each branch of the military a nuclear capability. Today we can see that in addition to the new weapons systems built at the end of the 1950s, there was also an important political discovery crucial to the evolving Cold War: namely, the universal utility of threat pro- liferation in US security culture. **The raw political value of existential threat as a motivating narrative became a well-worn domestic strategy** in the US, one linking the "missile gap" of the 1950s to the "window of vulner- ability" of the 1 970s, to the "strategic defense initiative" of the 1 980s to the "**space based Pearl Harbor**" narratives of the 1 990s **to the terrorist "WMD" discourses** of the 2000s as illustrations of a nuclear culture. In each of these cases, we can see how the bomb (as **a consolidated form of existential threat**) **has** been good for Americans to think with, **becom**ing the basis for building a nuclear state and a **global military system** but also for trans- forming raw military ambition into a necessary form of "defense." But if the bomb has been crucial to constituting US "superpower" status, it has also **produced a complex new domestic affective political domain, allowing images of**, **and** **appeals to,** **existential threat to become a central means of** establishing and **expanding a militarized national security culture**.

#### The asteroid impact threat is propaganda meant to legitimize continued research into incredibly powerful militarized technologies—turning the debate away from existential threats is the only way to develop peaceful solutions and divorce science from militarization

Mellor 07. **–** (Felicity, PhD Theoretical Physics Newcastle University, *Colliding Worlds: Asteroid Research and the Legitimization of War in Space,* Social Studies of Science, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Aug., 2007), pp. 499-531, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2547453>, SUSSMAN, PDF)

During the 1980s and 1990s, a small group of planetary scientists and astronomers set about actively promoting the asteroid impact threat. They drew on an expanded empirical base, but also on narratives of technologi cal salvation. Despite their concerns that their warnings were greeted by a 'giggle factor' and that funding remained too low, they succeeded in cap turning the attention of the media and of some policy-makers and in establishing the impact threat as a legitimate and serious topic for scientific study. By the eve of the new millennium, the meaning of asteroids had undergone a significant transformation. Asteroids had gone from being distant relics of Solar System history to being a hidden enemy that could strike at any time with catastrophic consequences. The reconceptualization of asteroids was accompanied by a reconceptualization of both space and astronomy. In Newtonianism, space had been conceived as an empty geometrical abstraction in which God's handiwork was displayed to the knowing observer. Space was both predictable and dis tant. Now, with the promotion of the impact threat, space was configured as the source of an enemy against which we must defend ourselves. This threatening conception of space matched the conception of space as a theatre of war promoted by the supporters of SDI. Space had become a place, a technologized location for human action where wars could be fought and human salvation sought. Thus astronomy was also reconceptualized. Further developing the violent metaphors already appropriated by impact-extinction theory (Davis, 2001), astronomers recast their role as impassioned prophets of doom and saviours of mankind rather than as cold calculators of cosmic order. Traditionally, Solar System astronomy had dealt with the grand narratives of planetary history and the timeless certainties of celestial dynamics. The technologies of astronomy - telescopes and, later, space probes - were the tools through which new knowledge had been sought. They were not, on the whole, instruments of action. Now, however, astronomy was to be prophetic and interventionist. As comets had been in a far earlier period, both asteroids and comets were now treated as 'monsters' - portents of Earthly calamities. It was the purpose of planetary astronomy to watch for these portents. Equally, it was the duty of astronomers to warn the unsuspecting public and to intervene to save the world. Planetary astronomy was transformed from the passive observation of the heavens to the active surveillance of the heavens, and the instruments of astronomy were to be supplemented with the technologies of war. By the 1980s and 1990s, asteroid science, defence science and science fiction all presented space as an arena for technological intervention where an invisible enemy would be defeated for the greater good of mankind. Science fiction provided a culturally available resource that could give con crete form to the ideas of both asteroid scientists and weapons designers. Through narrative, the timeless and universal speculations of science could be converted into a specific sequence of events. By drawing on narratives of technological salvation, asteroid scientists made their case more compelling, but they also became dependent on narrative scenarios shared by the defence scientists. Even as the scientists themselves attempted to pull back from concrete proposals for weapons systems, their own discourse irresistibly drew them towards the militaristic intervention demanded by the narrative impera tive. The identification of asteroids as a threat required a military response. Astronomer Duncan Steel (2000b), writing about the impact threat in The Guardian newspaper, put it most clearly when he stated that 'we too need to declare war on the heavens'. Just as the overlap between science and science fiction was mutually supportive, so the overlap between impact science and defence helped legitimize both. The civilian scientists could draw on a repertoire of metaphors and concepts already articulated by the defence scientists to help make the case for the threat from space. They would no longer be a marginalized and underfunded group of astronomers, but would take on the ultimate role of defending the world. Similarly, in the context of the impact threat, the defence scientists could further develop their weapons systems without being accused of threatening the delicate nuclear balance of mutually assured destruction or, in the period between the fall of the Soviet Union and the 9/11 attacks, of irresponsibly generating a climate of fear in the absence of an identifiable enemy. The civilian scientists attempted to still their consciences in their deal ings with the defence scientists by suggesting that, with the end of the Cold War and the demise of SDI, the latter had lost their traditional role. This argument was naive at best. In fact, as we have seen, the US defence scientists had taken an interest in the impact threat since the early 1980s, from the time that SDI had greatest political support during the defence build-up of the Reagan era. Even at the time of the fractious Interception Workshop, George H.W. Bush was maintaining SDI funding at the same level as it had been during the second Reagan administration. If outwardly the Clinton administration was less supportive when it took office in 1993 and declared that SDI was over, many of those involved in the programme felt that it would actually go on much as before (FitzGerald, 2000: 491). SDI was renamed, and to some extent reconceived, but funding continued and was soon increased when the Republicans gained a majority in Congress.33 After George W. Bush took office in 2001, spending on missile defence research was greatly increased, including programmes to follow on from Brilliant Pebbles (Wall, 2001a; 2001b). Thus the defence scientists had shown an interest in the impact threat from the time of the very first meeting onwards, regardless of the state of funding for missile defence, which in any case continued throughout the This is not to suggest that the impact threat was not used by the defence scientists as a means of maintaining the weapons establishment. Indeed, the impact threat offered a possible means of circumventing or undermining arms treaties.34 But it does mean that the attempt to access new sources of funding, while being an important factor in the promotion of asteroids as a threat, did not fully explain either the weapons scientists' interests or the civilian scientists' repeated meetings with them. The asteroid impact threat offered a scientifically validated enemy onto which could be projected the fears on which a militaristic culture depends. Far from providing a replacement outlet for weapons technologies, the pro motion of the asteroid impact threat helped make the idea of war in space more acceptable and helped justify the continued development of space based weaponry. Arguably, with the Clementine and Deep Impact mis sions, the asteroid impact threat even facilitated the testing of SDI-style systems. The asteroid impact threat legitimized a way of talking, and thinking, that was founded on fear of the unknown and the assumption that advanced technology could usher in a safer era. In so doing, it resonated with the politics of fear and the technologies of permanent war that are now at the centre of US defence policy. In this post-Cold War period, scholars of the relation between military and civilian science need to examine carefully claims about 'ploughshare' or 'conversion' technologies. New technologies arise not just out of fund ing and policy decisions, but also out of the social imaginaries in which new weapons can be imagined and construed as necessary. Concepts such as 'dual use' or 'cover' also need to be assessed critically.35 One way of characterizing the Clementine missions would be as dual-use technologies whose scientific aims served as cover for the testing of SDI technologies. Yet this fails to reveal the ways in which these missions were just one concrete output of a more **fundamental conceptual alliance between weapons designers and astronomers.** In this paper, I have attempted to show that by also considering the narrative context in which such initiatives are located, it is possible to throw some light on the cultural web that binds civilian science to military programmes. But the focus on narrative also begs a question: Which stories would we prefer to frame our science? Should science be driven by fear or by curiosity? Should it be aimed at creating technologies of war or cultures of compassion? These are normative questions, but they are also precisely the questions that make the military influence on science such an important issue. Narratives are inherently ideological and a refusal to see them as such does no more to enhance the scholar's objectivity than it does the scien tist's. The stories told by the asteroid scientists led them into collaborations with weapons scientists and helped fuel a discourse of fear that **served a particular ideological purpose**. This should be both recognized and challenged, not for the sake of regaining some impossible ideal of an undistorted science but because there are other stories, based on different ideological assumptions, that we could tell in order to guide science towards more peaceful ends.

#### Cap collapsing now – most recent ev

**IMT 21** (World Perspectives 2021: a global epoch of revolution is being prepared https://www.marxist.com/a-worldwide-epoch-of-revolution-is-being-prepared.htm International Marxist Tendency 30 July 2021 Accessed 8-13-2021) CSUF JmB + meza Work Week

