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News
Opinion
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Reader Feedback

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WS Store
Book Picks
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Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Is it time to cut the Pentagon's budget?

If you're an American looking to cut spending (as many apparently were today), the most unbelievably obvious place to start is with military spending. The Department of Defense spent somewhere around [\\$800 billion dollars](#) last year -- that's around 30 per cent of taxes collected in the United States and almost half of the world's military spending.


That's why Cato's Gene Healy believes that the U.S. needs to make "[genuine, and deep, cuts to military spending](#)."

Call for seriously downsizing DOD, and people tend to sniff at you like you reek of patchouli. Our stale defense policy debate only has room for two teams: hippies or hawks. Would you like to buy the world a Coke, or would you rather cow it into submission?

Fortunately, there's another option. Two of our better presidents pointed the way in their farewell addresses. George Washington condemned permanent alliances abroad, and Dwight Eisenhower warned against "mortgag[ing] the material assets of our grandchildren" to the "military-industrial complex."

Healy (and a book he recommends) argues that military spending as massive as that undertaken by the U.S. leads to decreased security since it encourages free-riding by American allies, and that it is no longer aimed at defense, which was its constitutional purpose.

You can read all of Healy's post [here](#).



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Posted by Janet Neilson on April 15, 2009 | [Permalink](#)

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Janet, why don't you just come out and admit that you hate America and you're in league with the Jihadists? Cut military spending... you traitor!

Posted by: [Mike Brock](#) | 2009-04-15 8:18:16 PM

30% of all taxes go to the military and they can't stop marital rape in Afghanistan?

Yep. It's time to cut spending and return to an American foreign policy: non-interventionism, no foreign entanglements and peaceful trade.

Posted by: [Matthew Johnston](#) | 2009-04-15 8:37:54 PM

It depends. Are the terrorists planning to cut theirs? Or did the brilliant minds at the Cato Institute not think to ask? Apparently it's no longer necessary to put things in context in order to draft good policy; you simply have to quote an impressive-sounding number, than stand there with your hands on your hips, glowering.

If December 7 and September 11 proved nothing else, it proved that sometimes not picking fights with someone else doesn't work. Sometimes they pick fights with you. Three times as many people died on September 11 as at Pearl Harbour, and yet the American response in 2001 was far more limited than that of sixty years earlier.

These think-tanks do not impress me. I'll take Bugs-Bunny-style Yankee ingenuity over Wile-E-Coyote-super-genius hyperanalysis any day.

Posted by: [Shane Matthews](#) | 2009-04-15 8:55:13 PM

"If December 7 and September 11 proved nothing else, it proved that sometimes not picking fights with someone else doesn't work." - Shane Matthews

Unless you believe Ron Paul and the "blowback" theory, which argues that years of interventionist foreign policy got us to where we are today, and specifically Gulf 1.

Posted by: [Matthew Johnston](#) | 2009-04-15 9:01:25 PM

Unless you believe Ron Paul and the "blowback" theory, which argues that years of interventionist foreign policy got us to where we are today, and specifically Gulf 1.

Don't be a narcissist, Matthew. Proofs are arrived at via thorough fact-finding and logical deduction, and are not invalidated because you simply refuse to believe in them. What the Japanese did to the Chinese, what the Germans did to numerous European majorities, notably the Jews, and what the North Vietnamese did to the South Vietnamese after the Americans had left, had nothing to do with "intervention" on the part of the victims.

Honestly, do you think that if you're stubborn and deny reality for long enough, that it will simply go away?

"Unless you believe." Good grief.

Posted by: [Shane Matthews](#) | 2009-04-15 9:17:59 PM

How am I being narcissistic, Shane?

It was a pretty straightforward statement.

If you think "blowback" is a well documented and accurate explanation of current hostilities -- which many reasonable people do -- you'll be disinclined to accept the view that "If...September 11 proved nothing else, it proved that sometimes not picking fights with someone else doesn't work."

Many take the view that September 11th proves interventionism, even with good intentions, creates blowback. In other words: we did pick the fight, even if we did it for good reasons.

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[Matthew Johnston on PC leadership hopefuls on the Beer Store's distribution monopoly](#)

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[April 2009](#)

[March 2009](#)

[February 2009](#)

[January 2009](#)

[December 2008](#)

[November 2008](#)

[October 2008](#)

[September 2008](#)

[August 2008](#)

[July 2008](#)

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And if you believe that you'll be disinclined to support current or increased military spending.

