

The Four UCAV's of the Apocalypse*

At this ominous time when some may feel the End of Days is approaching, I've decided now is the proper time to reinvent John of Patmos' image of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (*Book of Revelation*, chapter 6) but using more appropriate contemporary riders. In the biblical version the four horsemen were Death, Famine, War and Conquest –the latter usually associated with Pestilence.

First of all, as the use of riders or drivers is no longer needed in this brave new world of self-driven cars and Artificial Intelligence, I would think it rather appropriate to use military drones or Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV's) instead.

The first UCAV of the Apocalypse without a doubt is the new Pestilence: COVID-19 –a particularly ambivalent and insidious class of influenza that has divided every nation on Earth between the PPE-paranoiacs (supported by multiple variants of the COVID Gestapo), on the one hand; and the dance-macabre-till-you-drop naysayers and anti-vaccination nuts, on the other. On the day of this writing the official tally worldwide is more than 33 million cases and 997,966 deaths.

The second UCAV –reinventing Death– would then be choosing suicide as a way out. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, for example, "...existing research shows the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic devastation are expected to have large-scale effects on overall mental health, including an increase in suicide. In 2019, 2.5% of Canadians reported having had suicidal thoughts within the previous year. In comparison, in the thick of the pandemic in May, this survey found that 1 in 20 Canadians (6%) had recently experienced thoughts or feelings of suicide as a result of the pandemic..." It could be argued that the opioid crisis facing North-America is but one method of choice.

Another trendy new form of euthanasia is medically-assisted suicide –somewhat reminiscent of the suicide of two Roman patricians in Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969), who preferred death rather than face the barbarism and decadence of the Roman Empire. In advanced Western societies suicide now seems preferable to proper, well-funded palliative care and humane Hippocratic treatment of the elderly and infirm. Some would argue that this is all a consequence of an unconscious revival of Social Darwinism and its accompanying Eugenics.

The third UCAV of the Apocalypse is still Famine as in the Biblical prophecy. However today this is accompanied by food disorders and intoxication from multiple pathogens in processed food. The U.N.O. has declared that "...after decades of steady decline, world hunger has slowly been on the rise since 2015. An estimated 821 million

people in the world suffered from hunger in 2018...At the same time, overweight and obesity continue to increase in all regions of the world, according to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019.” According to Yuval Noah Harari, on the other hand, “In 2010 famine and malnutrition killed about 1 million people, whereas obesity killed 3 million.” (*Homo Deus*, page 6).

Finally, **the fourth UCAV** is still War, but this time it’s Thomas Hobbes rather than John of Patmos who can be considered the prophet, as he was the first to speak in *Leviathan* (1651) of “Bellum omnium contra omnes” (the war of all against all). However, in our times the enormous arsenals include not only the familiar nuclear and biochemical weapons, and the proliferation of over-the-counter military-grade weapons for personal vendettas, but also the Babel-like arsenal of information and social media weapons stockpiled by the Dark Web and sophisticated cyber-hackers of all stripes and colors that have extended the use of psychological warfare to your personal smartphone.

Of course, some would argue that there’s no need to stop at four UCAV’s. We could add Global Warming (a nice euphemism for Human-Induced Extreme Climatic Crises), or the rise of tribalism and autarky, or the cult of the personality of authoritarian leaders, etc., etc., ad infinitum.

But one thing we may all agree on as we approach the 2020 U.S. presidential elections is that the new persona of the Anti-Christ is the dysfunctional sociopath who today inhabits the White House.

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