The nature of perspectives The present document, which should be read in conjunction with the one we produced in September 2020, will be somewhat different to world perspectives documents that we have issued in the past. In previous periods, when events were moving at a more leisurely pace, it was possible to deal, at least in outline, with many different countries. Now, however, the pace of events has accelerated to the point where in order to deal with everything, one would need a whole book. The purpose of perspectives is not to produce a catalogue of revolutionary events, but to uncover the fundamental underlying processes. As Hegel explained in the Introduction to the Philosophy of History: “It is in fact, the wish for rational insight, not the ambition to amass a mere heap of acquisitions, that should be presupposed in every case as possessing the mind of the learner in the study of science.” We are dealing here with general processes, and can only look at a few countries which serve to illustrate most clearly those processes at this stage. Other countries will, of course, be dealt with in separate articles. Dramatic events The year 2021 commenced with dramatic events. The crisis of world capitalism is making waves that are spreading from one country and continent to another. On all sides, there is the same picture of chaos, economic dislocation and class polarisation. The new year barely began before a far-right mob stormed the US Capitol Building in Washington at the urging of former US president, Donald Trump – giving the centre of Western imperialism the appearance of a failed state. These events, coupled with the vastly larger Black Lives Matter protests last summer, show how deep the polarisation of US society has become. In addition to this, big protests in India, Colombia, Chile, Belarus and Russia demonstrated the same process: the masses’ resentment is growing, and the ruling class is failing to govern in the old ways. A global crisis like no other These world perspectives are unlike any other we have dealt with in the past. They are enormously complicated by the pandemic that is hanging like a black cloud over the entire world, subjecting millions to misery, suffering and death. The pandemic still rages out of control. At the moment of writing, there have been more than 100 million cases worldwide, and almost three million deaths. These figures are unprecedented outside a world war. And they continue to rise inexorably. This terrible scourge has had a devastating effect in poor countries around the world and has also seriously affected some of the richest countries. In the USA there are 30 million cases, and the number of deaths has gone over the half a million mark. And Britain has among the highest number of deaths per head of the population: over 4 million cases, and well over 100,000 deaths. The present crisis is therefore not like an ordinary economic crisis. This is literally a life-and-death situation for millions of people. Many of these deaths could have been avoided with proper measures early on. Capitalism cannot solve the problem Capitalism cannot solve the problem: it is itself the problem. This pandemic serves to expose the intolerable divisions between rich and poor. It has revealed the deep fault lines that divide society. The line between those who are condemned to get sick and die, and those who are not. It has laid bare the wastefulness of capitalism, its chaos and inefficiency, and is preparing class struggle in every country in the world. Bourgeois politicians like to use military analogies to describe the present situation. They say we are at war with an invisible enemy, this terrible virus. They conclude that all classes and parties must unite behind the existing government. But a yawning gulf separates words from deeds. The case for a planned economy and international planning is unanswerable. The crisis is worldwide. The virus does not respect frontiers or border controls. The situation demands an international response, the pooling of all scientific knowledge and the mobilisation of all the resources of the planet to coordinate a genuine global plan of action. Instead, we have the unedifying spectacle of the row between Britain and the EU over scarce vaccines, while some of the poorest countries are virtually denied access to any vaccines at all. But why is there a scarcity of vaccines? The problems of vaccine production – to cite just one example – are a reflection of the contradiction between the urgent needs of society and the mechanisms of the market economy. If we were really at war with the virus, governments would mobilise all their resources on this one task. From a purely rational point of view, the best policy would be to ramp up vaccine production as fast as possible. Capacity needs to be expanded, which can only be done by setting up new factories. But the big private vaccine manufacturers have no interest in expanding production massively because they would be financially worse off if they did. If they ramped up production capacity so that the whole world was supplied within six months, the newly built facilities would stand empty immediately afterwards. Profits would then be much lower compared with current scenarios, where existing plants produce at capacity for years to come. Yet another obstacle to mass production of the vaccine is the refusal of Big Pharma to relinquish intellectual property rights over “their own” vaccines (in most cases developed with massive amounts of state funding) so that other companies would be able to produce them cheaply. Pharmaceutical companies are making tens of billions in profits, but problems with both production and supply mean shortages everywhere. In the meantime, millions of lives are at risk. Workers’ lives at risk In their haste to get production (and therefore profits) moving again, politicians and capitalists resort to cutting corners. Workers are sent back to crowded workplaces without adequate protection. This is equivalent to passing a death sentence on many of these workers and their families. All the hopes of the bourgeois politicians were based on the new vaccines. But the rollout of vaccines has been bungled, and the failure to control the spread of the virus – which increases the risk of new vaccine-resistant strains developing – has serious implications, not just for human lives and health, but also for the economy. Economic crisis The present economic crisis is the most severe in 300 years, according to the Bank of England. In 2020, the equivalent of 255 million jobs were lost worldwide, four times more than in 2009. The so-called emerging economies are being dragged down with the rest. India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey are all in crisis. South Korea’s economy shrank last year for the first time in 22 years. That was despite state subsidies worth about $283 billion. In South Africa, unemployment reached 32.5 percent and GDP contracted by 7.2 percent in 2020. This is a greater contraction than in 1931 during the Great Depression, and this in spite of spending the equivalent of 10 percent of GDP in a fiscal stimulus package. The crisis is plunging millions of people ever deeper into poverty. In January 2021, the World Bank estimated that 90 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty. The Economist of 26 September 2020 wrote: “The United Nations is even gloomier. It defines people as poor if they do not have access to things like clean water, electricity, sufficient food and schools for their children. “Working with researchers from Oxford University, it reckons the pandemic could cast 490 million in 70 countries into poverty, reversing almost a decade of gains.” The United Nations’ World Food Programme put it in these terms: “Across 79 countries with WFP operational presence and where data are available, up to 270 million people are estimated to be acutely food insecure or at high risk in 2021, an unprecedented 82 percent increase from pre-pandemic levels.” This alone gives one an idea of the global scale of the crisis. In addition to the effects of the pandemic, the global ecological crisis will likely aggravate this situation, fuelling poverty and food insecurity. Capitalist exploitation of the environment threatens to put key ecological systems on the edge of collapse. We have seen an increase in conflicts over scarce water resources and environmental destruction that will inevitably lead to social instability and massive climate migration. The general instability around the world is organically linked to growing poverty. It is both cause and effect. It is the most fundamental underlying cause of many of the wars and civil wars taking place. Ethiopia is just one example of this. Ethiopia was presented as a model. In the period of 2004 to 2014 its economy was growing by 11 percent a year, and it was seen as a country to invest in. Now it has been thrown into turmoil with the outbreak of fighting in Tigray province, where 3 million people are in need of emergency food relief. This is not an isolated case. The list of countries affected by wars in the past period is very long, and the catalogue of human suffering appalling: Afghanistan: two million deaths; Yemen: 100,000 deaths; the Mexican drug wars have led to over 250,000 killed; the war against the Kurds in Turkey, 45,000 deaths; Somalia, 500,000 deaths; Iraq, at least one million deaths; South Sudan around 400,000 deaths. In Syria, the United Nations estimated the number of deaths at 400,000, but this seems too low. The real figure may never be known but is sure to be 600,000 at least. In the terrible civil wars in the Congo, probably over four million people perished. But there again, nobody knows the real figure. More recently we had the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. And so the list goes on and on. Such things are no longer considered suitable for the front pages of newspapers. But they express very clearly what Lenin once said: Capitalism is horror without end. The continued existence of capitalism threatens to create the conditions of barbarism in one country after another. A crisis of the regime From a Marxist point of view, the study of economics is not an abstract academic question. It has a profound effect on the development of consciousness of all classes. Everywhere we look now there is a crisis, not just an economic crisis, but a crisis of the regime. There are clear indications that the crisis is so severe, so deep, that the ruling class is losing control of the traditional instruments they used in the past for running society. As a result, the ruling class finds itself increasingly unable to control events. That is particularly clear in the case of the USA. But it also applies to many other countries. It is sufficient to mention the names of Trump, Boris Johnson and Bolsonaro to underline the point. USA The USA now occupies a central place in world perspectives. For a very long time, revolution in the richest and most powerful nation on earth seemed to be a very distant prospect. But the USA was hit very hard by the world economic crisis and now everything has been turned upside down. 68 million Americans filed for unemployment during the pandemic, and as always it is the poorest and most vulnerable, especially the people of colour, who suffer most. The scourge of unemployment falls most heavily on the shoulders of the youth. A quarter of under-25s have been thrown out of work. Their future has suddenly been taken away. The American dream has become the American nightmare. This dramatic change has forced many people, old and young, to reconsider views that they previously considered sacrosanct and question the very nature of the society in which they live. The rapid rise of Bernie Sanders at one end of the political spectrum and Donald Trump at the other set the red light flashing for the ruling class. This kind of thing was not supposed to happen! Alarmed at the danger posed by this situation, the ruling class was compelled to take emergency measures. Let us remind ourselves that, according to the official dogma of bourgeois economists, the state was not supposed to play any part in economic life. But faced with looming disaster, the ruling class was forced to throw all the accepted economic theories into the dustbin. The same state which, according to free-market theory, should play little or no role in economic life, has now become the only thing propping up the capitalist system. In all countries, starting with the USA, the so-called free market economy is really on a life support system, like a coronavirus patient. Most of the money handed out by the state went straight into the pockets of the rich. But the ruling class feared the political consequences of yet another corporate bailout. They therefore gave grants to every resident and massively boosted unemployment benefits. This cushioned the impact of the crisis on the poorest layers. At some point, these supports will be cut back or withdrawn altogether. We have the paradox of the most terrible poverty in the richest country in the world existing side by side with the most obscene wealth and luxury. By October 2020, more than one in five American households did not reliably have enough money for food. Food banks are proliferating. Inequality and polarisation Levels of inequality have broken all records. The gulf between rich and poor has become transformed into an unbridgeable abyss. In 2020 the wealth of the world’s billionaires grew by $3 .9 trillion. The Nasdaq 100 index is 40 percent higher than before the pandemic. Listed global equities, as of February 2021 had risen in value by $24 trillion since March of 2020. The average chief executive of an S&P 500 company earns 357 times as much as the average non-supervisory worker. The ratio was around 20 in the mid-1960s. It was still 28 at the end of Ronald Reagan’s term in 1989. To quote just one example, Jeff Bezos now makes more money per second than the typical US worker makes in a week. This takes America back to the times of the capitalist robber barons that Theodore Roosevelt denounced before the First World War. And this has an effect. All the demagogy about the ‘national interest’, that ‘we must unite to fight the virus’, ‘we are all in the same boat’, stands exposed as the vilest hypocrisy. The masses are prepared to make sacrifices under certain circumstances. In times of war, people are prepared to unite to fight a common enemy, that is true. They are prepared, at least temporarily, to accept lower living standards and also, to some extent, restrictions on democratic rights. But the gulf separating the haves from the have-nots is deepening the social and political polarisation and creating an explosive mood in society. It undermines all the efforts to create a sensation of national unity and solidarity, which is the main line of defence for the ruling class. Federal Reserve statistics show that the richest tenth in the US had a net worth of $80.7 trillion at the end of 2020. That means 375 percent of GDP and far above historical levels. A five percent tax on that would yield $4 trillion, or one fifth of GDP. It would pay for all the costs of the pandemic. But the rich robber barons have no intention of sharing their plunder. Most of them (including Donald J Trump) show a marked disinclination to paying any tax at all, let alone five percent. The only solution would be the expropriation of the bankers and capitalists. This idea will inevitably gain more and more support, sweeping away the remaining prejudices against socialism and communism, even among those layers of workers who have been bamboozled by the demagogy of Trump. This is already causing concern among the serious strategists of capital. Mary Callaghan Erdoes, head of assets and wealth management for JP Morgan, drew the inevitable conclusion: “You’re going to get a very high risk of extremism coming out of this. We have to find some way to adapt, otherwise we’re in a very dangerous situation.” The assault on the Capitol The attack on the Capitol on 6 January was a graphic indication that what the USA now faces is not a crisis of government, but a crisis of the regime itself. These events were neither a coup nor an insurrection, but they glaringly exposed the raw anger that exists in the depths of society and also the emergence of deep rifts in the state. At bottom, what they indicate is that the polarisation in society has reached a critical point. The institutions of bourgeois democracy are being tested to destruction. There is a burning hatred of the rich and powerful, the bankers, Wall Street and the Washington establishment in general (“the swamp”). This hatred was skilfully channelled by the right-wing demagogue, Donald Trump. Of course, Trump himself is only the most cunning and voracious alligator in the swamp. He is merely pursuing his own interests. But in doing so, he seriously damaged the interests of the ruling class as a whole. He has played with fire and conjured up forces that neither he, nor anyone else, can control. By word and deed, Trump was destroying the legitimacy of bourgeois institutions and creating huge instability. That is why the ruling class and its political representatives everywhere are horrified by his conduct. The impeachment The Democrats tried to impeach Trump, accusing him of organising an insurrection. But they predictably failed to get the Senate to convict him, which would have barred him from standing for public office in future. Most Republican senators would have been very glad to do this. They hate and fear this political upstart. And they knew very well who was behind the events of 6 January. The Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell delivered a damning verdict on the ex-President, after voting to acquit him. In reality, he and the other Republican senators were terrified of the reaction of Trump’s angry followers if they took that fateful step. They decided that discretion is the better part of valour and, holding their noses, voted not guilty. But if this was an attempted insurrection it was a very poor one. Rather than an insurrection, it resembled a large-scale riot. The mob of angry Trump supporters burst into the Capitol with the obvious connivance of at least some of the guards. But, having easily gained possession of the Holy of Holies of US bourgeois democracy, they had not the faintest idea of what to do with it. The disorganized and leaderless mob milled around aimlessly, trashing anything they took a dislike to and shouting bloodthirsty threats against Democrat Nancy Pelosi, Republican vice-President Mike Pence and Mitch McConnell, who they accused of betraying Trump. Meanwhile, the insurrectionaries’ Commander-in-Chief had conveniently disappeared. If history repeats itself, first as a tragedy and then as a farce, this was a farce of the purest water. In the end, nobody was hanged or sent to the guillotine. Tired out by so much shouting, the “insurrectionists” went home quietly or retired to the nearest bar to get drunk and boast of their courageous exploits, leaving behind nothing more threatening than a pile of rubbish and a few bruised egos. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the ruling class, it set a dangerous precedent for the future. Ray Dalio, founder of the world’s largest hedge fund, Bridgewater Associates, had this to say: “We’re on the brink of a terrible civil war. The US is at a tipping point in which it could go from manageable internal tension to revolution.” The storming of the Capitol was a serious warning to the ruling class. And this will undoubtedly have consequences. Despite a barrage of media hostility, 45 percent of registered Republicans thought that it was justified. But this has to be compared with the far more significant fact that 54 percent of all Americans thought that the burning down of the Minneapolis police precinct was justified. And 10 percent of the whole population took part in the Black Lives Matter protests – 20,000 times more than those who stormed the Capitol. All this shows the rapid growth of social and political polarisation in the United States. The spontaneous uprisings that swept the USA from coast to coast following the murder of George Floyd, and the unparalleled events that preceded and followed the presidential elections marked a turning point in the entire situation. Changes in consciousness The stupid liberals and reformists naturally understand nothing of what is happening. They only see the surface of events, without understanding the deeper currents that are flowing strongly beneath the surface and impelling the waves. They constantly shout about fascism, by which they mean anything they dislike or fear. About the real nature of fascism, they know absolutely nothing. That goes without saying. But by constantly harping on the “danger to democracy” (by which they mean formal bourgeois democracy) they sow confusion and prepare the ground for class collaboration under the flag of “the lesser evil”. Their support for Joe Biden in the USA is a very clear example of this. What we have to take account of is that Trump’s base has a very heterogeneous and contradictory character. It contains a bourgeois wing, headed by Trump himself, and a large number of reactionary petty bourgeois, religious fanatics and openly fascist elements. But we must remember that Trump received 74 million votes in the last election and many of these were working-class people who previously voted for Obama but are disillusioned with the Democrats. When they are interviewed, they say: “Washington doesn’t care about us! We’re the forgotten people!” There are violent swings to the left and also to the right. Nature abhors a vacuum, however, and because of the complete bankruptcy of the reformists, including the left reformists, this mood of anger and frustration has been capitalised upon by right-wing demagogues, so-called populists. In the USA we have the phenomenon of Trumpism. in Brazil we saw the rise of Bolsonaro.

#### Collapse creates sustainable living

**Powers ’11** (William is a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute. He has worked for more than a decade in development aid and conservation in Latin America, Africa, and Washington.) World Policy Journal, "Finding Enough: Confessions of a secular missionary," Project Muse, AM)

In October 2011, I visited the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of International Affairs to give a talk entitled "What's Your 12 × 12?" In the audience were professionals and intellectuals from more than a dozen developing countries. I was expecting a wholesale rejection of the "voluntary simplicity" concept. After all, these were all successful developing-country elites who were benefiting from rapid economic growth and increasing prosperity. But the **overwhelming consensus** in the room was that reducing consumption is more than a survival imperative. It **is actually a more desirable way to live**. One audience member, a thirty-something man from China, described the contentedness of his childhood, growing up in a 10-foot-by-15-foot house -- the solidarity it brought, the freedom from clutter and distraction. Others spoke of the need to ratchet up living standards, but only to a point that would allow for an intelligent, holistic balance between doing and being -- just enough, and not more, food, shelter, fresh air, family and friendship. At a certain point in my "development" career, I began to question the whole notion of impoverishment. Indeed, most of the so-called "impoverished beneficiaries" of my programs seemed better off than me. They wore bigger smiles. They engaged more easily in the moment. Through their kinship networks and close relationship with the land, they achieved a greater sense of meaning and purpose. I talked with these folks everywhere from the Gambian coast to the Amazon, and the vast majority told me they would not trade their lifestyle -- with its simplicity and rootedness -- for mine, despite the obvious difference in wealth and mobility. I do not mean to glorify material destitution. I've spent many hours with some of the millions of people for whom a 12 × 12 would represent an unattainable level of prosperity -- luxury, even. They live zero-by-zero, with no lush organic gardens, no gently flowing creek, no shelter at all. They live in what you might call the Fourth World -- those anarchic, failed places where community and basic necessities have been decimated by war, famine, and natural disaster. So, when discussing relatively "poorer" countries, I always make a clear, explicit distinction between people living in a state of material destitution and people living healthy subsistence lifestyles. There's a point where one's material life is in balance -- possessing neither too much nor too little. Roughly one-fifth of humanity has too much and is overdeveloped; another fifth or so has too little, and is underdeveloped. Neither of these groups experiences general well-being. The former can rarely experience the simple joy of being. The latter are so destitute that they can't sustain their bodies physically. Fortunately, the third group -- those with enough -- is by far the largest. It is what I redefine as "sustainably developed," ranging from subsistence livelihoods like the Mayans of Guatemala to the economic level of the average Western European in 1990. By this rough calculation, **60 percent of the world lives sustainably**. In other words, if everyone lived as they did, our one planet would suffice to feed, clothe, shelter, and absorb the waste of everyone.

neither that of one party nor of another. It traverses all discourses without them wanting it to.

#### When confronted with the ethical injunction of the aff, respond with “I would prefer not to”—vote neg on presumption

Baudrillard 98 (Jean, Ex-Prof of Media and Philosophy @ EGS, Paroxysm, p 60//shree)

JB: The paradox of liberation is that the people liberated are never the ones you think: children, slaves, women or colonial peoples. It’s always the others liberating themselves from them, getting rid of them in the name of a principle of freedom and emancipation. Hence the dramatic concern of children to ensure that parents don’t stop being parents, or at least that they do so as late as possible. Hence the collective concern to beg the State not to stop being the State, to force it to take on its role, whereas it’s constantly trying to relinquish that role—and with good reason. The State is constantly ‘liberating’ the citizens, urging them to look after themselves—something they generally don’t want to do at all. In this sense, we’re all potential Bartlebys: ‘I would prefer not to’. Be free! Be responsible! Take responsibility for yourself!—‘I would prefer not to’. Preferring not to, rather than willing something (Philippe Lancon, Liberation). Preferring not to any more. Not to run any more, or compete, or consume, and not, at any price, to be free. This is all part of the pattern of a repentance of modernity, of a subtle indifference which senses the dangers of a responsibility and an emancipation which are too good to be true. Hence the currently triumphant sentimental, familial, political and moral revisionism, which can take on the more violent aspect of a ‘reactionary’ hatred of oneself or others, the product of the disillusionment that follows liberatory violence. This opposite tide, this ‘regressive’ resublimation, is the contemporary form—and, so to speak, the consequence—of the repressive desublimation analysed by Marcuse. Decidedly, freedom isn’t simple, and liberation even less so.