Who's denying reality? It's a reasonable interpretation of the facts, even if you don't agree.

They hate us for our freedoms? Is that your view? I'd sure like to be hated for that.

Posted by: [Matthew Johnston](#) | 2009-04-15 9:33:28 PM

I see Shane Matthews is still up to the same sad stuff. Those who disagree with him must always have something wrong with them. Today they are narcissistic, stubborn and out of touch with reality, tomorrow it will be something else.

Now there is even a new word for this sort of internet behavior which he has been at for years, it's called Flaming: a hostile and insulting interaction between Internet users. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming_\(Internet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming_(Internet)) It's what some people resort to in order to feel better about themselves.

Posted by: [TruthTeller](#) | 2009-04-15 9:35:08 PM

Matthew,

The important thing is that now that they're out picking fights (I hadn't realized they'd stopped, but whatever) and freedoms that the terrorists hate them for have been severely curtailed in the name of the War on Terror, everyone in the world loves America.

Posted by: [Janet](#) | 2009-04-15 9:46:54 PM

The herring and the whale were seen swimming together every day. One day the herring was seen making its usual rounds. The whale was nowhere to be seen. After many inquiries about the whale's whereabouts, the frustrated herring blurted out, "What do you think I am, my blubber's kipper?" Lets get real and accept the US cannot be the world's policeman and must set proper priorities.

Posted by: [DML](#) | 2009-04-15 9:48:03 PM

DML,

That was pretty funny :)

Shane,

Do you think maybe that there is an issue of diminishing marginal returns when it comes to military spending? Could the U.S. fight the bad guys just as effectively with slightly less money?

(I'm with you on the need to sometimes take the fight to them; just wondering if it could be done just as effectively for a little less money.)

Posted by: [Terrence Watson](#) | 2009-04-15 9:53:04 PM

Janet, you should then love the fact that Obama is calling for a 10% reduction in military spending! Unfortunately, the guy is also calling for cutting Missile Defense at a time that North Korea and Iran are ignoring U.N. punishments. Iran just admitted to have 7,000 centrifuges and a missile that can travel over 1,150 miles. How far do you think those missiles will be firing in four years? Also, North Korea just kicked out the U.N. inspectors and has proved that their missiles could target Alaska and Hawaii. How far do you think those missiles will be traveling in four years? Also, we just had Somali pirates fire at another U.S. ship (no casualties fortunately). We are going to need to fund operations against these pirates. Whether it is navy SEALs blowing up their land bases, the navy bombarding the ports they operate out of and attacking their motherships, or putting Marine contingents aboard every American flagged ship there, we are going to have to pay more for that. Third, while the war in Iraq is won and winding down, we still have a fight to win in Afghanistan! Fourth, 85% of the public wants troops moved to the Mexican border to provide security. Fifth, the Chinese navy is increasing its operation capability in the Pacific (major cause of concern). Sixth, there is still a terror threat and we need to have a rapid deployment force available to handle

them. Look some cuts are acceptable like reducing the purchase order of Joint Strike Fighters. However, the point is that we still need significant funding of our military. You know the one area of the federal government that actually works! Too often it seems that libertarians, like liberals, believe in the defense principle of "one ship, one plane, one soldier, one too many for the American military". The end result of this thinking is like what happened in both World Wars and Korea. We entered those wars unprepared and thousands of American men died holding the line until we were ready to fight back! For god sakes, American soldiers are tough as nails but lets have properly prepared for the next conflict(there is always one).

Posted by: David | 2009-04-15 10:49:20 PM

"Could the U.S. fight the bad guys just as effectively with slightly less money?"

The answer to that is: without a doubt.
 ...but the only way to achieve this goal is if the U.S. would first concentrate on fighting the inner cancer that Ron Paul likes to talk about.
 Not only would they decrease their unconstitutional foreign interventions pushed forward by diverse special interest groups but they would automatically ease off that global hate growing movement that have stopped seeing them as the freedom loving nation they once were.

If the U.S. don't stop policing the World with their taxpayers' money while keeping on reducing their citizens liberties, bad guys overseas will be the last of their problems.

Posted by: Marc | 2009-04-15 11:34:43 PM

You're being a narcissist, Matthew, because you think that what you believe has a bearing on whether generally accepted lessons of history are valid or not. Truth is not in the eye of the beholder. What is, is. History is full of examples of people slaughtered for no reason at all. And most people who try to find some provocation when there was none do so because they don't want to admit that some people really are that sick, that twisted, that flawed. It's almost as if they feel that admitting such a thing would cheapen their own existence.

