

Opinion

To Be Dismayed is not Enough

Ilka Oliva Corado

Monday 29 August 2016, by [Ilka Oliva Corado](#)

Every time we learn about unpleasant news (a rape, a femicide, a slaughter, and a terrorist act) our first and last reaction is to be shocked and remain in that condition, as if with that our share of social consciousness, as a demonstration of our collective commitment, would be fulfilled. With all the injustice and pain that through history has shattered this world, we continue to take refuge in our egotism. Until the pain does not touch us and tear our skin apart, we will continue to be indifferent, inhuman and insensitive to the suffering of others.

Suffering that is the result of our silence, neglect and political inconsistency. Defend happiness, we say, as a shield to avoid the need to convert our thoughts into action. It is the fear to muster the courage and fight for what is right, because as long as we aren't the vilified, everything is fine.

To be dismayed, with a cry of horror, in a pray, in a funeral mass, in a song of praise, in a wreath, in a moment of calm that soothe and exclude us from reality. And we dress in full regalia and dare to toast to celebrate the joy and privilege of our happiness. For having our own private garden while thousands are starving in the streets. For having a dining room furniture while thousands are eating in garbage dumps. For enjoying hot water and bath, while thousands are dying of thirst.

And we celebrate that refined lotion we just buy, the new pair of shoes that matches our collection, the new smartphone, and our vacation trips we need to expose to the world through social networks, so that they can see us; pleasant of our happiness. Privileged!

And we show the world the recognition we are given, immersed in the vanity that makes us feel unique, immortal, important. Outstanding! While the world crumbles at the speed of light. While thousands die in the jaws of capitalism, which makes us consumerism slaves, and distracts us from reality, and keeps us in a perpetual state of shock that manipulates us like windup toys, like puppets.

And life is another when we are away from the pain, so we flee from it, we refuse to confront it. That's why we pretend not to see it; we turn a blind eye when life asks us loudly to react, to act. And that's why the deaths of thousands of children from starvation momentarily shock us, and we pray so that their souls find refuge somewhere. What do the children who die victims of genocides provoke in our consciousness? Do they also matter? How much? What is genocide for us? What is the meaning of a war, or an invasion?

But life goes on, we say, and we hide behind the world of indolence, of our joy and happiness that we proclaim everywhere. There we are safe; there we can live as we please, without an iota of our consciousness confronting and presenting us with our own human rot, making us feel the stench that expels our dying skin. We adopt a comfortable position so others can go to the front line. Poor devils, fucking dreamers.

And life is painful for us only when we've run out of hot water or shampoo, when there is a power cut, or when because traffic jam we're late for an appointment. And we are the most unhappy people in the world when Christmas came and we had no money to buy something to wear for the first time, or for that bourgeois style gala dinner.

Oddly enough life doesn't leave us when we see that in Syria the invasion and genocide is destroying the beauty of the spring that has always flourished in the smile of children. What Israel is doing to Palestine, the genocide, the land theft, the usurpation. Or when the sea swallows five hundred refugees a week, or

when the desert desiccates dozens of undocumented immigrants trying to reach the United States. It does not hurt us when a neoliberal government for which we voted, beat up those more vilified by the system and impunity.

It hurts surely, and we feel dismayed the rest of our life when tragedy knock on the door of our home and occupy it. And we feel dismayed when recognition and applause do not come, then we get depressed, we allow ourselves to fall down because our narcissism.

And while we're depressed by banalities, (because we have no money to dye our hair or buy that bottle of rum export) life elsewhere in the world or around the corner is asking loudly that we turn around to look at it. If only we had the integrity of looking around, listening and feeling everything that the world constantly tells us, we would be another humanity, not the crap that inhabit this planet.

To be dismayed is not enough. The sea would not be sea without the force of the waves and the storm.

@ilkaolivacorado

contacto[AT]cronicasdeunainquilina.com

[Crónicas de una Inquilina](#)

Translated by Marvin Najarro