

Why I am excited about Mars

In recent years I have been becoming increasingly interested in and excited about the prospect of people exploring and colonizing the planet Mars. A friend asked me recently about what I find so compelling about this idea, and I thought that I'd elaborate some on it here.

First off, I view the possibility of humans going to and living on Mars on a permanent basis as being an enormously important milestone for humanity overall. This move will signify humanity as being a species that resides not just on **one** planet, but on **multiple** planets. Humanity would then be a multiplanetary species. This would be a **huge** development, comparable to when humanity left Africa 1.8 million years ago to become a multi-continental, multi-regional species. To think that we can witness such a thing, and potentially be a part of such a thing, is just mind-blowing.

And as far as the survival of the human species goes, I do think that it is best to not have "all of our eggs in one basket", so to speak. There are any number of different things that could kill off humanity on Earth, be it human-based such as ecological devastation and nuclear war, or naturally-occurring phenomena like asteroid impacts and super volcano eruptions. I think that the more that humanity can spread around throughout our solar system, the greater the likelihood that humanity can continue to survive on into the future.

I also appreciate the great challenges involved with space travel, Mars exploration and ultimately settling on another planet. This is the kind of endeavor that would challenge people on every possible level: psychologically, physically, socially, technologically, architecturally, medically, you name it. I think that this kind of challenge is a good thing, because it is the kind of goal that can help get people out of lazy "comfort zones" where trivialities and petty conflicts preoccupy people's minds, and towards big collective goals where people have to work together and bring out their best selves. Because, frankly, their lives would depend on it. There's simply no room left for fucking around.

Relatedly, by taking on such a task I think that the conditions would be set for enormous scientific and technological breakthroughs and developments to occur. One of the areas in particular where I believe that lots of development will occur is the area of creating and maintaining life-support systems. This knowledge can be useful for assisting in efforts to colonize other places in our solar system, as well as for the people on Earth, since the Earth is currently on track towards dismantling it's life-support systems. The problems of too hot, too cold, the lack of immediately accessible drinking water, runaway carbon dioxide emissions, producing breathable air, the lack of good soil for growing plants in - these all are increasingly becoming major Earth problems, and of course these are also problems that are front and center with regards to colonizing Mars and other planets as well.

Now, with all of this being said, I also have my own unique goals and aspirations regarding Mars colonization. What I would like to have happen is for people with anarchist and libertarian socialist orientations to work together to establish new self-sustaining utopian colonies on Mars. I would like for these colonies to be separate and distinct from whatever colonies that businesses like SpaceX and Blue Origin and governments like the United States and China might create on Mars. I am excited about the work that SpaceX and NASA are doing, since I see their work as progressing towards human beings eventually actually being able to get from Earth to Mars, but ultimately I think that the kind of utopian anarchist colonies on Mars that I envision would need to become independent of these various agencies and go their own way.

This topic of establishing utopian colonies on Mars is actually something that I gave a workshop about at the international Mars Society convention that took place online last year. You can watch a recording of this talk on YouTube [here](#). My excitement about the prospect of creating utopian colonies on Mars comes down to this one thought: ***this is our opportunity to finally create our own new society in alignment with our own visions and values.***

I have been an anarchist for a long time now, and all this time I have been wanting to create a new world that more closely aligns with the kinds of ethics and values that are talked about in anarchist/libertarian socialist philosophy. And repeatedly over the years, the efforts of myself and my comrades have failed in accomplishing this. And now, looking at the state of the world as it is today, I don't see it as being likely that the world will go in the kind of direction that I'd want. What **does** seem increasingly likely to me is the possibility of human beings going to and colonizing the planet Mars. So as a result, I think that a shift has occurred in me in recent years, a shift away from a "change the world" mindset and towards a "create a new world somewhere else" mindset. This is the same kind of mindset that inspired the utopian socialists to leave Europe and go create their own new utopian colonies in the Americas back in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Part of the appeal to me of the idea of colonizing Mars is the "new frontier" and "fresh start" aspect of the place. Nobody is living there currently, and all of the various required life support systems would need to be intentionally created by human beings. The way that I am approaching this then is thorough focusing on this question:

As long as we are designing life support systems for human beings, how can we intentionally design life support systems to meet **all** of the different fundamental human needs for **all** of the different people involved? In other words, how can we design social relationships and social structures that would more effectively meet human needs? How can group decision-making, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, emotional and psychological well-being, the allocation of resources, the management of public and private spaces, how can **all of this** be intentionally designed in new ways to maximize the

health and happiness of everyone involved? I view the creation of utopian colonies on Mars as being the opportunity to look at all of this from fresh new perspectives.

With that being said, I do not view this question of colonizing the planet Mars as being an “Earth versus Mars” question. Looking at this as an “Earth versus Mars” matter is indicative of the kind of narrow-minded zero sum thinking that I think is currently leading humanity to a dead end. I much prefer “both/and” thinking, with an emphasis on creativity and ingenuity (as well as Ingenuity). To that end, I would like for all of the developments in space flight, life support systems engineering, alternative architecture, social relationships and structures, and other areas, to be looked at with an eye towards applying them to life on Earth, Mars, as well as other places in our solar system. These are all human problems that we are trying to address here, and these are all things that we are trying to create to better support human life, therefore the benefits should be for all of humanity.

One thing that I have come to realize regarding a potential future utopian anarchist colony on Mars, is that in order for such a thing to be successful, a massive functioning alternative infrastructure would need to be created by the utopian anarchist would-be Martian colonists right here on Earth beforehand. These people would need to be able to understand and operate alternative institutions that are capable of meeting people’s various real life needs. These people would also need to be able to effectively make decisions together and resolve conflicts together. And while we are all still immersed in a capitalist society, these utopian anarchist would-be Martian colonists would need to be able to make and manage money together to not just buy necessary materials, but also to pay SpaceX, or whatever company is offering commercial space transportation, to get from Earth to Mars. This kind of high level of cohesion, cooperation and collaboration is not at all present within the contemporary anarchist and radical milieux, and perhaps it never has been. This means that there is a whole lot of work, innovation and development that needs to take place even before we can begin to tackle the various enormous challenges associated with living on another planet.

It is all still very much worth it to me. Living on Mars is an opportunity to create and live in a “New World”, both physically and socially speaking. It is all of the exciting “frontier spirit” that animated a lot of the European colonization of the Americas, but without any of the conquest and genocide of indigenous peoples. This can be a place where the world of our dreams can be created, by our own human efforts, in our own human-created life-support bubbles. And all of this can very well happen during our own lifetimes. What a time to be alive!