

The Year That Was

Written by [Paul Collits](#)



2020 was the very worst of times. A year not to savour but to regret. What was thought inconceivable a mere twelve months ago is now real. It can never be inconceivable again. Barring a miracle or concerted political action by those who resent our loss of freedom, a dystopian future surely awaits us all.

2020. Another year has passed.

There is a lot to be gained by reflecting, not only on the key events of this year just gone, but also on both the underlying causes and the impacts of these bizarre events that have all but crushed our spirits and created a global malaise beyond anyone's imaginings a mere year ago.

No ordinary year, of course. A lost year, in many senses. A stolen year, in fact. Much more alarming, a year that may simply never end, whatever the calendar might say. Groundhog Year.

A year about death, above all else. About dying, and about obsessing over death in a new and wholly quirky way. A year about fundamentally redefining life and death. About ignoring God's task of deciding when we are called from this life and replacing Him with ourselves.

2020 was a year of abject surrender, of hysteria, of derangement, of paranoia, of delusion on a grand scale. A Kafkaesque year in which governments and their voters opted into the creepy new project of making the whole world a safe space. A year in which we gave up our cherished freedoms for a middling virus that in Australia was less harmful to our health than the 2018 flu season. Less harmful than many other flu

seasons. Freedom of speech? Gone. Freedom of movement? Gone. Freedom of assembly? Gone. Freedom to earn a living? For many, gone. Whole industries shot to pieces. Hopes and dreams eviscerated. Plans derailed. A year in which the young and the healthy have been forced by the Covid State sacrificed much, for no gain whatsoever. A year of political venality and bungling on a massive scale, of politicians self-protecting by lies big and small.

A year where rational thought, perspective, evidence-based policy and science all left the building. A year that saw the triumph of ideologised technocracy (the rule by experts who may not actually be experts), the victory of those with global power.

A year where every country on God's earth bar two or three simply aped Communist China, the source of the Covid virus.

A year of rampant hypocrisy, of double standards, of coverups, of wilful exaggeration, of blatant falsehood. Of panicked policy-on-the-run. Of something that looks like "leadership" but isn't. Of shaming those who speak truth-to-power. All this at a terrifying cost.

2020 was a truly sinister year.

An Orwellian year. A year of fear successfully implanted in whole populations. Through relentless, wall-to-wall, 24/7 fear-inspired reportage. A year in which the Covid State jumped the shark, leaving previous ruling elite-run fear campaigns like "the climate crisis" in its wake. A year of terror, but without the usual terrorists.

To what end? Simply to help certain classes of people escape death, at all costs, for a short time. Mostly to save those already close to death. The very old and the very sick. For a few more months of, in many cases, mere existence. Even though many of those who have died during the "crisis" actually died in aged care facilities funded by blundering governments and run by their hapless proxies.

We have experienced a year where fear conquered rational thought. A year that saw us deciding that only one kind of death matters. It matters so much that all other bets were off. A year on which the sole focus was – death.

2020 was a year that, as always, saw a cavalcade of great and famous men and women passing.

Kobe Bryant. Michael Jeffery. Doug Anthony. Pierre Cardin. John le Carre. Charley Pride. Diego Maradona. Sean Connery. Jerry Jeff Walker. Johnny Nash. Barbara Windsor. Jerry Stiller. Kirk Douglas. Eddie Van Halen. Helen Reddy. Mac Davis. Justice RBG. Diana Rigg. Kelly Preston. Herman Cain. Olivia de Havilland. Ian Holm. Pierre Cardin. Honor

Blackman. Kirk Douglas. Noel Kelly and Arthur Summons. Kenny Rogers. Bill Withers.

Speaking of Bill Withers, there ain't no sunshine around the place just now.

One of Bill's less well-known songs was titled "Better Off Dead". Alas, many have reached the same conclusion, and suicide and depression have achieved an efflorescence in 2020. Along with the famous who died, there are all those who were not famous. And those poor wretches who died of something other than Covid. Many took their own lives, despairing of a world that had lost meaning not only for them personally but for most of the rest of us. Countless and sadly uncounted people died as a result of the policies forced upon us by governments to combat Covid.

