# 1NC – TFA State – r1

## K

#### The aff is simply newspeak – the impossibility of communication and information disseminaton actively intensify the violence of the will to transparency

Shapiro 17 [Alan N, Professor in Transdisciplinary design at Folkwang, 2-19-2017, http://www.alan-shapiro.com/more-on-baudrillard-and-trump-by-alan-n-shapiro/]//sripad

Should we be content with the media theory of Orwell or with the media theory of Baudrillard, or do we need a new media theory? **Trump makes statements which are not true, but which he claims to be true**. His inauguration crowd on January 20th, 2017 was huge, he says. Millions of people voted illegally in the presidential election, especially in California and New Hampshire, he declares. President Obama was born in Kenya, not Hawaii, Trump states. Obama wanted to allow a quarter of a million Syrian refugees into America, says Trump. Thousands of Muslims in New Jersey celebrated on the night of the September 11th, 2001 attack, so it goes. Trump believes what he believes. What he says carries much weight because he is Trump. The argument put forward by the White House press secretary Spicer to support “the truth” of what Trump believes is that tens of millions of people believe him. He believes in them and they believe in him. A populist-democratic God.

On the other side of the equation, Trump is hard at work to delegitimize the liberal news media (like CNN, the New York Times, and the Washington Post), to undermine their authority, to get them identified in the hearts and minds of his supporters as being the purveyors of “fake news.” This strategy is the equivalent of that practiced by the far right in Germany which refers to the liberal media as the “Lügenpresse” (“lying press”). Congressman Lamar Smith of Texas, the chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee and a fervent Trump supporter, recently advised his fellow citizens: “Better to get your news directly from the President, in fact it might be the only way to get the unvarnished truth.” **There is no reason to search independently for verification of assertions anymore, for the signifieds of the signifiers which are words. You do not need to trouble yourself anymore with examination of the relationship between words and their meaning**.

So this is Orwell’s 1984. Two plus two equals five. Why? Because the great leader, the dictator, the totalitarian government, says that it is. **When all information and knowledge is controlled by a Power which seeks to unify and therefore negate all views of reality, the transmission and circulation of ideas becomes a social act par excellence, the effort of an individual to link herself to others through mutual recognition of freedom**. The enemy of Winston Smith (the protagonist of 1984) is the synthetic manufacture of books and literature of all sorts carried out in the obscure offices of the Ministry of Truth. Winston’s intellectual obsession is the Party’s erasure of the past and rewriting of history. But the Party cannot determine everything. The recollection by one man of something different, something not accounted for in the official version of the facts, already signifies the recovery of coherence and the genesis of a political challenge.

The Ministry of Truth, disseminating information, instruction and entertainment, reaching into all domains of social and everyday life… the superintendence of work norms, evening recreations, the rationalization of activities through bureaucratic administration… **Newspeak: the fabricated anti-language, an explicit design accomplished through the simple elimination of words. Not formal and legal restrictions on freedom of expression, but the restriction of the cultural and linguistic fields… “Heretical thought will be literally unthinkable, as least so far as thought is dependent on words.**” (1984) Speech will be reduced to a sound best described by the Newspeak word “duckspeak”: an emission not so much of the brain but of the larynx, “a noise uttered in unconsciousness, like the quacking of a duck.”

Orwell’s fiction describes the system which Trump would like to implement. Baudrillard’s theory offers an explanation of how we arrived at this stage. But are there not useful ideas beyond these two media theory paradigms? Is a new media theory possible and what would it say? We can glimpse the beginnings of this new theory in Baudrillard’s concept of “the fourth order of simulacra.”

What does Donald Trump mean “when he says words,” asked Zachary Wolf, CNN politics editor. What has the media culture as a whole done to the status of words?

Communication in the age of media virtuality has the property of viral metastasis. In the essay “After the Orgy” in the book The Transparency of Evil, Baudrillard writes of the “epidemic of simulation,” a networked mode of fractal or viral dispersal. Updating his famous theses of “the three orders of simulacra” (in Symbolic Exchange and Death) and “the precession of simulacra” (in Simulacra and Simulation), Baudrillard seeks to introduce “a new particle into the microphysics of simulacra”:

The first of these stages had a natural referent, and value developed on the basis of a natural use of the world. The second was founded on a general equivalence, and value developed by reference to a logic of the commodity. The third is governed by a code, and value develops here by reference to a set of models. **At the fourth, the fractal (or viral, or radiant) stage of value, there is no point of reference at all, and value radiates in all directions**… (Baudrillard, The Transparency of Evil)

This is the fractal or viral stage of fourth-order simulacra. In Baudrillard’s post-simulation epistème or “epidemic of simulation,” value – if that term is still appropriate – radiates in all directions in a cancerous metastasis. **There is “no relationship between cause and effect, merely viral relationships between one effect and another.” All spheres of society pass into their free-floating, excessive, and ecstatic form**.

The cross-contamination of societal spheres which Trump represents is that of the disappearance of the boundary between the discourses of the news media (or “politics”) and the operation of the first three orders of simulacra in the media culture in general. This phase was already partly attained by other presidents and prime ministers like Reagan and Berlusconi. With Trump we are experiencing a quantum leap.

I do not think that the classical Western narratives of Marxism and psychoanalysis will be of much help to us, as a thinker like Slavoj Zizek would like. **We need to creatively expand the horizons of our thinking. We need to help the next generation of media thinkers to emerge and to flourish, free from abstract wholesale rejections of capitalism, and free from grand psychological theories of “what truly motivates people.”**

If we adopt for a moment the perspective of the German idealist philosophical tradition which goes all the way back to the 18th century – such as Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, his critiques of ontology and transcendental analytics; of psychology, cosmology and theology; then we might take the position that so-called ‘reality’ was always a metaphysical notion, a naïve assumption. Thus the early Jean Baudrillard’s concept of hyper-reality – since it, in a way, derives from the idea of reality – is perhaps also naïve. Yet I believe that, in his later writings, Baudrillard goes beyond any trace of metaphysics in his emphases on radical autonomous objects, “impossible exchange”, quantum physics sociology, photography as the writing of light, and the self-parody or carnivalesque mode of simulation.

Science cannot really be about discovering “the true nature of reality,” as some scientists like to describe as being their mission. “**Discovering the true nature of reality” would be a tautological statement, since it is science, in the current and still largely prevailing modernist paradigm, which generates the concept of “reality.**” Science would be investigating its own projection. We cannot allow science to be based on a tautological self-contradictory first principle.