## Case

### Adv

#### 1. You should not give the aff any solvency claim in this debate – private entities as the actor of the plan justifies the worse forms of durable fiat where is we make an arg about states not being able to resolve space war or violence resulting from legal debates then they can just no link the argument and makes mechanism debates useless under their model

#### 2. Drop the debater because it kills clash and lets the aff win every time

#### 3. No Kessler

Drmola and Hubik 18 [Jakub Drmola, Division of Security and Strategic Studies, Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Masaryk University. Tomas Hubik, Department of Theoretical Computer Science and Mathematical Logic, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University. Kessler Syndrome: System Dynamics Model. Space Policy Volumes 44–45, August 2018, Pages 29-39. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0265964617300966?via%3Dihub]

The baseline scenario represents a continuation of the current trends, which are simply extended into the future. An average 1% growth rate of yearly launches of new satellites (starting at 89) is assumed, together with constant success rate in satellites’ ability to actively avoid collisions with debris and other satellites, constant lifetime, and failure rate. This basic model lacks any sudden events or major policy changes that would markedly influence the debris propagation. However, it serves both as a foundation for all the following scenarios and as a basis of comparison to see what the impact would be. Given high uncertainty regarding future state of the satellite industry (how many satellites will be launched per year, of what type and size, etc.), we elected to limit our simulations to 50 years. The model can certainly continue beyond this point, but the associated unknowns make the simulations progressively less useful. Running this model for its full 50 years (2016–2066) yields the expected result of perpetually growing amount of debris in the LEO. One can observe nearly 2-fold increase in the large debris (over 10 cm) and 3-fold increase in small debris (less than 1 cm) quantities (Fig. 5). The oscillations visible in the graph are caused by the aforementioned solar cycles which influence the rate of reentry for all simulated populations except the still active (i.e. powered) satellites. Also please note that throughout the article, the graphs use quite different scales for debris populations because of the considerable variations between scenarios. Using any single scale for all graphs would render some of them unintelligible. We can see that this increase in numbers still does not result in realization of the Kessler syndrome as most of the satellites being launched remain intact for their full expected service life. However, it comes with a considerable increase in risk to satellites, which is manifested by their higher yearly losses, making satellites operations riskier and more expensive for governments and private companies alike. This increased amount of debris in LEO combined with the larger number of active satellites makes it approximately twice as likely that an active satellite will suffer a disabling hit or a total disintegration during its lifetime. It should be noted that this risk might possibly be offset by future improvements in satellite reliability, debris tracking, and navigation [17].

#### 4. No escalation – Planning Priorities

Bowen 18 Bleddyn Bowen 2-20-2018 “The Art of Space Deterrence” <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/the-art-of-space-deterrence/> (Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Leicester)//Elmer

Space is often an afterthought or a miscellaneous ancillary in the grand strategic views of top-level decision-makers. A president may not care that one satellite may be lost or go dark; it may cause panic and Twitter-based hysteria for the space community, of course. But the terrestrial context and consequences, as well as the political stakes and symbolism of any exchange of hostilities in space matters more. The political and media dimension can magnify or minimise the perceived consequences of losing specific satellites out of all proportion to their actual strategic effect.

#### 5. Collision risk is very small

Fange 17 Daniel Von Fange 17, Web Application Engineer, Founder and Owner of LeanCoder, Full Stack, Polyglot Web Developer, “Kessler Syndrome is Over Hyped”, 5/21/2017, http://braino.org/essays/kessler\_syndrome\_is\_over\_hyped/

The orbital area around earth can be broken down into four regions. Low LEO - Up to about 400km. Things that orbit here burn up in the earth’s atmosphere quickly - between a few months to two years. The space station operates at the high end of this range. It loses about a kilometer of altitude a month and if not pushed higher every few months, would soon burn up. For all practical purposes, Low LEO doesn’t matter for Kessler Syndrome. If Low LEO was ever full of space junk, we’d just wait a year and a half, and the problem would be over. High LEO - 400km to 2000km. This where most heavy satellites and most space junk orbits. The air is thin enough here that satellites only go down slowly, and they have a much farther distance to fall. It can take 50 years for stuff here to get down. This is where Kessler Syndrome could be an issue. Mid Orbit - GPS satellites and other navigation satellites travel here in lonely, long lives. The volume of space is so huge, and the number of satellites so few, that we don’t need to worry about Kessler here. GEO - If you put a satellite far enough out from earth, the speed that the satellite travels around the earth will match the speed of the surface of the earth rotating under it. From the ground, the satellite will appear to hang motionless. Usually the geostationary orbit is used by big weather satellites and big TV broadcasting satellites. (This apparent motionlessness is why satellite TV dishes can be mounted pointing in a fixed direction. You can find approximate south just by looking around at the dishes in your northern hemisphere neighborhood.) For Kessler purposes, GEO orbit is roughly a ring 384,400 km around. However, all the satellites here are moving the same direction at the same speed - debris doesn’t get free velocity from the speed of the satellites. Also, it’s quite expensive to get a satellite here, and so there aren’t many, only about one satellite per 1000km of the ring. Kessler is not a problem here. How bad could Kessler Syndrome in High LEO be? Let’s imagine a worst case scenario. An evil alien intelligence chops up everything in High LEO, turning it into 1cm cubes of death orbiting at 1000km, spread as evenly across the surface of this sphere as orbital mechanics would allow. Is humanity cut off from space? I’m guessing the world has launched about 10,000 tons of satellites total. For guessing purposes, I’ll assume 2,500 tons of satellites and junk currently in High LEO. If satellites are made of aluminum, with a density of 2.70 g/cm3, then that’s 839,985,870 1cm cubes. A sphere for an orbit of 1,000km has a surface area of 682,752,000 square KM. So there would be one cube of junk per .81 square KM. If a rocket traveled through that, its odds of hitting that cube are tiny - less than 1 in 10,000.

#### 6. Cannot solve public sats from hitting – we read blue

1AC Wong 19 “Congested Outer Space: Increased Deployment of Small Satellite Constellations Could Hamper Military Space Operations” 2019 Arthur Wong [Strategic Development of Forces Division, SHAPE. Prior to working at SHAPE he has worked at NATO HQ, within the Defence Investment Division on interoperability for NATO’s multinational battlegroups.] <https://www.japcc.org/congested-outer-space/> SM

Since the production of a large number of small satellites in a factory environment will lower the cost of the overall programme, companies such as SpaceX, Amazon and OneWeb have been creating a satellite constellation within the LEO and Medium Earth Orbit (MEO).8, 9 OneWeb is a new company which plans to create an initial constellation of 648 satellites to provide global satellite internet broadband services. Each satellite weighs approximately 150 kg and will be programmed to operate in 20 different orbital planes at an altitude of 1,200 km.10 Creating a large constellation within the LEO could mitigate transmission delays and latency due to their closer range to ground stations while allowing users to send and receive data in a timely manner. The first six of the 648 satellites were launched in early 2019 with more launches scheduled to occur throughout this year. Both SpaceX and Amazon have also announced their intention of creating a separate constellation for internet communication systems. SpaceX satellite constellations, named Starlink, will be the largest constellation ever built when it is completed. The constellations consist of nearly 12,000 satellites in more than 20 different orbital planes.11 The altitude of Starlink will range between 550 km to 1,150 km. SpaceX aims to have a minimum of 2,200 satellites in the next five years and achieve initial commercial operation by 2020.12 Amazon’s version of constellation, named Kuiper, has also been seeking approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to launch more than 3,200 satellites between 590 km to 630 km in the LEO.13 Space Debris Threat Increases in the LEO The usage of cube satellite has provided positive impacts in various fields, ranging from environmental studies to offering worldwide internet access in rural areas through communication constellations. However, the current space environment is becoming congested. Hundreds of satellites have already been scheduled to launch each year before the construction of the constellation programme by OneWeb, SpaceX and Amazon. To further worsen the space debris situation in the LEO, direct-ascent Anti-Satellite Testing (ASAT) was conducted in recent years and more debris will be created through such testing. During the Chinese ASAT in 2007, some debris from the collision was blasted outward away from the Earth, causing a potential threat to satellites above the altitude where the ASAT testing occurred.14 Nine years after the incident happened, there are still more than 3,000 traceable pieces in orbit. In 2009, two satellites collided at a speed of 10 km/s at an altitude of 800 km. This was the first time a collision had happened between two satellites. The incident created more than 1,000 pieces of debris larger than 10 cm. Such activity could initiate a chain reaction, creating more collisions from the initial impact. This phenomenon is known as the Kessler Syndrome.15 From early 2019, there were approximately 34,000 pieces of debris larger than 10 cm (similar to the size of a cube satellite) and more than 900,000 pieces of debris ranging from one cm to 10 cm in size. Objects that are smaller than one cm in size are expected to be more than 100 million within the LEO.16 Despite the small size of the space debris, they are travelling at a speed of more than seven km/s. At this speed, tiny objects could harm any large satellite orbiting in the LEO. While satellites can increase their physical hardening to protect the on-board instruments from impact, some satellites cannot be hardened due to the size and dimensional constraints. Furthermore, hardened materials would also increase the overall cost of the satellite. Constellation in the Making Could Impact Space-Based Military Assets The previous examples revealed the congestion of the LEO. With companies continuing to launch thousands of small satellites, the chances of a collision in space will continue to increase. This will hinder space-based Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) support to provide valuable information to military operations. A majority of the ISR assets are orbiting in the LEO. NATO relies on space-based assets to assist its operations. Increasing the number of spacecraft in the LEO could raise problems and threats to military assets as well as access to space assets to support operations. If the orbital path of these smaller objects were not tracked by the Space Operation Centre regularly, larger satellites or manned-space stations could be penetrated by the non-propulsion satellites, making them a potential kinetic kill vehicle. Most satellites within the 600 km region of the LEO are affected by the atmospheric drag, which is helping to bring down some of the obsolete satellites. However, satellites orbiting above 800 km are less likely to be affected by the atmospheric drag, making cube satellites or small satellites without propulsion systems difficult to deorbit once they have reached the EOL.17, 18 The altitude for some of the OneWeb, Starlink and Kuiper constellations is planned to be above the atmospheric drag region. Despite this, Starlink satellites will have propulsion system for orbital manoeuvre and EOL deorbiting, tracking the full constellation with 12,000 satellites could be challenging for the company and the Combined Space Operations Center (CSpOC).19 Additionally, there is the possibility of losing contact with satellites before they reach their EOL. Envisat, an 8,210 kg satellite that is currently drifting at an altitude of 785 km, poses a collision threat with other satellites. Envisat was expected to decommission in 2014 but the European Space Agency (ESA) lost contact with the satellite in 2012.20 If no interaction will be made with the Envisat, it is expected to stay in orbit for the next 150 years.21

#### 7. Cannot solve Chinese ASATs

Blatt 20 [Talia, joint concentration in Social Studies and Integrative Biology at Harvard, specialization in East Asian geopolitics and security issues] “Anti-Satellite Weapons and the Emerging Space Arms Race,” Harvard International Review, May 26, 2020, <https://hir.harvard.edu/anti-satellite-weapons-and-the-emerging-space-arms-race/> TG

Despite their deterrent functions, ASATs are more likely to provoke or exacerbate conflicts than dampen them, especially given the risk they [pose](https://thebulletin.org/2019/06/arms-control-in-outer-space-the-russian-angle-and-a-possible-way-forward/) to early warning satellites. These satellites are a crucial element of US ballistic missile defense, capable of [detecting missiles](https://www.globalsecurity.org/space/world/japan/warning.htm) immediately after launch and tracking their paths.

Suppose a US early warning satellite goes dark, or is shut down. Going dark could signal a glitch, but in a world in which other countries have ASATs, it could also signal the beginning of an attack. Without early warning satellites, the United States is much more susceptible to nuclear missiles. Given the strategy of counterforcing—[targeting](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/isec_a_00273_LieberPress.pdf) nuclear silos rather than populous cities to prevent a nuclear counterattack—the Americans might believe their nuclear weapons are imminently at risk. It could be [twelve hours](https://books.google.com/books?id=ET8lDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=%22Protecting+Space+Assets%22+johnson-freese&source=bl&ots=6Oq0IdeBjw&sig=ACfU3U1G6Hj8QdP4JlCRNxA6i5XplZwHyg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj1n-jT2YzpAhUugnIEHUuMCu4Q6AEwA3oECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Protecting%20Space%20Assets%22%20johnson-freese&f=false) before the United States regains satellite function, which is too long to wait to put together a nuclear counterattack. The United States, therefore, might move to mobilize a nuclear attack against Russia or China over what might just be a piece of debris shutting off a satellite.

Additionally, accidental warfare, or strategic miscalculation, is uniquely likely in space. It is [much easier](https://books.google.com/books?id=VyXTDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA339&lpg=PA339&dq=space+offense+dominant&source=bl&ots=Mw0bgJ51qf&sig=ACfU3U3DeZiEHpr9nfszlCbJZIoyyssIpg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrs-WD3IzpAhVulHIEHbL0AE4Q6AEwCXoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=space%20offense%20dominant&f=false) to hold an adversary’s space systems in jeopardy with destructive ASATs than it is to [sustainably defend](https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/the-us-military-should-not-be-doubling-down-on-space) a system, which is expensive and in some cases not technologically feasible because of limitations on satellite movement. Space is therefore [considered](https://books.google.com/books?id=VyXTDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA339&lpg=PA339&dq=space+offense+dominant&source=bl&ots=Mw0bgJ51qf&sig=ACfU3U3DeZiEHpr9nfszlCbJZIoyyssIpg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrs-WD3IzpAhVulHIEHbL0AE4Q6AEwCXoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=space%20offense%20dominant&f=false) offense-dominant; offensive tactics like weapons development are prioritized over defensive measures, such as [improving GPS](https://www.politico.com/story/2018/04/06/outer-space-war-defense-russia-china-463067) or making satellites more resistant to jamming.

As a result, countries are left with poorly defended space systems and rely on offensive posturing, which increases the risk that their actions are perceived as aggressive and incentivizes rapid, risky counterattacks because militaries cannot rely on their spaced-based systems after first strikes.

There are several hotspots in which ASATs and offensive-dominant systems are particularly relevant. Early warning satellites [play](https://www.politico.com/story/2018/04/06/outer-space-war-defense-russia-china-463067) a central role in US readiness in the event of a conflict involving North Korea. News of North Korean missile launches comes from these satellites. Given North Korea’s [history](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11813699) of nuclear provocations, unflinchingly hostile rhetoric towards the United States and South Korea, and diplomatic opacity, North Korea is always a threatening, unknowable adversary, but recent developments have magnified the risk. With the health of Kim Jong-un [potentially in jeopardy](https://apnews.com/f5d302ae65b03838173e40848223b771), a succession battle or even civil war on the peninsula [raises the chances](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1273890/Kim-Jong-un-dead-North-Korea-nuclear-weapon-news-latest-death-US) of loose nukes. If the regime is terminal, traditional MAD risk calculus will become moot; with nothing to lose, North Korea would have no reason to hold back its nuclear arsenal. Or China [might decide](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/28/kim-jong-un-china-north-korea/) to seize military assets and infrastructure of the regime. If the US does not have its early warning satellites because they have been taken out in an ASAT attack, the US, South Korea, and Japan are all in imminent nuclear peril, while China could be in a position to fundamentally reshape East Asian geopolitics.

The South China Sea is another hotspot in which ASATs could risk escalation. China [is developing](https://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-threat-and-proliferation/todays-missile-threat/china-anti-access-area-denial-coming-soon/) Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) in the South China Sea, a combination of long range radar with air and maritime defense meant to deny US freedom of navigation in the region. Given the disputed nature of territory in the South China Sea, the United States and its allies do not want China to successfully close off the region.

