

Scientists Are Making Progress—But Is It in the Wrong Direction?

My first car was a Ford Consul, which cost me about \$35 in 1970. Purchasing that car was a great moment in my life, and with its column gear change and bench seat, I had great fun driving it. I recall that it had 120,000 miles on the clock at the date of purchase, and it was stolen outside my night school, then recovered three days later, fully serviced. It had been used in a bank robbery, according to the police. It died a natural death at 153,000 miles.

Twenty years ago this day next month, a 12,000 pound, 22-foot tall, 13-foot wide vehicle left Earth to head to the planet Saturn. The journey of 4.9 billion miles at a cost of \$ 3.9 billion, yes 79 cents per mile, or roughly the same as going there by motor car, though I know of no car (not even my Ford Consul) with 4.9 billion miles on the clock.

Today at around noon, the vehicle will be driven deliberately into Saturn, and one of the greatest journeys ever taken will end. The science that brought us away from the horse and cart to the car and now to these incredible space vehicles never ceases to amaze, particularly as we see this in the span of 100 years. As we crash into Saturn today and watch nuclear missiles fly across our own Earth, where are we heading with the science given to man? Driving the Consul was fun, but now it's getting scary, and perhaps the scientists should focus their best efforts on solving the problems here rather than taking the long route. {eoa}

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