

Il Faut Cultiver Notre Jardin Mondial, Or, On the Philosophical, Moral, and Political Significance of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Robert Hanna



I. Introduction

In February 2017, under the pseudonym 'Z', I published a short essay about the world-famous concluding phrase of Voltaire's *Candide*—“il faut cultiver notre jardin”—and its contemporary philosophical significance.¹

¹ Z, aka R. Hanna, “Il Faut Cultiver Notre Jardin,” *Against Professional Philosophy* (20 February 2017), available online at URL = <<https://againstprofphil.org/2017/02/20/il-faut-cultiver-notre-jardin/>>.

In that little essay, I argued that “il faut cultiver notre jardin” could be interpreted in at least three different ways, but that only the *third* way adequately captured Voltaire’s real intentions in the larger context of 18th century *radical enlightenment* thought.

I then formulated three important applications of the real meaning of Voltaire’s world-famous phrase to contemporary philosophy.

Now, almost exactly three years later, in these “interesting times,” I also see a *fourth* and arguably the *most* important application of the real meaning of “il faut cultiver notre jardin”: namely, *to the philosophical, moral, and political significance of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

II. What I Wrote in February 2017

The history of [*Candide*’s] world-famous phrase, which serves as the book’s conclusion – *il faut cultiver notre jardin* – is ... peculiar. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it didn’t come into written use in English until the early 1930s – in America through Oliver Wendell Holmes and in Britain thanks to Lytton Strachey. But a long, unrecorded history of its oral use and misuse can be deduced from Strachey’s announced desire to cure the “degenerate descendants of *Candide*” who have taken the phrase in the sense of “Have an eye to the main chance.” That a philosophical recommendation to horticultural quietism should be twisted into a justification for selfish greed would not necessarily have surprised Voltaire.²

In Voltaire’s *Candide*, the scathing critique of abstract, world-alienated, self-alienating, sanctimonious theoretical philosophy in general, and of professional academic philosophy in particular – specifically exemplified by 18th century Leibnizian/Wolffian rationalism and theodicy, or theo-idiocy, satirically represented by that iconic moralistic idiot of professional academic philosophy, Dr Pangloss – equally evocatively and provocatively concludes with the phrase “il faut cultiver notre jardin,” “we must cultivate our garden.”

What does Voltaire’s world-famous phrase mean?

As per the above, the novelist Julian Barnes aptly noted that a popular, vulgar misuse and twisting of it means “have an eye to the main chance,” that is, a “justification for selfish greed,” and then proposed that, contrariwise, its real meaning is “a philosophical recommendation to horticultural quietism.”

² Julian Barnes, “A Candid View of *Candide*,” *The Guardian* (1 July 2011), available online at URL = <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jul/01/candide-voltaire-rereading-julian-barnes>.

That reading of its real meaning seems wrong to me, however, an anachronistic interpretation over-influenced by the later Wittgenstein's idea that real philosophy should only get clear on the confusions of classical philosophy as represented by mainstream professional academic philosophy, discharge all its bad pictures, engage in liberating self-therapy, and then just "leave the world alone."

Contrariwise to Barnes's Wittgensteinian contrariwise, I think that "il faut cultiver notre jardin" is in fact Voltaire's radically enlightened 18th century philosophical recommendation to *revolutionize philosophy*, and transform it from abstract, world-alienated, self-alienating, sanctimonious theorizing into *a concrete, world-encountering, self-realizing, emancipatory, rational humanistic enterprise*: in a nutshell, *the real philosopher as a rational rebel for humanity*.

Hence what Voltaire is really saying, in the context of 18th century radical enlightenment, is essentially closer to what the early, humanistic Marx is saying in his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and his 1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*—

The resolution of *theoretical* considerations is possible only through *practical* means, only through the practical energy of humanity. Their resolution is by no means, therefore, the task only of understanding, but is a *real* task of life, a task which philosophy was unable to accomplish precisely because it saw there a *purely* theoretical problem.³

The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point is to *change* it.⁴

and to what Thoreau is saying in his 1854 *Walden*—

There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers.... To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically.⁵

—than it is to what Wittgenstein is saying in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

That being so, how do

³ K. Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology & Social Philosophy*, trans. T.B Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 72.

