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January 19, 2010: Dances with Wolves Meets The Matrix

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Title: Dances with Wolves Meets The Matrix

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1/19/2010—Taking a break from the secular/religious theme, two points today. First, could Avatar really have won a Golden Globe for best picture? It is the dumbest movie I believe I have ever seen. It takes no imagination to see Dances with Wolves in it, but did the aliens actually have to make those Hollywood Indian sounds? And as for the Matrix, it was bad enough that Avatar took the consciousness-into-alternate reality with your body back home theme, but did the human occupied weapon have to look exactly the same as in Matrix III? Beautiful 3D, but not best picture. Point number 2 is not related. It concerns the constitutionality of individual mandates to buy health insurance currently in the Healthcare Reform legislation. Assuming the Mass. election today does not doom the bill, critics have been making noises about challenging the constitutionality of such a requirement. Now, as a constitutional argument, this claim is not very strong. Congress has already forbade a wheat farmer from growing wheat in order to force him to buy wheat in the national market for his family's consumption. (*Wickard v. Filburn*). If that is constitutional, I presume this is as well. But what is breathtaking in its shamelessness is the context of this challenge. Republicans and others on the right were so insistent that a single payer public plan was "socialism" that this reasonable approach never even saw the light of day for debate. Instead, conservatives insisted that healthcare reform retain the private insurer model. But the government provision model is clearly constitutional because it relies on government benefits and taxes. Having forced a private care structure on those wishing reform, the very same critics now claim that the private format renders a requirement of mandatory coverage unconstitutional. Talk about no win. You'd almost think that these critics would use any argument just to prevent universal healthcare coverage.