

ROBBED OF LIFE, Then What

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The 2017 movie *I Don't Feel At Home In This World Anymore* took top honors at that year's Sundance Film Festival in January, winning the U.S. Grand Jury prize in the dramatic category. Released on Netflix shortly after Sundance, the work held a rating of 88% on the Rotten Tomatoes critics review Tomatometer.

The story's premise was simple—a young woman's home was robbed, and she sets out on an adventure to find and rob back the stolen loot, her laptop and her grandmother's silver flatware. Angered at the cavalier disregard for her life's dignity, overwhelmed that anyone could consider her sensitivities so unimportant, and incensed that anyone could so intimately intrude into her private person, she assumed the role of vigilante. What was there to lose? The insult, the diminishing of her relevance, the brushing aside of her significance in this world, the ripping away of her sense of belonging, the rejection. All pushed towards violence, risking of life, and abandonment of safety, for her and her closest friend, now her fellow would-be robber. This world was no longer home, bodily harm no deterrent. Only hurt feelings and a personalized definition of justice mattered.

A celebrated movie of another era (with three Academy Award nominations), *The Maltese Falcon*, is similarly a story of feelings—this time, avarice and its associates. It's a tale of pursuit of a medieval bird statuette made of gold and jewels. When the falcon is discovered, the giddy-with-greed con man uses his knife to scrape away at the black coating to reveal underneath the glitter of the treasure, a glitter hidden by its painted disguise for centuries. But there is no sparkle. It's a fake. When asked what the fake is made of, private eye Humphrey Bogart supplies the incomparable line, "It's the stuff dreams are made of."

Mr. Rogers (think *Neighborhood*) said he kept these words by his desk on a plaque, "What is essential, is invisible to the eye."

Our lives are the stories of our *invisibles*. Our motivations, good and bad, come from spirits that prompt deep within. Actions merely spin the unseen into the seen, and the things seen—we call it living. The etherial rules over all the eye can behold or the hand can grasp. How long does one need to live to know that? Apparently, only into the teens. Look up the youth suicide and depression stats for yourself (even the pre-teens). Remove a child's sense of belonging in the classroom, take away adult attitudes of partnerships with a nation of fellow citizens, let slip away a trust in affordability for education and healthcare, place hurdles in the way of believing there will be a self-sufficing wage, and then take a pass on accepting responsibility for it. What do you get?

We're lost, and it's too late to be found. We failed to provide our youth things to give identity and significance, things to instill confidence in belonging to this world, things that dreams—good dreams—are made of, things you cannot see, touch, hear, smell, or taste—the essentials. The young have grown up. The hour for doing now lies behind us.

Starlight in the night arrives from bodies far away. Some bodies have already flickered out, but their final rays still journey towards us. We see the light and believe in the star, but in truth it no longer shines. We see the bright, but do not realize the dark is already done. There is nothing left but to enjoy our sins for a season, until the day is gone and the night that follows is no longer lit, as the last of the rays pass us. But it all had ended years ago, when our light was first dimmed, then extinguished, by us, at its source, in our bowels.

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper
T.S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*

Where there is no vision,
the people perish...
Proverbs 29:18

Point Of No Return
the point in the flight of
an aircraft at which the
remaining fuel is not
enough to return to base
(it is too late to go back)

If I could turn back time,
if I could find a way...
written by Diane Warren
recorded by Cher

Definition of callous:
unkind, cruel, and without
sympathy or feeling for
other people
Cambridge Dictionary