Furthermore, now you bring forth the fallacy of the "many reasonable people." "Many" means more than two or three; on a continent of 415 million people, that is not significant. "Many" people (up to 30 percent) believe in UFOs, too. *Argumentum ad populum* is no argument at all. So no, it's not a reasonable interpretation of reality, because it requires the raw data to be filtered through a ridiculously coloured filter in order to even be sustainable.

Even if there were merit to your "theory," it references things that are already done and cannot be undone. The current situation is what we face; it is that we must deal with. So I'm going to ask you again: Are the terrorists cutting their funding, or not?

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:38:44 PM

It could certainly be done with less money, Terrence, but the tradeoff would be an increased cost in lives. The Pentagon spends so lavishly because it wants to reduce the number of American soldiers coming home in caskets. The casualties we're taking don't come close to what the enemy is taking. The difference is they're inured to losses, and we're not.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:40:43 PM

DML wrote: "Lets get real and accept the US cannot be the world's policeman and must set proper priorities."

If not the US, then who? It won't be the UN; that I promise you. Word on the street is Russia wouldn't mind the job...

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:41:56 PM

What freedoms have been curtailed, Janet?

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:43:07 PM

David, I think Janet and Matthew are of the belief that if you take pains to offend no one, no one will offend you. Of course, that's precisely the approach Canada has taken, and we already have two countries sniffing around our Arctic region...

Denmark is fairly easy to write off as inconsequential. Ignoring Russia is a little harder.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:44:45 PM

David:
First, paragraphs. Use them.

Second, had you read the article or paid attention you would see that Obama's "cuts" will have military continuing to rise, but slower. Obama's idea of cutting spending is like the CAW's idea of making concessions in a contract.

And third, even to someone who's a bit of a peacenik like me, defense is extremely important. I have no idea why Obama would cut missile defense spending while other countries are developing their nuclear programs - especially North Korea. I think there is an extremely high chance that Kim Jong-Il will come to be (if he isn't already) a good example of what I like to call "the Hitler problem" with non-intervention. There are some worthy goals for taking the fight to them, I just don't think that means charging in to every country with problems, guns a-blazin'.

And finally, as Terrence pointed out, America could do all the things you listed there (even the ones that I would consider ridiculous) with far, far less money than they are spending now.

Posted by: Janet | 2009-04-16 5:22:42 AM

What freedoms have been curtailed, Janet?

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-15 11:43:07 PM

Oh, Shane. You make-a me laugh!

Posted by: Janet | 2009-04-16 5:23:23 AM

>> \$800 billion dollars last year

The only way I could get anything like that number from sources like the Budget Office was to throw in NASA, VA, Department of Energy, etc.

>>30 per cent of taxes collected in the United States

Fine, but lets look at apples to apples. What per cent of the BUDGET, i.e. spending, does that constitute? Something like 21%. Still large, but significantly more reasonable.

And compare this with a sign I saw last night by a demonstrator at the post office where people were mailing their tax returns. "Over half of your taxes go to the Pentagon!" Sorry, but that hasn't been true since JFK was president.

As the old saying goes, you are entitled to your own opinion, but not your own facts.

Posted by: Tregonsee | 2009-04-16 5:46:08 AM

Oh, Shane. You make-a me laugh! - Consider your surrender accepted, Janet.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 6:34:50 AM

there is a war going on - make that two wars, maybe three if one includes the one against the Somali pirates. Win the war(s) first.

Posted by: Zebulon Pike | 2009-04-16 8:06:07 AM

"You're being a narcissist, Matthew, because you think that what you believe has a bearing on whether generally accepted lessons of history are valid or not. Truth is not in the eye of the beholder."

Of course. OK. I see your point. I don't "believe" things as a matter of faith or for some other subjective reason. I believe things that either reason or empirical evidence or both tell me I should believe. Truth is not a subjective thing, as you say. I agree with you.

I think you're being argumentative, Shane.

Posted by: [Matthew Johnston](#) | 2009-04-16 11:02:17 AM

Oh Matthew, don't be bowled over by Shane's bullying tactics, or his use of ad hominem.

Just because someone uses a stylistic preference to communicate their ideas (use of "I believe" or "I feel" rather than "it is the case that," which amount to *precisely the same thing*, since it is impossible for a person to believe x without thinking that x is true) does not mean that they are "narcissistic."

