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11 October 2021 | Draft

Institutional Blackmail -- No Jab, No Job, No Livelihood Reframing virtual death and assisted dying by "just suffering theory"

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Introduction

Government responses to the pandemic have been cautiously sensitive to the need for [informed consent](#) with respect to vaccination. This reflects the concerns articulated in the [Nuremberg Code](#) (1947). Progressively however those provisions have been consciously circumvented through policies of "No Jab, No Job", together with other measures by which restrictions are imposed on the unvaccinated -- and freedoms are reserved for the vaccinated.

The process might be compared with what has been hailed as the most famous line ever uttered by a movie gangster -- a simple promise delivered by Marlon Brando, playing Don Vito Corleone, in [The Godfather](#) (1972): *I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse* -- as discussed by [Jacob Shelton](#) ([What's In A Line? The Godfather's 'Offer He Can't Refuse,' Explained](#), 27 January 2019).

The sidelining of ethical issues is justified under emergency provisions (Rachel Gur-Arie, et al, [No Jab, No Job? Ethical Issues in Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel](#), *British Medical Journal: Global Health*, 6, 2021, 2; Rhiana Whitson, [Compulsory COVID-19 vaccinations at work could face legal challenges, lawyers warn](#), *ABC News*, 4 June 2021).

An emphasis is increasingly placed on the scope for mandatory vaccination and the responsibility of employers to implement this requirement (Matthew Boyle, [These Are the U.S. Companies Requiring Covid Vaccines for Employees](#), *Bloomberg*, 9 September 2021; Clea Skopeliti, [Biden introduces vaccine mandate for 100 million workers](#), *The Guardian*, 10 September 2021; Tara Subramaniam, [Are Biden's vaccine mandates 'unlawful'?](#) *CNN*, 19 September 2021).

Very little is mentioned in public discourse about the loss of [livelihood](#) of those who do not give their consent to be vaccinated -- and therefore lose their job. Expressed otherwise, there is little mention of "blackmail" with respect to policies of "No Jab, No Job", "No Jab, No Access", and the like.

In losing their livelihood, those refusing vaccination (and thereby losing their gainful employment) may well be faced with a high level of personal disaster: inability to feed a family, inability to pay rent or mortgage, inability to pay school and medical fees, inability to travel, inability to seek work, family breakdown, and the like. Responsibility for this condition is placed firmly on those who refuse to give their consent -- as is typical of any blackmail situation. It is their choice -- having been presented with an offer they can only be deemed extremely foolish to refuse. Those making the offer in the name of the highest human values are thereby framed as entirely innocent and without blame in doing so.

There is seemingly no official sensitivity to such forced loss of livelihood, nor does any such threat figure in any official modelling of the evolution of the pandemic ([Misleading Modelling of Global Crises: unquestioned bias in authoritative representations of reality by science?](#) 2021). Rather there is a progressive official tendency to shift the blame for any failure of pandemic policies onto those who refuse vaccination -- who refuse to be blackmailed ([Beyond universal vaccination: planning an exit strategy and cover-up](#), 2021). The mainstream media reinforce this perception in the eyes of those who have chosen to be vaccinated.

In this context it is appropriate to explore the ultimate meaning of "loss of livelihood" -- to the extent that it necessarily implies loss of ability to sustain life, namely a form of death, virtual or otherwise, especially given the tendency to suicide it may engender. Again however, any such death is the responsibility of those rejecting vaccination -- however much any death may be officially deplored and

constrained by legislative measures.

The irony of the situation is the manner in which the indifference to the suffering of those faced with loss of livelihood is effectively reframed by analogy with "just war theory" and "just torture theory". From that perspective, there is a progressive elaboration of what might be appropriately termed "[just suffering theory](#)" with the fundamental indifference it implies.

Such a theory specifically precludes any consideration of [assisted dying](#) of those faced with extreme suffering, irrespective of the degree to which there is institutional complicity in the death of many others elsewhere. This is notably evident in foreign conflict arenas (if only as [collateral damage](#)) or in impoverished countries faced with levels of malnutrition endangering life.

Recognizing the perverse connotation of "just" as "merely" (in contrast with "justice"), the argument concludes with discussion of the problematic implications of any "just consent theory" or "just dissent theory" in the engagement with authority.

Loss of livelihood as virtual death?

As noted by *Wikipedia*:

A person's [livelihood](#) (derived from life-lode, "way of life") refers to their "means of securing the basic necessities (food, water, shelter and clothing) of life". Livelihood is defined as a set of activities essential to everyday life that are conducted over one's life span. Such activities could include securing water, food, fodder, medicine, shelter, clothing. An individual's livelihood involves the capacity to acquire aforementioned necessities in order to satisfy the basic needs of themselves and their household. The activities are usually carried out repeatedly and in a manner that is sustainable and providing of dignity. For instance, a fisherman's livelihood depends on the availability and accessibility of fish...

In social sciences, the concept of livelihood extends to include social and cultural means, i.e. "the command an individual, family, or other social group has over an income and/or bundles of resources that can be used or exchanged to satisfy its needs. This may involve information, cultural knowledge, social networks and legal rights as well as tools, land and other physical resources."

Curiously however, the many references to "loss of livelihood" offer little indication of the consequences -- other than implying that people and families may indeed go hungry. There is little allusion to the consequences of going hungry -- otherwise understood as ultimately resulting in death, typically preceded by ever increasing vulnerability to disease.

The argument can be broadened in the light of the Biblical saying (*100 Bible Verses about Man Shall Not Live On Bread Alone*, *OpenBible*). It can be explored in the contrast between "surviving" and "thriving", if survival alone is experienced as a form of death by those who have previously thrived or have aspired to do so (Jim Taylor, *Crisis to Opportunity: Survival or Thrival with COVID-19*, *Saturday Evening Post*, 23 March 2020; Annie Flanagan, *JobKeeper: How was it for you? Survival or thrival? Better Business Basics*, October 2020; Kurt Wilkin, *Survival and Thrival: COVID-19 hits home, literally*, *HireBetter*, 24 August 2020). How is any forced reduction of the capacity to survive then to be understood?

To what degree are official policies resulting in loss of livelihood then to be recognized as causing death -- whether directly or indirectly -- physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually? Extending the question beyond physical death, raises the issue of the extent to which emotional death, mental death, or spiritual death merit recognition -- and by which institutions (C. Beebe Tarantelli, *Life within Death: towards a metapsychology of catastrophic psychic trauma*, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84, 2008, 4).

As [psychogenic death](#), the nature of "giving-up-itis" has been clarified by John Leach (*Give-up-itis: when people just give up and die*, *MedicalXpress*, 27 September 2018; *'Give-up-itis' revisited: neuropathology of extremis*, *Medical Hypotheses*, 120, November 2018). The term "give-up-itis" was coined by medical officers during the Korean War (1950-1953) to a condition where a person develops extreme apathy, gives up hope, relinquishes the will to live and dies, despite the lack of any obvious physical cause. With respect to the current pandemic, this can be usefully compared to what has been termed [voodoo death](#) in the light of the studies noted by Ryan Matters (*Covid-19: Fear, Anxiety and Voodoo Death*, *OffGuardian*, 18 September 2021).

