

In Praise Of America And Britain

For so many decades I - subsumed, infatuated, by some impersonal ideology or by egoistic, personal, desires - was wrong. For the reality of the world - of individuals - is only ever, at least according to my weird exeatic expiative experience, revealed to us by pathei-mathos: by actual personal experience in the immediacy of the moment.

Which personal decades-long experience so negates what assumptions or prejudice we individuals have or had or derived or assumed because of some ideology, or because of some faith, or because of some political movement, or because of some unconscious (possibly irrational) personal feeling which so subsumed us that we placed something abstract before an empathic, individual, knowing of others.

Thus the reality of The United States of America - in its vastness and its diversity (social, religious, racial) - is, as so discovered via my own recent pathei-mathos, so very different from the answers propogated by those who, lacking such a personal pathei-mathos extending over years of such a diverse America, personally or ideologically fixate on 'this' or 'that' perceived or even real causal personal problems as exist in a land such as America. Yet the reality of America is of many people - both in government and otherwise - who, from the best of intentions, seek and have saught to make their family, their local area, their State, their nation, a better place, guided as they are and have been for generations by such declarations as this:

"Designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection...

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government... Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge... Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it... In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which

indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave."

Which sentiment has made, over so many generations by so many individuals, that land a place, an opportunity, that so many millions of others, world-wide, desire to be part of and/or seek to emulate or emigrate to, to live in, and to so participate in the life that such a modern government has allowed and encourages. And which reality - as revealed via pathei-mathos and in the perspective of decades and centuries - renders all the anti-US propaganda of extremists worldwide (recent and otherwise) null and void.

Not that such a land is perfect, paradisaal. Far from it: for we humans in our individuality can still be so selfish, so unempathic, so wrong, so murderous. But on balance - in the supra-personal perspective of decades and centuries - it is most certainly preferable to what exists and has existed elsewhere; offering as it does a freedom, a diversity, a tolerance, a goodness, a dream, that (at least in my decades-long experience and studies) exists (and has never heretofore existed) nowhere else on planet Earth. Except, perhaps (and again in my experience), in Britain.

In respect of which praise of Britain I can only recount wise words such as the following, born as such words are from a personal experience and from a tradition that I for so many decades hubriatically distanced myself from even though my family, my in-laws, and my ancestors for so many generations, embodied - lived, toiled for, and sometimes died for - that tradition:

"Ladies and Gentlemen [...] It is a great day for you all and for your loved ones gathered here for this occasion. A proud day after months of toil.

You are receiving your commissions as officers at a moment when the profession of arms is moving into uncharted waters. Pillars of the international order are under challenge as never before in my lifetime. At the same time, a cult of death and destruction is defiling ancient lands and seducing a frightening number of lost young people. In the face of such challenges, Britain's traditional qualities - fair play, civility, a sense of humour in adversity - remain as precious as they've always been [...]

The British have always excelled at understanding the human factor in world affairs. Though in the popular imagination the British may be best known for the stiff upper lip, they have long displayed an exceptional capacity for empathising with the sorrows and joys, the hopes and fears, the faiths and cultures of others. The historical British capacity for empathy is all the more remarkable given that the United Kingdom is geographically isolated from the European mainland.

Today we are no longer isolated. The United Kingdom has become an extraordinarily cosmopolitan society and our diversity matches our ability to understand the perspectives of people from varied backgrounds. People raised here are everywhere and people from everywhere are here. Our people, our sorrows, our hopes are the world's, and the world's are ours.

You all know this, because you have lived it here at Sandhurst, where twenty percent of the cadets come from countries other than the United Kingdom. From your own experience, you know that our allies are those men and women in every corner of the world, from every culture and of every religion, who share the belief that each human being should have an opportunity to realise their potential, whilst respecting the right for others to do the same.

You will all go on to do specialised training, but none of the specialised knowledge you acquire will overshadow the importance of what you have learned at Sandhurst - the understanding of what moves men and women and how you can bring out the best in them, whether they are above, below or beside you.

I believe that there are men and women on parade today who will confront trials as great as any faced by our forebears who carried us through two world wars. I have every confidence that you will rise to the challenges that you will encounter, not only with the humbling courage they displayed, but with the courageous humility that success in our globalised world demands. With your help, civilisation - based on mutual respect for people's right to be themselves - will not merely survive, it will prevail."

Any and all words - comments - I might deign to add are superfluous; mere posturings of someone who for so many decades so stupidly failed to appreciate such a simple pathei-mathos as this: Quod superius est sicut quod inferius et quod inferius est sicut quod superius ad perpetranda miracula rei unius. [1]

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Extract From A Letter To A Personal Correspondent

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[1] "What is underneath is just as what is above with thus what is above as that underneath hence the wonderous accomplishment of The One." كتاب سر السرار (Kitab Sirr al-asrar, c. 900 CE).

For a similar sentiment, qv. *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini first published in 1489 CE: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur

superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona. [How, when what is underneath is touched by what is above, that above is cosmically presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.]
