



# laetus in praesens

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## Capital Punishment of Canon Fodder

### Death penalty contradictions in the declaration of the Pope

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Relevant to this argument with respect to "canon fodder" is the simultaneous publication of a [Grand Jury Report](#) (*Report details sexual abuse by more than 300 priests in Pennsylvania's Catholic Church*, CNN, 16 August 2018; *Pope Francis' letter on child sex abuse and cover-ups*, BBC, 20 August 2018)

## Introduction

A widely noted new formulation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, regarding the death penalty (paragraph 2267), was issued by the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) on 2 August 2018 after Pope Francis approved it in May 2018:

Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good...

Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption...

Pope Francis' change to the text concludes: "Consequently, the church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,' and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide". (*Pope revises catechism to say death penalty is 'inadmissible'*, Catholic News Service, 2 August 2018)

The new formulation follows a presentation by Pope Francis to members of the [Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization](#) (*Death penalty is contrary to the Gospel*, Catholic News Agency, 11 October 2017).

As declared by Cardinal Ladaria, the Pope "desires to give energy to a movement toward a decisive commitment to favor a mentality that recognizes the dignity of every human life and, in respectful dialogue with civil authorities, to encourage the creation of conditions that allow for the elimination of the death penalty where it is still in effect."

A summary of the issue is provided by *Wikipedia* (*Catholic Church and Capital Punishment*). This notes the [Vatican support for UN campaign against the death penalty](#) from 2015. The new declaration has given rise to worldwide commentary, including:

- Hannah Brockhaus: *Vatican changes Catechism teaching on death penalty, calls it 'inadmissible'* (Catholic News Agency, 2 August 2018)
- Daniel Burke: *What does Pope's death penalty shift mean for Catholic politicians?* (CNN, 3 August 2018)
- Tara Isabella Burton: *Pope Francis officially updated Catholic teaching, calling the death penalty "inadmissible"* (Vox, 2 August 2018)
- Tom Embury-Dennis: *Pope Francis changes Catholic teaching to oppose death penalty, saying capital punishment 'attacks' human dignity* (The Independent, 2 August 2018)
- Merrit Kennedy: *Catholic Church Now Formally Opposes Death Penalty In All Cases* (National Public Radio, 2 August 2018)
- Chico Harlan: *Pope Francis changes Catholic Church teaching to say death penalty is 'inadmissible'* (The Washington Post, 2 August 2018)
- Jane Onyanga-Omara: *Pope Francis changes Catholic Church teaching on death penalty, declares it 'inadmissible'* (USA Today, 2 August 2018)
- Elisabetta Povoledo and Laurie Goodstein: *Pope Francis Declares Death Penalty Unacceptable in All Cases* (The New York Times, 2 August 2018)
- Patsy McGarry: *Catholic Church rules out capital punishment in all circumstances* (The Irish Times, 2 August 2018)
- Francesco Guarascio: *Vatican changes teaching to oppose death penalty in all cases* (Reuters, 2 August 2018)

The concern in what follows is with the highly selective focus by the Pope on the inadmissibility of capital punishment -- both with respect to the fundamental complicity of the Catholic Church in enabling it and to the delayed execution of that death penalty in practice. The nature of that focus, systemically understood, could be variously deprecated in terms of blinkered [tunnel vision](#).

In this argument, however, the criticism relates to the time frame in contrast with conventional uses of such metaphors. Using another visual metaphor in temporal terms, this could be framed as an extreme case of myopia -- understood here as a focus on the short-term rather than on the longer-term for which the Catholic Church claims special insight and responsibility. This is curiously reminiscent of the overriding preoccupation of the corporate world with short-term profitability at any cost. However, rather than financial profitability, the preoccupation of the Church would appear to be with short-term accumulation of merit -- irrespective of any longer-term costs. Whether such merit is to be primarily understood in terms of mundane appreciation among the faithful, rather than in some more eternal form, calls for reflection as a very particular form of so-called [silo thinking](#).

Is there indeed a sense in which the uncritical temporal framing by the Pope ignores the authoritative role of the Catholic Church in condemning millions to death -- notably the as yet unborn, and especially in the more distant future? In so doing, through a pattern of [plausible deniability](#), is the Church skillfully disassociating itself from all responsibility -- by ensuring that the "punishment" is executed through systemic "bloodless" processes and surrogates, seemingly without its direct involvement?

Rather than associating itself with the physical violence it deplores, could the Church be understood as engaging in a new form of [structural violence](#), perhaps better named in terms of its finality as "structural mortality". Of the former [Johan Galtung](#) famously noted that this is the preferred modality of "professionals", Detection of any elusive Church complicity could then be compared with the fair ground confidence trick of *Find the Lady*.

Is this a curious echo of the manner in which governments now undertake dubious operations through [private military contractors](#) -- an inglorious reframing of *Ecclesia Militans* through use of mercenaries? In doing so is the Catholic Church imitating and reinforcing the "dirty tricks" now readily associated with the covert operations of multinational corporations? Is there deliberate failure to address the manner in which the nature of authority is no longer any guarantee of the ability to define "criminal" with any "legitimacy" in terms of the "justice" upheld as a value? On the other hand, could the new formulation be seen as a simple response to the extreme abuse of legitimate authority in some countries with Catholic majorities and Church complicity, such as the Philippines of the present and Argentina of the Pope's formative years?

Explicit reference to "capital" and "penalty" in the new formulation also gives cause for reflection in a period in which these terms have highly problematic global connotations -- to say nothing of an authority which lays special claim to framing the relation between death and eternity, and the penalties to be incurred in the latter context. What is implied by any sense that "capital" can be used as one form of "punishment" of concern to many? What indeed is implied by the threats so frequently made by legitimate Christian authorities to penalize other regimes by death?

The argument explores the implications of the amendment for the effective condemnation of millions to death over generations to come. Elaborated with the insights of science, its validity is readily denied with the insights of theology -- deprecated in turn by the insights of science. Why is it believed so naively that the insights of one should take precedence over the other -- especially when both are called into question from a military perspective? This tripartite dynamic recalls only too readily and appropriately that between the [Abrahamic religions](#).

## Condemnations to future death -- admissible within the new dispensation?

The temporally myopic vision of the new declaration can be understood as focusing only on the death penalty as it relates to immediate execution by legitimate authority. Missing is any notion of effective condemnation to death by such authority -- by other means -- which will only take effect in decades to come, among generations unborn, or beyond the preoccupation of living memory with the shorter term.

The longer time frame of concern in the following argument might even be recognized in biblical terms: *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation* (Exodus 34:7). Alternatively consideration could be given to the more extensive temporal framework of [seven generation sustainability](#) of an indigenous people

disempowered with Christian colonial complicity. The latter requires a perspective encompassing some 140 years -- rather than with the cumulative implications for centuries to come..

The declaration therefore implies a strangely perverse reframing of the [statute of limitations](#). Capital punishment is indeed condemned as inadmissible, as it may be enacted in the immediate present. However its admissibility now derives from the manner in which death will only be ensured at some period in the relatively distant future -- effectively beyond the maximum date at which formal condemnation might be legally recognized. A statutes of limitations within Canon Law\

Framed otherwise, this might be understood as a process whereby many are effectively placed on "death row" for very extended periods of time -- as with their progeny as yet unborn -- without that process being subject to criticism under the new dispensation. Should those constrained in this way die in the process due to other factors -- whether "bloodlessly" or not -- this could in no way be recognized as "inadmissible" according to the new dispensation. It should also be remembered that of those currently condemned to death, many remain incarcerated on "death row" for decades before execution.

The issue here is to understand how the reality of "death row" can then be more appropriately understood -- and how relegation of millions to it is achieved with the complicity and encouragement of the Catholic Church.

## Assessing the unpredictable: faith-based death warrants effectively authorised?

The following table is a partial revision of one previously presented ([Assessment of faith-based death warrants effectively authorized](#), 2007). The original presentation was designed to give focus to an earlier argument presented with respect to [Problems arising more or less directly from overpopulation](#) (2007).

**Controversy:** Of continuing relevance to the elaboration of such a table is the high degree of controversy associated with the identification of potential shortages, and with the potentially fatal consequences of such shortages -- now and at various future times. The nature of such controversy has become ever more relevant in the light of assessments of climate change and its probable catastrophic effects -- despite the historic [Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (2015) and the unprecedented climatic conditions recorded over the past year.

The pattern to be recognized is that any assessment of problematic future conditions by authoritative groups is now called into question by variously orchestrated claims of denial -- epitomized by the [United States withdrawal from the Paris Agreement](#) (2017). The process has been usefully documented by [Naomi Oreskes](#) and [Erik M. Conway](#) ([Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming](#), 2010).

The challenge of establishing estimates is usefully indicated by that relating to future levels of migration into Europe from disadvantaged countries, as argued separately ([Anticipating Future Migration into Europe \(2018-2050\): beyond the irresponsibility of current political and humanitarian short-termism](#), 2017).

**Constraints on prediction:** Prediction is especially problematic as a result of two factors:

- Systematic deprecation of insights elaborated in the light of the early conclusion of [Thomas Malthus](#) regarding population increase and the subsequent study by [Paul Ehrlich](#) and Anne Ehrlich ([The Population Bomb](#), 1968/2018). The process and associated controversy have been variously documented by Andrew Curry ([The Curse of Thomas Malthus](#), *Resilience*, 3 August 2018; John Scales Avery [Population and the Environment](#), 2018)
- Irrespective of any insights into potential problematic consequences of population increase, there is a fundamentally unquestionable commitment by the Abrahamic faiths to the biblical command: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth* ([Genesis 1-28](#)). This injunction has reinforced the widespread belief that there is no reason whatsoever to constrain population growth in any way, especially since remedial divine intervention is prophesied in the respective scriptures of the Abrahamic faiths. The command in *Genesis* is of primary importance to all the Abrahamic faiths in that the book of *Genesis* is common to their respective scriptures.

**Misinterpretation?** Arguably one extremely dubious interpretation of the divine injunction has resulted in what is now being described as the [Holocene extinction](#) (or the Anthropocene extinction) -- irrespective of the level of degradation of the environment. This suggests a misinterpretation of that divine injunction, as separately discussed (["Be Fruitful and Multiply" the most tragic translation error?](#) 1995). Given the obvious constraints on human comprehension, it might be asked whether that process of extinction implies the possibility of other forms of misinterpretation.

The consequences of the Holocene extinction are the subject of a recent report (Gerardo Ceballos, et al, [Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines](#), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, 25 July 2017). A commentary on that report notes:

Nearly half of the 177 mammal species surveyed lost more than 80% of their distribution between 1900 and 2015. The scientists conclude: *The resulting biological annihilation obviously will have serious ecological, economic and social consequences. Humanity will eventually pay a very high price for the decimation of the only assemblage of life that we know of in the universe... 50% of individual animals have been lost since 1970* ([Earth's sixth mass extinction event under way, scientists warn](#), *The Guardian*, 10 July 2017)

**Role of the Catholic Church:** The focus in this argument is on the particular role of the Catholic Church as the most obviously

influential institution framing international discourse in relation to issues of population and resources, as has been evident since the third (and last) [International Conference on Population and Development](#) (Cairo, 1994). The fact that this has been the last is an indication of the pressures on the United Nations, and specifically on the [UNFPA](#), with respect to the controversies in question and specifically the [relations of the UNFPA with the US government](#), as a consequence of pressures from Christian coalitions.

