# 1NC

**Stop looking at my shit Ilan/Sam/Zach. No, you can’t run this. No, you can’t ask me about this. Don’t even read anything beyond this. Do real prep**

## K

#### Political engagement is a distraction from the Nobel Path – the affirmatives external attachments can only breed suffering and chaos

Moore, Poli Sci Prof @ Cal Poly State University, 14

(Matthew, Is Buddhist Political Thought Worth the Trouble?, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=2455228)

In particular, my interpretation is that Buddhist political theory rests on three underlying ideas that are simultaneously familiar to Western thinkers and yet represent positions than almost no Western thinkers have been willing to embrace fully. First, Buddhist political thought is based on a denial of the existence of a self—not merely that there is no immortal soul, but that there is nothing at all that remains continuous over time to be the basis of personality or selfhood. This position allows Buddhism to diagnose a belief in the existence of a self as being the main source of interpersonal and social conflict, while also allowing it to avoid argumentative dead-ends like the West’s interminable debate about how agency can be possible given the reality of subjectification and socialization by external forces. Second, Buddhism is radically deflationary about the importance of politics to human life, coming about as close as possible to being overtly anti-political without actually embracing anarchism. On the Buddhist view, politics is inevitable and is probably even necessary and helpful, but it is also a tremendous waste of time and effort, as well as being a prime temptation to allow ego to run rampant. Buddhist political theory denies that people have a moral duty to engage in politics except to a very minimal degree (pay the taxes, obey the laws, maybe vote in the elections), and it actively portrays engagement in politics and the pursuit of enlightenment as being conflicting paths in life. Third and finally, Buddhist political theory rests on a theory of ethics that sees moral claims as being both naturalistic, in the sense that they arise from natural facts about the universe and not from any supernatural source such as a deity, and also irrealist, in the sense that moral claims do not reflect obligatory normative truths but rather optional (though wise) advice about how to achieve certain goals. If you want to achieve enlightenment, act in the following manner. If you prefer to pursue some other goal, you are free (if foolish) to do so, and no normative judgment attaches to your decision. To begin to assess those claims, we need to know a bit more about what Buddhists have actually said about politics. Given limitations of space and time, my discussion of those questions here is necessarily highly compressed (I have examined them in depth elsewhere). Scholars1 frequently divide the history of Buddhism into three periods—Early (from the lifetime of the historical Buddha (c. sixth-fifth centuries BCE) until the first century BCE, when the first Buddhist texts were written down); Traditional (first century BCE until roughly 1850 CE); and Modern (1850 CE until the present). On my reading, the early texts develop a clear theory of politics and political theory, which are preserved in almost exactly the same forms throughout the traditional period (with some minor changes discussed briefly below). The big change happens starting in 1850, when Buddhist countries abandon the early/traditional theories and adopt a radically different regime type. One of the great questions of Buddhist political theory is whether that change represents a new interpretation of Buddhist political texts or whether it represents a wholesale abandonment of them. I’ll address and partially answer that question below. But first we need to know what the early/traditional theory actually was. There are only a handful of texts in which the Buddha offers normative discussions about politics. In brief, in the Aggañña-Sutta2 the Buddha explains that the universe periodically contracts, killing all living beings, and then reexpands and is repopulated by beings still caught in the cycle of saṃsāra (birth, death, rebirth). At first all sentient beings are ethereal, being made of mind rather than matter, but through greed and concupiscence they become increasingly material, until they eventually take human form. These early humans live in groups, and have some minimal social rules, but have no institutions or offices for making or enforcing decisions. Eventually greed and selfishness give rise to theft, and the people decide to appoint one among themselves to enforce the rules full time, with a share of the crops as payment. Although the Buddha does not say so explicitly, this position of enforcer of the rules appears to be heritable, since the Aggañña-Sutta is presented as an explanation of the caste system, and the first ruler (Mahāsammata) is identified as the founder of the khattiya or warrior/ruler caste. This system appears to represent a primitive social contract, though without any right on the part of the people to resist a bad or incompetent ruler.3 In the Mahāsudassana Sutta4 the Buddha explains that a ruler or king can become relatively enlightened through personal purity and spiritual practice. Such a king obtains seven magical treasures, which allow him to rule peacefully, and even to conquer all neighboring nations without using violence. One such king, Mahāsudassana, revealed his relative enlightenment by adopting policies intended to support the poor, for example providing public baths and charities that provided at no cost food, drink, clothing, transportation, a place to sleep, wives (!), and gold. Ruling in this way allows the king to make further spiritual progress, and he is later reborn