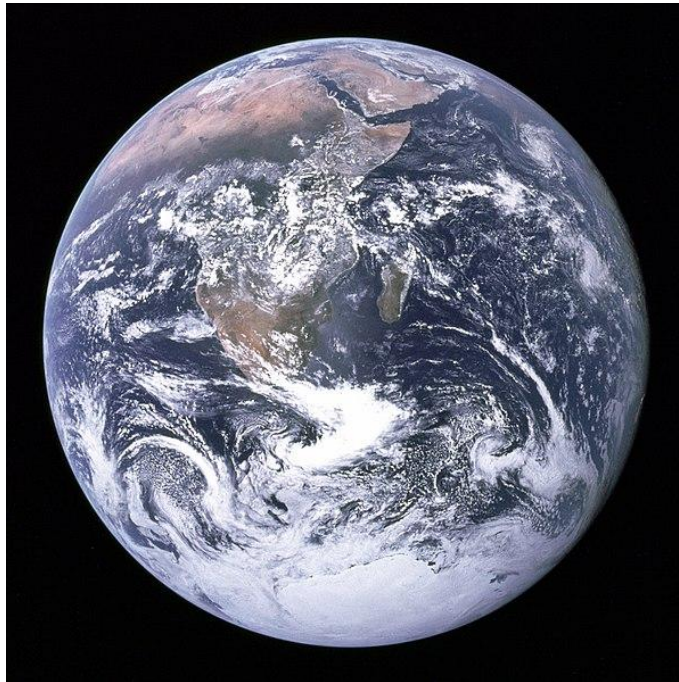


**December 27, 2021**

## **The Insane World of 2021**



**The Earth As Seen from Apollo 17**

**Credit: NASA, public domain**

I hope you all had a great Christmas. We are going to interrupt the discussion on the various ages of the Earth with my opinion on the insanity of our times. We all are all complicit in this insanity and I am more than willing to take my share of responsibility for the insanity. As part of taking responsibility I will lead you through a few examples of our current collective insanity. Maybe such a tour will help us to see our situation for what it is: sheer madness.

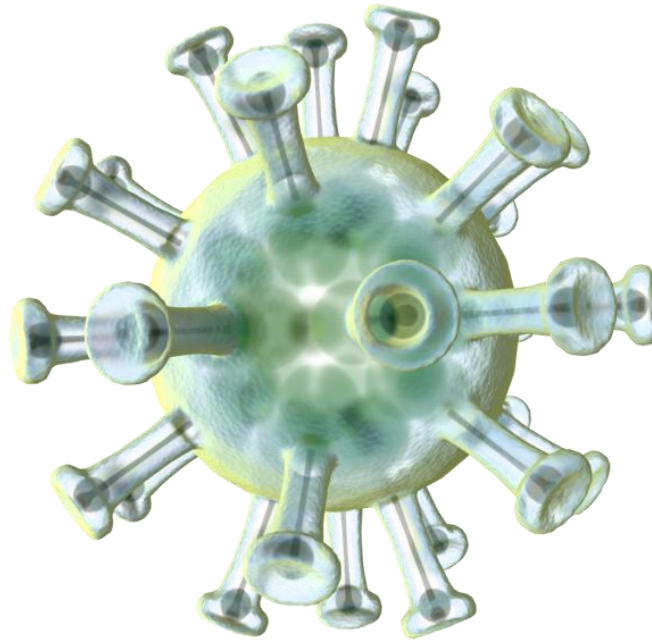
### **Covid-19 and the Corruption of Science**

Item 1 for our collective insanity has been the continuing pandemic of Covid-19 and our the response to it.

The disease began in the autumn of 2019, probably in Wuhan Province, China. The presence of a world class virology institute in Wuhan City led to its early discovery. In a sane world, the Chinese government would have warned the rest of us almost immediately. Instead, they chose to delay the release of the information until it was well established in both China, and the rest of the world.

The disease, spread by a virus dubbed Covid-19, generally presented itself as a bad case of the flu for most sufferers. However, for those already ill from other conditions, most commonly

obesity, it had a horrific effect. Wherever it went, hospitals were overwhelmed with sick people and the public media was inundated with images of their suffering. Compounding the suffering from the disease, have been the many drastic restrictions on travel and public gatherings imposed on the public in order to curtail the spread of the disease.



**Artist's Depiction of a Covid-19 Single Virion**

**[Credit: HFCM Communicatie, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license](#)**

In 2021, a series of experimental vaccines were given emergency use authorizations by the world's governments and people were encouraged to get at least one of the vaccines. The makers of the vaccines would only release them if they were given legal immunity from potential lawsuits that could arise from adverse reactions to the vaccines. While some doctors had discovered promising treatments for the disease, the use of these treatments were suppressed by various means. These means included a successful propaganda campaign against at least two of the drugs, hydroxychloroquine (sounds like a disinfectant) and ivermectin (a.k.a "horse medicine"). Other means included threatening to remove the licences of doctors who attempted to prescribe either drug for early treatment of the disease. Social media companies were recruited to suppress discussion of alternate treatments for Covid-19.