Given the systemic resistance to use of available methodologies to clarify future consequences of unconstrained population growth, **any tabular framework can only be a reflection of prevailing controversies**. The only viable approach is then to present estimates in terms of extremes -- evoking the ridicule characteristic of such controversy in a "post-truth" era. The only unquestionable "facts" which may become evident are the deaths enabled by inaction, although these too may be obscured by their suppression from media coverage.

The point to be emphasized is however the degree to which **the Catholic Church is now the legitimate authority establishing what are effectively death warrants** (in the sense described above). By its actions **many in current and future generations are being systematically placed on "death row"** -- leaving it to systemic forces and surrogates to execute that warrant, thereby denying any Church responsibility in the matter. Others will be righteously blamed, as separately discussed (*Collective Mea Culpa? You Must be Joking! Them is to blame, Not us!* 2015).

**Suffering:** Irrespective of actual fatalities, readily neglected in any estimates is the level of suffering, typically deplored by the Catholic Church, but for which the most extensive and insightful methodological approach is that developed through the research of [Ralph Siu](#) and the [International Society for Panetics](#). This developed the concept of the "*dukkha*" as a measure of suffering as a measure of the intensity and duration of pain and anguish -- adapted from the 9-point hedonic scale used to provide subjective judgements in market research. *Dukkha* is also a central concept in Buddhism.

According to this approach, one *dukkha* expresses the amount of suffering endured by one person experiencing one intensity unit for one day (roughly the equivalent to the amount of suffering felt by one person with a moderate toothache for eight hours). A "megadukkha" represents the order of magnitude of suffering sustained by 1,000 persons for about 10 hours a day, for a year, with severe stomach ulcers and without medication. The approach has been explored further by [Johan Galtung](#) (*Panetics and the Practice of Peace and Development*, 1999).

**"Methodology":** Although there is indeed controversy regarding global population in decades to come, this is clarified by use of high, median and low estimates. The columns of the table below are based on the median estimate. The possible shortages indicated are necessarily also a matter of controversy, especially since the techno-optimists foresee the probability of technical solutions for everything in the years to come. Much more difficult is acquiring estimates of the deaths which will be directly attributable to a particular form of shortage in a particular period.

Since the table is presented as a framework suggesting the need for its completion, **only the first row has been completed for purposes of illustration**. With respect to deaths from food shortages, figures on actual starvation are difficult to come by, but according to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#), the less severe condition of undernourishment currently affects about 842 million people, or about one in eight (12.5%) people in the world population (*The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, 2017). Indicate estimates such as the following are presented by John Scales Avery (*Population and the Environment*, 2018):

At present a child dies from starvation every six seconds. Five million children die from hunger every year. Over a billion people in today's world are chronically undernourished. There is a threat that unless prompt and well-informed action is taken by the international community, the tragic loss of life that is already being experienced will increase to unimaginable proportions (p. 258). It is a world where an estimated 11 million children die every year from starvation or from diseases related to poverty. (p. 60)

We can anticipate that as the earth's human population approaches 10 billion, severe famines will occur in many developing countries. The beginnings of this tragedy can already be seen. It is estimated that roughly 30,000 children now die every day from starvation, or from a combination of disease and malnutrition. (p. 195)

Thus there is a danger that just as global population reaches the unprecedented level of 10 billion or more, the agricultural base for supporting it may suddenly collapse. The resulting ecological catastrophe, possibly compounded by war and other disorders, could produce famine and death on a scale unprecedented in history -- a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions, involving billions rather than millions of people (p. 44)

The estimates of deaths in decades to come are obtained by the crude assumption that the percentage of 12.5% can be applied to the total population for each column of the table. Again, a lower figure could be assumed. The numbers would be equally impressive if only 5% were scheduled to die as a consequence.

The focus is on achieving a sense of the scale of deaths currently being effectively authorised as "admissible" rather than "unacceptable". **The accuracy of the figures is less relevant than the sense of the numbers of people placed on "death row" by the process**, now and in the future. The distinction between severe malnutrition and actual fatality is then academic -- especially given the inability to provide any adequate measure of suffering.

Other rows in the table could be completed in the same manner, using an assumption in each case regarding the percentage of those who die as a consequence. For the illustrative purposes of this exercise, this has not been attempted.

Framework for estimates of deaths as a consequence of shortages and problems	
Crude estimates of deaths implicitly authorised	
(as percentage of UN median estimate of total population, with indication of estimates yet to be made)	

Shortages and problems	Consequences	2017 (7.5 bill. pop.)	2030 (8.6 bill. pop.)	2050 (9.8 bill. pop.)	2070 (10.4 bill. pop.)	2090 (10.9 bill. pop.)	2110 (11.2 bill. pop.)	ca. 100-year total	Suffering engendered (megadukkkhas per year)
		Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Deaths (per year) as % of pop.	Death warrants authorised ?	
<b>Primary shortages</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Food	hunger, malnutrition, starvation	0.94 bill (12.5%)	1.08 bill (12.5%)	1.23 bill. (12.5%)	1.3 bill. (12.5%)	1.36 bill. (12.5%)	1.4 bill. (12.5%)	ca. 100 bill. ?	?
Water scarcity	drinking water, thirst, crop failure, disease	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Health care, sanitation	disease, death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Shelter, homelessness	exposure, disease, death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
<b>"Secondary" shortages</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Land (agriculture)	inability to grow food	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Land (infrastructure)	inability to build shelter	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Employment	inability to purchase essential goods	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Non-renewable resources (energy)	wood burning (deforestation), inaccessibility of essential utilities	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Non-renewable resources (materials)	rising cost of goods, inaccessibility of essential utilities	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
<b>"Tertiary" problems</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Immigration	pressure on facilities	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Violence (faith-based)	suffering death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Violence (resource-based)	suffering death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Environment (pollution)	global warming, disease, flooding	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Environment (degradation)	extinction of species	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Substance abuse	disease, death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Discrimination, injustice, exploitation	suffering, violence	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Unprotected sex	population increase, abortion, HIV/AIDS (40 mill.), death	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Inadequate education	inappropriate (collective) response, suffering	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Poverty	.	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Prolonged terminal incapacity	maximal suffering and family expense (prior to death)	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

It is of course the case that interference effects between the problems will engender problems of a different order of complexity -- appropriately named in the policy sciences as "[wicked problems](#)".

Unfortunately, in the light of this argument, the failure to complete the above table is irrelevant. Any conclusions would be as "inadmissible" as the death penalty is now upheld to be by the Catholic Church. Should the announcement by the Pope be recognized as a declaration to the deaf -- with the qualification that "there are none so deaf as those who cannot hear"?

## Consequences of human overpopulation?

Already in 2007, as indicated in a [press release](#) of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), presenting its *Global Environmental Outlook* (2007):

The human population is now so large that "the amount of resources needed to sustain it exceeds what is available... humanity's footprint [its environmental demand] is 21.9 hectares per person while the Earth's biological capacity is, on average, only 15.7 ha/person... the well-being of billions of people in the developing world is at risk, because of a failure to remedy the relatively simple problems which have been successfully tackled elsewhere.

At the time of writing [Earth Overshoot Day](#) entered August for the first time. This is the calculated calendar date on which humanity's resource consumption for the year exceeds Earth's capacity to regenerate those resources that year.

In reporting on that UNEP document, in the light of an interview with the Executive Director of UNEP, James Kanter (*UN issues 'final wake-up call' on population and environment*, *International Herald Tribune*, 25 October 2007) notes:

Over the past two decades the world population has increased by almost 34 percent to 6.7 billion from 5 billion; similarly, the financial wealth of the planet has soared by about a third. But the land available to each person on earth had shrunk by 2005 to 2.02 hectares, or 5 acres, from 7.91 hectares in 1900 and was projected to drop to 1.63 hectares for each person by 2050, the report said.

The result of that population growth combined with unsustainable consumption has resulted in an increasingly stressed planet where natural disasters and environmental degradation endanger millions of humans, as well as plant and animal species, the report said....

"**Life would be easier if we didn't have the kind of population growth rates that we have at the moment,**" Steiner said. "But to force people to stop having children would be a simplistic answer. The more realistic, ethical and practical issue is to accelerate human well-being and make more rational use of the resources we have on this planet."

The report "prepared by about 390 experts and reviewed by more than 1,000 others across the world", acknowledges the recognition by the [Brundtland Commission](#) (20 years previously) of the range of environmental and other "problems driven by growing human numbers". Unfortunately it focuses narrowly on the problems it selectively identifies without focusing on the underlying issue of how to restrain the growing human numbers that it implicitly acknowledges can thereby only continue to aggravate those problems -- as previously recognized by the Club of Rome *Limits to Growth* analysis in 1972.

This reflects the long-term fundamental flaw in international strategic thinking -- responding with the greatest expertise on secondary and tertiary issues without appropriately engaging in [root cause analysis](#) (*Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems*, 2013; *Ordering multiple competing quests for radical causes*, 2015; *Misleading focus on proximate causes*, 2007). As noted above, this is a shameful exercise in strategic evasion -- achieved by strategic tunnel vision on issues that are politically more acceptable and supposedly susceptible of technical solutions (with unpredictable consequences). The process can be otherwise explored (*Lipoproblems: Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009).

It is notable that **the capacity of responsible authorities to engender such reports is now systematically undermined by governments** -- or subject to statistical massaging to obscure strategic challenges. This is evident in the withdrawal of funds from independent research programme (most obviously in the USA), and through the surreptitious funding of "think tanks" committed to obfuscating the implications of the systemic processes which would otherwise be a major cause for concern,

## Dominion over every living thing upon the earth -- but not of self ?

**Overpopulation?** Overpopulation is readily framed as a myth -- most notably by those segments of the population who deny the incidence of climate change and environmental degradation (*Debunking the Myth of Overpopulation*, 2013; *Overpopulation Is Not the Problem*, *The New York Times*, 13 September 2013; *Five myths about the world's population*, *The Washington Post*, 4 November 2011). Their posture becomes increasingly difficult to sustain with the increasing experience of heat waves, droughts, wild fires and urban pollution -- to say nothing of overcrowding and diminished quality of life.

It is then appropriate to examine humanity's performance in regard to the biblical injunction: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1-28)*. Setting aside the mathematics of multiplication, particular attention can be given to humanity's achievement with respect to "dominion" -- as framed in this case by the arguments of the Catholic Church.

**Dominion of self:** As famously indicated by Leonardo da Vinci:

You will never have a greater or lesser dominion than that over yourself ... the height of a man's success is gauged by his self-mastery; the depth of his failure by his self-abandonment. ...And this law is the expression of eternal justice. **He who cannot establish dominion over himself will have no dominion over others.** [*emphasis added*]

This quotation is used to introduce an argument by Isaac Paintsil (*Dominion of Self, Christ My Oasis*, 2015) supported by other biblical citations:

- The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy,

fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (*Galatians 5:19-21*)

- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (*Galatians 5:22-23*)

For Paintsil,

Adam and Eve were created and given a divine mandate of having dominion over all the animate and inanimate things on earth as stated in *Genesis. 1:28*, **They failed or were disqualified in executing this great mandate because they did not start with self-dominion** as they succumbed to the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

The foundation of effective dominion in the physical and spiritual realms of life is "dominion of self". The dominion of all other things in life is the superstructure of the bedrock of self-dominion. If through the Spirit of God one can bring under subjection one's unrighteous anger, lust, envy, greed, drunkenness, pride, adultery, fornication, lying tongue and the other inordinate desires of the flesh, one would be guaranteed a very solid foundation to take dominion in every aspect of life to the glory of God. "**Dominion begins at home**" so let your recreated spirit or inner man start the process of disciplining the body or outer man from this day onwards; and be prepared for an unprecedented display of dominion in all that concerns you this year and beyond  
*[emphasis added]*

Like Paintsil, many Christian commentators specifically address the need for "dominion of self", notably in sermons (Brian Tierney. *Dominion of Self and Natural Rights before Locke and after*, *Transformations in Medieval and Early-Modern Rights Discourse*, 2006, pp 173-203).

