

# The Age of Voy

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What is the Age of Voy? The kick-start to the third millennium? It is probably whatever you make of it, although that sounds superficial and absurd. Ideally, it would be an age that belonged to no other age in time or space ... a floating age. But it can't be. It is an aging age that can only rejuvenate itself by self-renewal.

Once you consider yourself to be in the third millennium, you automatically discard at least 2000 years behind you. But where do they go, and how many more are there to come? Everything seems to have been concentrated in the last century. Compressed. Time has been sped up to an extent that incites us to throw our previous moment into the trash for fear of it becoming obsolete. Is memory a vacated dilemma? We're in a state of memory zero; erasing memories almost as quickly as we experience them to keep up with the spirit of the age.

What would be the difference between yesterday and tomorrow if it were not for the idea of progress? And even then, is there a difference?

What would be the difference between man and woman if it were not for their sexes?

What would be the difference between night and day if it were not for the sun?

What would be the difference between you and me if it were not for the ego?

What would be the difference between black and white, or yellow and brown, if it were not for their colors?

The age of Voy is an age which compels you to voyage; to travel far beyond the age so as not to compete with it, to travel parallel to it on another mental plane, while being, to a certain extent, comfortable within it. The age of Voy is a voyage in the void that fills the gaps between the trash, creating its own traverse.

The age of Voy is an age of fun, where fun is the means to heal yourself from the stress of metropolitan life. It is the age of de-communication, a selective age. It is sitting in a big chair before a big screen that continuously projects all types of movies and information, but shows you nothing. Suddenly, you realize you're in outer space, and already nostalgic about life on earth. It is the age where the multitude of paradoxes coming through the information network will teach us to be tolerant. It is the age of processing. It is the age of altered appearances caused by genetic developments. It is the age of reassessment in all fields, especially religious.

The age of Voy is where cities are transformed into museums and visited as such, and where the virtual is a major source of excitement. Where destroyed cities have the most potential for growth. It is the age where you talk nonsense until it makes sense.

What would be the difference between sense and nonsense if it were not for the non?

It is the age of whoever is not yet born.

What would be the difference between an elephant and its baby were it not for their sizes?

What would be the difference between one country and another were it not for their borders?

Plant more trees in pots, put more birds in cages, more pets between walls. Claim you're protecting them and giving them life.

This is the age of satellite people, where movement is primordial and places are commodities. Where continents become countries, countries become cities, cities villages, and villages communities. Where the five continents are no longer five, and where geography finds itself confronted with the

information network within which no boundaries exist. Where network jamming incurs involuntary accidents that in turn create pockets of adventure.

An orange pig lies on a glass table, on its side with its big feet in the air, peeing unconcernedly.

The age where words replaced by images take us back in time to hieroglyphics. The age where in order to think, write or produce anything, you have to turn on and off devices connected to sockets. It is the age of Voy. An age where machines and humans stand face to face.

What would be the difference between a machine and a human if it were not for the heart?

It's only when you enter the world of art that two plus two can equal anything but four, and the same goes for two times two. In the age of Voy, you do not need to have a chain of thoughts, but sporadic thoughts in a chain. There, everything already proven has the contrary also proven. When he wanted to go on an excursion to the third millennium, he was told, "But you're already there!" He stopped and looked around him, but couldn't see it. He looked again and saw nothing. However hard he looked, he couldn't see the third millennium. He realized that it must have begun, and that he was already immersed in it. He stopped looking, and began working.

He once saw a donkey going backwards simply because it was stubborn. Its cousin the zebra, who was flexible, moved forward.

What would be the difference between a donkey and a zebra if it were not for their characters?

Let's assume that everything happening on earth around us, including ourselves, is not a dream. Then what could it be? So as not to call it Reality, let's call it Voyage. A voyage that goes through an hourglass from life to death and back to life again, for as long as the hourglass continues to turn, and for as long as you're alive.

A clown that cries cannot be real.

