

“The Global Corona War”: Questioning the Unquestionable, Why and What Do We Need to Know?

Are we better able to love, to cherish our place on the earth, to create works of beauty untinged by servitude to power?

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“In this global Corona War our minds and bodies have been relentlessly assaulted, and the most sickening perversions of thought have been imposed upon us ...”

For many years I have enjoyed delving into the history of science, and have been fascinated by the work of physicists. My own mathematical talents reached an apex in rudimentary calculus and although I mustered enough mental energies to pass my statistics course in medical school, I can't say I had much affection for that discipline.

Nonetheless I have followed the various advances in physics and cosmology from the layman's armchair for decades: Newton's laws, Maxwell's equations, Einstein's special and general relativity, quantum mechanics, the Standard Model, string theory, dark energy and dark matter, the Big Bang, the multiverse, the ever-expanding universe, and on and on.

But let's be frank, if I have a grasp of any of these great achievements, it is a tenuous and metaphorical one at best. I understand that the preeminent discoveries of mathematics and physics have enabled our modern world of locomotion and instantaneous communication, of engineering and space-based geo-location, and nuclear energy and nuclear warheads — in short, of the conveniences we take for granted which confer ease and power over nature.

The Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland has been smashing subatomic particles and providing skeins of data and has confirmed the existence of the boson predicted by physicist Peter Higgs in 1964. Gravity waves have been detected, quantum entanglement appears to be a fact of life, and although a single unifying theory that marries relativity to the quantum

world has yet to be achieved, a tremendous lot has been comprehended.

In our era of Big Science, funded almost exclusively by States whose coffers taxpayers fill, an extravagant amount of money has been devoted to the education of the mathematical elite and their research projects encompassing astronomy, atomic forces and particle physics. The Webb telescope is exploring the depths of interstellar space and thousands of satellites swarm around our Earth and have become a foundational necessity for modern warfare — and finding the directions to the nearest pizza joint.

The quest to learn and seek to know more and more goes on. It is virtually an imperative that we probe the origins of our universe and develop ever more finely honed instruments of detection, instruments that far transcend the puny capabilities of the human sensorium. Strive we must, it seems, for comprehensive knowledge, for solving the mysteries of the forces that govern the physical universe and even the origin of life. In short, we just can't get enough until we get the theory that explains everything.

So strong is the drive to know, to encompass, to grasp and to explore, that this very pursuit goes unquestioned. The quest is esteemed, accepted, bathed in impregnable virtue, and seen as the crowning glory of human activity.

Meanwhile our mundane world is an absolute mess. To earn a living wage that allows a modicum of leisure and freedom from want is now fast becoming an impossibility in the 'civilized' Western sector of the planet. And for the many less fortunate billions, poverty, political thuggery, corruption, and war are ever-present ravages.

Somehow the mysteries of human cooperation and peace elude the ostensibly vast intellectual forces of our best and brightest. Somehow we prefer the alluring excitement of manipulating the human genome to the rather prosaic accomplishments of organizing societies that can preserve individual autonomy and establish equitable avenues of opportunity for all.

Why?

One would think that the creation of a peaceful and harmonious world that allows for maximal human good, that pays obeisance to our nurturing planet and establishes a sound foundation for future generations would be our greatest priority. And perhaps in some quarters it may be, though far greater emphases appear to be on the quest for control and 'convenience' that underlies the hallowed pursuit of technical knowledge.

In service to the God-rivalling ambition of knowing and therefore manipulating everything, humankind has launched itself into a cul-de-sac. Is our modern world — a world that is fast becoming exponentially *more* controlled — a better one than the world a few centuries or even a millennium ago?

Are we better able to love, to cherish our place on the earth, to create works of beauty untinged by servitude to power? Was Homeric or Renaissance art less worthy than the art of our day? Did societies exist within which the rapacious and destructive drives of men were kept to an absolute minimum?

There is a reason why the Old Testament is filled with stories of prophets who have despaired to witness the corruption and wickedness of men and women, over and over: it is because within the fabric of the human soul the impulse to deceive, destroy, command and

to commit harm merely for the sake of pleasure exists. It vies with its opposite, the impulse towards tenderness, peace and benevolence. And somehow out of the complex tissue of desires and drives and energies within the human breast springs the ever-inquisitive mission to know.

So, now we know how to split the atom and manufacture weapons of unimaginable destructive power. Now we know how to infest the human genome with injectable concoctions, and the human mind with seductive falsehoods. We know too how to manipulate weather, and in the secret echelons of military agencies no doubt fancier tools and weapons have already been devised. Soon the LHC will be hurling subatomic particles at even higher energies while somewhere somebody will cheer. But to what end? How much more do we need to know? What, in fact, do we *want* to know?

I like running water and driving cars and having a home that can withstand a storm; I like being able to take a ferry across Wellington Harbour; I even like being able to speak to somebody thousands of miles away.

Do I wish to be able to fly to Europe in two hours instead of twenty-four? I'm not so sure.

I can't shake the notion that the greater the technology, the greater the ability to kill, pure and simple, though it is not the technology itself that does the killing, but those who exploit it. Here again we are face to face with this quintessentially human factor, present from the dawn of the species in an age of rudimentary tools, and present now, in our age of vastly calamitous and sophisticated weaponry.

In this global Corona War our minds and bodies have been relentlessly assaulted, and the most sickening perversions of thought have been imposed upon us as well.

The ways of deception have been unimaginably many.

I used to think that the notion of an 'internet of things' was far-fetched, given that it aspires to the labeling and tracking of, essentially, everything — including us. Now, I'm not so sure, having recently learned that nano-technological graphene signatures may be applied invisibly to materials, and suspecting that nano-technological agents have already been injected into billions of us, courtesy of the covid jab.

We are, each of us, born into a world that is for all intents and purposes experienced as magical, and believing that some Great Benevolent Societal Entity is the magician that has made our comforts possible — our roads, our screens, our vehicles, our wireless communications over vast distances, our access to virtually every human fantasy. A very few of us understand how anything really works: we accept it, we cherish the conveniences, we assume the magic world's immortality and omnipotence.

Who's running this show? And, ultimately, to what purpose? That's what I'd really like to know.

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