

The Day The Aliens Took Over The World

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2010

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I.

“Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life.”
Oscar Wilde

Have you read or are you familiar with Harlan Ellison's science-fiction story *I have no mouth and I must scream*? If not, well, let me summarize it as much as I can : In that story, the leading civilizations construct a couple of highly capable computers so that they could conduct their wars more efficiently but eventually one of these computers becomes sentinel, takes control of the others and later it wipes the entire human race save for 5 people, one of them being the narrator. Well, you'll surely find some resemblances to that story as you go through these lines. After all, as Oscar Wilde put it, “Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life”... unfortunately this isn't a piece of literature but an account of what has happened.

As far as I can remember, science-fiction has always been on top of my obsessions list. I started with juvenile space operas, moving on to serious stuff like the works of Banks, Lem, Strugovskies, etc. While I was imbibing from them the refined, superior stuff, I also started experiencing guilty pleasures with the pulp sci-fi novels and B-movies, and eventually came a moment when I wouldn't keep their piles separate from the masters'.

In almost all of these later works that involved an extra-terrestrial activity, it's always the evil aliens coming from the outer space, wreaking havoc until they are generally defeated and beaten back to where they came from by nobody else but us, the heroic mankind. You can surely find exceptions to this in the primary league, like *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (in which there are also a lot of similarities with what happened in reality, by the way) or *E.T.* or *Rama* but then, *there are always exceptions...*

Although the reason for “their” coming is known, I don't think anybody really knows the answer to the question “why then, but not before?” (but I suspect that, asking this question even now, after all that happened shows that we still haven't learned our lesson). The event that triggered the alien intervention/invasion (– call it what you will) was just another massacre of civilians, this time conducted by the S. army in B. : As the last mother in the occupied village was shot down with her child, trying to protect her as if she could by embracing, the sky was darkened due to the space ships hovering above, blocking the sun (and can you believe that they were indeed in the shape of saucers!). Every T.V. set, monitor, every device capable of displaying images all around the world switched on by themselves and transmitted what was happening as the troop that was responsible for the massacre started to float upwards in a white light projected from one of the ships (so cliché that it hurts!) to disappear into it. And then everything ground to a halt.

II.

*“This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.”
T.S. Eliot*

During this “First Contact”, no counter-measures, no attempts of communication came from *our* side due to a very simple fact: we were immobilized. It was as if somebody had hit the pause button on the remote control of the equipment that was playing this thing we've come to call life. Although we could think trapped inside our non-responsive bodies, it was more than a paralysis. I was aware that I had stopped breathing, or more accurately, I had stopped using my body. I wasn't using my eyes to see what I was seeing – we were reduced to mere spectators of what was happening. It was as if my being, my consciousness was tied to my body with a loose string that although I could not drift away freely, I could explore the vicinity: I saw a plane suspended in the air; a pebble, halted in its mid-trajectory as it had been scattered from the road by a passing car's tire, with the car stopped right in its tracks 1 meter away. There was smell but there wasn't any sound. And the worst was of course seeing yourself, frozen in time, with an expression that was not panic, nor shock but a complete ignorance and weariness... Then, the “great transportation” was initiated.

I never saw *them*. My consciousnesses just drifted gently along my body as it was carried away by an unseen force. It was only the human bodies that was moving – I could still see the animals, plants and everything else staying where they were. It was almost our bodies had been taken to a different dimension: they weren't interacting with anything anymore as they moved. I hoped this was all a dream as I witnessed people passing through objects and even through each other. As they levitated, their bodies relaxed down as a suit would when put to a hanger – head dropped down, arms and legs extended, without any sign of life. Of course, there was no way of knowing that this would be the last time anyone saw anybody in person.

III.

“...the hallowed contrast between Mind and Matter will be dissipated, but dissipated not by either of the equally hallowed absorptions of Mind by Matter or Matter by Mind, but in quite a different way.”
Gilbert Ryle

So it turns out that at the end, Mr. Ryle was wrong when he found the idea of Mind and Body being two separate things ridiculous. No word can describe that feeling when my being was “plucked” from my body by “snapping” the nonphysical cord tying one to the other. I watched in an overwhelming sorrow as the body I had come to know as myself since the day I came into existence, was taken away, while I was blocked by some unseen barriers, unable to follow “it” to its unknown destination. Then I realized that there was nothing around me but whiteness once my body had gone. I wasn't able to tell if I was moving or not since there was nothing to take as a reference.