#### 8. You should be skeptical of the their internal links and power predictions of the aff – foreign policy analysts are riddled with bad predictions about conflict – they do this because it gives them a pay check – especially overexaggerating Chinese power

Drezner 21 [Daniel W. 1-15-2021 Foreign Policy Wonks Gone Wild https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/15/foreign-policy-predictions-always-bad-worst-international-relations-rewards-catastrophic-thinking/ Accessed 3-7-2021] CSUF JmB NDT 2021

In a world defined by scarcity, there will always be a bountiful harvest of bad predictions about the future. This is true for both foreign policy and Foreign Policy alike. In January 1989, East Germany’s leader, Erich Honecker, declared that the Berlin Wall would still be standing in “50 or even 100 years.” He turned out to be off by 49 to 99 years; the wall crumbled 10 months after his statement. No one writing in the pages of this magazine has been as consequentially wrong as Honecker. Nonetheless, even a cursory perusal of Foreign Policy’s archives reveals some serious errors in foresight. One article in the Winter 1999-2000 issue by the Russia expert Daniel Treisman claimed that Boris Yeltsin’s successor as president of Russia would “find himself blocked in by the realities of Russia’s political game, pushed back toward a set of policies and a style of governing that closely resemble Yeltsin’s.” In retrospect, this seems like a poor description of Vladimir Putin’s style of governance. This is less Treisman’s fault than a consequence of the ever present danger of believing the status quo will persist. Similarly, a 1995 article by the sociologist Jack A. Goldstone asserted that rapid economic growth would not save the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and that “we can expect a terminal crisis in China within the next 10 to 15 years.” It is safe to say that the CCP has, so far, managed to endure and entrench itself. Goldstone was proved wrong because the past didn’t predict the future; Chinese economic growth accelerated to a historically unprecedented rate. Likewise, in early 2009, the economist William Easterly forecast that the 2008 financial crisis would immiserate those who had just emerged from extreme poverty. Over the next five years, however, growth in the developing world actually outpaced growth in the wealthier economies of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Predictions that did not come true were by no means limited to the pages of Foreign Policy; the field of international relations is full of them. In the 1970s, the Club of Rome predicted that resource depletion would stunt global prosperity. Instead, the greatest reduction in global extreme poverty began a few years later. In the late 1990s, when petroleum prices were plummeting, some took to these pages to predict the end of OPEC. Instead, the price of oil skyrocketed well past $100 a barrel. This, in turn, led to renewed claims of “peak oil”—the idea that petroleum reserves would near depletion and the industry would go into decline. Fracking and the development of alternative energy systems proved that to be wrong as well. When the Cold War ended, multiple prognosticators predicted geopolitical chaos in Europe and a great-power rivalry between the United States, Europe, and Japan. Oops. The 100th anniversary of the start of World War I led many historians to envisage a replay of those events in the Pacific Rim in 2014. Thankfully, this too did not come to pass. With a surfeit of bad takes, it would be logical to conclude that there have been few good foreign-policy ideas over the same time period. This assumption is incorrect. Consider two examples from the early 1970s. After the 1973 OPEC embargo, the fear of commodity cartels gripped national security analysts. The political scientist Stephen D. Krasner argued in this magazine, however, that oil was the exception. History proved him right. The push by civil rights activists to make human rights a key component of U.S. foreign policy during the Carter administration was one of those ideas that seemed to bear little fruit at the time. This emphasis, however, persisted into the Reagan administration, and the result was the dawn of the third wave of democratization that transformed Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific Rim. Some ideas that are underappreciated when first proposed acquire momentum over time. A number of concrete foreign-policy ideas have been responsible for tangible improvements in people’s lives. Weirdly, however, these constructive arguments get less attention than famously wrong ones, like Samuel P. Huntington’s proposed clash of civilizations or the neoconservative belief that forcible regime change can contribute to democratization. The past 30 years have demonstrated that wars within civilizations are far more bloody than those between them and that forcible regime change is far more likely to lead to military quagmires than Madisonian republics. For anyone intimately familiar with the marketplace of foreign-policy ideas, this phenomenon should be unsurprising. Scholars like to think that, in the public sphere, good notions drive out bad ones, but that’s not necessarily true. Even foreign-policy experts tend to dwell on spectacularly bad ideas rather than helpful suggestions. Francis Fukuyama has a long, distinguished career of trenchant scholarship, but most foreign-policy observers remember him only for his premature prediction of the “end of history” in the early 1990s—the idea that Cold War ideological confrontation would give way to the triumph of liberal democracy. A review of the worst predictions and most useful ideas of the past half-century reveals a few lessons for the readers of Foreign Policy. The first is that foreign-policy observers are a pessimistic lot. We are awash with doomsaying that has proved no more accurate than a cult member holding a sign declaring “The end is nigh” on the street corner. The second is that when examining trends within countries, the primary source of bad predictions is the fallacy of extrapolation: the belief that the future will be just like the present, only more so. The third is that the most useful ideas are not rooted in grand strategy or doctrine. Sometimes grand narratives get the big things right, but just as often they create cognitive blinders that make it difficult to recognize error. By contrast, small-bore ideas—grounded in concrete, specific, well-defined problems—have made the most tangible contributions to international affairs. To be fair, international relations experts are hardly the only social scientists with a poor record of projecting the future. Economists have also proved extremely bad at forecasting, even though there are some awfully powerful incentives for economists to get things right. What makes foreign-policy analysts different is the bias in their forecasting errors. Economists are overly rosy about the future. This profound “optimism bias” explains the errors of the Bretton Woods institutions. On average, for example, a 10-year macroeconomic forecast from the International Monetary Fund or World Bank overestimates a country’s annual GDP growth by 1.1 percentage points. Political forecasters, however, suffer from a different bias: We are a profoundly pessimistic lot. As the Yale University professor John Lewis Gaddis once delineated in painstaking detail, international relations scholars failed to predict both the peaceful end of the Cold War and the manner of the Soviet collapse. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, realists in particular made overly pessimistic predictions about how the post-Cold War order would affect NATO, nuclear proliferation, violent conflict, and balancing against the United States. In reality, the 20 years after the breakup of the Soviet Union saw dramatic declines in almost every category of political violence. The realist line sounds slightly more accurate now, but prognosticators earn no points for predictions that might come true 30 years late. There are three reasons why foreign-policy analysts are so morose. First, it’s good for business. International relations is a countercyclical profession; bad times in the world are good times for geopolitical analysts—and there are incentives for doomsaying. The growth industry of political risk analysis, the first generation of which emanated from international relations scholarship, is predicated on things going wrong. One high-ranking officer at a prominent risk consultancy once explained the company’s sales pitch as follows: “You scare the shit out of them first. That’s what gets the clients through the front door.” Second, much like the reasons for having insurance on your house or car, it pays to devote greater attention to the extreme negative event. Over the past 50 years, there have been positive events: the end of the Cold War, collapse of apartheid, reduction in extreme poverty, and growing ease of cross-border communication. Nonetheless, both government officials and corporate leaders are compelled to respond to negative shocks like a terrorist attack, a global financial crisis, or a pandemic, which will have a far greater impact on politics and profits than a spate of good news. This is partly because human beings are hard-wired to be wary of threats; governments are, too. As one academic paper recently observed, “States tend to inflate threats, exhibit loss aversion, and learn more from failures than from successes.” Even if the probability of bad events happening is low, warning about them has minimal downside. No officials have ever been punished because they were too prepared for a worst-case contingency. Leaders get punished for sleeping at the wheel far more than they do for appearing too vigilant. Finally, there’s an asymmetry in the marketplace of foreign-policy ideas. It is much safer to predict doom and gloom than to predict that everything will work out fine. Warnings about disaster scenarios that never happen carry less cost to one’s reputation—that is someone just being cautious and prudent—and if you happen to be right, you’re treated as a prophet, as the Foreign Policy columnist and health writer Laurie Garrett recently discovered. History has stigmatized optimistic prognosticators who, in retrospect, turned out to be wrong—see, for example, the caricatures of Norman Angell’s 1909 book, The Great Illusion, which predicted that economic interdependence would make war obsolete, or Fukuyama’s end of history. When in doubt, predict the worst-case scenario. These professional tendencies have led to some bad collective forecasts. The end of U.S. hegemony in world politics has been the hardiest of bad predictions. By my count, in Foreign Policy’s 50 years, the death of U.S. hegemony has been declared after at least six different events: the collapse of the Bretton Woods regime in the early 1970s, the stagflation of the mid-1970s, the late 1980s “twin deficits” crisis, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, and the election of Donald Trump. U.S. hegemony will end at some point, but America’s status as a superpower has outlived many of its most pessimistic prognosticators. If forecasters have been too pessimistic about the state of the world, they have been too complacent in their assessments of the great powers. When it comes to country analyses, the natural tendency has been to extrapolate from current trends. Indeed, two political scientists made this very point in these pages in 2012 when characterizing U.S. National Intelligence Council documents: “The reports almost inevitably fall into the trap of treating the conventional wisdom of the present as the blueprint for the future 15 to 20 years down the road.” While this is a natural human tendency, large complex societies have a way of confounding that instinctual view. Sometimes trends do persist, but just as often they stop abruptly or reverse course. Predictions about China are a case in point. Two decades ago, predictions about the future of Chinese politics ran the gamut from democratization to stable authoritarianism. In March 2000, U.S. President Bill Clinton predicted, “The more China liberalizes its economy, the more fully it will liberate the potential of its people. … And when individuals have the power not just to dream but to realize their dreams, they will demand a greater say.” Even more sober analysts noted that by the early 2000s China had seemed to institutionalize the transfer of power, a rarity in authoritarian regimes. Instead, under Xi Jinping, China has transformed into the most personalist regime since the days of Mao Zedong. The fallacy of extrapolation also applies to forecasts about China’s economy. A decade ago, Robert Fogel, a Nobel-winning economist, made waves with a Foreign Policy article predicting that China’s economy would swell to $123 trillion by 2040. He made this prediction simply by assuming that China’s double-digit growth rates from the early 2000s would persist and extrapolating from there. In the decade since, China’s growth rate has slowed significantly—and even those growth figures are likely to be exaggerated. Over the past quarter century, China’s productivity growth has fallen by two-thirds. Now, some experts believe that people should fear a faltering China more than a rising one. China is the standout for bad predictions about national trajectories, but it is hardly alone. U.S. analysts persistently overestimated the capabilities of Soviet Russia during the Cold War. These same analysts underestimated Russian power during the days of Yeltsin. Under Putin, the pendulum has swung back toward exaggerating Russian power. Fifteen years ago, in his book Expert Political Judgment, the political scientist Philip Tetlock warned about the poor predictive ability of most political experts. The discipline’s short-term predictive abilities are lackluster. Worse, the public tends to pay attention to the out-of-the-box prediction that proves correct. The problem is that these kinds of predictions also tend to be wrong more frequently. Tetlock later wrote that these conditions would create a ripe environment for charlatans: “The demand for accurate predictions is insatiable. Reliable suppliers are few and far between. And this gap between demand and supply creates opportunities for unscrupulous suppliers to fill the void by gulling desperate customers into thinking they are getting something no one else knows how to provide.” It would be easy to infer from this that the foreign-policy community has produced nothing but 50 years of bad ideas. Indeed, this is what younger generations tend to think. A recent Rand Corp. report concluded, “A generation of Americans have come of age in an era in which foreign policy setbacks have been more frequent than advances.” Anyone as old as Foreign Policy has some memory of successful foreign policies: containment, the peaceful end of the Cold War, the cessation of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, beneficial trade agreements, and the expansion of U.S.-created international institutions to the rest of the world. Any American who came of age after the 9/11 terrorist attacks would be hard-pressed to identify similarly successful policies in this century. Any autopsy of this shift is likely to arrive at the same explanation for the cause. Because the U.S. diplomat George F. Kennan’s strategy of containment is now viewed as a smashing foreign-policy success, successive generations of foreign-policy analysts have tried to devise a similar “big idea” in grand strategy that would prove to be just as valuable. The world is a more complex place than it was during the 1950s, however, making it next to impossible for a single grand strategy to suffice. None of the post-Cold War grand strategies, from George W. Bush’s neoconservative democracy-promotion-by-force to Donald Trump’s America First, has served the United States well. This does not mean, however, that there haven’t been any good ideas in foreign policy. A more fine-grained analysis reveals the success of small-bore initiatives. The most significant foreign-policy accomplishment of the post-Cold War era was arguably the Nunn-Lugar program. This program helped ensure the security of the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal after the collapse in 1991. Over the next two decades, the program succeeded in preventing both nuclear material and nuclear scientists from furthering proliferation across the globe. Unsurprisingly, as one historian noted, “this success did not get major publicity at the time, and remains largely unknown today outside the expert communities in both countries.” The Barack Obama-era Nuclear Safety Summits might be viewed through a similar lens. Another tangible success has been the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), created by the Bush administration in 2003. It was announced at a time when the HIV epidemic was lowering life spans in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the program’s website, the U.S. government has since invested some $85 billion in the global HIV/AIDS response, saving more than 18 million lives. This is a rare case of the United States doing well by doing good. Global surveys of public attitudes toward the United States since PEPFAR was launched consistently show that recipient countries display more positive attitudes toward America. As infectious disease prevention moves to the top of the global policy queue, the United States should learn from PEPFAR’s success. A final example is the 2014 bilateral climate deal between the United States and China. This might seem like an odd inclusion, since it was soon supplanted by the 2015 Paris climate change accords, which the Trump administration abandoned. But the earlier bilateral deal played a crucial role in paving the way for a more wide-ranging agreement. By getting Beijing to formally pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the 2014 deal reversed China’s long-standing position that, as a developing country, it should not bear any responsibility to reduce climate change. Once China shifted its approach, it became far easier to cajole developing countries into an international agreement. The takeaway from all this is clear: To stand out, future foreign-policy observers will become less pessimistic and more concrete. Of course, I am making a prediction here. The odds are excellent that I am wrong.

#### 9. Squo solves AND it’s not talking about the same type of astronomy as Siegel ‘21, we read blue

1AC Grush 20 “The true impact of SpaceX’s Starlink constellation on astronomy is coming into focus” Loren Grush [science reporter for The Verge] Mar 24, 2020 <https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/24/21190273/spacex-starlink-satellite-internet-constellation-astronomy-coating> SM

Ever since SpaceX launched its first batch of internet-beaming satellites last year, astronomers have watched with dread as the company continued to blast more spacecraft into orbit. Could this ballooning constellation of bright satellites fill the night sky with artificial light and muck up observations of the Universe for years to come? Now, new data is partially validating what many astronomers have feared since that first launch.

Up until now, people have been somewhat in the dark about the true impact of SpaceX’s internet-from-space project called Starlink, which envisions nearly 12,000 of these satellites orbiting Earth. SpaceX’s satellites are super bright compared to others, and astronomers have been worried that with so many luminous satellites in the sky, the odds of one passing in front of a telescope and obscuring an image will increase.