In FACT, use of "I believe" and "I feel" rather than "it is true that," or "it is the case that" demonstrates humility, since it also allows the reader to see that you are open to the possibility of being wrong about something.

Ignore his attempts to argue by psychologically analyzing his interlocutors. He would know that this is a logical fallacy if Shane were aware of the rules of logic. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that Shane is not.

Posted by: [P.M. Jaworski](#) | 2009-04-16 12:44:14 PM

Oh, okay, fine, I'll bring up one piece of evidence from Shane's latest silly and self-contradictory comment:

"You're being a narcissist, Matthew, because you think that what you believe has a bearing on whether generally accepted lessons of history are valid or not. Truth is not in the eye of the beholder. What is, is."

Generally accepted lessons of history, Shane? You mean, there are plenty of beholders who believe that this or that is a lesson from history? So truth is not in the eye of the beholder (singular) but in the eyes of the beholders (plural)?

Or is it that "what is, is" regardless of the number of beholders that behold with their eyes the truth? So then it can't be that x is "generally accepted" as a lesson of history for it to be true, since "generally accepted" just means "there are a bunch of beholders who count some lesson as true."

"Furthermore, now you bring forth the fallacy of the "many reasonable people." "Many" means more than two or three; on a continent of 415 million people, that is not significant. "Many" people (up to 30 percent) believe in UFOs, too. Argumentum ad populum is no argument at all. So no, it's not a reasonable interpretation of reality, because it requires the raw data to be filtered through a ridiculously coloured filter in order to even be sustainable."

How is "generally accepted" different from "many reasonable people" as a standard? Here's the difference: Matthew's standard insists on "reasonableness," while your standard is simply a straw poll of raw numbers. Matthew's standard is higher. Matthew allows that a simple poll will not be sufficient, but suggests that a poll of reasonable people might be. So your standard for truth is lower, but Matthew is the one who is engaged with an appeal to the majority?

Consider this proof of your incompetence with logic. Consider it also partial proof against your theory of epistemology, since your theory is ridiculous, and you can't even stay within the boundaries of your own theory in three short paragraphs.

Posted by: [P.M. Jaworski](#) | 2009-04-16 12:53:23 PM

Peter has already discredited him, I particularly like how Shane is trying to use facets of formal logic to win his argument, which can be an argument fallacy in and of itself: a red herring--which it is in this case.

Shane, I find it great you're learning about formal logic. But somebody who is learned it formal logic is smart enough to know that just because an argument is *presented* in the form of fallacy, doesn't make it wrong.

I could say: The moon orbits the Earth because the book told me.

Formally, this is an *appeal to authority*. But would you then, take the opposing view and say that I'm wrong simply because of how I argued the point?

But that's besides the point. You pull out formal argumentation tenets here, but at the same time make *special pleadings* in other arguments.

You made a *special pleading* and a *argumentum ad populum* for faith because it's sacred, and *all* societies have sacred things.

Posted by: Mike Brock | 2009-04-16 1:53:24 PM

I think you're being argumentative, Shane. - Your assignment for today—what's wrong with that statement?

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 2:21:41 PM

Oh Matthew, don't be bowled over by Shane's bullying tactics, or his use of ad hominem.

Telling someone not to be a narcissist is not bullying, or even ad hominem. To falsely accuse someone, however, is both.

Just because someone uses a stylistic preference to communicate their ideas (use of "I believe" or "I feel" rather than "it is the case that," which amount to *precisely the same thing*, since it is impossible for a person to believe x without thinking that x is true) does not mean that they are "narcissistic."

You may not dance. He specifically stated that a belief could invalidate a proof. Dismissing it as "stylistic preference" is an unconvincing piece of sophistry.

In FACT, use of "I believe" and "I feel" rather than "it is true that," or "it is the case that" demonstrates humility, since it also allows the reader to see that you are open to the possibility of being wrong about something.

We are in a debate; there are no points awarded for being bashful. Points are deducted, however, for emotional puke.

Ignore his attempts to argue by psychologically analyzing his interlocutors. He would know that this is a logical fallacy if Shane were aware of the rules of logic. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that Shane is not.