**Collective dominion of self?** Strangely missing in relation to this argument are articulations of the need for Christianity, if only as exemplified by the Catholic Church, to address the need for collective "dominion over itself". It is curiously assumed that the injunction is addressed to individuals but does not apply to collectivities -- except perhaps by implication calling for no particular commentary.

The Catholic Church as a collectivity is in an especially difficult situation at this time as a consequence of the incidence of systemic abuse by clergy having clearly failed to exhibit "dominion of self". This has been exacerbated by a hierarchy variously complicit in ignominious cover-ups of such abuse. This collective failure could be seen as only the most recent failure of "dominion over itself" by the Catholic Church -- dating back over centuries, as variously noted by the following:

- *Contradictions in Roman Catholicism* Jude 1:3, 2 September 2011
- Hans KÜng: *Crisis in the Catholic Church: the Pope's contradictions* Spiegel Online, 26 March 2005
- Simon Basketter: *The Contradictions of Catholicism laid bare* Socialist Worker, 21 March 2013
- Keith Piper: *Errors of the Roman Catholic Church*.
- *Top 10 Shameful Moments in Catholic History*. Listverse, 8 June 2011
- Bob Stanley: *33 Multifarious Errors of Protestantism*. *The Catholic Treasure Chest*, 20 August 2002
- *The Errors of Protestantism*. *Protestant.errors.com*.
- *Catholic Errors from A to Z*. *The Ex-Catholic Journal*
- John Wijngaards: *Mistakes by the Teaching Authority in Rome*. *Womenpriests.org*
- Maureen Fiedler and Linda Rabben (Eds.): *Rome Has Spoken: a guide to forgotten papal statements, and how they have changed through the centuries*. 1998.

**Dominion over others?** According to *Wikipedia*, "**Judeo-Christian**" is a term used since the 1950s to stress the common ethical standards of Christianity and Judaism, such as the Ten Commandments. Such notions are consistent with Biblical injunctions regarding achievement of forms of dominion over the people of the world -- the **Great Commission** of Christianity, or its equivalent in Judaism.

In a context of faith-based governance, it is however appropriate to note the fundamental injunction of the Great Commission in the Christian tradition to spread the teachings of Christianity around the world through missionary work. As a driving commitment it bears comparison with the **Aleinu** as the fundamental expression of duty in Judaism and with the commitment of Islam to extending *sharia* through *jihad*. Through these mutually competitive injunctions each of these Abrahamic religions stresses an early historical understanding of a global perspective.

This strategy has long been pioneered by evangelizing missionary groups who have a very well-articulated strategy to evangelize the world in the coming years -- irrespective of any prior adherence to non-Christian faiths. The term the "Great Commission" derives from the Biblical reference: *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded You* (*Matthew 28:19,20*). Thus the **Great Commission Roundtable** was formed in 1999 to coordinate the efforts of the **Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization**, the **AD2000 Movement** and the **World Evangelical Alliance**. There is a Catholic equivalent under the name **Evangelization 2000**.

There is of course a case for exploring the hidden agendas of fundamentalist religious movements, whether Christian (Catholic or otherwise), Islamic, or Jewish.

In Islam, the unforgivable sin of *shirk* is denial that Allah is the only god. According to *Wikipedia*, *Ummah* is commonly used to mean the collective community of Islamic peoples. In the *Quran* it typically refers to a single group that shares common religious beliefs, specifically those that are the objects of a divine plan of salvation. In the context of **Pan-Islamism** and politics, the term can be used to mean the concept of a *Commonwealth of the Believers*. The purpose of **Islamic missionary activity** is to grow the Muslim *Ummah*. Conceptually a **caliphate** represents the political unity of the entire community of Muslim faithful (the *Ummah*) ruled by a single caliph according to *Sharia*, namely the moral code and religious law of Islam.

**Full-spectrum dominance?** Acclaiming itself to be the primary global exemplification of Christian values, it is curious to note that the USA could be said to take the divine mandate with respect to "dominion" most to heart through its military quest for [full-spectrum dominance](#) -- with all that that now seems to imply. *Ecclesia Militans* "reloaded"? It too would seem to have little capacity or taste for consideration of "dominion over itself" -- a disinclination presumably reinforced by the capacity of the Catholic Church in that regard.

The Great Commission necessarily reinforces those military aspirations to full-spectrum dominance and political doctrines such as [Manifest Destiny](#) (as superseded by variants of the [Monroe Doctrine](#)). It has become part of American civil religion and is often used to promote inter-religious cooperation. [Christian Zionism](#) is recognized as being especially significant in this respect.

## Failure of global "coping capacity" as failure of collective "dominion of self"

The incidence of global crises -- even a crisis of crises -- is the subject of widespread commentary. Collapse of global civilization is variously predicted or envisaged (*Mind Map of Global Civilizational Collapse: why nothing is happening in response to global challenges*, 2011). Global governance is only too easily recognized to be a total mess. Claims to the contrary now merely constitute an aspect of the problem, exacerbated by those cultivating the most myopic short-term perspectives (*Group of 7 Dwarfs: Future-blind and Warning-deaf: self-righteous immoral imperative enabling future human sacrifice*, 2018).

There are of course many remedial proposals and initiatives (*Global Strategies Project*). Missing would appear to be any consideration of the implication that global governance is no longer able to cope, as can be variously argued (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy ?* 2011). Coping capacity could even be said to be limited to the capacity to generate reports and proposals arguing for their viability -- without being able to address the probability of failure to implement them effectively (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009).

The peculiar characteristic of this condition of failure to cope is that it is seldom related to the manner in which the incapacity is increased by the challenges of an ever-increasing global population. **More people makes it ever more difficult to manage when global governance is already in crisis mode.** However it is political suicide to imply that more people cannot be appropriately governed.

Other than optimism and hope, however carefully cultivated, there is little indication that governance -- even in the best of circumstances -- will be able to manage the resource-related crises of the decades to come. As currently understood, **governance can no longer cope with the numbers.** This incapacity can only get worse, together with the degree of pretence that this is not the case. Rose-tinted spectacles and blinkers will be the "killer app" of the future -- enhanced by virtual reality.

There is no framework within which the capacity to govern can be considered in relation to ever increasing numbers. The Catholic Church has been instrumental in ensuring this. The reality of the situation is directly evident to many faced with shortages, breakdowns in transportation, inaccessibility of housing, and the like. All that can be done is to make new proposals, which may or may not be implemented, but are as likely to be inadequate to the numbers with which they will have to cope when they are finally implemented. This is especially evident in the case of infrastructure.

It is within this context that the interpretation of "be fruitful and multiple" by the Catholic Church is completely irresponsible -- through exacerbating a problem of governance already beyond current coping capacity, as argued more generally (*Root Irresponsibility for Major World Problems: the unexamined role of Abrahamic faiths in sustaining unrestrained population growth*, 2007; *Resource Insights from Plus or Minus 12 People on a Liferaft: thought experiment to highlight global dilemmas in a comprehensible context*, 2014).

Some would however be inclined to argue that enabling crisis and collapse is consistent with expectation of divine intervention -- that the Church is effectively "helping God". Others could argue that the Abrahamic religions have traditionally depended on crisis as a dubious "marketing strategy" to attract adherents from among the suffering (*Fundamental Need for Human Sacrifice by Abrahamic Religions: vital prerequisite for sustainable global civilization?* 2018).

## Metaphorical implications of "death penalty"

The "language" of the amendment to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* merits consideration in its own right. It would be naive to consider that the choice of words was without implication in evoking other connotations and associations -- whether inadvertently or deliberately.

**Failure to conform:** As noted above, "death" is frequently presented as the main penalty for failure to conform to the policies of those aspiring to full-spectrum dominance. This has been evident in threats made to bomb cultures back to the Stone Age (Nick Cullather, *Bomb them Back to the Stone Age: An Etymology*, *History News Network*, 10 May 2006). It is currently a feature of discourse between the USA and North Korea, and between the USA and Iran. It was a feature of the response by the Coalition of the Willing to Iraq. Arguments are commonly made for the application of this penalty to the societies of Russia and China.

Death merits recognition as a standard penalty which the leadership of global civilization -- exemplified by Permanent Members of the UN Security Council -- considers it appropriate to apply to those who do not subscribe to its rules, even when some Permanent Members may themselves not subscribe to them (as in the case of the [International Criminal Court](#))

**Economic death?** Interpretation of "death penalty" is complicated by the manner in which whole societies may be effectively condemned to death by deliberate use of structural violence, as noted above -- whether or not "death" is the final outcome. This is evident through use of economic sanctions to increase the consequences of those shortages which are conducive to death. Beyond "economic death", this is a probable (if not deliberate outcome) of sanctions -- as has been so desperately sought in the case of Cuba over decades.

The point has been admirably made by a statement of [Madeleine Albright](#), as Ambassador of US to the United Nations, when questioned

on whether the sanctions against Iraq (killing more children than at Hiroshima) were appropriate. Albright replied: *I think this is a very hard choice, but the price -- we think the price is worth it* (*We Think the Price is Worth It, Fair*, 2001).

Ironically at the time of writing, on the [73rd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima](#), a similar array of sanctions is being applied by the USA against Iran (*US to fully enforce reimposed Iran nuclear sanctions*. *BBC News*, 6 August 2018; *What US sanctions against Iran will snap back on Tuesday?* *Al Jazeera*, 7 August 2018).

The economic death of others -- as "just economic war" ? -- may be framed as the legitimate goal of a [trade war](#) (Lianna Brinded, *Qatar is falling into a socio-economic death spiral and the UAE made it illegal to feel sorry for it*, *Independent*, 7 June 2017; Martin Armstrong, *Europe's Economic Death Spiral*, 17 October 2017; Scott Cohn, *In an economic death spiral: America's worst state for business in 2017*, *CNBC*, 11 July 2017). As a strategic goal, rather than "economic death", it is typically termed [economic collapse](#). Many countries would welcome the collapse of others.

**Just war theory**: Potentially far more problematic is the justification for conventional war by so-called [just war theory](#) -- in the articulation of which the Catholic Church has been complicit. This follows from the theological framework of *Ecclesia Militans*. As with the emphasis in the amendment to the Catholic *Catechism*, this is justified by reference to the power arrogated by legitimate authority -- irrespective of whether that legitimacy may be variously questionable. This is the case made with respect to the legitimacy of the current US Presidency, given the distinctions made between the majority popular vote and its lack of effective representation in the electoral college system.

As succinctly framed by Madeleine Albright, notions of just war theory now merit elaboration to include "just sacrifice theory" -- especially given the tradition of the Abrahamic religions with respect to human sacrifice. It is presumably in that light that the condemnation of millions to death row can be justified as admissible -- especially if their death is achieved by systemic processes and surrogates. Like Madeleine Albright, is the sacrifice of non-believers by each of the Abrahamic religions effectively framed in terms of "the price is worth it"?