You hold on tightly to your binoculars to perceive the world through them and observe changes around you. When looking through your binoculars, you might discover your key in the sand. It won't open any doors, but will unerringly lead you to the age of Voy. And when you reach the age of Voy, you will find that you don't need the hourglass anymore. It is an archaic way of measuring time – you would be better off with a digital watch that you discard when it stops working. You will rarely need binoculars in the age of Voy, although you might be obliged to wear glasses. The screen is the media that will replace your binoculars. It will even show you things you don't want to see. You'll have to adapt. As for the key, try not to lose it because you won't be able to enter your own domain. Without it, you'll almost stop functioning. The more keys you find, the better, provided you can also find the doors they are supposed to open. If you happen upon an hourglass instead of a key, you might keep it as a souvenir of remote times; it has an aura of the past rarely found in the age of Voy. You will also be preserving sand at home.

One morning, while drinking coffee, his thoughts drifted to the binoculars he had received as a present before going to the opera. He put them to his eyes and directed them around the room. Then he stopped. The hourglass was enlarged and it various trains of thought in him. He wondered about the precise size of each sand grain, its age and its origin. He had the irresistible urge to break the hourglass open. He left. When he returned, he was obliged to climb in through the window. He found fragments of glass on the carpet, and traces of sand that had almost completely disappeared into the carpet's fibres. He went out to bring the shopping bags in from the car and returned to find his lost keys hanging from the keyhole of the front door.

It seemed to him that many events were happening in conjunction with the hourglass, the binoculars and the key. So he cleared the table top, placed on it a small mound of sand from the broken hourglass, his binoculars and the biggest of his keys, and studied them, trying to find a link between the three objects. He spent days moving the binoculars and the key around the mound of sand in

several different combinations; linear, triangular, and random, but it told him little about their combined meaning. After a few days, he realized that there was no point trying to relate them. They made sense only in relation to events in his life.

That day, he left home at midday, went to the opera house, sneaked onstage and began singing in a loud voice to the empty rows of chairs. It was far from opera, but it was even more important. His song was of the age of Voy. The echoes of his song filled the hall with the sounds of VA, OG and YE.

The success or failure of any given thing will depend on the media. It is the age of manipulation.

You reach the cliff edge and can't go back. If you jump, your chances of survival are zero – normally speaking. But if you jump with your faith? You will surely reach somewhere, somehow, in a swift and astonishing way. If you fall inside the hourglass, the sand will absorb your shock. If you fall inside the binoculars, you'll experience a vision of things never before seen. If you fall on them, it will most probably hurt. If you lose your key during your fall, try to work out where it landed. Finding it will help the day move ahead. If you don't find it, go back to the cliff edge and take a nap. You'll dream of a long voyage in the form of isolated images separated by intervals. In the empty flashes between them lies the age of Voy...

He reached the cliff edge and couldn't sleep. Instead, he took off his clothes and threw them aside. The key fell from his trouser pocket. He was free. Gripping onto the key, he threw his clothes off the cliff. After a while, he found that the key restricted the use of his hands, so he threw it off the cliff too. A sense of relief invaded him. Then he realized that he was imprisoned in the hourglass. He struggled to get out, his arms flailing above him, but was drawn downwards by the inexorable movement of the sand into the lower cone of the hourglass. Sand engulfed him, almost suffocating him. He reached for his binoculars, and, putting them to his eyes, saw a clear blue sky that made him forget his predicament. With the blue sky filling his head, he managed to survive the avalanche of sand.

Suddenly, he woke up and began running. He ran faster and faster, sweating profusely. He ran until he could run no longer. He reached a space in which there was a chair. He sat down, breathless. Little by little, he began noticing things around him. Opposite him, in the distance, he saw another chair with someone sitting on it who was looking at him. He disagreed with what the person was saying. Then he noticed many people around him sitting on chairs. He disagreed with most of them, realizing all the while that they complemented him. He found it so paradoxical that he decided to dive into the water.

The abrupt change in his surroundings made him breathless with wonder. It was like being out in the desert, an infinite blue over an infinite stretch of sand. Girls were playing, their feet kicking up sand which was lifted on the breeze then dropped in the water, creating clouds in the blue. A mermaid watched from afar. She sang a strange hypnotic refrain, swinging her tail rhythmically to and fro. She reminded him of the hourglass he had had at home. His thoughts drifted to the binoculars and the key, two unrelated elements united through him. Moving through the water, he was astonished by the richness of colors and variety of shapes of the rocks and fish around him.