It turns out, some astronomers have reason to be concerned. Certain types of astronomy may be more negatively affected than others, one peer-reviewed study shows, particularly those kinds that scour large swaths of the sky over long periods of time looking for faint, faraway objects. That means scientists looking for distant objects beyond Neptune — including the hunt for the mysterious Planet Nine — might have trouble when Starlink is complete. Additionally, Starlink may be much more visible during twilight hours, or the first few hours of the night, which could be a major problem in the hunt for massive asteroids headed toward Earth. “It depends on what science you’re doing, and that’s really what it comes down to,” Jonathan McDowell, an astrophysicist at Harvard and spaceflight expert who wrote the study accepted by Astrophysical Journal Letters, tells The Verge.

Meanwhile, scientists are also learning if SpaceX’s effort to mitigate the brightness of its satellites is actually going to work. The company coated one of its satellites in an attempt to make it appear less visible in the sky. Now, the first observations of that satellite are being published, and the coating is working — but it might not be enough to make everyone happy. “It doesn’t solve the issue,” Jeremy Tregloan-Reed, a researcher at the University of Antofagasta and lead author on the study, which is undergoing peer review at Astronomy and Astrophysics Letters, tells The Verge. “But it shows that SpaceX has taken on board astronomers’ concerns, and it does appear to be trying to solve the situation.”

HOW STARLINK WILL AFFECT THE ASTRONOMERS

For astronomers, light is everything. Observing celestial objects in different wavelengths of light is the best method we have for exploring the Universe. That’s why adding artificial light to the sky freaks out so many scientists. Some astronomers take long-exposure images of the sky, gathering as much light as possible from distant objects — and when a bright satellite reflecting light from the Sun passes overhead, it can leave a long white streak that ruins the picture.

Of course, the sky is a big canvas, and one tiny satellite isn’t going to be a major headache. A host of factors dictate exactly how and when satellites will be a problem. A satellite’s size, shape, height, and path around Earth all affect exactly how much light it reflects from the Sun and where people will see it the most. Meanwhile, the time of year and the time of night determine how much sunlight is shining on a satellite at any given moment.

To figure out Starlink’s exact impression on the night, McDowell made a comprehensive simulation based on what we know about where all of the Starlink satellites are going. Ahead of launching its constellation, SpaceX had to file multiple requests with the Federal Communications Commission, detailing where the company planned to send all of its spacecraft. Using that information, McDowell came up with a snapshot of which areas will see the most satellites overhead and what times of night will be the worst for observations.

In the more northern and southern latitudes, Starlink satellites will dominate the horizon during the first and last few hours of the night. In the summertime, it’ll be much worse, with hundreds of satellites visible for those in rural areas away from city light pollution. “Where I live in [Boston], I can see the planes hovering over Logan [Airport] on the horizon,” says McDowell. “That’s what it will look like, but it’ll be satellites and it’ll be a lot of them.” SpaceX declined to comment for this story.

While people living in cities and towns won’t really notice, this spells bad news for those hunting really distant faint objects using long exposures. “The longer that you have the shutter open for, the more that you’re likely to have an observation impeded by one of these streaks that are quite bright,” Michele Bannister, a planetary astronomer at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand who helped McDowell with his research, tells The Verge. That means those hunting Planet Nine and objects at the edge of the Solar System have some cause for alarm.

Additionally, asteroid hunters are going to be extra affected by this constellation, says McDowell. “They’re really hosed, because they need to look at twilight,” he says. Scientists looking for asteroids orbiting near Earth often look for these objects near the Sun; they observe just after sunset when they can see the part of the sky near the Sun that’s too bright to see during the day. “That’s where the problem with illuminated Starlink satellites is the worst,” he says. “Even from regular 30-degree latitude observatories, they’re going to have serious problems.”

As for what that means for these astronomy fields, one obvious concern is that a potentially hazardous asteroid could go unnoticed until it’s too late to act appropriately. It’s also possible observers will have to take expensive countermeasures to get the kinds of images they want. “It may mean you have to observe twice as long, if you have to throw away half your data,” says McDowell. “So that’s expensive. Or you may need to make changes to your telescope design, to stop reflections from a satellite.”

The silver lining here, at least, is that McDowell’s study found that Starlink may not really have a big effect on a lot of other astronomers’ work, especially those who only look at small slices of the night sky for certain periods of time. But his work does fly in the face of what SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said about Starlink and its astronomy repercussions. “I am confident that we will not cause any impact whatsoever in astronomical discoveries. Zero,” Musk said during a space conference at the beginning of March. “That’s my prediction. And we’ll take corrective action if it’s above zero.”

Despite Musk’s brazen proclamation, the truth is SpaceX has already taken some corrective action, but new research shows it may not be enough to silence all of the company’s critics.

A COAT OF NO COLORS

On its third Starlink launch in January, SpaceX included a satellite that had been painted with an experimental coating, meant to darken the spacecraft’s reflectivity. Nicknamed DarkSat, the spacecraft has been of particular interest to amateur satellite trackers. Various observatories have taken images of DarkSat as it’s passed overhead to gauge just how much fainter it appears compared to its cohort.

The answer, it seems, is that DarkSat is indeed darker but only slightly. Once it reached its final orbit, the satellite appeared 55 percent fainter compared to another bright Starlink satellite, according to Tregloan-Reed’s study. That’s based on the initial observations he made using a telescope at the Ckoirama Observatory in Chile. “The DarkSat coating does push the satellite beyond being able to be seen with the naked eye,” says Tregloan-Reed.

That’s a big reduction, but 55 percent may not be enough for some observatories. The Vera Rubin Observatory in Chile is still under construction, but it has the massive task of surveying the entire night sky. “It’s going to be able to give us the history of the Solar system in absolutely intricate and amazing detail,” says Bannister of the survey. “And I think that’s definitely something that is under threat.” People at the observatory have estimated that the Starlink satellites would need to be even fainter than DarkSat in order to truly stay out of the way and not saturate the images gathered.

The good news is that SpaceX has hinted that more extreme countermeasures may be on their way. During its latest launch, a SpaceX employee noted that while the coated satellite showed “a notable reduction” in brightness, a future Starlink satellite may be equipped with a sunshade to further reduce reflectivity. “We have a couple other ideas that we think could reduce the reflectivity even further, the most promising being a sunshade that would operate in the same way as a patio umbrella, or a sun visor — but for the satellite,” Jessica Anderson, a lead manufacturing engineer at SpaceX, said during the live stream.

Tregloan-Reed says he’s hopeful about some kind of shade. “If that was to work then in theory it would block out the sunlight completely,” he says.

Still, that doesn’t solve every single astronomy problem because even a darkened satellite can still be a nuisance. Astronomers searching for planets beyond our Solar System, for instance, often take very sensitive measurements of distant stars, looking for dips in their brightness that might indicate a foreign planet passing by. If a satellite, even a dark one, were to pass in front of a star someone was observing, it could throw off the search for these alien worlds.

No matter what, it seems that a giant constellation is going to have some kind of negative impact on someone — it can’t be helped. And looking at the big picture, SpaceX isn’t alone in its attempt to create a mega-constellation of satellites. The company just gets the most attention because it’s proposing the largest number of spacecraft, and its vehicles are big, bright, and lower in the sky compared to other proposed constellations. Others like OneWeb and Amazon want to also fill the sky with internet-beaming vehicles.

Such a large influx of artificial bright spots is really the heart of the issue. “I understand the importance of Starlink; I can see the benefits of worldwide internet,” says Tregloan-Reed. “It’s just the sheer numbers that are worrying me.”

#### 10. Goodwins internal link is that China hates Elon so much they jam every satellite in an area far past the country which escalates tensions to the point of war. Rupert Goodwins is a British writer, broadcaster and technology [journalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalist), and has zero evidence for why China would take an action like this which mean you should be massively skeptical of the link

#### 11. Hacking satellites is good – collapses capitalism

Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). Extraction, logistics, finance: Global crisis and the politics of operations. Radical Philosophy, 8-18. Recut – CSUF JmB

The politics of operations What is an operation? In our understanding an operation is something more than a relation of cause and effect or a model driven by linear processes of input and output. Throughout this article we have utilized the concept to name and analyse the syncopated pace of opening and closure that gives texture to and counterpoints the heterogeneity of space and time under global capitalism. In elaborating her famous distinction between labour and work, in The Human Condition, Hannah Arendt was well aware of the etymological nexus associated with the Latin opus. For Arendt ‘labour’ relates to the life or biologically necessitated dimensions of the human metabolism and reproduction. By contrast ‘work’ is inherently connected with the fabrication of an ‘“artificial” world of things’ that endures beyond the act of creation. [35] While Arendt associates the rise of industrial modernity with the encroachment of labour over work and its consequent effects of alienation, we wish to register the continuing role of the operation in the global present. But while for us an operation is connected with the fabrication of an ‘artificial’ world, it does not necessarily produce a ‘work’, a material ‘thing’. Operations also play a role in activities of finance and extraction. Think of the crane that lifts a container full of soy from a ship to a truck, the software-driven coordination of forklift vehicles in a fully wired warehouse, or the transmission of financial data through electronic networks by means of packet switching technologies. What is produced in these operations is not a ‘thing’ but rather a set of links or relations between things, which is to say the framework or skeleton of a world. In our use of the term, an operation refers primarily to this fabrication of the world, to the production of the connections, chains and networks that materially envelop the planet enabling and framing the labour and action of subjects well beyond those directly involved in the execution of the operation itself. In observing the ways in which such linkages are made we are observing the operations of capital. Aside from the material infrastructures required to establish such articulations, there is a need for rules, instructions and standards that guide and frame the operative principles at stake in these dynamics. Increasingly the frameworks and processes that enable the deployment of these operative principles are organized by means of computer code. More than a set of executable instructions or a means of information exchange, code alters conditions of perception, communication and representation. It participates heavily in the economic, political, military and governmental domains, organizing and disrupting relations of power and collective life. The code that governs activities of finance, extraction and logistics introduces the social relation of capital into the most minute and detailed of operations. Capital’s code, we might say, insinuates itself into the world of operations, embedding itself as a kind of organizing element or blueprint. Returning to the terminology of Arendt, the boundary between ‘labour’ and ‘work’ appears blurred in the operations of capital. At the same time, we have to recognize that some of the key features of ‘action’, the third concept discussed by Arendt, play an important role in the operations of capital, making them politically pregnant. This is to say that these operations are increasingly confronting the elusiveness, plurality, relationality and unpredictability of the ‘human condition’, which comprised for Arendt the domain of ‘action’. It thus makes sense to speak of a politics of the operation, taking into account both its structuring effect on human relations and the ways in which work, labour and action are combined both in the execution of specific tasks and in the articulation of different subjects that make operations possible. What we are calling operations of capital are a privileged field of surveillance and control. The rise of sophisticated performance measurement techniques makes it possible to monitor labour in real time. Data produced on the basis of such measurement can be fed back into production systems in order to adjust them accordingly. Traditional forms of workplace action are thus disrupted. Consider the worker who deliberately slows down. Not only can she be easily identified, but the effects of her foot-dragging can be minimized through computerized processes of system adaptation. Performance measurement is increasingly tied to algorithmic patterns and processes that give the operation a life of its own. We need to ask how the operation relates to performance and what the significance of this relation is in a situation where the operation threatens to detach itself from its performer. Is the operation a kind of paradigm of pure performativity? The concept of performativity has been at the centre of many recent debates about and approaches to the political. An important feature of the performative is its self-referring function – it constitutes that which it enunciates. The operation, by contrast, connects. It fabricates a world but does not do so only in relation to its own premisses. Its ontological moment is thus quite different to that of the performative, even if it retains a performative dimension. The operation has an outside, albeit constrained by parameters of connection and adaptation. The performative is self-contained, even if its affective dimension can trouble this containment. In the case of the operation, its politics registers the interaction between its inside and outside, between the protocols and standards that allow it to build connections across different situations and the heterogeneity of space and time in which it subsists. Only by thinking through these dynamics, which it is important to insist are productive of struggles and subjectivity, can we begin to understand how the Arendtian realm of action is increasingly folded into the worlds of work and labour. There is another sense in which the operation differs from its performance. This is the sense in which the operation is effectual rather than performative, the sense in which it is productive of something other than itself. We can think of the operation as a kind of interval: at one end lies that which initiates or triggers it, and at the other end lies that which it creates. While in reality these two aspects of the operation concatenate, in so far as one operation spurs another, it is instructive to consider the situation in this way to shed light on what unfolds between these moments of concatenation, which is to say on the time and space of the operation itself. We have already stressed the nonlinear and uneven nature of the operation. What we now want to emphasize is how thinking through these knotted relations gives us a different perspective on the theorization question of politics today. If the operation’s trigger or spur recalls a performative approach to politics, its creative capacities can be correlated with a version of politics that centres on the event. There is a temporality to the operation that cannot be separated from the temporality of politics. There is also a striking parallel between a politics of the event and the image of an operation that stresses only its generative outcome, particularly as regards the punctuated nature of time characteristic of both. While a focus on the performative aspects of the operation obscures the moment of connection, disconnection and friction generated through the articulation with its ‘outside’, a focus on its outcome does not shed light on the complex materiality of the operation, on the internal as well as external conditions of its effectiveness. Thinking of the operation in terms of its interval, which it is important to stress is only a heuristic approach, allows us to begin to specify in more philosophical terms what we mean by the politics of operation. We do not equate a causal notion of the operation with the moments of performance and event. The politics of performativity can never be correlated with the linearity of a cause; nor can the event be reduced to an effect. But once we begin to understand the workings of the operation beyond the mechanism of cause and effect, we enter an ontological and epistemological domain in which the questions of performativity and event become relevant. For now we limit ourselves to some brief comments on how such a politics diverges from what Giorgio Agamben, following Jean-Luc Nancy, terms an ethics of ‘in operativity’. [36] Such an ethics is supposed to signal a radical deactivation of the operation that is held in the tension between potentiality and activity. Inoperativity corresponds to the possibility inherent in potentiality that an activity has not realized. For Agamben, this suggests a way of living ‘without purpose’ since it refuses an orientation towards ends or outcomes. [37] This is not the occasion to explore Agamben’s theological derivation of the concept of inoperativity. [38] Suffice it to say that it suggests a style of politics that seems rather contemplative. Agamben explicitly contrasts a politics based on in operativity with ‘the ingenuous emphasis on productivity and labour that has long prevented modernity from accessing politics as man’s most proper dimension’. [39] Arguing that subjectivity ‘opens itself as a central inoperativity in every operation’, he develops what one of us has previously described as a ‘politics without action’ and an ‘economy without labour’. [40] By contrast, what we are calling the politics of operation involves the coalescing of action, labour and work and attempts to imagine processes of antagonism rooted in the production of subjectivity, implied by such coalescing. The interval of the operation not only separates it from the moments of performance and event; it also establishes a mesh of connections that challenge boundaries between ways of living, ways of earning a living and the fabricating of worlds. Considering the operation from the point of view of its interval operates like a freeze-frame that brings into relief the combination of social activities, technical codes and devices that make an operation possible, while at the same time it allows us to look at the outcome of the operation without taking it for granted. This means that there is a need analytically to suspend the role played by the operation in the fabrication of the world in order to grasp the tensions and conflicts produced by the encounter of the operation with its ‘outside’. It is through this suspension that other ways of fabricating the world become theoretically visible and the politics of operation can give way to the forging of ‘counter-operations’. These differ fundamentally from an ethics of inoperativity. While inoperativity implies a withdrawal from productivity and a gestural ethos of play, counter-operations involve targeted action within existing networks of production. Crucial to their effectiveness, which is to say to their ability to fabricate a world, is the political task we have already mentioned of determining the time and space in which to focus the organization of struggles. In this regard, knowledge of the interlinked operations of logistics, finance and extraction is decisive. Between the expansion of capital’s frontiers and its drive to closure, the workings of differential accumulation produce an excess of labour that can no longer be contained by traditional models of technical or political division. Here the production of subjectivity meets what we earlier described as the intensification of labour, its multiplication beyond the wage relation and its explosion of established legal and social statuses. Under these conditions, political organization must establish forms of coordination and solidarity that reach across these multiple lines of division, ranging across borders at different geographical scales and keeping in view the way supply chains, financialization and extractive economies overlap. A movement like Occupy Wall Street, which boldly challenged finance capital by taking hold of its territorial and symbolic heartland, is probably not enough. It needs to connect to struggles that confront capital’s logistical and extractive logics, such as those conducted in ports and mines that we discussed earlier. This is not to valorize horizontal, networked or communicative modes of organization at the expense of vertical structures that can help ensure discipline and continuity. There are still lessons to be learned from historical episodes of party, trade-union and internationalist organization. Elsewhere, we have argued that contemporary efforts of political organization need to grapple with what, following Gramsci’s interpretation of a famous speech by Lenin, we call the question of ‘translatability’. [41] This means these efforts need to come to terms with the deep rooting of struggles in material networks and settings. It also means they have to devise strategies for dealing with the untranslatable aspects of struggles, which expose the limits of communication, tear established political subjectivities away from themselves, and provide an unstable ground on which to open new horizons of organization. We have in mind a similar process of politicization when discussing counter-operations. In this sense, the counter-operation is something more than an act of sabotage. Undoubtedly, sabotage remains one of the primary ways in which the generative claims and actions of subjects within and against the social relation of capital can be realized. To be sure, sabotage has a long history, within which the activities of early-twentieth-century dock workers, miners and railwaymen documented by Émile Pouget figure prominently. [42] What has become more pronounced within current systems of extraction, financialization and logistics is the capacity for capital to route around episodes of disruption. Although we still might assert with Antonio Negri that ‘self-valorization is sabotage’, [43] it has become more urgent to coordinate struggles across the heterogeneity of global time and space. Isolated conflicts may register subjectivity’s excess over the networks of subordination within which they are situated, but their ability to ‘leap vertically’ and challenge capital on the global level (as Hardt and Negri wrote over a decade ago now) [44] has been curtailed. What is needed are new models of solidarity that can negotiate difference across the fractured geographies of globalization, taking into account and finding alternative paths to the socio-technical systems and assemblages that enable current processes of financialization, extraction and logistics. We thus speak of counter-operations both as a way of registering the constitutive moment of struggles, which can easily get lost if one focuses only on the ‘negative’ moment of sabotage, and as a thread along which the vested question of organization can be tested and rethought. It is important to stress that speaking of counteroperations does not imply a simply reactive use of ‘the master’s tools’ in order to prompt practices of resistance. It involves an accurate analysis of the processes of dispossession and exploitation that crisscross the operations of capital and an attempt to build new forms of political organization capable of combining struggles and multiplying their affirmative aspects. This is the chance that exists within the moment, the political decision that would make the crisis worthy of its name.