**Temporal variant of the "trolley problem"?** As framed by the Catholic Church, the death penalty merits reflection in the light of the classic "[trolley problem](#)" -- a much-studied thought experiment in ethics and moral philosophy. It is a specific experiment among several that highlights the difference between deontological and consequentialist ethical systems. The central question that these dilemmas bring to light is on whether or not it is right to actively inhibit the utility of an individual if doing so produces a greater utility for other individuals.

In relation to the death penalty it could be framed in terms of the choice between saving relatively few in the present (condemning many to death in the future) or acting to save the many in the future (by constraining the response to the relatively few in the present). **This emphasizes the temporal dimension in contrast with other articulations of the problem** -- those of the future being effectively neglected as "over the temporal horizon", as with other forms of strategic short-termism (Roger L. Martin, [Yes, Short-Termism Really Is a Problem](#), *Harvard Business Review*, 9 October 2015) .

The Catholic Church opts for saving the relatively few in the present, gambling on the possibility that the fate of those in the future may be more appropriately addressed at that time -- if any thought is accorded to their fate. Hope is given to those faced with death in the present; the fate of those in the future is in turn placed on hope, however unrealistic -- and the possibility of divine intervention in some form. The approach could be understood in terms of an instance of immediate gratification -- for both the victims and the Church. This is consistent with current marketing philosophy and strategic short-termism (Neil Patel, [The Psychology of Instant Gratification -- and how it will revolutionize your marketing approach](#), *Entrepreneur*, 24 June 2014).

The approach contrasts with understandings of [deferred gratification](#), namely the process of resisting the temptation of an immediate reward in preference for a later reward. Such delayed gratification is otherwise fundamental to Church teachings regarding the relative value of later heavenly reward. A growing body of literature has linked the ability to delay gratification to a host of other positive outcomes, including academic success, physical health, psychological health, and social competence. In contrast, curiously **the Church would appear to be fundamentally indifferent to future suffering**. This itself relates curiously to the indifference to the suffering of those faced with terminal illnesses, or the consequences of giving birth to children that cannot be effectively nourished. The economic implications of such choices are now explored in terms of [time preference](#).

Irrespective of the time preference of the Catholic Church, far more problematic is the radical opposition to any debate on time preferences and risk analysis, as they may affect the fate of billions in the future. The position of the Church is non-negotiable and the possibility of dialogue with regard to that position is as "unacceptable" as the death penalty is now upheld to be. The posture frames any alternative remedial response as being the responsibility of wider society. The suffering of millions is therefore used as a form of blackmail -- seeking conformation to the worldview of the Church.

**"Post-death threat"?** Understanding of the "death penalty" by the Catholic Church offers a strange contrast to that currently threatened by legitimate authorities against any opposition. Aside from the conventional secular understanding on which the amendment focuses, there is the threat long articulated with respect to the life hereafter by the Catholic Church as a legitimate spiritual authority. "Hell" is perhaps then to be framed in modern jargon as a "post-death threat" -- by which many have indeed been terrified.

The similarity with the conventional threat is that both lend themselves to recognition that death-related suffering will result from failure to do what is deemed appropriate by an empowered authority. How are the two threats to be distinguished? Do both constitute forms of blackmail which merit recognition as such?

## Metaphorical implications of "capital punishment"

As noted above, there is provocative significance to the phrasing of "capital punishment" in this period. It is however appropriate to note

that the term is not used in the English version of the amendment to the *Catechism*, although it figures widely in media commentary about it. The preferred term is "death penalty" -- considered in English to be synonymous with "capital punishment". Capital punishment has itself long been a matter of controversy (Vincent R. Jones, *The Problem with Capital Punishment: a critical assessment of the ultimate punitive sanction*, *University of Miami Law Review*, 69, 2015, 27).

The term "capital" is central to popular protests worldwide. It features in a multiplicity of academic texts. It is central to the strategic preoccupations of political parties -- notably those of "Christian Democratic" persuasion. It is obviously central to understandings of finance and economic development as presently conducted.

**Punitive use of capital?** Many of those questioning the use of capital at this time, most obviously its use in exploitative processes, recognize that such use is a form of "punishment", especially of those already disadvantaged and subject to systemic inequalities. The "punitive use of capital" is clearly a strategic option -- whether overt or undeclared. Curiously there are few, if any, references to such punitive use (in those terms), although the manner in which "capital" may itself be subject to "punitive" measures is a concern (Sarah Caldwell and James Fisher, *Moving out of the dog house? The case for easing punitive capital requirements on securitisations*, *Structured Finance in Brief*, 12 August 2015).

Some forms of development may however be criticized as punitive, including those orchestrated by the IMF (*Institutional "rape" as systemic equivalent to individual rape?* 2011). The "rape of countries" for oil is documented by Peter Maass (*Crude World: the violent twilight of oil*, 2010). Countries, regions and cultures may be recognized as having been "deflowered" by the development process (*Flowering and deflowering*, 2014). The punitive aspect may be obscured by euphemism as in the current controversy regarding **cultural appropriation**.

Uncritical use of the term "capital punishment" therefore implies far more than appears to have been intended in the amendment to the *Catechism* in relation to the death penalty. Overtly and conventionally it frames execution of individuals by legitimate authority as unacceptable and inadmissible. What of other forms of punishment and suffering enabled by the use of capital?

**Abusive use of capital?** Is it indeed the case that misuse of capital tends to place large numbers of people on what could be readily recognized as "death row"? As with those incarcerated in prisons within such a context, do they indeed suffer in consequence, possibly to the point of being killed by the experience -- if only spiritually? In this light it would be appropriate to contrast the distinctive views of the different Abrahamic religions on "capital" in relation to their distinctive views on the admissibility of "capital punishment" (Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani, *Capital, Entrepreneur and Islam*, *Islamic Markets*)

How is use of the immense capital resources of the Catholic Church then to be understood? Does their use indeed constitute a form of punishment for some exposed to its consequences -- whether deliberate or inadvertent? Does the failure to use it appropriately constitute a sin of omission -- withholding aid to those in need? (Daniel A. Chapman and Brian Lickel, *Climate Change and Disasters: how framing affects justifications for giving or withholding aid to disaster victims*, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7, 2016, 1)

Beyond the widely reported **scandals** associated with the **Vatican Bank**, are there uses of those capital funds which merit recognition as constituting inadmissible "capital punishment"? (*Vatican Bank caught in row over new president's German military links*, *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2013; Jonathan M. S. Pearce, *Guns and Violence: Vatican Bank is the main shareholder in 'Pietro Beretta' arms company*, *Skeptical Ink*, 16 December 2012; Mathew Block, *The Vatican and Arms Dealers Is the Vatican Bank the Largest Shareholder in an Italian Arms Company?* *First Things*, 23 June 2015)

**Seat of the "soul"?** Given the association of "capital" with the head -- whether for individual or country -- it is appropriate to explore its implication as the seat of the "soul", especially given the importance attached to it by the Catholic Church, and various expressions of concern regarding "soullessness" (*Soulless organization: deliverability as the dream*, 2015).

In the case of the individual, the soul has been traditionally associated with the **pineal gland** (Gert-Jan Lokhorst, *Descartes and the Pineal Gland*, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013; Jeffrey Roberts, *There's An Organ In Your Brain Which Seats Your Soul: meet your pineal gland*. *Collective Evolution*, 15 December 2013; F. López-Muñoz, et al, *The Pineal Gland as Physical Tool of the Soul Faculties: a persistent historical connection*, *Neurologia*, 27, 2012, 3; Gary Zukav, *The Seat of the Soul*, 1989).

With respect to capital punishment, and with no reference to the pineal gland, Douglas Hofstadter frames his inquiry into what is meant when we say "I" in the following terms with respect to *Small-souled and large-souled humans*:

Some of us believe in capital punishment -- the intentional public squelching of a human soul, no matter how ardently that soul would plead for mercy, would tremble, would shake, would shriek, would desperately struggle to escape, on being led down the corridor to the site of their doom.... Some of us believe that atheists, agnostics, and followers of other faiths - and worst of all, traitors who have abandoned "the" faith -- have no souls at all, and are therefore eminently deserving of death. Some people... believe that women have no souls -- or perhaps, a little more generously, that women have "smaller souls" than men do... Some of us... believe that neither a just-fertilized egg nor a five-month old fetus possess a full human soul, and that, in some sense, a potential mother's life counts more than the life of that small creature, alive though it indisputably is. (*I Am a Strange Loop*, 2007, p. 17)

Hofstadter continues by noting the recognition by many that a person:

... may be essentially "all gone" many years before the body gave up the ghost... It strikes us that, although there is a human brain... something has gone away from that brain -- something essential, something that contains the secrets of the person's soul. The "I" has either wholly or partly vanished... never to be found again. (p. 17)

Hofstadter then discusses the moral dilemma of *Where to draw that fateful line?*

All human beings -- at least all sufficiently large-souled ones -- have to make up their minds about such matters as the swatting of mosquitoes or flies, the setting of mousetraps, the eating of rabbits or lobsters or turkeys or pigs... (p. 18)

Contributing to this difficulty is that nearly all vertebrate species possess a pineal gland and therefore may be "ensouled" in some form. How indeed do such considerations relate to the divine injunction of having *dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1-28)?*

Is it only with respect to the "large-souled" that capital punishment is inadmissible under the new dispensation? Are there no constraints on the execution of the "small-souled" or those considered to be lacking any soul at all -- as is so widely evident, and has been so characteristic of the practice of the Catholic Church in the past? Is there justification for ensuring that the punishment of the terminally ill should be ensured at all costs, irrespective of the degree of suffering, and whether they are "all gone" or not?

**Cognitive twist: "downside of up"?** There is a strange interplay of terms of unexplored implication -- meriting consideration in the face of the potentially fatal consequences of capital punishment. "Capital" is understood both as **economic capital** and the **capital of a country** -- as well as extending to include **cultural capital**, intangible **political capital** or **social capital**. With its association to "head", as in capital punishment, a capital may be the location of the **"headquarters"** of various institutions, although clarified otherwise (*Origin of "quarters" in the sense of living area, English Language and Usage*).

A degree of confusion enters with use of "seat" as an alternative to "headquarters", namely the **seat of a legal entity** such as the government -- which the Catholic Church translates as **Holy See** in relation to the Vatican. In anatomical terms, "seat" is readily understood in terms of "hindquarters", namely the **buttocks and its synonyms** (including arse or ass, as used for over a thousand years). There is therefore the strange implication of a form of fusion between "head" and "tail", especially with regard to the locus of legal authorisation of capital punishment.

The unusual connotations are especially evident in that a typical form of **corporal punishment**, now held to be inadmissible, includes beating of the buttocks. Further confusion exists in that military weaponry used to punish others -- most obviously their capitals -- is typically stored in an **"arsenal"**. Use of "seat" with respect to "seat of the soul" in the head is noted above. Some would locate it elsewhere, notably in the heart, as in the traditional cultures of Egypt, Greece, Aztec. and Hindu.

The head-face preoccupation is evident in the security-related issues associated with the controversial inadmissibility of coverage of the face (*Facism as Superficial Intercultural Extremism: burkha, toplessness, sunglasses, beards, and flu masks*, 2009). Curiously controversy is evoked otherwise with respect to coverage of the area of the "seat". The issue is most evident in current use of the internet and its focus on "Facebook" -- matched by a remarkable degree of usage of the internet for the dissemination of pornography (via Facebook or otherwise, in the absence of any effective **"Arsebook"**, other than on Facebook). Pornography can of course be readily upheld as a form of unacceptable punishment, most notably of women by men (Julia Long, *Pornography is more than just sexual fantasy: it's cultural violence*, *The Washington Post*, 27 May 2016).