in the highest heaven. In the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta5 the Buddha tells a somewhat fanciful story of the fall and rise of human society from the level established by such relatively enlightened rulers (who are called cakkavattis). The story emphasizes that although the heir of an enlightened king is capable of himself becoming an enlightened ruler, he can only do so through his independent spiritual effort; he cannot simply inherit the seven magical treasures, which disappear when the previous king abdicates to become a homeless monk. The sutta tells of eight successive kings who achieve relative enlightenment, and then of a ninth who achieves enlightenment but loses it when he decides to rule according to his own ideas and not in keeping with the righteous practices of his predecessors. This king’s failure to provide for the poor leads to theft, which ultimately leads to punishment, which leads to various forms of social violence (and progressively shorter human lifespans), and so on through various levels of degeneration until we reach the Buddha’s own time. He predicts that in the future people will degenerate even further, and ultimately almost all of them will become temporarily insane and murder each other. The small remnant will be so shocked by this experience that they will embark on moral and social self-reform, until after tens of thousands of years another cakkavatti will be able to emerge (which depends on society already being at a high moral level). That next cakkavatti’s period of rule will be especially auspicious because it will coincide with the coming of the next Buddha, Metteyya. Because the Buddha’s theory of time appears to be cyclical, the implication is that after a period of enlightened rule it will all happen again and again, until the universe contracts and the larger cosmic cycle itself repeats. Finally, in the first portion of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, 6 the Buddha recounts his advice to the Vajjians, who are facing an invasion by the spiritually gifted but evil king Ajātasattu. The Buddha had counseled the Vajjians to preserve their traditional social and political institutions, which were semi-republican in nature (that is, their major political decisions were made by an assembly rather than a single ruler). Although some scholars have read this as evidence that the Buddha secretly preferred republican to monarchical government,7 the better reading seems to be that the Buddha was advocating social stability and continuity, rather than endorsing the particular institutions in question.8 The Traditional-Era texts continue to endorse a political system of enlightened monarchy based on a primal social contract. The king’s authority originally arose from the consent of the governed, but is maintained by the spiritual righteousness of the king himself. The king’s legitimate power extends to preserving order and preventing extreme poverty, though the people apparently have no right to resist even an incompetent or evil king, and there appears to be no possibility of reopening the terms of the social contract.9 Social and political inequality are an inescapable fact of life, though they are based on human conventions rather than on any natural or spiritual differences among the people, and the monarch has a moral duty to support the poor and unfortunate. Cakkavattis will not need to use violence, but inferior kings will inevitably rely on it, though even such semi-legitimate violence is ultimately socially destructive. In the context of this basic continuity, we see three kinds of changes in the traditionalperiod political texts: (1) identifying the Buddha with the mythical first king, either by claiming that the Buddha was in fact Mahāsammata himself in a previous incarnation, or that the Buddha is a direct descendant of Mahāsammata, thus uniting spiritual and temporal power; (2) identifying kingship with the status of being a bodhisattva or future Buddha, thus rendering kings semi-divine; (3) identifying contemporary and historical kings as being descendants of Mahāsammata and/or the Buddha, thus further sacralizing the king and blurring the distinction between sacred and secular power.10 Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the traditional Buddhist theory of politics changes rapidly and radically. The first changes are mostly efforts at modernization and Westernization of the various monarchies, largely in response / resistance to colonization. Eventually the changes shift towards embracing either popular republicanism or constitutional monarchy (with relatively little power for the monarch). By the early twenty-first century, all Buddhist-majority countries are republican in form, and some are effectively republican in practice (to varying degrees), though a few retain kings with some degree of power (quite a lot in Bhutan, less in Thailand and Cambodia, though still more than most European monarchs), and many are republican in name more than in practice. From my perspective, the interesting question is not how or why this change happened, since it seems obvious that colonization and globalization made it clear to all concerned that the traditional monarchies were not a sustainable form of government, both because they could not (with the exceptions of Thailand and Bhutan) defend themselves against colonization, and because they could not compete with Western countries in the global arena. Rather, the interesting question is how it was possible for Buddhists to justify the change to themselves. What story/ies did Buddhist tell themselves about why it was acceptable to abandon 2,000 years of monarchy and embrace republicanism in lay government? How did they (re)interpret the early and traditional-era texts to justify the change? Was this seen as