⁴ Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology & Social Philosophy*, p. 69 (Thesis 11).

⁵ H.D. Thoreau, "Walden," in H.D. Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960), pp. 1-227, at p. 9.

- (i) the meaning of “il faut cultiver notre jardin,”
- (ii) Voltaire’s radically enlightened critique of professional academic philosophy as abstract, world-alienated, self-alienating, sanctimonious theorizing, and
- (iii) his corresponding radically enlightened 18th century recommendation about real philosophy,

jointly apply to *contemporary philosophy*?

First, I think it’s entirely clear that the popular, vulgar misuse and twisting of “il faut cultiver notre jardin” as “have an eye to the main chance” applies directly to the *professionalization and neoliberalization* of academic philosophy in late 20th and early 21st century liberal democratic [S]tates, whether in Europe, North America, or anywhere else in the world.

Second, I think it’s also entirely clear that Voltaire’s radically enlightened critique of professional academic philosophy as abstract, world-alienated, self-alienating, sanctimonious theorizing applies directly to *the Ivory Bunker of professional academic philosophy in the USA in The Age of Trump*.⁶

Third, I think it’s even self-evidently clear that Voltaire’s radically enlightened recommendation about real philosophy directly applies to the three basic proposals made by members of the [*Against Professional Philosophy*] circle, including:

- (i) Robert Frodeman’s and Adam Briggles’ conception of *field philosophy*,⁷
- (ii) Susan Haack’s conceptions of *reintegration in philosophy* and *serious philosophy*,⁸ and most radical of all,

⁶ See Z, aka R. Hanna, “Professional Philosophy Inside the Ivory Bunker,” *Against Professional Philosophy* (5 December 2016), available online at URL = <<https://againstprofphil.org/professional-philosophy-inside-the-ivory-bunker/>>.

⁷ See, e.g., R. Frodeman and A. Briggles, “Socrates Tenured: The Argument in a Nutshell,” *Against Professional Philosophy* (25 August 2016), available online at URL = <<https://againstprofphil.org/2016/08/25/socrates-tenured/>>.

⁸ See, S. Haack, ““The Fragmentation of Philosophy, The Road to Reintegration,” *Against Professional Philosophy* (1 February 2016), available online at URL = <<https://againstprofphil.org/2016/02/01/app-is-not-alone-4-the-fragmentation-of-philosophy-the-road-to-reintegration-ac-edu-re-post/>>; and S. Haack, “Serious Philosophy,” *Against Professional Philosophy* (28 July 2016), available online at URL = <<https://againstprofphil.org/2016/07/28/serious-philosophy-2/>>.

(iii) Z's conception of *open or borderless philosophy*.⁹

Therefore, 21st century philosophers,

let's eradicate the infamy! (écrasez l'infâme!) that is the panglossian professionalization and neoliberalization of academic philosophy worldwide, together with the ivory-bunker-ization of professional academic philosophy in the USA in The Age of Trump, and cultivate our garden.

III. Il Faut Cultiver Notre Jardin Mondial

The COVID-19 pandemic, as of March 2020, is obviously a *natural evil*, and to that extent a very bad thing for anyone and everyone who is adversely affected by it.

But at the same time, I strongly believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is a *borderless*, (i.e., cosmopolitan or global) natural evil that demands an *unpanicked*, borderless, and *radically enlightened, dignitarian, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarcho-socialist* moral and political response, and not a *panicked, insular, nationalist, Statist, and merely instrumentalist (whether egoistic or utilitarian)* moral and political response.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic *also* vividly highlights large-scale moral and political issues such as

- (i) the oppressive, unfair healthcare system in the USA,
- (ii) massive income-disparity between the richest and the other 99%, not only in the USA but also in the rest of the world,
- (iii) Brexit-induced anti-EU nationalist insularity in the UK,
- (iv) the anti-dignitarian threats of so-called "right-wing populism," and neo-fascism more generally, worldwide, and other dire situations in the contemporary world, especially including
- (iv) global poverty, and

⁹ Z, aka R. Hanna, "Collective Wisdom, Collective Stupidity, Professional Philosophy, and Open Philosophy," *Against Professional Philosophy* (22 September 2016), available online at URL = <https://againstprophil.org/2016/09/22/collective-wisdom-collective-stupidity-professional-philosophy-and-open-philosophy/>.