### Framing

#### The 1AC’s try or die extinction scenario is a form of sublime rhetoric that compels us to endlessly repeat the failed project of Empire through confirmation bias. In the face of the incalculable violence of extinction, the only response is to prioritize imperial violence over try or die risk calculus. Only de-linking existential risk calculus from instrumentality can break the cycle of political tautology.

Matheson 17 [Calum, Assoc. Prof Communication @ Pitt, “The sublime rhetoric of Pascal’s wager,” Argumentation and Advocacy Vol. 0, Iss. 0,0, Sep 2017, <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/CTPGbVmNAmtvfJPI8Q86/full>//ak47]

The form of Pascal's wager has been adapted outside of its explicitly religious context. It perennially crops up in debates over important public political decisions, from space exploration (Bostrom 2003 Bostrom, N. 2003. “Astronomical Waste: The Opportunity Cost of Delayed Technological Development.” Utilitas 15 (2): 308–314. ) and asteroid collisions (Matheny 2007 Matheny, J. 2007. “Reducing the Risk of Human Extinction.” Risk Analysis 27 (5): 1334–1345. [Google Scholar] , 1340–1342) to climate change (Hurka 1993 Hurka, T. 1993. “Ethical Principles.” In Ethics and Climate Change: The Greenhouse Effect, edited by H. Coward and T. Hurka, 23–38. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. , 25) and anything else potentially covered by the precautionary principle.1 [Footnote 1: Those with recent experience in intercollegiate policy debate should recognize the logic of Pascal's wager in the “try or die” arguments that dominate its risk calculus in debates over the desirability of hypothetical plans and the attendant necessity to describe the outcomes of any decision in terms of possible human extinction, whether the topic revolves around military deployment, subsidies for agriculture, or decriminalizing prostitution in the United States. End footnote 1] Chief amongst these is nuclear weapons. Most clearly articulated in Jonathan Schell's (1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ) Fate of the Earth and modified in Dick Cheney's “One Percent Doctrine,” the logic of the wager features in calculations of the catastrophic, but relatively unlikely, prospect of nuclear destruction. But despite its continued iteration, the logic of Pascal's wager is far from uncontroversial. A great number of critics over the years have shown that Pascal's argument is fundamentally unsound whether or not God exists. Indeed, as a logical proof the wager has few defenders. How then might we account for its persistence? What political possibilities does the trope afford? To answer these questions, this article will examine Pascal's original wager and the logical objections to it with reference to debates over nuclear weapons. My central argument is that Pascal's wager is best understood as an example of the rhetorical sublime. In making this case, I will link the sublime to Paul de Man's observations on the undecidability of grammar and rhetoric. Critics of Pascal have often interpreted his wager grammatically as a logical argument for belief rather than rhetorically as a use of trope to establish the impossibility of logical argument. Even those who identify rhetoric at work in Pascal's wager tend to analyze it in terms of rational persuasion, oftentimes with some distrust. However, Pascal's rhetorical method in the wager is more akin to the sublime style of Longinus (1991 Longinus. 1991. On Great Writing (On the Sublime). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company. ) than the rational persuasion of Aristotelian logos, a result of the negative theology that informed Pascal's approach to the subject of God. The wager's power comes not from its mathematical consistency or reasoned argument but rather its stark presentation of infinity as something that exceeds reason itself in some measure and forces the potential believer to confront what exceeds logic itself. The outcome of this discussion matters because it implicates modern-day uses of the wager's argumentative structure and the sublime more generally. Appeals to act in the face of enormous, but enormously unlikely, threats cannot be effectively resisted by simply disputing the logic of their calculation, nor are they productive roadmaps for politics as conventionally understood. Rather, these arguments should be read in relation to Pascal's original theological motive as efforts to overwhelm auditors with the appeal to values and forces beyond their ability to comprehend or calculate with reason alone. Like Pascal's wager, the sublime also has its critics, and the nuclear example suggests that it might be particularly threatening in combination with Pascal's wager. However, the wager might also be read as evidence that the sublime also presents opportunities for political critique. Although Schell and Cheney's opposite deployments of the infinite demonstrate that aporia may result, Pascal's sublime rhetoric should not be dismissed. Indecision can also gesture towards political possibilities beyond rational, orderly politics. This essay will proceed in four parts. First, it will elaborate the structure and context of Pascal's original wager in the Pensées and the logical objections to it with the aim of recovering Pascal's reputation as a rhetorician employing a powerful trope, rather than a mathematician systematizing belief. Second, it will discuss Jonathan Schell's famous appeal for nuclear abolition in his book Fate of the Earth and Dick Cheney's so-called “One Percent Doctrine” against terrorism as contemporary uses of the wager's logical structure. Third, it will analyze the wager in terms of its sublime rhetoric and the influence of negative theology on Pascal's work. Finally, it will conclude with a discussion of the appeal to infinity as an argumentative strategy and the challenges of the sublime as an aspect of political rhetoric. Pascal's wager When he died at the age of 39, Blaise Pascal was in the midst of a project (or projects) of apology for the Christian faith. Although the work was never completed, it was ultimately to be assembled as the Pensées, a “mildly heretical” treatise reflecting Pascal's Jansenist conviction (Velchik 2009 Velchik, M. 2009. “Pascal's Wager is a Lie: An Epistemic Interpretation of the Ultimate Pragmatic Argument.” Aporia 19 (2): 1–8. , 1). Much of the book concerns the fallen state of humanity and the inability to directly contemplate the “hidden God,” the motive force of the universe that exists beyond the realms of speech and rational cognition. Pascal's work was inspired by the events of November 23 1654, eight years prior to his death, which he christened the “Night of Fire.” Vividly described in the Pensées, the Night of Fire was a two-hour long religious vision which he interpreted as a revelation of God (Ludwin 2001 Ludwin, D. 2001. Blaise Pascal's Quest for the Ineffable. New York: Peter Lang. , xi). Unable to communicate this experience directly, Pascal nevertheless endeavored to reach unbelievers with his brand of Jansenist Catholicism. One result was his famous wager, which Westel (1995 Westel, D. (1995). Pascal and Disbelief: Catechesis and Conversion in the Penseés. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press. , 13) has suggested would have been near the beginning of the assembled Penseés based on Pascal's notes and more recent textual scholarship. There is “not one inkling of doubt” that the final project was intended as an extended Christian apology (Westel 1995 Westel, D. (1995). Pascal and Disbelief: Catechesis and Conversion in the Penseés. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press. , 18) with the wager as a key element.22. Pascal himself was not the first to propose such an argument (Ryan 1994 Ryan, J. 1994. “The Wager in Pascal and Others.” In Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager, edited by J. Jordan, 11–20. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefied. ), but his formulation of it is the most complete, widely known, studied, and influential and is therefore the most appropriate target for analysis. Also, although the wager argument did not originate with Pascal, Patricia Topliss has argued that its mathematical expression did, which again makes it a key analogue for later, secular iterations (Topliss 1966 Topliss, P. 1966. The Rhetoric of Pascal: A Study of his Art of Persuasion in the Provinciales and the Pensées. Leicester: Leicester University Press. , 193–194). As Westel notes, “apology” applies a modern concept which Pascal would have understood somewhat differently. “‘Either God is or he [sic] is not,’” Pascal (2003 Pascal, B. 2003. Pensées [Kindle version].. Amazon.com . (Original work published 1670). ) wrote. “Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun which will come down heads or tails. How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong” (122). Because the proposition that God is real cannot be proven or disproven, neither decision is clearly correct. But some decision must be made, because one either believes or does not – “you are already committed,” as Pascal put it (2003 Pascal, B. 2003. Pensées [Kindle version].. Amazon.com . (Original work published 1670). , 122).33. This reflects the Jansenist emphasis on individual faith as an element of salvation, a doctrinal commitment opposed by the Jesuits. View all notes Pascal argues that four outcomes are possible – that God exists and I believe, that God exists and that I do not believe, that God does not exist but I believe, and that God does not exist and I do not believe. These outcomes can be mapped onto a decision matrix, and indeed Pascal is considered one of the progenitors of decision theory for his analysis of alternative choices (Jordan 1994a Jordan, J. 1994a. “Introduction.” In Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager, edited by J. Jordan, 1–10. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefied. , 3). Although Pascal implied a 50% probability of God's existence (assuming that the coin he described is fair), the most significant aspect of his argument is that probability itself is unimportant for this particular decision. Because the rewards for belief if God is real are “an eternity of life and happiness” while the potential losses of false belief are finite, the potential benefits of belief outweigh any drawback. “[T]hough there were an infinite number of chances,” Pascal (2003 Pascal, B. 2003. Pensées [Kindle version].. Amazon.com . (Original work published 1670). ) wrote, “of which only one were in your favor,” one would be right to wager if “there were an infinity of infinitely happy life to be won.” But the chance of God's existence is not one-in-infinity, but some finite fraction: “there is an infinity of infinitely happy life to be won, one chance of winning against a finite number of chances of losing, and what you are staking is finite” (123–124). That Pascal describes the bet in terms of “lives” bet and won only eases the way for its adaptation to public policy questions. Pascal's argument here is not that God exists, but that given the non-zero chance that God exists multiplied by the infinite reward of correct belief, it is rational to act as if God exists. It is rational to believe because of the expected value of this course of action, and if the “passions” prevent “reason” from convincing the gambler, then behaving like one believes by “taking holy water, having masses said, and so on” will eventually lead one to belief (Pascal 2003 Pascal, B. 2003. Pensées [Kindle version].. Amazon.com . (Original work published 1670). , 124). Pascal also argues that the salubrious effects of a pious lifestyle are worth the attendant loss of hedonistic pleasures even without the infinite rewards of Heaven (125). Eventually, as these boons accumulate and the convert behaves in a pious fashion, the repetition of worship will instill genuine faith and fear for one's immortal soul: “Anyone who grows accustomed to faith believes it, and can no longer help fearing hell, and believes nothing else” (126). The fear of hell adds a dimension of infinite suffering as an alternative to infinite happiness, and it is this negative incentive that is often echoed in secular incarnations of the wager. Leaving aside the moral objections to Pascal's wager, the logic of this argument has been attacked in a number of ways. One objection is that because many gods – perhaps an infinite number of them – are possible, Pascal cannot do more than argue that atheism and agnosticism are irrational, which does not prove that Catholicism is correct (Jordan 1994b Jordan, J. 1994b. “The Many Gods Objection.” In Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager, edited by J. Jordan, 1–10. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefied.). The argument that any small probability with an infinite impact should be assessed as infinite creates an obvious difficulty when two infinitely important outcomes – one good, one bad – are compared against one another. Suppose that choosing the wrong god results in damnation by the right one. On which god does one then decide? The result is either paralysis, which Pascal rejects with his insistence that some choice is inescapable, or an assessment that returns to probability, making the appeal to infinity moot (Schlesinger 1994 Schlesinger, G. 1994. “A Central Theistic Argument.” In Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager, edited by J. Jordan, 83–100. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefied, 89). At this point, Patricia Topliss (1966 Topliss, P. 1966. The Rhetoric of Pascal: A Study of his Art of Persuasion in the Provinciales and the Pensées. Leicester: Leicester University Press.) argues, the wager no longer makes sense. The unbeliever might argue that sufficiently low odds make the wager irrational (“is there an even chance that the unicorn exists?”) and that, knowing only the mortal world in which we live, to stake one's life in exchange for the possibility of salvation is to risk everything potentially for nothing (195–196). Perhaps God does exist but perversely tortures true believers – even if this outcome is unlikely, to make a judgment on this basis merely returns the debate to probability. Other difficulties exist with the nature of infinity as a concept, vital to the rewards and punishments of Pascal's wager. Leaving aside the well-known problem of Russell's Paradox, in which a set that contains all sets must paradoxically either include or exclude itself, there is also the St. Petersburg Paradox. Imagine that Peter offers a game to Paul involving coin flips. Peter will pay Paul a dollar if the coin ends up heads, two dollars if the second flip also turns up heads, four if this is repeated on the third flip, eight on the fourth, and so on to infinity (Bernoulli 1954, 31). How much would one be willing to pay to play this game? The amount that one could win rises towards the infinite, but the chances of winning decline toward zero as one continues to play. In addition, after a certain amount, doubling the prize money does not double its actual value – while having a 1000 dollars might legitimately make one twice as happy as having 500, having 200 billion dollars is not twice as good as having 100 billion, because as the prize increases the marginal utility of each dollar decreases. Although the expected value may only have an asymptotic relationship to zero, the value of playing this game has been set as low as two dollars (Ellenberg 2014, 244). The various objections to Pascal's wager have substantially discredited it is a logical argument and therefore led to its rejection by many scholars. In the summary judgment of Ian Hacking (1994), although the arguments of the wager are “valid,” none of them are convincing. “The arguments are worthless as apologetics today, for no present agnostic who understood the arguments would ever be moved to accept all the premises” (27). The wager is structured something like a geometric proof, so if Pascal the geometer has the math wrong, the wager has no value. At its extreme, this line of thinking lends credence to Buford Norman's (1977) claim that the Pensées are not rhetorical at all. “[M]any of the fragments of the Pensées,” he wrote, “consist of a direct association of ideas, with few connectives. This is precisely what the Port-Royal Logique calls jugement, which is basically the same as grammar … perhaps the most logical of all methods (styles), since it follows thought quite closely, and it is definitely far removed from rhetoric” (32). It seems reasonable to suggest, however, that Blaise Pascal, one of the great scientific and mathematical minds of his age, might well have realized the logical deficits of his wager but advanced it anyway for its rhetorical effect. In this sense, it is less a demonstration and more an effort to persuade, and Pascal should instead be judged for his merits as a rhetorician. Grammar and rhetoric of the wager The mathematical or logical reading of Pascal is the chief claim against him as a rhetorician. For interpreters such as Ellenberg and Hacking, Pascal's work is an effort to persuade through demonstration or at best grammar, as Norman argues. This interpretation sees Pascal as an earnest mathematician establishing what amounts to a proof, rather than a rhetorician employing his persuasive art to win the hearts of believers along with their minds. Others, however, have claimed the opposite position that Pascal's Penseés should be understood as primarily rhetorical, and