a crisis, or were the philosophical issues largely ignored? To my knowledge, these questions have not been directly examined before, though a number of studies on Buddhism and politics touch on the issue in passing. From those studies, we can extrapolate several possible explanations, which boil down to two basic positions: (1) that the republican transformation has no justification in the early or traditional texts and is flatly a pragmatic and/or cynical invention in response to circumstances; (2) that the transformation rests on some themes in the various historical texts, and that the shift from monarchy to republicanism represents a defensible change in interpretation and emphasis, rather than wholesale invention. In previous work I’ve examined the various national experiences of the transformation in more depth; here I offer just a summary of the outcomes. Of the various national experiences of the transition from Buddhist monarchy to republicanism, two (Burma, Tibet) seem to have been driven by Buddhist religious convictions, three (Thailand, Bhutan, Laos) seem to have been motivated by largely non-religious factors that the actors apparently perceived as being consistent with Buddhism, one (Cambodia) appears to be a cynical use of Buddhism to justify elite power, and one (Sri Lanka) is indeterminate. As I indicated above, this suggests that both of the broad explanatory schema—that the transition was largely cynical, and that the transition was rooted in a good-faith reinterpretation of the early texts—have some explanatory value. There are some clear cases in each category, as well as some cases that reflect a mixture of the two motivations. What that means for Buddhists going forward is that while there are textual and historical bases for a republican or democratic interpretation of Buddhist political theory, we cannot simply flatly assert that Buddhism is fundamentally democratic, nor forget its long embrace of monarchy, nor finally deny that some may use Buddhism cynically, as a fig leaf for power politics. Since 1950, there has been an enormous amount of Buddhist political theory being written, from many different doctrinal, national, and political points of view. On my own reading, it is all or nearly all republican, with most of it endorsing some form of democratic government. While there are of course individuals or institutions who speak for particular versions of Buddhism, such as the Dalai Lama for Tibetan Buddhism, there is no one who speaks for “Buddhism” generally, and thus there is no single Buddhist political theory today. Rather, there are many different strains of Buddhist political thinking, united by some common normative commitments, but diverging on the particulars of how those should play out practically. As I have hinted in several places so far, I believe that the cynical dismissal of Buddhist political theory is quite wrong. The theory of politics of early and traditional Buddhism— enlightened but more-or-less-absolute monarchy—is certainly a system that has no appeal in the twenty-first century. But that’s true of virtually every theory of politics that political theorists study—no one is advocating that we create Locke’s version of monarchy, Plato’s ideal city, or even Hannah Arendt’s polis of action and judgment. Political theory isn’t an effort to find a perfect government ready-made or a thinker we can treat as the source of all wisdom, but rather an exercise in thinking broadly and critically about a certain set of issues related to politics. The early and traditional Buddhist political texts and ideas are of ongoing value and interest for just the same reasons that we continue to read Machiavelli’s Prince—because they depict a unique approach to permanent problems of human collective life. Further, a typical move in political theory is to attempt to identify a set of principles that underlie a particular theory, separate them from their particular historical context, and ask whether they have some broader application. That is, we separate out a political theory (underlying principles) from a theory of politics (the particular application of those principles in a particular historical context). Buddhist political theory rests on the three principles discussed briefly above—the idea that there is no self, a deflationary assessment of the importance of politics (the idea of limited citizenship), and a naturalistic, irrealist theory of ethics. That political theory remains interesting and valuable for two main reasons: first, it continues to underlie Buddhist politics and political theorizing today, suggesting that perhaps it is the Western institutions of Buddhist-majority countries that are the veneer laid over a profoundly Buddhist approach to politics, and providing a clear and strong basis for Buddhist political theorizing in the future; second, it both overlaps and conflicts with many debates within contemporary Western political theory, thus providing an opportunity to examine familiar ideas in a new context and an opportunity to see limitations that are otherwise obscured by cultural myopia. In short, Buddhist political theory is not only alive and well; it is also an invaluable partner for Western political theory. Here I briefly examine how the three core elements of Buddhist political thought relate to the Western tradition more broadly, to show how they are both related to and yet distinctly different from Western approaches to these issues, and how Western thinkers can’t afford to overlook Buddhism’s perspective. It is overwhelmingly clear from the early texts that the goal of Buddhism is individual transformation (though there is considerable debate about whether one ought to save oneself as soon as possible, or intentionally submit to continued rebirths to help save others first). The content of