To put the disease into perspective, since the pandemic began there have been approximately 278 million Covid-19 cases worldwide; this amounts to approximately 3.5% of the world population (~7.9 billion). During that time, approximately 5.4 million people have died from the disease, or approximately 1.9% of the cases.

Covid-19 has exposed many of the fractures in our societies, for example rich versus poor and privileged versus unprivileged. Wealthy individuals have suffered little during the pandemic, even to the point of openly flaunting the various restrictions that apply to those less privileged. Many people, and this included many geologists, were able to work from home. Others found themselves out of work entirely. Governments have gone deeply into debt to pay for the various programs to address the pandemic. It remains to be seen if this debt is sustainable. The disease has also shown how well, or how poorly, our public health care systems are managed.

Among other things, Covid-19 has shown the influence of large corporate enterprises (corporations) on public policy. The pharmaceutical industry successfully lobbied for emergency use authorizations for their vaccines and they successfully lobbied for protection from liability should these vaccines prove toxic. To protect their legal immunity, it was necessary to suppress the application of alternate treatments.

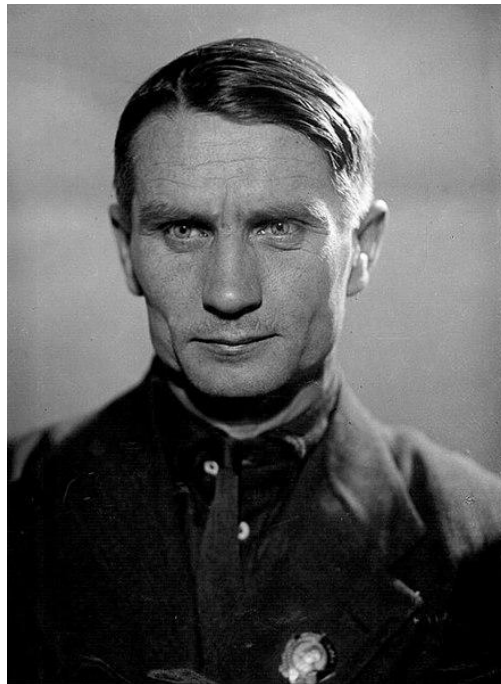
To make matters worse it appears that the vaccines are of limited utility, they don't actually provide significant protection from the disease. While this fact cannot be suppressed, the response of the public health various authorities has been to change the public narrative in order to say that the purpose of the vaccine is not to protect people from the disease, but merely to reduce the severity of the disease should you get it. Interestingly, this is the same argument for using some of the alternate treatments, they are not cures but treatments that reduce the severity of the disease. However one set of drugs, the vaccines, are "approved" and the others are not.

The exposure of the corruption of medical science by corporations will be one of the most significant outcomes of this disease outbreak. Public trust in authorities was a low before the pandemic began, it's even lower now. A good indication of this lack of trust is the plethora of conspiracy theories revolving around Covid-19. I recommend reading this [December 16, 2021 posting](#) from Martin van Creveld (Prof. Emeritus at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem) that listed the twelve common conspiracy theories concerning Covid-19; it's really quite funny.

As of the writing of this weblog posting, the current insanity is revolving around the latest variant, dubbed omicron, the 15th letter of the Greek alphabet. Like any other living thing, the Covid-19 virus has been evolving. The virus has evolved to be less virulent (i.e. less deadly) and more infectious (easier to spread). Right now it is spreading rapidly. Essentially the horse has left the barn. However, this unfortunate fact has not prevented the re-imposition of strict measures to control the virus' spread. The good news is that the omicron variety appears to cause only a mild infection in most cases. Many omicron cases are asymptomatic. The peak of infections in South Africa, where the variant was first discovered a few weeks ago, appears to have already passed. I expect it to peak in the rest of the world just in time for the celebration of Christmas by Orthodox Christians who follow the Julian calendar.

## Academic Insanity

One issue that has adversely affected the academic world, and this includes geology, has been the controversy over diversity, equity and inclusion. This political fad is Orwellian double-speak for an attempt to replace merit based assessments of academic and scientific work with an assessment of an arbitrary assessment of the individual's work based upon their race, sex and/or sexual preferences. The purpose of diversity, equity and inclusion is not to improve science or academic research, but to show the political correctness of those advocating the agenda. In a sane world, diversity, equity and inclusion would be rejected outright as toxic to academic freedom. But do not live in a sane world, so diversity, equity and inclusion are presented as the Height of Progress and any who oppose it are to be cast out into outer darkness. [Trofim Denisovich Lysenko](#) would be proud.



