

To Selfie or Not to Selfie

Monday, 6:07 AM

He woke up wanting to change the world. So original. So necessary. Just another morning in another day and there he was, lying down, having an epiphany. The first rays of the Sun did not deceive him: those were dark days.

He remembered that, as a child, he really enjoyed thinking about infinity. The sky had always been the only limit. He would spend endless nights dreaming about being in the rye with you, Holden. That dream was postponed. He would stop to caress every dog he met on the street and dreamed of taking them home. That dream was lost. Now it all seems like nothing but a magical potion.

He had been like this all his life: the boy who wanted to be an astronaut, a musician, a painter, or an inventor, but was conditioned to be a boss. The teenager who wanted to become a philosopher but had to put capitalist efficiency first. The adult who had been at times a follower of Freud and Jung, a religious and an atheist, who was on the left and the right, for and against. And now he was nothing but a man who had nothing to do with the world.

So why this, now? Was there anything different that morning? There wasn't, *that is the question*. His room's window continued to show the same world outside, seen by the same man inside. Would all those years of omission finally reveal themselves as a latent disturbance? Does anyone hear what he hears? Feel what he feels?

Upon reflection, he concluded that self-indulgence was the plague of the 21st century. Risking oneself in order to broaden horizons? Better dumb than dead, my dear. Just ask anyone. Columbus was raving mad for having crossed the ocean looking for something. Everywhere there's fear, mistrust, disappointment. Dirty money, dirty consciences, words that hide secrets. Species become extinct faster than any corrupt politician — who calls himself a socialist — is condemned. God is dead, but in every corner you find some opportunistic oracle. The right wins, the left is reborn from the ashes, and everything begins again from zero in this screen of totality. People are no longer aware of themselves. Nobody admires other people's progress any longer, nobody wants to help, nobody wants to improve. They anxiously wait (in quiet comfort, though) for a better world. They label the system as bad, but not as their enemy. And at the end of the game they prefer to postpone the whole match. A very brave new world indeed.

It is fear that is behind every action, not the search for fulfillment. Did anyone get close to you in the workplace? They either want to copy you or to sabotage you. It's a challenge to find a different verb that comes first to your mind. Die whenever you will, just don't do it in the middle of the marathon, wearing the sponsor's uniform; it's not good form. Don't promote new opportunities, don't open your car's windows, and use every kind of charm you have as you play to survive. Attention, says

the survival manual: don't ask for peace, ask for weapons; don't pray for hope, pray for strength. How bitter it is to adopt an "end of the world" perspective!

"One for all and all for one" is nearly an utopia, an unicorn, or a fossilized image from a distant past. Now, "run for your life" reigns like background music, loud and easy to hear. A syndrome of the modern soul as a whole. There's so many things going wrong we don't even know how to name them. "Capitalists: masters by merit, slaves by necessity." No. What is the opposite of a miracle? That would be a good name.

He thought about the many persecuted revolutions, the exile of geniuses, burnings of books, and torture of those who sacrificed themselves for a better world, so that all would end this way. O friends, pardon him: he was self-indulgent and survived, and you — you are gone. There's an invisible guilt here and now: it's these ghosts in the window, their bloody shadows on the floor.

But now he could not imagine where he would fit these things in a well-written tomorrow. Wrongs will have to be righted. The times are urgent, the times are insurgent.

6h25 AM

It was decided, then: he would change the world. Just like that. Finally.

He would be the idealist, the rebel, the adventurer, the altruist, the relentless one. He would take control of himself. He would stop pressing the snooze button every time the alarm clock showed it was time to act. He felt grateful for having been a solitary child who only had books for friends. These too were the best batallion he could have faced. *Heureka!*

An immense energy and plenitude hit him. A beautiful beginning: an idea became a path. He decided to start by writing down the truth. The truth! Ha! Those trivial truths we know so little about, we do so little about. After all, weren't humans themselves the creators of this reality? They created it, consented in it, and even planned it. Ugh.

