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OPINION

LETTERS

Critical thought is under siege

A long-churning grumble has erupted into unbridled attacks on science and expertise. An ongoing example is Trump's EPA eradicating well-established evidence verifying that climate change is caused by fossil-fuel emissions.

Disinformation undermining facts about threats to public health and the environment has spawned unfounded confidence in the supremacy of subjective opinions. Aided by the disruptive but profitable algorithms of social media, self-proclaimed truth-seekers attract millions of gullible followers daily. Postings about imagined conspiracies and rationalized retributions are fabricated to exploit armchair philosophers.

The detractors of science, unschooled in the empirical method, condemn theories tested and advanced in the path toward solving difficult problems. Accordingly, legitimate steps to mitigate threats including cancer and climate change are ridiculed for being counter-intuitive and insufficient. Legions of self-deceived critics profess enhanced insights derived through hard-knocks and partisan dogma.

For hundreds of years, civilization advanced through the application of science in technology and policy but is now struggling against cynical political manipulation that transforms subjugated discontent into impetuous disdain for knowledge. Tyrannical authority is being empowered by obstructing facts, rebuking wisdom, and scorning educational institutions.

When we need it the most, critical thought is weakened by nefarious opportunists, whose greed and dominion thrive on ignorance.

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