**Trofim D. Lysenko, Joseph Stalin's Favourite Scientist**

**Credit: unknown author, public domain**

The madness that began in academia has spread to the rest of the educational establishment, as well as the worlds of government, media and sport. As [James Kunstler](#) has said, we live in a world where anything goes and nothing matters. It used to be that we applied our collective intelligence to overcome the natural progress of entropy in the world. Now we seem to invite disorder as if, somehow, it was a symbol of Progress. Maybe [Oswald Spengler](#) was right and the Western world is doomed to destruction.



**Oswald Spengler, Author of "*The Decline of the West*"**

**[Credit: Unknown author, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license](#)**

## **Geopolitical Madness**



**Possible Result of Geopolitical Insanity**

**[Credit: Burnt Pineapple Productions, Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication](#)**

We can probably work out the disorder in our world caused by a novel disease or silly academic fads. However, great power rivalry is more serious, and, in the nuclear age, potentially more deadly. While there are many flashpoints, let's look at a couple of the more insane ones.

## Russia and the Ukraine

For centuries, the Russian Tsars ruled over almost all the [Eastern Slavic peoples](#), with varying degrees of peace and order. In 1917, the Soviet Union took over the lands of the Tsar. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, a new political order that included independent Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian states emerged. Each of these states have legitimate concerns and interests. As well, it is possible that this new order is potentially more just and peaceful than the old ones.

Despite their differences, Russia and, Ukraine are bound by economic and cultural ties. In a sane world, the Ukrainian government would recognise the importance of those ties and seek to capitalise on the economic ones while maintaining an independence that did not threaten the Russians. Also, in a sane world, the Ukrainians would seek not to seriously antagonise the Russians, especially given Russia's aversion to anything smacking of a potential threat from the Western powers. It's not like Russia hasn't had bloody wars with Western European powers in the past.



**You think that we live in a sane world?**

**[Credit: Ilya Repin, public domain](#)**

However we do not live in a sane world and the Ukrainian government has gone out of its way in the last 10 years to antagonise their Russian neighbours. Some blame American influence for this, but plenty of Ukrainian politicians are complicit in this madness. Perhaps the crooked politicians in the Ukraine are afraid of Putin's example of reining in the oligarchs in his own country. The consequences the Ukraine antagonising Russia has been a low intensity conflict in the eastern Ukraine resulting in deaths of many innocent people. As well, the Ukrainians lost control over the Crimea in the process.

The Ukrainians have also lost out on many economic opportunities. Although that probably doesn't bother the Ukrainian oligarchs who seem to be happy to continue to loot their already impoverished country.

Unable to make peace with their Russian neighbours, some people in the Ukrainian government seems to think that they can secure their independence by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Taking the Ukraine into NATO, however, would likely prompt a Russian invasion of the Ukraine; that in turn could lead to a nuclear war. Just what we need.



**Location of the Donbas**

**Credit: [RGloucester](#), [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license**

It is likely that we could see some action by Russia on this front in the New Year, after the celebration of Christmas on the Julian Calendar. The most likely action will involve local ethnic Russian militias taking action to secure autonomy for the Donbas Region, itself mostly populated by ethnic Russians. The Russian Federation will lend covert or open support to those militias. A continued low-intensity conflict might be manageable. However, things could escalate, such is the insanity of our world.

## **China and Taiwan**

One of the interesting phenomena of the past 30 years has been the economic growth of China. China is now a powerful nation whose power is still growing. As well the power of China's

geopolitical rivals, such as the United States, is stagnant or even shrinking. With the growth of China's power, the temptation to use that power has to be strong.



**Taiwan (in green) and the Rest of China**

**Credit: Laxsys, Creative Commons**

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One of those temptations has to be to "recover" Taiwan. At the end of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, the losers fled to the island of Taiwan declaring themselves to be the Republic of China. Since 1949 the Republic of China has been functionally independent of the Peoples Republic of China even if they are still legally united.

As well, since the opening up of the Chinese economy in the last 30 years, both the Chinese and the Taiwanese have taken advantage of the ambiguous legal status of Taiwan to make profitable investments in each other's country. A lot of people became rich as the result of these investments. In a sane world, this advantageous arrangement would continue.

However, we do not live in a sane world and there are clearly factions in the Peoples Republic of China who want to use their newly acquired power to forcibly reunite Taiwan with the mainland. The sheer destructiveness of such a war would negate any gains that the Peoples Republic of China could make. Add to that the possible reaction of a weakened and insecure United States and a nuclear war is possible.





**Sun Tzu - Advocate of Smart Strategies**  
**Credit: Unknown author, [public domain](#)**

The smart strategy of the Peoples Republic of China would be to continue the policy of economic integration combined with gaining influence among Taiwanese politicians over time; politicians can be bought and China is sufficiently rich to do so. This policy of influence peddling can go both ways; Taiwan is also rich and mainland Chinese politicians are no less venal than those anywhere else. Buying politicians is nothing new and may be morally superior to inviting your cities to be turned into glass as the result of hasty military action. Many Chinese are patient people. We can only hope that the patient ones have more influence than the proud ones.

Here's wishing everyone a Happy New Year.