#### Endless appeals to objectivity and evidence near and dear to the affirmative have lost all weight in the world of alternative facts and fake news – attempts to decipher the world through transparent metaphysics prove to not only be futile but also infinitely destructive as the quest to know everything merely reveals all that we can never know – meaning is contrary to its own intent; all information inevitable crumbles into the void of illusion

Shapiro 17 [Alan N, Professor in Transdisciplinary design at Folkwang, 1/5, “*Baudrillard and Trump: Simulation and Object-Orientation, Not True and False,”* http://www.alan-shapiro.com/baudrillard-and-trump-simulation-and-object-orientation-not-true-and-false-by-alan-n-shapiro/, //MW]

I see an op-ed piece in yesterday’s Washington Post (January 2nd, 2017) by Greg Sargent. It is called “Yes, Donald Trump ‘lies.’ A lot. And news organizations should say so.” This article is typical of the entire approach of the “liberal establishment” towards Trump. During the election campaign, journalists and commentators kept pointing out that Trump is a liar, a snake oil salesman, etc. (see the brilliant 1964 Philip K. Dick novel Lies, Inc.) That may all be true, but it doesn’t make a dent in the number of his supporters. Baudrillard comments throughout his work on the difference between critical theory discourse (which liberal journalists like Sargent are stuck in with respect to Trump) and what he called “fatal theory.” Critical theory discourse is ineffective. Trump is the candidate of Reality TV, of the celebrity culture, of media hyper-reality entertainment, of everyone’s 15 minutes of fame (Warhol), of the “trans-political” (Baudrillard), and of object-orientation (OO). OO: Trump will be the Presidency and not the President – end of the distance between human agent and office –Trump is misogyny itself and not a misogynist, he is racism itself and not a racist, Trump hates no one [“nobody loves Group X more than I do”], he simply associates himself rhetorically with the social-psychological “object” which is hatred). Beyond the epistemology of the human subject, Trump will identify with any iconic or mental-image “object” necessary as he performs “the art of the deal” and the practice of “winning” in larger and larger arenas. Trump identifies with the political-science-object that is the historically dormant China-Taiwan conflict itself (and its reawakened provocation). The “social actors” (Bruno Latour) of China and Taiwan are irrelevant. In other words, Trump is the candidate of the era of simulation. Invoking “the truth” against him does not work as a strategy. Trump is already more advanced than the discourse of truth. We are in a hyper-reality where there is no more truth and no more falsehood. Carl “The Truth” Williams, a former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, passed away in April 2013. Alan Cholodenko comments: If hyper-reality was born for Baudrillard during or just after the Second World War, then there have already been several simulation-Presidents: JFK the first televisual President, Reagan the Hollywood actor and first TV show host (of the General Electric Theatre)-President. Trump takes his place in this lineage. He is the second TV show host (of The Apprentice)-President, the first live show, reality TV show CEO host become live show, reality TV show CEO host-President of the live show, reality TV show America, Inc.) The mistake of the multitudes of journalists and editorialists like the Washington Post’s Greg Sargent is to not understand that the system of “truth and lies” is not some eternal, ahistorical or “scientifically objective” reality. It is an historically constructed cultural discourse or arrangement tied to an epoch which is finite in time. As Foucault might say, the concern with “true” and “false” is an epistème – an epistemological a priori, an expression of a specific power-knowledge constellation within an era – whose time has come and gone. The insistent belief in “truth and lies” is also embedded in the Plato-initiated “metaphysics” of the “human subject,” the subject-centered worldview, the sovereign (democratic or scientific) subject who “knows” and can therefore judge and determine when “knowledge” or a “fact” has been betrayed. In the new epistemological system beyond “truth and lies” to which Trump is finely attuned, of which he is the master, and which liberals do not get, the object itself is the hot thing. The spotlight is on objects (conceptual not physical), and they are a relationship, an association which knows nothing of whether they are real or fake. They transcend and straddle true and false. “Things have found a way of avoiding a dialectics of meaning that was beginning to bore them: by proliferating indefinitely, increasing their potential, outbidding themselves in an ascension to the limit, an obscenity that henceforth becomes their immanent finality and senseless reason.” (Baudrillard, Fatal Strategies; p.7) When Trump says something, it becomes true because Trump says it, and there is nothing that the New York Times and the Washington Post can do about it. Trump will change what he says on any given topic from day to day, or on any given Sunday. The liberal media will “prove him wrong” with evidence, but this demonstration will have an effect exactly the opposite than that intended upon and for the “silent majority” of half of Americans for whom they are the liars. The institutional bases for consensus or legitimation of “the truth” have disappeared beneath the sheer load of mountainous piles of information, and the virtualization, delocalization, de-physicalization, and disembodiment of discourse. When did this happen (when was the “Canetti point”)? Impossible to say. To know the point of origin of that would be to overstate the claims of knowledge, to violate the methodological recursivity of our awareness of being lost within the culture of simulation (as Baudrillard has taught us in his fascinating lengthy discussions of the “Canetti point,” and as Gerry Coulter has taught us, for example, in his essay on America). When Trump said that thousands of Muslims were celebrating on rooftops in Jersey City, New Jersey on 9/11, he was right. 100% right, as he later tweeted. Within the epistemology (theory of knowledge) of the humanist-democratic subject and of truth, the alleged rooftop event of course “did not take place.” Yet in the hyper-modernist epistemology, the rhetorical and emotional power of the words invoked and the mental images evoked by Trump (the advent of hyper-imagination) carry the weight and dynamic force of the image-immersed beyond-chimerical “object” of those evil Muslim celebrators. Probably Trump saw on TV in September 2001 some cynical celebrations in the Palestinian territories. The clandestine wormhole connection between physically remote points in space is plausibly extant. In the culture of virtual images, it is perfectly OK to transpose the bin Laden-sympathetic revelers from one geographical location to another, the hyper-space of Trump’s creative memory mingled with the hyper-dimensional expanding televisual space on the interior of the flatscreen. Fantasy is possible in a world that is still real. A fantasy could be said to be not true, some sort of illusion (in the non-Baudrillardian meaning of this word) or deception. But when images are everywhere, and they are universally exchangeable with each other, the made-up mental images become hyper-real. Which now (literally) means (hyper-means) more real than real. Meaning becomes hyper-meaning. Would not the ubiquity of video documentation and recording devices of every kind increase the availability of truth? Whipping the cam around, looking amazing from every angle? No, the effect is just the opposite. When documentation and recording are everywhere, then they are nowhere. They cease to exist in any meaningful sense. They serve no purpose whatsoever anymore. They are pure technology fetish in the bad sense, decoupled through their excess from what they were supposed to enhance or invent. As a hybrid radical-leftist-and-mainstreamer, I do believe that there is a good side to surveillance, a deterrence of crime. But if surveillance is everywhere, then this good side no longer functions. This is the same paradoxical logic that is operative for all virtual and digital media technologies. Yes, all of these wonderful new things are available to us, but we omitted the step of thinking carefully about the appropriate measure of their application. We forgot to humanly judge this. Hybrid posthumanist and humanist. We never took seriously the great thought of Albert Camus, that in almost every area, we need to have a sense of limits (as Dominick LaCapra pointed out). Academic referentiality – which Baudrillard was opposed to – is like this too. If you overdo it, become obsessed with footnotes, then you enter into the twilight zone of hyper-referentiality and then the whole business does not function anymore. You do it because you have to do it and the original purpose is lost. The “proof” (ha ha!) is now upon us that Baudrillard was right all along. We are now fully in the era of simulation and telemorphosis, of the New Truth of the omnipresent image (both picture-image and word-image – the multi-media of the screen having transformed written words from texts into images). The New Truth is not a lie – that would be too easy and the claim is retrograde. The New Truth institutes its own hyper-reality, which is at present our only reality. The only way to contest simulation and the New Truth would be a strategy or perspective of “taking the side of objects” (see, for example, [my most recent IJBS essay](http://www2.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-13_2/v13-2-shapiro.html), for an elaboration of this). We would have to get to know the codes which underlie and instantiate simulation and reverse them. Reversibility of the code comes from “objects” within the code which want more objecthood. Until we can start to do that, to paraphrase David Cronenberg’s Videodrome: LONG LIVE THE NEW TRUTH! Bernie Tuchman writes: “Your piece on Trump has great power because his election has defeated deniability. Something is Happening and You Don’t Know What It is Mr. Jones. The media continues to ‘analyze’ what it cannot understand. It is like a world which has entered into dementia — where the dream life is more real than the ‘awake’ life, and where no one can say which is which. It is the nervous breakdown of hierarchical order.