Of course the "death" consequent on loss of livelihood may indeed not be physical, it could be understood as "virtual". What forms might "virtual death" then take? How might it be recognized? There is only limited and isolated reference to this as such (Julie Moreau, *'A virtual death sentence': Gay Afghans brace for uncertain future under Taliban*, *NBC News*, 29 August 2021). Living with HIV has been understood in such terms. With respect to [Gulf War Syndrome](#), the long-term effects of the use of [depleted uranium](#) have revealed DU (uranium oxide) to be a "virtual death sentence".

The argument can be taken further with respect to the focus on any narrow definition of "killing", understood as death in a biological sense. The question is whether there are other forms of "death" as may be inferred from forms of violence which result in slavery, bondage and incarceration. These also lend themselves to more general definition. In such cases it is the essential humanity of the individual which is sacrificed, placing individuals in situations which are frequently named and experienced as a "life worse than death" (*Syria's civilians living a 'life worse than death'*, *BBC News*, 7 December 2015). A common reference to them is the "living dead".

This raises the question as to whether deliberate confinement of an individual or people -- isolation or lockdown -- does not itself merit recognition as a form of crime against humanity and, as such, thereby constituting human sacrifice of a kind. Should those confined behind boundaries against their will be understood in this way? Will the future see the restriction of movement across national boundaries in this light -- especially when the boundary takes the form of a deliberately constructed wall (see [List of walls](#))? The argument could be further extended to include the encroachment on the territory of people of one faith by people of another faith (*Varieties of Encroachment*, 2004).

It could then be asked whether malnutrition, when effectively ensured by institutional policies -- national or international -- merits recognition as a virtual death sentence, given the early death it may guarantee. Understood in that light, **does institutional negligence, whether conscious or unconscious, enable a form of death, whether physical or virtual?**

Are authorities, now ensuring loss of livelihood, then to be recognized as complicit in enabling some form of death -- whether or not this is acknowledged?

Institutional blackmail, institutional extortion or institutional racketeering?

Blackmail: There are many references in passing to "institutionalized blackmail" -- although curiously it does not appear to be the focus of any particular study. Pressure by international institutions has been framed in such terms (*IMF pressure termed 'blackmail'*, *Dawn*, 13 October 2010; *World Bank/IMF Exposed: COVID aid conditional on imposing extreme lockdowns, curfews*, *Europe Reloaded*, 28 July 2020; Michael Hudson, *Food Blackmail, the Washington Consensus and Freedom*, 24 June 2019; Martin Armstrong, *European Politicians Are Realizing -- Blackmail is the Game*, 1 July 2013).

Examples of institutional blackmail, possibly understood as political blackmail, are now cited in relation to the pandemic:

- Randy Alonso Falcón, et al: *COVID-19 Vaccines: stories of monopoly, blackmail and inequality* (*Links*, 26 March 2021)
- Jules Gomes: *UK Uses 'Behavioral Blackmail' to Push Jabs* (*Church Militant*, 21 April 2021)
- Jules Darmanin: *French government delays bill branded as 'vaccine blackmail'* (*Politico*, 23 December 2020)
- Zhong Sheng: *Putting the blame on others is bald-faced political blackmail* (*Global Times*, 7 May 2020)
- Barbara Loe Fisher: *Blackmail and the Medical Vaccine Exemption* (*National Vaccine Information Center*, 18 May 2015)
- *Vaccine blackmail is unacceptable* (*The Spectator Australia*, May 2021).
- *Corruption and the Coronavirus* (*Transparency International*, 18 March 2020)

As indicated above, those faced with the "No Jab, No Job" choice have every right to experience this as a form of institutionalized blackmail -- in a paradoxical context in which governments may well have legislation to constrain those who engage otherwise in blackmail.

As indicated separately, the [Mises Institute](#) offers a valuable clarification of some relevant distinctions regarding current controversy as to whether blackmail itself should be condemned as socially harmful (*The Case for Legalizing Blackmail*, *Jay Taylor Media*, 21 February 2019). There it is argued that [blackmail](#) and [extortion](#) are too readily conflated, when in fact they are distinct. A similar argument is developed by Pavel Slutskiy, specifically to the effect that blackmail should be legal because it is non-aggressive and punishment for non-aggression is a crime in itself (*Blackmail*, In: *Communication and Libertarianism*, 2021).

Extortion: This is more appropriately understood as referring to a demand for money (or other compensation) from a victim under the threat of doing something that violates rights -- such as initiating physical assault or arson. In contrast, merely blackmailing someone only involves "threatening" to do what the blackmailer has every right to do: namely, spreading gossip or embarrassing photos, etc. From a libertarian standpoint, this is held to be a critical distinction.

The authors argue that the blackmailer may even be condemned morally -- and denounced from that perspective as "bad". But from the standpoint of libertarian theory, the activity of blackmail is not perceived as violating anybody's rights and therefore should be legal in a just society.

Whether this is the case with "No Jab, No Job" policies, however, calls for further consideration. Authorities have seemingly opted already for an understanding of pressures on the unvaccinated as being a form of blackmail which does not violate rights -- despite the deliberate implication of infringement of rights (freedom of movement, and the like).

The current approach taken by authorities is consistent with the development of the Mises argument:

We can take the analysis further, using economics (rather than libertarian philosophy). Notwithstanding the popular revulsion against blackmail, there are actually potential social benefits that would flow from its legalization. In other words, the current policy of legally *prohibiting* blackmail might carry some significant unintended consequences.

The points made include:

- First and foremost, allowing for legal blackmail contracts would probably *bolster people's privacy and reputations*.
- By augmenting the actual legal code, a mature blackmail industry could enact "fines" for socially inappropriate behavior that steer people in a desirable direction in a relatively efficient and discreet manner, as well as compensating those who suffer from inappropriate but legal behavior, or who are victims of an actual crime but do not want the matter publicized.

It would appear that this proposal has indeed been effectively adopted by authorities in promoting "No Jab, No Job" policies. Arguably the strategy could be more fruitfully recognized as extortion -- especially given the financial benefits of vaccination to the health industry. Separately the possible extent of extortion has been highlighted by Zachary Meskell (*Corruption and the COVID-19 Vaccine: the looming problem of distribution*, *Global Anticorruption Blog*, 26 October 2020).