the Buddha’s first sermon after achieving enlightenment was the Four Noble Truths, the core of the religion, which explain (1) that life is suffering, (2) that suffering is caused by clinging, (3) that one could stop suffering if one stopped clinging, and (4) that one could stop clinging by living according to the Noble Eightfold Path.11 The entire focus in on how individuals can make spiritual progress to escape the cycle of reincarnation and suffering. That raises the question of the relative importance of politics to soteriology. Is politics integral to Early Buddhism, such that individual transformation is significantly affected by the political system under which one lives? Or is politics of secondary importance, such that it has a relatively small or even negligible effect on individual spiritual progress? As Joanna Macy correctly argues,12 politics must have some effect on salvation, because the theory of paticcasamuppāda, or dependent co-arising13 argues that every condition is the result of all previous causes in the universe. If politics exists, it has some effect on individuals and their struggle for enlightenment. The early texts themselves make clear that politics has a relatively small effect on salvation, and that politics is relatively unimportant in human life. For example, a close reading of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta offers substantial evidence against the idea that political factors are essential to achieving enlightenment. The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta clearly places the historical Buddha’s own era, when people lived to be 100 (that is the typical human life span mentioned in the early texts), as being far inferior to the era in which a cakkavatti rules, and also as being on the downslope towards things getting worse.14 Thus, it is apparently possible to achieve enlightenment (as the Buddha and many members of the early sangha did) without living under the rule of a cakkavatti, whom the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta implies appears only in the eras when people live to be 80,000 years old. Conversely, the text makes clear that the vast majority of people alive during the reigns of the nine successive cakkavattis did not achieve enlightenment. This indicates that while living under an enlightened ruler is helpful, it is not enough alone to lead one to enlightenment. At the nadir of human existence, when people live for only 10 years, it is some of the people themselves who decide that they must improve their behavior, not a cakkavatti or even an inferior king. Thus it appears that the people are capable of moral self-reform, and do not require the help of a king, either good or bad. Indeed, the next cakkavatti won’t appear until the people become so good that they once again live for 80,000 years, which won’t be for tens of thousands of years. During that entire period, the people will continue to improve without the guidance of a cakkavatti, though admittedly they will presumably have inferior kings to help them (though, interestingly, the inevitable errors of those less-than-righteous kings appear to be unable to derail the overall society’s moral progress). Thus, while the text overtly appears to say that the actions of the cakkavatti (i.e., the political environment) determine whether the society is morally good or not, the structure of the story suggests that in fact it is the moral goodness of the people/society that makes the emergence of a cakkavatti possible in the first place. The cakkavatti then clearly does have some influence on whether that moral goodness will be maintained, but it also appears that political leaders are powerless to improve a society that is already deteriorating or to undermine a society that is steadily improving, and that truly excellent political leaders don’t emerge in morally bad times. Therefore, even the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta appears to say that while social and political factors are relevant to the spiritual progress of individuals, they are not determinative. A bad social environment cannot stop people who are determined from making moral progress (witness the survivors of the generation that lives to 10), and a generally good social environment cannot stop people from deteriorating morally (witness the generation that lives to 80,000 due to their general moral goodness, but begins to behave immorally after the failedcakkavatti’s errors). Further, the quality of government and social policies appears largely to follow from the goodness of the people, rather than to lead it. Thus, while politics obviously plays some role in human life and has some effect on how easy or difficult the individual finds it to achieve enlightenment, politics is neither a central help nor a central hindrance to salvation. Politics simply isn’t that relevant to the truly important things in life; at most it plays a supporting role. While it’s certainly true that we see bits and pieces of this theory in the Western tradition, no one Western theory includes all of them, or puts them together in this way. Thus, for example, we certainly see something like a theory of limited citizenship in some Western thinkers, such as in Thoreau’s point that he came to the world to live in it rather than to improve it,15 and in Augustine’s pessimism about the possibility of avoiding evil when involved in politics.16 Yet both Thoreau and Augustine argue that there are some circumstances—rare for Thoreau, common for Augustine—under which one must nonetheless take an active role in the political life of the community. We see nothing like that in the early Buddhist texts. Someone has to run the society, but it needn’t be you, and in fact there will always be someone else eager to do it, usually for all the wrong reasons.