Then he stopped short. Bubbles came out of his mouth. Sharks were circling in the vicinity, waiting for a sign of movement to attack. Immobilized, he began rising from the depths of the water until he reached the first layer of clouds. On one of the clouds was a black wild cat who had raised his head to observe him. It was feeding on the cloud, which was gradually getting smaller. In the distance, small shadows were approaching in procession towards the clouds. They spread out and landed on a cloudy zone. It was the archaic procession. It was like being in a dream. In a few seconds they had eaten all the clouds and moved on, slightly more rounded in shape.

Is the age of Voy a reality or a fiction? It's probably what you make of it. It's fiction if you want it to be. And it's not an age if you don't think of it as one. His tooth was painful, and the dentist advised

him to replace it with a ceramic one, assuring him that it would look better than the original. On leaving the dentist, he held the tooth in his hand. It looked awful, but it was his. Should he keep it, or should he throw it away? How could he separate from a part of himself? But then, he had heard that science was advancing at great speed. If he buried it in the sand, surely a jaw full of healthy teeth would grow from it. He wouldn't even need to water it, only to make sure that the sand was not in full sunlight. And when the sand changed color, he would have to turn the hourglass.

The hourglass was practical and enigmatic. As long as somebody's there to turn it, it forever re-counts grains of sand. It's a never-ending process, and doesn't need any special mechanism. It is easy to use, but doesn't function without a user. It needs the user's constant attention. It is practical, but ultimately boring. It lasts several minutes without a user, and an eternity with one. He realized that both the binoculars and the hourglass made no sense without a user, which gave him the urge to use his binoculars. He took them up and began playing at focusing and distorting the world around him. He enjoyed watching the world. Watching people, watching them talking without understanding a word. Watching cars and the people in them, watching opera. He saw himself singing a song, the echoes of which were VA, OG and YE. The opera house was crowded with people who acclaimed the song of Voy, with applause that lasted into the first century of the third millennium.

And then there was the news. News of the age of Voy in all newspapers and on satellite television. The age of Voy was almost everywhere, everywhere except where it should have been. Apart from on the TV stations, media, and information, where really was the age of Voy? Can a whole age be created only by the media? Could it be so false? The answer could only be found in the news. Whenever the TV was on, so was the age of Voy – until a fault occurred in the TV monitor, influencing the way news was received. It created problems in the age of Voy.

The age of Voy could not survive without a solid financial grounding. The most obvious way to create this was to print voys. The age of Voy began appearing on the stock exchange. People gave voys for charity. Voys for sex. Voys for drugs. Voys for the church. Voys for psychiatry. Voys for war and voys for peace. They would do anything for voys. At night, back at home, people would count their voys and dream of future projects. Voys were printed on special paper. The hourglass, the binoculars and the key were represented on paper in a triangular formation. Their presence on the voys made no sense to people, nor did the connection between them, but as long as it was money and could be exchanged, people pursued it. They scrambled for voys, tumbled for voys, got up and began running for more.

They could do little else Voy – they were members of the age of Voy. In running, some people fell and hit a rock, others fell on their heads, and still others were run over. They woke up, as if from a bizarre dream, with a better understanding of the age of Voy.

"Do you mind?" he asked the hourglass. "I am going to turn you upside down one more time before I leave." On his way, he caught sight of a giraffe in the distance. She was tall, very tall. He focused on the feet, looked up and saw the body, looked further up but couldn't see the head. The long neck ended in a cloud. The giraffe must have been feeding on a cloud. It was a new and different age, this, he reflected, this feeding on clouds. He had never heard of such a thing before. When he saw the archaic procession doing so, he thought that he must have been dreaming, but now he was convinced that this is what happens. He took his binoculars to see what had happened to the cloud, but it had gone. The giraffe must have swallowed it entirely.