Racketeering: More controversially, but potentially more appropriately, the process could be explored as a curious form of institutional [racketeering](#). Such an exploration would recognize the complicity of authorities with the pharmaceutical industry through which a coercive, fraudulent, extortionary, or otherwise illegal coordinated scheme or operation (a racket) is set up to repeatedly or consistently collect money or other benefit from its victims, as variously argued by some:

- Fatima Hassan, et al: *Profiteering from Vaccine Inequity: a crime against humanity?* (BMJ, 2021,374,n2027)
- Kathy Gyngell: *Dr David Martin on the Covid vaccine racket* (The Conservative Woman, 7 September 2021)
- Brandon May: *Pfizer Accused of Holding Some Countries to "Ransom" Over COVID-19 Negotiations* (BioSpace, 23 February 2021)
- Madlen Davies, et al: *'Held to ransom': Pfizer demands governments gamble with state assets to secure vaccine deal* (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 23 February 2021)
- *Defendants charged in connection with multi-state racketeering conspiracy* (Tristate News, 22 September 2021)
- *COVID class action suit accuses states, districts of racketeering* (District Administration, 18 September 2020)
- *Zed Phoenix on Bill Gates and Vaccine Racketeering* (The Infohub, 26 April 2020).

How elevated does the price of vital emergency provisions have to be before it is recognized as a form of racketeering -- especially when this is enabled by cartels:

- Sharon Lerner: *Merck Sells Federally Financed COVID Pill to U.S. for 40 times what it costs to make* (The Intercept, 6 October 2021)
- Owen Dyer: *Countries are learning what others paid for vaccines* (BMJ, 29 January 2021, 372)
- Donato Paolo Mancini, et al: *Pfizer and Moderna raise EU Covid vaccine prices* (Financial Times, 1 August 2021)
- Julia Kollwe: *Covid-19 vaccines: the contracts, prices and profits* (The Guardian, 12 August 2021)
- Carmen Ang: *COVID-19 Vaccine Prices: Comparing the U.S. and EU* (Visual Capitalist, 7 June 2021)
- Mark Terry: *Comparing COVID-19 Vaccines: Timelines, Types and Prices* (BioSpace, 8 October 2021)
- William V. Padula, et al: *Economic value of vaccines to address the COVID-19 pandemic: a U.S. cost-effectiveness and budget impact analysis* (Journal of Medical Economics, 24, 2021, 1)
- *The Cost Per Jab Of Covid-19 Vaccine Candidates Covid-19 Pandemic* (Statista, 1 December 2020)
- *Vaccine monopolies make cost of vaccinating the world against COVID at least 5 times more expensive than it could be* (Oxfam, 29 July 2021)?

There is some irony to any comparison between institutional imposition of a "No Jab, No Job" policy and the traditional Mafia racketeering scenario with respect to installation of "slot machines" in pubs and clubs. "Shot machine" racketeering?

Looting? In the light of current [legal arguments for a Nuremberg-style trial](#) in the future of those instigating and sustaining vaccine extortion (or racketeering), even more provocative are any comparisons made with regard to looted [Nazi gold](#) and its transfer to international banks (Ian Sayer and Douglas Botting, *Nazi Gold: the sensational story of the world's greatest robbery - and the greatest criminal cover-up*, 2003; George M. Taber, *Chasing Gold: the incredible story of how the Nazis stole Europe's bullion*, 2014).

Through their exploitation of the pandemic, and the desperation of people, are pharmaceutical corporations to be recognized as looting countries of their wealth? (Cassandra Clark, *Pharmicide: the pharmaceutical industry's self-destructive effort to loot America*, The Objective Standard, 20 November 2009; Robert Reich, *Pharma Looting*, 9 October 2020). The process is especially recognized in the Indian media.

Will the future see an analogue to the [Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold](#)?

Just suffering theory?

Just war theory: There has been extensive clarification of what is known as [just war theory](#), summarized by *Wikipedia* as:

The just war theory... is a doctrine, also referred to as a tradition, of military ethics which is studied by military leaders, theologians, ethicists and policy makers. The purpose of the doctrine is to ensure that a war is morally justifiable through a series of criteria, all of which must be met for a war to be considered just. The criteria are split into two groups: "right to go to war" (*jus ad bellum*) and "right conduct in war" (*jus in bello*). The first group of criteria concerns the morality of going to war, and the second group of criteria concerns the moral conduct within war. There have been calls for the inclusion of a third category of just war theory (*jus post bellum*) dealing with the morality of post-war settlement and reconstruction. The just war theory postulates the belief that war, while it is terrible but less so with the right conduct, is not always the worst option. Important responsibilities, undesirable outcomes, or preventable atrocities may justify war.

Given the comparison by authorities of pandemic response with war, and the necessity for emergency response measures, it might be asked to what degree this evokes the ethical framing offered by just war theory -- most obviously with respect to collateral damage and the necessity for some to be effectively sacrificed for a greater cause.

The use of "just" in framing that theory unfortunately offers the additional connotation of being "merely" war -- a dynamic in which many engage with enthusiasm, and from which some derive considerable advantage.

Just torture theory? In the conduct of war and the necessity for interrogation of potential terrorists -- especially given the [ticking time bomb scenario](#) -- a controversial case has been effectively made for [enhanced interrogation](#), and challenged (Bob Brecher, *Torture and the Ticking Bomb*, 2007).

The parallel with just war theory suggests the need for recognition of "just torture theory" (Shunzo Majima, *Just Torture?*, *Journal of Military Ethics*, 11, 2012, 210; Ross W. Bellaby, *The Ethics of Torture-Lite: a justifiable middle-ground?* *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 29, 2015, 2; Simcha Walfish, *"Pain and Suffering of the Requisite Intensity": the legal definition of torture*, *Law and the Senses*, 15 September 2019).

Enforced vaccination can be seen as a curious surrogate for religious and ideological commitment to the indoctrination of the world with regard to a more enlightened perspective -- especially in the light of the relative failure of such initiatives. Rather than such indoctrination being perceived and experienced as a form of psychological torture, the case made euphemistically for enhanced interrogation could be seen as a well-crafted substitute. Enforced vaccination as a substitute for enhanced indoctrination -- and a prelude to the future challenge of climate change?

Again the use of "just" can be understood as undermining the human values of which torture is the antithesis.

"Just sacrifice"? Of greater relevance is the manner in which Abrahamic religions are complicit in enabling the human sacrifice associated with conventional warfare. This could be understood as a consequence of their involvement in the skillful crafting of just war theory. This can be readily recognized as the ill-considered "sacrifice of humans" in pursuit of national and other agendas with which any of those religions may be complicit -- whether sacrificing the enemy or the military forces deployed against them (Stanley Hauerwas, *Telling the truth about the sacrifices of war*, *ABC Religion and Ethics*, 24 Apr 2013).

This framework may be extended to include genocidal massacre and forms of ethnic cleansing. Any distinction between "human sacrifice" (as narrowly defined) and "sacrifice of humans" (more generally defined) merits careful consideration to avoid any tendency to condemn the first whilst denying complicity in the fatalities associated with the second. As argued separately, seemingly "just sacrifice" has yet to be framed in those terms (*Fundamental Need for Human Sacrifice by Abrahamic Religions: vital prerequisite for sustainable global civilization?* 2018).

