

The Drift

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Introduction

I'll be honest, I am not entirely sure how to write this, so I'll start with a disclaimer: this work is not meant to spark any political discussion. It *is* meant to discuss how we, as a society, engage with the research literature and is split up into 4 distinct strategies:

1. Rejection of science
2. Deification of researchers
3. Research with immediate gratification
4. Research without immediate gratification

Each of these ideas will be discussed within the context of a greater, fictional universe. I recognize that each of these topics can be stretched into theses in their own right, but my PhD is in computational science, not sociology. More than that, I recognize that the general public – those I am trying to reach the most with this work – do not read scientific literature. For that reason, I chose to formulate my ideas not as a scientific hypothesis, but as an opinion stated in fiction.

I believe that statement requires re-emphasis: any ideas expressed within this work are purely my own opinions and ideas. If you agree with them, great! If you disagree, also great! I want this work to spark discussion, but I don't want it to cause any sort of division.

Unfortunately, here is where I am a little split. The author in me wants to invoke emotion. The researcher in me wants to be as accurate as possible. As such, I might provide additional clarification where needed, such as academic citations or a some back-of-the-envelope calculations used to justify events in-universe¹. If you are interested in the narrative only, these statements can be safely ignored.

¹These statements will usually come in the form of footnotes, like these, but might also require separate figures or example

Finally, I will try to keep this novel available for free online² under a Creative Commons License³. If possible, I would like to have discussion about this work available on github for everyone to see and take part in. In fact, because of my licensing and openness, I am not going to try to publish this through traditional means; therefore, if you notice any typos, loose narrative threads, poor writing, etc, feel free to create an issue (or Pull Request online). Again, I encourage any and all engagement with this work. Also: because this work is freely available online, please do not pay for this unless you:

1. Want to support me, as a creator
2. Want a physical (or ebook) copy
3. Are buying this for someone else as a gift⁴

Ok, that's it for the foreward. I know most people skip this part of the book entirely and instead opt to hop right into the content, but due to the nonconventional nature of this work, I thought it was appropriate to discuss everything ahead-of-time.

²at https://github.com/leios/the_drift

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⁴To be honest, I don't know why you would do that, but thanks for the support!

Chapter 1

The Lecture

The world is changing. The world has always been changing and will always continue to change. In many ways, the human experience is about adapting to and capitalizing on that change. This is why research is so fundamental to humanity. Someone, somehow needs to explore the unknown, pushing the boundary of human knowledge forward one step at a time.

Sure, there are bad papers. There are scientists with poor work ethic. There are studies with improper methods. There are spurious initiatives that don't lead anywhere,

But without out fundamental curiosity leading us to question everything, we would never have developed as much as we have.

As long as we strive to learn more and reach into the unknown, the world will continue to change, and that's a good thing. A really good thing.

Anyone who stands in the way of progress, stands in the way of humanity,
itself. 1

¹If you couldn't tell, I am really trying to establish this character's narrative voice. Their opinions might not be your opinions, and that's ok!

Chapter 2

Meddlings

LEIOS

1

Arbitrary paragraph to use as an example to show how to use the note-
block type

check this out!²

¹yo
²what?