Those named above who passed in 2020 are only the famous ones. We will miss them. May they rest in eternal peace. We cling to those who gave us so much joy. But the reality is, since the fall of man, we all have to die. These are the fruits of original sin. You know, life's tough. Then you die.

Saint Thomas More said, as he faced his final call at a time and place decidedly not of his own choosing, "death comes for us all".

Death comes for us all; even at our birth-- even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little. And every day he looks towards us and muses somewhat to himself whether that day or the next he will draw nigh. It is the law of nature, and the will of God.

Wise, though discomfoting, words. More gave up his life in service of the truth. And in the face of ruthless state power. Death is something we can, in some cases, postpone, but ultimately not avoid. Despite the utopian dreams of Big Tech types who want to live for hundreds of years then freeze themselves for another stint later. Obsessing over death is a futile exercise. Death is sad. For the very old and very sick, it is not tragic. Merely expected. For many at that stage of life, it is welcomed. For Saint Paul, it would mean being with Christ. Indeed, an increasing number of us believe we should help the aged and infirm to speed up the process as a pain relief strategy, and use the profession traditionally most invested in preserving lives to end them.

This was a Jekyll and Hyde year, then, of strangely confused attitudes towards death. Where preserving life is simultaneously pursued at all costs for some, yet casually setting it aside for others.

A new disease has emerged in 2020, and I do not here mean Covid. It is "hypochondria by proxy", that is, taking on needless worry for the health of others. Most governments around the world caught the disease, and passed it on to many of their citizens. It has become a weird obsession. But again, the hypochondria by proxy is selective. We only wish to protect the Covid-

exposed. It is part of a strange, modern, still emerging secular obsession with extending this, our only life, as long as we can. And then ending it at a time of our choosing. All very post-Christian. If man can control everything – including the climate – he should be able to control death. It is our right, nay, our duty. God might well be thinking – “not on My watch”.

If it was a year where only some deaths mattered, it was also a year when only some lives mattered. Black ones, of course.

2020 saw the arrival, too, of a new philosophy of life. Only quantity of life matters, not quality. One is reminded of the old Dave Allen joke. Dave went to the doctor, who told him grimly – if you give up women, if you give up drinking, if you give up smoking, you will live for an extra fifteen years. Dave thought about this silently for a moment, then said – no, if I give up women, and give up drinking, and give up smoking, it will just seem like I am living an extra fifteen years.

2020 was like that.

For many, life has become prematurely purgatorial. Life replaced by mere existence, clock-watching instead of living. The dying who were wickedly deprived of the chance to say goodbye to their loved ones. We had to keep them alive a little longer, just so they could ... die! The grieving who, also, could not say goodbye. Except by zoom. Not for these families the joy of a good death surrounded by peace and love.

A purgatorial year too for the imprisoned of Victoria and elsewhere. The populations under house arrest. Those stressed by being forced to wear muzzles. By the curfews. By the fear mongering that was all too successful. The innocent citizens who were hounded, and in some cases brutalised, by thuggish, out-of-control police whose job used to be catching criminals. And innocent cardinals.

2020 has been a year of Covid cliches, of casual propaganda, of corporates doing infomercials for the government. Stay safe. We are all in it together. Now more than ever ... Unprecedented. Uncertain times. We're here for you. In effect, they have been promoting the purgatorial life. Superspreading the message. Enjoy misery! It is good for you.

<https://www.skyword.com/contentstandard/7-covid-cliches-to-avoid-in-branded-content-marketing-and-what-to-say-instead/>

Flatten the curve? How about flatten the English language. Make the language a cliched implement of oppression. To flatten the population.

It has been the year of the casedemic, of the conflation of Covid “case” with Covid “infection”. The two are not remotely correlated, especially when the tool of correlation is the seriously flawed – and flawed in multiple ways – PCR test. By feeding the public with endless, irrelevant reportage on “cases”, the

corporate Covid State and the public health establishment have been able to maintain disproportionate focus on Covid and irrational fear of it. The PCR test has been the means by which this has been achieved. We have been utter fools over the casademic. A truly headshaking year, then.