The concept is however only too evident in the following:

- the massive deployment of foot soldiers during the trench warfare of recent world wars, knowing that the slaughter to which many would be exposed could be framed with little challenge as a "just sacrifice", namely their sacrifice in a "just cause"
- the **firebombing** of German cities and their civilian populations as being as "just sacrifice" of their lives, however regrettable
- the articulation of **collateral damage** (with its many civilian deaths) during conflict in the Middle East and Vietnam as being a "just sacrifice" in the war against terrorism or Communism -- again with little challenge
- the use of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- readily framed as the epitome of a "just sacrifice" however much it may be deplored
- the famous assertion by the US Ambassador to the United Nations, **Madeleine Albright**, in response to the question: *We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it? An understanding of "just sacrifice" is implicit in her response: I think this is a very hard choice, but the price -- we think the price is worth it.* (CBS's *60 Minutes*, 12 May 1996).

Despite its existential significance, the use of "just" tends again to demean the experience of those involved -- rendering it into a token feature of cultural commemoration.

Just suffering? As with "just war theory", there is clearly a case for recognizing the effective elaboration of a "just suffering theory" through which indifference to the suffering of others is rendered morally and ethically acceptable -- an argument previously explored (*Enabling Suffering through Doublespeak and Doublethink: indifference to poverty and retributive justice as case studies*, 2013; *Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral and ethical high ground through doublespeak* (2013),).

The habituation of society and oneself to suffering is clearly greatly facilitated by the much appreciated simulations of violence through the media (movies, games, etc) and the portrayals of violence elsewhere. As a key to the psychic needs of the citizens of the Roman Empire, the central role of painful games in that context has anticipated the current media offerings: "No Suffering. No Entertainment"? These in turn anticipate conditions which may well prevail in urban environments of the future, and are already characteristic of no-go areas.

The justification becomes evident individually in the need to cultivate "**psychic numbing**" as a defence against being unduly affected by the **suffering** of others. Specifically through the need:

- to cause suffering in order to survive (and thrive), whether this is limited to animals required for food, or extends to ensuring the social inequality whereby others are malnourished, starve, or suffer otherwise, in the competition for resources
- to ignore a high proportion of those soliciting aid to mitigate their own suffering -- if only to conserve adequate resources to mitigate one's own.
- to limit severely personal exposure to the suffering of others, whether elsewhere or in one's immediate vicinity

Governance of society is then greatly facilitated if it is accepted that military strikes should be conducted wherever it is deemed to be appropriate -- as a form of retributive justice through which it may be claimed that the highest human values are effectively defendant and upheld.

Authorities vigorously promote the value of individual suffering "for the greater good" -- most obviously in conscription to engage in any form of war -- whatever the risks to human life. As noted, the pandemic has been widely framed as just such a war -- requiring individual suffering and sacrifice for the greater good of the community. This recalls the classic World War I image and slogan: **Your Country Needs You Now**.

There is a profound irony to the manner in which the trinity of different forms of **doublespeak** complement each other. It could be argued that the retributive justice sought through **political doublespeak** is engendered by religious doublespeak negligent of its own longer-term consequences -- curiously supported by legal doublespeak. "Syria", "Afghanistan" and "Iraq" are a consequence of ill-considered forms of faith-based governance -- with "Iran" to follow, appropriately entangled with "Israel". The informed consent desperately inferred by authorities in the implementation of "No Jab, No Job" policies can be recognized as carefully manufactured in the light of the

arguments of [Edward S. Herman](#) and [Noam Chomsky](#) (*Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 1988).

The suffering engendered is the price of the negligence by authorities, sustained by unexamined self-righteous assumptions regarding occupancy of the moral high ground. In effect the suffering is a global systemic "corrective" for indifference. One approach has been framed on the *Information Philosopher* website as *Liberty of Indifference*.

Especially helpful to a transcendent justification for indifference to the suffering of others is the ambiguity of religions in this regard. This is most evident in their contribution to the exacerbation of suffering on theological grounds -- "be fruitful and multiply" (*Genesis 1:28*). Religions have proven to be unable to engender modes of governance capable of managing the consequences of increasing population numbers -- or to enable more fruitful relations between each other (and amongst the divisions of each of them). It is only too evident that their existing patterns of relationship engender suffering and death -- necessarily to be blamed on an "other" .

Any understanding of the insights involved is challenged by the value variously attributed to suffering ([John A. Hardon](#), *The Value of Suffering in the Life of Christian Perfection, Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association*; [Kerry Weber](#), *Understanding Necessary Suffering: Richard Rohr*, *Publishers Weekly*, 9 March 2011).

Suffering is framed by Christian theology as vital to acquisition of insight -- irrespective of whether that suffering is of the most extreme nature ([James McTavish](#), *Suffering, Death, and Eternal Life, The Linacre Quarterly*, 83, 2016 2). The suffering of others is effectively welcomed as an exemplification of this insight -- however much it may be otherwise regretted. This could render suspect any policies promoted with the complicity of religion -- through political parties, such as Christian Democrats -- which exacerbate and prolong suffering.

The Buddhist tradition emphasizes the primordial importance of developing insight into the nature of *dukkha* (suffering), the conditions that cause it, and how it can be overcome. Related insights are cultivated in Islam, as noted by [Beth Davies-Stofka](#) (*Suffering and the Problem of Evil*):

... suffering tests belief... But suffering also reveals the hidden self to God. Suffering is built into the fabric of existence so that God may see who is truly righteous. In other words, God not only allows the various agonies and struggles of life, but has a purpose for them. Suffering opens up the soul and reveals it to God. God uses suffering to look within humans and test their characters, and correct the unbelievers.

Whilst the [Abrahamic religions](#) offer themselves the luxury of transferring any consequences in practice to a transcendent deity, the unfruitfulness of theological discourse in this regard is usefully illustrated by a controversy between the Catholic Church and Buddhism. This arose from the negative appreciation of Buddhism, offered in an assessment of other religions, by [Pope John Paul II](#) (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 1994). It evoked several [critical responses](#) ([Thinley Norbu Rinpoche](#), *Welcoming Flowers from across the Cleansed Threshold of Hope: An Answer to the Pope's Criticism of Buddhism*, 1997; [Bhikkhu Bodhi](#), *Toward a Threshold of Understanding*, 1998).

The critical concern of Buddhists, of relevance to the "indifference to the suffering of others", is framed by [Bhikkhu Bodhi](#) (1998) as follows:

The Pontiff describes *Nibbana* as "a state of perfect indifference with regard to the world," adding that in Buddhism salvation means "above all, to free oneself from evil by becoming indifferent to the world, which is the source of evil" (p.86). By such statements he represents Buddhism to his readers as a quietistic doctrine of withdrawal which can address the momentous problems that face humanity today only by politely turning its back on them. This is hardly a satisfactory depiction of Early Buddhism, in which transcendence of the world is stressed, let alone of Mahayana Buddhism, in which the bodhisattva's compassionate activity on behalf of the world becomes the guiding ideal.

