

A Useful Analogy: The Preflight Checklist

Post by "Eikadistes" of September 17, 2019 at 10:11 PM

Absolutely--I watch it for encouragement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZyRbnpGyzQ>

(The language contains *some* seeds of nationalism, so I'm including the bits that inspire me, regardless of national identity; and, I think, the attitude can inspire others as well.)

With regards to Epicurean philosophy, it particularly reminds me of the courage and boldness of Epicurus to have founded a school against the prevailing ideologies of the time, and the hardships against which he struggled.

*"We meet at a college noted for **knowledge**, in a city noted for progress, in a State noted for strength, and we stand in need of all three, for we meet in an hour of change and challenge, in a decade of hope and fear, in an age of both knowledge and ignorance. [...] condense, if you will, the 50,000 years of man's recorded history in a time span of but a half-century. Stated in these terms, we know very little about the first 40 years, except at the end of them advanced man had learned to use the skins of animals to cover them. Then about 10 years ago, under this standard, man emerged from his caves to construct other kinds of shelter. Only five years ago man learned to write and use a cart with wheels. Christianity began less than two years ago. The printing press came this year, and then less than two months ago, during this whole 50-year span of human history, the steam engine provided a new source of power. Newton explored the meaning of gravity. Last month electric lights and telephones and automobiles and airplanes became available. Only last week did we develop penicillin and television and nuclear power, and now if America's new spacecraft succeeds in reaching Venus, we will have literally reached the stars before midnight tonight. [...] Surely the opening vistas of space promise high costs and hardships, as well as high reward. So **it is not surprising that some would have us stay where we are a little longer to rest, to wait.** But [...] this [...] was not built by those who waited and rested and wished to look behind them [but] by those who moved forward - and so will space.*

*William Bradford, speaking in 1630 of the founding of the Plymouth Bay Colony, said that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and both must be enterprised and overcome with **answerable courage**. [...] **man, in his quest for knowledge and progress, is determined and cannot be deterred.** [...] **it is one of the great adventures of all time** [...] We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained [...] But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? [...] **We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon** in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, **but because they are hard**, because **that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills**, because **that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one***

we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too. [...] The growth of our science and education will be enriched by new knowledge of our universe and environment, by new techniques of learning and mapping and observation, by new tools and computers for industry, medicine, the home as well as the school. [...] if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun [...] and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out - **then we must be bold**. [...] Many years ago the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said, "**Because it is there**." Well, **space is there**, and **we're going to climb it**, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. [...]"