



A Non-Terrestrial View Of Planet Earth

Several times, in the last decade or so, I have – when considering certain current events, and social change, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians – often asked myself a particular question: What impression or what conclusions would a non-terran (a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system) have of or draw from those events, such social change, and those politicians? And what, therefore, would be the conclusions that such a non-terran would make regarding our nature, our human character, as a species?

Which answers seemed to me to depend on what criteria – ethical, experiential, ontological, and otherwise – such a non-terran might employ. Would, for instance, the home-world of such a non-terran be a place of relative peace and prosperity which, having endured millennia of conflict and war, had evolved beyond conflict and war and had also ended poverty? Would, for instance, such a non-terran view matters dispassionately, having evolved such that they are always able to control – or have developed beyond – such strong personal emotions as now, as for all of our human history, so often still seem to overwhelm we humans leading us and having led us to be selfish, to lie, to cheat, to manipulate, to use violence – and sometimes kill – in order to fulfil a personal desire?

The criteria I now (post-2011) apply to this hypothetical scenario are those derived from my own experience, and from reflecting over several years upon that experience, which criteria are of course subjective, personal, and it is thus no coincidence that they now are reflected in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. Thus the ethics I assume such an interstellar space-faring sentient non-terran might adhere to are based on honour and the apprehension of suffering and hubris that empathy provides; just as the ontology derives from a numinous awareness of how causal and fallible and transient every sentient life is in respect of the vastness of the cosmos (spatially and in terms of aeons of causal time), with such ethics and ontology a natural consequence of such a culture whose genesis is that *pathei-mathos* – ancestral, individual, societal – that derives from millennia of suffering, conflict, war, poverty, corruption, and oppression.

Furthermore, my reflexion on the past fifty years of human space exploration leads me to further conclude that we as a species – and perhaps every sentient species – can only venture forth, en masse, to explore and colonize new worlds when certain social and political conditions exist: when we, when perhaps every sentient species, have matured sufficiently to be able to, as individuals, control ourselves (without any internal or external coercion deriving from laws or from some belief be such belief ideological, political, or religious) and thus when we use reason and empathy as our *raison d'être* and not our emotions, our desires, our egoism or some -ism or some -ology or some faith that we accept or believe in or need. For despite the technology making such space exploration and colonization now feasible for us (if only currently within our solar system) we lack the political will, the social desire, the trans-national cooperation, the vision, to realize it even given that our own habitable planet is slowly undergoing a transformation for the worse wrought by ourselves. All we have – decades after the landings on the Moon – are a few individuals inhabiting and only for a while just one Earth-orbiting space station and a few small-scale, theorized, human landings on Mars a decade or more in the future. For instead of such a vision of a new frontier which frontier a multitude of families can settle and which can be the genesis of new cultures and new human societies, all we have had in the past fifty years is more of the same: regional wars and armed conflicts; invasions, violent coups and revolutions; violent protests, the killing and imprisonment and torture of protestors and dissenters; political propaganda for this political cause or that; exploitation of resources and of other humans; terrorism, murder, rape, theft, and greed.

How then would my hypothetical space-faring alien judge us as a species, and how would such a non-terran view such squabbles – political, social, ideological, religious, and be they violent or non-violent – and such poverty, inequality, and oppression, as still seem to so bedevil almost all societies currently existing on planet Earth?

In addition, how would we as individuals – and how would our governments – interact with, and treat, such an alien were such an alien, visiting Earth incognito, to be discovered? Would we treat such an alien with respect, with honour:

as a non-threatening ambassador from another world? Would any current government on Earth willingly and openly and world-wide acknowledge the existence of such extra-terrestrial life and allow Earth ambassadors from any country, and scientists, and the media, full and open access to such an alien sentient being? I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions.

But, remaining undiscovered, what would our visiting alien observer report regarding Earth and ourselves on their return to their own planet? Again, I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions. Which answers could well be that we are an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate – through perhaps having numerous peaceful, cooperating, colonies on other worlds – that we have culturally and personally, in moral terms, advanced.

Which rather – to me at least – places certain current events, social change by -isms, by -ologies, through disruption and violence and via revolution, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians, and armed conflicts, into what I intuit is a necessary cosmic, non-terran, perspective. Which perspective is of us as a species still evolving; as having the potential and now the means to further and to consciously, and as individuals, to so evolve.

Will we do this? And how? Again, my answer – fallible as it is, repeated by me as it hereby is, and born as it is from my own *pathei-mathos* – is that it could well begin with us as individuals consciously deciding to change through cultivating empathy and viewing ourselves and our world in the perspective of the cosmos. Which perspective is of our smallness, our fallibility, our mortality, and of our appreciation of the numinous and thus of the need to avoid the error of hubris; an error which we mortals, millennia following millennia, have always made and which even now – even with our ancestral world-wide culture of *pathei-mathos* – we still commit day after day, year after year, and century after century, enshrined as such hubris seems to be in so many politicians; in -isms and -ologies; in disruptive and violent social change and revolutions; in armed conflicts, and in our very physis as human individuals: an apparently unchanged physis which so motivates so many of us to still be egoistic, to lie, to cheat, to steal, to murder, to manipulate, to be violent, and to often be motivated by avarice, pride, jealousy, and a selfish sexual desire.

As someone, over one and half-thousand years ago, wrote regarding human beings:

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἶμι, τῷ τιμωρῷ ἐκχωρήσας δαίμονι, ὅστις τὴν ὀξύτητα τοῦ πυρὸς προσβάλλων θρώσκει αὐτὸν αἰσθητικῶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτὸν ὀπλίζει, ἵνα τύχη πλείονος τιμωρίας, καὶ οὐ παύεται ἐπ' ὀρέξεις ἀπλῆ τους τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων, ἀκορέστως σκοτομαχῶν, καὶ τοῦ τον βασανίζει, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖον αὐξάνει

"I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness – which tests them – and thus increase that fire even more." [1]

Which is basically the same understanding that Aeschylus revealed in his *Oresteia* trilogy many centuries before: the wisdom of *pathei-mathos* and the numinous pagan allegory of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [2], and which wisdom was also described by Milton over a millennia later by means of another allegory:

The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind.

David Myatt
2015

Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

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[1] *Poemandres*, 23. *Corpus Hermeticum*. Translated by DM in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

[2] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, Translated by DM.

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

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Original posting:
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2016/06/08/a-non-terrestrial-view/>

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NASA - Earth and Moon as seen from the departing Voyager interplanetary spacecraft

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