Pascal himself as an expert rhetorician, although whether this is a complement or aspersion varies according to the source. This section will summarize and analyze this rhetorical interpretation, ultimately concluding that the opposition between grammar (as indexical structure) and rhetoric (as persuasion) is an opportunity to view Pascal's rhetoric as something in excess of both, more in line with the sublime tradition than the Aristotelian one. Pascal's own theory of rhetoric is developed in an essay called “The Art of Persuasion” (1909),4 which begins by acknowledging that although people tend to believe what pleases them, this is “base, ignoble and irrelevant” (406). The “art of persuasion,” as Pascal names it, is “simply the process of perfect methodical proofs,” and “consists of three essential parts: of defining the terms of which we should avail ourselves by clear definitions; of proposing principles or evident axioms to prove the thing in question; and of always mentally substituting in the demonstrations the definition in the place of the thing defined” (Pascal 1909, 410). Blaise Pascal, “arguably the most successful and significant practitioner of written rhetoric in his century” (Lockwood 1996, 273), thus seems to treat the art of persuasion as something with a set of codifiable, if elusive, rules and laws, a sort of geometry of human interiority. Although Pascal professes not to know all the rules, persuasion is, in this view of his work, still thought of a technique bound by laws, hidden or not (Ijsseling 1976, 73). Rule-bound and systematic, this view of Pascal's rhetoric tends to support the idea that his mathematical language is meant to be taken literally, which is perhaps what Paul Valéry (1968) was thinking when he wrote that the wager is “absurd” because it “concludes with a hope in mathematics” (319). Pascal could be expected to transmit ideas with the minimum amount of figural embellishment or distortion, and it was precisely his failure to do that which sparked Valéry's ire, leading him to describe the deceased mathematician as “an enemy of the human race.” “My complaint against Pascal,” he wrote, “is that he wanted to persuade … For me this is shocking – I've caught him in the act of literature. As I see it, if a man has something to say and thinks it should be said, he should put it just as it is in his mind … Exactly as it is” (318). This attack resonates with criticisms of rhetoric more generally as an art of deception and deceit, unsuited to the serious questions of religion, science, and even statecraft. Indeed, in discussing another of Pascal's arguments Valéry claims that he cannot be an “inspired writer” because “it's a piece of rhetoric, a fake window … It's an effect—[Pascal] is a rhetorician” (317). Even Velchik, who acknowledges Pascal as a rhetorician without condemning him as such, still concludes that Pascal's wager is deceptive – “a white lie,” no matter how insightful (Velchik 2009, 8). The most influential work on this subject is Topliss's (1966) The Rhetoric of Pascal in which she concurs with Valéry's claim that Pascal uses figurative language as more than mere ornament, transforming the meaning of his arguments through sophisticated rhetorical technique. Although she did not envenom her judgment as did Valéry, Topliss argued that Pascal's technique departed from “Ancient Rhetoric” substantially in this regard (258). For Topliss, while something more may be at work, persuasion is still the central project of the Pensées, and in this sense Pascal does follow a certain tradition of ancient rhetoric beginning with Aristotle's well-known definition of rhetoric as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. Topliss and Valéry thus see Pascal's work as persuasive at its core, the exact opposite of Norman's claim that Pacal communicates so directly that his work is not rhetorical. The work of Paul de Man (1988) suggests one way to resolve this disparity. de Man argued that two theories of the function of language were at work in Pascal's writing. One was a “cognitive function” that is “right (juste) but powerless,” while the other was “a modal function” that was “mighty (forte) in its claim to rightness.” The “necessary choice” between “seduction and truth remains undecidable,” de Man argues, because even the language of Holy Writ cannot be squared in its persuasive power with a geometrical understanding of proof (de Man 1988, 153). This undecidability is what de Man calls allegory. The conflict between “seduction” and “truth” mirrors a distinction he developed in Allegories of Reading between “rhetoric” and “grammar.” In a famous passage in that book, de Man relates a scene from All in the Family in which Archie Bunker's wife, Edith, asks him if he would prefer his bowling shoes laced under or laced over, to which Archie replies “what's the difference?” When Edith begins to explain this difference, Archie becomes agitated; his statement, although it grammatically requests more information, rhetorically denies the need for it and is thus aporetic (de Man 1979, 9–10).5 In this formulation, both Norman and Topliss are correct: Pascal's language is “basically the same as grammar” as Norman argued, and yet paradoxically “restored to figures of rhetoric that had long been thought of as ornaments, their original function as instruments of persuasion” (Topliss 1966, 321). There is something undecidable in Pascal's rhetoric between reason and belief. Rather than leading us to accept the wager as a demonstration of how reason might be applied to God, the second half of this aporia suggests that the wager is a figurative argument for why there can be no such proof – something that Pascal himself hints at when he wrote that because the order of the holy infinitely exceeds the corrupt speech of human beings, “divine truths” could not fall under the arts of persuasion. “God alone,” he wrote, “can place them in the soul” (Pascal 1909, 406–407). If Pascal believed that the “hidden God” lies infinitely beyond the capacity of persuasive language to represent, why write the wager at all? Scholars who, like Topliss, argue that Pascal's work should be analyzed rhetorically share a basic assumption with the grammatical view of Norman and those who treat the wager as a kind of mathematical proof: in short, both view Pascal's central project as one of persuasion. Even de Man's somewhat more subtle reading largely shares this understanding. Pascal, through demonstration, rhetoric, or aporetic uncertainty is guilty of Valéry's charge of attempted persuasion. The wager does not seem to add much in this regard beyond a simple effort to persuade, an appeal to logos with the minor quirk of its mathematical appeal to infinity. Pascal's religious background suggests that this dismissal may be too hasty. As Topliss wrote, that Pascal's style “will not yield up all its secrets” hidden in his “most banal devices,” suggests that the author of the Penseés had his own “impenetrable places” (321). Negative theology and the sublime Dawn Ludwin (2001) makes the case in Blaise Pascal's Quest for the Ineffable that Pascal owed a great debt to the tradition of negative theology, particularly the work of Pseudo-Dionysius,6 which he seems to have read despite his relatively limited reading and citation of other scholarly works (3–4). Negative theology is an ancient tradition in Christian thought with strong parallels in other religions. Its central concern can be framed as the problem of infinity: if God is infinite and exceeds all human understanding, how are we to talk about the divine? Language fails to capture God because it is a fallen thing of human artifice and must necessarily provide a limit where none exists in the case of the divine. Language and its limits are thus central concerns in this line of thinking. Divine experiences, such as Pascal's Night of Fire, might be described, but they can never be fully understood through speech. We can only say what God is not because even the word “infinite” is nothing more than a linguistic marker, a condensation and thus a kind of paradox in itself. Like Pascal, Pseudo-Dionysius described God in striking terms as “light” and “fire,” arguing that although language might show a path, it is only in the silence that exceeds it where God might make itself known (50–56). These metaphors for God do not persuade, but rather lead the audience to the edge of a precipice beyond which the currency of language has no purchase. As Ludwin argues, the rhetorical theory deriving from such a position on God is more consistent with the sublime of Longinus than with the rational persuasion of Aristotle, and it is in these terms that Pascal might be best understood (140–141). The sublime has been partially absorbed into the field of aesthetics, but its origin is squarely rhetorical. For Longinus, powerful rhetorical figures – chiefly metaphor – may circumvent the auditor's reason by the sheer force of the concepts it invokes. Although it is unlikely that Pascal ever read Longinus,7 striking similarities exist in their theories of rhetoric. For Longinus, the greatest writing does not persuade, but “takes the reader out of himself [sic]” by employing and “irresistible force beyond the control of any audience.” Although the individual elements of style gradually accrete in a text to indicate the author's skill, individual tropes are sublime to the extent that they disrupt this coherence: “greatness appears suddenly,” Longinus wrote, “like a thunderbolt it carries all before it and reveals the writer's full power in a flash” (4). Like Pseudo-Dionysius's belief that the infinite power of God revealed the fragility of human subjects, Longinus's theory of rhetoric uses language as an appeal to a powerful motive force that exceeds the individual. A sublime trope conceals the proof of its own argument by “startling” the reader by “its own brilliance” (Longinus 1991, 27). The best figures are not even identifiable as such because their disruptive effect draws attention away from artifice altogether, making it appear natural (Longinus 1991, 29). The technical character of the trope is less important than its ability to shock the reader away from mundane language by changing their orientation towards the text and its associated concepts, however briefly. Viewed through this lens, Pascal's wager takes on a different significance. The purpose of the wager is not to provide a rational proof for God or even to compel adherence to the liturgy, but to use the trope of the infinite to disorient and displace subjects by revealing their finitude. The wager's logical structure is obviously flawed, but this fact does not undermine its significance – it is an example of rhetoric beyond persuasion. First, following Longinus, the effect of the trope should be to conceal the proof of its own argument if it is successful, rendering the proof itself relatively unimportant. The important part of the wager is not the finitude of probability in the coin toss, but the overwhelming, literally incomprehensible stakes of the wager. The wager is supposed to shock the reader into an inspired choice that will eventually lead to conversion through repetition, not to complete the process all at once. No part of Pascal's wager has to be compelling on its own, so the 50% probability of God's existence, for example, is arbitrary and irrelevant. The sublime is supposed to circumvent the faculty of reason, rather than appeal to it in an effort of persuasion that ends in a carefully calculated decision to convert. Second, following Pseudo-Dionysius, the weakness of the wager's logic might be precisely its appeal. The secret in the “banal devices” that Topliss diagnoses is that words never succeed in capturing the majesty of God. Pascal's sublime trope does its work through catachresis. As Pseudo-Dionysius (1987) writes, “incongruities are more suitable for lifting our minds up into the domain of the spiritual … the sheer crassness of the signs is a goad so that even the materially inclined cannot accept that it could be permitted or true that the celestial and divine sights could be conveyed by such shameful things” (150). The same characteristic describes the wager. The hitch in its logic – the catachresis resulting from juxtaposing the crude indexical statement of the wager with its divine referent – forces the reader to engage the claim more thoroughly. Valéry's fury at Pascal's base rhetoric might be precisely the point: after all, it did lead the later French critic to write at length about a single sentence in Pascal's work, stewing over the crassness of its persuasion for many years.8 Confusion at the logic of the argument only helps to conceal its non-rational effect: after all, to be angered at its irrationality is to presume that it is supposed to be rational in the first place. Pascal was an “enemy of the human race” (in Valéry's language) to the extent that he wished to dissolve its finitude in the rapture of the divine by catachretic revelation. Even at his most rational and precise, Pascal argued that persuasion had its limits because the rules could never be fully known and individuals would follow their passions (Pascal, 1909). It is more fitting with his indisputable genius that the wager be read as an immensely subtle attempt to shock readers out of complacency rather than an immensely clumsy use of probability by one of Europe's greatest and most diligent mathematicians. Pascal's heirs The purpose of this exercise in reinterpretation is not only to vindicate Pascal the rhetorician. The wager's basic form is perhaps more influential today than it ever has been in past. Since the detonation of the first atomic bomb in 1945, human beings have become aware that their decisions have the potential to destroy the entire species – and many others along with it. The challenges of thinking in terms of existential risk are immense, and many old habits of thought are irrelevant or even counterproductive when making these decisions. The root of this problem is that people are not accustomed to thinking in the appropriate scales. The magnitudes of some potential impacts, such as nuclear war, are so large that our minds are not well equipped to fathom them. If they are not truly “infinite,” they are at least close enough to exert the same effects on our minds. At the same time, probabilities are so low that in conjunction with existential risks they too are hard to grasp (Yudkowsky, 2008). It is this intersection that mirrors Pascal's wager: unpredictable, low chances married to immensely, possibly infinitely, important outcomes.9 Debates about existential risk thus adhere to Pascal's wager in form: at issue is not Pascal's argument for religious debate so much as his deployment of infinite value as a rhetorical device. The most thoroughly studied existential risk is nuclear war. Since the beginning of the Cold War, academics, think-tank employees, and military planners have made an effort to quantify the risks of nuclear conflict and manage it with the tools of reason (Abella 2008 Abella, A. 2008. Soldiers of Reason: The RAND Corporation and the Rise of the American Empire. Orlando, FL: Harcourt. ; Ghamari-Tabrizi 2005 Ghamari-Tabrizi, S. 2005. The Worlds of Herman Kahn: The Intuitive Science of Thermonuclear War. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. ). The arms race appears to be the first consistent use of Pascal's wager to inform arguments on both sides of a single dispute, and may serve as a prototype for later deployments. Roy Sorensen (1994 Sorensen, R. 1994. “Infinite Decision Theory.” In Gambling on God: Essays on Pascal's Wager, edited by J. Jordan, 139–159. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefied. ) reported that a version of Pascal's wager showed up in arms control rallies (141), but its most complete and eloquent formulation is in Jonathan Schell's widely-read book Fate of the Earth. Schell (1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ) argues that the consequences of a nuclear war largely are unknown, but due to the possibility that an ensuing nuclear winter might destroy all life on Earth, such a war cannot be risked for any reason. He writes: the mere risk of extinction has a significance that is categorically different from, and immeasurably greater than, that of any other risk, and as we make our decisions we have to take that significance into account…. We have no right to place the possibility of this limitless, eternal defeat on the same footing as risks that we run in the ordinary conduct of our affairs … although the risk of extinction may be fractional, the stake is, humanly speaking, infinite, and a fraction of infinity is still infinity. In other words, once we learn that a holocaust might lead to extinction we have no right to gamble … we have no choice but to address the issue of nuclear weapons as though we knew for a certainty that their use would put an end to our species. (Schell 1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. , 95) The above passage follows the structure and content of Pascal's wager very closely. First, Schell asserts an infinite value coupled with an uncertain probability, which together result in an infinite expected value for one choice (and therefore, an infinite opportunity cost for another). Like the rewards of Heaven and the consequences of Hell, the virtues of peace and the losses of extinction are unquantifiable. Probability is irrelevant in this calculation because “a fraction of infinity is still infinity.” Second, Schell argues that although the chances of extinction are unknown, we should act as if it is a certain result of nuclear war, just as Pascal attempted not to prove that God exists, but rather that we should act as if this was the truth. It is possible that nuclear winter would not result; it is possible that a nuclear war will not occur; it is possible that the worst-case projections are wrong. Thus, although “scientifically speaking” there is “all the difference in the world between the mere possibility … and the certainty of it, morally they are the same,” which is why we must act “as though we knew for a certainty” that extinction will result from the possession of nuclear arms (Schell 1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. , 95). Third, Schell appeals not only to the unknown but to the unknowable. The impact of a nuclear war is beyond our comprehension, just as the God of Pascal's negative theology is. The passage cited here comes at the very end of the first part of Fate of the Earth, “Republic of Insects and Grass,” which is an extended description of the potential horrors of nuclear war written lyrically and beautifully, but includes an acknowledgement that nuclear war can be imagined but is indescribable because its witnesses would be dead (Schell 1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. , 26). It mirrors the many names of God used by Pseudo-Dionysius to impress upon his readers that God is something that must necessarily exceed the human standpoint. Near the conclusion of his “wager” passage, Schell asserts, “we stand before a mystery.” Like Pascal's worshipper gradually humbled before God's revelation, the reader “take[n] outside” of themselves by Longinus's sublime, or the believer “struck by [God's] blazing light,” Schell's audience is to be overwhelmed by his language and made to realize their own finitude. “Our ignorance should dispose us to wonder,” he writes, “and our wonder should make us humble, our humility should inspire us to reverence and caution” (Schell 1982 Schell, J. 1982. The Fate of the Earth. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. , 95). Finally, Schell's sublime rhetoric is supposed to be an impetus for action. The third section of Fate of the Earth is called “The Choice” and is an explicit call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The existence of this technology forces a decision, just as the possibility of God does so in Pascal's wager. As in Pascal, for Schell the wager does not merely dislocate its reader – however vital this is to its effect – but also provides a framework for decision under the conditions of uncertainty, perhaps a hallmark of rhetoric itself. Faced with incalculable risks, inaction is not possible. To paraphrase Rush, choosing not to decide is still making a choice. The invocation of infinity does not have to persuade in an Aristotelian sense to serve a purpose. The Old Testament's Abraham was made to feel “but dust and ashes” before the Lord, but the end result of his encounter was clear: follow the divine law. Thus, it is for Schell: our confrontation with finitude breeds humility, reverence, and caution, resulting in support for disarmament without the need for a nuclear Revelation. The paradox of Schell's sublime wager grows out of the necessity for decision. If any fraction of infinity is still infinity, then it becomes impossible to choose between competing options that might stake claims to the same infinitely important outcome. While abolition might prevent a nuclear war from eradicating humanity, through any number of improbable outcomes, it might also cause human extinction, perhaps by triggering devastating non-nuclear wars, another wave of nuclear proliferation, biological war (Payne 2010 Payne, K. 2010. “Disarmament danger.” National Review Online. http://www.nationalreview.com/article/229492/disarmament-danger-keith-b-payne ), or even preventing humanity from deflecting an asteroid collision (Wall 2014 Wall, M. 2014. “How Nuclear Bombs Could Save Earth from Killer Asteroids. Space.com. http://www.space.com/24696-asteroid-strike-nuclear-bombs.html ). When probability is rendered irrelevant by the sign of the infinite, there is no way to distinguish between one outcome and another: all fractions of infinity are infinity. While for Schell the risk of nuclear war mandates a policy of abolition, for advocates of nuclear deterrence, the possibility that disarmament might encourage another power to develop or use nuclear weapons against the defenseless United States mandates the exact opposite: maintenance, perhaps even aggressive expansion, of the nuclear arsenal. Such a position was, in fact, taken by former Vice President Dick Cheney. Ron Suskind reports that in 2001, CIA Director George Tenet briefed Cheney about the possibility that terrorists or hostile nations might develop nuclear weapons with the aid of Pakistani radicals. In response, Cheney proffered the now-infamous “One Percent Doctrine.” “With a low-probability, high impact event like this,” he said, “I'm frankly not sure how to engage. We're going to have to look at it in a completely different way” (qtd. in Suskind 2006 Suskind, R. 2006. The One Percent Doctrine. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. , 61). That “different way” turned out to mirror Pascal's familiar construction. “If there's a one percent chance that Pakistani scientists are helping al Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon, we have to treat it as a certainty in terms of our response … It's not about our analysis, or finding a preponderance of evidence … It's about our response” (qtd. in Suskind 2006 Suskind, R. 2006. The One Percent Doctrine. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. , 62). The bar for acceptable evidence, as Suskind notes, can be “set so low that the word itself almost didn't apply” (62). As Cheney himself stressed, the doctrine was about response: any probability of an adversary possessing nuclear weapons should be taken as a certainty. The “Cheney Doctrine” thus helped to establish the “Bush Doctrine” of preemptive use of force against enemies potentially armed with “Weapons of Mass Destruction,” itself a somewhat ill-defined term. In the realm of nuclear weapons, this meant that American leaders could contemplate the preemptive use of nuclear arms against potential nuclear adversaries, as detailed in a 2005 draft of the Pentagon's Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2005 Joint Chiefs of Staff. 2005. Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Publication 3-12). http://www.wslfweb.org/docs/doctrine/3\_12fc2.pdf ). The Cheney Doctrine thus brings Schell's logic full circle and exposes the aporia of the wager's need for decision.1010. This problem is also known as Buridan's Ass: an ass, equally hungry and thirsty, dies of privation when forced to choose between a pile of hay and a trough of water because both are exactly equally appealing. View all notes Conclusion The difficulty with Schell's argument (and conversely, with Cheney's) is equivalent to the “many gods” objection to Pascal's wager. Given a range of mutually exclusive options, each representing a potentially infinite impact, there is no longer a way to choose amongst them. For Pascal, that decision boiled down to faith, but the same was true for the Bush administration in its embrace of impulse and conviction over rationality and evidence (Suskind 2006 Suskind, R. 2006. The One Percent Doctrine. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. , 308). This same problem affects decisions over other existential threats: perhaps manipulating asteroids to miss the Earth would save us all, but perhaps the technology could be used to cause a strike; perhaps slowing the rate of climate change could prevent warming temperatures and ecological disruption, but perhaps it could cause a new ice age; perhaps space colonization would safeguard the human species, but perhaps it would attract the attention of xenocidal extraterrestrials. Infinite stakes combined with indeterminate probabilities and the necessity of decision is a counsel of despair. Even if, like Pascal's, Schell's wager is not meant to be a logical proof but an appeal to a dislocating sublime force, the problem remains. The rhetorical effect of the infinity trope is part of nuclear deterrence. One accepted mission of the US nuclear arsenal remains as the capacity to “overawe” enemies with the sheer incalculable force of thermonuclear weapons (Oelrich 2005 Oelrich, I. 2005. Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War (Federation of American Scientists Occasional Paper No. 3). https://courses.physics.illinois.edu/phys280/archive/01282005175922.pdf , 46). The “madman” theory of nuclear deterrence, named for Richard Nixon, relies on projecting the image of irrationality over nuclear decisions to that a rational opponent might believe that they will actually be used in response to aggression, even if the cost to the defender is also very high.1111. To some extent, as Kavka's Toxin Puzzle suggests, all nuclear deterrence is paradoxical: after an attack, nuclear retaliation is no longer a rational choice because one's one destruction can no longer be prevented, so, assuming the rational actors necessary for deterrence to work in the first place, it is required that one intend to do something in the future that one would be irrational to actually intend to do at the time when that decision is required. View all notes This is precisely the logic of doomsday weapons such as cobalt bombs or the Dead Hand: the cost of extinction is so high that it overwhelms any possible gain for an aggressor. Schell's vivid descriptions of the nuclear aftermath may just as well result in a passionate commitment to nuclear deterrence. The same factors that make Schell's appeal powerful also limit the ability to resist Cheney's reinterpretation of the wager. When rational calculation is made subservient to infinite risks, then reasoned arguments fail to diminish the force of sublime rhetoric, just as the various logical objections to Pascal's wager have not eliminated its staying power. The limitless damage of a nuclear war (or imagined terrorist attack) overwhelm reason. John Mueller (2010 Mueller, J. 2010. Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ) has done a detailed analysis of the probability of nuclear terrorism that assigns it roughly one in three billion odds (204–206), but the numinous fear of nuclear weapons seems to remain. It is tempting to conclude with Ned O'Gorman claim that the sublime is antithetical to politics. Because the sublime is an overwhelming, illimitable force, no adjective changes it; there is no “political sublime” because one term cannot modify the other. As O'Gorman (2006 O'Gorman, N. 2006. “The Political Sublime: An Oxymoron.” Millennium 34: 889–915. ) writes, “the sublime is a free-floating force, a univocal power, which because of its univocality cannot provide alternatives for change, guide critique, or articulate new horizons. The sublime speaks only unpredicated power” (889). The sublime may be radical in a sense, but it is not politically radical. Rather, it tends toward the conservative because it cannot offer alternatives to the status quo and constitutes a “rhetorical lure” best employed by the elite and powerful (O'Gorman 2006 O'Gorman, N. 2006. “The Political Sublime: An Oxymoron.” Millennium 34: 889–915. , 891). In this reading, the present article is merely a Synodus Horrenda, dragging Pascal forth again as rhetorician rather than a mathematician and condemning him nonetheless. To write off Pascal's wager so quickly would be premature. As Schell and Cheney demonstrate, it is the need for decision that frustrates its possibility and results in aporia. Both men have read the wager grammatically and used it to calculate a decision. They may also present it rhetorically, attempting to impress not the rightness of their judgment but the overwhelming force represented by the infinite losses of a nuclear war. In either case, the wager is still aimed at persuasion but cannot overcome its own paradoxical logos. What is missing is a different aporia on an altogether different level: that identified by de Man as the contradiction of grammar and rhetoric. At issue is a practice for reading the wager, and this contradiction can be seen working in Pascal's original if it is read not as an appeal to believe in a specific God but rather an attempt to disrupt the obstacles that lead some people not to believe in any power beyond themselves. Pascal himself was not converted by this proof nor any other, but by the revelation of his “night of fire.” His wager is not a rational argument or a rhetorical device, but rather a rhetorical device illustrating the limits both of rationality and rhetoric. The point of the coin flip is to demonstrate that no rational decision is possible. Faith and fidelity constitute a moral life. Pascal argues that piety comes through repeated practice, but this practice itself is a means to realize the scope of what exceeds the human, not an end in itself. This conception of the sublime is not political according to O'Gorman's definition, where the “sine qua non of all politics except the totalitarian is differentiation” (2006, 891). As the juxtaposition of Schell's and Cheney's uses of the wager shows, the political result of sublime rhetoric is by no means determined by its use. To say that these figures do not assist one in making instrumental choices between different political goals is not to suggest that the sublime may still have radical – and not necessarily conservative – potential if “political” is not synonymous with “politics.” As Jean-Luc Nancy (2008 Nancy, J.-L. 2008. Philosophical Chronicles. New York: Fordham University Press. ) argues, nothing requires that the two terms be identical and we should be conscious of our linguistic choice between them (27–28). The political can be understood as an orientation to community, an attitude rather than being “dissolved in the sociotechnical element of forces and needs” (Nancy 1991 Nancy, J.-L. 1991. The Inoperative Community. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. , 40). The sublime may not aid directly in politics, but it may help to develop a conception of the political by revealing the limits of our capacity to order and to comprehend our social world. To dislocate the reader by illustrating the limit of knowledge is to call into question the inevitability of social structures that we have built and inherited. Nothing about the sublime need favor the elite and powerful. Oft forgotten in Longinus's writing is an attack on avarice and material accumulation as measures of value. Longinus argues that “wealth, honors, reputation, absolute power, and all things which are accompanied by much external and theatrical pomp” cannot be noble because to “despise them is in itself no mean blessing” (9). There is a contradiction inherent in any set of social values that idolizes the rich because they are rich and also values those who forgo material benefits because they are hollow and superficial. Why is it, Longinus asks, that although there is “no dearth” of people “who are persuasive, interested in public affairs, shrewd, skillful, and certainly delightful speakers,” there are so few who are truly outstanding? His answer is that the love of money “is a disease that shrinks a man [sic].” “I cannot see how we can honor wealth without limit or, and this is nearer the truth, make it our god, without admitting into our souls those kindred evils that inevitably follow it” (Longinus 1991, 57). Rather than proscribe an instrumental solution like those shrewd speakers occupied with public affairs might, Longinus seeks to identify the attachments that serve as the conditions of possibility for corruption. “For surely if our selfish desires were altogether freed from prison, as it were, and let loose upon our neighbors, they would scorch the earth with their evils” (Longinus 1991, 58). The “worst bane” is that nothing is done for its own sake, he argues, but only because it serves as a means to an end (58) – which is close to Nancy's concern about dissolving the political into the “sociotechnical element” of politics. The sublime's inattention to differentiation might be read as a critique of instrumental politics and accumulation. Configured this way, Pascal's wager, like Longinus's sublime and Pseudo-Dionysius's negative theology, displays the presence of something beyond the technical capacities of reason to resolve and reveals the arbitrariness of power as it is exercised in an unequal society. In disorienting its readers, the sublime is a check on hubris rather than the basis for programmatic action. At the very least, the sublime is important for argument research because its use continues, for better or for worse, and exploring the collective psychology underpinning its appeal might be a more effective means of countering its dangerous uses than rational debunking alone allows. O'Gorman's critique is a useful corrective for those who might use the concept as a kind of universal solvent that obviates the need for day-to-day political choices or provisional commitments. But the genius of Pascal's wager as a rhetorical trope is its capacity to remind us that the quotidian decisions of politics, vital as they are, do not exhaust the political itself. What we value in community has no satisfying objective basis, but is something we must deliberate collectively in an age when technological progress makes a literal Night of Fire all too possible.