The Pali word that the Pope interprets as "indifference" is presumably *upekkha*. The real meaning of this word is equanimity, not indifference in the sense of unconcern for others. As a spiritual virtue, *upekkha* means equanimity in the face of the fluctuations of worldly fortune. It is evenness of mind, unshakeable freedom of mind, a state of inner equipoise that cannot be upset by gain and loss, honor and dishonor, praise and blame, pleasure and pain. *Upekkha* is freedom from all points of self-reference; it is indifference only to the demands of the ego-self with its craving for pleasure and position, not to the well-being of one's fellow human beings.

Under the circumstances, the complacency of religions effectively constitutes a renewed commitment to the supposedly long abandoned practice of [human sacrifice](#) (*Contemporary reformation of ritual "human sacrifice"*, 2006) as variously exemplified and reinforced in a range of contexts:

- the conviction of authorities that any such sacrifice is "worth it", as so explicitly articulated by [Madeleine Albright](#) (U.S. [Permanent Representative to the U.N](#)) in commenting on the death of 500,000 children in Iraq as a result of US-imposed sanctions.
- the curious implication of the Catholic Church in the Iraq intervention and its massive slaughter is especially evident in the lack of remorse expressed by Tony Blair, one of its primary instigators -- as a subsequent convert to Catholicism and a promoter of faith-based governance thereafter. The slaughter of those of Islamic faith by those of Christian faith is necessarily to be construed as having been "worth it".

- the complicity of the US, the UK and Australia in ensuring the prolonged suffering of [Julian Assange](#) in speaking truth to power, thereby upholding principles which render totally suspect the claims of the leadership of those countries to represent the highest human values
- the remarkable focus of authorities and the media on achieving vaccination targets of 70%, 80%, and 90% of the population -- highlighting the freedoms to which those vaccinated will then be entitled -- is now matched by a virtually total neglect of the suffering of the corresponding 30%, 20%, and 10% of the population for whom no provisions whatsoever are envisaged. Inadvertently, or deliberately, such people may then be systematically prevented from access to food and health facilities (through deliberate deprivation of those freedoms by authorities). Remarkably this has been highlighted by cases of prohibition of travel to visit a dying relative ([Queensland denies son last chance to see dying dad](#), *News*, 18 June 2021; [Coronavirus: Australian family hit with huge quarantine bill to visit dying father](#), *BBC*, 10 September 2020)

Given the probability that [vaccination passports](#) will be tied to QR tracing apps, thereby restricting access to shops, should a national policy of "No Jab, No Food" be recognized as blackmail, extortion of racketeering? Is it surprising that, in enthusiastically promoting such policies, **there is little evidence of any discussion of how the unvaccinated are to feed themselves, to handle health emergencies, or to benefit from other essential services -- if excluded from access to relevant facilities, as currently envisaged.** Will any unfortunate consequences be simply framed by indifferent authorities as the responsibility of such people? Will they be able to enter voting stations?

The need for some to suffer in order that others may survive and thrive is a view seemingly espoused by authorities who perceive themselves empowered to enable this. Again there is the additional connotation of the theory that many are "merely" suffering, thereby justifying indifference to their condition. A case for a "just indifference theory" or even a "just negligence theory"?

A "specious argument"? -- a response to feedback

Subsequent to its publication, the argument above has been succinctly labelled as "specious" without further comment. Such a delightfully brief evaluation is a further invitation to comment on the justification for the argument in the first place.

The implication is that no argument contrary to that of the mainstream discourse regarding the vital importance of universal vaccination is worthy of further reflection. Everything justifying such a strategy is assumed to have already been said -- with the further implication that any other commentary should be ignored, if not quashed, irrespective of possible views of future historians on the matter.

With respect to "specious", the commentary above builds on that for "just war theory", many references to which include the term "specious" with respect either to its rationale or the objections to it. Ironically it could be said that the rationale for the two-decade disastrous intervention in Afghanistan was framed by that theory. Much has also been made of response to the pandemic as a "war".

The subsequent arguments above for "just torture" and for "just sacrifice" could well be qualified as equally specious. Together these frame the current preoccupation with "just suffering" -- if only as one consequence of loss of livelihood.

The further development of the argument below uses the challenge of specious perception to engage with the oversimplistic assumptions regarding consent -- "just consent" (?), as promoted with respect to universal vaccination. The same device is used to address the manner in which no scope for disagreement is to be tolerated by authority -- "just dissent" (?). It is naive to assume that the dilemmas for many posed by consent and dissent are simple. They could be understood as fundamental to the challenges of democratic discourse and the manner in which it is now severely and progressively eroded. Advocates of any strategy desperately seek consent from others and vigorously condemn any dissent.

More tragic is the interplay between consent, dissent and suffering. Any qualification of specious then merits reflection in the light of the indifference to suffering worldwide -- beyond tokenism. The fact that "No Jab, No Job" results in the loss of livelihood and access to services is a matter of indifference -- entirely to be blamed on those who suffer thereby. It is an instance of the suffering of the underprivileged whose access to vaccines has been inhibited by hoarding and other institutional practices. It would indeed appear that there a justification for a "just suffering theory" and a "just indifference theory" -- speciously understood.

Art of suffering? This argument is framed by the attention given to just war theory, especially given the recognition that the engagement with the pandemic is a form of war entailing wartime measures. Strategic value has long been associated with the treatise on the *Art of War* attributed to the Chinese military strategist [Sun Tzu](#). It is recognized as having influenced both Eastern and Western military thinking, business tactics, legal strategy, lifestyles and beyond.

This suggests the merit of exploring the possibility of an analogue, namely the *Art of Suffering*, especially given the development above from just war theory to just torture theory. There is indeed no lack of references to torture as an "art":

- John Feffer: *Art of Torture* (*Institute for Policy Studies*, 21 October 2008)
- Mark Bowden: *The Dark Art of Interrogation: a survey of the landscape of persuasion* (*The Atlantic*, October 2003)
- Hamid Dabashi: *The Art of Torture* (*The News (Pakistan)*, 25 September 2021)
- Michel Feith, *The Art of Torture in The Water Cure, by Percival Everett* (*Revue française d'études américaines*, 132, 2012, 2)
- Giles Tremlett: *Anarchists and the Fine Art of Torture* (*The Guardian*, 27 January 2003)
- *The Art of Torture* (*Bartleby Research*)

With respect to any *Art of Suffering*, there is clearly a distinction to be made between subtly causing others to suffer (as more obviously

in torture) and the transformation of the experience of suffering -- living with the experience:

- Thich Nhat Hanh: *No Mud, No Lotus: the art of transforming suffering* (Parallax Press, 2014)
- Ann Thompson: *The Art of Suffering and the Impact of Seventeenth-century Anti-Providential Thought* (Routledge, 2003)
- David Cayley: *Epilogue The Art of Suffering -- Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey* (Penn State University Press, 2021)
- Loreala Michaelis: *Politics and the art of suffering in Hölderlin and Nietzsche* (*Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27, 2001, 5)

Despite the many references to suffering as an art, it is far from clear that they reflect the insights of the *Art of War* which have proved to be so influential over the centuries. The strategic response to the pandemic is acknowledged to have engendered a high degree of suffering from which some may well have fruitfully learnt. More challenging is the manner in which this suffering has been artfully engendered by indifference and negligence -- whether consciously or unconsciously.