#### The impact is extinction and suffering – moral decision rule to reject the affirmatives external attachments

Segall, Zen priest and psychologist, 15

(Seth, a retired member of the clinical faculty of the Yale University School of Medicine and the former Director of Psychology at Waterbury Hospital, Buddhism and Moral Coherence, <http://www.existentialbuddhist.com/2015/12/buddhism-and-moral-coherence/>)

The Bodhisattva Path offers a telos, a final end, for us and Nature: we’re here to help all beings awaken, and because of Dependent Origination, the whole of reality supports us in this endeavor. It’s not just our endeavor, it’s the Universe’s. As the 13th Century Japanese Buddhist monk Eihei Dogen might say, “earth, grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles” co-participate in our enlightenment, our enlightenment transforming space and time as we co-awaken with the whole of reality. Within this non-dual framework, our purpose is to cultivate wisdom and compassion. It’s this purpose that provides an external standard for judging the morality of actions: Actions that help ourselves and others to actualize wisdom (i.e., the realization of emptiness, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, non-self, and non-duality) and facilitate mindful awareness, non-harming, compassion and non-grasping are moral. Actions that detract from it are immoral. We instantiate this moral process in all of our activities, e.g., in meditating, raising and educating children, dealing wisely and compassionately with others, being mindful in speech and behavior, exercising restraint in our desires, and so on. In After Virtue (1981), Alasdair MacIntyre argues that morality achieves coherence through embeddedness within a cultural matrix of supporting practices, narratives and traditions. Buddhism happily provides all three. Unfortunately, these general Buddhist principles fail to provide a means for resolving conflicts between specific moral intuitions. What if, in saving the baby drowning in the well, we’ve saved the baby Hitler? What if a compassionate action helps one person but disadvantages another? What if an act of mercy towards a perpetrator leaves an injured party aggrieved? What if saving an endangered species creates economic hardship for people living nearby? The answers to these sorts of questions often entail a resort to some kind of moral calculus, as if all goods could be measured against each other on the same scale, when in fact they are, often enough, incommensurable. While in Buddhism compassion trumps everything else, the primacy of compassion can’t resolve the question of “compassion towards whom?” when people are differentially affected by actions. All philosophies face this problem of what to do when “goods” conflict. Sometimes we just have to face the tragic implications of how life is structured with something approaching resignation or grace. Buddhist principles can anchor our ethics in a telos, but in and of themselves, can provide only minimal guidance on how to settle these disputes. Since Buddhism never developed its own tradition of critical ethical investigation, it may sometimes have to allow non-Buddhist philosophers to come to its aid with their ungainly mix of consequentialist, utilitarian, deontological, and virtue ethics to help think things through. Deciding what’s right is often complicated, but that doesn’t have to mean that the notion of “right” itself needs be incoherent. The problem with this second Buddhist solution is that one has to buy it’s premises for it to work. Not everyone can do so. Materialists, for example, could never buy into the premise that we have a purpose, or that our purpose is part of a larger narrative of everything “waking up.” As a result, Western Buddhism has secular adherents who try to fit significant portions of the Buddhist project into a materialist frame. For secularists, the end point of Buddhist practice is again some version of eudaemonia, and the active Buddhist ingredients contributing to this eudaemonia include elements of mindfulness and compassion. Their answer to the question, “why be mindful or compassionate?” needs be a utilitarian one: it contributes to one’s feeling happier and facilitates one’s capacity to make others feel happier. This probably provides sufficient reason for many people to engage in secularized Buddhist practice; after all, who wouldn’t want to be happier? What it doesn’t provide is a reason why the Buddhist path to happiness is superior to everyone just taking some Valium. The secular response to this requires a theory of why some types of happiness are superior to others, and this requires a theory of what human beings are for, and how they’re supposed to be—just the sort of thing that secularists tend to shy away from. For example, in his book Flourish (2011), positive psychologist Martin Seligman posits a model of eudaemonia that includes the five factors of positive emotion, engagement, accomplishment, relationship, and meaning. It’s not a bad list, but it begs the question of “why these factors and not others?” since it lacks a larger theory of what human beings are for. Seligman defines meaning as “belonging to and serving something you believe is bigger than oneself.” This definition suggests that we’re all free to find our own meaning — that one person’s meaning is as good as another’s, whether one is a Bodhisattva, a Fascist, or an acolyte of the Islamic State. Whatever makes you feel you’re part of some larger story. You can see the inherent problem: we’re left with no way to establish a hierarchy of goodness within the universe of possible meanings. Secularized accounts can never adequately address questions of goodness without grounding the concept in some larger theory of what our lives are all about. That means acknowledging that human lives are, in fact, about something. Everyone, knowingly or not, has a metaphysics. A materialist metaphysics can’t account for consciousness and value, and leaves our lives devoid of meaning. Materialism suggests our lives aren’t about anything — they’re just accidental byproducts of physical processes. Materialism can’t be empirically proven or disproven, any more than pan-psychism or teleology can. It’s just more or less useful, and depending on your point of view, more or less credible. I think the Buddhist story has something special to contribute to our survival as a species. It clarifies our deep interrelationship with all beings and with Nature, clarifies our moral duties towards all beings without exception, and encourages us to move beyond the fragmented individualism and consumer mentality that are the twin scourges of modern Western society. As our fragile species lurches toward the possibility of extinction, we moderns are increasingly the inheritors of a conflicting set of historical grievances and irreconcilable world-views, while simultaneously the possessors of technologies that extend our ability to inflict exponentially greater harm on each other. Our current moral incoherence will not let us muddle through. Something very much like Buddhist ethics seems increasingly urgent if we’re going to make sufficient progress in resolving these conflicts to survive as a species. The Buddhist solution, however, requires us to think differently about Nature and our place in it. It also requires us to assume something very much like the Bodhisattva ideal — the belief that there’s a more enlightened way to be than the way-we-are-now (however we construe “Enlightenment”) and that an engaged, compassionate regard for others is an indispensable component of that enlightened way.

# 2NC

### Overview

#### Dharma is scientifically and logically proven – death is not an end but the start of a new chapter in life – no need in fearing it

Hudson, Director of Psychological Health for the U.S. Air Force, 11

(Joshua, Should We Fear Death?, https://appliedbuddhism.com/2011/06/21/should-we-fear-death/)