Further confusion is implied by the absence of recognition of any intermediary "heartquarters", despite the considerable importance attached to the "economic heart" of a country (Heinz D. Kurz, *The Beat of the Economic Heart: Joseph Schumpeter and Arthur Spiethoff on business cycles*, 2010; Dean Whittaker, *An Economic Heart Attack*, 31 January 2009). It is typically the economic heart which is the target of conflict between countries -- as a means of ensuring the capital punishment of their peoples (as with the use of sanctions). It has been argued that: *Metropolitan areas represent the various 'chambers' of the economic heart of any country, further justifying the study of the movements between, to and from them* (P. C. Kok, et al, *Post-apartheid Patterns of Internal Migration in South Africa*, 2003, p. 35).

Strangely there is extensive recognition of the **"four chambers of the heart"**, whereas the use of "quarters" with respect to headquarters or hindquarters does not offer that sense. In law, **"chambers"** is a room or office used by a barrister or a judge. It is however within legislative or parliamentary chambers that capital punishment may be approved -- with **unicameralism** and **bicameralism** being far more common than **tricameralism**. The future possibility of the traditional possibility of **tetracameralism** has been envisaged. Although it is however argued that the legislative process in the USA is effectively "quadricameral" -- namely House, Senate, presidential veto, and judicial review -- as criticized by (Adrian Vermeule, *Second-Best Democracy*, *Harvard Law and Policy Review*). In the case of hindquarters, use of "chamber" is of course far more restrictive. The issues bear comparison with discussion of the traditional three **estates of the realm** and the role of any **fourth estate**, with the latter being especially relevant to capital punishment as a consequence of **trial by media**.

With respect to the "head", a **psychological condition of bicameralism** has been argued by Julian Jaynes using governmental bicameralism as a metaphor to describe a mental state in which the experiences and memories of the right hemisphere of the brain are transmitted to the left hemisphere via auditory hallucinations (*The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, 1976). What amounts to a quadricameral psychological condition has been argued in the case of the AQAL framework of the integral theory of Ken Wilber. This offers the intriguing possibility that "capital punishment" could be explored in a quite different manner.

Given this complex of associations, it is appropriate to argue that the three Abrahamic religions effectively function as a "tricameral belief system" -- whether of head or heart -- subject to a level of dysfunctionality of which any cardiologist would be deeply concerned. Through its claim to exclusive representation of one such chamber, the Catholic Church can be understood as exacerbating this condition.

## Population bomb as a ticking time bomb

As noted above, any sense that global overpopulation may prove to be the "population bomb" argued by Paul Ehrlich (1968) has been widely deprecated, especially since the timing predicted has seemingly proven to be invalid. For many this has justified discounting the threat completely. That the bomb may continue to tick is not a focus of collective concern.

If "bomb" can be considered an appropriate metaphor, the failure of a bomb to explode as predicted merits careful reflection. Bombs dating from World War II continue to be discovered and considered a major threat. A bomb can of course be designed to explode after a period of delay -- as a [time bomb](#). Since the explosion of any "population bomb" does not appear to have been consciously designed by global civilization, there is nevertheless the possibility that unconscious systemic processes have designed it to explode at some stage in the future -- possibly consistent with the favoured prophecies of various faiths. Any sense of imminent civilizational collapse is suggestive of this recognition ([Jared Diamond, \*Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed\*, 2005](#)).

More intriguing is the experience painfully gained from [improvised explosive devices](#) (IEDs). These are devices often used in unconventional warfare -- constructed and deployed in ways other than in conventional military action. They are commonly used as roadside bombs and may render potentially dangerous access to large areas.

To the extent that humanity is readily framed in secular and religious discourse as being "on a journey", there is a case for recognizing the extent to which any such journey may be rendered highly dangerous by population analogues to IEDs. Rather than a population bomb resulting in global mass destruction, an IED variant may confine its destructive effects locally -- "along the way". Arguably the possibility of urban system collapse as a result of overcrowding could be seen in this light -- as suggested by Venezuela at the time of writing.

## Dangerous conflation of "canon law" with "cannon law"?

The argument above concerns the widely publicized amendment to the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), regarding the death penalty. Little is said of the distinction between the Catechism and Canon Law as clarified in response to the question: [What is the difference between "Catechism" and "Canon Law" in Catholicism?](#) (*Christianity*):

- The [Catechism](#) is a teaching tool for the bishops and various catechists to instruct the faithful.
- [Code of Canon Law](#) is the system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the hierarchical authorities of the Catholic Church to regulate its external organization and government and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the mission of the Church.

It is unclear whether the amendment to the [Catechism](#) is reflected or derived from an amendment to the Canon Law of the Catholic Church -- as a reform of the existing corpus of canonical legislation. However one authoritative clarification of the new amendment suggests that no such change is necessary (Colin B. Donovan, [Capital Punishment - The Pope's Position](#), *Eternal Word Television Network, undated*):

The Church's teaching has not changed, nor has the Pope said that it has. The Catechism and the Pope state that the state has the right to exact the death penalty. Nations have the right to just war and individuals have the right to self-defense. Does that mean that any and all uses of force to defend oneself against a criminal, or a criminal nation, are justified? No, and most people understand that.

**Unexplored conflation?** The question which merits some attention is whether there is a dangerous degree of unexplored conflation between the "canon law" of various religions and "cannon law" as long practiced by state authorities -- with or without the complicity of the Catholic Church (for example). The dangers of such conflation are suggested by the curious use of gun metaphors in actual discussion of [gun control](#) strategies in the USA ([Gun Metaphors Deeply Embedded In English Language](#), *National Public Radio*, 19 March 2013).

The question can be raised more generally ([Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors](#), 1993), notably with respect to the use of "cannons" ("[Tank-thoughts](#)" from "[Think-tanks](#)": *metaphors constraining development of global governance*, 2003).

A degree of possible conflation is addressed with a touch of humour in a question to *The Times* by Mark Startin:

Recent correspondents on the relative sizes of tank engagements included Field Marshal Sir John Stanier, but also Dom Alberic Stacpoole, OSB (April 18). Today you carry a letter from Canon Michael Saward on the same subject. Is it that tank battles have some special appeal to members of the clergy? Or do they simply have a greater chance of having their letters printed? ([Canon fodder](#), 28 April 2003).

**Missions and gun law?** It is seldom recognized that much of the terminology of democratic processes derives historically from the elaboration of the rules and procedures of Catholic monastic orders (M-H. Vicaire et Léo Moulin, [Le Monde Vivant des Religieux, Dominicains, Jésuites, Bénédictins...](#), In: *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*. 21, 1966, 2, pp. 447-448). This is notably evident in the use of "mission" and "missive" and in their subsequent extension and metaphorical conflation with "missile" and military missions ([Missiles, Missives, Missions and Memetic Warfare](#), 2003).

In that light, and following the arguments above, to what extent is "canon law" to be understood as a heavily disguised and distorted form of "cannon law" -- given the implications in practice of the latter? Much has been made of "gun law" in the imposition of colonial power over vulnerable cultures -- under the banner of "might is right". The controversies regarding gun control in the USA are intricately related to appeals to the Second Amendment, as can be speculatively explored ([Arming Civil Society Worldwide: getting democracy to work in](#)

*the emergent American Empire?* 2003). Given the role of the Catholic Church in the colonizing process, the role of "canon law" in legitimizing many of its horrors merits appropriate recognition.

**Spiritual jurisdictions potentially in violent opposition?** Not to be forgotten are the equivalents to Canon Law in the other Abrahamic religions, especially in the light of the legitimacy they provide to any violent suppression of opposition in which they engage.

The canon law of each such religion is an explicit reflection of the corpus of sacred scriptures central to those faiths. Paradoxically, of particular relevance is the manner in which the phrase -- fundamental to the challenge of population control and dominion over others -- is common to the canon law of each, namely *Genesis 1-28: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* The fundamental irony is that each interprets this as a divine injunction to seek dominion over the others -- reducing them to cannon fodder if necessary.

## Metaphorical entanglement of "canon fodder" with "cannon fodder"?

The dangerous implications of conflation of "canon law" with "cannon law" extend to derogatory use of "cannon fodder" -- and its potential association with "canon fodder". This is suggested by the original use of the expression in French in a criticism of Napoleon: *On en était venu à ce point de mépris pour la vie des hommes et pour la France, d'appeler les conscrits la matière première et la chair à canon* (*De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*, 30 March 1814).

Despite its specific use with respect to "canon law", **canon** is of far more general significance, whether as a collection of formally approved scriptures, or as a body of rules fundamental to a field of aesthetics, literature, philosophy or music. As such the term may be applied more loosely to a body of work formally recognized in some way by a discipline.

One possibility of confusion with "cannon" is indicated by spellings in other languages with Christian majorities: German (*Kanonisches Recht* and *Kanonenfutter*); Spanish (*Derecho canónico* and *Carne de cañón*); Italian (*Diritto canonico* and *Carne da cannone*); Portuguese (*Direito canônico* and *Forragem de canhão*).

**Canon fodder?** Surprisingly, there are many references to "canon fodder". Less surprising, it is rare to encounter any which relate to Canon Law or theology. *Canon Fodder* is however the title of the theological blog of [Michael J. Kruger](#).

Given the traditionally conflicted views of the Catholic Church in relation to women, and arguments for their empowerment in relation to family planning, it is especially interesting to note use of the term in an extensive historical review of the relevant canons concerning marriage (Thomas Noble, *Canon Fodder: The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent*, *Commonweal*, 5 March 2018).

**Challenge of a canon:** As a musical form, a canon is a notable feature of the music of Beethoven and Bach. Its composition, execution and comprehension may be considered a challenge in its own right. The works of both composers are esteemed as exemplifying the highest values of Christian civilization. Beethoven's *magnum opus*, the 9th Symphony, is the official [Anthem of Europe](#).

Particular attention is given to the cognitive implications of the canons of Bach by [Douglas Hofstadter](#) (*Gödel, Escher, Bach: an eternal golden braid*, 1979). In highlighting self-reflexivity, the book is characterized by an intense interaction between form and content exemplified in 20 dialogues. Many of these simultaneously talk about and imitate strict musical forms used by Bach, such as canons and fugues (*Canon By Intervalllic Augmentation*, *Genius*; *Crab Canon*, *Genius*). As noted above, in a later work Hofstadter focuses on the subtlety of what is meant when we say "I" (*I Am A Strange Loop*, 2007). The question is a challenge to any collectivity (*Sustaining a Community of Strange Loops: comprehension and engagement through aesthetic ring transformation*, 2010). With its necessarily paradoxical nature, the question could be fruitfully asked of the Catholic Church.

Given the formal appreciation of the subtle complexities of sacred music by the Catholic Church, it can be asked whether Canon Law as a whole could be embodied and expressed in musical form, as explored with respect to the integrative expression of other canonical frameworks (*A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic?* 2006). Otherwise understood, can the harmonic constructions of Bach and Beethoven already be seen as implying such an interpretation?

**Challenging a canon:** Understood as a classical corpus of writings, the merits of a canon can be called into question in a self-reflexive process, as by Sam Sacks (*Canon Fodder: denouncing the classics*, *The New Yorker*, 23 May 2013). As noted by Mark Graber, the Civil War is the single leading source for canonical material for American constitutionalism (*The Declaration of Independence as Canon Fodder*, *Tulsa Law Review*, 2013). The bewildering evolution of the humanities, as a canon in its own right, is the focus of a compilation by Jan Gorak (*Canon vs. Culture: reflections on the current debate*, 2001). *Canon Fodder* is the title of a science fiction series; *Canon Fodder* is a series of war (and later science fiction) themed action games and the video game.