Any such analysis would be ad hominem. Apparently you neither practice what you preach nor adhere with any great stringency to the laws of logic yourself, considering that this entire post has been an emotional shoulder-patting for your fellow weeper.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 2:30:22 PM

Shane: I don't take you seriously any longer, since you are a) bad at logic, b) don't know the meaning of "argument" or "logic", c) don't know the standards for normative vs. descriptive arguments, and d) make up rules and change them when it suits you.

This is why I practice, when dealing with you, what *you* preach. It's a

performative reductio ad absurdum.

Consider your surrender accepted.

Posted by: P.M. Jaworski | 2009-04-16 2:40:51 PM

Generally accepted lessons of history, Shane? You mean, there are plenty of beholders who believe that this or that is a lesson from history? So truth is not in the eye of the beholder (singular) but in the eyes of the beholders (plural)?

The historical facts are undeniable, and sufficient time has passed to weed out all the crappy conspiracy theories and liberal guilt trips and other nonsense. This is the amalgamated judgement of generations of historians, politicians, military men, and survivors. To imagine that you know better than all of them is indeed narcissism.

Or is it that "what is, is" regardless of the number of beholders that behold with their eyes the truth? So then it can't be that x is "generally accepted" as a lesson of history for it to be true, since "generally accepted" just means "there are a bunch of beholders who count some lesson as true."

Is this a shell game, or what? Think if you move it round fast enough we'll lose track? The complete truth about anything is unknowable. But history is a much better judge than a preening academic at the American version of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and his fawning acolyte.

How is "generally accepted" different from "many reasonable people" as a standard? Here's the difference: Matthew's standard insists on "reasonableness," while your standard is simply a straw poll of raw numbers. Matthew's standard is higher.

Er, no. His "many reasonable people" are not experts whose investigations and conclusions have stood the test of time. Second, I have only his word that they're reasonable. If they're anything like you they're embittered idealists with axes to grind. It is quality not quantity that counts, Mike.

Matthew allows that a simple poll will not be sufficient, but suggests that a poll of reasonable people might be. So your standard for truth is lower, but Matthew is the one who is engaged with an appeal to the majority?

What he "allows" or "suggests" is irrelevant, as is what "might" be. That is pure speculation, which no responsible debater attempts. My standard of proof is to listen to those who know what they're talking about. His is to prune the polling lists of all but "reasonable" people (which could just be code for "people who think like me"), without any regard for whether they actually know anything or not. And you're arguing that his is higher?

Consider this proof of your incompetence with logic.

I consider it proof of yours. Considering the lamentably slack-brained and openly petulant epistle you have just consigned to the blogosphere for all to read, that really is rich. This reminds me of that radio commercial where the hazzard mom figures she's qualified to drive a seven-axle tanker truck with hazardous materials because of the "dangers" of driving around with a van full of grade-schoolers who have never known the strap.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 2:48:06 PM

Peter has already discredited him, I particularly like how Shane is trying to use facets of formal logic to win his argument, which can be an argument fallacy in and of itself: a red herring—which it is in this case.

More opinion, huh, Mike?

Shane, I find it great you're learning about formal logic. But somebody who is learned it formal logic is smart enough to know that just because an argument is presented in the form of fallacy, doesn't make it wrong.

A statement of opinion is neither wrong nor right. It's not an argument at all. It's a statement of opinion, period. That's the whole point.

I could say: The moon orbits the Earth because the book told me. Formally, this is an appeal to authority. But would you then, take the opposing view and say that I'm wrong simply because of how I argued the point?

You wouldn't say that, though, if the book were written by a reputable author and its contents were in accord with current astronomical knowledge. Because no such book would say that. A book published by the Flat-Earthers might, but they're hardly an authority. And Matthew's quoting of a singular academic was also an appeal to authority—to a much *lesser* authority.

But that's besides the point. You pull out formal argumentation tenets here, but at the same time make special pleadings in other arguments. You made a special pleading and a *argumentum ad populum* for faith because it's sacred, and all societies have sacred things.

First, Mike, it's bad form to cite material from another blog without including either a link or a quote. Also, it was you who tried to argue that religion had anything to do with *my* argument in the first place. It didn't. That is a reflection of your *own* bias, as was your ill-tempered rant about religion in general. You complain about special pleading, but insist over and over again that *you* don't think this, *you* feel that, *you* won't respect the other thing. As if anyone else should give a crap what you think but can't prove.

You opened your mouth too wide, and fell right in, a common fate among mouthy types. Don't come crying to me.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 2:58:00 PM

The US needs to quadruple its defense budget. The arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons needs to be increased tenfold. "I believe" these needs are self-evident.