(iv) the global refugee crisis.

Now what do I mean by the terminological mouthful, “radically enlightened, dignitarian, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarcho-socialism”?

Before I can explain *that*, I’ll need to define some *other* terms: *Statism*, *coercion*, and *authoritarianism*.

As Kant (*MM* 6: 203-372)¹⁰ and Max Weber have famously pointed out,¹¹ States possess a territorial monopoly on the (putatively) legitimate control of the means and use of coercion; and as philosophical and political anarchists have also somewhat less famously (or even downright infamously) pointed out, States are also inherently authoritarian.

By *coercion* I mean:

either (i) using violence (e.g., injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people against their will according to certain predefined purposes of the coercer (*primary coercion*),

or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (e.g., imprisonment, termination of employment, or large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, even if these are not in themselves violent, in order to manipulate

¹⁰ For convenience, I cite Kant’s works infratextually in parentheses. The citations include both an abbreviation of the English title and the corresponding volume and page numbers in the standard “Akademie” edition of Kant’s works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preussischen (now Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer [now de Gruyter], 1902-). For references to the first *Critique*, I follow the common practice of giving page numbers from the A (1781) and B (1787) German editions only. I generally follow the standard English translations of Kant’s works, but have occasionally modified them where appropriate. Here is a list of the abbreviations and English translations.

CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997.

MM *Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996, pp. 365-604.

PP “Toward Perpetual Peace.” Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 317-351.

WiE “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 17-22.

¹¹ M. Weber, “The Profession and Vocation of Politics,” in P. Lassman and R. Spiers (eds.), *Weber: Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 1994), pp. 309-369, at p. 310.

people against their will according to certain predefined purposes of the coercer (*secondary coercion*).

So all coercion is a form of *manipulation*, and proceeds by following a variety of strategies that share the same core characteristic: treating people as mere means or mere things.

Correspondingly by *authoritarianism*, I mean the doctrine that telling people to obey commands and do things is legitimated merely by virtue of the fact that some people (the purported authorities) have *told* them to obey those commands or do those things — “it’s right just because we say it’s right!” — and are *also* in a position to enforce this by means of coercion, not on any rationally justified or objectively morally defensible grounds.

So authoritarianism and coercion per se are different things, because although all authoritarianism requires coercion, nevertheless the converse is not the case: coercion can occur without authoritarianism — e.g., if you’re threatened or attacked by some random thug on the street.

Now all States are *coercive* insofar as they claim the right to compel the people living within their boundaries to heed and obey the commands and laws of the government, in order to realize the instrumental ends of the State, *whether or not* those commands and laws are rationally justified or morally right on independently ethical grounds.

In turn, all States are also *authoritarian* insofar as they claim that the commands and laws issued by its government are right *just because* the government says that they’re right and possesses the power to coerce, *not* because those commands or laws are rationally justified and morally right on independent ethical grounds.

With those definitions in place as conceptual backdrop, I’m now in a good position to break down the complex phrase, “radically enlightened, dignitarian, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarcho-socialism,” term-by-term.

1. *Radically enlightened.*

Consider these five short philosophical texts, the first one by Jesus and the next four by Immanuel Kant.

And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.¹²

Our age is the genuine age of **criticism**, to which everything must submit. **Religion** through its holiness, and **legislation** through its **majesty** commonly seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination. (CPR Axi n.)

Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his own self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! Have the courage to use your own understanding! is thus the motto of Enlightenment. (WiE 8: 35)

That kings should philosophize or philosophers become kings is not to be expected, but is also not to be wished for, since possession of power unavoidably corrupts the free judgment of reason. (PP 8: 369)

When nature has unwrapped, from under this hard shell, the seed for which she cares most tenderly, namely the propensity and calling to *think* freely, the latter gradually works back upon the mentality of the people (which thereby gradually becomes capable of *freedom* in acting) and eventually even upon the principles of *government*, which finds it profitable to itself to treat the human being, *who is now more than a machine*, in keeping with his dignity. (WiE 8: 41-42)

In view of those texts, I think that there is a fundamental difference between

- (i) what I call *enlightenment lite* (**EL**), and
- (ii) what I call *heavy-duty enlightenment* (**HDE**), or *radical enlightenment* (**RE**) in the specifically Kantian sense.¹³

EL says:

Argue and write as much as you like, provided that you still obey and “render unto Caesar,” i.e., “render unto” coercive political authority, the government, the State, and also obey and “render unto” other State-like institutions.

¹² Matthew 22:20-22, *King James Bible*.

¹³ See R. Hanna, “Radical Enlightenment: Existential Kantian Cosmopolitan Anarchism, With a Concluding Quasi-Federalist Postscript,” in D. Heidemann and K. Stoppenbrink (eds.), *Join, Or Die: Philosophical Foundations of Federalism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 63-90, available online at URL = https://www.academia.edu/6994230/Radical_Enlightenment_Existential_Kantian_Cosmopolitan_Anarchism_With_a_Concluding_Quasi-Federalist_Postscript.

But **HDE** or **RE** says:

You must exit your self-incurred immaturity, dare to think/know for yourself (*Sapere aude!*), and then also dare to feel and act for yourself.

Kant published his world-famous essay, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” in 1784.

Correspondingly, the by-now almost 350 year-old confusion between **EL**, on the one hand, and **HDE** or **RE** on the other, has had huge, dire cultural and political implications.

EL is deeply misguided, because it presupposes *merely instrumental rationality*, and leads to *rationality-nihilism* if it is not ultimately grounded on a deeper, non-instrumental, categorically normative conception of rationality.

The rationality-nihilist believes not only, along with Hume, that “reason is the slave of the passions,” but also that reason is ultimately *otiose* and *eliminable* in the face of brute coercive power.

Worst of all, then, **EL** is deeply complicit with coercive authoritarianism, or *Statism*, right up to *totalitarianism*, and equally deeply complicit with technocratic, large-scale capitalism and its valorization—or what we now call *neoliberalism*—as Adorno and Horkheimer carefully spell it out in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.¹⁴

By diametrical contrast, **HDE** or **RE** vigorously rejects *all* of those implications of **EL**, including specific rejections of

- (i) merely instrumental rationality,
- (ii) rationality-nihilism,
- (iii) complicity with Statism,
- (iv) complicity with totalitarianism, and
- (v) complicity with neoliberalism.

¹⁴ T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. E. Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002).

2. Dignitarian.

Dignitarianism, and especially the broadly Kantian version of it, says

(i) that everyone, everywhere, has absolute, non-denumerable, non-instrumental, innate moral value, aka *dignity*, simply by virtue of their being real persons (i.e., conscious, caring, cognizing, self-conscious rational animals with a further capacity for free will),¹⁵ and that dignity is—or at the very least, can be regarded as—a fundamental, irreducible, and therefore *primitively given* feature of persons that cannot either be erased by any bad actions or bad habits of character, or sanctified by any good actions or good habits of character, and

(ii) that everyone, everywhere ought to treat themselves and everyone else with sufficient respect for their dignity.

3. Existential.

By *existential*,¹⁶ I mean the primitive motivational, or “internalist,” normative ground of the philosophical, moral, and political doctrine I defend, which is the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed life *not essentially based on* egoistic, hedonistic, or other merely instrumental (e.g., utilitarian) interests, aka *the desire for self-transcendence*, while at the same time fully assuming the natural presence—aka the *facticity*—of all such instrumental interests in our “human, all too human” lives.

In a word, the existential ideal of a rational human wholehearted autonomous life is the ideal of *authenticity*.

