

## Science in Shackles

José Francisco S Bitencourt\*

Physics Institute of the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

### EDITORIAL

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#### \*For Correspondence

José Francisco S Bitencourt, Physics Institute of the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Tel: +55 11 970773804;

**Email:** jfsousab@yahoo.com.br

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It is possible that Science has a deeper and personal meaning for every sentient being on this planet. Nonetheless, we can all agree that Science is knowledge. Not only knowledge, but the active pursuit of new knowledge based on the already known. The observation of the seasons and the manufacture of rudimentary tools were some of the first interactions in this new relationship, and were caused by our most basic necessity: survival. However, necessity was not the only reason that made our ancestors try to understand the cosmos around us, and our own place in it, but also that resident curiosity that is a trait of our species. From this definition, the technology at our hands today is the result of our ancestor's desire for their children not to suffer the way they did and to reach even further in the search of the unknown. Is this a valid goal? Is it objective and well-defined? What is the price we must pay for it? Maybe these are some of the questions we should be asking ourselves, whatever our expertise field may be. Research fields are so intertwined nowadays and so many new ones are arising every year and still we can't (and shouldn't) leave behind the oldest of them all: the philosophy, which I shall bring up again another time.

Personally, I would say that Science is the way we humans interact with the universe. It is not an ultimate answer; stating this would require us to know the entire universe. Science is in constant evolution, like our own species. It is not a religion, since it doesn't require you to believe anything, but want you to find for yourself through observation and experiments. Also, it doesn't care for your beliefs, dogmas or upbringings. It is more like a language, expressing our desires, necessities and, mostly, fears. Thus, you can judge the fears of a society based on the most popular technology. For instance, we are living in the social media and communications age, which can denote the fear of loneliness, after surviving the century of weapons, which could be understood as a fear of ultimate annihilation. Irony, as always, is not on short supply.

Science is useful not only to solve our immediate problems, but also issues we think we may have in the future; thus so many concerns about global warming and non-renewable resources scarcity. We got so used to our way of life, that is very difficult to visualize it without our gadgets and abundance, even forgetting that 1/3 of the world population do not have access to most of these services and products.

Trying to put the social concerns aside for the time being, Science is facing two major threats in our days: being turned into a product and the intentional deviation to a few areas of interest. Nowadays, it is very difficult and expensive to carry out scientific research, so it falls on the hands of private and governmental institutions to finance them and, as result, they retain the power to guide, restrain and, sometimes, misuse the accomplishments. It seems that Science is still being only guided by politics and commercial interests, and not scientific consciousness.

Like a language, Science should be free to express the society's identity and personality. Nonetheless, most of science resources and personnel seems to be invested on a few fields, to the detriment of the others, to create new products and technology. Much is spent on new products, but not so much on how we should use them and even less on how to discard them. As examples, heavy metals from circuitry and plastics are major issues whose effects on a global scale are not seen yet, as the CFC gases did a few decades back and we are still suffering for them.

The scientific community, as during the Cold War and the World Wars, is being held hostage by the fears, not the curiosity, of

this age. This may be considered a bold statement, and some may affirm that this is no different than any other situation in history. But, if we learn anything from our ancestors, and also keep track of History, we shouldn't fall for the same mistakes.

However, as persistent as the life on this planet, research groups manage to fight every day, taking everything they can get to produce some miraculous results on fields that don't have immediate interference on our daily lives, and, for this reason, according to lesser and greed minds, should not be validated and financed.

Science, as any other human's creation, is filled with flaws and greed, sacrifice and accomplishments, and, as the evolution takes its course, we hope to see less of the first and more of the latter.