The giraffe's head was clearly visible now. He looked all around him but couldn't find the key. He didn't mind losing the hourglass or the binoculars, but strangely enough, he always ended up losing his key. He couldn't afford to lose it because he couldn't get into his own domain without it. He decided once and for all to establish an efficient way to prevent losing it. He began making a plan, although he hadn't yet found his key. He thought of getting advice, but whom could he consult? Maybe he should address himself to the highest authority - God. He clambered onto the giraffe's back, then began the long climb up to her head. When he reached, he stood upright and shouted,

"Hallo, God! Are you there? I've lost my key. It happens to me all the time."

God replied, "Is it the key to heaven? The key to my world?"

He answered, "No, it's just my key, but I can't really function without it."

"Did you turn the hourglass today?" asked God pragmatically.

"Yes."

"You probably left the key underneath it. If it's not there, come back."

So he went back to check, but did not find it. Should he return? He probably didn't have a better option. On his way, he met a priest who asked him where he was going. When he told him that he was going to ask a favor from God, the priest said,

"Tell me, son, for I am his representative on earth. Tell me your sins."

"I have lost my key."

"Repent, my son, it's almost a sin."

"But that won't bring back my key."

"But it will absolve you from your sins."

He continued on his way to see God.

"You must take more calcium and magnesium," God told him. "It's good for your bones."

He felt as though he were a skeleton, being examined by a doctor beyond his nudity.

God continued thoughtfully, "What is concerning you is that you've lost the key to your progeny and to your innermost desires. This key can only appear when you're alive, and very alive, at that. You're dead, to all extents and purposes."

He looked around him, and all the skeletons looked alike. There was no way to differentiate between man and woman, no sexual characteristics, no sensuality. It was frightening and terrible. He tried to find the key between the bones, sand and skeletons. He wanted to escape all of this. Holding sand in his hands, he remembered his life on earth, his family, his friends, his encounters, his life and the hourglass. He remembered the age of Voy and thought that if he had been carrying a few voys with him, he would already have been out of there.

From his viewpoint from the top of the giraffe's head, he saw a place with a big signpost on which was written; "All day breakfast; continental, traditional and vegetarian". He ate all day long, alternating between the three breakfasts. This should make him fat, he thought, so fat that he would forget about his misadventure with the skeletons and bones. As soon as he felt better, he went to register in a diet nutrition club. He was refused because he could not show enough voys at the entrance. Soon, he went back to God.

"I can see that you haven't found your key, yet, otherwise you wouldn't be here."

It was true, he reflected; the only time he went to God was when he needed his help.

"You know," he said, "I miss my father. Almost 30 years have passed since he's been gone. I don't even know where he went. Where do we all go from here?"

"I thought you came to ask about your key. Your father went to the same place as you came from. Do you have faith?"

Why is God asking me this question now, he wondered.

"If you have faith," God continued, "you have the key to the age of Voy. You have the key to any age. And you will find that you have no need for any other key."

Faith? Why does God talk about faith? He thought to himself. What is it, and where is it?

Knowing his thoughts, God said, "Faith is the thing you are, it is faith in humanity, in nature, in yourself."

There was nothing more to say.

While descending from the giraffe's neck, he wondered whether he should continue the search for his key, or begin searching for faith. He had better find faith. It was a matter of survival.

With faith, he no longer needed a key, and felt much lighter, freer.

He could go almost anywhere without paying voys. He went into a shop and selected the best binoculars.

"I want these", he said.

"Certainly, sir. How do you want to pay?"

" I have my faith".

"But that doesn't pay for the binoculars."

"In that case, I'll take some chewing gum."

"Your faith can't pay for that either, sir."

He left the shop with his old binoculars and his new faith. It's a tough age, he thought to himself. Faith, what will faith bring me?

Sometimes he thought about his key; it had been practical for him. It gave him easy entrance and exit to his world. He began walking, and saw a public telephone box. He entered and tried to call God. Nobody answered. He sighed. He had begun questioning the essence of the age, wondering about its validity. Everybody says that it's all in genetics. Changing and recreating humanity, transforming and alienating everything that moves on earth in the name of science. Healing the world. Man playing God, and getting it all wrong. He was told that one of the ways to reach God was through the Internet. When he tried, the screen displayed: "HERE, GOD IS EVERYWHERE".