Then there is the deliberate and immoral inflation of death numbers. We all know the story of the folks gunned to death who were counted as "Covid". If you have a positive test – not itself remotely proof of infection – then die within twenty-eight days (in the UK), well, you died from Covid. Even if, having generated a false positive result, you didn't actually have it. Or if you had it but it didn't cause you to die.

According to US critic Heather MacDonald:

When California State University, Long Beach, a campus of 37,000 students, shuts down because five students tested positive for the virus, we are in the realm of hysteria. When the New York Times portrays a 101-year-old military veteran as a coronavirus fatality, as opposed to someone who died of old age; when the Milwaukee coroner does the same for the death of an 89-year-old male with dementia, hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, and chronic renal failure, you know that the media and public-health establishments are looking for any excuse to inflate the death numbers.

Inflating death counts has had its purpose for the Covid State. As has failing to report more relevant data. Like how many positive testees were actually sick. In hospital. At risk of passing the virus on to others. Dying. Nary a word on these.

The Covid State's strategy has been to tell noble lies and enforce compliance by spreading fear. Like all ideologies, safetyism has its quartet of key players – masterminds, field operatives, fellow travellers and useful idiots. These have sought to embed this new ideology across society, and they have been successful. Just look at the polls, exaggerated though these might be. They bespeak implanted safetyism.

A key trick has been to isolate, belittle, abuse and humiliate those of us who wish to live our lives normally, or worse, who question – on a scientific basis – the main tenets of the belief system of the public health lobby. Attributing bad motives and accusing the sane among us of being killers has been de rigueur. One lunatic UK doctor recently accused non-social-distancers of "having blood on their hands".

The year that was. A year of cultural maskism. Of politicising health and illness.

Demonisation has often taken the form of actual suppression of views. The shutting down of debate. Censorship. Shadow banning. Cancellation. Non-platforming. In other words, we are in an age of supine "controlled opposition". The role of Big Tech has been widely discussed, if little

understood by those who maintain a naively benign view of technocracy and of platform companies whose businesses have evolved from localised chat groups to behemoths which constitute core media infrastructure. Back in the day, governments used to legislate to prevent legacy media monopolies, in the interests of democracy. Where is the state action to tame social media companies that now rig elections and censor opinion deemed to be against the interests of the global elite? Achieving social control through spreading Covid hysteria is right up there at the top of the ruling class's bucket list.

Branch Covidians, the masters of the cult, have come up with the ultimate insult for those who dissent from Covid orthodoxy. We are called spreaders of "misinformation". By we, I include professors of epidemiology and virology from Oxford, Stanford and Harvard, world experts, respected scientists and much published scholars. Published in the holy grail of the politically correct – peer reviewed journals. Never mind that what these people are arguing is in lockstep with what the World Health Organisation has prescribed and proscribed in the past. Before China applied pressure to the weak points of Big Medicine last February. Solid science – whether on vaccines, masks, distancing and lockdowns – becomes "misinformation".

Back home, we had the bizarre case of Victorian authorities and their own useful idiots castigating some poor truck driver who became known to all as "the Shepparton Superspreader". There was a statewide witch-hunt with breathless hourly updates on his alleged misdeeds and his every move. Maps with dotted lines, even. The outcome of all this demonisation? Three cases of Covid in Shepparton. Perhaps one of them felt ill for a bit.

A senior operative in VicPol, Luke Cornelius, called demonstrators against the lockdown in Melbourne the "tin foil hat brigade". Covidiot. (Covid "truthers" is a good one). Mind you, if I were from VicPol, I would be looking for a deep hole to crawl into or a big rock to hide behind around about now, rather than engaging in brazen abuse of the public with a megaphone in front of the media. One wonders when the moment was when public servants decided that part of their job was to insult their citizens.

All ideologies have their hate figures. Orwell in 1984 created Emmanuel Goldstein for all to hate in the name of Big Brother. Hating the enemy helped keep the whole Oceania show going. Covid has Pete Evans.

Call your opponent who dissents a conspiracy theorist. An anti-vaxxer. Job done.