#### The affs investment in objectivity only ensures the absolute liquidation of Otherness in the name of transparency – a spectacular genocide against alterity, conducted in the name of nothing at all.

Guignion ‘18

[David, M.A. at the University of Western Ontario. 2018. “The Mirror of Humanism; or, Towards a Baudrillardian Posthuman Theory”, <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7739&context=etd>] pat

Baudrillard’s two books on war, The Gulf War did not take place and The Spirit of Terrorism propose that war has been engulfed by the mass media. According to Rick Roderick, in his eight-part lecture series: The Self Under Siege: Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, Baudrillard wanted to cover the Gulf War on “CNN where it would really happen” (Roderick), because as the “media promote the war, the war promotes the media, and advertising competes with the war” (Baudrillard, Gulf War 31). For Baudrillard, the degree to which these wars were broadcast over television networks attests to a transformation of the nature of war itself. As he explains, “when it has been turned into information, [war] ceases to be a realistic war and becomes a virtual war” (41). The system of war is not the only one affected by this turn toward virtuality. Those fighting, if on the side of the invader, find a great deal of safety in the war zone itself. As Baudrillard writes, “A simple calculation shows that, of the 500,000 American soldiers involved during the seven months of operations in the Gulf, three times as many would have died from road accidents alone had they stayed in civilian life. Should we consider multiplying clean wars in order to reduce the murderous death toll of peacetime?”

(69). Still, Baudrillard’s remarks overlook the enormous casualties suffered by the losing side. In this case, the term “war” does not capture the essence of these military movements as well as the term “invasion,” indicative of a form of neo-colonialism. The transformation of these wars from the domain of reality to that of the virtual performs a dual function for the neo-colonial efforts of the West. First, there is a virtual violence, a violence of the image. In this operation the real events of these wars are substituted for the image of these wars: “The image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption” (Baudrillard, The Spirit of Terrorism 27). This process not only replaces the real with the virtual, but filters which images and messages are distributed. The images distributed operate to convince the viewer of the reality of these wars, or, more precisely, their virtual reality. Second, these wars function to destroy the other, virtually and symbolically. The West’s drive toward global hegemony “is a giant project meant to symbolically liquidate all values through consensus or force” (Baudrillard, The Agony of Power 67).

Global power, for Baudrillard, “is the power of the simulacrum” (66). Under the code of the simulacrum, where people are reduced to the status of cybernetician, the other poses an avid challenge to global hegemony. Global hegemony responds to this roadblock by declaring war on “the alterity of the other” by either converting or annihilating it (Baudrillard, Gulf War 37). The simulating machine dabbles in the affairs of reality when zones of resistance that do not subscribe to its oppressive logic emerge. In many ways, Baudrillard’s theorization of war bridges the gap between simulation and reality, pointing to a milieu—the war machine—that simulation mobilizes in the service of eradicating difference.

Baudrillard’s writing on war points to the erasure and eradication of those points on the globe that are outside of the purview of “our truth” where “nothing is true unless it is desecrated, objectified, stripped of its aura, or dragged onstage” (Agony 67). The West strives to make everything seen, everything tangible, everything real through the “museification” (Baudrillard, The Vital Illusion 40) of the other. The virtuality of the scenes of war exist to convince the viewer that the war is real; that there is something to be fought over, as opposed to neo-colonial genocide. The role of the museum in this process is, in a sense, to deliver the final blow to the objects of this neo-colonial effort. Those affected literally die from the bombardment of artillery strikes and drone strikes, but they also die “from being transplanted from a slow order of the symbolic, master over putrefaction and death, to an order of history, science, and museums, our order, which no longer masters anything, which only knows how to condemn what preceded it to decay and death and subsequently to try to revive it with science” (Baudrillard, Simulacra 10).

#### Reality is on the brink now – facts are replacing passion, truth is running rampant, and illusion is at an all-time low – what is now needed are new modes of language and communication that resist the ever-persistent onslaught of meaning and signification, engines of mystery radical enough to muddle and mystify the very fabric of the real, a form of non-meaning capable of pushing networks of transparency to their own logical extremes

Baudrillard, 96 [Jean, “*The Perfect Crime*,” pg. 96, //MW]

