

Musk's attack on the USA and Israel's on the people of ...

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As the Guardian has reported in an email this morning:

Israel [is to cut off any remaining electricity supplies to Gaza](#) in an apparent attempt to ramp up pressure on Hamas, as multi-track negotiations over the fragile ceasefire in the territory become increasingly chaotic. Israel had already cut off all supplies of goods to the territory, claiming that Hamas was stealing aid.

Last week, [CNN reported](#) this about Elon Musk:

"We've got civilizational suicidal empathy going on," Musk said, borrowing the term from Gad Saad, a Canadian scholar who is also a frequent Rogan host.

"The fundamental weakness of Western civilization is empathy, the empathy exploit," Musk said. "There it's they're exploiting a bug in Western civilization, which is the empathy response."

Empathy, he said, has been "weaponized."

He is wrong, of course.

He might be suggesting that we should all behave exactly as neoliberal economics suggests we should. He might think that the world would be a better place if we all removed our concern for others from our thought processes, as that economics suggests to be appropriate. But he would still be wrong.

The reason why is obvious. When we cannot imagine ourselves as others might be, three things happen.

Firstly, we lose our sense of justice. My perspective on this issue is heavily influenced by the work of [John Rawls](#), and so Kant and Aristotle before him. Rawls' theory of justice requires that we imagine ourselves in what he called the original position where an individual presumes that they are behind a "veil of ignorance," unaware of their social position, talents, or life circumstances. As a result, they make impartial decisions

because they have no idea where they might stand with regard to the distribution of the justice they are considering, meaning that they ensure all benefit. The Israeli leadership, like Musk, has clearly lost any such sense of justice. They work solely for the advantage of privilege.

Second, we lose our ability to care, whether about people or consequences.

This, then, thirdly diminishes our sense of who we are as a human being, because we cannot live in isolation. The indifference Musk and the Israeli leadership are showing to the 'other' is the consequence of their choice to ignore empathy. This means that they are bound to have a reduced capacity to function as people, simply because they are denying one of the capacities that makes us human in nature. This is a major reason why most of us find them so hard to understand.

Nothing can make the actions of Israel or Musk acceptable. The point I am making is that these actions are chosen. They reflect a decision to follow a corrupt philosophy, applied in extreme ways. They represent not just injustice at work as a consequence, but evil.