

WHAT ON EARTH IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

By [Shalom Dickson](#), for the [World Genius Directory](#)

Beyond the recent economic, health, and various social challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic, society itself may have developed a nuanced insanity. This writing is a largely premature diagnosis of the situation. First, here are some of my intuitions about the impressions of the pandemic on the social consciousness.

1. We live in a world... with others: It has been demonstrated how much we, in fact, count on the rest of the world to work for our aspirations to materialize. It turns out we live on a planet, with shared responsibility; a revelation met with great astonishment.

2. Things change without warning: With the improvements in prediction mechanisms and the frequent use of engineered systems, we may have developed an unjustified sense of foreknowledge and functional security. Now, we know that things can suddenly change, and no one will be held responsible.

3. The fragility of social systems and the emptiness of individual purpose: The sudden changes are possible because our institutions and establishments are destructible. Some are now left to wonder what their goals within such fragile systems mean, when the curtains drop.

4. The fallibility of experts: Expertise is the mastery of what is known. At the face of the unexpected, specialized experience is impotent, and we must count on sheer rationality and good-old-fashioned instinct to survive.

5. The ultimate existential threat: As layers of the societal onion peel away, it turns out that there is no final safety, and humanity itself can suffer doom. For a moment, we bear the unfamiliar fear that the world may end before we die.

Perhaps this has been, for some, an opportunity for self-reflection. But there are other options to choose from; these symptoms of trauma, in the form of coping mechanisms, are on sale for cheap:

1. Best wishes for loved ones, hoping the odds are in their favor.
2. Reactivity and rage: riots and protests for justice... and for sport.
3. Fake normal: pretending we can dance just as good without the music.
4. Making “when this is all over” plans, assuming a deadline and a closing bell.
5. Paranoia, conspiracy theories, and pseudoscientific analyses; for example, this writing.

We experience the first Internet-powered pandemic, which ensures that images of the tragedies are distributed worldwide to all not lucky enough to partake of them in the flesh. The subtle malady takes all heads! Maybe I need to get some sleep, or the fabric of society has not only been torn but, truly, lost its color. Perhaps it's the sense that people “don't know what to expect anymore”, and thus the story of humanity has no narrative.

The greater fear is not that things may never “get back to normal”, but that we should continue to expect that they will, only to wake up one morning, lost all the lessons we have learned and have—although missed extinction—become something much worse: a people who no longer dream.

A reality check is signed and delivered... blank! What will be the price?