Truth to tell, the real world, among all the other possible ones, is unthinkable, except as dangerous superstition. We must break with it as critical thought once broke (in the name of the real!) with religious superstition. Thinkers, one more effort! In any case, the two orders of thought are irreconcilable. They each follow their course without merging; at best they slide over each other like tectonic plates, and occasionally their collision or subduction creates fault lines into which reality rushes. Fate is always at the intersection of these two lines of force. Similarly, radical thought is at the violent intersection of meaning and non-meaning, of truth and non-truth, of the continuity of the world and the continuity of the nothing. Unlike the discourse of the real, which gambles on the fact of there being something rather than nothing, and aspires to being founded on the guarantee of an objective and decipherable world, radical thought, for its part, wagers on the illusion of the world. It aspires to the status of illusion, restoring the non-veracity of facts, the non-signification of the world, proposing the opposite hypothesis that there is nothing rather than something, and going in pursuit of that nothing which runs beneath the apparent continuity of meaning. The radical prediction is always the prediction of the non-reality of facts, of the illusoriness of the state of fact. It begins only with the presentiment of that illusoriness, and is never confused with the objective state of things. Every confusion of that kind is of the order of the confusion of the messenger and the message, which leads to the elimination of the messenger bearing bad news (for example, the news of the uncertainty of the real, of the non-occurrence of certain events, of the nullity of our values). Every confusion of thought with the order of the real -- that alleged `faithfulness' to the real of a thought which has cooked it up out of nothing -- is hallucinatory. It arises, moreover, from a total misunderstanding about language, which is illusion in its very movement, since it is the bearer of that continuity of the void, that continuity of the nothing at the very heart of what it says, since it is, in its very materiality, deconstruction of what it signifies. Just as photography connotes the effacing, the death of what it represents -- which lends it its intensity -- so what lends writing, fictional or theoretical, its intensity is the void, the nothingness running beneath the surface, the illusion of meaning, the ironic dimension of language, correlative with that of the facts themselves, which are never anything but what they are [ne sont jamais que ce qu'ils sont]. That is to say, they are never more than what they are and they are, literally, never only what they are [jamais que ce qu'ils sont]. The irony of the facts, in their wretched reality, is precisely that they are only what they are but that, by that very fact, they are necessarily beyond. For de facto existence is impossible -- nothing is wholly transparent without becoming enigmatic. Reality itself is too obvious to be true. It is this ironic transfiguration which constitutes the event of language. And it is to restoring this fundamental illusion of the world and language that thought must apply itself, if it is not stupidly to take concepts in their literalness -- messenger confused with the message, language confused with its meaning and therefore sacrificed in advance. There is a twofold, contradictory exigency in thought. It is not to analyze the world in order to extract from it an improbable truth, not to adapt to the facts in order to abstract some logical construction from them, but to set in place a form, a matrix of illusion and disillusion, which seduced reality will spontaneously feed and which will, consequently, be verified remorselessly (the only need is to shift the camera angle from time to time). For reality asks nothing other than to submit itself to hypotheses. And it confirms them all. That, indeed, is its ruse and its vengeance. The theoretical ideal would be to set in place propositions in such a way that they could be disconfirmed by reality, in such a way that reality could only oppose them violently, and thereby unmask itself. For reality is an illusion, and all thought must seek first of all to unmask it. To do that, it must itself advance behind a mask and constitute itself as a decoy, without regard for its own truth. It must pride itself on not being an instrument of analysis, not being a critical tool. For it is the world which must analyse itself. It is the world itself which must reveal itself not as truth, but as illusion. The derealization of the world will be the work of the world itself. Reality must be caught in the trap, we must move quicker than reality. Ideas, too, have to move faster than their shadows. But if they go too quickly, they lose even their shadows. No longer having even the shadow of an idea. ... Words move quicker than meaning, but if they go too quickly, we have madness: the ellipsis of meaning can make us lose even the taste for the sign. What are we to exchange this portion of shadow and labour against -- this saving of intellectual activity and patience? What can we sell it to the devil for? It is very difficult to say. We are, in fact, the orphans of a reality come too late, a reality which is itself, like truth, something registered only after the event. The ultimate is for an idea to disappear as idea to become a thing among things. That is where it finds its accomplishment. Once it has become consubstantial with the surrounding world, there is no call for it to appear, nor to be defended as such. Evanescence of the idea by silent dissemination. An idea is never destined to burst upon the world, but to be extinguished into it, into its showing-through in the world, the world's showing-through in it. A book ends only with the disappearance of its object. Its substance must leave no trace. This is the equivalent of a perfect crime. Whatever its object, writing must make the illusion of that object shine forth, must make it an impenetrable enigma -- unacceptable to the Realpolitiker of the concept. The objective of writing is to alter its object, to seduce it, to make it disappear for itself. Writing aims at a total resolution -- a poetic resolution, as Saussure would have it, that resolution indeed of the rigorous dispersal of the name of God. Contrary to what is said about it (the real is what resists, what all hypotheses run up against), reality is not very solid and seems predisposed, rather, to retreat in disorder. Whole swathes of reality are collapsing, as in the collapse of Baliverna (Buzzati), where the slightest flaw produces a chain reaction. We find decomposed remnants of it everywhere, as in Borges's `Of Exactitude in Science'. 3 Not only does it no longer put up any resistance against those who denounce it, but it even eludes those who take its side. This is perhaps a way of exacting vengeance on its partisans: by throwing them back on their own desire. In the end, it is perhaps more a sphinx than a bitch. More subtly, it wreaks vengeance on those who deny it by paradoxically proving them right. When the most cynical, most provocative hypothesis is verified, the trick really is a low one; you are disarmed by the lamentable confirmation of your words by an unscrupulous reality. So, for example, you put forward the idea of simulacrum, without really believing in it, even hoping that the real will refute it (the guarantee of scientificity for Popper). Alas, only the fanatical supporters of reality react; reality, for its part, does not seem to wish to prove you wrong. Quite to the contrary, every kind of simulacrum parades around in it. And reality, filching the idea, henceforth adorns itself with all the rhetoric of simulation. It is the simulacrum which ensures the continuity of the real today, the simulacrum which now conceals not the truth, but the fact that there isn't any -- that is to say, the continuity of the nothing. Such is the paradox of all thought which disputes the validity of the real: when it sees itself robbed of its own concept. Events, bereft of meaning in themselves, steal meaning from us. They adapt to the most fantastical hypotheses, just as natural species and viruses adapt to the most hostile environments. They have an extraordinary mimetic capacity: no longer is it theories which adapt to events, but the reverse. And, in so doing, they mystify us, for a theory which is verified is no longer a theory. It's terrifying to see the idea coincide with the reality. These are the death-throes of the concept. The epiphany of the real is the twilight of its concept. We have lost that lead which ideas had over the world, that distance which meant that an idea remained an idea. Thought has to be exceptional, anticipatory and at the margin -- has to be the projected shadow of future events. Today, we are lagging behind events. They may sometimes give the impression of receding; in fact, they passed us long ago. The simulated disorder of things has moved faster than we have. The reality effect has succumbed to acceleration -- anamorphosis of speed. Events, in their being, are never behind themselves, are always out ahead of their meaning. Hence the delay of interpretation, which is now merely the retrospective form of the unforeseeable event. What are we to do, then? What becomes of the heterogeneity of thought in a world won over to the craziest hypotheses? When everything conforms, beyond even our wildest hopes, to the ironic, critical, alternative, catastrophic model? Well, that is paradise: we are beyond the Last Judgement, in immortality. The only problem is to survive there. For there the irony, the challenging, the anticipation, the maleficence come to an end, as inexorably as hope dies at the gates of hell. And it is indeed there that hell begins, the hell of the unconditional realization of all ideas, the hell of the real. You can see why, as Adorno says, concepts prefer to scupper themselves rather than reach that point. Something else has been stolen from us: indifference. The power of indifference, which is the quality of the mind, as opposed to the play of differences, which is the characteristic of the world. Now, this has been stolen from us by a world grown indifferent, as the extravagance of thought has been stolen from us by an extravagant world. When things, events, refer one to another and to their undifferentiated concept, then the equivalence of the world meets and cancels out the indifference of thought -- and we have boredom. No more altercations; nothing at stake. It is the parting of the dead sea. How fine indifference was in a world that was not indifferent -- in a different, convulsive, contradictory world, a world with issues and passions! That being the case, indifference immediately became an issue and a passion itself. It could preempt the indifference of the world, and turn that pre-emption into an event. Today, it is difficult to be more indifferent to their reality than the facts themselves, more indifferent to their meaning than images. Our operational world is an apathetic world. Now, what good is it being passionless in a world without passion, or detached in a world without desire? It is not a question of defending radical thought. Every idea one defends is presumed guilty, and every idea that cannot defend itself deserves to disappear. On the other hand, one must fight all charges of irresponsibility, nihilism or despair. Radical thought is never depressive. On this point, there is total misunderstanding. Ideological and moralistic critique, obsessed with meaning and content, obsessed with the political finality of discourse, never takes into account writing, the act of writing, the poetic, ironic, allusive force of language, of the juggling with meaning. It does not see that the resolution of meaning is to be found there -- in the form itself, the formal materiality of expression. Meaning, for its part, is always unhappy. Analysis is, by definition, unhappy, since it is born of critical disillusionment. But language, for its part, is happy, even when referring to a world without illusion and without hope. That might even be the definition of a radical thinking: a happy form and an intelligence without hope. Critics, being unhappy by nature, always choose ideas as their battleground. They do not see that if discourse always tends to produce meaning, language and writing, for their part, always create illusion -- they are the living illusion of meaning, the resolution of the infelicity of meaning by the felicity of language. And this is surely the only political -- or transpolitical -- act that can be accomplished by the person who writes. As for ideas, everyone has them. More than they need. What counts is the poetic singularity of the analysis. That alone can justify writing, not the wretched critical objectivity of ideas. There never will be any resolving the contradictoriness of ideas, except in the energy and felicity of language. `I do not paint sadness and loneliness,' says Hopper. `What I wanted to do was to paint sunlight on the side of a house.' At any rate, better a despairing analysis in felicitous language than an optimistic analysis in an infelicitous language that is maddeningly tedious and demoralizingly platitudinous, as is most often the case. The absolute tediousness secreted by that idealistic, voluntaristic thought is the secret sign of its despair -- as regards both the world and its own discourse. That is where true depressive thought is to be found, among those who speak only of the transcending and transforming of the world, when they are incapable of transfiguring their own language. Radical thought is a stranger to all resolving of the world in the direction of an objective reality and its deciphering. It does not decipher. It anagrammatizes, it disperses concepts and ideas and, by its reversible sequencing, takes account both of meaning and of the fundamental illusoriness of meaning. Language takes account of the very illusion of language as definitive stratagem and, through it, of the illusion of the world as infinite trap, as seduction of the mind, as spiriting away of all our mental faculties. While it is a vehicle of meaning, it is at the same time a superconductor of illusion and non-meaning. Language is merely the involuntary accomplice of communication -- by its very form it appeals to the spiritual and material imagination of sounds and rhythm, to the dispersal of meaning in the event of language. This passion for artifice, for illusion, is the passion for undoing that too- beauteous constellation of meaning. And for letting the imposture of the world show through, which is its enigmatic function, and the mystification of the world, which is its secret. While at the same time letting its own imposture show through -- the impostor, not the composteur [composing stick] of meaning. This passion has the upper hand in the free and witty use of language, in the witty play of writing. Where that artifice is not taken into account, not only is its charm lost, but the meaning itself cannot be resolved. Cipher, do not decipher. Work over the illusion. Create illusion to create an event. Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible what is only too intelligible, make the event itself unreadable. Accentuate the false transparency of the world to spread a terroristic confusion about it, or the germs or viruses of a radical illusion -- in other words, a radical disillusioning of the real. Viral, pernicious thought, corrosive of meaning, generative of an erotic perception of reality's turmoil.