Posted by: dp | 2009-04-16 3:00:38 PM

Can you prove I'm bad at logic, P.M.? Probably not; you still haven't responded to that point where I refuted your definition of "argument"; instead, as shown above, you chose to get personal, playing the part of the condescending mom pooh-poohing the prattlings of a troublesome infant. Between you and Mike, this thread has gotten completely off the track, derailed by your own personal vendettas.

I'm still waiting for you to slam the door and then stand at the peephole with your fingers stuck in your ears, which appears to be the standard procedure around here whenever one of the bloggers gets in a righteous mood. Go on, then. Withdraw, and be a coward.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 3:08:09 PM

I "believe" you're wrong, dp. :-)

Posted by: Matthew Johnston | 2009-04-16 3:09:27 PM

Shane: What fun! It's like dealing with a person who has no short-term memory.

For example, just a week ago you scolded me for insisting on expert opinion. You said I prejudge things, and that this demonstrates my bias. And now? Why... you're clinging to experts.

"This is the amalgamated judgement of generations of historians, politicians, military men, and survivors. To imagine that you know better than all of them is indeed narcissism."

Alas, this is still only an opinion. True, it's many different peoples opinion, and many of them know what they're talking about, but this seems only good enough for you when it serves your purposes or ends.

In another context, or on another thread, you'll argue that what you want is the facts, and not opinions, not even the opinions of experts because that's "elitist" and "academic" and so on.

"The complete truth about anything is unknowable."

I think this is an incredible breakthrough. A hosannah moment. Let's see if you'll remember this the next time you post a comment, or demand pure, unfiltered by opinion, facts.

"Er, no. His "many reasonable people" are not experts whose investigations and conclusions have stood the test of time."

When comparing the "generally accepted" and "many reasonable people" standards, it is the latter, not the former, that has contained within it even the suggestion of expertise. Your standard remains weaker.

Of course, you can say that what you meant was "generally accepted by experts in the relevant fields," but then you'd be conceding to me that my standard was right all along in an earlier post. You don't want to do that, do you? Wouldn't you rather just cluck about "elitism" and "academics" and continue on your anti-intellectual bent?

"Second, I have only his word that they're reasonable. If they're anything like you they're embittered idealists with axes to grind. It is quality not quantity that counts, Mike."

It's Peter, not Mike. So I'm not sure if you meant to say all those things to me, although I am fairly certain that you just have a document of random insults that you copy and paste from. Some of those insults are in rhyming couplets, others using alliteration, it's all a good way to spend your time and energy.

"What he "allows" or "suggests" is irrelevant, as is what "might" be. That is pure speculation, which no responsible debater attempts."

Of course, you might keep context, and use English according to the accepted customs, but you like to change the rules as you go along. It was about Matthew's manner and style of presenting an argument, not the content of the argument, that was at issue then.

"My standard of proof is to listen to those who know what they're talking about. His is to prune the polling lists of all but "reasonable" people (which could just be code for "people who think like me"), without any regard for whether they actually know anything or not. And you're arguing that his is higher?"

No, your standard was "generally accepted" and his was "most reasonable people. Would you like me to quote the paragraph again, or can I count on

your ability to scroll up and double-check it yourself?

And what, one might wonder, is your standard for persons who "know what they're talking about"? Or is this bit of question-begging good enough for you? What you've said is equivalent to:

I believe things that are true (well, shit, amazing!) or:
I agree with people who know what they're talking about. (Golly!)

And now for the fun. I wonder if Shane will appeal to "experts" as judged by the relevant community? And I wonder if the relevant community will be those elitist academics? Oh man oh man. Or will Shane appeal to his own judgment about who gets to count as an expert, basically telling us that he believes those people who agree with him. Or will he construct a tautological (another word that Shane doesn't know, since he thinks it has to do with redundancy) standard. Holy Moses, this is a nail-biter. Stay tuned for the next installment of "Shane doesn't get irony."

Of course, I can just consider your surrender accepted, and call you a narcissist to boot.

Posted by: [P.M. Jaworski](#) | 2009-04-16 3:29:42 PM

"He specifically stated that a belief could invalidate a proof." - Shane Matthews

That's simply not true, Shane, and I'm disappointed to read that.

