

NOT MY MARS

Who hasn't looked up at the stars and dreamed about what it would be to travel outer space?

Over the last decade Mars (where the sunsets are blue) **has been** increasingly marketed as the necessary destination point for the survival of the human species.

Working off unquestioned declarations that all earthlings are doomed to **extinction** due to climate change, overpopulation, the threat of nuclear war and the repetition of history (we would be number 6 in a series of planetary extinctions) China is building a Mars colony prototype in the Qinghai desert and in the U.S., the trump administration, NASA and Elon Musk's Space X are partnering to begin steps towards colonizing Mars and mining the Moon.

The semiotic linking of the colonization of Mars to human survival is being marketed in the vein of team spirit. Having the slightest allergic reaction to the promised mix of the biggest survival reality show and extreme sporting event ever labels one either a Luddite and/or an enemy of team humanity.

Despite the certainty and engineering brilliance these ideas are presented with, there remains a vast **ignorance**, both willful and **blind**, beneath the shiny red surface. Therefore below is a list of necessary reevaluations.

First it is a bad idea to blindly follow billionaires anywhere regardless if they're creative geniuses or charismatic carpetbaggers especially if you think they're self-made. They're not. Their wealth is amassed with the use of your money through state support. That's why in the U.S. they donate to both major political parties

Second technology is dumb. Inherently it is neither good nor evil. It is indifferent like the Antarctic ice that slowly but surely covers any built environment at the South Pole no matter how creatively engineered. Technology alone won't redeem us. Neither will a simple mix of technology and entrepreneurship.

Third the inevitability of extinction is not a simple fact.

Fourth in the face of apocalyptic concerns, running away to Mars (which may fail) seems like the easier thing to try.

Harder is to seriously begin discussions about how to solve overpopulation instead of talking about what the best baby carriage is your money can buy.

And why choose to build more cars even green ones as a top solution to climate change? Instead just get rid of them. Los Angelinos alone would be overjoyed to have the extensive streetcar system that preceded cars put back in. If L.A. functions as a future imaginary, then take it from us, being doomed to individually inhabit a never ending barely moving dense sea of cars is utterly inhumane.

We must also completely disband nuclear weapons. It can be done. Like getting rid of cars and an outdated oil economy it simply needs to be made a firm goal.

And why is it more logical to solely speculate billions on **warming** up Mars than developing equivalent technology to cool the Earth back down? If the idea is that humans become a multi-planetary species why is Earth being written off?

Fifth these things will take time to accomplish. For one it will require brainstorming innovative and new economic formations equalizing wealth. Instituting them will move us away from betting the future on ideas generated by a tiny population of billionaires to wagering better odds on the differing collective endeavors of billions.

Sixth maybe there is no more time. What if Mars is it for a miniscule portion of humans? Extinction can also easily befall the colonists in numerous ways including the sole importation of an economic system deeply rooted in multiple types of discrimination and a social order based primarily on military hierarchy.

Seventh what if extinction is in the cards for all humans on Earth and Mars? Then it's best to consider that we are simply ordinary not anything special. Nor are we the most exalted life form among our fellow animal kith and kin.

Eighth who exactly will be going to Mars? Musk's goal of a city of 1 million is .013% of the current world population. Yet he says anyone with \$200,000 can go.

Ninth traveling to Mars will be fun says Musk. There will be a zero gravity room to play in, a movie theater, lecture hall and one restaurant. Humans who like shopping malls, bouncy houses, and off limits research communities of mostly white male scientists will enjoy the spaceship. For others, stuck in a loop of Ted talks, affectless science lectures, and James Cameron films can produce madness.

Tenth Musk also promises fun on Mars. For example, because Martian gravity is only 37% of Earth's one can easily "lift heavy things and bound around." Reduced gravity also causes human internal organs to migrate upwards towards one's throat. Failing to be realistic about inevitable physical changes that will beset the human body once it permanently leaves Earth can also produce madness. At the very least questions about authenticity will pop up.

Eleventh someone once told of experiments that were performed on the International Space Station by the Russians looking at the effects of gestating life in space.

Twelfth in the tiny greenhouse aboard the station, they first sowed wheat seeds brought up from Earth. As the plants came up so did their roots. No longer were the seedlings anchored to the ground. Next guppies were brought up and the progeny of these fish were born without flotation stomachs.

Thirteenth although both plants and fish adapted to space in one generation, when brought back to Earth it took seven generations for their descendants to return to their "natural" physical state. This brings to mind Frederik Pohl's 1976 SF novel *Man Plus*. An astronaut being bodily re-engineered to survive Mars becomes a monster on Earth.

Fourteenth starting with a series of ideas theorizing the human body by feminist, queer, transgender, affect, post-human, disability studies and black intellectual theorists, the following sections address a range of critical issues that must be thoroughly addressed and understood before inflicting **ourselves** on the **cosmos**...