

NOTE

## Life is 'Dot'

C W writes :

There was a time when the circle ruled life, when life was a cycle of seasons, of birth, growth and death in which it was returned to Mother Earth's womb only to be born again.

Now, life is reduced to the straight line, the linear progression moved by the energy of its own momentum. At one time the line was called progress, and it was believed it was carrying people towards the heavens.

However, one can only have a destiny if one has a past. But, the further people move along the line, the more the past fades into the mist of oblivion. Life is reduced to a tiny *laser dot* whose linear movement that lacks both a past and a future.

Now people mistake this movement for progress and believe that all change is good no matter how much destruction it leaves in its wake. As it moves, the dot believes that it is ascending when, in fact, it is descending.

Rather than a linear ascent, all historical and cultural movements inscribe a Bell curve, with an ascent, an apogee and a descent. Technological progress is no different, and one could well be riding the descent segment of the curve.

Initially, technology contributed to civilization, making life easier and more comfortable, conquering disease and lifting human beings out of the morass of superstition. But as with all other historical phenomena, technology peaked. Once this happened, technological innovation became destructive with the costs far outweighing the benefits. One could argue that people actually passed over the apogee with the splitting of the atom.

Many technologies that were benign at their inception have soured and threaten quality of human life. The internal combustion engine was great at first. Now it generates pollution and, instead of motoring pleasure, it is generating resource wars. Dependency of plastics consumes too much oil. Petroleum based fertilizers have seen the rise of monoculture and the gradual depletion of top soil threatening traditional agricultural practice once and for all.

Technology was a booster rocket that lifted the society out of the quagmire of primitivism. But once spent, it becomes deadweight that must be jettisoned.

One could argue that the profound technological progress, the progress that made a real difference in human lives, happened between 1820 (railroads) and the 1940s (splitting the atom). Everything since then is simply the combining of existing technologies. A computer is simply a typewriter, a calculator and a television hooked up together.

New technologies do effect change, but the change is increasingly superficial. No matter how many improvements are made to the television set, the content remains as bland as ever.

In the grand geological scheme of things, technology will barely register as a cosmic fart. □□□