

Waking up
By Pablo Ouziel

We wake up in the morning to hear and watch the newest tragedy that has swept the world's media attention. One morning it is the tragic crash of an airplane, the next some contested elections that turn violent as people revel. Soon, the media lens is directed to the death of a star, but after a few days, the media bites ease and as a few specialized commentators continue discussing previous events, cameras and microphones have gone somewhere else. Amidst this media frenzy, the future of the world is being orchestrated as attentive spectators watch in silence and (sometimes) disbelief.

Serious events and acts are taking place everyday which merit serious social debate, yet because of the fact that our societies are deeply fragmented, broken and clashing between each other, we are unable to grant ourselves the necessary pause, required for conciliation and unity. Because of this, we are easy to control as a mass of isolated individuals, which is held together by norms and regulations, bureaucracies, military, and police, and concepts such as the nation state, the church and the corporation. If we are to stay in this model of society, I fear we will live in perpetual war until we destroy ourselves by not paying attention to the fact that something is drastically wrong.

We are living in societies plagued with corruption at all levels, we are constantly expanding our militarized societies surveilled by police forces and colonizing armies, which are rapidly eroding our freedoms. In the meantime, the resources of the world are generating massive amounts of wealth for a small minority, as our natural heritage is being rapidly dilapidated. In exchange, the majority of the global population receives what we have come to identify as 'security', when in effect, it could be clearly labelled as racketeering. As a collective, the mass of the population gets terrorized and soon succumbs to authoritarian rule.

In the Western world - the bastion of democracy - we console ourselves with the thought that we are free, we refer to ourselves as members of the free world and compare our free societies with tyrannies that govern in other parts of the planet. This we justify by the fact that our elected officials have reached the podium through an electoral system of some kind, thus in effect being representatives of our interests as citizens. It can be argued that this is a fair assumption, as long as we conduct our field research in a laboratory, but if we engage with members of the numerous sub-communities, which exist within the boundaries of delineated Nation States, we quickly realize that there is tremendous discontent and frustration brewing amongst the population. At the same time, there exists in our societies a sense of impotence and fear that if the boat is rocked, things will get worse.

As the world globalizes on different planes – intellectually, spiritually, socially, politically, economically and militarily, to name a few, we are faced with the realization of the global consequences of our actions, or our inactions. At this point, all we can do is practice the great and often forgotten virtues of just analysis, honest critique and self-amelioration, hoping to contribute something of value to the global village. Without these

virtues, we fall into the trap of blaming others for our barbarous crimes. When starving kids in poorer nations are dying and have no access to food or water, we blame the country's tribal lords and corrupt politicians, we forget to mention the exploitation and extortion carried out by our corporations with the aid of our governments and laws. When we go to war, we blame tyrannical leaders for forcing us to attack them – we unload bombs on civilian populations in the name of pre-emptive strikes and the defence of freedom. We forget to question whether we have become animals and have lost all sense of reason. When our free-market banking system collapses and our politicians tell us that institutions are *too-big-to-fail* and must be bailed out by the taxpayers, we are quick to accept their jittery explanations and swiftly approve their actions. We forget to wonder whether we are being conned. Finally, when a surveillance society rises from within our democratic-communities and our freedoms are radically eroded, engrossed in our own delusion of freedom, we forget to evaluate whether we are still living in democratic states, or have transcended into something different. It is this lack of questioning which has paralyzed us as a collective-mass, and keeps us extracted from the true decision making process – the one that defines our present global reality and is shaping the future we will leave for others to inherit.

Although I believe professor Chomsky is right in advocating that “prediction in human affairs is a very uncertain enterprise”, I think it is safe to predict, that tomorrow we will wake up in the morning and the media will be playing out the show of the day, perhaps it will report on North Korean bombs, street fights in Iran, the failing state of California, the Madoff financial scandal, or the bombings in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan – amidst millions of other news, which will navigate through our systems of communication mobilizing us in one direction or another. It is also safe to predict, that unless there is a drastic change in the will and choice of the majority, at most tomorrow, we can expect isolated demonstrations making isolated requests; stop the war in Gaza, fight for gay rights, defend freedom of speech in Iran, or save the Polar Bear. We are still far from defending a globally united cause for environmental sustainability and continuity, equality, freedom and justice for all, a fair system of distribution, and an end to oppression and war. If we can one day unite under that banner, all together at the same time and prolonging our request, popular uprisings in Iran, in Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan, will inspire us all and we will unite under the same cause. If this happens, together we will break our chains from the elite that govern us, and bridge the abyss, which has separated us from each other. A brilliant man I know once told me, that despite what we are told, human beings are not too different from each other. I believe he is right, but we must wake up in order to understand this.