**Recognition of neglect:** The term has been used to challenge neglect of books by immigrants, foreigners and minorities (Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Canon Fodder*, *The Washington Post*, 3 May 2018). Similar use of the phrase has been made in the recovery of historical memory about a set of thinkers who have been forgotten or purposely ignored in relation to the canon of Western political philosophy (Penny Weiss, *Canon Fodder: historical women, political thinkers*, 2009). This theme is explored by Mary Ellen Waithe (*From Canon Fodder to Canon-Formation: how do we get there from here?* *The Monist*, 98, 2015, 1). Such use is specifically designed to recall the fate of soldiers in war who are treated by their governments and military leaders as expendable.

This has the more general implication that **the Abrahamic faiths have, through their respective canons, effectively framed women as "canon fodder"**. The point is made otherwise by [Elise Boulding](#) (*The Underside of History: a view of women through time*, 1976) -- especially in the light of any assumption of their relative lack of soul.

**Marginalization of alternative perspectives:** It is in that sense of neglect that the term has been explicitly borrowed to describe contrarian scientific concepts dismissed because they do not conform to conventional wisdom (Gerald W. Dorn, II, *Canon Fodder: a case for contrarian science*, *NCBI*, 2016). It is argued that reviewers dispose of "unworthy" science by "sacrificing it to the canon".

So framed. what is more conventionally described as "mainstream" may be recognized as constituting a canon from which alternative perspectives are necessarily excluded -- effectively as "canon fodder" (Antti-Ville Kärjä, *A Prescribed Alternative Mainstream: popular music and canon formation*, *Popular Music*, 25, 2006, 1).

As the iconic embodiment of one such canon, the process is exemplified by the much-cited declaration of Margaret Thatcher: *There Is No Alternative*, as may be explored more generally (*Framing the Global Future by Ignoring Alternatives: unfreezing categories as a vital necessity*, 2009). Clearly this commitment to marginalization is a feature of the exclusivism characteristic of the Abrahamic faiths individually, as well as within each of them -- as exemplified by the position of the Catholic Church in relation to the multiplicity of Christian denominations.

As currently conceived, cultivation of a dominant canon can be understood as what amounts to a **remaindering strategy** -- through which many are deliberately "left behind", as separately discussed (*Reintegration of a Remaindered World: cognitive recycling of objects of systemic neglect*, 2011). Cultivation of a canon framing an elitist worldview can then be usefully explored with respect to concerns about global inequality and the challenges for the "99%" faced with the "1%". Provocatively it might be asked whether those proportions unconsciously mirror the number it is anticipated will reach the "kingdom of heaven" -- with the remainder to be left behind -- again as canon fodder.

**Canonisation as mainstream embodiment?** An exceptional feature of cultivation of a canon is the process of transforming what was formerly unrecognized and neglected into an exemplar of that canon -- through **canonisation**. This is most explicitly recognized as a procedure within the Catholic Church -- strangely limited to those who have already suffered the penalty of death, especially as martyrs. This process is distinguished from the use of a "canon" to describe a member of certain bodies subject to an **ecclesiastical rule** -- namely a cleric. The term could of course be applied to members of any formally recognized discipline.

Canonisation may take other forms with respect to other canons -- for which the term may be borrowed as a metaphor. Receipt of major awards (Nobel Prize, etc) may be recognized as a form of canonisation -- notably in the case of "literary canonisation" (Doseline Kigur, *Literary Prizes, Writers' Organisations and Canon Formation in Africa*, *African Studies*, 75, 2016, 2; Wole Soyinka, *The Centenary award is canonisation of terror*, *African Orbit*, 1 March 2014)

Curiously a person may be variously recognized as a "cannon" in urban jargon -- as with use of *cojones*.

**Reduction of the "flowers of civilization" to "canon fodder"?** The aesthetic tragedy of the violent encounter between canons -- typically enabled by cannons -- has been notably articulated using "flower" as a metaphor. Curiously the association with the use of cannons lends itself to exploration through their role in relation to warfare, as extensively explored by Ann Elias (*War and the Visual Language of Flowers: an antipodean perspective*, *War, Literature and the Arts*, 20, 2008; *Exquisite Corpse: Flowers and the First World War*, *International Journal of the Humanities*, 5, 2007).

The tragedy has been expressed in terms of those "mowed down" by the guns of war (*The Flower of Youth, Mangled and Maimed*, *The Atlantic*, August 2014; Katharine Tynan, *Flower of Youth: poems in war time*, 1915; Erin Blakemore, *How the Poppy Came to Symbolize World War I*, *Smithsonian*, 20 October 2016; Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Commonwealth's cannon fodder*, *Independent*, 12 November 1998).

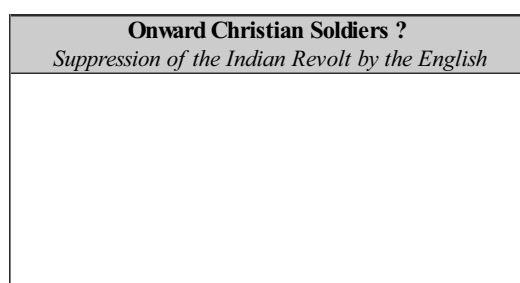
There is a curious ambiguity to any assumption that a canon constitutes or embodies the "flower" of a culture -- and the only one, when others are marginalized, if not eradicated. There is of course a long history of effort by each of the Abrahamic religions to eradicate the other -- often with the aid of "cannons". This contrasts with use of the flower metaphor to frame culture as the blossoming of flowers, as was the case in the Chinese **Hundred Flowers Campaign**. Promotion of a singular dominant canon can then be understood as ensuring a form of deflowering, as separately explored (*Flowering of Civilization -- Deflowering of Culture*, 2014).

## Canons as the "cannons" of memetic warfare?

The promotion of a singular dominant canon is increasingly called into question -- despite the vigorously articulated ambition of leaders of some countries to make their own country "great again". The **Western canon** is the body of Western literature, European classical music, philosophy, and works of art that represents the high culture of Europe and North America. As noted, the music of Bach and Beethoven has been a primary articulation of this.

**From the mouth of a cannon born?** Tragically it could be said that the Western canon, especially exemplified by Europe, was born from the "mouth of a cannon" -- a process in which the Catholic Church was especially complicit. Paradox has been evident in the bloody conflict between forms of Christianity -- and the abysmal failure to engage fruitfully with other religions or other cultures.

As a method of capital punishment extensively used by the British in the 19th century, **blowing from a gun** tragically and appropriately reinforces the argument. The victim was tied to the mouth of a **cannon** which was then fired, as surprisingly depicted in a video (*British Kill Indians With Canon Executions*) and in the following painting.





Painting by Vasily Vereshchagin, circa 1884 [Public domain]  
[via Wikimedia Commons](#)

An historical review of those times (of which the painting is one record), argues that up to 10 million Indians were slaughtered over a 10 year period in revenge for the so-called "[Indian Mutiny](#)", namely India's First War of Independence ([Amaresh Misra](#), *War of Civilisations: India AD 1857*, 2008). In India this period of acute terror was called "the Devil's Wind". Being blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon was regarded by the British perpetrators as one of their more humane methods of slaughter ("instant death to the victim, salutary terror to the onlookers who had body parts sprayed all over them").

Cannon fire is readily recognized as a means of "hammering" opponents. This usefully recalls the major text of the Catholic Church on witchcraft (*Malleus Maleficarum*, 1487), commonly translated as *The Hammer of Witches*. It prescribed inquisitorial practices for secular courts in order to extirpate witches; recommended procedures included torture to obtain confessions and the death penalty. Despite controversy, the treatise remained influential on culture for several centuries, being later used by royal courts during the Renaissance, and contributing to the increasingly brutal prosecution of heresy and witchcraft during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Echoes of this framing remain evident in the modern effort to eradicate terrorists (*Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?* 2014; *European states complicit in CIA torture*, *The Nation*, 1 June 2018; *True scale of UK role in torture and rendition after 9/11 revealed*, *The Guardian*, 28 June 2018).

Understood in this light, **the primary symbol of globalization could be recognized in the ambiguities of the "can(n)on ball" -- and the "can(n)on fodder" they engender.**

**Musical framing of inter-canonical violence?** Creative efforts have been made to frame "inter-canonical violence" through music. Ironically the birth of modern Europe could be dated to the defeat of Napoleon in battles "celebrated" in music using cannon fire (Philip Shaw, *Canon-fever: Beethoven, Waterloo and the Noise of War*, University of Leicester, 2017). The *1812 Overture* of Tchaikovsky is best known for its climactic volley of cannon fire.

Anecdotal tales recount the influence of cannon fire, real or imagined, on Beethoven. He included 193 live cannon in his commemoration of the Duke of Wellington's victory over Joseph Bonaparte in 1813 -- in a work known as *Wellington's Victory* (Op. 91).

**Number patterns:** The reason for 193 can be understood in the light of Beethoven's use of a system of numbers to guide aspects of many of his works, especially major ones, as explored by I. Grattan-Guinness (*Some numerological features of Beethoven's output*, *Annals of Science*, 51, 1994, 2, 103-135). The system is manifest in the number of notes in a melody and/or of bars in a work or part of it, in groupings and numberings of works of a given kind, and in his deliberate choice of Opus numbers. The interpretation of the numbers was not his own innovation, but came largely from Christian and Masonic traditions.

As composer of what was subsequently recognized as the Anthem of Europe, it could then be said that the birth of Europe was numerically framed, as had been the case with iconic cathedrals. Most obviously:

- **193:** a [prime number](#); a [happy number](#); a [lucky number](#); an [odious number](#); the sum of 2 [square numbers](#):  $(3 \times 4)^2 + (3 \times 4)^2$ ; the difference of 2 [square numbers](#):  $972 - 962$  (or  $9409 - 9216$ ); a [square-free number](#); a centered [32-gonal number](#) [There is the strangest of ironies with respect to this argument in the fact that the world record claimed for projection as a [human cannonball](#) is 193 feet.]
- **91:** a distinct [semiprime](#); a [triangular number](#); a [hexagonal number](#); a centered [nonagonal number](#); a centered [cube number](#); a [square pyramidal number](#), being the sum of the squares of the first six [integers](#)

Of some relevance, particular attention is given in the mathematical and computer sciences to [canonical form](#). The distinction between "canonical" and "normal" forms varies by subfield. In most fields, a canonical form specifies a unique representation for every object, while a normal form simply specifies its form, without the requirement of uniqueness. In reconciling the relationship between seemingly incommensurable canons, such distinctions may be vital to the success of any exploration of mathematical theology, as separately argued (*Mathematical Theology: future science of confidence in belief*, 2011).

**Symbolic projection?** With respect to the Anthem of Europe, as concluded by [Richard Taruskin](#) (*The "Ninth"*, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 2009):

The meanings embodied in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony are no longer public in this way. Though they are clearly crucial components of the work, they cannot be fully comprehended according to some socially sanctioned code. They have become subjective, hermetic, gnomic, "not of this world". They are not so private as to render the musical discourse unintelligible, but they do render its message ineffable and inexhaustible and, to that extent, oracular. Intuitive grasp, aided of course by whatever

can be gleaned by code or study or experience, is the only mode of understanding available. Just as often we may be deeply moved without quite knowing why or how. And that must be what Beethoven meant by insisting, in his late years, that he was not merely a composer (*Tonsetzer*) but a "tone-poet" (*Tondichter*).