2020 was a year of Covid theatre, of going along with the charade. Everyone has a part to play, either in the cause of making one's life easy, through "doing the right thing" and "pulling one's weight" to full-blown CovidMania. But is IS all theatre. Sanitiser, masks, distancing signs on the floor and posters, signing in and QR codes are both stage props and also the rules for entering commercial premises. A new language emerged, too – as

well as superspreaders, we have bubbles, hotspots, hubs, distancing, pandemic, tiers, contact tracing, PCR tests, fomites, flattening the curve, sheltering in place. And on and on. Branch Covidians love using the words, preferably in hushed tones. I suspect they actually get off on it.

We all long for a return to simpler times, when a "superspreader" was merely a successful prostitute and corona was a (barely drinkable) beer. This is sinister, though. As Kel Richards has recently pointed out, "linguistic engineering" has become a tool of social control and a vehicle for radical social change. (It also started in China. Mao's China). The phrase "climate crisis" is but one example of the genre. Toxic masculinity, white privilege and unconscious bias are others. Ideology embedded in words and phrases and if you say them enough by rote, they get believed. They become part of the narrative. Another strategy straight from the Orwellian playbook. The strategy has been front and centre in the Branch Covidian cult. Control the language, control thought.

2020 was a year in which several key institutions of our democracies simply gave up doing their jobs. One is the legacy (corporate) media. Journalists who should know better have given up whatever investigative instincts they may have had in the cause of becoming government hacks who simply write infomercials, reproduce media releases and scare the public witless. The legacy media in Western democracies have become Pravda.

The other main groups not doing their jobs are Opposition parties whose only line this year was – "your policies don't go far enough". Should have locked down earlier "to save more lives". (Idiots like Neil "Pantsdown" Ferguson said this. I assume they believe it). You haven't destroyed the economy enough. People are not sufficiently cowed. The unemployment rate must go higher. Our national debt needs to be even greater than it is. Print more money. Test more. Track more. Lock up more. Crush the bastards. Nary a whisper in actual opposition to what is being done to our world. Only side-swipes about bungles and incompetence. Opposition parliamentary members are collecting their pay cheques under false pretences. They are a disgrace.

What of the governing parties?

Well, they have simply outsourced all decision-making to unelected public health officials who have narrow KPIs, even narrower vision and a shedload of ideology. It is their job to identify public health risks and to provide advice to governments. It is NOT their job to govern society. Public health bureaucrats are Covid hammers to which every problem appears as a nail. And, as it turns out, they love power as much as anyone else who gets the chance to wield it. As Heather MacDonald noted back in April:

The public health establishment is fighting desperately to maintain this degree of hysteria in the populace, in order to prolong its newfound power over almost every aspect of American life.

For American, read also British, Australian, French, German ...

All have relied on the totally unreliable prognostications of career modellers, not scientists. These people are the same fantasists who lied to us all about climate change and who have been proven wrong over and over again about previous "pandemics" like swine flu and foot and mouth disease. Their preferred modus operandi is foot IN mouth.

As one observer (@boriquagato) noted:

There is no science here or any data. These are the febrile imaginings of discredited modellers.

As with climate change, they are modellers with influence and channels to power.

Governments panicked and copycatted. Presuming that voters would punish them more for visible deaths than for invisible deaths, governments that were elected to lead have instead followed. They have printed money we do not have. They have told us lies. They have not followed "the science". Not remotely. They have refused to seek advice from real, independent experts that questions their own numbskull bureaucrats. When they have sought it (like Boris Johnson did, very briefly), they have ignored it.

One that they might have listened to is Donald Henderson, who led the war on smallpox.

He wrote in 2006 that:

... there are no historical observations or scientific studies that support the confinement by quarantine of groups of possibly infected people for extended periods to slow the spread of influenza.... The negative consequences of large-scale quarantine are so extreme (forced confinement of sick people with the well; restriction of movement of populations) that this mitigation measure should be eliminated from serious consideration.

