THE FUTURE IS ALREADY HERE



The bank that prints time.

FERDINANDO FREGA

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THE FED SAGA — 22

When we are children, they tell us a very strange story.

They teach us that the future is ahead of us.

Like a destination.

Like a distant city.

Like a place we will reach one day.

Over time I began to suspect that this was a wrong description.

Not poetically wrong.

Technically wrong.

Because the future does not stand still.

It is not a city.

It is not a destination.

It is not a place.

The future is already moving.

And it is not waiting for anyone.

This difference changes everything.

For years I watched people build five-year plans.

Ten-year strategies.

Twenty-year goals.

Career paths.

Retirement plans.

Life projects.

All built on the same assumption.

That the future will be polite enough to cooperate.

Then reality arrives.

And does what it always does.

It changes the terms of the contract without notice.

Technology arrives first.

A crisis arrives first.

An illness arrives first.

A discovery arrives first.

A war arrives first.

A person arrives first.

A person leaves first.

Suddenly the future you had designed no longer exists.

Not because it was wrong.

Because the future kept moving while you imagined it standing still.

This is one of the most expensive illusions in life.

We think we are building the future.

Very often we are negotiating with something that is already transforming.

Every generation makes the same mistake.

It believes it lives in the present.

In fact it lives inside the past.

It uses inherited ideas.

Inherited habits.

Inherited structures.

Inherited definitions.

Meanwhile the future has already left.

And it is already producing a reality no one has understood yet.

That is why revolutions seem sudden.

They never are.

They are only the moment when people notice that the future arrived long ago.

The Federal Reserve discovers it all the time.

Markets discover it all the time.

Companies discover it all the time.

Everyone tries to anticipate the next change.

The ironic part is that the change has already begun while they are looking for it.

Maybe this is why forecasting is so difficult.

We are not observing an object.

We are observing a process.

And processes have a terrible habit.

They go on.

Even when we stop watching them.

For forty years I traveled.

Countries.

Cultures.

Markets.

Languages.

Every time I saw the same scene.

People convinced they knew where the world was going.

Ten years later the world was somewhere else.

Not because they were stupid.

Because the speed of change almost always outruns the speed of understanding.

First the world changes.

Then the explanations change.

It is an important difference.

Many believe intelligence means foreseeing.

I am beginning to think it means noticing quickly what has already changed.

Adaptation is born there.

Not in forecasting.

In perception.

In seeing what others keep ignoring.

The most dangerous people are not those without ideas.

They are those in love with ideas that belong to a world that no longer exists.

They keep defending them.

They keep explaining them.

They keep protecting them.

Like guardians of an abandoned city.

The future does not argue.

It moves on.

Time works the same way.

No one can stop it.

No one can persuade it.

No one can negotiate with it.

You can only decide how quickly you will notice the direction it is heading.

At a certain point I began to suspect something even more radical.

Maybe the future is not ahead of us.

Maybe the future is what is continually dissolving the present.

Moment after moment.

Decision after decision.

Transformation after transformation.

Like a river that cannot stop flowing.

We keep giving it names.

Generations.

Decades.

Eras.

Markets.

Crises.

Revolutions.

The river has no interest in labels.

It keeps flowing.

And we keep mistaking the map for the movement.

That is why some people age fast.

Not in years.

Cognitively.

They remain loyal to a version of the world that no longer exists.

Others, instead, keep something rare.

The ability to update themselves without betraying themselves.

To learn without erasing themselves.

To evolve without losing their center.

Maybe this is the true form of intelligence.

Not foreseeing the future.

Recognizing it when it arrives.

Because it always arrives.

Silently.

Long before the newspapers give it a name.

Long before economists assign it a theory.

Long before leaders deliver a speech.

When it happens, the future does not knock on the door.

It is already sitting in the living room.

And we are the last to notice.

Ferdinando
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Human Behavior as Story

We don't sell books. We build relationships.