The Buddha decided to look at a “Middle Path.” All things are impermanent (anicca), but life is more than just the small clip of experience we see in one lifetime. The concept of life starting and stopping from cradle to grave is an optical illusion. The cravings (tanha) to exist creates enough fear that we no longer see the continual evolution and little deaths that we bring every year, month, day, hour, minute, moment in our lives. The changes are too subtle to notice appropriately so we ignore them. So too, it is the Buddhist philosophy that our existence is equally ignorant of the continuity of our suffering and karma. Since we cannot see how our continuity works beyond the death of the body, we fear what comes next; or worse, we speculate. No one really knows what happens beyond death accept. We take it on faith that those who have reached enlightenment have the ability to see so clearly that they can look (literally or metaphorically) backwards and forwards beyond the time of birth and death. Nevertheless, the Kalamasutta tells us that we can only know for sure if we put the teachings into practice and eventually see for ourselves. All that is sure is the truth of the dharma, which has over the past 2,600 years to be true. It is continually being proven over and over again by science and practice. If the dharma of the world around us is true, then we must look with some credibility that the dharma of the after-life has some merit as well, because it uses the same observational logic. Not all of the teachings of Buddhism are purely the teachings of the Buddha. Some traditions have bardo a land of limbo, while others have the “Pure Lands”, and others have defined mystical realms. These are not the teachings of the Buddha Gautama, but later speculations from later Buddhas. Their veracity must be determined by the individual, just as every Christian must decide what their definition of heaven and hell is. The three heavenly messengers revealed to the Buddha were aging, illness and death. Aging and illness ultimately leads to death. These are the three qualities of existence that people avoid the most, because they are the three markers that deal with our mortality—the impermanent nature of being. In order to understand the nature of suffering, we must first stop avoiding the realities of being and embrace these three qualities in their entirety. Whether we wish to avoid sickness, aging or death or not is irrelevant. The truth of existence is that all things are temporary and will age, decay and eventually pass away. Therefore the fear that we have of not being, or at least being deprived of existence is irrational, mostly because to be afraid of death implies that there is some influence we can have over it. Like the serenity prayer states, “Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.” And yet, death is one area of our lives we ignore because we cannot accept it, we feel that we can change the outcome and we are ignorant to see death’s inevitability. But what is there to really be afraid of? What is really dying? If we see ourselves as a permanent identity, then there IS a great loss and deprivation of being. However, if we are just a process of being that has arisen and will eventually pass, we can see that our passing is just one more stage in the next becoming. It is only a chapter in a larger book.

### perm – 2nc

#### Perm fails – meditation is a process that seeks no end – the permutation uses the alternative as a means to an end to realize the plan which creates the paradox of politics – prefer inaction to false activism

Mathiowetz 16

(Dean, "Meditation is Good for Nothing:" Leisure as a Democratic Practice, New Political Science 38)