Meta studies published in The Lancet and elsewhere show NO correlation between non pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and Covid outcomes. They might have listened to Sunetra Gupta, Jay Bhattacharya, Martin Kulldorff, Mike Yeadon, Sucharit Bhakti, Carl Heneghan or John Ioannidis. Global experts all, who speak common sense and rely on evidence, not ideology or misplaced loyalty to government. As one observer has noted:

And this was all known. Every set of longstanding pandemic guidelines contra-indicated lockdowns...until this year, when we suddenly abandoned 100 years of science and started making stuff up and moralizing about it as though it were canon....

In other words, 2020 was the year decision-makers abandoned science just when they (and we) needed it most. They dug the hole deeper instead of climbing out of the hole, and begging our forgiveness.

Governments have not learned from their myriad errors, but rather have doubled down on the earlier, rampant failures of their initial policies. In doing so, they have pulled off the daily double. The biggest coverup in history in response to the biggest policy blunder in history. Governments have fallen prey, as well, to the sunk costs fallacy. They and their acolytes are invested so much in the big lie and the big blunder that to back away now would be career-ending behaviour by the political class. And too humiliating for words for the suborned cheer squad.

Politicians do not willingly do "career-ending".

As well, they have kept on shifting the goalposts, without having the courtesy to explain to the voters – if so, then why? From "flattening the curve" to save hospital resources to "eliminating the virus". Not a minor shift, then.

The generous might call this agile strategy. I call it dangerous rubbish. @boriquagato again:

Politicians are now doubling and trebling down on lockdowns and masks because to do otherwise is to admit that they bought us \$10 trillion of sugar water as medicine and wrecked our lives and livelihoods for no sound reason. They will never do that.

This is why they have shifted the debate to morality and censorship: to mask the fact that the science and the data call them liars. Repeat "I'm on the side of science" enough and scare people endlessly and you can generate social belief. But it's pure propaganda.

Moralising governments have joined in citizen bashing. They have avoided the hard questions. They have shown no interest whatsoever in the welfare of their peoples. They have imposed wicked and draconian measures out of all proportion to the threat and enforced them with state sanctioned police brutality. Something that, no doubt, many police have massively enjoyed. It so beats chasing criminals and bringing them to justice. Governments have bungled everything from quarantine to vaccines. They have enlisted the press to buttress their own incompetence. They have been useful idiots for global elites with far-reaching and radical agendas who intend not to let this crisis go to waste. They have bullied and they have moralised. They have claimed powers – to defeat viruses – they do not possess. In the words of Peter Hitchens, they have discovered a wasp's nest in the house and have burned the house down to get rid of the wasp's nest. They have relentlessly asserted, and reasserted. With an iron fist. Never argued, never demonstrated, never proved, never persuaded with evidence and logic. They

have claimed "science" as their friend, without remotely knowing what real science is, and where it can be found.

When the state takes away the freedom of its citizens, the onus is on it to explain itself. In 2020, it has not done so. The onus is NOT on free citizens to explain themselves for either going about their normal business, or dissenting from freedom-sapping governance.

The year was an epic fail for the elites. Here is Joe Barron, speaking of the UK, and speaking of Covid and more:

Annus horribilis just doesn't cut it. A year in which we've seen the advent of a global pandemic, worldwide protests caused by the killing of an unarmed black civilian in Minneapolis and the cancellation of Christmas – all endured with the forbidding spectre of a no deal Brexit hanging over us – surely needs a brand new term.

The most striking thing about this whole affair, though, has been the utter failure of our Alpha caste to navigate the ship of state through these tempestuous seas. Incalculable levels of ineptitude have combined with both arrogance and aloofness to produce an epoch-ending conflation of crises that has exposed the egregious shortcomings of our governing class and, just as importantly, the misconceptions of a credulous public. The mask has finally slipped and the veneer of superiority has been stripped away. The emperors really do have no clothes.

Oxbridge and Eton, we now know. Apart from churning out an interminable, never-ending configuration of smug, arrogant, born-to-rule Malfoys with the means and connections to trample over their opponents and further their own interests, you have nothing else to offer. You certainly don't add any value to the rest of society.

Thanks to you, and our most influential institutions – institutions saturated with your alumni and the alumni of our other elite educational establishments – the poor suffering British people have been lumbered with politicians intent on destroying our socio-economic and cultural inheritance – in short, our hard won freedoms and economic well-being – in the name of protecting us from a virus that has a 99.7% survival rate.