Is there an *Art of Indifference* to be explored -- or an *Art of Negligence* -- given their implications for future suffering engendered by climate change? One approach is through "non-decision making" (*Reframing the Art of Non-Decision-Making: conceptual gerrymandering on a global scale*, 2017; *Variety of System Failures Engendered by Negligent Distinctions*, 2016; *Lipoproblems -- Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009).

Hypocritical condemnation of assisted dying?

With the progressive association of the vaccine passport and contact tracing apps on smartphones, such a passport can be recognized as a new form of licence -- a effectively a licence to live, regularly renewable with booster shots. The unlicensed are effectively framed as deserving the fate they have purportedly chosen. Missing in this complex of implications is the role played by authorities -- effectively with the power to lie, however this may be framed as being in the interests of national security and the greater good. As indicated separately, those with the power to lie have absolutely no means of providing hard evidence that they are telling the truth (*Licensed to Live? Licensed to Lie? Unlicensed to Die? Implications of universal vaccination -- voluntary or otherwise*, 2021)

Virtual death: As argued above, policies resulting in loss of livelihood lead to an experience of virtual death for many -- a form of psychic death, if not to physical death, to suicidal tendencies, or even to psychogenic death. Authorities exhibit little sensitivity to this -- other than for public relations purposes on occasion -- and can be recognized as inherently indifferent in practice to the suffering of their populations.

This can be understood as a primary characteristic of governance and its viability in practice. The art of governance is then one of minimizing the suffering of the few on whose power such viability is dependent -- whilst offering tokenistic responses to the suffering of the more extensive proportion of the population, necessarily cultivated in the case of voters for purposes of election in a democracy.

Authorised suffering: It is therefore appropriate to note:

- the cultivation of violence in the media, whether as a form of entertainment, or through the vicarious appreciation of the suffering of others elsewhere (*Schadenfreude*)
- government complacency in the authorization of killing, whether framed by just war theory more generally, upheld as the right to assassinate those deemed to be a threat, or through capital punishment. Acceptance of all these modalities may be deliberately cultivated by the media -- most obviously in the form of heroic archetypes "licensed to kill".
- more controversial may be the use of "death squads" by authorities -- directly or indirectly -- currently exemplified by the policies of President **Rodrigo Duterte** of the Philippines in response to those enabling the drug culture there. Framed otherwise, appreciation of "death squads" may be cultivated as the heroic actions of skilled "special forces", capable of acting anywhere in the world, typically with impunity.
- the effective indifference to the marginalized in many societies, whether in the form of the impoverished, the unemployable, the homeless, ethnic minorities evoking discrimination, and the like. This is exemplified by the institutionalized condition of the "untouchables" in the Hindu caste system. A comparable framing as the "basket of deplorables" was offered by **Hillary Clinton** during the 2016 US presidential election (9 September 2016).
- the suffering of those exposed to **domestic violence** and **forced marriage**, especially in the light of the questionable arguments upheld as justifying it in terms of the rights of male partners, most obviously through legislative measures
- the effective indifference to the suffering of those incarcerated or institutionalized -- who are victims of violent exploitation by others in that context.

Such indifference follows from the long tradition through which the sufferings of any **underclass** has been tolerated. Those so perceived may possibly be framed as composed of **subhumans** (as a consequence of **dehumanization**), even as characterized by soullessness. This has been institutionalized through forms of **serfdom**, **debt bondage** and **slavery**, with the latter surprisingly of continuing concern (***)

From a more general perspective, there is the curiously unquestioned complicity in the suffering of millions of animals annually, most obviously conscripted in the process of testing vaccines. With respect to the virtually universal acceptance of this, and the dependency on animal husbandry as a source of food (irrespective of regrettable indications of suffering), there is clearly a degree of conflation with the reframing of many as effectively subhuman -- as a justification for any inferred suffering.

There is a further irony with respect to what might be caricatured as "suffering-lite", namely the manner in which institutions increasingly outsource the inefficiencies of their services into the requirement that those dependent on them should invest in waiting. This has been rendered most obvious through the media in the long queues formed for COVID testing and vaccination. However this pattern is evident in the obligation to queue to vote in democratic elections or for food and fuel supplies in many contexts. It is reflected in queuing procedures for electronic interactions with institutional services. Arguable the quality of democracy in practice could be evaluated in terms of the queuing times for services.

Requisite underclass: More problematic is the degree to which such an underclass is currently deemed vital to the health of an economy as a pool of labour on which enterprises may draw (when required) in order to ensure their viability (Van Badham, *Having a constant pool of unemployed workers is deliberate policy*, *The Guardian*, 26 July 2019; David Grace *Employers believe they are entitled to a large pool of cheap, disposable workers*, *Medium*, 1 August 2021).

Such a "reserve army of labour" was a central feature of the critique of political economy by Karl Marx. Although written in the distant past, his analysis may continue to be considered quite valid if considered globally. The ILO reports that the proportion of jobless has been steadily increasing since the beginning of the **financial crisis of 2007–2008** (Michael Denning, *Wageless Life*, *New Left Review*, 66, 2010).

It is in this sense, given that reality, that promotion of equality has become merely a feature of public relations by authorities (*Cultivating the Myth of Human Equality: ignoring complicity in the contradictions thereby engendered*, 2016).

It is necessarily appropriate to recognize the extent to which the larger population becomes complicit in the strategies promoted by authorities in this regard. Thus the mainstream narrative clearly seeks every means to frame the unvaccinated as a primary threat in the pandemic period -- thereby encouraging the extent to which the unvaccinated are a focus of institutional blackmail, if not extortion.

Whether intentionally or otherwise the unvaccinated are clearly in process of being crafted by authorities -- with the complicity of ever increasing "percentages" of the population (70%, 80%, 90%) -- as a dangerous underclass, a vital scapegoat to be the focus of every possible condemnation and restriction. However they may be made to suffer, this will be welcomed as appropriate -- being purely a consequence of their own stupidity and selfishness.

Assisted dying: In this context it is therefore remarkable the degree of controversy surrounding **assisted dying** -- for those who seek such assistance. Authorities typically oppose -- often vigorously -- any suggestion that assisted dying should be enabled. Arguably however **it is precisely in "assisted dying" that authorities engage most assiduously**, as variously noted above -- but deniably so, through cynically reframing that "assistance". Their manner of doing so is through negligence, indifference and indirection -- all readily deniable, as with **structural violence**.

The phenomenon can be explored through the process by which authorities are complicit in the subtleties of structural violence. **Death is enabled for many, whether directly or indirectly, whereas it is vigorously opposed for the few who endeavour to claim it as a right** -- given the suffering and loss of dignity they claim to experience, and possibly only too visibly so.