As I discussed earlier, the non-instrumental imperative of meditation is intrinsic to its effects— what practitioners sometimes call “the fruits of practice,” and what we (as docile subjects) are ever prone to thinking of as its “benefits.” Similarly, a practice of leisure, in order to escape the perversions or diversions Bataille and others warn of, needs to have non-instrumentality (goodfor-nothingness) at its centre. Meditation offers a practice that directly confronts and can habituate a person against the ever-encroaching instrumentalization of any practice—the imperative to turn anything extra back toward production, which (whether seen from the perspective of Marx or Bataille) becomes the production of inequality. So too, the affirmation and practice of good-for-nothingness in meditation supports the attenuation of instrumental thinking within citizen activity itself—what we might call “necessity-thinking,” or the reduction of political discussion or process to seeking the best means to a pre-given end. Meditation does not tell practitioners what to do when they engage in citizenship, but it does provide practical experience in letting go of narrowly instrumental demands confronting the complexities of shared action. Another contribution of good-for-nothing meditation to citizenship, and one that deserves more study than I can devote to it here, is practical experience in handling paradoxical thinking. Like good-for-you, but good-for-nothing meditation, the political world is inherently paradoxical. What I mean is this: political problems and events are as complex and heterogeneous as is the polis and its people. The grounds of political action are frequently ambiguous, and an attitude of ambivalence is often appropriate to them. And yet, to share in decision and take responsibility, citizens ultimately have to take sides and do something. This is itself a paradox, and only an acceptance of this paradoxical situation enables deliberation along the lines that, as I mentioned earlier, Bickford finds in Aristotle—deliberation about justice that nonetheless sustains the diversity and deep conflicts underlying political action.63 Each of these points highlights good-for-nothing meditation’s contributions to the kinds of capacities and practices that foster democratic citizenship. A third point touches directly upon ways that, despite the elitist connotations of leisure, meditation is democratic in another sense, that is, available to the participation of the many. Here we must face the challenging topic of time: the inequitable experience of having or not-having it, and the importance of good-fornothing meditation’s non-instrumental relationship to it. Like most activities, meditation requires time, but in a particular way: it involves removing time from the circulation of values that characterizes modern political economy. Meditation prioritizes appropriating the temporal dimension of our lives, “taking time,” for the sake of simply having time. This brings us back to a point I made at the beginning of this essay, when I touched upon the difference between the having of extra time and the using of it (for example, of individuals for status, or of capital for accumulation). Good-for-nothing meditation, I argue, decidedly shifts one’s practice from using extra time (for example, for benefits) to having it (for nothing). Strictly speaking, everybody has time by the fact of being alive. Yet, people are inequitably related to their time, depending on whether they are in a position to deploy much of it freely, or must give most (or all) of it away. Lacking time is, of course, a structural feature of life in late capitalism—many working poor are compelled to divide all their time between working (inside the home and out) and resting only inadequately and only for the sake of working again. But in another way, “lacking time” is ideational or habitual, as in the widespread compulsion people feel to declare themselves “busy” when asked “how are you?” or to justify their vacations so they can be better workers afterwards. Our resistance to these narratives must include structural changes in or against capitalism, and it must go beyond these changes, entailing practices that reshape habits, including habits of relating to time. Indeed, people changing their habits around time is a part of structural transformation—after all, economy is not something “out there,” but rather is made up of everyone’s everyday actions. Here is where meditation, with its potential viewed through the lens of Aristotle’s account of freedom, can cultivate intimate and shared practices of relating non-instrumentally to our activity, beginning by relating noninstrumentally to the condition of all activity, time.