Everything here could be said of our own "alpha class" down under. Uttering the very phrase brings forth a cynical smirk in response.

But not just an epic fail on competence. The governing elites have been cruel. Evil. Demonic. As Lord Sumption would have it, they have been "immoral".

Our lives belong to us, not the state. It's morally wrong for government control freaks to tell us what we can do at Christmas ...

Here is Sinead Murphy:

It's that time of year when we name the best and worst. Competition is stiff, on one side of the equation at least. How many worsts there have been, each hardly conceivable before it was suddenly real.

But there was a worst of all. In October in Milton Keynes. Two brothers moved to the side of their grieving mother, putting their arms around her shoulders as she sat before the box containing their dead father's remains, only to be reminded by an official from the crematorium that they were not permitted to be within six feet of their mother during the ceremony – as if she had been lowered into the grave as their father was being raised onto the pyre.

It is the simplest of mourning rituals, a consoling arm around the shoulders. A fragment of ritual, really. And yet it too has been made to retreat before the march of Health and Safety, those twin murderers of the last vestiges of our arts of living and dying.

Speaking of the American situation, Sandy Szwarc stated:

When it comes to the Covid-19 panic, as board-certified psychiatrist, Dr. Mark McDonald, explained, people have become so terrorized and traumatized, they're unable to think clearly, reason or process accurate and factual information even when it's available. Instead, people are driven by fear. The scares and alarms instilled by media and government have become so entrenched, he said, many Americans have reached a state of delusional psychosis. This widespread collective delusion, is unlike anything most health professionals have ever witnessed. People are being hurt.

Delusional psychosis indeed. Yes, this is real. It happened. And it is evil. The state has taken away the capacity of its citizens to reason. As Szwarc goes on to say, it is "unethical".

<https://www.critlarge.com/articles/2020/covid19>

In another piece, Szwarc states that the American people are "at breaking point".

American people are crying out for help and dying – not from a virus with an "infection fatality rate" of 0.15-0.2% across all age groups, and 0.03 to 0.04% in those under 70 years old. (This means, 99.96% of nearly everyone who gets the virus lives.) No, the desperation and distress are in response to the government's unprecedented mandates and lockdowns.

Masking, isolation, business closures, shuttered churches, ended normal school classes, seniors confined secluded in nursing homes, people left to die alone in hospitals, sporting events ended, music silenced, jobs and

livelihoods destroyed. American life has been cancelled – from Easter to Memorial Day, 4th of July to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and now New Year's..

Many people have lost everything and now face losing their country. The level of despair is palpable. Growing numbers have lost the ability to cope.

What would happen as a result of these unprecedented government mandates was well known. They cannot say they didn't know or that it wasn't anticipated.

As I say, this is evil. The biggest and scariest policy experiment in all of human history. A "perfect storm" for suicides. Including suicides by children. A perfect storm for much else besides.

If, indeed, the governing classes did know what they were doing, the obvious question (not for this paper to answer) is – why? How could they not know? And if they did know what was being done, and the likely impacts, then the onus is on those NOT prone to asking difficult, higher order "why" questions to prove it wasn't deliberate, wasn't evil. (For the CovidManiac, the synonym for "those asking higher order questions is "conspiracy theorists"). Merely a stuff up on the part of our rulers? That case is getting harder to make as time passes.

Then we have the punishment of whistleblowers, while we simultaneously reward, indeed, cheer on, the dobbling class. The Karens. Like the dobber who reported Tony Abbott for riding a bike on the Northern Beaches of Sydney.

Meanwhile, in the UK:

A woman in the UK was arrested by police after she filmed a video inside an almost completely empty hospital and posted it online.

The clip shows the woman walking through virtually empty corridors and filming empty wards at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

"This is a disgrace... it is so dead... all the people in our country desperately waiting for treatment, cancer treatment, heart disease, honestly this is making me so angry," she states as she films a row of empty waiting chairs.

The woman expressed shock at how quiet the hospital was, saying she expected there to be "a few more people around, there's absolutely nobody".