You said 9/11 proves X, without providing any evidence for this proof, which is fine. I said not everyone believes that 9/11 proves X and that some believe 9/11 proves Y. It's a pretty innocuous empirical statement really. You can't argue against my statement that some people believe Y when these people are all around you, unless you ignore this fact; you can only argue that their belief in Y is based on bad reasoning or bad evidence, which is fine. I'd like to hear that argument.

I was not arguing that some people believe Y and therefore Y is true. I was only arguing that some people believe Y.

Don't take from my use of the word "believe" that I have a subjectivist view of the world.

I use phrases like "I believe" and "I think" out of respect for the diversity of views in the libertarian/conservative universe of people who read the Western Standard. I also do it when I'm offering an opinion that I'm prepared to back away from without much of a fight should I be confronted by compelling facts and arguments. (I'm always willing to back away from an opinion, but some are more deeply held than others.)

Posted by: [Matthew Johnston](#) | 2009-04-16 4:00:39 PM

Shane: "Can you prove I'm bad at logic, P.M.?"

I did. I'll continue to. I've done it about four times now, and I'll be happy to continue proving it.

"you still haven't responded to that point where I refuted your definition of "argument";"

It's possible that I got bored, so consider this an apology. But I don't recall you refuting my definition of an argument. And my definition just is the definition of an argument. I didn't make it up, I looked it up.

An argument is one or more propositions leading to a conclusion. There needn't be any reference to "facts" for something to count as an argument. Normative arguments, for example, may not appeal to facts at all. For example: "Julie ought not steal, Bobbie ought not steal, therefore both Bobbie and Julie ought not steal." Whether or not the sentence "Bobbie ought not steal" is a "fact" depends on your metaethical theory. But, at any rate, it is false to say, as you did, that an argument is necessarily required to include facts to count as an instance of an argument. It needn't.

A "valid" argument is an argument where *if* the premises were true, the conclusion would necessarily be true. The following argument is valid: "If

Shane is ten feet tall, then the moon is made of green cheese. Shane is ten feet tall. Therefore, the moon is made of green cheese." A "sound" argument is an argument that is both valid with true premises. The valid argument I gave earlier is unsound, because premise 1 is false.

"instead, as shown above, you chose to get personal, playing the part of the condescending mom pooh-poohing the prattlings of a troublesome infant. Between you and Mike, this thread has gotten completely off the track, derailed by your own personal vendettas."

Agreed. But you started in with the "Matthew is a narcissist" nonsense. You could avoid doing that in future, and, in future, I won't feel compelled to do to you what you do to everyone else. It is, as I've said before, my attempt at returning your manner, style, and argumentative strategy back at you. You don't seem to like it. Okay, learn from that.

"I'm still waiting for you to slam the door and then stand at the peephole with your fingers stuck in your ears, which appears to be the standard procedure around here whenever one of the bloggers gets in a righteous mood. Go on, then. Withdraw, and be a coward."

Interesting. Shane says: "It is wrong for you to get personal." Then he says: "I'm still waiting for you to... blah... blah... blah"

The continuing adventures of Shane the irony-deficient hypocrite continue. It's a saga in many, many parts...

Posted by: [P.M. Jaworski](#) | 2009-04-16 4:02:28 PM

For example, just a week ago you scolded me for insisting on expert opinion. You said I prejudge things, and that this demonstrates my bias. And now? Why... you're clinging to experts.

Quote, please.

Alas, this is still only an opinion. True, it's many different peoples opinion, and many of them know what they're talking about, but this seems only good enough for you when it serves your purposes or ends.

Or when enough time has passed for anyone with an agenda that could be served has long since left the scene. World War II is now, for the most part, politically neutral, as is the Copernican model of the Solar System. Not so Gulf War II, nor global warming.

When comparing the "generally accepted" and "many reasonable people" standards, it is the latter, not the former, that has contained within it even the suggestion of expertise. Your standard remains weaker.

This statement is opinion. There is extensive case law that makes reference to the "reasonable person" in the context of the rational but not necessarily well-informed layman. Practically none that imputes "reasonable persons" as "experts." Unless, of course, you can prove otherwise?

Of course, you can say that what you meant was "generally accepted by experts in the relevant fields," but then you'd be conceding to me that my standard was right all along in an earlier post. You don't want to do that, do you? Wouldn't you rather just cluck about "elitism" and "academics" and continue on your anti-intellectual bent?

Ah, but global warming and many controversial topics today are NOT generally accepted by the experts. Most scientists are NOT convinced of AGM, saying that data are inconclusive. The radical ones get all the airtime, but what else is new? And no true scientist ever describes the science on a given matter "settled."

