

Title: Robbie from IMX posted a strange quote and then deleted it. The quote was from a Chinese Sci-Fi novel with a dark and interesting premise that explores the Fermi paradox.

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“

Next, even if you know that I think you're benevolent, and I also know that you think I'm benevolent, I don't know what you think about what I think about what you're thinking about me. It's convoluted, isn't it?



Robbie Ferguson (x) (@Oxferg)

I am a pacifist of this world. It is the luck of your civilization that I am the first to receive your message. I am warning you: Do not answer! Do not answer!! Do not answer!!!



Twitter | Today at 7:58 AM

THE BESTSELLING CHINESE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL,
AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST TIME

THE THREE-BODY PROBLEM

CIXIN LIU *Translated by* KEN LIU

Welcome to the Woods

Cixin's dark forest metaphor goes like this:

“

The universe is a dark forest. Every civilization is an armed hunter stalking through the trees like a ghost, gently pushing aside branches that block the path and trying to tread without sound. Even breathing is done with care. The hunter has to be careful, because everywhere in the forest are stealthy hunters like him. If he finds another life — another hunter, angel, or a demon, a delicate infant to tottering old man, a fairy or demigod — there's only one thing he can do: open fire and eliminate them.

Chains of Suspicion

When one civilization becomes aware of another, the most critical thing is to ascertain whether or not the newly found civilization is operating from benevolence — and thus won't attack and destroy you — or malice. Too much further communication could take you from limited exposure in which the other civilization simply knows you exist, to the strongest: They know where to find you. And so each civilization is left to guess the other's intent, and the stakes couldn't be higher.

You can't assume the other civilization is benevolent, and they can't assume that about you, either. Nor can you be sure the other correctly comprehends your assessment of their benevolence or maliciousness. As one character tells another in the book:

Technological Explosion

You do know that a civilization that contacts you is capable technologically of at least that much. But this is all you have to go on in your assessment of the threat level or their ability to defend themselves against an attack from you. You might think that a civilization that considers itself advanced could relax, secure in its military superiority at the moment of first contact. But contact with you could be just the impetus needed for the other civilization to shoot ahead technologically — progress is non-linear, as shown by our own tech explosion in just 300 years against the millions of years we've been around. By the time an invading force traverses the vast expanse of space — likely over the course of years, if not centuries — who can know what awaits them? No civilization can be confident of its power relative to the other.