Therefore he would study every revolution, the workings of the system, and neurolinguistic reprogramming. He would propose a revolution beyond capitalism and the destructive aspects of modernity. It would be a revolutionary text. Even though no one now knows what was going on in that room, he would change the world.

Using a pen name was a good idea if he preferred not to be found out, but soon this seemed a bit cowardly. Was he a coward or was he proud for wanting the prize in case of success? He was confused. He thought better and decided to start by taking the streets — isn't that the only thing that draws attention? Perhaps he would have to start his revolution outside his home. But in the streets? Publicly? What if he were caught, tortured, exiled? Perhaps it would be best to start a discreet revolution while pretending to be a miserable character, accepting the dominant

prejudices and mores, disguising anything that pointed out that such independence of mind could be interpreted as a provocation. How difficult were the workings of a modern revolution!

His head hurt. Years of study and dreams, apparently to no use, now surfaced like a tsunami. He paused and pondered.

6h43 AM

Fear takes over. Should he?

The first to raise his head in a crowd is always the first to be stoned, isn't he? You have to be brave.

He reconsidered. He could not find a different ending for his enterprise: like so many others, he would be persecuted, exiled, tortured, or he would see his early death shrouded in secret. No. He feared for his own life. Was he exaggerating, perhaps? After all, you can't be this unselfish and sublime. Human beings, not enlightened Buddhas, inhabit the earth.

Perhaps the adventurous idealist he imagines is nothing but a selfish, disgruntled maniac. One should admit it is a bit mad to want to be the alarm clock of present lethargy. It's also a bit suicidal. He wanted to have his books close by...

No. He could not do everything. He would have to leave something for God. Not that he was afraid of death, but he was not in a hurry to die either. After all, even if he wanted to create new laws, wouldn't he be judged by the existing laws? Is it possible for anyone to transcend the system and still be a part of it?

The bone has become so familiar to us — why would we want to get the meat now? To be the bearer of bad news? The truth — the truth that torments everyone, including the most gifted minds — is that it is easy to die for an ideal; living for an ideal, though, is difficult.

So let's play *Poltergeist*. Let's put ourselves in the position of puppets. Let's grow up dead. Yes. Because these are life's injustices. Wasn't that what you were taught? The mask fits perfectly well the thing to be hidden.

And so everything would remain the same. It would go on, as it had so far, with mankind in this nutshell.

07h14 AM

No! He could not find another excuse. Another excuse. Another time. Even the darkest night must rest and the Sun will rise.

There he was: bargaining for wasted minutes of life, struggling to be happy, just a bit more. He wanted to quit being a mere spectator, someone who just complains, who just likes Greenpeace on

Facebook, who simply goes to the supermarket and sheds tears of happiness when prices go down. Manipulators of every kind reign imposingly in this victimary society, where one nothingness does nothing more than putting up with other nothingnesses, but we are the true guardians of this world. It is not possible that we are conditioned to self-indulgence.

It's best to try, even if it is in vain. Either fighting the system or creating a new one. Yes, he will change the world. He will face fear, get up, and act, even though this means cutting off ties, seeling his possessions, and saying goodbye.

7h30 AM

The alarm has sounded and took him out of his epiphany. He remembered he was just some guy in his room, in a day just like any other day. What now?

Was all this just some malaise or the slow and sublime start of action? Damn the hour of night when dreams come. He had not decided how he would do it. He had also not lost the fear of doing it. He stopped. He stayed there. No, not now. Perhaps it was not for him, he was nothing but a man after all, to judge. Is it necessary to put an end to the silence of the world? He was no longer sure.

He sighed and shook his head. Finally he got up. After all, it was 7h30 and he had to go to his job which he did not like but paid his bills. Besides, as the Oxford Dictionary people had said, the word of the year was *selfie*, not *sharie*.

7h31 AM (and every hour from then on)

Perhaps the end of mankind will be different from what many expect. Perhaps mankind will end this way, not with a bang but a sigh.

Unfortunately so, though just like so.