**Gravity Team Meeting - January 29, 2015 at 6:00pm PST**

**In attendance:** Ruthie Weller, Bryan Clifton, Heather McCabe, Pam Miller, Sarah Rowe, Dima Koyfman, Michael Jonckheere

All Gravity team members were in attendance for this call. Each person provided a summary of their book and related it to one or more of the questions posed in the syllabus.

Our summaries showed that there are several themes that most, if not all, of these books shared. These themes primarily addressed the first question of “Why and how is our world changing?”

The first and most prominent theme was that the United States is a major capitalistic force in the world and not necessarily a good one. It may be and may not…it all depends on the perspective, yes? Despite an immense abundance of resources, large, U.S. companies can exploit these resources including their workforces in the name of increased profits. This is obviously an incredibly complex perspective. I think it’s important to have a point of view, but it’s also important to resist simple generalizations.

The next theme we noted was that consumption (and consumerism) is rampant in U.S. culture. The Chinese are being encouraged by their own government to increase consumption and slow down savings…

Finally, values such as work-life, well-being, and fairness are becoming clouded in the quest for power and influence. Many of our team members also noted author bias (whether intentional or not) and a negative tone to the writing. But they aren’t making simple statements either. Be careful…

Overall, we felt these forces do bring a great deal of progress and benefit to the world. Really…wow. However, they need to be held in check with balancing forces such as NGO’s, non-profits, alternative philosophies on living standards, uncensored social communication and continuous observation of social value systems.

Your group seems to have touched on the key themes and issues.. I worry that this report seems a bit simplistic, but that’s easily explained. Try to hold the complexities all together at one time…