

MP3

My mum is worried, she says I have an “addiction”. On the sly, my older sister is trying to help me: she has recorded an audio of me. The treatment? Listening to it every day.

I switch on the tablet. I open the app and select *Antidote.mp3*. I press *play*: white noise...

“Hello little brother. First thing: turn off the Wi-Fi and activate the flight mode. Now, close your eyes. Welcome to your *digital downtime*. Give your index finger a rest from endless mindless *scrolling*: a pattern of interaction so addictive that it has been openly compared to the ‘magic white powder’ we talked about back in the day. It’s ‘pure dopamine’ at 500MB symmetrical... You’re still too young to know about these things, but, burn this into your heart: if you don’t pay for the services, *you’re* the product...

Yes, Saul. Social networks fight for your time, you are auctioned off to the highest bidder. They show you content that keeps you glued to the screen, ads in between, more and more transgressive material; more and more extreme and violent material filling in the ‘black holes’ of your profile as they please. Mmm... Yes, just so you understand: they do the same with you as when you model those plasticine figurines. You decide whether to give them a snub nose, curvy legs or sturdy forearms... and so you generate their personality, through their appearance. It’s the same thing, but in this case they pick your brain until they manipulate your identity.

Listen little one, *fake news* attracts 60% more attention than real news... it’s the perfect hook for your eyes. Remember this: your content is different from the rest. They offer you what you want to see, they drive a wedge with anyone who thinks differently... They deliberately polarise us by

showing us a limited spectrum of reality. It’s... as if they took away the green, blue and yellow from your marker box. Your drawings could never have those colours anymore, could they? Imagine, purple grass!

Saul, blank your mind... Do you remember the movie we saw the other day, *The Matrix*? How do you ‘wake up’ if you are not aware of its existence? Now... *you* are. But don’t jump off a skyscraper! Mummy’s pushing me behind! It’s just a metaphor... ask your teacher to explain it to you. Come on, let’s get down to business, I’m getting distracted.

Nowadays misinformation is the universal language of social networks. Don’t be fooled. They are capable of destabilising a country in exchange for a handful of Euros... They already do it with the self-esteem of millions of people in search of constant validation... Isn’t life hard enough without adding such a rate of stress and frustration to a little elf like you?

Remember: in a time when social media connects us all, we are more alone than ever.

And now, open your eyes. Get out of flight mode; turn on Wi-Fi; reconnect to the digital world. You know, first of all, access my profile on all the social networks I showed you. Don’t get distracted by trifles, and *like* all my new photos and videos. And at least write two comments!, the profile has to grow. Come on Saul! Do it for your favourite little sister”.



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