¹⁵ See R. Hanna, *Deep Freedom and Real Persons: A Study in Metaphysics* (THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, Vol. 2) (New York: Nova Science: 2018), also available online in preview at URL = https://www.academia.edu/35801857/The_Rational_Human_Condition_2_Deep_Freedom_and_Real_Persons_A_Study_in_Metaphysics_Nova_Science_2018 >.

¹⁶ See also, e.g., S. Crowell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012). For an extended response to the classical “formalism,” “rigorism,” and “universalism” worries about Kant’s ethics, see R. Hanna, Hanna, R. (2018b) *Kantian Ethics and Human Existence: A Study in Moral Philosophy* (THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, Vol. 3) (New York: Nova Science, 2018), also available online in preview at URL = https://www.academia.edu/36359647/The_Rational_Human_Condition_3_Kantian_Ethics_and_Human_Existence_A_Study_in_Moral_Philosophy_Nova_Science_2018 >, ch. 2.

4. *Kantian*.

By *Kantian*, I mean the primitive objective, or “externalist,” normative ground of the philosophical, moral, and political doctrine I defend, which is the recognition that the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed, non-egoistic, non-hedonistic, non-consequentialist life, which we call *the desire for self-transcendence*, can be sufficiently rationally justified only in so far as it is also a life of *principled authenticity*, by which I mean *principled wholehearted autonomy*, or having a *good will* in Kant’s sense, guided by respect for the dignity of all real persons,¹⁷ under the Categorical Imperative.

5. *Cosmopolitan*.

Notoriously, there is no comprehensive, analytic definition of the term *cosmopolitanism* as it is used in either ordinary or specialized (say, legal, political, or scholarly) language, covering all actual and possible cases.

It is variously taken to refer to globe-trotting sophistication; to nihilistic, rootless, world-wandering libertinism; to the general idea of “world citizenship”; to a single world-state with coercive power; to a tight federation of all nation-states, again with coercive power; or to a loose, semi-coercive international federation of nation-states and related global institutions concerned with peace-keeping, criminal justice, human rights, social justice, international money flow and investment, or world-trade, like the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the (plan for a) World Court of Human Rights, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the term “cosmopolitanism” has an original, core meaning.

As Kwame Anthony Appiah correctly and insightfully points out:

Cosmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the fourth century BC [and especially to Diogenes of Synope], who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, “citizen of the cosmos.” The formulation was meant to be paradoxical, and reflected the general Cynic skepticism toward custom and tradition. A citizen—a *politēs*—belonged to a particular

¹⁷ By “real person,” I mean *an essentially embodied person*, or a rational minded animal, as opposed to either disembodied persons (for example, souls) or collective persons (e.g., business corporations). On essential embodiment, see, e.g., R. Hanna and M. Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009). And for a general theory of real personhood, see Hanna, *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, chs. 6-7.

¹⁸ See, e.g., P. Kleingeld and E. Brown, “Cosmopolitanism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), ed. E. N. Zalta, available online at URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/cosmopolitanism/>>.

polis, a city to which he or she owed loyalty. The cosmos referred to the world, not in the sense of the earth, in the sense of the universe. Talk of cosmopolitanism originally signalled, then, a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities.¹⁹

In short, the original, core meaning of *cosmopolitanism* expresses a serious critique of existing political communities and states; a thoroughgoing rejection of fervid, divisive, exclusionary, loyalist commitments to convention, custom, identity, or tradition; and a robustly universalist outlook in morality and politics, encompassing not only the Earth but also other inhabited worlds if any, and also traveling between worlds (as per, e.g., *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*), and, finally, the entire natural universe.

By *cosmopolitan*, then, I mean the original, core meaning of that term.

And, borrowing from Kant, I call the cosmopolitan universal ethical community, *The Real Realm of Ends*.

6. Anarcho-socialism.

Finally, by *anarcho-socialism*,²⁰ I mean *philosophical and political social anarchism*, defined as follows.

The thesis of *philosophical social anarchism* says that there is *no* adequate rational or moral justification for political authority, the State, or any other State-like social institution.