Just consent theory versus Just dissent theory?

With regard to any "No Jab, No Job" policy, as noted above, much with regard to implementation of a universal vaccination strategy turns on the interpretation of "informed consent", as it might be potentially constrained by the *Nuremberg Code* (1947). Understanding of informed consent has been extensively explored (Ruth R. Faden, et al, *The History and Theory of Informed Consent*, 1986; Jessica W. Berg, et al, *Informed Consent: legal theory and clinical practice*, 2001; Neil C. Manson, et al, *Rethinking Informed Consent in Bioethics*, 2007).

Just consent theory? The switch to mandatory vaccination policies deliberately reframes "consent" by presenting vaccination, like the *Godfather's* offer (noted above), as what would be virtually impossible for many to refuse. This subtle reframing of consent by authorities suggests the need for some form of "just consent theory". This would hold the ambiguity between "just do it" (and we can all move on), and "judicious consent". The latter would in turn include the sense of a tactical choice (to circumvent a threat) and considerations of the justice implied by the offer and its acceptance.

It is a curious coincidence that the question of consent currently features prominently in a seemingly quite distinct domain, namely with respect to sexual harassment, intercourse and rape. There it is a major focus of feminist protest and argumentation (Ami Katagiri, *Feminism 101: What is Consent?* *FEM*, 14 April 2016).

There is much debate as to what form "consent" should take in that context, with the implied question as to the manner in which it should be "informed":

- Rosanna Brunwin: *The Problem With How We've Defined Consent* (*Everyday Feminism*, 13 November 2015)
- Lasara Firefox Allen: *Consent is not so Simple: a feminist perspective* (*Patheos*, 16 January 2016)
- Maria Drakopoulou: *Feminism and Consent: a genealogical inquiry* (*Choice and Consent*, 2007)
- Madhulika Agarwal: *Understanding Consent Beyond A 'Yes' Or A 'No'* (*Feminism India*, 24 January 2017)
- Alli Kirkham: *What If We Treated All Consent Like Society Treats Sexual Consent?* (*Everyday Feminism*, 23 June 2015)
- Michael Schreiner: *Feminist Thought And Informed Consent* (*Evolution Counseling*, 15 January 2013)

There is considerable difficulty in understanding the implications in different cultures -- especially when the standards of one dominant culture are held to be universally applicable. Whereas the emphasis is placed on the consenter (or consentee) being informed, little is said about the extent to which the maker of the offer should be informed as to the implications of what is proposed for which consent is potentially sought.

Coincidence or not, parallels have been controversially drawn between vaccination and rape -- for fairly obvious reasons. The association has been ridiculed and dismissed as a view of extremist anti-vaxxers, necessarily to be disparaged. Whether of any merit, or not, the nature and challenge of consent in both cases -- and how it is informed -- invites careful reflection in terms of any "just consent theory".

For a woman faced with presentation of an "offer that cannot be refused" -- or for a man confronted with a typical male-rape situation in prison -- the case for "just consent" may be the convenient option in comparison with the implied threat. For authorities promoting

vaccination the message is simply "just consent" -- and all will be well.

Just dissent theory? The dilemmas surrounding consent highlight the role of **dissent**. Distinctions are made between **philosophical dissent**, **political dissent**, religious **heresy** and **schism**, **military dissent**, **judicial dissent**, **scientific dissent**, and **organizational dissent** -- all variously perceived as highly problematic.

These all point to the need for a "just dissent theory" -- to which there are no references as such. There are however many references to "how to say no", or to "just say no" -- but with little attention to the consequences, and as such relatively naive in practice:

- Zahra Campbell-Avenell: *49 Ways To Say No To Anyone* (*Career FAQs*, 28 July 2016)
- Rebecca Tenzer: *How to Say No* (*WikiHow*, 17 February 2008)
- Daniel Potter: *How to Say No: A Guide to Saying No Politely* (*Grammarly Blog*, 31 May 2019)
- Lauren Krasny: *How to Say "No" Diplomatically* (*WikiHow*, 9 July 2021)
- Mat Apodaca: *How to Say No Politely And Professionally* (*LifeHack*, 24 November 2020)
- *Knowing how to say "No" in Japanese* (*Coto Academy*, 11 April 2016)

More specifically "saying no" is a major preoccupation with regard to substance abuse and how it may be managed. A "just dissent theory" could be seen as fundamental to **conscientious objection** with respect to warfare. Missing however is an exploration of what might be constructed with dissent, as noted separately (*Using Disagreements for Superordinate Frame Configuration*, 1992).

The constraint on dissent is most strikingly evident in the primary defence of Adolf Eichmann in relation to the Holocaust. Given reference to the *Nuremberg Code*, identification of ultimate responsibility for the action of agents in response to the pandemic now recalls the dilemmas associated with Eichmann's defence. This is termed "**superior orders**", but also known as the Nuremberg defence (or "just following orders"), **It is** a plea in a court of law that a person, whether a member of the military, law enforcement, a firefighting force, or the civilian population, should not be considered guilty of committing actions that were ordered by a superior officer or official.

Although the absence of dissent is highly deprecated in the case of the Holocaust, it may be compared -- controversially -- to the failure of **Kofi Annan** in doing what was in his power at a critical moment in order to prevent the **Rwandan genocidal massacre** (*Perplexing Symmetries in Obedience to Orders: equivalencies in the moral abdication of Adolf Eichmann and Kofi Annan?* 1998); *Kofi Annan's legacy was complicated by the Rwandan genocide*, *The Washington Post*, 18 August 2018).

The complex relationship between consent and dissent in relation to authority has been explored in the much-cited "**Milgram experiment**" conducted by **Stanley Milgram** (*Obedience to Authority: an experimental view*, 1974). This was devised as a psychological study to explain the **psychology of genocide** and answer the popular contemporary question: *Could it be that Eichmann and his million accomplices in the Holocaust were just following orders? Could we call them all accomplices?* The experiment has been repeated many times around the globe, with fairly consistent results.

There is a useful comparison to be made between the controversy regarding suffering and that regarding dissent. Suffering is variously valued as a source of insight, as noted above in response to arguments to circumvent it through assisted dying. Both consent to what is not wanted, and dissent from its imposition, may well involve suffering. That suffering may also be valued as a feature of so-called "toughening up" (whatever the requisite pain, as in boot camps) and the rituals associated with "joining the team" or "joining the club" (as is the case in **hazing rituals**, whether or not they involve humiliation and invasive sex). The injunction may well be *don't ask questions, just do it like everyone else* -- as is so evident in the case of vaccination promotion.