## DA

#### To prioritize objectivity over advocacy is the impetus for false balance – that intensifies climate misinformation

Climate Discovery 18 [Climate Discovery is an advocacy group, this article heavily cites an article by Declan Fahy a profeesor of communication at Dublin City University, “False Balance in the Media Reduces Climate Science Credibility, Oxford English Dictionary”, <https://climatediscovery.org/false-balance-in-the-media-reduces-climate-science-credibility-oxford-english-dictionary/z>, October 11, 2018

]//Sripad

“Journalists have struggled historically to apply the notion of balance to the reporting of climate change science, because even though the overwhelming majority of the world’s experts agree that human-driven climate change is real and will have major future impacts, a minority of scientists dispute this consensus. **Reporters aimed to be fair by giving both viewpoints equal attention, a practice scholars have labeled false balance**.” This report from The Oxford English Dictionary by Declan Fahy of Dublin City University.

This **false balance affects opinions of all makes. Because we as humans get most of our news from the media, and the media is providing biased information, a great injustice is being innocently and blindly committed.**

False balance has been leveraged by the Climate Change Counter Movement to enhance doubt and denial of climate science and prolong delay of climate pollution reform action. Fahy goes on to tell us **false balance, “remains a pitfall for reporters** to avoid in coverage of two climate change topics: the presentation of the many potential future impacts or risks and the coverage of different policy responses in a climate-challenged society.”

Here, Fahy is displaying his own form of false balance (in my opinion, and I am not a global warming psychologist.) **Major impacts are occurring right now, not in the future, and they are very much worse than anything consensus climate science reporting organizations has suggested so far.**

This false bias thing extends even to environmental advocates. At the highest levels of the most prestigious environmental conservation and climate change advocacy organizations, policy and opinion are far behind, as much as 20 years behind.

How it works goes like this, “**The established notion of objectivity relies on sources to convey facts. When these sources do not present facts, reporting dissolves into** what journalist James Fallows calls ‘**false equivalencies,’ in which journalists place side by side in stories different assertions that do not have the same basis in fact**.”

Because science and antiscience are presented equally without judgement, both are understood by the reader or viewer as being valid. Privileged sources (the president, the wealthy and influential fossil fuel industry, media powerhouses, etc.), “can then present their own economic and social interests as being the common interests of all citizens. Because these sources then dominate news coverage, other voices that might challenge their views are marginalized.”

**The**[**dominance of Fox New**](https://www.thewrap.com/fox-news-continues-28-week-win-streak-as-most-watched-cable-network/)**s is a privileged source for a majority of cable news viewers in the U.S. in July 2017 for example**.

**Fahy tells us** that, “**journalists (have) now amplified uncertainties as they covered climate change as a controversy” because they are presenting inaccurate information form privileged sources to a majority of those seeking news information on climate change**.

When reporting objectively, **journalism ethical requirements of reporting both sides of the story compromises fact badly when the vast minority opinion of climate change denial is delivered as equal to the vast majority opinion**. **Fahy** says, **“In climate coverage, when journalists seek multiple voices, minority viewpoints —like those of scientists who dispute the human influence on global warming—gain a level of attention that is disproportionate to the amount of evidence that supports such a view. Journalists tried to make their coverage balanced by reporting these minority viewpoints, but instead made it biased** (Gelbspan, 1998). This was false balance.”

This false balance as “fairness” balance by Boykoff and Boykoff in 2004. Boykoffs’ [abstract states](http://www.colorado.edu/geography/courses/geog_2412_f04/balance%20as%20bias.pdf), “**Through content analysis of US prestige press— meaning the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and the Wall Street Journal—this paper focuses on the norm of balanced reporting, and shows that the prestige press’s adherence to balance actually leads to biased coverage of both anthropogenic contributions to global warming and resultant action**.”

False balance in climate reporting has been addressed by some media outlets says Fahy. Techniques to overcome viewer or reader skepticism have been implemented to show sources of statements and motivation. **But skeptical statements on settled science continue to be dominant** in Conservative news outlets.

#### Empirics prove that false balance is true and caused by press prioritization of objectivity –that leads to inaction

Anderson 19 [Lorena Anderson is the Senior Writer and Public Information Representative for UC MERCED, “Media creates false balance on climate science, study shows”, August 22, 2019, https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/media-creates-false-balance-climate-science-study-shows]//sripad

**The American media lends too much weight to people who dismiss climate change, giving them legitimacy they haven’t earned, posing serious danger to efforts aimed at raising public awareness and motivating rapid action, a new study shows.**

While it is not uncommon for media outlets to interview climate change scientists and climate change deniers in the same interviews, **the effort to offer a 360-degree view is creating a false balance between trained climate scientists and those who lack scientific training, such as politicians.**

“It’s not just false balance; the numbers show that the media are ‘balancing’ experts — who represent the overwhelming majority of reputable scientists — with the views of a relative handful of non-experts,” UC Merced [professor LeRoy Westerling](https://www.ucmerced.edu/content/leroy-westerling) said. “**Most of the contrarians are not scientists, and the ones who are have very thin credentials**. They are not in the same league with top scientists. They aren’t even in the league of the average career climate scientist.”