Commentators noted the deliberate choice of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as celebratory entertainment on the occasion of the G20 Summit (Bryony Jones, *Why Merkel chose 'Ode to Joy' for G20 concert*, CNN, 7 July 2017). Long accepted as the **Anthem of Europe** by the Council of Europe and by the European Union, the *Ode to Joy* has been variously used in support of quite diverse political agendas.

As a metaphor, imposition of the experience can be understood otherwise in that it was Beethoven's final complete symphony, composed when he was almost totally deaf. Those protesting the Summit in the streets of Hamburg would readily subscribe to the "deafness" of the G20 leaders (*Arrests and injuries as Hamburg gripped by mass anti-G20 protests*, *The Guardian*, 7 July 2017).

The inability of world leaders to "hear" the water cannons deployed against the demonstrators, echoes anecdotal accounts of Beethoven's inability to hear cannon fire during his composition of music in which cannons were incorporated (*Group of 7 Dwarfs: Future-blind and Warning-deaf -- self-righteous immoral imperative enabling future human sacrifice*, 2018).

**Noopolitics and memetic warfare?** As presented by *Wikipedia*, **noopolitics** is an information strategy of manipulating international processes through forming in the general public a positive or negative attitude by means of mass media. The aim is to reframe external or internal policy (of a state or block of states) such as to create a positive or negative image of ideas and promulgated moral values (David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, *The promise of NoÖpolitik*, *First Monday*, August, 2007; A. V. Baichik and S. B. Nikonov, *Noopolitik as Global Information Strategy*, 2012).

Given the increasingly widespread preoccupation with **information warfare**, what indeed is **memetic warfare**? For Brian J. Hancock (*Memetic Warfare: the future of war*, *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, April-June 2010):

Memes form the invisible but very real DNA of human society. A meme is essentially an idea, but not every idea is a meme. In order for an idea to become a meme it must be passed on -- or replicated to another individual. Much like a virus moves from body to body, memes move from mind to mind. Just as genes organize themselves into DNA, cells, and chromosomes, so too do replicating elements of culture organize themselves into memes, and co-adaptive meme complexes or "memeplexes"...

The principle of memetic warfare is to displace, or overwrite dangerous pathogenic memes with more benign memes. Once a critical level of saturation of the new meme set is achieved in the target population, undesirable human artifacts and behaviors such as weapon caches and IED attacks will disappear. Ideally the virus of the mind being targeted will be overwritten with a higher fidelity, fecundity, and longevity memeplex in order to assure long term sustainability. When this is not practical, it is still possible to displace a dangerous memeplex, by creating a more contagious benign meme utilizing certain packaging, replication, and propagation tricks.

As yet to be clarified is the extent to which "memetic warfare" is a primary characteristic of noopolitics, as might be readily assumed. Seemingly there are as yet no studies of "memetic warfare" (as such) in relation to "noopolitics" (as such), as noted separately (*Noopolitics and memetic warfare within the noosphere*, 2014; *Missiles, Missives, Missions and Memetic Warfare: navigation of strategic interfaces in multidimensional knowledge space*, 2001)

**Imaginary revolution?** Is there a case for recognizing the possibility of a "metaphoric revolution", an "imaginary revolution", or a "revolution of the imagination" -- as previously explored (*Metaphoric Revolution: in quest of a manifesto for governance through metaphor*, 1988, *Memetic warfare with aesthetic weapons?* 2012)? The **Arab Spring** of 2012 has been explicitly framed in these terms (Tarik Ahmed Elseewi, *The Arab Spring: a revolution of the imagination*, *International Journal of Communication*, 2011; Jonathan Jones, *Tahrir Square aflame: the visual basis of an imaginary revolution*, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2011).

Are the powerful metaphors of the future likely to enable new forms of integration and the emergence of collective entities of higher orders of complexity -- by analogy to the discovery by mathematicians of new classes of symmetry groups? Or are they likely to be memetic analogues to the **neutron bomb** -- information bombs with catastrophic effects of unforeseen dimensions on identity and the social fabric? The possibilities of such metaphors are already evident in **viral marketing**. A worldwide tsunami of desperation?

Recent reports to the Club of Rome can be seen as efforts to frame a new secular canon (*2052: a Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years*, 2012; *Come On! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet*, 2018). Can be understood as revolutionary documents -- a call for some form of revolution in thinking or imaginative engagement, as separately discussed (*Engendering 2052 through Re-imagining the Present: Review of a report to the Club of Rome*, 2012; *Exhortation to We the Peoples from the Club of Rome*, 2018)? And, if not, why not? In the light of the trends presented, what is the requisite strategic **paradigm shift** and how does that relate to a **scientific revolution** in thinking?

**Contrast with "cannon":** Even the possible use of "cannons" against "canon" has been evoked (Azade Seyhan, *Cannons Against the Canon: representations of tradition and modernity in Heine's literary history*, *Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 63, 1989, 4). The relation between "canon" and "cannon" has however been used to frame a more fruitful approach to strategic communication of relevance to the issues raised above. For **Antonio López**:

In order to convey the dangers of climate change, many activists deploy the old canon of communication theory, which views mass media as a kind of "magic bullet." Influenced by theories such as George Lakoff's cognitive linguistics, they propose that environmentally "progressive" mass media frames can be aimed like a cannon at the "public mind." This article argues that such an effort mirrors a mechanistic strategy of industrial production and remains a "shallow" method of environmental

communications. In response, it is argued that "organic media," like glasnost, is based on open and local contexts. (*Defusing the Cannon/Canon: an organic media approach to environmental communication*, *Environmental Communication*, 4, 2010, 1, pp. 99-108),

## Time wars, Death Stars and Canon Law?

**Time wars:** A sense of "time wars" in contrast with conventional "space wars" has long been a feature of widely disseminated science fiction, notably via the "Time Lords" of *Doctor Who*. The latter is but one example of **temporal warfare** explored in fiction and in video games. The possibility has evoked a wide array of imaginative reflection (*Embodying a Timeship vs. Empowering a Spaceship*, 2003; *Timeship: conception, technology, design, embodiment and operation*, 2003).

It is of course the case that the branches of Christianity in general -- and the Catholic Church in particular -- variously frame themselves to be "eternal", namely transcending the flow of time in some mysterious manner (Bill Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, 2011). In the case of Catholics, a careful distinction is made between the "external" Church and the "eternal" invisible Church (*The Church: what is it and why won't the gates of hell prevail against it? Think on His Truth*, 2013). A strangely similar understanding of time is evident in what is variously termed **perpetual war** or endless war, as framed by the USA -- notably with respect to the global war on terror (David A. Love, *A State of Perpetual War*, *Huffington Post*, 18 March 2010; James Joyner, *How Perpetual War Became U.S. Ideology*, *The Atlantic*, 11 May 2011; *Is the war on terror going to be eternal?* *Quora*). Jihad and crusade may be framed in such terms.

Conflict in temporal terms has been explored by **Jeremy Rifkin** (*Time Wars: the primary conflict in human history*, 1987). A time war can be readily seen as the primary feature of the **natalism** strongly promoted within the Abrahamic religions -- each competing to "out-people" the others. The framing has been otherwise explored (Mark Fisher, *Time-wars: towards an alternative for the neo-capitalist era*, *Gonzo*, 2012; D. A. Hicks, *Time Wars: Is there a financial undertow from accelerating technical advance?* *Research Technology Management*, 2000).

**Star Wars:** With a canon readily understood as a "star" in the global cultural firmament, imagination engendered by the temporal dimension of "star wars" merits recognition (Andrew Gordon, *Star Wars: a myth for our time*, *Screening the Sacred*, 1995; Koenraad Kuiper, *Star Wars: an imperial myth*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, Spring 1988; Martin Miller and Robert Sprich, *The Appeal of "Star Wars": an archetypal-psychoanalytic view*, *American Imago* 38, 1981, 2; John Lyden, *The Apocalyptic Cosmology of Star Wars*, *Journal of Religion and Film*, 4, 2000,1).

The various explorations of the theme have subsequently been recognized as the **Star Wars canon** (*Star Wars Canon Timeline*, July 2018). The theme framed perception of the **US Strategic Defense Initiative** of Ronald Reagan in 1983 -- a proposed **missile defense** system (Robert Bowman, *Star Wars: defense or death star?* *US National Institute of Space Security Studies*, 1985).

**Death Star:** The influential canon repeatedly reinforced credence of a **Death Star** -- the epitome of imperial destruction (Andrew Blair, *Star Wars: why does the Empire keep building Death Stars?* *Den of Geek*, 12 December 2016).

This has in turn framed the exploration of current challenges (Guy Walker, *What the Death Star can tell us about ergonomics methods*, *Theoretical Issues in Ergonomics Science*, 17, 2016; Donald Goldsmith, *Nemesis: the death-star and other theories of mass extinction*, 1985; Charles W. Harper Jr, *Might Occam's Canon Explode the Death Star?: a moving-average model of biotic extinctions*, *Palaios*, 2, 1987, 6).

**Space Force:** The Space Wars myth is currently giving credence to the US announcement of the formation of a "Space Force" -- a new, military department focused specifically on space (*Vice President Mike Pence unveils plan to create Space Force*, *CNBC*, 9 August 2018; *Think Space Force is a joke? Here are four major space threats to take seriously*, *Space.com*, 9 August 2018; David Price, *Militarizing Space: starship troopers, same as it ever was*, *CounterPunch*, 10 August 2018).

As declared by the US President:

The essence of the American character is to explore new horizons and to tame new frontiers... But our destiny beyond the Earth is not only a matter of national identity, but a matter of national security so important for our military... When it comes to defending America, it is not enough to merely have an American presence in space. **We must have American dominance in space.** (*Trump Orders Space Force for 'American Dominance'*, *Signs Space-Traffic Policy*, *Space.com*, 18 June 2018; *Trump's Space Force Needs \$8 Billion Over 5 Years*, *Pence Says*, *Fortune*, 18 June 2018) [*emphasis added*]

Given the ongoing Holocene extinction (mentioned above), and the earlier declaration by the US President regarding the "**shithole countries**" which have benefitted from American dominance (and from the Christian commitment to the divine injunction of *Genesis 1-28*), it is appropriate to ask whether the new Space Force will come to be understood as a further step in the transformation of the Earth into a Death Star. This can be otherwise argued (*Earth as a Shithole Planet -- from a Universal Perspective? Understanding why there are no extraterrestrial visitors*, 2018).

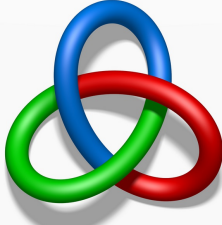

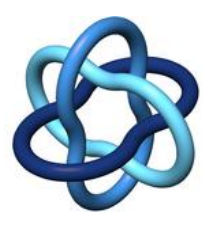
**Canon Law:** The range of understandings calls for greater clarity regarding any implication that Catholic Canon Law is being used -- to a significant degree -- as a "cannon" against those thereby reframed as "canon fodder". Of greater interest, however, is the manner in which **Canon Law delivers death over time, via "death row"**, rather than over space as in conventional use of cannons.

Canon Law would therefore seem to merit recognition as a **weapon of mass destruction -- but in temporal terms**, as a timeship endowed with temporal weapons like a "Death Star". The framing suggests that **the set of Abrahamic religions -- understood in canonical terms -- should be seen as engaged in a time war with one another**. Each would appear to be preoccupied with

transforming the adherents of the other into "canon fodder".