Correspondingly, the thesis of *political social anarchism* says that we should *reject* and *exit* the State and other State-like institutions, in order to create, belong to, and sustain a real-world, *universal ethical community*, The Real Realm of Ends, in a world in which there are no States or other State-like institutions.

¹⁹ K.A. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), p. xiv.

²⁰ See, e.g., R. Hanna, *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism: A Theological-Political Treatise* (THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, vol. 4) (New York: Nova Science, 2018), also available online in preview at URL = <https://www.academia.edu/36359665/The_Rational_Human_Condition_4_Kant_Agnosticism_and_Anarchism_A_Theological-Political_Treatise_Nova_Science_2018>; P. Kropotkin, "Anarchism," first published in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, available online at URL = <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1910/britannica.htm>>; M. Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (2nd edn., Montreal, CA: Black Rose Books, 1986), available online at URL = <<https://libcom.org/files/Post-Scarcity%20Anarchism%20-%20Murray%20Bookchin.pdf>>; and M. Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, available online at URL = <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/soclife.html>.

Now, finally, we're in a position to think philosophically, morally, and politically about the COVID-19 pandemic, by critically considering *a real-world thought-experiment*.

Let's consider two scenarios.

SCENARIO 1.

In the **first** scenario, there's a panicked, nationalist, coercive authoritarian, liberal democratic Statist response to the COVID-19 pandemic, employing all the medical and epidemiological knowledge and healthcare logistics expertise that the USA has as its command, in order to create a comprehensive plan to deal with the pandemic *only insofar as it specifically affects the USA*, a plan which is also such that, under a city-wide, state-wide, or national "state of emergency," *individual city governments, individual state governments, and/or the executive branch of the Federal government, are granted temporary special powers, including the power to impose martial law, in order to implement it*, with individual mayors, individual state governors, and at the Federal level, President Donald Trump, acting as, in effect, *temporary military dictators* for the duration of the pandemic as it specifically affects the USA.

SCENARIO 2.

By a diametric contrast to the first scenario, in the second scenario, there's an unpanicked, borderless (again: cosmopolitan or global), existential Kantian dignitarian anarcho-socialist response to the COVID-19 crisis, including of course the USA, but not in any way restricted to the USA's national boundaries, *employing exactly the same amount of medical and epidemiological knowledge and healthcare logistics expertise in order to create a comprehensive plan to deal with it*, and then a worldwide implementation of the plan—say, by means of a worldwide, massively expanded *Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières* operation, so let's call it *Super-Duper Doctors Without Borders*—but no authoritarian coercion whatsoever anywhere, rather only strong recommendations and strongly-worded requests for *voluntary compliance* with the plan, and *equally as much attention* paid to dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 virus on refugees, poor people, people put out of work due to the crisis, etc., anywhere in the world, as is paid to well-off people in the USA and other highly industrialized nations, and also *sufficient attention* paid to dealing with *the ecological side-effects, both local and global*, of implementing the comprehensive plan.

And let's also assume that in the second scenario, no force whatsoever is ever used, *except for* minimally effective defensive and protective responses to direct attacks on individuals or groups of innocent people, especially including direct attacks on the

people working for *Super-Duper Doctors Without Borders* and/or on their medical installations and equipment.²¹

Granting all that, then my question is:

From a philosophical, moral, political, and even pragmatic point of view, which scenario constitutes an all-around better and more effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic: **SCENARIO 1** or **SCENARIO 2**?

I think that it's self-evidently and even gobsmackingly *obvious* that **SCENARIO 2** constitutes the all-round better and more effective response.

So in turn, *that's* what I mean by the neo-Voltairean phrase, "il faut cultiver notre jardin mondial," in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Not only *must we not panic*, but also *we must cultivate our global garden*.²²

²¹ See R. Hanna and O. Paans, "On the Permissible Use of Force in a Kantian Dignitarian Moral and Political Setting, Or, *Seven Kantian Samurai*," *Journal of Philosophical Investigations* 13 (2019): 75-93, available online at URL = <https://philosophy.tabrizu.ac.ir/article_9431.html>.

²² I'm grateful to my father, Alan Hanna, for suggesting that I write an essay on this issue.