According to reports, a 46 year-old woman was subsequently arrested by police for filming the video and has been charged on suspicion of a public order offence.

In spite of all of this obsession with death in 2020 ...

We have also had a year in which we legislated (ironically, and with straight faces) so much death. Despite all the Covid hysteria, our governments made it easier to die and easier to kill our babies.

Each and every state of Australia, and New Zealand, have embraced infanticide on demand and "dignity in death" for the aged and infirm. Our governments are falling over themselves to make it easier to dispose of the unwanted. We obsess about death yet welcome it, so long as we, our autonomous selves, choose it. Go figure. Mothers (and fathers) get to kill their unwanted babies. The old and terminally in pain get to "die with dignity". You can get a travel exemption in some countries so you can fly elsewhere to be put down. With dignity. The state castigates those who would "kill Granny" with Covid while it grants the right to suicide to everyone else.

And, simultaneously, we obsess about a case of middling flu on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. Where no one is even sick. Where no one dies. Where no one even asks – how many of the "cases" have been hospitalised? Do the asymptomatic actually spread the virus? And a dozen other pertinent questions that never get asked.

The death count from Covid in NSW at 1 December 2020 was 53. At 31 December 2020 it was 54. A crisis?

The NSW Labor Health Shadow Minister can say, in apparent seriousness, "NSW is on the edge". His (acting) Leader says, we should mandate masks. (Update – the NSW Premier has now caved to the public health brigade on masks). On the edge? While just about every last one of those (very, very few) infected don't suffer much, make a full recovery and infect no one. In a host of countries, 2020 was not even an especially bad year for excess deaths.

With few notable exceptions, no one in Australia even asks, publicly – w ... t ... h ... ? No one in the major parties. No one from the dumbo left organs like The Guardian. No one from the independent medical sector. Academia? What a joke. Too many grants at stake to bite the feeding hand.

What a totally screwed-up society. Where the hell did we go wrong? When did we lose our capacity for reason? How? Why?

We have been crushed by fear, by the state, by brutal policing, by technocracy, by our own cringing inadequacies. We gave up thinking. Researching. Critical thought. Questioning authority. Energy. Activism in support of basic freedoms.

2020 was the year Australians stopped engaging with reality. And turned to porn, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and gambling to w(h)ile away the time. As someone wise once said, the devil makes work for idle hands to do.

GK Chesterton famously said – or if he didn't, he should have – that when we give up believing in God, we don't believe in nothing – we believe in anything. Well, Australians now believe in CovidMania. As noted above, we live in a time of Covid Theatre. We all play a part. We accept police state brutality. We accept the demise of the Federation, when state premiers have the power to close borders, stop commerce, crush industries, kill small businesses, stop people attending cricket tests in other states. We accept the masks. We accept the distancing. We accept the bullshit PRC tests. We accept the contact- tracing. We accept the PR press conferences. We accept the soft totalitarian infomercials.

2020. The year that was.

It was a year where science was appealed to yet ignored by the ruling class, over and over again. Faux science propaganda presented at State information. Real science crushed through State and Big Tech censorship. Fascistbook's elimination of truth. True scientific voices parked as "misinformation".

Real science decried lockdowns for decades prior to the World Health Organisation's total backflip in February. The latter was on the back of the WHO's kowtowing to its Chinese overlords, fresh from the brutalization of the people of Wuhan whence the wretched virus emerged. Real science shows that there is no evidence whatsoever that masks or social distancing or all of the other NPIs make a blind bit of difference to the spread of coronaviruses. Real science acknowledges that, for healthy people under the age of sixty, you are three times more likely to die from a car accident than from Covid. Real science realises that PCR tests do not necessarily prove you have Covid. Real science knows that over 99 per cent of people who contract the virus recover fully, that many of not most cases are asymptomatic and non-transmissible.

Yes, the year that was.

It was a year where we realized we no longer have real leaders. Instead, we have ersatz leaders presenting as the real thing. Endless pressers, sober updates on death, money printing, welfare for the involuntarily indolent, the endless postponing of the inevitable deaths of businesses and lengthening dole queues. Kicking the consequences of failed policy down the road.