Westerling is one of three researchers from UC Merced who tracked the digital footprints of climate scientists and deniers across about 200,000 research publications and 100,000 digital and print media articles on climate change over the past few years. Their work is [published in Nature Communications](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-09959-4).

Data shows that **about half the mainstream media visibility goes to climate-change deniers, many of whom are not climate scientists. This proportion increases significantly when blogs and other “new media” outlets are included — pointing to the rising role of customized media in spreading disinformation.**

“It’s time to stop giving these people visibility, which can be easily spun into false authority,” [professor Alex Petersen](https://www.ucmerced.edu/content/alexander-petersen) said. “By tracking the digital traces of specific individuals in vast troves of publicly available media data, we developed methods to hold people and media outlets accountable for their roles in the climate-change-denialism movement, which has given rise to climate change misinformation at scale.”

Amplified misinformation

**There are a variety of reasons people don’t accept the results of climate science even though the science is overwhelming. These include cognitive bias and “motivated reasoning”** — the tendency of people to bias their judgements by personal and group-level values, even when faced with documented facts; and external influences, including political cues, ideological biases, cultural worldviews and even personal weather experiences.

But the media’s longstanding and dominant role in empowering cultural politics, the advent of “new media” and the nearly boundless scalability of content distribution across the Internet compound the problem and amplify misinformation, the researchers said.

Even when people have complete control in choosing their sources of information, they are still susceptible to significant disparities in content production and to media coverage.

The proper counterpoint to a climate scientist would be another legitimate scientist who could show competing data from the same experiments or show where the first climate scientist has made mistakes in his or her work. Having a non-expert oil lobbyist or politician respond to a peer-reviewed study or assessment by saying “climate change doesn’t exist” is not a credible argument or a means of balancing, Petersen said.

“**These results show that false balance in the media is alive and well and the growing trend toward customized media that we access via the internet is feeding the disinformation trend**,” said Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas Tech University and a lead author of the U.S. National Climate Assessment. “This study is a wake-up call for all media to do better: to check their sources in order to accurately communicate the reality of human-induced climate change, the relevance of its impacts and the urgency of action.”

Petersen is a computational scientist who specializes in human analytics. He and Westerling, a climatologist known for his state-of-the-art modeling of climate-ecosystem-wildfire interactions, both with the [Department of Management of Complex Systems](https://engineering.ucmerced.edu/soe-bylaw-units/management-complex-systems-mcs) in the [School of Engineering](https://engineering.ucmerced.edu/), partnered with former UC Merced researcher Emmanuel Vincent to conduct a study of 386 prominent climate contrarians and 386 expert scientists’ public statements on climate change to compare the credibility given to those on each side.

“The acute misrepresentation of information aimed at misleading the public for political gain is a pressing problem that threatens various other domains in addition to climate change communication,” the team wrote in the new paper. “It requires a better understanding of the human, social and technological factors that facilitate widespread disinformation efforts.”

“Political reporting focuses its narrative around conflict and looks to highlight competing voices, rather than telling the story of the science.”  
— LeRoy Weserling

Disproportionate visibility

Westerling put it more bluntly:

“It’s well known now that a well-financed propaganda campaign on behalf of conservative fossil fuel interests led mainstream media to frame reporting on climate change science as political reporting rather than science reporting,” he said. “Political reporting focuses its narrative around conflict and looks to highlight competing voices, rather than telling the story of the science.”

This, he said, has led to the false balance between scientists and a handful of climate deniers who have become regular commenters.

Besides the scientists who have published work denying or downplaying climate change, many people will recognize some of the other people who are often called upon to present “balance:” Scott Pruitt, the former head of the EPA; Steve Bannon, former advisor to President Donald Trump’s campaign; Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe; White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney; former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

By featuring them as the counterpoints to legitimate, experienced and disciplined climate scientists, the media gives them a measure of credibility they do not deserve, the researchers said.

“Such disproportionate media visibility of contrarian arguments and actors not only misrepresents the distribution of expert-based beliefs, it also manifestly undermines the credible authority of career climate-change experts, and reinforces the trend of non-experts presiding over public scientific discourse, which all together **hinders prospects for rapid public action on climate change**,” they wrote.

#### Warming is the most probable root cause of human extinction

Hoare, 21. (Callum is a a Senior Special Projects Reporter at Express.co.uk, having joined in November 2018. He previously worked as a Video News Reporter at Daily Star Online) . "End of the world warning: Climate change will be 'biggest contributor to human extinction'." Express.co.uk. https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1484402/end-of-the-world-climate-change-human-extinction-rising-sea-level-conflict-famine. accessed 9-29-2021 // Gayden

It comes less than a month after the UNs Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a “code red” for humanity over climate change. They warned of increasingly extreme heatwaves, droughts and flooding, and a key temperature limit being broken in just over a decade. And now experts have painted a bleak picture for the human race. Scientists warn that ignoring the climate crisis will yield "untold suffering" for humanity. They say that although climate change will not directly cause an extinction event, that it could play a huge role, such as by leading to food and water scarcity, which has the potential to trigger a societal collapse and set the stage for global conflict. Michael Mann, a distinguished professor of atmospheric science at Penn State University, said: "There’s no reason to exaggerate the climate threat. The truth is bad enough, and reason enough to take dramatic action." Professor Mann believes a global temperature increase of 3C lead to a collapse of our societal infrastructure and massive unrest and conflict. Scientists have sent a doomsday warning The IPCC sent a 'code red' warning One way this could play out is by creating food insecurity. Warming the planet has a range of negative impacts on food production, including increasing the water deficit and thereby reducing food harvests. Luke Kemp, a research associate at the University of Cambridge, studies previous civilisation collapses and the risk of climate change. He told Live Science that extinction events almost always involve multiple factors, but he thinks that if humans were to go extinct, climate change would likely be the main culprit. He said: "If I'm to say, what do I think is the biggest contributor to the potential for human extinction going towards the future? Then climate change, no doubt." We are already seeing the impacts of climate change According to the expert, all major mass-extinction events in Earth's history have involved some kind of climatic change. This includes the cooling during the Ordovician-Silurian extinction about 440 million years ago that wiped out 85 percent of species, and warming during the Triassic-Jurassic extinction about 200 million years ago that killed 80 percent of species. Mr Kemp said: "While Homo sapiens are obviously not extinct, we do have a track record of other hominid species going extinct, such as Neanderthals. "And in each of these cases, it appears that again, climatic change plays some kind of role." There is time to stop the climate crisis It's still not clear exactly why Neanderthals went extinct about 40,000 years ago, but, according to the Natural History Museum, climatic fluctuations may have broken their population up into smaller, fragmented groups. But experts say it isn't too late for us to avoid the worst-case climate change scenarios. Prof Mann added: "It is up to us. "If we fail to reduce carbon emissions substantially in the decade ahead, we are likely committed to a worsening of already dangerous extreme weather events, inundation of coastlines around the world due to melting ice and rising sea level, more pressure on limited resources as a growing global population competes for less food, water and space due to climate change impacts. "If we act boldly now, we can avoid the worst impacts."

## Case

#### Their own salevsen 19 evidence says that objectivity is subjective and based on degrees that means determining whether or not it outweighs objectivity in the affs future

#### Pursuit of democracy after Trump causes nuclear war with China, Russia, and Iran. Even if democratic peace is true, Trump alters international calculus.

