



phenomenon. All are trying, albeit in our slightly different national ways, to depose the Corona. There are fewer riots in Hong Kong, the French *Gilets Jaunes* are quiescent, right wing governments and billionaires are giving more money to the poor and, as I write, people are praying for the health of senior politicians while Donald Trump is saying what a good guy is Xi Jinping, his opposite number in a trade war with China.

Where could this end? Peace could break out? Or human inequality be diminished? Capitalism could rediscover a human face?

The purpose of a city as a hub of civilization may fall to be examined afresh. Tech already could do most of what the 20th century professional classes and bureaucrats were doing: add to this Zoom, Skype and FaceTime calls and the role for human

THE BAD FAIRY

IN 1648, THE TREATY OF WESTPHALIA HELPED to end a longstanding series of European wars. It did so by articulating the concept of territorial integrity and it promoted the concept of an order based on the rule of the nation state. Many warring parties were included in the settlement but, like the Bad Fairy in the Hans Christian Anderson tale “*Sleeping Beauty*,” some were excluded from the celebrations.

One such excluded category was viruses—thus, they did not and still do not accept the authority nor the government of the nation state nor the power or significance of the individuals who rule it. Excluded from this orderly system, they run riot when let out of their bindings and work what mischief they may. The nation state is not the most effective way to organize a response but given a few notable exceptions (WHO) that is the equipment we have.

The recognition that our governance systems are not appropriate to the threat has led to humanity rallying to a common cause, not only as a global human community but also as a scientific community and as a protective community in a way not seen ever on our planet before. Humans in the world acting as one, with one voice, is a new

Against an intruder that knows no borders, humanity is pulling together. Can that propel us to a better future? asks Brunswick’s **ROB WEBB.**

bureaucrats at work is a live question.

Why would the post-Covid generation go to the city to work? Is it to enjoy the air quality? Is it to experience the commute? Perhaps it is to wait for the elevator? Perhaps because there are wonderful cycle lanes?

Will cities primarily become a social venue? In that case their threat would be from Grindr, Tinder and other dating apps, rather than the apps which sell remote accounting-spreadsheet familiarization.

We are being given an accelerated glimpse of possible futures and we have the familiar choice between a utopian or a dystopian path: The two great drivers of markets, fear and greed, are on the march together again. Fear currently holds the reins but greed will not be far behind once the grave robbers feel it is safe to return.

Humanity at present is acting together. It will likely be successful in its joint, giant endeavor. Covid-19 will be isolated, tested and vaccinated, halting its spread to a level that the populations of the world can accept.

What chance that the spirit which defeats it could be put to other good uses? ♦

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