It's Peter, not Mike. So I'm not sure if you meant to say all those things to me, although I am fairly certain that you just have a document of random insults that you copy and paste from. Some of those insults are in rhyming couplets, others using alliteration, it's all a good way to spend your time and energy.

Whom I meant to say them to is irrelevant; it is the statements I was addressing. I momentarily forgot who had posted what, but that sometimes happens when people decide to gang up on you. And you have the colossal effrontery to accuse ME of bullying. You didn't come here to argue the topic. You came here to attack me, and for no other reason. So you can get off your moral high horse now, P.M., because you stand revealed as just another petulant happy-slapper.

No, your standard was "generally accepted" and his was "most reasonable people. Would you like me to quote the paragraph again, or can I count on your ability to scroll up and double-check it yourself?"

Asked and answered. You know precisely what was being stated. You're pretending otherwise so you'll have an excuse, however thin, to act like an obnoxious puke.

And now for the fun. I wonder if Shane will appeal to "experts" as judged by the relevant community? And I wonder if the relevant community will be those elitist academics? Oh man oh man. Or will Shane appeal to his own judgment about who gets to count as an expert, basically telling us that he believes those people who agree with him. Or will he construct a tautological (another word that Shane doesn't know, since he thinks it has to do with redundancy) standard. Holy Moses, this is a nail-biter. Stay tuned for the next installment of "Shane doesn't get irony."

Now for the fun, indeed. Because history, unlike AGM and political science, is generally garnered from interviewing eyewitness and written records, people who were there at the time and can establish the facts as they occurred. Citizens, soldiers, sailors, people of every race, creed, colour and political stripe. Historians collect and compile the data and often insert their own opinions, but history is first and foremost a record of facts. Unlike politics. And unlike theories cooked up based on exotic and inaccessible data that largely references things in remote corners of the globe where most people will never, ever, ever travel to.

So don't pat yourself on the back, P.M. The petulant, hysterical, go-for-the-balls tone in your posts is quite evident, and frankly surprising. Mike has

always been grumpy skunk, but this is a new low for you. It seems that you, like Janet, have abandoned any pretence of being an impartial moderator and have instead turned into a common Internet troll, posting for no other reason than to throw gas on the fire and watch as the flames consume everything. In fact, ever since Harper "abandoned" the libertarians, the keepers of the Shotgun have been noticeably darker, moodier, and quarrelsome.

By the way, are you ever going to actually debate the budget of the Pentagon at all? Do you think you can handle that? Or did you fill your pails with nothing but "I know you are, but what am I?"

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 4:08:01 PM

Shane, get a life.

Posted by: TruthTeller | 2009-04-16 9:39:48 PM

Truthteller, get a name. Better yet, debate the topic. Do you think you can lower yourself to do that? Or, like P.M., do you just troll around administering e-wedgies?

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-16 9:49:37 PM

Thanks for the invite Shane, but I don't debate with childish, insulting, arrogant mind-fuckers. You showed yourself to be all these things at Canada.com. Now I find you here years later exhibiting the same behavior. But this time it's an uncensored blog and I get to tell you exactly what I think of you.

I think you come to blogs and internet forums not for any kind of meaningful exchange, but simply to mess with people, because that is how you get to feel superior. And I think you throw around logical fallacies in latin that you don't really understand in a lame attempt to compensate for your lack of formal education. As another poster correctly pointed out, "ad hominem" is the one you really need to understand better.

In any event, "global warming NOT generally accepted by the experts" is all I needed to see to know you are a nitwit.

Okay, I'm done with you. Flame on, Shane Matthews.

Posted by: TruthTeller | 2009-04-16 11:25:29 PM

Translation: You just troll around administering e-wedgies. Hah. Shocker.

You don't debate at all; I can't recall ever having seen you on these blogs. And you're hardly the one to talk about ad hominem, considering that you're the one following me around over blogs and years, spewing obscenities and spraying urine as you go.

I keep telling you creeps that what you think does not matter, on the few occasions when you can be said to think at all. When I want your freaking *opinions*, I will give them to you. I, at least, think enough of my opinions to attach my real name to them, instead of hiding behind a screen name that's an attitude in itself. Now giggle behind that slammed door, TT, and try not to pee all over the rug; your mom just had it cleaned.

Next.

Posted by: Shane Matthews | 2009-04-17 6:51:08 AM

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