

A world that doesn't care

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I was musing this morning having woken at my usual blogging hour even though there was no light at that time to stir me out of sleep. My thinking was on the theme of 'a world that doesn't care'.

I was sure I knew a lyric with that line in it, but struggled for a while to think what it was. Then I recalled it was this:

<https://youtu.be/krY4s1Z3FWo>

I am of course aware that this song is thought to be cliched. It is most certainly not popular to admit liking it. But I do. I see it as a simple and honest reflection by a songwriter on what he observed. I can't knock it for that.

That said, I can add that since the 70s when this was a hit our understanding of loneliness has improved immensely. What we do know is it can afflict anyone. Material circumstances do not, as McTell implied, come into it. Alienation from others is what matters.

In a crowded room, a crowded life, even with caring people, it is possible to feel lonely. What matters is a person's sense of isolation. Much of that has to do with feeling valued. It has also to do with a sense of belonging. It has to do with being accepted for who you are.

These things all matter to me. What worries me is that they very clearly do not matter to our government. The evidence comes from its new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. George Monbiot wrote about this with passion in [the Guardian](#) this week and I thought I might have nothing to add, but I do.

Of course we need to be concerned about the government's intention to use this Act when it is passed to suppress dissent. There can be no doubt that the denial of the freedom to protest is at the heart of their intention.

However, the physical act of protest is only one dimension of the whole process of

dissent. Dissent comes from the very core of the person and arises because of their inner belief. And because dissent requires courage it will mean that the person expressing it must have experienced a profound sense of disquiet as a consequence of an affront to their perception of well-being.

That may be a physical threat. At some level climate protest expresses that. However, more often the threat will be metaphysical. A threat to a person's values or to the way in which they wish to live is also implicit in this Bill. It does, in effect take away a person's freedom to choose, and as importantly their right to say why they have chosen and so to find others who think as they do. That to me is the biggest threat in the Bill. It sends out the message that you may deviate from the path that those in the elite of society have chosen for you at your own peril and that they intend to make that deviance perilous.

The response will be what it has been in so many societies with oppressive regimes. Those who dissent will simply shut up. That, they will know, will be the price of their survival. They will disappear from view. They will shrink into their shells. But they will not go away. Nor will their beliefs change. They will simply suffer in silence because that is what this Bill does in effect demand. After all, where would the LGBTQ+ community be without the noisy protest that was and is Pride? What chance is there that such protest would have been permitted under this new Act? I strongly suspect it is none at all. Don't doubt then that this Act will be used to suppress people.

Put the cost in terms of the loneliness that this will create as a consequence and it will be phenomenal. The impact on mental health of this Bill is hard to estimate, but as a crude approximation, I suggest that it will be staggering.

If this happens it will be because we live in a world that doesn't care about the harm that a tiny elite in our society is creating. One day we will realise the price of indifference.