### At: Cede Political DA

#### This argument is Western moralism. Social change comes additively from the enlightenment of persons

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More common in the Western tradition is the idea that participation in government is pragmatically necessary, morally obligatory, and/or the only path to full development of one’s capacities. We see this theme in the earliest works, such as in Plato’s implicit argument in the Republic that no class of citizens can fully develop its nature without the cooperation of the other classes through politics, and in aristotle’s overt argument in the Politics that individual perfection and the good life can be achieved only in the polis.71 that same theme recurs throughout the Western tradition, in Augustine’s argument that Christians have a moral duty to participate in politics despite the likelihood that they will sin in the process,72 in Locke’s assumption that political participation is the only rational course of action,73 in Marx’s assertion that human beings can only achieve their full potential through active participation in a democratic and egalitarian society,74 in Arendt’s valorization of the life of action in the public sphere,75 in the value pluralists’76 argument that plurality requires a kind of constant political engagement, and in the civic republican emphasis on self-cultivation through political participation. I t is virtually always true that the cure proposed for anomie, alienation, sectarian conflict, disempowerment, and other political ills is . . . more politics! Given the Western tradition’s emphasis on more and more politics, it is tempting to treat the Buddhist argument that politics isn’t so very important as being an irresponsible quietism for the response of an elite that can shelter itself from the consequences of bad policies. Indeed, Slavoj Žižek argues just that.77 Yet this response misses the fact that the Buddha’s depreciation of politics successfully captures the experience of many modern-day citizens. The Buddha’s advice is to participate in the political system in whatever ways are required and/or typical—obey the laws, pay your taxes, and vote for the candidates you think will enact the best policies. But don’t expect politics to dramatically improve the society, change ultimately comes additively, from the many personal transformations of individual citizens. Yes, it matters what happens in the world of politics, but what happens in the mind of each individual matters more, not just for each individual personally (contra Žižek), but for the society as a whole. To paraphrase Rousseau, good laws cannot make good citizens, and bad citizens cannot make good laws. Only improving citizens can create improving law, although patterns of political participation and engagement vary widely among societies, this idea—that one should not expect fundamental social change to be led by the political system—is a familiar feature of the politics of many contemporary democracies. to the extent that this deflationary view reflects the views of (some) modern citizens, the Buddhist theory of politics seems to be a better fit for them than much of the Western theory tradition, whose optimism about politics strikes many modern citizens as quaint.