

Abstract Submitted
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Value of Fundamental Science ALEXEY BUROV, Fermilab — Fundamental science is a hard, long-term human adventure that has required high devotion and social support, especially significant in our epoch of Mega-science. The measure of this devotion and this support expresses the real value of the fundamental science in public opinion. Why does fundamental science have value? What determines its strength and what endangers it? The dominant answer is that the value of science arises out of curiosity and is supported by the technological progress. Is this really a good, astute answer? When trying to attract public support, we talk about the “mystery of the universe”. Why do these words sound so attractive? What is implied by and what is incompatible with them? More than two centuries ago, Immanuel Kant asserted an inseparable entanglement between ethics and metaphysics. Thus, we may ask: which metaphysics supports the value of scientific cognition, and which does not? Should we continue to neglect the dependence of value of pure science on metaphysics? If not, how can this issue be addressed in the public outreach? Is the public alienated by one or another message coming from the face of science? What does it mean to be politically correct in this sort of discussion?

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