It was a year that a new religion was born. This new religion taken up by so many might best be termed "Covidianity".

As Rob Slane has noted, in relation to the UK:

It has its prophets (eg Neil Ferguson); its priesthood of experts (eg Whitty and Vallance); its own soteriology (eg The Vaccine of Salvation); its evangelists (eg Piers Morgan); its own eschatology (eg The New Normal), and of course its heretics (anyone questioning the data or the narrative).

But this religion is demonic.

What the ruling class has wrought this past year is evil, not stupid. It is said that the devil's greatest trick was to have convinced the world that he doesn't exist. Perhaps this past year he has revealed his twenty-first century ace card. His offshoots in the Covid State equally have managed to pull off a big con. They have convinced the punters not to blame them for all the economic and social carnage but to blame the virus!

Speaking of religion, 2020 was the year that the Church all but forgot the Third Commandment. "Keep holy the Sabbath", but not if there is a middling flu on the loose. Bishops of the two main Christian faiths here and in the Mother Country rushed headlong towards the state, in some cases practically begging governments to have their church services cancelled and their church doors slammed shut. In the year that the faithful needed their Mass and other services more than ever. Was it just a coincidence that the closure of our churches coincided with several Australian jurisdictions crushing the sacred seal of the Catholic confessional? Give to Caesar what is Caesar's? We have given Caesar the whole bang lot.

The Church is now a vassal of the state. Unlike Bunnings and Woolies, not even seen by our rulers as offering an "essential service".

No Mass for months. No singing of hymns, no Last Rites, no Communion on the tongue. No sacramentals like Holy Water. No weddings or funerals during lockdowns. Ridiculous distancing in cavernous cathedrals. The resulting emptying of the churches and the wickedness of video'd Masses, so beloved by some bishops who appear to cherish hits and likes more than bums on pews, are markers of Christian decline during a year of hopelessness and "suicide ideation".

This has played out at the local level. In my own (regional New South Wales) diocese, it has been a tale of two bishops. One (retired) says the Latin Mass with the permission of the other. The reigning bishop has decreed no Latin Mass and no Communion on the tongue until the crisis is over. The retired one won't say the Old Rite without communion on the tongue. Just another coincidence? Or a Rahm Emanuel "never let a crisis go to waste" moment utterly enjoyed by a prelate prone to CovidMania and regulation/compliance model of worship?

The Church's breathless desire to collaborate with the state in 2020 has sold out the faithful. It has been a craven capitulation to the enemy by prelates who prefer cosyng up to secular authorities than taking them on. Merely days after the 850th anniversary of St Thomas Becket's murder in another cathedral far away, it is poignant to note how real prelates behave before the might of a sinister state bent on exterminating the faith. At least President Trump paused to commemorate the anniversary of St Thomas of Canterbury, who he described as a "lion of religious liberty". Today's lot are domesticated pussy cats by comparison.

A year of fear. Can you imagine today's youth storming the beaches of Gallipoli or of Normandy? God, I might get Covid! Pass me the sanitizer before I get off the boat. Sorry, all bets are off. The Germans might be superspreaders. We are worse than cowed. We are infantilised, to borrow a phrase from Simon Heffer. The Covid State has won. We just surrendered.

The year that was. The worst of times. A dystopian moment that shows little sign that will only be a moment. A year like no other? One's main fear is that we are merely at the end of the beginning, and that the "new normal", a truly evil phrase, will be with us for the rest of our days.

To believe that we can simply throw the switch back to "old normal" is the height of naivety. Life will never be the same again. A final word to Sinead Murphy:

Most of the Covid restrictions were inconceivable this time last year. Now they have been made real, they can never be inconceivable again.

Yes, we can never get "inconceivable" back, ever again.

I guess if the ruling class can steal elections, it can also steal years. 2020 was stolen. And unless we follow Peter Hitchens' advice and get very angry very quickly, 2021 will go the same way. If we don't, then my fear is that we are still to reach "peak insane", and that our local, national and global misery will continue long into our future. The suspicion that, for many, Covid is simply too big to fail, lingers like a fart in an elevator.

Happy New Year