Miller ’17 (Benjamin; 4/27/17; Professor of International Relations at the School of Political Sciences, The University of Haifa; The International Security Studies Forum; “Policy Series: Will Trumpism increase the Danger of War in the International System?: IR Theory and the Illiberal Turn in World Politics”; <https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-5ag-war>; DOA: 12/6/17)

Some realists might, however, not see these recent developments as necessarily leading to more conflict, although they may not see them as leading to stable peace either.[22] In the eyes of these realists, the seemingly unconditional U.S. security umbrella for America’s allies has **allowed them to ‘free-ride’** on the U.S. commitment and to **avoid allocating** the **necessary resources** for their own national defense.[23] Moreover, some of the allies have been **provocative toward** their **opponents**, while relying on the U.S. security umbrella. This could **cause** **unnecessary conflict**. Especially provocative toward Russia, for example, was the enlargement of NATO to the east and the EU economic agreement with Ukraine in 2014. Such anti-Russian expansionist Western moves, in the realist view, compelled Moscow to **behave** more **assertively** and to **annex Crimea** and to **intervene in** Eastern **Ukraine**.[24] Somewhat similarly, it seems **less costly** for American allies in East Asia to engage in maritime conflicts with China so long they are under the U.S. protective shield. Realists believe that moving away from such ever-growing commitments will **stabilize the international system**, or at the very least **reduce** the likelihood of a **great-power conflict**. The realists are especially concerned about the American policies to shape the domestic character of other states, particularly by advancing democracy-promotion, “nation-building,” and the universal protection of human rights.[25] In this context they highlight what they see as **disastrous** American **military interventions**, notably, in Iraq in 2003 and in Libya in 2011 and also the continuously costly intervention in Afghanistan since 2001. In their eyes such military interventions are not necessary for the protection of American national interests. Moreover, such military engagements are **unlikely to succeed** and in many cases are **de-stabilizing** and are causing unnecessary conflicts. Such interventions simply **increase the perceived threat** posed by the U.S. to some other countries. Thus, lessening—if not **completely abandoning**—the U.S. commitment to advance these liberal values is likely, in realist eyes, to **stabilize the international system** and to **serve well** the American national security interests. Even though liberals see trade as a major pacifying mechanism, realists view trade—and economic interdependence more broadly—as potential sources for conflict.[26] They highlight the earlier U.S. trade conflicts with Japan and currently with Mexico and China. Thus, moving away from free trade might diffuse conflicts rather than accelerate them. Moreover, there is a growing populist opposition in the West to globalization. In this sense, it cannot work as a useful recipe for the promotion of peace. Similarly, despite the high levels of economic interdependence between Japan and China, for example, such interdependence does not prevent conflict between them and definitely does not result in stable peace even if it might have helped to prevent a shooting war between them, at least thus far. Realists are also skeptical about the ability of international institutions to advance stable peace.[27] Such institutions are not independent actors, which can influence the behavior of the member-states in important ways. International institutions just reflect the balance of power among states. States follow their national interests, and even more so in this age of rising nationalism. Thus we **cannot** expect much from the ability of international institutions to **pacify intense conflicts**, especially among the great powers. Even the most remarkable of international intuitions—the EU—has recently **failed in advancing cooperation** among its members with regard to the key issues of immigration, terrorism and the Euro financial crisis. Realists might be a bit skeptical about a potential reconciliation between the U.S. and Russia based on factors such as the personal friendship between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin or the supposedly common traditional/illiberal values of key figures in their respective administrations. Yet, the presence of a common enemy might be a good source of friendship. In this sense the Islamic State and perhaps even China create a potential basis for cooperation and avoidance of conflict between Moscow and Washington. But on the whole this will not advance a high-level ‘warm’ peace in Europe or elsewhere; rather it may, at most, lead to some kind of an unstable spheres-of-influence arrangement, which is unlikely to endure for an extended period. In sum, while liberals offer a menu of mechanisms for promoting peace, these mechanisms seem now **under assault** or in some process of weakening **under Trumpism** and the illiberal turn in quite a few other countries. Realists, for their part, do not believe in the far-reaching peace-producing effects of such liberal mechanisms. They tend to see some level of great-power competition as the natural order under international anarchy. Realists at most expect that there will be some stabilizing effects of deterrence, especially **nuclear deterrence**, and of the balance of power among the great powers. These kind of factors might — also under Trumpism—**maintain world stability** and **prevent war** even if some level of great-power conflict is expected to endure at any rate. The **most effective instrument** for cooperation—applicable even under the illiberal turn– is based on common threats faced by the great powers such as large-scale terrorism or risky behavior by a small nuclear power such as North Korea and potentially Iran. Evaluation of the Realist and the Liberal Views At this stage, less than three months into the Trump administration, it is quite difficult to determine which approach is right. Still, on the whole, we might be able to distinguish between short-term versus long-term effects and among different types of peace. In the short-term, **realists** may **have a point**: the avoidance of American interventions for democracy-promotion and humanitarian interventions might **stabilize the international system**. The key American adversaries—Russia, China, and Iran— will be **less troubled** by regime–change strategies or ‘color revolutions’ advanced by the U.S. that are **perceived to be posing major threats** to their regimes. The eastward expansion of NATO and the EU, which realists argue has provoked Russia, **will** also **stop**. Such reassurances are likely to **increase stability** in international politics and to produce at least a ‘cold peace’ in the international system and in key regions.

#### Collapse of democracy’s inevitable – transition to Chinese autocracy solves.

Schiavenza ’17 (Matt; 1/19/17; Senior Content Manager at Asia Society; Asia Society; “Could China's System Replace Democracy?”; <http://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/could-chinas-system-replace-democracy>; DOA: 12/6/17)