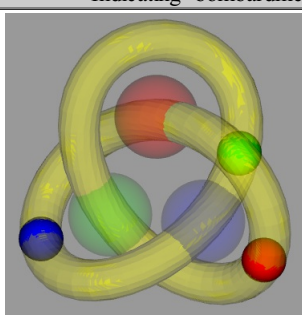
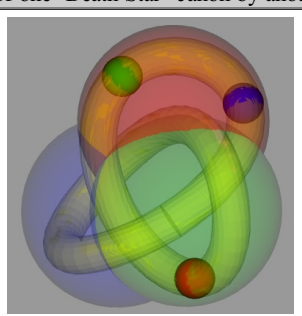
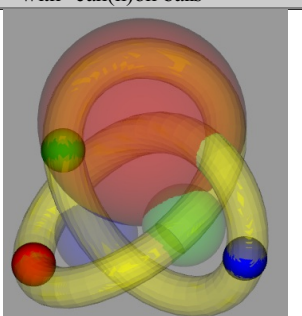
**In quest of a logo for the Abrahamic time war:** At the time of writing there is a quest for a logo for the US Space Force (*President Trump's Campaign Is Asking Supporters to Vote on a Space Force Logo, Time*, 9 August 2018) -- with proposals already called into question (*Trump's Space Force logos are just as dumb as Space Force, Fast Company*, 9 August 2018). Necessarily to be understood as an essentially Christian inspiration, there is a case for generalizing the quest to encompass the protagonists in the Abrahamic time war. As argued separately, an imaginative effort is required to frame the relationship between the Abrahamic "triumvirate" more fruitfully (*Reconciling Symbols of Islam, Judaism and Christianity Catalytic methodology for effective interfaith dialogue*, 2017).

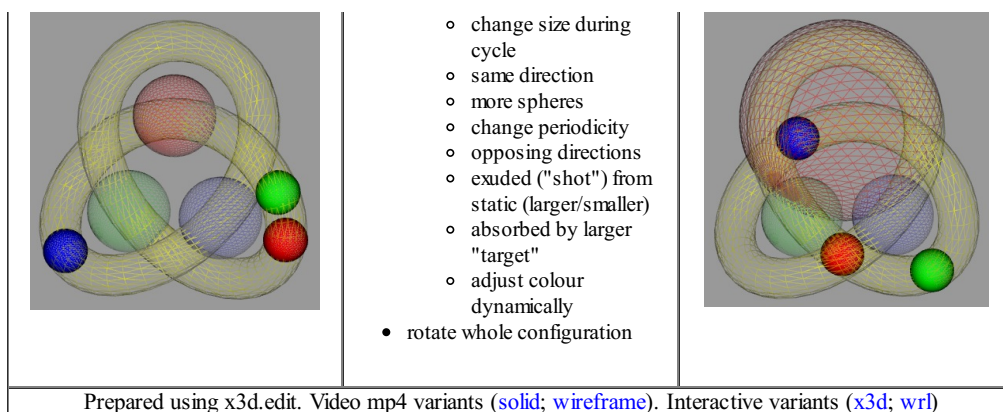
One point of departure is via valued symbols in 2D (*Cognitive Implications in 3D of Triadic Symbols Valued in 2D*, 2017). Natural "logical" possibilities offering a requisite degree of complexity, despite their simplicity, are the **trefoil knot** or the logo of the International Mathematical Union

3D variants of valued symbols in 2D		
Tricoloured trefoil knot	Animation of topological variant of trefoil knot	Borromean rings
		
By Jim.belk [Public domain], from Wikimedia Commons	By Philip Rideout [CC BY-SA 3.0 ], from Wikimedia Commons	Emblem of International Mathematical Union from Wikimedia Commons

With such design suggestions, given their symbolic relevance in reconciling three-foldness otherwise, there is a case for embodying a can(n)on-related "story" into an animation in 3D. The purpose here is to experiment with a template which allows for a variety of design modifications to explore different dimensions of the story in terms of visual dynamics. Here each Abrahamic religion is primarily associated with a distinctive loop, as suggested by the left-hand image above. However the association (as a static sphere) is centered on an inner portion of each loop, rather than with the external portion. This permits that static sphere to assume a larger diameter encompassing the outer portion of that same loop as well as the centre of the threefold form. In the latter case the overlapping recalls that of a typical threefold **Venn diagram** in 2D.

Each static sphere (distinctively coloured) can be variously understood as the canon of one Abrahamic religion, or of that religion in some other respect. Rendering the sphere more transparent and of larger diameter is then suggestive of the elusive primary significance of the faith to its adherents. When less transparent (and smaller), it emphasizes the ability of each to function tangibly as a "Death Star" and to endeavour to destroy the two others by bombarding them -- as well as being exposed to their can(n)on balls. The latter are indicated by the smaller spheres constrained to travel the trefoil knot interlinking them. These can be coloured to correspond to the static sphere from which they are "fired". The elusively mysterious nature of each canon necessarily ensures that it is unaffected by the can(n)on balls to which it is exposed.

Screen shots of experimental animation of dynamic interrelationship between Abrahamic religions		
Indicating "bombardment" of one "Death Star" canon by another -- with "can(n)on balls"		
		
<b>Design options -- "stories" to explore:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• larger static spheres (full or wireframe) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ all large (above)</li> <li>◦ single large (upper and lower right)</li> <li>◦ small (upper and lower left)</li> <li>◦ change size during cycle</li> <li>◦ switch to polyhedral structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• moving smaller spheres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ faster or slower movement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		



It is intriguing to note that in systemic terms -- in practice -- each Abrahamic religion effectively emits "can(n)on balls" (as missiles) against the others. Use of the trefoil knot offers one instance of the design of a "strange loop" -- as noted above in terms of the exploration in self-reflexive terms by Douglas Hofstadter (1979, 2007). Should the set of Abrahamic religions be understood as calling for some such form of self-reflexivity through which they are mutually entangled? The twisting nature of the trefoil knot is usefully indicative of the paradoxical complexity which the respective religions are unable to encompass -- however much they may subscribe in principle to the simpler symbolism of the circle, the halo or the [Ouroboros](#), as separately discussed ([Complementary visual patterns: Ouroboros, Möbius strip, Klein bottle](#), 2017).

Understood otherwise, as the tricameral system mentioned above, the "missiles" between them could be understood as fundamental to the systemic viability of the whole -- as a psychosocial ecosystem within which memes must be exchanged to enable sustainability. Each has a need for the challenging distinctiveness of the other.

The set of Abrahamic religions can be recognized as embedded in a larger set of mutually "antipathetic" religions, whether 8 or 9 ([Stephen Prothero](#), *God Is Not One: the eight rival religions that run the world -- and why their differences matter*, 2010). More complex animations in 3D can be explored to reflect their interrelationship -- notably in the light of an 8-fold polyhedral articulation of the Merkabah and of various degrees of helical coiling ([Framing Global Transformation through the Polyhedral Merkabah: neglected implicit cognitive cycles in viable complex systems](#), 2017; [Visualization in 3D of Dynamics of Toroidal Helical Coils: in quest of optimum designs for a Concordian Mandala](#), 2016).

In the case of the 8-fold configuration offered by the Merkabah ([stellated octahedron](#)) model, see videos ([triangular view](#) or [side view](#)) and interactive variants ([X3D](#) and [WRL](#))

## Being a punitive system of belief -- a canon

The argument can be developed further through the convergence between a personal sense of identity and the belief which a canon is designed to evoke. How does one embody a canon?

**Embodiment of a canon:** As suggested through comprehension of the musical form, a canon is a complex whole -- consistent with the framing offered by [holons](#). This suggests the related metaphor of the sphere as a fundamental geometric framing of wholeness -- epitomized by a ball or a star.

As explored with respect to other complex textual articulations, a canon can be mapped onto a polyhedron -- especially one that offers an approximation to a sphere (\*\*\*)

So framed, this raises the question of how belief and identity can be embodied in such a form, to whatever degree. How is it possible to "be a canon" -- as might be enjoined by those identified with such a system of belief? Such identification with a framework that is in itself "finite but unbounded" evokes the immediate challenge of the relationship with the "uncanonised" -- with the rest of the world.

Obvious dynamics are:

- conversion of otherness from "outside" to "inside" -- preferably by persuasion and through proselytizing, a "make-over" of otherness according to the image of the canon, understood as a process of [salvation](#)
- punitive reaction to intractable opposition to such conversion -- righteously using necessary violence, as with the processes legitimized as [crusade](#) or [jihad](#), possibly including eradication of "unbelievers". This is characteristic of the spirit of *Ecclesia Militans*.
- cognitive "re-cognition" of "outside" as "inside", however imaginatively constrained -- possibly involving the outer mirroring of "inside" -- as can be variously argued ([World Introversion through Paracycling: global potential for living sustainably "outside-inside"](#), 2013).

**Feeding on fodder:** Such dynamics do not engender a statically sustainable condition. Perhaps necessarily, they imply a continuing engagement with whatever has been "remaindered" and excluded in the process. Sustainability is necessarily a process which can be understood as "nourished" by otherness -- "feeding" on it, as implied by the "fodder" metaphor, and thereby engendering "waste". Understood in such ecological terms, a canon necessarily engenders waste such as to evoke the need for a recycling process.

The Western canon can be seen as having engendered the current planetary challenge of waste. More intriguing is the reframing of "fodder" as an "enemy" for which there is a fundamental need (Francis Wilkinson, *Trump's Inexhaustible Need for Enemies*, *Bloomberg*, 11 June 2018; Michael Streich, *Americans Need an Enemy: common enemies have united the nation since independence*, *Decoded*, 18

July 2013; F. G. Bailey, *The Need for Enemies: a bestiary of political forms*, Cornell University Press, 1998).

Expressed otherwise, through the quest for dominion a canon as a system of belief necessarily exists in a "punitive" relation to the larger reality of the world -- as it may come to be comprehended by the future. The "punishment" is inherent in the manner in which it reduces that larger reality to frameworks comprehensible in the present -- demeaning dimensions of it by assuming them to be irrelevant. Individuals and collectivities, variously subscribing to canons, are seriously complicit in this process.

**Balls and bullshit:** In the light of the above argument, the punitive relationship is usefully held through the ball metaphor -- and conflation between the canon-as-a-ball and the sense of a cannon ball. Systemically any canon is continuously "hammering" otherness with the "canon balls" it engenders. As a metaphor this recalls the [Papal bull](#), a type of public decree issued by the Pope -- a "missive". It is named after the circular leaden seal (*bullia*) that was traditionally appended to the end in order to authenticate it. A [Bull of the Crusade](#) was a Papal bull that granted indulgences to those who took part in the crusades against Muslims, pagans or sometimes heretics.

In modern jargon there is a valuable mnemonic convergence between use of "ball" and "bull" (*Viable Global Governance through Bullfighting: challenge of transcendence*, 2009; *Pricking the Bubble of Global Complacent Complicity: hyperdimensional insights from the physics of bubble blowing, bursting and collapse*, 2017). In a post-truth world of fake news this can be more provocatively extended to include the sense of waste and the challenge of its disposal in a mysterious "hole" ([Stephen Law](#), *Believing Bullshit: how not to get sucked into an intellectual black hole*, 2011; [Harry G. Frankfurt](#), *On Bullshit*, 1986; *Is the World View of a Holy Father Necessarily Full of Holes? Mysterious theological black holes engendering global crises*, 2014).

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