

INTERSTELLAR:
HUMANIST MIRACLES FOR A
DISASTROUS AGE

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American Studies

“Myth is already enlightenment,
and enlightenment reverts to
mythology.”

Adorno & Horkheimer,
Dialectic of Enlightenment

A MATTER OF EXPECTATION



SCIENCE FICTION VS. FANTASY

“If SF is the exploration of all the constraints thrown up by history itself – the web of counter finalities and anti-dialectics which human production has itself produced – then fantasy is the other side of the coin and a celebration of human creative power and freedom which becomes idealistic only by virtue of the omission of precisely those material and historical constraints.”

Frederic Jameson, “The Great Schism”

NOSTALGIA

“[T]he invocation of magic by modern fantasy cannot recapture this fascination [of a magical transformation of human relations], but is condemned by its form to retrace the history of magic’s decay and fall, its disappearance from the disenchanted world of prose ... it is only at this point, when the world of magic becomes little more than nostalgia, that the Utopian wish can reappear in all its vulnerability and fragility.”

Jameson, “The Great Schism”

POSITIVE FEATURES

“The denunciation of religion (or medieval fantasy) as sheer mystification and obfuscation to be eliminated has as its dialectical consequence the limits of Enlightenment radicalism and its shallow affinities with rationalism and liberalism.”

“Hegel’s dialectic on the other hand suggests (it is a whole political program) that we need to go all the way through religion and come out the other side, absorbing all its positive features...”

Frederic Jameson

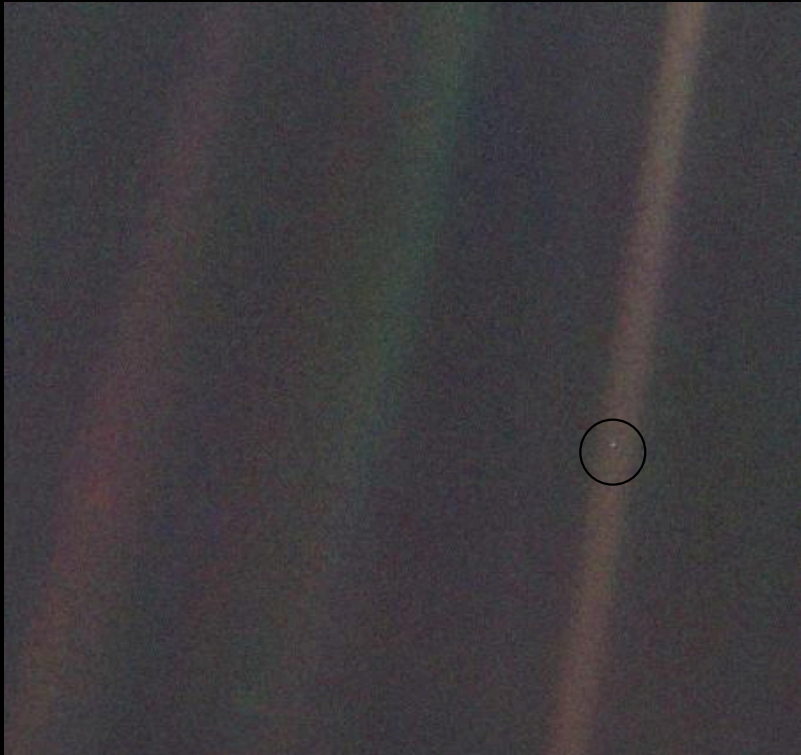
ALIENATION AND RELIGION

“Divine power, of which the various theologies are so many abstractions and elaborations, is in fact unalienated human creativity which has then been re-alienated into an image or a figural form. In it labor and productivity, including human intelligence and imagination, the ‘general intellect’ of humanity, have been hypostatized and subsequently appropriated and exploited like any other human product.”
Jameson as Feuerbach, “The Great Schism”

HUMANISM IN *CONTACT* (1997)



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The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known.

Carl Sagan

INTERSTELLAR'S DISASTER "HUMANISM"

- Utopian? Technological?
- Sacrificial, heroic
- Apolitical
- Anglo-American
- Promises the overcoming of death
- Suggests that salvation will not come in our lifetime, or on our planet.