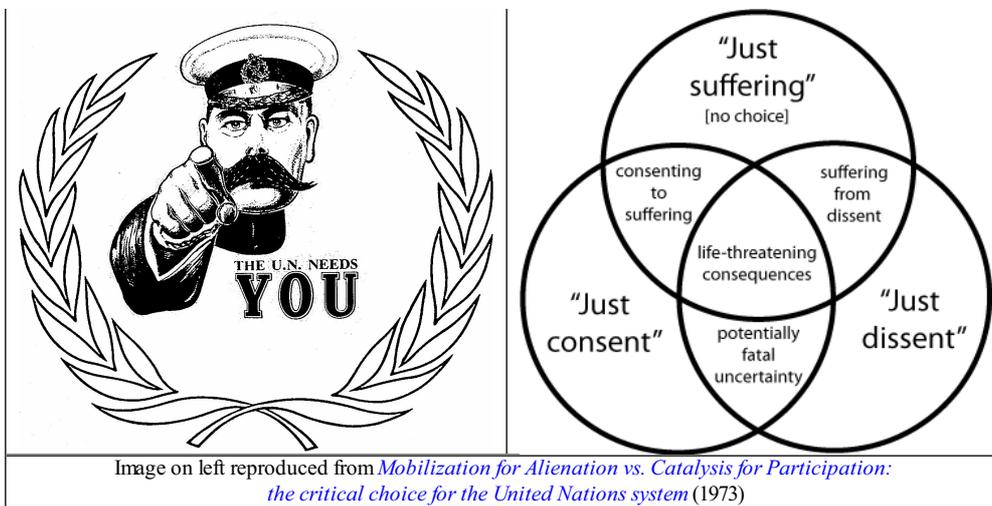
When indeed is it appropriate to dissent --- to disagree -- as highlighted by such examples? What is the price of dissent? Would Kofi Annan have risked his future career by ordering the troops under his local command to act in Rwanda? Loss of livelihood is currently the specific cost of "No Jab, No Job".

In the light of that policy, Australians are faced with a particular challenge following the establishment by the **Australian Defence Organisation** of a COVID-19 taskforce. **Lieutenant General John Frewen** was seconded to lead it -- appointed the Coordinator General in the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce on 4 June 2021 (*General confusion: who is John Frewen, and what is his role in Australia's vaccine rollout?* *The Guardian*, 11 July 2021; Daniel Hurst, *Letter reveals what Scott Morrison told John Frewen when he gave him vaccine role*, *The Guardian*, 1 September 2021). The Australian **Fair Work Commission** determined that what the federal government and that of New South Wales were doing has gone way too far and it has to stop. (*Decision, FWCFB*, 21 September 2021; *Joint statement from the BCA and ACTU on Mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations*. *ACTU*, 13 August 2021).

Just consent? Just dissent? Just suffer? As with many other countries, Australia is remarkable for quashing dissent of any form with respect to its strategy of universal vaccination. For those who dissent: Let them suffer? Given the analogy between inoculation and indoctrination, this offers the further sense in which the unvaccinated are becoming framed as in the multimedia franchise the *Left Behind*, with its focus on the Christian **dispensationalist End Times**.

However there is necessarily a further comparison with suffering in that religions in particular may attach extreme value to dissent and "saying no" when their adherents are under extreme pressure to convert to some other faith. As a consequence those who dissent -- and die for their belief -- may be upheld as **martyrs**. Cases distinguished include: **Christian martyrs**, **martyrs of jihad**, **martyrdom in Judaism**, **martyrdom in Sikhism**, in addition to **martyrdom in Chinese culture** and **political martyrs**. Is it then to be imagined that the future will perceive those who resist vaccination in such a light, especially if they are subject to extreme repressive measures, as was the case of the **Cathars** and their **massacre** by a Catholic Church in quest of universal indoctrination?

Framing the existential challenges	
World War I inspiration for Crisis Response	Interrelating the implications of suffering and choice



The various zones of the schematic on the right call for particular attention. The potential fatal uncertainty associated with the overlap between theories of consent and dissent will probably prove fundamental to the viability of future strategic response to climate change. It could be seen as indicative of the challenge of complicity of each and everyone in the patterns of behaviour engendering global warming (*Pricking the Bubble of Global Complacent Complicity*, 2017).

Positive versus Negative? How might a "just dissent theory" frame the capacity for judicious dissent, and its value -- when consent is upheld as "positive" (and cooperative) in contrast with dissent as "negative" (and uncooperative, even dangerously so)? With vaccination framed as strategically positive, how might it be subject to the critique of [Barbara Ehrenreich](#) (*Smile Or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World*, 2010)?

Conversely, with [vaccine resistance](#) framed as negative, how might its value be appreciated from the science-based perspective of cybernetics? This carefully distinguishes the role of both [negative feedback](#) and [positive feedback](#) in the control of any complex process (*Being Positive Avoiding Negativity*, 2005). As indicated in the latter, a major consequence of overvaluing the positive and excluding the negative is failure to recognize the vital requirement for negative feedback in order to determine why anything is not working as intended -- whether a nuclear power station or the strategic response to a pandemic.

More generally failure to distinguish the two detracts from the possibility of [critical thinking](#) to enable remedial action and creative responses to crises. The problematic nature of this deficiency is currently highlighted by the quality of testing for disease which may result in "[false positive errors](#)" or "[false negative errors](#)".

Experiential subtleties? The Venn diagram on the right above can be seen as framing a critical nexus of a threefold pattern of choice. As such it invites speculative engagement with its existential implications for those entrapped in that pattern.

One approach, from a Western perspective, could be that discussed separately with respect to the [Borromean challenge to comprehension of any trinity?](#) (2018). This notes the extensive analysis of how [Dante Alighieri](#) describes the three rings (*tre giri*) of the Holy Trinity in *Paradiso* 33 of the *Divine Comedy* (Arielle Saiber and Aba Mbirika, *The Three Giri of Paradiso XXXIII*, *Dante Studies*, 131, 2013, pp. 237-272). That remarkable interdisciplinary exploration combines insights from speculative theology, geometry and knot theory. It is especially remarkable for the balance it brings to aspects of the issue discussed here. If nothing else, it is valuable as a review of **the ways in which the reconciliation of three incommensurables may be most fruitfully considered in the light of thinking from the past**. It engages with Dante's poetic insights into Christianity's greatest paradoxical mystery of three-in-one / one-in-three. In this sense it could be understood as a study in "topological theology" or "theological topology".

A second approach, from an Eastern perspective, could encode the distinction highlighted here between just as "appropriate imposition" and just as "questionable submission" -- using the traditional twofold *yang-yin* pattern of unbroken and broken lines. The combination of such lines in groups of three then offers a pattern of eight distinct conditions through which the threefold nexus might be experienced -- the traditional *BaGua* pattern.

The Rehearsal is Over

(as articulated by [Charles Eisenstein](#), 10 October 2021)

Many people trust the authorities and willingly comply with their rules. They face no dilemma, no initiatory moment, no self-defining world-creating choice point, not yet.

But as the authorities' narratives devolve into absurdity and their rules devolve into oppression, more and more of us face this choice:

To live your truth out loud, or
 To live by a lie, consoling yourself with secret protest.
 To do what you know is right, or
 To cave in to the pressure, consoling yourself with words you don't believe.
 "I had no choice."

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