

## *Elon Musk is the Bob Dylan of our Time*



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by Adriano V. Autino

### **A brief letter to the “March For Our Lives” movement**

Dear students and supporters,

Fifty years ago, when I was your age, my generation rebelled throughout the world against the stupid and warmongering powers which rewarded exploitation and oppressed the exploited. We demonstrated for freedom and equal opportunities for all peoples in the world, regardless of the latitude where they were born or whatever social class that they belonged to.

The American student movement against the Vietnam War was an inspiring flame for similar movements that were born in other places throughout the world. Our heroes were the poets and musicians of the beat generation, of whom Bob Dylan is perhaps the most unanimously recognized representative. Dylan sang his deeply humanist lyrics, always projecting his vision far beyond the short-sighted classist and hateful ideology that unfortunately characterized many of the protest movements, severely limiting their innovative and genuinely progressive character.

The brightest minds realized that freedom, equality and brotherhood, which had been proclaimed two centuries ago by the French Revolution, were not enough to fuel progress. To fuel progress, wealth is also needed. Poverty does not generate progress: it can at most stimulate ideas and initiatives (“stay hungry, stay foolish, ...” as Steve Jobs said). However, if ideas and initiatives do not find the necessary resources they cannot develop. Whether wealth is conceived as a reward to the best ones or as a distribution criteria for social equity, if there is no wealth, there can be no



social model useful for the progress and the well-being of civilization. Poverty only generates barbarism, authoritarianism, despotic bureaucracy, dictatorship and contempt for life. Therefore, at least one fundamental concept must be added to the values of the bourgeois revolution of two centuries ago: wealth. Eventually, then, we can discuss how it is more ethical to distribute wealth, but first of all we must ensure that there is sufficient wealth for everyone, if we truly believe that every human being has the right to live peacefully and seek happiness.

Now, let's ask ourselves a fundamental question: "Has the concept of global wealth, of abundance necessary for humanity, already found poets and musicians capable of transmitting this "good news" all over the world?" In my opinion, yes it has.

A couple of months ago Elon Musk launched his car on a Falcon Heavy into space. This gesture was highly symbolic, as Musk is saying that we shall continue our civilian activities -- particularly industrial development -- in outer space. Also please notice the strong symbolism represented by the life and career of Elon Musk: he creates wealth and spends it on the future of humanity. He is able to understand and conceptualize, as have Stephen Hawking and a few other excellent minds of our time, that almost eight billion humans living on the third planet of the Solar System will not survive if they remain confined within the limits of their home planet. Inevitably, a myriad of fragmented tribes will be reduced to fiercely fighting over dwindling resources in order to survive in an ever deteriorating environment, as has been portrayed in many dystopian science fiction scenarios that have been "sensitizing" us for years about what to expect. Yet, the Solar System holds nearly infinite resources and the energy necessary for maintaining and perpetuating a truly free and peaceful civilization.

We must not expect the messengers of the Renaissance to always present themselves in the same form. This is the mistake made by all the nostalgic people who despair, regretting the movements of the past and lamenting their absence today.

Elon Musk speaks to the world today as much as Bob Dylan did so fifty years ago. Musk is part of a new visionary and progressive entrepreneur class that has been generated by the industrial civilization of the last two centuries, and he speaks to those who will understand it.

In approximately twenty countries where periodic tests have been carried out, it now seems that the intellectual quotient (IQ) of the latest generations has increased from 3 to 8 points every 10 years (the Flynn Effect). It is therefore my deep conviction that many will understand this message. Indeed, as it often happens, messengers probably interpret feelings that are already publicly widespread and present in society.

*[English editing: Arthur Woods]*

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