

I am an earthling



One planet, one world, one people!

Like you, I'm an earthling; our planet belongs to us.

I'm British, I was born in London in 1954. I didn't have choice about being British, nor even in being born; both were thrust upon me, no one asked me if, when and where I wanted to be born – so much for choice, eh!

My influences as a young boy in the early to mid-sixties were comics such as "The Victor", "The Hotspur" and "The Hornet". All of them were full of (mainly British) heroic battles and daring deeds, Wellington at Waterloo, Raglan at Balaclava, Melville et Coghill at Isandlwana, Chard & Broomhead at Rorke's Drift, Gordon at Khartoum, Douglas Bader during the Battle for Britain, etc. etc.

The underlying message (which I clearly didn't see as a young boy) was about how great we were (or at that time "are"); the comics didn't write about the thousands of Zulus who died protecting their homelands, or about the massacre of Amritsar, or about the atrocities of the Boxer rebellion, etc. They only wrote about the greatness of the British Empire.

You may be asking yourself if I am proud or ashamed to be British; to be honest I am neither, I just am British – as I wrote earlier, it just happened to me, I was born on a part of the planet that we call Britain. Britain and the British people have done some truly great things and some truly atrocious things – in the past.

I could probably have written the above from a French perspective (d'Artagnan, Napoleon, Jaurès, de Gaulle, ...) or an American perspective (Lincoln, Custer, Murphy, Armstrong, ...) and I am fairly sure that there are few French people or American people who "chose" to be born French or American.

I've had the opportunity to travel a bit (Europe, India, South Africa, Thailand ...) and everywhere I've been, I've found people more or less like me – people with brothers & sisters, people with parents, people with children, people who want to live in peace, people who want to enjoy life, people who want to contribute to their communities

The air that I breathed in those countries had already been inhaled & exhaled by hundreds of Indians, Zimbabweans, etc. and the water that I drank had already passed through numerous digestive systems.

We've divided the planet into "parts" that we call countries but nature doesn't give a damn about borders; radioactive or toxic clouds don't respect the Schengen Area; water tables communicate between themselves, diseased birds violate national airspace and the pollution in the Pacific Ocean eventually finds its way into the Mediterranean.

We've divided the planet into parts but the resources are common, the Amazonian forest is in a part of the planet that we call Brazil, just like coal or petrol is in other parts of the planet that go under other names.

When a forest is destroyed, it's my forest that is destroyed, it's your forest that is destroyed and it's our forest that is destroyed. When a river is polluted, it's my river that is polluted, it's your river that is polluted and it's our river that is polluted. Although I'm far from sure that anyone has asked my opinion, your opinion or our opinion.

I've yet to read in a religious document or a constitution (or any other document) that we should imprison (or even kill)

those who don't agree with us; in fact, quite the opposite most talk about compassion & comprehension.

For the majority of us we have about 80 years to realise our potential, develop it and then deploy it in order to accomplish our lives and, maybe, help others to accomplish their lives.

The planet has been divided into about 190 parts and the "others" living in those parts are no worse than us and no better than us, in the main they are just like us; they have the same aspirations, the same hopes and the same dreams.

We can't continue treating problems in isolation; deforestation in Indonesia, air pollution in China, fracking in North America, oil pipeline spillages in Russia, war in Ukraine, etc. If we don't start treating our planet like a "collective whole" the "mouldy" parts will start connecting up and it will be (far) too late to save anything.

Although "think globally and act locally" has been in vogue for some time now, there seems to be a move towards "think & act locally" and "sod the rest of the world"; as if what someone does in their part of the planet has no impact on the rest of the planet.

To finish with, a couple of quotes by Anne Frank and Albert Einstein:

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."