Two decades later, this notion seems increasingly unfeasible. **Democracy is** **struggling**. According to Freedom House, the number of democracies has **fallen since** reaching a peak in **2006**. The world’s non-democracies, meanwhile, have become **more authoritarian**. Russia, once a tentative democracy, is now under the control of Vladimir Putin, a **nationalist leader** whose regime has centralized power, targeted opposition journalists, and seized sovereign territory of other countries. Then there’s China. For years, conventional wisdom stated that as the People’s Republic grew more prosperous, the country would naturally transition to a liberal democracy. But this prediction — dubbed the “China Fantasy” by the author James Mann — has not happened. If anything, China’s economic success has only **further solidified the C**hinese **C**ommunist **P**arty: The current ruler, Xi Jinping, is widely considered to be the country’s **most powerful** since Deng Xiaoping. Democracy’s ill health has also **infected the U**nited **S**tates **and Europe**. The president of Hungary, a formerly Communist state whose accession to the European Union in 2004 was a triumph for the West, has sought to “**end liberal democracy**” in his country by clamping down on press freedom and judicial independence. These trends are also evident in neighboring Poland. Far-right parties — like the United Kingdom Independence Party, the orchestrator of Brexit — have **gained popularity** across the continent. During his successful campaign for president of the United States, Donald Trump expressed, at best, an indifference toward democratic norms and ideals. Trump called for his opponent, Hillary Clinton, to be imprisoned, raised false accusations of voter fraud, threatened legal action against the media, and refused to commit to honoring the results of the election. Trump has repeatedly professed his **admiration for Putin**, Russia’s dictatorial leader, for being “**a strong leader**”; as president-elect, he **praised the Kazakh dictator** Nursultan Nazarbayev for “achieving a miracle” in his country. Where Did Democracy Go Wrong? According to Brian Klaas, author of the new book The Despot’s Accomplice: How the West Is Aiding and Abetting the Decline of Democracy, there are **three main reasons**. One is **American hypocrisy**, or, as Klaas puts it, the “Saudi effect.” President George W. Bush made democracy promotion an explicit centerpiece of American foreign policy during his second inaugural speech in 2005, yet the following year when Hamas won democratic elections to govern the Gaza Strip, the U.S. refused to honor the results. And as Washington invested billions of dollars and thousands of American lives to **impose democracy by force** in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. government forged a military deal with Uzbekistan’s tyrannical regime and maintained a close relationship with Saudi Arabia, one of the world’s most repressive countries. A second reason for democracy’s decline is the **resurgence of China and Russia**. As China’s economic rise continued without interruption in the quarter-century after Tiananmen Square, observers began wondering whether the Chinese miracle was **because of**, rather than in spite of, **its autocratic government**. (The slower growth of India, a messy democracy, only seemed to strengthen this argument.) And while Russia’s economic fortunes in the Putin era have lived and died with the price of oil, there’s little question that the country is **wealthier and more stable** than it had been under Boris Yeltsin. The success of both countries, sustainable or not, seemed to indicate that democracy and growth were not necessarily co-dependent. Klaas’ third reason is the **weaknesses embedded in** modern **American democracy** itself. Last year’s presidential election was a multi-billion dollar, 18-month saga that resulted in the election of a candidate who had **never served in government** or the military and one, incidentally, who earned **three million fewer votes** than his main opponent. “Not many people looked at our election and thought that they were missing out,” Klaas told Asia Society. “I even heard a Thai general say that if ‘democracy means Donald Trump, **we don’t want it**.’” What About China's System? There’s **no doubt** that liberal democracy is in crisis. But the next question — whether plausible alternatives exist — is less certain. Consider China. The country’s ability to push through major infrastructure projects, such as a nationwide high-speed rail network, without political obstruction has dazzled Westerners frustrated at the gridlock endemic to American politics. In a 2010 episode of Meet the Press, the New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman famously admitted to fantasizing that the U.S. “could be China for a day” simply as a means to get things done. Daniel Bell, a professor of political science at Shandong University in eastern China, has written extensively about the meritocratic advantages of China’s political system. Chinese leaders must pass a series of examinations and negotiate a complex bureaucracy before achieving national power. Xi Jinping may have benefited from nepotism: His father, Xi Zhongxun, was a key Mao-era official. But the Chinese president also accumulated experience as the governor of two major Chinese provinces and a stint as vice president. This, Bell argues, has given Xi legitimacy in spite of never having to face voters. “I disagree with the view that there’s only one morally legitimate way of selecting leaders: one person, one vote,” Bell said in an appearance at Asia Society in 2015. State-run media in China spun the chaotic outcome of the Arab Spring uprisings as an example of democracy’s inherent flaws. The election of Donald Trump only served to further reinforce this notion. “I remember talking to the Chinese ambassador, and he made a crack about how in the U.S. you can be a nobody one day and the next day rise to power,” said Isaac Stone Fish, a senior fellow at Asia Society, “and you can’t do that in China because you have to go through all these different levels and rise through the system.” Bell acknowledges that the Chinese system has serious drawbacks. The prohibition of free speech, ban on political opposition, and absence of an independent judiciary mean that there are no checks against official abuse of power, something that has emerged as a major crisis in the past decade in the country. The high-profile anti-corruption campaign launched by President Xi has reduced visible signs of excess, such as lavish banquets and fast cars. But critics believe that the campaign also serves as cover for Xi’s sidelining of rivals within the Communist Party. Defenders of China’s Communist Party point to the country’s near-four-decade run of economic growth as proof that the system works. But in structural terms, the modern Party is little different from the one that, under Chairman Mao, presided over widespread political persecution, a deadly famine, and a disastrous period of social upheaval known as the Cultural Revolution. Even after Deng Xiaoping reversed Mao’s policies and adopted a pragmatic economic approach, the Party has still implemented policies whose consequences threaten stability and prosperity. The One Child Policy, adopted in 1980 without public debate, created a demographic imbalance that, three decades later, has prematurely reduced China’s working-age population. Even the much-vaunted record of economic growth is built on a shaky foundation of debt-fueled investment. "There have been 30 instances in the postwar period when a country's debt increased by 40 percent over a 5-year horizon," Ruchir Sharma, an economics expert at Morgan Stanley, said of China in an appearance at Asia Society in December. “And in 100 percent of these instances, the country got into a deep economic trouble within the next five years." China has taken steps to systematize its government by introducing a mandatory retirement age for senior officials and establishing term limits for its leaders. The Communist Party’s Standing Committee of the Politburo, a seven-man body that stands atop China’s government pyramid, is designed to divide the responsibilities of government and ensure no one individual assumes too much power. The behavior of Xi Jinping over the past three years, though, has raised questions whether these norms are durable. Xi has assumed positions within the Chinese government once shared by fellow leaders and has weakened Li Keqiang, his prime minister, by denying him the office’s traditional stewardship of economic policy. Xi has abetted and re-established a cult of personality, something explicitly discouraged in China after the Maoist era, by encouraging the singing of songs in his name. And, as the Wall Street Journal recently reported, there are questions that Xi may not name a successor at this fall’s 19th Party Congress in order to continue as president beyond the customary 10-year term. The Consequences of Democracy's Decline China, for what it’s worth, has never claimed that its system of government was universally applicable. In contrast to the United States or the Soviet Union, Beijing has never tried to install its system in a foreign country by force. Even still, democracy’s decline may prove advantageous to China in other ways. For one, it would weaken the democratic movement in Hong Kong, which has vied with pro-Beijing elements for political control of the Chinese territory, and deter would-be Chinese dissidents from challenging Communist Party rule on the mainland. In addition, Klaas argues, the American absence of support for democracy leaves a vacuum in emerging states that Washington’s geopolitical rivals in Moscow and Beijing might fill. “The ‘America First’ mentality, or the mentality that it’s not our business, makes the mistake that thinking that the withdrawal of Western influence means there’s self-determination,” says Klaas. “ [But what it means is] that China and Russia control things. It’s not something where if the West leaves, then, say, Malawi will be free to choose. It’s a global foreign policy battle, and the West’s losses are China's and Russia’s gains.” Before the U.S. can promote democracy overseas, though the country may need to firm up support for it at home. A Harvard study conducted in November found that just 19 percent of American millennials believe that a military takeover is not legitimate in democracy compared to 45 percent of those older. 26 percent of millennials likewise feel that choosing leaders through free elections is “unimportant,” a sentiment shared by just 14 percent of Baby Boomers. “A lot of people growing up now don’t understand what it’s like not to live in a free society in the West,” says Klaas. “That, combined with the "end of history," assumed that democracy is the natural way of things. “In fact, democracy is the least organic and least natural way we’ve had."

#### Polarization is inevitable under democracy – and its happened democracy hasn’t collapsed unfort