It's true. You can find everything on the Internet, and what's god-like about it is that it is all virtual and somehow metaphysical. He had never placed information about his old binoculars on the Internet, but while looking for the latest models on line, he noticed by chance an old pair of binoculars. They can't be mine, he thought. On checking them closely, he found that they were undoubtedly his. They had scratches on the upper left side where he had once dropped them, and then worried that he might possibly be losing visions by damaging his binoculars.

But there is much more sadness on earth, and you don't need binoculars to see it. If you lose something on the Internet, you lose nothing. There, inside, there are no feelings. What is clear is the insensitive way the inside strongly affects the feelings on the outside. You don't need binoculars to view the world. To feel and sense beauty and ugliness, terror and sensuality, get excited or feel bored, to visualize the world you want, to imagine anything you like, to be free ... All these tools are very helpful; they give lots of ideas, but they are also restrictive. Like other things, you have to hold them, carry them, maintain them, be careful not to lose them, and not to have them stolen. They help you, and they restrict you.

So where is the age of Voy in all of that, and how shall we define this coming age? Could it survive a full century? Is it a bizarre age? He could never sit down and think for more than five minutes about the coming age; and the same went for the previous one. But instead of thinking, he only heard his own echo. Is the age of Voy the fusion of echoes? When fused, echoes get diluted, dissipated. They become charged emptiness. Is this the age of Voy? An age of charged echoes with a huge amount of junk information that has been forever forgotten in the space pocket of God.

There is a rumor that a meteorite will bounce on the layers of the atmosphere and create an electromagnetic counter-effect that will banish electricity from earth. It will not injure human beings. It will only regress them to the Stone Age overnight. But it probably won't happen before the book VOY.AGE reaches you; otherwise you wouldn't be reading it now.

Voyage to what? Voyage to the limits of consciousness, to the far extents of imagination, voyage physically to see and learn about the world around us. Voyage in our thoughts and, what's more, voyage with no further need for binoculars, an hourglass, or a key. Voyage with time, vision and faith in ourselves. Voyage when you can and if you can. Voyage during the day or night in hot or cold seasons to other lands, other nations and races, to hostile or friendly places; voyage with your senses as much as with your thoughts. Voyage to the moon, to the cosmos; voyage without inertia, with curiosity. Voyage and melt with the sun, freeze with the Antarctic and explode with the nebulae, experience black holes, and then voyage backward into the past, the essence, and the origin. Voyage is the best way to move. It's also the best way to stand still. Let music and the arts take you there, there to the age of Voy.

He hadn't yet dropped the hourglass. He didn't mind, because the hourglass would anyway stop functioning when he stopped being. He couldn't believe that it would continue when he ceased to be. And he didn't want to know.

What would be the difference between life and death if it were not for being?  
Between everything, if it were not for everything else?

He thought that he should go to meet God once more. He climbed onto the giraffe in order to get as close as possible to God. Then, all of a sudden, a bomb dropped. It came very close to the giraffe, who began trembling with fear. Another one fell even nearer and broke the giraffe's foreleg. The giraffe fell on one knee. The jolt almost shook him off, but he gripped onto her neck tenaciously. Another bomb came, and the giraffe went down on both knees. It was an awesome gesture. Was the giraffe praying? Yet another bomb came, and the giraffe fell on her stomach, still holding her neck upright. Her legs were completely shattered but she was resisting.

And he was getting further away from God. He was going down with her, still holding onto her neck. He did not notice that she was digging her own hole. She knew the result of an unresisted war waged from unknown places for reasons she would never understand. He was upset and afraid. Was God watching them?

Sand was everywhere, scattered in the air. With a last effort and a strong thrust of her neck, she threw him far up in the air. A few seconds later she disappeared under a cloud of sand. There was nothing left of her. Not even a trace, just a transformed earth. When he wiped away his tears, they were red. Were his tears mixed with the blood of the giraffe? His mind was full of the giraffe, of her elegance and innocence, and he didn't know if he would ever understand why she was destroyed. Could the age of Voy explain it? There was so much sand in the air around him that the hourglass and the binoculars were no longer visible.

He wasn't sure if he was still moving through the air. In fact, he couldn't remember if he ever landed again. Was he in the age of Voy?