

## We Need Science but Crave Magic

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We are living in a time when the increased successes of science are only matched by the virulence of the attacks on it. We know we need science, but we hate it, and it is magic that we crave. Why?

Two vast armies wage war within our brains. One, mostly buried deep in the brain, is the army of magic, a word whose etymology extends back to Zoroastrian Magi. The opposing army, largely housed in the more recent frontal lobes, is science, whose etymology is Latin for knowledge.

The war between magic and science flickers and flares but is eternal. Science has won every battle, discovered every truth, produced all progress, and gained all new ground while magic has steeped and stewed in sterility. Yet magic, with its aliases, superstition, the G word, and the R word, has not yielded ground even as science has grown around it.

Science probes with impartiality to reveal the facts and workings of the universe. Science deals with doubts and suspicions and so, is treated with doubt and suspicion. Magic parades in the paradise of certainty. Magic brews value, wallowing in good and evil. It shuts eyes to all that discomforts and disturbs it. Though it gives us demons and devils it puts us at the center of the universe – everything revolves around us. It has us created unique and superior – unlinked from all other life.

Science takes work and patience. It is plodding. It yields slowly, reluctantly, incrementally. And when it does, it is harsh and unforgiving. It is blinding bright. It burns its way into our eyes and pains our brain. All it offers are the facts, at best a poor gift and more likely, a burden, often felt as a curse. We hate it because we know we need it and it doesn't care about us.

Magic proclaims its prizes – its miracles – for free. Who cares that all its prizes are placebos? What we get for free seems to hold infinite promise and feels invaluable. That makes us covet it all the more. Magic is life's grand buffet. We pay for it up front and forever after gorge gratis; hence, its cost is soon forgotten, then denied and ultimately, hidden from sight. The hidden cost is freedom, magic's sacrificial lamb.

Doctrine is a form of magic, for it gives us mandatory, unquestioning, absolute truth and inviolable edicts while deriding investigation, reason, and individual choice as willful. Doctrine demands surrender. Having trouble with the facts? Doctrine provides, indeed, demands *alternative* facts to soothe the psyche. To soothe it, so as to corral and enslave it.

Magic portrays science as our enemy, and always sounds convincing. With its incantations and potions, magic has perfected the promulgation of propaganda. Magic is instantaneous; not limited by the speed of light it operates in the dark.

The emotions, such as spirituality, idealism, and hope occupy separate empires in our brains from science and magic but feed off their tailings. Neither science nor magic create hope but science has increased the realm of justifiable hope by, for example, providing real cures for previously incurable illnesses. Magic has paved parkways where only fruitless hope promenades.

In the end, all that science has done is to prolong life, decrease physical pain, proliferate options, and increase understanding. That merely increases the amount of time we fear death. Only magic promises us eternal life. Finite reality can never compete with infinite fantasy.