I waited (might as well have been drifting, I'm not so sure) for a long time, panicking, not knowing what to do, *how* to do. So I waited and panicked.

IV.

“... for then I lost all sense of the place in which I had gone to sleep, and when I awoke at midnight, not knowing where I was, I could not be sure at first who I was.”

Marcel Proust

I don't know how much time has passed since that day. I haven't met anybody like myself, or as a matter of fact, haven't met anything at all. I'm in a white void. I have access to all the knowledge that once there was – it's like being in a grand museum or a library. The acquirement process is strange but I'll attempt to describe it, why not, after all, *I've got all the time in the world.*

You start by thinking about a specific thing, something about which you have a very limited understanding or knowledge, say quantum mechanics. Then all of a sudden, like remembering a long lost thing, you find yourself thinking about other main aspects of this, like “theoretical”, “experimental”, “correspondences in art”, ... stuff like these and you start focusing on the ones you would like to “remember” more. It's very much like surfing on the Internet, reading a wiki and following links while reading it but here instead of physical devices, you navigate by thinking and acquire via remembering. This way I've been “reading” books, “watching” movies, “examining” paintings – what I acknowledge is what normally could be gained just after reading the last line of a book. Not the act of doing it but just the after feeling/knowledge of the action. Also, this is not limited to only published media: if you can focus enough, you can also visit places and times, witnessing that specific moment although it's not like wandering among people unobserved like a ghost, but more like watching a documentary where you can change the camera view to any angle you'd like but being fully aware that the things you're seeing are not the real things themselves but merely a record of the thing. I also found out that the information you can acquire is limited to that produced by the human kind. You can, for example, explore Moon's surface only when and where there was an observation, and it doesn't get updated until someone (new) comes/probes and witnesses the place. Try as I might, I couldn't find anything about what happened after the moment the space ships appeared – what I know is what I experienced from the first hand. I sometimes tend to think that I am the only one left but this is highly implausible. I'm sure the other people's ghosts (that's what I came to call the consciousness that “we” became after being plucked from our material selves) are being stored somewhere just like me, isolated from each other. Maybe, it's possible to return to your old being in the material world once you reach a level of intellectual maturity by self-education with the help of this endless resources. After all, this limbo, being what that is, can not be something other than an intermediate stop.

The worst thing is the realization of how everything we came to think as an achievement was in reality feeble and puny. We were treated like a baby, upon being discovered by its parents while bullying the ants with the toy that was also plucked away from his hand, and immediately put to its crib, fixed by some pillows so that he can not bring harm to itself. Yes, maybe when it realizes the wrongness of his ways, he will be forgiven and returned back to his playground, this is the most plausible scenario I've managed to come up with.

They also don't have to be aliens, after all. The fact that everything happened pretty much as one would expect, I mean, c'mon, the flying saucers, the white light that transported the S. troops, the global broadcasting of the event, the bodies going up like that, everything that happened had already been written or played exactly like that in this movie or that book. Maybe it was just the final grasps of my

brain to protect itself from going insane, maybe it was “the aliens” because it was *I* was perceiving the events. Maybe nothing happened at all in reality, it's just me having a blow to the head and a trip to the comatose land. But the “new” information is so consistent that I wouldn't be able to produce such data (what if it's just my deranged mind projecting that there are new data and they are consistent?) I should try harder, think if there's a way to disprove this possibility (Lem's Kelvin character in *Solaris*, for example, had managed to devise such a test but it was actually a faulty one, ignoring the possible interventions conducted upon the perception by the brain itself).

Oh God, how I long for a human touch!

I think myself writing these lines, since it's now just my thoughts that are ever fresh in this whiteness, with no thought ever forgotten or so I think I'm keeping them with me forever maybe I'm already dead and this is just hell or maybe I have died and gone to heaven since I'm sitting next to this infinite river of information, evergreen tree of knowledge, my blessing my curse how I wish there was anybody to talk to somebody to hear me somebody to read this.

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22/07/2010 - 09/08/2010